



HILARY S. FRANZ
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS

\$1.8 million (Operating)

Funds needed to avoid additional programmatic cuts impacting the state's lands and waters.

This would support:

- 20 recently lost corps member opportunities that support the most at-need conservation & recreation lands at DNR.
- Maintain the successful Aquatics Reserves & Aquatics Invasive Species programs that are vital to supporting the health of the state's waters.
- Sponsoring programs like Northwest Youth Corps that lead *Inclusion Crews*, providing inclusive career ladder opportunities to tribal youth, women, LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and other underserved and underrepresented communities and individuals in the natural resources sector.

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Conservation Corps Partnerships

For 40 years, DNR has utilized conservation corps crews to help manage the variety of needs of our state's lands & waters. Conservation corps projects provide essential services to protect people, infrastructure, and ecosystems.



DNR received less than half of needed program funding for the 2023-25 to maintain current operations, which represents a new low point in funding over the last several biennia. This is occurring when costs are at their highest and projected to increase by 25% by the end of the biennium to \$1900/day.

DNR has had to cut on-the-ground crew time by 44%, resulting in a biennial loss of 2000+ days of crew time supporting state lands. These losses result in:

- Unsafe and degraded recreation infrastructure
- Invasive species spread across threatened landscapes and waterways
- Loss of protection for critical plant and animal species and food sources
- Increasing tribal concerns about impacts to lands from public access
- Reduced workforce and career development and for youth and veterans
- Potential reduction in grant awards due to loss of match from crew time

Without further action, DNR will lose significant funding for corps projects and staffing that provide vital services in:

- Lands restoration, noxious weed control, recreation site rehabilitation, and hazard mitigation.
- Aquatic invasives control, water quality monitoring, and aquatic restoration.

Corps Program Benefits

Climate Resilience: With the devastating effects of climate change that burden marginalized and underserved communities first and worst, service corps activities increasingly support climate resilience efforts through nature-based solutions that focus on adaptation as well as pursuing projects to mitigate downstream impacts for vulnerable communities.



Workforce Development: Conservation corps programs offer pivotal career opportunities in natural resources management, supporting our state's vital natural resources workforce. By providing leadership skills and mentorship, fostering connection to ecological systems, and supporting career pathways, many corps members go on to accept permanent positions within DNR.

Conservation Corps Protecting Washington's Camas Meadows



In just the last year, WCC crews were vital to helping restore floodplain connectivity and the natural hydrology of the Camas Meadows region, including through installing channel-spanning habitat log structures (coir logs) that serve erosion control and soil stabilization purposes. The increased water availability benefits threatened plant species, while simultaneously improving water storage capabilities to promote cooler waters flowing downstream later in the season, which is important for fostering healthy salmon. This work helps mitigate the impacts of limited snowpack that melt off earlier in the season due to climate change-fueled warmer temperatures.

Specifically, because of WCC crews, native endangered shrubs were replanted while also removing harmful noxious weed species. Because of the crew capacity, invasive species control could be accomplished by hand, which meant avoiding herbicide use around rare plants and near culturally important indigenous identified First Food locations.