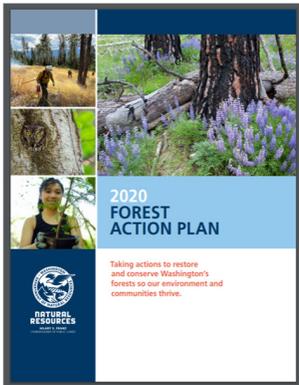


# WASHINGTON

## Washington State Department of Natural Resources

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources' Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program and the Washington Community Forestry Council (WCFC) are centering equity and environmental justice in their work. The program and the council have taken steps in recent years that have culminated in the passage of new legislation for urban forestry in Washington State. This new legislation recognizes urban forestry as a tool to address issues of social and environmental equity and provides 2.68 million in new state funding to accomplish that work.



In 2020, the WCFC assisted the UCF program with setting goals for inclusion in the Washington State Forest Action Plan. The first of four urban forestry goals outlined in the plan is to “Advance the equitable delivery of program services to address urban forestry needs in communities or neighborhoods that may be particularly vulnerable

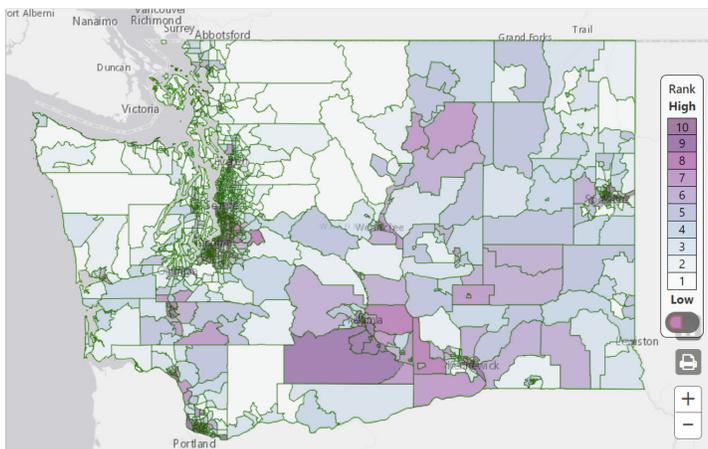
to the effects of climate change.” Both the program and the council are currently pursuing a number of identified subtasks that will reshape how the program delivers services to constituents, prioritizing equity and environmental justice in the process.

The WCFC was also instrumental in advocating for new legislation that would help the UCF Program provide increased levels of urban forestry assistance to Washington communities. Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1216 (E2SHB 1216) passed both houses of the Washington State Legislature and was signed into law by Governor Jay Inslee on May 11, 2021, though this would not have been

possible without the hardworking efforts of the WCFC.

This legislation provides 2.68 million dollars of new state funding to help communities develop tree inventories, tree canopy analyses, and urban forest management plans. To receive funding in the form of pass-through grants, applicants will be required to consider equity as a factor when analyzing data and prioritizing future investments in urban forests. Applicants will also be required to engage local residents in urban forestry planning processes. The UCF Program is obligated by the language in E2SHB 1216 to dedicate 50% of funding to support urban forestry work in “highly impacted communities.”

Highly impacted communities are those communities with census blocks having a ranked score of 8, 9, or 10 according to the Environmental Health Disparities Map, published by the Washington State Department of Health. The environmental health disparities map considers socioeconomic and demographic data, as well as data on exposure to a large number of environmental health hazards by census block. This web-based mapping tool will aid the UCF program in identifying areas of need for prioritized investments in urban forestry throughout the state.



(Top left) The Washington State Forest Action Plan is a five year plan outlining goals for a number of state forestry programs. Source: [https://dnr.wa.gov/publications/rp\\_2020\\_forest\\_action\\_plan.pdf](https://dnr.wa.gov/publications/rp_2020_forest_action_plan.pdf). Photo: Washington State Department of Natural Resources

(Bottom left) The Washington State Environmental Health Disparities Map is an interactive web-based mapping tool that ranks census blocks with a score of 1-10. High scores (purple) indicate areas of relatively high health disparity, whereas low scores (light blue to white) indicate areas of relatively low health disparity. Source: <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/wtn/WTNIBL/>. Photo: Washington State Department of Health

