

# Draft

## **Eastern Washington Council of Governments**

Chairman, Ken Oliver, Pend Oreille County Commissioner  
Vice- Chairman, Rudy Plager, Adams County Commissioner  
Secretary, Merrill Ott, Stevens County Commissioner  
Treasurer, Ted Hopkins, Lincoln County Commissioner

### **EWCOG Meeting – March 28, 2008 Lincoln County Courthouse Davenport, Washington Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 1100 by Chairman Ken Oliver

Members present:

Ken Oliver  
Dennis Bly  
Merrill Ott  
Mike Blankenship  
Rudy Plager?

Guests present:

Shelly Short  
Wes McCart

Mike Blankenship moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting with corrections. Dennis Bly seconded. Approved.

Dennis Bly presented the Treasurer's report – same as last month – \$58,047.62 balance with no new investments. Mike Blankenship moved to appoint Commissioner Dennis Bly as the Investment Officer for the EWCOG, to replace Ted Hopkins. Merrill Ott seconded. Motion carried. Dennis Bly was directed to invest the EWCOG funds into an appropriate account, as had been past practice under Commissioner Ted Hopkins, on behalf of the EWCOG.

Chairman Oliver rearranged agenda – added in topics – SSHB 2765 – Freezing of DNR funds for OHV trail improvements, Wolf program

Legislative updates, with winners and losers was reported. Cougar Bill passed intact. 911 centers have yet to be funded for cougar reporting. Okanogan County did get funding to shift responsibilities from WSP to county. Homestead Act has influence over areas you can protect legally from predator attacks.

The controversial Yellowstone to Yukon wildlife corridor bill will come back next year for legislative consideration.

Global warming legislation was discussed. Paving programs are suffering due to lack of funding with no transportation funds available for relief.

Discussion over the regional increases in property values causing higher property taxes. The negative impacts to senior citizens, the increase of minimum lot sizes, and the variances between the counties regarding lot sizes has consequential impacts to the county revenue bases. Discussions on reducing impacts to junior taxing districts, and how to reduce negative impacts to rural counties by prioritizing government actions was lively. Concerns over fostering a more business friendly state government, reducing the numbers of jobs exported out of the state, and relying on the west side centric philosophy of a non-resource based economy has its pitfalls.

Road construction throughout the state highway system has not followed the population buildups adequately. Though concurrency requirements for counties exist in the GMA, state highway concurrency requirements seem to fail.

Mike Blankenship reported on concerns of DNR funding being help up for trail development in the tri-county project area.

Mike Blankenship reported on the upcoming Forest Service Planning meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March from 0900 -1100 with a two hour break, then 1300 – 1600, to be held at the Ag Trade Center, Colville, WA. Mike will be the master of ceremonies. He reported a good response so far. The table will be set for 20 participants, and the participants and audience will be seated. Tribes have been contacted and preliminary responses are good. 4 lumber mill representatives will be there. The object of this meeting is to have users at the table of all types and to focus on their needs.

2008 Forest Planning Rule – Alternative G – is out for review. Ken Oliver gave Mike credit for great planning effort.

The potential for forming a Tristate Council of Governments was discussed. It still has interest, and should continue to be agenda item – perhaps later on this spring.

NPS Cooperating Agency - formalized agreement needs to be fostered. Debbie Bird briefed Stevens County, and did not know what kind of documentation was needed beyond the verbal invitation. Counties are concerned over need and purpose statement of the EA that is being envisioned. Recontact with NPS is necessary.

Ken briefed on Sullivan Lake Dam removal potential after PUD gives up license. It lowers Sullivan Lake by several feet. It has negative impact to Pend Oreille County through the loss of an \$80,000 annual fee paid by PUD to downstream and other users.

Mike Blankenship briefed on Growden Dam – CCC project – still results in no new water for delivery. Growden is a historical project for restoration.

The Lake Roosevelt drawdown was discussed. Counties await on DOE for more information.

Wolf program discussed by Ken Oliver. Federal govt is delisting the wolf on everything east of HWY 97 in Washington state. Issues arise in the working group. Enviro don't want wide spread property defense by land owners. Instead, they want land owners confined to household defense only. Briefed proposed program. Once wolf is delisted, compensation to livestock owners stops – however the program was extended for the state until the state program is activated. There is some progress, although very slow and very difficult. Funding is issue. If the residents are not allowed to protect themselves, any program will fail...property protection in our counties is pre-eminent. Other comments regarding the Healthy Forest Act, the impact of wolf showing up on private lands, and overly protecting wolves will cause program to fail.

A short discussion of progress on OHV programs in the counties ensued.

Next meeting Apr 25, 2008, in Davenport, at 1100.

Meeting adjourned at 1340.