



Minutes

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission April 6-8, 2023 – Hybrid Anacortes

Attendance

Commission

Barbara Baker, Chair
Molly Linville, Vice Chair
Lorna Smith
Tim Ragen
John Lehmkuhl
Jim Anderson
Melanie Rowland
Steve Parker
Woody Myers

Staff

Joe Panesko, AGO
Amy Windrope, Deputy
Director
Eric Gardner
Brendan Brokes
Karen Edwards
Lisa Coffman
Fenner Yarborough
Chris Donley
Craig Burley
Theresa Nation
Margen Carlson
Trent Roussin
Gabe Spence
Julia Smith
Ken Warheit

Guests

Tino Villaluz
Scott Schuyler
Frank Bob
Shawn Yarity

Commission Staff

Nichole Kloepper

Friday, April 7, 2023

1. Call to Order

a. Commissioners' Discussion

Chair Baker called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

New Commissioners, Myers, and Parker introduced themselves.

Chair Baker assigned new commissioners to committees. They can be found on the [Commission website](#).

Commissioners shared their stories about Spring and upcoming events of interest.

b. Meeting Minute Approval

The Commission considered approval of the March 16-18, 2023, hybrid meeting minutes.

Commissioner Smith made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rowland, to approve the minutes from the March 16-18, 2023, hybrid meeting, as presented. All in favor. Motion passes.

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

Wildlife Committee

Committee members in attendance: Anderson, Smith, Rowland, Myers

Commissioner Smith reported that the committee welcomed Commissioner Myers as a new member and elected a committee chair. Commissioner Smith will now act as the committee chair. The committee continued to discuss the Game Management Plan (GMP). The following sub-topics of the plan were discussed: [Policy topic identification](#), [issue statements](#), and [next steps for establishing Timelines and both WLC and Commission touchpoints](#). The committee supports the staff moving forward with the GMP process.

Deputy Director Windrope suggested that staff develop a survey tool for policy topic prioritization and develop draft criteria for when an issue becomes a policy.

Fish Committee

Committee members in attendance: Ragen, Linville, Anderson, Parker

Commissioner Anderson reported that the committee was provided a Co-Manager Hatchery Policy update and a briefing on the Lake Roosevelt White Sturgeon, the items will be discussed further during the Commission meeting. Staff provided a follow up on the Commissions Forage Fish Policies and provided potential direction. The committee supported a recommendation to rescind Policy C-3612 Columbia River Smelt and direct staff to draft amended language in Policy C-3012 Forage Fish Management Policy, Goals, and Plans to clarify the policy applies to Marine and freshwater ecosystems. Staff also provided a North of Falcon update, and the committee had a general discussion about upcoming meeting dates. The committee elected Commissioner Anderson to continue the duties as Fish Committee chair.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Linville to rescind Policy C-3612 Columbia River Smelt and direct staff to draft amended language in Policy C-3012 Forage Fish Management Policy, Goals, and Plans to clarify the policy applies to Marine and freshwater ecosystems. All in favor. Motion passes.

2. Open Public Input

The following people provided input on various topics:

Seann Mumford – Game Management Plan

Tim Manns – Skagit elk

David Moskowitz – Co-Manager Hatchery Policy

Ann Winkes – Skagit elk

Susan Kane Ronning – Skagit elk

Martha Hall – Game Management Plan

Janice Schweitzer – Skagit elk

Val Mullen – Skagit elk

Bill Smidt– Skagit elk

Bill Hebner – Skagit elk

Gary Strassburg – North American Model

Jen Syrowitz – Skagit elk

Wayne Johnson – wolf management

Steven Johnson – Skagit elk

Regina Wandler – Skagit elk

Judith Adkins – Sierra club

Doug Boze – wildlife management

Commissioner Ron Wesen – Skagit elk

Randy Good – Skagit elk

Curtis Miller – Skagit elk

Brian Lips Comb – Skagit elk

3. Deputy Director and Regional Director's Report

The deputy director reported on various meetings, and agency activities, and provided a budget and legislative update. Brendan Brokes, Director for Region 4, provided a report on area activities.

Commissioners requested that staff recirculate the agency's video on bear awareness.

Break

4. Lands 20/20 Expedited – Briefing

Karen Edwards, Real Estate Manager and Lisa Coffman, Lands 20/20 Coordinator provided a briefing on the expedited Lands 20/20 process which is used to consider potential land acquisition projects outside the annual cycle and provided an overview of two projects under consideration, including a summary of public comments on these two projects.

5. Land Transactions - Briefing, Public Comment and Decision

Karen Edwards, Real Estate Manager asked the Commission for a decision on three land transaction recommendations by the Department for the enhancement of conservation and public recreation opportunities, and hatchery operations.

There was no comment on this item.

Commissioner Ragen made a motion seconded by Commissioner Rowland to approve the land transactions as presented by staff. All in favor. Motion passes.

Lunch

6. Update on the North Cascades Elk Herd – Briefing

Brendan Brokes, Region 4 Director and Fenner Yarborough, Region 4 Wildlife Program Manager provided an update on the status of the North Cascades Elk Herd with tribal partners.

7. Lake Roosevelt White Sturgeon - Rule Making Authority Delegation to the Director – Briefing, Decision

Chris Donley, Region 1 Fish Program Manager briefed the Commission on white sturgeon fishery management in Lake Roosevelt and requested a decision to delegate rule-making for White sturgeon to the Director.

Commissioner Ragen expressed interest in sturgeon age structure data. Staff will also work with the commissioner to provide the data and coordinate a visit to Lake Roosevelt.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Linville to delegate rulemaking for the Lake Roosevelt white sturgeon fishery to the Director as presented by staff.

Commissioner Ragen made an amendment to add requiring the addition of sturgeon age structure data. He withdrew his motion.

Commissioners returned to the discussion of the main motion and voted. The motion to delegate rulemaking for the Lake Roosevelt white sturgeon fishery to the Director passed by a 6/2 vote. Commissioners Anderson, Linville, Lehmkuhl, Parker, Myers, and Smith voted for. Commissioner Rowland and Ragen voted against it. Motion passes.

8. North Skookum Ice Fishing Petition – Briefing, Decision

Chris Donley, Region 1 Fish Program Manager asked the Commission for a decision on the petition to open a season for North Skookum Lake to a year-round fishery or open a new season from January 1 to March 1 for ice fishing.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ragen to deny the petition to amend sportfishing rules on North Skookum Lake. Commissioner

Linville voted against. Commissioner Rowland abstained. The remaining commissioners approved. Motion passes.

Break

9. Lake Whatcom Rule Change Petition – Briefing, Decision

Edward Eleazer, Region 4 Fish Program Manager asked the Commission for a decision on the petition to open a season for cutthroat trout with two poles on Lake Whatcom.

The Fish committee, at a future meeting, will discuss opportunities with staff to gather more data on repeat spawner monitoring efforts.

Commissioner Ragen made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Smith to deny the petition to amend sports fishing rules to open a retention season for cutthroat trout and allow the use of two poles on Lake Whatcom near Bellingham as recommended by staff. All in favor. Motion passes.

10. HPA Rulemaking for SSB 5381 – Briefing

Theresa Nation, HPA Rule Making Coordinator; and Margen Carlson, Habitat Program Director briefed the Commission on expedited rulemaking to integrate elements of SSB 5381 into the Hydraulic Code Rules.

A decision will be made at the May 12, 2023, web conference.

11. Annual Wolf Management Report – Briefing

Trent Roussin, Wolf Biologist; Gabe Spence, Wolf Biologist; and Julia Smith, Wolf Policy Lead briefed the Commission on the 2022 annual wolf conservation and management report.

Recess

Saturday, April 8, 2023

Chair Baker called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

12. Open Public Input

The following people provided input on various topics:

Samantha Bruegger – Relevancy roadmap	Rachel Bjork – wildlife management
Hannah Thompson Gardner – eco-management	
David Moskowitz – hatchery expansion	Mike Herz – carnivore management
Rachel Harmon – Game Management Plan	Clarence Rushing - wildlife management

13. Co-Manager Hatchery Policy Update – Briefing

Ken Warheit, Fish Health and Molecular Genetics Lab Manager provided an update to the Commission on the status of the draft policy and the associated SEPA process.

The Commission gave consensus to continue moving the draft process forward and requested that additional questions be answered at the June 9, 2023, Special Hatchery Workshop.

14. Meeting Debrief and Future Meeting Planning

The following actions were captured from the meeting:

- Schedule a Commission summer retreat

- Anticipate additionally scheduled special Wildlife committee meetings
- Add a Science Enterprise presentation in September and a draft BAS policy to the Big Tent committee in October.
- Add the North American Model blue sheet to the YAAG.
- Staff will reach out to the commissioners via email for any remaining questions for the upcoming Willapa Bay, Alternative 4, Special Fish Committee on May 23.

Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Nichole Kloepfer, Executive Assistant

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