



## Minutes

Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission  
Web Conference

**Friday, February 16, 2024**

Olympia, Washington

### Attendance:

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Commission:	Department Staff:	Commission Staff:
Barbara Baker, Chair	Kelly Susewind, Director	Tami Lininger
Tim Ragen, Vice Chair	Joe Panesko, AGO	Jamie Caldwell
Lorna Smith	Amy Windrope, Deputy Director	
Woody Myers	Eric Gardner	
James R. Anderson	Anis Aoude	
John Lehmkuhl	Stephanie Landry	
Molly Linville		
Steve Parker		
Melanie Rowland - Excused		

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Vice Chair Ragen called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

#### **A. Deer Lake Fishing Season Rulemaking – Decision**

Chris Donley, Region 1 Fish Program Manager, and Lieutenant Rosenberger, Enforcement asked the Commission for a decision on the amendments to the sportfishing rules for Deer Lake (Stevens County). Amendments to the rules include changing the open fishing season from March 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>, to year-round and adjusting the harvest limit on Lake Trout from no daily limit to 5 fish daily, no more than 1 over 26 inches in length.

**Commissioner Anderson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Myers, to amend the fishing rules for Deer Lake (Stevens Co.) Change the open fishing season dates from March 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup> to year-round and change the harvest rules for Lake Trout from no daily limit for Lake Trout to 5 Lake Trout daily, no more than one over 26 inches in length. The vote was 8-0 (Commissioner Rowland was excused). Motion passes.**

#### **B. Wildlife Committee Report Out – Briefing, Decision**

Commissioner Smith, Chair of the Wildlife Committee, provided the full Commission with the majority report, noting that the committee isn't making a recommendation today for the timing or process of how to get to the wording in for a CR-102 and will need more work sessions to do so. The committee would like to have the cougar topic included on the March meeting agenda. The committee is making the recommendation to include change numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 from the matrix in the rule making proposals. The committee is recommending to not include change number 3 and 7 from the matrix in the rule making proposals. Commissioner Anderson provided the minority report for the Wildlife Committee, noting that the committee wasn't near consensus, and the committee lacked a well laid-out process to move forward. Commissioner Anderson also noted that the full Commission needs to step back, establish a clear process, and gather staff input to know the real issues so rule making can be targeted to make a difference. Change numbers 8 and 9 will have to be reviewed at a later date for consideration due to time constraints of the meeting on February 12, 2024 and the need for further information on black bears. Commissioner Anderson is recommending the Commission target rule making for the 2025 season.

#### **General Discussion**

Vice Chair Ragen suggested that the Commission not lock the cougar and bear topics to one

another and would prefer to work on them individually. Since the Commission has a more information and a better understanding of the cougar topic, Commissioner Ragen suggested working on it first, and then working on the bear topic in the future when more information is available to the Commission.

Commissioner Myers was in support of the Vice Chair's suggestion.

Anis noted that the Game Management Division is past the point to include any information in the public pamphlet, and would set a placeholder in the pamphlet, so that the information could be included once decisions have been made.

Commissioner Lehmkuhl commented that he feels the season setting process for these species and the Game Management Plan (GMP) needs to be resynchronized, as the GMP is the foundation of the season setting. The Commissioner's preference is to wait and have a deliberative process to have a hard deadline for the 2025 season to have everything done.

Commissioner Linville provided her opinion that rule making is going to take time away from the 3-year season setting process and the GMP, and that the concerns being presented could be put into those processes and solved during that time. Commissioner Linville is fully on board with receiving new information regarding cougars and bears to assist with guiding the Commission's policy making, and feels that a lot of time is being wasted when the GMP could be getting worked on.

Chair Baker proposed to set aside time on the March agenda to further discuss the cougar topic after hearing from the science team, and then review the bear topic at a later time once the science is available, on the May agenda.

Vice Chair Ragen brought up the topic of the sturgeon management policy currently scheduled for October, noting the need to set aside a good amount of time for the topic, and suggested to consider moving it up on the schedule. Commissioner Anderson stated that if the staff were available, that it could possibly be moved up to the March Fish Committee Agenda. Deputy Director Windrope stated that she touched base with Kelly Cunningham, and that he'll touch base with Commissioner Anderson about the topic.

Vice Chair Ragen requested the Commission consider the idea of holding periodic meetings to discuss topics that have to be in front of the public to help create more transparency as to the Commission's decision making process. Chair Baker requested that this be put on the Executive Committee agenda. Commissioner Lehmkuhl suggested this be included on the Big Tent Committee agenda to has through and then make suggestions to the full Commission. Commissioner Smith was in support of Commissioner Lehmkuhl's suggestion. Chair Baker rescinded her request in support of Commissioner Lehmkuhl's suggestion to have Big Tent work on the topic. Commissioner Linville was in support of Big Tent taking on the subject.

Vice Chair Ragen adjourned the meeting at 10:53 a.m.

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Jamie Caldwell, Executive Assistant