

Agenda
Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group

September 11, 2014, 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
John A. Cherberg Building, Conference Rooms A, B, & C

Thursday, September 11

9:00 a.m.	1. Welcome, Introductions and Review of Agenda	<i>Kaleen Cottingham</i>
9:10 a.m.	2. Reminder and Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forecast report – reminder of due date and check in• Governor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on Outdoor Recreation• Recreation and Conservation Office Economic Study• Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) Economic Study	<i>All</i>
9:40 a.m.	3. Department of Fish and Wildlife <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing Statewide <i>Priority Landscapes Work</i>	<i>Cynthia Wilkerson</i>
10:10 a.m.	4. Department of Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Property Disposal Program	<i>Paul Wagner</i>
10:30 a.m.	Break	
10:45 a.m.	5. 15-17 Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agency plans for budget submittals related to acquisition and maintenance• WWRP Request	<i>All</i>
11:00 a.m.	6. Public Lands Inventory Demonstration	<i>Jen Masterson</i>
11:30 a.m.	7. Review of Workplan Progress	<i>All</i>
12:00 p.m.	ADJOURN	

Next Quarterly Meeting:

December 11, 2014

9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

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

Habitat & Recreation Lands Coordinating Group

Date: September 11, 2014

Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

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

Habitat & Recreation Lands Group Members Present:

Kaleen Cottingham	Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)
Wendy Brown	Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)
Wendy Loosle	Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)
Senator Linda Evans Parlette	Washington State Legislature
Pene Speaks	Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Steve Hahn	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks)
Josh Giuntoli	Washington State Conservation Commission (WCC)
Heather Kapust	Washington Department of Ecology (DOE)
Paul Wagner	Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Commissioner Sheila Kennedy	County Governments / Okanogan County
Eric Beach	Washington Forest Protection Association
Michael Grayum	Puget Sound Partnership (PSP)
Bill Clarke	Trust for Public Land
Leda Chahim	Washington Association of Land Trusts
Lora Leschner	Pacific Coast Joint Venture

1. Welcome, Introductions and Review of Agenda

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

2. Reminder and Updates

Annual Forecast Report: RCO staff received information from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks), and the Department of Natural Resources to begin drafting the annual forecast report, due for publishing this December.

Public Lands Inventory (inventory): The new interactive database is functional and available online at <http://publiclands.smartmine.com/#Map>. During the June meeting, the lands group expressed interest in included a layer of data that would reflect information from each agency about forecasted land acquisitions. Now that the inventory is up and running, the developers are ready to proceed with this layer and will need data from each agency.

Pene Speaks, DNR, expressed some reservation about including all land acquisition forecast data, as some information is speculative data – agencies may not be sure if funding will be acquired, how much land or funding will be acquired (if any), and they will still need to come to agreements with land owners. Since the agency may have not purchased the land yet, it is unclear what the most appropriate designation

(conservation easement, outright purchase, etc.) will be; even the size of the parcel may be unknown. Each project involves negotiation and coordination with land owners, therefore including this data online may not be appropriate or it may be misleading. She stated that the lands group needs to define criteria, definitions, etc. about what sharing the data means and what should be included.

Bill Clarke, Trust for Public Land, asked about the appropriate stage for publicly sharing information about an acquisition and how coordination should occur with land owners. The data included in the inventory has a geographic envelope which is part of the grant application. This is an intentional public process and there are no issues with sharing this data publicly. In some cases, the geographic area is marked by a floating dot that does not clearly identify a parcel, but shows the general area as the exact site should be non-specific. Senator Parlette shared that this is a middle ground for transparent processes, which is the purpose of this group.

RCO will talk about solutions with developers and coordinate with State Parks, DFW, and DNR to determine which data is appropriate for inclusion. Currently the Washington State Conservation Commission is not expected to provide forecast data.

Governor's Outdoor Recreation Taskforce: The task force is wrapping up and will be holding its last meeting next week. It is anticipated that the group will reach consensus and closure on any remaining issues. The draft recommendations have been out for public review for some time and received substantial feedback. The report, which identifies both short and long-term actions, will be published on RCO's website at <http://www.rco.wa.gov/boards/TaskForce.shtml>. The group is working out some remaining questions that pertain to funding and will submit the report to the Governor's Office on September 19.

Recreation and Conservation Office Economic Study: RCO contracted Earth Economics to conduct a study of the economic contribution of outdoor recreation in Washington State. The firm is building modules for economic contribution of outdoor recreation statewide, by legislative district and by county across several land types, such as public lands, private lands (e.g., golf courses, skiing, etc.), as well as the contributions of out-of-state visitors and valuation of recreation-related ecosystem services (e.g., clean air enhancing experiences, clean water, etc.).

The firm has already begun collecting and compiling data, targeting late-December for publishing the final results. There have been relatively few issues, however collecting data about private lands has posed some challenges. Finally, a peer review will be conducted prior to publishing.

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) Economic Study: The JLARC economic study includes three parts. The committee is wrapping up first two parts of study which cover economic impacts and benefits. In a Q&A process with DFW and DNR, these agencies will also help with review and fact checking. The committee will present the report on January 7, 2015. They anticipate completing the third section this fall and hope to publish in April 2015. They are collaborating with the University of Washington (UW) for the data analysis. The committee decided to model specific state acquisitions and sites, including five case studies, and UW will conduct regression analysis of certain characteristics.

3. Department of Fish and Wildlife: Developing Statewide *Priority Landscapes Work*

Cynthia Wilkerson presented WDFW's Priority Landscapes initiative which intends to bring statewide focus to the ways that conservation work and acquisitions are incorporated and prioritized across agencies. Ms. Wilkerson requested input from the lands group members regarding the project direction and helping to ensure that WDFW is including all appropriate parties as partners in the work.

The purpose of the Priority Landscapes initiative is to “preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.” It establishes landscape conservation priorities, accomplished through partnerships across and within state agencies, local governments, and communities. On the ground, large landscape conservation means enhancing the conservation value of all lands, helping conserve key connections between landscapes, implementing climate adaptation initiatives, and developing strategies to help nature remain resilient on a grand scale.

WDFW intends to build upon past efforts, reviewing eco-regional assessments and knitting the individual assessments that have been completed to create a comprehensive statewide view. So far, WDFW has held an initial focus group and will bring their recommendations to larger agencies for feedback. The landscape approach is anticipated to be successful because, while there are differing goals, the objectives are the same/compatible (e.g., maintenance and recovery of species) and the work to do so can be shared and distributed across agencies and organizations.

Ms. Wilkerson asked the lands group members to contribute their input the criteria and on public outreach, including promotion of general awareness of the concept and those who would also be interested in giving feedback on the criteria. Pene Speaks asked whether WDFW intends to vet the criteria through other land management agencies, identify a timeline and process that is clear, and identify areas of overlapping or compatible objectives in order to streamline efforts and coordinate. Josh Giuntoli added that once priority landscapes are identified, then existing plans will inform the process of obtaining conservation goals. Leda Chahim shared that land trusts across the state will be attending the quarterly Washington Association of Land Trusts meeting in November.

Senator Parlette expressed that it is critical to honor the process and the vision of the initiative to maintain trust, integrity, and achievement of the intended goals. Eric Beach shared that the state wildlife action plan revision uses a public process to vet ideas that they want to implement over the next ten years; he hopes that Priority Landscapes work is well-established so that revisions to the action plan may be aligned with the strategic priorities of the initiative. Bill Robinson highlighted the potential public benefit, relevancy, and context as part of the outreach process that may create buy-in and longevity. Ms. Wilkerson stated that she hopes to keep this conversation going with the lands group, acknowledging that the role of the group should be defined as it may be appropriate for individual engagement and not be formally shared through this forum. Kaleen Cottingham suggested partnering with the Council of Regions due to their ongoing work in salmon recovery.

4. Department of Transportation: Property Disposal Program

During the lands group meeting in June, each agency described their property disposal rules and procedures. Paul Wagner joined to share information about WSDOT’s process. The primary purpose of the program is to dispose of properties that have been acquired, yet are no longer needed for transportation purposes, i.e., a whole parcel purchased for use of part of the land, and then selling the remainder that is not concurrent with the project goals. This often results in unneeded properties, usually adjacent to highways or as part of road detour/alignment. WSDOT holds an internal review process, carried out by a real estate services group, which identifies properties for disposal. If a transportation use is not identified, then the group will provide comments and make their recommendations. If the decision is made to surplus the property they will follow an appraisal process to obtain fair market value. WSDOT will contact the land owners and give them opportunity to make an offer to other agencies; if the land owner is not interested then it goes to public auction. The process is also guided by legislative mandates that direct WSDOT to surplus unneeded properties.

5. 2015-17 Budget

WDFW discussed the Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) process. They conducted a study of the current process and came up with recommendations to use value at which the PILT is paid which will remove the requirement to pay out at the 2009 level. The new process will also support counties with consistency. Due to the budget reduction exercise for the upcoming biennium, the available budget for PILT payments still carries a significant shortfall, approximately one million dollars, which WDFW is trying to make up for with other sources. They are continuing with the option to have the Legislature make PILT payments, as opposed to the state Treasury. Some revenue acquired through additional fees (i.e. salmon stamp to pay for enforcement and counting, etc.) will expire soon.

RCO will be submitting their budget requests today, comprised of eight categories within the capital budget that have some portion of funds going to acquisition:

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) request for \$6.6 million, includes some acquisitions adjacent to navigable waters;
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) request approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for \$97 million;
- Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) program request for \$12 million in bond funds.

There are also four accounts that mainly focus salmon recovery, though some have funding allocated for acquisitions (around 25-26%):

- Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) for \$20 million;
- Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFPPP), no acquisition related funding requests;
- Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) program, includes a request from the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) for \$144 million which includes some acquisitions
- Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) for \$40 million in bond funds, matches federal grants and includes some acquisitions.

The 15% general fund reduction exercise impacts salmon recovery efforts primarily, and RCO is requesting to buy back this portion and rebalance the federal and state contributions in an even split. Also, RCO is including one request bill for the WWRP administrative rate. Historically, this program accounted for a 3% allocation for administrative costs, and now RCO is asking for a higher amount by averaging the past five biennium to reach a number closer to actual costs. This request requires a statutory change.

DNR submitted their budget requests with a conservation and recreation program focus. The capital budget requests include \$3 million for development on natural areas and recreation sites; recreation for 6 million in capital development on 2 million acres of forest land, 140 recreation sites, Teanaway development, and recreation development in Darrington (as part of the recovery efforts for the Oso landslide area). DNR remains hopeful for increases for natural areas, requesting about \$1 million. They have been unable to replace natural areas managers since 2009 and require at least \$1 million for land management capacity. They also forwarded a request from last biennium for the Natural Heritage Program, required by statute to be updated every two years, which is comprised of a \$400,000 request to update the draft strategic plan. Finally, DNR PILT payments are issued through the state Treasury, requiring about \$3 million for the biennium for lands managed by natural areas program.

State Parks' acquisitions are largely funded by RCO (about 70%) in state parks grant categories. For general acquisitions, State Parks submitted a request for \$65 million (to support healthy state parks), but the current budget is \$10 million for the biennium which mainly serves as bridge funding. The current base budget is \$0, making for a very volatile budget for the general fund.

6. Public Lands Inventory Demonstration

Jennifer Masterson provided an online demonstration of the new Public Lands Inventory (inventory), available to the public at <http://publiclands.smartmine.com/#Map>. RCO developed a project plan and organized two advisory groups to assist in the completion of the inventory: 1) a steering committee chaired by RCO provided executive guidance; 2) a technical advisory committee chaired by RCO and staffed by information technology and data management personnel from the state agencies provided data for the project. State agency partners included DNR, WDFW, State Parks, and JLARC.

In keeping with past public land inventories completed by RCO, the inventory is focused on publicly-owned natural resource and park lands. It integrates data that currently exists in the 2012 Washington State Parcel Database, created and maintained by the University of Washington's School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, with updated information from state agency partners. The inventory makes visible the distribution, costs, and principal uses of recreation and natural resource lands. The inventory is intended to help Washingtonians better understand government investments in recreation and natural resource lands owned and managed by federal, state, and local governments. The inventory also enables information-sharing and collaboration between state agencies.

Ms. Masterson asked for input from the lands group regarding potential missing partners and data that could be added in various layers. Currently, tribal-related data is incomplete and not include at this time. The federal database that primarily maintains this data is being updated, and RCO will include it in the inventory at a later date.

Suggestions from members included adding percentages to the pie chart visuals that pop up when filtering the data and that perhaps the information is better displayed as a circle. Private lands and tribal lands are uncolored (purplish gray). DNR has a public lands map with a GIS basis (which is not published yet, but should align since the data sources are the same), but this is the other option that covers multiple agencies. Also, it was recognized that the inventory needs clearer labels and enhanced zoom properties. A future enhancement includes a tab for the 2015-17 Forecast Report, tribal boundaries, and management boundaries.

The inventory currently holds 50 years of RCO data; the data is not real-time information, rather a static set that will need periodic updating. RCO anticipates updating the inventory every two years, dependent upon funding, and have included funding proposals. Staffing and funding will help maintain the accuracy and integrity of the tool.

Should someone find incorrect information in the inventory about a parcel, the error report may be sent to Ms. Masterson. The current contract does not cover fixing data errors and discrepancies, but she will compile the reports in the meantime.

Recommendations for the inventory include:

- Knowledge Management Strategy for Lands Data
- System Improvements
 - Contributing Agency Data Systems
 - System Automation
 - Ongoing Support
- Data Needs or Enhancements
 - Tribal Lands
 - Land Use Information
 - Recreation Information
 - County and Local Data

– Acquisition Costs

The inventory only tracks recreation and conservation lands and will require continued support, updating and funding. RCO is developing a one-pager that will describe the purpose of the lands group, and will include information about the inventory to support public awareness and outreach. There may also be opportunities with new legislators, by informing senate staff who may help present to committees with a budget or recreation affiliation. Steve Hahn stated that he would draft a letter of support and send it to RCO/DNR. Leda Chahim inquired about a potential dissemination plan, expressing interest in sharing the inventory with the Land Trusts group - RCO held a press release and gave to information to the land trusts, although it was just a briefing and not a live demonstration.

7. Review of Work-plan Progress

Wendy Brown provided an update regarding the lands group 2014 Action Plan. The timeline was delayed due to funding and coordination challenges, however priority tasks 1-4 will be completed this year. We have the grant projects in, but the data is speculative since it is not clear what funding will be available. We were not able to use the forum to do the forecast, so in future efforts we should bump up the timeline so that we have enough time. July would be timely for the coordinating forum.

Task 5 is preparing the monitoring report to be ready December 2015, in which the lands group will report on how funding was allocated.

Next Quarterly Meeting:

December 11, 2014

9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Pritchard Building, Washington Room