

Quarterly Meeting

Agenda

Room 172, Natural Resources Building
Capitol Campus, Olympia
July 24, 2013, 9:00am – 12:00pm

9:00 Introductions and Agenda Review

9:10 Legislative Update

- a. Land inventory (RCO proviso)
- b. Land review (JLARC proviso)
- c. Parkland acquisition report (Parks & Rec. Commission proviso)
- d. Ag land holdings inventory (F&W proviso)
- e. SB 5054 and 5057
- f. WWRP update
- g. Other?

10:00 5th Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum

- a. Format, information included in the presentations.
- b. Workshops – When, what format, participants, objectives, etc.?

10:30 Break

10:40 2nd State Land Acquisition Performance Monitoring Report

- a. Information to include
- b. Information collection
- c. Information format (Web-based or PPT?)

11:10 Lands Group

- a. Better communication with the Legislature
- b. Other

11:45 Fact Sheet – Distribute

11:50 Next Steps

- a. September 9 – Annual Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum
- b. September or October – Workshops
- c. October 30 – Quarterly Meeting

12:00 Adjourn

Quarterly Meeting Summary

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

Attendance

Senator Linda Parlette
Sheilah Kennedy, Okanogan County Commissioner
Pene Speaks, Department of Natural Resources
Clay Sprague Department of Fish and Wildlife
Josh Giuntoli, State Conservation Commission
Paul Wagner, Department of Transportation
Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy
Bill Clarke, Trust for Public Lands
Leda Chahim, Washington Association of Land Trusts
Eric Beach, Green Diamond Resources
Sarah Gage, Recreation and Conservation Office
Nona Snell, Recreation and Conservation Office

Legislative Update

The budget provisos and bills, some of which did not pass, related to land acquisitions introduced and enacted during the 2013-15 legislative session were summarized. The following provisos and bills were summarized:

- Public Lands Inventory – Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)
- Review of Public Lands – Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC)
- Parkland Acquisition Account – State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks)
- Mitigation Projects and Dedicated Funding – Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)
- Washington Wildlife Recreation Program (WWRP)/Similkameen – RCO
- Trust Land Transfer Proviso – DNR
- Other Budget Items Related to Acquisition
- SB 5054 and SB 5057

Public Lands Inventory

The 1999 lands inventory, prepared by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) did not include a comprehensive inventory of local government lands, and the 2005 report only included state land holdings (not local, federal, and tribes). The data in these two existing inventories are not searchable.

A discussion took place about how the lands group should be involved in the 2013 RCO lands inventory directed by the Legislature. The inventory will inform the JLARC study (see JLARC Review of Public Lands below); sequencing the two studies will be a challenge.

RCO will work with the University of Washington, the Department of Health and other agencies on finding out what data is available and what data can be built upon. Commissioner Kennedy pointed out that the main goal of the inventory to know whether land purchases are a burden on local governments. In Okanogan County there is a question about how many acres have been taken out of production and have we met those goals of land acquisitions. There's a potential for the inventory to get too big and to lose sight of the goal. Others mentioned the goal for the inventory is to inform state decisions by knowing how much land is publically owned, the location and purpose of the public land. The JLARC study is more focused on the operating budget impacts of public lands and the benefits and costs of recreation and habitat lands to state and local governments.

JLARC Review of Public Lands

The RCO is already coordinating with JLARC because they will need the inventory to complete their work. The information from the JLARC review will be very valuable for the lands group when developing the monitoring reports.

Mitigation Projects and Dedicated Funding

The proviso that requires an inventory of DFW agricultural land holdings was summarized. Senator Parlette explained that the purpose of the requirement is making agriculture leasing a public process and more transparent. Both Senator Parlette and Commissioner Kennedy stated that the information needs to demonstrate that DFW working lands are using revenue to meet local needs regarding water issues and maintenance of lands.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may already be keeping track of their agricultural lands. The requirement could be assigned to other natural resource agencies in the future. A discussion about inclusion of the information in future inventories and the DNR's open leasing process followed.

WWRP Grants re: Similkameen

The WWRP program received an appropriation of \$65 million. Three projects were removed from the LEAP list, and one project was included with conditions. This project is the Okanogan Similkameen 2012 project. The proviso withholds funding until RCO has reevaluated the level of local support for the project.

Trust Land Transfer

Pene Speaks summarized the Trust Land Transfer proviso. The requirement is for a state trust land inventory and evaluation of lands that potentially could be transferred through TLT over the next several decades. The timing is similar to the public land inventory.

SB 5054 and SB 5057

Two Senate bills were discussed and, even though they did not pass, the lands group considered whether to include the requirements in reports. SB 5054 would have required the DNR, DFW, and State Parks to submit a request to the Legislature and obtain approval prior to acquiring certain types of real property. SB 5057 would have required state agencies to ensure public access with limited access for a couple of specified reasons.

The bills address the needs that lands group should fulfill. The discussion led to how the lands group can better communicate with and provide available information to the Legislature, County Commissioners, and the public about public access and maintenance costs and practices of lands.

5th Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum

The Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum is scheduled for Monday, September 9th. Because this is not a good date for many people, including county commissioners, an attempt at changing the date to Wednesday, October 30th, the same date at the next quarterly meeting, will be made.

The forum serves as a coordinating function to address opportunities for efficiencies, to communicate priorities, and share information about parcels, etc. The RCO will display a map that signifies acquisitions funded, and agencies present information about the projects. The group was reminded that in odd-numbered years, the lands group holds a forum about what the Legislature has funded. This is a good meeting for county commissioners and others to attend. The following forum, in even-numbered years, is a discussion of planned purchases that have not been funded. It serves as a preview for locals regarding agency plans and how they fit into agency's visions. The agency plans should include information on how much land is needed to serve the agency's vision.

The question was asked, what is the procedure when agencies first identify a project? DFW has procedures for staff to follow (application, proposal, evaluation, management review, director review). Public outreach is built in to the process. DNR project areas and priorities are identified. The Natural Heritage Advisory Council reviews proposals and makes recommendations. The process includes outreach and public hearings, and the Commissioner of Public Lands gives final approval of each project.

Other acquisitions to include in the forum presentations were discussed, including Section 6, national wetland funding, and Trust Land Transfers. A caution was made that the group needs to be aware of scope creep because some of these DNR managed properties haven't been included because they are managed under DNR trust objectives (revenue generation for the trusts) and not purchased for habitat and recreation objectives. The lands group statute specifies land acquisitions related to habitat and recreation.

Senator Parlette questioned whether only habitat and recreation should be included in the statute. The group discussed being at the forefront but also the need to remember its purpose. Land acquisitions have been controversial because there hasn't been information and transparency. The land trust perspective is looking at lands contextually; how revenue generation from lands fit into habitat/recreation/agriculture uses. By providing more information further controversies may be avoided. An apparent consensus was reached that the Teanaway, Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB), and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration projects in the forum. Although the Teanaway project will be community forest trust, the project should be included in the forum in

interests of transparency. It may also be useful to include a section in the forum about DNR trust land management.

Other information to include in the forum: value, acquisition purpose, use in and present and future use, operating expenses, payment in lieu of taxes (PILT). Estimates of PILT are possible, but county assessors determine what state agencies pay, and the information may not be available. If the information is available, include agriculture uses or taking lands out of agriculture production (SRFB projects).

2nd State Land Acquisition Performance Monitoring Report

The past monitoring reports include state natural resource agency profiles, habitat and recreation land acquisition practices, funding for these lands, and specific cost and use information about lands purchased in the prior biennium. The report includes the plan for the property when the acquisition was proposed and what actually happened, including the reasons if an acquisition wasn't completed.

Suggestions for other information to include are revenue generation from the purchase and pre-acquisition revenue. The report should inform about continued population growth and its effect/pressure on biodiversity. The report could also include information on planned operating costs/PILT. The report should show the distribution of lands purchased throughout the state.

Improving Outreach

The newly created fact sheet will be useful to legislative members and their legislative assistants who aren't aware of the lands group. The group needs to educate legislators, their assistants, and staff. County commissioners, using the Association of Washington Counties, also need to be informed on purpose and information the group collects.

A legislative work session at the beginning of the 2014 session and new member orientation at the beginning of the biennium are good opportunities. The lands group should focus education on the natural resources committees and possibly the agricultural committees.

Suggestions for changing the fact sheet were made – adding a sampling of public land information; i.e., the percentage of land publically owned, the costs, and the benefits, and adding web links to additional information.

Senator Parlette reminded the group that it was set up because of tax shift especially in small counties. For this reason there's a need to know and communicate whether the coordination and transparency of land ownership between state agencies and counties has improved since group has been set up.

Observations about the availability of information were made. The Lands Inventory proviso is seen as an opportunity for transparency. The lands coordinating forum is another opportunity to demonstrate the mission of the natural resource agencies

Next Steps

October 30, 2013	5 th State Land Acquisition Annual Forum and Quarterly Meeting
Due December 31, 2013	2 nd State Land Acquisition Performance Monitoring Report
Due December 31, 2013	Annual Progress Report to Office of Financial Management