

Agenda
Habitat and Conservation Lands Coordinating Group

June 19, 2014, 9:00 – 12:00
John A. Cherberg Building Conference Rooms A, B & C

Thursday, June 19

9:00 a.m.	1. Introductions and Review of Agenda	<i>Nona Snell</i>
9:10 a.m.	2. Public Land Inventory Update	<i>Nona Snell</i>
9:20 a.m.	3. Economic Study of Recreation Lands (RCO Proviso)	<i>Nona Snell</i>
9:30 a.m.	4. SB 6052 Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anticipated costs and fund source• Purpose of intended use• Detailed and measurable goals for each acquisition• Plan to track meeting measurable goals• Plan for operations and maintenance	<i>All</i>
10:15 a.m.	5. 2014 State Land Acquisition Forecast Report <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Content<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Anticipated costs and fund sources○ Intended uses○ Measureable goals?○ Plans for tracking goals and operation and maintenance?• Format• Due dates	<i>All</i>
10:50 a.m.	Break	
11:00 a.m.	6. State Agency Disposal Laws and Policies - Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department of Fish and Wildlife• Department of Natural Resources• State Parks	<i>Clay Sprague</i> <i>Pene Speaks</i> <i>Steve Hahn</i>
12:00 p.m.	ADJOURN	

Next Quarterly Meeting:

September 11, 2014, John A. Cherberg Building Conf. Rooms A,B,C, 9:00 – 12:00

Habitat & Recreation Lands Coordinating Group

Date: June 19, 2014

Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: John A. Cherberg Building, Conference Rooms A, B, & C

Attendees: Nona Snell, Wendy Loosle, Clay Sprague, Pene Speaks, Steve Hahn – WS Parks, Lora Leschner (via phone), Heather Kapust, Linda Parlett (Senator), Josh Giuntoli, Karl Herzog, Cynthia Wilkerson, Sheilah Kennedy, Tom Bugert, Sarah Guyer, Eric Beach, Ryan McChord, Michelle Harris, Stephanie Hoffman, Rebecca Connolly, Jamie Stanton, Trinity Stucker

1. Introductions and Review of Agenda

Nona Snell welcomed the members of the Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group (group) and reviewed the agenda. The members and attendees introduced themselves.

2. Public Land Inventory Update

Staff from the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is busy compiling the final data for the Public Land Inventory (Inventory), as well as troubleshooting errors, website formatting, and ensuring that the user-interface is easy to use. The final report is due to the Legislature on July 1. Agencies that contributed data to the project are able to access a test site prior to public release in order to review their sections and provide feedback.

The group is encouraged to determine gaps in the Inventory and provide input on building it out further. Senator Parlette serves on the Governor's Blue Ribbon Parks and Recreation Task Force, tasked with sustainable funding for state parks, and she will share this tool with the taskforce to encourage coordinated efforts and non-duplicated resources.

A discussion followed regarding RCO's plan for sharing the final report and the Inventory web site. Initial plans include posting a link on RCO's website and sharing it with the committee and a distribution list of interested parties. Senator Parlette agreed to share the report and link with other legislators.

Steve Hahn expressed his appreciation of this work, stating that it is a culmination of the work and goals of the group. He asked that a demonstration be provided at the next meeting.

3. Economic Studies

Nona Snell reviewed the proviso that requires RCO to contract for an economic study of recreation lands and updated the group on progress. RCO contracted with Earth Economics, based out of Tacoma, to conduct the study. Counties and a nonprofit organization have contacted Earth Economics to focus on specific areas. Those counties and organizations may contract independently with Earth Economics, and may not be part of RCO's state contract.

Clay Sprague summarized the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Study that focused on Okanogan County and public land contributions and economic impacts. Okanogan County and WDFW agreed to carry out independent studies, share the results with each other, and continue discussions to strengthen communication and partnerships.

WDFW has completed their portion of the economic study covering two landscapes within Okanogan County. In the designated study areas, they evaluated the fiscal and economic impacts of agricultural use and land acquisition with a recreation focus. Study sections were independent in data collection and assessment, and no high level conclusions were found but do provide additional information to frame ongoing discussions with Okanogan County.

Questions were asked about the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) economic study that is currently underway. In this study, researchers are evaluating the net change and impact on other industry sectors, and a cost/benefit analysis of non-market values, i.e. ecosystem services. In part, this study looks at the impact to economy vitality from changes in public land ownership and use, specifically habitat and recreation lands. The authors of the study intend to describe different types of economic analysis and what kinds of questions each type may answer; this may help avoid confusion between the other three studies and provide a framework for context. JLARC's study is due to be published in draft form in January, with a full economic impact analysis published the following April.

4. and 5. Senate Bill 6052 Requirements and 2014 State Land Acquisition Forecast Report

The discussion about these two agenda items was combined.

Senate bill 6052 (2014), which did not pass, directs the lands group to collect the following information about acquisitions.

- Anticipated operations and maintenance costs and fund source
- Purpose and intended use of acquisition
- Detailed and measurable goals for each acquisition
- Plan to track meeting measurable goals

Discussion took place about including the SB 6052 requirements in the acquisition forecast report. Questions were raised about whether this should include farm land acquisition and disposal, but the decision was made that this information should be included in the monitoring report, starting in 2015, instead.

The group reviewed the draft framework of the forecast report, focusing on the section where details of each project are documented. The group discussed the details of page five of the template at some length, as it lists the project details and background, separated by sections:

- **Section: Goals.** To be valid long term, the language here needs to provide guidance and criteria for written goals so that they are transparent, measurable, and specific. This language could include a "target" associated with a numerical value that could be compared across agencies for accountability. For some goals, this will be relatively straightforward and others it will be difficult, i.e. listed/non species, as listed includes recovery plans.
- **Section: Anticipated Future Costs.** Projects and sites vary widely across state agencies so operating impacts may be significantly different. This section should include specifics regarding the impact of the project, and a description of assumptions and plans for future impact/costs.
- **Section: Planning Link.** This section should include space for descriptions, contributions, background information, and potential "limitations" of data in the report.

In four years, the group will draft a monitoring report that will assess the "measurable goals" as defined in the 2014 forecast report.

RCO will make the changes to the template that were discussed at today's meeting and send the updated draft to contributing agencies for feedback. It was determined that the report should be due by November 1.

6. State Agency Disposal Laws and Policies - Overview

The Lands Group statute requires this group to review disposal plans and policies to help ensure statewide coordination of habitat and recreation land disposals. To address this requirement, three agencies provided background on their disposal processes.

WDFW assesses existing surplus properties available for disposals, and they are still working through this list. When looking for new properties, not many are in surplus as WDFW tries to limit properties to those that they know will be used for dedicated purposes. Many properties are subject to requirements of funders – return funds, replace properties, etc., that limit what can be done in terms of disposal.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) maintains two classifications of conservation areas (this does not include DNR trust lands which have separate requirements for how they can be bought, sold and transferred). The two classification types are natural area preserves (NAP) and natural resources conservation areas (NRCA).

Natural area preserves are identified, acquired, and managed in accordance with RCW 79.70. This statute sets parameters for site identification and some purchase requirements. The language of RCW 79.70.040 is written in such a way that designates NAPs to be held in trust for perpetuity, and disposal of these properties is only allowed upon a finding of imperative and unavoidable public necessity.

Natural resources conservation areas (NRCAs) are a DNR-specific designation and are managed by DNR. The bulk of NRCAs were once DNR-managed trust lands that were transferred to this status. While the statute is clear on the purposes and objectives for designation, such as endangered species, habitat restoration, etc., it is silent on disposals. As the statute provides no guidance for these procedures, no program currently exists to dispose of NRCAs. Many DNR-managed natural areas were purchased with federal or other grant funds and come with certain stipulations regarding disposals therefore there have been no instances of this.

State Parks receives a disproportionate amount of land through donations, so the governing rules are often unique. About 60 percent of lands acquired were through donations that occurred decades ago. It often occurs that donated land contains physical barriers that prevent feasible use, which allows sites or whole parcels to go to surplus for disposal.

State Parks can choose to appropriate the donated lands in the park system or let them remain as is. State Parks can: 1) transfer lands; 2) auction lands at market value if no others are interested; 3) sell acres to resolve a trespass; 4) transfer to another government entity under mutually agreeable terms (RCW 39.33).

Through 1999 proceeds from the State Parks program went to the general fund. Because of this, prior to 1999, most if not all transactions were land exchanges. As of 2000, State Parks could buy and divest what they wanted; however, while the park system has grown financially, the acreage has shrunk. State Parks does have condemnation authority, but has not used it since 1985 and no longer sees the value of holding this authority.

Next Quarterly Meeting:

September 11, 2014

9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

John A. Cherberg Building, Conference Rooms A, B, & C

Agenda Items Proposed:

- Demonstration of the Public Land Inventory
- Presentation from the Department of Transportation regarding their property disposal program