ANNUAL STATE LAND ACQUISITION COORDINATING FORUM

Member Attendance
Pene Speaks (Department of Natural Resources)
Bill Robinson (The Nature Conservancy, WWRC)
Kaleen Cottingham (RCO Director)
Elizabeth Rodrick (Department of Fish and Wildlife)
Steve Hahn (State Parks)
Ken Risenhoover (Department of Transportation)
Lynn Helbrecht (Biodiversity Council)
Jeanne Koenings (Department of Ecology)
Dominga Soliz (RCO)
Kammie Bunes (RCO)

Introductions, agenda review

Dominga Soliz welcomed the group, introduced herself, and invited attendees to introduce themselves. She stated the goal of the forum, which is to give state agencies a change to discuss which lands they have been funded to acquire this biennium and why in order to identify opportunities for coordinating land acquisitions and disposals. The Forum is designed to be an informal meeting in order to encourage discussion. The agenda was reviewed: in the morning agencies will present on their acquisition plans and open the discussion. In the afternoon, the preliminary biennial forecast map will be presented and discussed, and discussion will focus on how the Lands Group can help agencies coordinate acquisitions.

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

Forum Overview
Dominga gave an overview of the Annual Forum to show how it fits in with the Lands Group context. The 2005 RCO report entitled "Towards a Coordinated Strategy for Habitat and Recreation Land Acquisitions in Washington State," emphasizes the need to **achieve acquisition coordination through improved communication and transparency**. Coming out of the report was the agreement that it would be a good idea to make agency acquisition activities more transparent to citizens and elected officials. There was also general agreement that increasing communication between the agencies would increase the likelihood of better coordination. The report recommended that coordination would be improved by developing and convening an annual forum for agencies to meet and discuss their proposed acquisitions and disposals. The 2007 Lands Group legislation adds that near-term acquisitions and disposals should be discussed.

The Lands Group will host two different types of forums each biennium:

The **Odd-Year Forum** will meet after the legislature adjourns and the Governor signs the budget. Participants during this first year include agencies that acquire habitat and recreation

lands – Parks, DNR, DFW, DOT, Ecology, and State Conservation Commission. This is a working meeting designed to facilitate coordination of acquisition budget implementation.

The **Even-Year Forum** will be a workshop scheduled before the WWRP letter of intent is due. The idea is to enable agencies to identify opportunities to coordinate grant requests. This meeting will focus more on long-term, higher-level planning and will include non-profits and local governments.

Key questions for today are:

- Where is the potential acquisition/disposal going to be located?
- What's the purpose of the acquisition? (How does it meet agency objectives?)
- Are there opportunities for agencies to coordinate efforts in order to better meet statewide and agency objectives?

Another objective for today is to help the Lands Group produce a publishable biennial forecast of acquisition (and biennial forecast map) and disposal plans.

STATE AGENCY ACQUISITIONS PRESENTATIONS

Craig Calhoon
Land Acquisition Manager
Department of Natural Resources

Craig gave two presentations: one regarding Natural Areas Program (NAP) lands DNR wants to acquire and another on Section 6 funded lands DNR wants to acquire.

Coordination opportunities identified:

1. Stavis Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA) and Kitsap Forest NAP: DNR and DFW are already coordinating in this area
2. Lacamas Creek Natural Area: There's an opportunity to coordinate here regarding Farmlands. DNR and the Conservation Commission's Office of Farmland Preservation (OFP).
3. Washougal Oaks Natural Area: opportunity for State Parks and DNR to coordinate.
4. Selah Cliffs NAP: There's an opportunity for WSDOT and DNR to coordinate. This potential acquisition is in Yakima near highway 2.
5. Dyer Haystacks NAP: DNR and DFW can coordinate about this Columbia Basin potential acquisition.
6. I-90 Wildlife Corridor Project: There's an opportunity for WSDOT and DNR to coordinate.

Dan Budd, June Skye
Real Estate Manager
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Dan and June presented on DFW potential acquisitions. DFW acquires land with federal and state grants, and sometimes with direct appropriations from the legislature. DFW works closely

with DNR and others on issues such as the land exchange to improve management and address checkerboard ownership. DFW recently completed a review to identify previously-acquired lands that were no longer meeting program needs. Eighty seven properties were identified as surplus to agency needs. During the current biennium, WDFW is focusing on selling and replacing a number of these properties and on developing partnerships.

Coordination opportunities identified:

1. Black River Ranch: This area south of Olympia will hopefully be acquired with WWRP Farmland Preservation Account funds. There may be an opportunity to coordinate with OFP.
2. Hoquiam Surge Plain: It might be helpful for DFW and DNR to coordinate. It's near an NAP and the agencies could do priority planning together, with special attention on the northern section. Greg Schirato is the DFW lead.
3. Lummi Island Coastal: this land includes a combination of DNR and DFW land. It connects already-acquired DNR and DFW land.
4. Lynch Cove: This is part of a larger project in Hood Canal and South Puget Sound. WSDOT has a stream alignment project here. DOT and DFW could coordinate.
5. South Puget Prairie Oak Woodlands: This project involves a multi-agency partnership including State Parks and DNR. The partnership has identified 4 priority sites.
6. Stemilt Basin: This land south of Wenatchee is part of the land exchange with DNR.
7. Touchet River Grasslands: This is riparian land. The parcels are unique as they comprise the only intact habitat along the lower Touchet River where the river bottom is not being farmed. Possible coordination with OFP.
8. Upper Yakima River, I-90 Corridor: This acquisition is within the North-South I-90 wildlife corridor and is near planned wildlife crossing structures. The John Wayne Cross-State Trail and State Park cross the parcel. Coordination could involve DOT (related to the I-90 expansion project and mitigation efforts) as well as DNR and State Parks.

Bill Koss
Parks Planner
State Parks and Recreation Commission

Bill presented on State Parks potential acquisitions.

Coordination opportunities identified:

1. Lake Easton: This land is near I-90. There may be an opportunity to coordinate/partner with DOT.
2. Pearrygin Lake: This is near Winthrop. Parks may want to work with DFW to work out a trade for the road (Bear Creek Road?). There may also be an opportunity to work with DNR. This may be related to the Tilton River.

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

Peter discussed the State Parks Classification and Management Planning (CAMP) using the vicinity of Pearrygin Lake as an example. The CAMP system recognizes that identifying land by ownership provides limited information about its use, due mainly to overlap among agency missions. Effective coordination requires a common language to communicate the intended purpose/function of the land independent of its ownership. CAMP provides a single, unified picture of intended land uses by all state agencies. Using a CAMP system would help 1) plan future acquisitions with the most bang-for-the-buck (multi-agency benefits), 2) identify the most appropriate agency to acquire, and 3) identify potential property trades and disposals.

Peter provided the following discussion model of CAMP classifications:

State Land Classification System – Discussion Model

Statewide Classification	Working Lands	Recreation and Administration Area	Resource Recreation Area	Natural Area	Research Natural Area	Historical Area
Description	• Resource Harvesting • Motorized Recreation • Hunting	• Natural resource conservation subordinate to public facilities • High-intensity recreational development (campgrounds, cabins, lodges, rest areas) • Revenue Leases • Administrative support facilities (offices, residences, shops, hatcheries)	• Natural resource conservation in balance with sustainable medium-intensity recreation (parking, vault toilets, standard and primitive camping, boat launches) • Preservation of cultural landscapes (e.g., farmlands) • Small administrative structures and hatcheries (no occupied buildings)	• Resource conservation and restoration emphasized • Low-intensity recreation subordinate to resource conservation (walking trails, outdoor interpretive facilities) • Preservation of cultural resources subordinate to natural resource conservation	• Natural resource preservation emphasized (T&E species) • Public use limited to research and education or use as preservation tool (pedestrian trails)	• Preservation of historic and cultural resources emphasizes • Recreational use and natural resources conservation consistent with preservation of historical and cultural resources
WSP&RC Classification		Recreation	Resource Recreation	Natural Area	Natural Area Preserve	Heritage Area
WDFW Classification		Hatcheries, Offices, Shops, and Residences	Hatcheries, Boat Launches, Agriculture Areas	Wildlife Refuge		
DNR Classification	Trustlands	Administrative and Revenue	Natural Resources Conservation Area		Natural Area Preserve	
WSDOT Classification	Right of Way	Offices, Shops, Residences, Rest Areas	Primitive Rest Areas	Mitigation Lands		Historical Markers

Ken Risenhoover
Ecological Mitigation Program Manager
Department of Transportation

The main question Ken asked was: How can WSDOT environmental management effort benefit from this lands coordination process? DOT is limited in participating by funding source, regulatory, and bureaucratic constraints. WSDOT may be constrained to mitigating wetlands primarily. The group encouraged flexible, creative thinking to invite more win-win situations for agencies. Also, DOT's system is very different than those of the other Lands Group agencies. WSDOT is focused on developing infrastructure. It completes several hundred acquisitions per year mostly associated with right-of-way purchases. It works to minimize and avoid impacts to wetlands, but requires wetland mitigation where impacts are unavoidable. For more information, visit http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/.

If the Lands Group can involve DOT in the coordinating process, DOT could get help locating mitigation opportunities and collaborators for restoration efforts, and mitigation projects that achieve complimentary resource management goals of other agencies and organizations would be promoted. Agencies can help inform DOT about how it could best invest its mitigation money and DOT could benefit from knowledge of potential public lands for purchase. (It needs to consider public lands first for mitigation.)

DOT divides its mitigation efforts into 6 statewide regions. The environmental manager for each region might benefit from learning to navigate PRISM to help identify potential mitigation sites to meet their regional mitigation needs. Perhaps PRISM Administrator, Scott Chapman, could help train DOT managers.

Coordination opportunities:

Generally, there might be opportunities for DOT to coordinate with regulatory agencies and with irrigation districts. Coordination with irrigation districts may have helped along I-20.

In the Skagit region there may be several opportunities to coordinate, though none were specifically identified. In the Olympic Region, DOT can partner with DFW. In the Southwest Region, DOT can partner with DNR re: Washougal Oaks.

Ken presented regional maps with specifically listed mitigation sites and mitigation needs. DOT keeps a detailed, accessible website with interactive map showing DOT projects.
http://www.transinfo.state.wa.us/projects/gis/mapping/interactivemap.asp

Ken also showed a map of models of source habitat and movement corridors of focal species at a statewide level and a map of identified habitat connectivity priority sites.

Jeanne Koenings
Wetland Stewardship
Department of Ecology

Jeanne presented on Ecology's Coastal Wetlands Preservation program, which is a pass-through program for grants to NGO's, tribes, and local governments.

National Coastal Wetlands Grants are administered by the US Fish and Wildlife service and can be applied for by Ecology, DFW, and State Parks. Jeanne showed slides of the Fiscal Year 2009 funded grants, as well as the next round of Fiscal Year 2010 grants. The cycle for these federal grants is: applications due May-June 2009; nationwide ranking meeting October 2009; and notification January 2010.

Jeanne also presented on the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). This is a pass-through program administered by NOAA. Local governments, DFW, State Parks, Padilla Bay, and tribes are eligible to apply. All applications must be submitted through the Department of Ecology. Jeanne showed slides on the FY 2009 and FY 2010 grants and explained that NOAA is re-opening the 2010 competition based on the Omnibus Lands Bill passed by Congress.

No coordination opportunities were specifically identified, but these federally funded projects will be included in the Lands Group's biennial forecast. Information about these potential projects will help coordinate land acquisitions and management.

Josh Giuntoli
Office of Farmland Preservation
State Conservation Commission

Josh provided an overview of the Office of Farmland Preservation (OFP). He explained that the agency's conservation easement/agricultural easement account is unfunded, but the STATe Conservation Commission (SCC) looks forward to new eligibility in WWRP's Riparian Protection Account and Farmland Preservation Account. RCO is currently working on policy projects to incorporate the SCC as eligible applicants into these accounts.

The OFP Task Force provides recommendations to reverse the trend of farmland loss. Recent recommendations include utilizing agricultural impact statements in acquisition projects and working with local entities, such as conservation districts, to develop county agricultural strategic plans.

Josh suggested the Lands Group consider accessing information from the University of Washington Parcels Database. This database has normalized information about state lands.

Find more about the Commission and OFP at http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/.

No coordination opportunities were specifically identified, but as the SCC begins to acquire lands, it will be helpful to include the agency and its acquisition information in the Annual Forum and biennial forecast.

Questions related to morning presentations

- How detailed should future Forum presentations be?
- Should there be a standardized format?
- What specifically should be included? (eg: history of the acquisition – how they agencies acquiring it, partners, landowner issues, etc.)

BIENNIAL FORECAST MAP

Dominga introduced DFW's Marc McCalmon. Marc, Shelly Snyder, and John Talmadge created a biennial forecast map to use as a visual aid for coordination. One of the main themes of the Lands Group legislation was to give transparency to local government officials and others about acquisitions that will take place in their area and why. The map is an effort to answer those questions visually. This proto-map was made with information received from DFW, DNR, and Ecology to show where potential acquisitions will occur during this next biennium.

At this point we don't have specific answers about where this kind of map can live and who can manage it, but the Lands Group would like to refine the format and to make it accessible to the public somehow as part of its mandate to produce a biennial forecast and to publish it in a centralized, easily-accessible format.

OPEN DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Key questions that opened the discussion: What opportunities do you see to work with other agencies that will help you achieve your goals? What questions does the Lands Group need to ask to help agencies identify these opportunities? How can the Annual Forum and Biennial Forecast be formatted and what information needs to be included to help agencies coordinate acquisitions and disposals?

Disposals: Land disposals are not very common. DNR disposes on the trust land transfer side only. DFW has a disposal list, but management needs authority to buy replacement land. It would be helpful for the Lands Group to focus on what agencies have to get rid of as well as what agencies need. Disposal lists would be very beneficial to DOT, for example.

Maps/Biennial Forecast: it would be helpful to use the standard colors from the already-existing major public lands map by DNR. Use existing information people are familiar with. This map is available in jpeg. The purposes of the maps are to show land classifications, funding sources, and ecological boundaries. These require common agreement. The Lands Group is was (at least partly) created to answer where land will be acquired and for what purpose.

Some sensitive issues related to mapping are that these are large envelopes and it may be difficult to narrow down ahead of time. Also, these are acquisitions in progress and landowner privacy is an issue. The trick is to balance agency flexibility with local assurance. DNR maps are already part of the public process, so they may not have issues in re-distributing the information.

Can we utilize info from the UW parcel database? Is there a way to identify priority target parcels? It's not always easy to get county data and it's not consistent. Also, there may be issues in distributing county data.

This is really two layers of data – one showing what's currently there (ownership, type, function) and another showing potential work areas (it's okay to provide a caveat that these are only what the agency *intends* to acquire.)

Implementation – What's doable? Questions to consider: What existing data layers do we have? What else do we need? How will it be managed? How will it be distributed? What are the resources? (these can be packaged in the recommendations to the leg) Options should be put together and rolled out to the larger group.

Let's review the existing demo map and make sure the info is correct. We should host a mapping-focused workshop to develop data layers with input from database experts.

Context: The Lands Group needs a good communication tool and needs to show the broader context of public land acquisitions. The Public Lands Inventory showed that the majority of Washington State Lands are privately owned and that much of the public land is upland. This helps dispel a misconception that state acquisitions always directly impact local communities. The tool we use should make information transparent while showing how it fits in the broad context.
We also want to show how the acquisition relates to other acquisitions.

Forum Presentations: having a standardized template would make it easier on presenters. For example, a vicinity slide, a subject slide, and an on-the-ground slide for each potential acquisition. Some participants thought it would be helpful to have standardized maps in the presentation, but others thought it would be too cumbersome. It took a great deal of time to put together the presentations for today.

Reverse Coordination: This is related to GMA. Can agencies get together to discuss plans before talking with local entities about coordinating? This sounds nice, but what's the incentive?

Land Classification: State Parks CAMP system uses a common language to communicate the intended purpose/function of the acquisition. When you classify by ownership, the missions of the agencies overlap. The CAMP system shows multiple objectives that can be easily seen and mapped. Potential hurdles are agency agreement on definitions and the possibility that the system is too restrictive. It would be helpful to have a few agency representatives meet to work out initial proposals for classifications.

DNR's Forest Land Strategic Plan might be useful. It would need lots of backing to get to the statewide level but it would be palatable with public process.

Other suggestions: Help agencies network using the website and/or other tools. Perhaps Outlook or Sharepoint. As a way of incentivizing coordination, a letter to RCO Director and Senator Parlette can be sent with the list of identified opportunities.

Next Steps

- Help agencies coordinate around identified opportunities. Follow-up by connecting agencies regarding specific sites.
- Next Annual Forum: It's important for the Lands Group to follow up on the coordination opportunities. Participants would like to report back at the next Annual Forum in early 2010. In the meantime, the Lands Group can develop follow-up questions that capture how coordination was achieved and whether it was successful. What's a tangible outcome of coordination? Also, it was suggested that the Trust Land Transfer List be made more available to the public. Can the Lands Group bring this in at the next Forum?
- Refine the biennial forecast spreadsheet. This ties in with developing data layers for the data system. Think more about what other agencies need and what they have to offer. Host a workshop to develop data layers using agency and partner input about what should be included (what information the Lands Group needs to collect) and with input from data people about how to best collect the information, store it, and present/distribute it.