

Forestland Preservation

FACT SHEET

Who may Apply?

- Cities
- Counties
- Nonprofit nature conservancies
- Washington State Conservation Commission

Types of Projects Funded

Purchase of conservation easements or leases, and associated restoration

When Can I Apply?

This new grant program will begin accepting applications in March 2017.

Funding

Funding comes through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program from the sale of general obligation bonds. The funding is distributed as grants by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

Leveraging State Dollars

Grant recipients must provide at least 50 percent in matching resources, except for the State Conservation Commission.

Recreation and Conservation Office

PO Box 40917
Olympia WA 98504-0917
Telephone: (360) 902-3000
TTY: (360) 902-1996
E-mail: info@rco.wa.gov
Web: www.rco.wa.gov

Conserving Washington's Working Forests

Washington State's history is rooted in the lush forests and giant trees that grow here. From providing wood for the cities of early settlers to the family-wage jobs of today, forests and the use of the wood remains a vital cog in Washington's economy.

Washington is the second largest lumber producer in the nation.¹ More than 1,700 forest products-related businesses call Washington home, supporting 105,000 workers, gross business income of about \$28 billion a year, and \$175 million in state and local taxes.² Family-owned tree farms also play an important role in Washington's natural resource landscape. It's estimated that 40 percent of the privately owned forests, about 3.2 million acres, are held by families or individuals.¹ These forestlands also provide habitat for fish and wildlife, as well as protect water quality.

Purpose

The growing population has put incredible pressure on the state's forests. From 1978-2002, Washington State lost more than 1 million acres of forestland mostly from sprawling suburban development.³ The loss of these forestlands not only threatens to diminish a reliable source of wood products, but threatens to impair important fish and wildlife habitat.

To help conserve working forests, the Washington Legislature in 2016 added a new category to the the 25-year-old Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and set aside 1 percent of the program's allotment to fund the acquisition of leases and easements on working forestlands.

Forestland preservation grants must be used to protect forestland for the growth and harvest of timber for commercial purposes. Funding also may be used to restore fish and wildlife habitat in those protected forests.

Eligible Forests

To be eligible for protection, forests must be enrolled in a county's open space or forestland property tax program. Forestland is defined as any contiguous 5 or more acres that are devoted primarily to the growth and harvest of commercial timber.



Northwest Natural Resource Group

¹Washington Forest Protection Association Web site, www.wfpa.org/sustainable-forestry/, taken February 10, 2017

²Washington State Department of Commerce Web site, www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/key-sectors/forest-products/, taken February 10, 2017

³*Forest Land Conversion in Washington State*, Washington Department of Natural Resources Web site, http://file.dnr.wa.gov/publications/em_fwflanduse.pdf, taken February 10, 2017