

Summary

Meeting dates: February 26-27, 2016

Agenda item: Lands 20/20 Acquisition Process – Briefing

Presenter: Cynthia Wilkerson, Land Conservation and Restoration Section
Manager, Wildlife Program
Lauri Vigue, Environmental Planner, Wildlife Program

Background summary:

In December 2015, several potential acquisition projects were identified as high priority acquisitions during the Lands 20/20 process. These projects have been approved to move forward to collect public comment before final approval by the Director to pursue funding. This early review provides the Commission with background on the new proposals, as well as sharing what we've heard from our public comment period.

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

- The protection of critical habitats and recreational access sites through fee title or conservation easement purchase. Staff will present project proposals based on the 2015 Lands 20/20 process, which will be submitted to potential funding sources available from federal and state grant sources.
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Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Public involvement has included Regional Director and staff coordination with local governments, a public review period (web based), and a public presentation at the Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum (Forum) to be held in March. The Forum is a coordinated presentation of state agencies (Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Parks, the State Conservation Commission, and the Washington State Department of Transportation) on potential habitat and recreation acquisition projects forecasted in the 2017-2019 biennium. The development of many of the projects has included a strong collaboration with a variety of conservation partners.

Action requested:

Request Commission review of the list of projects approved through the 2015 Lands 20/20; the Department will seek funding for projects approved in the Lands 20/20 process. If the Commission identifies issues with the proposed acquisition projects, the final grant submittals will be modified. Comments are requested by March 11, 2016.

Draft motion language:

None. Briefing only.

Justification for Commission action:

None. Briefing only.

Communications Plan:

The public had a three week review in January/February where they were able to review proposals and provide comments via the department website.

Additionally, material and products of the Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum will be made available to the public through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) website <http://www.rco.wa.gov/boards/hrlcg.shtml>. Public grant sources, both state and federal, have associated public involvement opportunities. Final purchase approval for individual land transactions is achieved through a decision by the Fish and Wildlife Commission at the appropriate time, with additional opportunity for public comment.