

Community Forests:

Protecting Jobs, Forests, and Resilient Communities

At the request of the legislature, the **Community Forest Program** was developed by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) for the first time in 2020. This program supports the acquisition and development of important working forestlands by cities, counties, Tribes, and nonprofits so they can be managed on behalf of local communities. In centering the needs of local stakeholders, **community forests promote active management, restoration, and development that provides immediate economic impact**, while securing the lasting ecological and social benefits Washington's working forests hold.

Supporting Rural Economies

Community Forest projects are reviewed by a diverse, independent advisory committee to ensure they will provide lasting benefits to local communities. These projects:

- **Support forest stewardship and recreational infrastructure projects** that leverage additional matching funds to bring jobs in the woods.
- **Engage the public** in the benefits and importance of working forests, while cultivating the next generation of natural resource professionals.
- **Keep working lands working** by developing innovative management strategies, collaborative partnerships, and leveraging community engagement.
- **Safeguard the public interest** by reducing sprawl in fire-prone areas, preventing development on ecologically sensitive lands, or provisioning clean, affordable water to under-resourced communities.

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What makes something a community forest?

Community forests are as diverse as the lands they occupy and the communities they represent, but they all share a commitment to four common principles:

- secure public access and rights to forest resources;
- public engagement and participation in management decisions;
- investment in community and economic development needs;
- permanent protection of the working land base.



2021-2023 Projects

Sponsor	Project Name	County	Request	Proposed Funding
Chelan County Natural Resource Dept.	Nason Ridge Community Forest Acquisition	Chelan	\$3,000,000	
Jefferson Land Trust	Chimacum Ridge Community Forest	Jefferson	\$3,000,000	
Nisqually Community Forest	Nisqually Community Forest Phase 2	Pierce	\$2,313,250	
Mt. Adams Resource Stewards	Mt. Adams Community Forest: Conboy Lake	Klickitat	\$1,399,100	
Kittitas Conservation Trust	Cle Elum Ridge Community Forest - Phase 1	Kittitas	\$3,000,000	
Great Peninsula Conservancy	North Kitsap Divide Block Community Forest	Kitsap	\$2,935,000	Funded at \$16 million
City of Ilwaco	Bear Ridge Community Forest	Pacific	\$1,717,750	
Whatcom Land Trust	Stewart Mountain Community Forest - Riparian Reserve	Whatcom	\$1,737,252	
City of Hoquiam	Hoquiam Community Forests: Fry Creek Watershed	Grays Harbor	\$2,549,575	
City of Aberdeen	Aberdeen Community Forest: Fry Creek Watershed	Grays Harbor	\$1,384,915	
San Juan County Land Bank	San Juan Island Northern Forestlands	San Juan	\$1,546,000	
Great Peninsula Conservancy	Newberry Woods Community Forest Acquisition	Kitsap	\$2,900,000	Funded at \$27.5 million
Dishman Hills Conservancy	Dishman Hills Community Forest	Spokane	\$3,000,000	
Grays Harbor County	Doyle Brothers 80	Grays Harbor	\$271,575	
Kitsap County Parks and Rec.	Illahee Preserve - Community Forest Acquisitions	Kitsap	\$2,284,500	Funded at \$33,038,917



Project snapshot

Together, these projects demonstrate what is possible when people come together to envision a shared future for Washington's forestland.

- 15 projects
- 11 counties
- 10,809 acres
- \$13.1 million in matching funds

