

STATE LAND ACQUISITION PLANNING FRAMEWORKS WORK SESSION
MEETING SUMMARY

Member Attendance

Senator Linda Evans Parlette (R-12)
Commissioner Andrew Lampe (Okanogan Co.)
Kaleen Cottingham (RCO)
Erika Keech (Sen. Parlette's office)
Eric Beach (Green Diamond Resources)
Elizabeth Rodrick (Department of Fish and Wildlife)
Steve Hahn (State Parks)
Leslie Betlach (WA Recreation and Parks Assn.)
Ken Risenhoover (Department of Transportation)
Lynn Helbrecht (Biodiversity Council)
Ron Shultz (Conservation Commission)
Jim Fox (RCO)
Dominga Soliz (RCO)

Introductions, agenda review, call to order

Dominga Soliz welcomed the group and introduced herself as the new Coordinator. The agenda was reviewed and amended to substitute panelist Kitty Craig for Peter Dykstra to present for the Trust for Public Lands. The group reviewed a handout summarizing the purpose of the Lands Group and its specific mandates. Dominga presented an overview of the legislation and the tasks assigned to the six workgroups. Dominga introduced RCO Director Kaleen Cottingham.

Director Cottingham asked all attendees to introduce themselves. She discussed the role the Lands Group has in providing consistent messaging about land acquisitions and disposals. The Lands Group gives state agencies an opportunity to improve reputations. She introduced Senator Linda Parlette.

Senator Parlette provided background to the originating legislation. In 2004 she sponsored a bill that required an inventory of land purchases. The senator represents two of Washington's six counties that have a small private land base. The Lands Group is framed by the property tax issue: programs for payments in lieu of taxes do not adequately compensate for loss of the tax base. The purpose of the Lands Group bill was to bring county commissioners into the loop to prevent surprises when agencies purchase land. This group is tasked with improving coordination and transparency in order to make more apparent how agencies can do a better job for taxpayers.

The Work Session was organized to give members of the state natural resource agencies, the Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington Biodiversity Council, Washington Invasive Species Council, federal partners, non-government conservation organizations and land trusts, and local governments an opportunity to present their conservation planning and acquisition/disposal priority frameworks and tools to the Lands Group.

Panelists gave presentations on acquisition/disposal planning strategies and/or tools to aid acquisition/disposal planning. Panelists also provided the Lands Group with specific recommendations for coordinating acquisitions.

Panelist presentations are available at the Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group website at www.rco.wa.gov/rco/h&rlcg/default.htm.

STATE LAND ACQUISITION POLICIES AND PLANNING PANEL

- John Gamon
Natural Heritage Program Manager
Department of Natural Resources

John gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Natural Heritage Plan and provided the NHP 2009 Update publication. The Natural Heritage Plan identifies priorities for conserving the native species and ecosystems that make up our state's remarkably rich natural heritage. The Plan's basic methodology follows three steps: 1) classification, 2) inventory, and 3) conservation planning. The methodology is ongoing and iterative throughout the process. It utilizes a coarse-filter/fine-filter approach towards ecosystems and rare species prioritization and it employs external evaluation and approval processes and public review. It is part of a larger network of NHP's that includes shared methods, shared database standards, and shared information.

The DNR website provides the Natural Heritage Plan 2009 Update: <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/>. Use the DNR search tool to find "Natural Heritage Program."

- Jennifer Quan WDFW
Lands Division Manager
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Jennifer gave a PowerPoint presentation on DFW's acquisition planning strategies and provided the Lands 20/20 publication. General planning strategies include proposals at regional and local levels, consider multiple plans developed around species' needs, look for a willing seller, and consider funding sources and mitigation funding. All acquisitions must go through DFW's Lands 20/20 process. The process includes proposal submission (proposal contents: benefits, planning integration, alternatives to ownership, partnerships, maintenance and operational costs, and local involvement and support), priority ranking (internal and external review), and final approval (Fish and Wildlife Commission). Publications and other info available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/>.

- Peter Herzog
Parks Planner, State Parks Planning and Research Program
State Parks and Recreation Commission

Peter gave a PowerPoint presentation on Classification and Management Planning (CAMP). At its core, CAMP seeks the sublime balance between protecting natural resources, preserving cultural resources, and supporting recreational opportunities. CAMP works to bridge the gap between values and park planning. CAMP completes three products for each park: 1) a schematic Land Classification Plan that zones all park areas into specific land use designations, 2) a Long-Term Park Boundary that identifies lands that advance a park's mission (and those that don't) and, 3) a Park Management Plan that sets park management objectives and addresses the most pressing issues facing a park. The CAMP process includes gathering information and scoping, identifying issues, exploring options and alternatives, preparing preliminary recommendations, proposing final recommendations, and implementing and revising. More information is available at <http://www.parks.wa.gov/plans/>.

- Ken Risenhoover
Ecological Mitigation Program Manager
Department of Transportation

Ken gave a PowerPoint presentation on Compensatory Mitigation Planning and Inventory. WSDOT is focused on developing infrastructure with the support of communities. The agency uses opportunities to mitigate elsewhere in order to make impacts predictable. WSDOT's Environmental Service Office works to 1) facilitate the development of an effective and efficient transportation system that is ecologically sound and cost-effective, 2) ensure compliance with environmental laws and pollution prevention, and 3) avoid, minimize and appropriately mitigate environmental impacts. Mitigation strategies utilize an ecosystem approach to ensure greatest ecological benefits at a watershed scale. WSDOT has many restrictions to participating in landscape-level conservation planning, but it needs to know what properties are up for disposal and whether any of these have the mitigation values WSDOT needs within specific watersheds. For more information, visit <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/>.

- Ron Shultz
Director of Policy and Intergovernmental Relations
Conservation Commission, Office of Farmland Preservation

Ron provided a brief overview of the Office of Farmland Preservation (OFP). The OFP was created in 2007 to support the retention of farmland and the viability of farming for future generations. The OFP Task Force was created to provide policy input to OFP as it pursues farmland preservation goals. The Task Force provides recommendations to reverse the trend of farmland loss. Recommendations include emphasis on management of already-acquired lands and managing damage from wildlife that negatively impacts farming. Find more about the Commission and OFP at <http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/>.

CONSERVATION & RECREATION PLANNING FRAMEWORKS AND TOOLS PANEL

- Leonard Bauer
Managing Director, Growth Management Services
Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development

The Growth Management Act (GMA) encourages state agency coordination with local governments. Leonard discussed the big picture of growth management as well as the classification, designation and protection/conservation of critical areas and natural resource lands. CTED provides technical and financial resources to help local governments develop county-wide planning policies, comprehensive plans, and development regulations, including critical areas ordinances. State agencies are statutorily required to comply with local plans. (See RCW 36.70A.103) In addition, the GMA supports local government consideration of statewide goals in developing local plans and it encourages coordination between neighboring local governments. Find info about the CTED's growth management services at <http://www.cted.wa.gov> and follow the local government link.

- Stan Hinatsu
Recreation Program Manager
US Forest Service

Stan gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Land Adjustment Strategy of the Columbia River Gorge Natural Scenic Area Act specifically as it relates to recreation planning. The strategy involves a three-step process of developing 1) selection criteria, 2) prioritization criteria, and 3) ranking criteria. Stan emphasized that the key to balancing the demand for recreational use and protection of natural resources is to have a strategic recreation plan that matches the broader acquisition strategy.

- Jim Eychaner
Policy and Planning Specialist
Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office

Jim provided a PowerPoint Presentation on the State Agency Proposed Level of Service Tool. How do we know when we've acquired enough land? The Level of Service Tool should be considered as a method of measuring the state's investment in recreation. Level of service measures can be adapted to a variety of public services and infrastructure types. The measure is based on a grading system which incorporates three sets of guidelines to address the complexities of identifying and quantifying recreation access, meeting different needs of agencies and meeting site/facility specific needs. Two preliminary tools have been developed: one directed toward state agency sites and facilities, the other directed toward local sites and facilities. The State Agency Level of Service Tool proposal can be found at http://www.rco.wa.gov/rcfb/rec_trends.htm.

- Kitty Craig

Program Manager
Trust for Public Lands

Kitty provided a PowerPoint presentation on The Trust for Public Lands conservation planning services. TPL focuses on land for people. Its mission is to protect or create the places and spaces that healthy communities need. TPL's conservation services include helping communities develop a conservation vision, create conservation funding, and engage in conservation transactions. TPL has four key steps to planning: 1) community engagement, 2) conservation mapping and analysis, 3) conservation research, and 4) road map and action plan. More about TPL can be found at <http://www.tpl.org/>.

Question and Answer Session

Questions were directed to State Parks regarding how the agency determines the need for new parks. Peter Herzog discussed the difference between using a formula and finding another "Deception Pass." The latter approach is more organic. First there is the seed of the idea for creation/acquisition, then the agency looks for a destination of uncommon quality. This occurs very infrequently. The last one was in the 1970's.

Questions were directed to the Trust for Public Lands regarding how the organization decides what communities to work in. TPL decides this strategically based on community request and other factors. It is currently concentrating on North Central WA. Specifically, TPL became involved in the Stemilt-Squilchuck Community Vision project by request from Chelan County.

LANDSCAPE PLANNING PANEL

- Jim Cahill
Director of Accountability and Budget
Puget Sound Partnership

Jim discussed the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda priorities. PSP's goal is to make Puget Sound healthy again, and create a roadmap for how to get it done. By working together, we can have both a thriving Puget Sound economy and a clean and healthy Puget Sound ecosystem. PSP does not own land. The Action Agenda promotes overall restoration by protecting processes and ecosystems based on the concept that if you restore processes in the long run, you do a better job of restoring the ecosystem. The Action Agenda is a tool for others to use in acquiring lands. It is a statement of common purpose based on agreed-upon science that provides a platform for cooperation and coordination. The Action Agenda considers that acquisition is not the only tool to incentivize permanent protection. Download the PSP Action Agenda at www.psp.wa.gov/.

- Lynn Helbrecht
Executive Coordinator
Biodiversity Council

Lynn gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Conservation Opportunities Framework. At the core of the strategy is the belief that public, private, and nonprofit entities need to work together to achieve a widely shared vision. The Framework builds on existing strengths and outlines actions and programs to engage people statewide. The heart of its strategy is 1) guiding investments on the land, through the use of a new tool that maps biodiversity value and threats at a landscape scale, 2) improving incentives and advancing markets for landowners on working lands and open spaces, 3) helping citizens and Scientists work together to inventory and monitor Washington's biodiversity.

Find information about the Conservation Opportunity Framework in the Washington Biodiversity Conservation Strategy at www.biodiversity.wa.gov/.

Question and Answer Session

Questions were directed to the Puget Sound Partnership regarding how its work ties into the work of the WRIA 8 & 9. PSP protects the Puget Sound at an ecosystem level. Its work ties into the tri-county effort by building upon the work of the Shared Strategies Group.

LANDSCAPE PLANNING PANEL (CONT.)

- Kara Nelson
Conservation Planner
The Nature Conservancy

Kara gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Conservation by Design Framework. The Conservation by Design Framework is a systematic approach that determines where to work, what to conserve, what strategies we should use and how effective we have been. The Framework uses a four-step approach: 1) set priorities through ecoregional assessments, 2) develop strategies by conservation planning, 3) conservation action, and 4) measuring success. Ecoregional assessments allow TNC to set long-term conservation goals for ecosystems, natural communities and imperiled or declining species representative of an ecoregion, and to establish ecoregional priorities for resource allocation. Conservation Action Planning is used to guide conservation teams in developing focused strategies and measures of success. Conservation Action Planning addresses a complete project cycle at any scale—including design, implementation and evaluation. More information about the Conservation by Design Framework can be found at <http://www.nature.org> under the “Our Initiatives” link.

- Scott McEwan
Conservation Director
Columbia Land Trust

Scott provided a PowerPoint presentation on Columbia Land Trust's conservation initiatives and planning. Columbia Land Trust leads and inspires private actions to conserve the great natural resources of the Columbia River region. Planning employs a global, coarse and fine-filter

approach and utilizes conservation planning criteria that includes 1) the importance of the resource, 2) threat of loss or damage, 3) public and private funding, 4) partners and partnerships, 5) community support, 6) role for Columbia Land Trust, 7) contributes to larger system, and 8) provides additional organizational benefits. The planning effort considers focal areas and asks, 'Who are the people we need to be talking to in order to maximize staff capacity and accomplish goals?'

- Gina LaRocco
Conservation Program Associate
Defenders of Wildlife

Gina gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Conservation Registry. The Registry is aimed at the addressing the following problem: We have many people on the ground doing restoration work, and we have maps that show where our resources are, but we don't know where we are working in relation to one another or whether we are doing projects within mapped priorities. The Registry is an online, centralized database that tracks and maps conservation projects across the landscape and is utilized as a synthesis and project management tool. It captures proposed, in progress, and ongoing management projects and includes three categories of conservation projects: 1) habitat restoration and management, 2) enhanced conservation status, and 3) monitoring, education and research projects. It's a national database with initial release in Oregon, Washington and Idaho. It can be expanded nationally, with state portals for state-specific information. It can be used by state and federal agencies, landowners, non-government organizations, and policy makers and investors. More information can be found at <http://www.conservationregistry.org>.

Question and Answer Session

Questions were directed to DNR regarding land disposal. DNR's disposal strategy focuses on connectivity.

Questions were directed to Defenders of Wildlife about the Conservation Registry and how projects are scaled. Scaling depends on how users define projects, but can be as small as a point.

Synthesis of Questionnaire Responses

- Dominga Soliz
Coordinator
Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group

Dominga gave a PowerPoint presentation reflecting the responses provided by a questionnaire that was distributed to panelists prior to the Work Session. The synthesis was based on 9 returned questionnaires. The questionnaire asked several questions regarding acquisition planning approaches that are already in place and recommendations for coordinating the state's recreation and habitat land acquisitions and disposals. In synthesizing the responses, Lands

Group workgroup members looked for common themes in approach and recommendation. Recommendations will inform the Lands Group as it develops formal recommendations to the legislature regarding how state agencies can acquire and dispose of lands in a more coordinated, transparent and efficient way. Find the Work Session Recommendations document at the Lands Group website at <http://www.rco.wa.gov> under 'Special Projects' link.

Recommendation Discussion:

Dominga offered the following discussion points to brainstorm recommendations for the Lands Group:

- **Identify opportunities for coordination**
 - Where do priorities overlap?
- **Identify relationship opportunities**
 - Are there appropriate roles for public/private partnerships?
 - What is the role of state agencies in prioritizing working lands?
- **Identify methods of implementing coordination**
 - What tools would achieve your organization's goals?
 - What alternatives exist?

Discussion centered on defining the scope of the Lands Group and determining how to manage tasks in order to achieve its goals. How should the Lands Group strategize its twin goals of coordination and transparency? Which comes first? The two are interconnected.

The intent of the legislation is to provide more transparency and coordination between state agencies in order to bring county commissioners into the loop. These twin goals should lead the strategy and we should not be distracted by focus on conservation. Local governments want to know agency plans in advance. Planning forecast is what local governments need. This speaks to transparency. The transparency might drive the coordination process because local governments want agencies to reveal their acquisition strategies and this will create accountability. Focusing on transparency should lead the Lands Group strategy.

Agency coordination may not be as critical to local governments as transparency, but this is still part of the legislative mandate. The coordination piece speaks to efficiency and working together to reduce redundancies. In order to coordinate effectively, the Lands Group should focus on finding a common language for communicating about acquisitions and disposals. This will aid in transparency and bring us to a common understanding for coordination. If lands are all defined in consistent terms, we should be able to answer, "How much is enough?" But first we need to start with answering, "What have we got?" This takes us to questions about data and tools.

Using common data with common tools can be our common currency. We need tools to show how much land is enough. Tracking data is important to help create a forecast for transparency. Mapping is key, but function matters even in applying the mechanics of mapping. All state agencies use the same GIS system. We have the ability to have different systems talk together. Web-based mapping. We should focus on ownership of early information delivered in an

appropriate manner. Agencies already communicate about these things, but they ought to communicate earlier. The Lands Group should focus on the process to define the solution. Provide agencies with forums to discuss data and strategies.

Some obstacles to finding a common language are 1) different goals, 2) acquisitions are unequal, 3) imbalanced emphases, 4) the 'why,' 'where,' 'how,' and 'how long' questions, 5) value judgments, and 6) coordinating data collection.

The Lands Group should start by developing a classification system to coordinate existing lands that are being used for multiple purposes. To develop a matrix we have to think about land use as well as function. We have to integrate conservation and recreation. This is where the overlap occurs. We could develop a classification system based on the functions of each piece of land. Consider the State Parks CAMP method. This system could develop consistent classifications and land use categories.

We need to consider resources for taking care of the data systems. Where does the money come to develop and take care of it? Resources could be used more efficiently if we use tools already in place.

Next Steps

The first State Lands Coordinating Forum will be held on July 16, 2009. The goal of the forum is to provide agencies with a platform in which to share information in order to increase efficiency and transparency in acquiring and disposing of lands, and to identify opportunities for acquisition that meet multiple objectives.

In addition, the Lands Group will continue to work on developing recommendations that meet its statutory mandates. The six workgroups will advance options for strategies regarding specific tasks and will coordinate with other workgroups to refine implementation plans. The Lands Group Action Plan will be updated in August, 2009 to reflect recent developments.