

# 2024 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.



In 2024, the Washington Resource Conservation and Development Council (WRCD) continued to build upon our strong foundation as a facilitator of community partnerships and as an expert resource for the collaborative stewardship of our state's lands and waters. This year, the Washington State Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (WAFAC) celebrated its 10th anniversary and initiated the development of a Community Wildfire Ambassador program, and the Community-led Prescribed Burning Program hosted its 3rd successful Selkirk Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREX) in a row.

We also signed a memorandum of understanding that formalized continued collaboration in Community Wildfire Resilience with Washington State Conservation Commission and Washington Department of Natural Resources, signaling the long-term commitment of the state to these efforts. We continued coordinating the Yakima Tributary Access & Habitat Program (YTAHP), a model program for the restoration of salmonid habitat through private landowner and public entity collaboration now in its 24th year. In 2024, YTHAP opened up 3 miles of new habitat in Yakima River tributaries and began work on 5 additional projects.

2024 was also a year of expansion in new directions. Sophia Fox, our new Natural Hazards Planner, began working with communities to address the gap in access to key resources for wildfire protection planning, increasing our capacity to support communities in all three stages of wildland fire planning: before, during, and after. Amelia Wells, our new Communications Specialist, led the efforts to improve our digital communications and outreach, including overseeing the Spanish translation of WAFAC resources, in collaboration with community partner CAFÉ (The Community for the Advancement of Family Education). We welcomed new board members Lilliane Ballesteros and Hanne Beener, and are excited about the perspectives and experiences they will bring to the board.

As we turn towards 2025, we will continue to provide opportunities for communities of residents, practitioners, and professionals to grow knowledge, build connections, and create movements. Our work would not be possible without the support and commitment of our partners - Thank you!

Sincerely,



**Tony Craven**  
Board President

## BOARD MEMBERS

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**Tony Craven**  
President



**Mike Tobin**  
Treasurer



**Thomas Coleman**  
Secretary



**Lilliane Ballesteros**  
Board Member at Large



**Hanne Beener**  
Board Member at Large



**Kimberly Brinkley**  
Board Member at Large



**Todd Greenwood**  
Board Member at Large



**Anna Lael**  
Board Member at Large



**John "Ken" Tolonen**  
Board Member at Large



**Ali Zaidi**  
Board Member at Large



**Hilary Lundgren**  
Executive Director

### THANK YOU TO HILARY LUNDGREN...

This year we said goodbye to Executive Director Hilary Lundgren, who joined Resource Legacy Fund as a Program Officer. During her time as Executive Director, Hilary worked to strengthen our organizational capacity and build a strategic vision centered on collaboration and community. Prior to becoming director, Hilary was integral to the development of the Washington State Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, which continues into the present. We are deeply appreciative of Hilary's contributions to WRCD and wish her the best in her new position.

**Reese Lolley**

Strategy &amp; Partnerships Director

**Brian Miller**

Program Manager

**Kara Karboski**

Program Manager

**Keegan Fengler**

Program Manager

**Deysi Gonzalez**

Bookkeeper

**TJ Mattingly**

Contracts &amp; Administration

**WE WELCOMED TWO NEW STAFF MEMBERS IN 2024...**

Amelia Wells joined as the Communications Specialist. She has her B.A. from Whitman College and her M.M.A from the University of Washington. Her graduate capstone project focused on community climate resilience on the Kuskokwim River in Alaska. Sophia Fox, WRCD's new Natural Hazards Planner, graduated from Western Washington University with a degree in Environmental Studies, where she focused on natural hazards planning and emergency management.

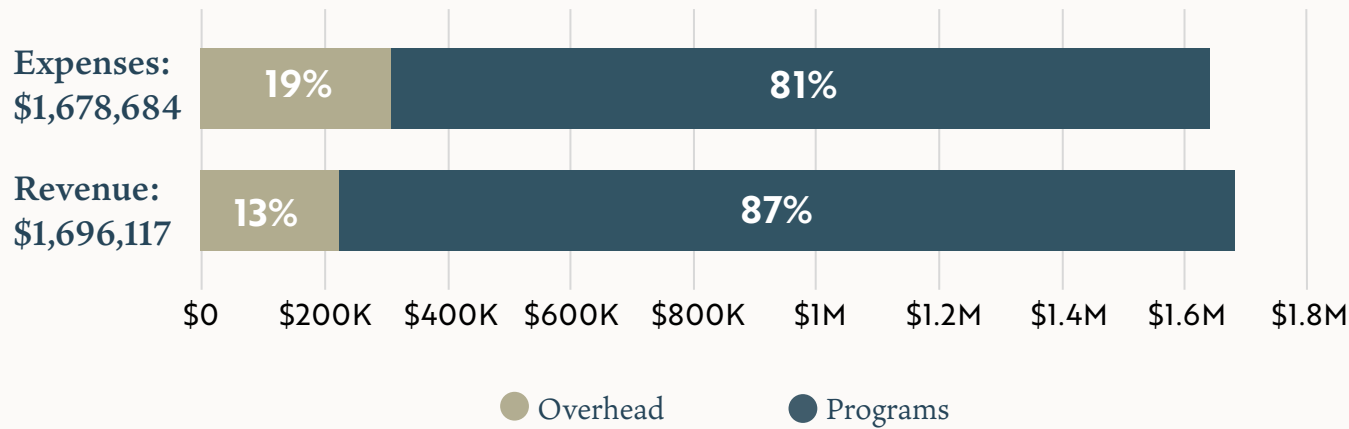
**Amelia Wells**

Communications Specialist

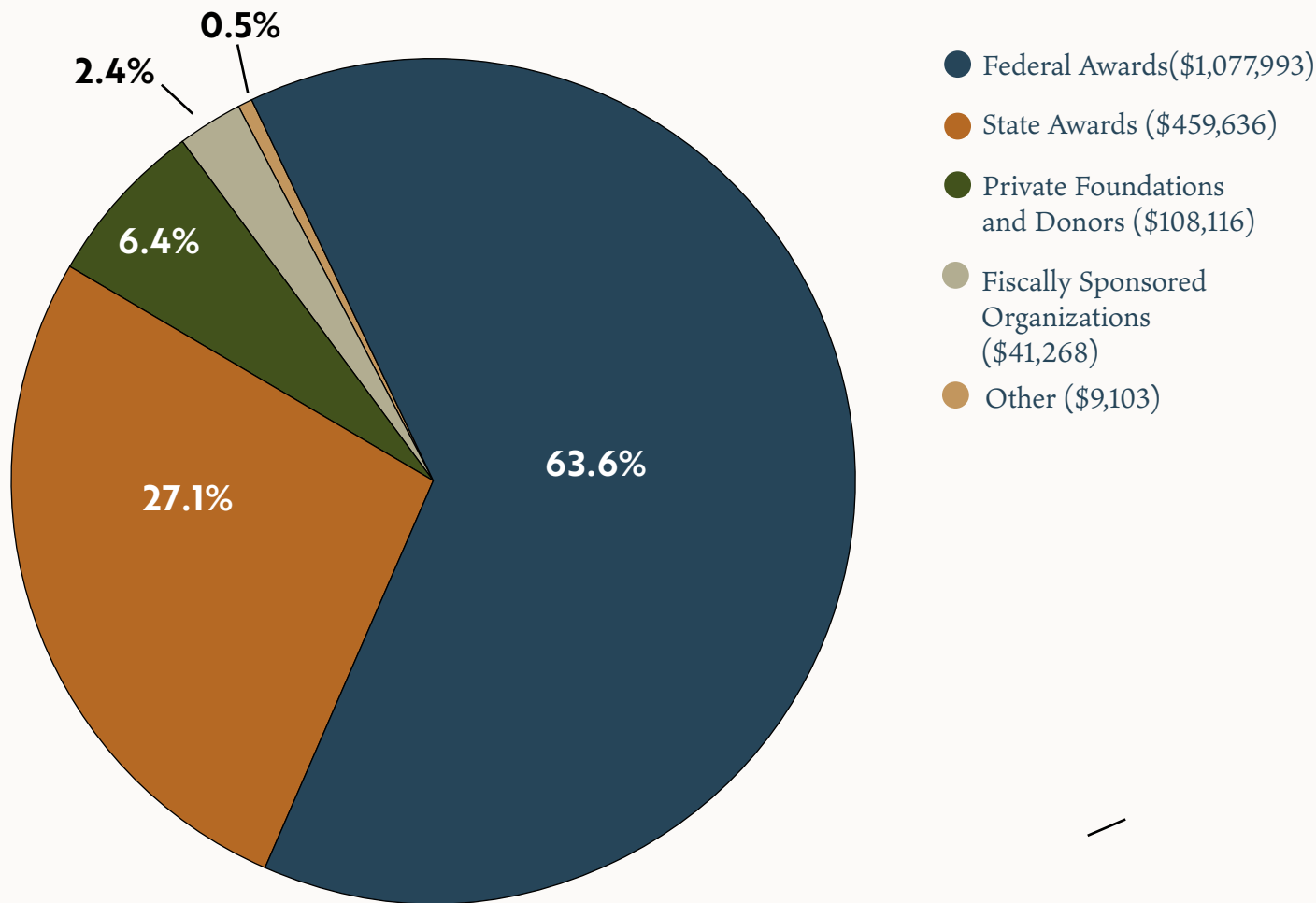
**Sophia Fox**

Natural Hazards Planner

TOTAL REVENUE AND EXPENSES



REVENUE PERCENTAGES



FISCALLY SPONSORED PROJECTS


Fiscal sponsorship enables WRCD to provide financial oversight and organizational capacity to projects whose missions align with our own. Fiscal sponsorship allows individuals or collaboratives to test drive ideas, new organizations to accept donations while awaiting 501(c)(3) status, or provide a home for projects that prefer not to form a new entity. In 2024, WRCD provided fiscal sponsorship and administrative services to three coalitions, in support of their work to build wildfire resilient communities: Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition (CWSC) and Fire Adapted Methow (FAM) as they worked towards forming their own 501(c)(3) entities, as well as Kittitas Fire Adapted Communities Coalition (KFACC), a long term fiscally sponsored project of WRCD.

IN 2024...




KFACC was awarded a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) grant through the US Forest Service to identify priorities for wildfire risk mitigation and hosted a women’s chainsaw class to build capacity in fuels reduction work for all community members.

*WRCD is proud to support these local organizations getting work done on the ground.*

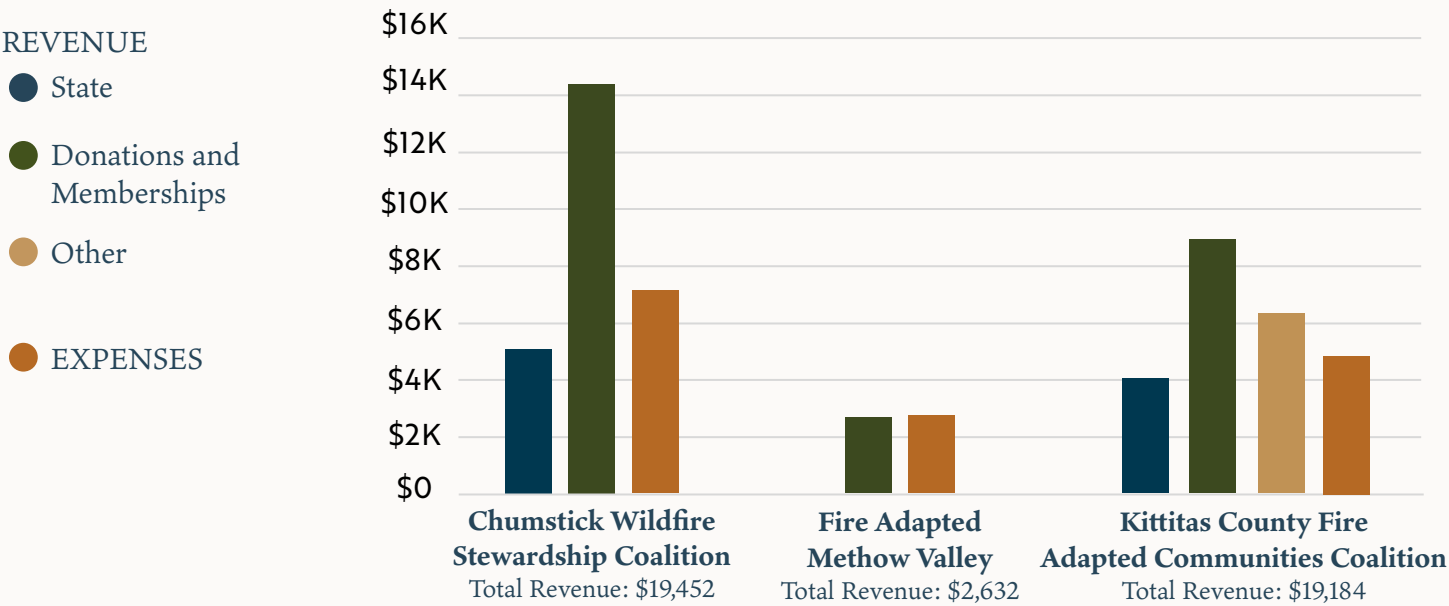


FAM started its Neighborhood Ambassador Program, with assistance from WA DNR, hosting 21 ambassadors from 17 different neighborhoods in the Methow Valley, as well as participating on a fire preparedness task force with the Town of Winthrop. FAM also completed local data collection for a Wildfire Research (WiRē) Team study on the social perceptions of wildfire risk, risk mitigation behaviors, and barriers and incentives to mitigate wildfire risk on private land parcels.



CWSC hosted bi-monthly neighborhood meetings addressing a variety of wildfire-related topics. Its annual Town Hall event featured Battalion Chief Sean Smith, who discussed lessons from the Paradise Fire in California. CWSC also participated in the update processes for the Chelan County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and CWPP, and partnered with Fire District 3 and the Chelan County Fire Marshal to identify strategic locations for 22,000-gallon remote water tanks.

FISCALLY SPONSORED GROUPS REVENUE & EXPENSES



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

Bonneville Power Administration

Cascadia Conservation District

City of Cle Elum

City of Roslyn

David Nickinovich

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

North Yakima Conservation District

Puget Sound Energy

Resources Legacy Fund

Snoqualmie Pass Fire and Rescue

Suncadia Community Council

The Nature Conservancy

The Watershed Training and Research  
Center

US Bureau of Land Management

US Forest Service

Washington Department of Fish and  
Wildlife

Washington Department of Natural  
Resources

Washington State Conservation  
Commission

The Don and Anne Stager Family  
Foundation

TJ Cycyota - donated to WAFAC via Paypal

Washington Department of Ecology

Americorps

Washington State Recreation and  
Conservation Office

## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

*In 2024, the WRCD strengthened existing relationships and formed new partnerships to promote lasting progress, pursue common objectives, and enhance the resilience of Washington's communities and ecosystems.*

WRCD drafted and formalized a strategic partnership with the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) through a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** to strengthen statewide community wildfire resilience. It establishes a framework for joint decision-making, resource sharing, and annual coordination to advance equitable, accessible, and impactful wildfire resilience initiatives across Washington.

In close partnership with the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest and others, the WRCD successfully completed the **Tapash Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program 15-Year Monitoring Report**. This milestone report reflects over a decade of collaborative investment across Tribal, federal, state, and local partners, documenting the ecological, social, and economic outcomes of one of Washington's most ambitious all-lands forest restoration efforts.

A **Community Fire Resilience Workgroup** was established to initiate a process to identify priorities for changes to fire adapted communities' policy and funding mechanisms in Washington. The Workgroup developed the **Community Fire Resilience Workgroup Summary and Recommendations**.

Ongoing work with the **Washington Shrub-Steppe Restoration Initiative** resulted in the incorporation of stronger Fire Adapted Communities principles into the Initiative's work, aligning community resilience with landscape restoration goals in the **final strategy**.

## ELEVATING VISIBILITY TO OUR WORK

After developing a new brand and logo in 2023, we launched WRCD's new website in 2024 ([washingtonrccd.org](http://washingtonrccd.org)) to more effectively communicate the work we do with the public. Our new platform dives into the history of WRCD, outlines our values and approach, and further highlights our evolving programming.



YTAHP aims to restore salmonid passage, protect fish from diversion entrainment, and enhance riparian and instream habitat in Yakima River tributaries on private lands. Through the YTAHP Program, partners prioritize project development, implementation, and monitoring to maximize watershed benefits, bringing together people and nature for a common cause.

In FY 2024, YTAHP implemented six fish passage and habitat restoration projects in Yakima River tributaries.

Leveraged

**\$904<sub>K</sub>**

in funding from other  
sources for project  
implementation.

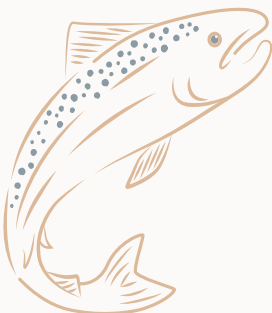
Expended

**\$773<sub>K</sub>**

toward fish access and  
habitat restoration.

#### PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: WENAS CREEK

The removal of a fish passage barrier on Wenas Creek opened an additional 3 miles of accessible fish habitat upstream.



LEARN MORE ABOUT  
OUR WORK

#### OUTCOMES:

Restored fish passage to

**3.0 MILES**

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

Screened

**13.6 CUBIC FT  
PER SECOND**

of water to prevent  
fish entrapment.

Installed

**.12 MILES**

of riparian planting on two  
streams in the Yakima basin.

Ongoing riparian  
vegetation and site  
stewardship on

**5 PROJECTS**

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

**5 ADDITIONAL  
PROJECTS**

## COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RESILIENCE

There is growing pressure to accelerate systems and practices of effective community wildfire preparedness to increase community resilience over time. Washington's communities are made up of people with diverse identities, circumstances, and lived environments. Their needs, experiences, and values are essential to shaping solutions that will help us build a future where we can live more safely and sustainably with wildfire. Through ongoing work with partners and community fire practitioners, Washington Resource Conservation and Development Council (WRCD) staff listen and strive to engage in projects and develop programs that support and advance systems and practices of effective community wildfire preparedness and resilience.

IN 2024, the WRCD launched 3 new programs and project areas:

- Community Wildfire Ambassadors
- Post-Fire Preparedness and Recovery
- Community Wildfire Protection Planning



COMMUNITY  
WILDFIRE  
PROTECTION PLANNING



### Post-Fire Preparedness and Recovery

In partnership with Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Post-Fire Recovery Program and the Okanogan County Long Term Recovery Group, WRCD staff began a new post-fire preparedness and recovery project to compile and create Washington-specific wildfire recovery resources.

Progress in 2024:

- Developed the logo and brand for [afterthefirewa.org](https://afterthefirewa.org)
- Hosted 7 meetings with recovery experts and practitioners
- Collected and created 5 wildfire recovery case studies

### Community Wildfire Ambassadors

In 2024, WRCD partnered with WDNR to adapt Colorado's successful Neighborhood Ambassadors model for statewide use in Washington. The team traveled to Colorado for coordinator training, met with active program leaders, and developed a draft program plan. Two organizations were funded to pilot what is now called the Community Wildfire Ambassador (CWA) Approach in Washington.

In 2025, we aim to finalize the program plan, host at least one CWA Coordinator Training, create resources for coordinators and ambassadors, provide technical support and mentoring, and launch online spaces for resource sharing and learning.

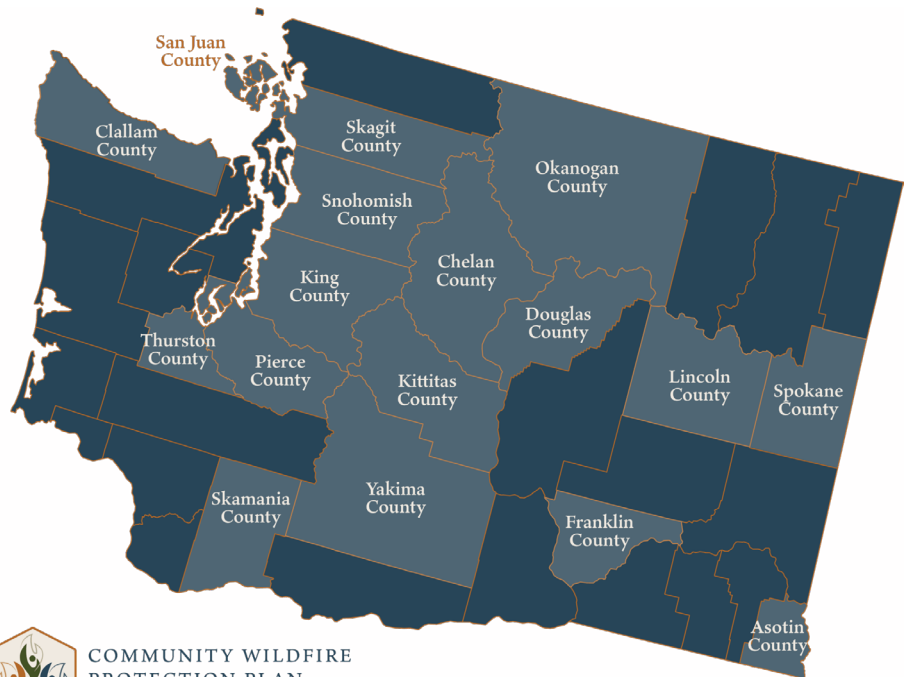


Over the past year, WRCD has advanced Community Wildfire Protection Planning (CWPP) across Washington, providing critical technical assistance, facilitation, and resources to help communities reduce wildfire risk and build long-term resilience. This work, supported through partnerships with the Washington Department of Natural Resources, The Watershed Research and Training Center, Okanogan County Long Term Recovery Group, and the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, directly contributes to Washington's 10-Year Wildland Fire Protection Strategic Plan and the Washington State Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network Program goals.

### HIGHLIGHTS:

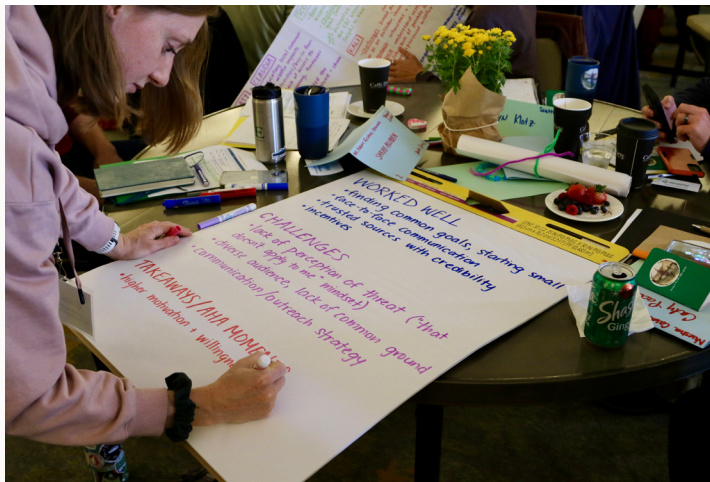
- **Supported CWPP planning and updates in 17 counties across Washington**, providing facilitation, technical assistance, and guidance tailored to each community's needs.
- **Co-funded CWPP development in 3 counties**, leveraging resources to advance planning in priority areas.
- **Hosted 5 CWPP Learning Sessions**, providing peer learning opportunities on best practices, planning frameworks, and implementation strategies.
- **Held 3 CWPP Office Hours sessions** to provide direct, on-demand support for community leaders and planners working on CWPPs.
- **Presented at 4 partner learning opportunities/webinars**, sharing insights and lessons learned to advance statewide understanding and alignment on effective CWPP development and implementation.

A core focus of this year's work has been identifying and addressing common gaps in communities' abilities to successfully plan and collaborate for wildfire resilience. By addressing capacity gaps and providing technical support, we are helping communities transform planning efforts into measurable actions that protect people, ecosystems, and economies from the increasing impacts of wildfire. This work continues to position WRCD as a statewide leader in advancing effective, actionable CWPPs that are both grounded in local needs while maintaining connection to broader wildfire resilience strategies across Washington.



The Washington State Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (WAFAC) is a peer learning network that supports local action, connects people to resources, facilitates results, and informs on-the-ground projects to help Washington better adapt to wildfire. Our members are leading the way to better prepare our communities before, during, and after fires by engaging local organizations and agencies to develop and act on place-based strategies and priorities. As of 2024, WAFAC has 104 members from 49 organizations.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR WORK](#)  
[WAFAC 2024 ANNUAL REPORT](#)



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

In our effort to help communities live with wildfire, WAFAC is always striving to provide relevant and useful learning opportunities for our members. In 2024, WAFAC hosted new learning series, developed more resources, and worked to translate both our website and additional resources into Spanish in order to enhance their accessibility for Latinx communities.

**17** TRAINING AND LEARNING  
OPPORTUNITIES

**300+** IN-PERSON AND  
VIRTUAL ATTENDEES

**70** local, state, and federal community fire adaptation practitioners attended the WAFAC Annual Workshop in October, 2024. We gathered for three days to share best practices, learn from peers, and brainstorm ideas for supporting our communities' wildfire resilience efforts.

*To ensure our learning opportunities are accessible to as many people as possible, all events hosted by WAFAC, including the annual workshop, are free of charge to participants. When feasible, we aim to subsidize travel and accommodation costs as well.*



# Community-led Prescribed Burning Program

[WashingtonRCD.org/programs-projects/#community-led](https://WashingtonRCD.org/programs-projects/#community-led)

The Community-led Prescribed Burning Program at WRCD is working to reduce wildfire risk and return beneficial fire to the forests and fire-dependent ecosystems in which our communities are based. We do this by providing locally based organizations and leaders with technical assistance, mentorship, training, and resources to implement prescribed fire in their community, and through partnership, policy, and coalition building across the state to increase beneficial fire on all lands.

In 2024, this work focused on supporting the development of Prescribed Burn Associations (PBAs), supporting the efforts of the Washington Prescribed Fire Council by leading the Policy Committee, and planning and coordinating Selkirk TRENCH for the third year in a row.

## SELKIRK TRENCH

In October, Selkirk TRENCH was held for the third year in northeast Washington. Unusually dry conditions focused training efforts on small, but effective training burns on private lands near Chewelah, WA. This partnership and training continues to support community engagement, collaboration around prescribed fire in the region, and the strengthening of a trained and qualified workforce.

15 TRAINING  
ASSIGNMENTS

43 PARTICIPANTS

24 ACRES BURNED  
ON PRIVATE LANDS

## PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATIONS

In 2024, Washington's three PBAs continued to build and expand. WRCD supported many prescribed fire opportunities through planning, training, and networking events.

2024 also saw the launch of the Washington PBA website ([wapba.org](https://wapba.org)) to provide connection between existing PBAs and resources to landowners wanting to burn their lands.

7 LEARNING  
EVENTS

4 ACRES  
BURNED

40+ PEOPLE  
TRAINED





109 South 3rd Street | Yakima, WA 98901 | [WashingtonRCD.org](http://WashingtonRCD.org)