

WASHINGTON STATE BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES

DATE: April 27, 2005
TIME: 9:00 a.m.

PLACE: NRB Room #172
Olympia, Washington

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brad Ack	Puget Sound Action Team
Ken Berg	US Fish & Wildlife Service
Dave Brittel	Department of Fish & Wildlife
Bill Brookreson	At-large
Bonnie Bunning	Department of Natural Resources
Maggie Coon	The Nature Conservancy
Donna Darm	NOAA Fisheries
Rob Fimbel	State Parks
Yvette Joseph	Colville Confederated Tribes
John Marzluff	University of Washington
Jackie Reid	Thurston County Conservation District
Ken Risenhoover	Port Blakely Tree Farms
Mark Schaffel	Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association
Kate Stenberg	At-large
Steve Tharinger	Clallam County
Wade Troutman, by conference call	At-large
Dick Wallace	Department of Ecology
Josh Weiss	Washington Forest Protection Association
Megan White	Department of Transportation

ACTIONS TAKEN

Item	Action	Reference
Minutes – February 16, 2005	Motion Approved	Page 2
Request to Governor's office to fill vacancy left by Mel Moon	Motion Approved	Page 6

OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Maggie Coon, Chair, opened the meeting at 9:10 a.m. Introductions of council and audience members were made.

The Chair said the Council should begin discussing the overarching framework for the 30-year strategy. This will be the focus for the next few meetings. Today's goal is to try to answer the questions printed on the agenda and to provide guidance to the committees as they define their charges.

She said that Executive Committee members (Maggie Coon, Brad Ack, Ken Berg, and Ken Risenhoover) have been working to keep processes moving between council meetings and are committed to a transparent approach.

The Executive Committee is pleased to announce that Lynn Helbrecht has been chosen as the Council's new Executive Coordinator as of April 18, 2005. She comes to us from the Governor's Executive Policy Office where she worked as the Sustainability Coordinator for the 22-member Governor's Sustainable Washington Advisory Panel. Prior to that she worked as a senior planner for the Department of Ecology.

The Chair expressed appreciation to Carole Richmond, the Interim Executive Coordinator, for her commitment in getting the Biodiversity Council organized and off the ground. Carole will continue to work with the Council through June 30, 2005.

The legislative session is over and it was reported that the Biodiversity Council would receive the full \$500,000 requested.

REVIEW OF MEETING AGENDA

The Chair informed the Council that there was no need for an Executive Session meeting today. Instead, she would like to discuss two other issues after the lunch break.

There was a brief discussion of upcoming meeting dates and locations. This topic will be continued later in the meeting.

Public comment on agenda topics only: No public comment.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Bill Brookreson made a **MOTION** to approve the February 16, 2005 minutes. Dave Brittell **SECONDED** the motion. The minutes were **APPROVED** as presented.

SCIENCE AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Rob Fimbel presented this agenda item. (See notebook for committee's progress report.)

Members of this committee are: Donna Darm and Rob Fimbel, Co-Chairs, Peter Goldmark, Jeff Koenings (Dave Brittell, alternate), John Marzluff, and Ken Risenhoover.

Rob reported that if the committee had a better idea of where the Council was headed with its long-term strategy, it would be in better position to move forward with its charge. The committee has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a review of existing biodiversity assessments and plans in Washington. The committee hopes to have a deliverable by the end of June.

Rob noted that the assessment document will probably be done on a coarse scale and is not intended to pick up all the small conservation projects. The information could be plugged into a data portal, but will mostly be used internally in developing a biodiversity strategy.

Mark Schaffel talked about current threats to biodiversity, such as overpopulation and global warming, and suggested the committee find a way to communicate to the public what the landscape is going to look like, locally and globally, if they don't deal with these issues.

PRESENTATION

Dr. Ed Miles, Co-Director of the Climate Impacts Group at the University of Washington, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the projected impacts of global climate change in the Pacific Northwest. The Climate Impacts Group, created in July of 1995, is an interdisciplinary research group studying the impacts of natural climate variability and global climate change on the Pacific Northwest (PNW). The Group's research focuses on four key sectors of the PNW environment: water resources, aquatic ecosystems, forests, and coasts.

Dr. Miles presented evidence of climate change in the PNW, as well as the results of simulations designed to show what climate and water conditions may be like in the future.

Over the past century, snowpacks and glaciers have decreased in the PNW, while precipitation and temperature have increased. Temperatures have increased a little more than the global average (0.8° C versus 0.6° C). Projected trends show that, as climate continues to warm, there will be less water storage in the form of snow and, therefore, more runoff in the winter and less water available in the summer. These changes are projected to affect irrigation, energy production, and fisheries. The current water management systems in Washington (e.g., the Columbia River multi-purpose system) are not prepared for these changes.

These climatic impacts will also affect forests. Less water in summer will mean more fires and more area burned. Warmer temperatures may increase the spread of pests, and are assumed to be the cause of widespread bark beetle infestations in Western Canada and Alaska. Impacts are also expected in coastal marine ecosystems, but the complexity of ocean systems makes prediction very difficult. Warming water temperatures and the increase in the amount of fresh water from melting glaciers could affect large ocean currents. Thermal expansion from warmer water temperatures could affect low-lying coastal areas. Marine waters have also absorbed significantly more carbon over the past 200 years, which could eventually cause chemical changes that would impair the ability of marine organisms to form skeletons or shells. In conclusion, Dr. Miles said the impacts of climate change present both challenges and opportunities for the PNW.

INCENTIVES COMMITTEE

Josh Weiss presented this agenda item. (See notebook for committee's progress report.)

Members of the Incentives Committee are: Peter Goldmark, Chair, Bill Brookreson, Mark Schaffel, Wade Troutman, Dick Wallace, Josh Weiss, and Steve Tharinger.

Josh summarized the group's progress since the last Council meeting. He would like the Council's input on several issues related to the proposed landowner survey:

- Should the definition of landowner include public and tribal?
- Should we get input from suburban landowners?
- Should participating and non-participating landowners be surveyed to get a broader perspective?

Katie Frerker, Defenders of Wildlife, provided copies of a handout listing the criteria for effective habitat incentive programs. She explained her assessment of Washington state's incentive programs. She found that, although demand for habitat incentive programs is high, all programs are at capacity and participation is limited due to lack of funds. Most programs look at habitat, not the broad biodiversity aspect. She also noted that a landowner survey would help identify the best ways to improve current state programs. The assessments can be found on the Defenders of Wildlife website at <http://www.biodiversitypartners.org/incentives/state.shtml> .

Josh led Council members in a discussion on the key questions concerning incentives:

Is there anything missing from the list of goals presented on page one of the progress report?

John Marzluff would like the committee to assess what components of biodiversity the incentive programs are actually addressing, and not only the benefit to landowners.

Ken Risenhoover believes the first step in an assessment would be to provide a scorecard level of participation – find out how many programs there are and where they are located, then decide how to gather this data into a report.

Mark Schaffel suggested asking landowners what other types of incentives would work.

Bill Brookreson noted one challenge would be to find out what could be a motivator for participants that don't have anything to do with biodiversity.

Do you agree that a survey of selected landowners is the best way to develop the desired information?

Donna Darm doesn't believe a survey would give sufficient information and that landowner data could be subjective. The results of the assessment would probably give very little information about how effective programs were in achieving their goals.

Rob Fimbel believes that a survey is necessary, but we may not be ready to do that yet. He suggested working first with grantors and incentive groups to validate information on the grant side.

Ken Berg would like to see more integration between each of the committees' work projects.

Ken Risenhoover commented that we should learn what is working from people who manage incentive programs and then, at a later time, we could glean more information from pilot projects. After that, we could decide whether we need a broader landowner survey. If we put out a statewide broad-based landowner survey at this point, we probably wouldn't get what we need.

Josh Weiss noted that if we work with conservation districts, it could move us through a good part of the assessment phase.

Wade Troutman suggested doing interviews with conservation districts, which could tell us what kind of incentive programs landowners would participate in. The Council needs to decide where to concentrate its efforts.

Ken Berg hopes that before making choices we use science to inform us of where biodiversity exists. We need to choose wisely to be representative of the state.

John Marzluff believes background information is needed prior to a survey of selected landowners. A survey of statewide urban and rural areas is necessary. He challenged the committee to look at biodiversity from multiple perspectives.

Do you have any guidance for the committee on whether the survey should be statistically valid or anecdotal?

Bill Brookreson is not sure the Council has the funds, or the need, for a statistically valid survey. There are a lot of ways to motivate people besides money. We need to be creative.

Dick Wallace feels it is premature to do a statistically valid survey until we have a better idea of how the pieces fit together. We should be thinking broadly. We need to be sure to include urban areas with population growth and invasive species issues.

RESIGNATION OF COUNCIL MEMBER

After lunch, Chair Coon announced that Mel Moon had resigned from the Council.

Bill Brookreson made a **MOTION** that the Council ask the Governor's office to fill the vacancy left by Mel Moon. Jackie Reid **SECONDED** the motion.

Discussion:

Dick Wallace would like to see the position filled by a tribal representative from Western Washington. He feels the person should also be able to make it a priority to invest his or her time in this effort.

Motion was **APPROVED** as presented.

2005 MEETING SCHEDULE

There was an earlier notice on alternative meeting dates to accommodate Lynn Helbrecht's schedule. Lynn was able to change her travel plans and the June 14 meeting will take place at the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge, as previously planned.

There was discussion about having a workshop on May 26 to work on developing a communications strategy. It was decided not to have a special workshop and instead to devote most of the June 14 meeting to the communications strategy.

Lynn gave some options for the September meeting:

- Sept. 22 only or 2 day retreat – Sept. 21-22 or Sept. 22-23
- Somewhere in Eastern Washington – e.g., Sleeping Lady Conference Center in Leavenworth or Wade's ranch in Bridgeport.
- Purpose: Work on framework for long-term strategy; tour an area of high biodiversity; bring in speakers or local people.

The consensus of the group was to have a 2-day working retreat in Eastern Washington on September 22 and 23. Lynn will work out the details and provide further information on this meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Kate Stenberg presented this agenda item. (See notebook for committee's progress report.)

Members of this committee are: Kate Stenberg, Chair, Bill Brookreson, Yvette Joseph, Naki Stevens, and Wade Troutman.

Kate led Council members in a discussion on the key questions concerning communication and education:

What recommendations would you like to offer for the content of the upcoming Communications workshop?

Kate provided copies of the committee's proposed Scope of Work for the facilitated workshop on June 14 meeting and encouraged all members to attend, as the communications strategy is expected to be an integral part of the Council's work.

Pyramid Communications of Seattle will facilitate the meeting and help develop an initial communications framework for the Council.

What should be the overall focus of the biodiversity website? Would you like to see additional content or features provided on the current IAC-hosted Council website? When should the official biodiversity website be launched?

The Biodiversity Council currently has a website on the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation's website at <http://www.iac.wa.gov/biodiversity/default.htm>. This site posts the Council's meeting schedules and minutes, the Executive Order, and the 2003 Strategy Report, as well as links to other conservation websites. The committee is seeking suggestions for ways to improve the website.

A domain name for the future website has been reserved (biodiversity.wa.gov). Additional names with alternative extensions can also be reserved. Linking to this name now automatically transfers people to the IAC-hosted site.

Kate brought up other website issues needing to be addressed:

- Should biodiversity content be posted on the new site, or should the new site simply link to existing sites?
- How much content is needed before launching our website?
- Do we want to have an intranet where we can post working documents, as part of the IAC-hosted site?

Ken Risenhoover noted that the most important role of our website is education.

Bill Brookreson feels a website would be more useful after a strategy is defined. We have no message or materials yet. He doesn't think the current website is very interesting to the public.

Ken Risenhoover would like to see some kind of internal communication device or website to be able to post information for other council members. It would probably need some type of protection, such as passwords.

The Chair will have staff work on this.

PILOT PROJECT DEMONSTRATION

Bonnie Bunning presented this agenda item. (See notebook for further details.)

Bonnie showed a short video and discussed the very successful "Students in the Watershed" pilot project that she helped to initiate in 1994. The project engaged students of North Mason School District in research with natural resource agencies, in cross-age teaching, and in applied science within the community of Belfair and the Hood Canal Watershed.

Vicki Christiansen, DNR, also participated in the "Students in the Watershed" pilot project and explained how the 3-year project made an impact on the students and the community.

PILOT PROJECTS

Bonnie Bunning presented this agenda item. (See notebook for committee's progress report.)

Members of this committee are: Bonnie Bunning, Chair, Brian Collins, John Marzluff, Jackie Reid, Ken Risenhoover, Josh Weiss, and Megan White.

Bonnie discussed the work of the committee since the last council meeting. She noted that it would be helpful to have the work of the Incentives and Science Committees in hand before launching the pilot projects. This committee would like input on what the pilot projects might look like in broad terms. One suggestion would be to let a community propose itself as a pilot project.

Bonnie led council members in a discussion on the key questions concerning pilot projects:

Do you agree that the pilot projects should focus primarily on evaluating the effectiveness of landowner incentives or focus on a broader, community-based approach?

Bill Brookreson doesn't agree with using landowner incentives as a goal rather than a tool.

Jackie Reid doesn't believe it is necessary to line up incentives before moving ahead with pilot projects.

Josh Weiss noted that the pilot projects would be great for testing effectiveness of new incentives. Could ask landowners what type of incentive would work for them to conserve.

Dick Wallace sees biodiversity as the organizing principle bringing other efforts together. Need to knit together the full spectrum of incentives, science and education.

The consensus of the group was that incentives are important and central to our charge, however there is much more to pilot projects than incentives.

What is the appropriate geographic scale for the pilot projects?

Rob Fimbel would prefer both a large and a smaller scale project. Projects of a smaller scale could enable landowners at the local level to see that they have an important role to play in biodiversity conservation.

Bill Brookreson cautioned that it may be better to pick a project and scale of a size that can be handled given our resource base and time limitation.

Dave Brittel feels that if the project is too small, there may be a loss of diversity. Need to have enough diversity to learn something from the project.

Dick Wallace asked the committee to consider what delivery mechanism would best move the project forward.

Brad Ack commented that Ed Miles' presentation gave us a reason to think big. Our Executive Order says nothing about finishing the projects in three years, we're just supposed to learn from them.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Maggie Coon, Chair

Next meeting: **June 14, 2005**