



State of Washington

Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee (JLARC)

DNR Sustainable Harvest Calculation

# REQUEST FOR INFORMATION



**Joint Legislative  
Audit & Review  
Committee**

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# REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

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## Participate in a Review of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources' 2025-2034 Sustainable Harvest Calculation

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages 2.4 million acres of trust land and is responsible for calculating a sustainable harvest level every ten years. By state law, the next calculation will be for July 2025 through June 2034 and must be approved by the Board of Natural Resources by June 30, 2024.

The 2021 Legislature directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to review the methodologies and data that DNR uses in its 2025-2034 sustainable harvest calculation. The work must be completed before DNR's calculation is adopted by the Board of Natural Resources in June 2024.

To complete this mandate, JLARC intends to work with one or more consultants that have expertise in forest inventory, forest growth and yield modeling, harvest scheduling, and other fields that are necessary for developing the calculation.

### About JLARC

JLARC is a committee of the Washington State Legislature. It is composed of an equal number of House and Senate members, Democrats and Republicans. The Committee works to make state government operations more effective, efficient, and accountable.

- JLARC pursues its mission by conducting performance audits, program evaluations, sunset reviews, and other analyses.
- Studies are completed by JLARC's nonpartisan staff auditors, under the direction of the Legislative Auditor.
- Work is conducted using Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards to ensure audit conclusions are independent, objective, and accurate.

More information is available on the JLARC [web page](#).

### About DNR and trust lands

DNR has a legal responsibility to manage the trust lands so that they generate revenue for their designated beneficiaries, such as schools, counties, and critical local services. DNR manages several trusts with different beneficiaries. DNR is obligated to follow the common law duties of a trustee, which include generating revenue, managing trust assets prudently and acting with undivided loyalty to trust beneficiaries.

More information can be found in this [fact sheet](#), DNR's trust lands [web page](#), and DNR's sustainable harvest calculation [web page](#).

## Study requirements and approaches

The Legislature directed JLARC to conduct an independent review of DNR's data and methodology for determining the harvest calculation.

JLARC staff are looking for a team of consultants to review DNR's forest inventory, forest growth and yield modeling, harvest scheduling, and economic modeling methods.

- As DNR completes its work (see timeline below), it will provide data and documentation to JLARC staff.
- Consultants will be expected to review the materials, including the process, assumptions, methods, and data used by DNR, and compare them against best practices and the consultant's professional judgment. JLARC staff can obtain additional information from DNR to support the analysis. Consultants are not expected to develop their own calculation.
- For each of DNR's milestones in developing the calculation (e.g., completion of forest inventory), the consultants will be asked to deliver a document to JLARC staff summarizing their analysis of the milestone and conclusions. This document becomes the property of JLARC, will be used in the JLARC staff analysis, and may be published online.

We are considering two options for how we could work with the primary consultant(s) on the project:

1. Contract with individual experts for specific pieces of analysis (e.g., inventory review, growth/yield modeling review). One consultant also would be hired to synthesize the analysis into overall observations. We would expect the consultants to communicate and coordinate with others, but each consultant would be responsible only for specific deliverable(s).
2. Contract with a consulting firm or single lead consultant to coordinate with others to provide all aspects of the analysis, including overall synthesis. The firm or lead consultant would be responsible for the production of all project deliverables and managing contracts with and payments to individual experts.

Regardless of the option we choose, one consultant will be required to attend meetings of DNR's sustainable harvest calculation technical advisory committee (TAC). The TAC meetings are held quarterly for up to 8 hours. The consultant may participate remotely in the meetings. This consultant also will help JLARC staff fully develop the review approach.

JLARC staff likely will hire secondary consultants to peer review the work and conclusions of the primary consultants.

JLARC staff will retain overall management of the final report to the Legislature, including development of study findings and formal recommendations, and the presentation of study results. The consultants will be asked to review how JLARC staff characterize their findings in our final report, and to participate in two legislative committee meetings to explain findings and answer questions.

## Study Timeline

DNR has started the meetings of its technical advisory committee, and JLARC staff would like to secure a consultant's participation in those meetings as soon as possible. The consultant also would be asked to work with JLARC staff to fully develop the review approach. We expect this will be a minimal time commitment until August 2022.

DNR's draft timeline for determining the sustainable harvest calculation is below. The final harvest level will be set by the Board of Natural Resources in June 2024. We expect the consultants' analyses of each component below to be completed within 1-3 months of DNR's projected completion dates.

- October 2022: field plot data collection complete.
- January 2023: plot/GIS data input into models.
- June 2023: DNR's technical work concludes. Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) complete.

JLARC anticipates presenting a report to the Legislature in December 2023. This means all contracted work is expected to conclude by August 2023.

## Data Availability

We will work closely with DNR staff to ensure our consultants have access to the most current data and models used for determining the harvest calculation.

Consultants are expected to consider the data and other information related to this work as confidential until JLARC's report is released in December 2023. Consultants may be expected to sign confidentiality agreements for the duration of the work.

## Request for Information

Please note that the majority of work in this study is expected to occur in 2022-23 and is subject to legislative funding decisions.

This RFI is intended to identify potential consultants and approaches to fulfilling the study mandate. JLARC staff may pursue contracts directly as a result of this RFI or use the information to pursue a competitive procurement.

If you have any questions, please contact Joshua Karas ([joshua.karas@leg.wa.gov](mailto:joshua.karas@leg.wa.gov)) or Rebecca Connolly ([rebecca.connolly@leg.wa.gov](mailto:rebecca.connolly@leg.wa.gov)) or [jlarc@leg.wa.gov](mailto:jlarc@leg.wa.gov). Please submit questions by October 15, 2021. JLARC staff will post responses to questions on [JLARC's homepage](#) by October 29, 2021.

Please submit your response to the questions below with a PDF or Word document sent via email to [jlarc@leg.wa.gov](mailto:jlarc@leg.wa.gov). The deadline for submittal is **November 16, 2021, by 9am PST**.

## Contact information

1. Name
2. Contact information (address, phone, email)
3. Organization (if applicable)

## Contracting approach

As explained above, JLARC staff is considering two options for its primary consulting team: working with individual independent experts or working with a consulting firm or group of experts. We also will need a consultant to sit on DNR's technical advisory committee.

4. In what capacity are you interested in working with JLARC? Please specify all that apply.
  - Option 1: Primary consultant – individual expert
    - Are you willing to sit on DNR's technical advisory committee?
  - Option 2: Primary consultant – consulting firm or lead consultant (Note: you or one of your team members must sit on DNR's technical advisory committee)
2. If you are associated with a university, are you interested in contracting as an individual or through the university?
3. If you are interested in being a primary consultant (consulting firm or lead consultant), please explain how you would engage or contract with other experts to complete the work. Please identify the other team members who will work under you.
4. What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of the JLARC contracting approach with regard to the consultants' ability to do the review, or to the quality of the review? Are there alternative approaches?

## Qualifications

Statute requires that we contract with consultants who have expertise in forest inventory, forest growth and yield modeling, harvest scheduling, or other fields that are necessary for developing the calculation. Expertise is a combination of education and experience.

5. What is your area of expertise (e.g., forest inventories, forest growth and yield modeling, and operational research modeling in forest harvest scheduling)?
  - a. If you are proposing a team, please list potential team members and their areas of expertise.
6. How would your expertise (including that of the proposed team) contribute to the review of DNR's calculations?
7. What is your and/or your team members' experience or familiarity with forestry and timber in the Pacific Northwest? Please describe and/or provide examples of your work.
8. What is your and/or your team members' experience with projects with large landscape scales? DNR manages 2.4 million acres of forested trust lands. Please describe and/or provide examples of your work.
9. What is your and/or your team members' experience with communicating technical information to a lay audience? Please describe and/or provide examples of your work.

## Availability

10. Do you have any concerns about your ability to be available during the project timeline?

## Independence

JLARC staff need to be aware of any potential conflicts of interest that consultants may have. Previous work with DNR will not automatically exclude a consultant from participation. However, it's important for us to know about the work so that we can assess independence.

11. Are you currently under contract with DNR, or have you been in the past 10 years?

12. Are you currently under contract with any of the trust beneficiaries, or have you been in the past 10 years (see [fact sheet](#) for list of beneficiaries)?

13. If you answered yes to either of these questions, please provide the following for each contract or agreement:

- a. A brief description of the nature of the work, the begin and end date(s), the scope, and your role.
- b. An explanation of why the work would not be a conflict of interest related to this work and how you might mitigate the appearance of a conflict of interest.

14. Have you been involved in litigation about DNR's sustainable harvest calculation, including as an expert witness or consultant?

- a. If yes, please describe.