



DNR awards forest restoration grants to forest collaborative in Washington

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OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has awarded nine organizations across Washington with a combined \$1.6 million in grant funding to help make forests in their communities healthier and more resilient, including to wildfires.

Through the All Lands Forest Restoration Grant Program, DNR awarded about \$1.25 million to help these groups plan and conduct forest health treatments, such as the thinning of overly dense forests. Additionally, through the Building Forest Partnerships Grant Program, DNR awarded \$350,000 to help the organizations reach potential partners and the public through outreach activities, such as public meetings, forest field trips, and website development.

The Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative, located in South Central Washington, covers much of the Kittitas County area. This local organization was awarded \$40,000 in Building Forest Partnerships funding. The other eight Collaborations receiving funding across Washington state are Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition, Darrington Collaborative, North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative, Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition, Pinchot Partners, South Gifford Pinchot Collaborative Group, and Stemilt Partnership.

In all, the funding will lead to the increased health and resilience of more than 1,400 acres of forest, while surveys and other on-the-ground activities will inform restoration planning on an additional 31,250 acres.

“I am proud to support the forest collaboratives in Washington state that are working alongside us to make forests healthier and naturally resilient to devastating wildfires,” said Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz, who leads DNR. “These local organizations, as well as our federal, tribal and industry partners, are instrumental in our all-lands forest health strategy, which allows us to work together across property lines and restore forests on a landscape scale.”

About grant programs

Both grant programs were established by the Washington Legislature in 2018, and Franz secured money in the 2019-21 budget to continue them. DNR awarded its first round of grants through these programs in the fall of 2018, investing \$1.8 million in the estimated treatment of more than 1,800 acres of unhealthy forest and the planning necessary to treat up to 120,400 more acres.

The only recipients eligible for these grants are forest collaboratives — a mix of conservation groups, state and federal agencies, tribes, timber workers, and other community members — who are joining forces across property boundaries to improve forest health while also supporting the rural timber economy. In central and eastern Washington, the collaboratives that received grant funding are working in high-priority watersheds identified in DNR's 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan.

Source: <https://nkctribune.com/dnr-awards-forest-restoration-grants-to-forest-collaboratives-in-washington/>