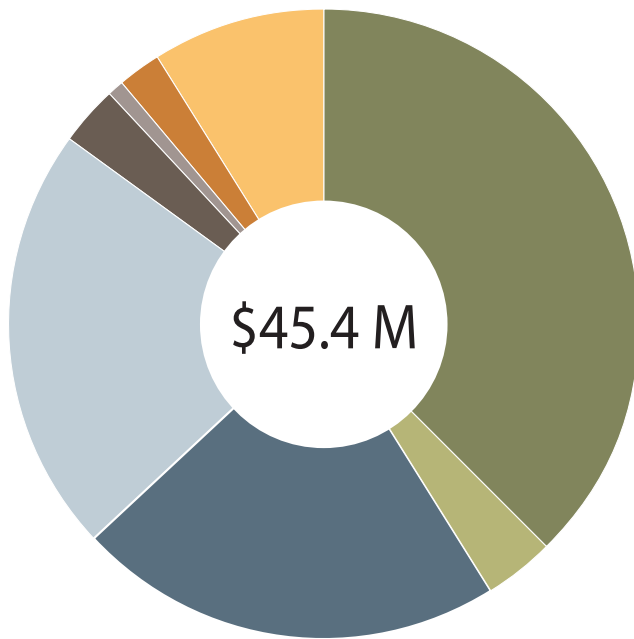




# 2019-21 Biennium Operating Budget Request



- Conservation Technical Assistance - \$17,134,000
- Working Lands - \$1,648,000
- Voluntary Stewardship Program - \$9,925,000
- Forest, Range Health, Fire Assistance - \$9,950,000
- Conservation Education - \$1,395,000
- Natural Disaster Resiliency - \$400,000
- Targeted Outreach for Conservation - \$1,028,000
- Agricultural Conservation Science Program - \$3,975,000

## Budget Package Summaries

### CONSERVATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE - \$17,134,000

**What it does:** Builds CD capacity to address critical natural resource issues and respond to a growing number of landowners on a “wait list” for voluntary conservation services. Funding will enable CDs to cover administrative costs, provide technical assistance to livestock operators, and support project development (e.g. grant writing).

**If unfunded, what are the impacts?**

- Service requests will continue to be backlogged due to CD staffing levels far below the workload equivalent.
- Washington will miss an opportunity to engage more landowners as partners in achieving healthy water, air, and land.

### WORKING LANDS - \$1,648,000

**What it does:** Strengthens farmland viability in Washington by: 1) engaging veterans to become farmers; 2) creating new economic opportunities for small farms; 3) improving strategic planning for local farmland preservation; and, 4) boosting on-farm energy efficiency.

**If unfunded, what are the impacts?**

- Farmland and farming jobs will be lost as Washington farmers retire and there are fewer new farmers to replace them.
- Farm operation costs and greenhouse gas emissions will continue to rise due to inefficient on-farm energy systems.

### VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (VSP) - \$9,925,000

**What it does:** Ensures the successful implementation of county VSP work plans, including monitoring and reporting on the results of this work. Funded activities will protect critical areas and the viability of Washington’s agriculture. It also includes funding for 12 non-VSP counties to implement similar programs that protect critical areas.

**If unfunded, what are the impacts?**

- VSP work groups likely will be unable to fully implement their approved work plans.
- Negotiated solutions to voluntarily meet goals and objectives in accordance with the Growth Management Act will fail, and previous state investments in these efforts will be lost.

## FOREST, RANGE HEALTH, FIRE ASSISTANCE - \$9,950,000

**What it does:** Enables CDs to assist private landowners with enhancing forest and range stewardship, preparing for wildfires, and recovering natural resource and agricultural losses in areas burned by wildfire.

**If unfunded, what are the impacts?**

- Washington will miss this opportunity to make private forests and rangeland more healthy and resilient, which is a key piece to state and federal strategies for managing wildfires.
- There will be no reduction in the risk wildfires pose to private homes, farms, ranches, and forests.

## CONSERVATION EDUCATION - \$1,395,000

**What it does:** Provides the grant funding and coordination CDs need to deliver career-connected K-12 learning opportunities that inspire and prepare students across the state for our STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) job market.

**If unfunded, what are the impacts?**

- School districts with either no or limited access to place-based STEM lessons will continue to be underserved.
- CDs will continue to turn down teacher and school district requests for their K-12 programming.
- Students will miss this opportunity to learn from and be inspired by natural resource and agricultural professionals in their own community.

## NATURAL DISASTER RESILIENCY - \$400,000

**What it does:** Trains CD staff on natural disaster recovery protocols so they're ready to respond to and support disaster survivors in all areas of the state. The Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) will have increased capacity to coordinate these local efforts with federal and state agencies in order to efficiently deliver disaster recovery funding.

**If unfunded, what are the impacts?**

- The SCC and CDs will be forced to continue to provide piecemeal, inefficient, and ad hoc support to communities in need of natural disaster assistance.
- More landowners who are in need of disaster planning and recovery assistance will go unserved.

## TARGETED OUTREACH FOR CONSERVATION - \$1,028,000

**What it does:** Provides CDs with the funding needed to more broadly use proven-effective, targeted outreach methods that engage landowners with desired conservation behaviors. The resulting increase in conservation activities will help yield measureable natural resource improvements.

**If unfunded, what are the impacts?**

- CDs will be unable to fully leverage their skills and trusted reputation in order to engage the levels of landowner participation needed to improve resource conditions.
- Washington will miss an opportunity to increase the rate of recovery toward state and tribal priorities, such as salmon and shellfish recovery.

## AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION SCIENCE PROGRAM - \$3,975,000

**What it does:** Supports an Agricultural Conservation Science Program at the SCC. The SCC will coordinate with agencies, universities, and other partners to ensure applicable research findings are put into practice on the ground. CD employee certification/training programs will be expanded. Funding will support research on soil health, dairy distillation, pollutant tracking, and water quality trading.

**If unfunded, what are the impacts?**

- The opportunity to improve best management practices based on scientific research and monitoring will be lost.
- Inefficient coordination across natural resource and agricultural agencies will result in redundant and segregated research efforts.

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## CONTACT