

**WASHINGTON STATE BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL
SUMMARY MINUTES**

DATE: December 7, 2005
TIME: 9:10 a.m.

PLACE: Natural Resource Building
Olympia, Washington

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brad Ack	Puget Sound Action Team
William Brookreson	At-Large
Bonnie Bunning	Department of Natural Resources
Brian Collins	Skokomish Nation
Maggie Coon	The Nature Conservancy
Donna Darm	NOAA Fisheries
Rob Fimbel	Washington State Parks
Yvette Joseph-Fox	Colville Federated Tribes
John Marzluff	University of Washington
Jackie Reid	Thurston County Conservancy District
Ken Risenhoover	Port Blakely Tree Farms
Mark Schaffel	Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association
Kate Stenberg	At-large
Naki Stevens	At-large
David Troutt	Nisqually Indian Tribe
Dick Wallace	Department of Ecology
Josh Weiss	Washington Forest Protection Association
Megan White	Department of Transportation

PRESENTERS and GUESTS:

Alicia Bishop	University of Washington Student
Bobby Cochran	Defenders of Wildlife
John Gamon	Washington Natural Heritage Program
Elizabeth Gray	The Nature Conservancy
Heath Packard	Audubon Washington
Bill Robinson	The Nature Conservancy
Jay Thompson	Edge Design

STAFF:

Lynn Helbrecht
Carole Richmond
Amie Fowler
Sarah Gage

ACTIONS TAKEN

Item	Action	Reference
Meeting minutes	Approved	Page 2
Resolution to Legislature on Funding Request	Approved	Page 6

SUMMARY OF MEETING ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Maggie Coon and Brad Ack reelected to Chair and Vice Chair, respectively.

- The Council tentatively approved 2006 meeting dates, with changes as discussed.
- Council members had a productive discussion but did not agree on a working biodiversity goal. The Executive Committee will reframe discussion and provide an update at the March meeting. Most Council members wanted to be involved in this continuing discussion.
- The Pilot Projects Committee reported that it has funded the Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance and a project titled, "Building a Conservation Economy in North Central Washington".
- The Council reviewed and provided comments on the design and content of its website, scheduled for launch at the end of February.
- Break-out groups explored key questions regarding the social, cultural, and economic landscape as they can inform an effective biodiversity strategy.

HANDOUTS DISTRIBUTED:

- Meeting Agenda (on light pink paper)
- Washington Biodiversity Council 2005-07 Biennial Budget Status as of 10/31/05 (blue)
- Washington Biodiversity Council Biennial Workplan 2005-2007 Status Report as of 12/7/05 (white, 11x17)
- Considerations for Defining a "Working" Biodiversity Conservation Goal (deep pink)
- Small Group Exercise: "Assessing the Current Status of the Human Landscape" (yellow)
- Meeting Evaluation Form (canary)

OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Maggie Coon, Chair, opened the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Maggie welcomed the Council to the last meeting of the year. Maggie noted that Peter Goldmark is exploring a run for a Congressional seat and will no longer be serving on the Council. Josh Weiss has agreed to serve as Chair of the Incentives Committee, a position previously held by Peter. David Troutt has been now officially confirmed as a member of the Washington Biodiversity Council, replacing Mel Moon.

Lynn Helbrecht introduced Sarah Gage, the new Project Associate for the Council, and thanked Dick Wallace for helping with the interview process.

Council members, staff, and audience members introduced themselves and shared what gives them hope for biodiversity.

Josh Weiss circulated a new book from Washington Farm Forestry Association, *Stewards of the Land* that profiles stories of forest landowners and their stewardship activities. The book can be purchased at the following site: <http://www.wafarmforestry.com/>

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Bobby Cochran (Defenders) has been coming to Biodiversity meetings for a year and is excited to still see a full house.

Elizabeth Gray (TNC) was pleased to see consideration of a working goal for biodiversity on the agenda. She believes that establishing a working goal will provide critical focus and direction for Biodiversity Council actions and strategy.

COUNCIL BUSINESS ITEMS:

Maggie reviewed the agenda and noted that the main focus of the meeting is to define a working goal for biodiversity conservation and to scope out what we need to know about the social, cultural, and economic landscape to develop the thirty-year strategy.

Approval of Minutes

Maggie called for a **MOTION** to approve the September 22-23, 2005 meeting minutes. Bill Brookreson **MOVED** approval of the minutes. Mark Schaffel **SECONDED**. The minutes were **APPROVED** as presented.

Bill Brookreson **MOVED** approval of the October 13, 2005 meeting minutes. Mark Schaffel **SECONDED**. The minutes were **APPROVED** as presented.

Workplan and Budget Status Report

Lynn reviewed two handouts: (1) the 2005-07 Biennial Budget Status as of 10/31/05 and (2) the Biennial Workplan Status Report as of 12/7/05. Lynn explained how the budget and workplan have been updated.

Lynn noted an interagency agreement with Department on Natural Resources is moving forward, and that John Gamon, currently Program Manager for the Natural Heritage Program will lead the drafting of the Current Status Report section of the thirty-year strategy.

Brad Ack requested that the outline of the Current Status Report be circulated to the Council, and Kate Stenburg requested that materials be put on-line for review as they become available. Lynn noted also that two in-person review opportunities will be scheduled with the Science Committee and all Council members will also be invited.

Selection of Officers for 2006

Bill presented the Nominating Committee's recommendations: Maggie Coon for Chair and Brad Ack for Vice Chair.

No other nominations were made. Maggie Coon and Brad Ack were unanimously reelected.

Bill noted for the Nominating Committee that they felt the Council was making excellent progress under Maggie and Brad's leadership and that this continuity would be important for the Council's work.

*Review 2006 Meeting Schedule
(Dates listed on back of agenda)*

Lynn presented the scheduled meeting dates and recalled the Council's discussion at the September retreat at which members noted that quarterly one-day meetings have not provided enough time for thorough discussion and involvement. As the Council's work progresses, the agendas will be even more challenging. The proposed schedule thus includes a mix of one-day and two-day meetings.

Yvette Joseph-Fox expressed concerns about meeting dates scheduled in the middle of the week and indicated a preference for a Thursday or Friday meeting date. When Council members travel from eastern Washington, it makes it difficult to attend in the middle of the week.

Maggie noted that staff would try to make adjustments where possible. She urged Council members to add these dates to their calendars and to please check email for any updates that are made in the next week. *NOTE: The June meeting was subsequently changed to June 15th, a Thursday.*

DEFINING A WORKING GOAL FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION:

(See handout: Considerations for Defining a "Working" Biodiversity Conservation Goal.)

Maggie thanked the Science Committee for all their work. Her hope is that the Council can arrive at a working, high-level goal to help develop the thirty-year strategy.

Donna Darm presented a PowerPoint slide show summarizing discussions by members of the Science and Executive Committees. The desired outcome of this discussion was to agree on a working goal for biodiversity conservation. The slide show noted the following points:

The purpose of making a goal is:

- *An aspirational goal can inspire and motivate potential partners*
- *It communicates our intention to the public at large.*
- *It provides a focus for strategy development, including the identification and analysis of possible actions to reach the goal.*
- *It may enable the development of measurable objectives and monitoring indicators.*

The Council should set a long-term, statewide goal. The thirty-year strategy will make progress towards the goal, but the Council would not necessarily expect to achieve it in thirty years. The Council should focus first on a goal related to biodiversity. We anticipate that the Council will develop other goals relating to educated citizenry, engaged landowners, etc., at a later time.

The Science Committee identified four distinct levels of protection, which could theoretically be offered by a biodiversity goal.

1. *No additional action – expect continued decline in species and ecosystems.*
2. *The second level maintains existing levels of species diversity and health. This option is titled “Maintain at current levels all currently occurring native species and ecosystems.”*
3. *A third level is defined as “Maintain or restore as necessary, to healthy levels, all currently occurring native species and ecosystems.”*
4. *The final option is defined as: “Restore to healthy levels all historically occurring native species and ecosystems.” This means that species currently extirpated from Washington would be restored in appropriate portions of their former range.*

Healthy used in this context means the ability to persist over time without significant intervention.

The Science and Executive Committees recommended the third option: Maintain or restore as necessary, to healthy levels, all currently occurring native species and ecosystems.

John Gamon gave some general figures on the current status relative to the third option, with the intent of providing a ballpark idea of what such a goal might entail.

Discussion:

Council members raised several issues about the four options presented. The discussion included comments on:

- **Language.** Several Council members focused on the language of the options, expressing discomfort with *healthy* (*too vague and “feel good”*), *all, as necessary*, and the subjunctive *were*
- **Level.** Council members discussed the trade-offs of aspirational language and achievability, with several people wanting an achievable yet grand or bold goal. The comment was made that we want a strategy that will work, not something that will be shelved because its not doable.
- **Intermediate options.** Some Council members would be more comfortable with options that fell between the four categories, e.g., at 2.7, or 3.4, instead of 1, 2, 3, or 4.
- **Emphasis.** Council members spoke to the need to emphasize ecosystem processes rather than a species by species approach. There was a concern that the language of the goal options as currently worded might encourage focus on species.
- **Scenarios.** Some Council members would like to develop a series of scenarios that would flesh out the risks and consequences of each of the options.
- **Compatibility.** Some other states have goals similar to the options presented, , while some states don't set a goal but strive to reach percentages. Rob Fimbel wanted to make sure we are learning from these efforts.

- **Education.** Council members discussed how important public education is to keep people engaged and informed about biodiversity and we may want to consider including goal statements related to education.

Maggie refocused the discussion by noting that the Council adopted a mission statement a year ago and we don't need to re-create that mission statement. The mission statement will be an important part of how the Council involves the public; today's discussion was meant to focus on a goal for the thirty-year strategy.

She asked for a show of hands in support of the four different options while stressing that this was not a vote. The Council raised hands for each option, with most hands being raised for option three but with all four options receiving some raised hands. The option "none of the above" also received a show of support.

Council members were not yet able to set or agree on a working biodiversity goal. The Executive Committee will seek to reframe the goals discussion and will provide an update and possible re-engagement with the goal discussion at the March meeting. Most Council members indicated that they wanted to be involved in this continuing discussion.

PILOT PROJECTS COMMITTEE UPDATE:

Bonnie Bunning presented an overview of the Pilot Project Committee's work. In October, the Committee heard presentations from each of the three project proposals reviewed by the Council in September. The Committee was enthusiastic about selecting two projects, Pierce County and North Central Washington (Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas counties) for funding at \$20,000 each. The third proposal, in Thurston County, raised a number of concerns, and the Committee decided not to fund it.

The two selected projects will be launched beginning in January. The Committee agreed to meet quarterly just before the Council meetings and sees an ongoing role to support and learn from the progress of the projects. The Committee has asked each project to provide quarterly updates at Committee meetings.

Bonnie noted that the Committee was funded \$60,000 and has allocated \$20,000 to each of the two projects. The Committee will hold the remainder for the time being for future needs or opportunities.

Rob Fimbel noted that specific project activities (e.g., Pierce County's BioBlitz) may interest Council members, and hoped they would have a chance to be involved and learn from the projects.

Maggie noted that the Council would be advancing a supplemental budget request of \$300,000 to the Legislature for the Pilot Projects of the Biodiversity Council. Bill Robinson explained that the environmental community has included this request in its list of priorities sent to the legislature. We will not know for several months regarding the success of this proposal. The Council discussed a resolution to the Legislature to support the request for \$300,000 funding. Bill Robinson agreed to work on language and present a draft resolution later in the meeting.

WEBSITE PRESENTATION:

Kate Stenberg gave an update on the Website Committee's activities. The website has been named the "Washington Biodiversity Project." This website will cover three major areas of information: biodiversity information, resources for users, and council information. Other categories will include stories of stakeholders, a grants program database, and landowner recognition. The plan is to launch the website at the end of February 2006.

Kate asked the Council to consider three questions:

1. Are you comfortable with the overall focus of the website?
2. Are you comfortable with how the Council is represented?
3. Is it a good idea to include Council biographies?

Jay Thompson presented a schematic of the highest levels of the site with an overview of the different categories which would be represented on the home page.

- Column 1 gives general information for those who have no background in biodiversity.
- Column 2 is specific to Washington's overall biodiversity.
- Column 3 presents information divided into Washington's nine ecoregions.
- Column 4 is the largest, with resources, the organization of which is still under discussion.
- Column 5 contains landowner resources.
- Column 6 is about the Council and its activities.

Ken Risenhoover asked whether the public will be able to provide information to the Council through the website. Jay answered that there is a *Contact Us* option and other ways to give feedback.

The Council discussed the option of including a "kids corner" in the site and expressed concern that site should appeal to youth. Staff explained that the site's creative brief, presented early in the planning, emphasized targeting educators (wholesale) rather than youth (retail), and so consequently the web committee had not been focusing on youth directly. In response to the Council's comment staff will see what could potentially be incorporated to appeal directly to kids.

Bill asked if there is enough staff time for maintenance so that the site is not outdated every few months. The equivalent of one-quarter FTE will be allocated for site maintenance after launch.

Kate noted material available will be posted now, and in the next year the Council can add to and update the website. She asked the Council if they are comfortable with the way that the Council is represented on the site or if there were any overall concerns.

Maggie appreciated the presence and color; it has a nice warm feeling. She asked if the home page would be a place to put highlights. Jay answered that the home page would be a good place for highlights and that content pages would be no more than two clicks from the home page.

Carole Richmond clarified that the site will be launched at the end of February 2006. Before that, a trial phase will get feedback from users and Council members. The site architecture retains much flexibility.

PILOT PROJECTS COMMITTEE UPDATE: (Continuation)

Maggie Coon presented a draft resolution. After discussion, the following language was presented:

The Washington Biodiversity Council endorses a \$300,000 supplemental budget request for pilot projects. These projects will focus on encouraging private landowners to enhance management practices that improve the state's biodiversity through non-regulatory incentives. This request will supplement and expand existing pilot projects by providing expert technical and financial assistance to develop workable incentives that can be exported to other areas on a voluntary basis. We believe this approach will build understanding and replace conflict between the economic and value based interests of landowners and the environmental needs of the community as a whole.

Brian Collins made a **MOTION** to approve resolution. Ken Risenhoover **SECONDED**. Resolution was **APPROVED** as presented.

"THREATS TO WASHINGTON'S BIODIVERSITY" PRESENTATION:

John Marzluff introduced University of Washington graduate student Alicia Bishop.

Alicia's PowerPoint presentation gave a description, solution, and impact on biodiversity for each of the following threats: Development, Agriculture and Grazing, Overgrazing, Disturbance, Forest and Fire Management, Invasive and Non-invasive Species, Hydrological, and Contamination.

Afterwards, the Council asked how the numbers were determined, what resources were consulted, and what process was used to come up with the solutions. Alicia noted that she and classmates used websites and additional resources for each threat. She noted that the solutions presented are just a sample.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT:

Lynn Helbrecht presented this agenda item (see handout: "Assessing the Current Status of the Human Landscape"), which addressed the question: What is essential for us to know about the social, cultural and economic landscape in Washington in order to develop an effective biodiversity conservation strategy? Given limited resources to direct towards this research, staff wanted the Council's feedback on the most important questions to focus on.

The Council broke into three groups and spent thirty minutes discussing what we need to know about the social, economic, or cultural landscape, and why?

Summary of discussions:

Social (ethics, spiritual, values)

Notes recorded and read by Brian Collins.

- Will public support increased taxation for effective conservation strategy?
- What behaviors will we support?
- General public's values—everyone has different history and cultural perspectives.
- Survey—formulate questions—sampling; what are existing surveys on environmental values? Opinion polls with components relevant to biodiversity?
- What actions? Willingness to do for selves & alter lifestyles?
- What regulations? (Regulatory/tax/non-regulatory)
- Incentives—pay it forward. Kids and parents assume responsibility to improve environment.
- Popularizing biodiversity—marketing. (Community involvement)
- What groups do we need to understand? Rural vs. urban values?
- Political discourse as an index of values.
- What does it mean personally and to family?
- Self interest vs. public trust.
- People have a limited geographic focus—it's their problem, not mine.
- How to find out?

Cultural (demographics, education, political)

Notes recorded by group, read by Brad Ack.

- Is increasing urbanization leading to increasing disconnect from nature? (Nature-deficit disorder)
- Aging demographic for working landowners.
- Private property rights movement versus community interests - is there a trend? What's behind this? What are implications for our project?
- Different timeframes for different sectors lead to different perspectives re: land - agriculture/shorter- timber/longer.
- Is there a way to use the two pilot projects to test or explore aspects of any of these factors?
- We should do a literature review on cultural issues.

Economic (sector growth, development trends, land values, etc.)

Notes recorded by group, read by Bill Brookreson.

- Where in the state is economic development?
- Where are the areas that are best for forestry, agriculture, etc.?
- What are the most cost-effective conservation strategies in which areas of Washington?
- Where do we expect economic growth in which sectors?
- Where does economic activity conflict with biodiversity?
- What is the economic value of the natural resources we are trying to protect?

- How does protecting WA biodiversity support Washington's economy?
- Conservation effectiveness.
- Identify incentives and disincentives for landowners.
- What is the rate and location of land conversion statewide (and how does this relate to conservation priorities)?
- What are interactions between industries that result in land use changes (e.g., keeping Boeing meant new highways)?
- What industries are compatible with biodiversity?
- What industries do we want to encourage? What do we want to discourage?

Lynn noted that these thoughts will help target the Council's future work.

Public Comment:

Elizabeth Gray believes that this discussion is critical in developing a strategy. These are fundamental questions that need to be asked before making a goal.

Meeting Evaluation:

Council members were encouraged to fill out the evaluation forms provided.

In closing, Maggie commented on the rediscovery of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker and recited Emily Dickinson's "Hope is the Thing with Feathers."

Meeting adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

Maggie Coon 3/8/06

Maggie Coon, Chair