Washington Department of FISH and WILDLIFE

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION'S REPORT ON ADA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REPORT TO THE WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE

December 2015 - Pursuant to RCW 77.04.150

Fish and Wildlife Commission

Bradley Smith, Chair
Larry Carpenter, Vice Chair
Conrad Mahnken
Kim Thorburn
Jay Holzmiller
David Graybill
Miranda Wecker
Jay Kehne
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AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE WASHINGTON FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

MISSION STATEMENT

The Advisory Committee will provide accurate and meaningful information to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission regarding the needs of persons with disabilities as they seek to enjoy equal opportunity to access all the programs provided by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Current Membership for this Advisory Committee:

Region 1
Wayne McCaskell

Region 2
Dan Dickerson

Region 3
Reno Pellegrini, Chairman

Region 4
David Martin

Region 5
Rick Erickson

Region 6
Vacant

At-large
Kevin Frankeberger

Department Staff Support: Sam Taylor, HR High Risk Manager
Commission Staff Support: Tami Lininger, Executive Assistant

Committee's Mission Statement, Goals, Objectives

Mission Statement:

The ADAAC will provide accurate and meaningful information to the Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission regarding the needs of persons with disabilities as they seek to enjoy equal opportunity to access the programs provided by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Goals:

- Provide advice and recommendations to the Fish and Wildlife Commission regarding ADA issues brought forth by the Department, Constituents, and/or Commission members.
- Provide advice and recommendations to Department Staff regarding ADA issues in the Regions.

Objectives:

- Serve as subject matter advisor to the Commission.
- Develop and maintain a collaborative working relationship with the Regional Biologists and Land Managers in each region in order to achieve access to Fish and Wildlife lands for persons with disabilities to hunt, fish, and view wildlife.
- Actively engage with WDFW on the ADA Advisory Committee's Work Plan.
- Identify and establish a working network of organizations that advocate for the various communities of people with disabilities.

Overview

In 2001, the Legislature directed the Fish and Wildlife Commission to appoint seven volunteers with disabilities to serve on an advisory committee as a pilot program. This Americans with Disabilities Act Advisory Committee (ADAAC) has been extended to the present, pursuant to RCW 77.04.150.

Washington State is recognized for its wide array of outdoor recreational activities and wildlife. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) encourages all persons with a disability to experience recreation in Washington's wonderful outdoors. Numerous opportunities are offered for hunters and anglers with disabilities through legislative mandates, statutes, and policies complying with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The ADAAC to the Fish and Wildlife Commission consists of Washington residents with disabilities representing each region with one appointed from at-large. This committee works closely with the Department to review, enhance, and create more recreational opportunities.

WDFW also partners with Cities, Counties, other State Agencies, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), private landowners and Timber Companies to develop hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities. Our programs and projects are good examples of accomplishments through the cooperative efforts of public-private partnerships and the many dedicated members non-governmental organizations, sporting clubs, and WDFW personnel who have all volunteered their time, dollars and efforts to make these many programs and projects successful.

The Advisory Committee represents the interests of disabled hunters, fishers, and wildlife viewers on matters such as special hunts, modified sporting equipment, access to public land, and hunting and fishing opportunities for persons with disabilities. Pursuant to RCW 77.04.150, the Fish and Wildlife Commission was directed to submit a report to the appropriate legislative committees detailing the effectiveness of the Committee, including information on participation levels, general interest, quality of advice, and recommendations for the Advisory Committee's continuance or modification.

Summary of Work 2012-15

In an effort to develop more clarity of function and purpose, in 2014 the ADAAC adopted a Committee Charter, setting forth the mission statement, goals, objectives, roles, responsibilities, and operations of the Committee. Additionally, a Work Plan for the years 2013-15 was developed (see attached, Committee Charter and 2012-15 Work Plan). Currently, a draft Work Plan for 2016-18 is being developed for review and approval by the ADAAC.

During this reporting period, the ADAAC adopted three resolutions which were formally sent to the Commission for their consideration. One resolution recommended that Region 1 be split into two separate North and South regions. The Commission did not act on this resolution. A second resolution recommended legislative changes to House Bill 1079 (Reduced fees). This was considered by the Agency and the Commission in its work on that legislation. The third resolution recommended changes to the WAC allowing the use of scopes on crossbows as part of the Special Use Permit process. This recommendation was accepted by the Commission and is reflected in the amended WAC. Additionally, the ADAAC has provided advice and recommendations to the agency on a variety of issues affecting access by persons with disabilities to fishing, hunting and viewing wildlife, including reduced fees for persons with disabilities, the use of scopes on crossbows, electrical animal calling, the use of special use permits to accommodate impairments, special hunting tags for youth with disabilities, Title II compliance of the Department's website, hunter/fisher companion rules, expanding access opportunities for fishing, starting an agency award for ADA access efforts, improving ADA Access signage, and the 2014 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ADA On-site Review.

For example, the Advisory Committee reviewed the agency's website for ADA Title II accessibility compliance and recommended review by an outside consulting group. As a result, recommendations were made to make the website accessible to persons with disabilities. The agency is currently working to make the website compliant, and funding to make the changes is being sought from the Legislature.

Recommendations were made to change the signage at WDFW sites to identify ADA opportunities at each site and the agency is now in the process of printing and posting that signage.

Recommendations were also made to post ADA accessibility language on agency publications and notices. The agency is now including that language in those documents.

Additionally, Committee members made significant impact at the regional level by working with WDFW offices and private entities to fund and construct ADA hunting access sites, performing inventories of ADA accessible hunting and fishing sites within each region, arranging for special events and forums for persons with disabilities, and networking with private entities to develop help and support to the Committee's efforts.

For example, ADAAC member David Martin, an active member of the Puget Sound Anglers, participated in fishing events for people with vision impairment. As a part of the Everett Coho Tournament, he assisted in organizing a fishing derby for the visually impaired for 75 anglers on 56 boats. Working as a volunteer with the Annual Tuna Classic and the Wounded Warriors organization, Mr. Martin assisted injured veterans participate in a tuna fishing tournament by placing them on boats and enabling them to participate in the tournament.

Chairman Reno Pellegrini, as a part of the hunter education program, helped develop volunteer activities for persons with impairments to enable them to complete the required volunteer hours needed to maintain their Master Hunter credentials. Additionally, he formed a group which received an ALEA grant to feed elk, keeping them away from crop areas in the winter. As a part of that effort, he has enabled persons with disabilities to participate in feeding the elk. Chairman Pellegrini also organized a regional forum in his district to allow local residents the opportunity to meet and discuss their views on fishing, wildlife viewing, and hunting opportunities in the state.

In 2015, ADAAC member Rick Erickson, through his non-profit organization, and in partnership with WDFW and several non-profit and for-profit organizations, built two hunting blinds in Region 5 with accessibility for persons with disabilities. Local partners have agreed to maintain the two facilities in future years. Additionally, in 2016, Mr. Erickson intends to construct two more hunting blinds with accessibility, and is currently exploring the construction of a fishing pier that would provide access for persons with disabilities in the Vancouver Lake area.

Most of the members have been working with private entities to develop private-public partnerships that have funded and constructed accessible hunting blinds in the regions, and monitored the existing accessible sites to evaluate their status.

Participation Levels of the Advisory Committee Membership

In November 2002 members of the ADAAC were selected from a small pool of candidates. Since that time there has been constant turn over for various reasons. There is currently one vacancy.

The Advisory Committee had conducted twenty three meetings, six conference calls, and presented nine annual reports to the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Statistical Data

This data presented illustrates the major changes from 2001 through 2010 in the number of Disabled Hunters and Fishers.

Data – Licenses Purchased:

2001	Disabled Hunter:	2924	Disabled Fisher	No Data
2008	Disabled Hunter	5468	Disabled Fisher	12469
2010	Disabled Hunter	6256	Disabled Fisher	13629

Hunting License Breakdown:

Persons with Disabilities purchased:

2001	Big Game:	2924	Small Game:	800
2010	Big Game:	6256	Small Game:	1875