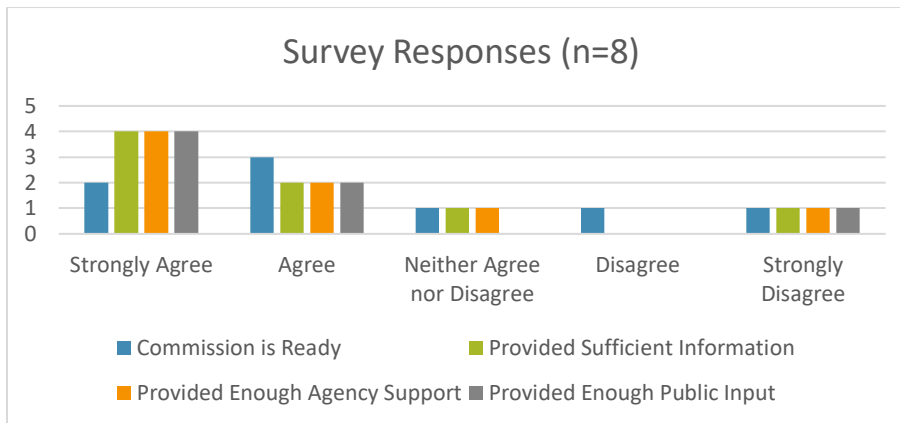


## SBH Process Survey Results, 10/27/2022

Prepared by: David J. Trimbach, Conservation Social Scientist, WDFW

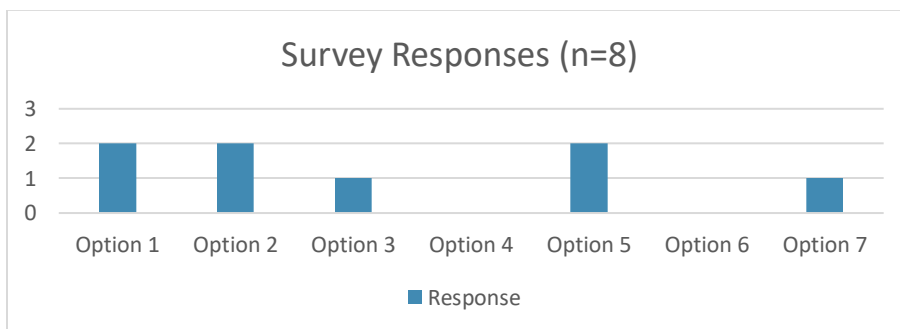
This document outlines the results from the SBH process survey conducted between October 13-19, 2022. The survey was approved by the Commission at the September 22, 2022, meeting in Ocean Shores, WA. The survey focused on process and not policy content. The questions were informed by Commissioner input and approved by Commissioner Baker and Commissioner Thorburn. 8 (n) out of 9 Commissioners responded to the anonymous survey instrument. The results are outlined below.

**Commission perspectives on SBH decision making process and needs:** Overall, the majority of Commissioners agreed that sufficient information has been provided to make a decision (6/8), enough agency support has been provided to make a decision (6/8), and enough public input has been provided to make a decision (7/8). The majority of Commissioners who responded to the survey also agreed that the Commission is ready to make a decision (5/8).



- **Commission is ready** to make a spring bear hunt policy decision.
- Commission has been **provided sufficient information** to make a spring bear hunt policy decision.
- Commission has been **provided enough agency support** to make a spring bear hunt policy decision.
- Commission has been **provided enough public input** to make a spring bear hunt policy decision.

**Commission perspectives on decision making process next steps:** Overall, the Commissioners who responded to the survey were somewhat divided on how best to move forward with this process. Half of Commissioners who responded agreed to some sort of workshop to help with the decision making process (4/8; Options 2, 3, and 7). The other half were split between holding a regular meeting with motions (2/8; Option 1) and a negotiation-based process (2/8; Option 5).



- **Option 1:** regular Commission meeting with motions to define policy -> implementation
- **Option 2:** workshop -> vote on spring bear hunt policy -> implementation
- **Option 3:** workshop -> Commission secondary discussion to define objectives -> vote on spring bear hunt policy -> implementation
- **Option 4:** Commission discussion -> series of motions defining a policy -> implementation
- **Option 5:** Commission member negotiation -> Commission meeting with motions to define policy -> implementation
- **Option 6:** pause process -> obtain more information -> Commission discussion -> series of motions defining a policy -> implementation
- **Option 7:** alternative process or approach not listed here (workshop included in response)
- Option 7 response description provided: "The process/approach should be a structured decision-making process that includes at least the following: (1) a workshop or other policy discussion forum that includes the "deep dive" elements the Commission agreed to at the June Commission meeting, and the questions brought forward as a result of the Ocean Shores decision to ask for Commissioner questions; (2) the development of draft policy language and the review of such by the full Commission; (3) the release of a public review draft of a new SBH Policy and getting public review of it; (4) a SEPA review of the possible implementation of a proposed new policy and (5) a final decision by the Commission on a new policy. It is important that the process/approach not be a short-cut or a short-circuited process to get to an a priori established end-point that has not considered the above. As a separate note, the reason I strongly disagreed with the statements in survey question #1 that the Commission is ready to make a decision and has been provided the necessities of making a decision is because we have not been provided even a draft of language for a new SBH Policy, let alone the process necessities to consider a new SBH Policy in an open, public, and transparent manner."

**Commission perspectives on potential workshop [includes open-ended responses:**

**Workshop should address:**

Public input via mail. No open input at meeting. Commissioner discussion. Decision

1. What exactly is the policy as written in the Game Management Plan: is it a recreation hunt with ancillary vague management objectives, or a management hunt performed by licensed (recreational) hunters? 2. list the main science and management issues we have a common basis for making policy decisions that might be based on values.

Under what conditions would a spring bear hunt be allowed and what additional information would be required?

The difference between damage permits and the general spring bear permits and how many of each have been issued for the last 10 years.

Objectives How do we fulfill the broad mandate of the FWC Do we support hunting as a management tool. Risk and uncertainty vs standard best practices and wise use of limited funds.

The workshop needs to address the utter disruption that has defined spring bear hunt decisions during the past 2 years. Rather than relying on our staff's reliable and valid analysis of black bear harvest management, individual commissioners demand different rules for making the decision that not only fail to honor long-established decision-making practices but even worse, deny the cultural perspectives of most stakeholder groups, particularly the most impacted stakeholder group, bear hunters. There has been no formal commission action that we are shifting our paradigm regarding

hunting season decisions so the demands for different rules underlying decision-making regarding hunting are disruptive and evoke conflict. Long-standing commission & department policy, including the statutory mandate (maximize hunting; so as not to imperil conservation), unquestionably support a spring black bear hunt. The public deserves an explanation of why the rules have changed.

A workshop should address, in a structured manner that considered the pros and cons of each element that we should consider in developing a SBH Policy, including at least the elements of (1) the “deep dive” elements the Commission moved forward this past summer; (2) answers to the questions prepared by staff for the Ocean Shores Wildlife Committee meeting and others submitted by Commissioners; (3) the outline of a new SBH Policy document; and (4) what the process moving forward would be that would develop language for a new SDBH Policy for the Commission to authorize release for public review, and how we would have public review and SEPA review of it before voting on a final new SBH Policy. It would seem at least a two Commission meeting process would be needed after a workshop to reach a defensible final policy decision.

**Workshop concerns:**

Waste of time for staff and commissioners

None

It has to be strongly facilitated with concrete objectives.

We are wasting time and energy without really getting at the essence of our disagreements

I’m concerned it would devolve into a commissioner argument in which instead of listening to each other we all just jockey to get our points made as loud and as many times as we can.

Not a willingness for some compromise. Freelancing based on ideas and biases vs our mission and mandate. A feeling that hunters and hunting should be restricted because there are fewer hunters than non hunters

That it won't accomplish what needs to be accomplished: decisions about the rules and content of our decision making with full disclosure to our diverse stakeholder public. And more important, a commission that decides to respect socio-cultural diversity, demonstrate cultural humility, and is inclusive, as these relate to spring black bear hunts.

One concern I have about conducting a meaningful workshop is that the Commission would not stick to a purpose and design adopted by the Commission, and that there would be an attempt to short circuit the workshop with a rush to adopt something that has not been adequately developed, has not had the effects professionally analyzed, and not been subject to an open, public, transparent process prior to final adoption.

**Other thoughts on process:**

I am for whatever gets us to a decision by the end of the year as promised. The current process of having the Commission lead and discuss the issues and policy has failed, so that is why I favor some structured workshop. Perhaps structure it on a decision tree.

We've already voted on this based on multiple thoroughly discussed viewpoints. A better approach would be to focus on our game management plan, which is where our overriding concerns lie, and then deal with spring bear when we are dealing with the black bear chapter.

I would like to see if there is any possibility for a middle ground and if there is, define that. If there is no possibility for middle ground, let's get to the vote, tank spring bear and get on with life.

Is the meeting going to be facilitated?

These discussions can only happen if they are structured.

This Commission owes it to the law, its mission, and the public to make a decision on this important policy question as a result of a structured, thoughtful process, in the same or better manner than other Commission policies that have been adopted. Conducting some sort of quickie process primarily based on a priori assumptions is objectionable and not becoming of the Commission as a deliberate body. As a separate process matter, I presume that the agenda item in Colville will result in direction and guidance to staff about what elements will be discussed at the workshop (I presume there will be a Commission majority in favor of a workshop as part of the process of developing and voting on a SBH Policy). However, the staff/Commissioner questions that were to be part of a basis for such elements were not included in the survey, thus making it difficult to properly answer survey question #4 about what elements a workshop should address. When will the Commissioners get to see the full set of questions from staff and the Commissioners?

**Original Survey Text:** The purpose of this survey is to gauge Commissioners' current perspectives on the Spring Bear Hunt policy decision making process. The survey was approved by the Commission at the September 22, 2022, meeting in Ocean Shores, WA. The survey itself focuses on process and not policy content. The questions were informed by Commissioner input and approved by Commissioner Baker and Commissioner Thorburn. The survey should take approximately 5 minutes (max.) to complete. All responses will be anonymous. The survey results will be shared back with Commissioners and be used to help determine the decision process next steps. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. David Trimbach at David.Trimbach@dfw.wa.gov. Please complete this survey at your earliest convenience but no later than **Monday, Oct 17, 2022**. [Note: response options outlined already in document.]

1. *To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:  
Why: This question is being asked to understand Commission perspectives on spring bear hunt policy decision making and potential decision making needs.*
2. *Please select the following process that comes closest to your current position on spring bear hunt policy next steps:  
Why: This question is being asked in order to determine what next steps should be taken for the spring bear hunt policy decision making process.*
3. *If you selected "alternative process or approach not listed here," please describe that process or approach below:*
4. *If a workshop were to be held, what would you like the workshop to address?*
5. *If a workshop were to be held, what are your concerns?*
6. *Please share any other process-specific thoughts you may have:*