
“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting dates: March 7 - 8, 2008 Meeting (Briefing)

Agenda item: Habitat Conservation Planning for Wildlife Areas and Hydraulic Project Approvals (Briefing)

Staff Contact: Marc Daily, Technical Applications Division Manager, (Habitat Program)

Presenter(s): Jennifer Quan, Wildlife Areas HCP Project Manager, (Wildlife Program)
Marc Daily, Technical Applications Division Manager, (Habitat Program)
Matt Niles, Hydraulic Project Approval HCP Project Manager, (Habitat Program)

Background:

This is a briefing to update the Commission on progress made over the last year on two projects that seek to develop Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) for activities authorized under the Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) program and for activities on state owned and managed Wildlife Areas. The HCPs will be long-term management plans for the conservation and protection of species that will satisfy federal requirements under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) upon approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the NOAA Fisheries.

Initiated in 2006, both of the HCP projects have been funded primarily with federal grant money from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with roughly 25 percent state funding. The planning process for these efforts is expected to require approximately five to six years, with completion tentatively scheduled for the end of 2011.

Since 2006, both efforts have been compiling background scientific information needed to develop habitat conservation plans and initiate public involvement. For the Wildlife Areas HCP, the focus has been on inventories of wildlife areas to better identify the species and activities that occur in wildlife areas. For the Hydraulic Project Approval HCP, efforts have concentrated on literature reviews to evaluate the potential impacts on fish, shellfish, and their habitats resulting from hydraulic projects and potential mitigation measures to account for adverse impacts.

Since the initiation of these projects, department staff have briefed the Commission annually to ensure that the Commission is aware of the work that has been conducted and the progress the department is making toward HCP development. For this briefing, department staff will provide an overview of both projects, progress made in 2006 and 2007, and will outline the work scheduled for completion in 2008.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

This is an informational briefing only.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Public involvement has been a primary focus for both HCP projects. In 2006, interviews with about 40 key interested parties were conducted to help outline issues with HCP development and identify how best to engage interested parties throughout the planning process. In 2007, six public meetings were held throughout the state to introduce both planning efforts. Meetings were held in Spokane, Cashmere, Yakima, Everett, Olympia, and Vancouver. The department has also been conducting government-to-government discussions with tribes to ensure that they are aware of the planning effort and to help determine how best to engage the tribes in HCP development.

For the Wildlife Areas HCP, department staff have also been meeting with the Wildlife Area Citizen Advisory Groups throughout the state to engage those groups in the planning efforts. For the Hydraulic Project Approval HCP, a contractor completed a report in 2007 to outline a framework for interested party participation that includes an HCP Advisory Committee and a number of Technical Workgroups to focus on specific hydraulic project types. The department will begin implementing this framework in 2008.

Action requested:

None

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

N/A

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