

**WASHINGTON STATE BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL
SUMMARY MINUTES**

DATE: June 15, 2006
TIME: 9:00 a.m.

PLACE: The Evergreen State College
Olympia, Washington

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brad Ack, Vice-Chair
Ken Berg
Dave Brittell
Bill Clarke
Maggie Coon, Chair
Donna Darm
Rob Fimbel
John Gamon (for Bonnie Bunning)
John Marzluff
Jackie Reid
Dave Roseleip
Mark Schaffel
Kate Stenberg
Naki Stevens
David Troutt
Wade Troutman
Dick Wallace
Josh Weiss
Paul Wagner (for Megan White)

Puget Sound Action Team
US Fish & Wildlife Service
Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
At-large
The Nature Conservancy
NOAA Fisheries
Washington State Parks
Washington Department of Natural Resources
University of Washington
Local Government
Agriculture, Forestry
Private Industry
At-large
At-large
Nisqually River Council
At-large
Washington Department of Ecology
Washington Forest Protection Association
Washington Department of Transportation

PRESENTERS

John Gamon
Marc Daudon
Joe LaTourrette
Jessica Branom-Zwick

Washington Natural Heritage Program
Cascadia Consulting Group
Cascadia Consulting Group
Cascadia Consulting Group

GUESTS

John Floberg
Jim Fox
David Jennings
Mac Martin
John Pierce
Bill Robinson
Elizabeth Rodrick
Sarah Vickerman
Gary Wilburn

The Nature Conservancy
Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation
Private citizen
Defenders of Wildlife
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
The Nature Conservancy
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Defenders of Wildlife
State Senate Caucus Staff

STAFF:

Lynn Helbrecht
Sarah Gage
Kathleen Barkis

ACTIONS TAKEN

Item	Action	Reference
Meeting minutes	Approved	Page 3

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- The Council welcomed new members Bill Clarke and Dave Roseleip. (p.2)
- The Council reviewed the progress of its two pilot projects. (p.3)
- The Council reviewed the current status of web site development (now launched at www.biodiversity.wa.gov). (p.4)
- The Executive Committee presented options for the 07-09 budget request due in early September. (p.4)
- The Council reviewed the report "Washington's Biodiversity: An Assessment of Status and Threats" presented by John Gamon and the Science Committee and provided comments. (p.5)
- The Council provided feedback on the report on Socio-Economic Condition and Trends presented by Cascadia Consulting Group. p.6)
- The Council provided feedback on the report on Strengths and Weaknesses of the Current Institutional Framework presented by Cascadia Consulting Group.(p.7)
- Marc Daudon of Cascadia Consulting Group led the Council in a discussion to select key issues for white papers and stakeholder involvement. (p.8)

HANDOUTS DISTRIBUTED AT MEETING

- Revised Agenda/Key Issues for Further Analysis (green)
- Biennial Budget Status (pink)
- 07-09 Budget Timeline
- Web Site Homepage/Content Timeline
- Web Site Content Questionnaire
- Press Coverage of Pierce County BioBlitz
- Evaluation form (yellow)
- Memorandum from Science Committee Chairs
- Washington's Biodiversity Status and Threats: A summary of the full report (21 pp.)
- Task 1: Institutional Assessment (printout of PowerPoint presentation by Joe LaTourrette)
- Towards a 30 year Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (printout of PowerPoint presentation by Marc Daudon)

OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Maggie Coon convened the meeting at 9:08 a.m.

Maggie reflected on the work and progress of the Council and expressed her sincere appreciation to members for continuing to show up for this important work: "It is a remarkable thing to share your dedication and creative energy for the vision we have."

She extended a special welcome to new Council members Dave Roseleip and Bill Clarke.

Council members, staff, and guests introduced themselves and shared something notable that had happened since the last meeting.

Lynn reviewed the handouts distributed at the meeting (listed above) and in the Council members' packets (mailed prior to the meeting).

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The September retreat (Sept. 27-28, 2006) will be held at the Lakeside Best Western in Chelan.

COUNCIL BUSINESS:

Mark Schaffel moved, and Dave Brittell seconded, approval of the March 8-9 meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. **APPROVED.**

Current Budget and Workplan Status Report

Lynn reported that the current budget is on track. She reviewed the Work Plan Progress Report and suggested that the Council may want to revise both its content and format in September to reflect the next year of effort.

She called attention to the yellow highlighted items, which were scheduled for completion in June.

- The "Biodiversity and Key Threats" Report, as well as an Executive Summary and PowerPoint presentation for this task are expected to be done by mid-July
- Socio-economic Trends—draft findings—will be presented today.
- Assessment of Institutional Framework—draft findings—will be presented today.
- Select Short List for White Papers—will be discussed today.

In response to questions from Brad and Dick, Lynn noted that funding is ok, although it is a tight budget. The Pilot Projects are spending their funds; the appearance that they aren't reflects a gap in billing.

She reported that she has been working to raise an additional \$30,000 to \$40,000 for the design and implementation of stakeholder meetings. Thanks to the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Puget Sound Action Team, and The Nature Conservancy, the funding is nearly on hand.

Naki asked about the final products from the stakeholder piece, and also indicated the importance of participation by Council members. Lynn indicated that the question is timely; there will be written products, but the products and format and number are not yet settled. She is open to suggestions on design of the process. Council members will be notified well in advance of meetings and encouraged to attend.

Stakeholder groups will start this summer, with some results available at the September meeting.

Committee Updates

Pilot Projects Committee

In Bonnie Bunning's absence, Sarah Gage provided the update. She reported that the Committee met on May 23rd and received phone updates from both Pilot Projects. Highlights of the projects are as follows:

The North Central Washington project recently participated in Healthy Lands Conference (June 8th, Waterville), which included two of their products: a slide show on the biodiversity of North Central Washington and a presentation and facilitated small group discussion on conservation incentives. Other facilitated stakeholder groups are scheduled throughout region during the summer.

Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance held its BioBlitz on June 2-3. Over 80 professional and citizen scientists observed and collected species for 24 hours along the lower White River between Auburn and Buckley. The Open House that followed was well attended by landowners, public, planners, and politicians. The event generated good energy, some press, and was considered a great success by those who attended.

Incentives Committee

Josh Weiss reported that the last few months have been busy. Activities include:

- Continuing development of issue briefs, intended to inform the Strategy.
- Planning for an event (summit or workshop) to foster dialogue on possible recommendations
- Developing a key partnership with other interested entities and working to develop a joint Workplan on conservation incentives. The Cascade Land Conservancy, the WSU/UW Policy Consensus Center, American Farmland Trust, and Evergreen Funding Consultants (with PIE grant from Puget Sound Action Team) are participating.

In response to Brad's request for more information about the summit/workshop, Josh noted that:

- Currently planned for early 2007.
- American Farmland Trust and Evergreen Funding Consultants are working with us to develop issue briefs on different incentive topics, intended to feed into the workshop.
- The summit will be used to test out hypotheses; it will be somewhere between a working group and an open forum.

Maggie recognized that Sara Vickerman (Defenders of Wildlife) has vast experience on incentives in Oregon, and acknowledged that Bobbie Cochran, formerly with Defenders of Wildlife, had been extraordinarily helpful to the Committee. Mac Martin, an intern with Defenders from Portland State University, will be working with the Committee over the summer. She thanked Defenders for their ongoing support.

Dave Roseleip asked for clarification about the relationship with WSU/UW Policy Consensus Center. Josh replied that the PCC had been engaged by the Governor help change the dynamics with the agriculture community in light of the property rights and eminent domain issues. PCC is developing specific pilot projects to increase agricultural profitability for example, on agricultural technology.

Web Site and Communications/Outreach Committee

Sarah Gage provided this update. She thanked the members for helpful input, noted that the Web site is moving to its home at www.biodiversity.wa.gov and should be there by June 22 if not sooner.

- The schedule for updating the site is ambitious (detailed on the Web Site Homepage/Content Timeline handout) but it is consistent with input that site needs to be dynamic, with frequent changes, to attract and keep visitors
- Ongoing updates will be the calendar and the Council documents. Monthly updates will be nearly everything on homepage. Quarterly update—the message from the Chair.
- The site is still under construction—many parts are still being developed. Because of this, the site will be going public quietly. She encouraged Council members' organizations to link to the site and asked for ongoing feedback and advice.
- She will be emailing monthly reminders to solicit calendar items, ideas for feature stories, or profiles and news items.

Lynn noted that the Council is still working on developing a communication and outreach strategy. Staff will be working with Kate and Naki to re-energize that effort.

07-09 Biennial Budget Request

Brad Ack referred to the handout (07-09 Budget Timeline) and discussed the budget disconnect, i.e., the Council's current funding ends at the end of the biennium in June 2007, whereas the Council's work ends December 2007. The Council has not yet determined whether there is a continuing role for the Council or a similar body.

The dilemma is that budget requests for the 07-09 biennium are due this September. The Executive Committee identified three alternatives:

- A 2-year budget request, but with funding secured only for the first year to complete the work of this council. The second year left open—with a budget placeholder for the supplemental session. The rationale for this approach is that the legislature may not commit to the second year of funding without first seeing the 30-year Strategy.

- A 1-year request to finish the Council's work; come back in the second year with a separate request for the supplemental budget.
- A 2-year full request

Naki asked whether the first option is an unheard-of strategy or is it standard operating procedure? Gary Wilburn (Senate caucus staff) commented that he couldn't think of a precedent. Bill Robinson (The Nature Conservancy) commented that it would be pretty unusual to appropriate money in this way. The system is not structured to have a reserve; if the money is not all spent, it goes away. His recommendation is to establish a clear expectation with the Legislature that the Council will be coming back in 2008 with a supplemental request.

Brad and Maggie clarified the following points:

- The IAC budget request is due before the September Council meeting.
- The issue has been raised with the Natural Resources Sub-Cabinet and John Mankowski from the Governor's Office.
- The Council needs to have a budget request for 07-09 in order to finish the work assigned by the Governor's Executive Order.

Dick commented that there's both a budget piece and a policy piece to the future of the Council—both formation and authorizing issues. Perhaps one option is to lay the groundwork with some proviso language that indicates legislative intent. Dave Brittell agreed, adding that the biennial budget is an important window. He suggested being more aggressive—the Council needs a 2-year budget: year one to finalize the report and year two to implement. This makes sure that we will institutionalize biodiversity as a state value.

Josh emphasized the importance of drafting recommendations by this December, in order to be able to go into the session with some substance. Wade agreed, although he raised the need to decide sooner rather than later whether or not the Council, as a body, should be institutionalized or replaced with something else.

Maggie noted that the Executive Committee will work on this over the summer; Council input is welcome.

WASHINGTON'S BIODIVERSITY: AN ASSESSMENT OF STATUS AND THREATS

Donna Darm opened this part of the meeting. The Science Committee has been working with John Gamon on this report. She reviewed the audience for the report: 1) the Council (i.e., making it useful and relevant for the Council's Strategy development) and 2) the public (i.e., making it useful as a public document).

She thanked John Gamon for all his work and his willingness to incorporate feedback from the Science Committee.

John Gamon made the following points about the Summary of the full report:

- It is a work in progress.
- It is the product of conversations with the Science Committee and other knowledgeable folks, as well as information from key sources (Puget Sound Action Team, Department of Ecology, Washington Natural Heritage Program, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife).
- Missing pieces include information from salmon projects, ecoregional assessments.
- The state is not doing a good job of efficiently bringing together information and expertise on terrestrial, marine, salmon resources. This is an issue for the Strategy.

Rob Fimbel thanked John Gamon and Lynn for their work and assistance to the Science Committee. He then talked through the Memorandum distributed at the start of the meeting. This memo reviewed the key findings about the status of biodiversity in Washington State and presented implications for the Council's Strategy, based on John's report. These included the need to set conservation priorities,

needs for additional data and research, and the need to institutionalize a biodiversity status reporting process.

Reactions included the following:

Brad complimented the Summary, but noted that trends are really important. Trends and threats are not the same. He would like to see information on the impacts of threats projected into the future.

Donna explained that the Committee had discussed the difference between trends and threats. They have been treating trends as historical (up to the present) and threats as going in to the future.

Discussion continued, with Council members making the following points:

- There is biodiversity value in green space/open space; questions about how best to characterize this value.
- A listing of threats is not as useful as information on how to deal with the threats. That is what the Biodiversity Council can supply in its Strategy.
- It may be difficult for science to project forward, but need to portray the urgency of the problems.
- Projecting out trends—we may want to portray them graphically (e.g., project build-out for an area and current land use regulation). Perhaps we can communicate the idea of a tipping point if the current rates of loss of habitat continue.
- The Science Committee did discuss trends, but because of the timeframe and available funding, the emphasis was on status and threats.
- If not using trends, then can we think of indicators? Look for some with historic data and with good sources of ongoing data.
- Need to maintain the connection in urban areas. Ecoregions are too broad, the scale should be more localized. SRFB has energized people around watersheds. Take advantage of that and keep folks moving to think beyond salmon.
- We need to think about what we're going to take to the Governor, the Natural Resources Cabinet. A packet of information that can include this summary, reports from pilot projects, even in September. If we tell them that growth in the state will decrease biodiversity, they'll just walk away. We need to put out examples so individuals can see a place where they can make a difference.

Maggie wrapped up the discussion. She noted that this piece is a foundation for the Strategy. We are struggling on how do we communicate a message when the message is dire and trends don't look good. People can make a difference. The Puget Sound Partnership, has done some polling about Puget Sound, and determined that most people don't see the threat; it's underneath the surface. There's a tension here between communication and inspiration.

BREAK

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Maggie introduced Marc Daudon of Cascadia Consulting. Marc and staff are the contractors for developing of the 30-year Strategy.

Marc asked the Council to consider the following key questions during the presentation:

- Are findings in line with your general understanding?
- Is this a good base for moving forward with 30-year Strategy?
- Is there anything of high-level significance missing?

Jessica Branom-Zwick of Cascadia presented a PowerPoint slide show with highlights of the report distributed to Council members on socio-economic conditions and trends.

Questions and comments included the following:

- Brad noted that it was a great presentation, but it seems to be more about status than trends. For example, the transfer of working lands ownership—what is the trend projected forward? Or, a

possible way to sidestep trends might be to highlight the most critical areas, for example that some of the most valuable habitat is being held in small holdings by aging landowners.

- Wade: The average age of farmers 15 years ago was 45; now it's 58-60. This generation of stewards is getting old and will not be replaced. The research should be out there.
- Brad clarified that he is not necessarily interested in quantitative projections, but rather which are the most important trends; which will have effects, which are trends to rank. And also we need to link the trends with the Biodiversity Status report.
- Marc acknowledged that trends are helpful but that in the studies they found, the research hasn't been done. On key issues, they could perhaps dig deeper. However, it would likely be resource and time intensive and be a more analytical exercise than a compilation.
- Brad: It would be very helpful to link trends, for example, population growth with the location of high quality habitat and small landowners who are getting squeezed by the economic situation. That would be an interesting analysis to target geographically.
- Dick: How can we use this information to glean what are the incentives and disincentives for habitat? We need a long-term view to get the dollars from the users of biodiverse lands into the hands of the biodiversity providers (e.g., tourism). Can we link tourism to incentives on small forest lands, such as easements to grow riparian habitat. Or disincentives—things we should do less of. Even just big picture views would be helpful.
- Josh: Both small and large forest landowners see themselves as stewards of land, as providing public benefit—the report should acknowledge this in some way. Data on large forest landowners are available on the Washington Forest Protection Association web site.
- Wade: Not all working lands created equal. There is a difference between cultivated irrigated lands & pastures vs. rangelands and forest lands. Original biodiversity values are a lot closer in the latter. That's an important distinction.
- Wade: In tourism/recreation, there's a distribution problem. For example, the people who recreate in Okanogan County buy their gear elsewhere (REI). People aren't spending their money where the biodiversity is. IAC should have those numbers. Council needs to recommend infrastructure to capture those dollars.
- John M.: Report is good work; interesting trends. Two observations:
 - It's important to recognize that Washington has a big buffer of high elevation federal forest lands.
 - The word "habitat" needs to be used selectively. Sprawl makes habitat for some plants and animals. Perhaps "native plant cover" is more apt. Accurate language will make the recommendations more specific.

Marc will take comments and see what can be addressed within the scope of Workplan.

LUNCH BREAK

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Marc introduced Joe LaTourrette

Marc asked the Council to consider the following key questions during the presentation:

- Are findings in line with your general understanding?
- Is this a good base for moving forward with 30-year Strategy?
- Is there anything of high-level significance missing?

Joe presented a PowerPoint slide show and distributed a printout to Council members.

Questions and comments during the presentation regarding "What might be missing from this report?"

- Brad: Need to have specific examples in the next version
- Naki: Would like to see specific examples of enforcement issues in the next version.
- Brad: There is a fragmentation of regulatory authority and a lot of regulations are made that don't take into account the ecosystem. [Joe will work on coordinating this information.]
- Naki: The Puget Sound Nearshore Project should definitely be on the list. They do a lot of inventory and assessment.

- David T.: Native Americans need to be added to the entire report.
- John M.: The differences between species-level assessments and “habitat-level” or “ecosystem-level” need to be clearly stated.
- Naki: Add Environmental Education Association of Washington and Jean McGregor’s Curriculum for the Bioregion to education section.
- Dick: The institutional assessment has to look at threats and opportunities. For example, global warming or market-based conservation opportunities or the role of the media in education are not in this report. Those should be looked at too.
- Brad: Problems need to be described in specific terms. If we’re going to suggest changes in the institutional framework, we need to know specifically where it is failing.
- David T.: The assessment could be more useful if we clearly define what we are trying to accomplish so we can measure it. What are our goals and objectives?
- Naki referenced a document dated 12-23-04 (Draft Strategic Framework to develop 30 year Strategy), which was ultimately reflected in the 30-Year Strategy Outline adopted by the Council 10/05. She suggested applying these questions to the institutional assessment. She also noted that the Council has not yet adopted a clear goal.
- Dick: Institutionally there are several laws (Forest Practices Act, Shoreline Management Act, Clean Water Act) that happen to do good things for biodiversity. But sometimes they are set up with too narrow a focus. We all have turf—this can lead to: “it’s not within my authorizing environment”. We can look for opportunities to make things better and to make it so people are rewarded for working together.
- Wade: Transition zones don’t line up neatly with agency jurisdictions—leads to frustration, not able to make use of available resources.

Maggie asked the group whether there was anything of high-level significance missing.

- Josh: Our institutional framework is set up very well to regulate. The culture is not set up to think in different ways. This is a key cultural issue, a missing piece.
- Rob: Washington is a little ahead of the curve; other states are grappling with this issue. Could this report include a section on other states and how they address this issue?
- Naki: Need to look at *effectiveness* of institutional structure, including enforcement of existing regulations and laws. Habitat loss and fragmentation affected by Growth Management Act, Critical Areas Ordinance, Clean Water Act. These are all tied to biodiversity conservation.
- Bill C.: States are not set up to deal with ecoregions; do we need to address that in this report?

Marc said that going forward the Council will have a lot of strategic choices. We’ll work through these ideas in editing the report.

KEY ISSUES FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Marc presented a PowerPoint slide show and distributed a printout to Council members.

The presentation reviewed the key threats facing biodiversity, high level levers for change, and a draft list of potential issues for further research and to focus stakeholder engagement.

- David questioned the order of the Council’s work and the wisdom of going out to stakeholders without a goal and objectives.
- Maggie: The Operating Framework of the Council includes the mission and vision. She noted that the Council had attempted to define a more science-based goal but did not reach a consensus. Lynn added that the stakeholder work is coming before we develop the Strategy and will inform that work.
- Naki: Agreed with David about the need for a goal. We are reaching a tipping point; there’s the urgency of these issues. We need a clear goal and deadline—it’s that serious. For Puget Sound, the Governor’s goal of 2020 completely changed the dynamic. A deadline forces clear goals and priorities.

Discussion On Selecting Short List Of Issues/Opportunities For Further Development And Stakeholder Work

Marc clarified that Cascadia can do six to ten issue papers. The more they do, the less depth in each one. Maggie noted that the presentation is organized around ideas that have potential for this Council—which are the principle arenas we may choose to act? Ken B. framed the discussion as: Where are we asking our consultant to spend more time? Where will we have the most impact?

Questions and comments:

- Mark S.: Population growth is the biggest factor and it's not addressed on this list. Many government policies encourage population growth, immigration, migration, big families, while other branches of the government encourage biodiversity and lower population, lower development. We are fighting ourselves. [Marc: population growth is a threat; it's a big issue]
- Rob: a component in all of this is to engage the public; but the most critical issue is to engage public in *Washington*. Once we've engaged them, anything is possible.
- Kate: Issues are interrelated. Not understanding the breakdown. [Marc: there is some overlap]
- Wade: Would like to see more pragmatism. Wants some research about how to respond to changes. Biodiversity conservation doesn't have to be a battle, perhaps if research institutions don't just tell us what is wrong, but what we can expect to see. For example, if this many people move in, what can we expect? How will we need to adapt?
- Dave R.: What proactive action needs to be taken to respond to threats? [Marc: So an issue is problem solving, adaptation.]
- John M.: Agree with first two additions (population growth, engage public). Wants to ask stakeholders about biodiversity trade-offs of different land covers. Wants more thought about the tradeoff between development and working lands.
- Maggie: Some of the topics on this list will be addressed in the Strategy but not in the stakeholder work or white papers. We need to focus on what is best for stakeholder involvement/white papers. Fewer is better. Other entities are working on some of these issues.
- John M.: Get stakeholder involvement on the most controversial issues. Get the greatest discrepancy of views.
- Brad: What about specific threats (e.g., loss of an important area)? How do the papers advance our case? How do the papers advance our ability to get to a substantive list of recommendations around that challenge?
- Marc: For example, markets and incentives and institutional framework give tools to address e.g., the loss of an important area. We will need to do the crosswalk.
- David T.: Comes back to measurable goals and objectives. Most things are outside the urban growth areas (Numbers 3-10). What about within the urban growth areas? How to encourage more dense growth within urban areas? Don't focus on just rural areas
- Bill C.: Issue of priorities. Is it possible to eliminate certain habitats from priorities because they already have adequate protection? Is it appropriate to say that these types of land areas are well protected? What are the actual habitat types/level of detail? If #5 adequate for some types of land but not others? In #2 and #5
- Donna: The more pithy and specific we are the more effective.

Maggie thanked Marc and his team for framing this issue. Over the summer the Executive Committee will have a couple of sessions to refine some number of topics for Cascadia to pursue in depth. Welcome all members to join that discussion.

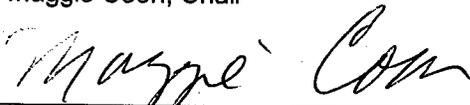
PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Maggie Coon, Chair



9/28/06