

DRAFT

Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC)

Meeting Minutes

October 6, 2006 Meeting

Bellingham, WA

Welcome, Introductions, Minutes approval

Lisa Remlinger welcomed the group and started the introductions.

28 people were in attendance and 17 chapters were represented.

Attending:

Gene Bullock, Kitsap AS

Murrel Dawson, Lower Columbia Basin AS

Michelle Ramsden, Vashon-Maury Island AS

Arden Hagen, Vancouver AS

Jan McMillan, Grays Harbor AS

Dean Schwickerath, Grays Harbor AS

Tom Pratum, North Cascades AS

Jon Soest, North Central WA AS

Allen Gibbs, Pilchuck AS

Sally Van Niel, Pilchuck AS

Jan Van Niel, Pilchuck AS

Bob Barry, Skagit AS

Steve Aslanian, Skagit AS

Keith Becker, Whidbey AS

Leslie Wahl, Yakima Valley AS

Dan Kinney, Yakima Valley AS

Keith Mahoy, Discovery Coast AS

Carolyn Mahoy, Discovery Coast AS

Linda Johnson, Black Hills AS

Shawn Cantrell, Seattle AS

Kristen Kosidowski, Seattle AS

Adam Sedgley, Seattle AS

Krystal Kyer, Tahoma AS

Stephen Glucoft, Willapa Hills AS

Gary Blevins, Spokane AS

Heath Packard, Audubon Washington

Christi Norman, Audubon Washington

Lisa Remlinger, Audubon Washington

Policy Director Report:

Heath Packard updated the group on Audubon Washington's strategic planning process, and went over the agenda. He reported that Audubon Washington's Board of Stewards will be integrated into the process of approving legislative priorities, and that we are forming a science advisory committee.

Minutes:

Meeting minutes approved with Jon Soest's correction to the global warming resolution. Rather than "Adopt resolution with a period after 'carbon emission". All of the "examples" (1 - 13) were to be removed from the resolution. They were to be included as supplemental information, which is what they are.

Gene Bullock motioned to approve the minutes.

Steve Aslanian seconded the motion.

Minutes approved.

Chapter Issues Roundtable

North Central Washington

Next year, the Forest Service intends to complete its revision of the land management plans for the Wenatchee and Okanogan National Forests, in conjunction with the Colville National Forest. The plans contain many controversial issues. A number of groups are working together to develop an alternative that would provide a plan for these 4 million acres of public land. It is not yet complete, but several key themes have emerged: Protect all roadless areas, increase non-motorized recreation opportunities, focus fire prevention near communities, preserve and restore wildlife habitat, and protect wild rivers. For more info go to: www.fs.fed.us/r6/colville/cow/.

Skagit

The chapter has been actively involved fighting I-933. Anacortes has a meaningful CAO. Existing plan needs to be approved through DOE. A forum on working forests will be held with info about Blanchard Mountain. Marbled Murrelets are nesting on this property. Need to understand the effects on set-aside and recreation. The chapter has also partnered with Seattle Audubon's Birdnote.

North Cascades

There was a recent debate between a neighborhood group and a proposed development. Cherry Point is home to oil refineries, but BP gave \$25,000 for educational purposes. The areas of Semiahmoo and Birch Bay are under heavy development pressure. Developers own over 2000 acres. Development around Lake Whatcom threatens clean drinking water, which will be exacerbated if I-933 passes.

Whidbey

Keystone ferry terminal. WSDOT is committed to the big ferry. They want to put it in a new area - Admiralty Bay. Right now there are mudflats that the chapter does not want to become a lake. Not necessarily opposed to new site, but concerned that Crocket Lake can be maintained as a shorebird area. Oak Harbor is trying to expand their UGA. Adjacent to Swan Lake there are two areas next to state parks that developers are selling – Deception Pass State Park expanded.

Yakima Valley

Grass management, was it attracting starlings and deterring the woodpecker? Good relationship with state parks. 120 acres preserved around the borders of the Yakima firing center. The chapter has concerns with shrub step habitat. Bureau of Reclamation is looking at putting in additional irrigation to save the farmers. The chapter sponsored a viewing of Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" movie. YVAS is concerned with Black Rock reservoir project expected to be built east of Yakima. This is a boondoggle – genuine concern for water, but this is not the answer.

FOLLOW-UP: Jon Soest, Dan Kinney, Allen Gibbs, Dean Schwickerath, Leslie Wahl, and Heath Packard need to discuss the DNR land swaps.

Kitsap

The chapter is very much involved with the West Sound Conservation Council, which is leading the fight against I-933. Partnered with People for Puget Sound to fight the proposed shoreline buffers, the appeal was successful. Still fighting the potential NASCAR track. Fighting marine port in Hood Canal – already sensitive watershed. This is a continuing battle.

Willapa Hills

The chapter is very busy with a number of different projects. Coal gasification plant – energy northwest is seeking permit. Copper Mine – July/August led field trips. City of Kelso passed a resolution against the mine. Public comment period will be this winter. Liquid Natural Gas receiving terminal – WHAS applied to be an intervener – Congressman Baird came out against the terminal. An Ethanol Plant is being proposed 200 feet from residential area. Wrote comments for EIS to be completed. Request was denied.

Seattle

The chapter has been taking a very active role against I-933, including phonebanking, doorbelling, and a chapter mailing. Northern Spotted Owl preparing to file lawsuit against DNR/Weyerhaeuser regarding state's Forest Practices Rules. NW Shade grown coffee campaign – working to protect habitat for migratory birds. Grown in managed forests. Invite chapters to partner with Seattle.

Black Hills

Still going through the Quality Rock appeal process. The hearing will be later this year. The cluster housing task force is trying to preserve as much rural land as possible. Failing septic tanks are a problem. The chapter is also involved fighting I-933 and the Cross Base Highway. The county is trying to dredge Budd Bay to get cargo ships in. The bay is polluted with dioxin. We need to unite as one voice for statewide policies.

Grays Harbor

The chapter is involved with beach driving signage and education. We need to find out what happened to the funding, if it was worth it. Channel dredging – the port wants to dredge it to stay in competition. Satsop is mismanaging the land. CAO update, Grays Harbor is currently not a GMA county until it has a 17% increase in the next 10 years.

Pilchuck

Also fighting I-933. KAKO towers are being proposed right by a small lake and local river. The chapter's main projects are the removal of creosote pilings for the nesting Osprey. Snohomish County has the largest nesting colony of Osprey on the west coast. Still fighting poorly written CAO's.

Discovery Coast

This is Discovery Coast's first WSACC meeting. Heath welcomed them to the table and invited them to speak briefly about their new chapter. They said the chapter was doing well and was still trying to get some conservation projects started.

Tahoma

The chapter is heavily involved with concerns over Geoduck aquaculture. Currently, 7 permits have been applied for, and there is insufficient science to back up decisions. Also fighting the Cross Base Highway, and planning on filing a suit in November. The project is expected to be part of the Regional Transportation Investment District package on the 2007 ballot. The county

recently passed road impact fees. Involved in the Green Tacoma partnership and will soon be mapping wildlife habitat and corridors.

Vancouver

The chapter is fighting I-933. If I-933 passes gravel mining will resume. Habitat restoration is happening at Ridgefield wildlife refuge. The chapter is currently sponsoring 58 classrooms with Audubon Adventures.

Vashon Maury

The chapter is opposing the proposed Glacier gravel mine. An oil spill response team is being established. Renewable energy is good, but the sites need to be appropriately sited. Shoreline – low tide festival. Need to educate people about the tidal lands.

Lower Columbia Basin

The chapter is fighting I-933. Regarding the proposed Black Rock reservoir, there are worries that the contaminated groundwater from Hanford could contaminate the reservoir/Columbia River. There would be a huge loss of habitat and tremendous amount of money. Hanford reach is working on a visitor center. Dean proposed a burrowing owl habitat land exchange with Grays Harbor, noting that the chapter must manage it.

Spokane

Next Saturday in Reardan, Spokane Audubon, WDFW, Inland NW Land Trust, and the Reardan Public Development Authority will celebrate the protection of Reardan's Audubon Lake. This is 280 acres of migratory shorebird habitat. They are also developing a trail system.

Policy Issues and Updates

No on I-933

The No on I-933 campaigned kicked off their field voter contact efforts on September 9th and since then have contacted 6,500 voters on the phone and at their doors and have left literature at approximately 8,000 additional houses. They have raised close to \$2 million dollars, and need to raise another \$2 million in the next 3 weeks (after October 16th they can no longer accept check larger than \$5,000). Media coverage continues to be overwhelmingly against the initiative.

Yes on I-937

This is the only initiative that continues to do well in the polls. The campaign has started phone banking and is trying to raise enough money for television ads. The Association of Washington Businesses and Weyerhaeuser came out against the initiative and have already spent thousands of dollars for media and press coverage. The Seattle Times came out against the initiative, but most other major papers are supporting it.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

A handout was passed out regarding increased funding for WWRP grants. It addressed frequently asked questions such as: How does the WWRP affect local tax revenues? How does it help local governments? How can my community apply for WWRP grants? A list of 2007

WWRP grant applications and their competitive rankings was also included in the WSACC mailing packet.

Northern Spotted Owl (NSO)

Since May 2006 Audubon Washington has been actively working to influence the federal recovery plan for the Northern Spotted Owl. Our Director of Science and Bird Conservation, Tim Cullinan, was appointed to the Spotted Owl Recovery Team by the U.S. Department of Interior, and our Policy Team is providing logistical support. The plan is drafted and contains both positive and negative items. Department of Interior secretaries in Washington D.C. will be briefed on the plan soon. This is a draft and we expect to have some influence during the public comment period. The final recovery plan is expected in December 2007.

Roadless Areas

Recently, U.S. Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Laporte rules that the Bush Administration violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) when it repealed the 2001 Roadless Rule. The court reinstated the 2001 Rule and enjoined any management activity contrary to the Rule. Comments are still being solicited to send to our governor's office until October 13th. Comment at:

<http://www.governor.wa.gov/roadless/comment/default.htm>.

Wolf Reintroduction

A handout from the Department of Fish and Wildlife was distributed. They are seeking nominees for a working group on wolf conservation and management plan. If interested contact Rocky Beach at 360-902-2510.

Marbled Murrelet (MM) Conservation Strategy Amendment

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources intends to gather information necessary for the preparation of an EIS, which will result in the implementation of a long-term conservation strategy for the marbled murrelet. DNR aims to amend its HCP regarding MM so it can resume timber harvest in areas currently 'off-limits' because of MM ESA threatened status and insufficient MM data. Audubon Washington has been coordinating with other conservation groups and will be working up talking points for a letter soon.

I-920

No on 920 is a campaign to preserve dedicated funding for critical public education programs. Washington's modest estate tax provides approximately \$100 million a year for the Education Legacy Trust that supports K-12 education improvements. Passing of I-920 would only benefit a handful of the state's wealthiest families. The Tax Fairness Coalition has asked Audubon Washington and the chapters to endorse the No on 920 campaign. Heath made note of the fact that we support the tax fairness coalition and joined in 2003. Concerns were raised because this request was not included in the WSACC briefing packet with the according timeline, and we cannot sign on to everything requested of us. The late timing in the campaign season was also discussed, as was the tenuous link to conservation.

Gene Bullock made the original motion for endorsement of the campaign.

Dean Schwickerath seconded the motion.

Discussion was held.
Motion Tabled.

ACTION: The decision was made to table the motion – it was seconded. WSACC does not have time to adequately decide if this is a prudent thing for us to get involved with. But each chapter may endorse the No on I-920 campaign on their own.

Meeting Adjourned.