

FOREST HEALTH

The impact of wildfires increasingly impacts citizens, outdoor activities and human health. This trend is expected to continue unless action is taken. Over eighty percent of Chelan County is publicly owned, and forests on these lands are unhealthy and susceptible to wildfire. The various government agencies with oversight of these lands have different responsibilities, engagement levels and incentives to find solutions. The level

of current activity by these agencies is insufficient to reverse this trend of wildfire devastation. Federal and state decision making processes, combined with fiscal challenges, are major impediments to action on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands. While streamlining of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is underway for restoration projects, actual change requires regional vocal strong support.

Guiding Principles

- » The Chamber supports exploring changes to Air Quality regulations at the state level to allow for more prescribed burns for the purpose of improving forest health and decrease the fuel for mega wildfires.
- » The Chamber supports partnering with the USFS on community development efforts that will increase the health of our area forests, provide job opportunities, and support stewardship of public lands while allowing for both motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities.
- » The Chamber supports development of infrastructure that will allow the forest industry to re-establish in North Central Washington.
- » The Chamber supports joint planning and coordination among public and private landowners and managers in Chelan and Douglas Counties.