



## Washington's Working Forests Newsletter

### January 2021

#### What are "Working Forests?"

A Working Forest is professionally managed to provide a continuous supply of renewable, sustainable wood products for building materials -- with a focus on protecting fish, water and wildlife. Using scientific practices and adhering to comprehensive state forestry laws, Washington's working forests work to give back to our entire state. Growing working forests absorb carbon, wood products store carbon, and the forest sector taken as a whole currently operates with a negative carbon footprint that supports greenhouse gas reduction goals and rural economies across Washington, a fact that is recognized in state law.

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#### The Good News From the Woods

### Wildfire Preparedness On the Agenda During an Unprecedented Legislative Session in Olympia

The 2021 legislative session, scheduled to begin on January 11th, will be unlike any in history as the state continues to feel the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The leadership from both chambers decided late last year that to prevent the spread of the virus, the 2021 session would, for the most part, be conducted virtually. In recognition of the reality of how holding hearings, as well as debates and voting, mostly by internet, leaders have signaled an agenda that is primarily focused on a handful of issues and legislation that cannot wait for 2022.

Although COVID-19 response, economic recovery, and climate will be among the top issues, along with passing a new state budget, **Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz** also made a high priority request for funding of a comprehensive wildfire program.

From Wildfire Today:

Legislation being introduced in the state of Washington requests additional funding to beef up their fire suppression capability on the ground and in the air.

The number of acres burned in wildfires last year in the state, 812,000, was more than four times the average in the 2000s. In eastern Washington, 80 percent of the buildings were destroyed by the Babb-Malden Fire in September, 2020. The number of acres blackened in Oregon last year, just across the border, was the second highest ever recorded.

The bill introduced earlier this week in Washington, HB 1168, would appropriate \$125 million for the Department of Natural Resources to create for the first time a dedicated fund to suppress and mitigate wildfires over the next two-year budget period.

The commissioner's \$125 million request would fund a comprehensive strategy of wildfire response, preventive forest restoration, and implementing community-level defensive strategies to prepare neighborhoods and spaces at high risk of fire.

To read more about the bill from Wildfire Today, click [here](#).

To read the text of House Bill 1168, click [here](#).

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### Follow the Facts

## New Resource for Information About Sustainable Forestry as Our Natural Carbon Solution

As our readers know, the enactment last year of the Washington State Forest Products Sector Carbon Bill (HB 2528) recognized the critical role that our state's private forest landowners and the entire forest sector have in addressing climate change. The law affirmed scientific study finding that the private forestry sector removes greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, sequestering 12% of the state's overall carbon emission annually.

The Washington Forest Protection Association has developed [a compact but fact-filled web resource](#) that answers some of the most common questions people have about how science is confirming what we have always suspected – working forests and the entire forest sector are an effective, natural tool in the fight to reduce the amount of carbon in our atmosphere.

We encourage you to share widely the link [here](#) to the WFPA's Forests & Carbon page.

You can also [like us on Facebook](#) or [follow us on Twitter](#) to see more shareable items that contain useful facts about sustainable working forests and our natural carbon solution.



Trees absorb carbon dioxide when they are growing, and store carbon in wood products.



In fact, almost 50% of the weight of wood is stored carbon.

Learn more at [wfpa.org/forests-and-carbon](http://wfpa.org/forests-and-carbon).

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## Have You Signed?

Our drive toward the creation of a special Washington state vehicle license plate to support working forests is still moving forward. Your help is still needed. If you haven't already, [sign our petition](#) today and then please share with your friends. Thank you for helping to make sure our voices are heard.

**[SIGN THE PETITION TODAY!](#)**

