



## 2026 State Legislative Platform

*The Washington Association of Land Trusts (WALT) unites 36 land trusts and conservation organizations across the state to advance voluntary, collaborative conservation. WALT connects its members to protect and restore the lands and waters that sustain us.*

Land trusts partner effectively with communities across the state to conserve land for future generations – but success hinges on robust public funding and effective policy tools. In the face of increased development, population growth, and a changing climate, WALT supports policies and programs that will ensure our farms, forests and shorelines continue to contribute to Washington’s economy, culture and landscape. Our priorities include:

### **1) Advance working forest protection through Community Forest Grants**

WALT urges the State Legislature to allocate \$9 million to RCO’s Community Forest Program to expand to new geographies and strengthen existing projects. Community-based forestry, in which residents are actively included in the development, governance, management and use of working forest land, can bring substantial benefits to community health, support local jobs, enhance wildlife habitat, increase recreational access, and advance climate resilience and mitigation. We ask for supplemental funding of this impactful program to align with the historic funding average of \$15M per biennium, at a minimum advancing the next three projects on the list – the Nisqually Community Forest, Carbon Canyon Community Forest, and Green Mountain Community Forest – if not funding all eight remaining projects.

### **2) Support salmon recovery and climate resiliency through Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) investments.**

WALT supports RCO’s request to fund SRFB and supports an allocation of \$8.1M to advance the full ESRP ranked project list. This funding could go to shovel-ready projects that will make our communities more resilient to climate change and protect beloved shorelines. From a restoration project in Nisqually to impactful conservation projects from Kitsap to Skagit, this investment will have immediate benefits for diverse communities.

### **3) Fulfill the commitment to fund \$125 million biennially for the Wildfire Response, Forest Restoration, and Community Resilience Account.**

WALT urges the legislature to honor its commitment made in 2021 via HB 1168 to fund \$125 million per biennium for the Wildfire Response, Forest Restoration, and Community Resilience Account. The investments made since 2021 in prescribed fire, forest health, and community wildfire risk reduction have been critical in expanding the use of prescribed fire through training events, procuring equipment, planning and implementation of prescribed burns, and formation of locally led collaboratives of private landowners and community members, also known as Prescribed Burn Associations (PBAs).

### **4) Increase funding for No Child Left Inside and youth outdoor education programs.**

WALT recommends expanding investment in the No Child Left Inside (NCLI) program. Expanding youth access to nature-based learning opportunities—especially for underserved youth—is essential to help foster the next generation of conservation leaders, promotes physical and mental well-being, and helps to ensure that tens of thousands of young people have the chance to connect with and appreciate Washington’s natural environment.



**The Washington Association of Land Trusts supports the following funding priorities in the 2025-2027 State Supplemental Budget:**

**WA Recreation & Conservation Office**

- Community Forests Program (\$9M)
- Estuary and Salmon Recovery Program (\$8.1M)
- Salmon Recovery Funding Board (\$20M)
- No Child Left Inside (\$5.8M)

**WA State Conservation Commission**

- Forest Health and Community Wildfire Resiliency (\$2.5M)
- Conservation Technical Assistance (\$2.25M)

**WA Department of Natural Resources**

- Wildfire Response, Forest Restoration, and Community Resilience (\$60M)
- Urban Forestry Local Grants (\$3M)
- Watershed Resilience Program (\$600K)

**WA Department of Fish and Wildlife**

- Post-wildfire Habitat Recovery (\$919K)
- Forest Health and Fuel Reduction (\$2.4M)
- HPA Permitting System Modernization (\$1.4M)

**Support/Oppose Issues and Bills**

• **Support**

- [SB 5567](#) - Expanding secondary training for careers in natural resources and conservation
- [SB 5203](#) - Ensuring connectivity for Washington wildlife through safe passages
- [HB 1983](#) - Amending the definition of timberland for purposes of determining the real estate excise taxes for a governmental entity
- [SB 5155](#)/HB 1208 - Extending a program to streamline the environmental permitting process for salmon recovery projects