



2018 Policy Platform

The Washington Association of Land Trusts unites 28 land trusts across the state to advance voluntary, collaborative conservation. The Association connects and leverages the work of members to protect and restore the lands that sustain us.

Land trusts are partnering with communities across the state to conserve land for future generations – but success hinges on supportive public funding and tools. In the face of increased development, population growth and a changing climate, it is more important than ever to support policies and programs that will ensure our farms, forests and shorelines continue to contribute to Washington’s economy, culture and landscape.

1) **Protect funding and integrity of state Capital Budget programs**

Washington state’s Capital Budget funds critical programs to help communities conserve and restore lands and waters for future generations – and in turn, support local economies, quality of life, and outdoor recreation. WALT urges the passage of the 2016-2017 State Capital Budget, without changes to funding levels or project lists for natural resource programs.

2) **Advance agricultural land protection through the federal Farm Bill**

Washington’s agricultural lands not only provide us with food and support local economies, they also are critical for water quality, wildlife habitat, and landscape health. In the face of population growth and development pressure, Washington’s farmland is at risk of conversion. WALT supports continued investments in agricultural lands easements in the federal Farm Bill, through maintaining funding for the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s ACEP-ALE program; streamlining administration of the program; and modifying the program to allow buy-protect-sell projects to help new and beginning farmers access land.

3) **Advance carbon sequestration and climate adaptation investments through natural resource protection**

As Washington state develops proposals to mitigate the impacts of climate change through carbon sequestration and climate adaptation, WALT supports strategies that invest in natural resource conservation and restoration. Land trusts have the ability to both prevent conversion of lands to development and to implement management practices that increase carbon storage in forests, agricultural soils, and grasslands. At the same time, land trusts’ ongoing work to improve landscape connectivity will become increasingly important as a way to help fish, wildlife and plants adapt to a changing climate.

The Washington Association of Land Trusts supports strong funding and integrity of the following grant programs:

State funding sources

WA Department of Natural Resources

- Community Forest Trust (CFT)
- Trust Land Transfer

Department of Ecology: Floodplains by Design

Puget Sound Partnership: Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR)

WA Recreation & Conservation Office

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)
- Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP)
- Marine Shoreline Protection (MSP)
- Salmon Recovery Funding
- Washington Coastal Restoration Initiative
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

Federal funding sources

US Department of the Interior: Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

US Department of the Interior: US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)

- Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (Section 6)
- National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program (NCWC)
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)
- Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR): Wildlife Restoration Program
- WSFR: Landowner Incentive Program (LIP)

National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

- Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP)
- Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF)

US Department of Agriculture (USDA): Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HRFP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

US Department of Agriculture (USDA): Forest Service

- Community Forest Program (CFP)
- Forest Legacy Program (FLP)

US Department of Defense: Readiness & Environmental Protection Integration Program (REPI)

US Department of Transportation: National Recreational Trails Program (RTP)