



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**Natural Resources**



**PARTICIPANTS**

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- USDA Forest Service
- Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources
- Washington State Assoc. of Fire Chiefs

A PROGRESS REPORT ON

# The National Fire Plan in Washington State



▲ All 39 Washington counties have projects which received National Fire Plan funding.

# Local Project Leaders

The following 132 private tree and timber businesses, forestry consultants, public utility districts, solid waste services, fire districts/departments, and state agencies, among others, have generated jobs, increased public understanding, improved fire preparedness, and reduced the risk of wildfire in Washington State as a result of National Fire Plan funding through summer 2002.

Adams County Fire District #4	Joint Fire #2 Walla Walla/Columbia County	Pomegranate Center
All Tree & Landscape	Kitsap County	Progressive Forestry
Asotin Fire Department	Kitsap County Fire District #12	Quinalt Indian Nation
Asplundh Tree Experts Company	Kittitas County Fire District #1	Rick's Tree Trimming
Avista Utilities	Kittitas County Fire District #2	Roslyn Fire Department
Benton County Fire District #2	Kittitas County Fire District #3	Russ Kastberg Consultant
Black Diamond Fire Department	Kittitas County Fire District #6	San Juan County Fire District #3
Cascade Tree Experts	Kittitas County Fire District #7	San Juan County Fire District #4
Chelan County Fire Marshal	Kittitas County Fire District #8	Skagit County Fire District #11
Chewach Enterprises	Kittitas County Fire Marshal	Skamania County Fire District #1
Clark County Fire District #2	Kittitas Sheriff Office	Skamania County Fire District #2
Clark County Fire District #3	Klickitat County Fire District #2	Skookum Timber
Clark County Fire District #9	Klickitat County Fire District #5	Snohomish County Fire District #16
Clark County Fire District #10	Klickitat County Fire District #7	Snohomish County Fire District #22
Clark County Fire District #13	Klickitat County Fire District #10	Snohomish County Fire District #28
Cle Elum Fire Department	Klickitat County Fire District #13	Snoqualmie Fire & Rescue
Columbia County Fire District #3	Klickitat County Solid Waste	South Cle Elum Fire Department
Cowlitz County Fire District #2	Lewis County Fire District #14	Spokane County Fire District #2
Cowlitz County Fire District #5	Lewis County Fire District #15	Spokane County Fire District #5
Cowlitz-Skamania County Fire District #7	Lincoln County Fire District #1	Spokane County Fire District #10
Don Stragis Consulting	Lincoln County Fire District #7	Spokane County Fire District #11
Douglas County Fire District #5	Mark Schertenleib, Consultant	Spokane County Fire District #13
Douglas County Fire District #8	Mason Conservation District	Spokane County Fire District #13
Druid's Reforestation	Mason County Fire District #4	Stevens County Fire District #2
Ferry Conservation District	Mason County Fire District #6	Stevens County Fire District #5
Ferry/Okanogan Fire District #13	Mason County Fire District #9	Stevens County Fire District #9
Ferry/Okanogan Fire District #14	Medical Lake Fire Department	Stevens County Fire District #10
FireSafe Spokane	North Central Washington RC&D	Stevens County Fire District #11
Franklin County Fire District #2	Northwest Management	Thurston County Fire District #4
FSA Advertising & Media, Inc	Okanogan County Fire District #5	Thurston County Fire District #11
George Flanigan, Consultant	Okanogan County Fire District #6	Thurston County Fire District #14
Goldendale Volunteer Fire Department	Okanogan County Fire District #7	Thurston County Solid Waste
Grace Tree Service	Okanogan County Fire District #8	TimberServ
Grant County Fire District #7	Okanogan County Fire District #9	University of Washington
Grant County Fire District #8	Okanogan County Fire District #12	Washington State Fish & Wildlife
Grant County Fire District #11	Olympic Builders	Washington State Parks
Grant County Fire District #12	Pacific County Fire District #3	Wahkiakum County Fire District #3
Grant County Fire District #13	Partnership for a Sustainable Methow	Wahkiakum Public Utility District
Grays Harbor County Fire District #7	Pend Oreille County Fire District #3	Whatcom County Fire District #11
Grays Harbor County Fire District #11	Pend Oreille County Fire District #6	Whatcom County Fire District #13
Grays Harbor County Fire District #14	Pend Oreille County Fire District #8	Whitman County Fire District #11
Ilwaco Fire Department	Pierce County Fire District #14	Whitman County Fire District #14
Inland Power & Light Company	Pierce County Fire District #18	Yakima County Fire District #7
Jefferson County Fire District #3	Pierce County Fire District #23	Yakima County Fire District #14
		Yakima County Fire Marshal

# Safer Communities Healthier Forests Economic Opportunities

**W**ildfire is a fact of life in Washington. It is a key part of the life cycle of the 22 million acres of private, state and federal forests that cover nearly 50 percent of the state.

Because it also threatens human life and property, wildfire has long been suppressed. But in a fire-adapted ecosystem, suppressing fire does not make the threat go away. To the contrary, in the West, the result of decades of fire suppression has been increased forest fuels and increased risk of catastrophic fire.

The National Fire Plan addresses this increased risk and focuses on helping states like Washington protect people and sustain resources in fire-adapted ecosystems.

On the following pages, you'll find profiles of projects funded through the Plan to increase prevention and firefighting capability, reduce hazardous fuels, restore fire-adapted forest ecosystems, and increase community assistance.

Through projects such as these, Washington is working to reduce the risks, so people and fire both can have a place in healthy forests.

## Pulling Together



In Washington State and across the West, it has become apparent that in order to protect lives, property and healthy ecosystems, we have to understand fire's role in our forests, and we have to plan and manage for it.

This reality has been brought home by a danger thought to have been put behind us a half a century ago: Fires that burn thousands of acres, destroy homes and threaten entire communities.

Decades of successfully suppressing fire has led to a widespread decline in forest health. Many forests are out of balance — overcrowded, weakened by disease, dominated by the wrong species — and heavily loaded with woody fuel. Add population growth in forested areas to that, and you have a recipe for catastrophic fires.

Fortunately, throughout the West, state and federal agencies, local communities, private contractors, non-profit groups and individual citizens are now teaming up to reduce that risk. Funding provided by Congress through the National Fire Plan has enabled hundreds of cooperative projects in widespread efforts to meet the plan's goals:

- ▶ Increase fire suppression capability,
- ▶ Reduce hazardous fuels,
- ▶ Increase community capacity, and
- ▶ Restore forest ecosystems.

As in other western states, the fire danger that Washington faces didn't develop overnight, and it won't go away overnight either. Reducing that risk is a huge job, but we are already seeing homes and resources saved through these efforts. Working together, the people of Washington and their state, federal and local partners have begun to make a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Sutherland".

DOUG SUTHERLAND  
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS

# Increasing Suppression Capability

Increased preparedness is improving Washington's capacity to prevent wildfires and perform initial attack. This is being accomplished through enhanced fire training, planning assistance, shared equipment-use contracts, improved workforce strategies, and continued collaboration to improve the placement of crews and equipment. National Fire Plan funds are being used to help fire agencies operate at full capacity to ensure optimal readiness.

## Farmers, Ranchers, Shrub-Steppe Benefit



DOUGLAS COUNTY

This refurbished truck will lessen the time it takes to stop wildfires from destroying local wheat crops and cattle grazing areas.

Douglas County Fire Protection District 8 was in desperate need of an initial attack firefighting truck before an \$18,000 National Fire Plan grant from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), \$2,300 in matching funds, and 80 hours of volunteer labor allowed the district to purchase a former BLM engine and refurbish it.

Serving about 75 Coulee City area residents, mostly wheat farmers and cattle ranchers, District 8 volunteers were short the fully equipped, four-wheel drive engine with foam capability necessary to quickly squelch yearly fires caused by lightning, machinery mishaps, and careless motorists.

District residents know from experience that uncontrolled wildfires can have a devastating impact on farm crops, animals, and the shrub-steppe ecosystem on which they all depend.

The district's participation in the Rural Fire Assistance Program has provided Douglas 8 volunteers with the reliable equipment needed to enter into Mutual Aid Agreements with Douglas and Chelan counties and to be able to fulfill their suppression obligations.

One week after putting the truck into service, district staff responded to and suppressed a lightning-caused fire that threatened BLM-managed lands.

## Engine Protects Columbia Gorge Region



GOLDENDALE CITY

Special equipment, like this portable water tank, pump and hose reel, improves the entire region's preparedness.

Thanks to an \$18,000 grant from the Bureau of Land Management, and \$2,000 in matching district funds, the 28-person Goldendale Volunteer Fire Department is now better equipped to respond to regional fire starts triggered by frequent thunderstorms and dry lightning.

### FEDERAL FUNDS HAVE ENHANCED THE ENTIRE REGION'S SUPPRESSION CAPABILITIES.

Using National Fire Plan funds and 40 hours of volunteer labor, the department was able to purchase an almost-new one-ton truck and the water tank, pump, radios and light bars necessary to transform it into a fully equipped, four-wheel drive, wildland brush engine with foam capability. Federal funds have enhanced the entire region's suppression capabilities.

Goldendale, which provides weekly volunteer firefighting training, provides mutual aid to all 14 of the county's fire departments/districts, to the nearby towns of Bingen and White Salmon, to Wasco and Sherman counties in Oregon, and to the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Columbia Gorge Scenic Management Area.

The refurbished engine also improves Goldendale's ability to protect itself. The community of 3,760 people is a 30-minute drive from its nearest neighbor city.

# Reducing Hazardous Fuels

The removal of hazardous fuels minimizes the risk of unwanted wildland fires to communities, natural resources, and cultural resources, and will help restore health to fire-adapted ecosystems. Past disruptions of natural fire cycles, as well as other management practices, have resulted in wildfires of increasing intensity and severity. Primary goals include reducing and removing fuels in the wildland urban interface, applied research and technology development, and forest health management.

## Avoiding Another Yacolt Burn



CLARK,  
COWLITZ &  
SKAMANIA  
COUNTIES

Clearing trails and forest roads of excess vegetation improves emergency vehicle access and reduces fire risk.

Many new Southwest Washington residents remain unaware of the 238,000-acre Yacolt Burn, which 100 years ago proved that Western Washington is no stranger to catastrophic fire.

Today, Clark, Cowlitz, and Skamania counties are crowded with more than 400,000 residents — many of whom live and work near the Yacolt Burn, in forested neighborhoods, by popular camping areas, and next to recreation-intense state and national parks, forests and wilderness areas.

In response to that fire danger, worsened by recent drought, local fire experts are conducting free FireWise workshops to encourage the public to take action.

In the communities of Amboy, Cathlamet, Yacolt, La Center, North Bonneville, Ridgefield, Stevenson, and Yacolt, the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is also using National Fire Plan funds to create private and public partnerships to reduce the risk by September, 2002, of some of Southwest Washington's most at-risk homes.

The goal is to create model neighborhoods and to develop a "critical mass" of FireWise homes that inspire other homeowners to take independent prevention steps.

Grant-funded crews clear brush, trim trees, and widen driveways for fire engines. In return, homeowners agree to keep the brush trimmed for the next 10 years.

## Working Together in Northeast Washington



PEND OREILLE  
COUNTY

Defensible space: a homeowner's best friend in fire country.

Environmental groups, forestry contractors, and natural resource agencies don't always agree on natural resource solutions. In Northeast Washington, however, multiple private and public organizations and agencies are working together to protect homes from wildfire.

**// THIS COOPERATIVE EFFORT IS JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF MANY DEFENSIBLE SPACE PROJECTS CARRIED OUT IN WASHINGTON AS A RESULT OF CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING. //**

**DICK DUNTON**  
DNR NE ASSISTANT REGION MANAGER

As part of that effort, the Lands Council is educating rural homeowners in Stevens, Pend Oreille, and northern Spokane counties about regional fire risk and the need for structure protection, and then helping individuals develop defensible space plans. The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has also contracted with Consulting Forester Don

Stragis, Druids Reforestation, and Chewach Enterprises to implement those plans and carry out fuel reduction work.

By year's end, DNR expects to complete in Northeast Washington fuel reduction work around approximately 2,000 homes. The effort is funded through National Fire Plan grants provided by the USDA Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Bureau of Land Management.

# Increasing Community Capacity

As the nation's demographics change, developed areas and individual home sites increasingly extend into wildland areas. Community involvement is a critical element in restoring damaged landscapes and reducing fire hazards near homes and communities. Community assistance programs focus on building state and community capacity to develop and implement citizen-driven solutions that will lessen local vulnerability to risks associated with wildland fires.

## Chipping Replaces Backyard Burning



THURSTON COUNTY

An employee of All Tree & Landscape, a Thurston County business, operates a portable chipper during a free wood disposal day for homeowners.

Backyard burning continues to be the most common method of fuel reduction among rural landowners. Using National Fire Plan funds, the Washington Department of Natural Resources and Thurston County Solid Waste Division are encouraging homeowners to change that practice.

DNR and county staff are organizing and publicizing eight, free, all-day mobile "chip and grind events." Residents bring forest debris to two different county sites, where it is chipped by a local contractor and hauled to a composting facility or pulp mill.

Citizens learn about air quality benefits, vegetative biomass, defensible space, and the risk of debris burns escaping.

"The Thurston County Mobile Chip and Grind program has reduced backyard burning, eliminated disposal costs for residents, and created local employment opportunities. Given regional burn bans, it's necessary to offer our residents alternatives such as this one," said Michelle Andrews, Thurston County Solid Waste Division.

**THE CHIP AND GRIND PROGRAM HAS REDUCED BACKYARD BURNING, ELIMINATED DISPOSAL COSTS FOR RESIDENTS, AND CREATED LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.**

## Remote Lummi Island: A Logistical Challenge



LUMMI ISLAND

As part of its community education program, firefighters simulate an emergency rescue from a second-story housing complex.

Accessible only by ferry or private boat, Lummi Island is beautiful, idyllic, remote, and at high risk of wildfire. Lummi also lies in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains and has one of Western Washington's driest climates.

The island has limited roads, 628 permanent residents and another 500 or so seasonal residents with summer cabins. A 1995 island wildfire demonstrated the logistical challenges inherent in attempting a quick initial attack when limited by ferry speed and carrying capacity.

State, county and island fire staff used National Fire Plan funding to encourage island residents to create defensible space and for actual fuel reduction work. Project organizers initiated local mailings, newspaper articles, a one-day FireWise workshop, and an one-day field workshop to assess and determine hazard reduction methods.

"Here in Western Washington, most people maintain the attitude that they'll never be personally affected by a wildfire. This project has given folks a better sense of the island's real fire danger. That has motivated people to carry out prevention activities they otherwise would have delayed, or not done at all," said Lummi Island and Whatcom County Fire District #11 Chief Duncan McLane.

Grant funds will also be used to perform fuel reduction work. DNR correctional crews, fire district staff, and contract wood chippers will supply the labor.

# Restoring Forest Ecosystems

Forests that are out of balance are at greater risk of fire. Dead wood from disease and insect infestations is a source of deadly fuel. Overcrowded forest stands can turn a ground fire into a crown fire and a lightning start into a statewide disaster. Projects that focus on forest health and restoration of natural ecosystem balance are key to reducing the long-term risk of catastrophic fires.

## Riverside State Park Safer Now



RIVERSIDE  
STATE PARK

After removing excess vegetation, crews chip the debris and blow it onto the ground, where it will recycle nutrients back into the soil.

In 2001, Riverside State Park received a National Fire Plan grant to carry out fuel reduction work in a small area of the park populated by dense, uneven-aged stands of ponderosa pine, excess vegetation, and flammable ladder fuels.

The popular state park, located along the Spokane River, is both surrounded by heavy residential development and home to forest stands grown dense and overcrowded by years of Spokane-area fire suppression.

In keeping with the park's vegetation management plan, and following silvicultural prescriptions, park managers used federal funds in the Nine-Mile area to reduce stand density to 100 stems per acre and to remove trees with diameters of eight inches or less.

Correctional crews supervised by Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff removed trees and piled slash for chipping by Washington Conservation Corp members.

"This project is a perfect example of how agencies can work together to accomplish wildfire risk reduction on public lands. Park managers have since applied for new grants to carry out similar fuel reduction work at Mount Spokane and Lake Wenatchee state parks and for additional work at Riverside," said Marty Davis, Washington State Parks.

## 200 Loon Lake Homes Protected



STEVENS  
COUNTY

Before: Overcrowded, unhealthy forest with storm debris creating extreme wildfire hazard. After: Healthy, wildfire-resistant forest.

Funded by Washington's 75 percent federal / 25 percent landowner Forest Stewardship Cost-Share Program, 200 Stevens County family forest owners at extreme fire risk from accumulated winter storm debris are able to hire private consulting foresters and contract workers to develop and carry out ecosystem-based Forest Stewardship / Wildfire Hazard Reduction Plans.

**// TODAY, EVERY HOME IS OUT OF HARM'S WAY AND FOREST HEALTH, AESTHETICS, AND WILDLIFE HABITAT HAVE BEEN GREATLY IMPROVED. //**

**BRIAN VRABLICK**  
CONSULTING FORESTER

DNR's Loon Lake project generated short-term, living-wage employment for about a dozen people. It also created shaded fuel breaks, reduced accumulated storm damage debris, and established defensible space around all 200 homes.

A National Fire Plan project, Loon Lake and others like it are restoring forest ecosystems to a more natural, healthy, and fire-resistant state — similar to what occurred before human

settlement, when low-intensity wildfires frequently burned across the landscape.

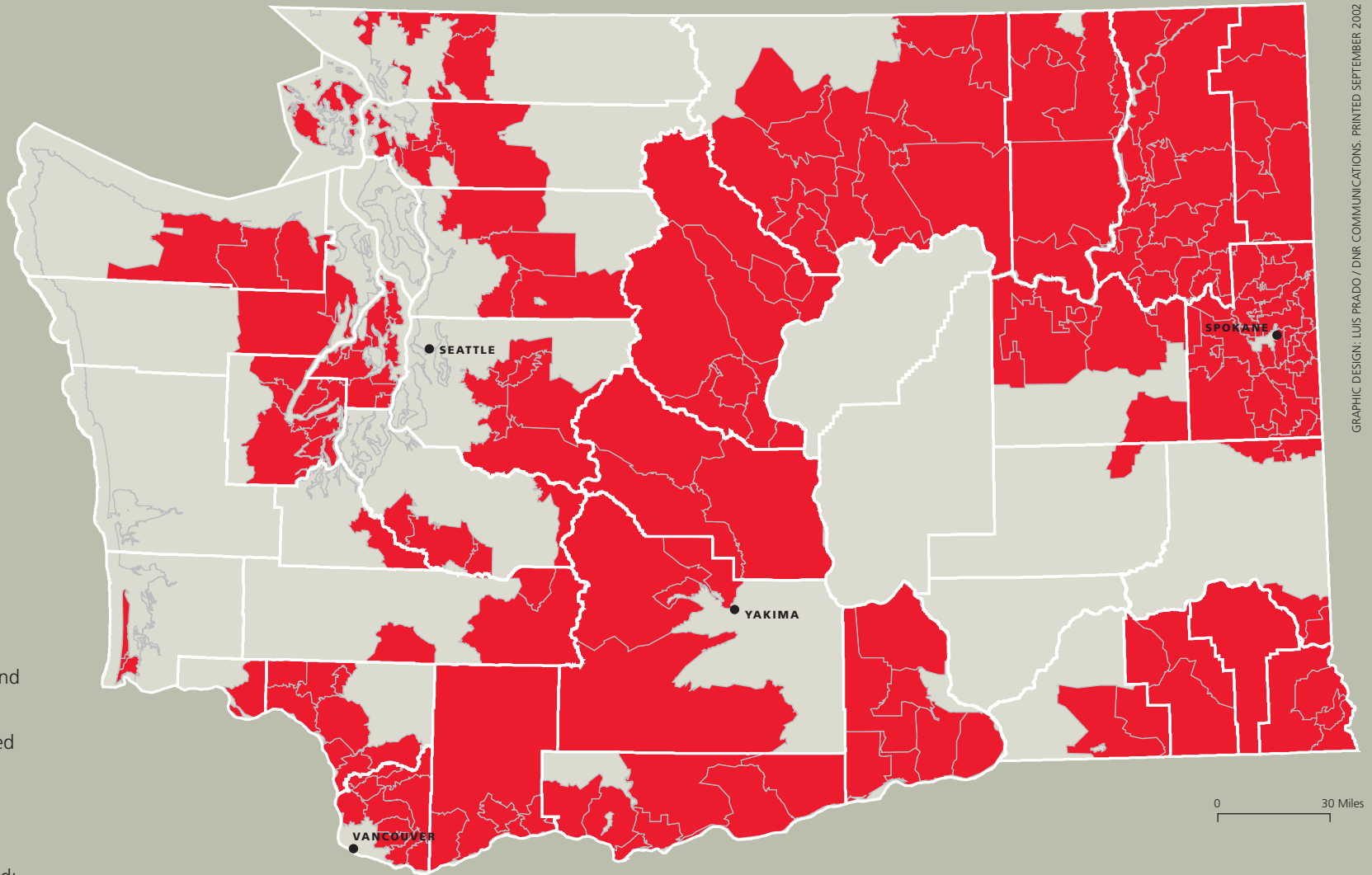
The Loon Lake project has been deemed a success in regional media reports and continues to be used as a demonstration site for others.

■ AREAS OF FIRE RISK  
 — COUNTY BOUNDARIES

# Washington Communities at Risk of Wildfire

This map shows in red (by zip code area) the Washington communities considered at risk of wildfire as assessed in 2000 by DNR and its local and federal partners.

Each community was evaluated as to the area's fire behavior potential, fire protection capability, and risk to social, cultural, and community resources. Risk factors included: area fire history, type and density of vegetative fuels, extreme weather conditions, topography, the number and density of structures and their distance from fuels, location of municipal watersheds and likely loss of housing or businesses.



- |                   |               |                |                            |               |                         |               |                 |                  |            |            |                           |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|------------|---------------------------|
| 9-Mile Rogers Bar | Bingen        | Chattaroy      | Elbe                       | Gifford       | Kelso                   | Malo          | Newman Lake     | Packwood         | Ridgefield | Stehekin   | Valleyford                |
| Acme              | Boyd          | Cheney         | Elk                        | Goldendale    | Kettle Falls            | Manson        | Newport         | Pateros          | Riverside  | Stevenson  | Vancouver                 |
| Addy              | Bremerton     | Chewelah       | Ellensburg                 | Granite Falls | Kingston                | Marblemount   | Nine Mile Falls | Peshastin        | Rockford   | Sultan     | Veradale                  |
| Allyn             | Brewster      | Clayton        | Elma                       | Grapeview     | Klickitat               | Matlock       | North Ahtanum   | Pomeroy          | Roosevelt  | Sugamish   | Waitsburg                 |
| Amboy             | Brinnon       | Cle Elum       | Entiat                     | Greenacres    | Lake Roosevelt Corridor | Mazama        | North Bend      | Port Angeles     | Roy        | Tahuya     | Washougal                 |
| Ariel             | Brush Prairie | Colbert        | Enumclaw                   | Hansville     | Leavenworth             | Mead          | Ocean Park      | Port Hadlock     | Selah      | Thorp      | Wauconda                  |
| Arlington         | Burlington    | Colville       | Etueville                  | Hoodspport    | Liberty Lake            | Medical Lake  | Okanogan Chelan | Port Orchard     | Seaham     | Tieton     | Wellpinit                 |
| Ashford           | Camas         | Cowiche        | Evans                      | Hunters       | Lilliwaup               | Methow        | Olalla          | Port Townsend    | Sequim     | Tonasket   | Wenatchee                 |
| Bainbridge Island | Cameron Lake  | Curlew         | Fairchild Air Force Base   | Ilwaco        | Long Beach              | Mica          | Olga            | Poulsbo          | Shelton    | Toutle     | White Salmon              |
| Baring            | Carlton       | Cusick         | Fall City                  | Inchelium     | Long Island             | Monroe        | Olympia         | Quilcene         | Silverdale | Tumtum     | Winthrop                  |
| Battle Ground     | Dayton        | Deming         | Ford                       | Issaquah      | Longview                | Moses Meadows | Oronville       | Randle           | Silverlake | Twin Lakes | Woodland                  |
| Belfair           | Carson        | Desautel       | Ford Cluster               | Kalama        | Loomis                  | Mossyrock     | Oroville        | Ravensdale       | Snoqualmie | Twisp      | Yacolt                    |
| Bellingham        | Cashmere      | East Wenatchee | Fort Simcoe Job Corp. Ctr. | Keller        | Loon Lake               | Naches        | Otis Orchards   | Reardan          | Spokane    | Underwood  | Yakama Indian Reservation |
| Bickleton         | Castle Rock   | Eatonville     | Friday Harbor              |               | Lyle                    | Naselle       |                 | Republic         | Spangle    | Union      | Yakima                    |
|                   | Centerville   |                | Fruitland                  |               | Malaga                  | Nespelem      |                 | Reservation Road | Springdale | Usk        | Yelm                      |
|                   |               |                | Georgeville                |               |                         |               |                 | Rice             |            | Valley     |                           |

MAP SOURCE: DNR