



# 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan: Eastern Washington | Summary



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
HILARY S. FRANZ | COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS



“Improving the health of our forests benefits almost every aspect of our lives. Forests provide for strong rural economies and jobs. Forests enrich us through recreation and solitude. Forests protect our water supplies and provide important habitat for fish and wildlife. And, healthy forests reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires that threaten communities and the forests we value.”

**HILARY S. FRANZ**

COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS  
WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## The health of our eastern Washington forests has declined significantly over the decades.

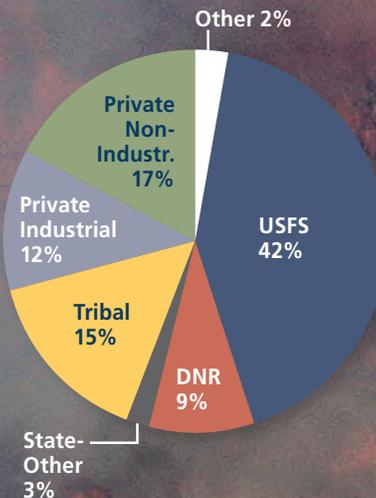
Due to past fire and forest management practices, our forests are more prone to severe wildfire and less able to support ecosystem services and provide for communities as they have historically.

### WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION VS FOREST RESTORATION/TREATMENT EXPENDITURES



### EASTERN WASHINGTON ACTIVE RESTORATION NEED BY OWNERSHIP

HAUGO ET AL. 2015



The state of Washington has more than 22 million acres of forestland with approximately 10 million forested acres in eastern Washington. The forest health problem in eastern Washington is too large to solve overnight. As of 2015, 2.7 million acres — nearly 30 percent of all forestlands in eastern Washington — need treatment to become more resilient to insects, diseases and wildfire.

It took a century to get where we are today, and it will take decades of dedicated support and partnership to reverse this situation.

# A Strategic Plan for Eastern Washington

A new 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan for eastern Washington calls for maximizing the effectiveness of forest health treatments by coordinating and prioritizing forest management activities across watersheds and large landscapes. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources has a core commitment to lead statewide efforts to address the health of Washington forests.

## The Vision

Washington’s forested landscapes are in an ecologically functioning and resilient condition and meet the economic and social needs of present and future generations.

## The Mission

Restore and manage forested landscapes at a pace and scale that reduces the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires and increases the health and resilience of forest and aquatic ecosystems in a changing climate for rural communities and the people of Washington state.

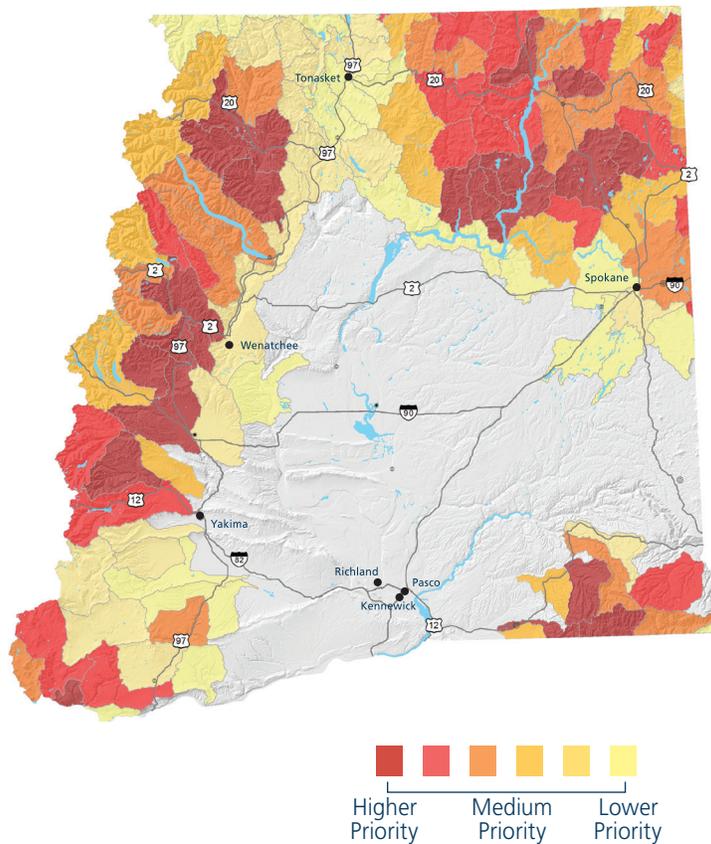
## Moving Forward Together

Commissioner Franz’s new Forest Health Advisory Committee began meeting in October of 2017. The Committee represents a diverse array of expertise and interests, and will assist the Commissioner of Public Lands to address statewide forest health issues. The advisory committee and 33 organizations that helped to create this plan will be vital to achieving our state’s forest health goals.

## GOAL 1

Conduct 1.25 million acres of scientifically sound, landscape-scale, cross-boundary management and restoration treatments in priority watersheds to increase forest and watershed resilience by 2037.

### EASTERN WASHINGTON PRIORITY WATERSHEDS



**Isolated treatments are not doing enough to improve the health of our forests. To make meaningful progress we must focus on entire watersheds and because there are not enough resources to address every watershed at once, we must prioritize.**

Forest health, wildfire risk and rural economic development are inextricably linked in eastern Washington.

## GOAL 2

Reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildfire and other disturbances to help protect lives, communities, property, ecosystems, assets and working forests.

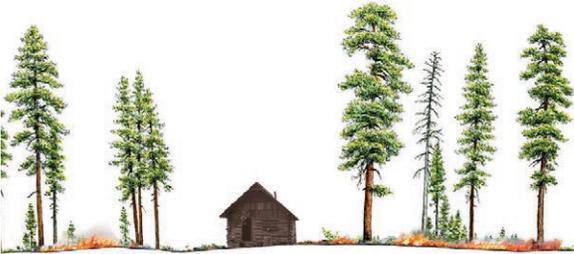
### DENSE FOREST WITH LADDER FUELS AND NO DEFENSIBLE SPACE



### AFTER TREATMENT THERE ARE WIDELY SPACED TREES WITH LESS FUEL



### FIRE REMAINS ON THE GROUND, LARGE TREES SURVIVE AND RISK TO STRUCTURES IS REDUCED



Wildfires will continue to be a major disturbance. Yet, each year a growing expanse of treated watersheds will begin to benefit from less intense wildfires.

## GOAL 3

Enhance economic development through implementation of forest restoration and management strategies that maintain and attract private sector investments and employment in rural communities.



Forest Health can be an economic catalyst. By adding value to restoration by-products and small-diameter timber, we can help pay for needed treatments and provide economic opportunities for rural communities. Thinning projects can increase timber supply to existing and new mills, and spur related investments.

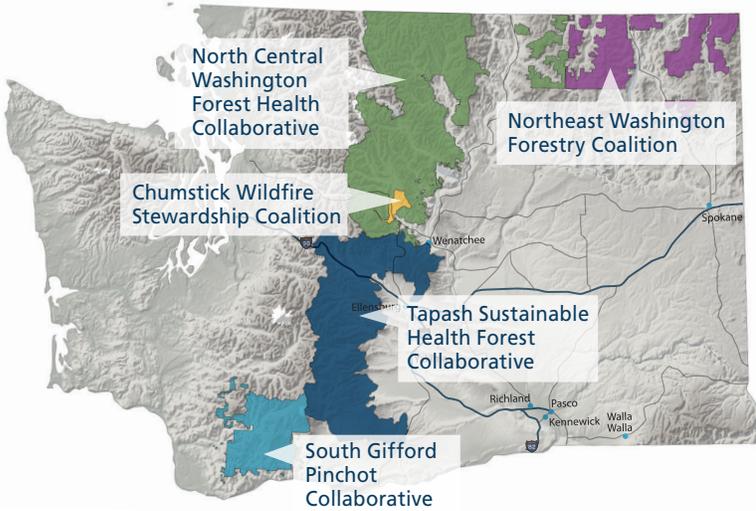
FOR EVERY  
**\$1 MILLION**  
SPENT ON FOREST RESTORATION

THERE IS  
**\$5.7 MILLION**  
GENERATED IN ECONOMIC RETURNS

## GOAL 4

Plan and implement coordinated, landscape-scale forest restoration and management treatments in a manner that integrates landowner objectives and responsibilities.

### EASTERN WASHINGTON FOREST COLLABORATIVES



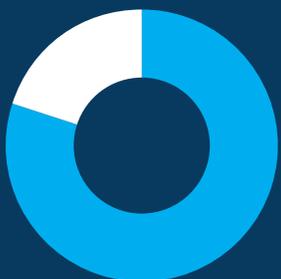
Eastern Washington collaboratives support cooperative forest health restoration.

## GOAL 5

Develop and implement a forest health resilience monitoring program that establishes criteria, tools and processes to monitor forest and watershed conditions, assess progress and reassess strategies over time.



Monitoring of forest health conditions and tracking progress is critical to ensuring the success of the plan and determining continued investments in forest health treatments.



**80%**  
OF OUR DRINKING  
WATER FLOWS  
FROM FORESTS

One of the most important resources that our forests provide is water. With more data, we will be better able to monitor how forest health is improving and growing our ability to hold, clean and cool our state's critical water supplies.



## Clear Direction for the Benefit of All Washingtonians

The Washington State Legislature and Department of Natural Resources believe that current forest health treatment levels and approaches are inadequate. Reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires by accelerating treatments across eastern Washington — and doing so at the landscape-scale — is critically important to protecting our communities, rural livelihoods and forest ecosystems. The Legislature has directed the Department to:

- With the assistance of a Forest Health Advisory Committee, develop a framework to assess and treat one million acres of land by 2033.  
*SB 5546, Senator Brad Hawkins (R) & Senator John McCoy (D)*
- Develop and implement a focused policy for analyzing, treating and protecting state trust lands and the economic and ecosystem values they provide.  
*HB 1711, Representative Joel Kretz (R) & Representative Larry Springer (D)*

[dnr.wa.gov/ForestHealthPlan](http://dnr.wa.gov/ForestHealthPlan)

Photo/Graphic credits: DNR staff, Derek Churchill, Gloria Flora/NE Washington Forestry Coalition, Forterra, Hannah Letinich/The Nature Conservancy and Robert Van Pelt

## Collaborators

- American Forest Resource Council\*
- Chelan County Natural Resource Department
- Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition\*
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation\*
- Conservation Northwest\*
- Institute for Natural Resources at Oregon State University
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative\*
- Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition\*
- Pacific Northwest Research Station
- Pinchot Partners\*
- South Gifford Pinchot Collaborative\*
- Sustainable Northwest
- Sustainable Obtainable Solutions
- Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative\*
- The Lands Council
- The Nature Conservancy\*
- The Wilderness Society\*
- University of Washington
- Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
- USDA Forest Service\*
- Vaagen Brothers Lumber\*
- Washington Association of Counties\*
- Washington Association of Land Trusts
- Washington Contract Loggers Association\*
- Washington Department of Commerce
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife\*
- Washington Environmental Council
- Washington Farm Forestry Association\*
- Washington Fire Adapted Communities
- Washington Fire Chiefs Association\*
- Washington Forest Protection Association\*
- Washington Prescribed Fire Council
- Washington Resource Conservation & Development Council
- Washington State School Directors Association\*
- Washington State University
- Yakama Nation

\*Forest Health Advisory Committee members