

Washington Biodiversity Conservation STRATEGY REPORT

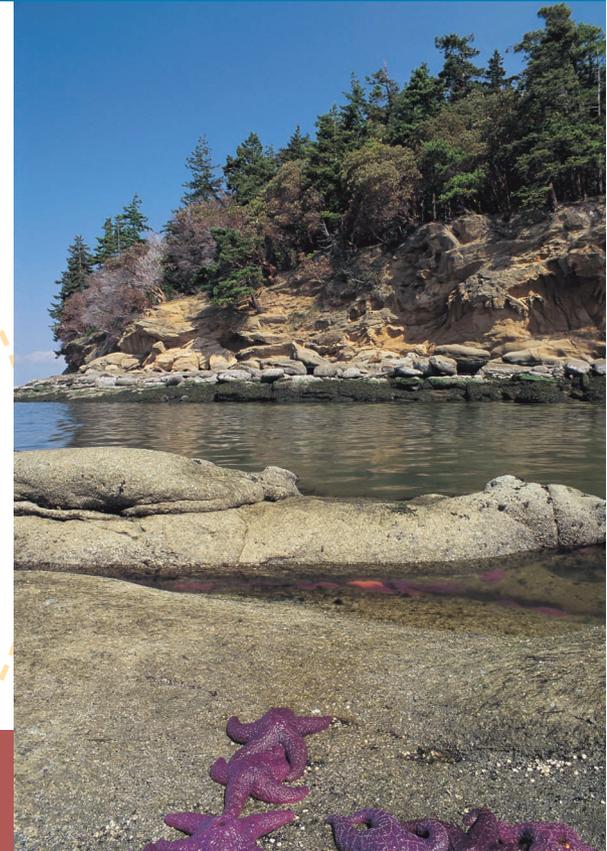
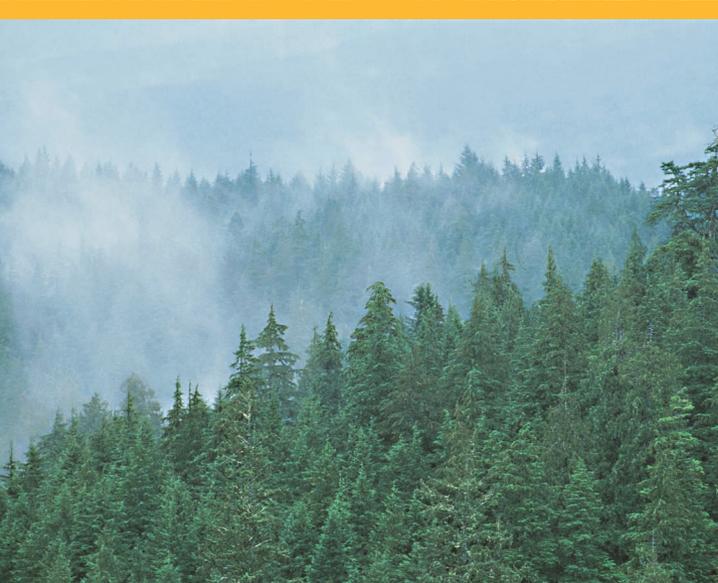


making the connections

Presented by the

WASHINGTON BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION COMMITTEE to

- ▶ Governor Gary Locke
- ▶ The Senate Parks, Fish & Wildlife Committee
- ▶ The House Fisheries, Ecology & Parks Committee



pursuant to Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6400

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October 1, 2003

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DEAR GOVERNOR LOCKE, SENATOR OKE AND REPRESENTATIVE COOPER:

In 2002, you and the members of the Washington State Legislature took the visionary step of acknowledging the essential role of our state's biological diversity in shaping the high quality of life enjoyed by all our citizens and visitors. In further recognition of this priority, new legislation, ESSB 6400, was passed directing the development of a framework for statewide biodiversity conservation. We are pleased to present to you the recommendations of the Biodiversity Conservation Committee established to carry out this first phase of what we hope will become an enduring commitment to safeguarding our rich natural heritage.

A task of this magnitude called for the engagement of people from many perspectives and walks of life. We discovered over the past year that, in the process of understanding biodiversity as "the full range of life in all its forms—the web of life," we as individuals also developed new connections among ourselves, laying a solid foundation for collective effort toward common goals. In essence, we have already begun to form a new kind of web. At the same time, we realized we are part of a much larger network of innovative efforts, an excellent example of which is the recent initiative toward an action plan for a sustainable Washington.

We began by confirming the critical importance of biodiversity and reviewing indicators of its decline. We then noted its many links to the economic well-being of Washington state. Next, we examined the tools currently in place to address biodiversity conservation. We explored experiences in other states and learned about many related projects here at home, both public and private. Finally, we took on the challenging task of identifying specific needs and opportunities to better coordinate and achieve synergies among existing programs and envisioning what it would really take to transform the way we approach biodiversity conservation in Washington state.

The core of our report is contained in a set of Guiding Principles and the recommendations that flow from them. These principles emphasize the opportunity to apply our growing scientific knowledge to ecoregional conservation efforts, and to do so in



a proactive, rather than reactive fashion. They stress the efficiencies we can achieve by building on and coordinating better the many excellent efforts already underway. And perhaps most significantly, they highlight the necessary contribution of the full array of individuals and organizations in Washington state in conserving biodiversity, while acknowledging a particularly important role for local government and private landowners. The Guiding Principles also state clearly that our proposed new, comprehensive approach does not recommend new regulations.

We believe that the recommendations developed by our committee will launch a new era of success in human stewardship of the rich diversity of life, both on land and water, in Washington state. They are ambitious, yet realistic. Key among them, and a necessary first step, is the creation of a public/private Washington Biodiversity Council. As earlier contemplated by the Legislature, this group will carry forward the development of a statewide biodiversity strategy, building on the consensus and creative thinking reflected in this report. The new council will have primary responsibility for development of the blueprint for a thirty-year vision, with a key component being public education and outreach. We anticipate it will foster enhanced collaboration, both among public agencies and between the public and private sectors, steering conservation resources more effectively toward those places of greatest biological significance.

We deeply appreciate your leadership in tackling this challenging issue. We know you share our vision of a state in which the rich diversity of our landscapes and seascapes sustains a vibrant economy and unparalleled quality of life. And we know you understand that achieving our goals will require a new consciousness and commitment on the part of each and every one of us. On behalf of our committee, thank you for the opportunity to take the first significant steps down this path.

Sincerely,

Steve Tharinger
Clallam County
Commissioner

Ken Risenhoover, Ph.D.
Director of Wildlife and Fisheries Programs
Port Blakely Tree Farms

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Executive Summary

Washington is one of the most biologically diverse states in the country, a diversity that is at the heart of our economic strength. It makes Washington one of the country's most desirable places to live and work. And its protection presents significant challenges. Washington is the smallest and second most densely populated of the rapidly growing Western states. And as such, it is in danger of losing much of its rich natural diversity. Habitat fragmentation, degradation and conversion threaten the ecosystems that sustain the state's rich web of life. And the demise of this affects all who live here.

Although scientists don't know all the consequences of the loss of native plant and animal species, they do know that healthy ecosystems are essential to maintaining our quality of life. Washington's rivers, streams and wetlands filter pollutants, deliver nutrients and reduce flood damage, and our biological diversity sustains those vital natural resource industries that produce food, fiber, fuel, building materials and medicines. The state's rivers and marine waters also continue to sustain a commercial fishing industry and its natural beauty draws recreationists and tourists from around the world who help to support our communities. It is this ecosystem infrastructure that biodiversity conservation aims to reinforce.

State and local leaders, policy makers and others have worked hard over the years to address the need for greater natural resource protection. But many of the efforts have been reactive rather than proactive and no single law or program provides for a holistic approach to conservation. Despite enormous effort, Washington continues to face one endangered species crisis after another, while quality habitat and other elements of biodiversity continue to decline. Some have compared our current approach to biodiversity protection to that of an emergency room: It kicks in only when the patient is in critical condition.

It was against this backdrop that the Washington State Legislature stepped forward in 2002, calling for the development of a framework for statewide biodiversity conservation. Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6400, passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Gary Locke, directed the creation of a temporary committee to assess the state's current efforts at biodiversity protection, nonregulatory approaches that could strengthen these efforts, and ways to make biodiversity information more accessible to a wide range of partners. This committee—a diverse group representing private and public interests, academia and nearly all levels of government—grappled with these issues over the course of almost a year. What emerged is a report that the committee believes lays the foundation for what could become one of the nation's most effective and enduring statewide biodiversity blueprints.

The committee's recommendations were informed by the following **four Guiding Principles**:

- 1. We can reduce uncertainty** by expanding the focus of natural resource efforts from the species level to the ecosystem level and by proactively working to prevent the need for ESA listings.
- 2. Conservation is more cost-effective** when it builds on science, recognizes existing efforts and maximizes coordination among public agencies, conservation organizations, and private natural resource managers.
- 3. Active stewardship by private landowners** is essential to biodiversity conservation and must be encouraged, on a variety of landscapes and scales, through the application of voluntary, nonregulatory approaches.
- 4. Local governments are best suited** to engage stakeholders in biodiversity conservation and should be supported in this effort.

With these Guiding Principles as its touchstone, the committee articulated seven desired outcomes and 22 more specific recommendations to address the conservation of biodiversity in Washington. The seven desired outcomes are to:

1. Develop a statewide biodiversity strategy. Many of the building blocks for a statewide conservation strategy are already in place. What is missing is a blueprint, a coordinated effort to identify, protect and restore areas that support the state's greatest biological diversity. Washington should build its biodiversity strategy on science-based assessments and a long-term vision of the state's conservation needs, both guided by the creation of a new Washington Biodiversity Council.

2. Develop a public education and outreach program. Biodiversity protection will be executed only if the public and policymakers fully understand its importance to our quality of life and the ways in which they can contribute. Education and outreach programs should be designed and implemented for all ages and walks of life, including K-12 public school children, university students and the general public.

3. Provide greater support to local government in conserving biodiversity. Local governments are at the heart of biodiversity conservation, because it is at that local level that most land-use decisions are made and because local governments are best suited to engage stakeholders in their own communities. These local agencies need support and good natural resource information to succeed.

4. Improve nonregulatory efforts at conservation on private lands. Voluntary stewardship by private landowners is essential to biodiversity conservation in Washington, since 60 percent of the state's land base is in private hands. We need to advance the use of and access to nonregulatory stewardship incentives by private landowners to enable many different users to contribute to the stewardship of Washington's biodiversity.

5. Improve efforts to conserve biodiversity on public lands. Most of the state's public lands and waters, including trust lands, are managed for conservation, or under a multiple-use concept that includes elements of conservation. However, the concept of biodiversity protection could better inform and influence the management philosophies and decisions of most public agencies.

6. Improve coordination among state agencies in collecting and managing biodiversity information. Biodiversity conservation will be successful and cost-effective only if all state natural resource agencies have access to objective and consistent biological data, and if they coordinate their conservation priorities and procedures for collecting and managing data.

7. Continue and expand ongoing ecoregional conservation assessments. Ecoregional assessments that identify the full range of biodiversity in a given region, as well as priorities to conserve that biodiversity, are currently being conducted by a growing number of public and private partners. These efforts should be supported and expanded to provide a solid scientific foundation for the state's biodiversity strategy.

Washington is at a critical juncture. Many dynamic forces and actions threaten the health of our land, water and way of life. At the same time, we have before us an enormous opportunity, a chance to ensure that Washington's biological diversity and natural beauty endure for generations to come. These recommendations, if enacted, will usher in a new comprehensive approach to conservation in Washington state—one premised on collaboration, strong science, private land stewardship, and cost-effectiveness. It is the committee's hope and belief that such an approach will enable us to make informed decisions about our state's future and launch a new era of success in the human stewardship of Washington's stunning diversity of life.

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INTRODUCTION

Washington is one of the most biologically diverse states in the union. This is due to the state's diverse topography, its exposure to Pacific Ocean currents and weather patterns, and its location on the migratory path of many wildlife species. Washington has seacoast, shrub-steppe, native prairies, parts of four major forested mountain ranges, and the huge arm of the Pacific Ocean called Puget Sound.

Washington, in fact, contains most of the major ecosystem types found in the western United States, including two found nowhere else in the world: the Olympic rainforest and channeled scablands. These landscapes and the biological diversity they support are contained within nine continental ecoregions that extend from the Pacific Northwest Coast and Puget Sound in the west to the Columbia Plateau and Canadian Rocky Mountains in the east. Washington's ecoregions, shown on page 9, are defined by similarities in flora and fauna, resulting from similar soils, geology, hydrology, and landforms.

Washington's varied landscapes and ecoregions not only support a variety of birds, mammals, plants, and other elements of biodiversity, but also a diverse cross-section of people who live and work here. Our forests support a timber industry that continues to employ thousands of people. Farmers have converted much of the semi-arid shrub-steppe into one of the nation's breadbaskets. And the state's rivers and saltwater habitats still support commercial and recreational fishing. Indeed, it is this state's natural richness that provides much of the quality of life that makes Washington one of the fastest-growing states in the West. Those who are born here want to stay, and each year thousands move to or visit Washington from other parts of the world.

BIODIVERSITY IN WASHINGTON STATE

Biodiversity is defined by the Washington Biodiversity Conservation Committee as "the full range of life in all its forms."



This includes the habitats in which life occurs, the ways that species and habitats interact with each other and the physical environment, and the processes necessary for those interactions. It is sometimes referred to as the "web of life." An ecosystem is defined as "an integrated ecological system of land, water, and living organisms in contiguous areas such as watersheds, landscapes, or regions."

One way of measuring biodiversity is by counting the number of different native plant and animal species that live in Washington. Our state is permanent or temporary home to 140 mammal species, 470 freshwater and saltwater fish species, and 341 species of birds that either breed here or stop here on their annual migrations, as well as 150 other vertebrate species, 3,100 vascular plant species, and more than 20,000 kinds of invertebrates.

As the smallest and second most densely populated of the rapidly growing Western states, Washington is in danger of losing much of its diversity of plant and animal life in our lifetimes, or the lifetimes of our children and grandchildren, through habitat fragmentation, degradation, and conversion, as well as from global climate change and a constant and rapid invasion of exotic plant and animal species. This is especially true in the Puget Sound

Our environmental infrastructure cannot be taken for granted. Just like our highways and educational systems, it requires investment and vision.

region, where most of the state's population and growth is concentrated, as well as in the Columbia Basin, Lower Columbia River, and other areas of rapid growth and development. Since statehood in 1889, Washington has lost an estimated 70 percent of its estuarine wetlands, 50 percent of its riparian habitat, 90 percent of its old-growth forest, and 70 percent of its native shrub-steppe and arid grasslands. Together, these four native habitat types have been considered among the most diverse and productive in the state.

The worldwide rate of extinction of plant and animal species is astounding. It is estimated to be 10,000 times as rapid as it was in prehistoric times, with more than 27,000 species being extinguished every year. Although we do not fully understand all the consequences of this continual loss of native plant and animal species, we do know that a diversity of healthy, functioning ecosystems is essential for maintaining our quality of life and economic viability into the future. Our biological diversity sustains those vital natural resource industries that produce fiber, food, fuel, building materials, and medicines. A healthy environment also provides enormous economic, health, and cultural benefits, including clean air, clean water, flood control, and nutrient cycling, as well as

recreational and economic opportunities such as wildlife recreation, recreational boating, and commercial fishing, as well as the passing down of traditional knowledge from one generation to the next.

We don't always know which species or set of relationships provides the link that is critical to ecosystem function. But we are painfully aware of the enormous economic and social impacts that can result from an aggressive non-native species or the listing of wild salmon or the northern spotted owl under the Endangered Species Act.

The combination of rapid growth and relatively small size makes the loss of biodiversity especially acute in Washington state. Washington's population in 2000 was 5.8 million, and we are expected to add almost two million people by 2020. Our population density is second only to California in the West, and the resulting stresses upon the state are great. Only by way of a coordinated statewide effort can we sustain Washington's rich biodiversity and the economies that depend upon it.

Through a coordinated, comprehensive approach to a biodiversity strategy we can:

- ▶ Identify the most important resources on land and water;
- ▶ Conserve ecosystems that are still functioning well;
- ▶ Restore critical habitats and their natural processes;
- ▶ Guide limited funds and staffing to areas that clearly address biodiversity;
- ▶ Better coordinate ongoing conservation efforts; and
- ▶ Attempt to get ahead of future endangered species listings.

Our environmental infrastructure cannot be taken for granted. Just like our highways and educational systems, it requires investment and vision.

Although we do not fully understand all the consequences of this continual loss of native plant and animal species, we do know that a diversity of healthy, functioning ecosystems is essential for maintaining our quality of life and economic viability into the future.





CURRENT CONSERVATION EFFORTS FALL SHORT OF PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY

There are many important state and federal environmental laws in place that address various aspects of environmental conservation. Over the last 20 years, millions of dollars have been spent to protect and restore imperiled fish and wildlife habitat and other elements of biodiversity in Washington state. But no single law or program provides for a holistic approach to conservation, and until the Washington State Legislature passed ESSB 6400 in 2002, there had been nothing in state or federal law that referenced an ecoregional approach to conserving biodiversity. Most of the laws we have now are reactive, not proactive, in that they do not address the conservation of plant and animal species before they become imperiled. Despite enormous efforts, Washington faces one endangered species crisis after another, while critical habitat and biodiversity continue to decline on both public and private lands.

Although some species will always be rare and in need of special protection, many decision makers recognize a need to expand the current species-by-species response to resource protection. Those state and federal efforts that do address the conservation of species and ecosystems before they become imperiled, such as the National Forest Management Act and the state Growth Management Act, are insufficient to make this shift because they are not currently implemented in a holistic or fully coordinated way. Biodiversity assessment and conservation allow a more comprehensive approach to the protection of species and their ecological evolutionary processes, so that many species never become rare enough to demand costly, individual recovery efforts. While this more comprehensive approach will allow us to begin to

understand priorities and trade-offs in our decision-making, it is important to realize that a biodiversity blueprint will only *inform*, not *make* the decision.

With most of Washington's landscape in private ownership, neither regulations nor public ownership of all conservation lands are practical or sufficient to protect biodiversity; we need to use all available tools. In particular, we need to advance nonregulatory stewardship incentives and a comprehensive blueprint to enable many different users to contribute to the stewardship of Washington's biodiversity. We also need to increase the capacity of local government to identify and conserve important biological resources on both private and public lands. This approach should be steeped in thoughtful landscape planning, from ecoregional assessments to local growth management plans, and should be implemented in a coordinated way. It should also work closely with those people whose livelihoods depend upon the health of these lands. And it must be founded on broad public understanding of the importance of biodiversity, something that is currently missing. Without public understanding and support, a biodiversity "toolkit" will never be opened and the coordination needed among natural resource conservation efforts will never be realized.

WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE ADDRESSES BIODIVERSITY

In 2002, the Washington State Legislature provided strong leadership in addressing biodiversity conservation by passing Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6400. ESSB 6400 requested a comprehensive review of the state's needs for biodiversity data and conservation, with an emphasis on better coordination of existing efforts and strengthening nonregulatory approaches to conservation—including voluntary landowner incentives on private land. To accomplish this review, ESSB 6400 called for the creation of a

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temporary Washington State Biodiversity Conservation Committee and directed the committee to conduct a review of existing programs and develop recommendations for a state biodiversity strategy. (ESSB 6400 is included as Appendix A.)

The committee, convened in late 2002, includes representatives from key constituencies and stakeholder groups as set out in ESSB 6400. Committee members include local elected officials, as well as representatives from agriculture and forestry groups, conservation organizations, business interests, universities, and federal, state, and tribal natural resource agencies. (See inside front cover for a list of committee members.)

Between December 2002 and June 2003, the full committee reviewed issues related to biodiversity conservation, including existing state laws and programs that may affect biodiversity con-

servation and out-of-state efforts such as the Oregon Forest Sustainability Project. Based on these discussions, the committee identified the seven desired outcomes and developed the 22 recommendations included in this report. When implemented, these recommendations will significantly advance the progress of biodiversity conservation in Washington state.

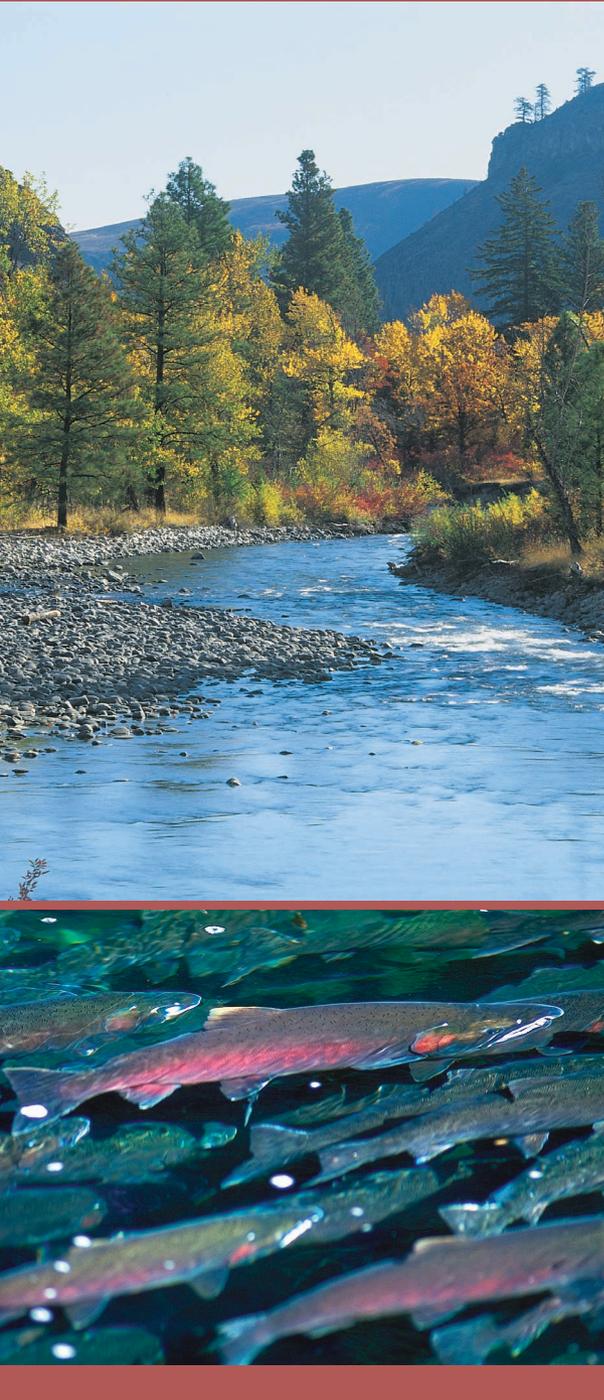
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE WASHINGTON BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION STRATEGY

With its unique mandate, the committee developed recommendations shaped by the following set of Guiding Principles. These principles address the urgency to conserve diminishing biodiversity while supporting and sustaining the communities and economy of Washington state. This new, comprehensive approach does not recommend any new regulations.

- ▶ **We can reduce uncertainty** by expanding the focus of natural resource efforts from the species level to the ecosystem level and by proactively working to prevent the need for ESA listings.
- ▶ **Conservation is more cost-effective** when it builds on science, recognizes existing efforts, and maximizes coordination among public agencies, conservation organizations and private natural resource managers.
- ▶ **Active stewardship by private landowners** is essential to biodiversity conservation and must be encouraged, on a variety of landscapes and scales, through the application of voluntary, nonregulatory approaches.
- ▶ **Local governments are best suited** to engage stakeholders in biodiversity conservation and should be supported in this effort.

While this more comprehensive approach will allow us to begin to understand priorities and trade-offs in our decision-making, it is important to realize that a biodiversity blueprint will only *inform*, not *make* the decision.





"We at the county level are always looking for nonregulatory, incentive based programs to help promote stewardship. We are willing to do what we can within our severe budget restraints to help build public understanding about a proactive approach to ecosystem health that a biodiversity strategy represents."

—STEVE THARINGER, CLALLAM COUNTY COMMISSIONER

State Strategies for Biodiversity Conservation:

- Oregon Biodiversity Project
- California Biodiversity Council
- Hawaii Conservation Biology Initiative
- New Mexico Biodiversity Project
- Oklahoma Biodiversity Plan
- Missouri Biodiversity Task Force & Council
- Wisconsin Biodiversity Plan
- Ohio Biodiversity Plan
- Illinois C2000 Ecosystems Program
- Indiana Biodiversity Initiative
- Kentucky Biodiversity Council
- Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership
- Maine Forest Biodiversity Council
- Delaware Biodiversity Initiative
- Maryland's Green Infrastructure Assessment
- Massachusetts EOEA Biodiversity Project
- New Hampshire Biodiversity Conservation Project
- New Jersey's Landscape Project
- Florida's Closing the Gaps Project
- Florida's Ecological Network Project

Source: "Status of the States: Innovative Strategies for Biodiversity Conservation," a report by the Environmental Law Institute, 2001

PROJECT BACKGROUND

A number of states, including Oregon, California and Florida, have addressed the loss of biodiversity by developing comprehensive, collaborative, and proactive strategies for biodiversity conservation and restoration. One of the most successful state-level biodiversity efforts has been the Oregon Biodiversity Project, initiated in 1994 by Defenders of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy of Oregon, the Oregon Natural Heritage Program, and other public and private partners. Over a five-year period, the project evaluated plant and animal species, habitat types, land ownership, threats to biodiversity, and management strategies to determine which areas in Oregon should receive the highest priority for conservation. The Oregon Biodiversity Project was successful in shaping the outlines of a biodiversity conservation strategy for the state. The ongoing Oregon Biodiversity Partnership is emphasizing on-the-ground conservation actions in priority areas, improving the management and distribution of biological information, making land-use planning more responsive to biodiversity conservation, and creating new conservation incentive programs for Oregon landowners.

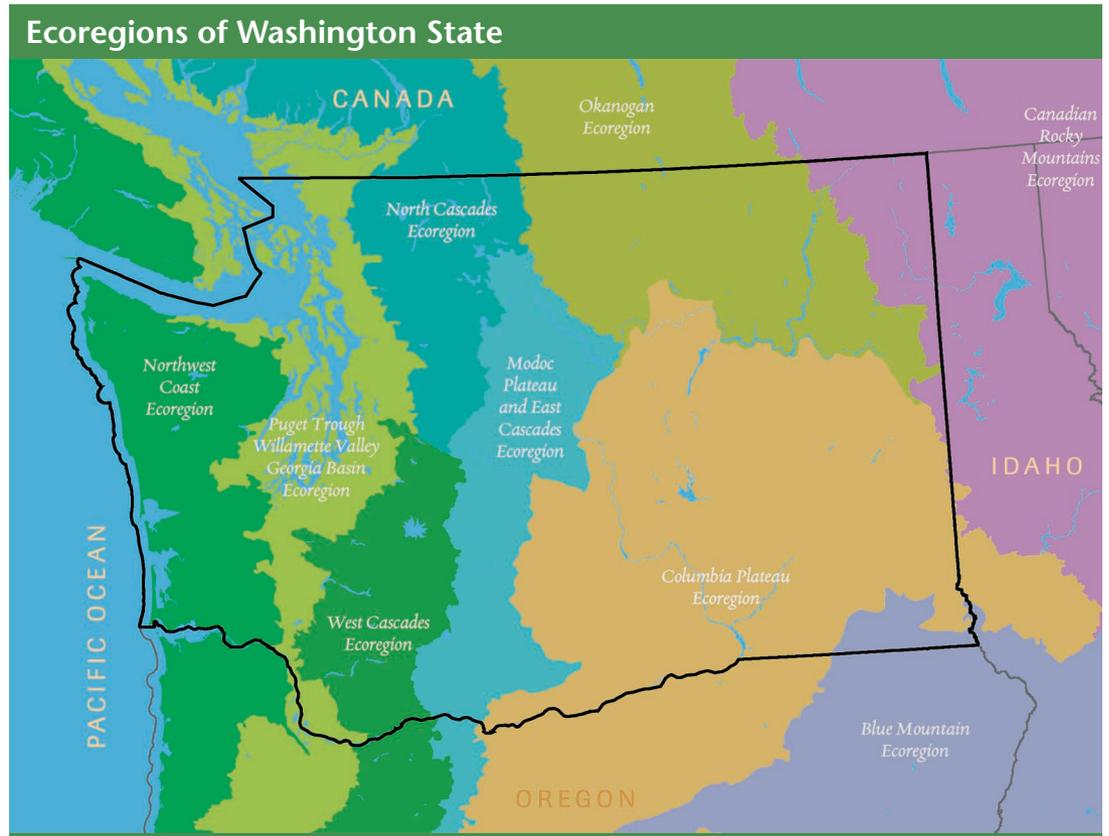
In April 2001, Defenders of Wildlife commissioned a study of the feasibility of a statewide biodiversity project in Washington. Completed in December 2001, the study was based on interviews with more than 70 federal, state, local, and tribal natural resource and GIS managers, state elected officials, and representatives from conservation, timber, and business organizations.

The feasibility study recognized that a number of important public-private conservation and assessment efforts were currently underway, including many focused on the restoration of Puget Sound and its near-shore habitats and tributaries. One effort, the Forests and Fish Agreement,

addressed management of state and private timber resources and its relationship to the recovery of salmon and other species under the Endangered Species Act. The study report noted that existing efforts could be important building blocks for a Washington biodiversity initiative. The report also noted that a high degree of technical capability existed among various agencies, businesses, and conservation organizations to begin the development of an effective statewide biodiversity initiative. Some of these existing public and private programs and efforts are summarized in Appendix E.

The following year, the Washington State Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6400. ESSB 6400, signed by Governor Gary Locke in April 2002, recognized that “the state possesses a diversity of plants and animals in a diverse array of ecologically distinct regions. This biological diversity and its role in forming the diverse landscape of the state are an important part of the high quality of life shared by Washington’s citizens and its visitors.” The bill also states that, although extensive scientific work has been done to map the state’s ecoregions and address ecoregional planning issues, the information is not complete, not sufficiently accessible to the public or policy makers, and not part of any coordinated state strategy to conserve Washington’s biodiversity. ESSB 6400 also called for the convening of a temporary Washington Biodiversity Conservation Committee and directed the committee to conduct a status review of the state’s biodiversity and report back to the Legislature and Governor by October 1, 2003 with recommendations regarding the development of a state biodiversity strategy.

To guide both traditional species protection and a transition to ecosystem conservation, as well as provide a landscape-level framework for biodiversity conservation, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and The Nature Conservancy of Washington began in 2002 to complete ecoregional conservation assessments in the state’s nine ecoregions. These ecoregions are defined by



geography and topography, rather than political boundaries, and span Washington from the Pacific Northwest Coast and Puget Sound to the Columbia Plateau and Canadian Rocky Mountains. The coordinated assessments will guide the state’s future conservation by identifying priority areas with the greatest importance for biological diversity. They are also being designed to provide usable, up-to-date information for planning and conservation at many scales, from state-level salmon recovery and wildlife management, to watershed assessments, to county-level planning required by the Growth Management Act. For Washington to be eligible for federal funding for the new State Wildlife Grants program, coordinated ecoregional assessments will need to be completed in 2005.

These ecoregions are defined by geography and topography, rather than political boundaries, and span Washington from the Pacific Northwest Coast and Puget Sound to the Columbia Plateau and Canadian Rocky Mountains.

7 OUTCOMES AND 22 RECOMMENDATIONS from the Biodiversity Strategy Committee

1

Develop a Statewide Biodiversity Strategy



A new Washington Biodiversity Council can create a shared long-term vision for public and private action to conserve the state's biological diversity.

Many of the building blocks for a Washington biodiversity strategy are already in place or under development by various agencies and conservation organizations, which often are working together. Some programs, particularly those dealing with Puget Sound, forest practices, water quality, and wildlife habitat, have been in place for years; others have been developed recently to address emerging critical issues such as salmon recovery, growth management, and invasive species. What has been critically missing in Washington is a strategy to incorporate these building blocks into an effective, coordinated

statewide effort to identify, protect, and restore areas with the greatest biodiversity, on both public and private land, as well as freshwater and marine environments.

Washington should build its biodiversity strategy on a science-based assessment of the state's conservation needs. Development and implementation of the strategy should be guided by a new Washington Biodiversity Council that can create a shared long-term vision for public and private action to conserve the state's biological diversity. The council's mission will require cooperation and coordination across traditional boundaries among state natural resource agencies. Administrative support for Washington's biodiversity strategy should be provided through an independent agency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create a standing, public-private Washington Biodiversity Council.

This new council will continue and expand upon the work of the temporary Washington Biodiversity Conservation Committee, including the evaluation of existing laws and programs, and ensure continued stakeholder involvement in biodiversity conservation and ecoregional assessments. The council should be appointed by the governor, and reflect the interests of the temporary committee and include additional stakeholder representation. The council should be charged with overseeing the design and implementation of a state biodiversity strategy, to include a 30-year biodiversity vision and a statewide public education and outreach program. The council will report back to the Governor and Legislature each biennium on the progress of the emerging Washington biodiversity strategy.

The Washington Biodiversity Council should be adequately funded and staffed to accomplish its mission, and a mix of public and private funds should be pursued for its work. To be effective, the council will also require cooperation and coordination across traditional boundaries among state natural resource agencies. The Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) should be designated to support and facilitate the development and implementation of an overall state biodiversity strategy by the council. Since the IAC was created in 1964 as an independent grant management agency, it has been given a number of important cross-agency natural resource responsibilities by the Governor and the legislature. Most recently, this has included administration of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, development of the Public and Tribal Lands Inventory (2001), and allocation of state and federal salmon recovery funds, through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. (A proposed timeframe and budget is included as Appendix B.)

2. Create a 30-year vision that includes benchmarks for conserving Washington's biodiversity.

This vision will include a strategy for educating the public about biodiversity and will incorporate statewide and ecoregional priorities and benchmarks for conservation of land and water (both fresh and marine) that:

- ▶ Include representative examples of all distinct native communities;
- ▶ Maintain ecological and evolutionary processes;
- ▶ Maintain viable populations of native plants and animals and other essential elements of biodiversity, including aquatic and marine species;
- ▶ Identify blocks of natural habitat, including aquatic and marine habitat, large enough to be resilient;
- ▶ Prevent introduction of invasive species and eradicate or control already-established invasive species;
- ▶ Recognize the contribution of existing conservation areas and programs; and
- ▶ Recognize the role and contribution of stewardship of public and private forests and farmland.

3. Use science-based ecoregional assessments to identify conservation priorities.

Science-based ecoregional conservation assessments will help the new Washington Biodiversity Council identify conservation needs and priorities, and provide a road map for both species-level and ecosystem management. The Washington Legislature identified ecologically distinct regions as an appropriate scale of planning, with passage of ESSB 6400 in 2002, and the departments of Fish and Wildlife and

Natural Resources have embarked on an intensive public-private effort to develop conservation assessments for the nine ecoregions across Washington state. This public-private partnership has been successful so far in creating a landscape-level framework and effective working environment for identifying areas of greatest biodiversity value and designing strategies to address their conservation. A key role of the Washington Biodiversity Council will be to ensure adequate stakeholder involvement in the development of ecoregional assessments. (The nine ecoregions being used for this statewide assessment are on page 9.)

4. Develop pilot biodiversity conservation projects in two ecoregions.

Pilot demonstration projects should be designed for two ecoregions, one east and one west of the Cascades. These pilot projects would be designed to have strong public involvement and to incorporate local knowledge and values into the development of a conservation strategy for each ecoregion. These pilots would also provide an opportunity to better coordinate ongoing ecoregional assessments with local growth-management planning and other conservation efforts within each of the ecoregions.

Outreach and education regarding the social, economic, and ecological importance of conservation within each ecoregion will be critical to gaining strong public involvement. The intended outcome of these pilot projects is to identify and agree on both conservation needs and local and regional strategies for addressing those needs. The ecoregional strategies would include identification of various conservation tools to be used (i.e., incentives, easements, acquisition, volunteer efforts, etc.), as well as roles and responsibilities for carrying out agreed-upon conservation actions. The pilot projects would also identify how to measure success and how to adapt to changes that may be required over the time of the project.

Recommended Additional Stakeholders

The Washington Biodiversity Conservation Committee recommends the creation of a standing Washington Biodiversity Council. The committee also suggests the following agencies and stakeholder interests be added to this new council, in addition to the list of agencies and groups listed in ESSB 6400 Sec. 2 (6) and those who participated in the committee:

- ▶ Departments of Defense and Energy (Hanford, U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force)
- ▶ Land trusts, representing both Eastern & Western Washington
- ▶ Conservation Districts
- ▶ Washington Association of Conservation Districts and/or Washington Conservation Commission
- ▶ Representatives of dryland and irrigated agriculture
- ▶ Representatives of livestock ranching
- ▶ Washington Water Resources Association
- ▶ Washington Farm Forestry Association
- ▶ Representatives from shellfish producers and other marine expertise
- ▶ Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction
- ▶ Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
- ▶ Representatives of county weed boards

2

Develop a Public Education & Outreach Program for Washington's Biodiversity



The success of the biodiversity conservation strategy will depend on being able to convey greater understanding of the “big picture” and to involve more people in its stewardship.

While many policy makers, stakeholders, and members of the public recognize the importance of biological diversity to our economy and quality of life, there has not been a clear blueprint that enables their contribution to its conservation. The success of the biodiversity conservation strategy will depend on being able to convey greater understanding of the “big picture” and to involve more people in its stewardship.

There are already many good environmental education programs in place, which are funded and administered by a mix of federal, state, and local agencies, as well as private organizations such as Audubon Washington and the Washington Forest Protection Association (Project Learning Tree). The Environmental Forum at the University of Washington's School of Forest Resources provides another opportunity for planners, managers, policy makers, landowners, and academics to work together to solve problems related to the maintenance of Washington's biological diversity. The public school curriculum in Washington also includes an environmental education component. But, as with other existing programs, there is no recognition or emphasis yet on the concept of conserving biological diversity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Develop a long-range public education strategy.

As part of a 30-year vision for biodiversity conservation, the Washington Biodiversity Council should develop a strategy to educate Washington's citizens on the importance of biodiversity to their daily lives and what they can do as individuals to help conserve it. This strategy should include formal public education from K-12 through the university level, as well as outreach and education programs for the general public.

"Our experience reflects conservation efforts are most effective when based on good science and implemented through strong private-public partnerships."

—DAVE BRITTELL, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

6. Create a Washington biodiversity web site.

The council should also develop a new web site that explains the work of the Washington Biodiversity Council and provides a visual, interpretive, and interactive overview of Washington's ecoregions and biodiversity. The web site could contribute to biodiversity conservation in many ways. It could serve as a management resource for private and public landowners and local government. It could provide background on major factors affecting biodiversity loss, including invasive species, and recommendations for addressing these factors on private and public land. It could also provide a summary and evaluation of available landowner incentive programs, statewide and by ecoregion, as well as other available assistance programs from both public agencies and private organizations.

7. Put biodiversity in the classroom.

The council should work with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Department of Fish and Wildlife, Audubon Washington, universities, local school boards and superintendents, and other partners to incorporate the concept of biodiversity conservation into the environmental education curriculum for public schools. Based on the recently completed *Environmental Education Report* by the Governor's Council on Environmental Education, this effort should identify existing programs that are effective or may be adapted for biodiversity education. The Council should also work with OSPI to incorporate biodiversity into its five-year strategic plan for environmental education and to design a public school curriculum to be integrated into the pilot biodiversity program recommended for two ecoregions, one in Western Washington and one in Eastern Washington.

3

Provide More Local Government Assistance to Conserve Biodiversity

Land-use planning and environmental programs are very much locally driven and locally administered in Washington state. A successful statewide biodiversity conservation program will need support and participation from the counties and incorporated cities.

The Legislature has established a number of statewide environmental programs, such as the State Environmental Policy Act, Shoreline Management Act, and Growth Management Act (GMA), that are administered with a high level of local discretion by the state's incorporated cities and 39 counties. The GMA, for instance, requires local government to identify and protect critical areas. State government has a limited role in determining which critical areas meet the statutory definition and how the local jurisdictions will go about protecting these areas.

Local governments know their communities well and can engage stakeholders in biodiversity conservation at the local level. However, it is vital that they are provided with the necessary support and expertise to succeed. Cities and counties have generally accepted responsibility for the protection of their own critical environmental resources, but effectively administering these programs using local tax revenues is often difficult, especially in Washington's rural counties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8. Establish a new state Biodiversity Conservation Account.

The Washington Biodiversity Council should develop a statewide strategy to engage local government in the conservation of biodiversity, on both public and private lands, and new funding should be provided to assist with this effort. The Washington State Legislature should create a new state-funded local-assistance pro-

gram within the IAC to assist local government with biodiversity conservation. Dedicated funds would be made available to local government on a competitive basis for various purposes associated with biodiversity conservation, including mapping, inventories, and data collection; biodiversity education; and protection, restoration, and enhancement of land and waters with important biodiversity values.

9. Enhance existing local-option conservation programs.

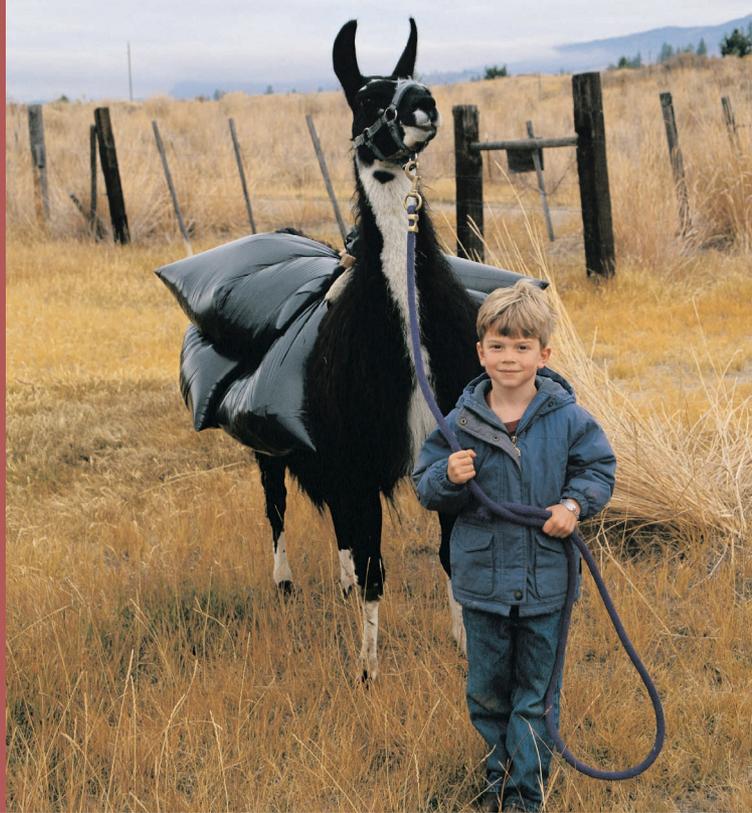
The Legislature has authorized local-option programs for local government to collect and spend tax revenues for acquiring conservation lands, easements, and development rights from willing landowners. These programs are often effective in protecting natural resources that cannot be protected in other ways, but most programs are under-funded relative to the state's growing population and conservation needs. Funding sources include the Conservation Futures Tax and the Real Estate Excise Tax. Some cities and counties use these options effectively to protect areas of biodiversity; many do not use them at all. Some of the most important and threatened areas of biodiversity may be in rural counties that do not employ these local funding options.

The council should examine ways to make these conservation-funding options more available to local governments not already using them (perhaps including state subsidies), and more effective for those who are. The Washington Biodiversity Council should be directed to survey selected cities and counties regarding the use and effectiveness of Conservation Futures and other local programs for funding the targeted acquisition of lands to conserve biodiversity. The council should also encourage local communities to take part in ecoregional assessments and other efforts to help them identify elements of biodiversity in most need of protection at the local level.



Local governments know their communities well. It is vital that they are provided with the necessary support and expertise to succeed.

Best management practices and conservation measures are often easier to apply on public lands, but in many cases conservation on private land is more critical.



4 Improve and Expand Nonregulatory Efforts to Conserve Biodiversity on Private Land

Active, voluntary stewardship by private landowners is essential to the conservation of Washington's biodiversity. Most of the land base of the state (60 percent) is in private or tribal ownership, and much of that, at least outside metropolitan areas, is in timber or agricultural production. Private corporate timberlands account for more than four million acres, or about 10 percent of the state. Agriculture, including cropland, pastures, and orchards, accounts for another 15 million acres, or about one-third of the state. (A summary of public and private land ownership is provided on page 17.)

Best management practices and conservation measures are often easier to apply on public lands, but in many cases conservation on private land is more critical, since much of the state's biodiversity is located in the same low-elevation areas that are under the most pressure for conversion and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. Evaluate existing landowner incentive programs.

Washington has a variety of financial incentives and other nonregulatory measures available to landowners and businesses to conserve wildlife habitat and other resources, including programs administered by both federal and state agencies. But many of these existing programs are not being used effectively or extensively enough to make a significant impact on the loss of habitat or biodiversity. Once established, the Washington Biodiversity Council should evaluate existing incentive programs in Washington and recommend changes to make these programs more effective in conserving biodiversity. This evaluation should include a survey of all 39 counties and selected cities to determine which programs work, which do not, and why. Some existing programs might even include disincentives to conservation, and these should be identified and addressed by the council. The council should also examine successful landowner incentive programs in other states and recommend ways that these might be applied or adapted for use in Washington. The Biodiversity Conservation Committee completed an initial inventory of existing landowner incentive programs in Washington; a short discussion and matrix of this inventory, including suggested future evaluation criteria, are attached as Appendix D.

11. Evaluate existing programs to acquire permanent conservation easements or development rights on private lands.

The Washington Biodiversity Council should conduct an evaluation of federal, state, local, and private programs available to landowners and develop recommendations for how the state of Washington can enhance the use and effectiveness of conservation easements and the nonregulatory purchase of development rights to conserve biodiversity.

12. Establish a coordinated landowner outreach and marketing program.

Landowners need easy access to information about why they should be involved in private land stewardship, who benefits, and the impact of their voluntary actions. A variety of education and outreach programs already exists to inform farmers, ranchers, and small forestland owners about opportunities for voluntary conservation on their lands, including the identification and control of invasive species. But these programs are under-funded and fragmented in different agencies.

The council should encourage agencies to pool their funds and staff to provide information and assistance about all existing conservation and invasive species control programs. New staff should be recruited to reach out to landowners and help coordinate the delivery of information and technical assistance by public agencies such as Washington State University, Washington Sea Grant Program, Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team, the departments of Agriculture and Fish and Wildlife, and local conservation districts. Partnerships should also be pursued between public agencies and private organizations



such as the Washington State Grange, Washington Farm Forestry Association, and local land trusts in order to get the message out to landowners about private land stewardship incentives and other nonregulatory programs available to landowners for biodiversity conservation.

13. Establish a Washington biodiversity stewardship award.

This new award program would recognize landowners who have gone beyond regulatory requirements to identify and conserve important biodiversity resources on private land. The program could be modeled after successful programs identified in other states. Different types of landowners and businesses could be recognized for their efforts, including voluntary timber industry efforts to protect critical wildlife habitat, efforts by farmers, ranchers, or small timberland owners to preserve and restore natural features on working lands, or successful attempts to identify and eliminate invasive species on private land.

"Privately owned lands contribute substantially to the overall amount of wildlife habitat available in Washington and the Pacific Northwest. Thus, it is paramount that we take steps to recognize and encourage good land stewardship, and where necessary, lend assistance, to ensure continued sustainability."

—KEN RISENHOOVER, PH.D.
DIRECTOR OF WILDLIFE & FISHERIES PROGRAMS
PORT BLAKELY TREE FARMS

5

Improve and Expand Efforts to Conserve Biodiversity on Public Land

About 40 percent of the land base of Washington state is in public ownership, including military bases, the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, public roads, and state and federal parks, forests, and wildlife lands. About 30 percent of Washington's tidelands and three-quarters of its freshwater shorelands are also owned by the state, the remainder having been sold into private ownership after statehood in 1889.

Most of Washington's public land base and water resources are either managed for conservation or managed under a multiple-use concept that addresses the protection and management of habitat and other elements of biodiversity. This includes state trust lands that are managed to provide support for schools and other public institutions. All public land and water management agencies, including the departments of Defense and Energy, have some level of responsibility for natural resource conservation and invasive species control on their lands.

However, the concept of biological diversity is not ingrained in the management philosophies of most public agencies. Protecting biodiversity on public lands at a landscape level depends on each agency's mission, funding, and willingness to coordinate with other agencies and organizations on conservation priorities and management approaches.

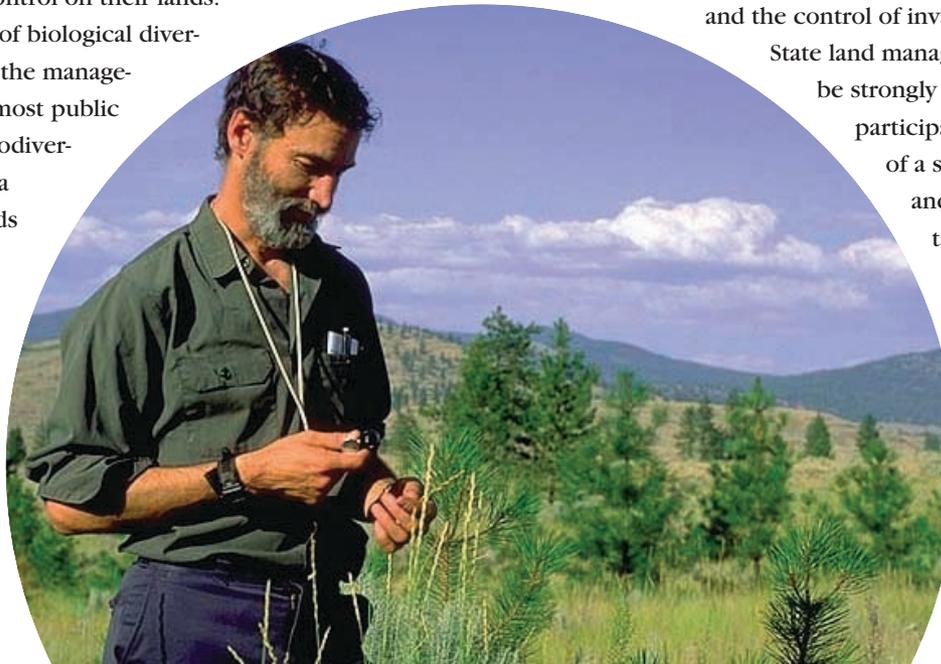
State land management agencies should be strongly encouraged to continue participating in the development of a state biodiversity strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. Encourage state agencies to be more responsive to biodiversity conservation.

About six million acres of Washington's land base is owned or managed by state agencies, including the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation, and the State Parks and Recreation Commission. These lands are managed for many different outcomes, from the protection of endangered and threatened species to the production of harvestable timber and agricultural products and the support of public school construction. Most state agencies already have special land designations, such as natural area preserves, wildlife areas, and marine protected areas, as well as policies for the protection of state and federally listed species and the control of invasive plants and animals.

State land management agencies should be strongly encouraged to continue participating in the development of a state biodiversity strategy and to incorporate important components of biodiversity into their land management planning. Recognition should also be given to successful state agencies and employees as an incentive to biodiversity conservation.





15. Continue state programs that fund the selective acquisition and public management of lands with high biodiversity.

Acquisition of land from willing landowners by public agencies or nonprofit conservation organizations is often an important nonregulatory tool in protecting areas with high biodiversity values. The cost of acquiring land can be significant—but for certain areas with high biodiversity, acquisition is sometimes the best or only alternative for long-term protection and stewardship. A number of conservation land acquisition programs are in place in Washington, administered by a mix of state and local agencies and conservation organizations such as local land trusts. These programs include the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Trust Land Transfer Program, and the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (see Appendix E). These programs should continue to be funded, and agencies and organizations receiving public acquisition funds should work closely together to coordinate their conservation priorities. Agencies should be strategic when they target lands to be acquired for protection of biodiversity. Critical biodiversity lands don't always have to be purchased; they can sometimes be protected through easements, land donations, or land trades.

16. Promote continued federal funding for nonregulatory conservation of biodiversity.

The Washington State Legislature should on a regular basis encourage Congress to continue and increase funding for federal programs such as the 2003 Farm Bill, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Forest Legacy Program, the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act, the Estuary Restoration Act, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, which are used in concert with other public and private resources to conserve lands of high biodiversity in Washington state (Appendix E). Federal funding programs are not only effective on their own in conserving biodiversity, but are used to leverage non-federal funds in the same way that state funds are used to leverage matching federal funds. The funding partnerships created by federal and state agencies have proven to be effective in conserving biodiversity, on both public and private land, all over the United States. These federal programs should be closely coordinated with state programs to maximize effectiveness in conserving biodiversity.

LAND OWNERSHIP IN WASHINGTON

FEDERAL AGENCIES

Forest Service (USDA)	9,189,418 acres
National Park Service	1,831,283 acres
Bureau of Reclamation	480,149 acres
Department of the Army	404,313 acres
Bureau of Land Management	395,929 acres
Department of Energy (Hanford)	363,612 acres
Other Federal	329,032 acres
Total Federal	12,993,736 acres

STATE AGENCIES

Department of Natural Resources (uplands)*	2,975,136 acres
Department of Fish and Wildlife	461,576 acres
Department of Transportation	152,464 acres
State Parks and Recreation Commission	107,619 acres
Other State	45,048 acres
Total State:	3,741,843 acres

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Total Local:	658,945 acres
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INDIAN TRIBES

Yakama Indian Nation	1,152,945 acres
Colville Confederated Tribes	1,119,269 acres
Quinalt Indian Nation	181,488 acres
Spokane Indian Tribe	131,787 acres
Other Tribal	91,792 acres
Total Tribal:	2,677,281 acres

Total Private Land	23,400,00 acres
Total Land Area of Washington (uplands)	43,461,805 acres

* The Wash. Dept. of Natural Resources also owns approximately 2,407,000 acres of aquatic lands.

Source: The 1999 Public and Tribal Lands Inventory; Final Report, December 2001; Washington Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation

6

Improve Coordination Among State Agencies in Collecting, Standardizing, Managing and Distributing Biodiversity Information

The state of Washington, through its various agencies, boards, commissions, and educational institutions, plays a critical role in collecting and managing natural resources information and providing data to local government and others. Federal and tribal agencies, as well as private organizations, also play an important role in collecting and using data for conservation purposes. Each of these agencies collects and manages data to meet its own agency mandates and needs, often resulting in uncoordinated or conflicting priorities and incompatible data sets.

For biodiversity conservation efforts to be successful and cost-effective, state natural resource agencies need access to objective, current, and comprehensive information on the status and distribution of all components of biodiversity. They also need to better coordinate their programs at various management levels so that agency conservation priorities, procedures, and information sets are compatible with each other. Coordination among state agencies is improving at all levels, and significant efforts related to data development and resource assessment have been completed or are in progress, but what is needed is a stronger interagency commitment to adopting a cooperative, coordinated approach to data collection and management.



RECOMMENDATIONS

17. Maintain a technical subcommittee to contribute to and report on data improvement priorities.

To coordinate information management efforts, the new Washington Biodiversity Council should maintain a technical subcommittee composed of representatives from key state, tribal and federal agencies, universities, and other public and private partners having expertise in the management of biodiversity-related data. This subcommittee should convene regularly and provide guidance to the Washington Biodiversity Council on a number of technical and policy issues, such as uniform definitions and mapping classifications for vegetative cover. This subcommittee is critical enough to the work of the Council to warrant a dedicated technical/scientific staff person in the proposed budget (Appendix B).

18. Partner with national data exchange efforts to ensure data standardization, scientific peer review, and credibility.

Biodiversity information must be managed to serve both agency mandates and the public's interest in biodiversity conservation. Scientific credibility of these data is maintained through national partnerships for data exchange, peer review, and standardization. Washington state agencies should maintain partnerships with the National Biological Information Infrastructure and NatureServe, a data exchange partnership which serves member programs in Washington and the other 49 states. These partnerships can provide credible scientific peer review, objectivity, standardization, and increased access to information on the nation's biological resources.

19. Enhance existing state initiatives for standardizing and making available geospatial data for biodiversity conservation.

The Washington Geographic Information Council (WAGIC) was created in 1994 within the Washington Department of Information Services to advance the coordination, sharing, and standardization of geospatial information among federal, state, regional, tribal, and local governments, and private entities. The WAGIC should be maintained and its capabilities should be strengthened by increased funding and staffing.

The **Geospatial Framework Project**, currently coordinated by the WAGIC, standardizes core GIS (Geographical Information Systems) data commonly used by state agencies and others, including cadastral, hydrography, elevation, ortho-imagery and transportation frameworks. This is an important ongoing effort among state agencies that will enable them to better coordinate their programs and identify and conserve areas of greatest biodiversity. Agency participation in the Framework Project is voluntary and there is no formal funding mechanism for their participation at this time. The effort should be continued, accelerated, and adequately



funded to meet the biodiversity conservation needs of state and local agencies. An additional data set for land use/land cover should also be acquired or generated; it should incorporate

uniform definitions and mapping classifications for vegetative cover, including wetlands, riparian, and forest cover types. Design of this new land use/land cover data set should be a coordinated effort by the WAGIC and the technical subcommittee of the Washington Biodiversity Council. When completed, land use/land cover data could be made available to public and private partners for biodiversity conservation and planning.

The **Washington Natural Resources Information Portal**, maintained by the IAC, builds on and enhances existing and emerging data systems, including but not limited to those developed for salmon recovery. The data portal provides one place on the Internet where public and private users can currently access published reports on a wide range of natural resource issues. It may be accessed at www.swim.wa.gov. At least two other phases are already being planned, which should be funded and completed.

For biodiversity conservation efforts to be successful and cost-effective, state natural resource agencies need access to objective, current, and comprehensive information on the status and distribution of all components of biodiversity.

7

Continue and Expand the Ongoing Ecoregional Conservation Assessments for Washington

The ecoregional assessments currently being conducted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with an expanding group of public and private partners, can provide a solid scientific foundation for the state's biodiversity strategy. However, this effort would benefit from broader participation by other agencies, organizations and universities, as well as greater public involvement in the assessment process.

Ecoregional assessment is a dynamic and interactive process:

1. Identify conservation priorities
2. Collect information and identify gaps
3. Establish conservation goals
4. Assess the contribution of existing conservation areas
5. Evaluate the viability of conservation priorities
6. Assemble the portfolio
7. Identify priority conservation areas

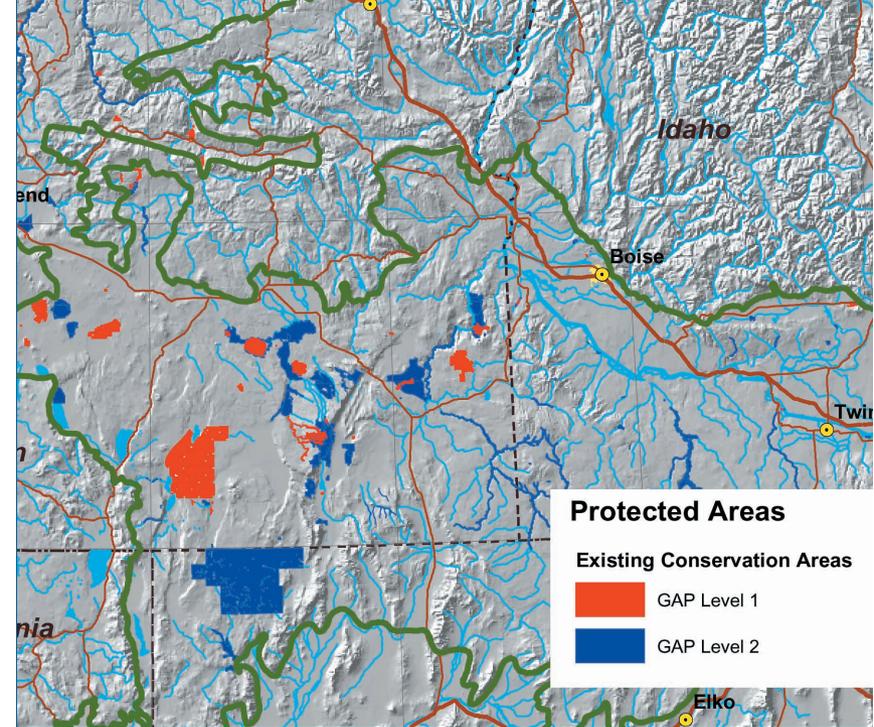
RECOMMENDATIONS

20. Complete ecoregional conservation assessments.

To meet all the needs of the public-private partnership, initial assessments should be complete for all nine ecoregions by the end of calendar year 2005. Some are already underway, including two that address the biodiversity of the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin system and the Columbia Plateau of Eastern Washington. The new Washington Biodiversity Council should monitor and report on the development of these two assessments and others that are completed in Washington.

21. Expand the Washington ecoregional assessment partnership.

Participation in the current effort to produce ecoregional assessments for the state of Washington must be expanded to include the range of state, tribal, and federal natural resource agencies, local government representatives, universities, and stakeholder organizations. A statewide public involvement component should be implemented



Detail from the Columbia Plateau ecoregional assessment map showing existing conservation areas within the ecoregion.

for the program, and local residents of each ecoregion should be engaged in the assessment process to elicit their knowledge and input.

22. Develop good scientific data and mapping products for all levels of planning.

The ongoing ecoregional assessment process in Washington should produce reliable, explicit information on all elements of biodiversity. These data sets and mapping products should be usable to inform decision-making at various scales of planning and conservation, from ecoregional and statewide resource management to watershed and county-level planning. This assessment information should be made available to various state, local, tribal, and federal agencies, as well as private partners, to help guide their investment of public and private resources to conserve biodiversity, including the targeted acquisition and restoration of critical habitat and other biodiversity resources.

CONCLUSION:

Why a biodiversity strategy can make a difference

Both policy makers and the public recognize the wealth of plant and animal species in our diverse ecosystems that underpins our economy and our quality of life. We are a people keen to give more than lip service to being the “evergreen state.” But in spite of strong conservation efforts over past decades, species continue to slide into extinction, habitats fragment into pieces, and ecological processes are disrupted so that they can no longer sustain life. The result is a decline in the biological diversity—our “web of life”—that supports our lives, livelihoods and lifestyles.

As this temporary Biodiversity Conservation Committee has discovered, what is missing is a holistic and comprehensive blueprint that allows us to look at all the dynamics in which environmental processes actually work; that is, we must be able to glimpse the “big picture,” the entire “web.” By viewing the big picture we start to understand the effects of our actions and can choose to be proactive rather than reactive, addressing species and the ecosystems that support them before they become imperiled. Because this comprehensive blueprint enables many different landowners to contribute to the stewardship of Washington’s biodiversity, it will allow each of us to begin to understand priorities and trade-offs in managing our own lands. Importantly, a biodiversity blueprint will only inform



With the pioneering biodiversity conservation act passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2002, we have the keys to craft our blueprint and encourage public and private landowner participation through nonregulatory stewardship incentives.

decisions, not make them, and this new, comprehensive approach does not recommend any new regulations.

With the pioneering biodiversity conservation act passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2002, we have the keys to craft our blueprint and encourage public and private landowner participation through nonregulatory stewardship incentives. These incentives to advance the blueprint, when coupled with the many good natural resource management efforts in place, will begin to address the urgency to conserve our diminishing biodiversity. The standing Biodiversity Council as recommended by this report is the entity to shepherd along this visionary task. It will be a daunting task, but a paradigm-changing effort that can reinforce the ecosystem infrastructure that supports us.

“Lost biological diversity means we must spend more on keeping our water drinkable, air breathable, and natural resources harvestable. Lost diversity also reduces nature’s ability to stimulate our culture and bolster our health. To stem the loss of biological diversity, we need positive initiatives like this one.”

—JOHN MARZLUFF, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
UW COLLEGE OF FOREST RESOURCES

APPENDIX A • Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6400 (2002)

ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6400

AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2002 Regular Session

State of Washington 57th Legislature 2002 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Oke, Kohl-Welles and Kline)

READ FIRST TIME 02/07/2002.

AN ACT Relating to biodiversity conservation; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

{+ NEW SECTION. +} Sec. 1. The Legislature finds that the state of Washington possesses a diversity of plants and animals in a diverse array of ecologically distinct regions. This biological diversity and its role in forming the diverse landscapes of the state are an important part of the high quality of life shared by all of the state's citizens and its visitors. By better understanding the variety and status of living organisms and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur, conservation efforts can be more effective in ensuring that this wealth of biological diversity is enjoyed by current and future generations.

The legislature further finds that extensive scientific work has been completed by both public and private entities to map the state's ecoregions and address ecoregional planning issues, by academic institutions, by state agencies such as the departments of natural resources and fish and wildlife, and by nongovernmental organizations such as the nature conservancy. However, these existing information sources are not complete, and this information may not be sufficiently coordinated or accessible and useful to the public or policymakers.

Similarly, there is no single entity responsible for development and implementation of a coordinated state strategy to conserve remaining functioning ecosystems and restore habitats needed to maintain Washington's biodiversity. There should be a comprehensive review to identify the state's needs for biodiversity data and conservation, and to coordinate development, dissemination, and use of existing information.

There is also a need to strengthen the state's nonregulatory approaches to biodiversity conservation, including incentives for voluntary conservation efforts by private landowners. Incentives shall be a major element of the state's overall biodiversity conservation strategy.

The legislature further finds that resource management on a single-species or single-resource basis has proven to be costly, acrimonious, and ultimately ineffective at either preserving the state's biodiversity or allowing reasonable economic development.

Therefore, the purpose of this act is to create a temporary committee to develop recommendations to the governor and the legislature to establish the framework for the development and implementation of a statewide biodiversity conservation strategy, to replace existing single-species or single-resource protection programs.

{+ NEW SECTION. +} Sec. 2. (1) The interagency committee for outdoor recreation is authorized to grant up to forty-five thousand dollars, on a competitive basis, to conduct the review of biodiversity programs as described in this section.

(2) The successful grantee must convene and facilitate a biodiversity conservation committee that will review existing biodiversity mapping and research programs in Washington conducted by state and federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and other entities, as well as reviewing programs and projects in other states.

(3) The biodiversity conservation committee must develop recommendations for a state biodiversity strategy that includes:

(a) Creation and composition of a standing public/private council to oversee design, development, and implementation of the strategy;

(b) Identification of a lead agency to support and facilitate development and implementation of a state biodiversity conservation plan;

(c) Methods to improve state agency and nongovernmental organization coordination and cooperation;

(d) Consistent definitions of the state's ecoregions and an integrated system of data management and mapping of the state's biodiversity;

(e) A review of Oregon's forest sustainability project and incorporation of key processes and criteria that are applicable in Washington;

(f) The state role for housing and administering biodiversity data and making the data accessible to local governments and others;

(g) A public education and outreach component that includes the production of a visual overview of Washington's ecoregions;

(h) Methods to ensure continuing stakeholder involvement;

(i) Methods to provide technical assistance to support state and local government land management;

(j) Identification of the time frames and funding needed to implement the strategy;

(k) Identification and development of nonregulatory methods to preserve biodiversity, including incentives to conserve land with important biodiversity values. These methods shall focus on approaches such as landowner incentives and acquisition of conservation easements from willing landowners;

(l) Recognition of the forests and fish program and other public-private efforts to identify and protect important fish and wildlife habitat;

(m) Development of consistent, workable definitions for key terms that are currently undefined in this act, including the terms "biodiversity" and "ecosystem"; and

(n) Review state policies and legal mechanisms that may affect biodiversity.

(4) The purpose of the state biodiversity strategy is to develop and suggest implementation recommendations for an ongoing biodiversity conservation strategy to maintain Washington's biodiversity in perpetuity, within the context of human activities on the landscape, to prevent additional species from being listed as endangered or threatened, and to create a more predictable environment in which to conduct economic activities.

(5) In carrying out the duties assigned in this section, the biodiversity conservation committee must recognize existing conservation commitments, including approved habitat conservation plans and other similar methods initiated by the legislature or a regulatory board, and focus on addressing conservation needs that have not already been addressed.

(6) The successful grantee must invite representatives of the following groups to participate on the biodiversity conservation committee:

(a) State agencies, including the departments of fish and wildlife, natural resources, and ecology, the Puget Sound action team, and the state salmon recovery office;

(b) Federal land management and natural resource agencies;

(c) Local governments;

(d) Tribes;

(e) Property owners, including forestry and agriculture;

(f) Business, including land development;

(g) Academia and research institutions; and

(h) Conservation nongovernmental organizations.

(7) The biodiversity conservation committee must choose a chair from among its members and adopt operating procedures.

(8) The grant agreement must be conditioned to require that at least an amount of funding equal to the state grant be applied to the project from nonstate sources.

(9) The grantee must provide a final report describing its review and recommendations to the governor and the appropriate standing committees of the senate and the house of representatives by October 1, 2003.

Passed the Senate March 12, 2002.

Passed the House March 8, 2002.

Approved by the Governor April 1, 2002.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State April 1, 2002.

WASHINGTON BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION COUNCIL
Major Milestones Timeline (2004-2007)

SHORT TERM

(next six months, through 2004 legislative session)

- ▶ Select & establish standing Biodiversity Council
- ▶ Secure necessary funding
- ▶ Develop web site

MEDIUM TERM (mid-2004 through 2005)

- ▶ Hire necessary staff
 - Scope recognition programs
 - Continue stewardship incentive research
- ▶ Identify eastern & western ecoregions for pilot ecoregional assessment process, to include:
 - Outreach to public & other stakeholders
 - Development of priorities
 - Tailor & market incentives to specific ecoregion
 - Establish educational plan of action
- ▶ Establish “Good Stewardship” recognition program for private and public landowners
- ▶ Inventory stewardship incentives in all 39 counties
- ▶ Establish stewardship incentives marketing & recruiting program
- ▶ Conduct Biodiversity Conservation Conference

LONG TERM (2006-2007)

- ▶ Complete first two pilot ecoregional assessments & make course corrections for remaining 7 ecoregions

PROPOSED BUDGET

SALARY

One professional staff to coordinate biodiversity strategy:

Salary:	\$63,000
Benefits:	\$15,750
Total:	\$78,750

One technical/science staff to work with technical committee:

Salary:	\$55,000
Benefits:	\$13,750
Total:	\$68,750

Clerical support for the IAC: \$10,000

TRAVEL

Per diem for 25 council members:

- 6 bimonthly meetings at \$50 per meeting: \$7,500

Travel for council members to 6 meetings:

- 12 Eastern Washington at \$300 per meeting: \$21,600
- 13 Western Washington at \$150 per meeting: \$11,700

Travel for 2 council staff:

- 6 meetings at \$200 per meeting: \$1,200

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Create web site on biodiversity, outreach and

marketing, and education programs: \$30,000

Publications and information brochures: \$10,000

Staff work stations and supplies: \$5,000

TOTAL proposed first year start-up budget: \$244,500

APPENDIX C • Private Landowner Stewardship Incentives

The Washington Biodiversity Conservation Committee examined a range of landowner incentives available in Washington, as well as other states, and made a number of recommendations to enhance the conservation of biodiversity on private land through landowner incentives. The committee also recommends that a standing Washington Biodiversity Council do a more thorough evaluation of stewardship incentives, both those available in Washington and those from other states that might be adapted to Washington. Many of these existing programs are listed on the attached matrix.

Following is a brief outline of landowner conservation incentives, which is based primarily on a 2002 Report by Defenders of Wildlife titled *Conservation in America-State Government Incentives for Habitat Conservation-A Status Report*. For more information on this and other landowner incentives, go to: www.biodiversitypartners.org.

DEFINITION: Conservation incentives were defined by Defenders of Wildlife at their 1999 Oregon Conservation Incentives Summit as “Any activity that can be initiated by a public or private concern to encourage improved stewardship of land and its resources.”

The Oregon Summit also determined that effective conservation incentives should:

- Meet both conservation and human needs in a cost-effective way
- Be flexible and easy to understand and administer
- Be acceptable to a wide segment of society
- Encourage people to begin making improvements in resource management
- Recognize progress, even if perfection is not reached

RANGE OF INCENTIVES: Landowner incentives can range from simple recognition of a landowner’s efforts to conserve biodiversity on his/her land, to tax breaks for property owners, to acquisition of less-than-fee-title acquisition of private property rights, such as development rights and conservation easements.

CATEGORIES OF INCENTIVES:

a. Direct Payments (45 states)

Direct payments are those payments made directly to a landowner for purchase of equipment, lease of habitat and other expenses

requiring a direct financial outlay for conservation projects or activities. The following types of programs were included:

- Cost share programs—pay all or part of cost of labor or materials to protect, restore or enhance habitat (Wisconsin)
- Grants—full/partial payment to acquire or permanently restore habitat (WA Salmon Recovery Funding Board, USDA Wetlands Reserve Program)
- Green payments—pay landowners to protect or enhance habitat (Georgia)
- Low/no interest loans—for water quality or soil erosion control with ancillary benefits for wildlife (Iowa)
- Provision of in-kind materials—(Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Cooperative Wildlife Program)
- Purchase of rights to land—acquisition of conservation easements (15 states)
- Rental or lease of habitat (USDA Wetlands Reserve 30-year lease program)

b. Education/Technical Assistance (43 states) Education and technical assistance incentives include:

- Landowner education and information—for conservation of wildlife/habitat (WDFW, Washington State University (WSU) Extension)
- Technical assistance (WDFW, WSU, Missouri, US Fish and Wildlife Service)

c. Legal/Statutory Mechanisms (12 states)

Some states provide legal or statutory mechanisms for conservation. Different types of mechanisms include:

- Liability limitation/regulatory relief—examples: exemption from new regulations if long term habitat management plan is adopted, elimination of penalties for landowners who engage in voluntary habitat surveys and monitoring, liability limitation for allowing public access
- Safe harbor agreements—allow regulatory latitude on private land if certain actions are taken to conserve wildlife/habitat (Kansas, Washington)

State habitat conservation plans/incidental take permits - with a state HCP, the landowner is provided with some regulatory certainty for actions which might otherwise require future state permits (Washington)

d. Market Institutions (12 states)

Market institutions are those programs that derive their impetus from the marketplace, and include:

- Certification and/or eco-labeling–purchase or transfer of development rights, often on agricultural lands (Delaware, King County, WA). Wildscapes Certification Program (Oklahoma)
- Habitat trading/banking–setting aside wetlands or other habitats for future mitigation requirements, or to offset the loss of habitat somewhere (Washington (DOT), Arkansas)

e. Property Rights Tools (48 states)

Property rights tools provide opportunities for landowners to alter their legal rights pertaining to their property's use or ownership and include:

- Conservation easements, covenants, and deed restrictions–permanent or long-term agreements to manage land for conservation. Incentives include federal and state income and property tax breaks. Used by federal, state agencies and local land trusts.
- Land donations and exchanges–tax breaks for donating land to agencies or non-profits for conservation purposes (all states for federal donations)
- Stewardship exchange agreements–agencies do habitat improvements on private land in exchange for public access or egress (Arizona)

f. Recognition Programs

This type of incentive provides public acknowledgment of landowners who maintain and/or restore habitat for wildlife on their property, and includes:

- Heritage and special land designation–Natural Areas Registry and Backyard Forest Stewardship Programs in Washington
- Recognition/award programs–Colorado has “Landowner of the Year” award; Texas has “Lone Star Land Steward Award”

g. Administrative Streamlining (six states)

This category of incentives refers mainly to programs that encourage landowners to preserve their property in exchange for streamlined or less stringent regulatory permitting. It is usually agency policy, rather than state law. Examples include:

- Hands-on assistance with environmental compliance
- Streamlined planning or environmental permitting process
- Management flexibility–ways to come up with measurably better results than with traditional regulations

h. Tax Relief

Tax relief incentives provide a financial benefit to those taxpayers who maintain or restore land for a variety of conservation purposes. The types of tax relief incentives include:

- Income tax relief–state income tax exemption (one time) for land donation for conservation purpose (11 states including Virginia)
- Property tax relief–includes current-use assessment such as Washington's Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs), as well as tax breaks for conservation easements (36 states including Washington)
- Other tax relief–including breaks for real estate transfer tax (New York) and inheritance and estate tax (Montana)

APPENDIX D • Landowner Stewardship Incentive Programs in Washington State

A number of federal, state and local programs are used by conservation agencies and organizations to secure, restore or enhance fish and wildlife habitat and areas with important biodiversity. On these two pages is a matrix containing summary information about many of these existing programs. The Washington Biodiversity Council will likely want to continue this review, making sure this matrix is complete. Other suggested criteria to be used in evaluating these programs include: source of funding, marketing, level of participation, relative ease of participation, support available to participants, and overall effectiveness.

PROGRAM	LEAD AGENCY	INCENTIVES	PROGRAM EMPHASIS	WHO IS ELIGIBLE	LIMITS	INCENTIVE AMOUNT
Backyard Forest Stewardship	WDNR	Tech. Asst.	Information and tech assistance for forests	Open		No pmts.
Chehalis Fisheries Restoration	USFWS	Tech. Asst. Direct Pmt.	Salmon habitat restoration	Stream landowner	Chehalis River	\$1–\$60K
Conservation Dist. Technical Asst.	WCC (Farm Bill)	Tech. Asst.	Highest priority water-quality problems	Any landowner		Varies
Conservation Easement Program (CEP)	Farm Services Agency (FSA)	Direct Pmt.	Protecting sensitive features on property with conservation easement	FSA borrower		Portion of FSA debt canceled
Conservation Reserve Enhancement (CREP)	WCC (Farm Bill)	Direct Pmt.	Cost share for restoring salmon spawning habitat on streams adjacent to agricultural lands	Agricultural land adjacent to stream	Critical & depressed spawning areas	Varies
Conservation Reserve (CRP)	FSA (Farm Bill)	Direct Pmt.	Cost share and/or rental payments to protect environmentally sensitive farmland from erosion	Agricultural	Cropland is sensitive	Max. \$50K per year–per farm
Conservation of Private Grazing Land	NRCS (Farm Bill)	Tech. Asst.	Assistance for livestock producers to improve grazing land and environmental features	Livestock producers		
Current Use Taxation/PBRS	Local Gov't.	Tax Relief	Retained open space property tax reduction	Natural, Ag, Timberland		Varies
Environmental Quality Incentive (EQIP)	NRCS (Farm Bill)	Direct Pmt.	Addresses point and non-point pollution problems on farms/ranches	Commercial agricultural producers		Max. \$10K per year–per farm
Five Star Restoration Challenge Grants	USEPA	Direct Pmt	Community-based watershed protection efforts such as riparian & wetlands protection	Communities, NGOs, local gov't.	5 or more partners	\$5–\$20K
Forest Legacy	USFS DNR	Direct Pmt.	Protecting working forests by purchasing conservation easements	Private forest owners	King, Pierce, Snohomish Counties	Very low funding
Forest Riparian Easement Program	WDNR	Direct Pmt.	Easement to not harvest riparian buffer areas for 50 years	Riparian forest owners	>20 acres with water feature	50% stumpage value plus compliance costs
Forest Stewardship & Forest Land Enhancement (FLEP)	USFW DNR	Direct Pmt. Tech. Asst.	Managing lands for forest production and multiple resource benefits of riparian, wetland, and fisheries habitat enhancement	Non-industrial forest owners	Min. 5 acres of forest land	
Grassland Reserve Program	NRCS (Farm Bill)	Direct Pmt.	Grassland protection & restoration for grazing or plant & animal biodiversity. Easement & rental agreement options	Landowners & agricultural operators	Grasslands & areas with forbs & shrubs	
Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)	USFWS	Legal/Statutory	Prerequisite for authorizing an Incidental Take Permit on T & E sps.	All landowners		None
HCP Assistance Grants	WDFW USFWS	Direct Pmt.	To plan & develop an HCP for federal incidental take permit actions on ESA species	All landowners	Related to permitting	~\$1 million in '02
HCP Land Acquisition	WDFW USFWS	Direct Pmt.	To purchase land or conservation easements that complement permitted HCP by providing species or ecosystem conservation	Private individual, state or local gov't. NGO, etc.		~\$20 million in '02
Jobs in the Woods	USFWS	Tech. Asst.	Restores degraded watershed functions while employing dislocated forest workers	Sponsor: NGO, local gov't.		Min. \$300K
Landowner Incentive Program	WDFW	Direct Pmt.	Restoration of fish and wildlife habitat	All landowners	W. WA	\$1.3 million
Marsh Program	Ducks Unlimited (Private)	Tech. Asst. Direct Pmt.	Restores wetlands and wetland-associated habitats for waterfowl	Sponsor: NGO, local gov't.		\$5–\$20K /project (\$75K Ann.)

PROGRAM	LEAD AGENCY	INCENTIVES	PROGRAM EMPHASIS	WHO IS ELIGIBLE	LIMITS	INCENTIVE AMOUNT
Migratory Waterfowl Artwork Program	WDFW	Direct Pmt.	Enhancement or restoration of waterfowl nesting habitat	Landowners of 10 acres or more		\$500 - \$5K (\$10K Ann.)
National Wetland Refuge Challenge Cost Share	USFWS	Direct Pmt. Tech. Asst.	Limited support to private landowners for enhancing or restoring degraded wetlands and other critical habitats	Landowners	Adjacent to refuge or refuge sps.	Varies~\$25K Ann.)
North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Small Grants	USFWS	Direct Pmt.	Preserve, restore, enhance, and/or manage wetland ecosystems and the fish and wildlife that depend on them.	Landowners and groups		\$50K
NRCS Technical Assistance	NRCS	Tech. Asst.	Help to conserve soil, water and natural resources.	Landowners—usually agric.		None
Partners for Fish & Wildlife	USFWS	Tech. Asst. Direct Pmt.	Restoring fish and wildlife habitats	Landowners		Max. \$25K
Pheasant Habitat Enhancement Grants	WDFW	Direct Pmt.	Cash grants on agric. land to improve pheasant habitat for hunting	Ag lands with pheasant habitat	E. WA	To \$5,000
Puget Sound Urban Resources Partnership	Multi-Agency	Direct Pmt.	Protecting or rehabilitating degraded natural areas in urban settings	Sponsor: local community		\$200-\$300K /project
Recovery Land Acquisition	WDFW USFWS	Direct Pmt.	Purchase land or easements that support approved recovery plans for listed species. (not for HCPS)	Private individual, state & local gov't, NGO, etc.		~\$2 million in '02
Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups	WDFW	Direct Pmt.	Projects benefiting salmon habitat on private lands with little to no cost to landowners	Sponsor: RFEG		\$10-\$40K annually to each of 12 RFEGs
Resident and Anadromous Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Program	BPA	Direct Pmt.	Mitigation program for resident fish, anadromous fish, and wildlife affected by Columbia River basin federal dams.	Anyone, but sponsorship by agency or CD is preferred		Varies
Resource Conservation & Development Program	NRCS (Farm Bill)	Tech. Asst.	Helping community economies by conserving local natural resources.	Anyone	Some areas of WA excluded	No direct
Riparian Open Space Grants	WDNR	Direct Pmt.	Landowner compensation for channel migration zones off limits to harvest.	Owner of channel migration zone		Varies (\$500K/yr)
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Grants	RMEF (Private)	Direct Pmt.	Protection and enhancement of elk habitat			
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	Local Gov't.	Legal/ Statutory	Allow transfer of densities between developments	Local gov't decision	Local option	No pmts.
Upland Wildlife Restoration Program	WDFW	Agreement	Habitat agreement for habitat improvement & public access on upland habitats & riparian areas	Agric. landowner	Mainly E. WA, Min. 50 acres or >	Varies
Volunteer Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Enhancement Prog.	WDFW	Tech. Asst. Direct Pmt.	Working with volunteer organizations to enhance fish and wildlife habitat on private lands.	Landowners, corporations, local gov't.		Avg. \$5K
WA Natural Heritage Register	WDNR	Recognition	Acknowledgement for landowners managing their land for the protection of Natural Heritage quality features.	Any landowner		None
WA State Ecosystem Conservation	USFWS	Tech. Asst. Direct Pmt.	Restore and enhance previously impacted wetlands, riparian, and upland habitats on private lands	Any landowner		Varies~\$500-\$26K
Wetlands Mitigation Program	WDOT	Tech. Asst. Direct Pmt.	Assistance to restore, enhance, and possibly create wetlands on private land to compensate for wetlands lost to transportation development.	Any landowner	Land located in area with need to mitigate	Varies
Wetlands Reserve Program	NRCS and Ducks Unlimited (Farm Bill)	Tech. Asst. Direct Pmt.	Payment to landowner for protection of wetlands with conservation easement and/or restoration of wetlands	Agricultural landowners		Varies with appraised ag value
Wildlife Forever Grants	Wildlife Forever (Private)		Protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat and recreation			> \$25K
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)	NRCS (Farm Bill)	Tech. Asst Direct Pmt.	Enhance and restore priority fish and wildlife habitat in areas impacted by agriculture & with a min. 15 yr. agreement.	Any landowner, NGO, local gov't., tribe		Max. \$10K

APPENDIX E • Some Existing Federal and State Programs That Address Biodiversity Conservation

There are many important state and federal environmental laws and programs in place that address various aspects of environmental conservation, although no single law or program currently provides for a holistic approach to conservation. Listed below are some of the more important programs currently under development or available in Washington.

Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was established by Congress in 1965 to support land and water acquisition for parks, forests, wildlife habitat and open spaces at the federal, state and local levels. Funds come from Outer continental shelf oil and gas leasing revenues. The program was authorized at \$900 million/year, half for federal projects, half for state and local projects. www.nps.gov/ or www.iac.wa.gov/

Northwest Power Planning Council–Fish and Wildlife Program (Federal)

The Northwest Power Act of 1980 directs the council to develop a program to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife of the Columbia River Basin that have been impacted by hydropower dams. This program is being implemented through a partnership of federal and state agencies. Coordinated fish and wildlife plans are currently being developed for 58 sub-basins in Washington and other Northwest states. www.nwccouncil.org/fw/program/Default.htm

Forest Legacy Program (Federal and State)

As part of the 1990 Farm Bill, Congress created the Forest Legacy Program to identify and protect environmentally important private forest lands threatened with conversion to non-forest use. In Washington, the program is operated as a partnership between the USDA Forest Service and the Washington Department of Natural Resources. www.dnr.wa.gov/

North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)(Federal)

In 1989 Congress established this act to carry out the wetland habitat objectives of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The act, which is administered in Washington through the Pacific Coast and Intermountain West Joint Ventures, provides large and small grants to public and private partners for protection and restoration of wetlands and associated upland habitat. northamerican.fws.gov/NAWCA/act.htm

2002 Farm Bill (Federal)

The current Farm Bill was passed by Congress in 2002. Typical omnibus farm bills include provisions for farm income and price support programs; agricultural trade and foreign food aid; conservation and environment; domestic food assistance (notably food stamps); rural development; research and education; and miscellaneous provisions such as global warming, food safety, and animal health and welfare. www.usda.gov/farmbill/

Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act of 1990 (Federal)

This act makes available federal funds, as matching grants of 50 to 75 percent of project costs, to any coastal state to carry out coastal wetlands conservation projects that will be administered for the long-term conservation of the lands, waters and dependent fish and wildlife. laws.fws.gov/lawsdigest/coaswet.html

Estuary Restoration Act of 2000 (Federal)

This act promotes the restoration of one million acres of estuarine habitat over ten years by leveraging limited federal resources with state and local funding. Specifically, the act makes restoring our nation's estuaries a national priority and authorizes funding for estuarine habitat restoration projects, strengthened local, regional, and national economies, and improved quality of life in coastal communities. restoration.nos.noaa.gov/htmls/project/act.html

Washington GAP Project (Federal and State)

GAP (Gap Analysis Program–A Geographical Approach to Planning) data are based on an interpretation of vegetation types and habitat associations. The GAP program is funded by the Biological Resources Division of the USGS and located with the Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Washington. www.wa.gov/wdfw/wlm/gap/dataproduct.htm

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (State)

This state program, administered by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), awards grants to state and local governments on a competitive basis for acquisition and development of local and state parks, water access sites, trails, critical wildlife habitat, natural areas, and urban wildlife habitat. www.iac.wa.gov/iac/grants/wwrp.htm

Salmon Recovery Funding Board (State and Federal)

Created in 1999 by the Legislature and administered by the IAC, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) provides grant funds to protect or restore salmon habitat and assist related activities. Working closely with local watershed groups, known as lead entities, the SRFB has helped finance over 500 projects to date. www.iac.wa.gov/srfb/default.asp

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) (State)

Administered first by DNR and now by the IAC, the ALEA program invests in locally sponsored projects involving state aquatic lands throughout Washington aquatic land acquisition, habitat restoration, and projects that create public access to aquatic lands. Funding for ALEA projects is provided by income earned through DNR's management of the 2.4 million acres of state-owned aquatic lands statewide. www.iac.wa.gov/iac/grants/alea.htm

Forests and Fish Agreement (State and Private)

The Forests and Fish Agreement was a multi-year, private-public effort to establish agreement on forest practices that would protect endangered species, riparian habitat and water quality while keeping the timber industry in Washington viable. www.dnr.wa.gov/sflo/ or www.dnr.wa.gov/forestpractices/rules/forestsandfish.pdf

Priority Habitats and Species Database (State)

The Priority Habitats and Species Database (PHS) is a source of information for identifying important habitat areas and species distributions. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife manages this database. Data in the PHS database are compiled at a nominal scale of 1:24,000, and the database is updated as new information becomes available. PHS data are readily available upon request from the WDFW. www.wa.gov/wdfw/hab/phspoly.htm

Washington Natural Heritage Program (State)

The Washington Natural Heritage Program (WNHP) is managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). Natural Heritage spatial data represent location and status information for rare plant species, high-quality terrestrial ecosystems, and high-quality wetland ecosystems within Washington. www.wa.gov/dnr.wa.gov/np

Trust Land Transfer Program (State)

Launched in 1989, the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) Program is an innovative approach to school construction funding with multiple benefits. The TLT Program does three things:

- It helps address the urgent need for school construction funding caused by our state's rapidly expanding population and rising school construction costs;
- It upgrades state assets held in trust to generate long-term revenue for school construction; and
- It protects Washington's natural heritage.

www.dnr.wa.gov/base/statelands.html

Ecoregional Conservation Assessments (State and Private)

To guide both traditional species protection and a transition to ecosystem conservation, as well as provide a landscape-level framework for biodiversity conservation, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington Department of Natural Resources began a public-private partnership with The Nature Conservancy in 2002 to complete ecoregional conservation assessments in the state's nine ecoregions. The coordinated assessments will guide the state's future conservation by identifying priority areas with the greatest importance for biological diversity. They are also being designed to provide usable, up-to-date information for planning and conservation at many scales, from state-level salmon recovery and wildlife management, to watershed

assessments, to county-level planning required by the Growth Management Act. For more information, contact any of the above-mentioned groups.

Washington Registry of Natural Areas (State)

In 1981, the Washington Register of Natural Areas (Registry) was authorized by the Legislature to broaden the state's natural area protection program. The Registry was designed to honor and recognize the owners of outstanding natural areas for their commitment to the protection of our state's natural heritage. It is a citizen-based conservation program that relies on the willingness of landowners to voluntarily safeguard the best that remains of our natural world. For more information, contact the Washington State DNR's Natural Heritage Program or The Nature Conservancy of Washington. www.dnr.wa.gov/nhp/index.html or nature.org/washington

Puget Sound Water Quality Work Plan (State)

This work plan, administered by the Puget Sound Action Team, presents a strategy for protecting the health of Puget Sound. It lays out actions that support the overriding Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan, and it addresses coordination of federal, state, tribal and local efforts. www.psat.wa.gov/Publications/workplan_03/wp03/03_toc.htm

Salmon and Steelhead Habitat Inventory and Assessment Program (State)

The Salmon and Steelhead Habitat Inventory and Assessment Program (SSHAP) is conducted by the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) in cooperation with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The program, a collaboration of 29 partners including state and federal agencies, academic and research institutions and private sector groups, collects data about the distribution of fish stocks and habitat conditions, including barriers to salmon migration. www.nwifc.wa.gov/ or www.nwifc.wa.gov/sshiap/

Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (Federal)

In July 1993, President Clinton directed the Forest Service to "develop a scientifically sound and ecosystem-based strategy for management of eastside forests" over 170 different GIS data layers or themes were developed, focusing on the upper Columbia River Basin east of the Cascades. Much of the information is derived from other data providers, including the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey. www.icbemp.gov/

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“It is one thing to find fault with an existing system. It is another thing altogether, a more difficult task, to replace it with another approach that is better.”

—NELSON MANDELA

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