LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR'S CONCLUSION:

DNR's long-term approach to wildfire prevention and preparedness is supported by science and best practices. The approach requires coordination with other entities and may reduce fire severity, which can impact costs to suppress fires.
JLARC direction to staff (2019)

Review DNR’s wildfire prevention and preparedness activities and related expenditures.

Identify if evidence exists about how effectively these types of activities reduce the impacts and costs of wildfire.

Evaluate DNR’s progress in implementing recommendations from the 2018 JLARC report.
Presentation Overview

- Long-term approach
- Coordination with others
- Effect on fire severity & cost
DNR plans have a long-term, strategic approach to prevention & preparedness

- 10- to 20-year implementation timelines
PREVENTION
Reducing human-caused fires

PREPAREDNESS
Improving landscapes through forest health

Helping communities adapt to wildfire
State law requires DNR to assess and treat 1 million acres of forest land by 2033.

DNR identified 33 priority areas to focus efforts.

Based on fire risk, wildland urban interface, water, habitat, timber, more...

Photo: Ed Suominen
Spent on preparedness & prevention FY 2018 through 2020

DNR is developing a tracking system to link forest health activities with maps and financial information.

$70 million

Spent on preparedness & prevention FY 2018 through 2020
Presentation Overview

- Long-term approach
- Coordination with others
- Effect on fire severity & cost
22 million acres of forest land

LANDOWNERS INCLUDE: State agencies | Federal agencies | Tribes | Private
The **priority areas** cross ownership boundaries

DNR owns or manages 500,000 acres in the priority areas. It must work with others to achieve goals.
Landscape preparedness is coordinated through formal agreements, collaboratives, and assistance programs.

PARTNERS INCLUDE:
Federal agencies | Private landowners | Local governments | Tribes | Fire agencies | Conservation Districts | Community groups
Presentation Overview

- Long-term approach
- Coordination with others
- Effect on fire severity & cost
Research suggests removing fuels from the landscape has reduced the intensity and severity of individual fires.

Source: Review of 300+ research documents.

**BEFORE FUEL REDUCTION**

**HIGHER INTENSITY:** Fire spreads from forest surface through ladder fuels to tree crowns.

**HIGHER SEVERITY:** Fire spreads through canopy and forest is more damaged by fire.
Research suggests removing fuels from the landscape has reduced the intensity and severity of individual fires.

Source: Review of 300+ research documents.

**AFTER FUEL REDUCTION**

**LOWER INTENSITY:** Fire less likely to rise to tree crowns.

**LOWER SEVERITY:** Forest is less damaged.
Thinning + Prescribed Fire is a best practice for removing surface fuels

Treated with prescribed fire before wildfire

Not treated with prescribed fire before wildfire

Source: Photograph taken by Justin Haug, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Many factors affect suppression costs

- Fire size and behavior
- Climate and weather
- Wildland urban interface

Relationship between preparedness, prevention, and suppression spending is complex.

Models predict preparedness activities may reduce suppression costs for individual fires.
LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR'S CONCLUSION

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The approach requires coordination with other entities and may reduce fire severity, which can impact costs to suppress fires.