



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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**Resolution No: 2018- 09**

**Title:** Supporting Funding for the Fire Adapted Communities, Forest / Rangeland Health Program

**Problem:** In Washington State the wildfire season is getting longer and causing millions of dollars in fire-related damages each year. Washington forest health is declining because of climate change, over-stocking, and lack of adaptive management. Costs associated with ongoing fire resource deployment, state fire mobilization, lingering air quality issues resulted in increased fire suppression costs.

It has been shown, that communities (on all scales) and individual properties that have taken the time to prepare and mitigate for wildfire are more resilient and survivable. The cost of prevention is considerably less than the cost of suppression and recovery. Prevention efforts not only save money, they save lives, structures, landscapes, and livelihoods. The problem is huge, hundreds of small communities (5 to 20 homes) are located in every county of the state.

Thousands of acres of our state's private forests are dead or dying due to the lack of technical and financial resources necessary to address forest health issues. Thousands more acres are in unhealthy conditions due to overstocking and noxious weed infestations. This creates not only an extreme fire danger but has resulted in the loss of thousands of acres of what was merchantable timber and the associated hundreds of jobs that a robust timber industry provides.

Thousands of acres of our state's range lands are infested with invasive species. This, too, serves as fuel for wildfire, and also creates decreased productivity of grazing lands with a resulting economic loss to the state cattle industry as well as the jobs associated with that industry.

**Recommendation:** WACD shall support state budget legislation that proposes to effectively fund Conservation Districts, through the Conservation Commission, to implement the program as outlined in the Washington State Conservation Commission Fire Adapted Communities, Forest / Rangeland Health budget decision package.

WACD work with the Conservation Commission and partners to advance this position with the Governor during his budget development, and with the Legislature in the 2019 legislative session.

**Presented by:** Okanogan Conservation District  
Skagit Conservation District  
Underwood Conservation District

Approved by the North Central Area Association on 10/16/18  
Referred to the Natural Resources Policy Committee  
Recommended DO PASS on 11/26/18  
Adopted on 11/28/18