



Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission Minutes

Workshop:
March 11, 2010 12:15 p.m.
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Commission Room
3406 Cherry Avenue NE
Salem, Oregon 97303

Meeting:
March 12, 2010 8:00 a.m.
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Commission Room
3406 Cherry Ave. NE
Salem, Oregon 97303

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3 *Commission minutes are considered draft until approved by the Commission*
4 *at its next meeting.*

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6 Notice of these meetings had been made by press release of statewide media
7 circulation. Those attending part or all of the meeting included:
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11 Marla Rae, Chair
12 Dan Edge, Vice-Chair
13 Jon Englund, Commissioner
14 Skip Klarquist, Commissioner
15 Bobby Levy, Commissioner
16 Bob Webber, Commissioner

Roy Elicker, Director
Curt Melcher, Deputy Director
Holly Michael, Conservation Strategy
Leader
Colleen Munson, Executive Assistant

17 **OPENING COMMENTS**

18 Chair Rae called the Landscape Connectivity Workshop to order at 12:15 p.m. on
19 Thursday, March 11, 2010. She thanked all the guest speakers and staff for this
20 opportunity to gain knowledge regarding climate change and barriers to wildlife
21 movement. Note: Commissioner Carter Kerns was not able to attend the workshop.
22

23 **LANDSCAPE CONNECTIVITY OVERVIEW**

24 Holly Michael, Conservation Policy Coordinator, highlighted the following points:

- 25 • This issue started with the July 2008 Wildlife Corridors Initiative, a directive from the
26 Western Governor's Association (WGA), to identify crucial habitat and corridors. The
27 Western Governor's Wildlife Council was established to address these impacts to
28 connectivity from climate change, land use and transportation change, and energy
29 development.
- 30 • Initiative also directs states to develop a Decision Support System (DSS), which is a
31 mapping and data management tool that can used to identify corridors and habitat
32 priorities.
- 33 • This is a very transformational era for conservation.

34 **DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

35 Ms. Janet Hess-Herbert, Montana Department of Fish, Game and Parks, said Decision
Support Systems (DSS) are important for survival/sustainability of species. She
highlighted the following issues:

- Climate change is big driver, as is land use.
- Loss of connectivity is a severe impact to big game migration.
- Some corridors for migration are very narrow, other are broad landscapes.
- Small game impacted also, some small game are moving as much as 100 miles.

- 1 • Protected areas are not enough (National and Regional Parks).
- 2 • Social issues decreasing permeability of landscapes (fencing at the US/Mexico
- 3 border).
- 4

5 Hess-Herbert provided an overview of the morning's outcomes from the Science and
6 Technical Workshop for Department staff:

- 7 • Build structure as you go, cannot do it all at once.
- 8 • Document and format best practices.
- 9 • Next steps for the Department - policy workshop on working with DSS.

10

11 General Principles:

- 12 • Structural and functional connectivity both essential.
- 13 • Connectivity does not equal conservation, just a part of conservation.
- 14 • Corridors vs. landscape permeability (permeability more important).
- 15 • Corridor functionality important.
- 16 • A lot of connectivity metrics and models available.
- 17 • Escape minimalist trap (bare essentials may not be enough).

18

19 Key Characteristics of Good Habitat Planning:

- 20 • Resilience to change needs healthy systems.
- 21 • Redundancy of habitat types – multiple sites.
- 22 • Suitable habitat for suites of species.
- 23 • Functional for multiple species.
- 24 • Adaptable as unanticipated changes occur.

25

26 Issues:

- 27 • Public participation critical.
- 28 • Data available, quality.
- 29 • Economics and society.
- 30 • Temporal and spatial scale.
- 31 • Structural and functionality.

32

33 Strategies:

- 34 • Saving represented species and habitats in protected landscapes.
- 35 • Conserving ability of animals to move between landscapes.

36

37 Make Plan Operational:

- 38 • Set conservation targets and goals.
- 39 • Must have a good project design and description.
- 40 • Explicit framework and criteria.
- 41 • Strong technical analysis.
- 42 • Valid ecology.

43 Challenges:

- 44 • Keeping pace with science.
- 45 • Easy stuff is done.

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Living Landscapes:

- People relate to their living locations, need a way to connect habitats and wildlife value.
- Livelihood survey empowers landowners and residents to designate protected wildlife areas.

QUESTIONS

Chair Rae said we need to know how to phrase things; we are engaged in new buzz words. What are really needed are clear and simple messages. The Commission should be careful not to jump in too fast, but this work is important and needs to move forward thoughtfully.

Commissioner Edge asked when the product will be available. Ms. Hess-Herbert responded it will be available in July 2010; the policy link in June 2010.

Discussion continued on the following:

Crucial Areas Assessment and Planning System

- Must have compatible data that extends across state and national lines.
- Definitions/criteria for crucial habitat can be consistent but not identical.

Assessment

- Three pronged strategy: 1) identify resources; 2) assess risk; and 3) make management recommendations.
- Statewide geography based, need to look at big landscapes.
- Reflects best available data.

Drivers for Assessment and DSS

- Field staff unable to keep up with environmental reviews.
- Consistent and growing demand for spatial information.
- Western Governor's Initiative directed.
- Implementation of comprehensive fish and wildlife conservation strategy.

Montana's Overall Process

- Used best science.
- Crucial areas and connectivity layers.
- Science review team that included 11 scientists provided checkpoints.
- Connectivity work group included 30 NGO external staff.

Implementation

External working groups:

- Land use and transportation.
- Energy and natural resources.
- Climate change implications.

- 1 Benefits to staff
2 • Preserving institutional knowledge.
3 • Work efficiency and reduce time/workloads.
4 • Understand lesser known species and habitat.
5

6 **Crucial Areas Planning System**

- 7 • 11 data layers.
8 • Pipelines (potential and current).
9 • Designated lands (National, Federal, Parks, roadless areas).
10 • Housing densities by decades (into future 2040).
11 • Game species information.
12

13 **QUESTIONS**

14 Chair Rae asked how much time from start to finish it took to develop the DSS; what is
15 the cost. Hess-Herbert responded that it involved three FTE. Montana already had a
16 StreamNet data system, and it took approximately 18 months to complete. Chair Rae
17 asked how much Montana would have to share. Hess-Herbert responded that Montana
18 would be willing to share all the data.
19

20 Commissioner Edge said he anticipates problems with people not believing the layers.
21 Hess-Herbert said that Montana has the support of citizen advisory committees and that
22 their Governor supports the data.
23

24 Commissioner Edge said that citizen's access to information on species supports
25 wildlife viewing. Can the information be put on a separate site for this purpose?
26 Hess-Herbert responded that this has been done.
27

28 Ron Anglin, Wildlife Division Administrator, asked where the Department is data-wise.
29 Cedric Cooney said the data is not centralized or standardized, and would take time and
30 effort, but it is doable.
31

32 Chair Rae cautioned the Commission on beginning development until we find out what
33 information the Department has, what is needed and the cost to get there. She asked
34 Director Roy Elicker to work with staff on getting those answers.
35

36 **FREEDOM TO ROAM**

37 Keith Anune, Wildlife Conservation Society, reported that Witness for Wildlife was
38 formed in 2007, and is designed to bring the business/corporate world together to
39 collaborate with industry. The corporate sector would bring money to the connectivity
40 effort. Anune noted the Steering committee members:

- 41 • Wal-Mart
42 • Southern-Cal Edison
43 • BP America
44 • Patagonia
45 • National Fish and Wildlife
46 • National Geographic Society

- 1 • Microsoft
- 2 • Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- 3
- 4 Anune gave an overview of the Keystone initiative.
- 5 • Witness for Wildlife program:
 - 6 1. Story telling – Citizens report from the field re: migrating animals.
 - 7 2. Experiences – sharing what they saw and learned.
 - 8 3. Engagement of organized influential groups, legislators and congressmen.
 - 9 4. Targets: policymakers, sportsmen, etc.
- 10
- 11 • Business for Wildlife:
 - 12 1. Recruit partners from business community.
 - 13 2. Discuss land-use strategies.
 - 14 3. Can lobby for policies.
 - 15 4. Contribute to financial resources.
 - 16 5. Information that benefits companies (site will post corridors and migration
 - 17 information).
- 18

19 **QUESTIONS**

20 Chair Rae asked if there was a chapter of Freedom to Roam in Oregon. Anune said
21 there is not a membership, and no chapters. Chair Rae said she would caution the
22 terms used – use “business” not “corporate”. Having partnerships is very important.

23
24 Anglin asked if it was possible to have sub-websites for Oregon. Can Oregon start
25 one? Can they come and talk to ODFW? Anune said the contacts are Dan Shepard for
26 Witness for Wildlife and Joan Prukop for Freedom to Roam.

27
28 Holly Michael said she will contact Witness for Wildlife to discuss a representative
29 coming to Oregon to meet with the Department and the Commission.

30
31 Commissioner Levy discussed the new Patagonia commercials and how they show that
32 Patagonia is more environmentally conscious.

34 **TRANSBOUNDARY MAPPING OVERVIEW AND OUTCOMES – TWO** 35 **COUNTRIES, ONE FOREST**

36 Ms. Gillian Wolmer, Wildlife Conservation Society, reported that the area used for the
37 study included four New England states in the United States and four Canadian
38 Provinces. The study identified corridors and places where they are absent, or “pinch-
39 points” that need to expand.

40
41 Wolmer discussed the **Eco-region Status and Trends Initiative**.

- 42 • Current Human Footprint – influence on ecosystems tell where human actions are.
- 43 • Future Human Footprint to 2040 (population growth):
 - 44 1. Three scenarios described:
 - 45 1) Current trends – Connecticut;
 - 46 2) Pacific Northwest; and

1 3) North Central Lakes.

- 2 • Eco-region assessment:
- 3 1. Select conservation targets.
- 4 2. Assess viability of target occurrences.
- 5 3. Set representation and redundancy goals.
- 6 4. Wildlands network design.
- 7 5. Priority locations for conservation.
- 8 • Irreplacibility vs. vulnerability (threat).
- 9 • Developed online Atlas to make information available, includes interactive maps and
- 10 map gallery, data warehouse.
- 11 • Connectivity tools (work differently, tool used depends on what is asked):
- 12 1. Cost path analysis.
- 13 2. Graph theory.
- 14 3. Circuit theory, based on electrical current flows.
- 15 4. CAPS Resistant Kernel Estimator for Connectivity Tools.
- 16 • Connectivity Tools:
- 17 1. Local Connectivity.
- 18 2. Regional Connectivity.
- 19 3. Continuity – structural connectedness.
- 20 4. Isolation.
- 21 5. Conductance.
- 22 • Stay Connected Grant (multi-state projects).
- 23

24 **QUESTIONS**

25 Chip Dale, High Desert Region Manager, asked if there is expected value for wildlife

26 connectivity in Ms. Gillian Wolmer's area. Wolmer said yes, the Adirondack Mountains.

27

28 Commissioner Edge asked if there was contrast data sharing among states, among

29 countries. Wolmer explained that in the United States public information is more readily

30 available. In Canada they have a cost recovery ethic which makes obtaining

31 information very costly, and each data set required that a license be bought. Wolmer

32 said, as a word of caution, don't get bogged down in detail, create by what information it

33 is to be used for.

34

35 **WORKSHOP WRAP-UP AND CLOSING COMMENTS**

36 Holly Michael said this workshop and presentations have given the Department an

37 opportunity to see their own challenges and limitations, what's missing, and what we

38 need to do. She discussed the Next steps:

- 39 1. Partnerships to develop.
- 40 2. Two different ways to provide information with maps.
- 41

42 Chair Rae said that decisions cannot be made hastily. The Department needs to be

43 prepared to give cynics reasons why they should care about what is being done. It is

44 important to do this in a regional basis; nationally can't do it alone.

45

46 Commissioner Webber stated that it seems others are way ahead. The Department

47 needs to begin by developing the necessary tools. Commissioner Englund agreed.

1
2 Commissioner Levy stated that it is scary how behind we are, and that the Department
3 needs to work with states bordering Oregon and to create better working relationships.
4

5 Commissioner Klarquist said that there is a sense of urgency; we need to start on the
6 project.
7

8 Commissioner Edge said that it appears that the Department has the capabilities and
9 underlying data to move forward. He asked if the Department has a centralized data
10 issue. He said it would be a “pro” to create layers, have data base information, and
11 have statewide the ability to assist developers.
12

13 Director Elicker said there is a federal effort to set up a regional approach to the project;
14 the feds want states to participate heavily in the process. He said it always comes
15 down to resources. The Department only has license dollars and not 100% of the funds
16 that are needed. Director Elicker said there will need to be Executive leadership
17 discussion to lay out the following scenarios:

- 18 1. How far do we have to go?
- 19 2. How fast do we need to get there?
- 20 3. How does this fit at the regional and federal level?
- 21 4. Do we want to push this on to the federal government?
- 22 5. How far away are we from centralized information? We have bits and pieces at
23 present.
24

25 Chair Rae said the Department needs to set priorities for time, attention, and resources
26 to develop the project.
27

28 **ADJOURN**

29 Chair Marla Rae adjourned the workshop at 3:45 p.m.