

WASHINGTON STATE BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES

DATE: October 16 & 17, 2007
TIME: 8:30 a.m.

PLACE: Best Western Lakeside Lodge,
Chelan, Washington

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Maggie Coon
Brad Ack
Dave Britnell
Jodi Bush
Rob Fimbel
John Marzluff
Kelly McAllister (for White)
Jackie Reid
Dave Roseleip
Ron Shultz
Kate Stenberg
Naki Stevens
Steve Tharinger
Wade Troutman
David Troutt
Dick Wallace
Josh Weiss

The Nature Conservancy
former director, Puget Sound Action Team
Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
US Fish & Wildlife
Washington State Parks
University of Washington
Washington Department of Transportation
Thurston County Conservation District
Agriculture & Forestry
Puget Sound Partnership
At-large
At-large (Via Phone part of the meeting)
Local Government
At-large, Open Heart Ranch
Nisqually Indian Tribe
Department of Ecology
Washington Forest Protection Association

PRESENTERS and GUESTS:

Elizabeth Rodrick
Nancy Warner
Marc Daudon
Laila Parker

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

STAFF:

Lynn Helbrecht
Sarah Gage
Lori Lawrence
Tammy Owings

ACTIONS TAKEN

Item	Action	Reference
Meeting minutes	Approved	Page 2

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Council members determined appropriate responses to comments submitted in the public comment period for the draft strategy.
- The Council directed development of new recommendations for public lands management and state agency use of the conservation opportunity maps and identified changes to several others.
- A proposal to refine the way that regulatory approaches are discussed and addressed in the strategy was developed by a workgroup for Council consideration.
- Another Council workgroup identified improvements to the Conservation Opportunity chapter.
- The Council agreed on how to address priorities in the strategy, through clearly listing first steps, and then a set of recommendations titled "the heart of the strategy". Other actions would follow.
- Key Messages were refined for use in developing an executive summary.
- Ideas and suggestions offered for building a celebratory tone into the December Conference.

HANDOUTS DISTRIBUTED AT MEETING

Meeting Agenda (yellow)
Memo from Maggie (buff)
Minutes of June Council meeting (white)
Key messages (buff)
Proposed priority recommendations
Comments received on draft strategy (blue)
Public comment top five priorities for action (green)
Supplemental Budget Request (pink)
Options for financing (blue)
Conference invitation flyers

OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Maggie Coon, Chair, opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

COUNCIL BUSINESS ITEMS

Maggie reviewed the agenda and noted that the main focus of the meeting is to make final changes to the draft strategy and decide how to articulate the top priorities. The Council also needs to review the legislative strategy and key messages, and review plans for the December conference.

Announcements

Brad Ack announced that he is now working for the Marine Stewardship Council.

Lynn introduced Lori Lawrence, who will be helping with the conference until the end of December. Conference donations include \$5,000 from WDFW, \$5,000 from WFPA, \$5,000 from Defenders of Wildlife, and in-kind contributions from TNC and USFWS.

Lynn also noted that she has been in touch with the British Columbia Biodiversity Steering Committee, staffed by the provincial government, and several members are planning to attend the December conference. They are also interested in spending time with the Washington Biodiversity Council to consider possible collaboration between the groups.

Approval of Minutes

Maggie noted a typo on page 7 – needed to end the sentence. She then called for a **MOTION** to approve the August 16, 2007 meeting minutes as corrected. Dave Brittel **MOVED** approval of the corrected minutes. Josh Weiss **SECONDED**. The minutes were **APPROVED** as corrected.

Budget Status Report

Lynn reported that the Council expenditures are on track with the budget approved at the August meeting. She pointed to a potential issue in printing the strategy, which is much longer than originally anticipated and will exceed the estimated budget. She mentioned the option of printing a limited number of copies and relying on CDs for broad distribution.

- Brad advised not skimping on the document since this will be a 30-year plan, and it will be important for agencies and others to have a copy in their hands.
- Dick suggested lots of copies of the executive summary with fewer full strategy documents.

08-09 Supplemental Budget Request

Lynn reviewed the supplemental budget request. The request is for funding two projects considered critical for the Strategy: regional demonstration projects and development of an accountability scorecard. The budget requests were submitted as part of the Recreation and Conservation Office budget request and are under review by the Governor's Office.

STRATEGY PROGRESS

Maggie thanked everyone for their work on the strategy.

Marc Daudon presented this agenda item. He reviewed the proposed process for next two days and a timeline for completion of the strategy:

- October 26: Final strategy completed and sent to the designer
- November 2: Executive summary draft available for Council Review
- November 30: Printed report available
- December 4: Conference
- December 12: Next Council meeting

THE SECOND DRAFT—addressing significant issues raised through public comment.

Marc provided an overview of the October 10 draft of the strategy, sent to all Council members prior to the meeting. This draft incorporated some, but not all, of the comments received by Council members and others during the public comment period.

Staff has identified 12 significant issues that need discussion and decisions by the Council (handout). Marc proposed reviewing each of these individually for discussion.

Acquisition

Issue: No recommendations directly address acquisition; several comments and suggestions received.

Discussion:

- Elizabeth Rodrick discussed need for more focus on acquisition of range land, forest lands and other specific types of lands that are key at this time.
- Brad talked about the need to integrate land use strategies between agencies, such as the recent legislation requiring agencies to coordinate on acquisition efforts
- Dave Britnell: need a clear statement that land acquisition is important—rally around WWRP but look at strengthening this effort by using the conservation opportunity maps.
- Group agrees—but emphasizes it should be characterized as “guiding principle.”
- Wade: acquisition is a sensitive issue to him—it’s not that kids don’t want to keep on the farm it is that there is not enough income to live. He doesn’t mind including acquisition, but those lands need to be managed. Wording needs to be very careful. State lands are not always the best managed lands.
- Kate reminded people that the maps are not at a scale that is very useful for local planners.

Marc summarized next steps

- Section on page 27 re: acquisition needs complete revision.
- Direction to develop a recommendation around WWRP
- Direction to develop a recommendation on public lands management.

Conservation Opportunity Maps

Issues:

Some limitations of methodology, potential for misuse of maps, no clear recommendations on using maps.

Discussion:

- Maggie believes the maps are an integral part of the strategy—consent by council members.
- Dave Roseleip wants to make sure that maps have credibility.
- Wade wants to make sure it is clear that the maps will be updated—should be part of the work of any future council.
- John M. and Rob are willing to work with staff to reorganize this section so it works better in the strategy.
- Kate also willing to work on this section to make it clearer.
- Dick likes first having an affirmative statement on how to use the maps and then how not to use the maps

- Josh is not worried about the misuse of the maps, but he is concerned about whether they will help meet the council's goal.
- Kate noted that average planner doesn't have a lot of expertise and wants to make sure there is a clear explanation for the lay person in using these maps.

Summary

- Maps should stay in the document, but use clear explanation about methodology.
- Subgroup identified to help revise chapter – Rob Fimbel, John Marzluff, Kate Stenberg.
- Add guidance statement to each map (“disclaimer”)
- Support possible new recommendations on using maps (to be developed and sent to Council for approval).

Public Lands Management

Issue: Plan is mostly silent on biodiversity on public lands; no recommendations directly address this; several comments received

Discussion:

- Ron believes that public lands should be addressed but would also want a way to monitor where the information is used—he would include both state and federal lands
- Rob as a land manager he is concerned that he doesn't have the staff or ability to meet the expectations; there are a huge number of gaps in research and development; possible new recommendation for public land managers.
- Maggie: group seems to agree we need to suggest that biodiversity conservation be explicitly incorporated into state lands and waters management.
- Josh would like to see some statement about road maintenance on federal forest service lands and for forest health and fire issues.

Summary: Staff will work on new recommendations for review by Council

Conservation Commission

Issue: Conservation Commission feels that Conservation Districts already effectively handle incentive programs. The Strategy as currently written doesn't adequately acknowledge this.

Discussion: Lynn is meeting with the staff and members of the Commission next week to discuss this further

- Dick would like to be included in this meeting and encourages other council members to attend as well.
- Josh also would meet with the Commission. He would not assign them lead responsibility for implementation at this time. Agrees that they are the key entity especially in farmland, but conversation still needed to identify the lead for overall coordination on incentives.
- Wade suggests that whichever agency gets the assignment, it must fall under that agency's primary responsibility.
- Lynn suggested waiting until after the meeting with the Conservation Commission before going much further with this.

Financing Biodiversity Conservation

Issue:

Strategy recommends new expenditures but does not recommend new funding sources

Discussion:

- Brad Ack would prefer a working group to a stakeholder group, to bring in expertise.
- Dick suggests to then vet draft recommendations with stakeholder groups.
- David Troutt would like to add a paragraph on need for infrastructure funding.

Regulations & Laws

Issue:

Comments received: current regulations and laws not sufficient; the role of regulation should be emphasized and strengthened in the strategy.

Discussion:

Much of the discussion focused on the way the Council's approach to regulation is characterized in pages 25-27 of the Strategy. Comments included:

- The need to convey that regulations could actually be an incentive for conservation.
- Need to frame the issue in a way that leads to further dialogue.
- Some of the legal framework is contrary to biodiversity conservation—should be addressed.
- Some can't agree with the broad statement that existing laws are sufficient
- The strategy needs to make it clear that the analysis has not yet been done—where laws are working for biodiversity and where not.
- Josh emphasized need to give a nod that there are regulations in place—the opportunity now is to invest in a different way. In some cases a good regulatory baseline exists.
- Council chartered because of need for additional voluntary efforts, not regulatory reform.
- Dick suggests a process to assess where existing regulations encourage conservation and in the future additional work on disincentives.
- Josh appreciates Dick and Maggie trying to bridge the gap but the next step would be to increase the regulatory pressure and he can't support this.
- Brad believes regulation needs to be in the document and wouldn't want to sign off on the strategy if regulation isn't there

Summary:

A regulatory working group was identified to develop some options to bring back to the group before the end of the meeting. (Jackie, Dick, Josh, Maggie, David Troutt)

Other Significant Issues:

Other issues and proposed resolutions described on the handout were briefly discussed.

- Valuing biodiversity in timber: need to add this to disincentives.
- Clarify definition of biodiversity: native vs. non-native.
- Regional pilot recommendations—need to include in report.
- Invasive Species: add specific recommendation suggested by staff.
- Ecosystem services: add recommendations to better quantify.
- Reorder the recommendations.

Marc also briefly reviewed other comments received on the strategy. These included:

- Goals are not strong enough
- There are limited references to other states and working across state borders.
- Timeline for objectives is inconsistent and too timid for incentives.
- Current use taxation has not been shown to be effective.
- Eliminate mitigation recommendations—mitigation can be a loophole.
- Fund a study to determine rates of land conversion.
- In education, give universities and colleges more prominence.
- Estimate costs of recommendations in new/expanded programs.
- Recommendation to extend the Council seen as self-serving by some.

Council Member Comments on the Draft Strategy

- David Troutt asked if there are sustainability efforts going on in the state. Many different efforts around the state are never pulled together—would hate to see the biodiversity strategy go the same way.
- Brad would like to have the report written in more lyrical language to reach people's hearts. He also wants to see more measurable goals and indicators that tie into the scorecard.

- Lynn suggested the draft goals and indicators document approved in June be included in appendix.
- Rob would like to see a two-page synthesis of the recommendations with who is responsible and whether it is short-term or long-term.
- Maggie: clarify differences between the science panel and data partnership.

Summary of Council workgroups to address final changes:

- Public Lands Management: Brad Ack and Dave Brittell
- Research and Development on Public Land: Rob Fimbel
- Regulatory Issues: Josh, Maggie, Jackie, Dick, David Troutt
- Maps: Kate, Rob, John
- Conservation Commission: Steve, Dick, Josh, Wade

Public Comment:

Nancy Warner, The Nature Conservancy staff and Council pilot project participant, encouraged the Council to mention the pilot projects by name: The Healthy Lands Initiative and the Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance. This will help to generate more name recognition for projects, which are both ongoing. Council members agreed.

Discussion on Selecting TOP PRIORITIES

Marc reviewed criteria and a handout summarizing priorities suggested by those who commented on the strategy. He also presented a proposed package of priorities. The recommendations are divided into three sets of actions: First/Next Steps, Short Term and Longer Term

Council members debated how to best present priorities—by function or timeframe or other.

- Maggie would take out the word "top" and just leave it as priorities.
- Josh wouldn't bundle by timeframe.
- John Marzluff the way the framework is now is okay since many of the issues are already on track.
- Josh agrees with John—he would take out the notion of priorities. The first items aren't necessarily first steps or top priorities, they are continuation of what is going now. If they are put in place then the next steps can be prioritized.
- Dave R suggested two buckets: (1) critical needs and (2) immediate return.
- John M: the entire list of priorities are critical needs. The question how to decide what to start in the first year and what comes later.
- Wade suggested a business analogy—when he goes to the bank he has short term assets that need to be taken care of in one year and then there are long term assets that need to be started now but won't be completed until much later.
- Steve suggests a first step, then actions to address critical needs, then list of further actions.
- Ron noted governor will want visible actions identified, so she can see what is being done.
- Maggie agrees with Wade: identify critical needs that need to start now and longer term items that also need to start now.

Marc suggested and Council agreed to pick up the priorities discussion again in the morning.

CONFERENCE Update and Feedback

Lynn provided an update and walked through the draft agenda.

- Ron and Dave R suggested adding speakers from eastern Washington with agriculture focus.
- Brad wants to emphasize the celebration of biodiversity and to include youth.
- Staff is working on an ecoregional photo display; agenda also includes student projects.
- Lynn clarified that 200 are expected to attend and the audience will likely be a broad mix.

Ideas from Council members to encourage a celebratory feel to the conference included:

- Show the Nature of North Central Washington DVD
- Have kids introduce the governor
- Procession of species by kids during lunch
- Pomp and circumstance of handing off the strategy to the kids or to the legislature
- Involve environmental educators

ADJOURN FOR EVENING at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at Campbell's with Guest Speaker Jennifer Korfiatis, North Central Washington Resource Conservation and Development Council

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17TH:

Reconvene:

Maggie Coon, Chair, opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

CHANGES TO THE STRATEGY

Josh Weiss presented the results of the early morning **regulatory workgroup** meeting to develop new text for "Existing Laws" (page 27), and to replace text in strategy 1.4.1 and 2.5 with new wording.

Discussion

- Some discussion on the use of the "laws" versus "regulatory programs"
- Brad: concerned that a working group analyzing and reporting on existing regulatory tools may not be as effective as contracting it out.

Marc suggested taking the language developed by the workgroup and circulating it among the entire Council so the group will have time for adequate review. Council agreed. Josh noted the workgroup was very deliberate in word selection; asked people to take a light touch on making the changes.

PRIORITIES—CONTINUED DISCUSSION

The Council revisited the proposed priorities package—three sets of actions: First/Next Steps, Short Term and Longer Term. The group discussed the specific sets of recommendations under each category and then how the categories worked overall.

Discussion on the First/Next Steps Category

- Steve, Brad, and Ron suggested to take out "funding for a phase II regional pilot project as proof of concept of the strategy" out of the first steps. Focus on implementation, not testing the strategy.
- Mark, Maggie, and Dick provided reasoning behind having this under first steps.
- Steve supports pilots but wants to see language strengthened and incentives explicitly addressed.
- Discussed changing wording and focus of extending the Council to "Ensure leadership is in place for continuity"
- Maggie is interested in seeing a funding mechanism included in first steps. Group discussed pros/cons—want to keep the focus on the long-term funding.

Marc reviewed general agreement to **change first steps to:**

1. Ensure continuing leadership is in place for biodiversity conservation.
2. Begin implementation of strategy.
3. Create a baseline for measuring future progress.

Heart of Strategy—three bundled sets of recommendations

As the group engaged in discussion about specific recommendations in each category, an alternative proposal, termed the Heart of the Strategy, was offered for communicating Council priorities.

- Citizens working with scientists to score biodiversity (messaging)
- Incentives for working landscapes, market mechanisms, and recognition initiatives for working landowners to conserve biodiversity (recognition key)
- Conservation opportunities (maps) and tools guiding investments to protect biodiversity where we work, play, and live

This alternative leads with the heart of the strategy—then the first steps, then actions to build the foundation for success. The priorities: citizen science, incentives, and map tools.

- Wade wants to make sure he understands what everyone is agreeing to in the emphasis on incentives and not depending on regulations.
- Maggie wants to make sure public education is included (*considered under citizen science*).

LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY

Bill Robinson joined by phone to discuss a general outlook for the legislative session, the Priorities for a Healthy Washington, the Council's Supplemental Budget Request, an Executive Order to extend the Council, and other possible initiatives for 2008 session.

- Priorities for a Healthy Washington are: state action on global warming, local action for climate, increasing forest cover in cities, and increasing local food for schools and food banks.
- Need to educate the legislature on the Biodiversity Council.
- The timing is good on voluntary approaches and incentives.
- Focus on key legislators
- Need allies within the executive branch; policy staff need to be actively supported.
- Should work the house as well as the senate.

Discussion:

- Discussed who should meet with which legislators and governor's staff. Also the need for a letter from Maggie to the governor and the different legislators.
- Legislators seen as key: Senators Fraser, Parlette, Rockefeller, and Pridmore.

Review and Discuss KEY MESSAGES

Marc reviewed the draft handout on key messages prepared by staff and the consultant team (Cascadia Consulting plus Pyramid Communications). This handout will be used to draft the executive summary and will form the core talking points to use in introducing the strategy.

Discussion:

- Dick wants to make sure that "what is biodiversity" and why it matters is included. How people contribute to the bounty and riches of biodiversity and how it affects our everyday lives.
- Brad: that needs to be in the first paragraph and how it links to everyday life (food, water, etc.)
- Wade wants the piece to have a positive, not negative tone.
- Maggie sees a need to elevate climate change and name a few ongoing efforts—also to make it positive, emphasize hope and optimism; solution oriented.
- What the group liked about the key messages piece: it integrates biodiversity into other state priorities, it works best where it is short and punchy, like words that can evoke pictures and make it real, focus on the recommendations in the strategy.

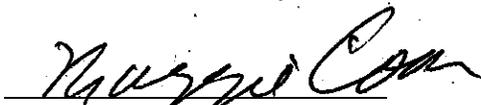
NEXT STEPS and Process for Completion of the Strategy

1) Finalize full document text, 2) Executive Summary, 3) Two page highlights 4) Executive Summary and CDs to be available at Conference

TIMELINE and CALENDAR

Lynn reviewed important dates in the next two months.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15.



Maggie Coon, Chair