

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

2009 Position Description

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

June 11, 2009

The Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission is seeking prospective candidates to apply to serve as Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Director reports to the Fish and Wildlife Commission and manages a Department with more than 1,500 employees, a biennial budget of more than \$350 million and responsibility for more than 900,000 acres of wildlife habitat. The position offers unique opportunities and challenges and requires a dynamic leader with demonstrated executive-level experience. The Office of the Director is located in the Natural Resources Building in Olympia, Washington. The position is exempt from state civil service law.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife serves Washington's citizens by protecting, restoring and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, while providing sustainable and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities.

The Director's duties include: 1) lead and manage a complex Department; 2) assist the Commission in developing and reaching agreement on policy directions; 3) coordinate with the Governor's Office, State Legislature, other state agencies and Congressional delegation; and 4) represent the Department and state in discussions, negotiations and partnerships with federal, tribal, regional and international organizations.

The Director will ensure that the Department's programs and services safeguard the long-term health of the fish and wildlife under the Department's stewardship. The Director will provide leadership in building more effective relationships with the citizens of Washington State and the broad array of constituents who have a stake in the Department's work. The Director will take responsibility for ensuring that the organization's culture is geared to achieving its strategic priorities.

Candidates are encouraged to carefully research the recent history of the Department and to be fully prepared to speak to the approach they propose to adopt in addressing the challenges outlined below.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

In 2007, the Commission adopted a set of goals, objectives and measurements with which to evaluate the performance of the Director. These goals and objectives provide a list of priority issues currently facing the Department. Washington State presents one of the most challenging contexts for resource management of all the western states. With a relatively large human population and a comparatively small public land base, our state will find it increasingly difficult to support the rich diversity of fish and wildlife species we desire. Washington State is the second most populous of the twelve western states and has the smallest land base of those states.

Fisheries

One of the Department's most costly and difficult challenges is to reverse the decline in salmon and steelhead populations. Recovery will demand a comprehensive and long-term approach that unites our stakeholders and the general public in this important cause. Fish populations other than salmon and shellfish have also been depleted. In a number of cases, the weak stocks have constrained the harvest of highly-valued and healthy populations of fish. The Director will be asked to develop effective new approaches to conserving and recovering fisheries resources, while resolving long-standing and increasing conflicts among competing stakeholders.

Wildlife

Washington State has a rich diversity of wildlife species. Some are abundant while others are listed as threatened or endangered under state and federal law. The Director will lead the agency as it confronts a range of key wildlife management challenges. The Department will not be able to provide all the habitat that is needed to support healthy populations of wildlife, despite the continued acquisition of additional lands. These lands cannot be adequately managed without increased funding for maintenance and operation. Public use of agency lands has intensified as the Department has sought to expand recreational opportunities. User group conflicts have resulted. The Director will confront these difficult challenges.

Enforcement and Regulatory Programs

In the past decade as Washington's population has grown, the number and complexity of rules and regulations have expanded. According to a recent outside evaluation, the Department has an insufficient number of commissioned officers and support staff to cover the agency's enforcement workload. The Enforcement and Regulatory Programs often give rise to politically charged compliance actions. The Director will lead the agency's efforts to demand a high level of compliance with these rules.

Intergovernmental Resource Management

In general, tribal, state and federal governments share responsibilities for protecting and managing fish and wildlife resources. More specifically, some authorities are separate, while other authorities overlap. The complex nature of federal, state, local and Tribal authorities and responsibilities creates the necessity for continual intergovernmental coordination on a range of issues. In addition to fisheries allocation decisions, coordination is necessary to fulfill the state's obligations under the Endangered Species

Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act and other laws. The Director will establish and maintain professional and productive working relationships with other state and federal agencies and with Tribal governments. The Director will lead the agency's effort to effectively advocate for conservation of the state's fish and wildlife in intergovernmental forums. He/she will represent the interests of our hunters and fishers and the general public in negotiations with Tribal co-managers.

Habitat

Of the western states, Washington's geographic size is the smallest while its human population size is the second largest. Thus, our state faces perhaps the greatest challenge of the western states in providing sufficient habitat for fish and wildlife populations. Like other states, our state's human population places many demands on our land base: for development, for recreation and for undisturbed open space. The Director will serve as one of the state's leading voices for the central importance of habitat in sustaining fish and wildlife populations. She/he will be called upon to create an environment that encourages innovation with respect to habitat protection and mitigation activities. New and more effective approaches to the agency's regulatory functions will also be promoted. The Department's stewardship of agency lands will become ever more important as the human population grows and habitat for wildlife shrinks. These pressures will make it vital that the Department continue to work cooperatively with private landowners whose properties provide important habitat values. Such partnerships offer opportunities to enhance recreational access to private lands.

The Organization

The Commission supervises the Director and sets agency policies. The Department's organizational structure is a complex mix of centralized functions and decentralized operations. The Department's six regions play an essential role in assuring that the policies are sensitive to local conditions and preferences. The Director will be asked to strike the optimal balance between developing one organizational vision and culture and allowing sufficient flexibility to adjust to the circumstances present in different areas of our state. The Director will be expected to work closely with the Commission.

The Budget and Agency Accounting

In the past six months, Washington has experienced a dramatic drop in revenues. As a consequence, the Department has been directed to reduce its biennial (2-year) budget by roughly \$22.5 million. These cost savings will demand a reduction in force of 163 FTEs. Budget cuts of this magnitude cannot be achieved without a fundamental transformation of the agency.

The Director will lead the agency through this transformative period. The nature and number of pivotal choices facing the agency make this a watershed time. Executive leadership skills of the highest order are essential. Difficult times such as these call for clear vision, true leadership and firm decisions.

What emerges from this time of change should be an agency that is more focused and more disciplined. It must be ready to carry out its essential core functions with great competence. At the end of this transformation, the agency will be judged on its

performance in meeting the expectations for cost cutting and in its readiness to face the future. The process of re-establishing its credibility and reputation for excellence will begin anew. The fiscal discipline adopted to get through this transformative period should be retained as core functions are strengthened.

The agency's business practices were called into question in recent years by the Legislature. A rigorous outside review of the agency's bookkeeping and other business practices – the Berk Report – acknowledged that reforms were necessary. Progress has been made in implementing the called for reforms. The Director will be held accountable for continued progress in improving the agency's financial operations.

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Director should possess the following qualities and characteristics.

1. Conservation Ethic

The Department serves as the trustee of the state's fish and wildlife resources. The Director must be motivated by a strong conservation ethic: a determination to place the highest priority on the long-term interests of the resources and their habitat. The interests of the public and specific user-groups are important, but they cannot supersede the welfare of the fish and wildlife populations we are charged with managing. The Director should have a record of making the decisions that have led to the recovery of depleted resources.

2. Capacity for Strategic and Visionary Leadership

The Director should bring to this job an established reputation for strategic and visionary leadership. As Director, the individual will be expected to assess and decide the best way to achieve substantial cost savings, while preserving critical functions and increasing agency efficiency. He/she will lay the foundation for a stronger and more effective and respected agency, as well as direct the strategic elimination of lower priority activities and the consolidation of effort and energy in higher priority programs.

3. Leadership Style that Inspires Excellence, Commands Respect and Demands Accountability

It is the role of the Director to keep the workforce motivated to pursue excellence. The Director should set high standards for performance and foster a climate in which all employees strive to meet those standards. Those who achieve should be provided regular reinforcement for their excellence by their supervisors. He/she should be expert in management techniques that effectively hold employees accountable.

4. Problem Solving Skills to Resolve Longstanding Problems.

The Director should be an individual who believes that longstanding problems can be solved, rather than that they should be accepted as inevitable and irresolvable. The Director will be energetic and creative in looking for innovative means to address priority

issues and conflicts among constituent groups. He/she will actively seek out new ideas and methods that may be brought to bear to advance the agency's mission.

5. Fairness and Ability to Work with all Stakeholders

The Director should have a personal manner that works well with constituents from all backgrounds. It should be evident that the Director approaches his/her authorities and responsibilities with humility and open-mindedness. The Director should display an attitude that inspires others to join in collaborative processes, because they are confident of being treated fairly. He/she should be capable of maintaining a professional demeanor.

6. Scientific Rigor

The Director should have demonstrated the ability to work closely with the scientific community in building a defensible scientific basis for resource management. He/she should also have a working understanding of scientific analyses and quantitative methods used to study fish and wildlife population dynamics as well as the health and productivity of habitats.

7. Work Ethic

The Director should be energetic and committed to serving as a role model for staff. The Director will be personally accountable for the accomplishments and shortcomings of the agency. The Director must assume responsibility for all aspects of agency leadership.

8. Ability to Work Collaboratively with the Commission

The Director should be prepared to enter into a collaborative working relationship with the Commission. The Commission -- by vote of the people -- was granted the authority to appoint the Director in order to assure that the agency would remain responsive to the views of citizens. The Commission sets policy for the agency. The Director implements the policies set by the Commission. In a number of arenas, the Commission has permanently delegated its authority to the Director. The Commission also evaluates the performance of the Director. The Director should have a successful track record for working with Boards of Directors or Commissions.

DESIRED EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Commission seeks candidates with the following experience and achievements:

- ★ A Bachelor's degree in natural resources or related field and at least ten years of progressively responsible professional experience in the management of natural resources for a large, complex organization or any combination of

education and experience that will yield the desired competencies of the position.

- ★ Managed and recovered wildlife populations
- ★ Managed diverse fisheries including those with stocks listed under the ESA through an integrated strategy responding to multiple factors degrading those resources
- ★ Experience in expanding and sustaining opportunities for traditional and new use of public lands
- ★ Expertise in agency budget development processes
- ★ Expertise in administrative procedures for financial accountability to assure effective utilization of appropriated funds
- ★ Experience in the state and federal legislative processes
- ★ Experience in managing senior level staff
- ★ Expertise in managing those who manage employees to accomplish goals
- ★ Experience in developing communication and positive relations with constituents

COMPENSATION

Compensation for this position is up to \$151,705 annually, depending on qualifications. The State of Washington also offers a complete benefits package including sick, vacation and military leave; medical, dental and life insurance coverage; and a deferred compensation plan.