

**9.30.09 Meeting Summary  
Attorney General's Office, Seattle**

**FOREST PRACTICES BOARD POLICY WORKING GROUP  
WASHINGTON STATE NORTHERN SPOTTED OWL**

Members Present

Shawn Cantrell	Seattle Audubon
Mark Doumit	WFPA
Kevin Godbout	Weyerhaeuser
Don Halabisky	Sierra Club
Robert Meier	Rayonier
Vic Musselman	WFFA
Miguel Perez-Gibson	Audubon
Tom Robinson	WSAC
Paula Swedeen	Seattle Audubon
Chuck Turley	DNR
David Whipple	WDFW

Also Present

Lois Schwennesen	Facilitator
Jennifer Cook	LSA Results
Kara Whittaker	WFLC
Martha Wehling	Attorney General's Office
Anna Jackson	WDFW
Lenny Young	DNR
Cindy Mitchell	WFPA

Absent

Ken Berg	USFWS
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Chris Lipton (via phone) Longview Timber

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**Updates**

The Policy Working Group welcomed Anna Jackson, WDFW, as an observer to the meeting. David Whipple will continue to be the participating member representing WDFW.

Paula Swedeen circulated a letter drafted on behalf of Pacific Forest Trust requesting increased funding under an upcoming emissions bill. There are 50 signatories to date, and members were encouraged to add their names after reviewing the letter. Chuck Turley noted that State Forestry is in support of the bill.

Bob Meier and Shawn Cantrell have submitted the Western Washington habitat improvement proposal to USFWS, designed to be a demonstration incentives project for northern spotted owl conservation.

Kevin Godbout reported that Weyerhaeuser is negotiating non-disclosure agreements with two separate entities regarding possible ecosystem services arrangements on a parcel of land. The goal is to get lands moved from commercial timberland into conservation management.

Chuck Turley, Anna Jackson, Ken Berg and David Whipple met to determine the schedule for a revised Federal Recovery Plan. Assuming court approval of the schedule, a final Plan proposal will be accessible in about 9 months.

**Conservation Caucus Proposal**

Shawn Cantrell, representing the conservation caucus, explained a proposal that was shared with the Group addressing what the caucus defined as a gap in the regulatory protection of northern spotted owls. This proposal involved surveying to identify areas within circles but outside of Spotted Owl Special Emphasis Areas (SOSEAs) to determine occupancy, and designating occupied sites as highest priority for voluntary conservation acquisition. For sites identified as unoccupied, harvest could proceed. He made it clear that this was a good faith attempt to find a

non-regulatory solution to our perceived gap in the regulatory structure. The proposal is in addition to, not intended to replace, any of the incentives or approaches agreed upon in the strawman to date.

Miguel Perez-Gibson added that the Group will soon make recommendations to the Board about strategic contributions from Non Federal lands. Absent a State wide science based strategy, the Group needs to address weaknesses in the current strategy. This proposal is not what the caucus thinks is the optimal approach, but an effort to close the gap in current northern spotted owl regulatory protection.

After a lengthy problem solving session in which each member and caucus discussed ideas and concerns, and offered possible alternative approaches that might address the interests of all members, the Group arrived by consensus to consider a new approach to establish an Early Action Plan. Under this Plan, the Group would review the database, identify specific strategic lands, and work with the landowners to develop voluntary agreements. The agreements would seek to accomplish more than the current rules require by tailoring provisions and incentives to the specific landowners' goals and market realities. Considered as a stop gap measure during a transition period until an acquisition program is functioning, at this time members expect both economic incentives and no take letters to be included in the agreements.

David Whipple noted that the Group is envisioning a different conservation strategy in the future that doesn't tie itself to circle management and uses incentives to get to a mutual goal of increased population with lower encumbrances and risk to landowners. We've talked about some tools to be used, but need to talk about the strategy that we need and what our end goals might be. Kevin Godbout noted that a long run strategy may not be doable by this Group, but the Group can figure out how to get conservation on sites that are now or recently occupied by using dots on a map and addressing the practical needs.

The Group reviewed and agreed on the following elements of an incentives program for Non Federal lands: a) Incentives would not be limited to "strategic sites", b) specific landowner outreach would be made for key, critical, "immediate action" parcels to seek voluntary landowner agreements, c) if non-occupied landowners find a new owl, they will receive incentives to manage land for conservation goals, and d) if landowners agree to grow property into suitable habitat, they will receive assurances they won't suffer economic loss.

The Group agreed to work to develop an Early Action Plan for circles outside SOSEAs by developing a timeline, prioritizing sites, establishing a menu of tools or mechanisms for voluntary agreements, creating an outreach plan including responsibilities and resources, and forming a work group legislative to-do list to create funding and operational mechanisms.

### **Eastside Thinning Pilot Project**

After the September 1 meeting, Chris Lipton, Paula Swedeen, Chuck Turley, David Whipple, and Ken Berg discussed the protocols involved in submitting a CR101 to the Forest Practices Board with Martha Wehling and Paddy O'Brien. Chris and Paula are working together to develop their outline into a more detailed proposal, and will obtain Martha's input before bringing it to the Group for approval on October 5th. The proposal will need to be finalized and brought before the Board on the 10th.

### **Meeting Adjourned**