



# Courthouse Briefing Document

## 2022

ADAMS  
ASOTIN  
BENTON  
CHELAN  
CLALLAM  
CLARK  
COLUMBIA  
COWLITZ  
DOUGLAS  
FERRY  
FRANKLIN  
GARFIELD  
GRANT  
GRAYS HARBOR  
ISLAND  
JEFFERSON  
KING  
KITSAP  
KITTITAS  
KLUCKITAT  
LEWIS  
LINCOLN  
MASON  
OKANOGAN  
PACIFIC  
PEND OREILLE



PIERCE  
SAN JUAN  
SKAGIT  
SKAMANIA  
SNOHOMISH  
SPOKANE  
STEVENS  
THURSTON  
WAHKIAKUM  
WALLA WALLA  
WHATCOM  
WHITMAN  
YAKIMA

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Olympia, WA 98501

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# Who We Are

## The Voice of Washington Counties

Created in 1906, the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) serves the counties of Washington State. Members include elected county commissioners, councilmembers, and executives from all of Washington's 39 counties. WSAC provides a variety of services to its member counties, including advocacy, professional development, public-private business partnerships, and a forum to network and share best practices.

While voting within the organization is limited to county commissioners, council members, and county executives, the Association also serves as an umbrella organization for affiliate organizations representing:

- County Road Engineers
- Local Public Health Officials
- County Administrators
- Solid Waste Managers
- County Human Service Administrators
- IT Directors
- Planning Directors
- Clerks of County Boards

WSAC also works closely with its sister organization, the Washington Association of County Officials (WACO), which serves independently elected non-judicial county officials, including assessors, auditors, treasurers, prosecutors, coroners, clerks, and sheriffs.



# 2021-22 WSAC Board of Directors



**PRESIDENT**  
**Jamie Stephens**  
San Juan County



**FIRST VICE PRESIDENT**  
**Mary Kunev**  
Spokane County



**SECOND VICE PRESIDENT**  
**Lisa Janicki**  
Skagit County



**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**  
**Michael Largent**  
Whitman County

The WSAC Board of Directors is responsible for the general supervision over the affairs of the Association per WSAC Bylaws and adopted policies and procedures.

## 2021-22 Activities

- Reviewed amicus filing requests and authorized participation
- Authorized filings and appeals of pending litigation
- Authorized and Monitor Indigent Defense Litigation
- Authorized and Monitor Blake Decision Litigation
- Appointments to Statewide Boards and Commissions
- Program Review and Oversight
- Develop and monitor Objective and Key Results for 2022-23
- Review and Approve 2020 Financials
- Review Organizational Culture and Values
- Appoint Legislative Steering Committee Members
- Appoint Federal Issue and Relations Committee Members
- Association Management in a COVID-19 Environment
- Review and Recommend Annual Budget and Program Expenditures, Dues, and Assessments
- Monitoring WSAC Financial Health

## 2022 Regular Board Meeting Dates

- Wednesday, February 2, 2022, Thurston County
- Wednesday, May 11, 2022, Pierce County
- Thursday, September 22, 2022, Kittitas County
- Tuesday, November 15, 2022, King County

## BOARD MEMBERS

Robert Gelder	Kitsap County
Scott Hutsell	Lincoln County
Stephanie Wright	Snohomish County
Dave Sauter	Klickitat County
Wes McCart	Stevens County
Chris Branch	Okanogan County
LaDon Linde	Yakima County
Art Swannack	Whitman County
Vickie Raines	Grays Harbor County
Nate Nehring	Snohomish County
Mark Ozias	Clallam County
Dennis Weber	Cowlitz County
Dow Constantine	King County
Joe McDermott	King County
Ryan Mello	Pierce County
Megan Dunn	Snohomish County
Josh Kerns	Spokane County
Karen Bowerman	Clark County
Tye Menser	Thurston County
Charlotte Garrido	Kitsap County
Amanda McKinney	Yakima County
Satpal Sidhu	Whatcom County
Will McKay	Benton County

## ALTERNATES

Chris Seubert	Asotin County
Brad Peck	Franklin County
Christine Minney	San Juan County
Temple Lentz	Clark County
Reagan Dunn	King County
Derek Young	Pierce County
Jared Mead	Snohomish County
Al French	Spokane County
Gary Medvigy	Clark County
Gary Edwards	Thurston County
Ron Anderson	Yakima County
Kaylee Galloway	Whatcom County
Jerome Delvin	Benton County



# Letter from Executive Director Eric Johnson

On Friday, May 18, 1984, my golden retriever Brubaker and I strode up to open the gates of Lewis County's Mayfield Lake County Park – starting my career and affinity for County Government. If that had been 2022, I would have taken a selfie!!! Sixteen years later, after being elected as a County Commissioner, I felt the same exhilaration, sense of responsibility, and frankly, awe to serve, as I took the steps to enter the Historic Lewis County Courthouse.

Now I sit at my desk in Thurston County, fortunate to serve hundreds of county elected officials and hundreds of county department heads, managers, and staff who deliver programs and services that are critical in the daily lives of our county residents.

One thing for me that has changed in the last 40 years of public service though is *The Degree of Difficulty*.

***“Degree of difficulty is a concept used in several sports and other competitions to indicate the technical difficulty of a skill, performance, or course, often as a factor in scoring.”***

In watching the Olympics this year, I thought about how your success as county elected and appointed officials is measured based on your execution and performance, and the public does not really give a hoot about any “degree of difficulty.” Yet I think there is one significant difference between the issues and challenges today's county elected and appointed officials face when compared to those of past: *The Degree of Difficulty*.

This is a 40 year personal professional reflection, affirmed by conversations that I have had with other colleagues, that I believe you each face unprecedented challenges as county elected and appointed officials. It is hard to fathom the complexity of the myriad of issues counties have faced over just the past two years. It has never been more challenging to be a public administrator or elected official. One silver lining is that county revenue is as strong for county government as it has been since the lost days of federal timber harvesting, federal revenue sharing, sales tax equalization, MVET for criminal justice and public health, and a 6% annual property tax increase limit!

While Counties' response to the COVID-19 Pandemic has dominated our Association work since February 2020, it does not solely reflect the depth of activities for the organization. Yet without question, aiding counties' response to and recovery from the pandemic and understanding the use Coronavirus Relief Funds and now American Rescue Plan Act funding has dominated our work and support for counties. Additionally, we continue to work in these core program areas:

- **Association public policy development:**

- **Transportation Funding**
- **Tax Reform**
- **GMA Reform**
- **Forest Resources and Public Lands**
- **Criminal Justice Reform**
- **Blake Decision Implementation**
- **Foundational Public Health Services/ System Structure**
- **Public and Behavioral Health**
- **Housing and Homelessness**

- Developing and planning to implement 2022-23 Organizational Goals, Objectives, and Actions.
- Advocacy, coordination, communication, and representation with the legislature and executive branch agencies/offices.
- Changing the manner that we deliver meetings, trainings and conferences from in-person to virtual and from virtual to hybrid and returning to in-person.
- Broadening our communication activities to keep our members and affiliates informed on issues relevant to county operations.
- Finding mechanisms to help the legislature, agencies/offices, and the public better understand county government.
- Represent county government in the judicial system.
- Manage and administer the business of the Association with integrity and efficiency.
- Perform affiliate management, coordination and communication.
- Provide training through County Development Institute, virtual assemblies, and a myriad of other workshops and online sessions.

I continue to be passionate about county government and the services that you all oversee and deliver. County government is the heart of a system of representative democracy where we elect our fellow residents to govern, administer, and legislate the programs and services that affect our everyday lives.

WSAC is fortunate to have a phenomenal set of leaders who I simply cannot thank enough:

**WSAC President Jamie Stephens (San Juan County)**

**WSAC 1st Vice President Mary Kuney (Spokane County)**

**WSAC 2nd Vice President Lisa Janicki (Skagit County)**

**Immediate Past President Michael Largent (Whitman County)**

**Legislative Steering Committee Co-Chair Kate Dean (Jefferson County)**

**Legislative Steering Committee Co-Chair Brad Peck (Franklin County)**

If you have questions, comments, concerns, or even praise about WSAC, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of your Association leaders or myself. Your WSAC staff is committed to serving you and working with each of you. We strive to serve you with integrity. We constantly remember to stay focused on executing our responsibilities to you with civility, thoughtfulness, professionalism, and respectful dialogue. It is an honor to serve you, the elected and appointed county officials whom the public has entrusted to lead county government in Washington State.



**Eric Johnson**  
Executive Director, WSAC

# Coronavirus Pandemic: Assisting Counties Respond

[wsac.org/recovery](http://wsac.org/recovery)

Public health has been a core function of County Government for decades, initially focusing on the spread of contagious diseases, sanitation, and preventing infectious diseases. Now, our County Commissioners/Councilmembers serve on our 35 Local Boards of Health that oversee our local public health departments that deliver crucial on-the-scene services and programs and implement the goals of Foundational Public Health Services. This pandemic has taught us how important public health preparedness is and the role WSAC and our partner affiliate, Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO), can play in being a convener and communicator. As counties continue to lead the pandemic response and recovery, WSAC is focused on disseminating useful information to our members and facilitating the exchange of effective strategies and approaches. Hundreds of county leaders joined WSAC's weekly Virtual Assembly where they had an opportunity to hear directly from the state agencies and statewide elected officials.

## 2021-22 Virtual Assembly Guests Have Included:

- Governor's Office Staff
- Department of Health
- Department of Commerce
- State Auditor
- National Association of Counties
- Redistricting Commission
- State Board of Health – 1152 Implementation
- Attorney General
- Association of Washington Business
- Public Utility Districts
- Non-Profit Groups

## Throughout the pandemic, WSAC has held regular calls with the Governor's Office to advise on the following:

- Guidelines, metrics, phased re-opening plans
- Orders and proclamations
- OPMA/PRA Orders
- Coronavirus Relief Funds for counties under 500,000 in population
- American Rescue Plan Coordination

## PROVIDED SUPPORT TO THE FOLLOWING COUNTY LEADERS



Commissioners,  
Councilmembers,  
Councilors, and Executives



Solid Waste  
Managers



IT Directors



Public Health Officials



Regional/County  
Planning Directors



Human Services  
Directors



Administrators



Engineers/Public  
Works Directors



Clerks of the Board/  
Councils

# Administration & Finance

The Finance and Administration department is responsible for the financial functions of WSAC, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, reporting, budgeting, contracts, grants, federal and state tax reporting, payroll, and benefits. The Finance and Administration department is also responsible for the management and financial functions of the Washington Counties Building.

## Staff

**Bridget Locking**  
Director, Finance and Administration

**Lynn Fiorillo-Lowe**  
Operations and Support Assistant

**Jessica Strozewski**  
Operations Coordinator



Provides financial services for **6 associations**



Oversees nearly **\$5 million** in deposits and disbursements



Produces **20 sets** of financial statements and coordinates **4 tax returns**

## 2022 Action Items

- 1** Bi-annual audit for 2020-2021.
- 2** Streamline internal controls and procedures.
- 3** Review dues structure and evaluate methodologies.
- 4** Formalize financial reserves and investment policies.



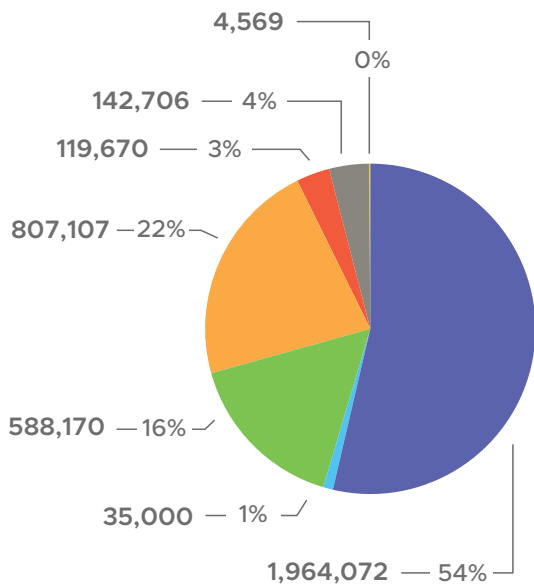
# 2021 Summary Financials

## By The Numbers

### WHERE WSAC REVENUES COME FROM

Total Revenues — \$3,661,294

WSAC has a strong compliment of other funding sources to cover operating costs

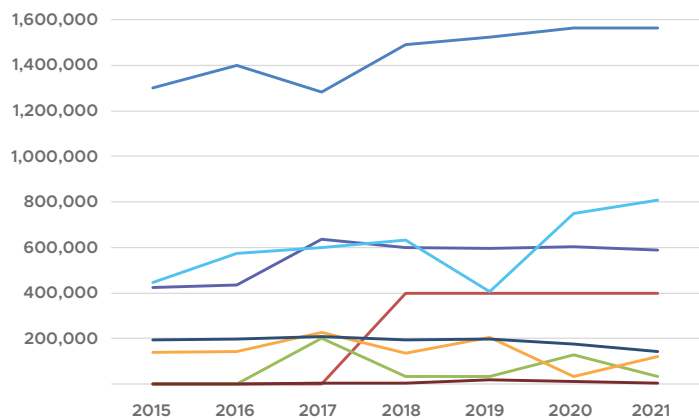


- Membership Dues
- Special Assessments
- Revenue from Affiliates
- Contract Services
- Conferences and Events
- Endorsements & Other Non-Dues Revenues
- Net Investment Income

### DUES AS PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE

2015	52%
2016	49%
2017	43%
2018	54%
2019	56%
2020	54%
2021	54%

### 7 YEAR REVENUE TRENDS



- Membership Dues
- Special Assessments
- Revenue from Affiliates
- Contract Services
- Conferences and Events
- Endorsements & Other Non-Dues Revenues
- Net Investment Income

**\$191,387** ^

INCREASE IN NET INCOME FROM 2020

**\$183,560** ^

INCREASE IN NET ASSETS FROM 2020

**27%** ^

INCREASE IN NET ASSETS SINCE 2016

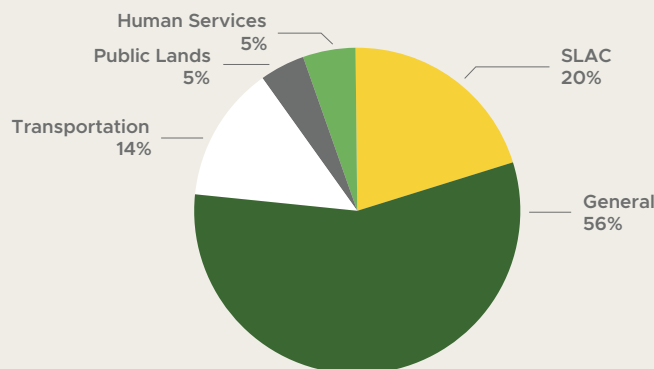
**\$883,766**

SPECIAL FUND CASH BALANCE

**\$179,275**

SLAC FUND CASH BALANCE

### 2021 DUES REVENUE BY TYPE



WSAC collects dues to support 5 main programs. Also collects assessments for 3 other special projects.

# WHERE SPENDING OCCURS

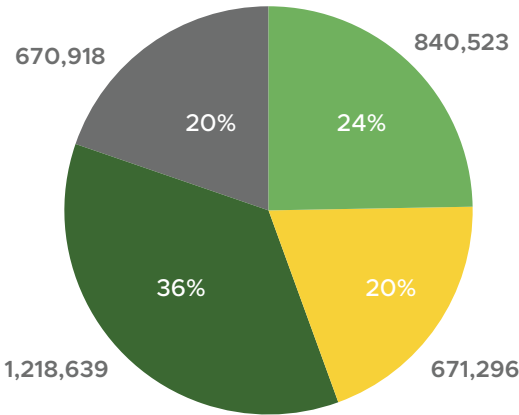
Total Expenditure — \$3,401,376



## SUPPORTING COUNTIES

YOUR TEAM OF EXPERTS

6.7 FTE – Policy, Government, Legal  
 4.1 FTE – Member Services, Communication, Marketing  
 2.1 FTE – Administrative, Financial, Logistics  
 6 Contracted Professionals – 13 Services Contracts



- Policy and Legislative
- Member Services, Conferences and Events
- Affiliates and Contract Services
- General and Administrative

73% of 2020 expenses went to the team of staff and contractors



### LITIGATION

Tackling the legal issues most important to you

\$220k legal defense and consultation

\$29k for Blake Litigation efforts

2 Trials and 1 Amicus Brief



### COMMUNICATION

Marketing the stories and messages that matter

\$34k media, marketing and brand awareness

National County Government week campaign

Weekly virtual assembly learning opportunities



### CONFERENCE

Training & educating county leaders

In-Person County Leaders Conference held in Spokane

200+ Attendees and vendors

Over \$39k in sponsorships

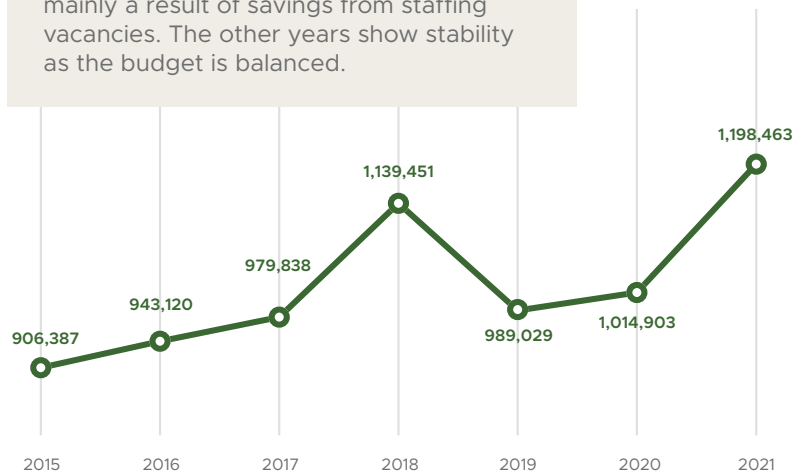
## NET INCOME & CASH RESERVES

2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015

Year	Net Income	Cash
2015	85,432	502,796
2016	106,118	646,280
2017	82,778	851,196
2018	238,782	749,561
2019	(88,178)	651,808
2020	68,532	661,591
2021 Budget	59,919	878,586

## NET ASSET CHANGES

Net Asset increases in 2018 and 2021 were mainly a result of savings from staffing vacancies. The other years show stability as the budget is balanced.



# Advocacy

The Legislative Advocacy & Policy Division supports one of WSAC's primary goals:

to advocate on behalf of counties at the state legislature, regulatory agencies, and executive branch offices in support of sound policy and fiscal strategies that sustain the basic government services that ensure the health and safety of all Washingtonians.

## 2022 Action Items

- 1 Work with the state legislature to make progress on shared priorities in the 2022 legislative session.
- 2 Assist counties with state and federal COVID response, including federal funding allocations.
- 3 Develop 2023-24 biennial legislative agenda.

## Staff

**Jaime Bodden**  
Managing Director,  
WSALPHO

**Axel Swanson**  
Managing Director, WSACE

**Travis Dutton**  
Policy Analyst

**Chris Goodwin**  
FPHS Policy Advisor

**Paul Jewell**  
Policy Director

**Juliana Roe**  
Policy Director

**Curtis Steinhauer**  
Policy Analyst

**Brianna Steere**  
FPHS Policy Advisor

**Mike Hoover**  
Policy Consultant



The 60-day 2022 Legislative Session was a tough one this year. **It was the second year in a remote-only format and tackled issues substantively more appropriate for a 105-day session.** The self-imposed limitations on bill introductions from last year was nowhere to be seen this year. **While the Legislature only passed 340 bills in 2021's 105-day session, they still passed just over 300 bills this year.** Less than the historical average, but high for a Zoom-based short session full of weighty topics.



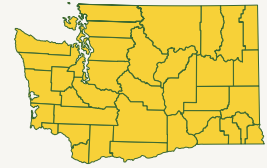
60-day sessions in the second year of the biennium are designed to be supplemental to the initial 105-day session, addressing necessary caseload and budget adjustments. **This year, however, the Legislature passed a \$64 billion operating budget, which was \$2 billion more than what the governor proposed and a full \$5 billion more than the budget they passed just one year ago.**



**In addition to passing a historically large operating budget, the Legislature did one other thing no one expected them to – they managed to pass a \$17 billion, 16-year transportation package.** The so-called Move Ahead WA package invests heavily in ferries, new and existing projects, state fish barrier removal, transit, preservation and maintenance, and more. It allocates \$80 million over the 16 years to the County Road Administration Board for local preservation.

# Legislative Steering Committee

The Legislative Steering Committee (LSC) is responsible for preparing and recommending a proposed legislative agenda for the review and approval of the active WSAC members. The LSC monitors the events of each legislative session and is empowered to adopt policy relating to legislation, executive branch policies and operation, and the activities of other organizations and associations.



**39** Counties Involved

**Kate Dean,**  
**Co-Chair**  
Jefferson County  
Commissioner

**Brad Peck,**  
**Co-Chair**  
Franklin County  
Commissioner

## 2022 Action Items

- 1 Meet virtually every week during the legislative session to review and take positions on critical legislation affecting counties.
- 2 Engage with leaders from state agencies and the Legislature to keep them apprised of county priorities.
- 3 Develop the legislative agenda for the 2023-24 biennium.

## LSC ROSTER

**Dan Blankenship**  
Adams County

**Chris Seubert**  
Asotin County

**Jerome Delvin**  
Benton County

**Kevin Overbay**  
Chelan County

**Bill Peach**  
Clallam County

**Gary Medvigy**  
Clark County

**Charles Amerein**  
Columbia County

**Dennis Weber**  
Cowlitz County

**Dan Sutton**  
Douglas County

**Derek Gianukakis**  
Ferry County

**Brad Peck**  
Franklin County

**Jim Nelson**  
Garfield County

**Rob Jones**  
Grant County

**Vickie Raines**  
Grays Harbor County

**Jill Johnson**  
Island County

**Kate Dean**  
Jefferson County

**Joe McDermott**  
King County Council

**Dow Constantine**  
King County Executive

**Robert Gelder**  
Kitsap County

**Laura Osiadacz**  
Kittitas County

**David Sauter**  
Klickitat County

**Lindsey Pollock**  
Lewis County

**Scott Hutsell**  
Lincoln County

**Sharon Trask**  
Mason County

**Chris Branch**  
Okanogan County

**Lisa Olsen**  
Pacific County

**John Gentle**  
Pend Oreille County

**Derek Young**  
Pierce County Council

**Ryan Mello**  
Pierce County Council  
Alternate

**Bruce Dammeier**  
Pierce County Executive

**Jamie Stephens**  
San Juan County

**Lisa Janicki**  
Skagit County

**Bob Hamlin**  
Skamania County

**Megan Dunn**  
Snohomish County Council

**Dave Somers**  
Snohomish County  
Executive

**Al French**  
Spokane County

**Wes McCart**  
Stevens County

**Carolina Mejia**  
Thurston County

**Lee Tischer**  
Wahkiakum County

**Greg Tompkins**  
Walla Walla County

**Kaylee Galloway**  
Whatcom County Council

**Satpal Sidhu**  
Whatcom County Executive

**Art Swannack**  
Whitman County

**Amanda McKinney**  
Yakima County

## >> Preparing for 2023

To develop the legislative agenda for the 2023-24 biennial legislative sessions, the LSC will:

- Convene a Virtual Assembly to identify emerging priorities and otherwise informally survey members and affiliates.
- Convene a planning meeting for the LSC in May to narrow the priorities.
- Assess the priorities and their alignment with economic and political realities.
- Seek approval of the agenda from WSAC membership.

# Legislative Priorities



In Washington, state government's strength and the strength of the state's 39 counties are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. State government's success requires thriving, flexible, front-line implementation partners in counties. Counties' success requires an active, resourceful, supportive partner in state government. **Here's how Washington's 39 counties and Legislature can work together to make urgent progress on shared priorities in the 2022 Legislative Session:**



## Responding to the COVID Crisis

### Disease response, containment, and resiliency.

**Adequate funding for case investigation, vaccination, and public outreach/education, as well as for coordination of care for people isolated in quarantine who need support beyond testing.** State and local communities must also look beyond the immediate needs of the pandemic to consider how to address inequities in health, access to critical services, and systemic discrimination by bolstering networks that include social services, behavioral health, businesses, public health, and health care.

### Behavioral health.

**Adequate funding for the behavioral health system, including jails. Mental health and substance use disorder treatment programs are essential county services.**

The pandemic has increased the need for care of those with mental health and substance use problems and those suffering from the psychosocial consequences of the pandemic. County jails inappropriately serve as substance use disorder and mental health institutions but are not designed or staffed to provide sufficient treatment.

### Affordable housing.

**New investment in stabilizing housing situations for tenants and homeowners.**

Even before the pandemic, Washington communities faced a massive affordable housing shortage and a growing number of persons entering homelessness.

### Government operations during the pandemic.

**Modifying Washington's existing Open Public Meeting Act and Public Records Act to preserve their spirit while ensuring compliance.** The OPMA should be updated to allow use of new remote technologies that better serve the public and provide flexibility to public meetings and testimony, especially in emergency situations. PRA response times must be flexible in an emergency where physical access to documents is impaired or when mail delivery may be less frequent due to remote work arrangements.

### Courts.

**Provide counties with funds to alleviate the impacts of the already backlogged court system worsened by the pandemic.** Support for the judiciary and maintaining effective, efficient courts are crucial to a just society.

### Broadband access.

**Continue investment to expand broadband access.** Geographic, economic, and other variables hinder access to quality high-speed broadband for too many Washington residents, with inadequate and unaffordable service in every county across the state.



## Combatting Climate Change and Protecting our Environment

### Climate change.

**Adequate funding and flexibility to adapt any new climate change impact reduction responsibilities to local conditions.** Counties can help the state meet its goals for

reducing climate change causes but face different impacts, and solutions for meeting climate change-related goals should be flexible and tailored to local conditions.

**Salmon habitat.**

**Adequate funding for repairing or replacing thousands of fish-blocking culverts in our state stream systems to ensure the state is in full legal compliance.** Like the state, counties have thousands of fish blocking culverts that need to be repaired or replaced, with will costs billions of dollars counties don't have.

**Forest health.**

**New resources for improving forest health, enhancing fire resiliency, responding and containing wildland fires, rehabilitating affected areas, and coordinating prescribed burns.** Forestlands are essential resources that create jobs, support education and other services, and meet cultural and recreational needs. Forest health is critical to a healthy environment, clean water, and wildlife habitat.

**Fire.**

**Increase the ability of local fire districts and the Department of Natural Resources to respond to and contain wildfires.** Wildfires affect all counties and are becoming more frequent across the state, and air quality has been extremely hazardous for long periods due to smoke.

**Growth management.**

**Greater flexibility in managing growth, and a new, reliable, sustainable funding source for planning requirements, and funding for any new ones.** Counties are required to protect farm and forest lands, rivers and lakes, and other sensitive environments. Many must also manage for growth, but planning is expensive and there are updates and reforms needed to make the GMA more functional and effective.

**Waste management.**

**Modern, safe, and working infrastructure is critical to county solid waste programs meeting growing demands and protecting the environment.** Dedicated funding for investing in the future of solid waste

management is crucial for success. Recently approved and emerging statewide priorities for waste reduction, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, litter control, and others that impact county solid waste programs should include collaboration with counties and must include resources for implementation of new requirements.

**Water quality and water supply.**

**Dedicated funding for state programs that improve water quality or support and enhance water supplies to ensure counties' effective implementation.** Water is vital to local economies, agriculture, recreation, and environmental health. Fair and equitable water distribution, along with programs that improve water quality, are essential to meeting the needs of all counties.



**Ending Racial Disparities and Social Inequities**

**Health disparities.**

**Stable and adaptive funding for public health departments to increase capacity, modernize, and manage emerging threats and longstanding health impacts.** Local health jurisdictions are the frontline defenders against community threats like infectious diseases, chronic illness, environmental toxins, and public health emergencies.

**Public defense.**

**Adequate funding for trial court public defense costs to ensure the constitutionally protected right to a defense attorney for all.** Access to a defense attorney is a fundamental constitutional right. Improving access to justice is a critical component in tackling inequality and ensuring that access is equal, regardless of where you live.

**State v. Blake.**

**Provide funds to cover the full cost of the State v. Blake decision. The Supreme Court's decision presented an unprecedented challenge to the state's criminal justice system that severely impacts the already backlogged court system caused by the pandemic.** Funding for resentencing and vacating convictions and reimbursing the associated legal financial obligations is critical.



## **Making Long-term Investments, Securing Long-term Solvency**

### **Road maintenance.**

**Reliable, sustainable funding for county transportation budgets. Counties are responsible for roughly half of Washington’s transportation system but face this responsibility at a time when motor vehicle fuel taxes are declining, and the costs of preservation and construction are on the rise.**

### **Capital investments.**

**Ensure adequate funding for county infrastructure.** Counties are responsible for maintaining a variety of public facilities and infrastructure and need state investment in water, sewer, solid waste, and buildings to keep them safe and functional. Investments in infrastructure are vital to economic growth and essential to vibrant communities and, yet, too often maintenance competes with mandates while facilities age and deteriorate.

### **Fiscal solvency.**

**New authority for counties to control their cost drivers and grow revenue sources that keep pace with increasing costs.** The county financial structure must meet the needs of modern county governments. At the same time, the Legislature must not continue to shift costs through policy changes without addressing the underlying funding problems that face county budgets.



# Federal Priorities

The Washington State Association of Counties is engaged on federal policy development and advocacy pertaining to National Association of Counties (NACo) Resolutions, proposed federal legislation, agency actions as well as other federal issues and proposals that have direct implication and nexus to the operations and administration of county government in Washington State.

## Federal Priorities

As part of WSAC Federal Policies and Positions, WSAC members adopted these 2022 Federal Priority Issues:

- **COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Assistance and Public Health Support** – All counties, regardless of size and population, need access to additional direct, equitable, flexible, stable, and long-term funding to respond to this pandemic, rebuild the economy, and strengthen our communities. It is important that counties have a strong federal funding partner for local public health jurisdictions. Stable and consistent funding of key federal grants helps counties build resiliency in the event of health emergencies, outbreaks, economic changes, and natural disasters.
- **Medicaid Inmate Exclusion** – Congress needs to reinstate federal health care benefits for non-convicted justice involved individuals. Congress must address the crisis caused by this callous Medicaid inmate exclusion policy that strips individuals who are still presumed innocent of their federal benefits.
- **Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT)** – This vital funding mechanism ensures counties receive property tax like compensation for federal lands within their boundaries. Full, predictable, and permanent mandatory funding for the PILT programs is needed to assure counties receive a property tax like compensation for federal lands within their boundaries. In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021, Washington’s counties (37 of 39) received \$24.9 million in PILT.
- **Infrastructure** – Federal funding support for new and aging public infrastructure is needed to support a vibrant economy, public health and safety, and a sustainable environment. Washington State is expected to grow by two million residents in the next twenty years. It will take significant local, state, federal, and private infrastructure investment to sustain a strong, competitive economy with thriving communities.
- **Secure Rural Schools (SRS)** – Permanent reauthorization and funding of the SRS program is important to Washington State counties. In FFY20, Washington’s counties (27 of 39) received \$15.2 million in SRS funding, a decline from \$15.8 million in FFY 2019. We ask Congress to:
  - Repeal the 5% automatic reduction in payment
  - Restore full funding of SRS back to historic 25% funding level counties received with inflation built into the payment mechanism.
  - Provide for yearly election of Title II/III designation
  - Allow Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) appointments to be made at the regional or local forest level.
- **Active Forest Management and Catastrophic Wildfires** – Congress and the Administration must act to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire. A joint study conducted by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the United States Forest Service, and The Nature Conservancy found that 2.7 million acres of eastern Washington forestland needs restoration. Federal lands account for 42 percent of the unhealthy forest identified. Policies and legislation, as well as pilot programs and projects, are needed to renew the federal government’s commitment to manage federal forests for the benefit of counties containing federal forestland. Management should be conducted in a manner that produces a sustainable resource yield, improves forest health, protects the environment, and aids in the prevention of catastrophic wildfires.



## 2022 FEDERAL ISSUES AND RELATIONS COMMITTEE

**Rob Gelder, Chair**  
Kitsap County  
Commissioner

**Dan Blankenship**  
Adams County  
Commissioner

**Bob Bugert**  
Chelan County  
Commissioner

**Jerome Delvin**  
Benton County  
Commissioner

**Temple Lentz**  
Clark County  
Councilmember

**Dennis Weber**  
Cowlitz County  
Commissioner

**Brad Peck**  
Franklin County  
Commissioner

**Danny Stone**  
Grant County  
Commissioner

**Janet St. Clair**  
Island County  
Commissioner

**Laura Osiadacz**  
Kittitas County  
Commissioner

**Lindsey Pollock**  
Lewis County  
Commissioner

**Scott Hutsell**  
Lincoln County  
Commissioner

**Sharon Trask**  
Mason County  
Commissioner

**Derek Young**  
Pierce County  
Councilmember

**Tom Lannen**  
Skamania County  
Commissioner

**Wes McCart**  
Stevens County  
Commissioner

**Eric Johnson**  
Executive Director

## Public Land Payments

County	SRS/Fed FY 2020	PILT/Fed FY 2021	Dept of Energy FY 2020	Refuge (RRSA) Federal	DFW PILT 2020-2022	DNR PILT FY 2021	DNR/Timber 6Yr Annual Avg	Total	% of Total Revenue
Adams	-	60,271	-	6,176	3,597	971	-	71,015	0.06%
Asotin	59,541	179,073	-	498	48,261	-	-	287,374	0.26%
Benton	-	184,224	858,544	6,404	-	-	-	1,049,172	0.95%
Chelan	1,040,503	3,352,067	-	11,315	54,978	9,855	-	4,468,717	4.03%
Clallam	782,914	1,155,238	-	7,855	-	5,412	5,746,334	7,697,752	6.94%
Clark	2,776	2,411	-	29,074	-	2,313	3,919,128	3,955,702	3.57%
Columbia	154,478	402,766	-	695	20,713	-	-	578,652	0.52%
Cowlitz	114,798	31,765	-	1,689	-	1,266	1,778,273	1,927,792	1.74%
Douglas	2	167,047	-	-	-	161	-	167,210	0.15%
Ferry	772,239	901,381	-	-	29,180	-	-	1,702,800	1.54%
Franklin	-	182,784	280,707	85	-	186	-	463,762	0.42%
Garfield	83,555	243,353	-	-	24,105	-	-	351,013	0.32%
Grant	-	804,652	643,642	5,947	37,443	278	-	1,491,962	1.35%
Grays Harbor	304,202	285,676	-	4,266	74,432	76,774	1,817,123	2,562,473	2.31%
Island	-	2,153	-	-	-	-	-	2,153	0.00%
Jefferson	794,102	1,643,245	-	26,490	-	91,306	1,909,383	4,464,526	4.03%
King	171,538	935,880	-	-	-	349,252	2,210,254	3,666,924	3.31%
Kitsap	-	-	-	-	-	52,892	905,231	958,123	0.86%
Kittitas	604,649	1,205,311	-	-	542,783	257,501	-	2,610,245	2.35%
Klickitat	42,886	117,365	-	42,557	78,558	53,010	104,720	439,096	0.40%
Lewis	1,559,064	687,075	-	237	-	2,185	7,937,784	10,186,345	9.18%
Lincoln	-	255,132	-	-	13,642	353	-	269,126	0.24%
Mason	299,839	331,886	-	-	-	22,190	4,662,881	5,316,796	4.79%
Okanogan	1,618,363	2,782,158	-	1,061	563,577	82,229	-	5,047,388	4.55%
Pacific	-	7,419	-	66,368	-	29,905	2,231,761	2,335,453	2.11%
Pend Oreille	629,807	1,190,789	-	412	20,004	-	-	1,841,012	1.66%
Pierce	193,901	872,946	-	1,745	-	779	426,586	1,495,957	1.35%
San Juan	-	7,084	-	-	-	17,748	-	24,832	0.02%
Skagit	431,225	1,318,757	-	-	-	258,871	10,539,048	12,547,902	11.31%
Skamania	2,794,068	344,800	-	8,185	-	87,826	1,979,333	5,214,212	4.70%
Snohomish	555,621	1,518,436	-	-	-	307,081	7,540,449	9,921,587	8.95%
Spokane	-	5,893	-	53,421	-	21,783	-	81,097	0.07%
Stevens	300,478	653,286	-	164,652	-	3,080	89,443	1,210,939	1.09%
Thurston	960	1,268	-	20,130	-	106,450	5,785,583	5,914,391	5.33%
Wahkiakum	-	-	-	15,077	-	5,803	1,735,454	1,756,333	1.58%
Walla Walla	2,558	31,168	-	5,260	-	-	-	38,986	0.04%
Whatcom	829,132	2,078,845	-	-	-	5,832	3,247,184	6,160,992	5.55%
Whitman	-	61,223	-	-	-	-	-	61,223	0.06%
Yakima	1,110,173	941,596	-	7,130	491,623	23,162	-	2,573,684	2.32%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>15,253,371</b>	<b>24,946,423</b>	<b>1,782,893</b>	<b>486,729</b>	<b>2,002,896</b>	<b>1,876,453</b>	<b>64,565,952</b>	<b>110,914,717</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

# Litigation & Amicus

In 2018, the WSAC Membership established the Strategic Litigation, Advocacy, and Communication (SLAC) Program designed to use legal actions as an effective tool to advance the WSAC policy agenda in coordination with legislative advocacy strategies and actions. WSAC's legal actions are used sparingly and as a last resort.



## Current Litigation Activities

### ■ Indigent Defense

The WSAC Board of Directors voted unanimously during their May 5, 2021, regular meeting to concur with the findings provided by the WSAC Legal Committee and Legislative Steering Committee that there are merits and reasonable grounds to support a legal challenge to require the State to fully fund constitutionally required trial court indigent defense services and authorized a legal challenge. WSAC anticipates filing this legal complaint sometime in 2022. To date, three counties, Kitsap, Yakima, and Lincoln have joined as co-plaintiffs. A variety of legal, analysis and budget documentation is underway.

### ■ Blake Decision

On October 3, 2021, WSAC formally joined 21 Counties as a co-plaintiff against the State to establish that the State is solely responsible for all costs associated with implementing the Blake Decision, including the cost of vacations, re-sentencings, and for all Legal Financial Obligation (LFO) refunds. The desired outcome is a declaration from the court that the State is required to indemnify counties for all Blake expenses, including all LFO refunds and the administrative costs to implement this Washington State Supreme Court decision (judicial, clerk, prosecutor, public defense, administration and operations) that counties will incur in implementing the Blake Decision. Negotiations are occurring with the Attorney General's Office and legislation was introduced to establish a program for reimbursement to counties and individuals who paid LFOs.

### ■ Unfunded Mandate

WSAC, with co-plaintiffs Whitman, Snohomish, and Kittitas County, filed a complaint with the King County Superior Court to hold Senate Bill 5472 (Ballot Drop Box Bill) is a violation of RCW 43.135.060, Prohibition of new or extended programs without full reimbursement. On October 14, 2020, Judge Lee ruled that SB 5472, which mandated County Auditors to significantly increase the number of ballot drop boxes statewide at an estimated capital cost of over one million dollars plus yearly operating and maintenance costs, "is an unfunded mandate pursuant to RCW 43.135.060." The state appealed and on January 27, 2022, the Washington State Supreme Court issued their ruling:

- RCW 29A.04.430 was the controlling statute for election cost reimbursement and not the unfunded mandate statute, RCW 43.135.060.
- Counties are entitled to reimbursement only for the State's proportional share of costs.
- The 2020 legislative amendments to RCW 29A.04.430 do not violate Article II, Section 37.
- Counties do not have a vested right to full reimbursement (even though costs were incurred).
- Case is remanded to King County Superior Court for further proceedings.

## Amicus Briefs

**Amicus Curiae Briefs are a means to provide information to the court on a particular aspect of the case or point of law in an attempt to help the court make a determination on the matter. Over the past several years, WSAC has worked with counsel and county prosecuting attorneys to submit briefs on issues important to county government including:**

- Personnel and Labor
- Public Works Liability
- Law Enforcement and Public Safety
- Public Health
- Corrections, Jails and Medical Costs
- Land Use and Zoning
- Taxation, Fees and Charges
- Public Records
- Franchise Agreements
- Juror Pay
- Public Health Responsibilities
- Trial Court Indigent Defense
- County Charter
- Constitutional and Administrative Authorities for County Elected Officials



# Communications & Member Services

The Communications and Member Services Division oversees all external and internal communications and public-private partnerships that provide cost-saving services to counties. The department also produces in-person, hybrid, and virtual conferences that provide members and affiliates with networking and professional development opportunities.

## 2022 Action Items

- 1** Create multi-year marketing campaign for #WanderCounties. Utilize digital channels to engage WSAC members and affiliates in sharing their pride in their counties and highlighting the critical work they do.
- 2** Re-launch WSAC Business Partners Program in partnership with affiliates to build greater awareness and increase benefits for member counties.
- 3** Officially launch Washington Counties Job Board as a paid platform within the second quarter of 2022.
- 4** Finalize the first round of training and education videos for the County Development Institute of WA. Develop specialized add-on trainings to enhance the learning portfolio.

### Staff

**Bridget Lockling**  
Director, Finance and Administration

**Tyler Melhart**  
Graphic/Web Design Manager

**Mitch Netzer**  
Communications Manager

**Jessica Strozewski**  
Operations Coordinator

### 2021 ENGAGEMENT



#### Twitter

1,949 followers  
3% increase from 2020



#### Facebook

2,828 page likes  
8.5% increase from 2020  
25,000 User Impressions  
Facebook post reach



#### Website

96,000 website visitors



#### Email

40+ COVID-19  
News Emails



HOSTED BY WASHINGTON STATE  
ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES

2022 COUNTY LEADERS

# WORKING TOGETHER

NOVEMBER 14-16

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Washington counties are engaged in delivering a broad range of services from public health and safety to road construction, environmental mitigation, and social services. With over 35,000 employees serving over 7.5 million residents, counties are looking to private and nonprofit sectors for innovation and solutions to improve their performance. Learn more about these services and how they can help improve service delivery and benefits to your county.



### Liberty Mutual Insurance

Through your affiliation with WSAC, this exclusive program gives your county a competitive edge and your employees an exclusive group discount on auto, home, and other lines of personal insurance. Plus, with Liberty Mutual's onsite educational events, you can deliver the tools your employees need to stay safe and secure in your workplace.

**Vicki Haworth**  
Lead Sales Representative  
vicki.haworth@libertymutual.com  
(360) 705-0600  
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### Live Healthy Prescription

The NACo Prescription Discount Card is provided to you in a joint effort of your local county government and the National Association of Counties (NACo). Any county resident without prescription coverage can use this program. Even if you have prescription insurance coverage, you may still benefit from the discount card since it may save you money on prescriptions your existing plan does not cover.

**John Losh**  
Member Outreach Manager  
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(202) 661-8832  
nacohealth.org

### NACo - National Association of Counties

The National Association of Counties Financial Services Corporation (NACo FSC) leverages NACo's networks, evaluates emerging market county needs and establishes sustainable, cost-saving and value-added solutions that can be applied nationwide. By providing quality solutions, we strive to develop and maintain healthy, vibrant and safe counties across the United States.

**Paul Terragno**  
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### Nationwide

Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS) provides county employees with a Section 457 Deferred Compensation Program. Since its inception in 1980, NACo's Deferred Compensation Program has grown to become the largest supplemental retirement income program available to county employees.

**Kristopher Morton**  
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## NextEra Energy Resources

NextEra Energy Resources is America's premier clean energy leader and the world's largest producer of wind and solar energy. We develop, construct and operate power projects to produce electricity. Equally important, we are dedicated to quality, committed to environmental stewardship, and care about our communities.

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## SSC - Sanitary Service Company

SSC provides full service recycling and solid waste collection for residential and commercial customers. SSC works closely with Whatcom County on solid waste and recycling issues and provides services consistent with the County's Comprehensive Solid Waste Plan.

**Ted Carlson**  
General Manager  
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## cashVest by three+one

A liquidity data tool for the public sector & higher Ed to execute borrowing, investing, and cash management decisions with more confidence and greater ease. Because three+one is neither a bank nor a Registered Investment Advisor, we provide a pure and independent perspective on making certain every dollar you have is being put to work efficiently, every day.

**Samantha Rothschild**  
Marketing Coordinator  
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(585) 484-0311 (ext. 712)  
threeplusone.us

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## Vector Payments

Our company brings decades of payments experience to further help local businesses apart of the WSAC network with the guaranteed lowest overall cost commitment including offers at 0% cost to you, best equipment available, and 24/7 personal support to ensure credit card processing is NEVER a pain point anymore.

**Ryan Mirpanah**  
Managing Partner  
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vectorpayments.com

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## Waste Connections

Waste Connections is one of the largest full-service provider of solid waste collection, providing non-hazardous solid waste collection, recycling and landfill disposal services to commercial, industrial, municipal and residential customers. Waste Connections is the third largest solid waste management company in North America with a network of operations in 41 states and 6 provinces.

**Mark Gingrich**  
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## WCIF - Washington Counties Insurance Fund

WCIF was established in 1958 by the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) to provide more cost-efficient health benefits for county employees. WCIF is a public non-profit multiple employer benefit trust (501 C9) that provides health and welfare benefits for the employees of counties and other publicly funded entities. WCIF currently provides services to over 100 participating employers within the State of Washington.

**Bobby Jackson**  
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# WSAC Programs

## Counties Coastal Caucus

The Washington State Association of Counties created the Coastal Counties Caucus, comprised of 14 counties bordering Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Pacific Ocean, shortly before the creation of the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) in 2007. The Caucus creates a forum for counties to interact, engage, and recommend WSAC positions on issues relating to the waters of Puget Sound, Hood Canal, and the Pacific Ocean. The program also supports members of the Puget Sound Partnership’s Ecosystem Coordination Board and Salmon Recovery Council, both of which have county elected official representation. The Caucus works to ensure coastal county interests and priorities are brought forward to the Legislative Steering Committee, state and federal agencies, tribal nations, and other key stakeholders.



**14**  
Counties  
Involved

**Ron Wesen, Chair**  
Skagit County  
Commissioner

**Brynn Brady**  
Program Consultant

## 2021-22 Activities

- Support WSAC members serving on Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Boards, Councils and Committees
- Coordinate representation in PSP meetings and other state efforts that impact communities along the Puget Sound and Pacific coast
- Ensure county policy interests are considered in the 2022-2026 PSP Action Agenda Update
- Supporting input and comment on Maritime Washington National Heritage Area Draft Management Plan.
- Monitoring and providing input to the Ecosystem Coordination Board’s Land Use subcommittee to better understand land use decisions that impact or enhance salmon recovery efforts. Specifically, they have identified the following for taking a leadership role:
- Monitoring and communicating to Coastal Counties about work plan priorities being planned for the Salmon Recovery Council, including:
  - Determining whether existing Chinook recovery priorities are the most effective and efficient means of advancing salmon recovery efforts and revising them if necessary.
  - Advancing policy recommendations articulated in the Chinook Implementation Strategy (Bold Actions) as a means of accelerating Puget Sound salmon recovery efforts
  - Processing and understanding the results of State/Tribal Riparian Work Group and assist implementation where appropriate
  - Leveraging existing funding sources by pursuing enhancements and better integration of salmon recovery priorities



## Columbia River Caucus

The Columbia River Basin Water Supply Development Program was initiated by the Legislature in 2006. The purpose of the program is to seek out and develop new water supply in eastern Washington. New water supplies are intended for both in-stream and out-of-stream use; water from projects funded by the program are allocated 1/3 for in-stream use and 2/3 for out-of-stream use.

WSAC receives funding from the Department of Ecology to provide staff support to eastern Washington county commissioners. This allows commissioners to participate as full partners in the program. The commissioners meet quarterly as the Columbia River Caucus.



**21**  
Counties  
Involved

**Wes McCart, Chair**  
Stevens County  
Commissioner

**Paul Jewell**  
Policy Director

### 2021-22 Activities

- Monitoring and engaging in deliberations/negotiations on the Columbia River Treaty.
- Ensure counties have a voice in Ecology's management of the Columbia River Water Supply Program.
- Quarterly meetings of the Commissioners Policy Advisory Group (PAG) continue to be held and are vital in ensuring a flow of information both to county commissioners and from them to the CR-PAG and the Department of Ecology.
- Regular discussions and meetings with the Director of the Office of Columbia River occur several times a year.
- Support CR Water Supply Program resources and funding.
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive training program for new Caucus members.

## Timber and Public Lands Program

The timber counties program works diligently to support, advocate for, and represent our member counties with interests in timberland management issues. This includes counties that are beneficiaries of state forestlands and counties with other private, state, and federal forestlands utilized for commercial timber harvest, conservation, recreation, and other purposes.



**39**  
Counties  
Involved

**Tom Lannen, Chair**  
Skamania County  
Commissioner

**Paul Jewell**  
Policy Director

**Court Stanley**  
Program Consultant

**Mark Meleason**  
Program Consultant

### 2021-22 Activities

- Reviewing, monitoring and commenting on the scoping process for DNR's sustainable harvest calculation. Mark Rasmussen, a contractor, represents WSAC on the Sustainable Harvest Calculation Technical Advisory Committee.
- Representing counties in Timber, Fish and Wildlife Principles Meeting.
- Completed the Marbled Murrelet Economic Impact Study and presented its findings at a joint legislative committee work session.
- Mark Meleason, a contractor, continues to represent WSAC on the Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review (CMER) Committee.
- Court Stanley, WSAC Program Consultant, represent WSAC on the TFW Policy Committee and monitors the activities of the adaptive management program.
- Forest land management and policy issues training program planned for Spring 2022.
- Continued development of strategies that respond to the Marbled Murrelet Economic Impact Study findings.
- Continued work to follow up with DNR on the trust lands performance assessment.
- Monitoring and providing feedback as DNR begins its ten-year sustainable harvest calculation process.

# Staff Directory

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