

**WASHINGTON STATE BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL
SUMMARY MINUTES**

DATE: Dec 12, 2008
TIME: 9:00 a.m.

PLACE: The Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
Olympia, Washington

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Maggie Coon, chair
Josh Weiss, vice chair
Jim Armstrong
Leonard Bauer
Ken Berg
Bonnie Bunning
Nina Carter
Donna Darm
Rob Fimbel
John Garner
Tom Laurie
John Marzluff
Ikuno Masterson
Mike Mosman
Elizabeth Rodrick (for Dave Brittell)
Ron Shultz
Kate Stenberg
Cullen Stephenson
Megan White

The Nature Conservancy
Washington Forest Protection Association
Spokane County Conservation District
CTED
US Fish and Wildlife
Department of Natural Resources
Audubon Washington
NOAA Fisheries
State Parks
Tacoma Nature Center
Department of Ecology
University of Washington
ESA Adolfsen
Port Blakely Tree Farm
Department of Fish & Wildlife
Washington Conservation Commission
At-Large
Puget Sound Partnership
WA State Department of Transportation

PRESENTERS and GUESTS:

Steven Walters
Erica Baker
Maya Kocian
Kathy Taylor
John Pierce
Heath Packard
Bill Robinson

University of Washington
Pacific Education Institute
Earth Economics
Department of Ecology
Department of Fish & Wildlife
Recreation and Conservation Office
The Nature Conservancy.

STAFF:

Lynn Helbrecht
Sarah Gage
Rachel LeBaron-Anderson
Marc Daudon

Cascadia Consulting

ACTIONS TAKEN

Item	Action	Reference
Meeting minutes	Approved	Page 2

SUMMARY OF MEETING ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- The Council reviewed its 2009 Meeting Schedule (March 12, June 10, Sept. 23-24, Dec. 2).
- The Council reviewed the Leadership Report submitted to the Governor in November, and discussed plans for the 2009 legislative session.

- The Council indicated interest in participating in current discussions on possible reorganizations of the natural resource agencies, particularly related to how biodiversity as an organizing principle might contribute.
- Three of the early action projects made presentations to the Council. Steven Walters asked for feedback on the initial stages of the Scorecard project. Erica Baker described the Schoolyard Biodiversity Report under development by the Pacific Education Institute. Maya Kocian provided information on how ecosystem services can be a source of funding for biodiversity conservation.
- Council working groups provided updates on their activities.

OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Maggie Coon, Chair, opened the meeting at 9:10 a.m., noting that, with the election and the financial crisis, the world had changed since the September meeting. She encouraged Council members to engage in high-level strategic discussion and to think of today's meeting as being about possibility.

Maggie and the Council congratulated Ken Berg on receiving the inaugural Science Leadership Award from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

COUNCIL BUSINESS ITEMS:

The leadership and accountability report, mandated in Executive Order 08-02, was delivered on time to the Governor. Council members received a copy of "Leadership Strategy: Recommendations for State Leadership to Sustain Washington's Biodiversity Heritage." Limited numbers of additional copies are available from staff.

Lynn made a presentation on climate change and biodiversity to the Senate Water, Energy, and Telecommunications Committee on behalf of the Council. Senator Rockefeller, chair of the committee, praised the Council's work and asked whether legislation to continue the Council was in preparation.

Maggie overviewed the agenda, Lynn reviewed the packet handouts, and she noted that the new brochure is available for Council member use.

Approval of Minutes

Maggie called for a **MOTION** to approve the September 24-25, 2008 meeting minutes. Nina Carter **MOVED** approval of the minutes. Josh Weiss **SECONDED**. In discussion, Leonard Bauer made one correction. Nina Carter **MOVED** approval of the corrected minutes. Josh Weiss **SECONDED**. The Council **APPROVED** the minutes unanimously with one correction.

2009 Meeting Schedule

Lynn reviewed the 2009 schedule: March 12 (Olympia), June 10 (Eatonville), September 23-24 (to be determined—possibly eastern Washington), and December 2 (Olympia area).

Workplan and Budget Status Report

The Council's budget is doing well, except that funding has not yet been found for the Nisqually valuation project. Council members asked about budget cuts in the next biennium. Lynn replied that the Recreation and Conservation Office has not yet been asked to cut its current budget. The RCO is keeping a close eye on costs.

Lynn reviewed the workplan. Some items are tentative and do not have timelines or target dates. The new format is designed to help both staff and Council members better track progress and accomplishments. Council members commented that they liked this layout.

BIODIVERSITY LEADERSHIP AND UPCOMING LEGISLATIVE SESSION:

Status of 2009-2011 Budget Request

Maggie reviewed the 2009-2011 budget request. Base funding (carryforward) for the Council (\$500,000) comes half from the General Fund and half from the Department of Transportation. Maggie is hopeful that the carryforward amount will be included in the Governor's budget. Maggie is not optimistic about the request for \$475,000 for council projects in the currently economy.

John Garner asked if the Council's funding from Transportation and the General fund were likely to continue. Megan clarified that DOT is scrutinizing every operating dollar. Bill Robinson explained that when the Council was set up, DOT provided funds because they had money available at the time, there were strong proponents of biodiversity conservation on the committee, and DOT's forward thinking about long-term infrastructure goals tied in with the goal of having a long-term strategy.

Nina asked staff to send an email to the Council after the Governor's budget is released on December 18 and note the status of the Council.

Leadership Report

Marc Daudon facilitated this part of the meeting. He reviewed the discussion and handouts from the September retreat, including the leadership options. At that time, the Council chose Option 2, a public-private partnership housed in a state agency. The entity would guide, lead, and convene, not implement.

Main points of Council discussion in September were the future council's home (which agency), the role, if any, for an NGO, the composition of the future Council, and the role of linkage to a university. Functions and roles of a future Council include promoting efficiencies, integrating approaches, measuring and reporting progress, and ensuring accountability.

Discussion:

- Josh stressed how important these roles and functions are to the business community, which wants to know how biodiversity conservation as an umbrella approach will provide economic benefits.
- Nina said that 30 years ago, "ecology" was a new word for the public. It is important to explain that "biodiversity" is an over-arching term that covers many things.
- John Garner suggested keeping the topic in front of the Governor, perhaps by natural resource directors reporting out more often.

Draft Legislation and Legislative Strategy

Maggie commented that the Executive Committee and staff worked very closely with the Governor's office to draft the legislation. There have been positive signals about submitting it as agency request legislation, in which case RCO and staff could help fully to move it forward.

- Josh noted that he has found legislative support from both political parties.
- Bonnie said if the bill is introduced as agency request legislation, it is likely that DNR would testify in favor of it. (Newly elected Commissioner of State Lands, Peter Goldmark, is a former member of the Council.)
- Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy, expects a drastic budget reduction, but believes that the Governor would not oppose a bill from the legislature.
- Leonard noted that cabinet agencies would follow the Governor's lead. It is positive that the bill has no fiscal impact.

The Governor is likely to recommend ending several commissions and boards. In that context, putting forth legislation to codify the Council could seem inconsistent. However, many of the commissions and boards to be cut are ones that rarely meet.

Lynn thanked Heath Packard from RCO for his work on the legislative request and reviewed its contents. Lynn reviewed the main points of the draft legislation, including suggested members of the

council, their terms, the work of the council, formation of a science advisory group and working groups, possibility of forming an NGO, responsibilities of state agencies on the Council, with specific mention of partnership with Conservation Commission, and sunset review in 2014. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) performs sunset reviews by state statute.

Two benefits of including a sunset review:

- It could bring more support from stakeholders concerned about another permanent group.
- Members will change over time; it is good to review the value of the group's work in a few years. The Council is respected now in part because of the high caliber of its members.

Heath reviewed the items needed to present new legislation, one of which is review by groups that might have a position or negative reaction. Staff and Council members conducted these stakeholder consultations between the November election and Thanksgiving. The majority of stakeholder groups contacted were supportive or neutral. An informal condition of support for many was that it move forward with little to no fiscal impact.

Next Steps:

In a wide-ranging discussion, Council members made the following points and suggestions in four areas: 1) how the Council could promote efficiencies across agencies; 2) how the Council could grow or change; 3) how to advance the Council and its legislation; and 4) ways forward under different scenarios such as no funding or no legislative mandate.

Promoting efficiencies across agencies

- Flesh out how the Council could implement reviewing the agency budgets, assuming the Council gets authority and agency cooperation/participation through the legislation.
- Ask what agencies are already doing, and how the Council can help them do it more efficiently.
- Look at ways to be more efficient in our home organizations. Many groups have common denominators, such as collecting data, data analysis, data assessment, incentives, outreach, education, interagency coordination. Maybe combine some of these functions.
- Combining functions may not mean cutting staff; it could be a way to accelerate the work and improve the product
- Integrate biodiversity more strongly into growth management act and county plan updates; provide incentives for counties. Utilize the power of local planning.

Possibilities for Council activities or actions:

- Look at current threats holistically, including climate change and invasive species.
- Maybe Council could assist in prioritizing threats.
- Add Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to our list of agencies; we need to bring in youth and future generations.
- Beware of Council losing focus if it takes on too many other group missions. How realistic is it that the Council could coordinate agency budgets? How would that create efficiencies?

Advancing the Council and the legislation

- Make the language of the bill more compelling. It does not explain exactly what we have done/are doing to sustain biodiversity.
- Need to have stories ready and list of projects to help get our main message through.
- Need an elevator speech on the value and importance of this council.
- "Transformation" is something this group can do. If we can keep showing progress, people will continue to say yes to us.
- The theme of the 2009-2011 budget is sacrifice, transformation, and stimulus including green jobs—there may be an approach here for the council.

Ways forward

- Look for a plan B for the group so we can go forward regardless of funding or legislation. May need to find a holding place for our work.
- Need to examine how the Council might participate in a restructuring or transforming of natural resource agencies.
- Governor is looking for sacrifice, stimulus, and transformation. The Council is ready and willing to help lead the conversation.
- An executive order, including how the council is transformative, could be a way forward whether or not the bill advances.

Council members agreed that options will become clearer after the Governor's budget is released. Maggie followed up on the suggestion of an executive order, noting that she has heard nothing against the idea and it could be started in the coming weeks.

BREAK

Next Steps continued

The Executive Committee will meet in the coming weeks to look at next steps. Staff will begin to flesh out plan A (legislation), plan B-1 (transformative), and plan B-2 (no legislation and/or no funding).

EARLY ACTION PROJECT: SCORECARD PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

John Marzluff thanked the group for its support of the project, and introduced Steven Walters, recently hired project lead at the University of Washington. John noted that Steven has a background that includes natural and social science degrees.

Steven presented a PowerPoint (Biodiversity Scorecard Project: Draft Vision and Guiding Principles) on the initial approach to the scorecard. He is working closely with staff and the Science Committee. Steven will be contacting each Council member. John Marzluff stressed the importance of keeping an open mind—the indicators may not be as familiar as one might expect.

- How will the scorecard reconcile scientists' differing opinions?
 - Avoid interpretation. State the data clearly and objectively, not whether they are good or bad.
 - Measure indicators that communicate to a wide range of audiences.
 - The scorecard will use existing data, not create new data at this point.
- How will the data be filtered for quality?
 - That will depend on the indicators chosen. May find that certain desirable indicators do not have data available.

Maggie thanked the Science Committee and Steven for pursuing this project. She stressed that the scorecard must be a scientifically credible tool that communicates with and educates a wide audience.

Steven will provide updates at each Council meeting and will be attending the Science Committee meetings. Email updates will also be available. In the coming weeks, Steven will send an email containing questions that will help start his discussion with each Council member.

WORKING LUNCH

EARLY ACTION PROJECT: HANDS ON STUDENT BIODIVERSITY PROJECTS

Erica Baker, Pacific Education Institute (PEI), shared the Schoolyard Biodiversity Study that she is developing and that Grays Harbor Middle School will be testing later in the school year. This tool will enable teachers to introduce biodiversity concepts right at their schools, and to tailor class activities to the strengths and opportunities of the site.

She noted that PEI shows teachers how this curriculum (Schoolyard Biodiversity Study) can help students meet state requirements. This creates more of an incentive for teachers to use it.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Incentives (Lead: Ron Shultz)

Ron distributed the ranking and tracking sheet the working group is using to review the Incentives and Markets recommendations in the Strategy. The group looked at leads and partners, status, and opportunities to advance each recommendation.

The working group concluded that three projects might be appropriate for direct Council support or involvement; a forum on ecosystem/conservation markets, a dialogue with interested parties on establishing a landowner incentive clearinghouse, and new opportunities for recognition and awards for landowner stewardship. Other possible actions include changing the definition of open space with Department of Revenue. Legislation to change the current open space definition in order to create a category for wildlife areas/biodiversity, is likely this year.

Science (Co-Leads: Rob Fimbel and Donna Darm)

Rob acknowledged and thanked the members of the committee who are not Council members. He reviewed the major areas of the committee's work.

Conservation Opportunity Framework.

- o The framework works well as a hook to interest people.
- o The ecoregional-scale threats layer is not as useful as local threats information would be to local planners. County zoning may be a good substitute.
- o The Western Futures Growth Model (threats layer), which shows population growth as a major driver of threats, is being updated.
- o The biodiversity significance data underlying the polygons needs to be made available.
- o Fresh water analysis will be available in six months. It will be a separate, complementary map.
- o A guidance document and talking points will be developed.

Climate Change. The Science Committee will invite the Climate Impacts Group at the University of Washington to a future meeting to see how they can link together.

Habitat Connectivity. The Science Committee is providing input to the Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group regarding methodology for determining connectivity areas for wildlife. John Garner commented that zoo groups would be interested in being involved, and Rob invited them to attend.

Biodiversity Scorecard. The Science Committee is working closely with Steven Walters (see above).

Outreach (Lead: Ikuno Masterson)

Ikuno drew attention to the new brochure, which is more sustainable and easier to distribute than the Strategy. Outreach activities in the past quarter included:

- o Staff made four presentations (Wild Links, Northwest Environmental Forum, UW Wildlife Seminar [with John Marzluff], South Sound Washington Native Plant Society).
- o Strategies and other materials made available at seven additional events (two Invasive Species Work Days, North Central Washington project workshop, Peninsula College Sustainability Days, and the annual meetings of the American Planning Association, Environmental Association of Washington, Washington Association of Conservation Districts).
- o Updated Web site.

Rob suggested adding Biodiversity Council meeting information to the home page two weeks before a meeting.

Future outreach activities include coordinating links from partners' Web sites, facilitating Council members' outreach at events they are attending, staff attendance or presentations at key events, and the video.

Land Use (Lead: Leonard Bauer)

Leonard distributed the scope of work for the North Central Washington project. Leonard and Kate Stenberg attended the project's local planner workshop on the Conservation Opportunity Framework. They listened to planners' impressions, and to what would make it more useful to them. They heard a lot of interest in integrating freshwater analysis, using different threat layer(s) (e.g., local zoning or development), and in access to the data behind the biodiversity significance.

Leonard is working with John Gamon on the Landscape project, to make it more useful to planners. Council members noted that the Conservation Opportunity Framework could be part of the "best available science" that planners must consider.

BREAK

EARLY ACTION PROJECT: NISQUALLY ECOSYSTEM SERVICES VALUATION

Maya Kocian from Earth Economics gave a PowerPoint presentation (Funding Mechanisms for Biodiversity Conservation) about ecosystem services and how they can contribute to funding opportunities for biodiversity conservation. Earth Economics is working with the Nisqually River Foundation and David Troutt on this project

She suggested viewing biodiversity as infrastructure: Ecosystems provide many services, but if we lose biodiversity, we lose the ecosystems, and so lose our economy. Cullen pointed out that the market does not look at the economic value lost by not using dollars in the best way ecologically.

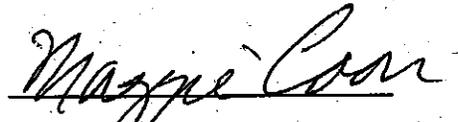
NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING COMMENTS:

Maggie reiterated follow-up items. Staff will send out the Governor's budget information as soon as it is available. Council members will be hearing from Steven Walters about the scorecard. The Executive Committee will continue talks about the council's future roles. Council members are encouraged to respond to the surveymonkey email.

Public Comment

Kayla Seville greeted the Council on behalf of the Nisqually River Council.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00.



Maggie Coon, Chair