

**DRAFT Agenda**  
**Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group**

March 20, 2015, 9:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.  
Natural Resources Building, Room 172

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**Friday, March 20**

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<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	<b>1. Welcome, Introductions and Review of Agenda</b>	<i>Wendy Brown</i>
<b>9:10 a.m.</b>	<b>2. Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bills of interest</li><li>• Additional information to share</li></ul>	<i>All</i>
<b>9:40 a.m.</b>	<b>3. Outdoor Recreation Economic Study</b>	<i>Wendy Brown</i>
<b>10:10 a.m.</b>	<b>4. JLARC Study and Recommendations</b>	<i>All</i>
<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Break</b>	
<b>10:45 a.m.</b>	<b>5. Planning for Monitoring Forum</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Template development</li><li>• Timing with Monitoring Report</li></ul>	<i>All</i>
<b>11:30 a.m.</b>	<b>ADJOURN</b>	

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**Next Quarterly Meeting and Monitoring Forum Meeting:**

July 9, 2015

9:00 am to 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Room 172, Natural Resources Building

1111 Washington Street SE

Olympia, WA 98501

**Other 2015 Meeting Dates:**

- October 7, 2015, Room 172, Natural Resources Building, Olympia
- December 2, 2015, Room 172, Natural Resources Building, Olympia

# Habitat & Recreation Lands Coordinating Group

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**Date:** March 20, 2015

**Time:** 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM

**Location:** Room 172, Natural Resourced Building, Olympia

## **Attendees:**

Kaleen Cottingham	Washington Recreation and Conservation Office
Wendy Brown	Washington Recreation and Conservation Office
Wendy Loosle	Washington Recreation and Conservation Office
Sheilah Kennedy	Okanogan County Commissioner
Josh Giuntoli	Washington State Conservation Commission
Tom Bugert	The Nature Conservancy
Heather Kapust	Washington Department of Ecology
Clay Sprague	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Eric Beach	Washington Forest Protection Association
Leda Chahim	Forterra
Cynthia Wilkerson	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Steve Hahn	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Steve Brand	Washington State Parks

## **Item 1: Welcome, Introductions, and Review of Agenda**

Wendy Brown, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Policy Director, welcomed the members of the Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group (Lands group) and reviewed the agenda. The members and attendees introduced themselves.

## **Item 2: Updates**

### **Agency Roundtable: Updates**

Ms. Brown provided an update on behalf of RCO regarding the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) administrative rate bill which requests a change to the current rate calculation. The Senate version of the bill is dead; however, the House version of the bill moved over to the Senate and the Natural Resources Committee held a hearing last week. The bill will likely be amended to give the Legislature more control over the rate.

RCO Director Kaleen Cottingham shared hopes that the bill will support dedicated staff or money to the Lands group in part, perhaps to support updating the state agency public lands inventory. She added that there seem to be no apparent problems with the House-initiated bill so far; although there may be some disagreement on the on funding level, there is consensus that the program should have sufficient funding to be administered appropriately.

Other bills of interest include the “No Child Left Inside” proposal which creates as outdoor recreation lead in the Governor’s office, a position that would be confirmed by the Senate.

Senator Parlette’s payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) bill was recently heard in a committee hearing. Vlad Gutman, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition Policy Director, shared that the fiscal notes are causing some delay, and he advocated for a vote in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. The legislation includes an Onbudsman position as a budget proviso. The proviso would fund two part-time

positions in Klallam and Okano supporting the public as liaisons regarding land management and weed issues. The positions would be part of a short-term pilot program, supporting agencies and people working on the ground to identify issues and draft recommendations for addressing them. The two counties selected for the pilot would be a representative sample that can be extrapolated to a statewide model.

Sheilah Kennedy, Okanogan County Commissioner, asked for clarification on whether the program/position is meant to support weed issues solely, or other matters such as acquisitions, etc. Mr. Gutman responded that the focus is on currently owned lands, ongoing maintenance, impacts to landowners, and identifying existing problems and what to do about them. Ms. Kennedy encouraged support and coordination of the current weed boards established by 17.10 RCW, versus creating new positions. Mr. Gutman concurred, explaining that the pilot program supports a research initiative, using a small sum of money to identify problems that would support development of more effective management methods. He stated that the research would support long-term funding investments. The next step would then be to invest in management support, which is not mutually exclusive to weed boards.

Steve Hahn, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks), shared that the bills monitored by his agency are not progressing sufficiently. Steve Brand, State Parks, shared that the Senate Ways and Means Committee held a work session yesterday, during which several senators expressed concern about the balance between land acquisition and development. It was pointed out that agencies (particularly State Parks) do not have the funds to develop their currently owned parcels. Mr. Brand explained that the uncertainties surround unknown operating and maintenance costs, and it feeds the lack of development action.

Mr. Hahn explained that State Parks operates using a critical mass on property assemblage – it is difficult to forecast the future use (development plans and needs) until the full property assemblage is acquired, which often takes several years. Budget and acquisition projections often mean planning several decades into the future, i.e., acquiring land now to create investments and development opportunities. During the work session, it was noted that senators would like to see projects completed before moving on to next acquisition, which may turn to a more balanced approach in development versus acquisition funds.

Historically, the capital budget is used as the development budget, and WWRP development funds do not usually keep pace with acquisition. State Parks works to maintain parks that are currently open, and to not open new parks when the current parks are not able to be maintained.

Clay Sprague, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), spoke to the PILT bill, stating that WDFW offered legislation in support of the bill, but it wasn't backed by the Governor. Although WDFW supports the bill, they are not able to testify or take a position. Ms. Cottingham state the same is true for RCO.

Ms. Kennedy shared that Okanogan county learned through last summer's fires that their 911 system is failing. There is a strong need for financial support, and her current visit to Olympia involves advocating for funding, as well as long-term recovery groups to support the human aspect of post-emergency response. She stated that the legislative response was to prioritize conservation efforts, a challenging issue as she believes it undermines recovery and public safety efforts.

Ms. Cottingham asked whether the Governor's budget includes funding for recovery. Ms. Kennedy affirmed, but stated that it covers infrastructure costs only, and not 911 system. Agencies do what they can to divert funding to support recovery in respective areas, but ultimately these decisions are prioritized by legislators. Ms. Cottingham shared that the current belief is that House will release their proposed

budget close to June 30, and at that time agencies will have a better idea of the available funding in these areas.

Mr. Gutman shared that, with regards to state agencies' operating budgets that provide funding for maintenance, the WWRC endorsed two requests pertaining to improved stewardship on public lands. Specifically, the WWRC supported the Department of Natural Resource's (DNR) request for allocating funding to improve active land management.

Cynthia Wilkerson and Clay Sprague, WDFW, shared information about their forest management practices, which have a focus on ecological integrity and monitoring. WDFW adopted a forest management strategy that addresses forest health issues, such as whether a forest is overstocked or untreated. To support implementation of the strategy, WDFW hired three forester positions, tasked with evaluating treatment options. WDFW began by implementing the strategy per specific property objectives, but this is a priority in addition to WWRP funding. Along with using merchantable volume to support funding for the strategy, WDFW is bidding out to local loggers and mills in an effort to create jobs and facilitate a way for the implementation to pay for itself, treat the forests, etc. Mr. Sprague shared that he and Ms. Wilkerson will keep the group apprised of their progress.

Mr. Sprague continued, acknowledging Ms. Kennedy's comments regarding needed assistance and funding. He shared that WDFW supported alternative grazing options in Okanogan county, which constituted a minimal amount, but it was what the agency was able to offer.

Ms. Wilkerson stated that the ecological integrity and monitoring aspects of the forest management strategy would be a good topic for a later presentation to the Lands group. It may serve as a tool for other state lands in order to track, monitor, and improve land health. WDFW is updating their [Lands 20/20](#) program currently, but they may present later in the year. The program looks at statewide strategies in WDFW acquisitions, and broader conservation and acquisitions programs statewide. The goals include finding ways to operate with the utmost transparency, reaching out to local and county officials, and collaborating on priorities. The program may be paired with the Priority Landscapes initiative (presented to the Lands group in September 2014) potentially in July. The goal of Priority Landscapes is to view land acquisitions at the landscape level, especially land that may be under multiple ownership levels.

### **Item 3: Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State**

Ms. Brown presented information and general results from RCO's [Economic Analysis of Recreation In Washington State](#). A legislative proviso tasked RCO with quantifying the contributions of outdoor recreation on public lands. The study found that approximately \$21.6 billion is spent annually on recreation within the state, amounting to an economic contribution of \$20.5 billion. The statistics covered overall outdoor recreation expenditures, the contributions to the Washington State economy, out-of-state tourism contributions, taxes generated, and valuation of ecosystem services.

The report demonstrates the relative public use (measured by day use) as compared to funding expended across various land types, including expenditures by land type and by legislative district. One key finding from the report highlighted how expenditures and resulting contributions are shifted from urban to more rural areas, using outdoor recreation as a mechanism.

In a national comparison of tourism spending by state, Washington State is unique in that it does not fund tourism. Typically, states agencies do not provide advertising and marketing for tourism; however, some agencies may use other funding sources to support counties.

Public outreach and awareness is supported through staff presentations by request at this time. The study is available online at: <http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/ORTF/EconomicAnalysisOutdoorRec.pdf>.

Ms. Brown commented on the study conducted by the Joint Legislative Audit Reviews Committee (JLARC), stating that the main difference between JLARC's study and RCO's study is essentially scope – the total impact of public lands versus outdoor recreation contributions, respectively. There are plans to conduct smaller case studies of different areas, but little information is available at this time.

Mr. Gutman commented on the economic study, noting that per county there is a multiplier effect which is higher for public lands, meaning that the money is, more often than not, staying within the county. Data is limited to mainly public lands, as data on private lands was difficult to obtain.

The [We'll Go Far Outside](#) brochure, now available for distribution, was funded by REI and created in partnership with Governor's Outdoor Recreation Taskforce.

**Break 10:15 a.m. – 10:25 a.m.**

#### **Item 4: Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) Study and Recommendations**

Ms. Brown shared information about the economic study conducted by JLARC. The study's recommendations include the charge that agencies in the business of natural resources, including OFM, should create a single, easily accessible source of proposed land acquisitions, including detailed outcomes and future costs (report, p. 3). The resource should include links to detailed plans, including how it relates to agency plans, identify plans for property, and describe progress towards outcomes and how it ties to agency goals.

The recommendation mirrors much of the purpose of the Lands Group, and the discussions that have occurred over the past several years. Various state agencies have convened in response and agree with the recommendations (the Public Lands Inventory made similar recommendations previously). At this time, funding is necessary to support the project, which is in part technical, and a consultant is needed.

There are noted information gaps in the recommended data that agencies should report. State Parks is concerned because many projects involve planning for a park with a land parcel that is not yet owned, so it could be wasted funding and may not meet the goals of the data collection. Some goals may not be inclusive of all agency needs or processes. It may not be possible to project development costs without dedicating funding first to design and permitting processes (that in turn determine what can be developed, where, and when). The public involvement and land discovery process impact the potential development options greatly, and being held to this in future plans (as the JLARC study is recommending) may be limiting and counter-productive.

Ms. Brown asked the Lands group about a potential compromise that addresses agencies' respective concerns while meeting the requests of the Legislature. Steve Brand explained that, as part of the need from State Parks to meet the report's recommendation, the projection estimates will be highly speculative. The agency needs fluidity and some degree of flexibility when submitting plans. Steve Hahn suggesting using the Lands group meetings to hone in on specific questions, strategize how the recommendations will work for agencies, and how this group can support it.

Ms. Cottingham provided an example of collection methodologies, namely tracking the number of jobs created by RCO funded projects during the recession peak. Part of the scoping process for fulfilling the JLARC recommendation includes defining common questions that each agency responds to, and a

consistent methodology for collecting the responsive data. The process will be challenging, and requires significant lead time, planning, and prioritization with database contractors.

Ms. Brown suggested an itemized process for separating estimated costs, projections, plans, etc. She included the need to apply time to the projections, noting the difficulties in projecting feasibility for all property types since some need several more years of assemblage time to have the report make sense or be worth the time.

Ms. Kennedy asked how members should maintain focus on the Lands group's mission and purpose while answering these questions in a way that will tie into long-term accountability and responsibility. She suggested using the reports to build records of decisions, acquisitions and change in order to be accountable and include progress checks. Ms. Cottingham noted that the group could expand the current forecast report, and adapt how this is included in the monitoring report – these two documents explain publicly what the group does.

Mr. Hahn spoke to the importance of relating acquisitions to long-term plans. While some flexibility is necessary, the data should be a cumulative, longer term look at where money is going. He questioned whether the group should set performance measures, noting that many decisions are governed by other elected officials and boards.

Ms. Cottingham explained that the lead for scoping the report, and whether the Legislature will fund the work, is still unknown. She recommended remaining flexible on the reporting structure, but the group should do what they are able in terms of the monitoring and forecast reports to order to meet the intent of the JLARC study.

Karl Herzog commented on the long-term history of the discussions between state agency's and land acquisitions, including projects that are prioritizing critical habitat. He recommended identifying small steps to describe the richness of the acquisitions and tracking this long-term. Ms. Cottingham responded, describing a project presented to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) that demonstrated the land acquisitions across multiple organizations and agencies. In this case study example, the data demonstrated Mr. Herzog's intent. Ms. Cottingham also shared a request from Senator Honeyford, who wants more inspections and support for Lands Group, as well as support for the Public Lands Inventory (PLI). The funding will ultimately depend on the total appropriation for WWRP administrative rate bill.

Mr. Sprague commented on the importance of wording and phrases within the reports, specifically referring to WDFW's disposal data. Of the total \$118,000 disposal amount, the bulk is from the surrendering of leases (not true disposals) so the data may be misinterpreted. How a word or phrase is defined will change numbers significantly.

#### **Item 5: Planning for the Monitoring Forum**

A small group will refine the template and bring back suggestions to the larger group, with the intent to begin incorporating these recommendations to prepare for the monitoring forum in July.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

#### **Special Funding Forum and Next Quarterly Meeting:**

July 9, 2015

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., and 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Natural Resource Building, Room 172, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA 98501