



2025 Federal Policy 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 Washington to conserve land for future generations – but success hinges on robust public funding and effective policy tools. WALT supports policies and programs that will ensure our farms, forests and shorelines continue to contribute to Washington’s economy, culture and landscape. Our federal priorities include:

1) Maintain the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF)

WALT urges our members of Congress to ensure the FY26 budget provides at least \$70M for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) in the Commerce and Justice Science and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. This program is a core federal investment in salmon recovery in Washington state. These funds unlock state and local matching resources and amplify on-the-ground habitat protection and restoration progress.

2) Pass a Farm Bill Reauthorization that supports voluntary conservation

WALT urges our members of Congress to support the Land Trust Alliance’s [Farm Bill Recommendations](#) to advance the policies and funding needed to strengthen voluntary, land conservation that protects high-priority farm and ranch lands, grasslands, wetlands and forests. Key areas of focus for WA land trusts include robust funding for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), providing additional cost-share options for easements and maintaining improvements to ACEP from the last farm bill, establishing a Forest Conservation Easement Program, and making Buy-Protect-Sell work as intended.

3) Support sufficient staffing for natural resource agencies

WALT urges Congress to ensure there is sufficient staffing for natural resource agencies that administer programs, provide technical assistance, efficient regulatory review, and public land stewardship and management. To connect federal funding to good projects on the ground in Washington, staffing is critical. Many Washington land trusts have grant agreements for conservation projects via USDA NRCS, NOAA, EPA, USFWS, USFS, and more. We rely on federal program staff, technical assistance staff, and contract managers to help us accomplish our work, but we are extremely concerned about whether the staffing levels in these agencies will be adequate to administer the programs as Congress intended. Land trusts work on voluntary conservation, which means getting the trust of landowners such as farmers, ranchers, and foresters, and this uncertainty puts these critical working and ecological land conservation projects at risk.

4) Advance land stewardship and next generation training by funding AmeriCorps

WALT urges Congress to continue funding for AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps is a critical volunteering and job training program that helps connect those who want to make a difference into the first step of careers in conservation. Land trusts employ AmeriCorps and Washington Conservation Corps staff to care for the lands that matter to our communities. From building trails to working on restoration that makes our lands more resilient, these young leaders drive big impact with federal support.



5) Support the Forest Legacy Program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and other funding programs and commitments for our natural and working lands

WALT supports robust funding for federal natural resource and conservation programs that provide for clean air, clean water, recreation, food security, and strong economies. We urge the passage of the **FY26 Appropriations Bill with funding at or above FY25 funding levels for natural resource programs**. Of particular concern is ensuring that the commitment to dedicated, permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund established via the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) is honored with an investment of at least \$900M, with no rescissions of previous investments.

Below we have listed programs that offer critical tools to support voluntary, private land conservation work in WA that empowers local landowners to ensure all our communities have access to greenspace, thriving ecosystems and wildlife, locally grown food, and vibrant economies for years to come. Publicly and privately conserved lands come together to form these important landscapes, and these agencies play a critical role in ensuring the protection and care of these lands as well as public access to them for recreation.

US Department of the Interior

- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

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
- America the Beautiful Challenge
- National Fish Passage Program

National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

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

US Forest Service

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

AmeriCorps

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) - Agricultural Land Easements
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
- Environmental Quality and Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HRFP)

US Department of Defense

- Readiness & Environmental Protection Integration Program (REPI)

US Department of Transportation

- National Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program

Bureau of Reclamation

- Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region Office

Environmental Protection Agency

- Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund
- Infrastructure grants