



PRIVATE FOREST LANDOWNERS INVEST IN FIRE PREVENTION AND EARLY SUPPRESSION

The forests of Washington State are vital to our economy and our environment. Private forest landowners support a plan of action that prioritizes prevention and early detection and suppression. Immediate fire response ensures wildland fires do not reach catastrophic proportions.

Private forest landowners continue to make significant investments to ensure a successful wildfire prevention and reduction strategy.

Active management promotes healthy, fire-resilient forests

Scientific research shows that proactively managing forests maintains and improves forest health and habitat quality. Proper harvesting, thinning treatments, brush removal, and pruning are practices used by private landowners to ensure productive and healthy forests over the long term. Unmanaged forests lead to dense, multi layered forest structures and often an unnatural accumulation of fuels. Harvesting, thinning small trees and clearing brush followed by controlled burning can all be effective methods to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire. "Prescribed fires" are carefully managed fires during mild weather conditions used to intentionally reduce vegetation under trees, prepare new seed beds, and dispose of excess wood debris on the forest floor. All of these active fire management tools can reduce the risk of large forest fires and reduce smoke emissions.

Investing & implementing preventive measures to save property, habitat and lives

Private forest landowners pay millions of dollars every year to ensure DNR is adequately prepared and equipped to respond to forest fires. Approximately \$20-25 million/biennium in Forest Fire Protection Assessments (FFPA) has been generated over the last three biennia primarily from private forest landowners. Those investments are statutorily required to be equitably shared between state contributions and landowners (RCW 76.04.167).

Private forest owners also spend hundreds of thousands of dollars every year on our own fire patrols and reducing fire hazard by disposing of slash, taking security measures to limit exposure to human-caused wildfires, purchasing equipment and staffing for initial firefighting response, and many other expenses.

Early suppression

Acting quickly to keep fires small with early suppression can prevent larger-scale economic and environmental devastation, and protect firefighter and public health and safety. Private landowners continually invest in maintaining our forest roads, ensuring quick access to suppress wildfires.

Private forest landowners also pay assessments of approximately \$400,000 annually into the Landowner Contingency Fund (LOCF) to pay for fire suppression costs if a fire is started through normal landowner operations (RCW 76.04.630). Successful prevention and early suppression has resulted in a current LOCF balance of more than \$4 million.

Many private forest landowners also pay into local fire districts, in addition to LOCF assessments.



Prompt post-fire restoration efforts protect forest health, the environment, and help minimize financial losses on state and private lands

Catastrophic fires are tragic while they are burning but also can have lasting environmental and economic consequences unless the burned forests are quickly stabilized, restored, and replanted. Wildfires kill trees, damage wildlife habitat, often result in wildlife mortality, and almost always significantly increase soil erosion, instability, and have unpredictable downstream effects. Private landowners need to act immediately to reforest and salvage damaged forests, install erosion controls, and provide for a renewed, growing forest. Science and experience tells us time is essential to treat burned areas quickly before fall rains and winter snows to avoid significant movement of soils and provide for a new forest.

A USFS 2015 study stated that post-fire logging can significantly reduce future surface woody fuel levels in forests regenerating following wildfires.

Nobody benefits from catastrophic wildfire. Certainly not private landowners who face the reality of trees consumed by fire and partially burned trees that deteriorate in value very quickly. Salvaging the burned timber is essential to allow landowners to preserve some value after wildfire disasters and to provide the economic resources necessary for reforestation, and soil and habitat restoration actions.

Science and economics dictate that long term forest health requires fast action to salvage the burned forests and simultaneously undertake ecological restoration and reforestation actions.

FIRE CAUSE HISTORY

YEAR	ACRES BURNED, BY CAUSE									TOTAL ACRES
	LIGHTNING	INCENDIARY	RECREATION	SMOKERS	DEBRIS BURNS	LOGGING	CHILDREN	RAILROAD	MISCELLANEOUS	
2014	265,713.1	23.9	143.3	23.5	500.4	2.5	23.4	0.2	48,703.9	315,134.1
2013	12,602.5	14.6	2,393.9	6.6	402.6	16.9	23.2	4.7	110,643.5	126,108.4
2012	31,425.1	274.5	977.8	165.7	1,104.8	5.4	20.2	0.2	34,360.0	68,333.7
2011	18.6	62.9	321.0	0.7	155.8	7.4	38.1	2.4	6,996.0	7,603.0
2010	2,397.4	43.6	177.6	2.8	153.6	60.5	4.2	0.2	22,647.1	25,487.0
2009	10,870.0	125.0	233.0	8.0	830.0	16.0	19.0	1.0	683.0	12,785.0
2008	1,518.0	12.0	1,018.0	22.0	2,217.0	15.0	20.0	4.0	27,854.0	32,680.0

Source: Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Resource Protection Division; www.dnr.wa.gov.

About the Washington Forest Protection Association

Founded in 1908, the Washington Forest Protection Association (WFPA) is a trade association representing large and small forest landowners and managers of nearly 4 million acres of productive working forestlands located in the coastal and inland regions of Washington State. Our members support rural and urban communities through the sustainable growth and harvest of timber and other forest products for U.S. and international markets. WFPA's objective is to support balanced policies at the state and national levels which create an equilibrium between equitable costs, environmental protection and long-term regulatory certainty.

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