

A wide-angle photograph of the Washington State Capitol building, a large neoclassical structure with a prominent dome, surrounded by tall evergreen trees and some autumn-colored deciduous trees. The sky is clear and blue.

PNIAF 2019

Scoping JLARC Audits

Suzanna Pratt, JLARC research analyst

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JLARC gets assignments from the Legislature

Studies are assigned through policy bills, budget provisos, and/or committee request

Assignments range from structured and specific evaluations to larger, multi-part study mandates

Sunset Reviews

Triggered by amendment to WA's
Sunset Act

Evaluation of need for continued
existence of program or agency

Criteria set in statute



Other studies mandated by the Legislature

May have multiple questions and tasks

Criteria unspecified

Scoping helps set parameters to answering Legislature's questions



Example: Measuring Outcomes of Land Acquisitions and Regulations, 2017

The joint legislative audit and review committee must conduct a review of state and local efforts to protect and conserve habitat and expand outdoor recreation since 1990.

(2) The review has two objectives:

- (a) To determine what existing or potential objective outcome measures can be used to evaluate the success of major regulatory programs and state expenditures that are intended to protect and conserve habitat and expand outdoor recreation;
- (b) To compare the amount of habitat lands protected through acquisitions and easements with the amount of lands protected through the major regulatory programs within three counties west of the cascades and three counties east of the cascades.

(3) The review must include state expenditures and local and federal expenditures used to match state funding in the following programs:

- (a) Salmon recovery funding board expenditures;
- (b) Puget Sound acquisition and restoration;
- (c) Puget Sound estuary and salmon restoration;
- (d) The Washington wildlife and recreation program;
- (e) State parks and recreation commission expenditures that expand recreational lands and facilities;
- (f) Trust land transfer program and other expenditures by the department of natural resources that protect habitat or expand recreation; and
- (g) Other state expenditures that expand recreational lands and facilities.

(4) The review must also include the following regulatory programs:

- (a) Growth management regulations regarding critical areas;
- (b) Wetland restrictions;

(c) Shoreline management rules;

(d) Forest practices regulation; ~~((and))~~

(e) Hydraulic project approval program;

(f) The clean water act; and

(g) Flood management.

The review must identify the objective benefits provided by each of the included programs, such as public safety, habitat protection, environmental quality, public health, protection of infrastructure, maintaining or improving recreational access proportional to state population growth, and economic development. The review must include existing studies and analyses of these objective benefits.

(6) The review must examine a sample of recreation and habitat land acquisition by state agencies within the last ten years to determine whether the state agencies have a land stewardship program for the lands, what that program entails, and the extent of compliance with that program. Land stewardship includes, but is not limited to, restoring or developing the land to meet the objectives of the acquisition, suppressing invasive weeds, securing the property to prevent damage, and maintaining the land to prevent wildfires.

(7) In undertaking the review, the joint legislative audit and review committee may contract with experts, and shall use information provided by state agencies, and provided by stakeholders who use science-based data to quantify benefits of natural lands in measuring the outcomes of regulatory and funding programs to protect and conserve habitat.

(8) By December 1, 2017, the joint legislative audit and review committee must submit a report to the appropriate committees of the senate and the house of representatives that presents information and findings from the study. The report is to include recommendations for accountability measures for determining the achievement of intended outcomes for protecting, acquiring, and improving habitat and recreation lands and facilities.

Translation

Review and compare outcomes of programs that protect and conserve habitat and expand outdoor recreation.

Compare habitat outcomes for

- 6 land acquisition programs

- 7 land use regulatory programs

- 6 counties

- 1990-2015

Address other benefits of programs

Review agency stewardship plans



Four components of scoping

1

What do
members
really want?

2

What do
scientists and
other subject
matter experts
think?

3

Can other
studies inform
our approach?

4

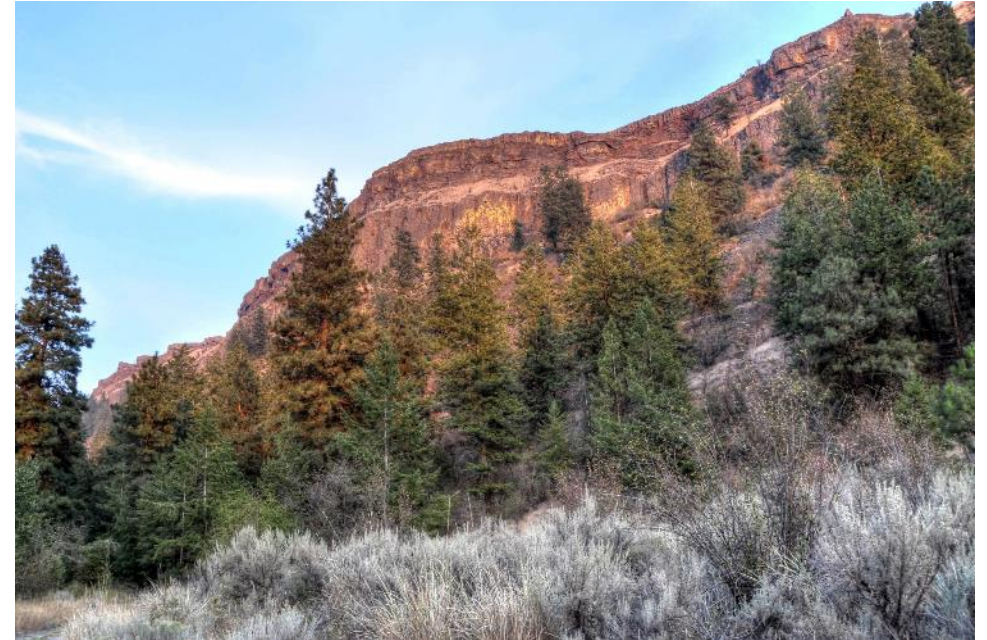
What data is
available to
help answer
these
questions?

What do members really want?

Discussed the mandate with Legislative staff

How does the state know when to buy and when to regulate land?

How much acquisition and regulation is enough?



What do subject matter experts think?

20+ conversations with experts

Economists, ecologists, biologists, mathematicians,
conservation nonprofits

How would you approach these questions?

What skills are needed to answer these
questions?



Can other studies inform the approach?

JLARC's tax preference reviews use counterfactuals



What data is available?

Identified agency datasets

Spatial data

Habitat information



3 key study questions

1

What outcome measures do programs use? Does research suggest additional measures?

2

For 3 counties east and 3 west of the Cascades:
How much land has been regulated and acquired since 1990?
Were outcomes stated and monitored?
How do the outcomes for habitat land acquisition and regulation compare? To what extent do they overlap?

3

Do agencies have land stewardship programs, and do they implement them?

Contact Us

Research Analyst

Suzanna Pratt

360.786.5106

suzanna.pratt@leg.wa.gov

