

## "GREEN SHEET"

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**Meeting:** April 3-4, 2009

**Agenda Item 5:** Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) Recommendations for Department Land Acquisitions – **Briefing**

**Prepared By:** Don Larsen

**Presented By:** Don Larsen, Environmental Planner, Wildlife Program  
Steve Pozzanghera, Deputy Assistant Director, Wildlife Program  
Jennifer Quan, Lands Division Manager, Wildlife Program  
John Larson, WACD Executive Director

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**Background:**

The Task Force was created in response to WACD Resolutions 2007-26 and 2007-27 passed at the WACD's annual meeting in 2007. Resolution 2007-26 addressed wildlife damage concerns and Resolution 2007-27 addressed concerns over WDFW land acquisition and management. The Task Force met three times in person and three times by conference call between January 2008 and September 2008. The statewide process involved participation from Conservation District supervisors and staff, and partner organizations. WDFW staff attended meetings and provided technical information to assist Task Force members with development of their recommendations. Recommendations (see attached) developed by the Task Force will be presented to WACD Officers and Directors on March 24, 2009 for their consideration.

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

Gaining support for various WDFW activities (i.e., land acquisition, land management, and wildlife conflict management) by increasing collaboration and cooperation with the WACD.

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**Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

WACD provides statewide representation and leadership for Conservation Districts and WDFW staff participated in their Task Force meetings. Despite some WACD concerns with WDFW land acquisition, land management, and wildlife conflicts, it was recognized by all that WACD and WDFW share many natural resource conservation goals.

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

None, briefing only. This is a Commission request from the February 6-7, 2009 Commission meeting.

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**Draft motion language:**

N/A

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**Justification for Commission action:**

N/A

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**Communications plan:**

N/A

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**WACD Task Force on WDFW Land Acquisition, Land Management  
and Wildlife Conflicts  
Final Recommendations – 9/12/08**

The Task Force was created in response to 2007 WACD Resolutions 2007-26 and 2007-27 by WACD President Dean Longrie. The task force met three (3) times in person and three (3) times by conference call between January 2008 and September 2008. The statewide process involved participation from supervisors, staff, and partner organizations. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife was represented by Don Larsen, with specific information brought to meetings by Jennifer Quan, Lands Division Manager, and Steve Pozzanghera, WDFW Deputy Assistant Director of Wildlife Programs.

The following Task Force members participated in the development of the recommendations that will be presented to the WACD Officers and Directors at their September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Participants:**

Jerry Hendrickson, Asotin CD supervisor; John Keatley, Cowlitz CD supervisor; Lee Hemmer, Foster Creek CD supervisor; Norm McClure, Okanogan CD supervisor; Carolyn Kelly, Skagit CD staff; Mike Tobin, North Yakima CD staff; Kevin Guinn, NRCS - Area Soil Conservationist; Mike Marsh, co-Chair Conservation Committee-Washington Native Plants Society; Larry Brewer, SE Regional Manager, WSCC; Don Larsen, WDFW Farm Bill Coordinator; Jennifer Quan, WDFW Lands Division Manager; Steve Pozzanghera, WDFW Deputy Assistant Director of Wildlife Programs; and John Larson, Executive Director, WACD.

During these meetings, an understanding and common theme was agreed to in principle of working toward identified goals in a positive and proactive manner. All participants were asked to look at the issues on a statewide level and not focus on site specific issues and problems. The following mission statement was created.

Task Force Mission Statement: "To assess and make recommendations to WACD on the acquisition of land, management of land, and wildlife conflicts in collaboration with WDFW".

Coordination and sharing of information from the Department was significant in the development of the recommendations along with numerous suggestions and comments from Conservation District supervisors and staff on the draft recommendations. The Task Force's recommendations are intended to provide direction, support, and assistance to the Department in finding common-ground with stakeholders in Washington State.

WACD Task Force on WDFW Land Acquisition, Land Management,  
and Wildlife Conflicts

Final Recommendations – 9/12/08

WACD Resolution 2007-26:

*WACD and WSCC need to work with the State Legislature and Department of Fish and Wildlife toward an equitable and user friendly system of compensating landowners for all wildlife damage to crops, grasses and infrastructures with monetary reimbursement and/or Landowner Preference Permit.*

WACD Resolution 2007-27:

*That WACD take a leadership role in addressing the issues of WDFW land management and land acquisition. WACD should form a task force to assess the many facets of problems and to report their findings back to the WACD Officers and Directors at the earliest opportunity.*

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**Problem Statement:** WDFW land acquisition and management

It is recognized that approximately seventy percent of the WDFW department's budget is not stable and that the land acquisition and management acreage is increasing and there is no corresponding increase in funds for management purposes. This is a long standing problem; every new acquisition dilutes existing funds for management of existing land. (In both dollars and staff)

**Recommendation:** The Wildlife Commission and WACD work with the Department to review all WDFW owned and controlled lands acquired for a specific purpose and evaluate, by the start of the 2009 Washington State Legislative Session, if there is still value for that specific purpose.

**Recommendation:** The Department should develop a strategic plan for acquisition or management control for a specific targeted acreage within the 37 habitat types prior to any of the existing matrix ranking of lands because they are available (deals with "how much is enough" in the Lands 20/20 Vision).

**Recommendation:** WACD recommends that WDFW place a higher priority on acquisition that is less than fee simple ownership, i.e. cooperative agreements (with private landowners and state, federal, local and tribal entities), conservation easements, purchasing of development rights, etc. This would be less costly both in terms of dollars and staff, and could accomplish the same goals as acquisitions.

**Recommendation:** With its partners, WDFW shall look at opportunities to develop “trust” funding for operation and maintenance (proper land management) for previously acquired lands and any future lands for the ecological and biological purposes of their acquisition.

**Recommendation:** Change current and future acquisition funding sources to include short and long term land management funding (to maintain existing function through grazing plans, weed control, timber harvest, TSI, etc.).

**Recommendation:** The Lands Division should be a program equal to Wildlife, Enforcement, Habitat, Fish, and Administrative; restore Lands Division Manager to Assistant Director position.

**Recommendation:** WACD will work at changing RCW 77.12.203 so that it accomplishes a tax rate paid by WDFW to the County at current tax rates as if in private ownership.

**Recommendation:** WDFW should formalize partnerships (Interlocal agreements, MOAs, TSP, contracts, etc.) to allow local WDFW personnel to work proactively with their local Conservation Districts to achieve common goals on private and public lands.

WACD is concerned over the long term effects of transition of lands from private ownership to public ownership and would be willing to discuss this issue further with the Department.

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**Problem Statement:** Wildlife Conflicts

Damage by wildlife or “wildlife depredation” on private lands is a growing concern and WDFW processes to deal with this concern are inadequate.

**Recommendation:** WACD recommends that organizationally WDFW remove this responsibility from the Enforcement Program to the Wildlife Program. This will improve the alignment of efforts to further improve wildlife management.

**Recommendation:** That WACD work with WDFW to revise the RCWs related to wildlife damage and eligible crops and lands (RCW 77 and WAC 232).

**Recommendation:** That WDFW develop a more equitable and user-friendly system for compensating landowners for all wildlife damage to crops, grasses, and infrastructures (fences) with monetary reimbursement or Lethal Removal Permits. This system should include a proactive education/outreach program.

The Task Force believes that crop and infrastructure damage is under-reported and understated and, consequently, funding for reimbursement to private landowners is inadequately funded.

**COMMISSION REQUEST TO DEPARTMENT**  
a.k.a. "Blue Sheet"

**Title of Request:** Briefing and Discussion with Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD)

**Commissioner:** Jerry Gutzwiler

**Priority Level (put one check in each row):**

Importance:  High       Medium       Low

Urgency:     High       Medium       Low

**Date Requested:** Feb. 6-7, 2009    **Date Assigned:** Feb. 10, 2009

**Assigned To (staff person):** Wildlife Program

**Requested Due Date:** April 3-4, 2009

**Knowledge or Action Being Requested (narrative). Describe what you want to know. Be specific.**

Follow-up regarding the "WACD Task Force on WDFW Land Acquisition, Land Management and Wildlife Conflicts – Final Recommendations – 9/12/08" document, and the year-long effort that resulted in recommendations concerning WDFW land acquisitions, land management and wildlife conflicts.

**Output Requested (e.g., telephone call, memo, material from files, new report, presentation, other):**

Invite WACD to provide a briefing at the April 4-5, 2009, Commission meeting in Olympia. Formal briefing to include outcomes, recommendations and considerations of adopting/implementing what WACD has proposed.