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Washington Department of Revenue
Property Tax Division

**2012 Review
of the Current Use Program
in Jefferson County**



January 2014

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Overview

Introduction

This report contains the results of the Department of Revenue's (Department) review of the Current Use Program in Jefferson County (County).

There are parts of the Current Use Program that are the responsibility of the Jefferson County Assessor (Assessor) and parts that are the responsibility of the county legislative authority. The Assessor and the county legislative authority may work closely together in administering the program or may administer their duties independently. Some administrative duties may be delegated to other units of county government (land use, planning, etc.).

Purpose

The primary purpose of this review by the Department is to provide the Assessor and the county legislative authority the information needed to perform the duties associated with the Current Use Program successfully.

An effective review of the methods employed by the County in administering the Current Use Program will promote fair, timely, and uniform property tax assessments.

Scope of Review

The review is limited in scope. We reviewed:

- The Assessor's role in administering the program.
- The county legislative authority's role in administering the program.
- Administrative procedures for compliance with state statutes and regulations.

We did not review the internal fiscal controls or the internal management of the Assessor or county legislative authority offices.

We did not examine all parcels enrolled in the program or the assessed values of these parcels. The processes used to determine value are within the scope of this review and may be addressed in this report. However, the level of assessment for properties is not within the scope of this review. The Department's Ratio Study Program monitors and measures assessment levels.

Continued on next page

Overview, Continued

Information Reviewed

To complete our review, we gathered information about the administration of the Current Use Program via interviews, documents provided by the County, as well as through independent verification. The areas we reviewed included (but were not limited to):

- Information provided or available to the public about the Current Use Program (forms, publications, and/or education efforts).
 - Administrative procedures for applications, removals, and continuances.
 - Homesite classification and valuation.
 - Technology utilized in the program administration.
 - Audit processes used to ensure continued eligibility.
 - Resolutions adopted by the county legislative authority pertaining to current use.
 - Advisory committee processes, meeting notices, and meeting minutes.
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Acknowledgment

We commend the Assessor, the Assessor's staff, the county legislative authority, and the Department of Community Development (DCD) staff for their willingness to look at opportunities to improve the uniformity and administration of the Current Use Program.

Executive Summary

About this Review In September 2012, the Department conducted an on-site visit to the Assessor's office. We interviewed the Assessor's staff and the DCD staff (delegated by the county legislative authority to handle open space and timber land applications) about the processes and procedures used in administering the County's Current Use Program.

An administrative review of this type is prone to underscore problem areas even in a county that is doing well. Though we may have observed processes or procedures employed that could be considered "best practices," those items may not be reflected in this report.

Categories of Results

The Department has completed its review and grouped the results into two categories:

- The first category, *Requirements*, is of the greatest urgency for effective administration by the Assessor and the county legislative authority. A change is required to adhere to the law.
- The second category, *Recommendations*, requires the attention of the Assessor and the county legislative authority. We note recommendations as being in the best interest of all parties. We believe improvements in these areas can improve service to the public.

The Department based the requirements and recommendations contained in this report on our analysis of the administrative procedures employed, existing state statutes and regulations, and areas we saw opportunities to improve processes, procedures, and communication.

Results

The Department identified seven requirements and three recommendations directed toward improving the administration of the Current Use Program.

The items identified may be specific to the Assessor's duties, the county legislative authority's duties, or they may have shared components of responsibility. A summary of these items follows.

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Executive Summary, Continued

Requirements

1. The Assessor is required to use the prescribed methodology for calculating the current use value on classified farm and agricultural land. 8
2. The Assessor is required to use the prescribed methodology for valuing qualified integral homesites on parcels 20 acres or more in the farm and agricultural land classification of the Current Use Program. 11
3. The county legislative authority (or their delegate) is required to include the city legislative body in the application approval process when property is located within an incorporated area. 13
4. The county legislative authority is required to provide a public hearing for consideration of applications for farm and agricultural conservation land and ensure that procedures do not limit a property owner’s ability to apply for a classification provided in law. 15
5. The county legislative authority (or their delegate) is required to rate all land classified as open space in the Current Use Program under the County’s adopted PBRS. Parcel rating may be delegated, but the county legislative authority (or the combined granting authority) must hear and approve all parcel ratings. 17
6. The Assessor is required to value all open space land according to the adopted PBRS valuation schedule. 18
7. The county legislative authority is required to appoint advisory committee members and should consider providing public notice of advisory committee meetings. 20

Recommendations

1. The Department recommends the Assessor continue their audit program to ensure only those parcels meeting the statutory requirements are eligible to continue in the Current Use Program. 24
2. The Department recommends the Assessor and the DCD staff continue to develop desk reference manuals for the Current Use Program duties. 26
3. The Department recommends staff involved in administration of the Current Use Program (including county legislative authority and DCD staff) continue to maintain an adequate level of knowledge about the Current Use Program. 27

Requirements

Introduction

For the items listed as *Requirements*, the Assessor and/or county legislative authority must make changes in procedure to comply with law.

Contents

This section contains the following requirement topics:

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Calculating Farm and Agricultural Land Values

Requirement The Assessor is required to use the prescribed methodology for calculating the current use value on classified farm and agricultural land. (RCW 84.34.065, WAC 458-30-260)

What the law says The value of farm and agricultural land is determined by considering the earning or productive capacity of comparable lands from crops grown most typically in the area averaged over not less than five years, capitalized at indicative rates. The earning or productive capacity of farm and agricultural lands shall be the net cash rental, capitalized at a rate of interest charged on long-term loans secured by a mortgage on farm or agricultural land plus a component for property taxes.

Net cash rental means the average rental paid on an annual basis, in cash, for the land being appraised and other farm and agricultural land of similar quality and similarly situated that is available for lease for a period of at least three years to any reliable person without unreasonable restrictions on its use for production of agricultural crops. A deduction can be made (from the rental received or computed) for costs of crop production charged against the landlord if the costs are such as are customarily paid by a landlord.

If net cash rental data is not available, the earning or productive capacity of farm and agricultural lands shall be determined by the cash value of typical or usual crops grown on land of similar quality and similarly situated averaged over not less than five years. Standard costs of production are allowed as a deduction from the cash value of the crops.

After gathering adequate information to calculate net cash rental, the Assessor must divide the net cash rental amount by the capitalization rate to obtain the current use value of farm and agricultural land. The capitalization rate consists of an interest rate and a property tax component for each county.

Each year, the Department updates the capitalization rate and provides it to the assessors to apply to their current use calculations. (WAC 458-30-262)

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Calculating Farm and Agricultural Land Values, Continued

What we found

According to the Assessor's staff, they base the current use value for parcels in the farm and agricultural land classification on a soil series from the Soil Conservation Service, averaged over the entire parcel. To calculate the average, the Assessor's staff:

- Determines the type (or types) of soil present on the parcel
- Measures the acreage for each soil type present
- Multiplies the acreage in each class by a factor of one to four (with four assigned for the most productive land)
- Calculates the sum of the factored acreage
- Divides the factored acreage sum by the total acreage of the parcel to compute an average productivity class which is assigned a value per acre (as shown in the table below)

Soil Class	Average Productivity Class	Per Acre Value
1	4 to 3.5	\$300
2	3.49 to 2.5	\$225
3	2.49 to 1.5	\$150
4	1.49 to 1	\$ 75

Staff stated that the capitalization rate has not been applied in their calculation of the current use per acre value of farm and agricultural land.

Action needed to meet requirement

Four-year revaluation cycle ending 2013

The County is currently in the last year of a four-year revaluation cycle, so the Assessor's staff must complete the farm and agricultural land value calculations for 2013 and apply those updated values to the appropriate farm and agricultural land parcels in the current revaluation area.

Annual revaluation beginning 2014

When the county converts to annual revaluation in 2014, the Assessor's staff must update the farm and agricultural land value calculations each year, then apply those updated values to all the classified farm and agricultural land parcels in the county.

Continued on next page

Calculating Farm and Agricultural Land Values, Continued

Action needed to meet requirement
(continued)

If the per acre value in the County's calculation is not updated annually because of a lack of data, or lack of change in the data, the capitalization rate must still be applied to the net cash rental of the parcel being revalued. A change in the capitalization rate results in a change in the current use value of farm and agricultural land.

If the current use values are not updated because of a lack of available rent or lease information, or productive capacity data (income, expense, and production), the Assessor should begin collecting this information (see Appendix A ~ Data Sources). At a minimum, the current use value should change based on a change in the capitalization rate. The Assessor should have documentation supporting the change in value, (or lack of change), since the last revaluation of a parcel.

Why it's important

Using updated data and the current-year capitalization rate ensures accurate farm and agricultural land values that reflect changes in land rents, production expenses, and commodity prices.

Valuing Qualified Integral Homesites

Requirement	The Assessor is required to use the prescribed methodology for valuing qualified integral homesites on parcels 20 acres or more in the farm and agricultural land classification of the Current Use Program. (RCW 84.34.065, WAC 458-30-317)
What the law says	<p>Qualifying <i>land</i> is valued by adding the prior year's average value of classified farm and agricultural land in the county to the value of any land improvements used to serve the residence or housing, such as sewer, water, and power. However, <i>buildings</i> used by the farm operator or owner as his or her principal residence and building(s) used to provide shelter to farm and agricultural employees are valued at their true and fair market value.</p> <p>To qualify for a reduction in assessed value, the land on which the principal residence of a farm operator or owner of farm and agricultural land or the housing for farm and agricultural employees is situated must be 20 acres or more or consist of multiple parcels that are contiguous and total 20 acres or more. The residence or housing must be integral to the use of the classified land for commercial agricultural purposes. If the residence or housing for employees is <i>not</i> integral to the farming operation, the land on which the residence or housing stands is valued at its true and fair market value.</p>
What we found	According to the Assessor's staff, qualified integral homesites are valued at the same per acre value as the surrounding farm and agricultural land. This is not the prescribed method of valuing qualified integral homesites.
Action needed to meet requirement	<p><i>Four-year revaluation cycle ending 2013</i></p> <p>The County is currently in the last year of a four-year revaluation cycle, so the Assessor's staff must complete the qualified integral homesite value calculation for 2013 and apply the result to all qualified integral homesites in the current revaluation area.</p> <p><i>Annual revaluation beginning 2014</i></p> <p>When the county converts to annual revaluation in 2014, the Assessor's staff must complete the qualified integral homesite value calculation each year and apply the result to all qualified integral homesites in the county.</p>

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Valuing Qualified Integral Homesites, Continued

Action needed to meet requirement
(continued)

Calculating the value for qualified integral homesites

Land under a qualifying residence is calculated by adding the value of land improvements used to serve the residence or housing, such as sewer, water, and power to the *prior year's average value of classified farm and agricultural land in the county*. The prior year's average value of classified farm and agricultural land is calculated by dividing the county's *prior year total farm and agricultural current use land value* by the county's *prior year total acreage in the farm and agricultural land classification*.

The Department recommends review of WAC 458-30-317 and Property Tax Advisory (PTA) 4.3.2012 for guidance on valuing qualified integral homesites.

Why it's important

Accurate valuation of qualified integral homesites ensures uniformity in taxation of the same class of property as required by the state Constitution.

Applications for Open Space or Timber Land in Incorporated Areas

Requirement The county legislative authority (or their delegate) is required to include the city legislative body in the application approval process when property is located within an incorporated area. (RCW 84.34.037, 84.34.041)

What the law says Applications for classification of open space or timber land in an incorporated area must include action by both city and county legislative bodies. Applications must be acted upon after a meeting of combined granting authorities consisting of three members of each legislative body. If the combined granting authority is unable to meet physically, the bodies may:

- Participate telephonically to approve the application as a single combined granting authority
- Approve separate affirmative acts where each legislative body affirms the entire application
- Separately affirm identical modifications for approval

If the parcel is in an area subject to an incorporated area's comprehensive plan, the application should be acted upon in the same manner that an amendment to the comprehensive plan is processed.

What we found The City of Port Townsend is the only incorporated city in the County. DCD staff stated that when they receive an application for land located within the City of Port Townsend, they have let the city process the application entirely. Documentation of the city's action was not part of the DCD file. The city and county legislative bodies are not meeting to approve the applications, nor are the legislative bodies approving the entire application or identical modifications.

Action needed to meet requirement *Procedures*
The Department recommends that the DCD staff develop written procedures for processing this type of application. The workflow may have differences depending on the comprehensive plan processes of the incorporated areas but must incorporate the required combined decision, or the approval of separate but identical legislative acts, or the approval of separate but identical modifications.

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Applications for Open Space or Timber Land in Incorporated Areas, Continued

Action needed to meet requirement
(continued)

Documentation

Each legislative body is required to keep copies of the applications, notices, and documents from the required proceedings and actions taken on the applications in their jurisdictions. (WAC 458-30-230(7))

Open Space Taxation Agreements

When an Open Space Taxation Agreement is prepared, the Department recommends at least one member from each approving legislative body sign the agreement on behalf of their legislative body.

Why it's important

Developing procedures for property in incorporated areas ensure the city's participation in property taxation decisions that affect the taxpayers in their jurisdiction and provides due process for all stakeholders.

Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land Criteria

Requirement The county legislative authority is required to provide a public hearing for consideration of applications for farm and agricultural conservation land and ensure that procedures do not limit a property owner's ability to apply for a classification provided in law. (RCW 84.34.020(1)(c), 84.34.037, 84.34.070)

What the law says Farm and agricultural conservation land is a subcategory of the open space classification. Farm and agricultural conservation land means:

- Land that was previously classified as farm and agricultural land that no longer meets the criteria for that classification, and is reclassified as farm and agricultural conservation land; or
- Traditional farmland not currently classified that has not been irrevocably devoted to a use inconsistent with agricultural uses, with the potential to return to commercial agriculture.

Classification or reclassification into the farm and agricultural conservation land subcategory requires a public hearing by the county legislative authority. (RCW 84.34.037)

Farm and agricultural conservation land that was previously classified as farm and agricultural land under RCW 84.34.020(2) is the only type of open space land that can be reclassified back to farm and agricultural land. (RCW 84.34.070(2)(d))

What we found The Assessor's staff stated there are no parcels in farm and agricultural conservation land. It is unclear if this is because:

- No applications were received
- There is misunderstanding about the criteria for classification
- There are procedural barriers or disincentives for applicants

The Assessor's staff indicated that the County's PBRS might require amendment to include farm and agricultural conservation land. The Department found that though criteria exists in the PBRS for farm and agricultural conservation land, it is unclear if the amount of points awarded for this type of resource is sufficient to meet the minimum PBRS points as required in Resolution 82-91.

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Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land Criteria, Continued

Action needed to meet requirement

The Department recommends the Assessor and DCD staff review the criteria for farm and agricultural conservation land and develop procedures for reviewing applications and rating these parcels under the County's PBRS. (RCW 84.34.020(1)(c), 84.34.037, 84.34.070)

As the Assessor audits and publicizes the availability of all the classifications, the Assessor (or DCD as their delegate) may receive applications and should be aware of the administrative requirements for this subcategory of open space.

The county legislative authority and DCD should review the County's PBRS and the existing criteria for rating farm and agricultural conservation land. If land qualifying under farm and agricultural conservation land cannot qualify under the existing rating criteria, the county legislative authority will need to amend the PBRS to include this subcategory of open space.

Why it's important

PBRS criteria and procedures should not be so restrictive that the effect is the elimination of an option of classification or reclassification that is provided for in state law.

Rating Land Under the Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs)

Requirement The county legislative authority (or their delegate) is required to rate all land classified as open space in the Current Use Program under the County's adopted PBRs. Parcel rating may be delegated, but the county legislative authority (or the combined granting authority) must hear and approve all parcel ratings. (RCW 84.34.037, 84.34.055, WAC 458-30-330)

What the law says When a county legislative authority adopts or amends a PBRs, all existing open space parcels must be rated under the criteria of the PBRs (as last amended). The county legislative authority (or the combined granting authority for parcels located in an incorporated area), must approve or deny the assigned rating or rerating of a parcel after a public hearing.

What we found The County adopted their PBRs in 1991 and amended the PBRs in 1995. The county legislative authority has delegated the rating process to DCD staff. At the time of our on-site visit, staff stated that they are aware that there are parcels that have *not been rated* under the PBRs (as last amended).

The Department did not review each parcel enrolled in open space, so we did not verify the number of parcels still requiring rating under the PBRs (as last amended).

Action needed to meet requirement DCD staff must review and rate any open space parcels that have not been rated under the PBRs (as last amended). The Department recommends coordinating the necessary rating of parcels as soon as possible.

When the parcel rating is complete, staff must ensure proposed ratings go before the granting authority for approval. The granting authority must hold a public hearing to approve or deny the rating of open space parcels under the PBRs, then notify the Assessor of the approved rating(s) for assessed valuation purposes.

Staff must apply the amended PBRs criteria to *all* current parcels in the program, not just future applicants.

Why it's important Applying the PBRs criteria to all land classified as open space provides uniformity of taxation and ensures other property owners are not shouldering a disproportionate amount of the property tax.

Valuing Open Space Land

Requirement The Assessor is required to value all open space land according to the adopted PBRs valuation schedule. (RCW 84.34.055, 84.34.060, 84.40.045, WAC 458-30-330)

What the law says When the county legislative authority notifies the Assessor that a parcel rating under the PBRs (as last amended) is approved, the Assessor must revalue the parcel based on the approved rating and the assessed valuation schedule.

The Assessor must notify the owners of newly rated open space land of the land's assessed value under the PBRs. Within 30 days of notification of their new assessed value under the PBRs, the property owner may request removal from classification (without additional tax, interest, and penalty).

What we found DCD staff reported there are parcels that they know *have not* been rated under the PBRs (as last amended). As a result, open space parcels not yet rated under the PBRs (as last amended) are valued differently than those that the rating is completed and approved by the legislative authority.

The Assessor is unable to value the unrated open space parcels based on the PBRs assessed valuation schedule until DCD staff have completed rating the parcels and the legislative authority has approved the rating. The rating translates to a percentage of market value reduction.

The Department did not review all open space parcels, so we did not verify the number of parcels still requiring valuation under the PBRs (as last amended).

Action needed to meet requirement The Assessor must determine the new assessed value of the parcels based on the final public benefit rating approved by the legislative authority. The Assessor must notify the property owner(s) of their new assessed value under the PBRs (as last amended). (RCW 84.40.045) The affected property owner(s) may request removal, (without additional tax, interest, and penalty) within 30 days after receiving notice of the new assessed value. (WAC 458-30-330(6)(a))

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Valuing Open Space Land, Continued

**Why it's
important**

The Washington State Constitution requires that all taxes be uniform upon the same class of property within the County. This ensures fair and equitable assessment of all property in the County and ensures other property owners are not shouldering a disproportionate amount of the property tax.

Appoint Advisory Committee

Requirement The county legislative authority is required to appoint advisory committee members and should consider providing public notice of advisory committee meetings. (RCW 84.34.145, WAC 458-30-345)

What the law says As a method of assisting the Assessor with valuable information about the farming community, the county legislative authority is required to appoint an advisory committee (commonly referred to as a farm advisory board). This five-member committee represents the active farming community and advises the Assessor in implementing assessment guidelines.

The advisory committee does not give advice regarding the valuation of specific parcels; however, it may supply the Assessor with advice on typical crops, land quality, leases, and expenses. This information will assist the Assessor in determining appropriate values for farm and agricultural land. (RCW 84.34.065)

What we found The Assessor's staff stated that County has not had an active advisory committee in several years. There were few farm and agricultural land applications, so the committee did not meet or replace members as they left the committee.

When the committee was active, it is unclear if the county legislative authority had appointed the current members to the advisory committee or if the committee itself appointed the members. Due to the inactive nature of the committee, there were no recent records provided of appointments or delegated appointing authority.

Action needed to meet requirement The county legislative authority must appoint an advisory committee. The Assessor can assist by contacting individuals who may be interested in serving, but the county legislative authority is responsible for the annual appointment of members to the advisory committee. If the county legislative authority is unable to locate persons to serve on the advisory committee, they should document their annual effort to appoint committee members.

Meetings of the advisory committee may constitute a public meeting. The Department recommends the county legislative authority review WAC 458-30-345 and chapter 42.30 RCW to determine if public notice and access is required.

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Appoint Advisory Committee, Continued

**Why it's
important**

Public access to advisory committee meetings and records ensures the committee's actions are transparent to county officials, Current Use Program participants, and the public.

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Recommendations

Introduction

For the items listed as *Recommendations*, the Department believes the Assessor and/or county legislative authority could improve program compliance and service to the public by making voluntary changes in procedure.

Contents

This section contains the following topics:

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Continue Audit Program

Recommendation The Department recommends the Assessor continue their audit program to ensure only those parcels meeting the statutory requirements are eligible to continue in the Current Use Program. (RCW 84.34.121)

The criteria for classification continue to apply after the approval of classification. (RCW 84.34.108) Only those parcels meeting the statutory requirements are eligible to continue in the Current Use Program. The Assessor should request all the information necessary to determine if the land is eligible for continued classification. (WAC 458-30-270) The Assessor must then determine if all or a portion of land no longer meets the criteria for classification.

For open space and timber land parcels, the Assessor may request assistance from the granting authority (or their delegate) to determine if the land continues to meet the qualifications of the classification and the Open Space Taxation Agreement (OSTA). The granting authority (or their delegate) shall provide the assistance within 30 days of receipt of the request. (RCW 84.34.108)

What we found The Assessor does have an audit program for farm and agricultural land. Assessor's staff stated they audit by questionnaire on a four-year cycle and any time property ownership transfers.

Farm and agricultural land

To collect additional information needed for audits, the Assessor's staff uses a questionnaire and requests the Schedule F or receipts to verify income.

Timber land and open space

The county legislative authority does not note conditions for approval and/or restrictions on the executed OSTA. At continuance, the Assessor's staff review timber parcels to ensure compliance with timber management plans. It is unclear how open space parcels are audited for compliance with their OSTA.

Action recommended In addition to the existing audit program, the Department recommends some random sample audits, where staff mail questionnaires to a random sample set of program participants.

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Continue Audit Program, Continued

**Action
recommended**
(continued)

Some of the relevant data or information the Assessor can collect includes:

- Receipts from sales of agricultural products produced on the classified land
- Federal income tax returns
- Rental or lease agreements/receipts
- Crop and livestock data
- Crop production or yield rates
- Government payments and subsidies
- Income/expense information related to the land
- Forest Management Plan review for compliance (for DFL)

Timber land and open space

The Department recommends the county legislative authority note any restrictions or conditions for approval or continued eligibility on the OSTA.

The Department recommends the Assessor and DCD staff work together to develop a plan and process for monitoring timber land and open space parcels to ensure owners adhere to their executed agreement and classification requirements.

**Why it's
important**

Monitoring all parcels in the Current Use Program on a periodic basis adds integrity to the assessment process and ensures other property owners are not shouldering a disproportionate amount of property tax.

Develop Desk Reference Manuals

Recommendation The Department recommends the Assessor and the DCD staff continue to develop desk reference manuals for the Current Use Program duties.

What we found The Assessor's staff stated they don't have specific manuals but that they use the materials provided by the Department for Current Use Program Training. The Assessor's staff provided brief documentation of the process they use, as well as the Jefferson County Codes that established the application process used.

The DCD staff stated that though they do not have an actual manual, they have documented the steps in the process (copy provided). This process utilizes the planning/permitting system for tracking the application through approval or denial.

Action recommended To ensure consistency and continuity, the Department recommends that the Assessor's staff and the DCD staff develop desk reference manuals for the program administrator's duties. Desk reference manuals should include policy information and specific step-by-step procedures on how to administer their duties in the Current Use Program.

A detailed desk reference manual can serve as a backup for the employee and assist their coworkers, in the event of a short-term (or long-term) staff absence.

Why it's important Desk reference manuals are useful for training staff and a good tool in preventing the loss of institutional knowledge.

Continue Training

Recommendation The Department recommends staff involved in administration of the Current Use Program (including county legislative authority and DCD staff) continue to maintain an adequate level of knowledge about the Current Use Program.

What we found The Assessor's staff regularly attends current use training offered by the Department (most recently in 2012). DCD staff expressed interest in attending training, which could be useful in their processing applications for timber land and open space.

Action recommended The Department recommends staff involved in the application and approval process continue to maintain an adequate level of knowledge about the Current Use Program through formal training or other learning opportunities.

The Department offers current use training courses each year to assist staff involved in current use administration. The schedule of course offerings is available at the Department's Property Tax Resource Center (PTRC).

The Washington State Association of County Assessors' Education Committee annually awards scholarships to Assessor's office employees to assist with the cost of attending various assessment-related training. For information about these scholarships, contact the Department's Education Specialist at (360) 534-1424.

Why it's important Attending training provides an opportunity to gain information about the Current Use Program and encourages discussion with other counties about their administrative processes.

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Next Steps

Prioritizing Requirements and Recommendations

Once the Assessor and the county legislative authority receive a final copy of this review, the Department will (if requested) consult with them to help prioritize the work they must complete.

Follow-up

The Department is committed to the success of the Assessor and county legislative authority by ensuring they comply with state statutes and regulations.

The Department will follow-up in six months to review the changes implemented. This will give the Assessor and the county legislative authority an opportunity to provide information to the Department about any issues they encountered during the implementation process.

Questions

For questions about specific requirements or recommendations in our report, please contact the contributing staff member listed below.

County Review Auditor	Judy Wells	(360) 534-1360
Current Use Specialist	Leslie Mullin	(360) 534-1424
County Review Supervisor	Cindy Boswell	(509) 885-9842

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Appendix A ~ Data Sources

The data sources below are examples of the many sources available to county assessors. Other data sources are available and the Department encourages assessors to locate, document, and use any reliable data sources available to them.

The websites and instructions provided below are current as of November 2013. The Department encourages assessors to become familiar with navigating the data sources and share any new sources they locate.

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service <www.nass.usda.gov>

To locate county/region data for cash rents, production, expenses, etc.

Step	Locate...	Then...
1.	<i>Statistics by State</i> search box	Select <i>Washington</i>
2.	<i>Washington Statistics / Quick Stats</i>	
3.	<i>WA County Level Data</i>	Select <i>Go</i>
4.	Available data options (may open to a new window based on your browser settings)	Filter data by selecting appropriate options for available categories (see Note 1)
5.		Select <i>Get Data</i>
6.	Displayed results	Save results, print results, or export results to a spreadsheet
Example of data filtering for specific results		
	Production data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Select <i>Crops</i>, then <i>County</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Select specific Crop in listing (winter wheat/spring wheat/etc; see Note 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Select <i>Get Data</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Locate bushels per acre on list of results 	Cash rent data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Select <i>Economics</i>, then <i>Rent</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Select <i>County or Region</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Select <i>Years</i> (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Select <i>Get Data</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Locate rent data on list of results

*Notes:

1. If data selections are too few, too much data is returned; if data selections are too many, necessary data may be excluded. It's a balance. You will find what you need through experience using the search tools.
2. Of the dry land small grain crops, winter wheat is the most useful. Spring wheat (a rotation crop) generally produces 50 to 70 percent of the bushels per acre of winter wheat. Combining the two crops will negatively affect the validity of your data.

Continued on next page

Appendix A, Continued

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (continued)

To locate cash rent publications

Step	Locate...	Then...
1.	Statistics by State search box	Select <i>Washington</i>
2.	I want to... box	Select <i>Search for Washington data and statistics</i>
3.	Reports for cash rents displayed	Select appropriate report from results

Department of Natural Resources data requests <www.dnr.wa.gov>

DNR will provide cropland rents if requested by phone, email, or formal letter. Land rents are available by county or by region. There are five DNR regions and contact information is available on the DNR website. When requesting DNR rents include specific detail about what information you want included and excluded, as well as the format you would like to receive.

Example of information request

Please provide the crop rents for DNR land in (fill in) County (or multiple counties).

Excluding rents from leases for:

- Conservation
- Habitat
- CRP
- Public access
- Homesites

For each lease, please provide:

- Location of each property including county, section, township, range, and parcel number
 - Type of land such as irrigated cropland, non-irrigated cropland, or grazing land
 - Size of the parcel and the number of crop acres in the parcel
 - Detail of parcel improvements such as trees, vines, an outbuilding or irrigation equipment
 - If the rents include or exclude the Leasehold Excise Tax
 - Start date and end date of each rental agreement and parcel
 - Total rent per year
 - Tenant's name
 - _____
 - _____
-

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Appendix A, Continued

Washington State University

<www.farm-mgmt.wsu.edu>

<<http://ext.wsu.edu>>

Enterprise Budgets <http://extecon.wsu.edu/pages/Enterprise_Budgets>

Enterprise Budgets are authoritative studies of the cost, yield, and income from a particular crop in a particular part of the state (for example cherries in central Washington; or spearmint using rill or center systems). A team of local farmers or orchardists and a WSU agricultural economist conduct the studies. The studies are especially helpful when they include land rents, which can be used for data comparison of farm and agricultural land value calculations.
