

Forest Health and Resiliency Division
Update for Wildland Fire Advisory Committee

January 21, 2020

Washington State Forest Action Plan was approved by the USDA Forest Service on October 27, 2020. The action plan integrates strategic priorities from numerous existing strategic plans, including both the 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan: Eastern Washington and 10-Year Wildland Fire Protection Strategic Plan. The updated Forest Action Plan will serve as a key document in guiding Forest Health and Resiliency Division work and priorities over the next five years.

Four Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) Grants were submitted to support forest health projects in Forest Action Plan priority landscapes, funding decision expected any day. Proposals included: (1) Biochar utilization in NE WA, (2) Unique habitat and fuels reduction in San Juan Islands, (3) Forest health treatments including prescribed fire on private and municipal land in Cle Elum priority landscape, and (4) forest health and wildfire risk reduction in Klickitat priority landscape.

Planning, Science, and Monitoring Program

Staff completed and submitted the bi-annual legislative report for RCW 76.06.200 (SB 5546 and HB 1784) in December 2020. The report includes landscape evaluations for 30 priority planning areas (PPAs) and 8 integrated recommendations for dual benefits of treatments for forest health and wildfire response. There are nine priority planning areas identified for assessment by December 2022.

Forest Health Tracker is anticipated for public release in mid-2021. Initial forest health project data upload to mirror treatment tracking information in 12/2020 legislative report will be completed by early 2021. The team continues to work to integrate financial information with spatial data sets for DNR projects funded by federal and state capital funds, site usability review and improvements, upload of smaller data sets (i.e. City of Roslyn), and user and partner trainings.

Federal Lands Program

Program staff are developing implementation targets for each national forest and BLM units based on capital budget request. Targets focus on non-commercial acres, commercial acres, timber volume, fish passage, road maintenance and decommissioning. The majority of work is anticipated to occur in priority landscapes identified in 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan: Eastern Washington and 2020 Forest Action Plan.

The Federal Lands Program continues to surpass previous year accomplishments and is on track to be the highest performing GNA program nationally. 2020 accomplishments include: successfully auctioned and sold 59,000 MBF of federal volume to date and equates to restoration work on approximately 5,500 acres; 2,200 acres of non-commercial fuels reduction work has been finished or is under contract to date; 46-50 projects are underway across the state supporting restoration goals.

Prescribed Fire Program

Program staff have been working on COVID safety protocols, enabling policies, and certification programs. WA Certified Prescribed Burn Manager program staff continue to develop course material on schedule for an early-March online shortened course for DNR staff and partner RXB2 Prescribed Fire

Burn Bosses to test and discuss materials. Once COVID restrictions are lifted staff will host a course inviting civilians, contractors, and landowners where in-classroom and field activities can take place. Agreements have been developed with USFS, supporting prescribed fire activities from Columbia River Gorge to Colville NF. DNR is working on a similar agreement with partners at WDFW.

Community and Landowner Assistance Program

The program continues to work on strategic initiatives related to community wildfire preparedness. The Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) staff are tracking the Evergreen Communities Act. UCF program recently interviewed 32 cities on how the pandemic is impacting their urban forestry budgets, operations, and needs moving forward. The results will be presented during a statewide urban forestry stakeholder meeting in early February. The 2020 Tree City USA Application period is wrapping up. Participation in Tree City USA and related Arbor Day Foundation programs is down a bit this year due to budget and staffing reductions among program participants.