

**WASHINGTON STATE BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL
SUMMARY MINUTES**

DATE: February 15, 2007
TIME: 9:00 a.m.

PLACE: Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
Olympia, Washington

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brad Ack
Dave Brittell
Bonnie Bunning
Maggie Coon
Donna Darm
Rob Fimbel
John Marzluff
Jackie Reid
Dave Roseleip
Mark Schaffel
Kate Stenberg
Steve Tharinger
Wade Troutman
David Troutt
Josh Weiss
Megan White

Puget Sound Action Team
Department of Fish & Wildlife
Washington Department of Natural Resources
The Nature Conservancy
NOAA Fisheries
Washington State Parks
University of Washington
Thurston County Conservancy District
Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Fndn.
Private Industry, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers
At-large, biologist
Clallam County
At-Large, Open Heart Ranch
Nisqually Indian Tribe
Washington Forest Protection Association
Washington State Department of Transportation

PRESENTERS

Molly Ingraham
John Pierce
Bill Robinson

The Nature Conservancy
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
The Nature Conservancy

GUESTS:

Wendy Brown
John Gamon
Jeanne Koenings
Clover Lockard
Elizabeth Rodrick

Washington Department of Natural Resources
Washington Department of Natural Resources
Washington Department of Ecology
Invasive Species Council
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

STAFF:

Sarah Gage
Jen Dial
Marc Daudon

ACTIONS TAKEN

Item	Action	Reference
Meeting minutes	Approved	Page 2

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

- Council members received copies of the newly published report, *Washington's Biodiversity: Status and Threats*.
- Staff presented a draft of the strategy's key components. After discussion, the council approved the draft by consensus.

- The council gave consensus approval to including spatially explicit conservation priorities in the strategy. They considered a first set of map products and asked the science committee to make modifications.
- The council provided feedback on preliminary recommendations for two issue areas, Biodiversity-Friendly Development and Incentives and Markets.

HANDOUTS DISTRIBUTED AT MEETING

Agenda (yellow)

Minutes of the December Council meeting (white)

Draft Key Components of the 30-Year Strategy (salmon)

Memo from Science Committee: Recommendation for Biodiversity Conservation Priorities (white)

Biodiversity-Friendly Development stakeholder feedback and draft recommendations (blue)

Incentives and Markets stakeholder feedback and draft recommendations (green)

Meeting Evaluation form (buff)

Washington's Biodiversity: Status and Threats

CONVENE AND WELCOME:

Maggie Coon, Chair, opened the meeting at 9:15 a.m.

Introductions and Overview

Council members, staff, and guests introduced themselves. Maggie talked through the day's agenda.

Josh asked to comment early on the "Memo from Science Committee: Recommendation for Biodiversity Conservation Priorities" because he would be absent during that discussion.

He noted that

- Spatially explicit conservation priorities raise fears in landowners
- Their concerns can be addressed by the preamble to and context of those priorities

If all tools, including conservation incentives to maintain working lands and not just acquisition and preservation, are used to achieve conservation of these priorities, then he is comfortable with the Science Committee's recommendation.

Sarah reviewed the documents in the member packets, including the newly published report, *Washington's Biodiversity: Status and Threats*.

- The report available on the website.
- Copies are available for distribution.

Maggie thanked John Gamon for his work in writing the report.

Announcements

Maggie and Josh briefed the Senate Natural Resources Committee on January 18.

The April 23-24th meeting will be held at Kitsap Conference Center in Bremerton.

COUNCIL BUSINESS ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

Maggie called for a **MOTION** to approve the December 5, 2007 meeting minutes. Donna Darm **MOVED** for approval of the minutes. Dave Roseleip **SECONDED**. The minutes were **APPROVED** as presented by unanimous roll call vote.

Current Budget and Workplan Status Report

Sarah reported that the budget and workplan are on track, but due to Lynn's absence updated versions were not available. They will be provided at the April meeting.

KEY COMPONENTS OF STRATEGY

Marc Daudon presented this document, "Key Components of Strategy" (salmon).

Discussion:

Comments on Top Five

- Should these be immediate actions or tiered? For example, immediate, 5 years, 10 years, etc?
- Don't want to dilute importance with tiering.
- If recommendations too immediate then lose future opportunities.
- Must have balance of long term and short term goals.
- Long term also need to have immediacy. Short term could have longer timelines attached.
- If five recommendations for the next 30 years, then break them down, e.g., for #1 need to do this within next few years.

Comments on linking with other efforts and plans

- Need a connection with the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS).
- How are we going to reference or integrate other plans? Need to recognize or endorse.
- Add a "related efforts" section to strategy or put in appendices.
- CWCS should be with the "how do we get to the conservation priorities" section.
- Connection will be in draft recommendations on the institutional framework
 - Ways to ensure implementation and coordination.
 - Who's responsible and how they talk to each other.
- This connection is part of capacity building. Strategy should provide focus and bring coherence.
- Need to reference or support other efforts in strategy, but don't tie *just* to those efforts.
- Linkage, coordination, leverage—this theme should be throughout strategy.

Marc summarized the discussion on Key Components

- Top Five makes sense.
 - Consider tier concept
 - Don't be too time bound
 - Figure out how to capture both big and small, short term and long term
 - Should be brief but complete; 3 to 6, not a laundry list.
- Related efforts
 - Link with CWCS
 - Add section that considers and supports other efforts
 - Ensure that coordination and leverage appear as primary value throughout strategy
- Keep "Education and Public Engagement" separate from "Capacity Building and Institutional Change"

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION PRIORITIES:

Maggie acknowledged the Science Committee's efforts on this topic.

Rob Fimbel introduced this agenda item. He reminded the Council that from the beginning they have been hearing that a spatial component is a necessary component of the strategy; that it's important as a tool to use our limited resources wisely, in the right places.

He referred Council members to "Memo from Science Committee: Recommendation for Biodiversity Conservation Priorities." It presents the rationale for the recommendation and specific elements. The key recommendation is that the Council's strategy should include:

- Map products that show areas of highest conservation value, by ecoregion, and also areas where conservation investment may be most critical.
- Methodology to generate the maps that uses the best tools available, the Ecoregional Assessments.

John Pierce presented a set of three maps of the Okanogan ecoregion. Parts of nine terrestrial ecoregions occur in the Washington. Okanogan ecoregion is used today simply as an example, to demonstrate how the Council's recommendation could be implemented.

Map #1: Conservation Value

- Conservation value equals irreplaceability. Priority plant and animal species were used as filter; also coarse filters such as vegetation type that may capture several important species.

Map #2: Suitability

- High conservation value overlaid with other factors to determine where most efficient to conserve.
- Three main categories of data used:
 - Current land ownership and management intent
 - Land use (e.g., rural, urban, agriculture)
 - Roads and distance to roads
- Goal is to determine what lands already managed for biodiversity, where current biodiversity is the highest, and where is it most efficient to conserve biodiversity.

Map #3: Highest Priority areas

- The third map combines the conservation value and the suitability.
- These three types of maps combined give an idea of the best places to conserve.

Question to Council: Which criteria to prioritize? Should criteria include efficiency and cost analysis?

Discussion focused on the following points:

- Some of the high conservation value areas (dark green on the map) are already protected.
- Another possible criterion: Areas most likely to change if we don't take conservation action soon.
- Six of nine ecoregions have been analyzed this way. Analysis of other three (Columbia Plateau, Canadian Rocky Mountains, Blue Mountains) could be proposed as a priority task.
- Could also analyze willingness of the community and landowners
- A more direct (species) map of biodiversity could be generated.
- Information sources include Priority Habitat and Species (PHS), Washington Natural Heritage Program (WNHP), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), federal agencies.
- These maps give a very broad sense of the landscape. Need to consult local knowledge and stakeholders to determine what would actually work.
- These maps could guide awarding incentives, tax relief, or scoring criteria for grants.
- A built-in assumption is that public lands are more suitable. If this underlying principle doesn't reflect values of Council, then it's not appropriate.

Discussion on setting spatially explicit conservation priorities:

- Megan: This is the most important thing that the Council can do. It's critically important for WSDOT. Let's not let this turbulence stop us from getting this completed.
 - Access to layers would be good.
- David T.: Tribes might want their lands looked at differently, but they will probably want them included.
- Kate noted that she has experience with this process in Arizona and King County.
 - Maps like this take on a life of their own—can be misinterpreted; criteria need to be very clear
 - Ranking and analysis must be *with* the maps because they are very powerful tools.

Specific discussion on map #1:

- Wade noted that most of the areas that show up with high conservation value are high elevation. Also, map seems to show that the Colville Indian Reservation has little high quality biodiversity, yet it does. Not sure the methods are working for the area; wants more explanation.
 - John Pierce replied that it only looks that way because of the cost and the suitability measures.
- The first map gives biological framework, exclusive of ownership and use. It has had many reviewers, not just WDFW and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

Specific discussion on map #2

- Council needs a map #2 that reflects its own values regarding vulnerability and criteria for investment.

Need for narrative to accompany each map

- Should describe how targets were selected and the people that were involved.
- Don't need to describe methodology.
- Needs to be user friendly.

Marc Daudon asked the Council to back up. Need to 1) understand package and 2) go through package and see where decisions needed.

Specific discussion on Map #4: Portfolio sites (presented by Molly Ingraham)

- Molly explained that an additional product generated from the ecoregional assessment was an analysis of the data for each ecoregion, with a goal of conserving 30% of historical presence of species and habitats. (Thirty percent is the number expert review agreed on.)
 - Advantage is that this kind of a goal can give you a delineated boundary of an important site for conservation, and then apply strategies (e.g., collaborative conservation).

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Marc D.: Does the Council like the conservation priority mapping and the methodology, with a narrative section to provide explanations to the public?

- Dave Brittell answered yes; no objections voiced

Marc D.

- Council would like to focus on the conservation values map option, using it to create tools that can be used at the local level.
- An option is that the Council could elaborate on the steps that a future council could work on.
- Council is interested in developing screens for a second map. Needs to decide on criteria.

Further discussion on overall package

- Kate: based on past experiences, the Council needs to run this through to an end point at least as an example so that people can see how to use it as a tool.
 - Need to have transparency about the assumptions and the data
 - Need to show that this is a way of understanding biodiversity
 - Need to empower locals to "turn knobs."
- Brad: map #4 takes areas out of consideration—don't like that. Like maps #1, #2, and #3.
 - Even if this methodology is disagreed upon, it starts the conversation.
 - No immediate successor to this Council, so let's get something done now
 - Can "caveat" it.
 - Give people recommendations and tools. Say next step is local planning with this info.
 - This is an appropriate tool.
- John M.: If vulnerability is the probability of land being converted, then it is valuable to mark areas that could be lost.
- Wade: Needs to be presented right—very sensitive subject. Going to get a gut reaction: "latest technique by Olympia to steal our land." Approach needs to get locals involved.
- Local communities' criteria are great, but areas should add up to something like a target that the Council sets for each ecoregion.
- We need to have a good understanding of what type of land use will really contribute to preservation.
 - The maps are good. It is the process that is concerning.
 - Need to know what type of land uses are helping to promote biodiversity.

Discussion of criteria or filters for Map #2

Marc D.: Agreement that lands that are vulnerable to being lost (converted) is the right filter?

- That is a good description of vulnerability.
- We could do this for one ecoregion as a pilot project.
- Dave T: nervous that could become too regulatory.
- To avoid becoming too regulatory, don't make too detailed statement regarding outcomes.

John Pierce clarified: Council wants a vulnerability map to overlay on conservation value map that shows ownership areas for at least one ecoregion with a narrative.

Rob: Science Committee and staff to work on and provide sample product at April meeting.

Maggie thanked the Science Committee and technical advisors for their work.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK:

Incentives and Markets

Marc Daudon introduced this agenda item. Maggie praised the January 5th Forum for Conservation Incentives. The presenters were excellent and the event received rave reviews.

Marc talked through the handout: "Incentives and Markets stakeholder feedback and draft recommendations" (green). It lists many insights from the forum and identifies gaps in current incentive programs. Reviewers felt that some options could be eliminated, and they added some new ones.

The recommendations are:

1. Provide better coordination of existing programs across sectors and landscapes
2. Move conservation markets forward
3. Strategic investments
4. Improve landowner access to incentive programs
5. Address disincentives
6. Fill gaps
7. Expand the toolbox

Discussion on the overall document

- Kate: Transfer of Development Rights should be in this section, not in Biodiversity-Friendly Development.
- This is a good set of recommendations and reflects the conversations at the forum.
- Recommendations are being drafted in a number of places. How should we link or stand alone from other efforts that are taking place?
 - At next phase, will examine how and who, and how to relate them.
 - State institutional framework recommendations include better coordination.
- What recommendations are coming out of other efforts? Don't want to duplicate.
 - The forum surfaced issues; now we are consulting stakeholders. Working group will determine which recommendations have the most legs.
- Can payments for ecosystem services be linked to the map of conservation priorities?

Discussion on better coordination and funding

- What about people who are already doing a great job? Should they be paid rather than just rewarding folks for improving? Does this cover that?
 - The clearinghouse and the brokering system could help them.
- Uphill battle to shift priorities of federal programs (e.g., CRP from soil to sage grouse)
 - It's very political. Individuals and groups need enough support to make change.
 - Bulk of money is federal; WWRP focuses on state legislation. Can we make federal money more biodiversity friendly?
 - Better to pass money through WWRP/IAC or set up account for straight up ecosystem services? Bills like this have passed, but they were never funded.
- There were some very good incentives for forest owners but the funding was cut.
 - To provide this would need another revenue source.

Discussion on short-term/long-term

- Immediate need is for coordination/brokers. Long-term need is to develop markets that reflect biodiversity values.
- Need to prioritize and sequence. Need to start now to develop marketplace for stewardship.
 - Markets require pull from consumers and push from producers
 - This is what's new and "thinking outside of the box." Important for council to address.

Marc asked the Council which items should come off of the list.

- In the “Fill in the gaps” section, “address the problem of escalating land values”.
 - Section is vague.
 - Value of land with homes is escalating much more quickly than forest land.
 - What to do with this information?”
- Maggie summarized that the Council does not want to take on the challenge of escalating land values. She asked that this section be reworded

LUNCH BREAK

Jeanette Dorner, Salmon Recovery Program Manager/Nisqually Watershed Lead Entity Coordinator, Nisqually Tribe, gave a presentation on restoration projects in the Nisqually delta.

UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Legislative session update:

Bill Robinson presented this information.

- The emphasis in the Capital budget is on health and education.
- Another emphasis is Puget Sound.
- The office of farmland preservation was introduced this session.
- The budget for the Biodiversity Council, if passed, would carry forward at the same level for the next biennium.

Sarah made the following announcements

Pilot Projects

- The North Central Washington pilot project is holding a forum March 7. She distributed a flyer with more information.

Website

- The content on the Council’s website is nearing completion, and it is ready for the general public.
- She invited Council members to distribute publicity postcards about the site.

PRESENT PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK: Biodiversity Friendly Development

Marc introduced this agenda item. Lynn Helbrecht talked to experts and stakeholders about this issue. He talked through the handout: “Biodiversity Friendly Development stakeholder feedback and draft recommendations” (blue). Reviewers’ feedback included: the importance of the local level; the need for a regional market for Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs); the topic of enforcement provokes a lot of discussion. A few items were eliminated.

The recommendations are:

1. Provide direct assistance to local government
2. Enhance capacity to address local government needs and deliver technical assistance
3. Make needed changes in laws and policies
4. Support/fund innovative approaches

Discussion:

- Kate: TDRs belong in this set of recommendations.
- Steve T.: Why are some counties not using Current Use Taxation (CUT)— Open Space Taxation? Need to know so can address in strategy. Smaller counties having trouble with tax revenue; any loss of revenue is an issue for them. Tax equity issue?
- David T.: Document seems government-centric. Non-profits need to be included.
 - For example, nonprofits supply local technical support to Low Impact Development (LID)
 - Make local information available within community about LID etc.
- Need study on exurbia effects on biodiversity: what’s working, what’s not. For example, what happens when develop land into five acre parcels? Don’t have data.

- Steve T.: Debate at county level is whether open space is giving value. Assessors are getting hammered. Need to be clear on what value the community gets, so they will support it.
- Josh: To get at conversion issue need a recommendation that's more overarching, i.e., focus on where development should occur—within the Urban Growth Area (UGA).
- Josh: Council should consider supporting the current legislation on expanding the use of TDRs.
- Brad: Suggest examining tax code: What are we taxing that we actually want more of? We need to tax things that we want less of.
- Kate: the title "Biodiversity Friendly Development" implies Low Impact Development, which is not in this document. She would like a different title.
 - "Biodiversity Friendly Development" and "Incentives and Markets" are too mixed up. A better line between the two would be helpful.
 - TDR is a market issue. Recommend that staff talk with King County, which has the most successful TDR program in the country. The lead staff person retiring end of April.

Section 1f (provide funding to ensure consistency and compliance with existing laws)

- Josh: Supports 1f. DNR is doing some great compliance work.
- Maggie: It should be more specific. Just listing some laws is not specific enough.

Section 2a (provide resources to WDFW to deliver support to local government)

- Wade: Expand this recommendation to include educating county government personnel.
 - Need to provide counties with tools to understand the costs of development.
 - Some counties see only that development increases their tax base; don't see benefit of protecting farmland. Need a study on this.
- Marc D: Connections here with Education and Public Outreach.

Section 2b (make mitigation more efficient and effective)

- Megan: concerned about language. Could be interpreted as building a new regulatory system with regimented ratios.
 - Opportunities to help developers choose areas (conservation priority maps good tool).
 - Opportunities to improve mitigation so it better supports biodiversity
 - Megan will talk with Lynn about language.

Section 3a (expand SEPA checklist)

- Josh: Would like to see 3a removed. It has direct regulatory impact and acts as a disincentive.
- Kate: Supports 3a; would be a very creative way to get at the issue.
- Josh: Suggest reframing/changing the language of the SEPA checklist so that it more directly addresses biodiversity and ecosystem services, rather than adding new things.
- Bonnie: Could be a backlash if things added to SEPA checklist.
 - Checklist written before current emphasis on ecosystems.
 - Checklist not unified; has many components.

Marc summarized

- SEPA checklist: don't expand but reframe/reword to make biodiversity more explicit.
- Local government emphasis: strong support
- LID and emphasizing growth in UGAs to stem conversion: want more
- Whole package: lukewarm support
- Brad: Lack of enthusiasm in part because recommendations are incremental, not bold. We need to redo the way we do development in rural areas.
- Rob: What is working in other states?
- Josh: Agree with Brad. We should be framing this issue.
 - We know development is going to occur. We need to address where and how.
 - Where: being addressed other forums; need to be informed, but we don't need to lead.
 - How: LID etc. Again, need to be informed, but don't need to lead.

- Maggie: Council focus on finding most successful examples and pointing to them—goes with our desire to link to other efforts.
- Bonnie: Agree with Brad. Want to energize the development sector to be more creative.
- John M.: At neighborhood scale, clustering is not necessarily better than spreading out development.
 - If development all done the same way then it hurts biodiversity (bird data)
 - Diversity of development styles will benefit species that can live in developed areas.
- Josh: Need money for research on how you develop without affecting biodiversity?

Marc summarized

- The Council supports and looks for good efforts to show as examples
- So far we have specific, incremental things rather than big ideas.
- Josh: This document talks about short term and long term.
 - Short term: assistance to local governments.
 - Long term: look at bigger picture of how we are going to accommodate this growth.
 - Perhaps pilot projects with developers?
- David T: Link development to mapping exercise—where in each ecoregion shouldn't develop.
- Jackie: What will it cost us? A lot of people want to grow cheap.
- Steve T.: Density by design, then not so bad.

TDR Legislation

Maggie heard Josh ask the council to support the current TDR legislation. Several council members indicated that they didn't know enough about the legislation to want to endorse it. General agreement to leave endorsement to individuals

NEXT STEPS FOR DESIRED STATES AND BENCHMARKS

- The three desired states will have benchmarks.
- Staff will have something for the Council to look at in April.
- The metrics for each benchmark will help develop a report card that will be an education tool and a way to track progress.
- Staff is exploring bringing in a contractor to help with making language more user-friendly.
- The science committee will work on metrics for statement of #1 and #2.
- The governance working group will work on metrics for statement of #3

CLOSING COMMENTS:

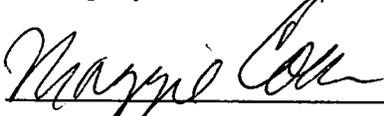
Maggie closed the meeting with a communication exercise from the book, *Making Ideas Stick: Why some ideas survive and others die*, by Dan and Chip Heath.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m.



Maggie Coon, Chair