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Fish and Wildlife Commission Presentation Summary Sheet

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**Meeting date:**

12/13/2024

**Agenda item:**

Pygmy Rabbit Periodic Status Review, Briefing, Public Comment, Decision

**Presenter(s):**

Taylor Cotten, Conservation Assessment Section Manager  
Gerry Hayes, Wildlife Biologist

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**Background summary:**

The Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit population has not met population or secure habitat criteria for down-listing from its current state endangered classification. The population remains small and its distribution in the wild is extremely limited. It is therefore recommended that the pygmy rabbit remain a state endangered species in Washington.

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**Staff recommendation:**

Maintain the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit as endangered in Washington.

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**Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:**

No policy changes with a maintain recommendation.

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**Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:**

None

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**Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

The agency sent out a press release and posted a request on our website to solicit information from the public to be included in the coming Periodic Status Reviews and Status Reports. In accordance with Washington Administrative Code (WAC) regulations, individuals and organizations had one year to contribute information for the reviews. Department staff included this information as applicable in the status review documents. The documents were then reviewed by Department staff and external species experts before 90-day public comment periods on the document and our findings. We incorporated appropriate edits received as part of that 90-day public comment period on the Periodic Status Review general support for the recommendation.

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**Action requested and/or proposed next steps:**

Briefing, time for public comment, and decision.

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**Draft motion language:**

I move that the Pygmy Rabbit maintain its current status as an endangered species in Washington as recommended by Department staff.

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**Post decision communications plan:**

Since the species is already endangered and we are recommending that it remain so, our current management of the species will not change. We will share information with the public affairs team for any necessary news release as well as update the website as appropriate.

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*Form revised 1-20-21*