Quarterly Meeting

Member Attendance

Pene Speaks (Department of Natural Resources)
Sean Graham (Senator Parlette's Office, alternate)
Kaleen Cottingham (RCO Director)
Joe LaTourrette (Pacific Coast Joint Venture)
Eric Beach (Green Diamond Resource Company)
Elizabeth Rodrick (Department of Fish and Wildlife)
Steve Hahn (State Parks)
Ken Risenhoover (Department of Transportation)
Jeanne Koenings (Department of Ecology)
Dominga Soliz (RCO)
Josh Giuntoli (State Conservation Commission, alternate)

Introductions, agenda review

Dominga Soliz welcomed the group and group members and audience members introduced themselves. The agenda was reviewed and briefly discussed.

Lands Group Updates

Member Changes – Shiloh Burgess replaced Erika Keech as an alternate from Senator Parlette's office. Jim Fox from RCO retired and is no longer a member. Lynn Helbrecht is the Executive Coordinator of the Biodiversity Council and is replacing Sarah Gage. She is a member of Workgroup 1.

Website Updates – The Lands Group website can be found at: (http://www.rco.wa.gov/rco/h&rlcg/default.htm). Meeting and event information is regularly updated. RCO will soon update its website and the Lands Group site will have a new look. It will also have an "events" link for information and documents about Annual Forums, workshops, etc. Older meeting and events is archived there. The site currently has info from the April 29, 2009 work session and info from the July 16, 2009 first Annual Forum will be posted shortly. There have been several requests for agency presentations from the Forum to be posted.

General Progress Report – Dominga presented a slide show to give a broad look at the Lands Group, its progress to date, and some of the challenges it faces. She discussed 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. The report was the result of a 2004 bill "relating to establishing a statewide strategy for land acquisitions and disposals." 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.

Since then, the 2007 Lands Group enabling legislation gave the group 13 mandates. Last year the group divided into 6 subgroups to accomplish the 13 tasks. No task is accomplished without communicating with other workgroups. The Lands Group structure requires all workgroups to communicate with each other.

The workgroups meet about every 2 to 3 months. People are enthusiastic about the potential for what the Lands Group can do. Attendance has been good and people are motivated to get the job done. The word about the Lands Group is getting out there. People are visiting the website and talking about it. Especially in this budgetary crunch, people are looking for new ways to coordinate and be efficient. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) was briefed in March about Lands Group progress and will be briefed in October about the Annual Forum, Biennial Forecast, and other recent progress.

Up to now, there's been a lot of discussion about priorities and the scope of the tasks. Scopes have been narrowed and focus is shifting now to implementing tasks.
Implementation for many tasks really means to develop recommendations for the legislature. For example, the group doesn't have to actually produce a GIS-based documentation system of habitat and recreation lands. It just has to recommend a method for doing so.

Tangible outcomes from this last year include:
Lands Group Charter
Action Plan
Annual Report
Agency transaction plans matrix and work session recommendations
Annual State Land Coordinating Forum
Biennial Forecast Map Prototype

Outcomes will be included in the annual report to OFM.

The **main challenges** the Lands Group faces are **1) communication between the workgroups and 2) resource uncertainty**. Internally, the workgroups are trying to get their tasks done, but have a hard time doing it without better communication with other workgroups. Workgroups find they get to a point where it can't go any further until they learn what other groups are doing. For example, Workgroup 2 can't develop a data system without input from other workgroups about what data it needs to collect. So people requested we discuss the best way to structure the Lands Group.

Another challenge is the uncertainty about resources. How can the Lands Group afford to implement the legislative mandates? What does the legislation really call for to complete each task? For most tasks, it just requires developing recommendations for the legislature. These recommendations can be drafted as **sets of options depending on varying resources**.

Event Reports

State Land Acquisition Planning Frameworks Work Session, April 29, 2009:

- The **purpose** was to hear from members of state agencies, federal partners, and non-profits and local governments about their conservation and recreation planning strategies in order to help the Lands Group coordinate acquisitions and disposals at a statewide level. This goes to Workgroup 1's task of reviewing agency transaction plans and policies to help ensure statewide coordination of habitat and recreation land acquisitions and disposals.
- **Who participated** – Lands Group members heard from several state agencies, including WSDOT, the conservation commission, CTED, PSP, and RCO. We also heard from the biodiversity council, the US Forest Service, and non-profits such as the Nature Conservancy, Defenders of Wildlife, Columbia Land Trust, the Trust for Public Lands.
- **Outcomes** –The Lands Group collected recommendations from panelists at the meeting and beforehand in a questionnaire. Incorporated into a recommendation synthesis. Documents and presentations posted on website.

First Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum, July 16, 2009:

- **Purpose**: This is a Workgroup 1 task. The Forum is designed to provide a chance for state agencies to discuss which lands they have been funded to acquire and why in order to identify opportunities for coordinating land acquisitions and disposals.
- **What happened:** agencies presented potential acquisition information and maps. Others in the room were able to see specifically where coordination could happen. A first prototype of a biennial forecast map was presented to show some agencies' potential acquisition/disposal sites. Color coded.
- **Outcomes**: several coordination opportunities were identified. Lands Group will follow up to facilitate networking. There was some talk about starting a Sharepoint site or other internet based networking site. There was a suggestion that the Lands Group follow up at the next Forum to see how coordination was achieved.

Workgroup Progress Reports – Workgroup leads provided reports on workgroup tasks. Reports explained the scope of each task, what has been accomplished, and next steps. Progress reports will help draft the Annual Action Plan and the report to OFM in December.

Specific issues discussed include addressing the challenges DOT faces in participating in Lands Group coordination. DOT's participation at the Forum was insightful. DOT wants to find wetland mitigation sites and other agencies might be able to help. But there are resource, legal,

and bureaucratic barriers DOT faces. How can the Lands Group meet DOT's needs? What about a Conservation Banking Committee?

Pene Speaks discussed **Workgroup 1's** progress. Workgroup 1 has reviewed agency land acquisition and disposal plans and policies and will work on drafting a report. The workgroup hosted the first Annual Forum. The information from the Forum will be utilized in developing a biennial forecast. The workgroup is developing questions designed to solicit information from agencies near the time of the Forum in order to make a forecast each biennium.

Steve Hahn discussed **Workgroup 2** (records and documentation) issues and potential next steps. He would like to see GIS publications of potential agency acquisitions and disposals. A pilot area (perhaps the Metthau or Willipa Bay) can be used to create maps that show ownership, function, and partners involved. Jeanne Koenings suggested Hood Canal or Kitsap as potential pilot areas. Perhaps Ecology's watershed characterizations could be a part of this. To develop the GIS-based data system, we can look at existing systems such as the Conservation Registry or the UW GIS system. Josh Giuntoli has contact information. Workgroup 2 will hold a workshop for data-minded people to help match an appropriate data system to Lands Group objectives.

The data system is linked to the other workgroup tasks, such as the biennial forecast, monitoring, and federal grants coordination. Where will the system live?

Workgroup 3 has limited the scope of developing a system for monitoring the success of acquisitions. The aim of the task is to address these questions:

- What was the original purpose of the acquisition?
- Has the original purpose been fulfilled?
- What efforts has the agency made to coordinate the acquisition/disposal with others?

Agencies should identify the purpose of the acquisition at the beginning of the biennium (at the Odd-year Annual Forum). Agencies should ask the follow-up questions (ie: has the purpose been fulfilled) at the end of the biennium (in other words, at the beginning of the *next* biennium).

Workgroup 4 meet to discuss whether WWRPs planning requirements should be revised in order to improve coordination of state land acquisitions. The group determined that a change in statute is not necessary, but a few changes in WAC and policy could be made to encourage agencies to go a coordinating process that considers local communities.

Workgroup 5 (federal funding) has reviewed the legislation and narrowed the scope of the task. The purpose of the federal grant piece is to make sure federally funded acquisitions aren't left out of the coordinating process. The FAME database could help to keep it in the loop. Other options include using processes that all federal grants have to use (such as the SF 424 forms) in order to collect necessary information. The workgroup is identifying what information should be collected and how grant timing cycles and other obstacles can be overcome to coordinate federally funded acquisitions.

Workgroup 6 will meet to draft the annual report.

Discussion

The Lands Group's role in the Governor's process for transforming the natural resource agencies

The Lands Group is being offered to the Governor's Office as a model for reforming the natural resource agency land management services in order to streamline government, improve customer service, and meet state objectives in protecting and restoring the environment and natural resources. The Lands Group model is a way of coordinating agency land management functions without eliminating the lines between the agencies. The emphasis is on providing a formalized, structured way for agencies to collaborate.

Lands Group structure:

What's the best way to structure the Lands Group to achieve long and short-term goals?

How do workgroups keep meeting without reaching a quorum? Workgroup 1 has exceeded the quorum limit. A quorum is established when 51% of group members are present. When a quorum is established, the meeting is subject to open public meeting rules There are currently 16 Lands Group members and 9 of them are on Workgroup 1. Lands Group members decided to invite members from the Puget Sound Partnership and The Trust for Public Lands.

Should we maintain the 6 workgroup structure? The workgroups all need to work together somewhat. No task can be completed in isolation, so communication between the workgroups is essential. Often, workgroups feel they cannot move forward without getting input on what other workgroups are doing. Keeping small workgroups is important to helping tasks get accomplished quickly. Combining groups doesn't work because a quorum would be established. Perhaps fewer, but longer, workgroup meeting in which leads could be present would work.

Challenges to the Lands Group:

The Lands Group faces resource challenges. How can we accomplish these tasks without any funding? Look back to the legislation. Only the biennial forecast actually has to be developed. All other tasks require the Lands Group to make recommendations, provide analysis, etc. Tasks can be accomplished by **developing recommendations to the legislature as sets of options based on varying resource levels**. For example, the Lands Group can present options for a data system we'd like to produce if we had ample resources, a data system that makes budgetary compromises, and a system that has little to no funding.

Milestones and Performance:

The Lands Group's success is in institutionalizing coordination. We need to sell this coordination by showing evidence of tangible outcomes. So, while we're developing recommendations we should also be setting milestones for outcomes we can show to OFM and the legislature. We

need to figure out how to show how the Lands Group is being successful. The benefits and priorities should be identified.

Biennial Forecast and Biennial Forecast Maps:

At the Annual Forum, agencies submitted information about their potential acquisitions. A spreadsheet was circulated to presenters to fill out ahead of time. The spreadsheet asked questions developed by workgroups 1, 2, 3, and 5 in order to accomplish their tasks. The spreadsheet was too complicated and questions need to be refined in order to make them meaningful.

Producing forecast information raises agency and landowner privacy issues. What information about potential acquisitions and disposals should be shared in a biennial forecast? What are the problems with publishing that information? DNR presents potential acquisition information in public meetings and workshops, so it shouldn't be a surprise by the time the forecast is published. Information will have to be shared if the Lands Group wants to meet its goal of improving transparency about agency acquisitions and disposals.

In order to develop the data component, a workshop should be scheduled to develop standards for data layers. This workshop (or workshops) should help define functions of land and should also have a more technologically focused component to examine what it would actually take to create a forecast and forecast map. Perhaps the workshop could take place this fall.

Next Steps

- Action Plan updates: Our charter requires annual updates to the Action Plan. Workgroup leads will draft the action plan and it will be presented to the Lands Group in October. Workgroup progress reports can be utilized.
- Annual Report to OFM: A draft will be presented to the Lands Group in October
- Meeting dates for 2010 meetings will be discussed at the next Lands Group
- Representatives from the Puget Sound Partnership and Trust for Public Lands will be invited to be members of the Lands Group.
- A workshop will be organized to develop the data system for producing the biennial forecast.
- The next Annual Forum will be planned.
- Follow up on coordination that happened at first forum. Forum attendees would like to be connected and would like to report back at the next annual forum about how coordination was achieved
- Workgroups will continue developing recommendations as sets of options depending on varying resources.
- Participate in statewide coordinating conversations.