

Quarterly Meeting

Agenda

Room 172, Natural Resources Building
Capitol Campus, Olympia
October 31, 2012, 9:00am – 12:00pm

- 9:00 Welcome, introductions, agenda overview**
- 9:10 Roundtable Updates**
- 9:40 Annual Report and Action Plan** – Final review and discussion
- 10:15 Break**
- 10:30 Charter Update** – Final review and discussion
- 10:45 Review the 2nd State Land Acquisition Forecast Report**
- 11:15 Other Discussion Topics**
- Improving the visibility of land maintenance funding
 - Enhancing the visibility of public access on state lands
 - Web-based tracking system to track projects through the funding cycle
 - Including land trusts in the annual forum
 - Including all farmland preservation projects in annual forum
- 12:00 Adjourn**

Lands Group Next Steps

December, 2012	Submit annual progress report to OFM, include updated charter
January 30, 2013	Quarterly Meeting

Quarterly Meeting Summary

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

Attendance

Mike Deller, Trust for Public Land
Jim Richards, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition
Tom Bugert, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition
Pene Speaks, Department of Natural Resources
Josh Giuntoli, State Conservation Commission
Leslie Betlach, City of Renton, Washington Recreation and Parks Association
Lora Leschner, Pacific Coast Joint Venture
Leda Chahim, Washington Association of Land Trusts
Eric Beach, Washington Forest Protection Association
Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy
Nona Snell, Recreation and Conservation Office
Dominga Soliz, Recreation and Conservation Office

Introductions

The group welcomed new member, Nona Snell. Nona is the new Policy Director and Legislative Liaison for the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). She has worked for the Office of Financial Management and most recently for the Office of the State Treasurer.

Roundtable Updates

Lands Group members provided brief updates.

Leda Chahim gave an update on the North Kitsap Peninsula, Port Gamble project.

Leslie Betlach said the City of Renton is getting cold calls from private landowners wanting to sell. Frequently the appraisal then comes back at a lower price than the landowner wants and the deal falls apart. These are often properties on streams. Leslie also reported that local governments are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain facilities and that because resources are limited, maintenance is becoming more of a priority than new development or acquisitions.

Josh Giuntoli reported that more landowners are approaching conservation districts and that conservation districts are providing an important role, similar to land trusts. The focus is on agricultural land with conservation easements.

Dominga Soliz reported that Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants have been evaluated. RCO has noticed an overall decrease in grant applications. This could be because applicants are finding it more difficult to dedicate staff time to complete grant applications and come up with matching resources. RCO is conducting a survey of applicants to identify the challenges. Dominga said that RCO submitted a budget request on behalf of the Lands Group for the GIS-based state lands inventory. Legislators and other attendees of the Annual State Land Coordinating Forum have requested a tool like this to give a statewide picture of what habitat and recreation land the state owns, including how much money has gone towards acquisitions in areas of the state. Dominga also attended a meeting with Josh Giuntoli and the Rural Technology Initiative at the University of Washington to discuss GIS-based public land mapping projects. The group discussed the perception that there seems to be a lot of GIS coordination work going on, and this work could be better coordinated.

Lora Leschner reported that Pacific Coast Joint Venture welcomed new director, Brad Bales. His office is physically located at the Oregon Zoo; he is interested in exploring new partnership opportunities. Lora also discussed work that Pacific Coast Joint Venture is doing on best management practices for migratory birds and work with the Conservation Registry, in addition to traditional wetlands and coastal work.

Pene Speaks updated the group on the Department of Natural Resources' 2013-15 acquisition grant applications, which include acquisition, restoration and development projects. It has been difficult to apply for grants because of cuts to staff capacity. Pene mentioned the Department of Defense as an emerging source of funding for land conservation. There is more interest by the Department of Defense to lessen the possibility of conflicts in land use adjacent to and near military facilities. The Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative allows the Department of Defense to partner on land conservation to provide buffers and support compatible land use. The Army Compatible Use Buffer Program, which has benefitted conservation in Washington, is funded through the initiative. Dabob Bay Natural Area is a good example of a cooperative effort to conserve land for multiple objectives. Partners include the Department of Natural Resources, Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, and the U.S. Navy.

Mike Deller reported on the Trust for Public Land's 40th Anniversary and new hire, Adrian Benepe, to direct the Urban Program. Adrian was New York City's Commissioner of Parks and Recreation. Mike reported on recent closings including sections of the Pacific

Coast Trail, Big Creek, Cutchie Ranch, and Wenatchee Foothills. He also discussed new funding opportunities such as Fudge Point and Yakima Basin Integrated Plan.

Bill Robinson reported that The Nature Conservancy is focusing on large landscape scale conservation, such as protecting the last strongholds for salmon, the Puget Sound, and the Cascades. The Nature Conservancy is working with partners to focus on cumulative impacts.

Tom Bugert updated the group on a poll of the 8th Congressional District. The poll included direct questions on public land conservation. People polled in both Eastern and Western Washington showed strong support of public land conservation. In fact, there was no more than an 8 percent difference on any question. Learn more about the poll at <http://wildliferecreation.org/news-events/press-releases/new-8th-congressional-district-poll-executive-summary>.

Tom also reported that both candidates for Governor have shown a positive interest in supporting the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP). The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission support the program's funding at \$90 million.

Tom provided the group with these additional resources:

WDFW Economic impact report

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01160/wdfw01160.pdf>

"Outdoor recreation is big business in Washington state. Each year, spending by anglers, hunters and wildlife watchers generates \$4.5 billion for the state's economy and supports more than 60,000 jobs."

Trust for Public Land Study: Economic Benefits of the WWRP

<http://wildliferecreation.org/our-campaigns/2011-wwrp-campaign-files/economic-benefits-of-the-wwrp>

"Active outdoor recreation, such as hunting, fishing, hiking and other outdoor activities contributed \$8.5 billion to Washington's economy in 2006, supporting 116,000 jobs"

Jim Richards discussed the advocacy work the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition is doing to advocate for the WWRP. For example, the Coalition is helping address questions such as "Why buy more public land when it's difficult to maintain what we've got?" "How much public land is enough?" and "Is Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) reimbursement adequate?" He said it is important to identify legislative concerns and to show legislators that they are being addressed.

[Annual Report and Action Plan](#)

The group discussed the draft annual report to the Office of Financial Management, including the action plan. The group made suggestions to improve the report by:

- Generally – Include more emphasis on work that's being done or has already been done to address concerns. Capture the lessons learned and address whether the Lands Group is providing a valuable service – are we getting to the people that have the concerns?
- Background section - Emphasize that the primary purpose of the Lands Group is to improve coordination.
- Background section - Include discussion about Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT).
- Background section - Include Trust for Public Land in the list of non-profit Lands Group representatives
- Coordinating Visibility of Land Maintenance Funding section – Include a reference to or discussion of Jennifer Quan's presentation on funding maintenance on Department of Fish and Wildlife lands.
- Economic Impacts of State Land Acquisitions section – Add that while the same kinds of economic impacts studies have not been done about land conserved for habitat, recreation depends on habitat land
- Economic Impacts of State Land Acquisitions section – Include anecdotal data that shows acquisitions benefit communities. RCO is beginning to collect this data.
- Economic Impacts of State Land Acquisitions section – Refer to several reports that show economic benefits, including the recent report by the Outdoor Industry Association and a 2011 report by the Trust for Public Land.

Dominga will make the changes and send the revised draft to Lands Group members for final review.

Charter Update

Lands Group members discussed updates to the charter now that group has been extended to 2017. Dominga provided the group with proposed edits to the charter. Comments included a technical change and a suggestion to add "monitoring acquisition data" to the mission statement. Dominga will make the changes and send the revised draft to Lands Group members for final review.

Review the 2nd State Land Acquisition Forecast Report

The group reviewed the Lands Group's [2012 State Land Acquisition Forecast Report](#) that was published in September on the Lands Group Web page. Some members commented that the report was well done and useful.

Other Discussion Topics

Land maintenance – Members discussed the differences between the local and state perspectives on funding for maintenance. At the local level, land maintenance appears to be a bigger priority than acquiring land. There are differences between the local and state perspectives and it is important to show state lawmakers that their issues and concerns are being identified and addressed.

Working lands – The public has shown concern that public lands take working lands out of production or restrict the landowner's use of the land. It could be helpful to show what the existing uses of the lands proposed for public purchase are. Conservation easements are a good tool to allow agricultural and forest productivity on habitat lands.

Land Trust involvement in Lands Group – Some members expressed concern that including land trusts in the annual forum will detract from the main focus of the Lands Group on state habitat and recreation land acquisitions. It could invite criticism and put pressure on the land trusts. Leda Chahim, representing the Washington Association of Land Trusts, said that the Lands Group is helpful to land trusts from the perspective of partnerships, but there is not capacity to coordinate projects as part of the annual forum. A good role for land trusts is to participate in the Lands Group for the purpose of reminding the legislature that partnerships with land trusts on public land purchases are important. It would also be useful to land trusts to coordinate projects with state agency planners.

Enhancing visibility of public access on state lands – Some members said that this is outside the scope and purpose of the Lands Group. Others said that the Lands Group process is a good education opportunity about the public access benefits of state land purchases.

Project Coordination Work Sessions

The group discussed how the Lands Group has changed since 2007. The increased legislative interest in the annual forum has changed the focus from project level coordination for the purpose of increasing efficiencies to more of a policy discussion. Group members suggested supplementing the Lands Group process with a project coordination work session for state agency acquisition planners and possibly partners to

attend. Dominga will propose 2013 work session dates at the January 30, 2013 Lands Group quarterly meeting.

Next Steps

- Submit annual progress report to the Office of Financial Management – December 2012
- Lands Group quarterly meeting – January 30, 2013, Natural Resources Building Room 172, 9:00-12:00