

**WASHINGTON STATE BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL  
SUMMARY MINUTES**

---

*DATE: January 20, 2010  
TIME: 9:00 a.m.*

*PLACE: Natural Resource Building  
Olympia, Washington*

---

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Josh Weiss, Chair	WA State Association of Counties
Dave Roseleip, Vice Chair	WA Agriculture & Forestry Education Foundation
Leonard Bauer	WA Department of Commerce
Ken Berg	US Fish and Wildlife
Dave Brittell	Department of Fish & Wildlife
Donna Darm	NOAA Fisheries
Mitch Friedman	Conservation Northwest
Pete Heide	WA Forest Protection Association
Tom Laurie	Department of Ecology
John Marzluff	University of Washington
Ikuno Masterson	WA Planning Association
Mike Mosman	Port Blakely
Ron Shultz	WA Conservation Commission
Clay Sprague	Department of Natural Resources
Kate Stenberg	Scientist

**PRESENTERS and GUESTS:**

John Mankowski	Governor's Office
Kaleen Cottingham	Recreation and Conservation Office
Steven Walters	University of Washington
Wendy Brown	WA Invasive Species Council
John Gamon	Natural Heritage Program
Eric de Place	Sightline Institute
Senator Ken Jacobsen	Washington State Senate
John Dodge	The Olympian

**STAFF and CONTRACTORS:**

Paul Dziedzic	Facilitator
Lynn Helbrecht	Staff
Sarah Gage	Staff
Rachel LeBaron Anderson	Staff

---

**ACTIONS TAKEN**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Meeting minutes	Approved	Page 2

**MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:**

- John Mankowski, Natural Resources Policy Advisor to the Governor, and Kaleen Cottingham, Director of the Recreation and Conservation Office, discussed options for continuing the work of the Biodiversity Council. Members provided direction on the future of the Council to the Executive Committee, and authorized them to develop and pursue a more refined recommendation.

- A panel of Senator Ken Jacobsen, John Dodge (The Olympian), and Eric de Place (Sightline Institute) discussed how a biodiversity scorecard would be useful in their work.
- Steven Walters presented the Biodiversity Scorecard final report to the Council.

#### **OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

Josh Weiss, Chair, opened the meeting at 9:10 a.m. He reviewed the agenda and asked council members and attendees to introduce themselves.

Josh introduced Paul Dziedzic, council facilitator. Paul reviewed goals for the day's meeting. Sarah Gage showed the council's new video, "Washington's Biodiversity: Celebrating the Richness of Life." Lynn Helbrecht reviewed the handouts in Council member packets.

#### **COUNCIL BUSINESS ITEMS:**

##### *Approval of Minutes*

Josh called for a **MOTION** to approve the October 6-7, 2009 meeting minutes. Dave Roseleip **MOVED**. Ron Shultz **SECONDED**. The minutes were **APPROVED** as presented.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

#### **CONTINUING THE IMPORTANT WORK OF THE COUNCIL:**

Josh reflected that the Council has generally made decisions by consensus. He clarified that Paul's role is to facilitate Council discussion. If motions and other formal actions are made, Josh will take back the gavel.

Paul clarified that today's meeting will provide an update of where the council stands and members will discuss options to give direction to the Executive Committee to develop a refined proposal. .

Kaleen Cottingham noted that the future of the Biodiversity Council has been a question since she became RCO Director two years ago. During the 2009 legislative session, the governor's office asked the RCO not to submit a bill that would have formalized the Council in statute. The governor's priority of eliminating boards and commissions, along with the state's very serious budget problems, make a further executive order highly unlikely; that should not be considered a viable option. However, the council has done good work and that should not be lost.

The Council's general fund-state money (\$75,000) was cut, but contractual funds remain from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT); the contract is through RCO.

Lynn reviewed a handout that showed two budget scenarios based on these facts.

Kaleen reviewed her discussions with John Mankowski. The Governor chose not to continue the Council without funding. If there is a future Council-like entity, RCO is available to support that entity as needed, including providing administrative support; these costs not identified in the budget handout).

In response to Ikuno Masterson's request for an update on the Natural Resource Reform effort, Kaleen gave a brief synopsis of Executive Order 09-07. The Natural Resource Cabinet has been formed and given a list of tasks. This cabinet could possibly take Biodiversity Council projects and roles under its wing.

#### **COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE AND PROJECTS IN PROGRESS:**

Lynn gave a PowerPoint presentation that summarized projects that are completed and in progress. She reviewed the Biodiversity Council's "Flagship Projects":

- Website

- Scorecard
- Conservation Opportunity Maps
- Tools for Conservation Planning
- Habitat Connectivity

Council Discussion:

- Whichever option for the Council's future is chosen, it must continue the projects and keep pressure on implementing the strategy. This is a time of refocus. We cannot do everything so we need to decide which parts are most important to continue.
- Leonard Bauer asked about the status of the grant proposal to UW for additional funding to develop the scorecard. John Marzluff does not think the proposal will be funded.
- Dave Roseleip asked if the maps are currently on the website. Lynn says they are not; we have funding to add them, but first we need to know who will continue the website. The website would be key to keeping the scorecard, maps, and strategy in view.
- Ikuno Masterson suggested that rather than focus on continuing our projects, our main goal should be to protect the state's biodiversity.
- Lynn observed that landowner incentives are missing from the current suite of projects – while central to the Council's overall mission and work, there are no active projects.
- Josh noted that there is value in looking at what we have accomplished. What is most important to him is that we have all of the interests in the public/private partnership represented and sitting at the table working together.

BREAK

**COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE AND PROJECTS IN PROGRESS continued:**

John Mankowski arrived and spoke about the work of the Council.

- The Council's work is very important, especially its "non-denominational" public-private partnership approach. He is proud to share our work with others when he travels to national and international meetings, and likes that it is not a regulatory approach.
- Unfortunately, the Governor will not reconsider extending the council, both because of the state's budget and her priority to close out boards and commissions.
- The work is too important to sunset in June. There is a Senate bill to continue the Council, but John does not feel it is likely to make it through session.
- How do we continue the public/private partnership without a formal council?
  - The Biodiversity Council could work with the Natural Heritage Advisory Council (NHAC).
  - The Biodiversity Council could continue its work through the Natural Resource Cabinet, which could convene private partners on a regular basis to see how the state's biodiversity is doing.
  - The Natural Resource Cabinet will be developing Government Management Accountability and Performance measures (GMAP) for natural resources. "What gets measured gets done." The council could help develop that list of GMAP measures.
  - Money is a challenge; there may be potential to tap Western Governors Association or Department of Energy monies for some key projects. Other ideas are agency director commitments or putting something through the Legislature.
  - John acknowledged the great work that Lynn Helbrecht has done for the council.

Council Discussion:

Council members asked questions to clarify how the Natural Resource Cabinet will work. John Mankowski replied that the Cabinet has not yet formed or met.

- John hopes to build biodiversity into the work plan of the Cabinet.
- He would like to build the Biodiversity Council's breadth into how the state does business – one suggestion is to convene a group of biodiversity leaders a couple of times a year at the request of the Cabinet.

Leonard Bauer noted that a strength of the Council's Science Committee has been more stakeholders participate than just state agencies, and he suggested that model to the cabinet.

Kate Stenberg suggested the biodiversity scorecard be used to inform the GMAP process. John Mankowski replied that embedding a few key measures would keep Biodiversity goals around for a long time and at low cost.

Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy, said that The Nature Conservancy is concerned about council work being lost and mentioned Senator Ken Jacobsen's bill to continue to the council. Bill would like to see infrastructure (staff) in place to make it possible for this group to convene once or twice a year with the cabinet.

Mitch Friedman spoke to the importance of cross-jurisdictional/cross-agency work to issues like habitat connectivity. But he is still concerned that there will not be enough citizen involvement, staffing or funding to continue the Council's work. .

Josh Weiss thanked Bill Robinson and The Nature Conservancy for their support. He also thanked John Mankowski for his work representing the Biodiversity Council within the Governor's office.

### **COUNCIL OPTIONS:**

Lynn introduced the handout that listed options for continuing the work of the Biodiversity Council

In discussion, Council members identified the following priority considerations:

- Establish clear accountability for moving the Strategy forward
- Find homes for highest priority Council projects
- Continue the inclusive and collaborative way the Council does its work (i.e., the public-private partnership).
- Ensure full participation and commitment of state agencies through direction from Governor's office or the legislature.

Discussion focused primarily on three of the options presented:

Option D3: Governor's Natural Resource Cabinet establishes a Biodiversity Policy Committee (subcommittee)

Biodiversity Policy Committee meets a couple of times a year at request of cabinet. Strategy becomes part of Natural Resources Cabinet plan

Pros and cons:

- Natural Resources Cabinet shows promise for cross-jurisdictional dialogue.
- Clout of cabinet is important element
- Doesn't necessarily mean good citizen integration, could risk backlash.
- Staffing (funding) still necessary. How will Cabinet (and this initiative in particular), be staffed?
- Unclear how engage non-state agency partners and create a place that can invite in other voices.
- Caution about moving the Council's work deeper into a state agency.
- Would Biodiversity Committee become just an occasional sounding board?
- If projects go to the Natural Resources Cabinet they would lose momentum

Option D4: Governor's Natural Resource Cabinet assumes accountability for implementation of strategy

Cabinet establishes Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) measures for biodiversity and tracks high level indicators. Build the work into how the state does business. (Perhaps annual meeting with biodiversity reports to Cabinet; perhaps tie GMAP with Scorecard)

Pros and cons:

- Funding a challenge (procure outside money? Maintain transportation money? Western Governors, Dept of Energy?)
- Concern about biodiversity getting lost in other issues.
- Recommend the benefits of science panel that's not just state agencies.
- Cabinet link doesn't put together all the pieces.
- GMAPing natural resources a good idea—have to be able to supply that information.

Option D5: Natural Heritage Advisory Council expands its mandate to incorporate Biodiversity Council functions.

- Could Biodiversity exist there as it has under RCO?
- NHAC would need more emphasis on private side and on incentives, less emphasis on preservation.

Combination options mentioned:

- NHAC could play some of the roles of Biodiversity Council. Natural Resources Cabinet take on GMAP measures for natural resources.
- Cabinet could take on the Strategy; RCO could take the website; remaining funds could support other projects. Create a transition for joining the NHAC.

LUNCH

#### **PANEL DISCUSSION ON POTENTIAL USE AND VALUE OF A BIODIVERSITY SCORECARD:**

Panel members:

- John Dodge, reporter, *The Olympian*
- Senator Ken Jacobsen, Washington State Senator
- Eric de Place, Senior Researcher, Sightline Institute

The panel responded to the following questions:

1. What would make the biodiversity scorecard credible and useful to you in your work?
2. If we can provide answers to the following questions, would that be useful to you? Are there other questions besides these that could more productive?
  - Is biodiversity overall improving?
  - Are our conservation efforts making a difference?
  - What is the value of ecosystem services to our quality of life?

#### **John Dodge**

- A Biodiversity Scorecard will likely be as useful as other scorecards (e.g., Health of Puget Sound).
- The media will want the answer boiled down to a headline, e.g., "Is Puget Sound getting better or worse?"
- Important to be able to look at each indicator and display it graphically. Trend lines work well.
- He will look for story ideas about specific issues and try to tie to private property owners.
- He looks for places where we have had knowledge and have not taken steps to create change; also for areas where a difference has been made.
- "Ecosystem services" needs to be put into laymen's terms.
- He would like to see trends for different kinds of habitats and species.

- He wants to see something on invasive species (e.g., how New Zealand mud snail would affect biodiversity in Capitol Lake).
- Aerial photographs of change are very useful (e.g., DNR's "Our Changing Nature" report).

#### Q & A

- Do readers understand the word biodiversity?
  - Biodiversity needs less explanation now. It is easier to understand than "ecosystem services."
- Are scorecards seen as negative, punitive, like a report card?
  - The best scorecards give trend analysis. "Grading a congressman" type scorecards have limited shelf life. Show score and trend and then he can write about why the score is what it is and what would make it better.

#### Eric de Place

- There is tension between what is credible (can be very complex) and what is useful (simple messages).
- Biodiversity is a huge and complicated topic: what we know and don't know, what we'd like to know, are often in direct tension with what's useful.
- The information environment is extremely crowded; trends in information consumption show shorter attention spans, more scanning than reading. People look for bullets, have 3-4 windows open on desktop. This creates a huge communications challenge.
- The I-Pod and Google are well-loved in part because they are very calm and simple to look at (and also fundamentally good products).
- Communicating biodiversity is difficult because it has nuance.
- As messengers, we only get to say one or two things, not the 10 we would want. If you say more than two, people stop listening, and you have said nothing.
- All messages **will** be simplified, so you must simplify it first.

#### Comments, Q & A:

- Simple graphics such as those on Sightline's scorecard show a trend line that causes a reaction. That's powerful, but does it express what we want? Is there a perception of bias? Was information skewed? Aren't there tensions between complexity and simplicity?
  - As communicators, we don't have a choice about simplification. To maintain credibility, need to annotate (supply methodology, provide transparent data); allow people to dig in if they want to and determine if it's credible or not.
- John Marzluff noted that the scorecard will have a diverse audience and the last thing we want is for someone who digs in to find that it's not credible.
  - Eric responded that the last thing he would want is to have no one pay attention. That would be worse—to be very credible but have no one pay attention. That would be a huge failing and would lose those who care most.
- The Council is very diverse, does that help give the Scorecard credibility?
  - The information environment is fragmented and overwhelming, like a fire hose; it is very difficult for people to believe that any given source is different.
  - The scorecard project is useful; Eric endorses its substance 100%, but he cautioned it is immensely important that its value not get lost in the fire hose.
- When is it time to segment or choose the audience? Is it better to put out one statewide sound bite or tailor it to eastern/western Washington or to an ecoregion?

- Probably not trying to communicate with everyone, but policy makers, media, more informed audiences are key.
- At Sightline, they direct their products to segments of the population—but still don't get to communicate as complexly as would like.
- Start communication with what the state should do (and then eastside, westside).
- A policy direction can be more attention-getting than information.
- The objectives for the Cascadia Scorecard are to foster sustainability in the Northwest by 1) setting agenda and 2) a small number of policy wins that tilt the playing field toward long-term sustainability.

### Senator Ken Jacobsen

- Number one is KISS (keep it simple); make it easily understandable.
- “Inconvenient” facts are important, especially those that are easily overlooked.
- Facts had better hold up under scrutiny. Once something is discredited, it is hard to get it back on track.
- Sometimes it just takes one thing, for example one photo of zebra mussels drove the bill on invasive species.
- If the media and the public take interest then the legislature will take interest.
- There is always an “issue du jour” and this year it's the budget.
- Wikipedia is a good model because it starts out simple but you can dig deeper and deeper.
- Recycling and smoking are two examples of success with issues and how society changes.
- Do not overlook the importance of kids' involvement (e.g., 4<sup>th</sup> graders succeeded in having the [Olympic marmot](#) declared the state endemic mammal).
- Historical preservationists issue a list of 10 most endangered properties each year—this helps prioritize what needs to be fixed first if you only have so much money.
- An electronic copy of the scorecard should be emailed to the members of the legislature; also important for constituents to email it to their legislators.

John Dodge commented that the Cascade Scorecard does a good job of linking issues to things we all care about, such as our own longevity and the environment. It makes a good connection between indicators and consequences, and answers the questions “Why should I care?” and “How will this affect me?”

Eric de Place noted that Facebook has a lot of potential for disseminating information in bite-sized chunks. Social media can be extremely useful, and Facebook is number one right now.

Josh Weiss asked the panelists whether biodiversity, as an umbrella issue, has the potential to become “the” indicator. Do we have any hope in getting the concept across?

- Eric de Place feels there is a huge amount of hope. Young people are very environmentally conscious. People care about themselves and money (and cars). Must put people in stories about biodiversity. Even infants respond to faces, so you must put faces into the information. The economic case can help on the margins too.
- Senator Ken Jacobsen said that people love animals and nature (biophilia), and we can use that in messaging. Programs like NatureMapping in schools bring kids into the picture.
- John Dodge added that the Council can clearly and forcefully put humans into the picture rather than having it be just about habitat or species. Show why it's important to humans.

Lynn asked about credibility, in light of the Council's being in transition. Is it important that the scorecard be issued from a public-private partnership? Does it diminish credibility if one agency takes it over?

- John Dodge: a public-private group adds credibility.
- Eric de Place: not sure it matters. If the scorecard is factually accurate it can avoid perception of bias.

Senator Jacobsen announced that there will be a public hearing of SB 6554 on January 27.

BREAK

#### **DEBRIEF ON RESULTS OF THE PANEL—WHAT DID YOU HEAR?**

- How should this inform the next phase of our work on the Scorecard?
- What other research is still needed to develop communication tools for the Scorecard?

John Marzluff commented that the tension between usability and credibility is real. Right now, the scorecard is credible and not usable. A quarter of the scorecard makes the human connection, which is right on target, but we need to make the work accessible.

#### Council Discussion:

Comments on how to make the work accessible:

- Perhaps focus on a smaller number of indicators (10 rather than 30) in our communications.
- Could use Facebook for quick stories that refer reader to more in-depth information.
- Our communications must interpret the score, or someone else will interpret for us.
- Create "issue de jour" in the legislature. For example in social sciences, the chronic issue/ trend lines of case loads were brought home when a child died; made a point, made change happen.
- Test our products on sample groups to see if our message is understood.
- Look for a warm and fuzzy critter in each ecosystem to tell the story.
- Need to use pictures, images, faces.

What do the data in the current scorecard mean? Both mesic forest and shrub-steppe are down 30% from statehood—what does that mean?

- Concern about comparing things to statehood. Use timeline from 1970?
- Is it better to emphasize how well we have done in spite of population growth, compared to other countries?
- Trend lines might have the most value for interpreting the data.
- Does the 30% lost mean we've lost 30% of the extent of forests? Or does it mean that condition of forests is down 30%? John Marzluff replied that it means both.
- Trends inform how our quality of life and economy are doing.
- Hard to compare quality of life at statehood to the quality of life now.
- Scorecard as structured now could show regional trends (i.e., different parts of state showing different trends).

#### **FINAL REPORT FOR BIODIVERSITY SCORECARD**

Steven Walters, University of Washington, thanked the Council for its support and overviewed the Biodiversity Scorecard in a PowerPoint presentation.

Lynn clarified that the Scorecard project has not received a grant from the University of Washington that would have funded further development.

#### **REVIEW DECISIONS, NEXT STEPS, AND CLOSING COMMENTS:**

Council Discussion of future for Scorecard Project

John Marzluff noted that the grant proposal to the University of Washington (which was not funded) lays out what's needed next in terms of scientific/technical work.

- Steven Walters indicated that the project will be published as a scientific paper.
- Several Council members spoke to the need to entice others to finish the scorecard and expressed concern that what has been completed not be lost.
- Steven assured the Council that the documentation, appendices, and database would give another researcher all they need to continue the work.
- Josh Weiss noted that the most likely homes for Council products are with entities represented around the table.

Bill Hearing:

Council members discussed their approach to the public hearing on SB 6554.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Washington Biodiversity Council will be March 10, 2010.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10.

---

Josh Weiss, Chair