

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY DECISION

POLICY TITLE: BUDGET REDUCTIONS 2009-2011 **POLICY NUMBER: C-4001**

Supersedes: N/A

Effective Date: January 9, 2009

Termination Date: December 31, 2009

See Also: Policy Document, and
2007-09 Goals & Objectives

Approved: January 9, 2009

By: [/s/ Jerry Gutzwiler, Chair]
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

Policy: Budget Reductions for 2009-2011 Biennium

Washington State's impending budget deficit will force policymakers to consider all options for dramatically reducing the costs of state agencies. At minimum, the Department will be called upon to explore ways to redesign, downsize, and focus resources to assure that the agency can carry out its mission, perform core functions, and deliver the services expected by the public. The Governor's Office has directed that we place priority on retaining field staff that most directly accomplishes our core mission.

This Policy is intended to ensure that the budget reductions undertaken in response to the deficit will be consistent with the priorities of the Commission and the guidance provided by the Governor's Office. It is understood that the Commission Policy Document and Director's Goals and Objectives developed earlier this year remain in effect; however, some of the agreed upon goals may be modified or temporarily set aside for budget reasons. Deviations from the Goals and Objectives of January 2008 will be identified by agreement between the Commission and the Director during the second quarter of 2009.

The Director and the Commission will communicate frequently to ensure timely and accurate review of proposed Department changes.

Priorities for Budget Decisions:

The Director will be responsible for decisions on budget reductions based on the following guiding principles:

- Conservation is the first priority of this agency. Resource utilization is also among the highest priorities, but it must be considered only after the

conservation mission is secured.

- Insofar as is possible, the agency will retain core functions and assure that State and federal legislative directives are achieved in a manner that maintains the reputation and credibility of the agency.
- Because the reductions needed are very large, costs cutting must be strategic. Core activities need to be funded sufficiently to allow high quality performance, while lower priority activities that we can no longer afford need to be greatly reduced or eliminated.
- Across-the-board cutting by program is not the preferred approach to resolving the budget crisis. Instead, the benefits of organizational restructuring should be seriously considered including reductions in the number of programs and the number of high-level management positions.
- The Agency will maintain a high presence and quality of service to the public in the Regions. A reduction in the number of Regions should be considered only as a last resort after major significant reductions in central office expenditures.
- Opportunities for innovative partnering with other agencies to find economic operating efficiencies should be fully explored, including potential options for sharing facilities, resources, and combining functions where possible. The Agency should seek opportunities to coordinate with federal, other state and local agencies (including colleges and universities) to work together on activities of common interest. Such partnerships may allow important activities to be accomplished that would otherwise not be achievable within budget restrictions.
- The Agency should involve local citizens groups across the state and seek their cooperation. Furthermore, the public should be enlisted to help develop and enhance partnerships to pursue agency objectives that might not otherwise be affordable.
- The Agency must maintain its enforcement capability as a necessary function to protect and conserve fish and wildlife resources.
- The Agency should maintain regular, clear, and effective communications with the public to ensure that complete and up-to-date information on proposed and adopted changes to WDFW functions and priorities is readily available.