



May 2010

Operating Protocols and Guidelines for Advisory Groups

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Civil Rights Coordinator for Public Access
4401 N. Fairfax Drive
Mail Stop: WSFR-4020
Arlington, VA 22203



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Director's Message

Welcome and thank you for your participation on one of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (Department) advisory groups. We understand that you are a volunteer, choosing to donate your time and energy to help us perform our mission of sound stewardship of fish and wildlife.

I am hopeful this brochure will help you understand your appointment, responsibilities, and the processes in communicating with the Department.

Many items may not be applicable to your specific group; however, I am hopeful that the information provided will better assist you in understanding the variety of roles and purposes of the various groups and the processes of state government in general.

Specific questions or comments on any of this material should be directed to the lead agency contact for your group.

The Department's use of volunteer groups is fundamental in encouraging the use of citizen talent and interest in the affairs of the state, and in keeping government responsive. We welcome the partnership and thank you for your commitment.

Sincerely,



Philip Anderson
Director

Notes

You Are Important to the Department

Advisory groups may be created by the Governor, the Legislature, or individual agencies. The Department has formally established and appointed members to, a variety of advisory groups through statutory or agency authority and discretion. The primary purpose of these groups is to advise the Department on current and emerging issues associated with fish and wildlife conservation and management. Members appointed to the Department's advisory groups assume certain responsibilities described in this document **in addition** to those that may be specific or unique to an individual advisory group.

Unless specifically authorized, advisory groups do not have the authority to enforce policy or create rules, but their analysis and recommendations can play an important role in furthering the effective operation of state government.

Agency Roles and Responsibilities

- Clearly define the advisory group's role.
- Provide the Department's mission and goals statement.
- Provide timely opportunities for advisors to counsel the agency on policy and provide timely communication on emerging issues.
- Schedule meetings in consultation with advisors and provide meeting places. Scheduling should take into account the volunteer nature of advisory group members—choosing times and locations that are most convenient and scheduling as far in advance as possible.
- Provide background and other briefing material.
- Facilitate meetings and conference calls as needed.
- Develop meeting agendas.
- Be respectful of the views of others and carefully consider the views of the advisors.
- Communicate the advisors' comments, views, and perspectives to agency leadership prior to decision-making.
- Provide feedback regarding how the Department uses advisors' input.

Giving the Department Your Input

Advisor Roles and Responsibilities

- Provide advice to the Department on agency proposed regulations, policies, and management plans for species, ecosystems, or Department lands. Such advice should consider:
 - 1) conservation of fish and wildlife resources;
 - 2) the effect on local economies and social structures;
 - 3) the views of various constituent groups;
 - 4) potential conflicts among user groups using a specific fish or wildlife resource; and
 - 5) enforcement issues and the need for additional enforcement resources.
- Communicate stakeholder opinions, attitudes, and needs to the agency.
- Identify areas of concern and recommend change.
- Members are responsible for understanding their group's roles and responsibilities.
- Advisors should keep up-to-date on issues and regulations affecting their focus areas.
- Attend public workshops or forums established by the Department (such as the North of Falcon process) or regional meetings addressing fish or wildlife issues such as herd management plans, watchable wildlife, or local fishing issues.
- Keep the Department advised of current trends and developments.
- Provide advice regarding enforcement and regulatory compliance issues.
- Assist the Department in developing communication strategies and communicating with members of the public regarding the issues that come before the advisory group.
- Be respectful and carefully consider the views of others.
- Attend advisory group meetings or advise the Department of absences. Requests to have an alternate attend should be coordinated with the Department in advance, and may not always be accommodated.

Role of Advisory Groups

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Groups/Boards (origin of group: legislative, Director's request, or informal)

FISH PROGRAM

Anadromous and Marine Resources Sportfishing Advisory Group (**Director**)
 Aquatic Invertebrate Import Advisory Committee (**Director, WAC 220.77.040**)
 Ballast Water Working Group (**WAC 220.150.010**)
 Coastal Dungeness Crab Advisory Group (**Director**)
 Columbia River Commercial Advisory Group (**Director, Joint with Oregon**)
 Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group (**Director, Joint with Oregon**)
 Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Recreational Anglers Board (**RCW 77.12.716**)
 Distant Waters Advisory Group (**Ad Hoc**)
 Grays Harbor Salmon Advisory Group (**Director**)
 Inland Fish Policy Advisory Group (**Director**)
 Puget Sound Commercial Dungeness Crab Advisory Group (**Director**)
 Puget Sound Commercial Salmon Advisory Group (**Ad Hoc**)
 Puget Sound Commercial Shrimp Advisory Group (**Director**)
 Puget Sound Oyster Reserve Lands Advisory Committee (**RCW 77.60.150**)
 Puget Sound Recreational Dungeness Crab and Shrimp Advisory Group (**Director**)
 Puget Sound Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Oversight Committee (**RCW 77.105.160**)
 Puget Sound Recreational Coastal Bottomfish and Halibut Advisory Group (**Ad Hoc**)
 Puget Sound Rockfish Advisory Group (**Director**)
 Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group Advisory Board (**RCW 77.95.110**)
 Sardine Advisory Group (**Ad Hoc**)
 Sea Urchin / Sea Cucumber Advisory Group (**Ad Hoc**)
 Steelhead and Cutthroat Policy Advisory Group (**Director**)
 Upper Columbia Recreational Advisory Group (**Ad Hoc**)
 Willapa Bay Oyster Reserve Lands Advisory Committee (**RCW 77.60.150**)
 Willapa Bay Salmon Advisory Board (**Director**)

WILDLIFE PROGRAM:

Game Management Advisory Council (**Director**)
 Lands Management Advisory Council (**Director**)
 Migratory Waterfowl Art Committee (**RCW 77.12.680**)
 Upland Game Advisory Council (**Ad Hoc**)
 Waterfowl Advisory Group (**Director**)
 Wildlife Area Citizen Advisory Groups*
 Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council (**Director**)
 Wolf Working Group (**Director**)

ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM:

Enforcement Advisory Group (**Director**)
 Master Hunter Advisory Group (**Director**)
 Shooting Range Citizen Advisory Group (**Ad Hoc**)

OTHER:

Commission's Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (**Commission**)
 License Dealer Advisory Group (**Licensing**)

*Diverse ad hoc groups dedicated to specific wildlife areas across the state

Role of Advisory Groups

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| STATE OF WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO A DEPARTMENT ADVISORY BOARD | |
| NAME OF BOARD OR GROUP YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE CONSIDERED FOR: | |
| Name: | |
| Address: | |
| City: | |
| State/Zip: | |
| County: | Are you a citizen of the United States: Yes No |
| Business Phone: | Home Phone: |
| Education: | |
| Current Employment: | |
| Licenses Held: | |
| References: | |
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| Please attach a current resume/biography with application. | |

What you need to know

ADVISING THE AGENCY

- Advisory group members are selected to represent a broad range of interests. The Department is seeking the advice from individual members recognizing that members may have different views on key issues of concern. It is important for the Department to understand and consider different perspectives before making a decision. Thus, in many instances the Department gains more value from understanding the range of perspectives than from a majority opinion.
- Consensus recommendations have utility when they represent the full range of stakeholder views.
- Recommendations on major policy issues to the Department should include discussion of alternate viewpoints.
- All ideas should be expressed in clear, concise language; Department staff will assist with the written record.
- Proposed solutions and/or recommendations should be viable and cost-effective.

COMPOSITION

Unless provided otherwise by statute or the Director, advisory groups shall consist of a sufficient number of members, generally less than 20, to carry out the objectives and duties of the advisory group. In selecting members, the Department shall seek an advisory group composition that recognizes differences in management and conservation perspectives and is considerate of the value of diversity and geographical representation.

NOMINATION SOLICITATIONS

Announcements will be distributed widely and will be specific about the duties and responsibilities. Nominations must be accompanied by adequate information on the amount and kinds of experience that qualify the nominee for the particular position. Nominations should be received on or before a deadline identified by the Department.

Most Department Advisory Group Coordinators use recruitment notices tied to specific open application periods. Announcements seeking advisory group nominations are broadly distributed and have a specific deadline for submission. During an announced period for applying, you may send a letter of interest, along with your resume and letters of support, to:

Director's Office
 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
 600 Capital Way North
 Olympia, Washington 98501-1091

CHAIRPERSON OR STAFF COORDINATOR

For each advisory group, the Department will designate a staff person who will be responsible for organizing and conducting meetings. In some cases, as specified by the Department or state statute, an advisory group will elect a chairperson. The chairperson will be elected by majority vote of the advisory group members at a scheduled meeting provided a quorum of more than one half of the appointed members is present. Advisory groups that establish a chair position will conduct their meetings in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- Advisory groups are created to provide input and feedback to the Department, and are not created for the purpose of influencing other entities.
- An advisory group shall not communicate its positions and opinions to entities outside the Department without notifying the Director or their designee.
- A Department advisory group should not meet with outside entities unless it has received prior approval by the Director or their designee.
- Nothing prevents an individual advisor from expressing their views as a private citizen.

COMPENSATION

Advisors are responsible for their own travel and meal expenses unless otherwise expressly provided.

THE NEWS MEDIA

- Treat all contacts with the media as external communications; the advisory group should not interact with the media but individual members are free to express their own views.
- If you do not know the answer to a question from the media or are unsure about an issue, feel free to refer the matter to your Department contact.
- Keep in mind that the comments you make in public may also have to be made in a court of law. Do not risk your personal integrity or that of another by thoughtless or unwarranted remarks.

QUORUM

If this applies to your group, and a quorum is not present, any business transaction is null and void.

TERMS

Advisory group members shall be appointed by the Department for a specific term generally not to exceed three years, and may be reappointed at the Department’s discretion. In most cases terms will be based on a calendar year.

TERMINATION OF MEMBERS

- An advisory group member may be terminated at the Department’s discretion if he/she is absent from two or more meetings in any 12-month period, violates the provisions of the operating protocols, or is unable to fulfill their responsibilities as an advisory group member.
- Advisory group members are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and be respectful of others. Abusive language or other types of unprofessional conduct are sufficient grounds for termination.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT
PUBLIC RECORDS AND PUBLIC ACCESS**

Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30)

The Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) applies to almost all state agency multi-member boards and commissions. Generally the OPMA requires that the multi-member board give public notice of a proposed meeting and allow the public to attend the meeting. Pursuant to the OPMA, the public may attend and witness the meeting, but unless required by another provision, the OPMA does not provide the public a right to speak at or otherwise actively participate in the meeting.

Whether the OPMA applies to an advisory group and thus requires meetings be noticed and open to the public, depends on the nature of the advisory group. The Department staff coordinator will assist each advisory group in understanding whether the OPMA applies as a matter of law. Nevertheless, the Department encourages members of all advisory groups to conduct their business in an open, transparent manner, consistent with the intent of the act.

Public Records Act (RCW 42.56)

The Public Records Act (PRA) provides public access to “public records” created by state and local governments. “Public records” generally includes any writing containing information relating to the conduct of government created or held by a state or local government. The public may inspect or obtain copies of most public records by filing a public disclosure request with the agency.

In the Department’s view, all materials and communications associated with advisory groups are public, and subject to public disclosure requests. The Department will respond to all disclosure requests for any materials provided by Department staff and records of any communications that have included Department staff. The Department cannot be responsible for communications and materials that it has not been aware of; consequently advisors are encouraged to always include Department staff in all their exchange of materials or communications between advisors in their group.

Reasonable Accommodation for Disabilities

Reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities will be arranged.