

Quarterly Meeting

Agenda

Room 172, Natural Resources Building
Capitol Campus, Olympia
April 25, 2012, 9:00am – 12:00pm

- 9:00 Welcome, introductions, agenda overview**
- 9:10 Roundtable updates**
- 9:45 Earthquake drill**
- 10:00 Review the 4th Annual Forum**
- 10:45 Lands Group vision for the next five years**
- Now that the lands group has been extended to 2017, what would we like it to accomplish over the next five years?
 - Review the 2008 charter, discuss updating by the end of the year
 - Should we develop a 5-year work plan?
- 11:30 Prepare for 2nd Forecast Report**
- 12:00 Adjourn**

Lands Group Next Steps

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| June 2012 | Publish 2 nd Biennial State Land Acquisition Forecast Report |
| July 25, 2012 | Quarterly Meeting (9:00-noon, Rm. 172, Natural Resources Building) |
| October 31, 2012 | Quarterly Meeting (9:00-noon, Rm. 172, Natural Resources Building) |

Quarterly Meeting Summary

Attendance

Senator Linda Evans Parlette
Sean Graham, Senator Parlette's Office
Kaleen Cottingham, Recreation and Conservation Office
Majken Ryherd, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition
Tom Bugert, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition
Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy
Pene Speaks, Department of Natural Resources
Dan Budd, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jennifer Quan, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Daniel Farber, State Parks and Recreation Commission
Karen Waltenburg, State Parks and Recreation Commission
Josh Giuntoli, State Conservation Commission
Leslie Betlach, City of Renton, Washington Recreation and Parks Association
Bill Clarke, Trust for Public Land
Eric Beach, Washington Forest Protection Association
Paul Wagner, Department of Transportation
Dominga Soliz, Recreation and Conservation Office

Introductions and Roundtable Updates

Some lands group members provided brief updates. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is busy preparing for about 50 grants, not all acquisitions. The Department of Natural Resources received \$150,000 in General Fund to keep the Natural Heritage Program alive through the biennium. The fact that the money received is new money shows the value of the program. The Department of Natural Resources also received money for road maintenance and abandonment on forest lands, for several individual projects in the capital budget, and for the Puget Sound Corps.

The Department of Natural Resources reported that it will be creating a new Natural Resources Conservation Area to further the intent of House Bill 1484, passed in 2009. The bill made it possible for State Forest Trust Land, which is managed by the Department for the benefit of county government services, to be transferred to Natural

Resources Conservation Area designation. It allows lands that are otherwise unable to be managed for revenue production due to environmental regulatory restrictions to be transferred into long term conservation status, and provides opportunity for the trust beneficiaries (counties) to be compensated for the timber value of the properties while the land values are used to purchase other lands more suitable for revenue production/commercial timber management. The first of these transfers is planned for Wahkiakum County.

Operation and Maintenance Costs of State Land Acquisitions

Members asked whether the lands group should work to make the operation and maintenance costs of planned acquisitions more visible. The question arose at the 2012 Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum and the legislature is expected to give it some attention during the 2013 session. Legislators and others want to know early in the funding process how lands planned for purchase will be maintained.

The lands group discussed options for identifying operating and maintenance expenses and making them more transparent early in the acquisition planning process. The Department of Fish and Wildlife noted that the Fish and Wildlife Commission will have the discussion at its June 2012 meeting. The agency is considering an approach that will show the levels of maintenance that can be provided for each project depending on varying levels of funding. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is also planning to launch a Web site on operation and maintenance of its habitat and recreation lands. The group discussed other options such as requiring agencies to identify operating expenses as part of the grant application process. Prior to 2009, the Office of Financial Management used to require agencies to identify operation and maintenance costs as part of the funding request for projects, but the agencies used different approaches to calculate costs.

Members asked whether agencies should report on estimated operating and maintenance expenses for planned projects that will be included in the Biennial State Land Acquisition Forecast Report. The report will be published in June 2012 and will provide maps and other information about projects planned for acquisition in 2013-15. Some agencies responded that they do not expect to have operating expense data available by the time the report will be published.

One member noted that developing a consistent, coordinated formula and process for agencies to report the costs up front should be fairly straightforward. It will be important to provide clear, consistent messaging to legislators and others about the process.

Representatives of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition said the Coalition is supportive of programs that are complementary to its core mission of advocating for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, but that operation and maintenance of lands is not Coalition's lead issue. Tom Bugert noted that the Coalition is starting a trial program to recruit and organize friends of state parks groups with the goal of raising awareness and raising funds for maintenance and other costs of owning and operating state parks. The program may be extended in the future to other agencies.

Economic Impact of State Land Acquisitions

Members asked whether the lands group should address making jobs created and the economic impact of state habitat and recreation land acquisitions more visible. Some members thought that the issue of economic impacts is not within the lands group's scope. Agencies are brainstorming how to analyze the impacts of acquisitions on local communities, but they may not have the expertise to analyze economic impacts. Perhaps the data collected by agencies, such as the number of hunters, can be used in an economic analysis.

The Washington Recreation and Park Association is also considering how to address economic impacts. John Crompton, Texas A&M University, is an expert on analyzing economic impacts of parks and recreation and has produced several reports. The National Association of Recreation Resource Planners Web site has a [list of resources](#) on economic impact studies. Dominga noted that the 2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) will consider economic impacts of outdoor recreation. Leslie Betlach said that local agencies build operation and maintenance costs into each project.

Recreation and Conservation Office Director, Kaleen Cottingham, explained that the Recreation and Conservation Office is collecting economic data about projects. The data will go into the Office of Financial Management model for calculating economic impacts. State agencies are asked to use the Office of Financial Management model in order to use a consistent methodology that will produce defensible results.

In addition to the numeric impacts, it's important to explain the qualitative value to the community. Legislators and others connect with stories that show how an acquisition has affected its surrounding community. The Recreation and Conservation Office is beginning to collect qualitative assessments from grant recipients.

Some members commented that state agencies should coordinate on a strategy for addressing the concerns related to operation and maintenance costs as well as showing the economic value of acquisitions. So far the agencies have taken a defensive stance and should be more strategic and coordinated in providing messaging about these issues. One member noted that the message should also show the non-economic benefits of acquisitions (such as benefits to species).

The Next Five Years

As the lands group was recently extended to 2017, the group discussed the work it should focus on over the next five years.

The group discussed the growing demand for a statewide strategy for state habitat and recreation land acquisitions. Legislative staff raised the issue at the 2011 State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum. Members discussed the potential for coordinating priorities on a regional basis, and for a coordinated approach to making priorities more visible, such as with map layers. Some plans, such as statewide trails plans, already include statewide priorities.

The group discussed making farmland preservation a more meaningful component of the lands group. Rather than the Conservation Commission reporting on one farmland preservation project, perhaps the Recreation and Conservation Office can bring the whole suite of farmland preservation projects to the coordinating forum. Perhaps land trusts can come to the forum to discuss the farmland preservation planning grants. A representative from Washington Friends of Farms and Forests should be formally invited to become a member of the lands group.

Several members said that land trusts should be more of a part of the lands group process. The Washington Association of Land Trusts should be formally invited to become a member of the lands group.

Some members felt the recreation component of the lands group can be enhanced over the next five years. The group should conduct more outreach to recreation groups.

The group reviewed the 2008 charter and agreed to update it by the end of the year. Perhaps the group's mission should be revised to include "coordinating and monitoring" of state land acquisition projects. The group could provide a simple, accessible way to track projects through the funding cycle (such as a web-based tracking system). Agencies could do more to characterize and communicate the needs for the projects and perhaps to work towards quantifying the project value. The Legislature needs to see

what is driving the state to acquire lands – what are the needs and priorities for habitat and recreation land purchases?

The 2nd Biennial State Land Acquisition Forecast Report

The group planned for publishing the 2nd biennial forecast report in June. The report will give information about state land acquisition projects planned for potential 2013-15 funding. The group discussed adding data for each project that explains what the anticipated operation and maintenance costs will be. Several agencies thought they will not have this data by June. Perhaps the report can include a narrative that addresses the issue of operation and maintenance costs. Dominga will coordinate with the agencies to get project data for the Biennial Forecast Report.

Next Steps

- 2nd Biennial State Land Acquisition Forecast Report – June 2012
- Quarterly meeting: July 25 – 9:00-noon, Natural Resources Building Room 172
- Quarterly meeting: October 31 – 9:00-noon, Natural Resources Building Room 172