

Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC)
Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2005 Meeting
Olympia, WA

Welcome, Introductions, Minutes approval

Heath welcomed the group and noted the impressive turnout regardless of the snow and ice outside. He also mentioned Nina Carter was unable to attend the meeting.

Attending:

Senator Fraser, (D-22)	Robert Wahl, Yakima Valley AS
Representative Wallace, (D-17)	Leslie Wahl, Yakima AS
Dean Schwickerath, Grays Harbor AS	Sue Danver, Black Hills AS
Jon Soest, North Central Washington AS	Steve Aslanian, Skagit AS
Rob McNair-Huff, Tahoma AS	Dan Stonington, Community Protection Coalition
Steven Starlund, Tahoma AS	Heath Packard, Audubon WA
Gretchen Starke, Vancouver AS	Lisa Remlinger, Audubon WA
Christy Barton, Black Hills AS	Tim Cullinan, Audubon WA
Matt Mega, Seattle AS	
Marina Skumanich, Seattle AS	

Policy Director Report:

Audubon Washington's board of stewards will soon be trying a more focused approach. There will be one or two Executive meetings a year, with smaller groups meeting more frequently to discuss specific things like fundraising and chapter relations.

Legislative session begins Monday, January 9th. The Policy team has been busy working on spotted owls, IBA's, birding trails, and wind power. It was noted that Miguel Perez Gibson's (Audubon WA's contract lobbyist) capacity is only for a couple hours a week, but we get so much more from him. Audubon receives about a quarter of his time.

The question was raised about Oregon and their involvement with National Audubon Society (NAS). There have been conflicts between the state and NAS and Portland Audubon. Portland was incorporate before NAS. It was noted that Audubon Washington and the chapters are lucky to have such a good working relationship.

A comment was made about the recent success of the Education Committee - it is moving along nicely.

Since Audubon has its new website, the question was asked if WSACC could have a secured section where documents could be listed.

FOLLOW-UP

Talk to Hilary about making this available on the website.

April 2005 Minutes:

Changes were noted.

Dean motioned to approve the minutes.

Rob seconded.

Minutes Approved.

Dan Stonington – Developers Initiative

The Community Protection Coalition has now hired two new staff members (Dan Stonington and Ben Lawver) to assist in the efforts to fight the Developers Initiative, which is expected to be filed by the Farm Bureau sometime around January 9th, 2006.

Dan passed around a PowerPoint presentation, which outlined the background of a ‘takings’ initiative and what happened in Oregon. A discussion was held about whom the Farm Bureau really was made up of. It was noted that most of the members are not even farmers, but rather people who have bought insurance from them.

The group then discussed how the chapters could get involved:

- Have your chapter join the Community Protection Coalition. (Completed)
- Join our email list to stay up to date.
- Help us identify other supporters.
- Give us stories of how development has impacted you. (This is discussed later in the meeting.)
- Include information in a newsletter or email alert.

For more information or questions please contact Dan at:

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Audubon Legislative Priorities

This year Audubon will be focusing on the following legislative priorities:

- Conserve Washington’s Forests
- Promote Watchable Wildlife
- Ensure Surface Mining Reclamation
- Reduce Toxic Lead Shot

We will also continue our collaboration with the rest of the environmental community and the Priorities for a Healthy Washington, which are:

- Promote Energy Independence through Renewable Fuels
- Clean Up Puget Sound
- Launch Electronics Waste Recycling
- Protect Kids Health by Eliminating Toxic Flame Retardants
- Defend our state's land use protections

The first copy of Bird's Eye View (BEV) was distributed and the following comments were made:

- Who are the targeted legislators?
- It is great to have a goal statement listed on the front.
- Make sure it is clear that we want to contact the *legislative* committee.
- Make the legislative hotline available on every page.

For specific details on each of Audubon's legislative priorities please read BEV, or view it online at http://wa.audubon.org/PDFs/BEV_12-2005.pdf.

Elected Officials

This year Audubon tried something new and invited state legislators and Fish and Wildlife Commissioners to attend WSACC during lunch. Two legislators attended:

- Representative Wallace, (D-17)
- Senator Fraser (D-22)

Representative Wallace

She introduced herself and let the group know some of the issues she is interested in:

- Wetlands
- 'NO' and the Developer's Initiative
- Renewable Energy

Senator Fraser

She introduced herself and let the group know some of the issues she is interested in:

- Toxics
- Bellingham Bay initiative
- Renewable energy.
- ORV noise issue task force

Wind power

Tim Cullinan gave WSACC an update on what has been happening with this issue. At the National level our hands are tied on proper siting because we have weak guidelines; it is done at the county level, there are no federal guidelines. Potentially we receive 240 megawatts, if the wind is blowing all over, which means about 60,000 homes. The wind power does not necessarily come from Washington State. USFWS developed guidelines, not rules; and decided

they did not have to go through the public comment process. We are working with the office in DC about revisions. We are alternative energy advocates, but we also need wildlife advocates. Local and State regulations will spin off of what happens at NAS.

Wenas Update

The Department of Natural Resources steering committee has decided camping will continue - good work by public and private landowners. Cascade Land Conservancy is helping with the negotiations, which have been redirected and picked up. There could potentially be a good story about anti-development and Wenas.

Grays Harbor Audubon

So far the proposed golf course has been kept at bay. The long-term outlook does not look good. As long as they have money, they will continue to propose the course. Checking local CAO's to see if they are being implemented and enforced properly.

Seattle Audubon

Seattle Audubon and the Spotted Owl Caucus successfully convinced the Forest Practices Board to implement some marginal new Spotted Owl protections. There was some disappointment that their major request for on-the-ground interim protections of crucial owl nesting habitat were not considered.

Yakima Valley Audubon

The chapter has been involved in their local CAO updates, so far there is only one environmentalist at the table. The chapter has been in touch with Wenas. There is concern because the maps do not match the best available science.

Vancouver Audubon

Vancouver has also been actively involved in their local CAO updates. Clark county decided to breakdown the CAO into five different sections. The wetland and habitat ordinances still have to be decided. Locally there has been discussion regarding livestock being too close to streams, and Cowlitz wants to put in a casino. The Yakima tribe has purchased land in Battleground.

Tahoma Audubon

Bryan Flint will soon no longer be with Tahoma Audubon and his position will be filled as soon as possible. The Cross Base Highway is a major concern for the chapter. Representative Wallace said she would give the issue a hearing in the House Transportation Committee. With the tax not voted through that is good. For Tahoma's local CAO update they left shorelines out of the regulations. They have decided to deal with the best habitat that remains, which is a mixed bag. They are going to appeal to the city.

Skagit Audubon

One successful land use story in Snohomish County is that there was no development of a proposed car dealership on lands zoned for agriculture adjacent to exit 208 on I-5. We need to continue to maintain our farmlands. They are welcoming Dave Somers to the Snohomish County Council. He is someone good replacing someone bad. But the bad ordinance allowing developers to apply for a euphemistically termed "Fully Contained Community" as a site for a Transfer of

Development Rights' pilot project was passed. All in all there are a lot of things happening in Snohomish County that are going better than Skagit County.

North Central Washington Audubon

It was recommended not to look at only local CAO's to get bad development stories. There are other groups and ways of other actions. Salmon recovery will take other actions such as this, not just zoning, also water treatment, and gravel pits.

Black Hills Audubon

A Mason County judge okayed asphalt plant next to the Black River National Wildlife Refuge. He ruled that Quality Rock Products could proceed with its plan to expand its gravel mine and construct and operate an asphalt and concrete plant. Now the chapter is deciding whether it will appeal this decision to the State Court of Appeals. On a different note the chapter and Maytown Aggregates signed an agreement that says when the mining is over the property will be dedicated primarily to wildlife, with some commercial forestry.

Meeting Adjourned