

Federal Lands Program Summer 2020 Update

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources' Federal Lands Program (FLP) has reached a stabilization phase of development as projects, staffing and funding sources align for implementation. The program uses the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) extensively to conduct critical restoration across Washington.

Restoration projects are being implemented on five major national forests throughout the state, and pilot projects on cross-state national forests and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land are being explored.

To date, FLP has engaged in 46 federal lands projects in various stages of completion. As of June, 12 GNA timber sales were awarded in four of the five major national forests.

Program staffing now spans the state with 15.75 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff dedicated to federal land restoration projects. Positions are a mixture of permanent, project and non-permanent status.

Engineering support is one of the most requested state services, creating a need for full-time FLP engineers to support these requests. The program now supports two full-time, statewide engineers. They bring licensed expertise to projects, and combined with state toolsets, help reduce costs and increase outputs.

Funds for program staff and projects come from federal and state sources, as well as revenue derived from commercial restoration projects.

BY THE NUMBERS

- **46 projects** on federal land: **20** are commercial restoration and **26** are noncommercial. **Six** are complete, **20** are underway, and **20** are being planned.
- **36.4 million board feet** sold through commercial restoration, **22.9 million** of those board feet sold in the 2020 fiscal year.
- **3,097 acres** of wildfire-fuels reduction work, **2,600** of those acres completed in 2020 with **1,600** more acres planned.



BACKGROUND

There are more than 2.7 million acres of unhealthy forests in Washington that have grown unnaturally dense from past management practices and more than a century of fire suppression. Restoring forests improves their natural resilience to wildfire, insect infestation and disease, and improves fish and wildlife habitat.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Federal Lands Program and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service are increasing the pace and scale of forest health treatments and restoration projects in forests across Washington state through the mutual benefits of an agreement called the Good Neighbor Authority between the two agencies.

It authorizes the state to act as a trusted agent of the federal government to accomplish a variety of forest, range, and watershed restoration in national forests with the additional benefit of using state processes, which are sometimes more efficient.



An elk browses foraging habitat created earlier this year by a GNA restoration timber sale in the Snoqualmie area.

GAME CAMERA IMAGE



Project spotlight: Skamania County

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources signed an agreement in spring 2020 with Skamania County for road improvements in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and to support watershed restoration on federal land.

The new partnership, made possible under the GNA agreement between DNR and the USDA Forest Service, will provide about \$300,000 in state and federal funds for Skamania County crews to pave and stabilize six, 100-foot sections on a 5-mile stretch of Forest Road 25. The project will prevent sediment runoff into streams and help maintain critical infrastructure in the forest to support rural economies and recreation access.

A portion of the project's funding comes from the state's Natural Resources Federal

Lands Revolving Account. Revenue generated from GNA timber sales within a national forest are deposited in the account to fund critical watershed restoration projects and make habitat improvements for fish and wildlife in the same forest. Overseen by DNR's Federal Lands Program, the Skamania County forest-restoration thinnings will improve deer and elk foraging habitat and support healthy and complex forest conditions in the Gifford Pinchot.

Eighty percent of Skamania County is federal forestland. The Gifford Pinchot's Forest Road 25 is one of the few major roadways that connects northern and southern parts of the county, and it receives heavy traffic from commercial and passenger vehicles.



Timber from a forest thinning

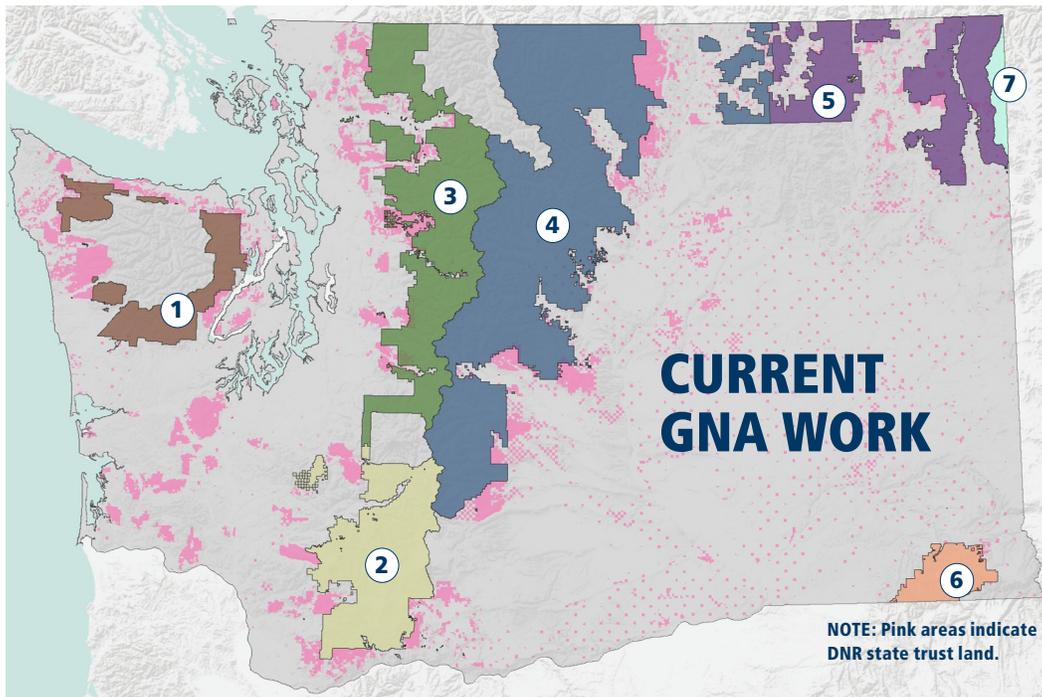
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// WE COMMEND DNR FOR DILIGENTLY WORKING TO FIND A SEAT AT THE TABLE FOR US. OUR HOPE IS THAT OVER TIME THESE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PROJECTS WILL LEAD TO INCREASING THE SCALE AND SCOPE OF SHARED STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS, WHICH COULD PROVIDE A REVENUE STREAM TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTITIES."

TOM LANNEN
Skamania County
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MORE INFORMATION

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1. Olympic National Forest: Removing barriers to fish and other aquatic life, supporting the development of mature forests, and riparian monitoring on state land, the Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest.

2. Gifford-Pinchot National Forest: Commercial and non-commercial forest restoration to enhance the development of old-growth characteristics.

3. Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest: Innovated approaches to the Bandera Restoration Thin that retrofitted a three-time no-bid project to successfully award a sale.

4. Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest: Commercial and non-commercial restoration and fuels reduction.

5. Colville National Forest: Work includes National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental planning with the forest, tribes, local forest collaborative and other entities on a more than 90,000-acre high-priority forest restoration area.

6. Umatilla National Forest: Developing restoration projects to help achieve forest health objectives.

7. Idaho Panhandle National Forest: Beginning talks to expand GNA implementation in the near future.

