## Commission Request to Department "Blue Sheet"

Date of Request: August 26, 2022			
Title of Request: Beaver Management			
Commissioner: Melanie Rowland			
Request Due Date: October 2022			
Priority Level (put one check in each row):			
Importance:	[X] High	[ ] Medium	[ ] Low
Urgency:			[ X ] High [ ] Medium [ ] Low

Knowledge or Action Being Requested (narrative). Describe what you want to know. Be specific.

I am requesting Commission action to 1) initiate discussion of a management policy for beavers (*Castor canadensis*) that supports the Department in assisting landowners with nonlethal solutions to beaver problems, and emphasizes the critical role of beavers in restoring wetlands and riparian and stream habitats beneficial to myriad aquatic species, including endangered salmonids; and 2) if warranted after a briefing and public input, place a temporary moratorium on trapping beavers (except for trapping for relocation) until a new beaver management policy consistent with these goals can be adopted and implemented.

I request that staff present a briefing to the full commission, including answers to the following questions:

- 1. What is our best estimate of the Washington beaver population and distribution? On what is this estimate based?
- 2. Are beaver hunted in this state by methods other than trapping?
- 3. How many beavers have been trapped and killed in Washington each year for the last five years?
- 4. Under what authority are these beavers trapped?
- 5. How many individual licenses for trapping of furbearers (other than for beaver relocation) does WDFW issue annually?
- 6. How many of the licensees attempt to trap beavers?

- 7. How many applications for permits to trap beaver for relocation under <a href="RCW 34.05.313">RCW 34.05.313</a>. has WDFW processed?
- 8. How many of these applications have been granted?
- 9. How many permits for beaver relocation trapping are in effect for the current year?
- 10. Does the Department participate in partnership with any other public agencies, Indian Tribes, or community groups to relocate beavers to aid in salmon recovery or other conservation goals?
- 11. What is the status of the rule that is the objective of the Department's beaver relocation permit project?

## For additional resources, see:

**RCW 77.32.585: Release of wild beavers**, which instructs the Department to "permit the release of wild beavers on public and private lands with agreement from the property owner." The legislative finding for this statute is perhaps the best description of the conservation benefits of beavers. (See <a href="https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=77.32.585">https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=77.32.585</a>; https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/nuisance-wildlife/beaver-relocation#FAQ)

## Beaver: The North American freshwater climate action plan,

https://wires.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/wat2.1592 ("[W]hile the importance of river restoration is clear, beaver-based restoration—for example, strategic coexistence, relocation, and mimicry—remains an underutilized strategy despite ample data demonstrating its efficacy.") (April 28, 2022)

**The Methow Beaver Project**, a partnership between the Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation and the Forest Service to benefit watershed function

https://ecology.wa.gov/Blog/Posts/December-2015/Beaver-reintroduction-a-watershed-success;
https://www.methowsalmon.org/methow-beaver-project

**The Skykomish Beaver Project**, a partnership among the Tulalip Tribes, UW, the Forest Service, and other agencies to improve salmon habitat

https://nwtreatytribes.org/beavers-relocated-improve-salmon-habitat/

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe and Forest Service project in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest to help salmon recovery

https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/how-relocating-beavers-in-wa-is-meant-to-help-young-salmon/