

DRAFT

**Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC)
Meeting Minutes
June 11, 2005 Meeting
Richland, WA**

Welcome, Introductions, Minutes approval

Nina welcomed the group and noted the slight turnout. We agreed that next time it would be better to have the meeting in a more central location such as Cle Elum or Snoqualmie.

Attending:

Nina Carter, Audubon WA
Heath Packard, Audubon WA
Lisa Remlinger, Audubon WA
Gretchen Starke, Vancouver AS
Dean Schwickerath, Grays Harbor AS
Jonathan Webster, Blue Mountain AS
Shirley Muse, Blue Mountain AS
Dana Ward, Lower Columbia Basin AS

Beth Rogers, Kittitas AS
Sally Van Niel, Pilchuck AS
Jan Van Niel, Pilchuck AS
Leslie Wahl, Yakima AS
Robert Wahl, Yakima AS
Dan Kinney, Yakima AS

Executive Director Report:

Nina introduced the concept of Audubon's strategic planning. Audubon needs a clear focus and a vision for the future. The Board of Stewards will review a draft report July 8th. Following that, the chapters and other stakeholders will be interviewed and surveyed for their input in to this long-range planning process. There are untapped resources within our chapters and more people can be engaged. We are asking ourselves if we are doing everything we can to grow the organization to be more effective advocates?

Nina mentioned she is learning more about the national system, and that WA state is seen as one of the best for chapter relations. The chapters are going to receive their baseline funding. We will try to fund the first round in January 2006.

April 2005 Minutes:

ACTION ITEM: Change spelling for Dean Schwickerath and Shirley Muse. Minutes approved.

ACTION ITEM FOLLOW-UP:

Lacking quorum, this sub-committee recommends endorsement by the full Conservation Committee via mail.

Chapter Issues, Roundtable, and Resolutions

Vancouver AS:

Gretchen gave an update about:

- GMA/Comp Plan crisis

- Effort to change urban growth boundaries, which the planning commission turned down and the city of Vancouver opposes
- CAO – Wetlands on hold

Yakima AS:

Leslie, Robert and Dan gave an update about:

- CAO/SMP updates (CAO 12/06, SMP 2013)
- CAO – adding wildlife sections to each area, which is new!
- Buffers – Not much has been studied in Eastern Washington
- Wetlands BAS is available, but there is resistance to adding BAS in the middle of the process
- Need to connect Gretchen with Yakima
- Shrub Steppe – Yakima Valley Training Center – Fire season is a huge hazard to habitat

FOLLOW-UP: Dept of Ecology best available science about Wetlands. – Heath will circulate to WSACC, bring this up to Kristi and WetNet committee about buffers and research. Have they been adopted as guideline by the department? Heath will check.

FOLLOW-UP: Lisa Remlinger will update WSACC list and circulate electronically to members.

FOLLOW-UP: Put Heath on mailing list with Mark Quinn. He can advocate in the legislature.

Grays Harbor AS:

Dean gave an update about:

- WDFW planning – Wildlife management areas plans
- Department of Agriculture – Fed’s plan to pave the road and then give to Grays Harbor county
- Half Moon Bay Golf Course – comments
- CAO update – expecting counties and cities to ask for extensions
- A water tank is trying to be disguise with a lighthouse, because Discovery Coast chapter is not quite up and running – a letter was sent because snowy plovers were threatened.

Wenas Creek:

Boise Cascade sold land to landowner with a questionable intent. There is concern because Boise Cascade used to let Audubon members access the land for bird watching and hunters for hunting. A growing coalition is trying to approach the owner and ask what it will take to turn acquire the site. – we do not want it developed.

Blue Mountain AS:

Shirley and Jonathan gave an update about:

- Dramatic expansion of wind power
- Growth management – not officially involved in Audubon capacity, but have been working with FutureWise
- Established a high profile being involved in the preservation in the Walla Walla area there are plans for an interpretive center in the Delta.
- Evolved concerns about expansion of highway 12 to more lanes.
- RES international wind power development agency. Comment on USFW on wind power by the end of June.
- Gregoire has Wildhorse from EFSEC on her desk for approval.

FOLLOW-UP: Send out FutureWise lawyers telephone number.

Kittitas Audubon Society (&)

ACTION ITEM: I-90 Wildlife Bridges Resolution:

Beth explained the proposal to expand I-90 between Hayek and Easton. The proposal is a great opportunity to help wildlife migration and corridor connectivity. She passed around campaign/comment cards for members to fill out and review. Forest Service has been a big part of this. It is appropriate to make a comment on the draft environment impact statement.

Beth will get WSACC the:

Endorsement form

Draft letter

And keep WSACC informed.

WSDOT will release its Draft Environmental Impact Statement in early June. Deadline for comments is July 25th. Hearings will be held in the following areas:

Ellensburg - June 29

Snoqualmie Pass - June 30

Seattle - July 7

Jan Van Niel moved a motion for WSACC to adopt the I-90 wildlife bridges resolution

Dana Ward seconded.

Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM FOLLOW-UP:

Lacking quorum, this sub-committee recommends endorsement by the full Conservation Committee via mail.

Lower Columbia Basin AS:

Dana gave us an update on:

- Mountains/ridges are being lost to urban growth. Friends of Badger Mountain joined with LCB to raise over \$125,000 in donations. The rest (\$600,000) came from state and county.
- Friends of Hanford Reach are building a visitors center. It is an IBA at the confluence of the Yakima and Columbia Rivers. There should be room for an Audubon office/display.
- Rattlesnake Elk herd 700 – 1000 elk, they come through the Ale reserve. They have an over population problem. They feel the carrying capacity is at 300. They need water and they are ruining the springs.
- Initiative 297 – Lower Columbia Audubon and Yakima Audubon did not vote in support of this initiative. According to our consensus-approach, this has been misrepresented in BEV and in Olympia in 2005.

FOLLOW-UP: Correction in BEV and website. Heath apologized for oversight and will adjust advocacy efforts accordingly.

Pilchuck AS:

Jan and Sally gave an update on:

- County land use decisions
- Finished with CAO's, but going to GMA hearing board
- They are working on 10 year comprehensive plan updates
- SMP are under review
- Starting IBA conservation toolkit

Cross Base Highway:

Heath gave an update about this issue. It spans I-5 east towards East Pierce County over Military Bases. Base with subdivision around it may be closed sooner. This issue will have another update at the Fall ACOW.

Protect our Oceans Resolution Follow-up:

Heath gave an update on this issue. The Ocean Policy Review Commission bill did not pass, but there was funding in the final budget for 1.6 FTE's at the Department of Ecology to evaluate ocean policies and make recommendations to the legislature for action. A sign up sheet was sent around to see if anyone would like to work on a stakeholders group to provide recommendation to the legislature. Dean Schwickerath and Sally VanNiel signed-up and will try to get the policy review to look at coastal habitat and growth management issues.

FOLLOW-UP: Send out separate notice for others to join.

Policy Issues, Updates and Prioritization

Black Rock:

Estimated field construction cost has doubled. Agricultural community likes the idea because they can get more water. There has been no feedback yet from the letter that was sent by Audubon and others requesting the Governor consider all implications and options. Concern about moving water from one watershed to other was raised.

Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy:

We are asking conservation chairs to ask local members to look at their eco-region, go to the website and take a look to see if it adequately addresses the issues. State wildlife grants help to fund non-profits, and some day may contribute to IBA's to help state wildlife plan. Audubon needs to weigh in.

Takings:

Members were asked to review the proposed resolution for formal adoption. By January 2006 Eyman is going to file some type of initiative. Chapters were asked to get involved. We need to build a coalition of non environmental group members. Montana has defeated initiatives three times.

Gretchen Starke made a motion for adoption of the proposed resolution.

Seconded by Jan VanNiel.

Suspended by Dean Schwickerath because it was not introduced with enough time.

ACTION ITEM FOLLOW-UP:

Lacking quorum, this sub-committee recommends endorsement by the full Conservation Committee via mail. **Send packet to all chapters and then vote at next meeting (ACOW). What does this have to do with birds? (Question by Yakima) Ask Jessica Moore, Policy Intern to prepare document. Send out the entire packet electronically.**

Spotted Owls:

Nina updated the group on this policy issue. A report came out stating spotted owls are still dying rapidly – 49%. We need to ask the Forest Practice Board to improve policies to protect owls. We have a responsibility to look at this regulation. There is scientific information to back this claim. Habitat has still declined. Timber left the table after a report was released by WDFW that they didn't like. We are working closely with KAS, SAS and other environmentalists on this issue. The recent habitat report received some media attention. There will be a Forest Practice Board NSO workshop on August 9. More to come.

Legislative Review:

The brochure 'Birds can't vote', was passed around. It allows you to sign up for state and federal issues. Refer to last issue of Bird's Eye View. Overall this session was good and we were involved in passing major pieces of legislation including Clean Cars and Green Buildings, the first of its kind in that nation. We need to develop a plan to strengthen relationship with Sen. Jacobsen. Doumit is taking pride in his natural resources budget.

Priority Document:

Heath introduced a proposal for Policy Priority Criteria, and 2006 legislative and policy priorities. This document is to filter Audubon's work, not to replace WSACC. It is based on National's new goals and measures for success. It was commented that this would be a good exercise to go through when proposing resolutions to WSACC.

Jonathon Webster motioned- It is the recommendation of this group to be supportive, fully briefed, with it sent out to WSACC (mail and email) with the deadline of July 22, 2005.

Sally Van Niel seconded

Motioned approved.

ACTION ITEM FOLLOW-UP:

Lacking quorum, this sub-committee recommends endorsement by the full Conservation Committee via mail.

Meeting adjourned 3:25pm