



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE
1111 Washington Street SE
PO Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

June 12, 2006

TO: IAC Members & Designees

FROM: Laura Johnson, IAC Director *Laura*

SUBJECT: IAC Agenda Item # 5
Large-Scale Long-Range Conservation Strategies

Background:

Several planning efforts around the state have started to look at large geographic scales (regional or statewide), and over long time frames (30 to 100 years), to develop strategies for protecting Washington's environmental heritage. This portion of the IAC meeting will offer an overview of plans such as the Biodiversity Council and the Governor's Puget Sound Initiative.

The Board is encouraged to consider the implications of these approaches for IAC's grant programs. Traditionally, most state agencies' grant programs focus on specific issues, such as trails, sewage treatment plants, or transportation infrastructure. The new planning suggests that issue-specific or 'stove-piped' grant programs may not be able to reflect the systematic or strategic priorities of the larger-scale approaches.

Board Action Sought:

- Offer preliminary thoughts on interactions of IAC programs with these issues.
- Provide direction for staff work to develop policy responses for discussion at future IAC meetings.

Attachments:

1. Quotes from three long-range large-scale planning efforts – note common themes of 'strategy', 'comprehensive', etc.
2. Color chart illustrating the range of state issue-specific grants (from a 2005 JLARC grants study)
3. Briefing handout, Biodiversity Council
4. Briefing handout, Puget Sound Partnership
5. Briefing Handout, Cascade Agenda



Quotes from recent strategic plan approaches (highlights added)

“A system-wide approach offers the best hope for achieving multiple outcomes and needs in Puget Sound, where human and natural systems are intimately connected.”

Page 9, Puget Sound Partnership Preliminary Findings to the Governor — DRAFT May 25, 2006

“The Biodiversity Council is directed to:

- Develop a 30-year comprehensive prioritized strategy and implementation plan for the state of Washington that enables the state to sustainably protect its biodiversity heritage;...”

Executive Order 2004-02

“ The Agenda calls for us to act now to conserve the working land base and support foresters and farmers while also preserving recreation and natural resource lands....

WHEN IT COMES TO INVESTMENT, THE AGENDA ADVOCATES:

...

- Landscape-scale conservation benefits by permitting rural villages and conserved lands.”

THE CASCADE AGENDA SUMMARY, page 29 (May 2005)

Washington's State-to-Local Infrastructure Grant and Loan Programs, 2005

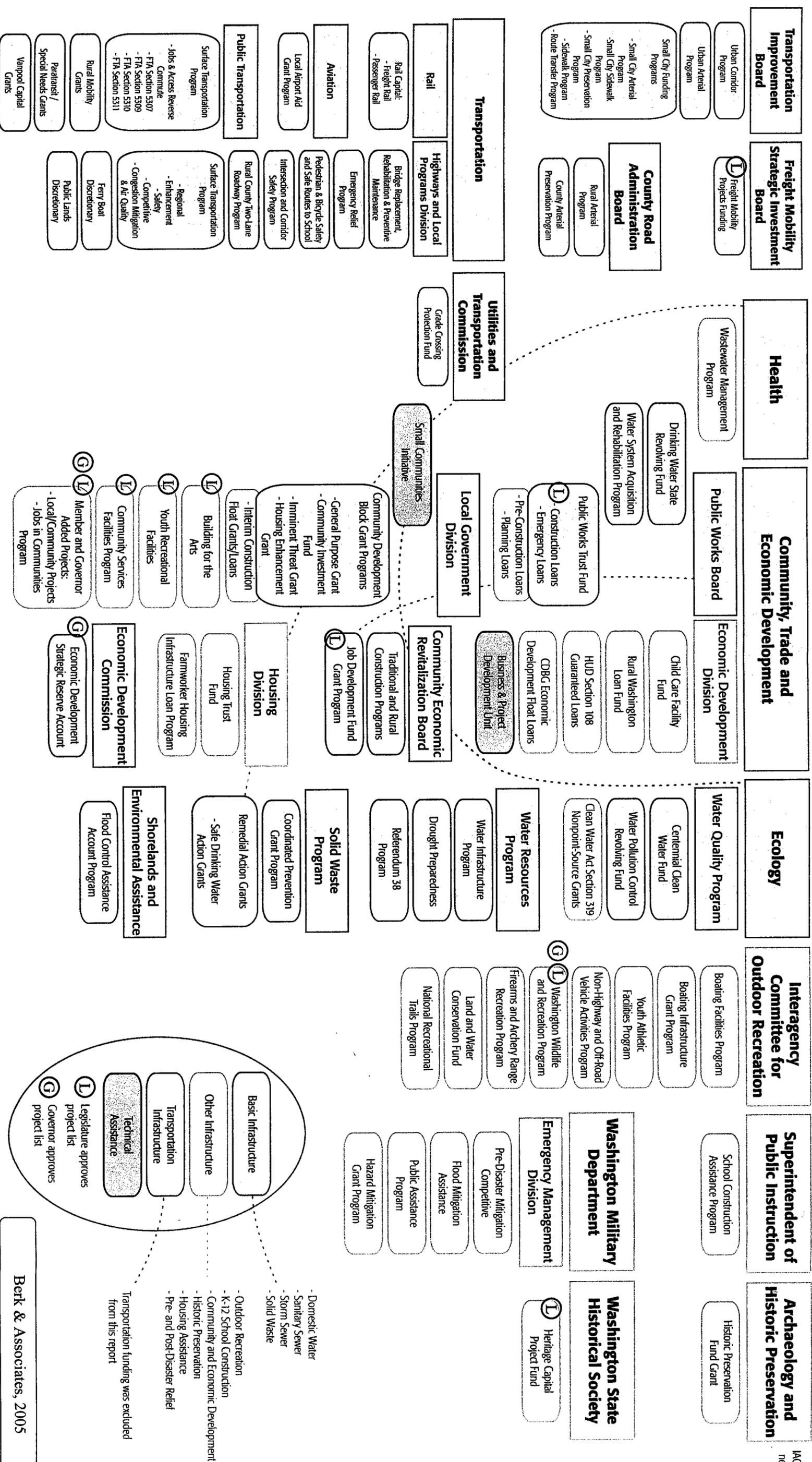
System Map from OFM Infrastructure Study, Exhibit ES-3

The Governor

The Legislature

Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council

IACC is an independent non-profit staffed by State-employee volunteers.



Washington Biodiversity Council

WORKING TO CONSERVE THE DIVERSITY OF LIFE IN WASHINGTON STATE

Biodiversity Council Members

Brad Ack, Vice Chair
PUGET SOUND ACTION TEAM

Ken Berg
U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Dave Brittell
WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Bonnie Bunning
WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL
RESOURCES

Bill Clarke
MENTOR LAW GROUP / WASHINGTON REALTORS

Brian Collins
SKOKOMISH NATION

Maggie Coon, Chair
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Donna Darm
NOAA FISHERIES

Robert Fimbel
WASHINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMISSION

Yvette Joseph
COLVILLE CONFEDERATED TRIBES

John Marzluff
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Jackie Reid
THURSTON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Ken Risenhoover
PORT BLAKELY TREE FARMS

David Roseleip
WASHINGTON AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Mark Schaffel
PACIFIC COAST SHELLFISH GROWERS
ASSOCIATION

Kate Stenberg
QUAILCROFT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Naki Stevens
PEOPLE FOR PUGET SOUND

Steve Tharinger
CLALLAM COUNTY COMMISSION

David Troutt
NISQUALLY INDIAN TRIBE

Wade Troutman
FOSTER CREEK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Dick Wallace
WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

Josh Weiss
WASHINGTON FOREST PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

Megan White
WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The Washington Biodiversity Council was created to develop and promote effective ways to conserve, steward, and restore Washington's stunning biodiversity—the rich mosaic of life that so many Washingtonians prize. It was established by Governor Locke in 2004 after civic and environmental leaders recognized that the state's conservation strategies were largely reactive and crisis-driven and thus costlier and less effective than they should be. The Council is now working to chart a new and comprehensive approach to conservation—one that is strategic and forward-looking and that recognizes the importance of the state's rich biological diversity to our health, our economy, and our quality of life.

Comprised of 23 members representing a wide range of interests, the Council is directed to:

- Develop a 30-year comprehensive strategy for the state of Washington that sustains its biodiversity for future generations;
- Complete an assessment of incentive programs and propose ways to assist and encourage private landowners to maintain healthier landscapes at all scales;
- Craft a public education component that underscores the importance of biodiversity to our future economy and health; and
- Develop a publicly accessible web site to share information about the state's biodiversity and incentive programs to assist landowners.

The Council must submit its strategy to the Governor and the Legislature by December 31, 2007.

The Council membership includes agriculture, forestry, ranching, local, state and federal government, academia, tribes, shellfish growers, and conservation organizations.

Selected activities:

- Funded and launched two pilot projects, each testing different approaches and incentives for engaging community members and landowners in voluntary stewardship activities. (See other side for more details on the pilot projects.)
- Preparing a set of issue briefs to encourage dialogue on ideas to significantly scale up landowner incentive programs.
- Building the Washington Biodiversity web site, launched in June 2006.
- Assessing the current extent and condition of Washington's biodiversity, including future projections based on historical trends.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Lynn Helbrecht, Executive Coordinator
lynnh@iac.wa.gov
360-902-3087
www.biodiversity.wa.gov



© Eliza Habegger



© Julie Naasko

Washington Biodiversity Council's Pilot Projects

Healthy Lands Initiative: Building a conservation economy in North Central Washington.

This 18-month project is intended to develop a shared community vision for how biodiversity conservation can be integrated into the economic and social fabric of North Central Washington, including Okanogan, Douglas, and Chelan counties and the Colville Indian Reservation.

The project will bring together the land conservation, agricultural, and economic development communities to learn more about the region's biodiversity, assess existing and potential incentive programs, and apply new conservation approaches, including habitat farming and grassbanking programs in Moses Coulee, the Methow Valley, and the Wenatchee River watershed.

This project will:

- Raise awareness about regional tools and resources available for enhancing conservation.
- Discover new ways to combine biodiversity conservation with productive and profitable agricultural enterprises.
- Develop plans for implementing incentive programs to benefit riparian and shrub-steppe ecosystems in the Wenatchee River watershed, Moses Coulee, and the Methow Valley.
- Evaluate, synthesize, and share results of the pilot project with neighboring North Central Washington landscapes and other regions of the state.

Citizen Stewardship of the Pierce County Biodiversity Network: Lower White River.

This project funds the Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance for 18 months to recruit and train "citizen scientists" who will survey and monitor biodiversity in their community. It will also engage private and commercial landowners in a process to evaluate and increase the effectiveness of incentive programs in fostering voluntary conservation actions.

The focus for this pilot project is on citizen stewardship within the Puyallup River watershed, where the Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance will focus on a biologically diverse area along the lower White River.

This project will:

- Implement a biological inventory, or "BioBlitz," a form of rapid biodiversity assessment, on the biologically rich lands included within the geographic scope.
- Recruit and train individuals and groups as citizen scientists to survey and monitor biodiversity using the principles and methods of NatureMapping.
- Engage both private and commercial landowners in voluntary incentive programs and assessment of the effectiveness of those programs.

**THIRTY-YEAR STRATEGY
FOR THE CONSERVATION OF WASHINGTON'S BIODIVERSITY**
Outline of Key Components

PART I INTRODUCTION

- Background and Purpose
- Definition and Value of Biodiversity
- Brief Statement of the Problem
- Council's Vision for Biodiversity

PART II CURRENT STATUS OF BIODIVERSITY IN WASHINGTON

1. **What's the current status of Washington's biodiversity?**
Assess the current status and condition of Washington's biodiversity (Species, Communities and Ecological Systems)
 - What are our most vulnerable resources and where they are located?
 - What is currently protected and what is not?
2. **What are the key threats and transformative forces?**
Assess the current impact of key threats and transformative forces and to the extent possible, project future impacts.
(Note: the Council will select the top tier of transformative forces – examples may include invasive species, habitat fragmentation, and alteration of natural ecosystem processes.)
3. **What are the social and cultural values related to biodiversity?**
What are the significant features and trends in Washington's social, economic and cultural landscape that influence values towards biodiversity conservation?
4. **What protection do we get from current institutional framework?**
Where does conservation come from? How do we evaluate/measure biodiversity results? What are the critical issues impeding progress? *(Note: this analysis is expected to include both non-regulatory and regulatory activities.)*

PART III BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

1. **What places, species and habitats must be conserved in order maintain biodiversity and the processes that generate it?** *These priorities can be expressed as either spatially explicit priorities or qualitative priorities.*
2. **Where are the gaps?**
Identify gaps between what we need to conserve (*priorities established by Council*) and what is currently protected.

PART IV ANALYSIS: ISSUES and OPPORTUNITIES

1. **What are the critical issues impeding progress?** *(Note: These issues are intended to include socioeconomic and cultural factors.)*

2. What opportunities are there to improve the existing system? What are options for addressing critical issues?

Note: This section should initially be based on a discussion of options previously identified as part of the 2003 Report, including, but not limited to, actions in each of the following categories:

- Engaging Students and Citizens – Public education and outreach
- Maximizing Opportunities for Local Government
- Increasing Partnerships and Working with NGOs
- Increase Voluntary Conservation on Private Land
- Improve Conservation of Biodiversity on Public Land
- Improve Collection, Management and Distribution of Biodiversity Information

3. What other actions are necessary to insure that we can achieve biodiversity conservation priorities?

PART V ACTION PLAN

1. Recommendations

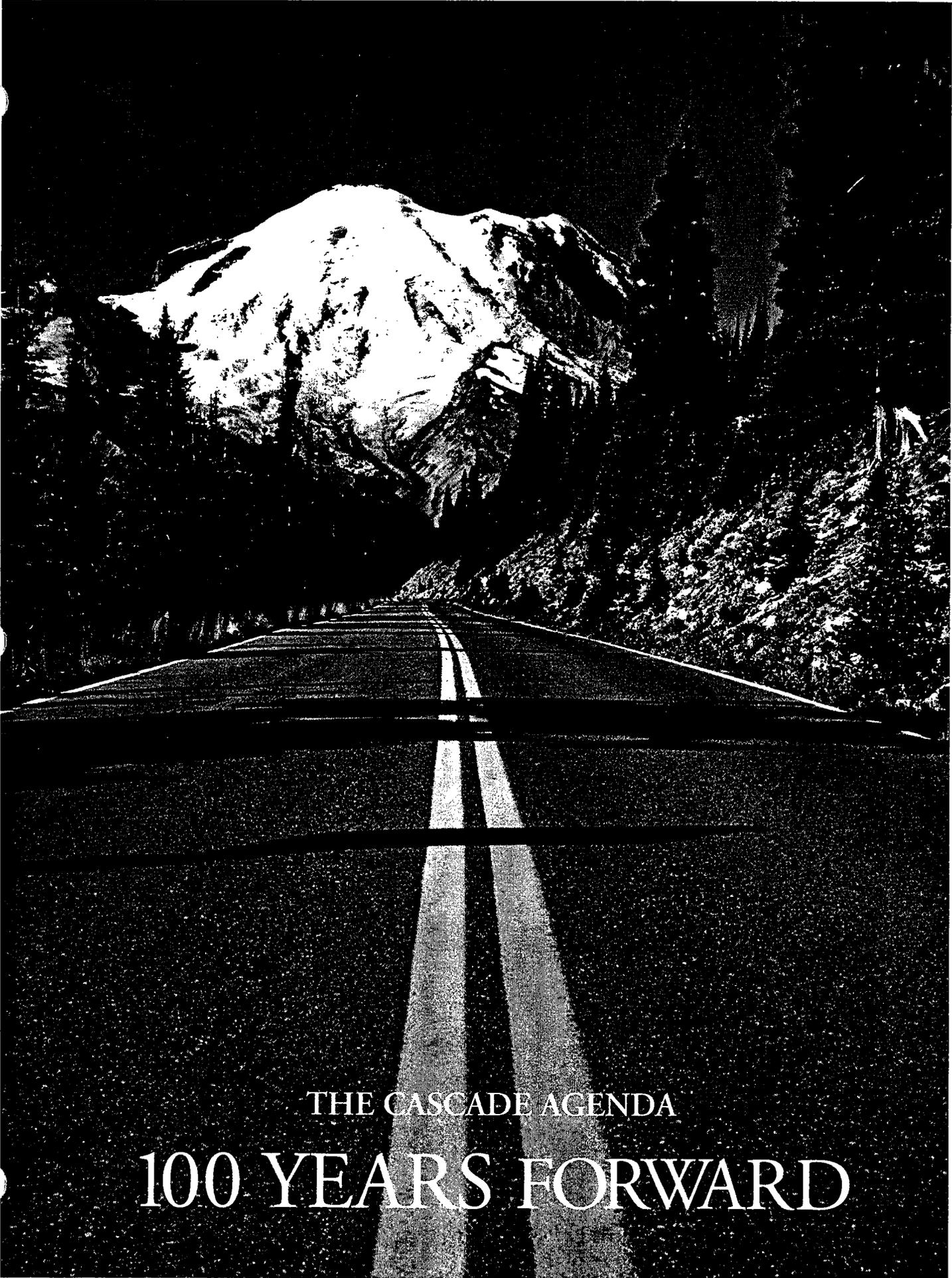
Identify key strategies to achieve biodiversity conservation priorities
These strategies will address political will and buy-in.

2. Implementation Plan

Goals
Strategies
Actions
Responsibilities
Timeline
Feedback Loops
Measuring and Reporting Progress

PART VI APPENDICES

- References
- Case Studies
- Pilot Project Results
- Other Relevant Information

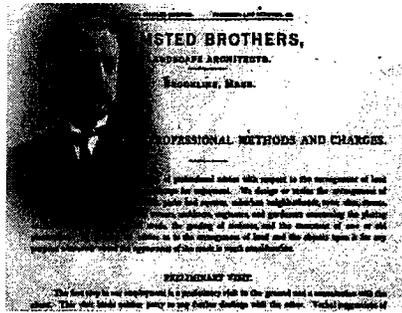


THE CASCADE AGENDA

100 YEARS FORWARD

A CENTURY THAT TRANSFORMED OUR REGION

A little more than 100 years ago, Congress, looking out on a rapidly urbanizing nation, took action to set aside massive landscapes in Wyoming and California, creating the national parks of Yosemite, Sequoia and Yellowstone. In the same decade, President Grover Cleveland established the Mt. Rainier Forest Reserve, along with 11 others around the country, which were to become a system of National Forests to preserve the forests and the water supply and provide a reliable source of timber.



The population of the entire state was a little more than 500,000 then with about 120,000 in the two big cities of Seattle and Tacoma. The very first automobile in the Pacific Northwest had just arrived in Seattle from Kittitas County. Farsighted civic leaders in Seattle had hired the prestigious Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Mass., to look 100 years into the future and design a parks system for future generations, "to make a beautiful place."

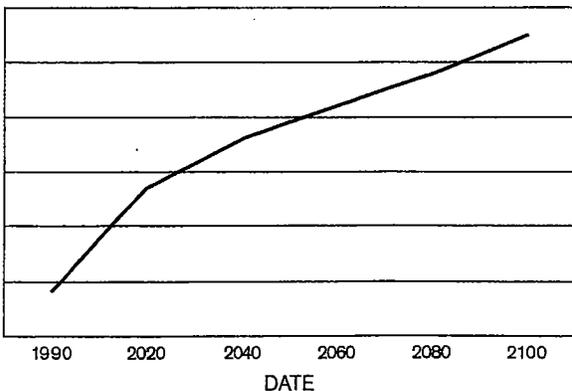
Today, 100 years later, just under 3.5 million people live, work and play in the Central Cascades region, and it is, indeed, a beautiful place.

We also use this land that we love. It goes to work for us every day. We live on it, we farm it, we harvest its timber and we build commercial centers and neighborhoods, towns and city centers with soaring architecture. Our homes, families, jobs and futures depend in large part on our abundant natural resources and public assets. One cannot imagine life without them. One cannot imagine losing them.

TODAY, STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF THOSE FARSIGHTED CONSERVATIONISTS AND CIVIC LEADERS OF MORE THAN 100 YEARS AGO, WE ARE LOOKING LONG AS WELL.

In many conversations over the past year, people told us that while they love their Northwest, they are worried about its future, and cite some disquieting trends: continued urbanization, unplanned growth, sprawling development from shoreline to ridgeline. The continued loss of open space, natural systems and wildlife. The loss of natural resource-based jobs in farming, fishing and forestry. And overcrowding, even in parks, on trails and on roads.

POPULATION PROJECTION: THEY WILL COME



The population of the region will increase dramatically over the next 100 years, whether low or high rates of growth are used.



SNOQUALMIE PASS
SUNSET HIGHWAY
PHOTO
1911

How long is 100 years? Take a look at the automobile in the Northwest. The very first automobile in the region came from Kittitas across Snoqualmie Pass in the summer of 1905. It was an 1898 Fryer-Miller driven by Bert Harrison. It took two days to get from Kittitas Valley to Snoqualmie Pass. A hundred years later, at the beginning of 2005, there were 3,148,019 registered motor vehicles in the counties King, Kittitas, Pierce and Snohomish, and some of Harrison's descendants are probably stuck in the Renton S-curves.





THE URBAN FOOTPRINT IN GREATER PUGET SOUND 1990



WE COULD HAVE A SIMILAR FOOTPRINT IN 2100

THE CASCADE AGENDA IS A CALL TO ACTION.

THE AGENDA STARTS WITH THE BELIEF THAT THE FOUNDATION OF AN OUTSTANDING QUALITY OF LIFE IS A GOOD JOB, AND WITH THE VIEW THAT CONSERVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEED EACH OTHER TO SUCCEED.

Unless we have homes and jobs, we will not have the financial means for conservation. And unless we conserve our natural resources, our high quality environment, people will not want to bring their creativity, talent and productivity to the region. If we are to be the kind of place people told us they want, we must get started today on two big jobs.

First, we have identified 1.26 million acres of working and natural land that we must conserve, and as conservationists we know how to do this. It is a realistic goal. During the last five years, local conservation groups conserved about 150,000 acres. Just last year, King County, the Cascade Land Conservancy and Hancock Timber Resources Group came to agreement on conserving 90,000 acres of working forest land, using the sophisticated conservation tools and strategies we have developed. The protection of the Snoqualmie Forest is the first step, already accomplished, toward our 100-year goal. If we start now on these 1.26 million acres, and if we do this well, in relatively short order, we will be prepared for the future.

There is some good news here. While we have converted significant areas to other uses over the last 100 years, we have also done a pretty good job of protecting the natural landscapes we value. We start with a large base of more than 2 million acres of our four-county region already in public ownership as working forest or preserved natural areas. And we have some of the most stringent forest practices and regulations in the nation.

Our second big job is perhaps more difficult and complex. To achieve the kind of future we heard about in the Cascade Dialogues, we must make our cities attractive and affordable places, so that more of the 3.5 million people coming our way can freely choose to live in them. Vibrant, livable cities and new ways of looking at rural development can take pressure off forests, farms and the most sensitive rural lands. We can help these places succeed through our conservation of close-in forests and farmlands outside our cities and by helping secure more parks, trails, green spaces and access to the water inside our cities.

To help us think long term, out 100 years, we divided the region into different landscapes to address particular needs within each. Here are detailed looks at the individual landscapes.

Using satellite imagery to map urban areas, we created these unusual views of Greater Puget Sound from the north. The perspective focuses attention on the potential for future growth to consume the rural lands and the Cascade Foothills. The 2100 image draws on a computer-based land use model and state population projections to imagine one potential future where growth is managed and open space largely protected. Red lines indicate the current urban growth boundaries.

FARMING

Washington is blessed with fertile soils and an ideal climate for growing crops. Our state is second only to California in the diversity of its produce, with more than 115 different agricultural products. Although our four counties have lost many of their farmlands to development, we still have a rich variety of farms and orchards, some passed from generation to generation for more than 100 years. Moreover, the remaining farms and orchards in the Cascade region are the life blood of a growing trend that is providing locally produced farm products that are fresher and healthier for our area residents. While the local market holds the most promising boost for the future farm economy west of the Cascades, Kittitas farming will rely on several key commodities for the world market such as timothy hay while increasing the production of goods for local consumers.



Unless we take action now, however, the odds are that farms and orchards will continue to vanish from our landscape as development pushes farther into the countryside and city dwellers buy up agricultural land as country estates. The State Growth Management Act, locally defined Agricultural Production Districts, coupled with such programs as King County's Farmland Preservation Bonds, have provided a measure of protection in many rural areas, but in other rural areas, where land is zoned to permit one home for five or ten acres, land is quickly being converted to other purposes with little conservation benefit for the region.



OUR GOAL

Is that both farms and the business of farming will be preserved as permanent elements of our landscape and our way of life. Farmers' markets will continue to thrive, and new strategies will be found to assure our farmers can make a living on the land. Our goals are to:

- Conserve 85% of the agricultural land that remains in the four counties, including 106,000 acres on the west side of the mountains and 200,000 acres in Kittitas County.
- Support the regional farm economy by promoting more consumption of locally produced foods. Increase local consumption of local produce to about 5 percent of what we eat, an increase that will make farming a viable local industry.
- Provide an adequate and consistent supply of water, an important part of the agriculture industry in Kittitas County.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS

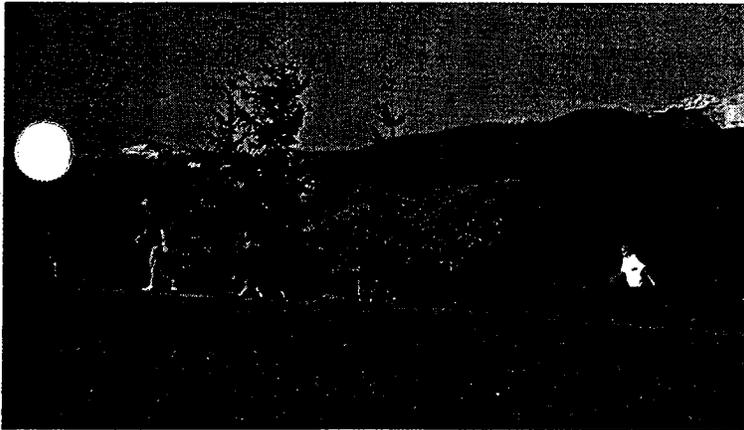


While Kittitas County (right) has large contiguous areas of agricultural land, those on the west side are small and scattered. Only a few cohesive agricultural districts remain, more in Snohomish County than the other two west side counties, making conservation difficult and expensive.

PARKS

When the Olmsted Brothers created their visionary plan for Seattle's park system 100 years ago, they sought to make the natural environment a prominent element of every neighborhood within the city. In large part, they succeeded. The areas of our region that are graced with their parks (and those of their followers) have retained their livability and economic value, through good times and bad, throughout the past century. There is a lesson in that success: well designed parks and space for recreation are essential elements of vibrant cities – just as important to the life of our cities as any other part of the urban infrastructure.

The people of our region are blessed with wonderful parks, from National Parks to tiny urban pocket parks, providing opportunities to pursue an almost endless variety of recreational activities. Today, these recreation lands constitute a huge asset for our community and are a magnet that attracts and helps to hold a skilled workforce in our region. Yet not every neighborhood is well served by the park systems we have today, and, with hundreds of thousands of new residents expected, more park land must be acquired to keep pace.



Like many parts of the Cascade Agenda, county-to-county recreational land needs vary. In more densely populated areas of King County, land prices are higher and additional park lands will more frequently come from smaller purchases. Programs such as the Green Seattle Partnership also will help restore existing parkland.

Development and population growth are moving at a different pace in Kittitas County where the challenge is to maintain and enhance its spectacular recreational assets. Because the county is geographically and politically “divided” into “Upper County” and “Lower County,” it will be important to create a recreation network that connects people to the vast areas of public lands as well as to the two parts of the county.

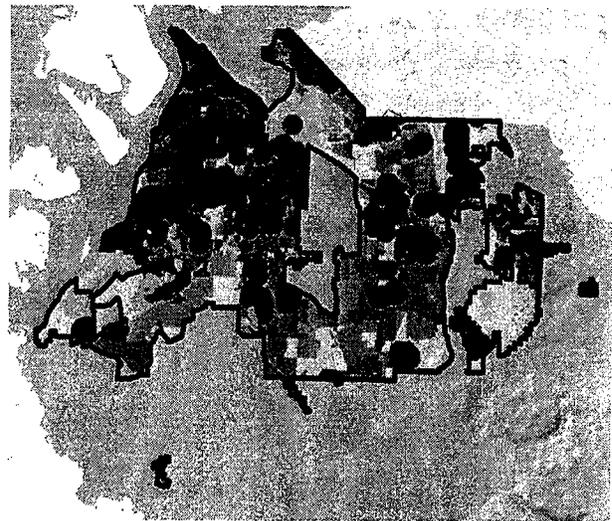
In Snohomish County, people want a system of trails that connects their communities to the high mountains; in Pierce County, residents are concerned about the health of estuaries and the links to the salt water beaches of Puget Sound.

OUR GOAL

To weave parks and recreation land into the fabric of every neighborhood in the region, and to connect our cities and towns to one another by trail systems that encourage walking, running and cycling. To achieve this we propose to:

- Design recreational opportunities in the Cascades that meet the needs of diverse users while protecting natural features of our limited public land base.
- Work with private timberland owners to maintain and expand public access programs for recreation.
- Connect and improve regional trail networks with a regional consolidation and gap analysis of local plans to identify needed links.
- Keep pace with population growth by adding 30,000 acres of urban parks, ensuring that there is a park within a half-mile walk of all urban residents or within an eighth-mile in more densely populated areas.
- Maintain the quality of experience our residents now have at regional destination parks such as Point Defiance in Tacoma, by adding 82,500 acres to destination parks over the next century.
- Make water and shoreline access available along every eight miles of our rivers in rural areas.

PROXIMITY OF PARKS TO PEOPLE IN PIERCE COUNTY



The dark green shows existing parks within the urban growth boundary in Pierce County. Lands within a half mile of those parks are shown in light green. The red, orange and yellow show areas of high, medium and low population densities that do not have close access to parks. Industrial area inside boundaries shown in gray.

BRIDGING THE LANDSCAPES

BECAUSE NATURE IS, IN FACT, A SINGLE SYSTEM, THERE ARE FORCES AT WORK ACROSS THE LANDSCAPES WE HAVE DESCRIBED: THE MOVEMENT OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS, THE SHIFTING TIDES OF HUMAN MIGRATION AND EVEN THE MOVEMENT OF TIME ITSELF.

NATURAL HERITAGE

For centuries, the people of our region have been deeply connected to the natural world. Native Americans depended for their survival on a sophisticated knowledge of the land and its bounty for food, shelter and spiritual well-being.

A desire to catalogue, identify and understand has been a part of our natural heritage for years. Lewis and Clark catalogued many species in their Voyage of Discovery. David Douglas, a famous 19th century botanist, visited the Pacific Northwest in the 1820s, sending back numerous plant samples to the Royal Horticulture Society in Great Britain. The name of our most well-known conifer, the Douglas fir, speaks to his legacy.

A desire to protect this region's abundant resources has a rich and deep tradition as well. For the first human residents, it was a matter of survival – they depended on the availability of resources for food and shelter. Today, it is still a matter of survival – for endangered species such as the Spotted Owl and the Puget Sound Chinook and for us, our culture. With the right combination of actions, we can secure their survival and restore the great and diverse ecosystems that characterize the Cascade counties.

OUR GOAL

That after 100 years, our region's natural heritage will be far more secure than it is today, and the survival of our region's iconic species will be assured. To achieve this, we propose to:

- Maintain our region's biological diversity by striving to protect about 30% of the original extent of our region's various habitats, an area that we estimate to be 140,000 acres on both sides of the Cascades.
- Retain the spectrum of natural species that are unique to our area.
- Maintain the means for wildlife to move throughout traditional ranges.



STEWARDSHIP

Perhaps it goes without saying, but a plan for 100 years must include a commitment to stewardship. For even when we are successful in acquiring the right to preserve land or water, that prize will not be passed intact to future generations without a sustained effort.

For the past several decades, stewardship has focused primarily upon correcting the mistakes of the past – by cleaning up pollution, reviving natural patterns of forest succession and restoring waterways to health. Today new challenges are emerging, created by invasive species, fragmentation of habitat and even the simple pressure of too many boots hiking the same beloved trails. We know that we cannot fully predict how such challenges will evolve or what new issues our children and grandchildren will encounter as they work to protect the legacy of lands and waters we wish to leave them.

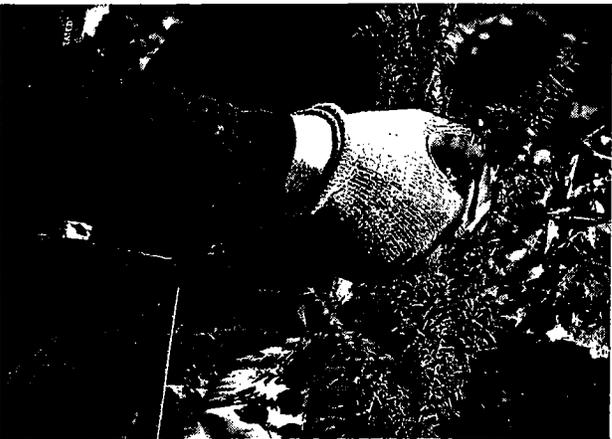
But we can predict with certainty that their success, like ours, will be contingent upon finding ways to work together.

It is our responsibility to leave them with some examples. The Cascade Dialogues have demonstrated a formula by uniting environmental organizations, business leaders, government agencies, tribes and other community organizations in common cause. But the Dialogues do not represent the only example or even the first.

We are building on a tradition that is exemplified by many others, such as the Mountain to Sound Greenway Trust and its allies, who have succeeded in mobilizing hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours each year to improve and care for the Greenway. Their example teaches us that extraordinary things can be accomplished when we plan thoughtfully and work as one to achieve our conservation goals. Perhaps we cannot predict all the challenges, but we can state our intentions.

OUR GOALS

- Establish a plan and the financial resources for the stewardship of each property we preserve.
- Restore, whenever possible, self-sustaining ecosystems by repairing the damage from past practices.
- Prevent the proliferation of invasive species that threaten to destroy the balance of natural systems.
- Maintain, to the greatest extent possible, the existing level of biodiversity within our region.



THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Cascade Agenda would not be complete without a vision for the communities in which most of our people live and work. In fact, in a very real sense, conservation and development are two sides of the same coin. Both begin with the same premise – there are going to be more people living here in the next 100 years, and they will need homes and places in which to work. The question is how to meet those needs while protecting the natural resources that make this region unique.

The Growth Management Act has been a powerful and a strong force in guiding development and encouraging conservation. Maps of the region, charting growth patterns, provide some encouragement. While the maps show that tremendous growth has occurred during the past 10 years, the vast majority of that growth has stayed within the boundaries set by the Growth Management Act. Go out a few years, to 2020 and the picture remains hopeful.

But if we go out 100 years to 2100, the picture begins to change. If land use regulations and zoning codes remain as they are for the next 100 years, our urban areas will begin to spill over the current boundaries but not drastically so, because the density within the growth boundaries would be much higher than it is today. Seattle is destined to look more like downtown Vancouver, B.C., with many high-rise apartment and condominium towers.



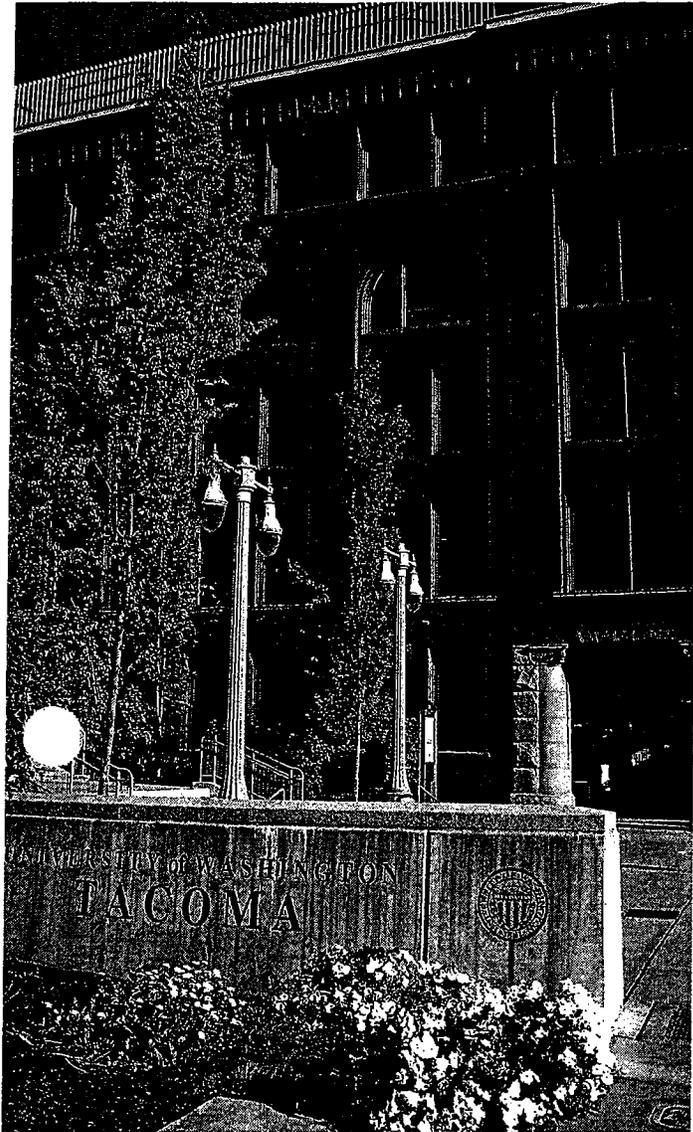
Yet, urban growth boundaries and residential densities are set by elected officials, and they are subject to many pressures. Even a slight change in the policies they choose could unleash a huge surge of development in the rural areas and foothills forests of the region.

In Kittitas County, the issues are different. It is still a largely rural area although it is increasingly attracting people from the west side of the mountains to establish second homes there. Most parts of the county are less than two hours drive away from the urban centers on the west side. Kittitas County population may grow by as many as 100,000 people over the next 100 years. But that estimate could grossly understate the population gains – people with second homes in the county are not counted as residents, for example, since they are already counted in their county of primary residence.

Our vision for the cities, towns and villages of our four counties is that they will become even more alive and interesting than they are today. We expect to see infill of our urban neighborhoods, but with more and better parks – neighborhoods in which it is possible to live, work and play without needing a car.

We must make our cities vibrant and vital, providing a real draw for many of the 3.5 million people coming this way. It is happening already in Tacoma, Everett, Ellensburg and Seattle where innovative developers are building bold communities with new economic hubs housed together.

Whenever development issues were discussed during the Cascade Dialogues, most participants seemed to be in agreement on how we need to grow our cities and towns. But when it came to the rural areas, the discussion almost immediately turned to the question of growth management, the critical areas ordinances and the growing discord among mostly rural property owners. The conclusion reached during many of the discussions was that the Cascade Agenda, and the spirit of civil discourse it represents, may provide a unique opportunity to begin a rational discussion of the issues of land use and property rights in the rural zone. People expressed a real hunger for a middle ground and a common future.



OUR GOAL

That all those who have a stake in the future of the rural zones work together to identify the features of the rural landscapes they most value and create better ways of maintaining them. We imagine new approaches to rural development, guided by the principles of conservation that recognize and respect the economic interests of the land owners. To achieve this goal we propose to:

- Convene the stakeholders in constructive conversation.
- Provide the best possible analysis of the conservation and community values of rural lands.
- Assist the stakeholders in reaching agreements and creating new tools to preserve the character of the rural zone such as implementation of Transfer of Development Rights programs as a means to preserve important landscapes while providing a fair economic return to land owners.

