

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 04-02

ESTABLISHING THE WASHINGTON BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, the state of Washington is one of the most biologically diverse states in the country. The state contains most of the major ecosystem types found in the western United States, including two found nowhere else in the world: the Olympic rainforest and channeled scablands; and

WHEREAS, Washington's natural environment sustains the state's rich web of life, including those vital natural resource industries that produce food, fiber, fuel, building materials and medicines. Washington's forests support a timber industry that employs thousands of people; its lands produce a rich and abundant agricultural economy that is a breadbasket of the nation; its fresh and marine waters support commercial and recreational fishing and shellfish industries; and the state's biodiversity heritage draws outdoor recreationalists and tourists, who help support our local economies; and

WHEREAS, Washington is in danger of losing much of its rich natural diversity due to habitat fragmentation, degradation and conversion that threatens the state's ecosystems. Threats to species and critical ecosystems have resulted in repeated endangered species listings, which disrupt communities and long-term resource management; and

WHEREAS, in response to 2002 Legislature, the Washington Biodiversity Conservation Committee was formed, consisting of diverse representation from the private and public sector and tribal governments to recommend ways to manage and protect our state's biodiversity. The Committee issued its *Washington Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Report* on October 1, 2003; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Gary Locke, Governor of the state of Washington direct and request that a State Biodiversity Council be established. The Council shall:

1. Consist of 23 members appointed by the Governor representing the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Ecology, the Puget Sound Action Team, the Department of Natural Resources, State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Transportation; two members each from local government and federal agencies; three tribal representatives; and representatives from private industry, agriculture, forestry, ranching, academia and non-governmental conservation organizations, and four at-large representatives.

The members of the Council shall appoint a chair from among its members and may adopt operating procedures. The Council may reimburse travel and meeting expenses to non-governmental members, at the discretion of the Council. The Council shall expire December 31, 2007. The Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation shall administer all contracts and expenses for the Council.

2. By December 31, 2007, perform the following tasks:

- 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. This strategy must be coordinated with the Governor's Sustainable Washington Advisory Panel.

- Complete an assessment of existing and potential landowner stewardship incentive programs, and a demonstration of the applicability of such programs in two demonstration biodiversity conservation projects, one on the eastern side and one on the western side of the state.
- Develop a public education component, including K-12 through higher education, and an outreach component for stakeholder groups.
- Develop a website to present information on the state's biodiversity heritage that is accessible to local governments, watershed-based planning groups, and the public at large. This data shall be organized to include an assessment of the state's full range of biodiversity as well as the ability to identify individual species and habitats that are potentially in trouble and in need of a proactive management initiative.
- Address other recommendations included in the October 1, 2003 report from the Biodiversity Conservation Committee, within budgetary limits.
- Submit its comprehensive strategy to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 31, 2007.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the State of Washington to be affixed at Olympia this _____ day of March, A.D., Two Thousand Four.

Governor of Washington

BY THE GOVERNOR;

Secretary of State