

## **FULL-TIME FIGHTERS**

\$11,896,000 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;
- Provide staff to plan and carry out critical forest health treatments; and
- Create living-wage jobs in rural Washington.

## **TRAINING EXPERTISE**

\$2,201,800 in 2019-21

\$887,300/yr ongoing

With wildfires growing increasingly complex and erratic wildfires and more housing in the wildland-urban interface, wildland firefighters need more specialized training.

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 a consistent, focused regimen to train all of Washington's firefighting agencies.

## **FASTER AERIAL RESPONSE**

\$6,251,400 in 2019-21

\$1,340,700 ongoing

DNR's 7 helicopters are heavily used by all wildland firefighting agencies in Washington. Their ability to get to fires quickly and keep small fires small is critically important given the number of fires we respond to each year. By keeping small fires contained, we allow ground resources to reach and suppress fires before they become catastrophic.

We are also seeing more and more fires in western Washington, stretching our air assets even thinner.

This funding adds 2 helicopters to DNR's fleet, increasing the range and speed of response.

## **PREVENTION OUTREACH**

\$1,942,500 in 2019-21

\$938,000/yr ongoing

Ninety percent of wildfires are caused by humans. Reducing wildfires means reducing the number of human-caused fires. The best way to do this is by keeping citizens informed about wildfire danger and prevention strategies. DNR does not currently have the resources to engage and inform communities around wildfire prevention.

This proposal adds 7 communications experts who would be strategically located in DNR's six regions. These resources will be dedicated points of contact for communities, helping residents safeguard their homes and neighborhoods and stay abreast of wildfires as they burn.

## **WILDFIRE DIVISION REALIGNMENT TO FOCUS ON FOREST HEALTH**

\$5,761,600 in 2019-21

\$2,989,300/yr ongoing

To increase the speed of efforts to restore the health and productivity of Washington's forests, DNR is realigning its organization to create a division solely committed to Forest Health. Forest Health staff are currently paid with capital budget dollars, making their positions temporary and uncertain. Additionally, legislation passed in 2017 requires DNR to treat 1.5 million acres of unhealthy eastern Washington forest by 2033. A Forest Health division will make forest restoration more effective and efficient, ensure capital dollars are put to work on the ground, and improve retention of specialized employees.

## **CAPITAL REQUEST**

### **REDUCING HAZARDOUS WILDFIRE FUELS**

\$17,700,000 for 2019-21

To tackle our wildfire crisis, we must improve the health of our forests. In partnership with the Legislature, DNR is implementing a 20-year Forest Health Strategic Plan, which calls for the restoration of 1.25 million acres of forest to health. This bold plan requires significant and sustained investment. This funding will treat more than 32,000 acres of state, federal and private forests in targeted watersheds.

### **LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE**

\$4,268,700 in 2019-21

\$2,336,600/yr ongoing

Private forests 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.

### **GOOD NEIGHBOR AUTHORITY**

\$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 will be necessary to meet forest health goals and mitigate the significant ongoing crisis of unhealthy forests.

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

### **INVESTING IN CORRECTIONAL CAMPS**

\$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 forestry projects. For example, mobile kitchens staffed by inmates provide tremendous cost-savings for fire camps. When not fighting fires, inmate crews thin unhealthy forests, plant trees, and serve emergency response needs, such as responding to flooding.

Participants also learn valuable work skills that have helped many secure employment opportunities after release.

This funding creates opportunities for 80 additional inmates—bringing total program enrollment to 380—and replaces aging equipment.

### **STATEWIDE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

\$100,000 in 2019-21

Wildfire response relies on functional telecommunications networks. This funding will allow DNR, in partnership with other agencies, to evaluate how well telecommunications infrastructure serves firefighting. This study will also look for improvements to broadband service in underserved communities.

### **POST-WILDFIRE LANDSLIDE RECONNAISSANCE**

\$234,200 in 2019-21

After wildfires occur, there are increased risks for landslides in certain areas. This proposal assembles a team of geologists, hydrologists, and foresters from within DNR to assess the potential for post-fire damage and recommend mitigation measures.