Washington Department of Natural Resources

Federal Lands Section 2026 Annual Update

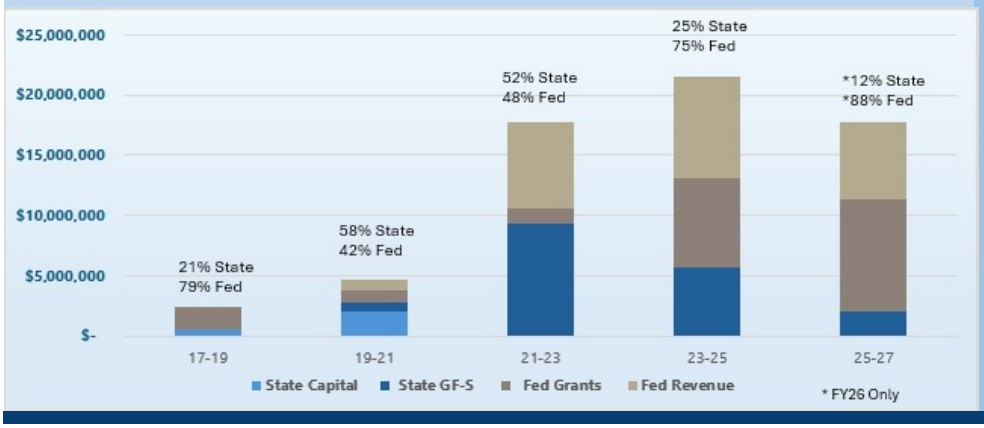
2026 stood out as a year of unique challenges to the department and Federal Lands Section (FLS). Funding levels decreased and national events impacted how the federal government engages with partners.

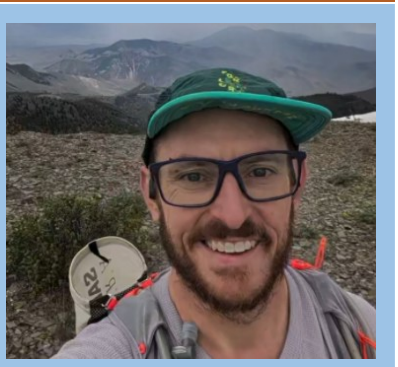
FLS received **no additional federal funds in FY26, and a reduced state-level budget,** limiting the ability to complete stand-alone projects and third-party contracting. To respond, FLS increased its field implementation work, where staff directly completed work such as NEPA surveys, engineering designs, or using agency heavy equipment crews to complete road maintenance.

Significant federal admirative changes also occurred. Most notably, a historic **U.S. Forest Service national reorganization,** adding to existing broad uncertainty. Concurrently, an **overhaul of federal agreements general terms and conditions** was deployed, sparking nationwide concerns for federal award recipients and will most likely persist through FY27.

Colville NF: Pile Burning utilizing the Arcadia 20 Crew, a transitional crew made up of prior Incarcerated individuals who ve shown exemplary work ethic and seeking a career in wildland fire. The Arcadia 20 crew is a cooperative effort between DNR and WA Dept. of

WA DNR GNA State and Federal Investments 2018-2026





Staff Spotlight:
Matt West oversees the business operations of the FLS and play a critical role ensuring backend systems to manage grants, contracts, and finances are working smoothly. Matt and his staff work closely with division and agency staff, as well as primary administrative contacts for federal partners. Prior to DNR, matt worked in the non-profit sector and served in the US Navy. In his free time, you can find him running ultra-distance races across the US, and helping others be successful.

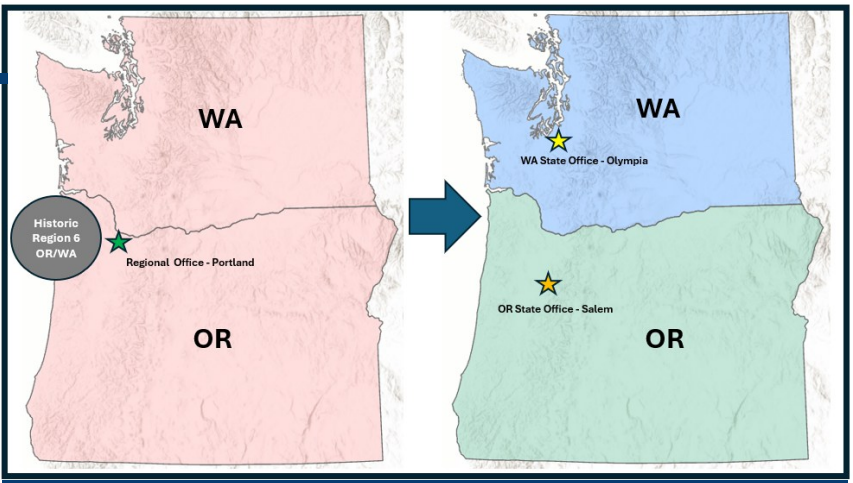
25-27 Target Status

- **2,300 of 15,300** Acres Treated
- **4,100 of 52,000** MBF Sold
- **70 of 142** Road Miles completed
- **24 of 30** Aquatic Passages Completed
- **11 of 15** NEPA Projects completed

USFS Reorganization

In March of 2026, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) announced a **major reorganization**, closing 9 Regional Offices and moving towards a state-based model with new State Offices, housing new State Directors and staff. Local forest-level function is reported to remain intact, and possibly expanded.

Many questions remain, in particular how States, partners, and the public will engage with the new State Office dynamic and how local forests will adapt.

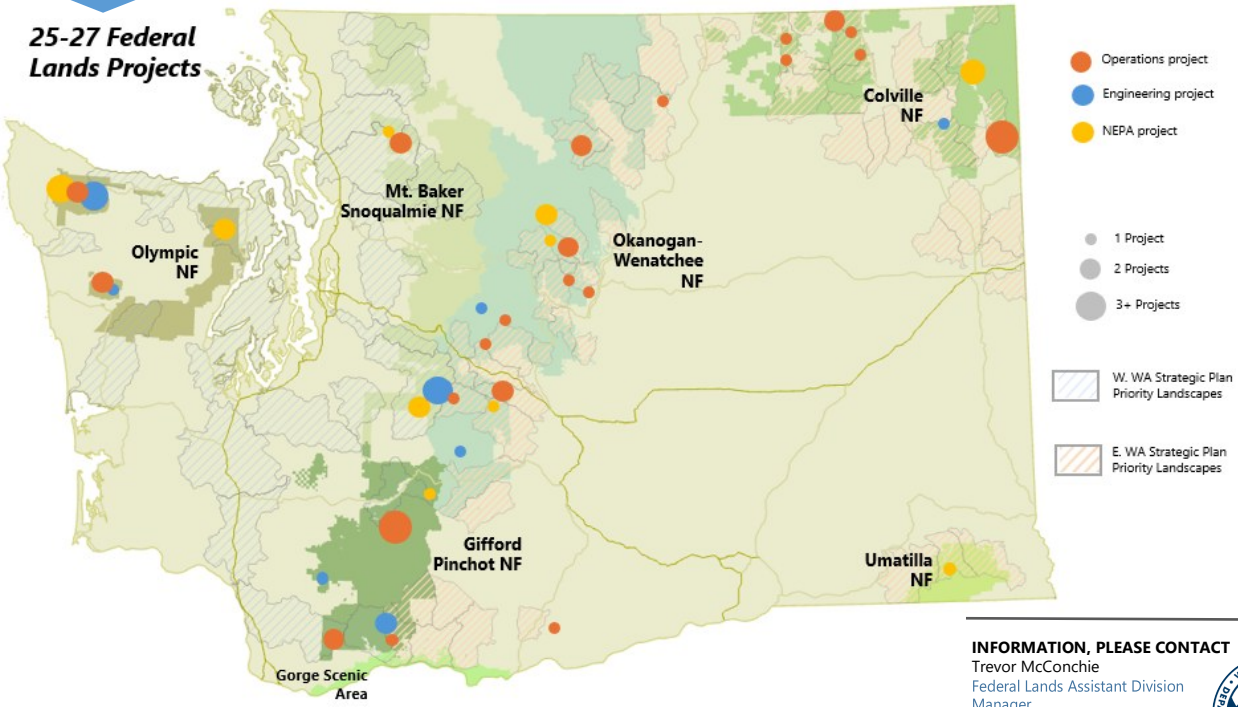


The historic Region 6 Pacific Northwest, (left) with Regional Office in Portland, OR and the new State Office model (right) based in Olympia, Washington and Salem ,Oregon. Region 6 was established in 1908 as "District 6".

The FLS work state wide to complete restoration projects on US Forest Service , Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife and National Park Service Lands.

Comprised of engineers, foresters, scientific specialists and environmental planners, the FLS strives to improve these crucial federal landscapes using highly technical skills and toolsets.

Olympic NF : Bonidu Restoration Thin, showng the dense stand conditions (left) prior to treatment (right), where the larger, healthier trees are left to improve stand conditions for wildlife habitat



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