



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N • Olympia, WA 98501-1091 • (360) 902-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207
Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building • 1111 Washington Street SE • Olympia, WA

February 18, 2009

Dear Interested Party:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) would like your help in shaping the future direction of the Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) program.

The Department is developing a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for activities authorized under the HPA program. The HPA HCP will guide the Department's long-term efforts to conserve and protect sensitive fish and shellfish species. It will also ensure that hydraulic projects comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The HPA HCP will draw upon the best available scientific information about the impacts of various types of hydraulic project activities. In developing the HCP, the Department will evaluate management strategies necessary to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for adverse impacts to ESA-listed and at-risk species and their habitats resulting from HPAs.

To help ensure that diverse viewpoints are considered throughout the process, we are seeking members to serve on a policy-level Habitat Conservation Plan Advisory Committee. The perspective and participation of groups such as yours are important to developing a workable plan that will protect fish and shellfish to the maximum extent practicable.

The purpose of the HCP Advisory Committee

The HCP Advisory Committee will play a key role in the HCP development process by recommending specific management strategies or rule revisions the Department should consider including in the HCP. The Committee will also help by providing diverse perspectives on the effects of those actions. The Department will select representatives based on potential participants' experience with HPAs, HCPs, and/or similar issues and planning processes.

The purpose of the HCP Advisory Committee meetings will be to discuss the actions that the Department could or should take to conserve and protect fish and shellfish habitat, and the effects of those actions on tribes, resource users, other governmental entities, and businesses. The outcome will be a set of recommendations from the Committee that the Department and the Fish and Wildlife Commission will consider in developing the HCP and in revising any associated rules and the hydraulic permitting system.

Please note that while the HCP Advisory Committee represents an important part of the process, it is not the only way to be involved, and there will be multiple, ongoing opportunities to provide input. In addition, there will be formal public review and comment after the Advisory Committee has made its recommendations and the Department has prepared a draft HCP. If you do not wish to formally participate in the HCP Advisory Committee process, but wish to be informed about these other opportunities, please let us know.

How much of a time commitment will the HCP Advisory Committee require?

We are seeking Committee members who will work together collaboratively over the next two years. We hope to finalize the membership of the HCP Advisory Committee and hold initial meetings early in 2009. Each member will be interviewed with regard to their interests prior to the first meeting and the first two meetings will be held one month apart.

In these initial meetings we will:

- Introduce members of the Advisory Committee.
- Adopt a charter and ground rules.
- Establish decision-making procedures.
- Review the purpose of the HCP.
- Review the work that is being done to establish the technical and scientific basis of the HCP.

Following these initial meetings, we anticipate that the Committee will continue to meet for one day approximately every two months through 2010. Additionally, occasional small group work may be needed.

The meetings will be professionally facilitated to ensure that members' time is used efficiently, and the Department will commit all necessary staff and resources to ensure the process runs smoothly. We will also convene groups of technical experts to assist the Committee on an as-needed basis. Members will be expected to commit to attending meetings, reviewing meeting materials beforehand, and actively collaborating in discussions and other forums.

Please consider joining the HPA HCP Advisory Committee. If you would like to participate in the HCP Advisory Committee, or if you know of someone else who should be considered, **please respond in writing (see requested information below) by April 1, 2009, to:**

Carol Piening at carol.piening@dfw.wa.gov

or

Carol Piening
Environmental Planner
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Habitat Program
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98501-1091.

In your response, please include the following information:

The names and contact information of potential Advisory Committee representatives and what organization they represent.

A short summary of their qualifications to serve, based on the following criteria:

- Experience or familiarity with the Hydraulic Project Approval program or similar regulatory programs.
- Experience or familiarity with Habitat Conservation Plans or similar plans for the management of species and habitats.
- Leadership ability.
- Past experience and success in collaborative processes.
- Knowledge of and good working relationships with other anticipated participants.
- Availability.

A brief description about why the individual is interested in participating in the Advisory Committee.

The work we are undertaking with this project will help establish the future direction of the HPA program for years to come. Your participation would contribute greatly to the project's overall success.

For more information about the HCP project, including activities to date, please refer to the enclosed list of questions and answers about the project. You can also visit the HPA HCP project website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hcp>.

If you have any questions please contact Carol Piening, Project Planner, at 360-902-2588 / carol.piening@dfw.wa.gov, or Matt Niles, Project Manager, at 360-902-8138 / matt.niles@dfw.wa.gov. We will be in contact with you over the coming weeks to provide more information about the process.

Thank you in advance for any assistance you may be able to provide.

Sincerely,

Philip Anderson
Interim Director

Enclosure
cc: