

**DRAFT**

**Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC)**

**Meeting Minutes**

**June 24, 2006 Meeting**

**Ellensburg, WA**

**Welcome, Introductions, Minutes approval**

Heath Packard welcomed the group and introduced Ben Ellis Audubon Washington's Policy Intern. It was suggested that instead of going around the table, chapter members would introduce themselves as they presented their chapter report.

**17 people were in attendance and 10 chapters were represented.**

**Attending:**

Sue Danver, Black Hills AS

Gloria Baldi, Kittitas AS

Jeb Baldi, Kittitas AS

Jon Soest, North Central WA AS

Sally Van Niel, Pilchuck AS

Jan Van Niel, Pilchuck AS

Steve Aslanian, Skagit AS

Rob McNair-Huff, Tahoma AS

Gretchen Starke, Vancouver AS

Keith Becker, Whidbey AS

Charlotte Persons, Willapa Hills AS

Leslie Wahl, Yakima Valley AS

Dan Kinney, Yakima Valley AS

Michael Martin, Yakima Valley AS

Heath Packard, Audubon Washington

Ben Ellis, Audubon Washington

Lisa Remlinger, Audubon Washington

**Policy Director Report:**

Heath Packard updated the group on Audubon Washington's strategic planning process, and Seward Park, which will break ground this summer and open summer of 2007.

**Minutes:**

Changes were noted from Pilchuck, Kittitas, and Black Hills Audubon.

**FOLLOW-UP: Contact Richard Anderson to see if a thank you letter was sent to Senator Bob Oke.**

Minutes approved.

**Chapter Issues Roundtable**

**Kittitas Audubon**

The chapter continues to be involved in Northern Spotted Owl issues and recently attended a hearing in Yakima. Three wind power projects have kept the chapter busy: one is approved, the courts and county have denied the second, and the planning commissioners have denied the third. The chapter has also been involved in GMA hearings, the I-90 expansion, and responding to vehicles in the Wenatchee National Forest.

**Yakima Valley Audubon**

The Wenas land exchanged should be completed by June of next year. DNR will provide better stewardship and the Ponderosa Pine forest will be maintained. The chapter has also been involved in CAO roundtable discussions. Protections have yet to be included for upland habitat. Additional water storage (new dams) is being considered for the Yakima basin. The environmental impacts and implications are complicated. In late May, the USFS, WDFW, DNR, and TNC entered into the Tieton Forest MOU. The MOU will serve as a charter to restore the dry forest and shrub-steppe zones to a more sustainable area.

### **Pilchuck Audubon**

The chapter will be testing the IBA toolkit by implementing a conservation plan for Port Susan Bay. Several Everett ospreys have built nests on old creosote pilings, because of dangers from creosote leaking into the water the pilings are slated for removal. Pilchuck is putting together a project to replace the pilings with cement supports recycled from retired highway bridges.

### **North Central Washington Audubon**

The chapter's top conservation priorities include: IBA designation, watershed planning in relation to the Wenatchee and Entiat Rivers, forest management plans for COW forests (roadless area maps, potential wilderness area designation, and travel management plans), participation in Beebe Springs Working Group, Wells/Chelan/Sagebrush Flats Wildlife Areas Citizens Advisory Group, and finally GMA/CAO meetings and public input.

### **Black Hills Audubon**

April, May and June have been very hectic months for the chapter as they continue to appeal three major development projects in Thurston County: Quality Rock Products' proposed asphalt and cement plants, the Maytown Aggregates Gravel Mine and Warehouse Facility, and the Keeneland Park development. Black Hills will also be participating in the new Cluster Housing policy as well as CAO hearings and meetings.

### **Skagit Audubon**

Skagit, along with Pilchuck, will be testing the IBA toolkit. There is no concurrency with development; developers just want to pack them in. Chapter members attended a Northern Spotted Owl hearing in Mount Vernon, which was a success. I-933 is a big deal and has the ability to bring disparate groups together.

### **Vancouver Audubon**

The chapter continues to be a lead in developing the county's CAOs. Clark County will not receive additional funding until their CAO package is complete. Wetlands and Habitat ordinances passed last week. Agriculture module is not yet completed, and the chapter has concerns – the working group proposal is weaker than state standard. A work group has formed to open up the comprehensive plan and define what is commercially viable agriculture. I-933 is a major issue and the chapter has actively engaged in the fight against it.

### **Willapa Hills Audubon Society**

The chapter has been tremendously busy, being one of the only conservation groups in the Willapa Hills area. Two issues they have been working on include: (resolutions on these topics were presented later in the meeting)

- Copper Mine near Mt. St. Helens
- Coal gasification plant

The chapter wanted to use its time to talk about a late-coming proposed resolution for a Liquid Natural Gas Terminal application filed June 5, 2006 for a Bradwood Landing LNG receiving terminal on about 55 acres of a 420-acre site, located in Clatsop County, Oregon. (WHAS found out about the proposal only days before the meeting.)

### Discussion and Actions

According to WSACC rules all resolutions need to be included in the WSACC packet two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting, any late proposals are then scheduled for the following meeting. In this case the group decided to vote whether or not to approve this resolution because of an urgent deadline. The argument was made that most late resolutions have urgent deadlines (NCWAS also proposed something that did not make it in time for the packet, and as a result did not ask WSACC for a position), but the group voted to suspend the rules and to consider the resolution.

**FOLLOW-UP: Find out if NAS has a position regarding liquification. Call the lead and see if they can extend the deadline to apply as an intervener.**

### **Tahoma**

The chapter continues its work on the Cross-base highway. The coalition is trying to expand its members and will most likely challenge (in the form of a lawsuit) the EIS that has been approved. They are also working on shoreline issues, in particular geoduck farming. Kirk Kirkland has been working with local neighbors to try and set-up environmental standards. TAS does not like birds getting caught in the netting. I-933 is a major issue for the chapter. A conservation director should be coming in July.

**FOLLOW-UP: TAS could propose a resolution on geoduck farming for next meeting.**

### **Whidbey**

Developers want to sell property that could potentially enlarge a state park. Hunting is trying to tiptoe around it. Ducks unlimited needs to know we are not always opposed to hunting. Pigeon Guillemot study is going very well. The human population is growing, and the island is divided. Sound end is very environmental.

### **Policy Issues and Updates**

#### **Proposal for new powerline corridor across Stevens Pass**

Dept of Energy, Dept of Defense, and Homeland Security are behind the proposal. Apparently when public scoping began Stevens Pass was not considered, now it is. The corridor will have a 3500' width, running along the BPA powerlines from Rocky Reach Dam over Entiat Ridge through Plain over Natapoc, up Nason Creek and over Stevens Pass along towards Seattle. There are concerns with birds collisions during migration periods. You can respond on the website at: <http://corridoreis.anl.gov/>.

## **IBA Toolkit**

The group reviewed the history behind the toolkit and the 12 steps. Input was solicited from chapter members. For more information please reference a copy given to conservation chairs and chapter presidents.

## **Initiatives**

I-933 – the campaign is ramping up and is in need of volunteer efforts. Check and make sure your chapter has formally endorsed the campaign. Check out their updated website at [www.noon933.org](http://www.noon933.org)

I-937 – this is the last weekend to collect signatures. They still need some to qualify for the November ballot. Please check with the campaign to see where people are gathering in your area.

I-917 – questions have been raised about whether Tim Eyman has been able to gather enough signatures to qualify this initiative for the ballot.

## **WWRP**

There have been record numbers of applications. Passed out handout identifying statewide projects.

## **NSO**

There is action around the lawsuit; Kittitas is hoping they go into negotiations. We added protections and there will be no net loss for NSO habitat.

**FOLLOW-UP: Is it only the west side of the state? Get back to Michael Martin.**

## **Birding Trail**

WSDOT Enhancement Grant was awarded!! Idea - create a distribute card to leave to make sure you are being noticed. Survey at birding festivals to get the hard data.

## **Wetland Mitigation**

Follow up with NAS, why this was not an action alert?

## **Strategic Policy Planning**

Proposed Policy Priorities:

1. Forestry
2. Watchable Wildlife
3. Environmental Education Funding

Proposed Secondary Policy Priorities:

1. Growth Management Act – Land Use Issues
2. Climate Change – Global Warming
3. Puget Sound
4. Surface Mining Reclamation

Tracking Policy Priorities:

1. Invasive Species
2. Wetlands
3. State Parks
4. Cross-base Highway

Budget Priorities:

Operating Budget

Department of Natural Resources

1. Important Bird Area (IBA) program funding
2. Upland Wildlife Assessment Funding
3. 5% increase in RMCA administrative overhead funding
4. Environmental Education

Department of Fish and Wildlife

1. Windpower siting guidelines and staff funding
2. Citizen Science and Environmental Education

Capitol Budget

1. Secure additional funding for the Washington Wildlife Recreation Grant Program (WWRP)
2. Environmental Education

**ACTION: Legislative priorities approved.**

**Resolutions**

(For more detailed information about each resolution please see meeting packet.)

**Proposed Copper Mine**

Comments: If you can put this on the border of a national monument is there any development you can't stop? WHAS is scheduling field trips. Gifford Pinchot task force is currently the lead.

**ACTION: Resolution approved.**

**Gasification Plant**

Comments: Big Sky project is a combination of state and federal research. The question is will this work long term? Before we get the information they will permit the plant. We should be against it as it is currently planned. Nobody knows about this – we need to be writing LTE's. Write your local PUD – whoops II. If they changed it we could change our position.

**ACTION: Resolution approved.**

**Merlin Falcon Foundation**

Comments: Incomplete resolution form. The group has too many questions. It was suggested this be tabled for the October 6th meeting if he is interested.

**ACTION: Resolution denied in current form.**

**Keystone Ferry**

Comments: Endorse ecological position – as well as already prepared resolution. We will not send the letter as is, but will reword it to reflect ecological language and not endorse Martinac specifically.

**ACTION: Resolution approved with letter amended.**

**FOLLOW-UP: Send letter to Governor with ecological position regarding Keystone ferry relocation.**

**Global Warming Change**

Comments: It is a good resolution, but the comments at the end are not all inclusive and are trivial for the big picture. We need something that is more powerful. Adopt resolution with a period after ‘carbon emission’.

**ACTION: Resolution approved with punctuation amended.**

**Meeting adjourned.**