

2023 WRCD ANNUAL REPORT



*Empowering communities today,
building resilience for tomorrow.*





WASHINGTON RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

VISION

Washington's communities and landscapes are resilient in the face of environmental and economic issues.

MISSION

We empower communities by equipping them with tools, resources, capacity, and connections to adapt to a changing world.



When I look out across Washington's diverse landscapes or meet with our communities – I am reminded daily of why our work matters. This past year has deepened my conviction that our individual and community resilience is deeply interwoven with these lands, whose futures depend on our collective stewardship.

This year, our dedicated team has woven equity and inclusion into our organizational values. They work tirelessly to build relationships and trust with local leaders who know their community best. Local knowledge has guided our approach to community wildfire adaptation, informed our prescribed fire work, and strengthened our salmon recovery efforts. Whether it's training local fire practitioners about prescribed burning or engaging with community-based organizations on wildfire preparedness and recovery, these partnerships are creating lasting change that extends far beyond our immediate projects.

The challenges we face in Washington can only be met through deep partnerships with the communities who live here. I'm inspired by how local leaders have stepped forward to ensure our collective work improves ecosystem health and builds community resilience.

As we look to the horizon, I see a future where healthy landscapes and thriving communities go hand in hand. Your continued partnership makes this vision possible – as we strengthen the fabric of our communities.

With gratitude and optimism,



Hilary Lundgren
Executive Director

BOARD MEMBERS



Thomas Coleman
President



Mike Tobin
Treasurer



Todd Greenwood
Secretary



Anna Lael
Board Member at Large



John "Ken" Tolonen
Board Member at Large

IN 2023, WE WELCOMED TWO NEW MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:



Ali Zaidi, Board Member at Large

Ali is a student at the University of Washington seeking a degree in Community, Environment, Planning, and Sustainability Studies. Ali has traveled across the globe to support conservation efforts in remote and rural communities. He currently lives in Seattle, Washington.



Tony Craven, Board Member at Large

Tony's family migrated to Roslyn in the late 1880s as some of the first black people to move to Washington State. Tony has been engaged in wildland fire for 30 years. Tony is the Chair of the Kittitas Fire Adapted Community Coalition, serves on the Washington State Wildland Fire Advisory Committee, and brings his experience working with smaller communities and grassroots organizations to the WRCD.

With gratitude and appreciation, we thank Reese Lolley and David Nickinovich for their dedicated service and invaluable contributions during their tenure on the WRCD's Board of Directors. Their passion and leadership have made a lasting impact on the WRCD and set the foundation for continued contributions to community-led natural resource management.



Hilary Lundgren
Executive Director



Reese Lolley
Strategy & Partnerships Director



Brian Miller
Program Manager

MEET REESE LOLLEY, WRCD'S STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS DIRECTOR

Throughout the past decade, Reese has actively collaborated with WRCD as a board member and partner on various community and conservation initiatives.

In April 2023, Reese transitioned to join the WRCD staff, focusing on cultivating synergistic partnerships across local, state, and federal levels to fulfill organizational and partner objectives and drive positive outcomes for community and ecosystem resilience in Washington.



Kara Karboski
Program Manager



Keegan Fengler
Program Manager



Tessa Vermuel
Project Manager



TJ Mattingly
Contracts & Administration

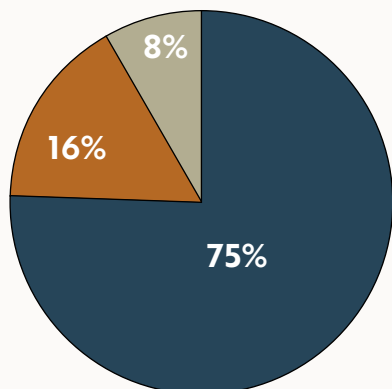


Deysi Gonzalez
Bookkeeper

WRCD PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS

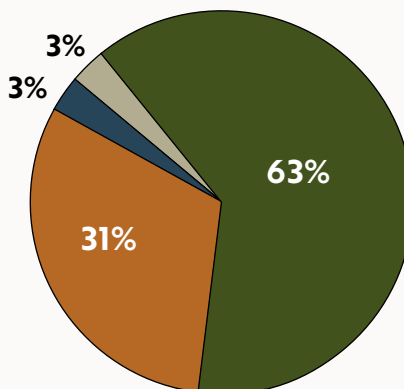
Revenue: \$1,691,439

- Federal
- Private
- State
- Other (<1%)



Expenses: \$1,646,824

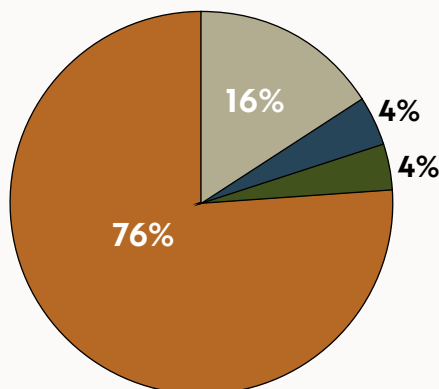
- Contracts
- Travel & Hosted Events
- Wages & Benefits
- Other



FISCAL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

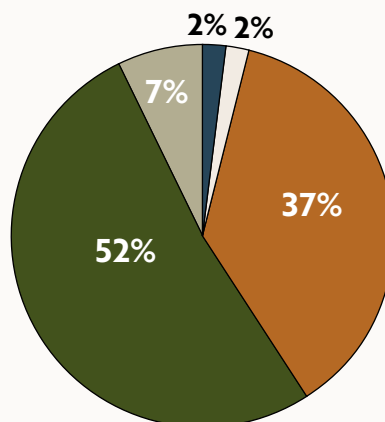
Revenue: \$207,878

- Federal
- Private
- State
- Other



Expenses: \$202,323

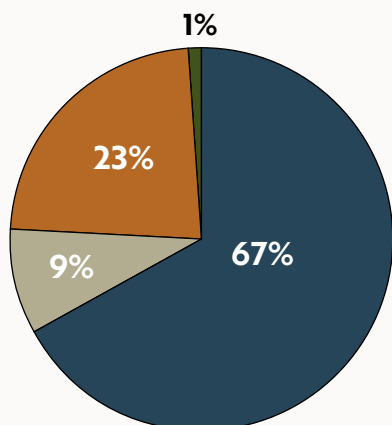
- Contracts
- Fiscal Sponsorship Fee
- Wages
- Office Expenses
- Other



TOTAL

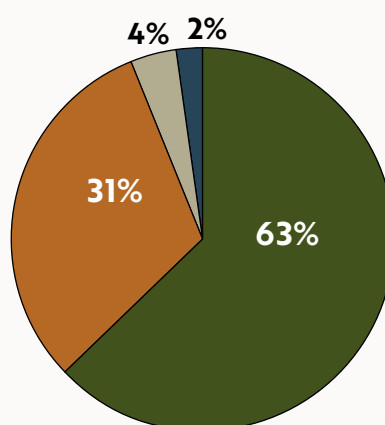
Revenue: \$1,899,317

- Federal
- Private
- State
- Other



Expenses: \$1,849,147

- Other
- Wages & Benefits
- Contracts
- Travel & Hosted Events



*With gratitude & appreciation,
WRCD programs and projects are supported by:*

Bonneville Power Administration

Cascadia Conservation District

City of Cle Elum

City of Roslyn

Coalitions and Collaboratives

Gesseron LLC dba Munchen Haus

Julie Mackoff

Kathryn Heim

Kittitas Conservation Trust

Kittitas County

Kittitas County Conservation District

Kittitas County Fire District 1

Kittitas County Fire District 6

Kittitas County Fire District 7

Kittitas Valley Fire and Rescue

Master Gardener Foundation

North Yakima Conservation District

Resources Legacy Fund

Suncadia Community Council

The Nature Conservancy

The Watershed Training
and Research Center

US Bureau of Land Management

US Fish and Wildlife Service

US Forest Service

Washington Department
of Fish and Wildlife

Washington Department of Natural
Resources

Washington Farm Forestry
Association, Kittitas Chapter

Washington State
Conservation Commission

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

OUR PROGRESS

In 2023, WRCD continued to make progress toward the **four bold steps** outlined in our [Strategic Plan](#):

1. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Inspire, enable, and cultivate a shared culture of conservation that includes all community members

2. PROGRAMS

Maintain and invest in quality programming

3. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Develop capacity and build for the future

4. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Radically increase awareness and knowledge of WRCD – who we are, what we do and why, and how and who we partner with

OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION.

In 2023, the WRCD formally adopted our [Commitment to Equity](#), including our five [Core Values](#):



SUPPORTING ON-THE-GROUND WORK.

INVESTED **\$1.6 million** to support three core organizational programs and community fire adaptation projects:



COMMUNITY WILDFIRE
RESILIENCE



SALMON HABITAT
RESTORATION



COMMUNITY-LED
PRESCRIBED FIRE



Supported Kittitas County Partners to complete CWPP partnership assessment, accomplishments summary, and summary of recommendations for CWPP update in 2024.

Finalized the Yakima CWPP, and developed a complementary Yakima CWPP Summary, CWPP Resident Mitigation Resource Guide, and Yakima CWPP ArcGIS Storymap.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE.

We are forging strong partnerships to engage in systems-level change to accomplish shared objectives and bolster resilience in Washington's communities and ecosystems.

IN 2023, THE WRCD WORKED WITH PARTNERS TO...

Provide recommendations to more holistically incorporate community resilience and strategic wildland fire response strategies in the **Washington Shrub Steppe Resilience and Restoration Initiative**.

Collaborate with the Washington Conservation Commission and conservation districts to plan and host training for community fire adaptation practitioners.

Participate on the advisory committee to support the development of the 2023 Washington **Prescribed Fire Barriers Assessment Report** and Strategic Action Plan.

Engage with prescribed fire policy leaders across the country in the National Prescribed Fire Policy Working Group.

Complete a Community Prescribed Fire Needs Assessment focused on emerging **Washington Prescribed Burn Association** development.

ELEVATING VISIBILITY TO OUR WORK.

- We invested time and energy into defining who we are at the WRCD through developing a new brand and logo.
- We relaunched the WAFAC newsletter and **blog** to share more about our work along with our partners' work.
- We developed new resources on community fire adaptation to bring awareness to our programming.

The Yakima Tributary Access & Habitat Program (YTAHP) is a shining example of conservation in action. Since its inception in 2001, this program has been dedicated to revitalizing crucial salmon habitats with the help of landowners. By undertaking various projects, YTAHP works tirelessly to safeguard, repair, and enhance riparian and floodplain areas vital for salmon to thrive.

In FY 2023, YTAHP worked to develop, design, permit, and construct nine projects in Yakima River tributaries.



OUTCOMES:

Restored fish passage to

4.5 MILES

of Yakima River tributary
habitat used by salmonids
for spawning and rearing.

Screened

**4.6 CUBIC FT
PER SECOND**

of water to prevent
fish entrapment.

Revegetated and fenced

0.2 ACRE + 0.2 MILE

of stream for riparian habitat.

Ongoing riparian
vegetation and site
stewardship on

4 PROJECTS

Provided significant
work toward project
development, permits,
design, & funding for

**8 ADDITIONAL
PROJECTS**

Expended

\$801K

toward fish access and
habitat restoration.

Leveraged

\$420K

in funding from other
sources for project
implementation.

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR WORK

FireAdaptedWashington.org

The Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (WAFAC) supports local action, connects people to resources, and informs and influences on-the-ground projects to help Washington better live with wildfire.

WRCD staff unite communities, agencies, and organizations to develop and act on place-based strategies and priorities. WAFAC has 112 members from 45 organizations, with 14 new members joining in 2023.



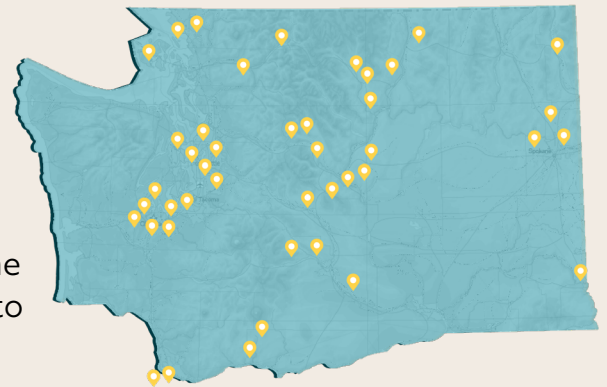
[LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR WORK](#)

WAFAC ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

In 2023, we paired 14 members to increase mentorship opportunities.

Mentors and mentees shared their work and resources with WAFAC members through learning events. We curated these best practices and resources into a series of before, during, and after the fire toolkits and guides for others across the nation to use and adapt to their place:

FireAdaptedWashington.org/toolkit/



9

Education
Events

13

Workshops and
Trainings

46

Communities
Assisted

83

Acres of
Vegetation
Removed



Community-Led Prescribed Burning Program

WashingtonRCD.org/programs-projects/#community-led

The Community-Led Prescribed Burning Program at WRCD supports locally-based organizations and leaders by providing them with the resources, knowledge, and capacity to implement prescribed fire in their place. Through technical assistance, mentorship, funding, training, and engagement with federal and state strategies and policies, this program seeks to empower communities and individuals to use fire as a tool, not just to reduce wildfire risk and return beneficial fire to our forests and ecosystems, but as a way to engage communities in a broader conversation about the role of fire and our relationship to it.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS:

PBA LEARNING EXCHANGE

In March 2023, staff from WRCD and seven partners from Washington went down to Northern California for a week to learn about Prescribed Burn Associations (PBAs), talk with PBA leaders, study the ins and outs of starting a PBA, and gather lessons learned through field trips, work sessions, and engaging with people in place. It was an inspiring week, and everyone left feeling energized to bring all these ideas back to practice back home.

As one Learning Exchange participant said: "It was like drinking water at the oasis after wandering in the desert." (Chris Adlam, Oregon State University Extension)

In Washington, two emerging PBAs put on Learn & Burn events in May, exhibiting what they learned in Northern California, supported by WRCD staff and other partners.

[READ THE BLOG POST](#)

PRESCRIBED FIRE TRAINING EXCHANGE

Two TRENCH events occurred in Washington in the fall of 2023. WRCD staff led the planning and implementation of the Selkirk TRENCH in northeast Washington, and supported the Columbia Gorge TRENCH out of Glenwood, WA, led by Mt. Adams Resource Stewards with funding and technical assistance. TRENCH continues to provide essential training and learning opportunities for prescribed fire and engage local communities and leaders in prescribed fire conversations and partnerships.

2023 TRENCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

72

PARTICIPANTS

39

TASKBOOK TRAINING
OPPORTUNITIES

74 ACRES
BURNED

INCLUDING 244 ACRES ON
PRIVATE LANDS

In 2023, the WRCD fiscally sponsored
four place-based collaboratives and coalitions:



**CHUMSTICK WILDFIRE
STEWARDSHIP COALITION**

Leavenworth, WA • Since 2008



**KITTITAS
Fire Adapted
Communities
COALITION**

Fire Adapted
Methow Valley



Táp'ash

SUSTAINABLE FOREST COLLABORATIVE

Fiscal sponsorship allows these local groups to receive funding to implement community-based projects under the WRCD's 501(c)(3) charitable organization status and offer tax-exempt status to donors, apply for foundation and government grants, and benefit from the administrative systems already in place within the WRCD allowing them to focus on getting the work done on the ground.

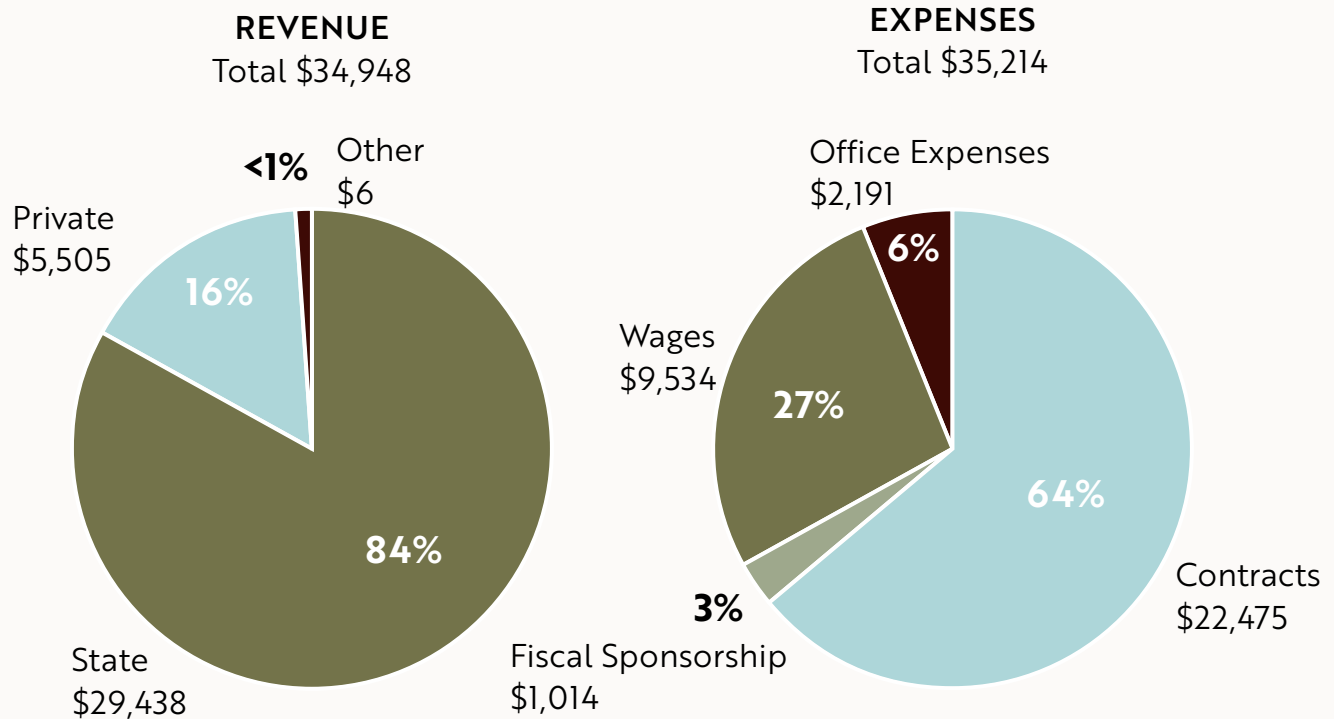


The Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition (CWSC) has been promoting the adaptation of fire-resilient practices in the greater Leavenworth, Washington area for the past 15 years. In 2023, CWSC efforts focused on community outreach and fuel reduction activities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Planned and hosted a community town hall featuring keynote speaker, Rick Stratton from the USFS Fire Science Laboratory. Feature and panel presentations addressed fire risk modeling, preparedness, and risk reduction strategies.
- Coordinated the removal and disposal of vegetation from the property of approximately 80 landowners at a chipping event hosted by the CWSC and Chelan Fire District 3
- Organized and hosted the first public presentation and vetting of the USFS 115,000-acre Chumstick to Lower Peshastin Project, attended by over 65 residents and organizational partners.

FINANCES:



The Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition is fiscally sponsored by the Washington Resource Conservation and Development Council (WRCD). Financial support is provided by the Washington Department of Natural Resources, Community Foundation of North Central Washington, and donations.



The Kittitas Fire Adapted Communities Coalition (KFACC) is a collaborative group of stakeholders and community members who live and work in Kittitas County and recognize the importance of wildfire issues.

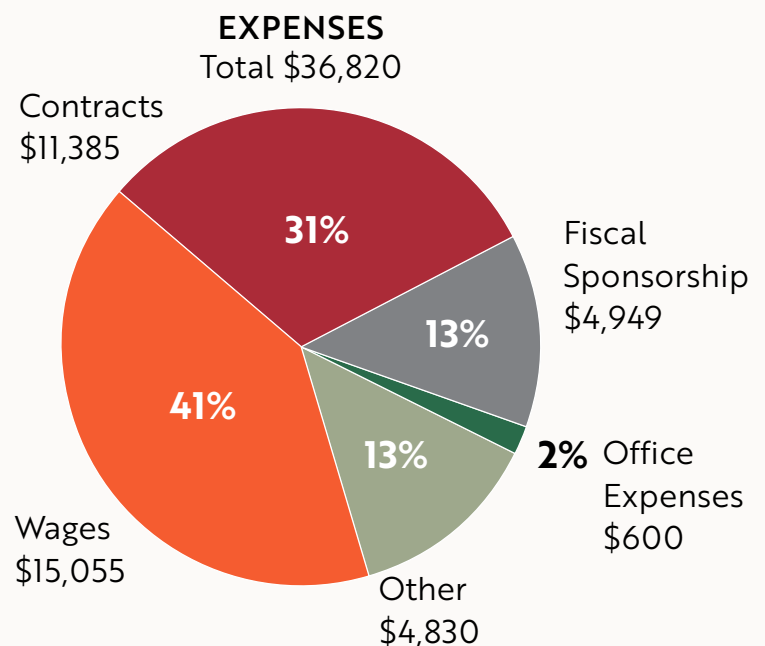
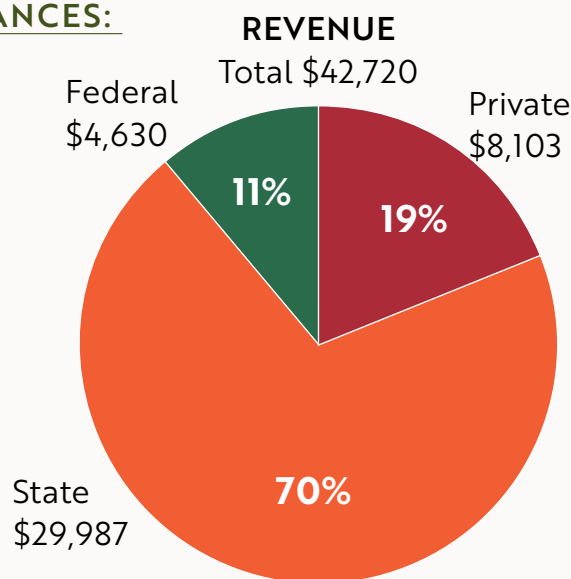
WRCD staff have continued to coordinate and facilitate monthly KFACC meetings, support communications, and procure and manage grant funding to move forward with priority wildfire resilience work. KFACC meetings continue to provide a platform for stakeholders to convene and identify opportunities to align initiatives.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Created and mailed defensible space flyers to 7,895 residences.
- Prepared a Community Wildfire Defense Grant application to support the Kittitas County CWPP update.
- Updated the **KFACC website**.
- Hosted six educational wildfire outreach events.
- Established a subcommittee to research biomass utilization options.
- Supported DNR's Wildfire Ready Neighbors wildfire risk assessment program.

KFACC collaborated with Kittitas Conservation District to secure a \$10 million Community Wildfire Defense Grant for countywide fuel reduction and wildfire preparedness in 2023!

FINANCES:



Kittitas Fire Adapted Communities Coalition is fiscally sponsored and facilitated by the Washington Resource Conservation and Development Council (WRCD). Financial support is provided by the USDA Forest Service through a Cost-Share Agreement with the WRCD, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and donors.

Through collaborations with local, regional, statewide, and nationwide partners, Fire Adapted Methow Valley (FAMV) brings fire preparedness education, demonstration, and assistance to Methow Valley community members and visitors.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Equitable Mitigation Program Pilot

- Completed the **Equitable Mitigation Program (EMP)** pilot and research report and toolkit for developing and managing an EMP.

Outreach and Education

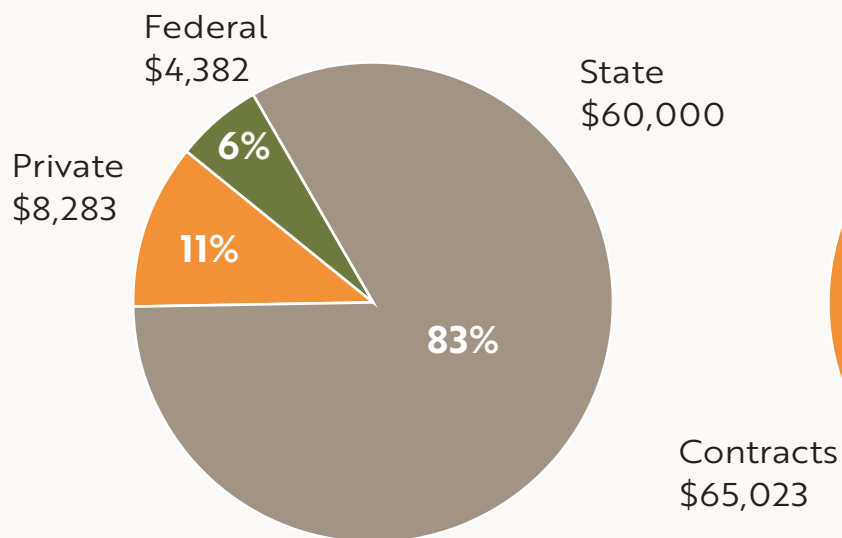
- Worked with several neighborhoods to provide Firewise USA® site education and resources, forest health information, and best practices for reducing the risk of home ignition from embers. Collaborated with Okanogan Conservation District to provide vegetation removal and disposal resources.
- Partnered with Friends of the Winthrop Public Library (FOWL) and WSU Master Gardener's to host a Fire Resistant Residential Landscape training for the public.
- Collaborated with FOWL, Methow Conservancy, and consultants to develop and design eleven interpretive signs for installation at the public library's fire-resistant demo landscape.

Organizational Development

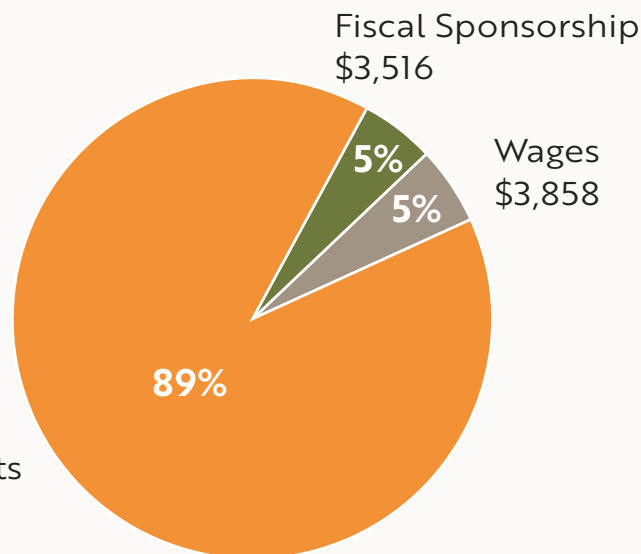
- Initiated and conducted stakeholder research and organizational planning and development to secure new leadership for FAMV.

FINANCES:

REVENUE
Total \$72,666



EXPENSES
Total \$72,672



Fire Adapted Methow Valley is fiscally sponsored by the Washington Resource Conservation and Development Council (WRCD). Financial support is provided by the USDA Forest Service through a Cost-Share Agreement with the WRCD, Coalitions and Collaboratives, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Community Foundation of North Central Washington, and donations.

The Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative (Tapash) works to improve the landscape's ecosystem health and natural functions through active restoration projects backed by best science, community engagement, and adaptive management.

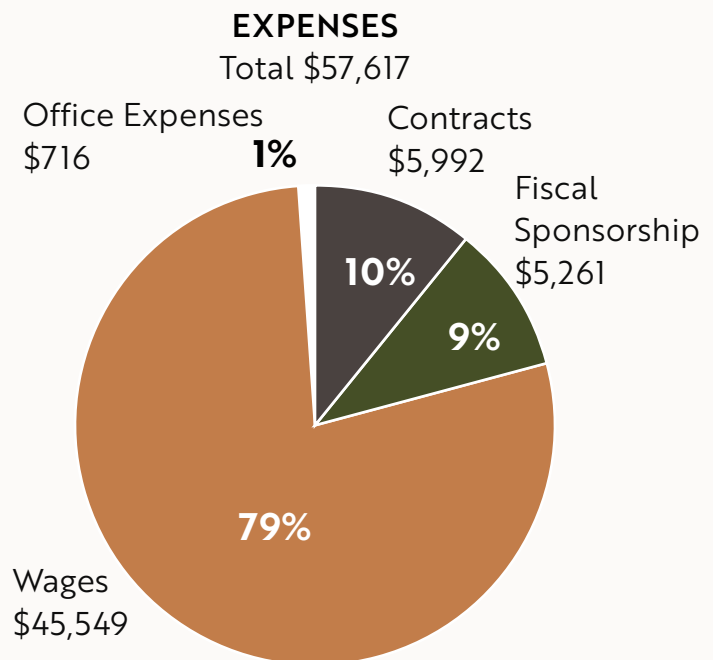
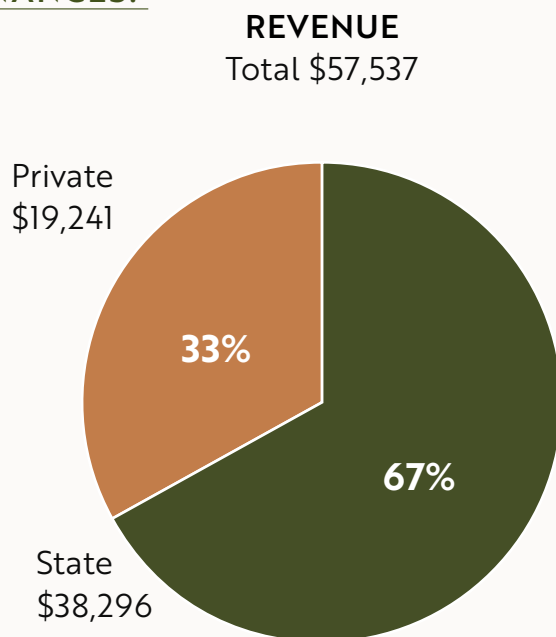
Over the last year, the WRCD facilitated and coordinated Executive Committee meetings, focused on coordinating working groups, aligning efforts across the Collaborative with the Central Washington Initiative, and with collaborating with partners to identify community engagement strategies.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Manastash Taneum Restoration Project. After over five years of collaboration with USFS and Tapash partners, including project management, outreach events, and grant management, the Taneum EA was signed by USFS in April 2023. WRCD utilized lessons learned to create an after-action review process, which will be piloted for implementation planning in Tapash landscapes and other complex NEPA projects.

Naches Working Group. The Naches Working Group identifies restoration priorities and strategies across disciplines in the watershed. This year, they expanded their service area, and WRCD facilitated discussions on capacity needs and engagement in larger collaborative processes and secured \$50,000 in funding for facilitation and strategic planning in 2024.

FINANCES:



The Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative functions under a multi-party agreement between the Yakama Nation, The Nature Conservancy, the USDA Forest Service, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

The WRCD's fiscal sponsorship of the Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative ended in October 2023.



109 South 3rd Street | Yakima, WA 98901 | WashingtonRCD.org