Report on Long-Term Forest Health & Reduction of Wildland Fire Danger (2SHB 1168)

RCW 76.04.516

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Purpose

The statute directs DNR to provide biennial progress reports on expenditures made from the wildfire response, forest restoration, and community resilience account and recommendations on funding dispensation. As well as progress on the implementation of the wildland fire protection 10-year strategic plan and the 20-year forest health strategic plan, and progress on developing markets for biomass generated from forest health treatments.

Content

By December 1 of each odd-numbered year, the DNR must provide a report to the Governor and Legislature on:

1. The type, amount, and purpose of expenditures made from the Account by fiscal year;

2. The amount of unspent and unobligated funds in the Account, and recommendations for disbursement to local districts;

3. Progress on the implementation of the Wildland Fire Protection 10-year Strategic Plan;

4. Progress on the implementation of the 20-year Forest Health Strategic Plan;

5. Progress on developing markets for forest residuals and biomass generated from forest health treatments.

6. DNR must also include any recommendations for adjustments to how Account funds are disbursed.

Accountability

This report straddles two biennia of work funded by the Account: 2021-2023 and 2023-2025, but only includes detailed information on FY 2023 and FY 2024. FY 2022 is covered in the prior report. This report provides detailed information for FY 2023, as well as the final deliverables for the 2021-2023 Biennium. It also provides an overview of how funds were allocated by the agency for this current biennium, (2023-2025) and a progress report on deliverables through FY 2024.

Fiscal Year	Total Allotments	Total Expenditures
2023	$87,097,500	$80,290,947.16
2024	$56,961,976	$43,054,157.58

Fiscal Year	Wildfire Response Allotment	Wildfire Response Expenditures	Forest Restoration Allotment	Forest Restoration Expenditures	Community Resilience Allotment	Community Resilience Expenditures
2023		$32,897,009.36		$33,735,059.70		$13,658,878.10
2024	$23,293,393.44	$17,732,613.22	$19,554,624.84	$15,469,830.29	$14,113,957.72	$9,851,714.07

Table 1. 2023-2024 Total allotments and expenditures. For the 2021-2023 Biennium, the Wildland Fire Response, Forest Restoration, and Community Resilience investment areas lack allotment information as such allocations were not broken out programmatically at that level of detail.

Key Achievements (2023-2024):

Wildland fire Response: DNR has strategically committed $14.9 million from the Account to bolster wildland fire response capabilities by increasing its wildland fire fighting workforce; expanding wildland fire training, including training tribal members; increasing air operations capacity; and improving operational facilities.

Forest Restoration: In FY 2023 and FY 2024, DNR invested $16.7 million from the Account to increase forest resilience to insects, disease, climate, and wildland fire. Direct investments in state, tribal, federal, and private lands to reduce forest density, reduce fuels and encourage appropriate species have occurred statewide. These investments will pay off in the short term by addressing immediate threats, and in the long term by improving growth and yield of forests as well as landscape health.

Community Resilience: DNR has invested $6.4 million to date from the Account to increase regional and community preparedness and response to wildland fires, as well as increasing the resiliency of our forests and communities statewide to wildland fire and other disturbances. Account funds increased capacity for outreach and to provide grant funding to communities conducting community wildland fire preparedness, participating in Firewise USA, Wildfire Ready Neighbors, or Fire Adapted Communities activities.

Other Key Achievements

Development of Data Dashboards: In response to the need for transparent and accountable tracking of progress, DNR has launched a comprehensive Wildfire Response, Forest Restoration, and Community Resilience Account Dashboard. This tool monitors the effectiveness and outcomes of the initiatives and activities funded under 2SHB 1168, ensuring goals are met efficiently.

Enhanced Organizational Structure: DNR has refined its internal structures to better organize programs and personnel, optimizing resource allocation and response times during critical wildland fire incidents.

Strengthened Partnerships: Through the implementation of the various programs supported by the Account, and building on the foundation of collaboration, DNR has deepened partnerships with local communities, federal agencies, and other stakeholders. These partnerships are vital for integrated and cohesive wildland fire management and forest health strategies.

Community Engagement and Resilience Building: Through continuous engagement and support, DNR has empowered communities to actively participate in resilience building, making substantial strides in changing the trajectory of wildland fire suppression and loss mitigation.

Questions?