Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration & Resiliency Initiative & WSCC's Fire Recovery Program



Photo courtesy of Lincoln County CD

Washington State Conservation Commission

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WSCC Regional Managers

October 25, 2022

Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration & Resiliency Initiative – 'WSRRI'

- Labor Day Fires of 2020 – 600,000 acres
- 2021 Legislative Session
  - $2.35 million operating
  - $1.5 million capital (fencing)
- Collaborative Steering Committee

…to restore shrubsteppe habitat and associated wildlife impacted by wildfires…

…support wildlife values and ranching communities in eastern Washington…

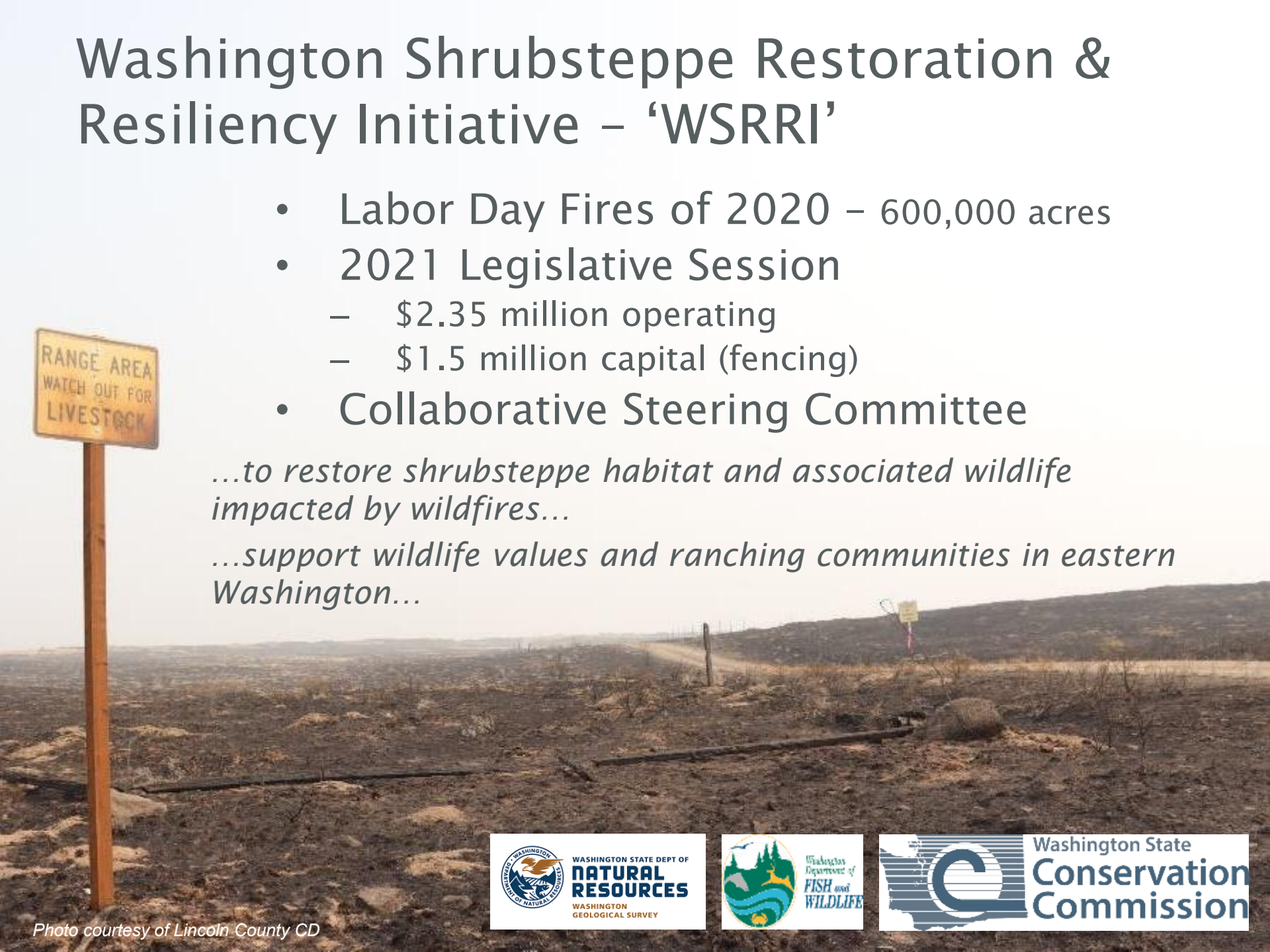


Photo courtesy of Lincoln County CD

WASHINGTON STATE DEPT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
WASHINGTON GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Washington Department of FISH and WILDLIFE

Washington State Conservation Commission



Photo courtesy of WDFW







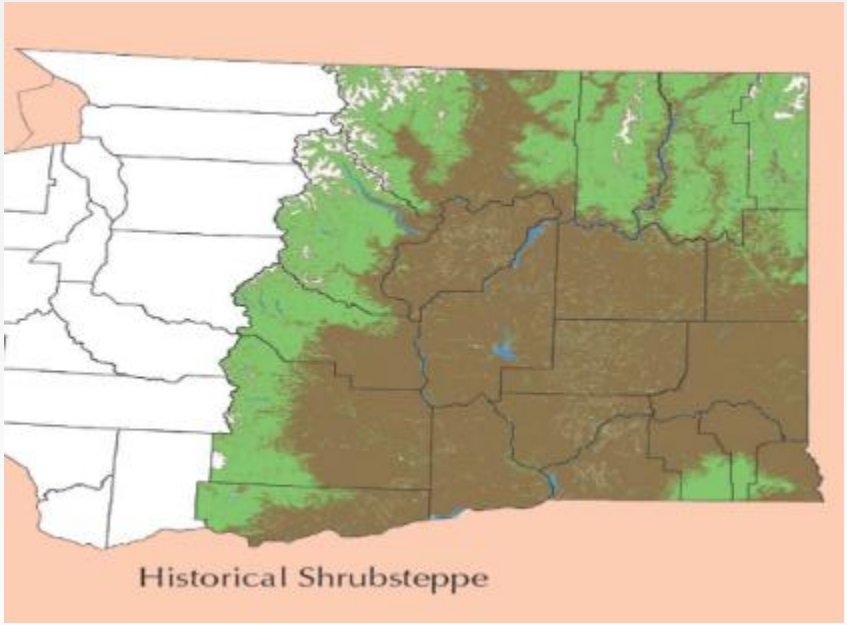


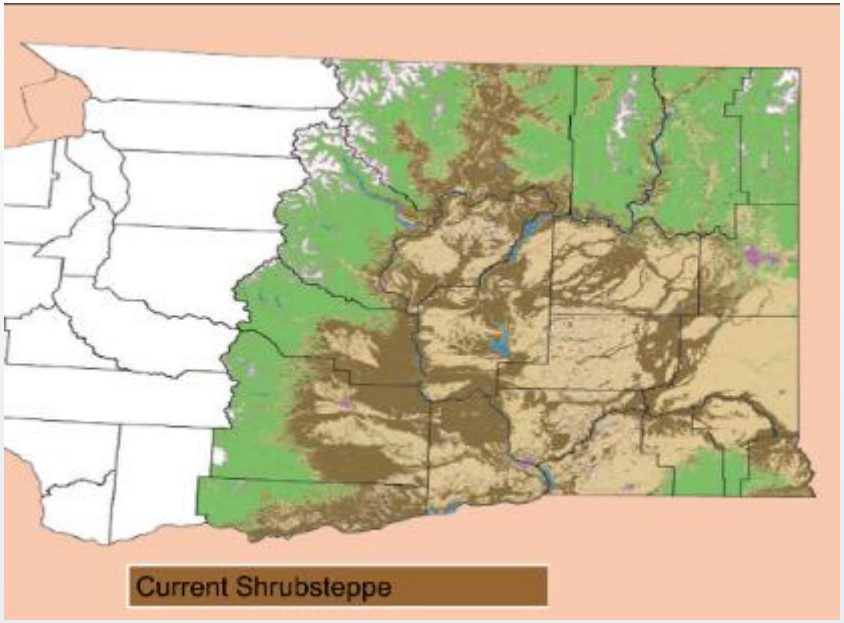
Photos courtesy of WDFW

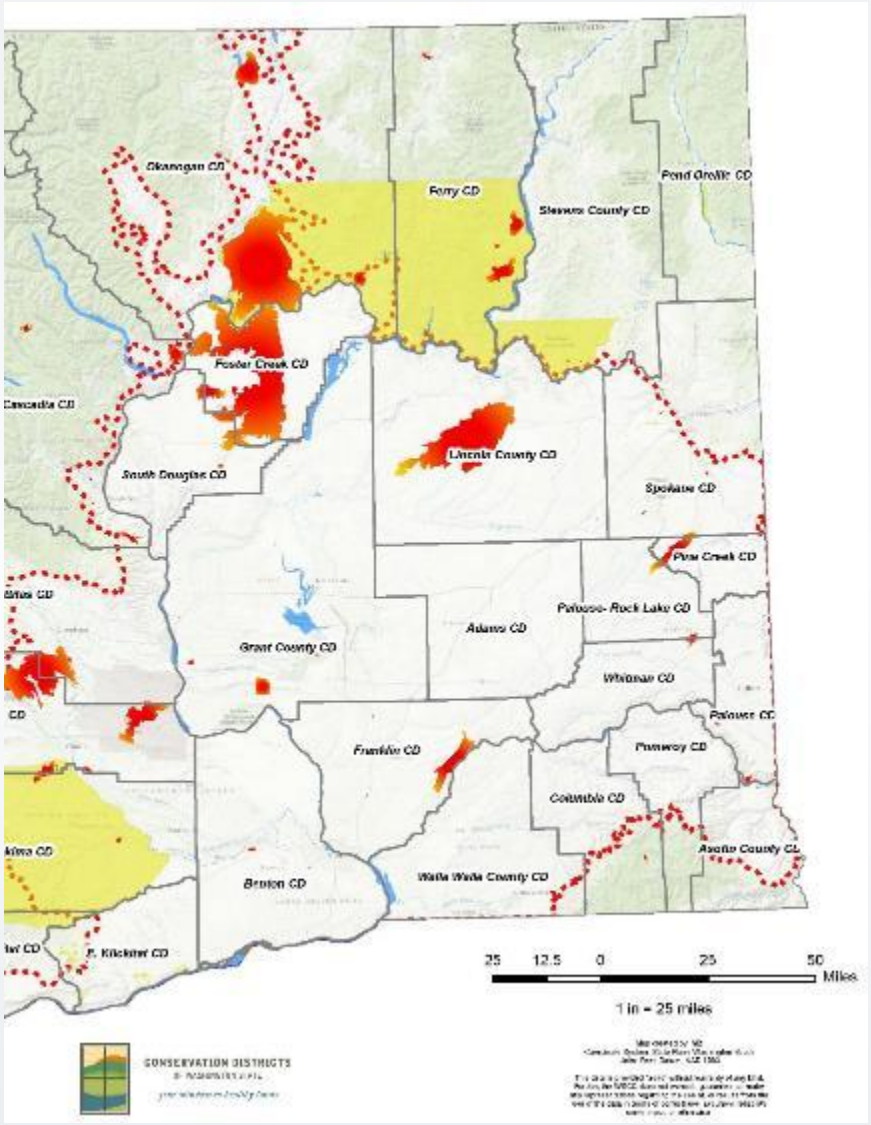


Rawpixel

Photo courtesy of WDFW


Historical Shrubsteppe


Current Shrubsteppe


Okanogan CD
Ferry CD
Stevens County CD
Pend Oreille CD
Foster Creek CD
Lincoln County CD
Spokane CD
South Douglas CD
Pine Creek CD
Palouse- Rock Lake CD
Adams CD
Grant County CD
Whitman CD
Palouse CD
Franklin CD
Pomeroy CD
Columbia CD
Asotin County CD
Benton CD
Walla Walla County CD
25 12.5 0 25 50
Miles
1 in = 25 miles
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Implement immediate no-regret actions

Species Recovery	Cultural Resources	Plant Availability	Wildlife Friendly Fencing	Deferred Grazing

Convene a collaborative group, facilitated by a neutral third party, to develop long-term strategy for shrubsteppe conservation and fire preparedness, response, and restoration.

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*best kept secret

STEERING COMMITTEE

Near Term Advisory Group

BLM, Cattlemen's, Land Trusts, Tribes, NGOs, CDs, NRCS, USFWS, WDFW, WSU

Tech Teams

6 Total

- *Species Recovery*
- *Cultural Resources*
- *Technical Tool*
- *Plant Availability*
- *Wildlife Friendly Fencing**
- *Deferred Grazing**

Fall/Winter 2021-2022

Review Teams

3 Total

- *Wildlife Friendly Fencing**
- *Deferred Grazing**
- *Habitat Restoration*

Winter/Spring 2022

Guidelines

Washington State Conservation Commission

WA Shrubsteppe Restoration Initiative Funding Procedures

FY 2022-2023

The following are general procedures for the Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration Initiative (WSRI) funds appropriated by the legislature with the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Shrubsteppe Budget Proviso and delivered to conservation districts through the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) for the FY 22-23 biennium. These procedures may require change as more information becomes available.

WSRI Funding for Conservation Districts

Funding will be available for conservation districts specified by the WSRI Steering Committee. One-time Capital funding is provided for Wildlife Friendly Fencing and associated eligible activities and Operating funding is provided for Deferred Grazing activities. See descriptions below for eligible project types.

DFW Shrubsteppe Budget Proviso Language

Operating Funds
$1,175,000 of the general fund-state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and $1,175,000 of the general fund-state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 are provided solely for the department to restore shrubsteppe habitat and associated wildlife impacted by wildfires.

a) This funding is intended for the restoration of habitat on public lands as well as private lands by landowners who are willing to participate. The restoration effort must be coordinated with other natural resource agencies and interested stakeholders.

b) Restoration actions may include: 1) increasing the availability of native plant materials; 2) increasing the number of certified and trained personnel for implementation at scale; 3) support for wildlife-friendly fencing replacement; 4) support for private landowners/ranchers to defer wildland grazing and allow natural habitat regeneration; 5) species-specific recovery actions.

Capital Funds (Wildlife Friendly Fencing)
This $1.5 million project will allow for funding to be provided to public and private landowners to rebuild wildlife-friendly fences in impacted and prioritized areas. This program is not phased.

The Department's shrubsteppe recovery committee, authorized in the operating budget, will guide distribution of the Cooperative Wildlife Fencing funding under this capital budget proviso. Funding will be provided to public and private entities to rebuild wildlife-friendly fences in prioritized areas impacted by wildfires. This will benefit the critical habitats required for endangered and threatened species, allowing those habitats to recover undisturbed. Furthermore, it will benefit private landowners whose fencing was destroyed by the fires, allowing them to construct new fencing to continuing grazing livestock on their lands. We anticipate that over 125 miles of wildlife-friendly fencing will be installed with these funds. This fence will support wildlife values and ranching communities in eastern Washington by facilitating sustainable grazing and wildlife movement and migration. We will track the miles of fence installed on public and private lands.

Application

Washington State Conservation Commission

Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration Initiative Funding Request

Name of Requester: *

First Name

Last Name

Conservation District or Agency/Organization Submitting Application: *

Requester Contact Phone: *

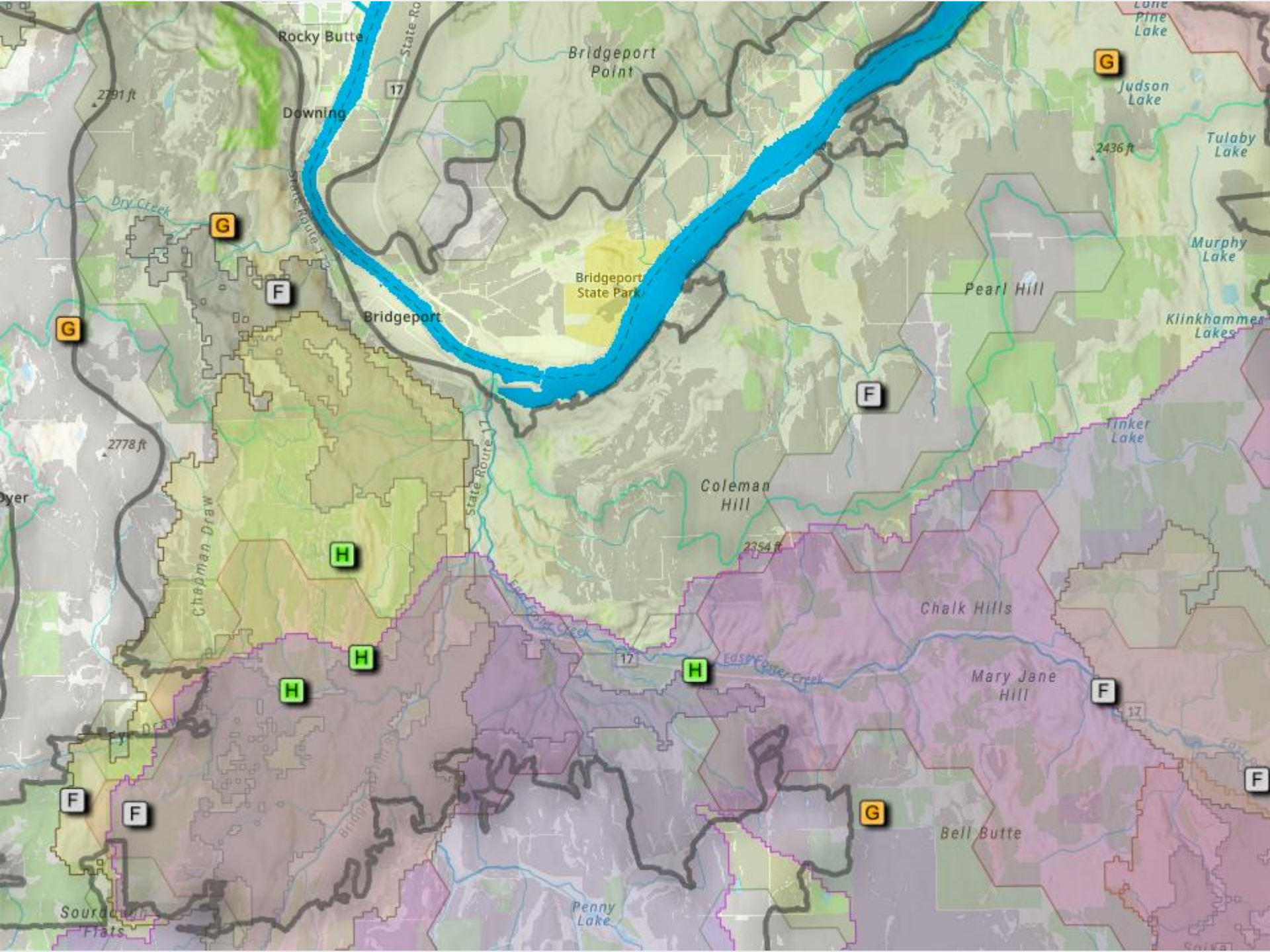
Requester Contact Email: *

Conservation District that the project is located

Select a Conservation District

Which project type are you applying for? *

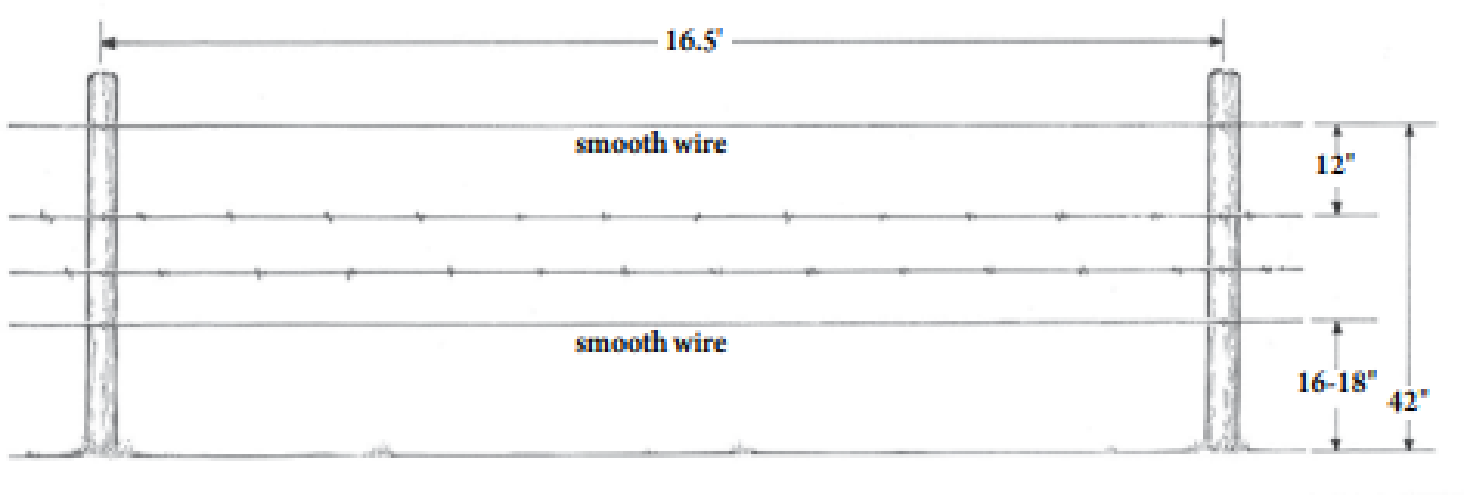
- Wildlife Friendly Fencing
- Deferred Grazing
- Habitat Restoration


Rocky Butte
Bridgeport Point
Downing
2791 ft
Judson Lake
Tulaby Lake
2436 ft
Dry Creek
Murphy Lake
Bridgeport State Park
Bridgeport
Pearl Hill
Klinkhammer Lakes
2778 ft
Tinker Lake
Coleman Hill
Chapman Draw
2354 ft
Chalk Hills
Mary Jane Hill
Bell Butte
Penny Lake
Sourdough Flats
G
F
H
17

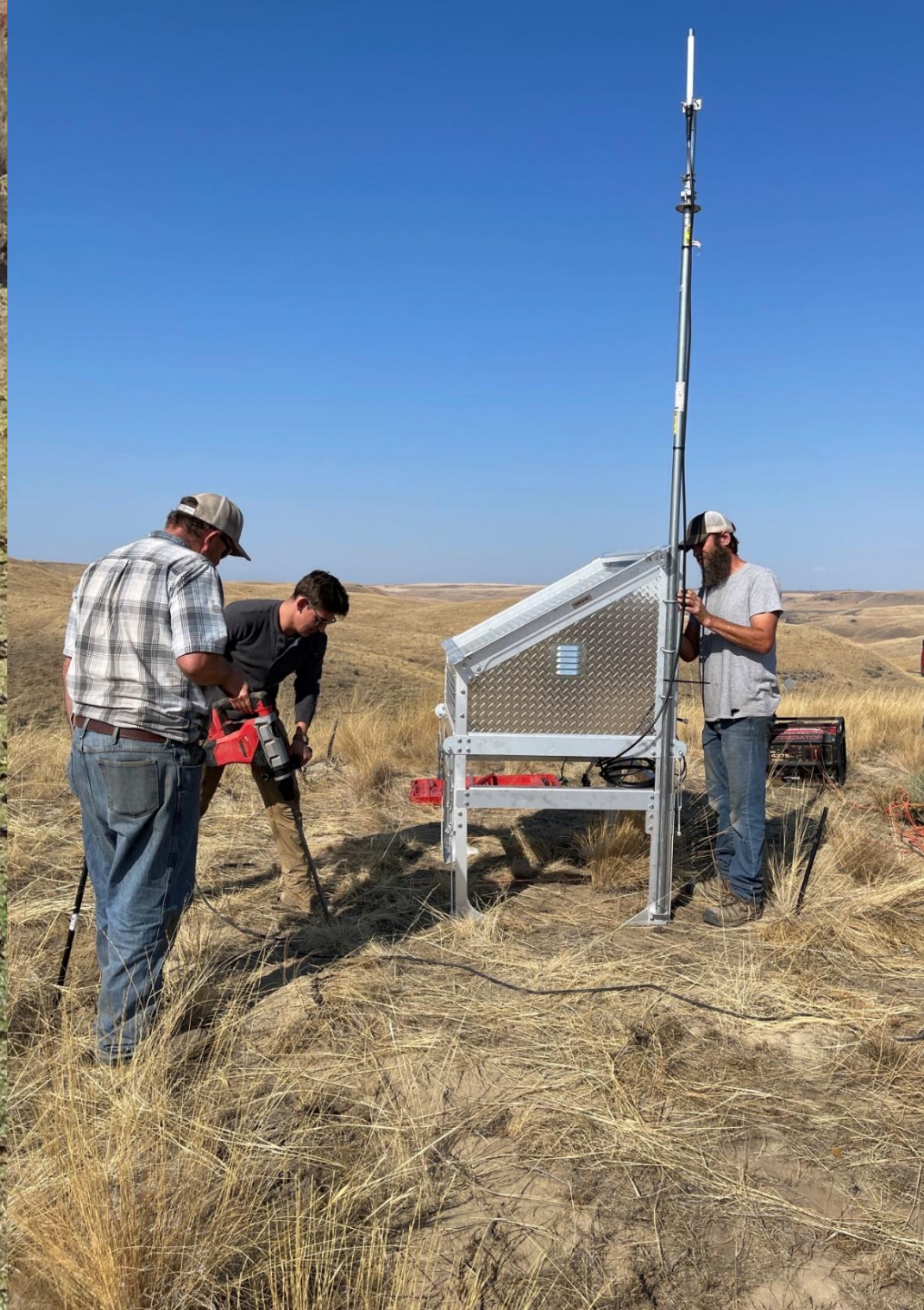
Wildlife Friendly Fencing

- Replace Burned Barbed-wire w/ Smooth Wire
- Fence Markers
- Remove Fence
- Retrofit
- Virtual Fence!

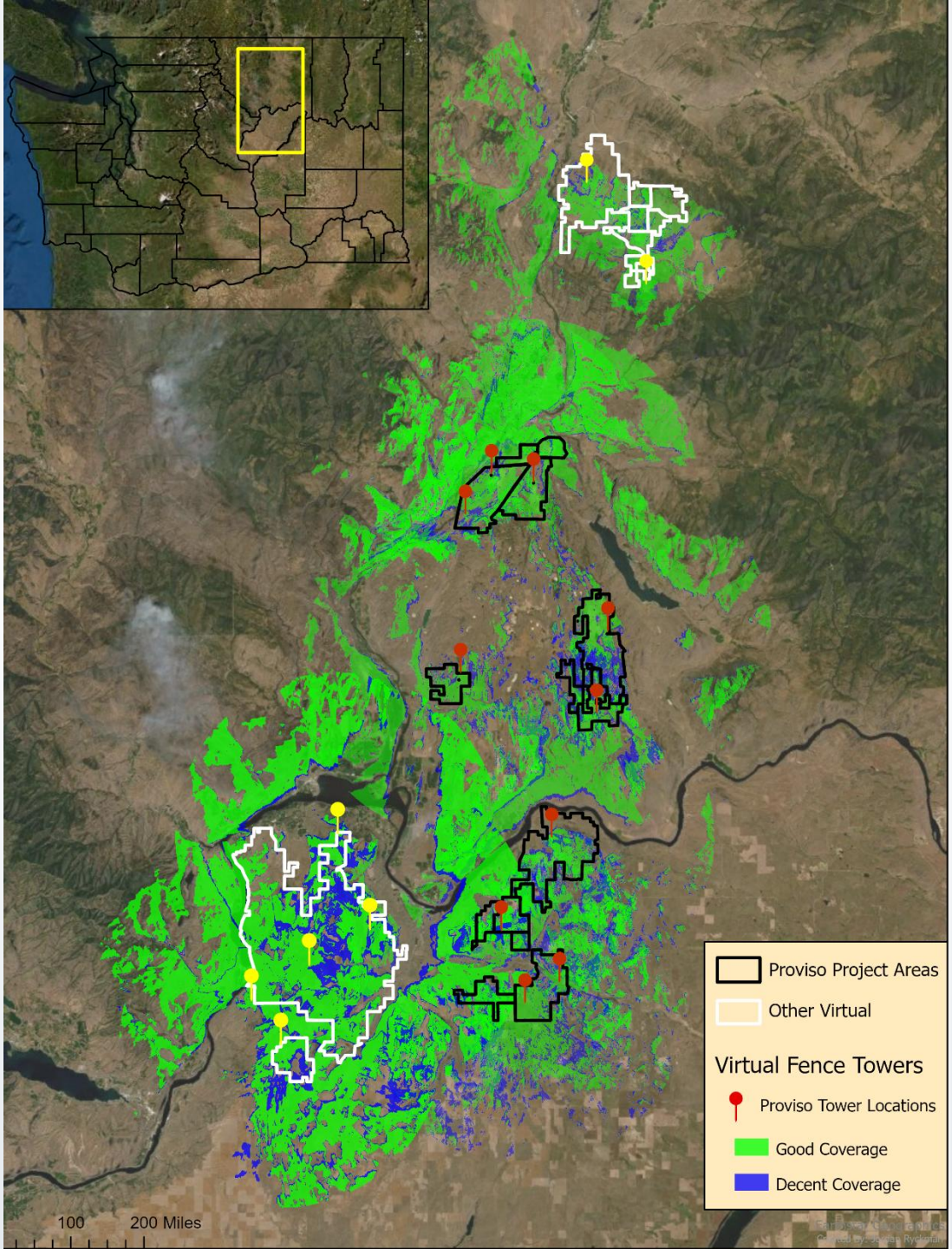
"…the best wildlife friendly fence is no fence…"







Photos courtesy of Conservation Northwest


Proviso Project Areas
Other Virtual
Virtual Fence Towers
Proviso Tower Locations
Good Coverage
Decent Coverage
100
200 Miles



Fencing Awards

Fence Replacement - $410,000
Virtual Fence - $166,000
Retrofit/Remove - $110,000

~$686,000 total

19 miles (14+5)
40,000 acres

Photo courtesy of Foster Creek CD

Deferred Grazing

- How to best assist?
- What should it look like?
- We asked producers…



Deferred Grazing

- Hay & Pasture Rental
- Timing (for best chance of recovery)
- Shrubsteppe Condition
- $10k per producer per fy, 75% cost-share

10 projects
$108,000
35,432 acres



Photo courtesy of Foster Creek CD



Photos courtesy of Foster Creek CD

WSCC Fire Recovery Program



- Fires of 2020-2022
- 2021 Legislative Session
- $3 million for CDs for landowner fire recovery projects – split evenly over FY 22 and FY 23

State appropriations of the general fund are *provided solely for conservation district technical assistance, project cultural resources review, project engineering, agency administration, and cost-share grants to landowners for recovery from wildfire damage*, including, but not limited to,

rebuilding fences, seeding unstable slopes, controlling weeds, and planting shrubs and trees for wildlife habitat.



- CD submits application with project details
- SCC staff committee review and approval
- $50,000 max. per landowner per fiscal year
- Funds project implementation, technical assistance, cultural resources, and engineering if needed
- Provides for “Initial Technical Assistance funding” up to $5,000

Procedures

Washington State Conservation Commission

Fire Recovery Funding Process
FY 2022-2023

The following are general procedures for fire recovery funds appropriated by the legislature for the FY 22-23 biennium. These procedures may require change as more information becomes available. **Please refer to the Fire Recovery Procedures FAQ for additional information.**

Wildfire Recovery Grants

One-time funding is provided for conservation district technical assistance, project cultural resources review, engineering, and cost-share grants to landowners for recovery from wildfire damage (General Fund-State).

Proviso Language

$1,500,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and $1,500,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 are provided solely for conservation district technical assistance, project cultural resources review, project engineering, agency administration, and cost-share grants to landowners for recovery from wildfire damage, including, but not limited to, rebuilding fences, seeding unstable slopes, controlling weeds, and planting shrubs and trees for wildlife habitat.

1. Eligible Land Ownership:

- Private Lands
- Private Lessees on State and Federal Lands
- Private Landowners or Lessees on Tribal Lands

2. Funding Process

Funds provided to Districts will be utilized consistently with the funding proviso and these procedures. Eligible activities will be consistent with the proviso language. Commission grant funds shall be administered according to Commission grants policies and procedures unless otherwise noted below:

A) Fire Recovery Addendum

The Commission will award funds through a fire recovery addendum. Individual grant activities and/or projects will be listed as intermediate outcomes in the grant. Vouchers shall be submitted according to Commission grants policies and procedures.

B) Initial TA Allocation

Districts may request an initial Technical Assistance allocation. This request should be focused on landowner site assessments, and outreach with the intent of generating projects and assisting landowners with post-fire recovery. This request should not exceed $5,000. Additional funding may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Additional funding may also be considered in response to new fires. To make this request, submit the request using this form: Post-Natural Disaster Conservation District Technical Assistance Funding Request.

This funding will be awarded under a specific outcome in the fire recovery addendum. Initial TA awards will be considered for award as soon as practical upon receipt of request.

[Fire Recovery Funding Procedures FY22_23.pdf | Powered by Box]

FAQ

Washington State Conservation Commission

Fire Recovery Procedures
Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions and answers are intended to provide clarification and interpretation of the fire recovery procedures.

1. Can these funds be used on public lands? Does the 50% limit for cost share apply?

Projects would be eligible for lessees on public lands. However, the lessee would need to be working with the landowner, or someone within the public agency who is authorized to sign the cost-share agreement on behalf of the landowner, as it is the landowner that will be responsible for maintaining the practice for the practice life. Unlike other SCC cost share funds, the cost share rate for lessees on public lands would not be subject to the 50% cap for fire recovery projects.

2. Can these funds be used on tribal lands?

Funds can be used to support projects with private landowners or lessees on tribal lands.

3. Are companies that own land considered private landowners, such as logging companies? On that same note, is a non-profit organization considered a private landowner?

Yes, private companies and non-profits would be considered private landowners in most cases.

4. Is someone leasing land from a private company or non-profit eligible for these funds?

Yes, but the cost share contract would have to be signed on behalf of the landowner by someone with that authority.

5. What types of fencing can be addressed with these funds?

Replacement of fencing used for livestock (exclusion, perimeter, and cross-fencing) is eligible.

6. Is fencing repair allowable under these funds or must new materials be used?

Existing or used materials can be used, provided they meet the practice life and the specifications according to NRCS standards (excluding the requirement for new materials). It is important to remember that SCC reimburses expenses based on receipts, not on a per-foot basis.

7. Can weed control projects be funded by this program?

Weed control is specifically mentioned in the proviso. However, weed control projects should meet the requirements for NRCS Practice Standard 315, Herbaceous Weed Control, and it is preferable that it be conducted in conjunction with a longer-term practice such as seeding or native plant restoration.

8. Are livestock watering or irrigation systems eligible?

Yes, however, care must be taken to make sure that work conducted pertains to the portions of the system impacted by fire (i.e. not an opportunity to upgrade an old system)

[Fire Recovery Funding FAQ FY22_23.pdf | Powered by Box]

Washington State
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Fire Recovery Project Funding Request

First Name*

First Name | Last Name

Email*

Dropdown List*
Select Your Conservation District

Priority Project - 1

Landowner/Cooperator Name*

First Name | Last Name

Fire Year?*
Select Year of Fire

Fire Name / Designation*

Estimated State Cost Share Funding Needed*

If Engineering is Needed - Identify Funding Amount Needed

NRCS Practice Code(s) and Name*

Natural Resources Concern(s) Addressed*

Applied for Federal EQIP?*
- Yes
- No

Amount of Federal EQIP Awarded - If Applicable

Applied for Federal EWP?*
- Yes
- No

Amount of Federal EWP Awarded - If Applicable

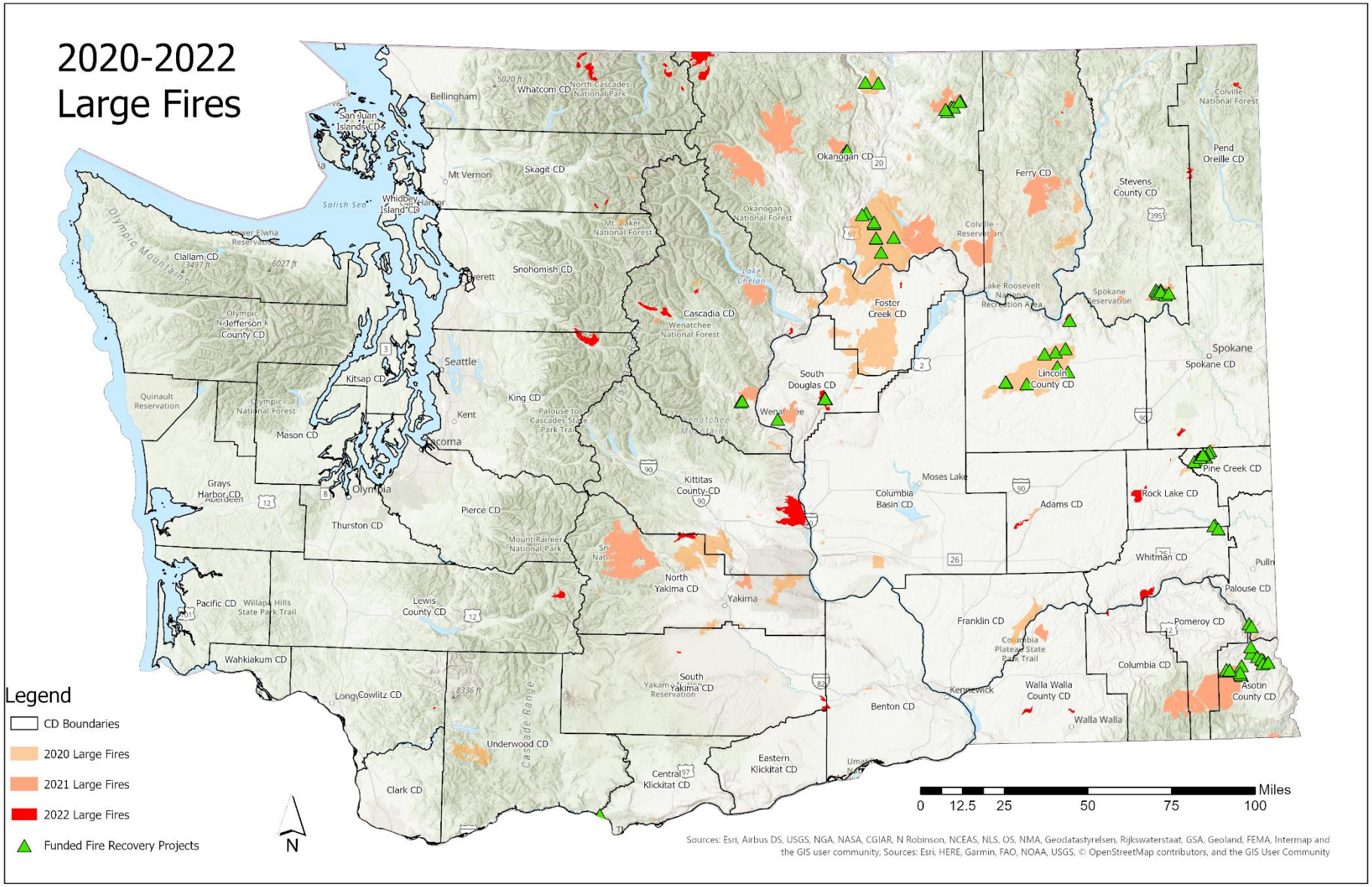
Applied for Federal ECP?*
- Yes
- No

Amount of Federal ECP Awarded - If Applicable

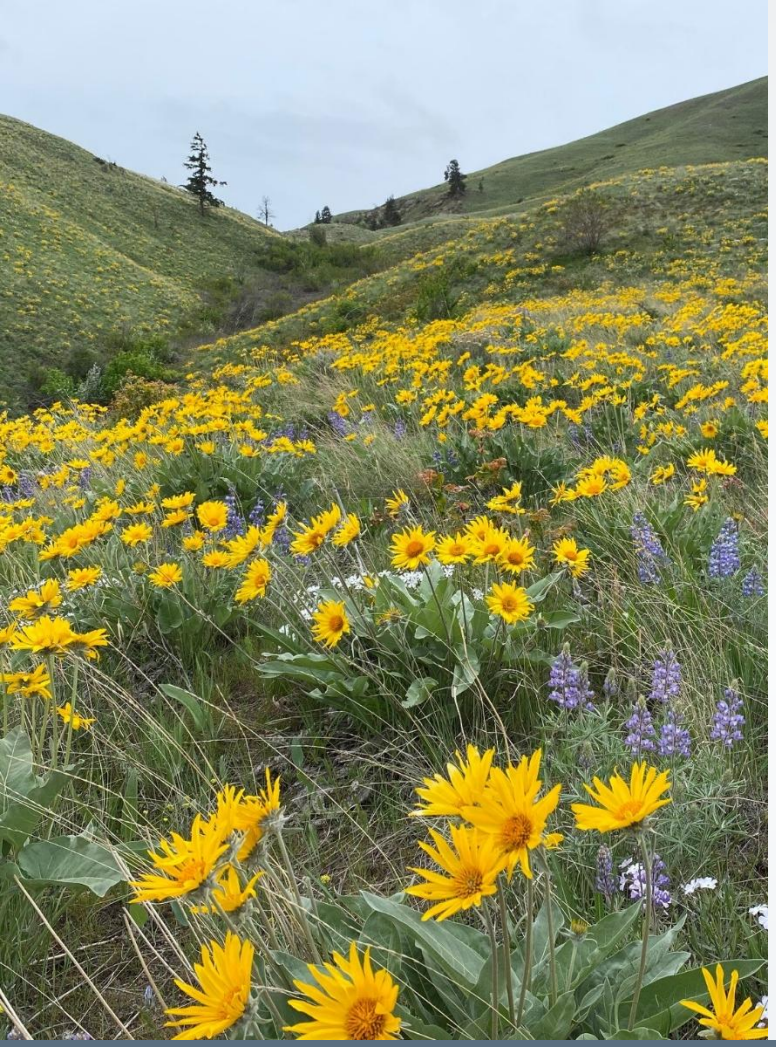
Application

Form Name:	Fire Recovery Project Requests
Submission Time:	July 14, 2022 12:18 pm
Browser:	Chrome 103.0.0.0 / Windows
IP Address:	63.142.196.220
Unique ID:	986016355
Location:	48.3481, -119.601

First Name	
Email	
Dropdown List	Okanogan
Landowner/Cooperator Name	
Fire Year?	2021
Fire Name / Designation	Muckamuck Fire
Estimated State Cost Share Funding Needed	38,922.48
NRCS Practice Code(s) and Name	Fence 382
Natural Resources Concern(s) Addressed	Replace Fencing
Applied for Federal EQIP?	Yes
Amount of Federal EQIP Awarded - If Applicable	$0.00
Applied for Federal EWP?	No
Applied for Federal ECP?	No
Longitude (Decimal degrees)	
Latitude (Decimal degrees)	
Brief Project Description (Please include details such as feet of fence, acres, of plantings, number of plants, feet of pipeline, etc. Enough details for the review committee to have a good feel for the work to be done.)	This project funding request is a request for additional funding for fire recovery fencing for the Ranch. The landowner has already been granted $49,996.60 to re-build 19,190 ft of burnt barb wire fencing. The remainder of the project would entail re-building 13,648 ft of fencing in moderate and difficult terrain, with an estimated cost share funding of $38,922.48, and a landowner 25% match totaling $12,974.16. The landowner originally had large segments of their fencing damaged in the 2015 Okanogan Complex Fire, much of which had been replaced by FSA funding, by the time of the Muckamuck fire in 2021. There are no other funding options to assist the landowner in replacing the fencing lost or damaged in 2021. This rebuilt fencing would allow the landowner to return to a responsible grazing plan on over 1300 plus acres, and prevent cattle from entering populated areas or roadways.



78 projects funded in FY 22 and 23



Thank you!

Contact:

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Washington State Conservation Commission