

## DRAFT

### Memorandum

To: Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group

From: Acquisition Coordination Workgroup 1

Date: January 14, 2008

Re: Proposed Lands Group Recommendations

#### Summary

Workgroup 1 recently "*Review[ed] agency transaction plans and policies to help ensure statewide coordination of habitat and recreation land acquisition and disposals.*"<sup>1</sup> As a result, Workgroup 1 recommends that the Lands Group consider some or all of the following recommendations to address one or more of the Lands Group's action items and tasks. The recommendations range from inter-agency coordination that can happen within existing resources and policies, to policy/funding options that the Lands Group would have to recommend to the Legislature or other state policy boards. **The revised state agency matrix (attached) includes the Workgroup 1 notes and deliberations from which the recommendations were drawn.** This memorandum provides a summary of those recommendations for Lands Group discussion and action.

#### Next Steps

At the Lands Group's January 21, 2008 meeting, the Lands Group can consider each of these options. The Lands Group should determine which recommendations are ready for full Lands Group endorsement, which recommendation require further development, and which, if any, should be tabled and why. For, the Lands Group should delegate recommendations requiring further development to the appropriate workgroup(s).

#### Options for general land acquisition coordination

- (1) Increase inter-agency land acquisition coordination at a landscape planning level. Identify overlapping agency acquisition goals and priorities. Identify where in the landscape are acquisitions most likely to occur and what acquisitions are most likely to meet multiple agency objectives.
  - a) Use mapping and planning tools (GIS) and perspectives to do this.

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<sup>1</sup> Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group Action Plan; December, 2008 Update; <http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/rco/h&rlcg/ActionPlan.pdf>

- i) Develop new or identify existing GIS-mapping tools to meet this goal.
  - ii) Should this be delegated to WG2 (Records and Documentation)?
  - iii) We need to identify what layers of information are necessary to inform decision-making and coordination.
  - iv) Can this process happen at annual Lands Group Coordination forum with existing resources?
- b) Identify high priority conservation/recreation acquisition opportunity areas based on those areas that meet multiple conservation/recreation objectives.
- i) Identify the appropriate conservation/recreation objectives to apply as criteria to prioritize landscapes with the greatest conservation value to meet multiple conservation/recreation objectives. For conservation these may include:
    - (1) Natural Heritage Plan
    - (2) Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority Habitat and Species
    - (3) Biodiversity Council's Conservation Opportunity Framework
    - (4) "Viable" Agriculture preservation considerations (Co. strategies?)
    - (5) What else?
  - ii) For recreation acquisitions, agencies should test the State Agency Level of Service Tool and evaluate its utility and effectiveness<sup>2</sup>.
    - (1) Also consider:
      - (a) SPRC 2013 Centennial Plan
      - (b) WDFW Hunting and Fishing Access Plans
      - (c) WDFW Watchable Wildlife Plan
      - (d) WDFW habitat acquisition plans
      - (e) DNR recreation plans
    - iii) Coordinate (at the biennial forums) with NGO (land trust) partners and their strategies and conservation/recreation priorities.
- c) WSDOT should consult with the three natural resource land management agencies each time it is looking at purchasing/enhancing lands to see if

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<sup>2</sup> "Defining and Measuring Success: The role of state Government in Outdoor Recreation – a state comprehensive outdoor recreation planning document"; RCO, 2008; Page 30;  
[http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/rcfb/Recreation\\_Trends/SCORP\\_2008.pdf](http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/rcfb/Recreation_Trends/SCORP_2008.pdf)

multiple conservation management objectives can be met.

- i) Consider appropriate land management agencies or cooperative management agreements
- d) Support development of a WSDOT mitigation lands inventory
- e) Other?

#### Options for Natural Area Preserve coordination

Each of the agencies is capable of acquiring and Natural Area Preserves (NAPs). This is a natural point of departure for increased coordination.

- (1) Evaluate if NAPs are currently owned and managed by appropriate agencies.
- (2) Require all agencies to consider Natural Heritage Plan priorities when identifying land acquisitions.
- (3) For any acquisitions, if there are Natural Heritage “elements” or if the site meets NAP criteria, require agency coordination and planning around acquisition including ownership, management objectives, etc.
- (4) Consider incorporating preceding options into annual forum agenda.
- (5) Evaluate if these options are encouraged in WWRP planning requirements. If they are not, consider recommending policies that would incorporate these options into the WWRP planning eligibility requirements.
- (6) Natural Heritage program should evaluate as appropriate WDFW wildlife areas, State Parks areas and see where sites might get credit for implementing the Natural Heritage Plan.
- (7) Other?

#### Options for prioritizing acquisition

- (1) Internal agency acquisition priority list development should be informed by inter-agency coordination. This could be done at the annual forum.
- (2) Look at parcel-level priorities and coordination in a timeframe that is relevant to WWRP grant cycles and Biennial budget development.
- (3) Within the confines of sensitivity of parcel identification, request that the IT team to help develop a 10-year (?) projection of acquisitions that are in the queue.

- (4) Contact PSP to coordinate Lands Group charge with PS acquisition and restoration prioritization.
  - a) Discuss land acquisition priorities and strategies for identifying appropriate land management agency for holding lands.
- (5) Pool state resources for acquisitions including (through MOU or other?)
  - a) Appraisers
  - b) Timber cruisers
  - c) Surveyors
  - d) Engineers
  - e) Community process facilitators
  - f) Public outreach approaches
- (6) Other?

Options for improved public involvement and transparency

- (1) Develop a common approach for all agencies to conduct early, pro-active community outreach and public processes for land acquisitions.
  - a) Familiarize local governments with a consistent outreach/involvement approach.
  - b) Early involvement of the local communities should be required of all state agencies for any acquisition.
- (2) Share good models for community meetings and public process.
- (3) Consider sharing resources such as:
  - a) Facilitators
  - b) Media contacts

Options for Federal acquisition funds

- (1) Spending authority for federal funds is approved by OFM. So OFM could develop a reporting mechanism for the legislature. Share this with WG 5.

- (2) OFM natural resource budget analysts should be an observer/participant in the annual forums.

Options for acquisition implementation

When agencies are implementing acquisitions on-the-ground consider the following.

- (1) Coordinating efforts for landowner/local government/NGOs contacts by multiple agencies
  - a) Especially for large landowners.
  - b) Share information about which landowners agencies are talking to and making deals with.
- (2) Coordination with partner organizations (land trusts) contacts by multiple agencies

Transformational big ideas

Given current fiscal climate and apparent interest in rethinking how Washington manages its natural resources, consider advancing the following recommendations to the appropriate venue.

- (1) Ecosystem management/objectives should be the driver and organizer for all existing conservation objectives.
- (2) Support funding for statewide biodiversity inventory
  - a) Integrate this with Natural Heritage Program Methodology (used globally)
- (3) Consider a higher-level lands group (commission/agency?) that develops, implements and manages a statewide acquisition strategy (consider Florida model)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> See Florida Case Study on p.22-25 of "Toward a Coordination Strategy for Habitat and Recreation Land Acquisition in Washington State"  
<http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/rcfb/6242/LandsFinal.pdf>