

Minutes of the Natural Heritage Advisory Council
APRIL 4, 2012

NATURAL RESOURCES BUILDING
1111 WASHINGTON STREET SE
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON
ROOM 172
9:30 A.M. – 10:50 A.M.

Voting members present in person: none; Voting members present on phone: Len Barson, Al Black, Peter Dunwiddie, Bob Meier, Wade Troutman; Ex Officio members present in person: Julie Sackett (Washington Department of Natural Resources) and Elizabeth Rodrick (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife).

Members absent: John Banks, Janelle Downs, Cherie Kearney, Chris Hempleman (Department of Ecology), Steve Mclellan (Recreation and Conservation Office) and Rob Fimbel (State Parks and Recreation).

DNR Staff: John Gamon, Curt Pavola, Pene Speaks

AGENDA

I. Introductions

Pene Speaks acted as meeting facilitator per Chair Kearney's request. The meeting was started at 9:30 with attendees identifying themselves on the phone and in person. No guests were present.

II. Minutes of January meeting- hold until next meeting

The meeting minutes from the January 25, 2012 meeting will be reviewed for approval at the next meeting of the council.

III. Old Business

Budget update:

Natural Heritage Program funding – status of funding options

Sackett reported on a meeting with Ken Berg at the USFWS that resulted in a pending \$50,000 contract for Natural Heritage Program (NHP) operations, which is anticipated to be an annual contribution. Speaks reported that the state House of Representatives budget proposal included \$150,000 for the program but the Senate budget did not. New budget proposals are expected this week. Barson added that a second special session may be needed if an agreement isn't announced soon, especially with the holiday weekend coming up. Sackett also noted that a proposal was made to DNR Executive Management for potential trust management funds support for the NHP for \$200,000. The proposal is being considered along with others if the agency receives more spending authority in the supplemental state budget. The potential sources would help get the program through the biennium, but we still need a funding solution moving forward. Speaks said DNR will be talking to other federal agencies to reinforce the value of the Heritage Program to their work.

IV. New Business

Reschedule June meeting date

The next council meeting is presently scheduled for June 19, 20, 2012. Staff recommended that the meeting be schedule for one day only in Olympia. The meeting would be a half day meeting, with remote option for those who couldn't attend in person, and an afternoon field trip to a site near Olympia. Because Chair Kearney is unable to make either of those dates, the council discussed rescheduling the meeting to a different day. Speaks indicate she would send out a "Doodle" poll to select a new day.

Recruiting council members

The council has two vacancies at present, an at-large position and a scientist position. There was discussion about considerations for recruiting and some names were offered as suggestions. We should give thought to recruiting someone from People for Puget Sound or the Puget Sound Partnership, a tribe such as the Squaxin Island Tribe or Nisqually Indian Tribe or someone from a local Audubon chapter. Some council members volunteered to contact potential candidates.

V. Agency Reports – brief updates

Recreation and Conservation Office – No report

Department of Ecology – No Report

State Parks and Recreation Commission – No Report

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Rodrnick reported that the Columbia Plateau Habitat Connectivity Analysis is now available at <http://wacconnected.org/statewide-analysis/>. The analysis was created by state and federal agencies and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and is getting national and international attention. The Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group, who developed the study, used a landscape integrity approach with focal species modeling to identify conservation priorities and linkages across the state. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is planning to use the focal species information to identify priority inventory and research needs. The study could help in efforts such as translocation of sage grouse. Brad McCray of The Nature Conservancy and Natural Heritage staff have contributed to compiling the information included in the study. Rodrick also mentioned that the department is submitting a number of projects to the Recreation and Conservation Office for Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) grant funding. There is a link on the RCO website to the WWRP projects when it is available if council is interested (we'll send link to projects).

Department of Natural Resources

Sackett said that in addition to the priority work of raising funds for the Natural Heritage Program, DNR is working on a procedure to guide staff in protecting special ecological features. It will help the region staff tie into the goals of the NH Program and will include a training component.

VI. Natural Areas Program – brief update

Pavola stated that the Natural Areas Program will be pursuing the following grants in 2012 through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account. Note that the proposal at Kennedy Creek will require review and an expansion recommendation by the Natural Heritage Advisory Council. The following list includes grant requests for acquisition of land and restoration and development on natural areas.

Acquisition Applications	Categories	WWRP Restoration or Development Grants	Potential ALEA Grant
Camas Meadows	NA	Admiralty Inlet -- restoration	
Dabob Bay	NA and Riparian	Chehalis River Surge Plain -- restoration	
Kennedy Creek - boundary expansion	Riparian	Kahlotus and Marcellus -- restoration	
Lacamas Prairie	NA	Klickitat Canyon -- restoration	
Middle Fork Snoqualmie	UW		
Stavis	UW	Mima Mounds -- restoration	
Trombetta Canyon	NA	Secret Harbor -- restoration	
Upper Dry Gulch - boundary expansion	NA	Secret Harbor -- development	
Wanapum - boundary establishment	NA	Stavis -- restoration	
Washougal Oaks	NA	Washougal Oaks -- restoration Phase 3	
West Tiger Mountain	UW	Woodard Bay -- development	Woodard Bay (fill removal/public access)
Woodard Bay - boundary expansion	UW	Woodard Bay -- restoration	

VIII. Natural Heritage Program – brief update

Gamon reported that NH staff continue to work on a number of grant/contract projects, including wrapping up the vegetation mapping of San Juan National Historical Park, updating the wetlands information in the Natural Heritage database for EPA phases 1 & 2, and a number of Endangered Species Act Section 6 rare plant projects, including the development of mobile applications for federally listed plant species. In addition, Joe Arnett has been involved in the planning and implementation of a rare plant conference at University of Washington. We have also submitted an application for phase 3 of the EPA wetlands project. Phase 3 would provide the funding to update our wetlands information for eastern WA. We were recently notified that this year's allotment of USFWS funding for ESA Section 6 projects will be \$70,000+. There will also be a NatureServe / Natural Heritage Programs conference in Portland during the last week in April. At this point, the number of people registering for the conference is looking better than anticipated. There will be sessions on the various science disciplines within natural heritage programs (zoology, ecology, botany and information management), as well as sessions on program administration, conservation planning, and others. The annual conservation award given by NatureServe will be going to William Ruckelshaus; Commissioner of Public Lands Dr. Peter Goldmark will help with the presentation of the award.

IX. Other Business – None indicated.

Adjourned at 10:50