

The role of GIS in combatting wildfires

As Washington prepares for a potentially severe wildfire season amid dry forecasts, it's worth highlighting the important, behind-the-scenes role played by [WaTech's State Geospatial Program Office](#).



During wildfire emergencies, when homes and businesses face significant threats, teams from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and state emergency operations quickly mobilize. They utilize detailed maps to orchestrate the deployment of resources such as fire trucks and helicopter support. These maps also play a key role in identifying and evacuating at-risk communities, including residents who may require more time to evacuate due to mobility or medical issues.

Central to these efforts is WaTech's Geospatial Program, which acquires and centrally stores the data essential for creating these maps. This data is housed in the GeoPortal—a central repository accessible online by government organizations, enabling swift access by all state agencies.

By centralizing this critical imagery data and facilitating its easy access, WaTech's Geospatial Program not only boosts the state's capacity to respond effectively to wildfires but also helps preserve cultural heritage by providing data used to protect historical sites. This strategy is an example of WaTech's efforts to use technology to enable swift and informed decisions in times of crisis.



For more information, please see the [Geospatial Program Office website](#).

Geospatial Program