

RCW 79A.25.260 Habitat and recreation lands coordinating group—

Members—Progress reports—Duties. (Expires July 31, 2027.) (1) The habitat and recreation lands coordinating group is established. The group must include representatives from the office, the state parks and recreation commission, the department of natural resources, and the department of fish and wildlife. The members of the group must have subject matter expertise with the issues presented in this section. Representatives from appropriate stakeholder organizations and local government must also be considered for participation on the group, but may only be appointed or invited by the director.

(2) To ensure timely completion of the duties assigned to the group, the director shall submit yearly progress reports to the office of financial management.

(3) The group must:

(a) Review agency land acquisition and disposal plans and policies to help ensure statewide coordination of habitat and recreation land acquisitions and disposals;

(b) Produce an interagency, statewide biennial forecast of habitat and recreation land acquisition and disposal plans;

(c) Establish procedures for publishing the biennial forecast of acquisition and disposal plans on websites or other centralized, easily accessible formats;

(d) Develop and convene an annual forum for agencies to coordinate their near-term acquisition and disposal plans;

(e) Develop a recommended method for interagency geographic information system-based documentation of habitat and recreation lands in cooperation with other state agencies using geographic information systems;

(f) Develop recommendations for standardization of acquisition and disposal recordkeeping, including identifying a preferred process for centralizing acquisition data;

(g) Develop an approach for monitoring the success of acquisitions;

(h) Identify and commence a dialogue with key state and federal partners to develop an inventory of potential public lands for transfer into habitat and recreation land management status; and

(i) Review existing and proposed habitat conservation plans on a regular basis to foster statewide coordination and save costs.

(4) If prioritization among the various requirements of subsection (3) of this section is necessary due to the availability of resources, the group shall prioritize implementation of subsection (3)(a) through (d) and (g) of this section.

(5) The group shall revisit the planning requirements of relevant grant programs administered by the office to determine whether coordination of state agency habitat and recreation land acquisition and disposal could be improved by modifying those requirements.

(6) The group must develop options for centralizing coordination of habitat and recreation land acquisition made with funds from federal grants. The advantages and drawbacks of the following options, at a minimum, must be developed:

(a) Requiring that agencies provide early communication on the status of federal grant applications to the office, the office of financial management, or directly to the legislature;

(b) Establishing a centralized pass-through agency for federal funds, where individual agencies would be the primary applicants.

(7) This section expires July 31, 2027. Prior to January 1, 2027, the group shall make a formal recommendation to the board and the appropriate committees of the legislature as to whether the existence of the habitat and recreation lands coordinating group should be continued beyond July 31, 2027, and if so, whether any modifications to its enabling statute should be pursued. [2016 c 151 § 1; 2012 c 128 § 1; 2007 c 247 § 1.]

Finding—2012 c 128: "The legislature finds that participation by the state's habitat and recreation land management agencies in the habitat and recreation lands coordinating group is an inherent part of transparent, efficient, and effective state habitat and recreation land management, and must be conducted within existing resources." [2012 c 128 § 2.]