

DRAFT Meeting Summary
Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group
(Lands Group)

Olympia, Washington, October 28, 2008

Attendance

Senator Linda Evans Parlette (R-12)
Commissioner Andrew Lampe (Okanogan Co.)
Erika Keech (Sen. Parlette's office)
Elizabeth Rodrick (Department of Fish and Wildlife)
Mark McCalmon (Department of Fish and Wildlife)
Pene Speaks (Department of Natural Resources)
Steve Hahn (State Parks)
Leslie Betlach (WA Recreation and Parks Assn.)
Mike Rundlett (Western Washington Ag Association)
Bill Robinson (The Nature Conservancy, WA Wildlife & Recreation Coalition)
Joe LaTourrette (Pacific Coast Joint Ventures, Ducks Unlimited)
Sarah Gage (Biodiversity Council)
Ron Shultz (Conservation Commission)
Jeanne Koenings (Ecology)
Heath Packard (RCO)
Patty Davis (RCO)

Introductions, agenda review, call to order

Heath Packard welcomed the group. Everyone introduced themselves. The agenda was reviewed (attachment A) and amended to include a presentation by Okanogan County Commissioner Lampe. Erika Keech volunteered to be time keeper. Heath thanked Patty Davis for her assistance with the Lands Group.

Item #1 July meeting summary review

July meeting summary introduced. The following corrections are needed:

1. Joe LaTourrette's last name is misspelled
2. Need to add "to" to page 3, 2nd paragraph

Action

Motion to adopt with these edits: Pene

2nd: Leslie

Discussion: none

Consensus

Next Steps

- Heath makes corrections and posts edited summary online (done 11/5/08).

#2 Review staff report – Heath

Heath referred the group to a report that was sent at the beginning of October and highlighted the fact that the Lands Group now has a website hosted on the RCO's site:

<http://www.rco.wa.gov/rco/h&rlcg/default.htm>.

#3 Charter adoption

Heath reminded the group that the charter was introduced before the July meeting and that the Lands Group had multiple opportunities to comment. Lands Group member suggestions have been incorporated in the final draft (e.g. membership memorialized). Heath highlighted a few key provisions including: the RCO Director may add members as she sees fit; quorum is at least 51%; Lands Group meetings are subject to the open meetings act; public comments are welcome at all meetings; the group should avoid unpublicized quorum meetings via email; decisions will be by consensus, or by vote when consensus is not possible; and the 2009 meeting schedule is included.

Action

Motion to adopt charter: Ron Schultz

2nd: Pene 2nds

Discussion – none

Consensus

Next Steps

- Heath seeks RCO Director's approval of final charter. (Status: approved by director)
- Once approved, Heath will post online (status: requested of staff)

#4, 5, 6, Membership updates

In July, the Lands Group expressed a desire to expand the group's membership to include a private forest landowner. The group also identified the need to ensure that the county perspective was representative of all county governments, and to memorialize positions in order to ensure balanced and diverse perspectives regardless if appointees could not serve the full terms. The RCO Director embraced the Lands Group requests and sent appropriate letters to the state's forestry and county associations. A forest landowner nomination is expected any day. The RCO Director will follow up on the nomination before the January meeting.

Heath asked the group about this language from the September 2007 Lands Group meeting summary:

“The US Forest Service should be invited to participate in the HRLCG since they are a major public landowner and should be part of a coordinated approach to providing recreation and habitat land.”

Heath reported that the archives indicated that this notion has not yet been acted upon. The group agreed and revisited the issue. After some discussion, the group concluded that:

- It is important to expand this coordination to federal, tribal and local partners, however we need to figure out how and when to best do this.

- The Lands Group could get unwieldy and unfocused if everyone involved in public land acquisition was at the table. Thus, Lands Group representation should remain focused on state partners.
- Because of increasing instances of compensatory mitigation on state recreation and habitat lands, WSDOT was identified as an important partner that is currently missing from the group, and should be here now. We need to try harder to get their participation.
- Land trusts need to be better represented in the Lands Group process.

Next Steps:

- Senator Parlette plans to contact Paula Hammond, Secretary of Transportation
- Heath will advance a request to RCO Director to contact WSDOT to participate (status: Director agreed, sent letter to Secretary of Transportation, Ken Risenhoover appointed)
- Workgroup 1 will identify appropriate timing and opportunities to engage federal, tribal, local government and land trust partners in forums, presentations and workshops.
- Bill Robinson will keep Land Trust Association informed of Lands Group work.

#7 Action plan orientation

Heath reported that the action plan has been redesigned to be more user-friendly. He oriented folks to the new design. Group provided positive feedback about design/layout.

Added agenda item: State lands case study – Commissioner Lampe

Commissioner Lampe shared several GIS maps, generated by county staff, with information that was gleaned from public notices, and other sources. The Commissioner requested information from the WDFW and suggested that the response was unsatisfactory because the answer and the acquisition process lacked transparency and planning. Elizabeth Rodrick explained that there is indeed a plan and that all the landowners had been approached prior to publishing these acquisition targets. Elizabeth stated that information requests should have been met promptly and she is unclear why they were not. The group agreed that this is a good example of the problems the group is charged with solving.

Next Steps:

- Elizabeth and Commissioner Lampe agreed to work together to sort out the confusion between WDFW and the county.
- Lands Group agreed to keep this example in mind as it works on its action plan.

#7 Action plan

Workgroup #1—acquisition & coordination

Action item 1 – transaction plans/policies: The workgroup is in the process of reviewing agency transaction plans and policies. This is the workgroups first priority. The workgroup is working to identify information gaps or opportunities to increase coordination as a result of this review.

Lands Group members agreed that there needs to be more tasks oriented toward coordinating state lands acquisitions with agricultural preservation strategies/interests. County and state level agricultural preservation plans are currently being developed. The Growth Management Act requires county designation of agricultural lands of long term significance. However, the group

should be aware that these designated lands are not necessarily the same priorities identified in the plans.

Action items 2/3 – biennial forecast: Action item 1 must be nearly completed before this action item can be taken up. The workgroup is going to have to spend some time defining exactly how to interpret “forecast”. Should it be documentation of acquisitions an agency is expected to complete within existing appropriations, or of acquisitions an agency has prioritized for the coming biennium prior to appropriations?

Action item 4 – annual forum: The workgroup is evaluating the best timing for the first annual forum. This will most likely fall sometime after the close of the 2009 legislative session (end of April). The workgroup is also drafting an agenda and guest list. An update will be presented to the Lands Group in January.

Action item 5 – public land transfers: this item can tap existing programs like the trust-land-transfer and current interagency efforts to ‘block-up’ landholdings. The group is prioritizing action items 1 and 4 at this time, and will take this up as other tasks near completion.

Discussion: the Lands Group needs a common understanding of the myriad of conservation planning approaches as they relate to acquisition policies. The group asked workgroup 1 to coordinate an all-day workshop at the Lands Group April 29 meeting. The meeting should include the state natural resource agencies, WA St. Dept. of Transportation, WA Biodiversity Council, WA Invasive Species Council, federal partners, non-government conservation organizations and land trusts, and local governments. These and other organizations should be invited to present their conservation planning and acquisition priority frameworks. Each presentation should be brief with time for Q&A and discussion. The group can decide where they require more in-depth understanding of particular frameworks.

Next steps:

Workgroup 1 will:

- Continue work on its priority action items;
- Identify an ideal date and begin planning for the first annual Lands Group forum;
- Identify ways to improve the alignment of state land acquisitions with agricultural preservation strategies;
- Begin planning for the April 29th full day, conservation planning, workshop; and
- Elizabeth Rodrick and Sara Gage will provide the group with a link to a conservation assessments report done for the RCO space report:
http://www.biodiversity.wa.gov/documents/AssessmentsCommEnSpace_Report.pdf

#7 Action plan

Workgroup #2 – Records and Documentation

Workgroup 2 has developed a detailed work plan for *action items 5 and 6* that focuses first on identifying the audiences/stakeholders for the GIS-based information management and central data-management protocols. They will then ask these end-users to identify their needs and uses for these tools. Based on this vision, they will develop recommendations that accommodate all the needs identified. The recommendations will be divided into must-have and nice-to-have

options. A budget will be designed to reflect the costs to implement the recommendations and the workgroup will identify whether any of the recommendations can be accomplished with existing resources and technology. The Lands Group agreed that the other work groups need to provide their GIS/data management ‘wish list’ to workgroup 2.

Next steps:

- Workgroup 2 will meet to decide how to best collect the information needed to identify the users and their mapping/data needs.
- Workgroup 2 will determine how to best flesh out the needs and wish-lists of all audiences/stakeholders.

#7 Action plan cont’d.

Workgroup #3 – Evaluation

Action item 7 – acquisition monitoring: Workgroup 3 has scoped the land acquisition monitoring at 2 basic levels, acquisition success (quantitative) and management success (qualitative). The group intends to design an approach to answer these two questions: Was the property acquired on time? Is the property meeting its intended outcome? Workgroup 3 recommends that the Lands Group could be responsible for the first level of monitoring. However the qualitative monitoring could be resource intensive unless it was focused on agencies own monitoring of their land management objectives.

Action Item 9 – habitat conservation plans: Because habitat conservation plan (HCP) in 79A.25.260 is not defined, workgroup 3 decided to interpret HCPs as those that are authorized under the federal endangered species act. In this case, HCPs are tools that permit land owners to manage their lands in ways that might “take” endangered species. The workgroup intends to review the HCPs affecting state lands and see how they might influence land acquisition targets.

#7 Action plan

Workgroup #4 – Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Planning Policies

Workgroup 4 is evaluating the WWRP Program’s planning eligibility requirements. State agencies must have a plan approved by the RCO to be eligible for WWRP funding. Each agency interprets these requirements in a different ways. Each agency will present their approach so the workgroup can define where the gaps/differences are and how the plans can be more aligned.

#7 Action plan

Workgroup #5 – Federal Funding

Workgroup 5 is looking at options for coordinating federally funded acquisitions through one state agency. They have already identified pros and cons for keeping the approach the same or integrating this into another agency. Options will be developed with a full analysis of the pros and cons. The group’s initial assessment is that there may be preferred options that increase transparency without adding another layer of bureaucracy.

#7 Action plan cont’d.

Workgroup #6 -- Reporting

Heath created this workgroup since the Lands Group’s last meeting to support staff in RCO reporting requirements for the lands group. The subgroup is working via email/phone. See item #8 below.

Item #8 – Draft report to OFM

The statute requires RCO to report annually to OFM. Heath presented a draft report from RCO director Kaleen Cottingham to OFM. He invited comments for substantive omissions or errors (no wordsmiths please). Steve Hahn recommended that each subgroup lead provide a couple of bullets to include in memo regarding anticipated accomplishments in 2009. The Lands Group agreed that this was a good idea.

Next steps:

- Subgroup leads will give couple bullets to Heath in next two weeks.
- Heath will send out reminder email (status: workgroup leads all responded).
- Heath seeks Director approval on final report, and submits report to OFM.

Item #7 -- Adopt 2009 meeting schedule.

Heath identified a typo on the Action Plan schedule and asked the group to change Oct 15 to Oct 28th. The group agreed that the April meeting should be all day with a small business meeting and the rest of the day spent on the workshop. The schedule follows.

Lands Group 2009 Meeting Schedule			
Month	Day	Meeting	Location
January	21	Quarterly Mtg. 8:30a.m. – Noon	Capitol Campus, Natural Resource Bldg, Olympia Rm 175A
April	29	Conservation planning workshop Quarterly Mtg. 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Capitol Campus, Natural Resource Bldg, Olympia Rm 175A
July	29	Quarterly Mtg. 8:30a.m. – Noon	Capitol Campus, Natural Resource Bldg, Olympia Rm 175A
October	28	Quarterly Mtg. 8:30a.m. – Noon	Capitol Campus, Natural Resource Bldg, Olympia Rm 175A
July?	TBD	1 st Annual Forum	TBD

Action

Motion to adopt 2009 calendar: Senator Parlette

2nd: Sara

Consensus

Next steps

- Heath sends out save-the-date notice to Lands Group members.
- Heath will file the schedule with the code reviser before January 2009 as required by the Open Public Meetings Act.

Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Committee Meeting

DRAFT AGENDA

October 28, 2008 ~ 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Office Building 2 (OB2) ~ Room: SLO 3
Capital Campus, Olympia
(Directions on reverse)

Start	Minutes	Item	Topic	Who
8:30	5		Introductions & agenda review	All
8:35	5	Item # 1	July meeting summary review	All
8:40	5	Item # 2	RCO staff report	Heath
8:45	20	Item # 3	Charter Adoption	All
9:00	15	Items # 4, 5, & 6	Membership updates --County representation --Private forest landowner --September '07 recommendation to invite USFS? --other?	Heath Heath All
9:20	10	Item #7	Action Plan Orientation --recommendations for more accessible format?	Heath All
Added	10		Public land acquisition case study	Commissioner Lampe
9:40			Work Group Updates & Work Plans	
	40	Item # 7	WG 1 – Coordination	Pene Speaks
	20	Item # 7	WG 2 – Records and Documentation	Steve Hahn
10:25	15		break	
	20	Item # 7	WG 3 – Evaluation	Bill Robinson
	15	Item # 7	WG 4 – WWRP review	Heath
	15	Item # 7	WG 5 – Federal Funding	Joe La Tourette
	15	Item # 7	WG 6 - Reporting	Heath
		Item # 8	- draft RCO lands group report to OFM	Heath
11:45	15	Item # 7	Adopt 2009 meeting schedule	All
12:00			Adjourn*	
Total	210			
<i>If we finish early...</i>			<i>Brainstorm action items above and beyond statutory requirements and a process to prioritize those items for lands group action if time and resources permit.</i>	<i>all</i>