Outline

• Description of public comment period
• Procedure to process and synthesize comments
• Distribution of comments, by channel
• Comment themes/highlights
• Next steps
Public Comment Period (April 10-June 30, 2023)

- News release (and Spanish translation)
- Social media posts (and Spanish translation)
- Advisory Groups and Partners Groups notified
- Tribal notification
- March/April Director’s Bulletin
- Second news release
- June 22-23 FWC public meeting
**Procedure to process and synthesize comments**

- Four ‘channels’ for public input during the comment period
  - PublicInput online form
  - PublicInput email (accepts letters, pdfs, or emails)
    - Emails sent to agency were forwarded to the PublicInput email account
  - PublicInput voice-mail
  - Fish and Wildlife Commission hearing on June 22, 2023 and public input on June 23, 2023
- We enumerated comments and conducted a subjective analysis by interpreting and categorizing textual/verbal information:
  - We sorted comments into bins: Support and Oppose.
  - We reviewed for unique themes/ideas for potential editing by the FWC.
Comments by “Channel”

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submittal Method</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PublicInput Online Form</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PublicInput Email</td>
<td>1,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PublicInput Voicemail</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>June 22 FWC Hearing and June 23 OPI</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,101</strong></td>
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## Categorization

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<tr>
<th>Submittal Method</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1237</td>
<td>4 (spam)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 22-23 FWC Meeting</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
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</table>
Summary of Supportive Comments

• General
  • Forward-thinking
  • Inclusive of all Washingtonians, not just hunters/anglers
  • Appreciative that the Commission is pursuing this policy and the holistic approach
  • The policy recognizes intrinsic value of wildlife
  • Strengthen language even further; add a sense of urgency (to address threats like climate change; habitat conversion)
Summary of Supportive Comments

• Purpose
  • Represents Washingtonians who do not hunt/fish; public trust is to conserve wildlife for all Washingtonians
  • Proactively acknowledges conservation challenges, and provides pathway to address future challenges

• Mission
  • Preserve and protect should happen first; once populations are sustainable, then opportunities can be provided
Summary of Supportive Comments

Definitions

• Conservation
  • Encompasses all Washingtonians—consumptive and non-consumptive
  • Support for recognizing ‘intrinsic value of nature’

• Ecosystem
  • Write it to be more user-friendly; simplify
  • Acknowledge human presence/impact

• Ecosystem-Based Management
  • Acknowledges complexity of ecosystem and human impacts

• Sustainability
  • Progressive
Summary of Supportive Comments

**Principles**

- Conservation First
  - Forward-thinking
  - Acknowledges hunting and fishing
  - Prioritizes values of non-consumptive use first
- Conservation of all species, habitats, and ecosystems
  - Supportive of an ecologically diverse system
  - Note exception for invasive species
- Conservation partnerships
  - Promotes collaboration
  - Gives voice to non-hunting/fishing communities
Summary of Supportive Comments

Principles, Continued

• Knowledge and science
  • Supportive of Commission approach to include all scientific disciplines

• Precaution
  • Changes thinking to a holistic approach

• Innovative leadership and solutions
  • Supportive of proactive management; hunting/fishing is a privilege resulting from successful management
  • Add “continually” learn in last sentence

• Aligning mandate, strategy, staff, and budget
  • Moves Department into the current climate to address challenges of today, rather than continuing past efforts
Summary of Opposing Comments

• General
  • Why pursue this? What is ‘broken’ that this draft policy is fixing? Clarify the purpose.
  • Conflicts with Department mandate
  • Conflates the word ‘conservation’ with ‘preservation’ throughout draft
  • Does not acknowledge past contributions to conservation by hunters and anglers and partners
  • Use accepted, published definitions of key terms; edit vague terminology used throughout
  • Unclear as to what results are expected from this policy and how it would be implemented
  • Concerns that this draft is anti-hunting/anti-angling

• Process:
  • Slow down and re-gain trust; the draft itself and the process has been divisive
  • Lack of consultation with tribes
Summary of Opposing Comments

• Purpose
  • Is not aligned to existing mandates; conflicts with RCW 77.04.012; conflicts with the Department’s purview.

• Mission
  • No mention of managing for sustainable populations for hunting/fishing opportunities
  • Departs from the tenants of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation
Summary of Opposing Comments

Definitions

• Conservation
  • Too broad in definition; implies actions WDFW cannot achieve in its mandate.
  • As defined, is more ‘preservation’-oriented than ‘conservation’-oriented
  • Use existing definition of ‘conservation’ that acknowledges sustainable use/human use
  • Be clearer about how science will be used to inform actions
  • Remove “equitable benefits to nature”

• Ecosystem
  • Does not address human impact/presence in the ecosystem
  • Confusing; overly-broad or too general
Summary of Opposing Comments

Definitions, Continued

• Ecosystem-Based Management
  • Use accepted definition
  • Infringes on other agencies’ responsibilities

• Sustainability
  • Does not acknowledge human effects/role in sustainability--concern this will result in lack of predator management which will impact health of other game species
  • Does not account for recreational, consumptive, or commercial users
Summary of Opposing Comments

Principles

• Conservation First
  • Is not the primary purpose of the Department, as described in the draft policy
  • From a draft policy perspective, this should not be the first-time hunting/fishing appears

• Conservation of all species, habitats, and ecosystems
  • “Preservation” and “conservation” appears to be used interchangeably in policy
  • Too broad and ambitious; “all” is not possible; attempts to capture work not under Department’s authority

• Conservation partnerships
  • Good in theory; partnerships have competing priorities and goals
  • Need to acknowledge and prioritize tribal engagement

• Knowledge and science
  • Clarify how Commission plans to support Department science, which kinds of science, and the decision-making process used
  • Does not include or acknowledge local/community knowledge
Summary of Opposing Comments

Principles, Continued

• Precaution
  • Risk, and how it is determined, is not defined
  • Current management practices already consider precautions
  • Conflicts with Principle 4
  • Concern that this gives Commission more authority to override Department science and Department leadership’s decisions

• Innovative leadership and solutions
  • Fails to account for success in North American Model of Wildlife Conservation; do not change

• Aligning mandate, strategy, staff, and budget
  • Goes against current Commission duties and authority; appears capable of removing authority from Department decision makers; provides pathway to override science-based decisions
General Comments (neutral)

- How will policy be implemented and measured?
- How does this policy intersect other Commission policies or Department policies?
- Use word “resident” or “public” versus “citizen” to be more inclusive
- Use published definitions for terms; avoid vague terms
Next steps

• August: Big Tent Committee deliberation and revision

• October 26-28: FWC discussion and potential adoption of Conservation Policy
Questions and Discussion