

Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum

Agenda

Room 172, Natural Resources Building
Capitol Campus, Olympia
February 3: 9:00am - 4:30pm
February 4: 9:00am - 12:00pm

Forum Objectives

February 3rd provides an opportunity for state agencies to coordinate and share information about which habitat and recreation lands they plan to seek grant funding to acquire in the 2011-2013 biennium. Stakeholders will be invited to ask questions and discuss the acquisition plans with agency representatives.

On February 4th, the Department of Natural Resources will seek input from stakeholders about how to improve the Trust Land Transfer process.

Wednesday, February 3rd

9:00 – Welcome, Introductions, Forum Overview

Dominga Soliz, Lands Group Coordinator

9:30 – Department of Fish and Wildlife presentation and discussion

Jennifer Quan, Lands Division Manager; Elizabeth Rodrick, Land Conservation Manager; Dan Budd, Real Estate Manager

11:00 – Department of Natural Resources

Heather Kapust, Special Lands Acquisition Project Manager

12:30 – Lunch

1:00 – State Parks and Recreation Commission

Bill Koss, Planning and Research

2:30 – State Department of Transportation

Ken Risenhoover, Ecological Mitigation Program Manager

3:00 – Break

3:15 - State Conservation Commission

Josh Giuntoli, Office of Farmland Preservation

3:30 – Break out session – stakeholder opportunity to meet with agency staff

4:30 – Adjourn

HABITAT AND RECREATION LANDS
COORDINATING GROUP
FEBRUARY 3-4, 2010

Thursday, February 4th

Department of Natural Resources – DNR invites discussion about the Trust Land Transfer process.

Julie Sandberg, Assistant Division Manager, Asset and Property Management Division

ANNUAL STATE LAND ACQUISITION COORDINATING FORUM

Welcome and Introduction

Dominga Soliz introduced herself as the Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group (lands group) coordinator. Attendees also introduced themselves.

Dominga provided an **overview of the lands group**, explaining that the group was formed to improve communication between natural resources agencies about land acquisitions and disposals, and to make that information transparent and accessible to the public. The Lands Group includes 18 members from state agencies, non-profit organizations, local governments, and private interests. When the lands group was formed, several counties raised the concern that a disproportionate amount of land in their counties was publicly owned. Citizens and local government officials wanted to know what land the state was planning to acquire because of concerns that their local tax revenues would decline when private lands became publicly owned.

Dominga discussed the **goals of the forum**, which are to give state agencies that acquire habitat and recreation lands a platform to share information with each other and stakeholders, and to identify opportunities for coordination about upcoming habitat and recreation land acquisitions and disposals.

The lands group hosts **two different types of annual state land acquisition coordinating forums** each biennium. It held the first forum in July 2009, after the legislature adjourned and the Governor signed the budget. The purpose of the odd-year forum is to coordinate acquisition budget implementation. The even -year forum is held early in the year to help facilitate coordination of state agency acquisition grant requests which are prepared for application in the spring. This forum helps coordinate grant requests for the 2011-2013 biennium. Other goals are to share information about planned acquisitions with stakeholders, to invite discussion about agency acquisition plans and priorities, and to help agency representatives establish contacts with other agencies and with stakeholders. The forum is not intended to be a substitute for state agency processes for vetting acquisition projects with the public.

Dominga also emphasized that project **information shared at the forum is based only on best estimates** at this time. Ultimately, the projects might not actually be acquired and the information about them is very likely to change before they are complete. There are many variables at this early stage in the acquisition process.

Dominga discussed the **next steps for the lands group**. After this forum, the lands group will update the information presented today and incorporate it into a Biennial Acquisition Forecast report. The report will be published with companion maps in June 2010 on the lands group website (hosted by RCO's website). The forecast is aimed at making information about potential acquisitions transparent and accessible. The lands group will

also follow up after the forum to facilitate networking between agency representatives and stakeholders who express an interest in specific projects or issues.

Dominga presented a statewide map of potential acquisitions for the 2011-2013 biennium. The map was developed by Shelly Snyder and her team at the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). A similar map will be published with the biennial acquisition forecast report in June 2010.

Panelist presentations are available at the Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group website at <http://www.rco.wa.gov/boards/hrlcg.shtml>.

STATE AGENCY POTENTIAL ACQUISITION PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Jennifer Quan – *Lands Division Manager*

Elizabeth Rodrick – *Land Conservation Manager*

Jennifer Quan discussed DFW's land acquisition priorities and the Lands 20/20 strategy which aims to maintain a citizen supported portfolio of lands to sustain Washington's diverse fish and wildlife and their habitats into the next century. The objectives of the strategy are to provide benefits to the public, benefits to fish and wildlife, and operational excellence. Jennifer discussed DFW's acquisition steps, including identifying habitat or recreation needs, regional management team review, regional director approval, agency land acquisition evaluation team review, director approval, and commission approval. The public has opportunity to inform the process at the county level and before the fish and wildlife commission approval. Jennifer also reviewed the major funding sources for DFW's land acquisitions.

Attendees asked questions about how DFW re-assesses acquisition priorities over time and about the Lands 20/20 process. Elizabeth Rodrick presented potential DFW acquisition projects across the state for the 2011-2013 biennium. DFW and DNR discussed coordinating about the Micah Peak project.

Department of Natural Resources

Pene Speaks, *Assistant Division Manager, Natural Heritage Conservation and Recreation*

Heather Kapust, *Special Lands Acquisition Project Manager*

Pene gave an overview of Natural Area Preserves (NAP) and Natural Resources Conservation Areas (NRCA). NAPs include opportunities for appropriate low-impact public use, scientific research and education access. They are important for establishing baseline/reference areas and for providing habitat for vanishing species. NAPs are selected with criteria established in the State of Washington Natural Heritage Plan.

NRCAs are designed to protect native plant and animal species or ecological communities, geological, archaeological, and scenic values. NRCAs are in areas that have retained or re-

established their natural character, and they offer opportunities for environmental education and low-impact use, such as hiking or viewing of wildlife and scenery. NAPs and NRCAs are designated through a process that involves DNR staff, the Natural Heritage Advisory Council, public meetings and hearings, and the Commissioner of Public Lands.

Heather presented project information and maps. Several attendees asked questions related to recreational access on project lands. Other questions asked for clarification about relocation procedures and land management policies. DNR will coordinate with State Parks about the Klickitat Canyon NRCA. DNR will coordinate with DFW about the Dabob Bay, Stavis NRCA/Kitsap Forest NAP, and Dyer Haystacks projects.

State Parks and Recreation Commission

Bill Koss, *Planning and Research*

Bill gave an overview of how State Parks identifies properties for acquisition. One tool is the agency comprehensive park planning approach which identifies a long term boundary for each park to identify acquisition candidates. He explained in this biennium there are no new parks planned and that the proposed acquisitions are built around existing land features and plans. Land is acquired via fee simple only, with funding provided by RCO-administered grant programs. Bill presented project information and maps.

Parks may coordinate with the State Conservation Commission (SCC) about Deception Pass since SCC expressed an interest in allowing local farmers to sell goods at the Deception Pass market. Parks may coordinate with Whidbey Camano Land Trust regarding the Fort Casey project. Parks proposes one DNR property as a candidate for Trust Land Transfer; a property within the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge.

Department of Transportation

Ken Risenhoover, *Ecological Mitigation Program Manager, Environmental Service Office*

Ken presented regional maps showing WSDOT's mitigation sites and mitigation needs. He explained that WSDOT's acquisition processes are very different other agency processes. WSDOT acquires land to build infrastructure and manages over 400 acquisitions per year, mostly involving right-of-way purchases. The agency works to identify mitigation sites for unavoidable impacts to wetlands. WSDOT hopes the lands group forum can help locate mitigation opportunities and collaborators for restoration efforts and can help promote advance mitigation projects that achieve complementary resource management goals of other agencies and organizations.

For more information, visit <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/>.

State Conservation Commission

Josh Giuntoli, *Office of Farmland Preservation*

In 2009, the legislature amended the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) within the larger Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) to include the eligibility of the State Conservation Commission (SCC) to apply for funds through the program.

According to the new statutory language, a match is not required for proposals from the SCC. Staff anticipate a large response from interested parties in SCC sponsorship of proposals because a match is required if the proposal is submitted through other sponsors. To do this, the SCC will establish a process for receiving applications, and a process for the proposals received. This process is anticipated to occur in mid February.

Projects are expected to come from all parts of the state. Find more about the State Conservation Commission and OFP at <http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/>.

Break Out Session

Following agency presentations, forum attendees had an opportunity to meet with agency staff to ask questions and discuss the potential projects that were presented.

TRUST LAND TRANSFER PROCESS DISCUSSION

Department of Natural Resources

Julie Sandberg, Assistant Division Manager, Asset and Property Management Division

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has administered the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) Program for over twenty years. The direction and funding for the TLT Program has always been appropriated through the capital budget bill rather than statutory language. Common School Construction Account (CSCA) bond monies are diverted through the TLT Program to allow for the transfer of certain DNR managed trust properties. The timber value is deposited to the CSCA and the land value is used by DNR to acquire replacement trust property. The land and timber is then transferred to a public program recipient to be managed for state park, fish and wildlife habitat, natural area preserve or natural area conservation area, open space or recreation.

Each biennium DNR prepares a list of trust properties that are difficult to manage or are underperforming as trust revenue producing assets. With limited resources, the agency works with interested recipient agencies to prioritize the list of properties for submission to the Legislature. The budget bill requires that eighty percent of the total value of transferred property be timber value deposited into the CSCA. The program began with all properties transferred in fee ownership. Over the past few years the Legislature has designated more properties be transferred as long term leases. For the 09-11 biennium an appropriation of \$100,133,000 was made for the TLT Program. This included 11 properties for fee transfer and 23 properties set for 50-year leases.

Julie engaged attendees in a discussion focused on the legislative shift toward long term leases rather than fee ownership. She also invited suggestions about how to better involve

the public in developing the list to submit to the Legislature. More information about the Trust Land Transfer process can be found at http://www.dnr.wa.gov/BusinessPermits/Topics/OtherLandTransactions/Pages/amp_tlt.aspx.