

6. WDFW/WDNR LAND EXCHANGE UPDATE – BRIEFING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Decision Page.....	<i>i</i>

"GREEN SHEET"

Meeting: May 2-3, 2008
Agenda Item 6: WDFW/WDNR Land Exchange Update – **Briefing**
Prepared By: Jennifer Quan
Presented By: Jennifer Quan, Lands Division Manager, Wildlife Program
Dan Budd, Real Estate Section Manager, Wildlife Program

Background:

The WDFW/WDNR Land Exchange, encompassing an approximate 170,000-acre landscape in checkerboard ownership, is expected to close this fall (November 2008). The lands currently under consideration for exchange are ~55,000 acres of WDFW high-elevation forestland (going to WDNR) for ~117,000 acres of WDNR shrubsteppe and/or lower elevation forestlands (coming to WDFW). The bulk of the areas affected by the exchange include the Colockum, Wenas, L.T.Murray, Sinlahekin, and Oak Creek Wildlife Areas as well as wildlife areas in Chelan, Kittitas, Okanogan, and Yakima counties. Smaller acreages are also under consideration in Adams, Asotin, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Grays Harbor, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Thurston, and Whatcom counties.

The agency expects to sign a purchase and sales agreement in May to preserve federal "appraisal shelf-life" requirements. Prior to closing, the agency and WDNR will continue final parcel exchange negotiations; attain conversion approval from Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), USFWS, NPS per original acquisition funding agreements, establish and implement process of conveyance of leases (grazing, oil and gas, other) as well as road easement, operation and maintenance agreements; National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), State Environmental Policy Act, Section 7 - ESA and Cultural Resources Review.

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

Briefing and status update. Request for Commission approval will occur in November 2008.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

WDNR will hold public hearings on the proposed land exchange April 21-23, 2008 and Department staff will be in attendance. The exchange has also been discussed with the Land Management Advisory Council (LMAC). In addition, public comment will be solicited through the NEPA and SEPA processes.

Action requested (identify the specific Commission decisions you are seeking):

Request the Commission to provide feedback, guidance, and support of the proposed land exchange process.

Draft motion language:

Briefing only.

Justification for Commission action:

Briefing only and request for input.
