Quarterly Meeting Summary

Member Attendance

Senator Linda Evans Parlette
Kaleen Cottingham (Recreation and Conservation Office Director)
Steve McLellan (Recreation and Conservation Office)
Bill Robinson (The Nature Conservancy)
Roma Call (Puget Sound Partnership)
Pene Speaks (Department of Natural Resources)
Joe LaTourrette (Pacific Coast Joint Venture)
Elizabeth Rodrick (Department of Fish and Wildlife)
Steve Hahn (State Parks and Recreation Commission)
Leslie Betlach (City of Renton)
Jeanne Koenings (Department of Ecology)
Dominga Soliz (Recreation and Conservation Office)
Josh Giuntoli (State Conservation Commission)
Lynn Helbrecht (Biodiversity Council)

Introductions, agenda review

Dominga Soliz welcomed the group and introduced new members Roma Call (Puget Sound Partnership) and Steve McLellan (RCO). Roma is an Ecosystem Recovery Coordinator for the South Sound Action Area. Steve is RCO's Policy Director and Legislative Liaison. Attendees introduced themselves and the agenda was reviewed. Several members could not attend because of illness or financial constraints.

Senator Parlette explained the development of the Lands Group legislation. Local government officials want to see what lands the state is planning to acquire in their county because they can lose some of their tax base when private lands become publicly owned.

Administrative items

Member Changes
Mike Rundlett of Western Washington Agricultural Association (WWAA) resigned due to budgetary constraints. There will be no replacement from WWAA. Joe LaTourrette of Pacific Coast Joint Venture will resign from the group at the end of the year due to his upcoming partial retirement. Joe is working to find a replacement representative for the Lands Group. Based on suggestion and agreement from the group at the July 2009

quarterly meeting, a representative from the Trust for Public Land was invited to be a Lands Group member. We are awaiting response. The group had no suggestions for additional members to invite.

Meeting Dates for 2010
The following dates were agreed upon for 2010 quarterly meetings:

January	20
April	28
July	28
October	13

The group decided to host the 2nd Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum on February 3, 2010 (all day) and February 4, 2010 (until noon). The group is aware that this is during the legislative session, but the timing coincides with acquisition grant requests.

Document Review

Review Annual Progress Report to OFM

The group reviewed the draft annual report to the Office of Financial Management (OFM). The 2009 draft report is different from the 2008 report. The 2008 report focused on the structural organization of the lands group and on the developing of the action plan. The 2009 draft emphasized more detail about specific actions and accomplishments and highlighted the April 29 work session and first Annual Forum. It also highlighted Lands Group's part in the Governor's effort to reform the natural resource agencies. The draft explained that the group was as model of structured collaboration to improve customer service and efficiencies, and to decrease duplicative work. It also discussed the major challenge of the Lands Group in implementing statutory tasks with no budget, but described how the group is focusing on developing recommendations to the legislature as options based on varying levels of resources.

The group offered the following suggestions for revising the report:

- The draft includes too much detail about Action Items. The report should be revised to read like an executive summary of the Lands Group, highlighting details and anecdotes from the July 2009 Annual Forum and the development toward publishing a biennial forecast of potential acquisitions in June 2010.
- If a specific task is discussed in the annual report, it should be numbered, cross-referenced to the Action Plan, and labeled an "Action Item," as in the Action Plan.

- It is premature to offer the Lands Group as a model for reforming the natural resource agencies.
- An introductory statement should emphasize the purposes of the Lands Group in improving communication between agencies and making habitat and recreation land acquisition information transparent and accessible.
- The title of the biennial forecast should indicate that the information is speculative and not final. “Sunshine Forecast” and “Preliminary Forecast” were offered as title suggestions.

Workgroup 6 (Reporting) will revise the draft report and circulate it to the Lands Group for review before submitting it to OFM.

Review Annual Action Plan

The group reviewed the draft annual Action Plan. The Action Plan will be included as an attachment to the annual report to OFM. Readers can find detailed information about the Lands Group in the Action Plan. The Action Plan that is included in the report to OFM should be reduced to show a summarized history of what’s been accomplished, rather than a detailed history.

Dominga emphasized that the lands group is no longer in its infancy. Each workgroup has a lot to do by July 2012 and this is reflected in the Action Plan. She asked members to note timelines for the action items they are working on and flagged workgroup members to expect to hear from her for scheduling workgroup meetings.

Workgroup 1 Updates

2nd Annual Forum

Pene gave an update about the second State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum, scheduled for February 3rd and 4th. The purpose of the forum is to help natural resource agencies coordinate grant requests for the 2011-2013 biennium. Land trusts, other non-profit organizations, local government representatives, and others will be invited to attend. Non-profit organizations will be invited in order to inform them about potential agency acquisitions and to inform the agencies about how to improve acquisition strategies. The forum will help make agency acquisition plans transparent, will provide an opportunity to foster partnerships and will help identify acquisition-related impacts. Land trusts may be particularly interested in the discussion since they will be eligible to receive WWRP funds during the next grant cycle. Agency scientists will be able to coordinate with each other as well.

The format will allow the State Parks and Recreation Commission (Parks), the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the State Conservation Commission (SCC) to present vicinity and project-level maps of each potential acquisition and discuss the project details and reasons for the

acquisition. Attendees will have the opportunity to comment within an allotted timeframe on each potential project and the Lands Group will facilitate networking after the forum.

Biennial Forecast

Pene discussed the proposal for the biennial forecast. A forecast of potential acquisitions and disposals for each upcoming biennium will be published in a report and companion statewide map in June of every even year. Agencies will coordinate budget requests at the annual forum in January of every even year, and then submit grant requests in the spring. The biennial forecast of potential acquisitions will be published in June of every even year. This will ensure that the forecast information is as accurate as possible and will provide the public with the information about six months before the legislature meets. The first forecast will be published in June 2010.

The forecast will be reported as a statewide GIS-based map and as a detailed project report organized by county. An appendix to the report will index the projects by legislative district. The following information will be included in the report:

- Agency acquiring or disposing of the land
- Project name
- Priority site of the acquisition or disposal (county, section/township/range)
- Legislative district
- Land classification (ie: purpose of the acquisition in terms of conservation, recreation, or combined use)
- Type of acquisition (ie: fee, less-than-fee, transfer)
- Fund source
- Estimated amount to be requested (cost)
- Number of acres
- Project detail (description, what's unique about the acquisition, partners, specific habitat, etc.)

The SCC's Office of Farmland Preservation suggested information about existing farmlands on or near potential acquisition sites should be provided as well. This would fit well in the project detail section of the report. The report will be in a readable format with an introductory summary that includes forecast data analysis, followed by project forecast data information organized alphabetically by county.

Without resources, it is unclear where the forecast will "live" or who will maintain it after it is built. In June 2010 it will be published on the Lands Group website.

Senator Parlette discussed the 5248 project involving the Ruckleshaus Center. The project brought together farmers, environmentalists, counties and tribes to engage in discussion mainly focused on critical area ordinances. In a progress report to the Legislature, the Center emphasized its accomplishments and specific funding needs. The Lands Group should think about its presentation to the Legislature in 2012. The

group should be able to present specific accomplishments that meet the transparency and coordination goals of the legislation and should be able to describe detailed funding needs for continuing the group.

Dominga reported that the Department of Transportation (DOT) requested to withdraw from the lands group coordinating process. She said this is primarily because DOT is structured into 6 regions and this makes coordinating more complicated. Also, DOT's wetland mitigation site acquisitions don't fit within the same timeframe or processes as other state agency acquisition processes. Several members said there could be many benefits if DOT coordinated around potential wetland mitigation sites. Coordinating these sites with other agencies could boost the success rates of DOT's wetland mitigation and could help DOT select sites in a way that complements other conservation strategies. Perhaps the Lands Group can work directly with DOT regional managers?

Workgroup 2 Updates

GIS-Based Documentation (Maps)

Steve gave updates about Workgroup 2 (records and documentation) progress. Workgroup 2 is tasked with recommending options for:

- coordinating GIS-based documentation of habitat and recreation lands, and
- standardizing record keeping of habitat and recreation land acquisitions and disposals, including identifying a preferred process for centralizing acquisition data

The workgroup is planning to develop the biennial forecast map to publish in June 2010, and to recommend options for building a data system that centralizes habitat and recreation acquisition data. The system will coordinate GIS-based documentation and standardize records, and will incorporate the other lands group tasks (eg: capturing data to monitor the success of acquisitions, including federally funded acquisitions). Workgroup 2 supports the work the other subgroups are doing to ensure their data needs will be met by the system it develops.

The workgroup split into two sub-workgroups. A technical group is developing a detailed plan for database options and a higher level group is identifying what information needs to be captured in data layers. The technical subgroup will host a technically-focused workshop in early 2010 to plan development of the data system.

Steve Hahn described the biennial forecast map. It will be renamed to show the information it presents is speculative. The following information will be included in the GIS-based map:

- Priority acquisition site (section/township/range)

- Land classification (conservation, recreation, combined use)
- Project number that corresponds to map legend (so that users can find the project in the biennial forecast report)

The map will use the DNR map of major public lands as a base layer map, with non-essential information removed. For example, the map will not include unpaved roads, non-navigable or unnamed waterways, airports, or railroads.

The map will be presented to the user as a statewide map showing color-coded land classifications. For example, recreation lands could be shown in dark pink. Each colored area on the map will have a corresponding number that refers to a more detailed project description in the biennial forecast report.

The biennial forecast map will be the base layer map for other maps that will be developed to complete other Lands Group tasks. For example, the biennial forecast map can be used to show the “before” picture in a map that shows the “after” picture of the land agencies actually acquired by the end of the biennium.

In addition to the forecast map, the workgroup is planning to develop recommendations for building a map of one or two pilot areas. The pilot map will show regional information about public land acquisitions based on land function rather than ownership. For example, if public land has combined uses (such as working lands, high or low intensity recreation, etc.) these functions could be shown on the map. This level of specificity is not called for in the legislation, but users might find it valuable. Users might want more detail than seeing a biennial forecast map that classifies land only by “habitat,” “recreation,” or “combined use” functions. It could also help the Lands Group show the Legislature and others that it has produced valuable work product. If resources allow, the workgroup will begin building the pilot map.

Before the pilot map is built, members suggested vetting it well with potential users. The group should ask users what information they want to see and how they want to see it. The pilot map should be designed to address the tax base issue that the Lands Group legislation is designed to address. Perhaps Okanogan County would be a good area for a pilot study. Perhaps the Lands Group could conduct workshops to inform county officials what the Lands Group is doing and to gather recommendations for building the pilot tool. The Washington State Association of Counties is a good group to contact.

Joe recommended the Lands Group consider the existing Conservation Registry data system. The Conservation Registry was presented at the April 2009 Work Session. The Registry is an online, centralized database that tracks and maps conservation projects across Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. It’s used as a synthesis and project management tool. It captures proposed, in progress, and ongoing management projects and includes three categories of conservation projects. RCO has provided the Registry with data for some projects to upload onto the database. It is unclear whether the Registry includes information about recreation projects.

Next Steps

- Workgroup 1 will
  - organize and host the second Annual Forum (Jan. 2010)
  - produce biennial forecast (June 2010)
  - develop a proposal for Lands Group review for an inventory of potential public lands for transfer into habitat and recreation land management status (March 2010)
- Workgroup 2
  - Organize and host a data development workshop (early 2010)
  - Develop a detailed plan for data system that could incorporate needs of the other workgroups and keep records, using standardized data, and has a GIS component (Oct. 2010)
  - produce biennial forecast map (June 2010)
- Workgroup 3 will develop a proposal for monitoring the success of acquisitions (Oct. 2010)
- Workgroup 4 will develop a proposal for updating planning requirement WAC's and policies (May 2010)
- Workgroup 5 will develop a proposal regarding options for coordinating federally funded acquisitions (Oct. 2010)
- Workgroup 6 will revise the annual report to OFM and circulate it to the Lands Group for review.