

# WASHINGTON STATE BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES

DATE: March 8-9, 2006  
TIME: 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: Cedar River Watershed Education Center  
North Bend, Washington

## MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ken Berg	US Fish & Wildlife Service
Dave Brittel	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Bill Brookreson	At-large
Bonnie Bunning	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Maggie Coon, Chair	The Nature Conservancy
Donna Darm	NOAA Fisheries
Rob Fimbel	Washington State Parks
John Marzluff	University of Washington
Ken Risenhoover	Port Blakely Tree Farms
Mark Schaffel	Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association
Steve Tharinger	Clallam County
Wade Troutman	At-large
David Troutt	Nisqually River Council
Dick Wallace	Washington Department of Ecology
Josh Weiss	Washington Forest Protection Association
Megan White	Washington Department of Transportation

## GUESTS & PRESENTERS:

Clay Antieau	Cedar River Municipal Watershed
Linda Burgess	Puyallup River Watershed Council
Bobby Cochran	Defenders of Wildlife
Bruce Crawford	Governor's Monitoring Forum
Britt Dudek	Foster Creek Conservation District
John Floberg	The Nature Conservancy
John Gamon	Washington Department of Natural Resources
John Garner	Metro Parks Tacoma
Goldin Ortiz	Washington Forest Protection Association
Kathy Taylor	Puget Sound Action Team
Michelle Tirhi	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jim Warjone	Port Blakely Companies
Ruth Winbauer	Port Blakely Companies

## STAFF:

Lynn Helbrecht  
Sarah Gage  
Carole Richmond  
Marc Daudon

## ACTIONS TAKEN

Item	Action	Reference
December 7 Meeting minutes	Approved	Page 2
March 1 Meeting (Conference Call) minutes	Approved	Page 3

Slate of names and recommendation for the vacant agriculture/ranching Council seat to be advanced to the Governor's office

Approved

Page 3

Executive Committee empowered to submit two names and a recommendation for the vacant at-large Council seat to the Governor's office

Approved

Page 3

#### **MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:**

- The Council approved plans for filling the two vacant Council seats.
- The Council agreed to meet in eastern Washington for the September 27-28 meeting.
- The Council provided feedback on John Gamon's outline for the status report on Washington's biodiversity. April 12 is the target date for a review draft.
- The Council reviewed progress on the web site, which will be launched in April.
- The Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance shared progress on its pilot project in the lower White River biodiversity management area.
- Case study presentations from the Issaquah Highlands development project and Foster Creek Conservation District informed the Council about landowner issues.
- Marc Daudon of Cascadia Consulting Group led the Council in a discussion on the institutional framework for the conservation of biodiversity, socioeconomic trends, and other questions related to stakeholders and critical outcomes for the strategy.

#### **HANDOUTS DISTRIBUTED:**

- Meeting Agenda (on lavender paper)
- December 7 minutes (white)
- March 1 minutes (white)
- Budget (pink)
- Updated Workplan (white, 11 x 14)
- Outline of Status and Trends report (multi-colored)
- Meeting evaluation form (tan)
- Incentives Committee Workplan (orange)

#### **OPENING REMARKS AND CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Coon convened the meeting at 1:10 p.m.

Council members, staff, and audience members introduced themselves and shared what has inspired them since the last meeting.

Maggie reported that the request to the Legislature for \$300,000 in supplemental funding for the Council was not successful, in part because the Governor has requested funding for agriculture-related pilot projects sponsored by the WSU-UW Policy Consensus Center. The Legislature passed ESSB 5385, creating an Invasive Species Council.

Maggie noted that Bill Brookreson will be retiring from the Department of Agriculture at the end of the month. She and the Council thanked Bill for his work with a round of applause.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA**

John Floberg indicated that it's important to get the word out on the importance of biodiversity to the state sooner rather than later.

#### **COUNCIL BUSINESS**

Bonnie moved and Donna seconded approval of the December 7 meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. **APPROVED.**

Bonnie moved and Donna seconded approval of the March 1 conference call meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. **APPROVED.**

### **BUDGET UPDATE and WORKPLAN STATUS**

Lynn provided an update on the latest budget and workplan. She also called to the Council's attention the updated Fact Sheet on the Council, which includes a summary of the Council's two pilot projects on the back, and a brochure on a workshop co-sponsored by the Council entitled "Managing Biodiversity on Small Woodlands."

Bill announced that preparations for Native Plant Appreciation Week are underway.

Lynn said that four good proposals were received in response to the RFP for strategy development. Maggie Coon and Dave Brittell participated in the evaluation and interviews and the team selected Cascadia Consulting.

With regard to the Strategy development scope of work, Lynn said that an outreach strategy is not part of the Cascadia contract. Stakeholder meetings would require an additional \$40,000. The IAC has contributed \$10,000 and other agencies are invited to contribute.

She reported that Sarah is working to develop a common look and feel for published information from the Council, and that a standard PowerPoint presentation is being developed for use by Council members.

Maggie encouraged members to use the PowerPoint. Bonnie suggested that members should coordinate messages and presentations through a communications strategy. Lynn commented that staff will be working with Kate Stenberg to re-energize the Communication and Education Committee.

### **COUNCIL VACANCIES**

Maggie announced that names of candidates to replace retiring Council members should be provided to the Governor's Office. Peter Goldmark (agriculture/ranching) retired in December 2005, and Bill Brookreson (at-large) will retire at the end of March 2006.

Names being considered for the agriculture/ranching seat are Dave Roseleip, president of the Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation, and Terry Hunt, state president of the Washington State Grange. Both have been contacted, both are willing to serve. Positive comments were made about both candidates. It was said that "Dave teaches" and "Terry lobbies."

Steve moved that both names be advanced to the Governor's Office and that the Council recommend Dave Roseleip to fill the agricultural position. Bill seconded. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. **APPROVED.**

For the at-large position, the Executive Committee suggested that names be solicited particularly from the real estate, development, and construction sectors. The Council is under-represented in the private sector.

Steve moved that the Executive Committee be empowered to submit two names and a recommendation to the Governor's Office after email consultation with the Council. Bill seconded. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. **APPROVED.**

The goal is to have both new members appointed in time to attend the June 15 meeting.

### **NEXT MEETINGS**

Maggie reviewed the meeting dates for the rest of the year's Council meetings:

- June 15, Olympia
- September 27-28 – eastern Washington

- December 5 – Olympia

Lynn asked about the Council's level of interest in meeting on the eastside in September. It would be a good opportunity to hear from the North Central Washington Pilot Project. Rob Fimbel asked for a place that was easier for the public to get to than the last time (Leavenworth). Mark said it would be easier if the meeting were at the same place as the lodging. Wade said it was important to take advantage of field trips. Bonnie suggested that a site close to the pilot project setting would be ideal, and that the public could be engaged with a pilot project field trip.

Maggie confirmed that the September meeting will take place in eastern Washington and that we will strive to achieve what Bonnie described.

### **CURRENT STATUS REPORT**

John Gamon presented his outline for a report on the status of Washington's biodiversity. Maggie said it was important to build the strategy on a solid foundation, and the status report is the foundation.

Ken Risenhoover wondered if the section on historical context would be based on hard data. If the past is the anchor point for what we're basing current status on, it's important to be careful about attribution of cause and effect. John said the past would be described in broad-brush terms.

The historical context starts with geology and climate and moves into the human use of the landscape. Bonnie mentioned that the legislation spoke to assembling conservation plans and outcomes to show the positive influences humans have had. Wade cautioned to be sensitive about characterizing farmers and foresters as having "ruined" the environment. John Marzluff said it was nonetheless important to acknowledge the wholesale change to the environment (old growth, Palouse) since historic times. The facts need to be stated. Bill noted that it was important to discuss changes in urbanized areas; the filling in of estuaries and locating settlement in the most productive areas.

John Gamon said the current status discussion would be summarize the best available information. He suggested using "conservation status," as developed by NatureServe, which would allow comparing our state with other states. Maggie asked what that would add to our understanding, especially for lay audiences? We need to start with diversity numbers to begin with. John said we need better monitoring.

Bonnie said we need a clear understanding of the level of sophistication of this product and the intended audience. Rob said the audience is the Council. Donna said it was important to present priorities, to focus on the critically important issues.

In response to population trend data, Wade noted that consumption was equally a problem.

Invasive species present another threat to biodiversity. Six hundred non-native plants have been identified. Other threats to local plants include wild harvesting for the nursery trade.

Climate change is an emerging threat that needs to be understood by the public.

Multiple sources of information need to be coordinated for users. Megan emphasized that it's important for people to understand how to make sense of this information. She is looking for practical information.

Donna suggested including information about known strategies for addressing threats, focusing on scientific, fact-based sources.

John will go through the outline and see where he needs guidance, and will contact members for assistance. April 12 is the target date for a first draft of the report.

## **WEBSITE UPDATE**

Carole Richmond provided a progress report on development of the biodiversity website. She said she wanted the Council to feel comfortable with the direction of the website. Launch of the site is planned for mid-April. Council members will have access to a beta test of the site for two weeks before the public launch.

Carole covered the work done with the contractor, EDGE design, and by the Website Steering Committee. She then presented a couple of pages of the website, with real content, to demonstrate the features of the site. She closed by saying that the website will need continued effort in order keep it updated and to continue building the baseline content.

She noted that she would be transitioning out as project lead sometime in April, and that Sarah would be taking over. She suggested that a needs assessment might be useful to help identify the kinds of information that audiences are looking for, and that a strategic plan would be valuable in helping to define success and evaluate performance.

Features will be updated monthly, with stories archived on the site as required by law. Criteria for calendar items will that are of more than local interest. Bonnie suggested that criteria be codified. Ken Berg thought the site should be launched sooner, rather than later.

## **COUNCIL PILOT PROJECTS**

Michelle Tirhi, of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, described the scope of work for the pilot project in the lower White River.

“Biodiversity management areas” (BMAs) in Pierce County were identified through the following process:

- Satellite data to create land cover maps.
- Other data sources were then used to identify relatively undeveloped areas.
- Once potential biodiversity areas had been mapped, biologists “ground-truthed” the sites to verify habitat condition.
- Sites that appeared to be in good condition were designated as BMAs, and also as “open space” in Pierce County’s Comprehensive Plan.

The complete methodology is described in the Pierce County Biodiversity Network Assessment (2004).

Predictions about the species associated with habitats can be made from the literature. Then, a form of rapid biodiversity assessment, known as a “BioBlitz,” can be conducted to validate the presence of predicted species. This process was first used in Gig Harbor in 2005, and is now planned for the pilot project site in the lower White River BMA. The BioBlitzes use citizen scientists and serve both to document the presence of expected species and to educate people about wildlife and habitat.

The White River BMA is much larger than the one in which the first BioBlitz was conducted, and includes multiple jurisdictions, including the Muckleshoot Tribe, which is interested in participating in the wildlife surveys.

Linda Burgess related how the Puyallup River Watershed Council had become part of the project.

John Garner (Tacoma Parks) noted that the Council’s funds are helping them complete a biodiversity management plan that will include an inventory of wildlife resources found along the lower White River. He said that the “landowner engagement piece” doesn’t yet have a home, but he is trying to convince the Pierce County Conservation District to take it over. The plan will include a modified 5S process (systems, stresses, sources, strategies, success) to identify stressors to biodiversity and management responses.

John said that landowners often don't realize that they qualify for current use taxation if their property is found within designated open space.

Dick Wallace said he would like to understand the assumptions that go into the modeling.

## **Day 2 – Thursday, March 9, 2006**

---

Blakely Hall, Issaquah Highlands

### **CASE STUDY PRESENTATION: Development, Growth Management, and Biodiversity**

Jim Warjone presented information about the Issaquah Highlands planned community, which encompasses 3200 homes on 600 acres, with 1800 acres set aside as open space. He detailed a number of innovations in the project, the reasoning behind them, and the regulatory hurdles that Port Blakely encountered. He emphasized that the number one thing that his company needs is regulatory predictability so they can continue to do what's right for the environment, the company, and the community. He also stressed the importance of creative solutions and governmental flexibility.

### Cedar River Watershed Education Center

### **INCENTIVES COMMITTEE REPORT**

Josh (chair) reported on the committee's workplan. Other committee members are: Wade, Dick, Bill, Steve, Bobby. The committee's goal is to influence policy makers. It will develop recommendations related to a complete suite of incentives for landowners.

Josh said that an incentives summit is planned for late 2006 or early 2007. He is looking for co-sponsors to provide financial support.

The committee plans to produce a number of issue briefs to inform discussion at the summit. WFPA can work on an issue brief about certification. The committee invites help from other members of the Council.

Josh referred to the incentives spreadsheet prepared by Sarah. It's intended to be a complete catalogue of incentive programs in the broadest sense, not only grant programs. Many landowners are feeling tapped out from a regulatory standpoint, which is why the Farm Bureau Initiative may have support. Josh said no one has taken an overarching look at how incentive programs really work in Washington. Ken Berg said he would like a set of questions to ask of incentives program staff.

Josh said the intent is to gather existing information, not to collect original data. Ken Berg said he would like to see categories of incentive programs, a kind of taxonomic structure.

Josh requested members to look over the workplan and to provide him with comment, and also to identify issue briefs they can work on.

### **CASE STUDY PRESENTATION: Conservation Incentives in Douglas County**

Wade talked about the land and economic situation in Douglas County. He said that 95% of the county population resides in the Wenatchee area, and 5% owns all of the surrounding land. In responding to a survey about trust, the local population trusted farmers and ranchers most and environmentalists least. Because land is cheap in Douglas County, it has been considered empty, and used for military purposes and for dump sites. Yet, there is a lot of biodiversity and natural beauty in Douglas County.

Britt Dudek talked about developing the Foster Creek Habitat Conservation Plan. One of the first questions he needed to address was: How do you measure biodiversity?

He started working with The Nature Conservancy's GIS products to identify different habitat types in the county. He also developed habitat suitability analyses to identify limiting factors and to be able to

monitor various indicators. Habitat amount is not always the limiting factor – it may instead be something like the timing of disturbance. Understanding cause and effect is important if the goal is to increase certain populations. Britt said the Conservation Reserve Program has done more for the county than any other grant program.

Wade said it's almost impossible to certify wheat, especially if it's intended for export. It goes to major commodity brokers and gets mixed up with other wheat. He said he wants to see if there is a market in "sustainability credits" for wheat that would be sold directly to manufacturers like Sara Lee, etc.

Wade's land also has a lot of ecotourism potential. It could provide hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, but he hasn't figured out how to capture that benefit. In Europe, farmers earn green subsidies for opening their land to this kind of use.

Wade and his community will present a day-long workshop on biodiversity conservation in Douglas County on June 8. The annual walking tour on his farm is scheduled for May 24.

At noon, Clay Antieau of the Cedar River Municipal Watershed welcomed the Council to the Education Center and described the background of the Cedar River Watershed and its Habitat Conservation Plan.

### **REFRAMING THE DISCUSSION ABOUT A BIODIVERSITY GOAL**

Maggie reviewed the four goal options the Council had discussed in December. The Executive Committee and other interested Council members met afterwards to consider how best to move the discussion forward. The Executive Committee is recommending that we use the four options presented in December as a working model for alternative *outcomes*, instead of focusing on goals. They are recommending that the Council work to better understand the implications and the different investment which would be required of the different alternatives.

#### Discussion

Some Council members emphasized the need to establish a goal and others felt that the Council should not set a goal around biodiversity. Comments specific to the four alternatives presented included a concern that #1 "No Action", was included at all and that #4 was infeasible.

There was a suggestion that our goal may need to address the "process" (how we get to biodiversity protection) and the human side. Another comment offered that the enabling language in the Executive Order could serve as a goal

At the close of the discussion the following appeared to be points of agreements:

- Focus on alternative outcomes for context and to help build strategy. A decision on whether or not to formalize a goal for the strategy can be revisited at a later time.
- No action isn't really an alternative, but it is important to understand what the world would look like under this scenario.
- As part of the analysis framework, we will need to quantify levels of effort and impact.

### **STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT SESSION**

Marc Daudon of Cascadia Consulting gave a short presentation outlining his approach to the work he will be doing with the Council. He then asked Council members about several specific components and outcomes for development of the strategy.

#### Task 1: The current institutional framework

Marc defined the institutional framework as: the laws, regulations, policies affecting human behavior, which affects biodiversity. Council members added that other pieces of the institutional framework include: education, the private sector, delivery of services to landowners, the market.

#### **Marc offered a set of questions to frame this task**

- Where does the current framework succeed at protecting biodiversity?

- Where is it not productive, not coordinated, or have unintended consequences?
- What is the potential for success of alternative policies and programs?

**Council member comments:**

- How do we engage public in conserving biodiversity?
- Institutional framework for outreach and education regarding biodiversity isn't there.
- Address role of NGOs and private sector in the institutional framework.
- Conservation Districts are part of institutional framework – but individual districts have to take initiative to directly protect biodiversity; its not built in.
- Biodiversity is NOT institutionalized at the delivery level.
- There is not institutional framework for biodiversity, but there IS for conservation. We need to make it holistic. This is what the initial legislation asked us to do. Need to take all existing systems into account, and figure out how to make them work better for biodiversity (Bonnie)
- We should ask the question: IS there a framework for managing biodiversity? (no, not explicit)
- Market and social institutions are involved in biodiversity conservation – consider part of framework?
- We can most influence government, should we focus there?
- Don't forget education as an institution
- Question: how do existing policies work for biodiversity? (away from species by species)
- Question: How does current framework work at educating people?

Task 2: Socioeconomic trends – additional questions to consider

**Marc provided for the following set of initial questions for discussion:**

**Social and cultural factors**

- What motivates private landowners and others to action?
- What willingness to pay for conservation?
- What level of support from different parts of the state?

**Economic and physical factors**

- What business/industry sectors are growing, and where?
- Where does economic growth conflict with biodiversity conservation?
- How and where can we align conservation and economic development?
- How might climate change impact the economy, species distribution, and conservation efforts?

**Council member comments:**

- What's the current value citizens place on biodiversity?
- Cost savings of acting early (regarding the listing of species – example of pygmy rabbits)
- What values do people respond to? (salmon? WQ? What does biodiversity mean to people?)
- How do you make biodiversity "worth something"?
- Take a snapshot – where is this issue (urgency, importance) in public's eye relative to others? (i.e., economics)
- Address growth and consumerism. What does it mean that Seattle sends its garbage to the East?
- Needs to address education.
- What motivates people to take action? A clear message that doing nothing is unacceptable.
- People don't see a problem.
- Globalization and the impacts of the global economy on biodiversity
- State fiscal policy – how does that influence biodiversity?
- What is the role of working lands in economic development?

