



Minutes

Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission
Webinar
Friday, June 26, 2020
Olympia, Washington

Attendance

Commission:	Department Staff:	Commission Staff:
Larry Carpenter, Chair	Kelly Susewind, Director	Nikki Kloepper
Barbara Baker, Vice Chair	Amy Windrope, Deputy Director	
Don McIsaac	Joe Panesko, AGO	
Bob Kehoe	Donny Martorello	
Dave Graybill	Steve Pozzanghera	
Kim Thorburn	Eric Gardner	
Brad Smith	Julia Smith	

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

A. Wolf Rulemaking Petition – Decision

Donny Martorello, Wolf Policy Lead briefed the Commission on a petition to amend the current rules pertaining to lethal removal of wolves in Washington and address the chronic conflict with livestock.

The Department recommended that the Commission deny the petition. This recommendation was based on multiple reasons, including:

- Determining the need to use lethal control to stop repeated depredations is a complicated issue that is highly situation-dependent,
- Limiting the flexibility articulated in the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan by fixing criteria in rule reduces the ability to address each case-specific wolf-livestock conflict,
- The proposed rule language as written has problems,
- This issue of wolf management and removals involves internal department actions, and internal practices are not legally required to be set out in rule, nor is it normal to set the same out in rule,
- The Department's WAG process involves significantly more public and community involvement and interaction than would occur through a single rulemaking hearing, and;
- If the proposed rule was adopted, WDFW would need to hire a significant number of additional Wildlife Conflict Specialists. This is not feasible given the State's current budgetary uncertainty.

After significant discussion of the issue, the Commission agreed with the Department's recommendation.

Commissioner Thorburn made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McIsaac to deny the petition to codify the proposed rule. The motion passed unanimously. Vice Chair Baker's vote to deny differed from the others in that it was based on her desire to engage in an alternative as outlined in the Administrative Procedures Act to have the Commission get more directly involved in the Department's wolf management decisions before considering rulemaking.

The Commission expressed support for additional education on wolf recovery processes and to actively participate in wolf recovery outreach.

Vice Chair Baker requested a science presentation to understand dispersal and to compare the lethal protocols of Washington and Oregon.

B. Future Meeting Planning

The Commission had a discussion of the remaining process on the Columbia River Policy review. The agenda item scheduled for the July 31 – August 1 Commission meeting will be held and the Commission will take public testimony and input on the draft revised Policy that is out for public review, but will not take final action at that time. The Commission will schedule final action as part of the July 31 – August 1 Commission meeting.

Vice Chair Baker brought up scheduling final action on the Strategic Plan and noted no objection to pushing out the final decision on adoption to September to ensure that there is ample review and input from the public.

Chair Carpenter brought a potential blue sheet around climate change that came out of the annual discussion with the Governor's office on June 24. Vice Chair Baker and Commissioner Smith will take on this task to provide bullets and some guidance. Deputy Director Windrope indicated that the agency has a climate change coordinator and a climate action team who are poised to have this conversation.

C. General Discussion

Commissioner Kehoe asked about the closure of the Hoodsport boat launch on Skokomish property. Director Susewind indicated that it is a tribally controlled launch and they have closed access to it due to their concerns over COVID-19 but staff will follow up with Commissioner Kehoe.

Deputy Director Windrope reported on the status of agency furloughs.

Director Susewind reported that there will be a budget reduction package for the biennium that will come back to the Commission for approval.

Vice Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Nikki Kloepfer, Executive Assistant