

WILDLIFE VIEWING ACTIVITIES IN WASHINGTON

A STRATEGIC PLAN



REPORT TO THE WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE

MARCH 2004



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY,
TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Suggested Citation

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. *Wildlife Viewing Activities in Washington: A Strategic Plan. Report to the Washington State Legislature, March 2004.*

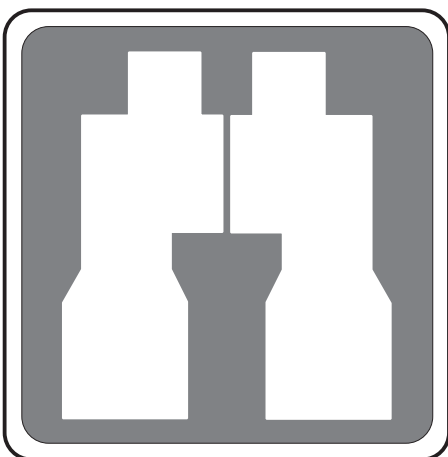
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2003, the Washington State Legislature passed SB 5011 requesting that the departments of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) host a working conference to adopt a strategic plan to promote wildlife-viewing tourism in Washington.

This conference created the backbone of a plan that would promote wildlife viewing as a means to provide sustainable economic development in the state's rural areas while maintaining the state's wildlife diversity. The Legislature also requested that steps to implement the plan be developed.

From the input of the conference attendees, the following guiding principles and activities have been developed to meet this request:

- Identify needs and opportunities to provide premium wildlife viewing recreational opportunities, ensuring participant safety, conservation and protection of the wildlife being viewed; while not diminishing existing hunting and fishing opportunity.
 - Develop a watchable wildlife site database
 - Develop an interactive Web map
- Market the state as a premium national and international wildlife-viewing destination, to increase travel to wildlife viewing locations throughout the state.
 - Expand advertising exposure in key metro markets
 - Conduct a media blitz involving community wildlife viewing representatives
- Develop sites to safely accommodate viewers and wildlife, with appropriate amenities such as viewing blinds, restrooms, parking, fencing and habitat improvements that attract wildlife.
 - Develop viewing sites at premier WDFW access points
 - Provide matching grants for local capital projects
 - Increase operation and maintenance for viewing activities on WDFW land
- Utilize interpretation and development activities for wildlife sites to inform and educate visitors, communities and vendors on ethical viewing activities, viewing practices that ensure sustainability of the wildlife on which the species depend.
 - Watchable Wildlife biologist
- Collect valid, reliable and credible measurements of the economic impact of wildlife viewing activities in Washington along with continued monitoring of the impacts of viewing activities on the wildlife being viewed.
 - Conduct economic impact research
 - Conduct consumer research
 - Conduct advertising return on investment (ROI) research
- Maximize limited budgets by creating strong, sustainable partnerships with all appropriate public and private agencies in order to leverage public funds and to create involvement and multi-ownership in wildlife projects by all potential partners.
 - Provide matching grants for small projects
 - Provide professional and financial assistance for vendors and communities
 - Conduct wildlife viewing conference
 - Develop Washington State Watchable Wildlife Coalition
 - Support Great Washington State Birding Trail development



OVERVIEW

Washington State's varied geography, climates, and ecosystems have created one of the richest and most diverse habitats in the nation, giving rise to over 640 vertebrate species, including 365 bird species; and thousands of invertebrates.

Past conservation efforts of hunters and anglers and other conservationists have enabled some species to thrive despite habitat encroachment by expanding communities. While support for traditional recreational hunting and fishing activities remains steadfast, another wildlife activity has become increasingly popular and important: *wildlife viewing* as an outdoor recreational pastime. Economic contributions to the state's economy are \$1 billion per year! (U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation – Washington.)

In recognizing the importance of this growing interest in promoting wildlife viewing opportunities, in 2003 the Washington State Legislature passed SB 5011, requesting that the departments of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) host a working conference to draft a strategic plan to promote wildlife-viewing tourism in Washington. The Legislature specified that WDFW and CTED should create a plan that would promote wildlife viewing as a means to provide sustainable economic development in the state's rural areas while maintaining the state's wildlife diversity. The Legislature also requested that steps to implement the plan be developed. In addition to SB 5011, the Legislature also passed Second Substitute House

Washington Wildlife Viewing Plan

Bill 1973 stating the legislature finds that tourism is a growing sector of the Washington economy. (See Appendix A for both bills.)

Washington has a diverse geography, geology, climate, and natural resources, and offers abundant opportunities for wildlife viewing. Nature-based tourism is the fastest growing outdoor activity and segment of the travel industry and the state can take advantage of this by marketing Washington's natural assets to international as well as national tourist markets. (See Appendix B for a full discussion of wildlife viewing economics and the demographics of wildlife viewers.)

Expanding tourism efforts can

“This report is not the end product - instead it is a beginning.”

provide Washington residents with jobs and local communities with needed revenues. Current efforts to promote Washington's natural resources and nature-based tourism to national and international markets are diffuse and limited by funding. A collaborative effort among state and local governments, tribes, and private enterprises can serve to leverage the investments in nature-based tourism made by each.

The conference requested by SB 5011 was held in Olympia on September 3, 2003. It was attended by 150 people, representing a broad spectrum of agencies, individuals and businesses involved in wildlife tourism—private business, counties, cities, state and local government and tribes, and the input from the attendees forms the core of this plan (Appendix C). A survey of other watchable wildlife activities in the state

was also gathered for presentation at the time of the conference (Appendix D), and a detailed listing of partners providing wildlife viewing opportunities is included (Appendix E). Further input was gathered from participants at a Washington State Tourism Forum on November 19, 2003, and through a general public review conducted in December 2003 through January 2004 (Appendix F).

This report is a summary of the major findings of the conference, the survey, the forum and the general public review. It contains WDFW's and CTED's combined vision of the future of wildlife viewing as an economic stimulator, along with recommended strategies and tasks to implement the plan. This report is not the end – instead it is a beginning!

Wildlife viewing is an annual billion-dollar industry in Washington. With the proper care and nurturing, this economic boost to the state's rural economies can be increased. This plan for wildlife viewing in Washington is a start in that direction.



WHAT IS “WATCHABLE WILDLIFE?”

Watchable Wildlife is all wildlife that people might see, enjoy and learn about. Although birds and the charismatic megafauna (large, showy wildlife) are the more popular species, what people enjoy viewing is as diverse as the viewers themselves. Watchable Wildlife also consists of recreational activities of responsible viewing, photographing, feeding and learning about wildlife and wild places.

In 1990, recognizing the growing national consumer interest in non-consumptive wildlife experiences, wildlife agencies created a new national organization designated “Watchable Wildlife”. This program has been embraced by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife along with other state and federal wildlife management agencies in Washington. Watchable wildlife in our state provides both resident and non-resident visitors with access to a range of biodiversity almost unequalled in any other state in the U.S. It offers us the opportunity to extend an out-of-state visit beyond the metro centers of the state to include rural communities. Perhaps equally important, wildlife viewing can increase human exposure to and interaction with other species in order to learn about and value both the economic and ecological attributes of these natural assets.

The current impact of Washington State’s watchable wildlife program is well documented. In 2001, over 47% of Washington’s residents participated in wildlife watching. In doing so, Washington residents spent \$979 million resulting in a total economic output of \$1.78 billion, generating and or maintaining 22,000 jobs (Appendix B).

However, Washington State’s travel industry is an even more significant part of our overall economy. Travel spending in Washington State generates an estimated \$11 billion, \$3.2 billion in earnings and 152,500 jobs. In 2002 alone, travel spending generated

an estimated \$569 million in state tax revenues and an estimated \$191 million in local tax revenues. (Data from 1991-2002 Travel Impacts and Visitor Volume available on www.experiencewashington.com/industry). An advantage for Washington State is the fact that wildlife-viewing sites are primarily located in more rural counties of the state. The annual County Travel Impact Report, prepared for CTED by Dean Runyan Associates, has always shown travel spending and travel generated employment to be a more significant percentage of total revenue and employment in rural counties than in urban counties of the state (available at www.experiencewashington.com/industry).

In addition, the target audience for the state’s visitor industry is the “urban naturalist,” defined as the consumer lifestyle that seeks cultural, historic, and urban travel experiences along with authentic nature-based outdoor experiences. Wildlife viewing appeals strongly to this audience. In addition, the “urban naturalist” is more likely to participate in other historic or cultural activities or attractions located in rural communities, that will further increase the economic impact in those communities.

Watchable Wildlife promotion is a strategy that enhances people’s opportunities for sustainable, low impact recreation. Watchable Wildlife programs develop facilities and activities to increase the chances of successful viewing experiences. They can teach

viewing skills and responsible behavior and give people the opportunity to learn about wildlife, which leads to increased public support for wildlife conservation.

Watchable Wildlife strategies can range from very passive to more active. **Passive** wildlife viewing opportunities are a result of information or directions given about where people might see wildlife. Examples are publications, brochures, newspaper articles and web site information. **Active** wildlife viewing activities occur in areas **developed** to ensure that people would likely see wildlife at a given location and/or season and have a safe and satisfying experience. Developed viewing areas, and structures to see wintering big game, waterfowl, urban or wetland species are examples of active viewing.



WHAT IS THE VISION?

Vision: “To aid the long-term community and economic stability achieved by nationally and internationally marketing Washington State as a world-class wildlife viewing destination, while simultaneously protecting and enhancing our state’s biodiversity and natural assets of wildlife and their habitat.”

Currently, wildlife viewing programs are small and poorly funded. Yet the opportunity to significantly increase wildlife tourism in Washington is great. Participants at the Watchable Wildlife Conference held in September 2003 spent considerable time and energy detailing the opportunities and impediments to achieving this vision of wildlife viewing as an economic stimulant for rural communities in Washington. Appendix C details their suggestions and their concerns. The participants then identified the following strategies necessary to achieve the vision.

What are the Primary Strategies?

- 1) Identify needs and opportunities to provide premium wildlife viewing recreational opportunities, ensuring participant safety, conservation and protection of the wildlife being viewed; while not diminishing existing hunting and fishing opportunity.
- 2) Market the state as a premium national and international wildlife-viewing destination to increase travel to wildlife viewing locations throughout the state.
- 3) Develop sites to safely accommodate viewers and wildlife, with appropriate amenities such as viewing blinds, restrooms, parking, fencing and habitat improvements that attract wildlife.
- 4) Use interpretation and development activities for wildlife sites to inform and educate visitors, communities and vendors on ethical viewing activities and practices that ensure sustainability of the wildlife sought by viewers.
- 5) Collect valid, reliable and credible measurements of the economic impact of wildlife viewing activities in Washington along with continued monitoring of the impacts of viewing activities on the wildlife being viewed.
- 6) Maximize limited budgets by creating strong, sustainable partnerships with all appropriate public and private agencies in order to leverage public funds and to create involvement and multi-ownership in wildlife projects by all potential partners. (See Appendix C for potential partners.)



WHAT ARE THE CURRENT ACTIVITIES?

Both CTED and WDFW have ongoing programs that include wildlife viewing as major components. These are detailed below and both agencies plan to continue these activities under current budget levels. Additional activities and tasks have been identified as new initiatives necessary to take wildlife viewing to further enhance the economic impact of wildlife viewing for rural communities and are detailed as “Strategic Recommendations.”

WDFW Current Activities and Tasks

Wildlife viewing recreation and education was recognized as a need in the department’s 1980 Nongame (now Diversity) Plan. In 1993, the department began its formal wildlife viewing in two ways. First, the department joined with Defenders of Wildlife, other state and federal agencies, and a number of private foundations and companies to co-sponsor publication of the Washington Wildlife Viewing Guide, a 96-page book published by Falcon Press, identifying 90 of the best places in Washington to observe wildlife. Viewing guides have also been published for 21 other states. Secondly, the department joined with the Olympic and Mount Baker-Snoqualmie national forests in sponsoring the Puget Sound Eyes on Wildlife program. Early projects were targeted toward viewing activities on these forests, with partnerships with Trout Unlimited and others.

In 1997, funding was secured for a full-time Watchable Wildlife Coordinator position within the Diversity Section. The vision is to connect citizens with year-round wildlife viewing opportunities, particularly in rural communities, and to encourage the public to engage in habitat stewardship and wildlife conservation. Components of the program include: WildWatchCams, Watchable Wildlife on Wildlife Areas, wildlife festivals, and partnerships with other local, state and federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Also, part of the program is a campaign to raise awareness about Personalized Motor Vehicle License Plates, fees for which help fund the program.

Beginning in 1998, a major project was conducted in eastern Washington,

funded by the Washington State Department of Transportation, that promotes fish and wildlife recreation as well as other cultural resources—the Scenic and Recreation Byway along SR 17 and SR 155, from Othello to Coulee City. Staffed in part by WDFW, this partnership with WSDOT, local leaders and Central Basin Audubon Society led to the establishment of an active citizens’ group. Members of the group became involved in the resource assessment and planning of projects in and near communities bordering portions of the byway. Among the successes of this project are the active Coulee Corridor Committee which created the Balde Eagle Festival; a heightened awareness throughout the corridor about wildlife viewing potential; the creation of the Coulee Corridor Scenic Byway Birding Map in cooperation with WSDOT and Audubon Washington (completed in 2003); and the successful pursuit of grant dollars and partnerships to make on-the-ground improvements. This brought the department’s staff working on wildlife viewing to two and highlighted the need for an eastern Washington presence.

In 1999, the Department received a one-time appropriation of \$100,000 in Capital funds for wildlife viewing construction activities. Completed projects include an improved parking area and fence on the Fir Island Farm section of the Skagit Wildlife Area; a joint project with State Parks to re-develop a bald eagle viewing trail and parking area at Northrup Canyon (Steamboat Rock State Park) near Electric City in Grant county; and an ADA-accessible vault toilet on the North Potholes Wildlife Area near Moses Lake.

In 2001, the Department received a

US Fish and Wildlife Service matching grant for the development of the Great Washington State Birding Trail pilot project; the Cascade Loop. Primary partners were Audubon Washington and CTED Department of Tourism. Additional funding came from the Icicle Foundation, Puget Sound Energy and individual Audubon donors. The Cascade Loop was launched in October 2002.

Congressional budgets in 2002 provided the department with the first federal funding to conduct wildlife-related recreation and educational programs. One product from that funding is “A Community Guide to Nature Tourism,” a web-resource and how-to manual on nature tourism assessment and development. Created by the WDFW, the website was specifically created to assist community leaders, natural resource managers and others to use a five-step process for creating a community nature tourism site or event, including assessing community features, planning, implementation and evaluating success.

The colorful website provides guidelines and best management practices for protection of natural resources in the rapidly growing area of nature tourism development. The site is heavily linked to outside resources that allow a user to find useful information on guidelines and technical assistance throughout all project phases in planning a wildlife viewing trip to Washington or developing a nature tourism business. The Community Guide to Nature Tourism can be viewed at www.experiencewashington.com/industry.

The 2003 Washington Legislature also passed SB 5204, authorizing the department to sell Watchable Wildlife Decals. Sale of these decals, set by the Fish and Wildlife Commission at \$30, creates a revenue source for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop watchable wildlife opportunities in cooperation with local, state, and federal agencies and NGOs. The proceeds must be used to support the Department’s watchable wildlife

activities. The Fish and Wildlife Commission sets the fee for the decal. Purchasers of the decal receive the annual Access Permit for using WDFW lands and access areas.

Funding for wildlife viewing recreational development is in its infancy in Washington. WDFW has minimal resources available to pursue and promote present opportunities. Pursuing grants is one of the few options available for expansion.

Other activities that can be accomplished at current funding levels are:

- Enhanced website information and cross-agency coordination (WDFW/CTED) of Web information.
- Continued development of public information on seasonal wildlife viewing through WDFW’s monthly cable TV show “Wild About Washington” and WDFW’s twice-monthly on-line “Weekender Report.”
- Grant writing to fund projects on department lands, through Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation.
- Minimal support of existing and to-be-developed wildlife festivals.
- Development of interpretive signs for use on WDFW lands and with partners.
- Continued coordination with partners.
- Continued development of WildWatchCams.
- Continue working with Audubon Washington to develop the Great Washington State Birding Trail maps – two finished and five remaining to be developed.

“Birding Trails” is a national program with Audubon WA as the lead in this state in partnership with WDFW, CTED and WSDOT. Audubon WA plans a 3,000-mile trail (driving tour) that covers all of the state. The Trail will incorporate seven driving loops with maps, signs, traveler amenities and site enhancements to draw tens of thousands of nature tourists from around the state, country and the world. Audubon WA has completed

two loops, the Cascade Loop and the Coulee Corridor Scenic Byway, and is starting the third loop on the Washington coast.

WDFW’s Oak Creek Wildlife Area near Naches draws thousands of wildlife viewers every year to see elk.



CTED Current Activities and Tasks

The Business and Tourism Development Office of CTED is responsible for a variety of economic development activities that primarily benefit business constituents. Partners include industry associations, and state, regional and local economic development organizations.

The primary role of the tourism unit is as a marketer to increase awareness of, and visits to, the state. Marketing target audiences include consumers, travel publications, and travel trade representatives nationally and internationally.

The Tourism advertising effort is focused primarily out-of-state and given budget constraints, targets neighboring states, provinces and California. Described are current marketing activities for wildlife viewing in Washington State.

Research

CTED conducts a major Visitor Profile and consumer attitude analysis every three to four years to determine market share, visitor spending levels, and attitudes of visitors and non-visitors to key travel attributes for the state. The 2003/04 statewide Visitor Analysis study is underway and will include questions to determine consumer perception of Washington as a wildlife viewing destination, along with spending information for wildlife viewing visitors. This study will provide us with baseline data against which all future marketing activities can be measured for effectiveness.

In addition the CTED has been annually partnering with Destination Marketing Organizations (Convention and Visitor Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, etc.) to conduct regional, multi-county visitor profile studies. Most recently these studies have included questions about wildlife viewing attractions for certain counties. This type of information will be collected in all future regional profile studies. All tourism research is available on the CTED website at www.experiencewashington.com/industry.

Marketing

The primary consumer travel website for the state, www.experiencewashington.com features a "watchable wildlife" section. Communities provide the information using an online content form available from the tourism industry website. Beginning in spring 2004, the site will add an interactive "clickable" GIS mapping component to allow consumers to search for specific activities and attractions that will be added annually as funding permits. In 2004 the state's Scenic Byways will be featured and wildlife viewing sites along each By-Way will be mapped. This site currently receives well over a million visits annually and is currently 45% above the previous year in consumer visits.

The *Northwest Backroads* weekly TV series that airs on NBC stations in Seattle, Spokane, Portland and Boise features story ideas provided

by community representatives in a partnership effort with the Business and Tourism Office. Several stories have focused on a watchable wildlife event or attraction. In 2004, the Tourism office will utilize existing feature stories to create a half-hour television special program focused on Scenic By-Ways and wildlife viewing opportunities that will be aired in Texas, and if partnership funds permit, Arizona.

One of CTED's six new full-page, four-color ads has a wildlife focus. The ad has been placed in publications that have a strong wildlife editorial content. For Spring 2004, a new four-color, two-page spread ad will be produced to focus on wildlife viewing and position Washington State as a premium and unique wildlife viewing destination. This ad will be placed in consumer magazines targeting Oregon and California. Press releases, "Storylines" and tour operator materials for the domestic and international markets all feature a variety of watchable wildlife press information, story ideas and tours that include a wildlife-viewing opportunity.

The Business and Tourism Photo Libraries contain a searchable database and are available from the Tourism Industry site (www.experiencewashington.com/industry). CTED has continued to add new wildlife images from excellent photographers (as budget permits) and these are made available to press and tour operators. There is also a non-restricted photo library available to community organizations or anyone wanting Washington images at no cost.

Tourism Development

On a time-available-basis, tourism development staff provides technical assistance to communities and businesses interested in tourism development projects. CTED staff provides assistance with the strategic planning process and identifies potential funding.



Great egrets at North Potholes Wildlife Area. Courtesy CTED Photo Library

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS - WDFW

Given the overwhelming support expressed by participants at the September 2003 watchable wildlife conference, the following tasks have been identified as new initiatives necessary to enhance wildlife viewing to further aid local economic impact for rural communities. These activities will require additional funding; and estimated range of costs are included on page 14, as well as amount of time to implement the activity or task.

Watchable Wildlife Site Database

Develop and maintain a detailed database inventory of all existing wildlife viewing sites, including details on site ownership, positive attributes and any potential or existing problems. Provide this information to CTED to be included in the www.experiencewashington.com interactive map.

Lead Agency-WDFW Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 4 months

Matching Grants

Develop a matching grant program. Good ideas and energetic volunteers/community leaders are only two legs of the stool to get a worthy project implemented. The third is money. Often, \$10,000 to as little as \$1,000 can make the difference between a great idea and success. A grant program patterned after Seattle's Neighborhood Matching Fund (\$1:\$1 in four different categories) would provide the incentive for locals to commit their own resources for specific needs. The Community Financial Grant program would provide local communities and nonprofit organizations with funds to develop low-impact watchable wildlife sites and/or pool funds with other communities to increase visibility of their wildlife destinations or events to targeted audiences.

Lead Agency- WDFW; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 1 month

Site Development

A key to quality wildlife attractions is the amenities at the site. WDFW manages 800,000 acres of quality wildlife habitat throughout the state, offering an incredible array of viewing opportunities. However, there are very

few developments—such as parking areas, viewing blinds, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible trails—to encourage viewing use. In addition, existing maintenance money is inadequate. New developments require increased operation and maintenance funding. Local communities and groups will be important in assisting with activities such as protecting, utilizing and promoting the site in ways that tie back to their local communities. WDFW capital plan funds are anticipated as a major portion of the Washington State match for federal funds to develop the Great Washington State Birding Trail.

Lead Agency- WDFW; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 4 years

A. Implement first three sites on WDFW 10-year Capital Plan

Sharp-tailed grouse viewing site, Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area, Lincoln County. Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 3 months

Wings Over the Skagit, Skagit Wildlife Area, Skagit and Snohomish Counties. Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 3 months

North Potholes Reserve, Potholes Wildlife Area, Grant County.

Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 3 months

B. Operation and maintenance increase for WDFW Lands for Wildlife Viewing Activities.

Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: annual

C. Implement next three sites on on WDFW 10-year Capital Plan

Lower Crab Creek Alkaline Wetlands, Crab Creek Wildlife Area, Grant County.

Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 3 months

Bird Watchers Corner, Dodson Road, Potholes Wildlife Area, Grant County.

Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 3 months

Corfu Road ADA Nature Trail, Seep Lakes Wildlife Area, Adams County.

Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 3 months

D. Matching Grants - Capital

Feedback from the participants in the November 19, 2003 Washington State Tourism Forum, as part of the first review of this plan, indicated a strong need for local communities and nonprofit organizations to have an opportunity to apply for funding for capital projects that are not on WDFW land. Local needs include parking, interpretation, restrooms, fencing, trail development and other similar activities. Currently, the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) administers various funds that could be used for these activities, but the specifics of the grants may preclude many projects. Additional Capital funds could be made available for a broader range of proposals.

Lead Agency -IAC; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: Annual

Watchable Wildlife Biologist

Eastern Washington

Retain a watchable wildlife biologist stationed in eastern Washington to insure that wildlife populations are not being adversely impacted by viewers and viewing activity, and provide regular research and monitoring of local wildlife populations. Currently such a position exists in western Washington,

but it is difficult, if not impossible, to provide such services statewide.

A dedicated biologist to review the wildlife viewing activities and wildlife populations for the entire east side of the state will insure that healthy wildlife populations will remain. This person will coordinate the viewing site plans of local communities to insure that species are not severely impacted, which could include threatened, endangered or sensitive species. The current wildlife viewing biologist stationed in Olympia cannot adequately cover the vast opportunities in eastern Washington. Lead Agency - WDFW; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: Annual



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Endangered American white pelicans rest and feed at Sprague Lake Watchable Wildlife Area.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS- CTED

Given the overwhelming support expressed by participants at the September 2003 watchable wildlife conference, the following tasks have been identified as new initiatives necessary to take wildlife viewing to further enhance the economic impact of wildlife viewing for rural communities. These activities will require additional funding and estimated range of costs are included as well as the amount of time to implement the activity or task. These activities would not take place all at the same time and some of them are timed with specific industry trends and coincide with current work CTED conducts.

Research and Marketing

Interactive Web Map

Develop a watchable wildlife interactive map component on the www.experiencewashington.com website similar to that being developed this fiscal year for scenic byways. Map features will let consumers search for wildlife sites, by species, on a “clickable” map that also shows nearby communities, and other related activities and businesses. In addition, link to other websites with good images of the wildlife viewing sites or obtain images of these sites showing wildlife that can be viewed, including the Great Washington State Birding Trail. Lead Agency- CTED; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 3 months

Economic Impact Research

Utilize existing economic impact research data to develop a methodology for measuring wildlife viewing impact on communities and provide a bi-annual economic impact report as part of annual county travel impact reports. Use this methodology to determine most productive locations for wildlife viewing sites to maximize return on investment. Lead Agency- CTED; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 2 months

Consumer Research

Conduct qualitative research in Seattle, Portland and one California metro market to gain insights into: 1) the type of wildlife viewing sites most attractive to the key audience; 2) other activities in rural communities that wildlife viewers seek; 3) key messages that influence travel behaviors of wildlife viewers; and 4) key media that are used most by wildlife viewers. This research

can also be helpful in testing existing watchable wildlife ads, to determine audience reaction, so that ads can be modified to be more effective. Results based on consumer preferences will be shared with communities and with WDFW to provide guidance in wildlife site development.

Lead Agency- CTED; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 2 months

Expand Advertising Exposure in Key Metro Markets

Expand wildlife print ad placement into additional niche publications targeting wildlife viewers as identified in Task #3 above. In addition, find new partners to share in the cost to air the ½ hour television program featuring scenic byways and wildlife produced by Belo Marketing Solutions in selected metro markets in key western states. Develop a receptive and international tour operator cooperative advertising campaign to increase watchable wildlife tour packages.

Lead Agency – CTED; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 7 months

Advertising ROI (Return on Investment)

Develop return-advertising investment research to determine the cost-effectiveness of an enhanced wildlife viewing advertising campaign.

Lead Agency- CTED; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 1 month

Media Blitz Involving Community Wildlife Viewing Representatives

Biennially conduct media blitz programs to be held in media centers of the U.S. (New York and California) targeting niche wildlife media, including representatives of communities with

wildlife viewing attractions. Arrange for media appointments among community representatives and key wildlife publication editors and writers to provide the community organizations an opportunity for one-on-one discussions to encourage media feature stories. In addition, during each blitz, CTED will hold a media marketplace providing communities an opportunity to meet with press and tour operators that are not available to meet during the one-on-one appointments.

Lead Agency- CTED; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 1 month

Technical and Financial Assistance Programs

Professional and Financial Assistance for Vendors and Communities

Create an “ombudsman” position for locals to help guide them through the various stages of community building, from “How do we get started?” to “Where can we find money?” to “Help, our volunteers are at burn out!”

Small communities seldom have the knowledge, skills, and staff to conduct community needs’ assessments of available resources, build local teams to tackle planning and implementation activities, conduct wildlife festivals, develop targeted publicity, develop sites and sustain partnerships. This was one of the strongest, most consistent items of feedback generated at the viewing conference. Universally, local officials and nonprofit organizations want “one person to call” to help them through difficult times.

Assist start-up businesses with technical assistance and training to identify sources for financing, business plan development, licensing requirements, and other business assistance. Community assistance would include technical assistance with preliminary organization and funding identification, wildlife festival development and publicity and other start-up assistance

to help communities learn how to create their own wildlife viewing opportunities.

Lead Agency – CTED; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: Annual

Future Partnership Activities

Conduct Statewide Wildlife Viewing Conference

Every two years beginning in 2005, conduct a conference on development of wildlife viewing opportunities and promotion, based on participant needs.

Lead agency- Joint WDFW/CTED; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 9 months (and ongoing)

Partnership Development

Create a Washington State Watchable Wildlife Coalition to continue providing direction and feedback to CTED and WDFW on the wildlife viewing industry.

Lead Agency- Joint WDFW/CTED.; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 3 months

Continue to Develop and Market the Great Washington State Birding Trail

Obtain federal highway grant to complete birding trail including additional loops, signs and site enhancements. It is anticipated that federal funds will pay a substantial

percentage of the trail. In addition, advertisements in bird watching magazines are targeted opportunities to immediately and directly draw in out-of-state visitors.

Lead Agency – Audubon Washington; Estimated amount of time needed to implement activity or task: 60 months

Ospreys on nest on Pend Oreille River near Usk. Courtesy CTED Photo Library.



SUMMARY: WHAT WILL IT COST?

Activity	Task	Estimated Cost	Lead	Time Frame	*If begin FY 04
<i>Research and Marketing</i>					
	Wildlife site database	\$30,000-\$50,000	WDFW		July - Oct 04
	Interactive Web wildlife map	\$30,000-\$60,000	CTED	3 months	Nov 04 - Jan 05
	Economic impact research	\$35,000- \$40,000 first year; \$18,000-\$22,000 biannually	CTED	2 month	Oct 04-Dec 05
	Consumer research	\$36,000-\$50,000	CTED	2 months	July-Sept 04
	Expand ad exposure in key metro markets	\$150,000-\$500,000	CTED	7 months	April 05-Oct 05
	Media blitz	\$10,000-\$15,000	CTED	1 month	Sept 05`
<i>Technical and Financial Assistance</i>					
	Professional/financial assistance specialist	\$100,000-\$125,000 annually	CTED	3-6 months	July 04
	Matching grants	\$100,000-\$500,000	WDFW		July 04
<i>Site Development</i>					
	Three WDFW sites	\$774,000	WDFW	3 months	July 04
	Three WDFW sites	\$540,000	WDFW	2 months	July 05
	O&M increase for WDFW Wildlife Viewing sites	\$150,000-\$500,000	WDFW	Annual	July 04
	Watchable Wildlife biologist	\$100,000-\$125,000 annually	WDFW	Annual	July 04
	Non-WDFW Capital matching grants	\$500,000+ annually	WDFW	Annual	July 04
<i>Partnerships</i>					
	Wildlife Viewing Conference	\$50,000-\$75,000 bi-annually	CTED/ WDFW	9 months	July 04
	Watchable Wildlife Coalition	\$10,000-\$15,000 annually	CTED/ WDFW	3 months	July 04
	Birding Trail matching funds	\$400,000-\$600,000	AW/ WDFW	60 months	Supt 05
<i>Total</i>		\$3,015,000-\$4,491,000			

CASE STUDY

The Developing Coulee Corridor Nature Tourism Story

Coulee Country in Central Washington is one area where a few communities have pursued an expanded vision of a new mix of nature and cultural tourism. All of the ingredients for success exist in these communities, and on the adjacent public lands, to attract this new kind of visitor – one who is interested in real places with stories linking the past and present, blending the history and cultures of an area that has a backdrop of abundant natural scenery and wildlife diversity. Interwoven in this “quilted” landscape are thousands of acres of ponds and marshes, vast stretches of agricultural lands and smaller patches of native grasslands and shrubs that serve as a magnet for a wide diversity of birds, wildlife and human settlements.

The coulees and canyons of central Washington along the SR17/155 scenic byway provide remarkable opportunities to capitalize upon existing and potential sites to experience and enjoy birds and wildlife against the backdrop of rosy colored rocky cliffs and coulees that help tie together the area’s stories and experiences of “the power of water.”

Initially, the communities seemed to lack a cohesive, comprehensive method to develop a well thought-out, large-scale tourism plan for the entire area. That is until a Scenic Byway grant and planning process came along to serve as the catalyst to bring representatives of ten towns, two counties, multiple state, federal, tribal agencies and conservation nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to the planning table.

This project area, roughly stretching from Othello to Grand Coulee, is blessed with an abundance of

ecologically and culturally significant resources as well as a substantial amount of tourist support infrastructure, like parking lots, public lands and access to recreation and trails.

A second successful National Scenic Byway (NSB) Grant for the Coulee Corridor was written by Audubon Washington to create a Birding Map for the area. Audubon Washington staff worked with the Central Basin Audubon Chapter and the Coulee Corridor Consortium to create this second leg of the Great Washington State Birding Trail patterned after successful ventures in Texas and Florida. The map was finished and unveiled in the Fall of 2003 and expands the “shoulder season” to year-round.

A third NSB grant was awarded to the Coulee Corridor in 2003 for specific projects related to watchable wildlife in the Lake Lenore area, continued planning for future projects and also for general marketing and training for the entire Scenic Byway and its supporters.

Following are some of the major steps and actions taken by a citizen’s steering committee as they worked to pursue a community planning effort that is leading to the development of a Scenic Byway Management Plan. It is also serving as the core of a sustainable, long-term nature tourism plan:

- Conduct dozens of public meetings starting in 1999
- Organize a steering committee early in 2000
- Inventory community resources & attractions 2000-2001
- Promote existing events and festivals like the Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

- Map the community resources and sacred sites 2000-2001
- Establish a formal Coulee Corridor Planning Committee 2002
- Draft a work/project plan with prioritized projects
- Obtain necessary training and leadership skills 2002
- Develop a "community vision/future condition" 2002
- Obtain funding for priority projects
- Conduct "familiarization" tours for key constituents 2001 and 2002
- Publicize the region’s natural and human assets through numerous media articles and TV specials
- Develop three community awareness and pride meetings called “Big Events”
- Create a second Washington eagle festival, the Grand Coulee “Balde Eagle Festival

For more information on this community effort check out the following:

www.couleecorridor.org
www.cbas.org/bw_areas/birding_trail.htm
www.wsdot.wa.gov/biz/csd/BPBC_Final/
www.grandcouleedam.org/balde/index.htm



APPENDIX A: SB 5011 AND HB 1973

SB 5011

AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2003 Regular Session, State of Washington 58th Legislature;

By Senators Jacobsen, Winsley and Kohl-Welles

Read first time 01/13/2003. Referred to Committee on Parks, Fish & Wildlife.

AN ACT Relating to promoting wildlife viewing; adding a new section to chapter 77.12 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

{+ NEW SECTION. +} Sec. 1. A new section is added to chapter 77.12 RCW to read as follows:

The department shall manage wildlife programs in a manner that provides for public opportunities to view wildlife and supports wildlife viewing tourism without impairing the state's wildlife resources.

{+ NEW SECTION. +} Sec. 2. (1) The departments of fish and wildlife and community, trade, and economic development shall host a working conference on promoting wildlife viewing tourism. The objective of the conference shall be to adopt a strategic plan and specific implementing actions to promote wildlife viewing tourism in Washington in a manner that both provides sustainable economic development in the state's rural areas and supports maintaining the state's wildlife diversity.

(2) The departments shall work with interested local governments, state agencies, visitor and convention bureaus, the hospitality industry, tourism development organizations, and tour operators and wildlife conservation organizations in preparing for and conducting the conference. The departments shall guide preparation for the conference by surveying programs and activities in other states and compiling information on current programs, infrastructure, and promotional activities regarding wildlife viewing tourism in Washington.

To enhance the effectiveness of the conference and its products, the departments shall seek to frame issues and outline options for improvement through white papers and preliminary meetings with interest groups.

(3) Among the topics that the departments and interest groups should address at the conference are:

(a) Strategies to increase revenues and benefits to Washington communities with wildlife viewing resources that have identified tourism as part of their economic development strategy;

(b) Strengthening the wildlife viewing tourism elements of gateway community partnerships among state and local transportation, economic development, and parks and wildlife agencies;

(c) Providing leadership and services by state agencies

to assist local communities to assess their local wildlife viewing resources and to market tourism centered upon such resources;

(d) Developing proposals to increase state funding to local communities to implement local wildlife viewing tourism plans, including assessing resources, providing infrastructure specific to wildlife viewing tourism, festival development, and marketing;

(e) Promoting wildlife viewing tourism as an element of tourism related to the Lewis and Clark bicentennial commemoration.

(4) The departments shall schedule the conference at a time sufficient to prepare a summary of the conference proceedings and proposals for legislative funding to be submitted to the appropriate committees of the legislature no later than December 15, 2003.

☞

Second Substitute House Bill 1973

AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

Passed Legislature - 2003 Regular Session, State of Washington 58th Legislature

By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Veloria, McCoy and Kenney)
READ FIRST TIME 03/10/03.

AN ACT Relating to promoting tourism; amending RCW 43.330.090, 43.330.094, and 42.52.150; adding a new section to chapter 77.12 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 42.52 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

{+ NEW SECTION. +} Sec. 1. The legislature finds that tourism is a growing sector of the Washington economy. Washington has a diverse geography, geology, climate, and natural resources, and offers abundant opportunities for wildlife viewing. Nature-based tourism is the fastest growing outdoor activity and segment of the travel industry and the state can take advantage of this by marketing Washington's natural assets to international as well as national tourist markets. Expanding tourism efforts can provide Washington residents with jobs and local communities with needed revenues.

The legislature also finds that current efforts to promote Washington's natural resources and nature-based tourism to national and international markets are too diffuse and limited by funding and that a collaborative effort among state and local governments, tribes, and private enterprises can serve to leverage the investments in nature-based tourism made by each.

Sec. 2. RCW 43.330.090 and 1998 c 245 s 85 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department shall work with private sector organizations, local governments, local ({{- economic -}}) {+

associate +} development organizations, and higher education and training institutions to assist in the development of strategies to diversify the economy, facilitate technology transfer and diffusion, and increase value-added production by focusing on targeted sectors. The targeted sectors may include, but are not limited to, software, forest products, biotechnology, environmental industries, recycling markets and waste reduction, aerospace, food processing, tourism, film and video, microelectronics, new materials, robotics, and machine tools. The department shall, on a continuing basis, evaluate the potential return to the state from devoting additional resources to a targeted sector's approach to economic development and including additional sectors in its efforts. The department shall use information gathered in each service delivery region in formulating its sectoral strategies and in designating new targeted sectors.

(2) The department shall (({- ensure that the state continues to -})) pursue a coordinated program to expand the tourism industry throughout the state in cooperation with the public and private tourism development organizations. (({- The department shall work to provide a balance of tourism activities throughout the state and during different seasons of the year. In addition, -})) {+ The department, in operating its tourism program, shall:

(a) Promote Washington as a tourism destination to national and international markets to include nature-based and wildlife viewing tourism;

(b) Provide information to businesses and local communities on tourism opportunities that could expand local revenues;

(c) Assist local communities to strengthen their tourism partnerships, including their relationships with state and local agencies;

(d) Provide leadership training and assistance to local communities to facilitate the development and implementation of local tourism plans;

(e) Coordinate the development of a statewide tourism and marketing plan. The department's tourism planning efforts shall be carried out +} {+in conjunction with public and private tourism development organizations including the department of fish and wildlife and other appropriate agencies. The plan shall specifically address mechanisms for: (i) Funding national and international marketing and nature-based tourism efforts; (ii) interagency cooperation; and (iii) integrating the state plan with local tourism plans.

(3) The department may, in carrying out its efforts to expand the tourism industry in the state:

(a) Solicit and receive gifts, grants, funds, fees, and endowments, in trust or otherwise, from tribal, local or other governmental entities, as well as private sources, and may expend the same or any income therefrom for tourism purposes. All revenue received for tourism purposes shall be deposited into the tourism development and promotion account created in RCW 43.330.094;

(b) Host conferences and strategic planning workshops relating to the promotion of nature-based and wildlife viewing tourism;

(c) Conduct or contract for tourism-related studies;

(d) Contract with individuals, businesses, or public entities to carry out its tourism-related activities under this section;

(e) Provide tourism-related organizations with marketing and other technical assistance;

(f) Evaluate and make recommendations on proposed tourism-related policies.

(4) T +}he department shall promote, market, and encourage growth in the production of films and videos, as well as television commercials within the state; to this end the department is directed to assist in the location of a film and video production studio within the state.

(({- (3) -})) {+ (5) +} In assisting in the development of a targeted sector, the department's activities may include, but are not limited to:

(a) Conducting focus group discussions, facilitating meetings, and conducting studies to identify members of the sector, appraise the current state of the sector, and identify issues of common concern within the sector;

(b) Supporting the formation of industry associations, publications of association directories, and related efforts to create or expand the activities or industry associations;

(c) Assisting in the formation of flexible networks by providing (i) agency employees or private sector consultants trained to act as flexible network brokers and (ii) funding for potential flexible network participants for the purpose of organizing or implementing a flexible network;

(d) Helping establish research consortia;

(e) Facilitating joint training and education programs;

(f) Promoting cooperative market development activities;

(g) Analyzing the need, feasibility, and cost of establishing product certification and testing facilities and services; and

(h) Providing for methods of electronic communication and information dissemination among firms and groups of firms to facilitate network activity.

{+ NEW SECTION. +} Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 77.12 RCW to read as follows:

The department shall manage wildlife programs in a manner that provides for public opportunities to view wildlife and supports nature-based and wildlife viewing tourism without impairing the state's wildlife resources.

Sec. 4. RCW 43.330.094 and 1997 c 220 s 223 are each amended to read as follows:

The tourism development and promotion account is created in the state treasury. All receipts from RCW 36.102.060(10) {+ and 43.330.090(3)(a) +} must be deposited into the account. Moneys in the account {+ received under RCW 36.102.060(10) +} may be spent only after appropriation. {+ No appropriation is required for expenditures from moneys received under RCW 43.330.090(3)(a). +} Expenditures from the account may be used by the department of community, trade, and economic development only for the purposes of (({- promotion of -})) {+ expanding and promoting +} the tourism industry in the state of Washington.

{+ NEW SECTION. +} Sec. 5. A new section is added to chapter 42.52 RCW to read as follows:

When soliciting charitable gifts, grants, or donations solely for the purposes of promoting the expansion of tourism as provided for in RCW 43.330.090, state officers and state employees are presumed not to be in violation of the solicitation and receipt of gift provisions in RCW 42.52.140.



APPENDIX B: ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS OF WILDLIFE VIEWING

Note: Appendix A references data from the 2001 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. This survey is conducted every five years by the U.S. Bureau of Census for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The 2001 USFWS Survey was designed to provide state-level estimates of the number of participants in recreational hunting and fishing, and in wildlife-watching activities (e.g. wildlife observation). Information was collected on the number of participants, where and how often they participated, the type of wildlife encountered, and the amount of money spent on wildlife-related recreation.

Data obtained from the 2001 USFWS survey and other sources are not entirely comparable. Methodologies can differ significantly from National to State Level Analysis, therefore care should be taken in interpreting data attributed to Washington State. Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, Business and Tourism Development office conducts a variety of consumer travel trend data and travel economic reports, which can be viewed at www.experiencewashington.com/industry.

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Economic Contributions of Wildlife Viewing

Participation in Wildlife Viewing

In 2001, 2.5 million U.S. residents 16+ years old participated in wildlife viewing activities in Washington. (See Figure 1.) Of these, an estimated 43 percent (1.1 million) traveled one mile or more to view wildlife, spending an average of \$265 annually per person on trip-related expenses. An estimated 286,000 wildlife viewers were from out-of-state.

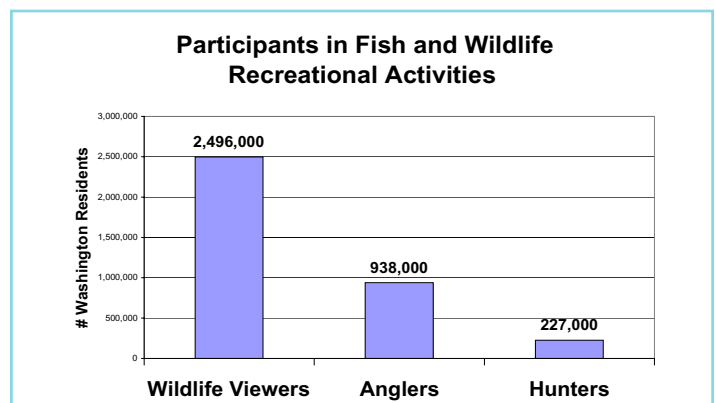


Figure 1: In 2001, 47% of Washington's residents participated in wildlife watching, compared to 30% nationally. Sixteen percent of Washington residents fished and 5% hunted. Bird watching is one of the most popular of wildlife viewing activities for Washingtonians having the fourth-highest participation rating in the country. Thirty-six percent of Washington residents regularly participate in bird watching activities. Source: 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau.

Expenditures by Wildlife Viewers, Anglers and Hunters

Wildlife viewers spend money in two categories: equipment and other items; and travel-related activities. Equipment expenditures include binoculars, spotting scopes, cameras, film and developing, bird and other wildlife food, birdhouses, packs, tents, vehicles, magazines and books, membership dues and contributions and plantings. Travel-related expenditures include accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, air and ground transportation, recreation, retail sales, and food stores.

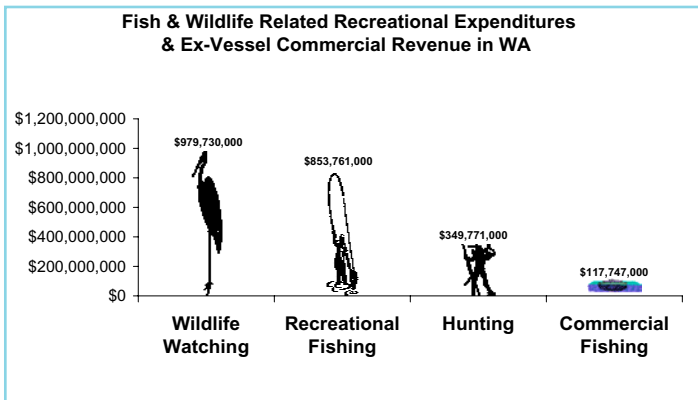


Figure 2: Direct expenditures on wildlife viewing of over \$979 million exceed other fishing and hunting activities. The total economic output from wildlife watching in Washington, \$1.78 billion, is the 8th highest in the nation. Nationally, over 66 million people made trips primarily to view wildlife in 2001, spending \$38.4 billion and creating over 1 million jobs! Total economic output was \$95.8 billion, generating \$6.1 billion in state and federal tax revenue. Source: 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau; and a WDFW-PacFin Report.

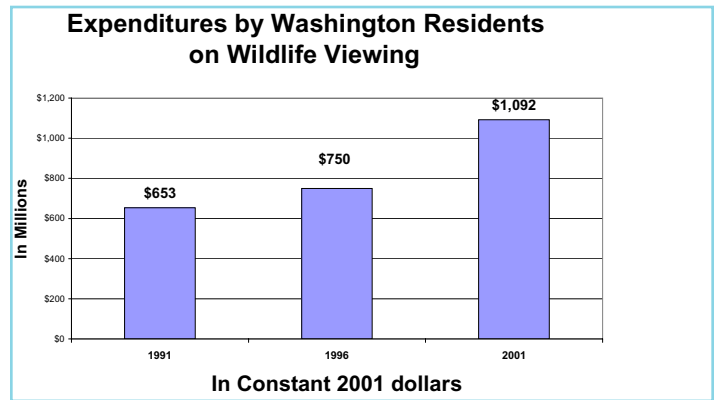


Figure 3: The US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Census conducted similar surveys in 1991, 1996 and 2001, showing substantial growth in expenditures over the previous decade (adjusted to constant 2001 dollars.) Source: 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; US Fish and Wildlife Service, and US Census Bureau.

Jobs Generated

Wildlife viewing generates jobs! A variety of occupations benefit—wildlife tour operators, whale watching boat captains and deck hands, river rafting companies for eagles, government agency recreation staff, travel agents, Chambers of Commerce staff, local non-profit leaders, bird seed distributors, camera and binocular store salespersons, film processors, mail-order catalog companies, specialty equipment outlets, government land-owner use-fee staff, and many others. Occupations not normally associated with wildlife viewing, but having jobs provided as well are café wait-staff, gas station attendants, latte baristas, motel clerks, RV campground owners, car and kayak dealers, ferry system operators, book store managers, magazine writers, print-shop press operators, paper mills, delivery drivers, museums and newspapers, etc. Wildlife viewing provides part-time and full-time employment. When you take a little piece of one person's time and income, and combine it with thousands of other similar pieces, it adds up.

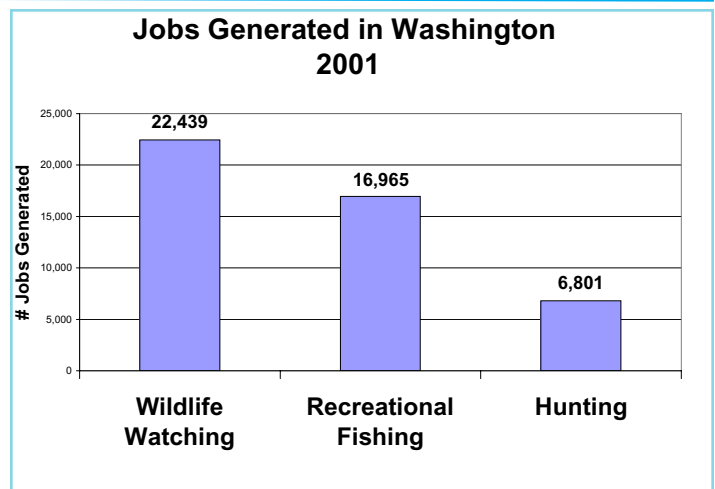


Figure 4: Fish and wildlife recreation creates substantial numbers of jobs and generates an estimated \$528 million in earnings totaling .8% of total state employment and .5% of total state wage and salary disbursements. Source: 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau.

Demographics of Wildlife Viewers

Impacts of Aging Baby-Boomers

Like most states, the majority of Washington residents soon will be middle aged “Baby-Boomers.” Those born between 1946 and 1964 are now approximately 50 years old and along with their advancing maturity have come a new appreciation for “soft adventure” and the inclusion of meaningful educational experiences as an integral part of their travel. Baby Boomers are the dominant age group representing the “Urban Naturalist” lifestyle that is the ideal target for Washington State’s visitor industry. “Urban Naturalists” in Washington and out-of-state, travel for the best in culture and history available in a more urban setting and the outdoor and natural environment that offers the opportunity for an “up close and personal” interaction with wildlife species they can’t always observe in their backyard. This group is among the highest users of the Internet for travel. Details on this target audience are in the Marketing section of www.experiencewashington.com/industry.

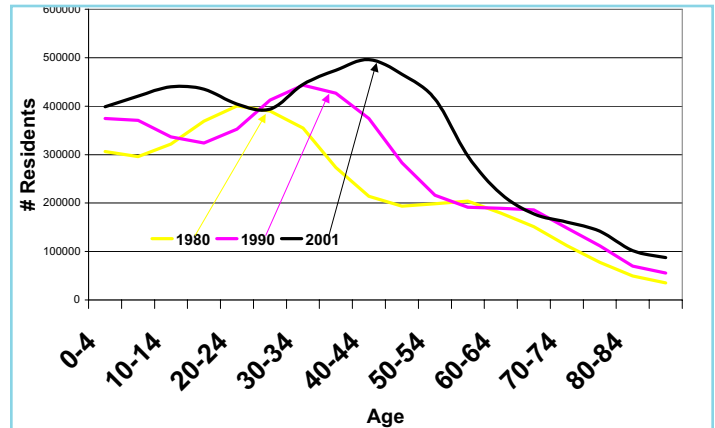


Figure 5. Washington’s Aging Population. Source: 2110 Washington State Data Book; Office of Financial Management.

Age

Washington residents who participate in viewing wildlife and the national wildlife viewing public reflect the growing influence of the “Baby Boomer” population. Growth in wildlife viewing in Washington, especially that which is associated with travel, will depend on increasing awareness of the state’s wildlife viewing opportunities among national and international consumers as well as Washington residents.

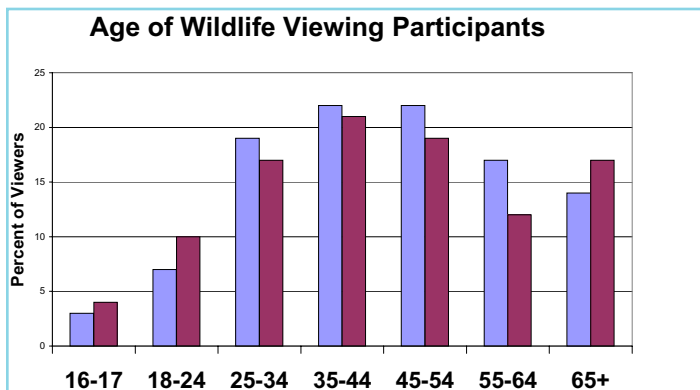


Figure 6: Percent of wildlife viewers in various age groupings. Source: 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau.

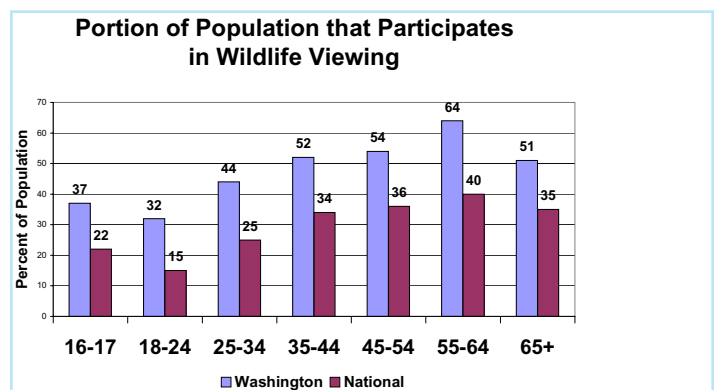


Figure 7: The percentage of each age group in Washington that participates in wildlife viewing activities far exceeds the national average. Source: 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau.

Gender

Second, in contrast to the more traditional fish and wildlife recreational activities, women present a slight majority of participants in wildlife viewing activities. Focus group research conducted by CTED has consistently demonstrated that women are the information gatherers in any family setting. They are also most likely to use the Internet to seek travel information to help the family make travel decisions

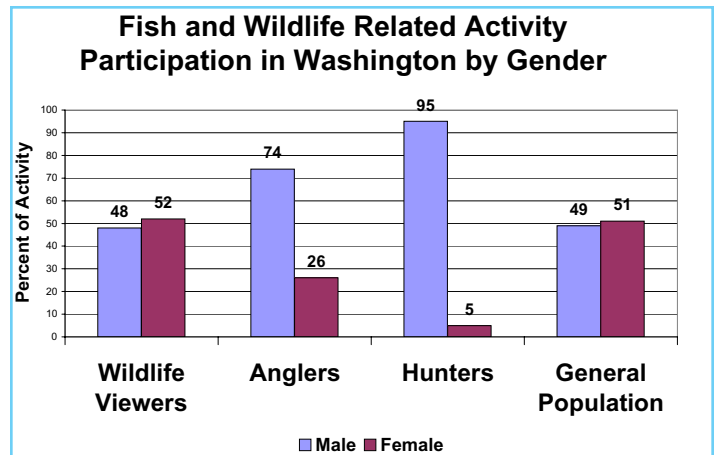


Figure 8. Gender of participants compared to other activities. Source: 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau.

Education

Wildlife watchers in Washington also tend to be more likely college-educated. This is also the finding for the state's travel target, the urban naturalist, so this substantiates the value of this lifestyle profile as a premium national and international target for wildlife viewing in Washington. Higher levels of education are also associated with higher use of the Internet for travel information.

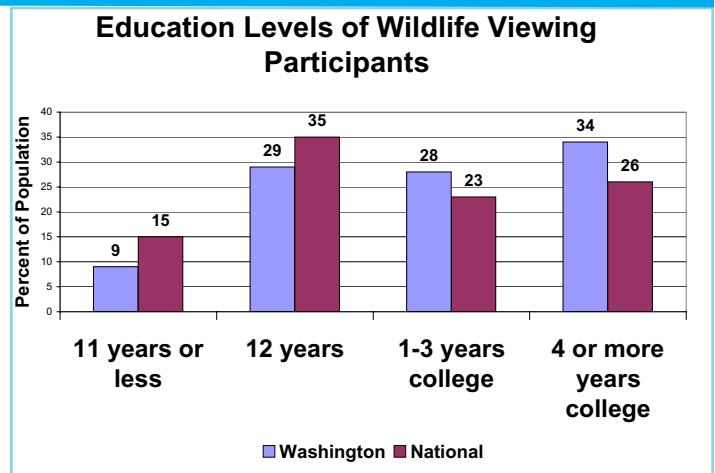


Figure 10: Wildlife viewing participants are well educated, with 62% of Washington viewers having some college education. Source: 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau.

Residence

Not surprisingly, eighty percent of wildlife viewers live in larger cities. (See Figure 9.) Metropolitan centers of the U.S. are also those with the highest percentage of urban naturalist. These are sophisticated travelers who seek a connection with the natural environment because they often have little of it in their daily lives. An estimated 1.065 million wildlife viewer's travel to see wildlife (nonresidential wildlife viewers).

Currently, the Puget Sound region is the largest source for visitors throughout Washington (see *A Report on the 1999 Travel Year* and other regional Visitor Profile studies available at www.experiencewashington.com/industry), and this is reflected in wildlife viewers as well. It underscores the opportunity to expand the state's visitor base to attract more out-of-state as well as overseas consumers interested in a premium wildlife destination.

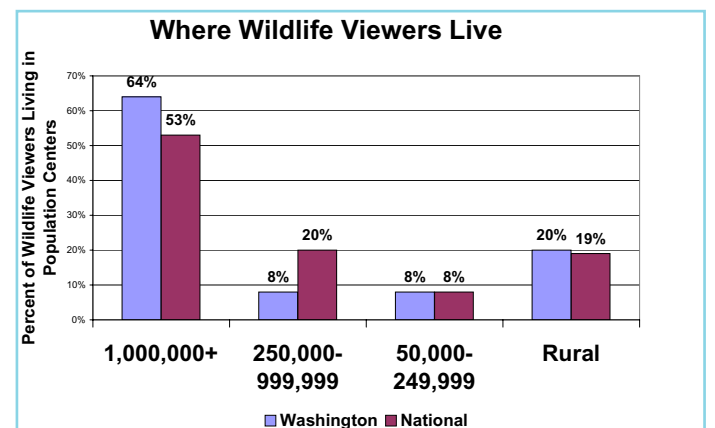


Figure 9: Eighty percent of wildlife viewers live in large metropolitan areas, traveling to rural areas for viewing activities. Source: 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau.

Income and Household Size

With an average age of 49, wildlife watchers tend to be at the height of their career, making a professional family wage, are often empty-nesters with children through college, and many have paid off most loans and mortgages. A survey of visitors to the Great Texas Birding Trail found that the average household size is two. Visitor Profile studies conducted by CTED have consistently found the average travel party consists of two adults.

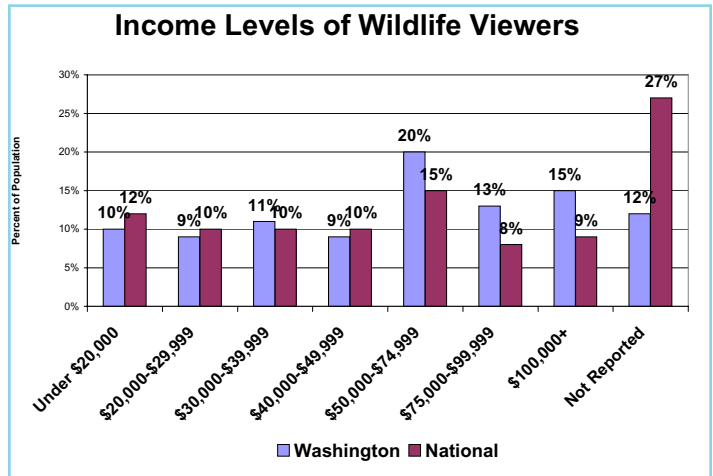


Figure 11: A characteristic of maturing populations is a peak of earning power as well as an increase in discretionary income. Wildlife viewers in Washington have higher incomes than is reflected by national figures. Source: 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau.



APPENDIX C: COMMENTS FROM WILDLIFE VIEWING CONFERENCE

September 3, 2002, Olympia, WA

NEED STATEMENTS: CONSOLIDATED

- Lack of funding for campaign, staff, agency participation signing, materials, future needs
- Need a coherent vision of what watchable wildlife is and how to project that to the public and agencies
- Need to make it easy for others to get a program going, need instructions, who to talk with, how is it done, what is the safe way to do the program both from site selection and public safety while viewing
- Need to develop methods to help volunteers and keep them from being burned out
- There is a need to protect both private landowners from damage and the wildlife that is being viewed
- Educate the public on what is being seen, develop the infrastructure to support sites
- How to develop local interest and support, emphasis on economic return on investment, how it promotes area, get sites into urban areas also
- Need political and business support for program
- Governmental agencies need to support and show some priority for program

AS STATED

- Legislative dedicated competitive grants program *How does this fit my communities needs? (funding wise) SB 5011 (3.a) funds
- False perceptions regarding tribal image “keep it to ourselves” selfishness toward Washington resources
- Refusal of law enforcement to enforce natural resource and wildlife laws
- Public agencies do not prioritize non-consumptive use
- Addressing cultural barriers to understanding wildlife viewing practices
- Addressing individual attitudes and resistance to change
- Lack of current baseline habitat and species data – accuracy of information
- Relationships with tribes
- Need assessment tools
- Whale watching industry supporting research program
- Threat of watchable wildlife to local cultural values and community nature
- Lack of environmental assessment
- Credibility – paid staff vs. volunteers, recognition, federal/state agencies, involve the community, all inclusive with communication
- Cultural issues must be addressed to make progress with

tribes, tribal participation

- “Certification” program for nature-based tourism
- “Master naturalist” badge or certification – a recognition for the user – consistent icons

IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLUTIONS

- Cohesive/strategic marketing plan (target: youth, disabled/handicapped)
- Donations ILO fees
- Open to opportunities of a growing industry
- One-stop shopping – staffed coordination – funding mechanisms
- User fees to manage cooperative activities
- Use hotel/motel tax dollars for land owner assistance “habitat development” (legislation needed)
- Sell end products (e.g., birding trail maps) to fund infrastructure
- License plate sales – individual species/plate earmarked to wildlife
- Bypass parking fees
- Business “decal” or other showing wildlife support – certified wildlife – friendly business
- Personalize wildlife sites – For a fee (adopt a site) donor recognition (tile bricks)
- Broad-based fee for non-consumptive wildlife (or through hotel/motel tax)
- Stewardship – long history
- Simplify accessibility permits
- Establishing permanent funding programs
- Adequate support (Legislative/dollars/staff) to keep all this work going
- Tourism budget/program that meets needs and can showcase the state’s natural resources
- Get private dollars to help educate teachers and kids (e.g. Puget Sound Energy)
- Get Local business support; e.g., hotels, etc. by demonstrating economic benefits
- Compensation of/to local residents
- Grant/\$\$/funding facilitator
- Local watchable wildlife fee collection/kiosks boxes
- Tax benefits to private land owners offering watchable wildlife opportunity
- Explore income tax breaks – RV/SUV tax
- Corporate sponsorship/involvement and other sponsorship, cooperative agreement
- Get local DMO support for watchable wildlife to attend chamber of commerce or CVB
- Identify economic benefits
- Need to draft blanket press release on economic impact

- number
- Standardized permit for watchable wildlife similar to Parks & Recreation
- Look at all Washington State grants and see if properly focused
- Funding solutions adding to tax similar to hotel/motel
- Develop festival and proceeds to help funding
- Financial incentives to private landowners to develop infrastructure or access on tax breaks
- Dedicated long-term funding – general tax @, hotel/motel tax, tax on binoculars, sports equipment, watchable wildlife license, user stickers
- Pledge – individual or organization for responsible behavior/practices – guidelines
- Legislative strategy - \$ for watchable wildlife
- Developing incentive program – private lands, USDA \$
- Private partnerships – donations, sponsorships
- Foundations developed
- Money; e.g., IAC \$, but where does it come from? – hotel/motel tax, parking pass – though current situation is complex and confusing – general fund, economic development – percent of lottery
- Building partnerships – open communication
- Grant funding to enhance partnerships
- Education (prior to viewing of in conjunction with subject matter experts
- Successful prototypes/examples that “work”
- Attempt national dedicated funding of watchable wildlife -supplemental budget requests for watchable wildlife – approach local and statewide legislators
- Local/cities) community revenue generator (promote economic development)
- Funding for facilities and planning – FTA (partner-match) and T-21
- Create financial incentives for multiple partnerships – and businesses to support

COOPERATION/COORDINATION

- Grass roots/special interest groups
- WACO – Washington Association of Counties
- AWC
- Coordinate with and address a larger group – expand communication
- Create working group of agencies to define “watchable wildlife” and develop goals and objectives
- Regulatory agencies need to be part of solution – share with communities, agencies, private sector
- Create Oversight agency to coordinate and develop partnerships – advocacy “watchable wildlife commission” (NRA model)
- Partnership building
- Community outreach and involvement
- Existing land and professional support (federal and state agencies)

- Identifying key players
- Coordinated communication effort
- Established student projects/programs
- Relationships with tribes
- All chamber of commerce/tourism WEBSITES to showcase/link to wildlife information
- Coordinated repository for all information/resources on nature tourism (maps, web, books, magazine, rack card)
- Coordinated communications program to get word out to public
- Include sites, locations, seasons, time to go
- Good customer service!
- State level expertise to facilitate entire process of watchable wildlife from start to ongoing maintenance
- Advanced “slow and easy” training about watchable wildlife visitors to local residents (e.g., type of visitor)
- Watchable wildlife groups, how best to centralize and communicate to public (e.g., newsletter, conference – subgroup of statewide tourism conference)
- Partnership with colleges, universities, schools as a source for watchable wildlife volunteers
- Creating trends groups; i.e., scenic byways group
- Hunters and fishermen as partners – look at DNR site – crew meadow
- Packaging and promoting watchable wildlife
- Need statewide and local component for strategic wildlife viewing plan – workable for local
- Need to bring strategic plan to politicians/regionally
- Community diplomacy – outreach, PR, education of benefits to the community
- Developing “friends” groups
- Coordinate between agencies/org – leverage resources, ex: coordinate. Ad camping/messages
- Conservation – Ag., NGOs
- Partnering – business, schools, government
- In California groups meet twice a year
- Package tours – can help build businesses
- Package and link opportunities; e.g., Saturday in Ocean Shores, Sunday in Westport – helps disperse benefits
- Regional workshops, meetings, etc.
- Presentations to civic, business, and government groups and using groups to reach public
- Partnering – university and research groups (monitoring)

EDUCATION

- Education (prior to viewing) in conjunction with subject matter experts
- Successful prototypes/examples that “work”
- Rural/local governments need to ask for wildlife programs – need education about opportunities
- Watchable wildlife curriculum
- American recreation toolbox – education
- Need friendly/knowledgeable local person to help people understand what they are seeing (guided walks)

- Get information out to public in consistent manner; i.e., chambers/VIC centers
- Interpretive signs
- Training watchable wildlife certification to ensure protection of resource
- Watchable wildlife steward/volunteer training
- Creating docent programs – master watchable wildlife volunteer
- Develop watchable wildlife viewing BMP, maybe species specific
- Teachers – field trips, currently developed.
- Best practices document – web, develop workbook (“how to start”)
- Workshops – each county/area, multiple user groups
- Don’t reinvent the wheel – have not others found solutions? e.g. clearing house
- Develop website to share information – list viewing
- Certification programs – businesses, shops
- “Portal” to organizations/agencies regarding tourism/recreation – lists – resources
- Learn about tribal cultures – allow them to tell their story through wildlife
- Training on “how to” develop partnerships
- Opportunities – how can people communicate, etc.
- List serve
- Networking
- Communication with interested parties

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Highway safety/access: solution interagency design team –(issues i.e., viewing areas and pull-outs)
- Accessibility (global)
- Provide quantitative reasoning
- Wildlife
- Public comment period
- Use “scouts” to build kiosks, etc.
- Centralized fast-track enforcement of wildlife laws and accountability
- National marketing effort
- Empower volunteers
- Consumer research to learn what will attract them – focus groups
- Clearly defining goals and objectives
- Evaluating current infrastructure for marketing
- Inventory assessment and public interest priority
- Statewide uniform identification symbols/icons
- Developing accessibility
- Political awareness and political positioning
- Be part of standard “tourism book” – not duplicating; one-stop shopping
- Go to different nature sites throughout state to see different species depending on site – be all inclusive
- Seamlessly integrated with E.E.D.; wildlife management; community economic development

- Look beyond current demographics that are “nature tourist” today and reach other cultures and income levels and age group and races
- For viewing opportunity, clarify viewing “season” best time
- Statewide/regional identification of watchable wildlife areas for the purpose of preservation of similar ecotypes/habitats
- Regional/statewide planning of watchable wildlife opportunities
- Watchable wildlife program needs to target diverse cultural groups (e.g., language-interpretive signs, radio, TV)
- Develop statewide volunteer/opportunity list
- Clean goals and objectives to bring to public – fact sheets/1 pager
- State Parks host workshop with CTED – Fish and Wildlife with politicians around regions – face-to-face meetings
- Establish media plan
- Collect data
- Storyline PR program
- Identify successful cold call corporations and need case studies (funding)
- Strengthen recreational immunity status
- Source of information – web/printed/list serve/TA people/
- Agency commitments – MOUs
- Quality sites vs. quantity in coordination with calendar, life cycles, least impact
- Building sense of community – rural areas
- Improve sites through training, volunteers, signing, etc., sharing information
- Publicity
- Marketing to the political leaders, especially by the business community
- Lobbying
- Market to out-of-state people who spend the night
- More regional perspective/planning
- Improve physical access; e.g., better roads, trails (fix washouts)
- Assistance – people resources
- Getting people involved in observation and data collection, nature mapping
- Point person for wildlife tourism programs regional
- Promoting wildlife tourism “ethnics and responsible behavior”

OTHER COMMENTS NOT CAPTURED ABOVE

- Sub. private sector with wildlife viewing – compensate farms, ranches, businesses
- What is the next step
- International correspondence – Marketing to country – Website: multiple languages
- Youth focused activities/programs – all levels, teen – WV. Engage: boy/girl scouts
- Shift public funding from permits for extractive activities to natural resources funding
- If no legislation for watchable wildlife, need initiative

- process
- Need a wildlife “lobbyist”
- Create a tour operator “FAM tour” for wildlife
- Certified guides and services intra state
- Establish state urban planning wildlife standards for permits (GMA/shorelines/etc.)
- Create staffed organization to facilitate equal benefits to partners
- Elevating wildlife viewing from just entertainment to a positive behavioral adjustment
- Incorporating wildlife viewing as an ongoing educational component
- Using your community assessment to develop wildlife tourism packages
- Integrating wildlife programs with established hotel lodging business
- Equity, economy, and ecology
- Providing proof and end result for sustainable practices
- Planning for the long-term change when establishing a site
- Supporting and appointing agency leaders who can stand up to political and economic pressure to erode our wildlife standards
- Building and understanding the relationship between • viewable and non-viewable wildlife
- Encouraging and supporting comprehensive land-use planning, i.e., private land owner partnerships
- Marketing plan: Int’l, interagency, private sector, local government/communities
- Safety: Highway/viewing sites/access – interagency design team
- One entity (agency) should be the lead for all local, state, and federal nature tourism development to be accountable and have a seamless coordinated communication program
- How can wildlife watchers help collect data for agencies? Citizen scientists? Cultivate new nature mapping customers and make it fun
- Cultivate young wildlife watchers – boring? – not exciting – elk vs. Nintendo
- Scholarship programs for urban kids
- How to connect local EDCs with watchable wildlife promoters
- Which companies should we work with? Which ones will benefit?
- Trail sponsorship by private business, etc. “Adopt-a-Trail”
- Develop watchable wildlife state/national? Stamp
- Statewide brand for Washington watchable wildlife – icon, symbol, slogan, etc. to be used by all watchable wildlife providers
- WSDOT (all agencies) cognizant of impact of road or other projects on local community watchable wildlife provider’s needs coordination
- Habitat for humanity type marketing of “habitat for watchable wildlife”
- Watchable wildlife focused on non-four-legged charismatic mega fauna
- Watchable wildlife ethics, instill appreciation of wildlife – wildlife education at all levels
- Partnerships with zoos
- Look at watchable wildlife programs around state – Skagit Eagle; Snowbird Festival – best practices/issues?/problems involved?
- Linking Natural Resources websites – nonprofits – consumer and industry
- Brand Washington State watchable wildlife; icon; tagline; logo
- Streamlining and certification for outfitters/guides – need to be certified (barrier possibly grant \$)
- Distribute and evenly – community resources
- Involve all stakeholder groups
- Plan – feedback loop
- Do we acquire lands? Private payments in lieu of quantity vs. quality – visitors
- User friendly plan/document
- International (Canada)/regional (Oregon/Idaho) sharing of information
- Diversity of public/users – income/culture
- Improve existing wildlife sites – enhancement
- Trickle down effects – invest in communities – loans, grants, infrastructure
- Draw from other state’s efforts
- Not one size fits all – flexibility
- Need to attract diversity of clients – disabled, elderly, ethnic groups
- Should consider year-round, not just a day or week
- Leavenworth has had success bringing in the arts community, broaden appeal
- Volunteers, including Americorps
- Make it clear that the plan will not take public lands away from hunting or other established uses
- Make sure today’s attendees and others can review draft and comment before the November conference
- County taskforce to look at watchable wildlife – MRC model
- Quality control – high standards
- Ongoing monitoring for resources – viability of trails, sites, etc.
- Report on what the bill has done for us annually – 6 months – regular
- Accurate historical and cultural links bulletin
- Make good use of existing infrastructure
- How to measure success
- Match USFWS survey information
- Less unemployment – less free lunch program
- Special/habitats – no negative impact, “loved to death”
- Additional private lands added//benefiting
- Wildlife awareness – pre/post
- Longevity of programs – festivals, events, programs, publication, sites

- Attendance at annual watchable wildlife conference
- Legislative appropriations dedicated to watchable wildlife

STAKEHOLDERS – WHO?

- Private landowners
- State agencies – federal
- Business owners
- Public
- Recreational/community users
- State Parks
- Sporting groups – Ducks Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Pacific Coast Joint Ventures, Inter-Mountain. Joint Ventures, Public Lands Council, WTA, Inland Northwest Wildlife Council, environmental. community (Earth Share list), Sierra Club, Audubon
- Economic Development Councils
- Chambers of Commerce
- Professional societies – Wildlife Society
- Town councils
- County commissioners
- Tribal
- Church groups
- Hiking clubs



Participants at the September 3, 2003 Wildlife Viewing Conference listen to the keynote speaker, in preparation for the afternoon brain-storming sessions.



Governor Gary Locke (center) signs SB5011, setting in motion the development of a statewide strategic plan for wildlife viewing. Attending the ceremony (left to right) were Michelle Reilly (CTED), Steve Pozzanghera and Mike O'Malley (WDFW).

APPENDIX D: SURVEY OF OTHER WILDLIFE VIEWING PROGRAMS

As a part of the Washington Wildlife Viewing Workshop held on September 3, 2003 and as requested in Senate Bill 5011, a determination on the status of Watchable Wildlife programs/activities in Washington State was conducted. A survey was sent out to several federal, tribal, state agencies and contacts as well as several private conservation non-profit organizations. The following is a summary of the responses received to each question as of 10/29/03. Greater detailed information may be referenced under the Partners section of this document.

Survey General Definitions

What Is A Watchable Wildlife Activity And/Or Program?

From a public perspective, Watchable Wildlife is all wildlife that people might see, enjoy and learn about. Although birds and the charismatic megafauna are the more popular species, what people enjoy viewing is as diverse as the viewers themselves. Watchable Wildlife also consists of recreational activities of responsible viewing, photographing, feeding and learning about wildlife and wild places.

From an agency/organization perspective, Watchable Wildlife is a strategy that enhances people's opportunities for sustainable, low impact recreation. Watchable Wildlife develops facilities and activities to increase the chances of successful viewing experiences. It can teach viewing skills and responsible behavior, gives people the opportunity to learn about wildlife and leads to increased public support for wildlife conservation. Watchable Wildlife strategies can range from passive to active. Passive wildlife viewing opportunities are a result of information or directions given about where people might see wildlife. Publications, brochures, newspaper articles, web site information are examples. Active wildlife viewings are those efforts where areas are developed to ensure that people will see wildlife at a given location and/or season and have a safe and satisfying experience. Developed viewing areas, and structures to see wintering big game, waterfowl, urban or wetland species are examples of active viewing.

1) What is the size of your annual Watchable Wildlife/Wildlife Viewing/Activities budget (be as precise as possible)?

Responses:

(USFWS) Our budget isn't broken out in this way. The National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) and National Fish Hatcheries in Washington offer unique wildlife viewing opportunities. National Wildlife Refuges consider wildlife-dependent recreation as priority public use, and most offer opportunities for "watchable wildlife" observation.
(BOR) We have no specific budget but take some

opportunities to cost share with others on specific projects effecting Reclamation lands.

(USACE) Attempting to break it out by this category of recreation somewhere between- \$200-400K.

(NOAA/NMFS) In FY 2003 we spent approx. \$20,000 on Watchable Wildlife related activities. This is, however, primarily due to an influx of funding related to the Southern Resident killer whales. (NOAA/Marine Sanctuaries) contributes \$60,000 annually in funding, most for staffing in boosting National Park Service, Makah Tribal as well as local private sector support for marine wildlife viewing and marine wildlife education.

(NPS) National Parks spends a considerable amount of money protecting Washington wildlife and providing trails, bathrooms, interpretive programming, brochures and web resources for visitors seeking a wildlife viewing experience. Over six and a half million people visit Washington's National Parks each year. The spin-off from this to the local economy provides a significant boost to Washington's economy. That said, wildlife viewing is not separated from other activities in park management or budgets.

(WA Parks & Rec.) We do not have a budget for this activity, other than to cover the costs of a few 'passive' info handouts/posters on bulletin boards, and signing at a few 'active' sites.

(WADNR) While no funds are earmarked for a Watchable Wildlife Program in the Department of Natural Resources, the overall Operations Budget provides for access to conservation areas and recreation sites for wildlife viewing. The Operations Budget supports Watchable Wildlife opportunities.

(WDFW) Approximately \$143K/yr

(NW Trek) \$3 million (general annual operating budget)

(AW) \$2-4 million for centers plus birding trails budget, policy staff work, etc.

2) How many fulltime staff are involved in your Wildlife Watching Program/activities in Washington? (estimate partial FTEs if no designated positions exist)

Responses:

(USFWS) we do not have dedicated staff for "watchable wildlife," yet many of the staff spend a portion of their time on providing wildlife observation opportunities. Activities

include: community events and festivals, construction and maintenance of observation platforms/pull-outs/blinds and other visitor facilities, providing information for visitors, and providing interpretive tours for many different groups.

(BOR) None, probably utilize about .01 FTEs

(USACE)- Approximately 4-6

(NOAA/NMFS) No designated positions, but between the Marine Mammal Program and our Public Affairs staff we have approximately 1/3 of an FTE.

(NPS) We have no full-time staff dedicated to Wildlife Watching per se. We have a number of people dedicated to building trails, visitor centers and rest areas as well as giving interpretive tours and providing signage about wildlife watching opportunities.

(WA Parks & Rec.) No specific FTE dedicated to this activity. Rangers squeeze this activity into their time along with everything else they do.

(WADNR) The Department has no FTEs devoted to a Watchable Wildlife program. The Natural Areas Program expends approximately two FTEs on the 20 sites that directly/indirectly benefit wildlife viewing opportunities. Additional resources are provided through the Department's Recreation Program.

(WDFW) 2 fulltime positions

(NW Trek) 25 positions

(AW) Six center's employees are involved in it, plus Christi Norman, Heath Packard, Nina Carter, Tim Cullinan.

3) Briefly, what do you consider are four major challenges in implementing your WW program? Examples: limited funding, too much demand too little staff, agency support etc.

Responses:

(USFWS) limited staff and funding

(BOR) As we support others I do not see Reclamation as having challenges. Overall the program seems to have the following challenges 1. Avoid conflict with other uses, 2. gaining support from others, 3. funding, 4. suitable sites for the activity.

(USACE) Poor communication with other agencies (i.e., no response from State on how to get our reservoirs in WW publications), limited funding, limited staff, limited support.

(NOAA/NMFS) Reliable sources of funding, no full-time staff positions.

(NPS) Our limited funding makes any new undertakings extremely difficult. It also makes maintenance of our existing facilities and programs difficult.

(WA Parks & Rec.) We do not have a specific program to promote this activity (and the budget, FTE, and activities that could be developed as a result of this program existing in SP).

(WADNR) An inadequate Capital Budget leads to an inability to develop access for wildlife viewing at natural areas. With additional developed access, the Department would need additional staff to maintain sites and provide

interpretation.

(WDFW) Lack of capital funds; lack of funds to support partners; lack of time and money for field positions.

(NW Trek) Funding – particularly capital; Aging infrastructure; Site location – well away from urban and demographic center; lack of non-profit support group.

(AW) Limited funding, lack of priority for WDFW and Tourism and lack of public awareness.

4) Briefly, how has your agency addressed those challenges? Examples: developed workshop, publications, new funds, etc

Responses:

(USFWS) Friends, or refuge support groups, have helped address the challenges with NWR staff. These groups publish newsletters, volunteer with projects; provide information, and other types of support.

(BOR) We work with others after sites have been identified. We have done some area-wide planning that identifies the program and specific sites.

(USACE) With limited success. Without agency support, aside from localized areas, WW opportunities are relatively obscure and not highly publicized. The Corps works throughout the state on many projects. Several of them are ideal for WW opportunities, but without a higher priority or understanding, those opportunities will continue to be missed.

(NOAA/NMFS) Developing partnerships within our agency and externally has allowed us to build on the funds we have available and do more than we would be able to do on our own.

(NPS) We have developed partnerships with non-profit and other agencies to stretch our budget. We also use volunteers to help build and maintain trails and educate the public about park resources.

(WA Parks & Rec.) Most of our WW related activities have occurred as the result of a ranger having an interest in promoting such an effort. Where this has occurred, monies have been found through grants and have resulted in interpretive trails, viewing platforms, and the development of literature.

(WADNR) The Commissioner of Public Lands has introduced the Legacy Trust to the Legislature as a potential new funding source to fund conservation and recreation programs. The Department will continue to request budget enhancements to develop the Natural Areas Program.

(WDFW) Wise use of CARA federal funds and repeated legislative budget requests.

(NW Trek) Funding – increase revenues; Aging infrastructure – repair and replacement through public bonding; Site location – more effective marketing and pr program; Lack of non-profit support group – establish and foster support group.

(AW) On the funding side, we are launching a major capital

campaign, have recruited volunteer boards at each of our centers, and are actively pursuing grants, major individual gifts and public funding to support them. In terms of public awareness, we have conducted more than 20 public meetings to announce new Audubon centers, have held three centers launch events, numerous site tours and meetings with community leaders, and have issued media releases. Media coverage has been excellent – especially in Sequim, Seattle and Leavenworth. We also have announced the centers and kept people within the Audubon family informed about their progress via our state newsletter, website, conferences and an e-mail newsletter.

5) What four major accomplishments have been achieved by your Watchable Wildlife program/activities? Examples: Greater public awareness, more people attending functions, increase funding, etc.

Responses:

(USFWS) Too many to list, but the most important is community support for NWR's.

(BOR) I do not believe that Reclamation has a program; all accomplishments are in support of other's programs.

(USACE) Greater public awareness of the wildlife that inhabit our area, more requests from schools and local groups for environmental programs, more volunteer participation in environmental enhancement projects, boost in employee morale and positive public relations.

(NOAA/NMFS) Increased signage at key locations, on the water education presence regarding killer whales/whale watching, training of local stranding response groups.

(NPS) There are too many accomplishments to address. Over six and a half million people visit Washington's National Parks, many seeking wildlife watching opportunities. For these users, we maintain over a thousand miles of trails in Washington, countless campgrounds, rest areas, wayside exhibits, web resources, and visitor centers. In addition we participate in local community events, and school and youth group programs.

(WA Parks & Rec.) Hopefully we have helped the public to gain a greater appreciation of wildlife and their habitat requirements, which in turn has led to their being more conservation minded in their actions.

(WADNR) The Department has acquired and developed sites where wildlife viewing opportunities exist, some with trails, interpretive signs and viewing platforms. Natural Areas Program staff lead tours on natural areas, working with students at all levels from elementary grades to graduate school.

(WDFW) Developing the economic impacts and benefits of wildlife viewing; partnerships with Audubon Society and others; development of the wildlife viewing ethics; WildWatch-EagleCam project; Fir Island/Northrup Canyon site development.

(NW Trek) We attract 160,000 visitors per year and are planning to increase that to over 200,000 by 2005. Our mission: Northwest Trek is dedicated to conservation and education through the display, research and interpretation of native Northwest wildlife and their native habitats.

(AW) More than 20,000 people participated in field-based educational programs at Audubon Centers. Nearly all of these programs include watchable wildlife. Over 400 acres of wildlife habitat lands adjacent to Audubon Centers is being actively stewarded by Audubon staff and more than 100 volunteers. Audubon centers in Sequim, Seattle, Leavenworth and Tacoma have created heightened awareness of the importance of conserving habitat through education, stewardship and citizen science programs. Audubon Centers are opening new eyes to nature by actively reaching out to ethnically diverse audiences, and in the cases of Tacoma and Seattle, by locating centers in diverse communities.

6) How does your Watchable Wildlife Program/activities work with and/or assist local communities with wildlife viewing planning and resources? Examples: publications, workshops, websites other

Responses:

(USFWS) We are generally one of several partners involved with these opportunities in the communities. Through Refuge Roads projects, Scenic Byway designation, birding trails, festivals, events, visitor facilities, auto tour routes and numerous others, generally on NWR's and Fish Hatcheries.

(BOR) I am aware that local efforts support two festivals and a number of guides to watchable wildlife; utilize Reclamation lands and the resources on them as areas with wildlife for viewing.

(USACE) Opportunities to participate in wildlife surveys, wildlife viewing facilities, publications, and subject experts for questions and/or programs.

(NOAA/NMFS) Training sessions for local community stranding response programs, responsible viewing guidelines posted on our web pages.

(NPS) National Parks in Washington provide tourists with recreational opportunities, trails, facilities, visitor centers, educational programs, etc. These directly support tourism in Washington's urban and rural communities (again, this is 6.5 million visitors). Park managers also meet with local community members and tribes to develop strategies and plans for local tourism. Brochures, maps and web resources provide secondary support to potential area visitors.

(WA Parks & Rec.) There have been some limited success stories where community partnerships have led to the development of wildlife viewing areas (e.g., corridor along Banks Lake, developing Audubon Center at Riverside).

(WADNR) Natural Areas Program managers are now headquartered in each statewide Region to work directly

with local communities. Region natural areas managers and Department ecologists work with local educators and lead educational visits to sites, where learning about wildlife is part of the experience. Presentations are made to local Audubon chapters and other conservation groups. Local Americorps volunteers, site stewards and other volunteers also interact within the communities.

(WDFW) Consults with public groups as requested; developed website and web-resources; use limited graphics and printing to assist communities; regional staff meet local request; support of fish and wildlife festivals.

(NW Trek); We work in partnership with: WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife; USDA – Forestry; USDA APHIS – Center for Wildlife Research.

USDI – Wildlife Department; many other American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) accredited facilities; local school districts; Metro Parks Tacoma; WA Dept of Natural Resources; Northwest Ecosystem Alliance; WA Dept of Agriculture; Cascade Land Conservancy.

(AW) At Audubon Centers we provide sites open to the public where they can watch wildlife on nature trails, or while participating in educational programs led by trained naturalists. Through classes, presentations, tours, publications and volunteer work parties, Audubon Centers engage the public in resource planning and conservation.

7) *Who do you consider are your major Watchable Wildlife partners/cooperators in Washington (top 5-6)?* Examples: tribes, Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Parks and Rec. Conservation nonprofits, local communities, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, etc.

Responses:

(USFWS) all of the above AND local communities

(BOR) Audubon, WDFW, Othello and Coulee Corridor groups, USFWS

(USACE) Local communities such as Bridgeport High School and Okanogan Country Tourism Council

(NOAA/NMFS) Within NOAA (Public Affairs, Office for Law Enforcement, Headquarters) and externally (WDFW, The Whale Museum/Soundwatch, The Seattle Aquarium, Whale Watch Operators Association)

(NPS) University of Washington, North Cascades Institute, Olympic Park Institute, local communities, conservation nonprofits, other federal agencies

(WA Parks & Rec.) WDFW, Audubon, Native Plant Society, interested local stakeholders

(WADNR) Educators, stewards and volunteers, The Nature Conservancy and other private conservation organizations, land trusts, local officials and community leaders, local community colleges, universities, and agencies providing acquisition and development grants

(WDFW) Audubon Society of Washington; CTED, Division of Tourism; WSDOT; Wildlife Area Managers

(NW Trek); WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife; other AZA Zoos – Woodland Park Zoo and Pt. Defiance Zoo; Metro Parks Tacoma; Pierce County (AW) Parks and Recreation, Tribes, nonprofits, local communities

The last four-part question is to be ranked from 1 to 4 where-
1= strong rating represents a major commitment

2= a moderate commitment

3= a slight commitment

4= low/no emphasis commitment

What is the strength of emphasis placed on wildlife viewing activities in your organization or agency that

Increase revenues and benefits to communities with wildlife viewing resources?

Responses:

(USFWS-2); (BOR-1); (USACE-3); (NOAA/NMFS-4);

(WA Parks & Rec.-4); (NPS-2), (WADNR-4); (WDFW-1);

(NW Trek-1); (AW-1)

Assists communities with assessment and marketing of local wildlife viewing?

Responses: (USFWS-2); (BOR-1); (USACE-2); (NOAA/

NMFS-4); (WA Parks & Rec.-4); (NPS-3), (WADNR-4);

(WDFW-2); (NW Trek-); (AW-1)

Increase funding to communities to implement wildlife viewing tourism plans?

Responses: (USFWS-); (BOR 2); (USACE 4); (NOAA/

NMFS-3); WA Parks & Rec.- 4); (NPS 2), (WADNR-4);

(WDFW-3); (NW Trek-1); (AW 2)

Strengthens wildlife viewing tourism and community partnerships?

Responses: (USFWS-); (BOR-1); (USACE-2); (NOAA/

NMFS-2); (WA Parks & Rec.-3); (NPS-1), (WADNR-4);

(WDFW 1); (NW Trek-1); (AW -1)



APPENDIX E: PARTNERS

While the Legislature directed two state agencies (WDFW and CTED) to develop a wildlife viewing plan, plan writers wish to acknowledge the role that other government agencies and non-government organizations play in providing wildlife and wildlife viewing recreation. Major government and private landowners provide the majority of wildlife viewing opportunities in Washington and, in some instances, significant funds to develop projects.

Government Agencies

Washington State Parks Commission

Wildlife viewing opportunities are part of the overall visitor experience for the nearly 48 million people who come to Washington's 119 state parks each year. Many park lands and facilities, including 1,300 miles of trails, serve as ideal settings for WWL. While State Parks does not have a specific program or staff dedicated to the activity, the Commission has invested dollars in both its operating and capital budgets for WWL opportunities. On the operating side, the agency has covered the costs of informational handouts/posters on bulletin boards and signage at "active" sites (e.g. Jarrell Cove birding brochure, Dosewallips wildlife viewing platform, Flaming Geyser salmon interpretive trail).

Although there is no dedicated WWL staff, many State Parks employees spend time on wildlife-related work. Activities include habitat enhancement/restoration, construction of observation platforms and other visitor facilities, and providing information and interpretive programs for visitors. Parks stretch their budgets by enlisting volunteers to assist with these activities. For example, Southwest Region parks were able to use staff and volunteers to provide over 800 interpretive programs in 2003, many of which focused on wildlife.

Many of State Parks WWL-related activities result from interested park rangers promoting such efforts. Due to limited agency funds, some monies have been found through grants to finance ranger-led efforts, including interpretive trails, viewing platforms, and interpretive literature. Other WWL activities are evolving through partnerships with other organizations. For example, the Audubon Society is considering an environmental education center at Riverside State Park. Audubon and the Trumpeter Swan Society are helping State Parks to plan and develop wildlife viewing trails at Bottle Beach and Leadbetter Point state parks.

In 2002, State Parks began a "Discovery Pack" program to support wildlife viewing in parks. The packs, which contain binoculars and field guides, can be checked out from park offices. This program allows families to explore parks and wildlife at their own pace, when formal programs don't fit their travel time and plans. State Parks plans to increase the number of these packs as funds become available.

Washington Department of Natural Resources

While no funds are earmarked for a Watchable Wildlife Program in the Department of Natural Resources, the overall Operations Budget provides for access to conservation areas and recreation sites for wildlife viewing. The Operations Budget supports Watchable Wildlife opportunities.

Approximately twenty five percent of the Natural Area Preserves and Natural Resources Conservation Areas managed by DNR provide wildlife viewing opportunities. Access on these sites ranges from primitive to developed, interpretive access. Staff time at these sites ranges from one to six staff months per year.

The Natural Areas Program formerly had one FTE dedicated to outdoor environmental education and outreach. Funding for this position was lost in 2003 budget reductions. The Natural Areas Program expends approximately two FTEs on the 20 sites that directly/indirectly benefit wildlife viewing opportunities. Additional resources are provided through the Department's Recreation Program.

Problems include an inadequate Capital Budget that leads to an inability to develop access for wildlife viewing at natural areas. With additional developed access, the Department would need additional staff to maintain sites and provide interpretation.

DNR's goal is to encourage wildlife viewing while not harming, harassing or frightening the wildlife. Staff and monitoring resources are required to properly plan and carry out an effective wildlife viewing program and experience for the public.

The Commissioner of Public Lands has introduced the Legacy Trust to the Legislature as a potential new funding source to fund conservation and recreation programs. The Department will continue to request budget enhancements to develop the Natural Areas Program. Additionally, the Department has recruited and trained volunteers to assist on natural areas and recreation sites. The Department has cooperated with other agencies, organizations and educators to support wildlife viewing opportunities as a part of overall education, protection and conservation efforts.

The Department has acquired and developed sites where wildlife-viewing opportunities exist, some with trails, interpretive signs and viewing platforms. Natural Areas

Program staff lead tours on natural areas, working with students at all levels from elementary grades to graduate school.

Natural Areas Program managers are now headquartered in each Region to work directly with local communities. Region natural areas managers and Department ecologists work with local educators and lead educational visits to sites, where learning about wildlife is part of the experience. Presentations are made to local Audubon chapters and other conservation groups. Local Americorps volunteers, site stewards and other volunteers also interact within the communities. Major partners include: educators, stewards and volunteers; The Nature Conservancy and other private conservation organizations; land trusts; local officials and community leaders; local community colleges, universities, and agencies providing acquisition and development grants.

Washington State Department of Transportation

Washington's abundance of parks, forests and natural areas offer a wealth of recreational opportunities for travelers, and make the state an ideal candidate for implementing the National Watchable Wildlife Program. The national program is implemented by individual state programs. In Washington, authority to implement the signage program came from the state legislature's direction to Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to provide signage along the state highway system that helps identify and locate significant natural and heritage resources. The Watchable Wildlife Program is one of WSDOT's primary implementations of that policy. To help implement the state program WSDOT has partnered with the Federal Highways Administration, (FHWA), the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), cities, counties and other site owners.

As partners, WDFW and WSDOT coordinated with other participating agencies to develop and install directional signing for the wildlife viewing sites detailed in the Washington Wildlife Viewing Guide, and accompanying directional signs provide access to the sites for travelers by linking our state's roadways to ninety of the best wildlife viewing sites around the state. The sites are a diverse collection of public and private lands, and range in size from entire national parks and wildlife refuges, to small city parks and specific locations on private lands. Some of the sites are comprised of several miles of a transportation corridor. Collectively, each of the ninety sites offers considerable opportunities to observe native wildlife in its natural state.

Directional Signing Project. The now familiar brown and white binocular sign was adopted by the Federal Highway Administration as the international wildlife-viewing symbol, in guiding motorists to sites where seeing wildlife is likely to occur. These directional signs use the binocular logo, directional arrows, and the wording "wildlife-viewing area" to guide motorists off state highways and onto county and local roads that lead to the viewing sites. The signs may also identify the site itself if no other sign is posted. The Watchable Wildlife signing system is central to the program's success

and is what distinguishes Watchable Wildlife guidebooks from other outdoor guidebooks. The end result is that the standardized system of signing makes finding recreational wildlife viewing opportunities faster and easier.

One outcome of the conference is the development of a joint Department of Transportation, WDFW and local nonprofit member task force to create Design Guidelines for wildlife viewing pull-offs. Currently no such guidelines exist. Adding them to the engineering specifications manual is the first step in obtaining funding for potential viewing pull-offs.

Washington Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC)

Since 1964 the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation has improved the state's quality of life through its investment of public funds in parks, trails, beaches, boating facilities, wildlife habitat, and natural areas. Established by citizen Initiative 215 in 1964, IAC helps finance recreation and conservation projects throughout the state. Composed of five citizens appointed by the Governor and three state agency directors, the Committee brings together the experiences and viewpoints of citizens and the major state natural resource agencies.

The Committee fosters the protection and enhancement of Washington's natural and outdoor recreation resources for current and future generations. The Committee provides funding, technical assistance, research and policy development, coordination, advocacy, and encourages long-term stewardship.

IAC administers several grant programs for recreation and habitat conservation purposes. Depending on the program, eligible project applicants can include municipal subdivisions of the state (cities, towns, and counties, or port, utility, park and recreation, and school districts), Native American tribes, state agencies, and in some cases, federal agencies and nonprofit organizations.

To be considered for funding assistance, most grant programs require that the proposed project be operated and maintained in perpetuity for the purposes for which funding is sought. Most grant programs also require that sponsors complete a systematic planning process prior to seeking IAC funding. Grants are awarded by the Committee based on a public, competitive process which weighs the merits of proposed projects against established program criteria.

US Forest Service

The Mission of the Forest Service's NatureWatch Program is: To provide children and adults the opportunity to safely view, and participate in, activities and programs that raise their level of awareness and understanding of, wildlife, fish, and plants and their interactions and connection to ecosystems, landscapes, and people.

Through the Forest Service's NatureWatch Program, a

wide variety of wildlife and fish viewing sites are located throughout the state of Washington. In addition there are a number of “NatureWatch” educational programs designed to introduce children and adults to the wonders of watching wildlife. Millions of people enjoy these treasures by visiting the Olympic, Mt Baker-Snoqualmie, Gifford Pinchot, Wenatchee/Okanogan, and Colville National Forests, and the Columbia River National Scenic Area.

The Nature Watch Program also includes opportunities for viewing wildflowers – a major recreational activity throughout the Pacific Northwest. National Forests in Washington provide endless opportunities to enjoy wildflowers in spectacular mountain settings.

The Forest Service funds a full-time National NatureWatch Coordinator position and an array of NatureWatch “champions” and regional coordinators who assist and promote the development of the National NatureWatch Program mission.

US Fish and Wildlife Service

The National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) and National Fish Hatcheries in Washington offer unique wildlife viewing opportunities. National Wildlife Refuges consider wildlife-dependent recreation as priority public use, and most offer opportunities for “watchable wildlife” observation.

A few of the successful festivals focused on wildlife resources have been the Sandhill Crane Festival, Nisqually Watershed Festival, Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival, Wenatchee River Salmon Fest and Ridgefield Birdfest. Other successful events held each year at many NWR’s include National Wildlife Refuge Week in October, International Migratory Bird Day in May and Kid’s Fishing Day at Quinault National Fish Hatchery in Humptulips.

There is no dedicated staff for “watchable wildlife,” yet many of the staff spends a portion of their time on providing wildlife observation opportunities. Activities include: community events and festivals, construction and maintenance of observation platforms/pull-outs/blinds and other visitor facilities, providing information for visitors, and providing interpretive tours for many different groups. The major challenge facing implementation is limited staff and funding.

Friends, or refuge support groups, have helped address the challenges with NWR staff. These groups publish newsletters, volunteer with projects, provide information, and other types of support. USFWS is generally one of several partners involved with these opportunities in the communities. Similar activities occur through Refuge Roads projects, Scenic Byway designation, birding trails, festivals, events, visitor facilities, auto tour routes and numerous others, generally on NWR’s and Fish Hatcheries. USFWS facilities have interpretive volunteers, cultural resource centers and wildlife that attract tourists.

US Bureau of Reclamation

The Bureau has neither specific budget nor staff for wildlife viewing activities, but takes opportunities to cost share with others on specific projects effecting Reclamation lands

Overall, the program has the following challenges: 1. Avoid conflict with other uses; 2. gaining support from others; 3. funding; 4. suitable sites for the activity. The Bureau works with others after sites have been identified, and have done some area-wide planning that identifies the program and specific sites. Supports two festivals and a number of guides to watchable wildlife utilizing Reclamation lands and the resources on them as areas with wildlife for viewing. Major partners are Audubon, WDFW, Othello and Coulee Corridor groups, USFWS. BOR helped fund the Coulee Corridor Scenic Byway Trail.

NOAA/ Marine Fisheries Service/Marine Sanctuaries

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency Fisheries (NOAA Fisheries) has three primary overall goals: rebuild and maintain sustainable fisheries; promote the recovery of protected species; protect and maintain the health of coastal marine habitats. In FY 2003, approximately \$20,000 was spent on watchable wildlife related activities. This is, however, primarily due to an influx of funding related to the Southern Resident killer whales. NOAA Fisheries funded additional “Be Whale Wise” materials and contracted with Soundwatch/The Whale Museum and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to assist with distributing materials and increasing public awareness. Generally the funds available are not consistent every year.

The National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) has applied \$60,000 annually in funding primarily for staff time in bolstering the National Park Service, Makah Tribal as well as local private sector support for marine wildlife viewing and marine wildlife education. The National Marine Sanctuary Program works closely with the nonprofit Olympic Park Institute to develop and lead wildlife based educational seminars and has worked with numerous Sekiu/Neah Bay based charter operators to broaden their services and markets toward wildlife viewing (whale and birds) and basic scenic charters. At the national level, National Marine Sanctuaries has been active in the national Watchable Wildlife initiative for years and at many sites, their programmatic involvement with tourism and wildlife-based recreation is significant.

Major challenges in this area include reliable sources of funding and no full-time staff positions. However, developing partnerships within the agency and externally has allowed NOAA to build on the funds available and do more than would be able to be done on their own. Other important community programs and outreach efforts include local community training sessions for stranding response programs and responsible viewing guidelines posted on their web pages.

In the Olympic Peninsula region, NMSP is working with the visitor and convention bureau, chambers (Forks and Port

Angeles) on enhancing wildlife tourism through interpretive facilities and programming, and will continue to work on the development of a \$240k-\$400k visitor center in Port Angeles.

National Park Service

The National Park Service manages 9 units in Washington. These range in size from Olympic National Park with one million acres to Whitman Mission with 98 acres. Klondike Gold Rush in downtown Seattle is an exception with no real acreage and no natural resources. In combination, the park service in Washington manages roughly two million acres. These include important breeding grounds, wintering grounds and wildlife viewing areas.

National Parks have been set aside for a number of reasons. For many of Washington's National Parks, protecting wildlife species was a primary or secondary motivation in their designation. Olympic National Park, for instance was in large part, set aside to protect the Roosevelt elk. That said, wildlife viewing is not separated from other activities in park management or budgets.

National Parks spends a considerable amount of money protecting Washington wildlife and providing trails, bathrooms, interpretive programming, brochures and web resources for visitors seeking a wildlife viewing experience. Over six and a half million people visit Washington's National Parks each year. The spin-off from this to the local economy provides a significant boost to Washington's economy.

NPS has no full-time staff dedicated to Wildlife Watching per se, but have a number of people dedicated to building trails, visitor centers and rest areas as well as giving interpretive tours and providing signage about wildlife watching opportunities.

Limited funding makes any new undertakings extremely difficult. It also makes maintenance of our existing facilities and programs difficult. NPS has developed partnerships with non-profit and other agencies to stretch the budget, and also uses volunteers to help build and maintain trails and educate the public about park resources.

Over six and a half million people visit Washington's National Parks, many seeking wildlife watching opportunities. For these users, NPS maintains over a thousand miles of trails in Washington, countless campgrounds, rest areas, wayside exhibits, web resources, and visitor centers. In addition NPS participates in local community events, and school and youth group programs. Tens of thousands of students learn about wildlife and environmental science through park educational programs. The National Park Service also provides assistance in park development and planning for local communities through a grant program.

National Parks in Washington provide tourists with recreational opportunities, trails, facilities, visitor centers, educational programs, etc. These directly support tourism in Washington's urban and rural communities. Park managers also meet with local community members and tribes to develop strategies and plans for local tourism. Brochures,

maps and web resources provide secondary support to potential area visitors. Major partners are: University of Washington; North Cascades Institute; Olympic Park Institute; local communities; conservation nonprofits; other federal agencies

US Army Corps of Engineers

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is made up of civilian and military men and women. This diverse workforce of biologists, engineers, geologists, hydrologists, natural resource managers and other professionals assist with the planning, designing, building and operation of national water resources and other civil works projects.

Budget size for wildlife viewing related work in Washington is estimated at \$200-400K annually. The United States Army Corps of Engineers has 4-6 staff positions with responsibilities for fish and/or wildlife viewing and education. With limited success and visibility, aside from localized areas, wildlife viewing opportunities are relatively obscure and not highly publicized. The Corps works throughout the state on many projects. Several of them are ideal for WW opportunities, but without a higher priority or understanding, those opportunities will continue to be missed.

Tribes

The 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington comprise a population of 104,819 and 3,258,686 acres of reservation land throughout the state. Each tribe's desire and capacity for tourism development differs depending on cultural, geographic, economic, and natural resource factors; and each tribe that does desire tourism development has different resource and technical assistance needs. "Federally recognized," means these tribes and groups have a special, legal relationship with the U.S. government. This relationship is referred to as a government-to-government relationship.

Key agencies that WDFW and CTED coordinate with are Governors Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA) and the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI). While WDFW and CTED coordinate efforts with GOIA and ATNI it is recognized that each tribe is a sovereign government and must be treated as such.

Centennial Accord between the federally recognized Indian Tribes in Washington State and the state of Washington. The Accord dated August 4, 1989, is executed between the federally recognized Indian tribes of Washington signatory to this Accord and the state of Washington, through its governor, in order to better achieve mutual goals through an improved relationship between their sovereign governments. This Accord provides a framework for that government-to-government relationship and implementation procedures to assure execution of that relationship.

Northwest Trek

Northwest Trek is dedicated to conservation and education through the display, research and interpretation of native

Northwest wildlife and their native habitats. NWT attracts 160,000 visitors per year and is planning to increase that to over 200,000 by 2005. NWT is a publicly owned zoological park dedicated to the display, research and conservation of native Northwest wildlife species. We provide an opportunity for visitors to view and enjoy watchable native wildlife in wholesome, safe surroundings.

With a \$3 million general annual operating budget and 25 positions, NWT faces several issues: funding – particularly capital; aging infrastructure; site location – well away from urban and demographic center; lack of non-profit support group. Needs include: funding – increase revenues; repair and replacement aging infrastructure through public bonding; more effective marketing and pr program; and establishing and foster support group.

Primary partners include: WDFW; USDA – Forestry; USDA APHIS – Center for Wildlife Research; USDI – Wildlife Department; Many other American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) accredited facilities; Local school districts; Metro Parks Tacoma; WA Dept of Natural Resources; Northwest Ecosystem Alliance; WA Dept of Agriculture; Cascade Land Conservancy

Nonprofits

Audubon Washington

Audubon Washington conserves and restores natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

Goals of the Great Washington State Birding Trail: to identify and conserve wildlife and birding areas as economic assets for local communities; and to contribute to a sustainable economy through nature tourism.

Audubon Washington is developing the Great Washington State Birding Trail as a self-guided automobile tour for bird watching. It is modeled after the successful and popular bird watching trails in Florida and Texas. There will be seven driving loops covering the entire state of Washington. The first two are complete: the Cascades Loop and the Coulee Corridor Scenic Byway. Each trail has a full-color map created to guide visitors to the 50+ best bird-watching sites that can be accessed by car. The maps provide paintings of the common birds to be seen and detailed information on where and when to find the birds. Five additional maps will be created during the next few years.

Audubon Washington is creating the Great Washington State Birding Trail in partnership with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington Department of Community, Trade & Economic Development, Business and Tourism Development Unit. Other funding partners include the local Audubon Chapters, US Fish and Wildlife Service,

Washington State Department of Transportation, US Bureau of Reclamation, the Icicle Fund, Puget Sound Energy, and many individual donors. Local tourism boards, Chambers of Commerce and individual businesses are in-kind partners.

Plans to complete the Great Washington State Birding Trail include applying for federal highway funds that will pay 80% of the cost; the state and private contributors would supply the balance.

Successes and Challenges: Audubon Washington planned a 5-year distribution of 50,000 Cascade Loop maps, but 47,000+ have already been sent to national and worldwide bird watchers. Our challenge is to establish a systematic method by which to measure the economic impacts of birders and watchable wildlife enthusiasts. The state of Texas has already established such a system.

Newspaper coverage includes a bi-weekly column in the Seattle Times Northwest Weekend bi-weekly column "Top Spots for Birders." The Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce's new tourism strategy is on wildlife viewing using bird watching as an anchor and a major attraction to Leavenworth. The majority of the Chambers of Commerce on the Cascade Loop and the Coulee Corridor Scenic Byway has embraced the Birding Trail Maps as significant products that enhances tourism.

Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival Committee- Interpretive Center

A community-based organization that plans and manages the Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival annually. The multiple-town organization has secured funds and developed the Bald Eagle Festival from the original one-town event to now include the three communities of Concrete, Rockport and Marblemount. The Festival Committee also created the Skagit River Bald Eagle Interpretive Center, managing this seasonal program and information facility for the past seven years at the Rockport Fire Hall.

The Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival Committee has undertaken a cooperative planning and capital campaign to design and construct a local interpretive and environmental learning center along the Skagit River on land owned by Skagit County Parks and Recreation at Howard Miller Steelhead Park. Major partners include: Skagit County Parks and Recreation, Mount Baker Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service, Puget Sound Energy, Seattle City Light, North Cascades National Park, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and The Nature Conservancy.

Grand Coulee "Balde" Eagle Festival

The purpose of the Balde Eagle Festival is to showcase the wintering Bald Eagles in the Grand Coulee Dam Area and to promote the natural beauty of the Grand Coulee Dam Area. A growing number of Bald Eagles winter in the Grand Coulee Dam area with as many as 200 of these magnificent birds present in winter months. Bald Eagles are carefully viewed approaching their winter roosts in the rock cliffs and

canyons or along the lone trees near water areas. Numerous community activities and special events are also planned as part of this three-day event.

Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

The Sandhill Crane Festival Committee plans, organizes and conducts the festival. The Committee includes Othello Conservation District staff, Othello citizens, plus residents from the neighboring Columbia Basin communities of Ephrata, Moses Lake and Royal City. The Othello Sandhill Crane Festival began in 1998, sponsored by the Greater Othello Chamber of Commerce and the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service). Since the beginning, the Festival has been financially supported by the City of Othello through tourism development funds (hotel/motel taxes) and logistically supported by the Othello School District and Othello Community Schools, reimbursed by Festival registration fees.

Washington Brant Festival

The Brant Wildlife Festival marks the arrival of the Pacific Black Brant on its annual migration north. The festival exists to promote conservation of key wildlife habitat, to emphasize that wildlife has spiritual, aesthetic and inspirational value, and to encourage the community to celebrate its natural heritage. This event is hosted by the communities of Birch Bay and Blaine and sponsored by numerous local, state, federal and private partners and organizations.

Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival

Grays Harbor Audubon Society, Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge and the City of Hoquiam work with a host of other local sponsors to bring you the Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival. This event is timed to match the annual migration of hundreds of thousands of shorebirds as they pause at the Grays Harbor estuary to feed and rest before departing for their nesting grounds in the Arctic. A portion of revenues in excess of festival expenses goes toward a fund to benefit the Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge.

Leavenworth Spring Bird Festival

A celebration enjoying birdsong and exploring the natural world. This event is a cooperative effort by Audubon Washington, the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, Okanogan & Wenatchee National Forests, the Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce, North Cascades National Park Service Complex, the North Central Washington Audubon Society, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Upper Valley Arts, with generous help from the Icicle Fund. While birding is the heart of the weekend, additional activities include geology, wildflowers and conservation.

Kettle Valley Songbird Festival

The Highlands Birding Group of Ferry County and numerous partners and other supporters help sponsor this two-and-one-half day event focused on area birds but includes many other recreational, educational and just fun-filled activities.

Wenatchee River Salmon Festival

The Salmon Festival is a free weekend devoted to fun-filled “edu-tainment” that highlights the spectacular mountain country of North Central Washington. The Wenatchee River Salmon Festival is hosted by the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery and the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests, with the help of other sponsors and boosters.

Issaquah Salmon Festival

The Issaquah Salmon Days Festival is presented by the Greater Issaquah Chamber of Commerce, and is the major fund-raiser for the Chamber. For the past 34 years, Issaquah has celebrated the return of the salmon with a huge, rollicking family festival on the first full weekend in October. In addition to producing the Festival and assisting with the operation of the Chamber, Salmon Days is an opportunity for many other non-profit organizations and local service clubs to raise funds and/or public awareness. Issaquah-based groups are encouraged to participate in Salmon Days, the proceeds from these groups go directly back into supporting the community.

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

RMEF’s Project Advisory Committee Funds translates into approximately \$200,000.00/year that comes back to the state of Washington, of which an estimated \$15-20,000/yr. goes towards a project with a primary purpose of the conservation education or esthetics related to experiencing/viewing of wildlife and or elk in Washington.

Another related resource is their Washington State grants program that is approximately \$20,000, of which an estimated \$4-5,000 goes toward conservation education and/or the viewing of elk and wildlife in Washington. RMEF supports wildlife viewing and elk viewing when carefully planned and developed. People for Puget Sound is a non-profit citizens’ group working to protect and restore the health of Puget Sound and the Northwest Straits through education and action. Their vision is a clean and healthy Sound, teeming with fish and wildlife, cared for by people who live here.

Washington State Scuba Alliance

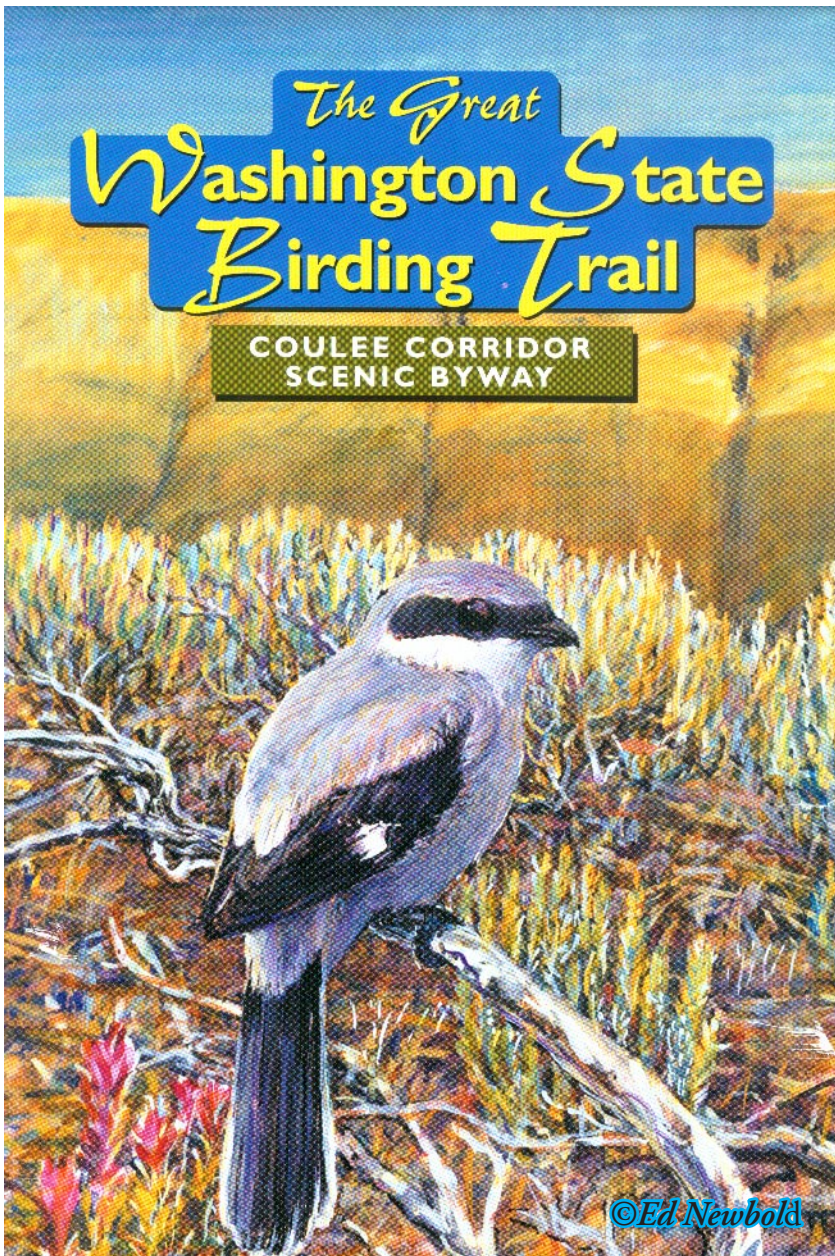
The waters of Washington State provide some of the best year-round scuba diving in the world. Jacques Cousteau said, “The diving in the Northwest is only second to the Red Sea,” which is an incredible statement given the weight of this man’s accomplishments.

In 1992, a group of dedicated SCUBA divers formed Washington SCUBA Alliance to advocate for underwater parks. This mission has expanded to include the protection and enhancement of the underwater environment, including historic wreck sites, geologic formations, and the natural habitat. WSA’s work is funded by memberships and contributions. WSA is a 501 c(3) corporation. Contributions are tax deductible.

WSA is committed to working with officials of state, county, city, and local departments, and volunteer divers to establish a series of underwater parks that divers and snorkelers may enjoy. Underwater preserves will help prevent the loss of marine biodiversity by creating “safe havens” for all marine life.

WSA strives to create a unified group of divers, as dive clubs, dive stores, and charter operators who work together on projects. These projects make our waters a better place for its inhabitants to live and for divers to visit.

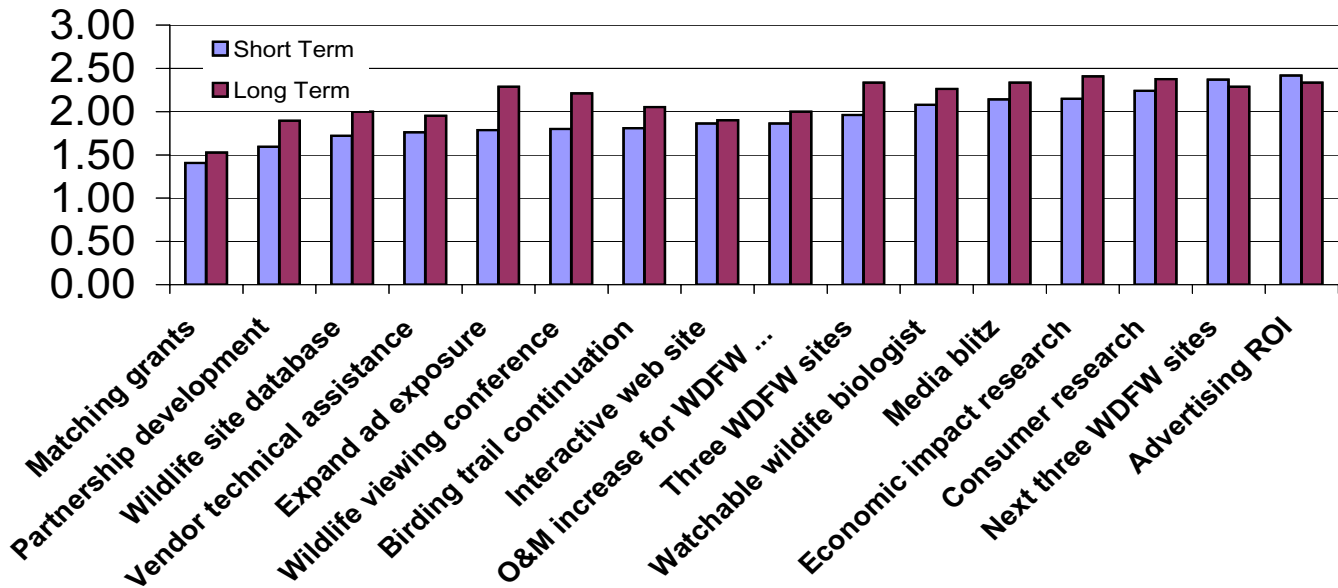
More than 15,000 divers are certified to dive here in the Pacific Northwest each year. These divers want to observe and interact with marine life in their natural habitat. Many of these divers take underwater naturalist courses and fish identification classes to improve their knowledge of the ocean environment. More than 1,000 dive-related businesses exist in Washington State and many tourism communities benefit from the dive tourism industry.



APPENDIX F: REVIEW COMMENTS

Two public reviews were conducted for this plan. The first was at the Washington State Tourism Forum, November 19, 2003 at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center in Seattle. The second was a general public distribution of the plan in December, with a structured feedback form. The following are the results of those reviews.

Combined Input from All Reviewers



The lower the number the higher the preference

Reviewers were asked to rate the proposed activities and tasks as to their importance for implementation over the short term (within 2 years) and/or over the long term (3-6 years). 1= essential 2= important 3= nice to do 4= nonessential

November 19, 2003, Tourism Forum Seattle, WA

Participant Written Comments:

In Lewis County, we are organizing a task force to look at potential opportunities to develop Wildlife Viewing activities. We will need technical assistance to begin the process. On December 2, we will meet as a small group to identify key players and a project plan. In early January, the Lewis County CVB will invite you and George Sharp to come to the area. Some key initiatives include:

1. Wainke Watchable Wildlife preserve in Packwood.
2. Alexander Park restoration on the Chehalis River.
3. Borst Park to Schaefer Park greenway in Centralia.
4. Skookumchuck River wetlands.
5. Tacoma Power wildlife refuge on Riffie and Mayfield Lakes.

These are all in their beginning stages & need technical support.

Branding has not been included. It will be important to ID

Washington Wildlife Viewing Plan

Washington's unique assets and get everyone talking the same positioning, while at the same time promoting their own areas.

How can WDFW and CTED build with private development to expand program more quickly?

Would like to be kept apprised of Belo scenic byway/WW 30 minute show.

I would personally like to be considered for media blitz participation.

Integrate WW program with scenic byway program.

What about corporate sponsorships? Advisory board?

Set criteria for the sites to be developed.

Look for Federal Funding/Programs to get this going.

What is the communications strategy with the communities in moving this forward?

Don't limit to WDFW land.

Packwood "Warnke" WW Area

Destination Packwood

360-494-2223

Some great funding in hand. Property was a gift from a local

pioneer family.

Packwood is economically distressed. Wildlife area will be a marketable attraction for increased tourism.

Research needed for more extensive partnerships with organizations currently hosting Wildlife Viewing activities. Collaborative efforts make it easier for everyone! Representing a wildlife viewing activity with limited funds for advertising, it is challenging to market our programs effectively.

Need to clarify programs in letter. Are these just for wildlife owned lands or a state plan? If it is a statewide plan, WDFW can serve as a catalyst, facilitator. I believe if you can develop a strategic plan, with goals and objectives and then give focused actions and steps.

About funding—partnerships are important and make miracles happen. A strong focus, agreed upon strategy, will help you gain the necessary political and corporate monetary support.

Our community, Richland, feels strongly that developing wildlife viewing activities and infrastructure in our region is essential for economic development and to preserve natural resources.

The plan you are developing is needed and valuable. It just needs expansion.

It seems state money could go further if you helped private industry do a lot of this on private—state park—and other lands.

(i.e.) San Juan Whale Watching is a major tourist attraction and almost 100% private industry funded.

Use private industry as “mirror” to multiply state dollars.

Definitely list all sites; private and WDFW sites. All of Washington.

The strongest role for the state is to help various places develop responsible viewing sites. Make it easy to do with clear start-up kits that assist communities in developing sites, creating interpretive signage, and protecting wildlife assets. Please do not use the money to conduct economic and marketing research that already exists. Be a resource, a teacher, and a cheerleader for this effort. The passion will have to come from each local area for these efforts to be sustainable.

Awarding grant money, especially when you see good partnership efforts forming, is a key role for the state. Award advertising grants to local communities to encourage creation of unique approaches and authentic experiences. Please apply program beyond WDFW lands—include water trails, kayak, and whale viewing marine mammal viewing.



Comments from General Public Review

Wildlife Viewing Plan Feedback	
The draft plan was relaeased for general public review in December 2003. A guided feedback form was provided to help organize remarks. The following comments relate to the proposed Strategic Recommendatins (edited for grammer and spelling).	
Research & Marketing	
Wildlife site database	<p>People can use existing data.</p> <p>Mainly unclear of what data would be included.</p> <p>Database have a habit of going out of date without regular updates.</p> <p>Seek out existing inventories of sites. For instance, Kittitas County is in the process of developing a "Recreation Plan" of which watchable wildlife is part. They are even doing the GIS database, which could be included in the online map. By its more general focus, this plan will also include the other activities in the surrounding area. This effort is being led by the Kittitas County Planning Office.</p> <p><u>Include list of active groups already involved in wildlife viewing.</u></p>
Interactive web wildlife map	<p>Most tourists use the web for research so we have to show them WA wildlife, links a good ROI.</p> <p>Great!</p>
Economic impact research	<p>We desperately need WA baseline numbers to talk about.</p> <p>Is there existing research that could be used as a baseline?</p> <p>Especially positive impacts.</p> <p>Money spent here should be low priority. Should involve survey of existing interest groups already involved in WW.</p>
Consumer research	<p>We might be able to use other's research in targeted parts of U.S. to save money.</p> <p>Is there existing research that could be used as a baseline?</p>
Expand Ad exposure in key metro markets	<p>Have several products to start advertising in Texas and Arizona. Good time to attract international/European bird watchers as the Euro gains strength. Good time to get people who will not be traveling out of the U.S. Better to advertise in niche markets first?</p> <p>Need more local contact for existing events and sites to expand coverage. Better bottom up than top down.</p>
Advertising ROI	We have to develop our products before we can measure them.
Media blitz	<p>Prefer to have economic impact research and consumer research done first. Inexpensive way to get lots of media coverage in target markets.</p> <p>Could be a nice tool when the plan begins implementation.</p> <p>Sounds great – even contact lists for media would be helpful for small existing groups promoting WW.</p>
Tech. & Financial Assistance	Very important that these monies are concentrated on existing festivals and community events focusing on Watchable Wildlife.
Vendor technical assistance	<p>People will figure out what to do.</p> <p>Need to make sure it is a step program designed to meet specific needs such as established groups need different aid than beginning groups. Start with existing groups and benefit from their experiences.</p> <p><u>Will have greatest benefit to rural communities.</u></p>

Matching grants	<p>Expensive to administer in the short term.</p> <p>Very important that these monies are concentrated on existing festivals and community events focusing on Watchable Wildlife.</p> <p>Important to help develop sites that are educational and minimize long-term maintenance and other costs.</p> <p>Sounds great – make it work for existing programs.</p> <p><u>Will have greatest benefit to rural communities.</u></p>
Site Development	<p>Have the communities with events asked for their suggestions for sites? What are the criteria for sites?</p>
Three WDFW sites	<p>North Potholes site has been identified on Coulee Corridor Scenic Byway Birding Trail as high priority.</p> <p>How were these sites selected? Were existing partners given an opportunity to critique these sites or offer alternatives?</p> <p>WDFW sites appear to be more about bird watching than any other wildlife. There needs to be more consideration for sites with other species.</p> <p>Some WDFW sites may have greater need.</p> <p>Expensive and economic benefit restricted to one geographic area.</p>
Next Three WDFW sites	<p>Bird Watchers Corner and Corfu Woods sites have been identified on Coulee Corridor Scenic Byway Birding Trail as high priority.</p> <p>Let's make sure that the first 3 are up and running effectively before rushing into the 2nd 3. How were these sites selected? Were existing partners given an opportunity to critique these sites or offer alternatives?</p> <p>Involve existing interest groups which will be affected in all planning.</p> <p>Expensive and economic benefit restricted to one geographic area</p>
O&M increase for WDFW sites	<p>Customer satisfaction is necessary for success and many WDFW sites need better maintenance.</p> <p>Very important that WDFW increase their presence and cooperation within communities with WWL sites.</p> <p>All developers will need money to develop sites.</p> <p>Very important statewide.</p>
Watchable Wildlife Biologist	<p>Very important that WDFW increase their presence and cooperation within communities with WWL sites.</p> <p>As framework is developed, someone will be needed to lead.</p> <p>Needs to be a team member along with grant assistance, PR person, and organizer statewide to help interest groups do a better job.</p>
Partnerships	<p>Increase financial and technical support, communication and involvement with existing</p>



Wildlife Viewing conference	<p>Nice but does not produce a product.</p> <p>Most of the community groups involved in WWL have very limited budgets and are staffed by volunteers. It is a financial drain on them to attend a conference.</p> <p>Good if it provides examples, training, etc.</p> <p>Conferences should be held all across the state, not limited to west side.</p> <p>These conferences should be held in various locations around the state. Participants should be provided with field trip opportunities within the hosting community to view what is being done there (and of course to enjoy the wildlife). A good model for these conferences would be the Audubon Conference of Washington (ACOW) held twice annually around the state.</p> <p>Would like local county-wide or regional conference more frequently with large conference less often.</p>
Partnership development	<p>Nice but does not produce a product.</p> <p>Recognize existing partners and increased awareness of their efforts. Work harder at keeping them in the loop. What is in it for their community — short and long term?</p> <p>We all need to find ways to leverage our limited dollars and get things done.</p> <p>Anything where the money comes from someone else is a good idea if the locals have control of the use.</p> <p>Include a paragraph that would allow partnerships with any local nonprofit around the state. Such organizations as the 26 local Audubon chapter spread across the state and others such as the Kittitas Environmental Education Network based in Ellensburg. Or even other state or regional groups such as the Environmental Education Association of Washington (EEAW) would be worthwhile partners.</p>
Birding Trail matching fund	<p>The Birding Trail program contains elements of all six Primary Strategies. The Birding Trail is an extremely visible, highly marketable product with proven success on a national basis. The lead partner, Audubon WA has published two top quality maps to date and has capacity to complete the state. Birding Trail has highest Return on Investment 4: 1. Much of the state match can be for site development already budgeted by WA State agencies.</p> <p>Although this is important, there is lots of work to be done in order for this to be a positive economic, conservation and cultural influence for small rural communities or the state.</p> <p>Birds are not the only watchable wildlife, other wildlife species should be considered.</p> <p>Great program – need to share information on benefits and ways for community development.</p> <p>36% of Washington residents watch or feed birds. Promote their visits to rural areas by building more birding trails.</p>



Additional Written Comments on Draft Wildlife Viewing Plan

Additional written comments were received and are included below. In many instances, the suggestions have been incorporated into the preceding pages. Comments have been edited for spelling and grammar. Names are included for those representing an organization.

ADDITIONS

Add "Get more wildlife tour groups to come to Washington." There are many wildlife tour groups that do not offer tours to WA. Add "Work to get more wildlife meetings in Washington." American Birding Association, for example, has annual meetings, but no one has encouraged them to have it in WA. There are a number of similar organizations that should be enticed to come to WA.

MISSING ATTRACTIONS

Dear Sir or Madam:

I applaud the efforts of the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the community and the Trade and Economic Development Council on creating a comprehensive plan to assist local businesses with promoting and developing wildlife viewing opportunities.

However, the plan fails to address wildlife viewing of aquatic species and the importance of the dive industry and tourism derived from it within our state. Thousands of divers travel to Washington State from all across the world to dive the legendary waters of the Puget Sound, where an abundance of wildlife can be found.

Scuba diving can be defined as wildlife viewing in an underwater environment. More than 15,000 divers are certified to dive here in the Pacific Northwest each year. These divers want to observe and interact with marine life in their natural habitat. Many of these divers take underwater naturalist courses and fish identification classes to improve their knowledge of the ocean environment. These are exactly the type of "urban naturalist" divers who want to see what our waters have to offer.

The state of Washington is sitting on a tourism gold mine with our underwater assets. Nearby British Columbia has seen the importance of aquatic wildlife viewing and has identified scuba diving tourism as an important economic resource. Florida is another state that draws visitors to their underwater playgrounds.

There are at least 100 scuba diving related businesses that fall prey to weather related disasters, and often struggle to compete with other tourism opportunities. Developing an assistance plan will help these businesses better understand wildlife viewing tourism and leverage their own marketing

capabilities.

Small destinations would benefit from assistance in promoting dive tourism - specifically, Hood Canal with its sheltered waters, limited currents and deep clear waters. Thousands of divers from Oregon, Idaho and Montana dive in the Hood Canal. In fact, Mason County has identified scuba diving as an important part of its economic survival. However, it lacks the resources to enact a marketing plan. Areas similar to Hood Canal need to be included in your comprehensive plan.

The Puget Sound and the surrounding waters are truly one of God's footprints. Increasing awareness of this amazing underwater environment is the key to this industry's survival. Trust me - there is no greater excitement than seeing Puget Sound octopus, wolf eels, orca whales, crabs and lingcod in their natural surroundings.

The waters of Washington State provide some of the best year-round scuba diving in the world. Jacques Cousteau said, "The diving in the Northwest is only second to the Red Sea," which is an incredible statement given the weight of this man's accomplishments.

Sincerely,
Rick Stratton, Publisher, Northwest Dive News Magazine

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), the world's largest association of recreational dive professionals. PADI members train approximately 70% of the divers in the United States, and PADI divers are found wherever there are divers and wherever people dive. PADI as an organization, and with our associated environmental foundation, the Project AWARE Foundation, is involved in numerous marine safety and environmental efforts. We have been specifically involved in the state of Washington, in fact, as a sponsor of the diving signage project in the waters around Seattle.

The purpose for our writing concerns the draft "Strategic Plan for the Development of Wildlife Viewing Activities in Washington State." It has been noticed that scuba diving is not mentioned in the draft as being an activity involved with the viewing of wildlife. In reality, surveys of divers typically find that the opportunity to interact with wildlife consistently ranks as one of the most significant factors as to why they were attracted to diving. They also, as a group, are significantly involved in supporting environmental efforts. Particular to

Washington, according to recent surveys, approx. 2.5% of the nation's nearly 3,000,000 divers (75,000 people) reside in the state, and 6.5% of the divers who took a dive trip within the United States within the past three years - some 43,000 divers per year - visited the U.S. Pacific Northwest, most of those visiting Washington.

Especially from a tourism perspective, these traveling divers are of an active, upscale demographic group, with the most recent survey of active PADI divers showing them to have a median age of 47 years; 86.4 % attended college; 67.9% were employed in a professional or managerial position; and with a median household income of \$113,000. And, they are a group with a range of active lifestyle recreations, with 47% participating in photography; 41.9% in fishing; 34.2% in camping; 29.7% in hiking; and 45.5% in bicycling. In short, divers would seem to represent an excellent multi-use target group for the program being considered.

Based upon these factors, we would urge you to consider including scuba diving as an activity, and the sites divers frequent, in your plan for promoting wildlife viewing. If you have any questions or wish further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Al Hornsby, Vice President, Legal Affairs, PADI

AGENCY COMMENTS

Congratulations on a comprehensive and well thought out plan to develop wildlife viewing in Washington. As you move forward with funding and implementation, NOAA Fisheries is interested in continuing to be a partner and assist with any marine/marine mammal viewing issues.

- 1) Use partnerships to spearhead this effort. Washington State has an incredible infrastructure of opportunities (sites, interpretive volunteers, fish hatcheries, refuges, wildlife).
- 2) Use an established organization to manage your database; RBFF.
- 3) U.S. Fish and Wildlife facilities have interpretive volunteers, cultural resource centers, and wildlife that will attract tourists. Use national fish hatcheries/refuges as contact points to attract tourists. Combine with state, tribal, and private facilities to attract tourists.
- 4) Include Kid's Fishing Day at Quinalt National Fish Hatchery (Humpulips, WA) as an attraction.

Growth Management – take steps to integrate this WW planning with growth management plans in the State. There are many mutual connections; it's surprising the draft avoids this whole topic??? At least the draft could open the door on this.

Corridors and Connections – this comment relates to the GMA comment above....once we have the site database (and a way of maintaining & developing it), correlations can be made with environmentally sensitive areas and ecosystem knowledge, wildlife movement corridors, human transportation patterns, and other factors. The WW sites and related needs to access and also to protect them will begin to construct a statewide land plan. Accompany this with some good ROI and economic analysis, and it's pretty exciting.

Educational Partners – they are an obvious but currently missing partner...secondary schools and higher education institutions – seems to me like all of them stand to benefit from the WW program; and they all have something that they can contribute to it – the sites, the conferences, the analysis, and more. Ought to be at least a mention of this potential in the draft.

HUNTING, FISHING AND PROPERTY RIGHTS CONCERNS

The plan looks like a good idea on the surface! My concern would be to include a provision prohibiting private property condemnation in acquiring ANY aspect of the tourism plan...now or in the future! If this were included, then it would have my support! If it doesn't, then I would be opposed!

I would like to begin by saying that fishing is the most popular outdoor recreational activity in the country surpassing golf and all the rest combined. Let's not forget that when it comes to funding, don't touch a dime of our funds towards improving steelhead, salmon and trout stocking programs.

Combining viewing with fishing opportunities would be a far better approach and here's why. If you would ask any family of four or five visiting the state of Washington, I would venture a guess that at least one or two people in the family are interested in fishing. People driving through the state enjoy its natural beauty and to think that they would go out of their way to spend a day on the chance of seeing some wildlife is a stretch. I believe most people will take their chances of seeing wildlife as they travel through the state. I would bet that they would take a day out of their way to find good fishing and combine that with a wildlife viewing opportunity.

Don't get carried away with this idea of the Urban Naturalists who don't carry fishing rods or hunting firearms. If you recall the salmon fishing boom of the seventies and early eighties, the folks I saw at Westport were interested in catching fish, not looking at them. Those were big-time bucks spent in the state and people did it over and over again until we ran out of fish and you know the rest of the story. Westport today is a mere shell of what it used to be.

So when a bunch of pavement hugging never fished or hunted a day in their lives politicians get together and thinks everybody has the same views, let's not forget what brought us to the dance and it sure wasn't looking at tweedy birds through a telescope.

All of these are nice ideas to promote tourism and generate more revenue, especially in tight economic times. However, you already have a group of people at your disposal who already spend millions of dollars in the states economy already, and would spend millions more if you would take advantage of that opportunity. That group is the sportsmen and women who already buy licenses and hunt and fish in this state. If the state of Washington would re-evaluate the decision to continue to try and support an "economically viable" commercial fishery at the expense of the citizens and sportsmen and women of this state, revenue into the states economy would increase exponentially. Instead of seeing that a few fishing families are able to still hang on and exploit the states limited resources that are already spread so thin, you could buy out (with the help of the private sector) the existing licenses and spread this resource amongst those who contribute millions of dollars annually to the states economy and would spend millions more!

How do you think this is going help the hunting and fishing causes of Wa. state?, is this just a ploy to make more money for the state, I think so. The type of people that this is most appealing to are the very people that are trying to take our hunting heritage away. I am disgusted that the WDFW is standing by watching the environmental left take our hunting and fishing rights away one by one. I had the pleasure of putting my 10yr old son through hunter safety this past March and also had the pleasure of watching him harvest his first deer (a buck) and his first duck. I was totally amazed to see how many Hunter ed. classes were full months before they were to take place. I live for the sport and couldn't imagine life without it, nor could my kids. I've been very dissatisfied with several recent decisions reached by the WDFW. First and foremost is the survey questionnaire that was presented awhile back asking the hunters what we would like to see on the upcoming seasons setting. It was apparent from the beginning of the survey that this was only a formality only

to pacify the requirement. The questions were one sided and leading. Many of the "choices" were the same only worded differently and were very weighted with the obvious direction the WDFW wanted. They did very little to gather the true feedback and ideas from the average hunter. I was totally dismayed when I looked at the compiled results from the survey last week. It was obvious to me that the hunters filling the survey out were as sick and tired of the status quo regulations as was I. I could read through the "baited" questions and could see that most hunters want the same as I do, simplified regs with less bureaucracy and more choices. When the WDFW didn't like the survey results, they stated that there were further studies required and we know what's going to happen there, the WDFW is going to do exactly what they had planned before the survey even went out. I see a great-renewed interest in hunting and fishing with the younger generation as seen by the full Hunter ed. classes. If the WDFW doesn't start listening to the people paying the bills, we will be forced to hunt/fish elsewhere. I hate the thought of it but what choice will I have? Please start listening to the people that make your Dept possible. Don't get me wrong, I love watching wildlife and do so every chance I get. I just think promoting the resource in this way is going to do more damage in the long run for fishing and hunting causes that it will do good. I would compare to showing the Disney classic "Bambi" at the hunter ed. classes and wondering why no kids want to hunt.

Too much regulation is driving hunters away; this could be seen from the 80's when the dept kept over regulating our hunting seasons turning the average hunter into a closet lawyer. Finally long time hunters quit buying hunting licenses because it was getting too confusing. Little by little the base is returning back to the sport; please don't continue ignoring the people who make it all possible, "Hunters." Quit the pandering to the environmentalists.

I've reviewed the plan and it has captured most of the inputs from the conference with one major exception. I realize that non-game and economic issues are constantly and rightly part of the WDFW mission. The legislation requiring development of this plan is mainly an economic development driven concept. Having acknowledged that, I feel that a major omission in the plan is clearly stating this program must be evaluated and implemented recognizing it must not take away from the people who have been the primary conservationists -- hunters and fishers. I couldn't find anywhere in the plan that current major recreational users of public lands will be protected and watchable wildlife will be an overlay onto those uses. This program needs to be integrated into current uses and not override them.

I was the only hunter group representative (Inland Northwest Wildlife Council) at the conference. When I mentioned that fact your main speaker, James Mallman, went out of his way to point out these programs cannot succeed if they exclude consideration for consumptive users.

Secondly, I personally believe WDFW is headed for a train wreck with their biggest supporters, the hunters and fishers of Washington State, if somehow this plan doesn't include a statement that this program will not remove lands from their current activities. Right now the plan indirectly gives an indication of a major shift from traditional programs without assuring hunters and fishers of WDFW continuing their traditional role. Watching wildlife is not mutually exclusive from hunting. Hunters probably spend more time outdoors outside of the seasons and watching wildlife is a main activity. We support it. I strongly recommend the plan clearly indicate this program will not exempt lands from their current primary use.

Thanks for your consideration of my comments.

Fred Zitterkopf, Inland Northwest Wildlife Council

As long as NO hunting or fishing opportunities are decreased in ANY area of the state, I have no problem with the plan. But, if WDFW plans to take away ANY opportunity from hunters and fishers of this state so someone can look at wildlife I am strongly opposed to it. Some may not like seeing someone in camo or fl. orange in the same area they are 'looking' at wildlife. That is their problem and should go somewhere else. To close an area to hunting so these people can see an animal is NOT the answer!

NO! NO! NO!!! This is another yuppie West Side rip-off of the hunters, trappers and fishermen and women of this State who have worked and PAID to perpetuate Washington's wildlife.

Our Game Department has not been funded as promised by Governor Locke when the name was changed to Dept. of (watchable) Wildlife, or something. It is an injustice to use any funds generated by the hunters, trappers and fishermen and women of this State for a program dedicated to non-consumptive use!

I'm sure the "State" of King County and all those who voted for I-713 will support an increase in their local sales tax and will anti-up with all the money needed so they can motor out into the country to look at Bambi.

CONTENT CONCERNS

Overview comments: The implication that hunters and fishers are the only cross-

section of the population that has worked to maintain habitat for wildlife is snubbing all the other conservation efforts that have taken place. The only thing that has made sportsmen different is that they have been the money producers for WDFW via the Pittman-Bowes and other taxes. Also, wildlife viewing is not a "new" activity; all that is new is the focus. Replacing "new" with "other" in the last 2 sentences puts this trend in perspective.

Include non-profits in the list of attendees to the September conference. I know of quite a few attendees including my husband and myself who were there representing these organizations. In our case it was the Kittitas Environmental Education Network and the Kittitas Audubon Society (a separate entity from Audubon Washington), respectively.

What are Primary Strategies:

Strategy #6 should be strategy #1. Bringing the rural counties into the picture on the ground floor will give them some ownership in this plan. The Legislature should take it upon themselves to provide money for the rural, financially strapped counties to work in this process.

Strategy #3 should be ahead of #2. It doesn't make sense to actively seek to bring wildlife viewers to WA if the infrastructure is not in place to give them the type of experience they desire.

EMPHASIS CONCERNS

Several people on our Board of Directors have reviewed A Strategic Plan for Development of Wildlife Viewing Activities in Washington." We note limited development is planned for Western Washington. Wildlife Viewing Areas development in Western Washington is of equal or more importance than Eastern Washington, due to numbers of people in the West and the readily available and easy viewing in numerous areas of Eastern Washington already available.

What is "Wings Over the Skagit" exactly? No one on our Board knows exactly what that this plan involves.

Our suggestion is the improvement of a "launch" on the Skagit River just south of Rockport, Washington on Martin Road that seems very appropriate. The site currently belongs to Fish and Wildlife and some fencing, an "outhouse," parking, some trails, etc. are established. The development/improvement could include building a viewing blind, basic landscaping, fence/trail/ground improvement, and direction signs from Highway 20 and interpretive signs.

Thank you for the consideration,

Deanna Ray Ensley, Co-Coordinator
Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival

My name is Matt Jager and for the last 2 winters I've been the manager and education Coordinator for the Skagit River Bald Eagle Interpretive Center in Rockport, WA. I read, skimmed through the report and have a few comments about it.

It seems like there is a lot of money and time set aside in the plan for more study and biologists, etc. who will monitor the effects of recreational viewing on wildlife. I think it's pretty ridiculous to spend that kind of money without also having those folks document the effects of probably even more disruptive forms of recreation like hunting and fishing. Example: In Rockport, the winter WW viewing season focuses on Bald Eagles. Through cooperation, already long established, between the Interpretive center I manage, the USFS Eaglewatcher volunteer program, we channel up to 18,000 visitors a year to three sites along the highway to view wildlife. These sites are staffed with volunteers with spotting scopes. They are hardened areas so foot and vehicle traffic do no damage and they are so far removed from the feeding and roosting areas of the bald eagles, those animals are not affected... contrary to what the fisherman and hunters would have the public believe. Those two lobbies are extremely impactful on wildlife. My anecdotal experience of hunting and fishing along the Skagit is of loud powerboats flushing eagles off gravel bars as they pass by (just by noise and motion), and of hunters (I kid you not, this was reported to me last week by tourists watching eagles from the bridge on Highway 530, a staffed Eaglewatcher site) blasting two ducks with shotguns as they passed through 'urban' Rockport under the highway bridge in their boat, less than 50 yards from roosting bald eagles.

And our area of the Skagit has already been well documented and studied 'ad nauseum' to the effect of eagle watching, hunting and fishing. You are probably familiar with the reports. But, if the plan calls for more studies then they should be objective and also always document the effects on watchable wildlife of the hunting and fishing communities.

O.k. the other issue is that we already know the effects of a lot of these activities on bald eagles in the Skagit. My non-profit employer, the Bald Eagle Festival Committee, and the USFS have already put into place the Eaglewatcher program to do what the strategic plan can only hint about at the stage it is at. Our programs have been in effect for at least 8 years. They are well-established in the community mind, however, they eek along, year to year, on desperately low budgets. I can't help think of this when I think of the plans proposal for a 100k dollar a year biologist, that I make only \$4500 for 3 months working for the Interpretive Center and all our other employees are volunteers.

My position has to be grant funded every year (RAC). Currently we are setting our sites high in conjunction with the USFS, and Skagit County Parks and trying to build a 11,000 square foot Skagit River Interpretive Center at Howard Miller County Park. We have the land but have none of the 1.1 million estimated dollars that will be required to build the building. We are scrambling to write grants to get the \$5000 startup money that we have to get to hire a professional grant writer. The new center would be a huge leap for this community, making Rockport a watchable wildlife destination year round, instead of just for the winter eagle season. During the summer, the focus could be on salmon and watershed conservations, switching more to bald eagles as a theme in the winter.

The building would also be the Headquarters office for the County park. It's such a great opportunity. Rockport would no longer be just as an unseen village along the Highway 20 corridor unseen by motorists as they head towards Winthrop or North Cascades National Park. Rockport would benefit greatly from this watchable wildlife activity, but the strategic plan, instead of reinventing the wheel in areas already engaged in watchable wildlife, needs to assess what is there and see how it can help concretize and expand those opportunities. IF the plan would support this new Interpretive Center that would be a huge step forward for a very impoverished yet extremely 'watchable' part of Washington.

Another example is that we have 2 sites we send people to, to see eagles. There is another site that is incredible. A WA fish and Wildlife access site off of Martin Rd. It already had a vault toilet, kiosk that could hold an interpretive display of some sort, but the USFS Eaglewatcher program doesn't have the money to staff it. So, we've never tried. In fact, next year the person who coordinates the Eaglewatcher program is losing her job due to mandatory downsizing in the USFS! So, we can't even keep the programs that are wildly successful running! Your strategic plan needs to help fund and develop funding strategies around programs that already work, but which need help to stay viable.

Those are my suggestions... Thank you, for your work with this plan and keeping the Bald Eagle Festival involved.
Matt Jager, Education Coordinator, Skagit River Bald Eagle Interpretive Center

Watchable Wildlife Site Database. — This would be a nice tool to have BUT without proper interpretation, essential services, and supporting attitudes and amenities in the site communities has the potential to do more harm than good.

Matching Grants — The number one need

Washington Wildlife Viewing Plan

for community organizations is matching funds — for project development, salaries, infrastructure (phones, office equipment), travel expenses for training, conference and meeting attendance. The care and feeding of volunteers is essential to continued effective partnerships and building new ones. For example: Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival has been in active in Watchable Wildlife for 17 years with a conservative minimum 20 volunteers per year working on the festival for a minimum of 30 hours per month for 5 months each year= 30,600 hours. If those hours have a value of \$10 per hour the Festival should have \$306,000 in credit towards matching funds. I believe the same would be true for other festivals. It often appears that state and federal agencies do not value volunteers and their contributions at a comparable worth, to that of their staff. Volunteers that feel their input and contributions are not appreciated and who see little or no financial gains returned to their community repeatedly burn out and give up. Small rural communities in this state could not function without volunteers and it behooves partnership agencies to put the priorities of these community volunteers and their extensive knowledge of their communities as an integral part of the planning for economic development and revitalization of those communities. Money and capital investment is what these communities need.

Site Development — Ask the communities and volunteers to review once again Audubon's Birding Trail Site map and review biannually for changes or updates. Ask the communities what amenities and essential service are critical for each of these sites. Hold public meetings in the community nearest the site. Maybe the WDFW & CTED staff for that site could volunteer to attend those meeting if the communities' volunteers develop it.

How were the first 3 sites on the WDFW chosen? What is the level of community support for those sites? What partners have been identified for these sites? Are they partners that have historically worked to develop Watchable Wildlife sites and projects in their communities?

Interactive Web Map — This is a good idea but needs quite a bit of work. One of the biggest issues in rural communities is trespassing and if ownership is not properly identified on the map as well as on site with proper interpretation and public services (bathrooms, trash disposal, etc.) there will be negative reaction and a lack of hospitality within the community.

Economic Impact Research — In the last 10 years the upper Skagit Valley has been a study subject for Economic Impact by the Nature Conservancy, and before that it was studied by Western Washington University.

Consumer Research — Done in the upper

Skagit Valley by WDFW using the Birding magazine format for 3 years, Western Washington University class on Eco Tourism 2 years, WA DOT as part of their Highway 20 Corridor plan.

Community Leadership and Revitalization

This has been done in partnership in the upper Skagit Valley by PRI (Partnership for Rural Improvement; a project of the Kellogg Foundation) thru Washington State University, WA CTED Downtown Revitalization, twice, and Washington Small Cities Institute. Although all of these were good exercises, the end results have not brought funding to our communities. We have been studied and researched to death — we need capital investments within these communities.

Statewide Wildlife Viewing Conference

My suggestion would be to use the communities that host festivals or sites as the host communities for such a conference. It would bring much needed revenue to these communities while honing their skills. Give them funding to help plan and implement these conferences and work with them as mentors. It might be possible to follow right after a festival or viewing season to increase the economic benefits to that community. This kind of plan would garner great PR for all concerned as well as build stronger partnerships.

Partnership Development — This should start with recognition of existing partners and an evaluation of their existing working relationship with WDFW and CTED and what their needs are to be effective partners.

Summary — Where is the economic benefits to rural communities? The majority of these expenditures go to 2 state agencies with hopefully trickle down economic benefits to rural communities. These communities are rich in resources and economically bankrupt as far as any means to protect or promote them. The monies should be going to the communities. Give the monies to the communities and do a study on how they use them and benefit from them.

Conclusion — There are viable watchable wildlife festivals, events and sites already operational throughout Washington's rural communities that are in need of capital, partnerships, mentoring and technical assistance and I am very disappointed to see so few of these needs addressed in this strategic plan. Studies are great but the NEED is for operational funds to perpetuate what is already operational and protect existing wildlife viewing sites.

I look forward to further opportunities to discuss this draft form with you.
Vicki Johnson, Coordinator, Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival

As a rural resident, I am privileged to have the opportunity to view wildlife on a daily basis. I have also had the opportunity to see how many urban dwellers come to enjoy those same opportunities. I recognize the importance of using those opportunities to improve the economic viability of rural areas and the need to protect wildlife from being "loved" to much. While I feel we need the State influence, I hope that those of us working on a local level will be included in all planning and given the support to help volunteers do a more professional job. I would like to see more practical solutions than money spent for studies and surveys when they duplicate what has already been done or when those directly involved can supply the same information.

This is a very positive direction for the State to take. Our wildlife/outdoor recreation opportunities are excellent. I had a chat with a reporter in Los Angeles, CA this week who is working on a story on eagle watching. Opportunities like this need to be promoted. We're on our way. Keep up the good work.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

Last summer an airboat came to Grays Harbor, and for several months offered wildlife viewing excursions. With the passengers clad in ear protection, the airboat left the Westport marina and roared up the nearby estuary. We could hear the airboat from about 2 miles away and for the duration of the hour-long tour. Our porch shook when it was a half-mile away – it was louder and longer in duration than any aircraft or watercraft we've seen here in the past. We estimate the noise exceeds 120-130dB!

From our vantage point, the visible wildlife became less overnight. The great-blue heron, the bald eagles, the waterfowl and shorebirds, the peregrine falcons all must have been impacted by the noise of the airboat. The noise pollution from the large motor and 6 foot propeller scared off marine mammals, and bats. Where the boat "drove" across the mud, it must have disturbed eelgrass beds, clams, and other invertebrates. This land is a mix of private land and Department of Natural Resources Natural Resource Conservation Area (Elk River) – not WDFW.

The airboat is a new business to a rural community that needs economic help. However the airboat is exploiting the resource and excluding others from enjoying it. People with canoes, kayaks or just binoculars are not going to come, or come back, if this airboat continues to scare off the wildlife. The operator may as well take out a gun and shoot at the wildlife; fortunately he could never get close enough to hit anything.

The plan being submitted to the legislature should include more funding for biologists

who will monitor the impact of wildlife viewing activities. Just funding one biologist on the east side is insufficient. Also, **matching grants should encourage low-impact wildlife viewing activities**, and perhaps businesses that support low-impact wildlife viewing (canoe rental business, guided snorkeling, wildlife-viewing blinds on private land).

Finally, rural communities/rural governments are sometimes in desperate economic situations and will welcome any business that offers to set up shop. **They need education and incentives to choose to develop wildlife viewing** as a long-term profitable and sustainable goal. Many in my community are convinced that publicizing what we have will just attract throngs of "tree-huggers." They haven't thought about how that could give a real boost to the local economy.

I'm James (JESSE) Nielsen owner of Airboats NW, Inc. right now in Westport. I have opened up a trip through the wetlands and rivers in the local areas and it was a big hit with the blessing of the local fish and wildlife department. In Montesano they have airboats doing the Patina work. I have brought many, many people out into the Wetlands without disturbing anything, not even a blade of grass.

I had a larger motor application on my Airboats I brought up here from the south and it was way too much money to run. We, my company and another have come together with a planed Airboats and style of Airboat we have come to a design that not only is less then a 1/3 the weight but also gives us much less fuel consumption as well, which mean a longer area to cover when needed and will give you more LBs to haul your sprays and horse power & distance to cover, and this is all great news to our areas. I have quite a few companies and private people looking in our direction. The noise will be much less and the weight as well, by about 800 to 1000 lbs less with more weight to haul if needed.

On 30 gallons of fuel, with the application you have now, you use around 12 to 15 gals an hour and some you have maybe 8 to 10, with a smaller block. We have an application that will give you about 1-1/2 gal to 3 gals an hour and not taking anything away from what you have now with less noise. I have been on this for our Washington fragile areas for 14 year when I had used an airboat in Alaska to save my crew-member's life. Then is when I found myself wanting to bring these Airboats or these types to our area, and so far it has been great, and getting better every week we work on it.

Go to www.airboatsnw.com and see what and where I have been so far. Please, it will give you an idea that I have a great idea to bring this application your talking about

into our rives without destroying spawning ground at all, or eagle breeding areas such as the Hood Canal, any of the rivers elk or durr breeding. I have been in all of them, and these haven't stopped any of the transplant or chased the wildlife away at all to any of the rivers or wetlands.

I have been up the Snohomish River that hasn't been passable for 80 to 100 years or more, without disturbing or upsetting any of the grounds or wildlife. It is the application of our future; believe me it woks. Airboats NW had concentrated it self on the privation of out wild life & spawning grounds for now 14 years, well since I was a little boy fishing and camping on most if not all of our water ways. I'm a Skagit county boy so I know what it means to save out waters and wild life. These Airboats can, when needed to go around a shallow water of our rivers, be able to go over the sand or gravel bars to make sure we don't disturb the spawning grounds or if we need to go over logs, limbs, or hard areas to maneuver these boats are all and more of that.

With this in mind and having a young special-ed. man of 24 form Portland last summer going on my airboats he was so taken by the wildlife he saw and the ride, I just couldn't give him and his family a short ride so we went out on a 1 hour ride and stayed for 3 hours. The look on his face was breath-taking and his family was so happy that they could give him something otherwise would never had happened without my airboat. He will remember and be able to tell his classmate what he had done for his summer break. You really had to be there. So as I looked down the road for this year, I thought that if I put a nonprofit company together I could work with schools, college, jr, ecology, departments, schools of all types for them to take this ride for nothing and with the building of my airboats is the way I put back into the system, airboats as well as building these for the fish & wildlife as they need a better way and more efficient way to operate, we have all of that. We will also have a training time to work with people that know nothing about these boats to have the training to train themselves down the road for our safer waterways.

Please take a look at our outline and our way of the future. Even Florida hasn't come this far and they started with these and still don't have what we will have, nor Alaska. Thanks so much. James (JESSE) Nielsen, Airboats NW Inc.

From: Peter Hamilton, Liferforce Foundation

Re: Draft Strategic Plan for Wildlife Viewing Tourism

The Liferforce Foundation is a Vancouver-based ecology organization that was formed in 1980 to provide a public service to help people, animals and the environment. We

provide a free service to people who want to protect animals and the environment for their personal well-being and for the sake of animals and their habitats. All life on earth is dependent on a healthy ecosystem.

We believe that some of our Marine Life Programs has been contributing to promote wildlife viewing. Our Orca Trails program has been a great success in Lighthouse Marine Park, Point Roberts, WA. This program promotes land-based whale watching. We hope to expand this program to other WA parks.

The following is general information about our work.

Lifeforce Foundation Studies

Boat and Orca Interaction Studies

Lifeforce is collecting data about the impact of boat traffic on endangered population of orcas. This information is extremely important in order to protect orcas and their habitats through improving marine mammal regulations, developing an Orca Recovery Plan; creating marine protected areas for all life and implementing environmental education programs.

Some of the video images would also be used in a future education video on orca behaviour in order to help people understand how to operate a boat if whales are in the area. The video would be used by organizations that are licensing/training boaters. We have previously used photographs in our Orca Field Guide and have found that a video would also be an important education tool.

The Boat and Orca Interaction Study is conducted in conjunction with our Lifeforce Boater Awareness Program in which we distribute the present whale watch guidelines to boaters on the water.

In 2003, we tested new, innovative methods to stop boaters from interfering with the orcas' lifestyle. This includes the use of a traffic "arrow bar" to advise boaters what direction to take in order to avoid driving over a pod.

Lifeforce Boater Awareness Program
Whale watching can be a peaceful experience but presently it may well be a threat to the Southern Community. The majority of the boaters are unaware of "Whale Watching" guidelines. Lifeforce distributes whale watching guidelines to boaters on the water and to the general public. The information advises pleasure boaters, commercial boaters, jet skiers and seaplane operators how to safely watch whales and other marine life. Lifeforce helps stop boaters who inadvertently or intentionally harass marine mammals.

Threats to the Southern Community such as

dwindling food sources and environmental pollution will not be resolved immediately, but we can immediately reduce some of the threats through Lifeforce. By controlling the boat traffic we can immediately reduce noise pollution/boat traffic that interrupt foraging patterns and cause stress that affects the immune systems. We can also stop/reduce boat collisions that could injure and kill orcas.

Education programs that include monitoring and collecting data for the enforcement of guidelines are essential for their survival. This project should be a high priority since the Southern Community resident orca population is at a critical low number. There is an urgent need for strong conservation measures. This population is extremely vulnerable to human and environmental threats.

Orca Trails

Lifeforce is conducting a project called Orca Trails Whale Watching. This is a unique education program to promote land-based whale watching in BC and Washington State. We hope this will help manage potential increases in boat activity.

Orca Trails is a result of our ten-year study of orcas. We can advise park managers and the public when the orcas will pass by certain park areas. The public can call us for information about land-based whale watch areas so they can plan hikes, camping trips and other types of outdoor recreation. Lifeforce will help protect marine ecosystems and the orcas by promoting ecologically-friendly outdoor lifestyles for land lovers and boaters.

The Boat and Orca Interaction Study, Orca Trails and Lifeforce activities will act as a model for land based whale watching and monitoring activities. A Monitoring Standards Policy will be developed in order to meet the demands of this challenging work. New methods to monitor orca and boat interactions will be developed in order to mitigate the impact of boat traffic on marine wildlife and habitats. If the programs can save even a few, it will help ensure their future survival.

In addition to the above programs, Lifeforce conducts the following Marine Life Programs.

1. Whale and Dolphin Hotline. Lifeforce provides a telephone hotline for the public to be able to report marine wildlife stranding, harassment and/or sightings. Lifeforce will either solely provide assistance or contact other agencies to assist us.

2. Orca Research. Under a Department of Fisheries and Oceans Research permit Lifeforce has conducted studies of the behavior and travel patterns of orcas. We obtain data to provide the public with educational materials to help everyone have

a better understanding of the complex lives of orcas.

We also gather photographic/video data for displays. Some of the images have been used in an educational field guide on orca behavior to help people understand how to operate a boat if whales are in the area. This information would help prevent injury to people and the whales.

We hope that our research and education programs will help create marine sanctuaries, obtain COSEWIC Endangered Species status, determine any changes in travel patterns resulting from noise pollution, etc. and monitor any effect of dwindling fish stocks in order to obtain fish quotas for wildlife. Understanding orca travel patterns will also help Lifeforce promote land based whale watching through Orca Trails that is our program to alert Park Managers when orcas and other cetaceans will pass their marine parks.

3. Marine Mammal Census and Boat Interaction Study. In order to protect the endangered Southern Orca Community students are monitoring marine wildlife travels and their interactions with boats. This will also look at the feasibility of promoting ecotourism activity in communities and how these operations can be conducted under a Code of Ethical Ecotourism. This will help promote a respect for marine wildlife and economic development.

4. False killer whale study. This study will help understand why some dolphins follow boats and appear to interact with people. Information could lead to the development of methods to keep marine mammals away from dangers, such as oil spills.

5. Pinniped Predation Research. Lifeforce is developing non-lethal methods to reduce and/or eliminate seal predation of endangered fish stocks. This research will help stop the shooting of seals and sea lions.

6. Lifeforce Boater Awareness Program is similar to Sound Watch in the U.S. and the Park Warden program in Robson Bight. We distribute whale watching regulations to boaters on the water and the general public. The information advises boaters to safely watch whales and other marine life. It also stops boaters who inadvertently or intentionally harass marine mammals. Lifeforce is the only organization providing this service in Southern BC. As part of the Lifeforce program we will conduct investigations of cruelty to marine wildlife.

7. Marine Wildlife Rescue. Lifeforce provides a 24-hour service to respond to marine wildlife injury, sickness, abandonment, stranding and other emergencies. This service includes responding to pollution problems such as oil and chemical spills. In addition, we will

remove dolphins, porpoises, pinnipeds and seabirds trapped in fishing nets.

Lifeforce is the only organization that responds to seal pup emergency calls in the Point Roberts area. We monitor seal pups on beaches to make sure that their mothers are nearby. Our boat or van would take any sick or injured pup (and other wildlife) to a veterinarian or rehabilitation center.

The rescue equipment is kept in our Marine Wildlife Rescue Trailer with a command post and educational displays. The equipment can be shipped by air or boat anywhere in BC and Washington.

8. Eco Friendly Boating. In order to reduce and eliminate pollution of the Georgia Basin off Canada's West Coast, it is crucial that we provide ecology information and demonstrate how people can help to develop pollution-free lifestyles. This project will develop and demonstrate the necessary clean alternatives. The Ocean Friends Library will be aboard an Eco Friendly Boat powered by solar, wind and fuel cells.

9. Educational Materials and Displays. Lifeforce publishes educational materials such as the Whale Watch Guidelines that we distribute to the public. We also create public displays such as the Orca Center in Point Roberts, WA. This "whale museum" includes information about human and environmental threats to marine wildlife. We plan to create other education centers in BC communities.

Conclusion: We hope that WDFW will be interested in discussing our programs in order to provide unique wildlife tourism experiences. We can be reached at lifeforce@ciety@hotmail.com and (604) 669-4673.

In today's Daily News, it was mentioned that we could send comments about establishing wildlife areas that would encourage tourism. It gave me such a ray of hope. I grew up in California and literally saw it destroyed into a mass cement jungle. I'm sure that was not John Muir's vision, and yet to his credit he saved some redwood areas which are tremendously popular today and a huge tourist draw. I have lived here since 1975 and enjoyed Washington's wild beauty, knowing full well how development will come here as well and dreading it. For most of the people who have always lived here, they naively think it will last forever. Unfortunately, most of the great old growth forests are already gone in the past couple of decades.

When they logged behind me, we cooperated as it was a tremendous view area, and we just asked them to consider our buffers. The city walked it, the loggers like Weyerhaeuser's eagle specialist who bankrolled it ahead of logging it was notified of all the eagles' nests we had

watched for years, and I had geologists from the DNR out twice to see if it would unleash sliding since a geologist named John Cunningham had told us it was an ancient slide area, and they told us it wouldn't. I thanked Eagleridge and city officials at the city meeting for saving the buffers, 8 ft across old growth and eagles trees. Instead, the grove of 8 ft across trees over three hundred feet high which I took aerial shots of, and the buffers in the city codes then, and our property, the creek, and the pipeline which slid out due to the logging (documented by the Olympic pipeline letter I have), and unbeknownst to us until after the Aldercrest, giant deep-seated slides on the hill behind us were all logged. The SEPA had been waived in spite of the eagles and bears and the DNR saying it looked like the Olympic rainforest. I can remember picnics across a moss-covered bridge on hot days over 100 degrees when it was so cool down there and we sat by a waterfall. There were salamanders in the creek. The boys tore home one day after seeing a bear. We could see the eagle's nest out the back window. All the neighbor kids watched it with binoculars. There were trails that were supposed to be protected in the city codes that the kids would sled down in the snow. We used to take campfire groups and identify all the wildflowers in spring and the fields of trilliums would be out. A British singing group said up north in Washington they had walked for miles to see trilliums and here we had them in abundance. There were elk herds and deer and many hawks and owls. One morning I got up to feed my baby and a great horned owl had spread its wings from one side of the play set to the other. It used to sit way up in one of the old trees near the end of the street behind Sessions house. I remember after they logged it, looking out the back at dusk and seeing an owl fly over as if he was looking for what had happened. It hadn't been logged 90 years ago, probably because the gullies were too steep or because it was a known landslide area since 1902 one city councilman's binder said.

They moved the freeway away from the area, George Clark, the engineer who worked on the Longview Wye told me. Anyhow, then they went over and logged the plug of Aldercrest in spite of me calling up the DNR long distance and telling them there were wetlands over people's heads and beaver dams and the pipeline. Even today elk herds of 60 elk roam-we have movies. A wildlife photographer said some of the land out the river valley behind Aldercrest, and in the valley view of the town, has some ancient tree formations. Peter Crawford, the surveyor of Washington, made his home here because of the old trees wading into the river. Brent Haddaway, a wildlife biologist from DOT, said it all should be saved. Jack Wardlaw, who used to live here, a high school biologist, affirmed all the eagles, owls, many types of hawks, bear, porcupine, raccoon, beavers, etc. that live here. A

wetland lake in the trustland in the river valley boasts hundreds or even a thousand ducks and there are all kinds of flocks of geese and heron. A river ranch adjacent to the trustland of over 450 acres is available for the first time in years. Lower Columbia Fish Recovery documented the types of endangered salmon, steelhead and nearby cutthroat trout pond. Nature Conservancy, Len Barson, and state Audubon, Woody Wheeler, thought it was beautiful. There are three documented bald eagles' nests in the trustland alone and another nearby. All the property owners of 1000 acres contiguously have put it in writing that they would consider offers as it is all landslide, and wetlands, and floodplain around the trustland (which was saved through the legislature in a trustland transfer). Property owners have waited four years for it to be put through the legislature and have put offers in writing. There is also a historic house on the river that would qualify for the register the state office said looking at the photos. Bill Dygert, a grant writer for the Columbia Land Trust could help somehow. The Columbia Land Trust said they would manage it if we got someone to purchase it. It would be a great way to restore value to the area and make something good happen out of something bad.

A developer who works for Hewlett Packard thought it would be a great area for his people until the landslides happened. A wildlife area would be a draw for desirable business. No one comes with the known slide area. There have been numerous conventions on the other side of the walking dike from it. The walking dike is 3-tenths of a mile in one direction on a straight shot from the I-5 freeway exit and 8-tenths of a mile down Allen street in the other direction from the freeway. The walking dike looks out on this area, except for the wetland lake hidden around the corner behind the trees. And the hotels, schools, and park are adjacent. It's already a regular stop for buses from Canada to refuel for example. It is on the loop route to Mt. St Helens-the volcano, Castle Rock, Kelso, Woodland, Merwin Lake, Swift, Cougar, and back to the other side of the volcano.

Many groups support a wildlife area there including, Audubon, Kelso Recreation Council, homeowners' groups, Conservation, the Kelso schools, ESL and after school programs, Cowlitz Indians, Peace International, a Japanese exchange program of whom we are the sister city, Regional Outdoor clubs, Regional Scouts, Camp Fire and many others who have put their support in writing. Occasionally a weak-minded councilman will ask to log the trustland which is the centerpiece so that they can have the money for the city hall, but geologists from Portland State University say doing so would unleash the major slide into the river as the trustland stands on the banks of the wetland lake and the Coweeman River. The dike is nearby

with the elderly and schools and hotels and town adjacent. It has previously been sandbagged and raised several times. UW professor Dave Montgomery said logging on steep slopes is illegal and could cause sliding into the river. Universities would even like to have geology centers there in the midst of the wildlife area or nearby so that is another possibility. I often have been too frustrated and outspoken and disillusioned and not myself living in a home that creaks, with no value, and no compensation, and not able to sell, that is supposed to go over the cliff someday. Also, like many others whose husbands have lost their jobs when 800 jobs were lost at the aluminum plant in 2001 when a lawyer sold off the electricity, we have suffered from the economic failings in the community. So many good things could happen that could bring value for the future and even economic value instead of being known as a slide area. This area at the bend of the Columbia adjacent to three rivers that wrap around it with tremendous views is on the migration route. Please share my vision. There were 9 bald eagles on my street alone last year that we took photos of. In fact an eagle is at 116 South Vista this week. Pretty soon the smelt will be running too, and the otter will come all the way up and sun themselves on Joyce /Craven's dock and along the Coweeman slough and you can watch them off the dike or the salmon and steelhead as they race upriver to Coweeman lake. Please read the letter from the wildlife photographer, Jack Scharbach, and help us make this area remain for posterity and for the wildlife!

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Shorebirds at Bowerman Basin

