

## FUNDING

PSCDs are nimble organizations in forming partnerships that can be funded through a variety of mechanisms:

- RCW-enabled systems of Rates and Charges and Special Assessments
- State and federally funded grants
- Coordinated investments with local jurisdictions
- Strategic partnerships with philanthropic organizations
- Charitable donations through Title 26 USC (Internal Revenue Code) – Section 170(a)(1)
- Legislative appropriations

PSCD regional forest stewardship services were identified as funding priorities in collaboration with regional partners and leaders, such as the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC), Washington Department of Natural Resources, and the Puget Sound Partnership. The WSCC is working on behalf of Washington conservation districts to ensure that small acreage forest landowners have access to adequate technical and financial resources for forest land protection and enhancement.

## WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

- Conservation Technical Assistance funds are proposed as part of the FY23-25 Biennium Budget to support forest health management programs and services including technical assistance, cost-share for best management practices (BMPs), and landowner education and outreach.
- Firewise funds may be used to conduct Firewise risk assessments, prepare Firewise plans, fund fuel reduction practices, install signage for homes and evacuation routes, and conduct Firewise program related outreach and education.
- WA Legislature appropriated engineering funds support conservation district professional engineers (PE) and engineering technicians who plan, design, and coordinate construction of conservation practices—many that are NRCS-certified. Five PEs stationed at three PSCDs provide support to all PSCDs on planning and implementing forest stewardship services, such as forest access roads, fish passable stream crossings, and more.

## A SHARED VISION

The Puget Sound conservation districts have formed a collaborative regionally focused Caucus.

Our shared vision is a future in which private land managers and local residents are actively engaged in building community, stewarding natural resources, and playing an essential role in restoring and maintaining a healthy and productive Puget Sound and Salish Sea.

Our shared mission is to support and strengthen the 12 Puget Sound conservation district and partners to foster community-scale and individual stewardship ethic. PSCDs share staff and resources to support local economies and restore, enhance and maintain the natural resources of Puget Sound through a non-regulatory, incentive-based approach.



## PUGET SOUND CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

*Working with you and other land  
stewards for Better Ground*

Local food • Healthy forests • Clean water

[www.betterground.org/pscd](http://www.betterground.org/pscd)



## REGIONAL FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

### WHO WE ARE

The twelve PSCDs are uniquely positioned to engage private landowners in stewardship practices that address regional priorities. PSCDs are aligning core programs and services to recover the health of Puget Sound, and are increasing capacity to deliver their proven approach region-wide.

#### PSCDs are:

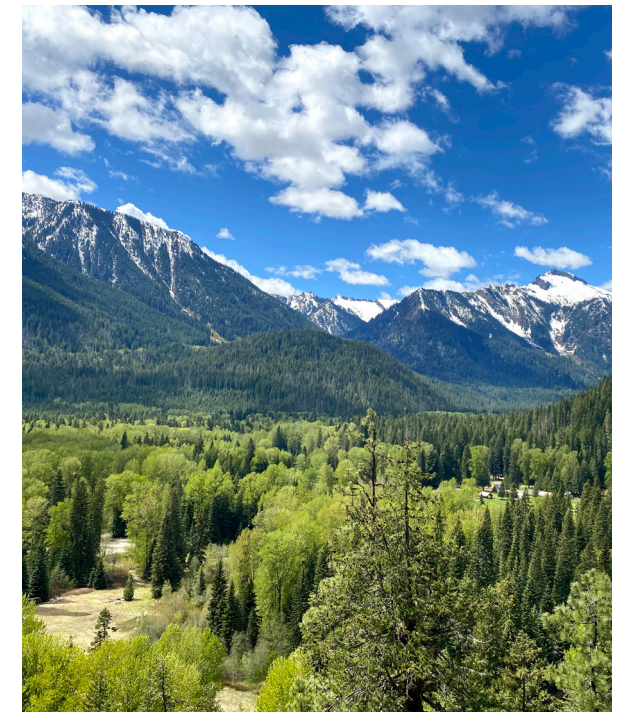
- Non-regulatory
- Community based and locally led
- Accessible
- Strategic
- Results driven and focused on shovel-ready projects
- Cost-effective

#### PSCDs offer:

- Coordinated, certified and trained professionals. We lend best available science, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) technical standards, peer training and certification networks, and a high level of quality to our projects.
- Uniquely positioned, special purpose districts that engage private landowners and managers in stewardship practices to address both local and regional resource conservation issues.
- A strategically aligned collective of interdisciplinary experts, scaling proven programs and services in a cost-effective way.

### WHAT WE DO

- Work with private landowners on a voluntary basis to reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality.
- Assist jurisdictions in achieving NPDES requirements and comprehensive planning goals.
- Provide 'boots-on-the-ground' support in the construction and maintenance of practices
- Enable implementation on private and public property through cost-share funding.
- Provide regional outreach and education through the PSCD Better Ground initiative.
- Replicate proven programs at the local level.





# REGIONAL FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

## FOREST STEWARDSHIP SERVICES

Our Regional Forest Stewardship Program focuses on protecting and enhancing Puget Sound lowland forest ecosystems by supporting small forest landowners in incorporating best management practices on their properties.

## HOW WE WORK

### OUR STAFF

Staff at the twelve Puget Sound Conservation Districts include professional foresters, wildfire preparedness and fuels reduction experts, conservation planners, civil engineers, GIS specialists, soil scientists, water quality and environmental specialists, and education specialists who comprise a diverse and proficient group of practitioners focused on forest health improvement, working lands management, and urban and community forestry.

### PROGRAM SUCCESSES

As of 2023, our Regional Forest Stewardship Program achieved the following:

- Outreach to forest landowners: 10,081
- Forest landowners receiving Forest Stewardship Services: 605
- Acres impacted by Forest Stewardship Services: 10,279
- Forest landowners receiving support for Open Space Enrollment: 59
- Acres impacted by support of Open Space Enrollment: 1,553
- Forest landowners accessing and securing cost-share: 64
- Acres treated or will be treated through cost-share: 2,051
- Forest Management Plans Created: 81

### FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS

A forest management plan provides an overview of current forest conditions on a property. It also provides recommended actions landowners can take to help meet their management objectives. It can help facilitate communication of objectives, intentions, and management activities to interested parties. Our plans are developed in accordance with the Washington State



Integrated Forest Management Plan Guidelines, which are intended to help landowners meet the written forest management plan requirements for a variety of programs, including current use forest property tax programs and USDA Farm Bill conservation programs. Forest Management Plans may be used to help landowners qualify for the state Designated Forest Land Program (Chapter 84.33 RCW).

### WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS AND FIREWISE COMMUNITIES USA PROGRAM

Conservation Districts have become leaders in wildfire preparedness and Firewise program delivery in Washington State. Districts provide personalized home assessments for landowners to reduce fire risk within the home ignition zone and increase defensible space. Landowners are encouraged to manage their forests for climate resilience and wildfire risk reduction through fuel reduction (such as thinning) and tree species selection. In addition, high priority areas in the Wildland Urban Interface are encouraged to organize as a community and pursue Firewise USA certification to further community resilience to wildfire.

### FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR FOREST LAND MANAGERS

Conservation Districts utilize a variety of financial incentives to assist land and homeowners in caring for their trees and forest, large or small.

- Cost-share Programs
- Grant Programs
- Tax Incentive Programs

### PERSONALIZED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Conservation District foresters regularly engage community members through personalized advice, educational resources, and technical assistance to their properties. A significant portion of forest landowner outreach and education is supported by collaboration with the WSU Extension Forestry program.

### OUTREACH AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

PSCDs work together using community-based social marketing approaches and other effective tools to engage communities and support program participation. Educational materials created by foresters are promoted to the broader district audience in order to inspire lifestyle change and program engagement.

