

P. O. Box 47471  
Olympia, WA 98504-7471

# Washington Department of Revenue Property Tax Division

## **2012 Review of the Current Use Program in Clallam County**



*July 2013*

## Table of Contents

---

Overview.....	3
Introduction.....	3
Purpose.....	3
Scope of Review .....	3
Information Reviewed .....	4
Acknowledgment .....	4
Executive Summary .....	5
About this Review.....	5
Categories of Results .....	5
Results.....	5
Requirements .....	7
Rating Land Under the Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs).....	8
Valuing Open Space Land .....	10
Calculating Farm and Agricultural Land Values .....	11
Valuing Qualified Integral Homesites .....	12
Updating Forest Land Values .....	14
Advisory Committee.....	15
Recommendations.....	17
Continue Audit Program .....	18
Continue Developing Desk Reference Manuals .....	20
Continue Training .....	21
Verify Forms and Publications .....	22
Next Steps.....	25
Prioritizing Requirements and Recommendations.....	25
Follow-up.....	25
Questions.....	25
For Additional Information Contact .....	25
Appendix A ~ Data Sources .....	27

---

## Overview

---

### Introduction

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

There are parts of the Current Use Program that are the responsibility of the Clallam 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 process used to ensure continued eligibility.
  - Resolutions adopted by the county legislative authority pertaining to current use.
  - Advisory committee processes, meeting notices, and meeting minutes.
- 

### 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 Department of Community Development (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 six requirements and four recommendations directed toward improving the administration of the County's 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.

---

*Continued on next page*

## **Executive Summary, Continued**

---

### **Requirements**

- 1. The county legislative authority 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. .... 8**
- 2. The Assessor is required to value all open space land according to the adopted PBRs valuation schedule. .... 10**
- 3. The Assessor is required to use the prescribed methodology for calculating the current use value on classified farm and agricultural land..... 11**
- 4. The Assessor is required to use the prescribed methodology for valuing qualified homesites on parcels 20 acres or more in the farm and agricultural land classification of the Current Use Program..... 12**
- 5. The Assessor is required to update the per acre value of designated forest land (DFL) and timber land each year based on the land grade and operability class of the land. .... 14**
- 6. The county legislative authority is required to appoint open space advisory committee members and should consider providing public notice of advisory committee meetings. .... 15**

### **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. .... 18**
- 2. The Department recommends the Assessor and the DCD staff continue to develop desk reference manuals for the Current Use Program duties..... 20**
- 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. .... 21**
- 4. The Department recommends the Assessor and county legislative authority verify Current Use Program/Designated Forest Land (DFL) forms and publications provided to the public are current..... 22**

## 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:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>See Page</b>
Rating Land Under the Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs)	8
Valuing Open Space Land	10
Calculating Farm and Agricultural Land Values	11
Valuing Qualified Integral Homesites	12
Updating Forest Land Values	14
Advisory Committee	15

---

## Rating Land Under the Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs)

---

**Requirement**      **The county legislative authority 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 1996 and amended the PBRs in 2001. The county legislative authority has delegated the rating process to DCD staff. At the time of our on-site visit, only a portion of the open space land was rated under the PBRs (as last amended). Staff reported there are parcels that they know *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 with the Assessor’s regular audit for continued eligibility. The Assessor’s staff could mail questionnaires to the owners of open space land requesting information on how they use the land and the attributes the land contains. Additionally, during their regular physical inspections, the Appraisers should document any changes in use. This will be helpful when rerating parcels where there is no application and/or OSTA on file. DCD could use the responses to ensure accurate parcel rating.

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.

---

*Continued on next page*



## Rating Land Under the Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs), Continued

---

**Action needed to  
meet requirement**  
(continued)

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

---

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>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)</b>
<b>What the law says</b>	<p>When the county legislative authority notifies the Assessor that a parcel rating under the PBRs is approved, the Assessor must revalue the parcel based on the approved rating and the assessed valuation schedule.</p> <p>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).</p>
<b>What we found</b>	<p>Staff reported there are parcels that they know <i>have not</i> 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 county legislative authority.</p> <p>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 county legislative authority has approved the rating. The rating translates to a percentage of market value reduction.</p> <p>The Department did not review all open space parcels, so we did not verify the number of parcels still requiring valuation under the PBRs.</p>
<b>Action needed to meet requirement</b>	<p>The Assessor must determine the new assessed value of the parcels based on the final public benefit percentage approved by the granting authority. The Assessor must notify the property owner(s) of their new assessed value under the PBRs (as last amended). (RCW 84.40.045) 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))</p>
<b>Why it's important</b>	<p>The Washington State Constitution requires that all taxes be uniform upon the same class of property within the County. This provides 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.</p>

---

## 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. (WAC 458-30-260)**

---

**What the law says**      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)

---

**What we found**      According to the Assessor's staff, the current use values on parcels in the farm and agricultural land classification had not changed for many years. It appears to be at least ten years based on a review of several parcels classified as farm and agricultural land. Staff stated that the capitalization rate has not been applied to net cash rental to calculate the current use value of farm and agricultural land.

---

**Action needed to meet requirement**      The County is on an annual revaluation cycle, so the Assessor must revalue *all* real property each year. If net cash rental 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 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**      Qualifying *land* 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, *buildings* 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.

To qualify for a reduction in assessed value, the land on which the residence or housing stands 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 *not* integral to the farming operation, the land on which the residence or housing stands is valued at its true and fair market value.

---

**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**      The County is on an annual revaluation cycle, so the Assessor must update the homesite calculation each year and apply it to all qualified integral homesites in the farm and agricultural land classification.

Land under a qualifying residence is calculated by adding the value of land improvements, 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) 4.2.2009 for guidance on valuing qualified integral homesites.

---

*Continued on next page*

## **Valuing Qualified Integral Homesites, Continued**

---

**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.

---

## Updating Forest Land Values

---

**Requirement**      **The Assessor is required to update the per acre value of designated forest land (DFL) and timber land each year based on the land grade and operability class of the land. (RCW 84.33.130, 84.33.140, 84.34.060, WAC 458-30-700, 458-40-540)**

---

**What the law says**      The Department adjusts and certifies forest land values for county assessors to use in valuing forest land for the assessment roll. (RCW 84.33.130) Forest land values are based on land grades and operability classes. The Department updates and publishes the values annually. (WAC 458-40-540)

The Assessor must list each parcel of DFL with a value, taking into consideration the grade and class of the land, and then apply the published values to the land. (RCW 84.33.140) Timber land is valued according to chapter 84.33 RCW, using the same published values as DFL, based on land grades and operability classes. (WAC 458-40-540)

---

**What we found**      The Department reviewed several DFL and timber land parcels. Forest land values were updated for these parcels according to the published values through assessment year 2010. Values remained the same for assessment years 2011 and 2012, which reflects the update did not occur for the parcels we reviewed.

It is unclear what occurred during this period that prevented updating forest land values. The Department did not review each parcel enrolled in DFL and timber land, so we did not verify the number of parcels requiring value updates.

---

**Action needed to meet requirement**      The Assessor must update the forest land values in the computer system each year and apply the values to all parcels classified as DFL and timber land.

The Department recommends the Assessor verify the update has occurred during the 2013 revaluation and document the process for future annual updates.

---

**Why it's important**      Forest land values that accurately reflect the changes in value for land grades and operability classes ensures accurate values to calculate levies for taxing districts and the equalization of the state school levy.

---

## Advisory Committee

---

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

---

**What the law says**      As a method of assisting the Assessor's office 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. (RCW 84.34.065)

---

**What we found**      The County has an active advisory committee. Committee members and the Assessor's staff occasionally meet. It is clear the committee and the Assessor's staff work well together, sharing information pertinent to farming conditions in the County. The committee appropriately documents the meeting minutes. The Assessor's staff provided copies of the prior year's meeting minutes (2004 and 2009).

It is unclear if the county legislative authority has appointed the current members to the advisory committee or if the committee itself appointed the current members. There was no record provided of appointments or delegated appointing authority.

---

**Action needed to meet requirement**      The committee and 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.

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.

---

*Continued on next page*

**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.

---



## 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:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>See Page</b>
Continue Audit Program	18
Continue Developing Desk Reference Manuals	20
Continue Training	21
Verify Forms and Publications	22

---

## 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 the 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 a formal audit program. The Assessor's staff conducts audits of parcels at transfer and during physical inspections. During physical inspections, the Appraiser notes changes in the use of the land. The office staff follow-up with an audit letter and parcels are tracked through the end of the audit process.

*Farm and agricultural land*

To collect additional information needed for audits, the Assessor's staff uses supplemental questionnaires (to verify income and agricultural activities).

*Timber land and open space*

The county legislative authority does not note any 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 farm and agricultural land audit program, the Department recommends some random sample audits, where staff mail questionnaires to a random sample set of program participants.

---

*Continued on next page*

## 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 continue working 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.

---

## Continue Developing 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, which are supplemented with policies and instructions. The Assessor’s staff provided brief documentation of the process they use, as well as the Clallam 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 (flow chart).

---

**Action recommended**     To ensure consistency and continuity, the Department recommends that the Assessor’s staff and the DCD staff continue developing desk reference manuals for the program staff duties. Desk reference manuals should include policy information and specific step-by-step procedures.

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 monitored the 2012 training.

---

**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.

---

## Verify Forms and Publications

---

**Recommendation**     **The Department recommends the Assessor and county legislative authority verify Current Use Program/Designated Forest Land (DFL) forms and publications provided to the public are current.**

The Department must prepare and make available to the Assessor's office the necessary forms, publications, and applications for the Current Use Program and DFL. The Assessor and county legislative authority are required to publicize the qualifications and provide the forms to property owners who want to apply for classification. (chapter 84.34 RCW)

---

**What we found**     The Assessor provides information about the Current Use Program and DFL through personal contact with property owners via phone calls and visitors to the Assessor's office. Additionally, the Assessor provides information through speaking engagements, targeted education, and limited information through the County website.

---

**Action recommended**     The Department recommends the Assessor and county legislative authority continue to utilize available resources to advertise the Current Use Program and DFL.

The Department updates forms and publications on a regular basis. The Department encourages the Assessor and the county legislative authority to utilize existing forms and publications intended for the public by linking to the Department's website whenever possible. This can be more effective by including a brief explanation with each link, providing the user information about what they can expect to locate by following the link.

The Department recommends including links to the Department's forms and publications with the information already on the County's website. The Department further recommends the county legislative authority and DCD include brief information on their websites about the open space and timber land classifications with a referral to their delegates (DCD and the Assessor's staff) for more information.

Property Tax forms intended for the public are available on the Department's website at  
*[dor.wa.gov/content/getaformorpublication/formbysubject/forms\\_prop.aspx](http://dor.wa.gov/content/getaformorpublication/formbysubject/forms_prop.aspx)*.

---

*Continued on next page*

## Verify Forms and Publications, Continued

---

**Action recommended**  
(continued)

Property Tax publications intended for the public are available on the Department's website at [dor.wa.gov/content/GetAFormOrPublication/PublicationBySubject/#property](http://dor.wa.gov/content/GetAFormOrPublication/PublicationBySubject/#property).

If the County has limited resources for website updates, we recommend providing a brief explanation of each category of classified land with a link to additional information on the Department's website.

---

**Why it's important**

Utilizing updated forms and publications by linking to the Department's website ensures the use of materials that reflect recent changes in regulation and/or procedure.

---

This page intentionally left blank.



## 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

---

**For Additional Information Contact**

Washington State Department of Revenue  
Property Tax Division  
P.O. Box 47471  
Olympia, WA 98504-7471  
(360) 534-1400  
<http://dor.wa.gov>

---

This page intentionally left blank.

## 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 June 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](http://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
<b>Example of data filtering for specific results</b>		
	Production data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Select <i>Crops</i>, then <i>County</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Select specific Crop in listing (winter wheat/spring wheat/etc; see Note 2)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Select <i>Get Data</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Locate bushels per acre on list of results</li> </ul>	Cash rent data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Select <i>Economics</i>, then <i>Rent</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Select <i>County or Region</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Select <i>Years</i> (if applicable)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Select <i>Get Data</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Locate rent data on list of results</li> </ul>

\*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](http://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
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 

*Continued on next page*

## Appendix A, Continued

---

### **Washington State University**

<[www.farm-mgmt.wsu.edu](http://www.farm-mgmt.wsu.edu)>

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

### **Enterprise Budgets < [http://extecon.wsu.edu/pages/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.

---