

**DRAFT**

**Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC)  
Meeting Minutes  
October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005 Meeting  
Federal Way, WA**

**Welcome, Introductions, Minutes approval**

Nina welcomed the group and distributed an updated contact sheet for WSACC members.

**Attending:**

Jerry Joyce, Seattle AS	Bryan Flint, Tahoma AS
Steve Aslanian, Skagit AS	Rob McNair-Huff, Tahoma AS
Sue Danver, Black Hills AS	Robert Wahl, Yakima Valley AS
Sue Chickman, Olympic Peninsula AS	Dan Kinney, Yakima Valley AS
Annette de Knijf, Olympic Peninsula AS	Gene Bullock, Kitsap AS
Gene Kridler, Olympic Peninsula AS	Sandy Bullock, Kitsap AS
Sherry Bottoms, Vashon-Maury Island AS	Dean Schwickerath, Grays Harbor AS
Steven Puddicombe, Willapa Hills AS	Paul Woodward, North Cascades AS
Gary Blevins, Spokane AS	Jon Soest, North Central AS
Matt Mega, Seattle AS	Jeb Baldi, Kittitas AS
Martha Jordan, Pilchuck AS & TTSS	Gretchen Starke, Vancouver AS
Sally Van Niel, Pilchuck AS	Charlotte Reep, Lower Columbia Basin AS
Jan Van Niel, Pilchuck AS	Christi Norman, Audubon WA
Merlin Wiese, Rainier AS	Elizabeth Henry, Audubon WA
Stan Engle, Tahoma AS	Nina Carter, Audubon WA
Helen Engle, Tahoma AS	Lisa Remlinger, Audubon WA

**Executive Director Report:**

Nina mentioned Policy Director, Heath Packard was away from the office and unable to attend the meeting. She went through the proposed agenda, and then spoke briefly about the state office's involvement with the People and Property "Takings" Coalition and recent information at the federal level regarding the protection of the Endangered Species Act.

**June 2005 Minutes:**

Sandy Bullock moved a motion for the June 2005 WSACC minutes to be approved.

Jon Soest seconded.

Motion passed – minutes approved.

**Chapter Issues, Roundtable, and Resolution**

**Cascade Agenda**

Nina and Matt Mega (Seattle AS is expected to adopt the same resolution soon) updated the group on the proposed endorsement of the Cascade Agenda. The Cascade Agenda is a century-long vision for the region from Puget Sound east to the Columbia River. It lays out a set of visions and goals for land conservation, along with programs to achieve them. Concerns were brought up that this did not cover enough area in Eastern Washington (only Kittitas County), but the group decided that this was still a potentially important model to look at for the future. Counties that are not covered in this plan can watch and learn from its example.

Charlotte Reep motioned to support the Cascade Agenda  
Sue Chickman seconded  
The proposed resolution was adopted.

**FOLLOW-UP: Lisa Remlinger will look into who the point person will be for any further discussion of this issue.**

### **Wenas Creek**

Helen Engle updated the group by announcing the loss of Anne Watanabe at the Ellensburg office of Cascade Land Conservancy saying this was a major glitch since it had been arranged she would be the liaison with the agencies, other user groups at Wenas, and the owner of the property. The position has been filled: Tim Engstrom, the Cascade Land Conservancy's Kittitas County Conservation Director, is on the job and Helen mentioned they would be meeting with him shortly. The group also discussed the comprehensive wildlife management plan opportunity and noted the fact that Wenas needs this money. Yakima conservation committee is meeting with user groups to get a local interest in maintaining an area including Wenas creek and including species preservation in comprehensive plan.

### **Cross Base Highway**

Bryan Flint gave an update on the cross base highway proposal. It is funded through local tax; if the gas tax is repealed we have to start over. Great connections have been made with Rep. Wallace because she already knew the issue because WSACC endorsed the proposal. It is important to note Fort Lewis and McChord oppose this project. The message to lobby with this session will be – it is a threat to hundreds of jobs.

### **Western Snowy Plovers**

The much-enlarged size of the restored habitat inland of the primary dune on the Leadbetter Refuge seems to have reached the size and condition to really help the birds. They were very successful this year in numbers of nests and numbers of eggs hatched. Other good news is that State Parks is working to create a position of a Ranger specifically for the Leadbetter State Park. Bad news is that a water tower/lighthouse is going to be built - Pacific County declared it a utility, so it was SEPA exempt.

### **FOLLOW-UP**

**What kind of mitigation happened? Call Discovery Coast Chapter or Willapa Hills – did they have more information? Steve Puddicome will get back to the state office. Is the US fish and Wildlife service reducing habitat restrictions because of recreational income?**

### **Seattle Audubon - Oil Spill Advisory Council**

There are three representatives from the environmental community on the council. (Jerry Joyce from SAS is one of them.) The priorities of the council are to prevent oil spills and make available materials for immediate containment. There will be a council meeting October 21, 2005 all meetings are open to the public and held around the state. If anyone is interested it would be good to give examples or show that chapter members are out looking at birds, and citizen science programs may be active around certain areas.

### **Olympic Peninsula - Buyer's Excise Tax**

OPAS endorsed their local PROPOSITION 1, the Buyer's Excise Tax. Farms help with wildlife habitat, migration corridors, floodwater detention and retention, and aquifer recharge. They want to protect valuable farmland and open space throughout Clallam County. (*Note: The proposition failed on the November 8<sup>th</sup> ballot.*)

### **Black Hills - Gravel Mines**

The chapter has been busy with legal action. The BHAS position is that the Special Use Permit for the expansion for the mine and its accessory activities should be denied. However this argument was lost in superior court. Sue Danver was interviewed by the Tacoma business journal with an opportunity to be on record with BHAS concerns and predictions.

### **North Cascades**

Paul gave an update about the effects of a recent oil refinery EIS that stated how much oil is going to be refined (BP). A local judge changed his mind and he is re-opening the refinery. The chapter is now trying to mitigate, but they need \$20,000 just to do negotiations. It is hard not to feel like you are fighting a losing battle. The chapter is also involved in getting tug escorts, and other things with the negotiations. The Magnuson Act eliminate building docks, went to rules committee and changed regulations and will still keep the big ships from coming in.

### **Pilchuck**

The chapter has been very involved in updating Snohomish County's CAOs. It is difficult because it seems many planning commissioners are pro-development. They recently finished their comprehensive plan for the next 20 years and the Shoreline management plan update. The chapter lost smart growth director, John Mauro, but Kristin Kelly is now on board working for both Futurewise and Pilchuck part-time.

### **Vancouver**

Gretchen noted the chapters continued involvement with growth management. The habitat ordinance draft has been circulated, and the chapter has some issues. A railroad route is being proposed and looked at putting through an IBA site. The chapter will be involved in convincing the city of a better route. The chapter has also been involved in a former army base ammunition clean-up.

### **Willapa Hills**

Four liquid natural gas plants have been proposed, but none in Washington. The sites do sit on the Columbia estuary though. It seems like the Fed's don't have to follow rules and regulations to place these plants. The chapter would like to hear from other chapters if they have any ideas because the ramifications of these plants are very serious.

### **Spokane**

The chapter has been involved with Inland Northwest Land Trust about the management of Reardon Ponds. \$620,000 was acquired from capital state budget. Inland Northwest Land Trust might be willing to partner with other Audubon chapters. Spokane has also been involved in growth management issues.

**FOLLOW-UP: The state office will follow-up with WDFW (Dan Budd) to check the status of the Reardon Ponds acquisition.**

## **Lower Columbia Basin**

The \$125,000 in contributions that was needed to buy the ridge has been raised. It will now be protected from development, and is now public land. The Governor came and attended its big celebration. The chapter is also involved in saving Amon Creek Basin from further degradation; it is the only tributary to the Yakima River Salmon creek. Concerns have also been raised about Elk hunting. The chapter does not want it open to public hunting because of the soil being open to noxious weeds. Good news about another building putting up artificial burrows and monitoring them for owls – 12 were occupied!

## **Yakima Valley**

The chapter has been involved in the lands advisory committee of the department land use primarily regarding wildlife areas. If you would like to discuss this issue or any land management type issue talk to Dan Kinney.

## **Skagit**

The chapter has been involved in the restoration of Wiley Slew. It is an important birding area, but not officially an IBA. Futurewise has been a good force regarding this issue.

## **General Comments**

Matt Mega from Seattle Audubon suggested WSACC put together a binder documenting wins and losses from each chapter, so we can learn from each other and not reinvent the wheel. Chapter conservation chairs are urged to send in “Wins” to Lisa Remlinger for the upcoming WSACC meeting.

## **Policy Issues and Updates**

### **Endangered Species Act**

Representative Pombo’s “Extinction Bill” is a radical departure from current law that would substantially limit the government’s responsibility to protect America’s most vulnerable birds and wildlife. It passed through the House (Congressman Reichart, a Republican from East King County did vote against the bill) and is expected to be brought up in the Senate. We may see an amended bill that removed the ‘takings’ like compensation that was introduced in the original.

### **Forest Service Management Plans**

Jon Soest presented detailed maps and updated the group on the Wenatchee, Okanogan, and Colville National Forests, which are in the process of updating their forest management plans. Right now the topic of interest is Roadless Areas, which are very important to wildlife and habitat protection in the NCW Audubon territory. As of yesterday the Governor and Attorney General’s offices have filed suit because Bush deleted some restrictions. National Audubon Society has joined in that suit. A statewide Task Force of conservation groups and individuals has been working on the proposed NF management plans, and this Task Force has been concentrating on the Roadless Areas issue for the past several months. NCWAS had been very involved in the Task Force. A couple of months ago, he asked for comments to the USFS as they began the Roadless Area study. That was successful-the result of the comments was that the time the Task Force had to study and comment on the USFS proposal was extended by several weeks. Now, comments are needed on the results on the USFU study and the Task Force effort.

### **Birding Trails**

Christi Norman talked about what a huge success the maps have been and showed an example of great press that resulted from a local chapter's and community's involvement. CTED is interested in eco-tourism and this could potential be a very successful partnership. We will ask for money for the last three loops from the Washington Department of Transportation enhancement grants. Christi would like letters of support from the chapters. She also passed out information about a free workshop available to chapter members.

### **Takings Initiative**

Audubon is involved with the Community Protection Coalition and is currently helping make the coalition more diverse. The Washington State Farm Bureau filed their initiative on November 15<sup>th</sup>. All chapters are asked to engage in stopping this initiative.

### **Legislative Priorities**

Because of time restraints WSACC members were encouraged to read Heath's Packard's update that was included in the packet, and call or email with any questions, concerns, or comments.

### **Toxic Lead Shot**

The Trumpeter Swan Society will be conducting the telemetry monitoring, tissue sampling, and recovery of dead birds under contract to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Martha Jordan passed around a sign-up sheet asking for interested persons to volunteer.

### **NSO Update**

A sign-up sheet was passed around for involvement in the November 9<sup>th</sup> Forest Practices Board meeting. Audubon Washington would like a coordinated presence at this meeting and will be doing follow-ups with chapters to request attendance. *(Thank you for attending! We packed the room!)*

### **Wind Power**

Because of time restraints WSACC members were encouraged to read Tim Cullinan's wind power update that was included in the packet.

**FOLLOW-UP: There are currently 240 megawatts (MW) of wind power generating capacity on line in Washington (enough energy for about \$60,000 homes), in four major developments, the vast majority of which are in Walla Walla County. Jeb Baldi asked if this was all the time, or only when the wind is blowing?**

### **Next Meeting**

The idea was proposed to have the next WSACC meeting in Olympia on Saturday December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and to invite legislators to discuss Audubon's 2006 legislative priorities. Postcards were passed out, so members could personally invite their legislators. Discussion was held and it was questioned whether legislators would actually attend. Comments were made that any contact with legislators was a good thing and improved relationships.

Helen Engle motioned for the meeting to be changed

Paul Woodcock seconded

**The new meeting in Olympia December 3<sup>rd</sup> was adopted. It will be held at the Olympia Library - 313 8th Ave. SE from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm.**