



Environment and Resilience

DNR 2019-21 Biennium Operating Budget Decision Package

An \$18 million package to help repair environmental damage and protect and improve the habitat of threatened and endangered species on Washington's public and private working lands. Related to Puget Sound Action Agenda Implementation.

This proposal includes a multi-tier approach for protecting and restoring our water quality and salmon habitat. This package:

- develops strategies for adapting to acidifying marine waters; removes creosote and marine debris, and restores critical habitat;
- increases the transparency and functionality of timber harvests;
- enhances and expands urban forests to control stormwater runoff and cool urban habitat;
- helps private forest owners manage their lands while protecting and restoring habitat;
- protects sensitive and rare environments; and
- broadens understanding of Washington's glacial landslide hazards.

A. Ocean Acidification Research and Coordination - \$1,502,900 in 2019-21, \$746,100/yr ongoing

Acidifying oceans pose particular problems for Washington's nearshore environment, where state-owned aquatic lands managed by DNR are located. Changing marine chemistry threatens the ability of shellfish to properly develop, which jeopardizes the \$20 million DNR generates annually through wildstock geoduck revenues and the millions of dollars private growers earn through the state's broader shellfish industry.

The Acidification Nearshore Monitoring Network established by DNR's aquatic scientists measures nearshore impacts of ocean acidification in Puget Sound and on the coast. It is assessing how changes are affecting marine organisms and enabling us to develop ways to mitigate impacts.

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This package will provide 3 aquatic scientists to carry out vital research efforts that fulfill deliverables laid out in the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda.

This package will also provide funding to continue studies into zooplankton – the underpinning of the food web that forage fish, salmon, and Orca all depend on. Funding for this vital research will cease at the end of FY 2019 if not funded.

B. Aquatic Restoration and Creosote Removal - \$7,000,000 in 2019-21, \$3,500,000/yr ongoing

DNR's aquatic restoration program is one of the most successful state initiatives for removing creosote-treated marine structures and other legacy toxics, restoring native aquatic habitats and responding to toxic marine debris. This work has been historically funded by one-time dollars, making long term planning, contracting, and prioritization of work more challenging. DNR's restoration efforts are a key component of the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda.

This proposal will permanently fund 2 full time positions to identify and remove marine debris, restore eelgrass beds and remove creosote structures.

C. Small Forest Land Owner Assistance - \$1,602,900 in 2019-21, \$704,700/yr ongoing

More than half of Washington's private forests belong to small family forest owners. DNR's Small Forest Landowner Office is the primary resource for family forest owners looking for technical assistance in managing their property. Demand for this staff has risen sharply in recent years as family forest owners seek help enhancing fish and wildlife habitat and meeting timber regulations. Funding for this program has not kept up with increasing demand for its services.

This proposal funds 4 full time professional forester positions to respond to increasing demand and provide the customer service necessary to ensure small forests are productive, healthy, and contribute to the overall health of watersheds. It will also fund 1 outreach and communications professional to ensure forest land owners are aware of the incentives DNR provides and further help preserve working forests throughout the state.

D. Landslides and Public Safety - \$1,433,200 in 2019-21, \$1,085,000 in 2021-23, \$431,100/yr ongoing

The devastating 2014 SR530 "Oso" landslide revealed our need to better understand landslide hazards in glacial geology in Washington.

This proposal funds 2 geologists to research, map, and monitor the 50-square-mile SR 530 corridor and gain a detailed understanding of landslide mechanisms in the area. This information will inform future research needed in counties with similar geology, such as

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Okanogan, Douglas, Chelan, Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Clallam, Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King, Pierce, Thurston, Mason, Kitsap, Island, Jefferson, and San Juan.

E. Forest Practices and Public Safety - \$820,400 in 2019-21, \$358,200/yr ongoing

Washington sees regular landslides due to its steep slopes and rainy climate. With this understanding, we must ensure public safety and that roads built for forest practices purposes do not trigger landslides or add sediment to salmon-bearing streams. This proposal increases DNR's expertise in this area by adding 2 licensed road engineers to partner with foresters and geologists on forest practices applications.

F. Conservation Lands - \$1,526,800 in 2019-21, \$ 830,600/yr ongoing

Washington's booming population has increased development pressure on the state's most valuable and precious habitat. DNR's Natural Areas has received terrific support from the Legislature in acquiring natural lands and preserving native species, but the maintenance budget remains below 2007 funding levels.

This request provides reliable funding for natural resources staff, allowing them to focus on maintaining natural areas, providing low-impact public access, and identifying acquisition opportunities.

G. Urban Forestry - \$2,101,100 in 2019-21; \$502,200 in FY 2022

Stormwater runoff is the number one source of pollution in Washington's waters, and a healthy urban forest canopy reduces the volume and velocity of stormwater discharge into lakes, rivers and other public water bodies. DNR can play a pivotal role in addressing stormwater through its Urban Forestry program, by providing expertise on how to maximize improvements in salmon watersheds by expanding forest canopies in the right places. DNR is requesting funding to expand its Urban Forestry Program and focus new resources in areas that would most benefit critical salmon runs. These investments should result in improved stormwater retention, better treatment through natural filtration processes, more complex habitat structure along salmon-bearing streams, and reduction in high, habitat-damaging flows during storm events.

This package calls for DNR to hire 3 FTEs to strengthen DNR's urban forestry program, to help municipalities plan, plant and manage urban forest canopies to increase stormwater infiltration and improve habitat. Funding will also support existing DNR GIS analysts to complete a land cover analysis to help identify sites within priority watersheds that would most benefit from an expanded forest canopy. One FTE is for a community engagement specialist to work directly with communities, NGOs, and other agencies to coordinate planning and prioritization of urban forestry and other complementary efforts in the watershed to get the best outcomes within that watershed for salmon. A second FTE is for an environmental engineer to work with locals to design green stormwater infrastructure solutions. The third FTE is for an urban and community forestry specialist to help

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communities implement projects, including tree planting, natural area restoration, and green stormwater hardscape installation to ensure long term viability of new urban forest investments. DNR will utilize WCC/Sound Corps staff to support on the ground efforts such as tree planting and restoration.

H. Forest Practices Online Application - \$2,100,500 in 2019-21, \$261,400/yr ongoing

Review of forest practices applications is important to assure water and habitat are protected. Forest practices applications are managed by a 10-year-old online tool that is inefficient, cumbersome for forest owners, and unwieldy for those seeking information about forest practices applications. This proposal will develop a user-friendly portal for filing and reviewing forest practices applications online.

I. Fairview Remediation - \$303,600 in FY 2020

A state-owned aquatic lands site near Fairview Ave. and Lake Union in Seattle is contaminated with hazardous levels of lead, chromium and arsenic. In 2007, DNR negotiated a lease that split costs of remediation between the lessee and the department.

DNR is requesting \$303,600 from the Model Toxics Control Account to fulfill its remaining share of the agreement and meet goals in the Puget Sound Action Agenda.

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Rural Communities and Trust Health

DNR 2019-21 Biennium Operating Budget Decision Package

A \$10 million package to ensure state-owned lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources produce maximum, sustainable revenues for trust beneficiaries and create economic opportunities in rural Washington.

These funding requests will effectively and efficiently increase trust revenue and expand rural economies by:

- developing and maintaining recreational opportunities on state lands;
- analyzing DNR's portfolio to increase financial performance;
- capitalizing on commercial real estate opportunities;
- developing new, high value green energy projects; and
- improving the performance of communication sites.

A. Outdoor Recreation and Community Engagement - \$3,896,000 in 2019-21; \$2,126,000/yr ongoing

Washington's outdoor recreation industry provides 7.6 million jobs and generates \$887 billion in annual economic activity, often in and around the state's most economically challenged communities.

While DNR has received funding from the Recreation and Conservation Office to develop new recreation opportunities across rural Washington, maintenance funding is needed to ensure recreation sites are safe and accessible to all. Since 2008, DNR has closed more than 30 recreation sites due to poor maintenance.

This package will fund 10 new full time employees in regional positions to support maintenance, manage volunteers, expand recreational opportunities as well as

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provide education and enforcement. Two new law enforcement officers are also requested to decrease illegal activities on DNR-managed lands.

It will also fund 3 outreach and communications professionals to identify and partner with recreation organizations and businesses to educate the public about recreation opportunities and the importance of public lands, recruit volunteers to assist with trail and campsite maintenance, and increase visits to state recreation areas.

This package also requests funding for three FTEs currently funded by the Off Road Vehicle Account (ORV). A projected decrease of \$650,000 of gas tax dollars in the 2019-2021 biennium makes new funding necessary for these positions.

B. Asset Valuation - \$557,000 in 2019-21

State lands have generated \$1.5 billion for trust beneficiaries over the past two decades. However, that number could be higher. The agency has not taken a full appraisal of how well its holdings are performing since commissioning an analysis from Deloitte & Touche LLC in 1996. Since that time, the economy has changed dramatically, and continued population growth and development have changed the optimal use of some lands.

The Legislature directed DNR to conduct an asset valuation by 2020 and provided funding for the agency to begin this work. This additional funding is necessary for DNR to complete the task of appraising the performance of current holdings, finding opportunities to repurpose the use of properties to meet changing market conditions, disposing of properties that no longer fit into DNR's mission, and acquiring land that will generate more funding for beneficiaries.

C. Green Energy Leasing - \$1,460,000 in 2019-21, \$707,000/yr ongoing

Solar, wind and geothermal energy present incredible opportunities to develop new industries (and family wage jobs) in rural Washington. Although DNR lands are located in areas of high interest to green energy firms, the agency does not have the necessary expertise, capacity, or resources to capitalize on existing opportunities presented by the growing green energy sector.

Solar power is a win-win for the people of Washington. It generates significant revenue for critical local services – schools, hospitals, and libraries – and provides clean, affordable energy to our homes and businesses. For example, developing solar power is projected to yield a 10,000 to 33,000 percent increase in revenue on some DNR lands.

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This package will fund 4 positions to identify green energy opportunities and recruit green energy businesses as tenants.

This is a temporary funding request to kick start these efforts and allow DNR to capitalize on immediate opportunities to create jobs and generate revenue for trust beneficiaries. Once DNR's clean energy portfolio is expanded, the increase in revenue generation will fund this work.

D. Identify Geothermal Resources - \$632,000 in 2020, \$292,000/yr ongoing

Washington's volcanic activity presents the potential for clean, renewable geothermal power, but very little is known about the viability of this resource. The Washington Geologic Survey, a division of DNR, is at the forefront of efforts to understand the potential of Washington's geothermal resources.

Geothermal energy could be used to generate commercial electricity, heat buildings or greenhouses, dry wood for biomass, or supplement a cogeneration facility with wind and solar projects.

This proposal will fund 1.5 full-time positions to map high and low temperature geothermal resources, drill wells to test potential geothermal sites and work with the state lands leasing program to find tenants to tap into resources.

E. Commercial Leasing - \$440,000 in 2019-21, \$398,000 in 2021-23, \$183,900/yr ongoing

Opportunities exist to maximize revenue from our commercial real estate, but the department does not have the capacity or funding to take advantage of them.

This proposal will fund one position to explore the viability of new and second-tier market locations and pursue property enhancement for select urban properties (e.g., annexations, rezones, access to public sewer and water infrastructure, etc.). This position will also identify investment properties to acquire and make the dynamic property management strategies of buying, selling, and exchanging part of DNR's management model.

This is a temporary funding request to kick start these efforts and allow DNR to capitalize on immediate opportunities to create jobs and generate revenue for trust beneficiaries. After DNR's commercial portfolio is reinvigorated, the increase in revenue generation will fund ongoing work.

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Employees will require IT support for additional computers, cellular telephones and data storage. Workspace will meet standard rent and cubicle funding and will be coordinated with DNR's regional offices.

F. Emergency Communications and Connectivity - \$2,057,000 in 2019-21, \$1,002,000/yr ongoing

DNR owns many communications towers and sites around Washington. However, the agency cannot afford to maintain these sites because costs exceed the 25-to-31 percent of revenues DNR is allowed to capture for maintenance. The standard for maintaining communication sites is 60-to-75 percent of gross revenue.

This proposal will temporarily fund 4 positions to inventory, inspect, survey and perform critical maintenance on 25 sites with state-owned buildings and towers to prepare them for sale. This will free up existing staff capacity, allowing staff to better respond to requests for new leases and administer DNR's 430 other existing leases. Once implemented, this proposal is projected to increase revenue by \$600,000 to \$1 million annually.

This proposal will reduce liability for state-owned infrastructure, allow private companies to make upgrades faster (thereby improving coverage and connectivity to rural Washington) and address a \$2.5 million maintenance backlog.

G. Amateur Radio - \$371,000 in 2019-21, \$199,000 in 2022, increasing by 4.9%/yr ongoing

Amateur Radio operators are key to effective, comprehensive emergency communications throughout Washington. State law requires DNR to provide amateur radio operators discounted access to communications towers, with the legislature obliged to "account for the estimated difference between the one hundred dollars per year, per site, per lessee paid by qualified amateur radio operators and fair market rent."

Current appropriations fall short of projected rents for the next biennium and prevent DNR from allowing new leases to amateur radio operators.

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Wildfire and Forest Health

DNR 2019-21 Biennium Operating Budget Decision Package

A \$38 million package to reduce Washington's wildfire danger by increasing the number of experienced wildland firefighters; providing firefighters with better training and equipment; and amplifying efforts to restore the health of our forests. This package will:

- make 30 part-time firefighter positions permanent, increasing readiness and forest health efforts; provide firefighters with consistent, high-quality training;
- increase community engagement around wildfire prevention and wildfire safety strategies; grow aerial firefighting resources;
- improve Correctional Camps programs to meet demand;
- amplify Forest Health initiatives by consolidating them in a united division; add capacity to work with federal agencies on forest restoration;
- better ensure community safety after wildfires; and
- improve forest restoration activities with small, private forest owners.

A. Permanent Engine Leaders and Broadband Study - \$11,996,000 in 2019-21; \$3,166,300/yr ongoing

The vast majority of DNR's firefighting force is seasonal – only 43 firefighters are full-time. This lack of career path opportunities has prompted many experienced DNR firefighters to take their training and expertise elsewhere.

Moving 30 engine leader positions from 3-to-4-month seasonal positions to full-time, permanent positions will:

- develop a core of trained, experienced personnel in strategic locations throughout Washington;
- provide staff to plan and carry out critical forest health treatments during non-wildfire months; and
- create living-wage jobs throughout rural Washington.

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This package also includes \$100,000 to evaluate improvements to telecommunications infrastructure in rural areas to enable needed emergency communications for wildland firefighters. DNR is also working with community leaders on parallel strategies to use these improvements to deliver broadband to underserved communities in rural Washington.

B. Training Expertise - \$2,201,800 in 2019-21, \$887,300/yr ongoing

The complexity of wildfires that burn more intensely, and the increasing number of wildfires near homes and neighborhoods in the wildland-urban interface, requires more specialized training for wildland firefighters. Better training requires personnel to form a training cadre whose sole function is to focus on methods of fighting complex wildfires while developing and implementing training to improve the safety and effectiveness of wildland firefighters at the state and local levels. Washington's current training staff is comprised of DNR employees whose primary employment is in the agency's other divisions.

This proposal will create 5 permanent, full-time positions who will develop and deliver training to firefighters across the state.

C. Outreach to Communities Endangered by Wildfire - \$1,942,500 in 2019-21, \$938,000/yr ongoing

Eighty-five percent of wildfires are caused by humans. If we are to tackle our wildfire crisis, we must reduce the number of human-caused fires by informing the public about wildfire danger and prevention strategies. Currently, DNR does not have the resources to sufficiently engage and inform the community around wildfire prevention.

This proposal adds 7 employees who would be strategically located in DNR's six regions to help disseminate wildfire prevention messages and keep residents informed of forest restoration opportunities that reduce wildfire risk. These resources will provide residents with a dedicated point of contact in their area, help residents connect with services to safeguard their homes and neighborhoods, and help communities prepare for wildfires.

D. Aviation Program - \$6,251,400 in 2019-21, \$1,340,700/yr ongoing

DNR's aviation assets have been the primary factor in the state's ability to keep 95 percent of wildfires under 10 acres. Getting to fires quickly and keeping them small long enough for ground resources to more effectively contain them is a strategy that

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has proven successful in Washington and increased the safety for our wildland firefighters. Our existing 7 helicopters are heavily utilized by all wildland firefighting agencies.

This proposal funds 2 more helicopters. These additional resources will allow greater flexibility and reduce response times to new wildfires. This will increase our effectiveness in protecting communities and natural resources.

E. Correctional Camps Program - \$4,826,300 in 2019-21, \$1,225,900/yr ongoing

Washington benefits from allowing inmates from state correctional facilities to fight wildfires and carry out silvicultural and forest health treatments. Inmates, meanwhile, learn valuable work skills that have helped many secure employment opportunities after their release. Mobile kitchens staffed by inmates also provide tremendous value and cost-savings in providing food for incident management camps.

This proposal provides more forest work opportunities for 350 individuals incarcerated in Department of Corrections' facilities, and addresses the need to replace aging equipment. When not fighting fires, these crews perform critical work thinning unhealthy forests, planting trees on state trust lands, and serving other emergency response needs.

F. Wildfire Division Realignment to Focus on Forest Health - \$5,761,600 in 2019-21, \$2,989,300/yr ongoing

As efforts to restore the health and productivity of Washington's forests increase, DNR is realigning its organization to create a Forest Health division wholly committed to the task to ensure maximum cost-effectiveness, benefits and impact. Additionally, SB 5546, passed in 2017 (RCW 76.06.200), requires DNR to treat 1.5 million acres of unhealthy eastern Washington forest by 2033.

Forest health staff have historically been supervised by the Wildfire Division. Separating these programs into two divisions and consolidating DNR staff from other divisions that are currently implementing closely related Federal programs will improve span of control, make each program operate more effectively and efficiently, and display a strengthened level of commitment to solving the state's forest health crisis.

This proposal will allow forest health staff to focus on implementing objectives laid out in both SB 5546 (RCW 76.06.200) and Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz's 20 Year Forest Health Strategic Plan.

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G. Federal Lands Program - \$724,240 in 2019-21, \$362,120/yr ongoing

The state’s forest health crisis has developed over several decades. The Good Neighbor Authority agreement between DNR and the U.S. Forest Service presents an excellent opportunity to expand forest health efforts across the state using federal funds. While federal funds will help offset state investments, the type of treatments necessary to mitigate the situation are not all self-sustaining. Supplemental funding for the GNA program and to better coordinate other closely related federal programs will be necessary at both the state and federal levels in order to meet forest health goals and mitigate the significant ongoing risk of forest loss due to insects, disease, and catastrophic wildfire.

This proposal dedicates 2 staff persons to manage federal contracts, finances, and grants that are vital to carrying out restoration treatments on federal lands.

H. Post-Wildfire Landslide Reconnaissance - \$234,200 in 2019-21

After wildfires occur, there are increased risks for landslides in certain areas. To address these risks and protect our communities, this proposal assembles a team of geologists, hydrologists, and foresters from within DNR to assess the potential for flooding, debris flows, and landslides following wildfires and recommend mitigation measures.

This proposal provides funding for 0.5 FTEs to assemble, lead, and direct the team’s efforts.

I. Landowner Assistance Program - \$4,268,700 in 2019-21, \$2,336,600/yr ongoing

Private forestlands are a large part of Washington’s forests and an integral part of dealing with our unhealthy forest crisis in Washington. DNR’s Landowner Assistance Program has proven to be an effective way to help private landowners reduce the wildfire threat on their lands and on neighboring lands and communities. Most of that work, however, has been done through federal grants and state capital dollars, making long- term planning difficult and long-term initiatives unsustainable.

This proposal creates 3 additional positions and transfers 13.5 existing positions from capital dollars to operating dollars to provide certainty and stability in helping Washington’s private forest owners reduce wildfire threats.

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