

HEALTHY LANDS INITIATIVE

Final Report

June, 2007

The overall goal of this project, originally titled “Putting Our Natural Assets to Work: Building a Conservation Economy in North Central Washington,” has been to develop a shared vision for how biodiversity conservation can be integrated with economic and social needs to enhance the health and vitality of the region. We have sought to do this by bringing together the land conservation, agricultural, economic development, and planning communities to learn more about the biodiversity of the region, assess existing and potential incentive programs, and develop plans for implementing grassbanking programs in Moses Coulee and the Methow Valley and habitat farming in the Entiat and Wenatchee River watersheds. The process and findings associated with the pursuit of project goals and objectives are summarized below along with specific recommendations; referenced products and deliverables are attached in the Appendix.

Goal A: Build collective understanding of biodiversity resources of the region.

- Summarize findings of available biodiversity assessments
- Obtain local input on biodiversity resources
- Revise & expand tools & use as platform for integrating biodiversity of place with school curricula

Staff, Structure & Process: Nancy Warner, NCW Program Director for The Nature Conservancy, served as project manager for this project goal that culminated in the production of a Microsoft Power Point slide show highlighting the biodiversity of the region, “The Nature of North Central Washington.” Many people contributed to the development of this program including nature writer Jack Nisbet who provided review and input on the conceptual and draft storyboards, and Malcolm Keithly with M&M Productions who helped convert the script and Power Point to a narrated program on DVD.

Acknowledgements of all who provided information, slides, and review of this program are included in the credits at the end of the DVD. The DVD will be made available for download from the Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship page of the North Central Washington Resource Conservation & Development website (www.ncwrcd.org).

The process for creating this program was as follows:

1. Drafting questions for use in interviewing ecologists about what makes the region unique (See Appendix).
2. Conducting interviews with experts representing a variety of disciplines in terrestrial and freshwater ecology.
3. Summarizing key concepts and drafting conceptual storyboard.
4. Obtaining review on draft conceptual storyboard and revising.
5. Writing script, obtaining review, and revising again.

6. Collecting slides for use in telling the story revising storyboard along the way as needed.
7. Producing draft slide program and presenting to audiences for feedback.
8. Revising program and presenting to additional audiences.
9. Finalizing program, recording narration, preparing credits, and producing as DVD.
10. Distributing to all contributors and interested institutions in NCW.

Findings and Recommendations:

While the process of developing this program took much longer than expected, it did result in a product that has been widely reviewed, reflects the contributions and thoughts of many in the region, and serves as a solid platform for the development of additional complementary programs focused on individual counties or habitat types.

Others who might want to develop a community-based slide program highlighting their regional biodiversity might look into the feasibility of establishing a web site where interested parties and contributors could review the draft programs and slides being used to tell the story. We would not recommend that this type of web-based tool replace the face-to-face focus groups that were used to solicit feedback on the program; however, it could be an additional and useful way to involve others in telling the story of their place.

Goal B: Create a collective understanding of regional tools and resources for enhancing conservation.

- Summarize information about existing public and private incentive programs relevant to private landowners in the region.
- Summarize information on existing conservation initiatives in the region.
- Share summaries of existing incentive programs and conservation initiatives with private landowners and solicit new ideas.

Staff, Structure & Process: Kathleen Deason, Foster Creek Conservation District Implementation Project Manager, and contractor to IRIS for much of the pilot project period, served as project manager of this goal.

The process used in creating the summary of incentive programs and conservation initiatives and then sharing those findings with private landowners included:

1. Conducting research on existing incentive programs by contacting local organizations such as the conservation districts, NRCS, and WSU Extension Services and by using existing research conducted by the Washington Biodiversity Council and Defenders of Wildlife.
2. Working with staff on conservation initiative leads and following up with individuals within organizations to conduct interviews and request photos for slide program.
3. Summarizing findings in slide program and handout (See Appendix).

4. Identifying natural resource concerns, organizing them into a matrix with relevant incentive programs in each major habitat type, and highlighting gaps. .
5. Presenting the slide program and sharing the summary of incentive programs with community members gathered together throughout the dialog process (See Outreach Summary).

Findings and Recommendations:

In addition to summarizing incentives and initiatives, we developed a matrix of incentive programs to see how they addressed natural resource concerns or threats in each habitat type. There seem to be few incentive programs that directly address invasive weeds, altered fire regimes, and global warming but many that are directed towards habitat fragmentation, decreased water quality and quantity, and general stewardship.

Organizing conservation incentive programs according to these main natural resource concerns or threats can be used to determine redundancy and gaps in the existing incentive programs and conservation initiatives and lead to new ideas for addressing those gaps.

Healthy Lands Initiative Outreach Summary
January 05 – May 07

Date	Event	HLI Staff	Attendees
April 11, 2006	Focus Group to Review Draft Slide Programs	4	7
June 8	Healthy Lands Conference	4	80
June 27	Oroville Focus Group	3	5
July 6	Wenatchee Focus Group	4	6
July 19	Winthrop Focus Group	3	7
August 3	Pateros Focus Group	3	5
August 30	Okanogan Meeting with NRCS Regional Staff	4	8
August 30	Nespelem Focus Group	4	7
September 19	Waterville Focus Group	4	6
September 27	Washington Biodiversity Council Retreat and Fieldtrip	5	30
November 16	Ag Forestry Leadership Seminar	1	35
November 21	Priority Strategy Selection by Steering Committee	4	12
January 18, 2007	Forum Planning Committee	4	10
March 7	Forum	4	65
April 4-5	Pilot Project Retreat	3	10
May 24	Yakima Valley Audubon Society	1	25

Goal C: Discover new ways to combine biodiversity conservation with the maintenance of productive and profitable agricultural enterprises.

- Design process that promotes problem solving around key issues affecting agriculture in shrub steppe and riparian habitats.
- Launch dialog process among biodiversity conservation, economic development, and agricultural communities across the region.
- Capture stories and lessons learned from dialog series.

Staff, Structure, and Process:

Jay Kehne, NCW Resource Conservation & Development Council Coordinator, Kathleen Deason and Kent Mullinix with the Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship, and Nancy Warner, NCW Program Director for The Nature Conservancy worked as the core team managing this community dialog process that extended from spring 2006 through spring 2007. The process was designed to bring people with interests and backgrounds in agriculture, land conservation, economic development, and planning together to look at existing incentive programs for conserving biodiversity in shrub steppe and riparian habitats and to develop plans for advancing some priority needs.

The first step was to identify key leaders and invite them to focus group sessions held in Tonasket, Nespelem, Waterville, Winthrop, Pateros, and Wenatchee. In addition, the presentation and discussion questions were brought to the Foster Creek Conservation District's Healthy Lands Conference, Economic Development District of North Central Washington, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

After introducing the Washington Biodiversity Council and the Healthy Lands Initiative, the core team members presented "The Nature of North Central Washington" and "Conservation and Agriculture: Moving Beyond the Traditional into the Sustainable" in each session and then launched a discussion focusing on two questions:

- On your land or lands you are familiar with, what are the barriers for maintaining or restoring riparian and shrub-steppe habitat?"
- What ideas do you have to improve existing programs or for new programs?

All together more than 70 issues were identified through this process and grouped under the desired outcomes listed in the 2003 Washington Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Report relevant to a subregion of the state:

1. Develop a statewide biodiversity strategy
2. Develop a public education & outreach program for Washington's biodiversity
3. Provide more local government assistance to conserve biodiversity
4. Improve and expand non-regulatory efforts to conserve biodiversity on private land
5. Improve and expand efforts to conserve biodiversity on public land
6. Improve coordination among state agencies in collecting, standardizing, managing and distributing biodiversity information

The next step was to convene a steering committee composed of focus group members and others to prioritize two to three issues for action planning. The two key issues that were identified as necessary in order to address many other priorities follow:

Action Plan Issue #1: Form a Healthy Lands Coalition (HLC) including agriculture, economic development, land conservation and planning organizations to develop a common vision about regional biodiversity and agricultural priorities and the actions needed to advance a sustainable North Central Washington agricultural-based economy that integrates and values habitat and open space conservation.

- Build capacity of conservation districts to enable staffing of the HLC.
- Use existing local comprehensive plans as a starting point for efforts.
- Secure legislative dollars for farmland protection, land management, and ecological benefits.
- Develop matching funds for multiple species and habitats.
- Diversify funding sources to add new revenue to government funds.
- Explore the value of ecological services to society.
- Develop a jointly funded position to assist landowners with conservation options.
- Link incentive programs to desirable biodiversity outcomes such as riparian community restoration, reduction of weeds, and increasing biodiversity of shrub-steppe.
- Develop solid land management and preservation strategies not contingent on political shifts.

Action Plan Issue #2: Develop a comprehensive educational and outreach program that showcases and builds upon local conservation successes to spur innovative and cooperative approaches that enable farms and ranches in North Central Washington to thrive.

- Recruit and educate young farmers through beginning rancher programs.
- Incorporate youth education with federal farm bill programs such as CRP, EQIP, WHIP etc.
- Establish an annuity program that allows current farmers to stay on the farm and transition to new owners who can build on their efforts to improve habitat.
- Develop fair trade for conservation practices and quantify the value of conservation outcomes.
- Explore grazing options to existing programs such as CRP.
- Develop other long term flexible, innovative commitment programs that pay landowners for ecological benefits.
- Where lacking, implement invasive weed control on federal, state, and county roads.

The last step in the regional dialog process was to organize and hold a regional forum to develop action plans for the top priority issues. Another group of community members stepped forward in January, 2007 to help the HLI core team plan for the regional forum that was held in Chelan on March 7. This forum, attended by more than 60 people, resulted in draft action plans and notes that the core team synthesized and sent out to all forum participants for feedback before finalizing. See Appendix for a copy of the forum agenda and HLI action plans.

Findings and Recommendations:

The dialog process provided an assessment of existing and potentially different incentives for shrub steppe and freshwater-riparian habitat types in North Central Washington. Along the way this process helped the HLI core team identify constraints, gaps and a number of different opportunities by engaging people at multiple scales from small focus groups to the larger regional forum. The importance of long range planning to the preservation of important agricultural lands and open spaces and the maintenance of appropriate development opportunities was integrated in discussions throughout the dialog process.

The small focus group meetings served as an effective tool for scoping out the issues and identifying leaders to engage in action planning further along in the process. People appreciated the fact that we traveled to meet with them and that the group size, usually less than ten, was small enough to provide for the active input of all attendees. The diversity of each group enabled all involved to learn something new and to hear different perspectives about how incentives could be changed or created to better meet needs. While many issues related to funding, capacity, and information were brought up time and again, other issues such as managing BPA lands on the Colville Reservation, only came up in one meeting. Some general findings from the focus group discussions are listed below along with additional recommendations.

Conservation incentive programs require initial investment and further financial risk-taking on long-term practices for the farmer or rancher. Landowners are not reimbursed for materials until a funded practice is complete and remain responsible for operation and maintenance of the practice including sometimes costly management changes that need to be made to ensure success. Some landowners are reluctant to become involved in incentive programs when the financial issues associated with their success are uncertain.

Increased income from incentive programs can affect taxing and financial aid for landowners as cost share given for a given project is recorded initially as income. This can become a disincentive particularly, in one example, when a rancher needed to stay within a given income level for his daughter to be eligible for financial aid for college.

There is no one place that can provide a comprehensive guide to all available conservation incentive programs and that can guide landowners to those that best meet their needs. A person really has to be motivated and have the time needed to track down various incentives and incentive program coordinators. The lack of a clearinghouse and

easily accessible information tailored to meet the needs of landowners essentially creates a disincentive or constraint to someone who might otherwise utilize incentive programs.

Further, technical assistance to implement conservation practices associated with programs is dwindling as Natural Resource Conservation Service staff retire and their positions are either not replaced or are filled with contractors who do not have the skills, time and experience needed to provide on-the-ground assistance. In addition, funds available through the NRCS for different types of conservation practices vary in response to federal budget allocations and farm bill priorities.

While potential partners are listed with the strategies that emerged from the dialog process in *Discovering Gaps and Opportunities for Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Agriculture in North Central Washington*, the Healthy Lands Initiative White Paper (See Appendix), two priority strategies we would like to forward as recommendations to other regions are currently being implemented here. One is to establish a long-standing organization to serve as the convener for continuing discussions that integrate land conservation, economic development and agriculture. The identity of that organization is still being explored but a favored option is to bring the regional dialog process that started as the Healthy Lands Initiative in as part of the North Central Washington Resource Conservation & Development Council's new committee, IRIS, or the Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship. This structure could provide a neutral, locally-managed entity supported by local conservation districts, counties, municipalities and other organizations and serve as the convener for many of the information sharing and problem-solving needs identified in the dialog process.

The other strategy and recommendation is to establish the means for sharing regional information and success stories on a regular basis. The NCW RC&D has launched a web site as part of the Healthy Lands Initiative that will help in establishing this regional information hub (See www.ncwrcd.org and design in Appendix). This web site will also be used as a place to help educate people in the region about how current land use planning, development, open space and agricultural land conservation decisions will affect the future of the area. Ideas surfacing around this strategy include using long-range planning and visioning tools such as that used by Envision (www.QuestForTheFuture.com), Community Viz (www.communityviz.com), and possibly developing a regional planning staff to assist cities and counties with biodiversity-friendly, economically-important development strategies, codes, ordinances, and comprehensive plans.

The NCW Economic Summit, planned for September, 20, 2007, will provide an additional opportunity for people to come together and help craft a regional organization and plan to maintain biodiversity while allowing smart growth in the region (See Appendix for summit agenda).

Goal D: Develop plans for implementing grassbanking and habitat farming incentive programs in the Wenatchee River watershed, Moses Coulee, and the Methow Valley.

Grassbank Incentive Program

- Learn about grassbanks and explore their potential use
- Develop a common vision and plan for implementing demonstration grassbanks
- Compile and share products along with recommendations for how others might approach the design of these and other incentive programs

Background: Interest among a number of landowners and managers in North Central Washington in learning more about innovative methods for increasing biodiversity conservation while enhancing the viability of family ranching prompted TNC to organize a Grassbank Workshop in November, 2005. Over 25 people came to the workshop to learn more about grassbanking from Linda Poole, Manager of TNC's Matador Ranch in Montana and how animal behavior can be used as a tool to advance conservation and economic return in shrub steppe systems from Dr. Fred Provenza, Professor of Range and Wildlife Biology at Utah State University (See www.behave.org). Following these presentations the group used the Grassbank Assessment Worksheet to guide discussions about how these concepts could be applied in the Methow Valley and Moses Coulee landscapes (See Appendix).

At the end of the workshop participants expressed interest in continuing to explore ways that a grassbank might be used to advance conservation and economic goals in NCW, recognizing that it might only serve as a starting point that could result in a completely different approach perhaps more appropriate to the needs of the Methow Valley and Moses Coulee. With this understanding the group decided to seek support from the Washington Biodiversity Council to continue exploration of grassbanking as part of the proposed NCW pilot project.

Staff, Structure and Process: While the development of plans for grassbanking in the Methow Valley and Moses Coulee would require groups focused on each place, the pilot project team recognized that there would be value in bringing the groups together periodically to share information and take advantage of any additional outside consultants that would be brought in to support the effort.

Nancy Warner, NCW Program Director for The Nature Conservancy agreed to coordinate meetings of the combined group with Chuck Warner, Moses Coulee Program Director for The Nature Conservancy and Bob Anderson, Project Coordinator with the Okanogan Conservation District serving as the Grassbank Coordinators for the Moses Coulee and Methow Valley groups. Craig Nelson, Okanogan Conservation District Manager, stepped into this role when Bob Anderson left his position in fall, 2006. Will Keller, Natural Resource Conservation Service rangeland ecologist and longtime Coordinated Resource Management Manager for Okanogan County also helped out with the Methow Valley Grassbank Group as much as his time would allow.

Invitees to the Moses Coulee Area Grassbank were originally selected from a subset of those who attended the November 2005 Grassbank Workshop and live or work in Douglas County. This list was expanded to include participation from Foster Creek Conservation District, and other ranchers in Douglas County who run at least 100 head of cattle. Invitees to the Methow Valley Grassbank included those who attended the Grassbank Workshop along with other ranchers and agency representatives involved in the Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) groups. Background reading materials on grassbanking were provided for all participants along with booklets and DVDs on the BEHAVE program and used to inform discussions at meetings. (See Appendix).

Grassbank Project Activity Summary

Date	Activity	Outcomes
Nov. 11, 2005	Grassbanking Workshop	Introduction to grassbank, BEHAVE, and assessing feasibility of grassbanking in Moses Coulee and Methow Valley. Agreed to move forward with pilot project.
Feb. 19, 2006	Moses Coulee Group Meeting in Wenatchee	Sharing information on grassbanking, discussion of grassbank vision and guiding principles
Feb. 21	Methow Grassbank Group Meeting in Twisp	Sharing information on grassbanking, discussion of vision and guiding principles
Feb, 14-15	Will Keller, Dana Peterson, Chuck Warner, Nancy Warner attend session on grassbanking at SRM Conference in BC	Learned more about the challenges associated with grassbanking including the need for a dedicated grassbank manager.
Mar. 22	Moses Coulee Group Meeting in Waterville	Discussed and rejected idea of combining the grassbanks. Discussed possibility of a “traded grazing” concept and valuation of ecological services
Mar. 23	Methow Group Meeting in Twisp	Developed working list of issues and some strategies for addressing them
May 22	Moses Coulee Group Meeting in Waterville	Discussed how “uneven” interpretation of FSA and NRCS regulations across state has hurt producers – strategized solutions. Refined guiding principles and roles.
Aug. 22	Technical Group Meeting in Okanogan	Reviewed and summarized actions to date and suggested strategies for addressing needs
Sept. 25	Joint Group Meeting in Pateros	Developed shared agreement on key issues/talking points
Sept. 27	Washington Biodiversity Council Board Fieldtrip & Dinner	Dialog among HLI participants and Council members
Oct. 28-30	Chuck and Nancy Warner attend BEHAVE meeting	Discussed success of the Matador Ranch Grassbank with ranchers and TNC staff.
Mar.	Assessing mapping needs in Methow to inform situation	Reluctance to share information about current fee and lease lands used for ranching due to fear of outside influences
April	Developed draft work plan	Agreement that common monitoring protocols are needed

Findings and Recommendations:

The Moses Coulee Working Group initially identified lands owned and/or managed by The Nature Conservancy, key portions owned by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, and private farmland currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for inclusion as potential grassbank contributors.

The group identified the following set of Guiding Principles as necessary to success: (not prioritized)

1. Management of the grassbank lands should be exemplary.
2. Use of the grassbank should promote wise and innovative management activities on cooperators' lands.
3. Conservation practices must be implemented on priority Moses Coulee Conservation Area lands.
4. Participants should be signatory to the Douglas County Habitat Conservation Plan.
5. The grassbank group agrees to work together to provide a catalyst and support for the development of innovative activities.
6. Trucking should be kept to a minimum in order to reduce cost and energy consumption.
7. The grassbank should not be thought of as a means for producers to get bigger.

The Methow Valley Working Group identified lands held by private absentee landowners and those held by WDFW as necessary to create a grassbank since spring and fall grazing is the general need of most ranchers in that landscape. Since private lands held by absentee owners tend to be small parcels that would be difficult to knit together into a grassbank large enough to accommodate shared needs, the group focused on WDFW lands as critical for implementation of a grassbank in the Methow Valley.

The Methow group articulated the following vision statement: "We envision a healthy land base which supports biodiversity and viable agricultural operations" and set out a number of requirements that would need to be addressed to meet that vision including:

1. Need to demonstrate compatibility between wildlife and grazing livestock, i.e., develop demonstration project to run alongside those in Kittitas and Asotin counties.
2. Need to educate the public and increase general understanding of how ranches are managed and what their needs are so people can understand the problems and contribute to the solutions that will shape the future of agriculture in the valley.
3. Need to define which lands are needed by which ranchers in order to block up lands for spring and fall grazing and reduce transportation and management costs.
4. Need to understand how grassbanking could be incorporated into WDFW lease/permit system.

In joint discussion, the grassbanking groups later derived a set of talking points for presenting the strategies and barriers of grassbank creation to the Washington Biodiversity Council and other audiences. This set of talking points is included in the Appendix.

While both groups decided that formation of a grassbank is not currently in their best interests or feasible at this time, they do feel it is important to continue meeting to discuss ideas and work together on a number of important issues. Our intent is to educate others on the potential ecological, social, and economic benefits to be gained by increasing the availability of state lands for grazing programs that meet biodiversity and economic goals, and to work with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and U.S.D.A. to increase program flexibility when using state and CRP lands for emergency grazing.

We have created partnerships that are sponsoring and providing funding to conduct rangeland monitoring workshops. These workshops will train ranchers, agency personnel and others in the use of a common language that can be used to describe the landscape and provide a simple protocol that allows everyone to participate in integrated wildlife and rangeland monitoring programs and to share their results with each other and the public (See: www.landekg.com). Two three-day workshops are already planned; the first is scheduled to take place in Moses Coulee in August, 2007, the second will take place in Okanogan County at a date yet to be determined. Contributors currently include the Washington Rangelands Committee, The Nature Conservancy, Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network, North Central Resource Conservation and Development Council, Washington Cattleman's Association, and the Cattle Producers of Washington.

Representatives from the grassbank group will also coordinate with the Washington Rangelands Committee to produce educational materials and programs to advance understanding of the compatibility of appropriate grazing and biodiversity conservation. They are also working with the Foster Creek Conservation District through the Habitat Conservation Planning Group to synthesize information on the needs and compatibility of shrub steppe species with ranching practices, to provide recommendations for avoiding conflict between them to ranchers, agencies, conservation groups and individuals, and to work with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, local schools and environmental education providers to integrate ecological monitoring into school and landowner programs (See "Student Achievement From the Ground Up" news release in Appendix).

Agriculture in Douglas County stands on the brink of potentially dramatic change. Both the positive and negative impacts of wind energy and biofuels development are starting to be felt. This coupled with the Farm Services Agency's current plans not to extend contracts on nearly 50,000 acres currently enrolled in the CRP in Douglas County, contributes to the general sense of uneasiness expressed by the cooperating producers in getting involved in any new venture such as a grassbank at this time. All attendees agreed that even though they choose to not pursue a grassbank at this time, going through the investigative process and simply meeting and discussing new ideas or revisiting old ideas from a new perspective was worthwhile.

Similarly, agriculture in the Methow Valley is highly threatened by increasing fragmentation caused by development and decreasing access to lands needed for fall and spring grazing, particularly following the loss of rangelands associated with the 2006 Tripod fire that burned more than 190,000 acres in Okanogan County. Additional acquisitions of land by WDFW coupled with the loss of some DNR lands through public-private land exchange is adding to the stress the Methow Valley ranching community is experiencing at this time. It is becoming apparent that for the agricultural community to survive it will be necessary to make a case to WDFW that ranching and livestock grazing can be compatible with the needs of key wildlife species they are mandated to protect.

Overall, this portion of the HLI project served to clarify the needs associated with balancing grazing with biodiversity conservation using the framework of a grassbank. Participants in this effort discussed a number of prerequisites and recommendations that others might consider to maximize the probability that a grassbank, or some other cooperative biodiversity/ranching endeavor, is successful.

- Any effort must have strong leadership from both the producer and conservation communities.
- Be certain that the landscape has long-term conservation value and will remain intact.
- Pre-identify where opportunities either exist or can be created to maximize permanent conservation.
- Participants have the appropriate desire and incentive to cooperate and have a vested interest in achieving mutually beneficial outcomes.
- The system or process chosen must exhibit clear accountability and flexibility.
- Participants should all participate in a shared system of monitoring for both implementation and action effectiveness.
- To be successful over the long term, project areas should be designed that create blocks of land (whether CRP, state or other lands are included) adjacent or very near existing ranches in order to reduce transportation related energy costs and carbon production.
- It is essential to continue to work with Federal and State agencies to increase management flexibility of both lands they control (such as wildlife areas) or programs they manage (such as the CRP, GR, etc.)
- The best programs will strive to build system and producer flexibility and capacity, not dependency.

Habitat Farming Incentive Program

- Learn about habitat farming tool and develop pilot program for its use in the Wenatchee and Entiat River watersheds.
- Compile and share products along with recommendations for how others might design and use these and other incentive programs.
- Develop a common vision and plan for implementing pilot habitat farming program.

Background:

The desire to integrate fish and wildlife habitat restoration and protection goals with economic strategies that will support sustainable, agricultural land use lifestyles motivated tree fruit farmer members of the Entiat Watershed Planning Unit, a local watershed organization that has been involved in collaborative natural resource management and planning for over 13 years, to approach the Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS, now Initiative for Rural Innovation and Stewardship) in 2005 and request assistance with the development of a conceptual program that would provide farmers appropriate economic return for growing and maintaining riparian habitat as an alternative to traditional crops.

IRIS supported the concept and completed a feasibility study under contract with Chelan County in August, 2005ⁱ with the understanding that Chelan County would contract with IRIS in the coming year to develop a pilot project with potentially two sites in the Wenatchee and Entiat watersheds. The intent to fold the habitat farming pilot project into the greater pilot program for the Washington Biodiversity Council prompted the HLI core team to include this effort in their proposal for North Central Washington.

Staff, Structure, Process:

Kent Mullinix, IRIS Director, served as the project manager for this part of the HLI until he assumed a new position with Kwantlen University College and moved to Vancouver, B.C. in February, 2007. Since that time a core group of IRIS and HLI partners have managed the project with Sarah Walker, Entiat River Watershed Project Coordinator-Chelan County Conservation District, taking the lead. Other key partners that have been involved in this effort include John Thoren, IRIS Chair and manager at Key Bank, Nancy Warner, IRIS Vice-Chair, Bob Bugert, IRIS Past Chair and current Chelan Douglas Land Trust Director, and Lisa Pelly, IRIS Member and Washington Rivers Conservancy Director.

A scope of work to develop a pilot project for habitat farming was developed by IRIS and submitted to Chelan County for approval and funding in January, 2006. However, while Chelan County indicated interest and support for having IRIS further develop the concept, concerns about broadening the partnerships needed to actually implement such a habitat farming plan prompted them to work with the HLI partners to prepare a proposal to the Policy Consensus Center. A pre-proposal for support needed to develop the pilot project plan was drafted and submitted by the Chelan County Conservation District in conjunction with IRIS, Chelan County, Washington Rivers Conservancy, Key Bank and the Washington Biodiversity Council's Healthy Lands Initiative in February, 2006ⁱⁱ. The results of that grant application are pending.

In an effort to move the project forward, the HLI Habitat Farming team developed a scope of work for development of a habitat-based Conceptual Riparian and Habitat Restoration Plan for a selected pilot project site in the Entiat River watershed. The Chelan County Conservation District partnered with IRIS and the HLI to fund the development of this conceptual plan using a pilot project site in the Entiat River watershed. The team then hired John Monahan with GeoEngineers to work with the owners and operators of SANRAY ORCHARDS, other valley orchardists, the Chelan County Conservation District and the Entiat Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service to develop a brief report and conceptual plan, as well as an outreach poster, for use in further development of the Habitat Farming Enterprise Program (HFEP).

Findings and Recommendations:

Talking points prepared by partners in the HLI habitat farming project outline the positive outcomes and challenges associated with launching this type of incentive program from a landowner, biologist, watershed management, and salmon recovery perspective (See Appendix). These points of agreement were used in discussions with the Washington Biodiversity Council and other audiences during the course of this project. They were also used, along with previous scopes of work developed by IRIS, to inform the contract with GeoEngineers for the attached report and poster on the Habitat Farming Enterprise Program (HFEP). Both of these products are included in the Appendix.

The report describes the site, alternative potential riparian and aquatic habitat restoration actions, expected results and benefits to terrestrial and aquatic species, and challenges to implementing a HFEP project at SANRAY ORCHARDS located within the Entiat River watershed. While discussed in the context of the SANRAY ORCHARDS site, most or all the challenges identified are likely to apply to other agricultural properties with riparian areas in the Entiat and Wenatchee River watersheds. Alternative conceptual restoration plans are provided to assist project partners in developing a shared vision of the on-farm riparian and habitat restoration component of the HFEP. As discussed in the report, the landowner and land managers have not committed to implementing any of the alternatives at this time. Rather, they support the development of alternatives and further exploration of the challenges described in the report to assist HFEP partners in developing economic analyses and incentive programs to enable the implementation of a program. Landowners and land managers also expressed interest in reviewing and considering alternative HFEP actions at the site to help them clarify potential land management, economic and regulatory issues that will need to be considered in developing the program.

Three alternatives were developed to offer a range of options for use in development of economic analyses and consideration by landowners, land managers, the CCCD, the USFS, IRIS, Chelan County and other HFEP project partners. All three options, described in the attached report, offer significant riparian and aquatic habitat protection and enhancement benefits.

Recommendations for moving forward with developing the Habitat Farming Enterprise Program include: 1) meeting with landowners, land managers and HFEP partners to discuss the expected results, benefits and challenges associated with implementing each of the alternatives, and 2) developing cost estimates and alternative incentive programs to assist land owners, land managers and other HFEP project partners with a cost-benefit evaluation of alternatives.

Goal E: Evaluate, synthesize and share results of pilot project with neighboring NCW landscapes and other regions of the state.

- Evaluate the results associated with each project goal and formulate recommendations for further action.
- Synthesize and package results in formats suitable for sharing with wide variety of audiences.
- Share project results with key NCW audiences and those in other portions of the state.

Staff, Structure, Process

The staff, structure and process associated with goals A-D has been noted in the previous sections. Jennifer Allen-Tate with Earth & Sky Studios helped the HLI team address the objectives of Goal E by designing the web site that will enable information sharing to continue long after the completion of the HLI. Recommendations presented in this report for Goals C & D reflect the input of the regional dialog participants, both grassbank groups, and the habitat farming group. Nancy Warner served as the lead for the preparation of the final report with assistance from Jay Kehne, Kathleen Deason, Chuck Warner, Craig Nelson, Sarah Walker, and others on the IRIS committee. Kathleen Deason, who worked throughout the project to coordinate with the Community Foundation of North Central Washington and the Washington Biodiversity Council to issue payments to contractors and vendors, prepared the final budget.

Findings & Recommendations:

The results of the project are presented in the Appendix and attachments in a variety of formats suitable for sharing with a wide variety of audiences.

Goal	Deliverable	Formats
A	Slide program highlighting biodiversity of NCW	DVD
B	Overview of existing incentive programs	CD
B	Slide program highlighting incentives and conservation initiatives	CD
C	White paper summarizing regional dialog results	CD
C	Action plan for advancing two priority strategies	CD
C	Web site for sharing existing and future products related to HLI	Web site
D	Action plan for addressing needs related to biodiversity conservation and livestock grazing outlined in final report	CD
D	Conceptual plan for implementing habitat farming on demonstration site in Entiat River watershed	CD

Project results have been shared with a variety of audiences within North Central Washington and beyond. In addition to many presentations, information about the Washington Biodiversity Council and the Healthy Lands Initiative has been shared through the following avenues:

- Washington Biodiversity Council fact sheet and website
- Healthy Lands Initiative talking points
- Grassbank group talking points
- Habitat farming talking points
- *The Conservation Voices*, newsletter for Foster Creek Conservation District, South Douglas Conservation District, and Natural Resource Conservation Service, article about the Healthy Lands Conference, Summer, 2006
- *Tilth Producers Quarterly* article about the Healthy Lands Initiative, Summer 2006
- *Tilth Producers Quarterly* article about habitat farming, Fall, 2006

Copies of the Healthy Lands Initiative talking points and articles highlighting the HLI are attached in the Appendix.

Healthy Lands Initiative Budget

Budget by Goal:				
	Biodiversity Council Funds	Initial In-Kind Match	Initial Icicle Fund Cash Match	Additional Cash Match Contributed During Grant Period*
Goal A:	\$2,000.00	\$8,500.00		
Goal B:	\$3,000.00	\$1,250.00		
Goal C:	\$6,059.00	\$5,544.00	\$4,127.00	\$700.00
Goal D:	\$6,591.00	\$8,200.00		\$12,000.00
Goal E:	\$2,350.00	\$1,000.00		
Total	\$20,000.00	\$24,494.00	\$4,127.00	\$12,700.00

* \$10,000 was donated from Chelan County Conservation District originating from the Washington State Department of Ecology; \$2,000 was contributed from the Washington Rivers Conservancy; and \$700 from the Foster Creek Conservation District out of Washington State Department of Ecology watershed implementation funds.

ⁱ Chelan County Habitat Farming Enterprise Program Feasibility Study, Institute for Rural Innovation & Stewardship; Kent Mullinix, Nancy Warner, Jon Yoder, and Tom Schotzko, August, 2005.

ⁱⁱ Habitat Farming Enterprise Program: Pilot Development and Implementation in Chelan County Pre-proposal submitted to WSU-UW Policy Consensus Center

Healthy Lands Initiative

APPENDIX

List of Attachments/Format:

- *The Nature of North Central Washington*, interview questions (CD)
- *The Nature of North Central Washington*, final program (DVD)
- *Conservation & Agriculture: Moving Beyond the Traditional into the Sustainable*, final Power Point program (CD)
- Conservation Incentive Program Summary Handout (CD)
- Healthy Lands Initiative, Interim Action Plan 2007-2008 (CD)
- 2007 North Central Washington Economic Summit Agenda (CD)
- *Discovering Gaps and Opportunities for Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Agriculture in North Central Washington*, Healthy Lands Initiative White Paper (CD)
- North Central Washington Resource Conservation & Development Council and IRIS Committee website design (www.ncwrcd.org)
- Healthy Lands Initiative Forum Agenda, March 7, 2007 (CD)
- Grassbank Assessment Worksheet (CD)
- Select Readings on Grassbanking (CD)
- Grassbank talking points (CD)
- *Student Achievement From the Ground-Up* news release (CD)
- Habitat Farming Enterprise Program, Conceptual Riparian and Aquatic Restoration Plan (CD)
- Habitat farming talking points (CD)
- Healthy Lands Initiative talking points (CD)
- Copies of articles about the Healthy Lands Initiative (hard copies)

The Nature of North Central Washington Interview Questions

What patterns distinguish the region from others in WA and the NW? What patterns are similar to other part of the state and NW?

What community types or species characterize the area to you? How do they differ from communities found in other regions around NCW?

What animals or plant species might be used to stimulate curiosity, wonder and interest in the region?

What do you see as the top three threats to biodiversity in the region?

What is happening in the area today that gives you hope for biodiversity conservation in the future?

What is your vision of a healthy NCW landscape?

Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS)


Healthy Lands Initiative

Table 1. NCW Agriculture Incentive Program Summary

Incentive Program Name, Managing Entity & Brief Description	Participation & Eligibility	Program Administration & Funding	Technical Assistance & Contact Information
Financial Assistance			
Federal			
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Provides direct funding and technical assistance to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, establish wildlife habitat, restore floodplains, and enhance forest and wetland resources.	Agricultural producers with cropland or marginal pastureland. Selection based on a benefits index.	Farmers establish vegetative cover on environmentally sensitive acreage and receive annual rental payment for term of 10-15 year contract. Cost sharing of up to 50% is provided to establish approved conservation practices. Administered by Farm Services Agency and funded by Commodity Credit Corporation.	Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Central Area Office 2145 Basin St. SW, Suite D Ephrata, WA 98823-9451 Phone: (509) 754-3023
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Provides benefits similar to CRP; tailored to meet significant environmental needs of each state.	Landowners must meet eligibility criteria for CRP plus additional criteria defined by state program.	State and federal partnerships provide landowners with incentive payments, cost-share assistance, and rental payments for installing specific long-term conservation practices on eligible land. Landowners enter into 10-15-year contracts and remove certain lands from production. Administered by Farm Services Agency.	NRCS
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). USDA. To promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals.	Landowners with livestock or agricultural production on eligible land. Local work groups set priorities for ranking proposals and distributing funds based on national priorities.	Program offers financial and technical help installing or implementing structural and management practices on eligible agricultural lands. Up to 10-year contracts, cost-share up to 75% and incentive payments for up to three years to encourage producers to try new conservation practices.	NRCS in conjunction with local conservation districts.
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). USDA. Assistance in establishing and improving aquatic or upland wildlife habitat.	Landowners not eligible under other USDA programs. Projects with declining wildlife species are prioritized.	NRCS works with landowner to develop wildlife habitat plan. 5-10 year contracts, up to 75% cost share for wildlife habitat plans.	NRCS
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). USDA. Offers opportunities to establish long-term conservation and wildlife practices and protection for wetlands.	Private lands with past agricultural use with restorable wetlands. Wetlands converted since 1985 are not eligible.	Landowners voluntarily retire marginal lands and limit land's use through sale of permanent or 30-year easements. Up to 75% cost share also available for restoration. Lands can be used for hunting, fishing and other uses compatible with wetland function. Easement compensation and cost share level depend on length of easement.	NRCS
Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG). Provides an opportunity to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies.	EQIP-eligible producers. Projects need to be at a watershed or larger scale.	This program is authorized and funded within the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. The funds are awarded through a nationwide competitive grant process. There is a required non-federal match of at least 50%, including half of this from in-kind.	NRCS

Incentive Program Name, Managing Entity & Brief Description	Participation & Eligibility	Program Administration & Funding	Technical Assistance & Contact Information
Conservation Security Program (CSP). USDA. Rewards landowners for the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on working private and tribal lands.	Individual producers in designated priority watersheds. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pasture, and range land, as well as forested land that is an incidental part of an agriculture operation.	Eligibility and priority for individual producers is based on a high level of current and planned conservation activities. For the first year of the program (2004), only 18 priority watersheds have been chosen to participate in the United States. For 2005, 202 watersheds participated.	NRCS
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program. Program provides matching funds to help purchase development rights in order to keep productive farm and rangeland in agricultural uses.	Private lands large enough to sustain agricultural production with conservation plan for highly erodible land.	USDA partners with state, tribal, or local governments and other organizations to acquire conservation easements from landowners. Up to 50% fair market value paid for easements.	NRCS
Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). Helps landowners protect, restore and enhance grassland, rangeland, pastureland, and shrubland on their property.	Operators with long-term control of the property.	Agreements between landowner and NRCS or a third party limit use of lands through 30 year or permanent conservation easements or rental agreements. Grazing, mowing and fire management are allowed. Commodity Credit Corporation, state or land trust can hold the easement.	NRCS
North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), USFWS.	Organizations and individuals.	Matching grants to those who have developed partnerships to carry out wetland conservation projects for the benefit of wetlands-associated migratory birds and other wildlifer. Non-federal match required at 1-to-1 ratio. Standard and small grants program.	USFWS Division of Bird Habitat Conservation, (703) 358-1784, dbhc@fws.gov
Landowner Incentive Program (LIP). USFWS. To establish or supplement existing landowner incentive programs that provide technical or financial assistance including habitat protection and restoration, to private landowners for the protection and management of habitat to benefit Federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands; and to encourage States to enhance private landowner conservation by providing these benefits to private landowners in an efficient manner.	Individual or groups of private landowners.	Competitive grant program that establishes partnerships between landowner, state and federal government. Provides up to 75% cost share with 25% match from landowner as in-kind or non-federal contributions.	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) develops a portfolio of projects to submit to US Fish and Wildlife Service for LIP funding. Ginna Correa, WDFW Wildlife Program, 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501, (360) 902-2478; or Jeff Skriletz, WDFW Fish Program, 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501, (360) 902-8313.
Private Stewardship Program (PSP). USFWS. Supports conservation efforts to benefit federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands.	Private landowners and their partners.	A proposal needs to describe the conservation efforts to be undertaken, provide a plan for how and by whom the work will be implemented, describe the land where the work will be done, and explain the benefits for the targeted at-risk species. A 10% non-federal match (cash or in-kind) is required.	US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). : privatestewardship@fws.gov, 503-231-6241

Incentive Program Name, Managing Entity & Brief Description	Participation & Eligibility	Program Administration & Funding	Technical Assistance & Contact Information
Forest Legacy Program (FLP). USFS. Provides an opportunity to support state efforts to protect environmentally sensitive private forest lands from being converted to nonforest uses, by developing and carrying out state forest conservation plans.	Private forest landowners.	This voluntary program supports acquisition of conservation easements. To qualify, landowners are required to prepare a multiple resource management plan. Most conservation easements restrict development, require sustainable forestry practices, and protect other values. The federal government may fund up to 75% of program costs, with at least 25% coming from private, state, or local sources. In addition to gains associated with the sale or donation of property rights, many landowners also benefit from reduced federal or state taxes.	US Forest Service (USFS) and state forestry agencies. USDA Forest Service 1400 Independence Ave. SW Washington, D.C. 20078-5500 (202) 205-8333
Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW), USFW. Supports conservation efforts that benefit species listed or proposed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act, candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands.	Individuals or groups.	Cost-share for restoration projects provided with landowners providing 1:1 non-federal match. Landowners agree to retain restoration project for at least 10 years.	USFWS 11103 East Montgomery #2 Spokane, WA 99206 509-893-8005 FAX: 509-891-6748
Washington State			
Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board Grant Program. Funds salmon recovery and habitat restoration projects.	Public & private entities are eligible.	Applicants must provide at least 15% matching funds or in-kind contributions. Funding shortages are a primary obstacle.	Through a sponsoring agency. Unclear whether sufficient technical assistance is provided for cost estimation.
Habitat Incentives Program. WDFW offers state regulatory certainty in exchange for habitat restoration project.		No landowners have participated in this project yet.	Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW).. Ginna Correa, WDFW Wildlife Program, 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501, (360) 902-2478; or Jeff Skriletz, WDFW Fish Program, 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501, (360) 902-8313
Upland Wildlife Restoration Program, WDFW. This program is available on private agricultural and forested lands and benefits all forms of upland wildlife, game, nongame, birds, and mammals.	Private agricultural and forest landowners.	The Department of Fish and Wildlife offers in kind assistance in the form of staff labor, equipment, and plant materials for habitat improvements under the program. In addition, landowners receive technical assistance, recognition, signage of properties and a liability exemption for allowing public access. Over the past decade, the Program has worked with 1,296 private landowners to enhance hundreds of thousands of acres of wildlife habitat, install 1,100 wildlife watering devices and post 25,000 signs on over three million acres with hunting access and habitat agreements.	WDFW

Incentive Program Name, Managing Entity & Brief Description	Participation & Eligibility	Program Administration & Funding	Technical Assistance & Contact Information
Community Salmon Fund, NFWF. It provides funds for habitat restoration on private property along salmon-bearing streams and shorelines. Although the program's focus is salmon, it has benefits for multiple species in riparian corridors, freshwater aquatic habitat, and near shore areas.	Landowners themselves are not eligible applicants, but can apply in partnership with nonprofits or local governments.	The Community Salmon Fund is administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and several county and state agency partners. Funding for the program is expected to be approximately \$2-3M/year.	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). 806 SW Broadway, Suite 750 Portland, OR 97205 Phone: 503-417-8700 Fax: 503-417-8787
Farmland Preservation Grant Program. Provides grants to preserve economically viable farmlands in Washington State and enhance ecological functions on those lands. Office of the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (OIAC)	Cities & Counties.	Counties and cities may use the grants to acquire farmland development rights by purchasing agricultural conservation easements. Counties or cities also may buy farmland outright "fee simple," place an agricultural easement on the property dedicating the land to agricultural use, and then resell the property to someone who will maintain the property as a working farm.	Office of the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (OIAC). 1111 Washington St. P.O. Box 40917 Olympia, Washington 98504-0917 Telephone: (360) 902-3000
Forest Riparian Easement Program (FREP), DNR. 50-year easements on qualifying timber.	Forest landowners.	Landowner receives 50% (or more in some cases) of stumpage value plus administration costs.	Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Forest Practices Division. 
Riparian Open Space Program, DNR. Willing landowners of timbered lands within unconfined avulsing channel migration zones (islands of timber within rivers or streams) can apply to donate or sell the land itself or a permanent conservation easement covering the trees or land and trees to the DNR.	Forest landowners.	The purpose of these acquisitions is for ecological protection and fisheries enhancement and to provide compensation for qualifying lands.	DNR, Forest Practices Division
Local			
Chelan County			

Incentive Program Name, Managing Entity & Brief Description	Participation & Eligibility	Program Administration & Funding	Technical Assistance & Contact Information
Chelan County Water Metering, Chelan CD. Provides cost-share for the installation and calibration of meters for surface and groundwater diversions, as well as data telemetry or system automation.	Participants must possess a valid water right permit, certificate or claim for the point of diversion or withdrawal. Funding is for source meters only and does not apply to anyone on a distribution system.	Priority is large (>1 cfs) diversions and/or those in designated fish-critical WRIAs. Cost share ranges from 100% for small projects to 50% for larger projects with a project maximum of \$24,875 in cost-share.	Chelan County Conservation District. 301 Yakima Street, Room 307 Wenatchee, WA 98801 phone 509.664.0275
Conservation Commission 2006 Water Quality Implementation Grant, Chelan CD. Provides cost share funds for the implementation of BMPs that will support and enhance surface or groundwater quality.	Cooperators on Chelan County.	Participants have been orchardists upgrading to more efficient irrigation systems, but all cooperators are eligible as long as there is a water quality benefit. BMPs must meet NRCS standards. The program provides 50% of actual costs for upland BMPs and 75% for riparian BMPs. The individual project cap is \$6,000, as well as per-practice per-unit hold downs. Total program funding is limited to \$30,000.	Chelan County Conservation District. 301 Yakima Street, Room 307 Wenatchee, WA 98801 phone 509.664.0275
Douglas County			
Water Quality Improvement Cost Share Program, South Douglas CD. Provides an opportunity for landowners to conduct water quality improvement projects.	Producers in the boundaries of the South Douglas Conservation District.	Cost share will be available for 50% of the project expense. Project designs must follow the NRCS best management practice guidelines. Successful bids will be awarded based on conservation benefit per cost share dollar spent.	South Douglas Conservation District. P.O. Box 428 Waterville, WA 98858 (509) 745-8362
No-till Drill Rentals, South Douglas CD. Encourages minimum tillage by providing opportunity to test a piece of equipment without the expense of buying one.	Producers in Douglas County.	The equipment rentals include no-till drills and ripper (subsoiler).	South Douglas Conservation District P.O. Box 428 Waterville, WA 98858 (509) 745-8362
Noxious Weed Herbicide Application Cost Share Program, Foster Creek CD.	Producers in Douglas County.	50% cost share available to control rush skeleton weed, houndstoungue, leafy spurge.	Foster Creek Conservation District P.O. Box 428 Waterville, WA 98858 (509) 745-8362
Habitat Conservation Plan, Foster Creek CD.	Producers in Douglas County.	Program is being developed to encourage producers to develop farm plans and implement BMPs in exchange for regulatory certainty, freedom for incidental take, and market based incentives.	Foster Creek Conservation District P.O. Box 428 Waterville, WA 98858 (509) 745-8362
Okanogan County			

Incentive Program Name, Managing Entity & Brief Description	Participation & Eligibility	Program Administration & Funding	Technical Assistance & Contact Information
Irrigation Efficiencies Program. Provides cost share to upgrade inefficient irrigation systems on salmon bearing streams.	Individual producers in the Okanogan and Methow Watersheds.	This program pays irrigators up to 85% cost-share for upgrading older inefficient irrigation systems along salmon bearing streams. Producers must put some of the saved water into trust. Eligible Best Management Practices (BMPs): Irrigation canal, Irrigation Erosion Control, Irrigation Regulating Reservoir, Irrigation System, Irrigation Water Conveyance, Irrigation Water Management, Pumping Plant for Water Control, Tailwater Recovery, Structure for Water Control, Water Well, Water Flow Measuring Devices.	Okanogan County Conservation District. 1251 2nd Ave. South, Room 101 Okanogan, WA 98840 Phone: 509-422-0855 ext. 5 E-mail: ocd@okanogancd.org
Large Livestock Grant, Okanogan CD. Program provides off site water facilities and other improvements to improve water quality and relieve producers of possible enforcement action.	Livestock producers in Okanogan County.	Practices included in this program include drilling wells, pipelines, troughs, fencing, and corral and facility relocation. This program would assist a producer with up to \$25,000.00 per facility and up to \$50,000.00 per producer to correct problems.	Okanogan County Conservation District. 1251 2nd Ave. South, Room 101 Okanogan, WA 98840 Phone: 509-422-0855 ext. 5 E-mail: ocd@okanogancd.org
Small Livestock Water Quality Grant from Commission Implementation Grant, Okanogan CD. This grant provides funds for technical assistance and a competitive cost-share program to reduce impacts to water quality from livestock operations.	Livestock producers in Okanogan County.	Applicants can implement best management practices (BMPs) by installing Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation practices to address the livestock and water quality issues identified in conservation plans developed with technical assistance provided by the Okanogan Conservation District. 2006 has \$30,000 available. This program is a small grant from the Washington Conservation Committee called the Implementation grant which will pay up to 5,000.00 per producer to correct water quality problems.	Okanogan County Conservation District. 1251 2nd Ave. South, Room 101 Okanogan, WA 98840 Phone: 509-422-0855 ext. 5 E-mail: ocd@okanogancd.org
Class A Noxious Weed Control, Okanogan Noxious Weed Control Board.	Landowners in Okanogan County.	Currently offers control of all Class A noxious weeds including new invader including Yellowstar thistle, yellow toadflax, and orange hawkweed eradication for landowners at no charge.	Okanogan Noxious Weed Control Board. 1st Floor County Courthouse, Room 102 149 3rd Street P.O. Box 791 Okanogan, WA 98840 Phone # (509) 422-7165 E-Mail: nw-insp@co.okanogan.wa.us
Low Cost Herbicide Program, Okanogan Noxious Weed Control Board.	Landowners in Okanogan County.	Facilitated bidding process from chemical company to retailer company to provide low cost herbicide to landowners for a specific period of time.	Okanogan Noxious Weed Control Board.
Scotch Thistle Hand Pull Crews, Okanogan Noxious Weed Control Board.	Landowners in Okanogan County.	Crews handpull noxious weeds on tribal lands and along the Canadian boarder.	Okanogan Noxious Weed Control Board.
Technical Assistance			
NRCS			

Incentive Program Name, Managing Entity & Brief Description	Participation & Eligibility	Program Administration & Funding	Technical Assistance & Contact Information
Conservation Districts			
WSU Extension			
Tax Relief			
The Open Space Taxation Act. Washington State Department of Revenue.	Agriculture and timber producers can qualify under open space agricultural or timber land designations.	Allows property owners to have their open space, farm and agricultural, and timber lands valued at their current use rather than at their highest and best use.	Chelan, Okanogan, Douglas County Planning Departments. <u>Chelan County Planning</u> 316 Washington Street, Suite 301 Wenatchee, WA 98801 (509) 667-6225 <u>Okanogan County Planning</u> 123 - 5th Ave. N. Suite 130 - Okanogan, WA 98840 (509) 422-7160 • FAX: (509) 422-7349 • TTY/Voice Use 800-833-6388 email: planning@co.okanogan.wa.us <u>Douglas County TLS</u> 140 19th Street NW, Suite A East Wenatchee, WA 98802 Phone: (509) 884-7173
Market Based Incentives			
USDA approved Mobile Meat-Processing Unit. Trailer that carries a state-of-the art facility for slaughtering livestock on the farm to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) standards.	Producers in Okanogan County.	The unit is intended to open new markets for farmers and create more options for consumers interested in buying locally raised beef, pork, lamb, and even goat, buffalo and ostrich by the cut.	WSU Extension in Okanogan County PO Box 391 Okanogan, WA 98840 Phone: 509-422-7245
Communities of Stewardship Farms (CSFs). In this project additional farmer's markets will be set up along the I-5 corridor and regional transportation will be established in several areas of the state (Okanogan is one of them) to bring the produce over. It is designed so that farmers would only need to travel a handful of times over the mountains on a rotating basis to work the market stand.	Producers in NCW.	Farming and the Environment is embarking on creating a new food delivery system that will honor and financially reward farm families that are providing positive stewardship of the land, water, air, and native habitat in their farm environments. In this model system, F&E will help to create Communities of Stewardship Farms (CSFs) within a region and then connect these communities of farmers directly to urban markets including locally-based retail grocery chains, newly created stewardship farmers markets, and culinary professionals that desire local, sustainably grown products.	Farming and the Environment 1411 Fourth Avenue, Suite 325, Seattle, WA, 98101 Phone: 206-622-1340

Incentive Program Name, Managing Entity & Brief Description	Participation & Eligibility	Program Administration & Funding	Technical Assistance & Contact Information
Organic Certification. The program provides technical information about organic food production and assists in the development of markets for the organic food industry through a nationwide certification system.	Agriculture producers.	Producers and handlers must be certified by a WSDA certifying agent to sell, label, or represent their products as organic. Any qualified agricultural production or handling operation may be certified as an organic production and handling operation.	Washington State Department of Agriculture. 1111 Washington Street SE PO Box 42560 Olympia, WA 98504-2560 (360) 902-1800
Food Alliance Certification.	Agriculture producers.	The organization promotes sustainable agriculture by recognizing and rewarding farmers who produce food in environmentally friendly and socially responsible ways, and educating consumers and others in the food system about the benefits of sustainable agriculture.	Food Alliance. 1829 NE Alberta, Suite 5 Portland, OR 97211 Ph 503.493.1066 Fax 503.493.1069 info@foodalliance.org
Vinewise Program	Grape growers in Washington.	The Vinewise Guide is a series of three self-assessment evaluation forms for grape growers, covering specific sustainable viticulture and business topics. The topics cover the spectrum of sustainability – vineyard practices, the community, the environment and business management. The series of three forms is designed to allow growers to rate themselves on a scale to evaluate what they are doing now –vs– what they should be doing to be as sustainable as possible within the confines of their vineyard and business plan, then formulate a plan of action to make the recommended changes.	Washington Association of Grape Growers PO Box 716, Cashmere, WA 98815 (509)782-8234, 1-877-88WAWGG, fax (509)782-1203 info@wawgg.org
SmartWood Certification.	SmartWood works in all forest types, tropical, temperate and boreal. They certify all types of forest operations, including natural forests, plantations, large commercial operations and small-scale family or community forests.	SmartWood works in all forest types, tropical, temperate and boreal. They certify all types of forest operations, including natural forests, plantations, large commercial operations and small-scale family or community forests.	Rainforest Alliance 65 Millet Street, Suite 201 Richmond, Vermont 05477 USA Tel: 802-434-5491, Fax: 802-434-3116
Sustainable Forestry Initiative.	Forest landowners.	SFI program participants support sustainable forestry practices on the lands they manage and actively promote such practices on other forestlands. In exchange, they receive the “SFI@ Participant” label.	American Forest & Paper Association 1111 19th Street, NW, Suite 800 Washington, D.C. 20036 Phone: 202.463.2590
Forestry Stewardship Council Certification.	Forest landowners.	FSC’s model of certification allows products that flow from certified forests to enter the marketplace. Any FSC labeled product can be traced back to a certified source. The program serves as the link between consumer preference and responsible, on the ground forest management.	Forestry Stewardship Council www.fscus.org 1155 30th St NW # 300 Washington, DC 20007 (202) 342-0413

Incentive Program Name, Managing Entity & Brief Description	Participation & Eligibility	Program Administration & Funding	Technical Assistance & Contact Information
American Farmlands Trust Legacy Program. Offer options to assure a farm or ranch will be permanently protected from development and kept available for agriculture.	Retiring Farmers.	Options may include bargain sale, outright donation, retained life estate, charitable remainder trust, charitable gift annuity.	American Farmland Trust. Pacific Northwest 3211 Beacon Ave. South, #26 Seattle, WA 98144 (206) 860-4222
Recognition			
Vim Wright Award, Farming and the Environment.	Must be a farmer or rancher in Washington State.	Must meet the following criteria: Follow growing practices that meet F&E's Stewardship Principles. Be actively engaged in educating the community about stewardship. Use marketing strategies that use stewardship practices to add value to the products you sell. Use best available science to develop your operations.	Farming and the Environment, 1411 Fourth Avenue, Suite 325, Seattle, WA, 98101 Phone: 206-622-1340
Wildlife Farmer and Wildlife Steward of the Year, Washington State Association of Conservation Districts.	Producers who have cooperated with local conservation districts.	Wildlife Farmer of the Year is any conservation district cooperator who enhances wildlife habitat on their commercial farm and/or forest of 50 acres or greater in size. Wildlife Steward of the Year is any conservation district cooperator who enhances wildlife habitat on their commercial or non-commercial farm and/or forest smaller than 50 acres in size.	Craig Nelson, WACD Awards Committee Chair, Okanogan County Conservation District. 1251 2nd Ave. South, Room 101 Okanogan, WA 98840 Phone: 509-422-0855 ext. 5 E-mail: ocd@okanogancd.org
Founders of a New Northwest, Sustainable Northwest.	Individuals, businesses and communities are all eligible for this program.	Founders are the "frontline" of sustainability - creating, developing and refining the concepts, tools and techniques that will make sustainability a reality. They may include, but are not limited to: individuals or organizations working to restore ecosystems supporting resource-based economies; businesses, government agencies or communities incorporating sustainability into their planning and management; natural resource stewardship-based or recycling-based businesses; sustainability education and training programs; and multi-stakeholder collaborative efforts to resolve natural resource conflicts.	Sustainable Northwest 620 SW Main, Suite 112 Portland, OR 97205 Phone: 503-221-6911 Fax: 503-221-4495 www.sustainablenorthwest.org
Producer Group Awards			

Table 2. Conservation Incentive Programs Addressing Natural Resource Concerns

Habitat Type*	Incentive Program	Natural Resource Concern						
		Warming Trends	Invasive Species	Altered Fire Regimes	Habitat Fragmentation	Increased Water Need	Diminished Water Quality	General Stewardship
Coniferous Forests	Forests Legacy Program (FLP), USFWS	Secondary		Secondary	Primary	Secondary		
	Upland Wildlife Restoration Program, WDFW				Primary			
	Forest Riparian Easement Program, DNR	Secondary		Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Secondary	
	Riparian Open Space Program, DNR				Primary	Secondary	Secondary	
	Forestry Stewardship Council Certification							Primary
	Smart Wood Certification							Primary
	Sustainable Forestry Initiative							Primary
Shrub-Steppe	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), NRCS	Secondary		Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Secondary	
	Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), NRCS	Secondary		Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Secondary	
	Upland Wildlife Restoration Program, WDFW				Primary			
	Habitat Conservation Plan, Foster Creek CD				Primary			
	Water Quality Improvement Program, South Douglas CD						Primary	
	No-till Drill Rentals, Douglas	Secondary				Primary	Secondary	
	Herbicide Cost Share , Foster Creek CD.		Primary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	
	Okanogan County Noxious Weed Board Programs		Primary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	
Rivers, Streams and	Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), NRCS				Primary	Secondary	Secondary	
	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	Secondary			Primary	Secondary	Secondary	

		Natural Resource Concern						
		Warming Trends	Invasive Species	Altered Fire Regimes	Habitat Fragmentation	Increased Water Need	Diminished Water Quality	General Stewardship
Habitat Type*	Incentive Program							
Wetlands	North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants Program (NAWCA), USFWS				Primary	Secondary	Secondary	
	Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)				Primary	Secondary	Secondary	
	Community Salmon Fund, NFWF				Primary	Secondary	Secondary	
	Family Forest Fish Passage Program, DNR				Primary			
	Riparian Open Space Program, DNR				Primary			
Applies in Various Habitat Types	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), NRCS				Primary			
	Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)				Secondary	Primary	Primary	
	Landowner Incentive Program (LIP), USFWS/WDFW				Primary			
	Private Stewardship Program (PSP), USFWS				Primary			
	Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW), USFW				Primary			
	Chelan County Water Metering.					Primary		
	Water Quality Implementation Grant, Chelan CD						Primary	
	Irrigation Efficiencies Program, Okanogan CD				Secondary	Primary		
	Large Livestock Grant, Okanogan CD						Primary	
	Small Livestock Water Quality Grant, Okanogan CD						Primary	
	Open Space Taxation Act			Secondary	Primary			
	Wildlife Farmer and Steward of the Year				Primary			
	Organic Certification						Primary	
	General Conservation Incentive Programs:							
	Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)							Primary
	Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program							Primary
	Conservation Security Program (CSP)							Primary
	WSU Mobile Meat-Processing Unit							Primary
	Communities of Stewardship Farm (CSF)							Primary
	Food Alliance Certification							Primary
American Farmlands Trust Legacy Program.							Primary	
Vim Wright Award, Farming and the Environment							Primary	
Founders of a new NW, Sustainable NW							Primary	
Producer Group Awards							Primary	

* Another habitat type in NCW is alpine to subalpine. These are generally not agriculture or timber lands for incentive programs to apply.

For more information please contact:
 Kathleen Deason
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Healthy Lands Initiative Interim Action Plan Calendar Year 2007-2008

Healthy Lands Initiative Introduction

- The Initiative for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS) launched the *Healthy Lands Initiative* to bring together conservation, agriculture and economic development interests to craft new and innovative approaches for combining biodiversity conservation with the maintenance of productive and profitable agricultural enterprises in North Central Washington.
- The initiative was funded as an 18-month pilot project funded by the Washington Biodiversity Council until May 2007.

Healthy Lands Initiative Vision and Purpose

- The purpose of the *Healthy Lands Initiative* was to help citizens design a shared vision for how biodiversity conservation can be integrated with economic and social needs to enhance the health and vitality of North Central Washington.
- The initiative was specifically designed to bring together the land conservation, agricultural and economic development communities to:
 - 1.) Build a collective understanding of biodiversity resources in the region.
 - 2.) Create a collective understanding of regional tools and resources for enhancing conservation.
 - 3.) Discover new ways to combine biodiversity conservation with the maintenance of productive and profitable agricultural enterprises.
 - 4.) Develop plans for implementing incentive programs, such as habitat farming and grassbanking, that benefit riparian and shrub steppe systems in the Wenatchee River watershed, Moses Coulee, and the Methow Valley.

Healthy Lands Initiative Dialog Sessions

As part of the initiative, a series of dialog sessions were hosted to gather ideas for enhancing biodiversity conservation and agriculture, specifically in shrub steppe and riparian habitats. A Steering Committee was convened to review the ideas from the dialog sessions and to select at least two priority strategies for action planning and implementation in North Central Washington. These priorities are to:

- 1.) Form a Healthy Lands Coalition including agriculture, economic development, land conservation and planning organizations to develop a shared voice on regional biodiversity and agricultural priorities and actions needed to advance a sustainable North Central Washington agricultural-based economy that integrates and values habitat and open space conservation.
- 2.) Develop a comprehensive educational and outreach program that showcases and builds upon local conservation successes to spur innovative practices and cooperative approaches that enable farms and ranches in North Central Washington to thrive.

Primary Goals for Interim Action Plan

- At the March 7 Healthy Lands Initiative Forum participants developed action plans for the two strategies selected by the Steering Committee in small group sessions. These small group action plans were combined into the following interim action plans to move us forward on the establishment of a Regional Healthy Lands Coalition and Regional Education and Outreach Approach.
- The primary goals for the interim action plan are for the Healthy Lands Coalition to have its organization structure and strategic plan in place and for a combined educational and outreach program to be actively providing and facilitating the integration of programs by January 2008.

Project Partners:

- The Initiative for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS) serves as the overall project lead. Partners include The Nature Conservancy, North Central Washington Resources Conservation & Development Council (NCW RC & D), the Okanogan Conservation District, Foster Creek Conservation District, Chelan Conservation District, the Community Foundation of North Central Washington, Washington Biodiversity Council, and private landowners and citizens throughout the region.

Healthy Lands Initiative Coalition Interim Action Plan - Calendar Year 2007-2008

GOAL #1: BY JANUARY 2008, THE HEALTHY LANDS COALITION (HLC) WILL HAVE ITS ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND STRATEGIC PLAN IN PLACE.

Objectives	Key Activities	Time Frame	Leader(s)	Resources Required
1a.) Identify HLC Host Organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define characteristics of desired hosting model. Explore potential hosts (RC& D, IRIS, Conservation Districts, or EQIP Local Working Group) Select host. Build capacity of host organization for administration of HLC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RC&D IRIS EDD Technical expertise Community 	
1b.) Select and convene steering committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential steering committee members. 			
1c.) Engage the community in an HLC strategic planning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop mission and goals, strategic plan, and operating/ guiding principles to build a regional vision, coordinate efforts and prioritize projects. 			

GOAL #2: BY JANUARY 2008, THE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM WILL BE PROVIDING OR FACILITATING THE INTEGRATION OF PROGRAMS.

Objectives	Key Activities	Time Frame	Leader(s)	Resources Required
2a.) Share information by creating an on-line directory of resources and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide mission and summary of activities for each participating NCW organization Provide regional calendar of events. Provide list serve. Create a blog that includes artwork and posters . Create funding directory organized by source, eligible projects and time frames. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sept 2007 Feb 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RC&D IRIS Grange 	
2b.) Integrate and combine education and public outreach efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host combined field tours and conferences for landowners, NGO's and agencies. Provides tools to attendees to use at home, for example a list of incentives. Provide presentations during commodity group meetings (Horticulturists, Cattlemen, Hay growers etc). Host farm appreciation days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing July 2008 		

NORTH CENTRAL WASHINGTON
REGIONAL ECONOMIC SUMMIT

6/21/2007

September 20th, 2007

Campbell's Resort

AGENDA

"Evolution of a Region, Changes & Opportunities for North Central WA"

Hosted By: NCW Resource Conservation & Development Council
&
NCW Economic Development District
through a grant with
USDA, Rural Development

Wednesday Sept 19th, 2007

TIME ESTIMATE	TOPIC	Speakers
6:00-9:30pm	Pre summit get together at Tsillan Cellars Winery No Host Wine tasting and Hour-Devours (\$20.00 cost)	

Thursday Sept 20th, 2007

9:00-9:10	Welcome, Purpose, Goals	Wendell Black NCW RC&D Chair Dale Sparber NCW EDD Chair
9:10-9:15	Table Introductions	
9:15-10:00	Regional Perspectives	
Confirmed	Economic Overview "Entrepreneurship and Regional Development"	Mina Yoo Assistant Professor U.of W. Business School & Author of NCW Economic Analysis
	Environmental Overview	Gordon Orians Trustee, The Nature Conservancy, Professor Emeritus of Biology U.of W.
Confirmed	Community Overview	Mary Watson Wenatchee Valley College
10:00-10:30	"Regional Planning Okanagan Style"	David Arsenault RDOS, Osoyoos, B.C.
10:30-10:45	Coffee Break	or Nelson Jatel Okanagan Partnership

10:45-11:30	Confirmed	“Cooperative Regional Planning Perspectives from Lake Tahoe, Las Vegas, Needs, Benefits, Lessons Learned”	Juan Palma , former USFS Supervisor and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Executive Director, present BLM Director, serving on the Las Vegas Regional Planning Coalition
11:30-12:00		Round Table Discussions Question: "How could a Regional Planning effort be organized in NCW to help promote development, preserve agricultural productive lands & conserve open space in order to build a lasting economy?"	
12:00-1:15		Lunch (Taco Bar on the Veranda)	Hosted by the Community Visioning Group
1:15-1:35	Confirmed	"So you want to live in the Country"	T. Lewis Co-Creator "Over the Hedge"
1:35-2:25	Confirmed	"The Role of Protected Areas in Economic Development "	Spencer Phillips Senior Resource Economist The Wilderness Society
2:25-2:45	Confirmed	Key Business leader Perspective	Bob Jankelson Tsillan Cellars Winery
2:45-3:15		Round Table Discussion Question: "How can we create a Stronger Economy for businesses and local entrepreneurs based on the natural resources we have in the region."	
3:15-3:25		Break	
3:25-3:40		"The Big Picture"	Senator Linda Evans Parlette
3:40-4:10		" What do you want to see happen next" Facilitated by:	Audience Jennifer Korfiatis NCW EDD Jay Kehne NCW RC&D
4:10-4:25	Confirmed	“In a Nutshell”	T. Lewis Co-Creator, "Over the Hedge"

Discovering Gaps and Opportunities for Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Agriculture in North Central Washington

Healthy Lands Initiative White Paper

Prepared by Jay Kehne, Kathleen Deason, Nancy Warner and Kent Mullinix

The Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS) launched the *Healthy Lands Initiative* to bring together conservation, agriculture and economic development interests to craft new and innovative approaches for combining biodiversity conservation with the maintenance of productive and profitable agricultural enterprises in North Central Washington. This 18-month pilot project funded by the Washington Biodiversity Council and the Icicle Fund with contributions from partners including the North Central Washington Resource Conservation & Development Council, The Nature Conservancy, Foster Creek Conservation District, Okanogan Conservation District, and Chelan Conservation District extended from January 2006 – May 2007.

One goal of the larger project was to discover new ways to combine biodiversity conservation with the maintenance of productive and profitable agricultural enterprises, particularly in shrub steppe and freshwater-riparian habitat types. The Nature Conservancy and Okanogan Conservation District worked with groups of landowners and managers in the Methow Valley and Moses Coulee areas to explore the feasibility of using a grassbank to advance biodiversity conservation and the economics of ranching while the Chelan Conservation District worked with IRIS and tree fruit growers in the Entiat River watershed to develop a conceptual plan for using habitat farming to advance conservation and agricultural goals in the Entiat River watershed. The results of these efforts are summarized in the Healthy Lands Initiative 2007 Final Report submitted to the Washington Biodiversity Council. The results of a wider dialog process used to promote problem solving around key issues affecting agriculture in shrub steppe and riparian habitats is summarized here.

Staff, Structure, and Process:

Jay Kehne, NCW Resource Conservation & Development Council Coordinator, Kathleen Deason and Kent Mullinix with the Institute for Rural Innovation & Stewardship, and Nancy Warner, NCW Program Director for The Nature Conservancy, worked as the core team managing this community dialog process that extended from spring 2006 through spring 2007.

The process was designed to bring people with interests and backgrounds in agriculture, land conservation, economic development, and planning together to look at existing incentive programs for conserving biodiversity in shrub steppe and riparian habitats and to develop plans for advancing some priority needs.

A fact sheet was developed to describe the NCW pilot project for the Washington Biodiversity Council, dubbed the Healthy Lands Initiative, and used in inviting key leaders to a series of focus group meetings held around the region. After introducing the Healthy Lands Initiative the core team members presented "The Nature of North Central Washington" and "Conservation and Agriculture: Moving Beyond the Traditional into the Sustainable" before launching a discussion focused on two questions:

- On your land or lands you are familiar with, what are the barriers for maintaining or restoring riparian and shrub-steppe habitat?"
- What ideas do you have to improve existing programs or for new programs?

Additional input was gathered from those attending the Healthy Lands Conference in June, 2006 where the Healthy Lands Initiative team had the opportunity to make the same presentations and work with breakout groups to gather input. All together more than 70 issues were identified through this process and clustered under the desired outcomes listed in the 2003 Washington Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Report relevant to a subregion of the state. This information is presented in the table below along with potential partners needed to advance each one.

**Responses from Dialog Sessions
June – September, 2006**

1.) Develop a Statewide Biodiversity Strategy

Strategy	Potential Partners
<i>Selected as Priority Actions</i>	
1. Identify and secure agreement on regional biodiversity and agriculture priorities as basis for action and funding in NCW.	IRIS/Healthy Lands Coalition, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), NCW Economic Development District (NCW EDD), future regional planning entity
2. Provide solid land management and preservation strategies not contingent on political whims.	Regional planning entity in conjunction with counties and city and county planning staff
3. Develop aggressive invasive weed control programs.	County government, weed control districts, conservation districts, Department of Transportation (DOT), business community, federal and state weed control managers
<i>Additional Actions</i>	

Establish local planting mixes that corresponds to local conditions.	NRCS, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), conservation districts, local farmers, native plant nurseries
Promote global thinking to restore habitats.	Conservation banks established for each habitat type
Develop a true water picture of the Columbia River to allow appropriate water uses for agriculture and the economy	Columbia River Management Program

2.) Develop a Public Education & Outreach Program for Washington's Biodiversity

Strategy	Potential Partners
<i>Selected as Priority Actions</i>	
1. Showcase and build upon local conservation land management successes to spur innovation and further conservation practices.	IRIS/Healthy Lands Coalition (HLC), NCW RC&D, NCW EDD, conservation districts, Washington Biodiversity Council, WSU Extension, Washington Rangelands Committee
2. Recruit and educate young farmers; explore beginning rancher program or incorporate youth education with federal farm bill programs such as CRP.	IRIS/HLC, conservation districts, NRCS, NCW EDD, Washington chapter of Society for Range Management, Reinventing Schools Coalition (RISC)
3. Reframe conservation incentive programs to focus on payments for service to society, instead of payments for not doing anything.	Research community, TNC, conservation districts, NCW EDD, American Farmland Trust (AFT), Farm Services Agency (FSA), NRCS, NCW RC&D
<i>Additional Actions</i>	
Host field trips on the Colville Reservation to show examples of incentive programs.	NRCS, Colville Confederated Tribes Conservation District
Get conservation incentive materials into builder's guides and newspapers.	NCW Builder's Association, NCW Board of Realtor's, chambers of commerce
Develop a regional food resource guide to educate public on value of locally-produced agriculture products.	IRIS/HLC, Wenatchee Valley Farmer's Market, WSU Small Farms Program
Promote change to a healthy food culture. For example, host a scavenger hunt to find real food in NCW grocery stores.	Conservation districts, land trusts, e.g.; TNC, Chelan Douglas Land Trust, Methow Conservancy,

	Okanogan Valley Land Council, schools, NCW Audubon Society, Chelan Douglas Health District
Create access to farms and develop small scale demonstration programs to learn from each other and get outside of respective “boxes”.	IRIS/HLC, landowners, conservation districts, Farming & the Environment
Strengthen the understanding that proper grazing can be compatible with biodiversity.	Conservation districts, land trusts, WDFW, grazing associations, private landowners, SRM, WRC
Evaluate and develop regional pilot program that demonstrates the importance of riparian areas throughout NCW to water quality.	NCW Audubon Society, watershed planning groups, regional land trusts
Provide cross agency training to increase sensitivity and awareness of private property issues. Have state, federal and local agencies designate a liaison to work with agricultural community.	Washington Department of Agriculture, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Public Utility Districts
Get more farmers on boards at state level.	Washington Biodiversity Council, Wildlife Commission, Transportation Commission, Chelan-Douglas Farm Bureau
Provide more information on water leasing programs	Washington Water Trust, Washington Rivers Conservancy Washington Department of Ecology (WDOE)
Incorporate environmental education in hunter safety courses.	WDFW

3.) Provide More Local Assistance to Conserve Biodiversity

Strategy	Potential Partners
<i>Selected as Priority Actions</i>	
1. Secure legislative dollars for farmland protection, land management, and ecological benefits. Develop set of matching funds for multiple species and habitats. Diversify funding and add new revenue sources to government funds to pay the value of ecological services to society.	Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program, federal Farm Bill programs, new state and regional bonds, conservation banks, WSDA
2. Establish annuity program that allows family farmers to stay and transition to next owners who can build on their efforts to improve habitat.	Land trusts, Community Foundation of NCW

3. Increase role of federal farm bill local working groups. Turn over federal funding to local working groups with required outcomes. Expand local working group to include all conservation incentives.	NRCS, IRIS/HLC, conservation districts
<i>Additional Actions</i>	
Promote a real estate tax for conservation futures. Capture dollar value from second homeowners and developers to protect resources, sustain a viable agriculture base, and support local government.	County government, future regional council of governments, state legislature
Explore and promote ecosystems trading and conservation banking.	IRIS/HLC, land trusts, public utility districts, Washington Department of Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED)
Develop conservation easements for farmland protection.	Regional land trusts, WSDA, NRCS
Pass state levy to support acquisition of open space and ecological services.	Coalition of conservation districts, conservation groups, and economic development entities
Encourage conservation share holders.	Conservation districts, conservation groups
Encourage disincentive (tax) for breaking up large agriculture or ranch lands.	County government
Promote a sliding scale taxes.	County government
Colville Reservation Conservation District can take lead on securing BPA Foundation funding for developing management plans for BPA property on the Colville Reservation.	Colville Confederated Tribes, BPA, new tribal land trust
Create a slush fund or revolving loan fund for low income producers for the conservation practice materials until they get reimbursed in the EQIP program.	NCW Community Loan Fund
Use incentive money for shared cooperative conservation equipment.	Conservation districts
Need to get incentive to keep family name as part of the farm. For example, a community foundation brokered program to provide options instead of selling and leaving.	NCW Community Loan Fund

Have a NCW Regional CRM Coordinator and trained local implementers to assist in resource management.	NRCS, Coordinated Resource Management Council, IRIS/HLC, WSU Extension
Improve technical assistance. Need county extension technical assistance. Figure out how to duplicate skill sets and experience such as that held by NRCS Range Specialist, Will Keller.	NCW RC&D, IRIS/HLC, NRCS, land trusts, WSU
Develop Grassbank to meet immediate needs on burned Methow rangelands and BPA lands on the Reservation.	Okanogan Conservation District, NRCS, Colville Confederated Tribes Conservation District

4.) Improve and Expand Non-regulatory Efforts to Conserve Biodiversity on Private Land

Strategy	Potential Partners
<i>Selected as Priority Actions</i>	
1. Bring together groups including agriculture, economic development, and land conservation to develop a shared voice and form united coalitions to more effectively influence legislature and change government policies. Include an agricultural segment to NCW EDD/ Economic District.	IRIS/HLC and NCW RC&D, AFT, regional land trusts
2. Provide payments to landowners for ecological services. Develop fair trade for conservation practices; quantify value of conservation outcomes.	Research community, Washington State Conservation Commission, WSDA, WDFW, CTED
3. Establish options for niche and direct marketing. Create market and outlets for locally grown.	Farming & the Environment, IRIS/HLC, Tilth Producers
4. Implement conservation programs: Explore a “New Age CRP” that is locally designed to meet needs of conservation. For example, allow grazing in CRP lands. Develop other programs that include long-term commitments on private lands such as CRP. Tailor programs to local areas and allow for innovation and flexibility.	IRIS/HLC, conservation districts, regional land trusts, NRCS
<i>Additional Actions</i>	
Consider the value added more than just “organic”.	IRIS/HLC, Farming & the

Promote marketing for “non-consumptive or low impact uses”. Private sector market based “quality product” incentive.	Environment, Tilth Producers
Develop pilot programs for alternative crops and maintain diverse crops including heritage breeds and local “signature” crops.	WSU Small Farms Program, IRIS/HLC
Promote and link ag-tourism to restoration and conservation demonstration projects.	NCW RC&D, NCW EDD, IRIS/HLC, Via 97
Combine compatible organic farming with cluster development. Incorporate Switzerland type clusters and subsidize farmers.	Future regional planning entity or council of governments, county government
Provide attitude and risk acceptance support/training as well as expertise to shift farm practices and marketing to value-added products.	NCW EDD, NCW Community Loan Fund, IRIS/HLC, Farming & the Environment
Form cooperative markets and implement conservation COOPs such as a Rancher’s Stewardship Alliance.	IRIS/HLC, regional land trusts, NCW EDD, conservation districts
Develop broker for investigating new approaches for on-farm diversification.	IRIS/HLC, conservation districts, Farming & the Environment, regional land trusts, NRCS
Need to stick to regulatory provisions. The county needs to uphold ordinances (GMA) instead of processing change designations so market-based incentives can work. Tie code and zoning improvements to conservation incentives.	Future regional planning entity, county government
Develop appraisal methods that include ecological values as well as land use values.	Research community, IRIS/HLC, land appraisal community
Streamline mitigation implementation process.	Future regional planning entity
Encourage IRIS to develop a model of sustainable agriculture or host a design charrette for sustainable agriculture on individual farms in NCW.	IRIS/HLC, NCW RC&D, NCW EDD, future regional planning entity, conservation districts

5.) Improve and Expand Efforts to Conserve Biodiversity on Public Land

Strategy	Potential Partners
<i>Selected as Priority Actions</i>	
Work with state agencies to improve grazing	WDFW, DNR, Washington

practices on their lands.	Rangelands Committee, future grazing advisory council, SRM, Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative
Require invasive control along county roads.	County government, WSDA, DOT
Manage road access to control weeds.	Counties, DOT, WDFW, DNR, USFS, BLM

6.) Improve Coordination among Entities in NCW in Collecting, Standardizing, Managing and Distributing Biodiversity Information

Strategy	Potential Partners
<i>Selected as Priority Actions</i>	
Develop a central knowledge shopping center that builds on existing institutions, e.g., conservation districts.	IRIS/HLC, NCW RC&D, TNC, DNR Heritage Program, WDFW
Develop jointly funded position to assist landowners with conservation options (informational clearing house position).	IRIS/HLC, NCW RC&D

The next step in the regional dialog process was to convene a steering committee composed of focus group members and others to prioritize two to three issues for action planning. The two key issues that were identified as necessary in order to address many other priorities are listed below.

Action Plan Issue #1: Form a Healthy Lands Coalition (HLC) including agriculture, economic development, land conservation and planning organizations to develop a common vision about regional biodiversity and agricultural priorities and the actions needed to advance a sustainable North Central Washington agricultural-based economy that integrates and values habitat and open space conservation.

- Build capacity of conservation districts to enable staffing of the HLC.
- Use existing local comprehensive plans as a starting point for efforts.
- Secure legislative dollars for farmland protection, land management, and ecological benefits.
- Develop matching funds for multiple species and habitats.
- Diversify funding sources to add new revenue to government funds.
- Explore the value of ecological services to society.
- Develop a jointly funded position to assist landowners with conservation options.
- Link incentive programs to desirable biodiversity outcomes such as riparian community restoration, reduction of weeds, and increasing biodiversity of shrub-steppe.
- Develop solid land management and preservation strategies not contingent on political shifts.

Action Plan Issue #2: Develop a comprehensive educational and outreach program that showcases and builds upon local conservation successes to spur innovative and cooperative approaches that enable farms and ranches in North Central Washington to thrive.

- Recruit and educate young farmers through beginning rancher programs.
- Incorporate youth education with federal farm bill programs such as CRP, EQIP, WHIP etc.
- Establish an annuity program that allows current farmers to stay on the farm and transition to new owners who can build on their efforts to improve habitat.
- Develop fair trade for conservation practices and quantify the value of conservation outcomes.
- Explore grazing options to existing programs such as CRP.
- Develop other long term flexible, innovative commitment programs that pay landowners for ecological benefits.
- Where lacking, implement invasive weed control on federal, state, and county roads.

The last step in the regional dialog process was to organize and hold a regional forum to develop action plans for the top priority issues. Another group of community members stepped forward in January, 2007 to help the HLI core team plan for the regional forum that was held in Chelan on March 7. This forum, attended by more than 60 people, resulted in draft action plans and notes that the core team synthesized and sent out to all forum participants for feedback before finalizing. The action plans are attached here (Appendix).

Findings and Recommendations:

The dialog process provided a rolling assessment of existing and potentially different incentives for shrub steppe and freshwater-riparian habitat types in North Central Washington. Along the way this process helped the HLI core team identify constraints, gaps and a number of different opportunities by engaging people at multiple scales from small focus groups to the larger regional forum. Long range planning and planners were important to the discussion of maintaining appropriate development opportunities, while preserving important agricultural lands and open spaces

The small focus group meetings served as an effective tool for scoping out the issues and identifying leaders to engage in action planning further along in the process. People appreciated the fact that we traveled to meet with them and that the group size, usually less than ten, was small enough to provide for the active input of all attendees. The diversity of each group enabled all involved to learn something new and to hear different perspectives about how incentives could be changed or created to better meet needs.

While many issues related to funding, capacity, and information were brought up time and again throughout the process, other issues such as managing BPA lands on the

Colville Reservation, only came up in one meeting. Some general findings from the focus group discussions follow along with several additional recommendations beyond those listed in the table above.

Conservation incentive programs require initial investment and further financial risk-taking on long-term practices for the farmer or rancher. Landowners are not reimbursed for materials until a funded practice is complete and remain responsible for operation and maintenance of the practice into the future in spite of adaptations in management that need to be made to ensure success. Some landowners are reluctant to become involved in incentive programs when the financial issues associated with their success are uncertain.

Increased income from incentive programs can affect taxing and financial aid for landowners as cost share given for a given project is recorded initially as income. This can become a disincentive particularly, in one example, when a rancher needed to stay within a given income level for his daughter to be eligible for financial aid for college.

There is no one place that has a comprehensive guide to all the available conservation incentive programs and that can guide landowners about which best meet their needs.

Incentives are only as good as the economy that surrounds the producer. Parallel development of markets is necessary to ensure that incentives are developed and used to enhance biodiversity.

It is much more cost effective to educate people and protect habitat than it is to restore it so we need to create viable opportunities for coming generations to participate in farming and ranching operations that maintain habitat.

All the good ideas in the world will go nowhere without the institutional capacity and structure to guide and feed them. It takes a group of people with commitment and organizational support to make things better.

Strong leadership from both the landowners and the enabling partner organizations is required to move new ideas forward. Small success steps that enable this leadership to emerge are needed for long-term gain.

Technical assistance to implement conservation practices associated with programs is dwindling as NRCS staff retire and their positions are either not replaced or are filled with contractors who do not have the skills, time and experience needed to provide on-the-ground assistance.

While potential partners are listed alongside the numerous strategies that emerged from the dialog process in the table above as recommendations, two strategies that we would like to forward as recommendations are being implemented now. One is to establish a long-standing organization to serve as the convener for continuing these important discussions, i.e., the Healthy Lands Coalition.

The identity of the organization that houses the work of the Healthy Lands Coalition is still being explored but a favored option is to bring the regional dialog process into the IRIS Committee under the organizational structure of the North Central Washington Resource Conservation & Development Council. This structure could provide a neutral, locally-managed entity supported by local conservation districts, counties, municipalities and other organizations and serve as the convener for many of the information sharing and problem-solving needs identified in the dialog process. The Healthy Lands Coalition could also be used to help prioritize use of federal Farm Bill funds to the NRCS-managed Local Working Group.

Another strategy and recommendation is to establish the means for sharing regional information and success stories on a regular basis. The NCW RC&D has launched a web site as part of the Healthy Lands Initiative that will help in establishing this regional information hub (see attached web site design). This web site will also be used as a place to help educate people in the region about how current land use planning, development, open space and agricultural land conservation decisions will effect the future of the area.

Additional ideas related to this strategy of establishing a long-term home for the work of the Healthy Lands Initiative includes building support for the use of long-range planning and visioning tools such as that used by Envision (www.envision.org), Community Viz (www.communityviz.org), and possibly developing a regional planning entity to provide assistance to counties and cities needed to encourage the development of strategies, codes, ordinances, and comprehensive plans that encourage appropriate growth and development while maintaining productive agricultural lands, preserving open space and protecting the biodiversity of the region.

There is a need in NCW and beyond to work with existing infrastructure and connect like-minded people in building a framework for collaboration and regional strategy development. The NCW EDD and NCW RC&D with IRIS as committee work as partners to integrate natural resource management with economic development. The NCW Economic Summit planned for the fall of 2007 will provide an additional opportunity for people to come together and help craft an organizational regional structure and plan to maintain biodiversity while allowing smart growth in the region.

For more information on the Healthy Lands Initiative and the IRIS Committee contact:

Jay Kehne, Coordinator
NCW Resource Conservation & Development Council
www.ncwrcd.org
509-422-2750 extension 107

Healthy Lands Initiative Interim Action Plan Calendar Year 2007-2008

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- The primary goals for the interim action plan are for the Healthy Lands Coalition to have its organization structure and strategic plan in place and for a combined educational and outreach program to be actively providing and facilitating the integration of programs by January 2008.

Project Partners:

- The Initiative for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS) serves as the overall project lead. Partners include The Nature Conservancy, North Central Washington Resources Conservation & Development Council (NCW RC & D), the Okanogan Conservation District, Foster Creek Conservation District, Chelan Conservation District, the Community Foundation of North Central Washington, Washington Biodiversity Council, and private landowners and citizens throughout the region.

Healthy Lands Initiative Coalition Interim Action Plan - Calendar Year 2007-2008

GOAL #1: BY JANUARY 2008, THE HEALTHY LANDS COALITION (HLC) WILL HAVE ITS ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND STRATEGIC PLAN IN PLACE.

Objectives	Key Activities	Time Frame	Leader(s)	Resources Required
1a.) Identify HLC Host Organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define characteristics of desired hosting model. Explore potential hosts (RC& D, IRIS, Conservation Districts, or EQIP Local Working Group) Select host. Build capacity of host organization for administration of HLC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RC&D IRIS EDD Technical expertise Community 	
1b.) Select and convene steering committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential steering committee members. 			
1c.) Engage the community in an HLC strategic planning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop mission and goals, strategic plan, and operating/ guiding principles to build a regional vision, coordinate efforts and prioritize projects. 			

GOAL #2: BY JANUARY 2008, THE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM WILL BE PROVIDING OR FACILITATING THE INTEGRATION OF PROGRAMS.

Objectives	Key Activities	Time Frame	Leader(s)	Resources Required
2a.) Share information by creating an on-line directory of resources and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide mission and summary of activities for each participating NCW organization Provide regional calendar of events. Provide list serve. Create a blog that includes artwork and posters . Create funding directory organized by source, eligible projects and time frames. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sept 2007 Feb 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RC&D IRIS Grange 	
2b.) Integrate and combine education and public outreach efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host combined field tours and conferences for landowners, NGO's and agencies. Provides tools to attendees to use at home, for example a list of incentives. Provide presentations during commodity group meetings (Horticulturists, Cattlemen, Hay growers etc). Host farm appreciation days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing July 2008 		

HEALTHY LANDS INITIATIVE REGIONAL FORUM
March 7th, 2007
Campbell's Resort
AGENDA

9:00-9:10	Welcome	Jay Kehne, NCW RC&D Kent Mullinex, IRIS
9:10-9:30	The Nature of North Central Washington	Nancy Warner, TNC
9:30-9:45	Incentives & Conservation Initiatives	Kathleen Deason, FCCD
9:45-10:15	Biodiversity, Prime Ag Lands, Urban Growth	Jesse Langdon, TNC
10:15-10:30	Break	
10:30-11:30	Success Stories	
11:30 – 12:00	Keynote Speaker	David Primozich Willamette Partnership
12:00 – 12:45	Lunch – Informal Networking	
12:45-1:15	Laying the Groundwork for Action Planning	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Context:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Existing Organizational Capacity - Nancy Warner/Jay Kehne○ Existing Outreach Activities - Kathleen Deason• Process<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Describe the task & timeframe - Steve Christiano	
1:15-2:45	Action Planning by Break- Out Groups - Steve Christiano	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy Lands Coalition• Education & Outreach model	
2:45-3:15	Report Back from Break Out Groups	Steve Christiano
3:15-3:30	Action Plan Summary and Next Steps	Steve Christiano
3:30	Adjourn	

Using Grassbanks as a Tool: Assessing Feasibility

11/11/05

General:

What would be the community, environmental, and economic benefits of using a grassbank in this place?

What lands are available for use as a grassbank? Are these lands ready to use or would they need improvements such as fencing? How close are these lands to the ranchers that might want to use the grassbank?

Who manages the grassbank? Who is responsible for developing the concept and operating plan, administering the program, and doing the monitoring?

Who manages the livestock while there on the grassbank?

How are decisions made about who uses the grassbank? What criteria are used to identify grassbank users or lessees?

How is the value for value exchange rate calculated for use of the grassbank? How are the values of the conservation practices on the participating rancher's home places established? How are grassbank grazing fees determined?

What would be the costs associated with management of a grassbank? What would be the costs associated with the use of the grassbank by local ranchers? What opportunities exist for distributing those costs, i.e., partnerships?

Who fixes fences, checks water, puts out supplements and doctors livestock?

Will herds be composed of blended ownership?

What fees and conservation discounts are appropriate?

For Grassbank Host:

What does the grassbank provide for lands owned by the grassbank host?

TNC

Other private grassbank hosts

What is the livestock carrying capacity for the grassbank?

How does the grassbank help accomplish the host's goals?

TNC

Other private grassbank hosts

For Agencies:

How does the grassbank help accomplish BLM or state agency missions?

Is there an economic impact to agency revenues?

For Producers: What can the grassbank provide for producer owned lands?

What are their goals?

What are the roadblocks to achieving those goals?

Are there underlying systems or principals that put up those roadblocks?

Will participation in a grassbank address those systems or roadblocks and help them to succeed?

Where is the grassbank located in relation to the user group? Can users trail cattle into the grassbank, or will they have to truck them?

What is the preferred season of use?

Are there land use restrictions to be considered such as BLM lease regulations?

Are there water quality or potential neighbor/neighbor interaction issues to consider?

Select Readings on Grassbanking

A Case Study of the Heart Mountain Grassbank. Unpublished. TNC Wyoming
An Analysis of Selected Nature Conservancy Grassbanks in Conserving Biologically Significant Landscapes. Lisa Bay and Bernhard Hall. 2004. TNC of Montana

Bartering for Conservation: Are Grassbanks an Effective Tool for Achieving Conservation, Promoting Stewardship, and Building Trust? Stephanie Lynn Gripne. Presentation for Boone and Crockett Club

Building Community: Ranching and Conservation on the Matador Ranch. TNC

Cattle Grass Bank Stirs Controversy. Allison Batdorff, 2004. Billings Gazette 6/25
Deschutes Grass Bank. 2004. Deschutes Resources Conservancy

Frequently Asked Questions. 2006. Oregon Sagebrush Cooperative.

Grass Banking. 2004. Red Lodge Clearinghouse.

Grassbank Opinions. 2004. George Wurthener. Stephanie Gripne, ed.

Grassbanks. Glossary of Sonoran Institute Terms. 2004

Grassbanks: Bartering for Conservation. Stephanie Gripne. 2004

Grassbank Research Project Newsletter. 2003. Stephanie L. Gripne ed.

Grassbank Research Project Newsletter. 2004. Stephanie L. Gripne ed.

Heart Mountain Grassbank Advisory Group Operating Principles. DRAFT 2002

Heart Mountain Grassbank Business Plan. 2002. TNC Wyoming

Heart Mountain Grassbank Selection Criteria. Draft 2002

Heart Mountain Ranch. Website

Matador Ranch Grass Bank: Story Profiles. 2005. Red Lodge Clearinghouse.

Moses Coulee Grassbank Area map. 2005. TNC/BLM

National Grassbank Network Newsletter: Website (<http://www.grassbank.net>) as well as hard copy made available.

Upper Klamath Basin Tribal – Community Grassbank: Working Concept Paper DRAFT V1.2. 2005

Talking Points – Grassbank Discussion Groups

Grassbank: The purpose of a Grassbank is to make possible the ecological restoration and productivity of grazing lands through a value for value exchange. By improving the condition of the land, a Grassbank can strengthen the foundation of a region or area's ranching heritage and help reduce conflicts between grazing and other land uses.

Assumption: The idea and structure of a Grassbank provides a starting point for groups to explore solutions to shrub steppe conservation and restoration at Moses Coulee and in the Methow. The groups might come up with ways to utilize a Grassbank in each location or they might find that something completely different is more appropriate to their needs.

Positive Outcomes and Strategies:

- Increased flexibility in use of stewardship alternatives on public lands
 - Facilitate leases that allow exchange of privately-owned habitat (sage grouse) for publicly-owned grazing land to enhance wildlife and economic values
 - Trade stewardship for use of grazing (value for value exchange)
- Grazing opportunities appropriately distributed across landscape to meet seasonal livestock forage needs and reduce transportation expenses
 - Increase availability of state lands for grazing programs that meet biodiversity and economic goals
 - Work with WDFW and U.S.D.A. to increase flexibility of using state and CRP lands for emergency grazing (response to 2006 fires)
- Large, contiguous blocks of agricultural lands are enhanced and provide livestock, wildlife, open space and other ecological and economic benefits
 - Develop maps that show relationships between existing ranches, priority wildlife areas, and surrounding lands to help facilitate long-term strategies for land conservation
 - Protect existing water rights by managing location of new exempt wells
- Increased capacity to gather, integrate, and summarize data on vegetation and wildlife response to grazing, resulting from shared vision and cooperative approach
 - Work with agencies to develop training workshops for ranchers, students, and conservation group representatives that enable them to participate in integrated wildlife and rangeland monitoring programs
 - Secure funding for innovative approaches to land management such as “gentle” herding and creation of cooperative management positions
- Education tools and programs advance understanding of the compatibility of appropriate grazing and biodiversity conservation

- Conduct outreach about the values provided by local agriculture to build recognition and support among conservation groups, policy makers, and the general public.
 - Secure partnerships and funding needed to develop integrated monitoring and outreach program that supports demonstration projects on biodiversity and grazing (WRC, GLCI, other)
 - Promote ranching for biodiversity concepts, i.e., Country Beef
 - Popularize and share the results of technical monitoring of rangeland and wildlife response to grazing
- Increased agency funding supports staff needed to plan, monitor, and participate in collaborative processes and stewardship, e.g., CRM, HCP
 - Conduct statewide poll to determine support for maintaining open space and local agriculture

Barriers:

- Decrease in lands available for grazing due to increasing development, enrollment in CRP, and designation of wildlife areas
- Increasing complexity of managing and leasing isolated parcels needed to maintain a functional ranching operation
- Skyrocketing land values
- Compartmentalized thinking – lands for grazing, lands for wildlife
- Agencies and public don't understand the needs of livestock and ranchers
- Absentee landowners don't always know about the needs of lessees so when they sell lands there is risk that leases will be terminated or given to another operator
- Limited capacity to monitor and summarize results of grazing practices
- Difficult economic environment and workload fails to attract younger generation of ranchers
- Roadblocks on permitting/policy
- Assumptions that agency lands are closed to grazing



WOODLAND PARK ZOO

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

For immediate release
May 16, 2007

Media Contact: Gigi Allianic, Wendy Hochnadel
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**Grant program encourages hands-on scientific learning through
Student Achievement from the Ground Up**

SEATTLE – Students and teachers in North Central Washington will get the chance to engage in some high-level environmental work next school year, thanks to a project developed by Woodland Park Zoo, The Nature Conservancy, and other central Washington landowners, called **Student Achievement from the Ground Up**.

As part of the project, students at High Tech High School in Quincy will help develop an environmental monitoring trail through the Beezley Hills Preserve. Students will lay out the route for the trail, which will have posts set up at designated points along the way. Students and the public will be invited to walk the trail and take photos at each of the posts. Students will create a Web site where photographers can upload their photos, and thus create a way to monitor changes in the landscape over time. For example, you could take photos next winter, and then someone else could come along and take photos in the same place two years later.

“We’re interested in using this as a platform for involving students in increasingly technical monitoring,” said Nancy Warner, The Nature Conservancy’s North Central Washington Program Director. Students may also become involved in monitoring birds, or hedgehog cactus, to cite two examples. They’ll also do stewardship work such as checking fence lines, removing non-native plants or picking up trash. Along the way they’ll develop photography skills, writing skills, and math and science skills.

“This grant has it all: the infusion of math, science, history, and communication as students research valid questions and communicate their findings,” stated Steve Coleman, a teacher at High Tech High. “Students will demonstrate comprehension, application, analysis and evaluation just as other professionals do. Emerging data overwhelmingly supports this type of experiential instruction and it meets our goals of Rigor, Relevance and Relationships at many levels; I’m excited to be a part of it.” Oroville Middle-High School, Waterville Elementary School, and Bridgeport High School are also participating and will take part in local environmental monitoring projects.

Four lead teachers, the project managers from the land-owning agencies, and educators from Woodland Park Zoo will meet this summer to flesh out the details and logistics of the project. The zoo’s role is crucial in designing teacher training workshops, providing classroom and field training for students, and working with the schools and landowners to pull the project together. “The zoo offers training workshops for teachers year-round and outreach programs that touch students in every county in the state,” explained the zoo’s Education Director, Bev Clevenger. “This is a natural tie-in for the zoo to further encourage environmental stewardship among future generations.”

The project is funded in part by a \$26,500 grant from the state Superintendent of Public Instruction, part of its Environmental Education Partnerships Grant program to encourage hands-on scientific learning.

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Habitat Farming Enterprise Concept Talking Points: Design a pilot riparian habitat incentive program targeting tree fruit growers in Chelan County that would remunerate them for the opportunity costs of converting some specified portion of their holdings into riparian habitat and maintaining that habitat for an agreed upon period of time to support both the tree fruit industry and improved riparian habitat for the area. The program would help growers succeed economically and promote retention of family farms while providing a framework to quantify contributions to improved habitat and biodiversity.

LANDOWNER PERSPECTIVE

- Positives:
 - ***Enhance Agricultural Profitability:***
 - Pilot could provide regulatory certainty/risk reduction for growers, provide win-win route to compliance with existing mandates (e.g. pesticide spray issues);
 - Provide alternative ways to preserve ag land
 - ***Enhance Landowner Stewardship:***
 - Increase awareness and use of conservation farming practices
 - Provides growers with way to measure results/outcomes and show their contribution to habitat improvements
 - ***Encourage/Sustain Positive Working Relationships:***
 - Increase communication and cooperation among community growers and other stakeholder groups,
 - Creates opportunities for growers to be recognized for their ability to enhance biodiversity and contribute to salmon recovery by doing what they do best -- farming and being good land stewards.
 - ***Achieve Innovation and Sustainability***
 - This type thinking is needed to create “paradigm shift” necessary for long-term change and success
 - Pilot effort could potentially be scaled-up or replicated for use across larger areas/ag sectors.
- Challenges:
 - ***Overcoming traditional methods and thinking***
 - This is not another “Ag Lease” program -- it’s an enterprise.
 - Traditional appraisal methods of highest and best use will likely not reach the level of compensation needed to encourage grower participation -- Need new methods but can be difficult to develop these.

BIOLOGIC PERSPECTIVE

- Positives:
 - ***Helps Achieve Regulatory Standards***
 - Temperature (EPA/WDOE 4(b) -- CWA, Forest Plan),
 - Overall water quality
 - ***Address salmonid limiting factors***
 - Habitat complexity (promote LWD recruitment, enhance off-channel rearing)
 - ***Improve overall watershed health***

- Corridors of connectivity to benefit upland species
- Adaptation of riparian pilot in future for upland/wildlife benefits
- Improved function of hydrologic processes such as flooding, channel migration, and woody debris jams; no longer viewed as “threats”
- Challenges:
 - How to measure and value the contribution to salmon recovery and biodiversity
 - Overcoming fears that participation will increase “regulatory burden”
 - Creating sustainable, natural habitat that does not require frequent “maintenance”

WATERSHED PLANNING PERSPECTIVE

- Positives:
 - ***Furtherers ongoing work of Entiat Watershed group***
 - Builds on over 12 years of locally-led planning that started with CRM process, grew into state watershed planning process, etc.
 - Maintains tradition of “out of the box” thinking, collaboration to find win-win solutions to issues.
 - ***Puts new tools in the toolbox***
 - Shows community that thinking/development of new approaches is occurring so can adapt to deal with changing issues/markets/land uses
 - Pilot, visible on-the-ground efforts essential to sustain and generate new community support and participation
 - ***Meets objectives of Entiat Watershed Plan***
 - Enables “implementation accounting” tied to recommendations in watershed plan -- accountability to public, funding entities, watershed planning partners.
 - Provides mechanism for quantifying improvements; tied to effectiveness monitoring and adaptive management
- Challenges:
 - ***Funding***
 - Grant opportunities that support pilot initiatives can be limited; partnerships are essential
 - Need to identify how to find long-term funding support, explore options such as clean water credits/mitigation banking, etc.
 - ***Human capital***
 - “Innovation isn’t easy” -- more time consuming in the beginning; no road map
 - Need trust and participation of local growers and good technical team -- collaboration/think tank

REGIONAL SALMON RECOVERY PERSPECTIVE

- Positives
 - ***Supports implementation objectives of regional recovery plan***

HEALTHY LANDS INITIATIVE

Introduction

- The Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS) has launched the *Healthy Lands Initiative* to bring together conservation, agriculture and economic development interests to craft new and innovative approaches for combining biodiversity conservation with the maintenance of productive and profitable agricultural enterprises.
- The initiative includes all of North Central Washington including Douglas, Okanogan, Chelan counties and the Colville Indian Reservation.
- It is an 18-month pilot project funded by the Washington Biodiversity Council that will be completed in May 2007.

Healthy Lands Initiative Goals

- The *Healthy Lands Initiative* will help citizens design a shared vision for how biodiversity conservation can be integrated with economic and social needs to enhance the health and vitality of North Central Washington.
- The initiative is specifically designed to bring together the land conservation, agricultural and economic development communities to:
 - 1.) Build a collective understanding of biodiversity resources in the region.
 - 2.) Create a collective understanding of regional tools and resources for enhancing conservation.
 - 3.) Discover new ways to combine biodiversity conservation with the maintenance of productive and profitable agricultural enterprises.
 - 4.) Develop plans for implementing incentive programs, such as habitat farming and grassbanking, that benefit riparian and shrub steppe systems in the Wenatchee River watershed, Moses Coulee, and the Methow Valley.

Project Partners:

- The Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS) serves as the overall project manager coordinating work plans carried out by partner staff and contractors.
- Partners include The Nature Conservancy, North Central Washington Resources Conservation & Development Council (NCW RC & D), the Okanogan Conservation District, Foster Creek Conservation District, the Community Foundation of North Central Washington, Washington Biodiversity Council, and private landowners and citizens throughout the region.

What is the Biodiversity Council?

- The Governor created the Washington Biodiversity Council in 2004 after civic and environmental leaders recognized that the state's conservation strategies were largely reactive and crisis driven and thus costlier and less effective than they should be. The Council is comprised of 23 members representing a wide range of interests.

What are the goals of the Biodiversity Council?

- Develop a 30-year prioritized strategy to protect biodiversity in Washington State for future generations.
- Create educational materials and programs that show the importance of biodiversity to our future economy and health.
- Assess existing incentive programs and generate new ideas for non-regulatory ways to assist private landowners in maintaining healthier landscapes at all scales.

Why did the Biodiversity Council select NCW as a pilot project area?

The Washington Biodiversity Council selected two pilot projects, one on the east side of the Cascades and one on the west, to demonstrate new approaches to landowner stewardship programs. The North Central

Washington proposal was selected because of the emphasis on collaboration with agricultural and economic development interests and the focus on exploring new and innovative approaches.

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