

## **Quarterly Meeting**

### ***Agenda***

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

- 9:00 Welcome, introductions, agenda overview**
- 9:10 Review 2012 schedule**
- All meetings in Natural Resources Building, Room 172
    - Quarterly meeting: January 25 – 9:00-noon
    - 4<sup>th</sup> Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum: March 13 – 9:00-4:00
    - Quarterly meeting: April 25 – 9:00-noon
    - Quarterly meeting: July 25 – 9:00-noon
    - Quarterly meeting: October 31 – 9:00-noon
- 9:15 Roundtable updates**
- 9:30 Legislative update – Steve McLellan, RCO Legislative Liaison**
- 10:00 Discuss the two lands group reports published in December**
- State Land Acquisition Performance Monitoring Report
  - The Future of the Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group
- 10:30 Break**
- 10:45 Plan for 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum**
- 12:00 Adjourn**

### **Lands Group Next Steps**

4<sup>th</sup> Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum – March 13, 2012  
2<sup>nd</sup> Biennial State Land Acquisition Forecast Report – June 2012

## **Quarterly Meeting Summary**

### ***Attendance***

---

Sean Graham, Senator Linda Evans Parlette's Office  
Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy  
Heather Kapust, Department of Natural Resources  
Dan Budd, Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Steve Hahn, State Parks and Recreation Commission  
Steve McLellan, Recreation and Conservation Office  
Leslie Betlach, City of Renton, Washington Recreation and Parks Association  
Mike Deller, Trust for Public Land  
Eric Beach, Washington Forest Protection Association  
Lora Leschner, Pacific Coast Joint Venture  
Paul Wagner, Department of Transportation  
Greg Tudor, Recreation and Conservation Office  
Dominga Soliz, Recreation and Conservation Office

### ***Using GIS as a visibility and coordination tool***

---

Greg Tudor, RCO's Information Technology manager, asked the group to identify the key messages relating to state land acquisitions that could be conveyed with GIS technology. GIS could help show how projects are in proximity and connected to one another and could be used in project planning and coordination. At last year's annual forum, legislative staff said it would be useful to have a mapping tool that would show what past and current funding has gone to areas in the state, and a tool to show whether state lands are being purchased from private, local, state, federal, or tribal owners.

The group discussed landowner privacy. Leslie Betlach explained how local jurisdictions use GIS for acquisitions to show broad areas of interest to the public, and a more detailed map for elected officials. This method protects landowner privacy. Greg may attend another lands group meeting in the future to continue the discussion.

### ***Legislative update***

---

Steve McLellan, RCO's Legislative Liaison and Policy Director, gave an overview of SB6385 which proposes to extend the lands group to 2017. The language is drafted

narrowly to simply extend the group and leave its statutory tasks in place. The new language also prioritizes the annual forum, biennial forecast, and monitoring report if resources are scarce. If funding becomes available in 2017, the full suite of statutory tasks could be addressed at that point. The bill also changes the previous requirement that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) submit final recommendations to the Legislature; the new language allows the lands group to submit the recommendations directly. A hearing on the bill is expected on Monday, January 30<sup>th</sup>.

A new section of the bill states that participation in the lands group is an inherent part of the work of land management agencies. One interpretation is that transparency is a duty of land management agencies and the lands group is a vehicle for transparency. Steve said funding is unlikely for the group.

Fiscal notes haven't been requested yet. It isn't clear what assumptions to include in a fiscal note, but one strategy is to show what costs are being absorbed by each agency by participating in the lands group. Sean Graham said it would be helpful to use a scaled approach that shows how much it would cost to do the core tasks (annual forum, biennial forecast, monitoring report) and how much it would cost to add other tasks (such as GIS coordination, develop a method for centralizing data, etc.).

Dominga said Bill Clarke from Trust for Public Land (TPL) mentioned the possibility of a joint letter to Legislators from TPL, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition (WWRC) in support of the lands group.

### *Roundtable updates*

---

Dan Budd reported that the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) put 75% of the 2011-13 money on the ground already.

Steve Hahn reported that next week the State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) will lose its only FTE dedicated to GIS.

Mike Deller reported that TPL has several projects closing and that TPL is becoming more dependent on philanthropic support. For example, when projects fall below the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) funding line, TPL has to turn to other sources. There is an increasing interest by the public to conserve lands and a growing realization that it isn't enough to rely on public funding.

Paul Wagner reported that the Department of Transportation (WSDOT) recently completed a big construction cycle. Paul's program is currently focused on how to do ongoing monitoring and performance audits. Paul's team is working with the [Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group](#) (which includes state agencies and others) to assess connectivity in the state. The connectivity assessments from the Working Group could be useful in acquisition planning.

Lora Leschner reminded the group of the [Conservation Registry](#), which is a tool for landscape level planning and looks at state as well as private conservation acquisitions nationwide. On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Pacific Coast Joint Venture will discuss the Conservation Registry during a meeting at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. This discussion will cover some new features and opportunities. For example, the California Highway Department is considering using the Registry to select mitigation areas and perhaps partner with the land trusts. Find out more information at the [Pacific Coast Joint Venture](#) Web site.

#### ***[Lands Group reports published in December 2011](#)***

---

The group briefly reviewed and discussed the two reports published in December 2011. [The State Land Acquisition Performance Monitoring Report](#) was aimed at monitoring the success of state habitat and recreation land acquisitions by asking whether state agencies achieved their acquisition objectives. The report was on acquisition projects funded in 2007 by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), DFW, and State Parks. The report does not offer policy recommendations, but the data can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses in state acquisition processes and inform decisions made by the Legislature, state agencies, local governments, and others. Dominga said that she received some comments about the report and they were positive.

The report called [The Future of the Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group](#) included recommendations to the Legislature on whether the lands group should be continued past its sunset date of July 31, 2012. The report provides three options for the future of the group without stating a preference. Dominga explained that the current statute requires the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) to submit the recommendations the Legislature, but the new bill would allow the lands group to submit recommendations directly next time. She said the RCFB reviewed the recommendations in November and was very supportive of the lands group's work to improve visibility and coordination of state land acquisitions. Based on the RCFB response, language was added to the report to say that the RCFB is hopeful the Legislature will choose to continue the core functions of the group.

### ***Puget Sound Action Agenda***

---

The group reviewed the section in the draft Puget Sound Action Agenda that describes the lands group as an ongoing program. Dominga briefly described the process to update the Action Agenda. The [draft Action Agenda](#) is available for public comment until February 3<sup>rd</sup>. The piece on the lands group is in the Upland and Terrestrial section.

The group noted the language only says what the lands group does and does not task the group with doing anything more. Some members wanted to know what will be expected in terms of performance reporting. Dominga said that it is unclear at this point, but performance managers are hopeful that the reporting will be minimal for ongoing actions. The group agreed that no formal comments are necessary.

Some members had questions about a near-term action in the same section that says RCO will revise policies in some grant programs to align with Action Agenda priorities. Dominga explained the intent of the near-term action which is to update existing RCO policies to be more clear.

### ***4<sup>th</sup> Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum***

---

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual coordinating forum is scheduled for March 13<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-4:00 in room 172 of the Natural Resources Building. The date was moved from February to mid-March to allow Legislative staff to attend. The forum is focused on coordinating grant requests; state agencies will present their acquisition "wish lists" for potential funding in 2013.

The group discussed what needs to be done to prepare for the forum. The agencies said they will be able to participate. The group decided to add policy discussions to the presentations to give each agency an opportunity to show 1) how they include the public in acquisition planning 2) how they plan for acquisitions within the agency (by using, for example, Lands 20/20, Natural Heritage Plan, or Centennial Plan) 3) how they plan for land management as part of acquisition planning and 4) how the acquisitions are done by already-established processes.

The project presentations might be improved by focusing more on the benefits of the projects in terms of ecological significance, etc. What will the public receive in exchange for this investment?

They will also be improved by giving the projects more context. The group discussed ideas such as giving a quick history of conservation or recreation in that area and how the project adds to the regional conservation effort. To respond to the discussion at the

last annual forum, the projects should show how they fit within a broader statewide conservation plan.

The group discussed the invitation list and encouraged a more crisp and inviting email blast.

Paul Wagner said it will be difficult for WSDOT to provide a detailed presentation, but he might be able to give a short presentation on WSDOT's wetland mitigation program and how it works. The link to the lands group is WSDOT's need to find mitigation sites and state, local, and private interest in receiving mitigation sites on their lands.

Steve Hahn said he will include information on planned disposals by State Parks.

### Next Steps

---

The group reviewed the following upcoming dates:

- Quarterly meeting: January 25 – 9:00-noon
- 4<sup>th</sup> Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum: March 13 – 9:00-4:00
- Quarterly meeting: April 25 – 9:00-noon
- Quarterly meeting: July 25 – 9:00-noon
- Quarterly meeting: October 31 – 9:00-noon

All meetings will be held in Room 172 of the Natural Resources Building.

Dominga will ask the agencies for the "wish lists" in February. She will work with Shelly Snyder from DFW to develop a statewide map for the forum.

Dominga will work with the RCO communications manager to see if the format for the presentations can be improved to highlight the benefits (return on public investment) of the projects. She will also consult on draft language for the invitation and will send the draft to the lands group.

Dominga will work with agencies to develop the agenda and invitation list. She will contact the Trust Land Transfer program, the State Conservation Commission, and the Department of Ecology to see if they would like to participate. In addition, she will talk with TNC and TPL to see if they would like to do a short presentation on why partnerships between state agencies and NGOs are important.