

Quarterly Meeting

Agenda

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

- 9:00 Welcome, introductions, agenda overview**
Welcome new member Leda Chahim, WALT
- 9:10 Schedule 2013 Quarterly Meetings/Annual Forum**
Tentative Dates:
- January 30, 2013 – Quarterly meeting
 - April 24, 2013 - Quarterly meeting
 - July 24, 2013 - Quarterly meeting
 - August 13, 2013 – Annual Coordinating Forum
 - October 30, 2013 - Quarterly meeting
- 9:15 Roundtable updates**
- 9:30 Operation and Maintenance Presentation and Discussion**
Jennifer Quan – Lands Division Manager, WDFW
- 10:15 Review budget request concept paper**
- 10:30 Break**
- 10:40 Preview the 2nd State Land Acquisition Forecast Report**
Question – When is the drop-dead date for publishing?
- 11:00 Update the Charter** - Provide final comments on updating the 2008 charter
- Update the Action Plan** – Review the 2010 Action Plan and identify key actions for the lands group to complete in 2013
Ideas include: enhancing the visibility of public access on state lands, web-based tracking system to track projects through the funding cycle, include land trusts in the annual forum
- 12:00 Adjourn**

Lands Group Next Steps

August 2012	Publish 2 nd Biennial State Land Acquisition Forecast Report
October 31, 2012	Quarterly Meeting (9:00-noon, Rm. 172, Natural Resources Building)
December, 2012	Submit annual progress report to OFM

**HABITAT AND RECREATION LANDS
COORDINATING GROUP
JULY 25, 2012**

Quarterly Meeting Summary

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

Attendance

Majken Ryherd, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition
Commissioner Andrew Lampe, Okanogan County
Pene Speaks, Department of Natural Resources
Jennifer Quan, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Paul Dahmer, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Steve Hahn, State Parks and Recreation Commission
Josh Giuntoli, State Conservation Commission
Leslie Betlach, City of Renton, Washington Recreation and Parks Association
Lora Leschner, Pacific Coast Joint Venture
Bill Clarke, Trust for Public Land
Mike Deller, Trust for Public Land
Leda Chahim, Washington Association of Land Trusts
Eric Beach, Washington Forest Protection Association
Chris Hempleman, Department of Ecology
Marguerite Austin, Recreation and Conservation Office
Dominga Soliz, Recreation and Conservation Office

Introductions and Roundtable Updates

The group welcomed new member, Leda Chahim, representing the Washington Association of Land Trusts. Leda is the Director of Government Affairs for Forterra. Leda discussed the special advocacy and partnership role of land trusts in public land acquisitions and that the Washington Association of Land Trusts is interested in strengthening land trusts across Washington.

2013 Schedule

Dominga presented the following tentative dates for 2013 lands group meetings:

- January 30, 2013 – Quarterly Meeting
- April 24, 2013 - Quarterly Meeting
- July 24, 2013 - Quarterly Meeting
- August 13, 2013 – Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum
- October 30, 2013 – Quarterly Meeting

Roundtable Updates

Some lands group members provided brief updates. Jennifer Quan reported that the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is busy with acquisitions, including National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Act and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) grants. The Department is also conducting outreach to members of the Legislature and to Okanogan County. It has been receiving many responses to the new lands Web page.

Commissioner Lampe reported it is a busy election year in Okanogan County. The county prefers conservation easements, that allow lands to be profitable, over fee simple acquisitions and values keeping water on the land. He said the lands group has done a good job with transparency and that, as a matter of trust, it is important for the public to know the specifics of public land acquisitions.

Steve Hahn reported that the State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) is working to become self-sufficient, focusing on managing the discover pass and how to draw visitors to special events. Compliance for the discover pass is improving (85% compliance on all state recreation lands).

Eric Beach reported that the timber industry is more consolidated and focused on identifying lands that are not ideal for timber purposes, such as recreation and conservation lands, to bring in non-timber revenue streams. For example, there is a current focus on increasing recreational access on timber company lands.

Marguerite Austin reported that Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant applications and the amounts requested for grants are down this year. This is probably due to the ability of local agencies to provide matching resources and because several agencies have fewer staff available to work on grants. She has also noticed a change in the number of RCO grants that match other RCO grants. RCO will be conducting a survey of grant applicants in September/October 2012 to learn more about the 2012 grants cycle; Marguerite will share the results of the survey with the lands group.

Mike Deller reported that the conversation about public land acquisitions is different now than it was 2 years ago. There is more emphasis on private philanthropy to support community priorities. For example, in the Wenatchee foothills the community was willing to raise money for both acquisition and stewardship. Communities are more interested in saving special places. At the Trust for Public Land, the philanthropy team is growing while project staff is not growing. In addition, with traditional public funding shrinking, there is more demand for public financing, such more willingness among cities and counties to tax themselves to support lands.

Majken Ryherd reported that there is about \$130 million in requests for WWRP funding in 2013-15. The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition is beginning to talk with Legislators about the lists of projects that are requesting funding through the program. In particular, demand for the Farmland Preservation Program, a category of WWRP, is up, which helps to show the need for farmland preservation in the state. The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition is gearing up for the funding request process; the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will meet on September 4, 2012 to decide on the amount it will request for the program.

Chris Hempleman reported that she is managing 16 active grants, mostly National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Act grants including several acquisitions and representing several partnerships with land trusts. The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program does not have an application round this year and is not anticipating funding in the near-term.

Josh Giuntoli reported that the State Conservation Commission is submitting a grant request for WWRP Farmland Preservation Program funds out of about 24 total applications. The State Conservation Commission is trying to partner more in Yakima where farmland preservation is highest long- and short-term priority. The Commission is working with stakeholders on identifying changes to the home site exemption of the Open Space Taxation Act as it relates to small farmers.

Lora Leschner reported that Pacific Coast Joint Venture has a new Coordinator.

Some members made general comments. Commissioner Lampe said he wants the Department of Fish and Wildlife to justify their land acquisitions. Jennifer Quan asked what is missing in their current process that could help? Members discussed the public perception that state lands are acquired through concealed processes outside of the public eye. The lands group's work to improve visibility helps with this perception.

Steve Hahn said State Parks has been getting calls asking why they are purchasing more lands when they can't afford to maintain the lands they already own. One view is that this is an issue for the Legislature, since that is the body that provides the funding for acquisitions. Another view is that state land acquisitions are a partnership between the state and the Legislature. Jennifer Quan noted that the Department of Fish and Wildlife is being asked "how much land is enough"? She wants better tools for providing messaging about what drives the need for open space. The Department is directed by the Legislature to go after the money. Overall, members expressed a growing need to understand the rationale of the criticism of state land purchases.

Operation and Maintenance of State Habitat and Recreation Lands

Jennifer Quan gave a PowerPoint presentation on the status of operation and maintenance funding for Department of Fish and Wildlife lands. The presentation can be viewed at:

http://wdfw.wa.gov/commission/meetings/2012/06/jun0212_06_presentation.pdf.

The presentation showed that in April 2012, the Department of Fish and Wildlife paid about \$565,000 in Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) payments in 14 counties and about \$350,000 in Assessments to 28 counties. The presentation showed the 10-year DFW PILT payment history and examined the question of “How much land is enough?” Commissioner Lampe said it would be good to have guaranteed PILT payments that are equitable to what counties would have received if the land purchased for public purposes remained privately-owned. He noted that legislation requires counties to distribute PILT payments to junior taxing districts.

Jennifer also showed that the Department’s biennial lands division operating budget is about \$24 Million and comes from several sources. She showed the trends of major fund sources for operation and maintenance and available operation and maintenance dollars per acre. These key points summarize the presentation:

- WDFW invests \$10M+/yr on its lands
- The level of service that WDFW provides with this funding is exceptional
- Operation and Capital funding trends are going up (Discover Pass)
- Current acquisition rates are not expected to negatively impacts base funding for O&M through at least 2015

Potential Budget Request

The group reviewed the potential budget request to create a centralized, GIS-based inventory of state habitat and recreation lands and to publish the map and data about the lands in a Web-accessible format.

Leslie Betlach noted she likes the request. In her experience, a computerized database that helps involve the public can be extremely successful. She recommended linking this database to the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) inventory of the state’s recreation supply. Dominga responded that the 2013 SCORP inventory is not expected to be GIS-based, but it could be when the plan is updated in 2018. GIS developers are aware of both potential efforts (SCORP and lands group).

Jennifer Quan sees the inventory as an opportunity to partner with other things that are going on, particularly TRACS – a federal GIS-based system of mapping lands.

Pene Speaks said the inventory could complement the US Geological Survey inventory of protected lands. She noted that the inventory could be helpful in leveraging federal

and private projects, but it will be primarily helpful in providing information about state habitat and recreation lands to Legislators.

Paul Dahmer expressed some concern about the level of accuracy that would be expected for a GIS-based inventory. State agencies have a lot of GIS-based data of their lands, but some of it isn't accurate down to the parcel level.

Some members expressed that the estimated budget of \$92,000 was low, noting that standardizing data can take a lot of time and that the database will need to be maintained.

Mike Deller recommended updating the data more frequently than biennially; Legislators will be interested in real-time data.

Jennifer Quan asked whether a GIS-based format is necessary; will a Web-based application be sufficient? Steve Hahn responded that if we use a GIS-based format then the map data can be updated in real-time (as soon as agencies update in their systems).

Leda Chahim suggested that in addition to an inventory of state lands, layers that show priorities for acquisition would be helpful.

Josh Giuntoli and Eric Beach recommended coordinating with the University of Washington's Parcel Working Group (part of the Rural Technology Initiative). The group can be found at www.ruraltech.org.

State Land Acquisition Forecast Report

The group briefly discussed the second State Land Acquisition Forecast Report. The report provides maps and information about state habitat and recreation land acquisitions proposed for funding in 2013-15. The primary purpose of the report is to provide visibility of proposed for funding well in advance of the funding approval process. The report was due for publishing in June 2012, but the data necessary to publish the report has not been submitted by all of the agencies. Dominga urged the agencies to submit all the data by mid-August at the latest.

Update to the Charter and Action Plan

The group ran out of time to discuss updates to the charter and action plan. Dominga has received some comments and will submit the tracked changes to lands group members in advance of the October quarterly meeting.

Next Steps

- Publish 2nd Biennial State Land Acquisition Forecast Report – September 2012
- Quarterly meeting: October 31 – 9:00-noon, Natural Resources Building Room 172
- Submit annual progress report to the Office of Financial Management – December 2012