



Minutes
Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission Meeting
April 9-10, 2020 – Webinar

Attendance

WA Commission: **WA Department Staff:**

Larry Carpenter, Chair	Joe Panesko, AGO
Barbara Baker, Vice Chair	Anis Aoude
Bob Kehoe	Andrew Murdoch
Dave Graybill	Gary Marston
Donald McIsaac	Brock Hoenes
Kim Thorburn	Margen Carlson
Molly Linville	Rachel Blomker
James R. Anderson	Randi Thurston
Brad Smith	Laurie Peterson

Commission Staff:

Nikki Kloepfer

Public:

Thursday, April 9, 2020

Chair Carpenter called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Hatchery Reform Workshop Webinar – Briefing, Public Comment

Andrew Murdoch, Eastside Science Manager and Gary Marston, Hatchery Scientist briefed the Commission on the key findings of the Policy Evaluation Review report, which includes an assessment of implementation of the 11 policy guidelines relative to defined metrics in a report card format.

The following people provided comment:

Alan Chapman Greg King
Robert Sudar

Friday, April 10, 2020

Chair Carpenter called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Chair Carpenter announced that there will not be Executive Session at 11:50 a.m. Instead a meeting debrief will follow the last agenda item of the day.

1. Open Public Input

The following people provided input on various topics:

Frank Urabeck – Willapa Bay	Rob Kavanaugh – Game management
Ken Miller – Bear/timber damage	Bob McCoy – Mountain Lion Foundation
Dan Paul – Humane Society	Debra Chase – Mountain Lion Foundation
Kelly Bush – Against cougar hunting	Greg King – Willapa policy
Cindy Meck – Against cougar hunting	Perry Menchaca – North of Falcon, transparency

Robert Kinder – Clam season	Marie Neumiller – Science-based cougar management
Gary Koehler – Cougar harvesting	Heath Heikkila – Puget Sound fish conservation
Fred Koontz – Change	Matt Simonson – Increase cougar harvest
Chris Bachman – No cougar hunting	Sophia Ressler – Keep current cougar harvest quota

2. Call to Order

a. Commissioners' Discussion

Commissioner Thorburn, Graybill and Linville participated in a Region 1 leadership staff briefing on Commission issues in the area.

Commissioner Thorburn provided her thoughts on the COVID-19 closure in relation to public health. Other Commissioners also provided their thoughts on the pandemic as it relates to hunting and fishing. Commissioner McIsaac asked about when the next steps conversation will occur reopening. Chair Carpenter indicated it will occur at the end of today's meeting.

Commissioner Graybill acknowledged the retirement of Jim Brown, Region 1 Director. Thanked him for his service to the agency.

b. Meeting Minute Approval

The Commission considered approval of the minutes of the March 13, 2020 meeting and March 27, 2020 conference call.

Commissioner Thorburn made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. All in favor. Motion passed.

Commissioner Thorburn made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2020 conference call as amended. All in favor. Motion passed.

c. Committee Reports - This Section constitutes the formal minutes from each of the listed committee meetings:

Wildlife Committee

Commissioners in attendance: Anderson, Baker, Thorburn, Linville

Commissioner Thorburn reported the committee discussed cougar management options. The committee does have recommendation that will be discussed during the cougar agenda item later in the meeting. The committee discussed predator/prey management issues including the current department approach and the significance it. Commissioner Thorburn acknowledges the testimony of Ken Miller in relation to his long-term volunteer efforts with bear damage to small forest land owners operations. The committee discussed the department's response, which had been on hold due to litigation. The program is now resuming.

Fish Committee

Commissioners in attendance: Kehoe, Graybill, McIsaac, Carpenter

Commissioner McIsaac reported that the Fish Committee met April 9, 2020 by conference call. The agenda and materials were posted on the Commission website prior to the meeting. The Fish Committee discussed materials associated with the topic of providing guidance on the development policy language revisions to Policy C-3619. The Fish Committee reached a unanimous recommendation to the Commission to consider under agenda item 8 at this meeting. The recommendation is linked under agenda item 8 on the Commission website.

3. Director's Report - COVID-19 Update

The Deputy Director provided oral highlights on the following:

- Our DFW's structural deficit was resolved with \$27M State General Funds which is a great recognition that broad-based funding support is appropriate for our conservation mission. This supplemental operating budget, which will fund the Department's core services through June of 2021 and allocates significant resources for new work. The ongoing dollars are close to fully funding today's needs in outyears.
- The Governor's Office, in anticipation of a poor economic forecast, made approximately 150 vetoes throughout the 2020 supplemental operating budget to begin to align the state budget with the anticipated loss of tax revenue. The areas vetoed did not impact current service levels.

The following bills were passed and signed by the Governor:

- [HB 2571](#) is our enforcement civil authority bill which provides officers the option to cite low-level fish and wildlife violations as an infraction, versus referring a misdemeanor case to a prosecutor.
- [SB 6072](#) separates the state wildlife account into a flexible account and a restricted account on July 1, 2021 which will help with the visibility of structural budget challenges in the future.

Amy Windrope announced the retirement of Jim Brown, Region 1 Director he served seven years as the regional director for Fish and Wildlife in Ephrata and 23 years for the agency. Under the COVID-19 update, internal conversation is ramping up. Appreciation goes out to the CIO Matt Oram for all the work he and his staff produced in the efforts to mobilize the agency for telework and online meetings during this time.

Fir Island Estuary Restoration Project

After ten years of collaboration, the Skagit County Consolidated Dike, Drainage, and Irrigation Improvement District #22 (District) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) signed the final paperwork to transfer ownership and operation and maintenance responsibilities for the Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project infrastructure to the District. The infrastructure consists of 5,800 feet of marine dike, tide gates, a 7-acre drainage storage pond, and a pump station.

Fleet Reduction Project

The fleet reduction proviso which included \$573K for WDFW to work with the fleet to structure a CR gillnet fleet reduction program and conduct a phase 1 bid this summer, was vetoed last Friday when the Governor signed the budget. Despite the veto, the WDFW team is pushing ahead with this important work. Our contractor Kim Gordon and the internal team have made progress this winter and spring evaluating other programs, considering lessons learned and identifying key components for a program here on the Columbia. Next week we will be meeting with commercial fishing advisors on Monday the 13th and with members of the Columbia River, Willapa and Greys Harbor gill net fleet on Thursday the 16th to share our work and get early feedback on our approach.

4. 2020 Game Setting Seasons – Decision

Anis Aoude, Game Division Manager asked the Commission for a decision on:

WAC 220-412-050 and WAC 220-412-100 Landowner Hunt Permits

WAC 220-416-060 Migratory Gamebird Seasons

WAC 220-416-010 Small Game

WAC 220-440-060 and WAC 220-416-040 Crow Depredation

WAC 220-413-200 Hoof Disease

WAC 220-412-090 Multi-season Tags
WAC 220-412-070 Auction Raffle
WAC 220-415-070, WAC 220-415-120 and WAC 220-415-130 Moose, Sheep and Goat
WAC 220-415-040, WAC 220-413-180, WAC 220-410-060, and WAC 220-410-050
Boundaries and Closures
WAC 220-415-020 and WAC 220-415-030 Deer General Season and Special Permits

Commissioner Thorburn made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Smith to adopt the recommended rule changes as presented on slide one by staff. All in favor. Motion passes.

5. Elk General Seasons and Special Permits – Decision

Brock Hoenes, Ungulate Section Manager asked the Commission for a decision on elk general seasons and special permits.

Commissioner Smith made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adopt the recommended rule changes as presented by staff. All in favor. Motion passes.

6. Cougar Rules – Decision

Anis Aoude, Game Division Manager asked the Commission for a decision on options to choose from relating to recreational cougar harvest guidelines.

Commissioner Thorburn made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Linville to accept option 4 of the staff recommendations relating to recreation cougar harvesting guidelines. Commissioners' Carpenter, Linville, Kehoe, Thorburn, McIsaac, Anderson in favor and Commissioners' Baker, Smith and Graybill against. Motion passes.

Commissioner Thorburn noted that Wildlife committee will propose to the Commission, a plan, of action to address public safety in NE Washington and surrounding areas. A Commission decision on this matter is to be scheduled for the next full Commission meeting.

7. Hydraulic Project Implementing Bill 1579 – Briefing, Public Hearing

Margen Carlson, Habitat Director, Randi Thurston, Protection Division Manager, and Pat Chapman, Regulatory Services Coordinator briefed the Commission on the implementation of the hydraulic project bill 1579.

The following people provided comment:

Robb Krehbiel Nora Nickum
Tina Whitman

8. C-3619 Hatchery Policy – Briefing, Public Comment

Laurie Peterson, Fish Program Science Division Manager provided a status update on the Hatchery and Fishery Reform Policy Review project following the Policy Performance assessment workshops and the Commission provided staff guidance on revised policy language development.

Commissioner McIsaac provided some input on the draft Policy Performance Assessment report, suggested authors consider input from Commissioners and the public and requested to see another draft of the report at some point in the future.

Commissioner McIsaac made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Thorburn to adopt the Fish Committee C-3619 recommendations for policy language development as possible revisions to Policy C-3619.

The following people provided comment:

Ron Gardner Robert Sudar
Spencer Roozen Butch Smith
Greg King

9. Miscellaneous and Meeting Debrief *Added*

The Commission discussed the delegation of authority to the director, the impact of recreational fishing closures and the timeline to reopen.

Vice Chair Baker highlighted the Governor's budget vetoes, and their potential impacts.

Chair Carpenter adjourned the meeting at 1:04 p.m.

Nikki Kloepfer, Executive Assistant