

Commission Statement of Appreciation for Phil Anderson

At the end of January, Phil Anderson will step down after serving 6 years as WDFW Director. He has presided over one of the most difficult periods in the Department's history-- a time of unprecedented budget cuts and instability. Working in close tandem with his trusted Deputy Director Joe Stohr, Director Anderson skillfully mapped a pathway to traverse those extraordinarily trying times.

His strategic sense and political skills were key factors in how well the Department survived the loss of 40% of its state funding as a result of the Great Recession. In those terrible times, success was defined as minimizing the size of the cuts. After the first brutal year, the cuts that occurred were less than the cuts anticipated. Staff reductions were absorbed in a humane way. Largely due to Director Anderson's capacity for work and his ability to motivate his staff, in last couple years, the Department saw most of our legislative agenda accomplished.

Director Anderson's leadership was pivotal in and essential to all of the major policy reforms carried out by the Commission in the past 6 years-- on Hatchery and Harvest Reform, Puget Sound Crab Management, Puget Sound Shrimp Management, Columbia River Salmon Management, and Grays Harbor Salmon Management. All those policies were carefully developed with well- documented scientific bases, extensive involvement of stakeholders, and strict adherence to procedural laws.

Director Anderson's leadership with regard to the recovery of gray wolves in Washington deserves special note. There is no more contentious and challenging resource issue: one that demands the most difficult decisions again and again. Director Anderson demonstrated the highest degree of professionalism and leadership during the times of greatest stress. As a result, the state is on a path towards successful wolf recovery and management, without court intervention.

All these major accomplishments cannot be done without an enormous amount of legwork by Department staff-- work that must be done in addition to their routine work. All this work was successfully carried out during the meltdown with fewer people, less money, and an anxious public.

In our line of work, even in the best of times, we get few compliments for tasks done well. Director Anderson has been getting a share of well-earned compliments. The Commission fully understands why. Some leaders attain high positions and delegate all the tough, thankless work to their underlings. Director Anderson has worked longer and harder than anyone, criss-crossing the state, listening to our constituents, and trying his best to help solve the most intractable problems we face. His concern for staff and ability to lead by example has made the Department a better place to work. We offer him our sincere appreciation and in a voice loud and clear: **JOB VERY WELL DONE.**