

## ACOW 2015 Meeting Summary

Saturday, October 24, 2015 at the Best Western Plus, Skagit Valley Inn, Mount Vernon, WA

### ATTENDANCE

Approximately 95 people were in attendance representing 20 of 25 Audubon Chapters in Washington. Guests were in attendance from the National Audubon Policy Office, Audubon California, the Governor's office, the University of Washington, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Please contact the [Chapter Conservation Manager](#) if you would like a copy of the attendee list.

### MEETING INTRODUCTION

- Irene Perry (Skagit Audubon President) opened up the meeting with a warm welcome to Skagit Valley, highlighting all of the excellent bird watching opportunities the region offers.
- Art Wang (north Pacific Flyway Rep to the National Board) gave an update on the progress of the National Strategic Plan to be released in early 2016. The latest update of the plan's development can be seen here: [NAS STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE, Fall 2015](#)
- Susan Markey (Black Hills Audubon) was awarded the third annual Helen Engle Volunteer of the Year Award by Helen Engle – Congratulations Susan! Deb Nickerson (Black Hills President) accepted the award on Susan's behalf.

### GOVERNOR'S CLEAN AIR RULE

Chris Davis, Senior Advisor Energy and Carbon Markets, Office of Governor Inslee

- Unable to pass cap and trade legislation to limit carbon emissions in Washington, Governor Inslee has directed the Department of Ecology, under the Clean Air Act, to enact a Climate Air Rule establishing limits on the amount of carbon pollution emitted in the state. The draft rule targets 35 entities with a focus on the manufacturing industry. More information is available on the DOE website under <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/carbonlimit.htm>.
- See also: [Governor Inslee's Executive Carbon Pollution Cap, Explained](#), by Sightline
- Chris acknowledged two other carbon reduction initiatives underway in Washington – a carbon tax and a cap and trade proposal. Should either of these initiatives pass the legislature, they would override the Governor's Clean Air Rule.

### PROPOSALS TO REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS IN WASHINGTON

Attendee Discussion

- Gail Gatton (Audubon WA, ED) provided brief overviews of the two carbon reduction initiatives being proposed in Washington:
  - **Carbon Tax**, proposed by Carbon WA (<http://carbonwa.org/>)
    - **Revenue-neutral Policy:** Add a tax to fossil fuels; Cut the sales tax by 1 cent (per dollar); Fund a tax rebate for working families; Reduce the B&O tax on manufacturing

- **Campaign:** Grassroots volunteers have been gathering signatures since March 2015. They have reached their signature goal and will be submitting their initiative to the 2016 legislature. If it does not move during session, it will go to the 2016 ballot.
  - **Cap and Trade**, proposed by the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy (<http://jobscleanenergywa.com/>)
    - **Revenue-generating Policy:** Details unknown, but presumably similar to the cap and trade priority in the 2015 legislative session that would limit carbon pollution by requiring major polluters to pay for their emissions. Funds would be reinvested by the state to promote further emissions reductions, expand transit and maintain transportation infrastructure, support public education, and assist lower-income families.
    - **Campaign:** Unfolding. Currently recruiting volunteer signature gathers who will begin gathering signatures in January 2016 for an initiative on the 2016 ballot.
- Participants acknowledged the challenges of two competing carbon initiatives and the likelihood of both proposals failing due to confusion among the public. Several people spoke in favor of the Alliance proposal (cap and trade) due to its broad coalition support and its emphasis on investing in diverse and low-income communities that are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts.
- We expect the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy to announce their policy details early in 2016 when they begin gathering signatures for a 2016 ballot initiative. At that time, Audubon will make a formal endorsement of either the Carbon WA campaign or the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy campaign. In the meantime, a small ad hoc working group has been formed to facilitate discussion and guide our decision about which initiative Audubon will support in 2016.
- As independent entities, individual chapters may choose which (both?) initiative they'd like to support.

## HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE GRASSROOTS ADVOCATE

Sean Saville, Field Director, NAS Policy Office

- Sean emphasized the effectiveness of Audubon's grassroots advocacy network, particularly when it is leveraged on a regional or flyway scale.
- Suggested techniques for advancing local issues included building alliances with non-traditional partners (farmers, ranchers, developers, land owners, industry), by being moderate in the way issues are approached, and by using the language of the entity you are trying to influence (e.g. for developers, sustainability = good economics). [Messages should be framed](#) to illustrate the cost of inaction, and should tap into deeply held human values.
- A [power map exercise](#) was presented as a way to identify community leaders, who influences them, and where relationships should be built.
- It was suggested there is no better lobbying tactic than taking the person you are trying to influence to the place(s) being impacted.
- The full power point is available on [Audubon Works](#).

## **CLIMATE SCIENCE FOR WASHINGTON ECOSYSTEMS**

Dr. Josh Lawler, Denman Professor of Sustainable Resource Sciences, UofW

Dr. Lawler emphasized that we need to take multiple climate change models into account and look for areas of agreement (e.g., some models predict stable shrub-steppe, others predict expansion of woody vegetation). Generally, impacts on species due to climate change are most expected in southwest and eastern Washington, while climate refugia are expected in high mountain elevations. With regards to planning for climate change, Dr. Lawler referenced Heller and Zavaleta's 2009 paper "[Biodiversity management in the face of climate change: A review of 22 years of recommendations](#)" which highlights the following recommendations: larger reserves; adaptive management; monitoring; coordination; address scale of issues; more reserves; assisted migration; intensive management to secure populations; study biotic responses; mitigate other threats; integrate climate change into planning; increase connectivity.

## **CLIMATE WORK BY CHAPTERS**

Members of **Kittitas Audubon Society's** Climate Change Committee gave an example of the climate change program they have been presenting to traditional and non-traditional audiences across Eastern Washington, and demonstrated ways in which climate change science can be presented in a non-threatening way to more conservative audiences. In addition, the committee is working to collaboratively develop a regionally specific best practices guide for creating habitat that is simultaneously bird-friendly, water-conserving, fire-wise, and carbon-sequestering. This resource will help guide neighborhood, school, and city landscaping efforts, and will be relevant to habitat managers that work in the sagebrush shrub steppe ecosystem.

The committee is working with several other climate-centric groups in Eastern Washington to run events and host programs, they write regular climate-themed OpEds for their local newspaper, and have developed a beautiful Birds and Climate Change exhibit for display in local libraries and other public spaces. For more information please contact Barry Brunson, Climate Committee Chair, [mathisfun@mac.com](mailto:mathisfun@mac.com).

**Black Hills Audubon Society** has developed and launched a [For the Birds](#) campaign; a community invitation to improve personal habitat for the benefit of birds while providing the resources to turn the vision into reality. By 2020, the Black Hills Audubon hopes to see an accumulation of habitat improvements in their area accomplished by asking residents to commit to making three habitat improvements each year from 2016 through to 2020 – actions such as pulling weeds instead of using a herbicide, planting a bird friendly native bush, and removing an invasive plant from their yard or neighborhood. The chapter has developed communication tools (a brand new website, brochures, bumper stickers, presentations) for use at outreach tables, farmer's markets, and in meetings with home-owner associations, realtors and condominium managers that will help them spread the word about the need for bird friendly landscapes to mitigate the effects of climate change on birds and other wildlife. For more information please contact Deb Nickerson, Chapter President, [debranick@gmail.com](mailto:debranick@gmail.com).

## **REGIONAL MEETINGS**

Please contact your regional representative for an update on regional meeting discussions and plans.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>
Eastern Washington	Robin Priddy, LCBAS (unable to attend, therefore please contact Christi Norman at cnorman@audubon.org)	grania0358@aol.com
King County	Randy Smith, Vashon	cousythecat@centurytel.net
NW I	Allen Gibbs, Pilchuck	agibbspr@gmail.com
NW II	Rick Jahnke, Admiralty	rjahnke@att.net
SW	Lloyd Fetterly, Tahoma	lfetterly_47@hotmail.com

## WSACC 2015 Meeting Summary

Friday, October 31, 2015 at the Skagit Train Station, Mount Vernon, WA

### CONSERVATION INTEGRATION

In 2015 an ad hoc committee convened to codify the relationship between WSACC and the Audubon Washington Conservation Committee. Three recommendations were adopted:

- Audubon Washington will develop guidelines to codify the current structure and process of how WSACC resolutions are put forth, and expand the opportunities for submission to include spring regional meetings in addition to the fall WSACC/ACOW meeting.
- Chapters are given the opportunity to select and put forward up to two chapter conservation leaders to serve on the state conservation committee, selection to occur during the annual WSACC meeting.
- The state office will formally solicit chapter input to state conservation goals by:
  - Making a request to chapters during the fall WSACC meeting for input to state conservation goals for the next year that can be considered during the state board planning retreat; and
  - Sending out the state draft conservation goals for review to chapter presidents and conservation chairs between the planning retreat and final adoption of the goals.

For a copy of the memo to chapter leaders from the ad hoc working group on integrated conservation work, please contact the [Chapter Conservation Manager](#).

### 2015 WSACC RESOLUTIONS

WSACC passed three new resolutions as outlined below.

#### 1) [Prohibit Snag Felling on National Forest Service Lands](#)

- Questions arose around the potential need to harvest snags as a fire management tool, however the science does not support this as a valuable management technique. Someone suggested promoting the protection of critical habitats first and that a more gentle push may be more successful in moving the needle forward. It was noted that the Cle Elum ranger district only allows the harvest of downed trees. The resolution passed with an agreement that conversations among a broad group of stakeholders would increase buy-in and the chances of conservation success.

#### 2) [Reform in the Regulation of Urban Forest Practices](#)

#### 3) [Best Management Practices for Geoduck Aquaculture](#).

- An amendment was made to clarify that the resolution pertained only to intertidal geoduck farming (not harvest in deeper coastal waters). The chapter is committed to offering their assistance/expertise through workshops with other chapters facing geoduck farming challenges in their region (and has since received a small grant to do so).

Seattle Audubon Society abstained from voting on all resolutions as they were not able to discuss them prior to the meeting. A fourth resolution regarding Fossil Fuel Divestment proposed by Eastside Audubon was tabled until the December WSACC conference call when the chapter will be available to discuss the proposal.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

A [summary of 2015 legislative outcomes](#) was presented. Audubon will head into the 2016 legislative session with a new contract lobbyist, Neil Beaver. Neil will be our eyes and ears in Olympia in 2016 and help guide our priority engagement, while building Audubon relationships with key decision makers. It is expected to be a short, contentious session due to a lack of funds, partisan politics, and 2016 being an election year. The Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC) will have no priority bills in 2016 and will be focused on opposing damaging environmental legislation. As per the [Urban Forest Practices resolution](#), Audubon Washington is currently researching the possibility of submitting legislation to amend the Washington Forest Practices Act to close the loop hole allowing the over-riding of more protective critical areas ordinances in urban growth areas.

As previously noted, we will continue to follow the three carbon initiatives currently being proposed in Washington (the Governor's clean air rule, the carbon tax Initiative I-732 from Carbon WA, and the upcoming cap and trade proposal from the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy), and re-evaluate in the new year regarding strategy and targeted advocacy efforts.

## PAST WSACC RESOLUITON UPDATES

Meeting with legislative aids in Washington DC, Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society continues to lobby for the inclusion of additional central Hanford lands into the **Hanford Reach National Monument**. There is hope that President Obama may add these remediated lands to the Monument by Presidential Proclamation in 2016.

Protection for the **Marbled Murrelet** is gaining ground. The Board of Natural Resources recently voted to accept all conservation alternatives outlined in the [MaMu LTCS Draft Alternatives](#) jointly proposed by DNR and USFWS. Alternative E is seen as the only alternative that is based on the 2008 science report, will expand protected areas for Marbled Murrelet, and is predicted to increase the species' population in Washington. We expect to see the Draft EIS in late spring-early summer 2016.

**Oil transport** activity in Washington continues to increase. We have been working with the [Stand Up to Oil](#) campaign to mobilize state-wide grassroots efforts in opposition of several new and expanding fossil fuel terminals along Washington's coast and shorelines. Recently, comments were submitted regarding the [Westway and Imperium DEIS](#) in Grays Harbor, and the [Shell rail unloading facility scoping period](#) in Anacortes. The [DEIS for the Tesoro Savage](#) crude-by-rail uploading and marine loading facility at the Port of Vancouver, WA is expected November 24<sup>th</sup> followed by a 45 day comment period.

## NEXT STEPS

Sam Merrill (Black Hills) and Charlotte Persons (Willapa Hills) were selected to serve on the Audubon Washington state conservation committee.

The WSACC steering committee remains as Allen Gibbs and Sam Merrill (both of whom also sit on the Audubon Washington conservation committee), and no chair was selected.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next WSACC meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 14, 2015 to vote on the fossil fuel divestment resolution and to get an update on the 2016 legislative session.

**Date:** Monday, December 14, 2015

**Time:** 5:30 pm

**Phone:** 1 888 585 9008 **Code:** 342-173-906#

Please contact the [Chapter Conservation Manager](#) to request additional WSACC meeting information.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

- **ACOW 2016:** September or October 2016; Eastern Washington Chapters to host.
- Audubon Washington will be launching a new website in January 2016. It will look and act similar to the new [National Audubon website](#). There will be a Chapters and Centers tab located at the top of the page for easy access, however, many of the chapter resources currently available on the Audubon Washington website will be transferred to [Audubon Works](#). Please take the time to familiarize yourself with this Audubon communications platform, built to facilitate collaboration across the entire Audubon network. Learn more at [wa.audubon.org/audubon-works](http://wa.audubon.org/audubon-works)
- Are you on the Washington Chapter Network listservs? Join us on **WAGeneral**: a voluntary email discussion list sponsored by Audubon members in Washington state. Or on **WSACC**: a voluntary email discussion list comprised of the conservation chairs and committee members from each chapter in Washington state. Contact the [Chapter Conservation Manager](#) to sign up.
- The next monthly **Leadership Council Conference Call** will be November 24, 2015. These conference calls between chapter presidents, regional representatives, and Audubon Washington staff provide communication and sharing opportunities among the Audubon Network in Washington. They occur the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month from 5:30-6:30pm.