

Proposed FWC Review Process for Ruckelshaus Report

To be discussed at the March 20 BT and March 21, 2025 FWC meetings

- The **goal** for this document is to present a starting point for discussions to address recommendations in the 2024 Ruckelshaus Report.
- Below, is a **condensed list** the 30 main recommendations in the Report. Some entries have sub-recommendations that are not listed. Refer to the Report for details.
- **Some of the items**, particularly about communications, could be Commission or Department efforts.
- **The bold text indicates the nine recommendations for FWC action.**
- Other responsible parties for addressing recommendations are the Legislature (4 items), Governor's office (4), or Department/Staff (13 in *italics*), as designated at the end of the recommendation.

A. GOVERNANCE

Option 1: Maintain the Status Quo (Legislature)

Option 2: Establish WDFW as a Cabinet Agency (Legislature)

Option 3: Maintain the Commission, but Address the Following Issues with Comprehensive, Simultaneous Reforms (all parties)

1. **Reform and simplify the Commission's function and "Rules of Procedure."** (4 sub-issues were listed on the report). (Commission)
2. Implement Commission mechanisms, policies, and protocols that establish accountability to the tribes and tribal interests: tribal sovereignty, treaty rights and co-management relationships, consultation processes, and earlier and greater engagement with tribes. (Governor)
3. Strengthen criteria for the makeup of the Commission to ensure Commissioners see their role as representing all interests in the state vs representing special interests. (Governor)
4. Change the Commissioner appointment process. Establish accountability mechanisms for Commissioners. (Governor)
5. **Improve the functioning and effectiveness of the Commission by providing additional staff support; creating a second deputy; and providing training to Commissioners.** (Commission)

6. **Strengthen and enforce norms and rules of engagement and operational and governance protocols for Commission meetings and decision-making processes. (Commission)**
7. **Establish agreement on decision-making processes and the use of Department and outside science in decision-making. (Commission)**
8. Do not change the compensation provided to Commissioners. (Legislature)
9. **Utilize a third-party facilitator for Commission and subcommittee. (Commission)**
10. **Provide training to build the skills and capacity for collaboration within the Commission. (Commission)**
11. *Design new public engagement strategies, beyond the public hearing style engagement. (Department/Staff)*

Additional governance recommendations

1. *Continue to utilize advisory committees for guidance on specific issues. (Department/Staff)*
2. *Continue to prioritize strengthening relationships with tribes, including communication and protocols around consultation. (Department/Staff)*
3. *Work to Mitigate Silos within the Department and Between the Department and Other Agencies. (Department/Staff)*

B. WDFW MANDATE (Legislature)

C. CHANGING CONDITIONS - CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

1. *Continue to Allocate Resources for Coordination Between the Department, Counties and cities on local land-use planning. (Department/Staff)*
2. *Support Existing and Create New Strategies for Wildlife and Fish to Adapt to Changing Conditions. (Department/Staff)*
3. *Continue to Support WDFW Climate and Biodiversity Programs and Policies through Ongoing and Increased Investments and Multi-Agency and Tribal Coordination. (Department/Staff)*

D. FUNDING STRUCTURE

1. *Update (as needed) the WDFW long-term funding plan and work with the Budget Policy Advisory Group (BPAG) to continue to implement the plan. (Department/Staff)*
2. *Increase communication about how the Agency is funded. (Department/Staff)*
3. *Diversify funding sources. (Department/Staff)*

E. TRIBAL COORDINATION AND CO-MANAGEMENT

1. *Continue department efforts to strengthen relationships with tribes and build additional capacity by increasing the number of tribal liaisons. (Department/Staff)*
2. Clarify the role of the commission in regard to US v. Washington and US v. Oregon, including when and how the commission engages with federally recognized tribes and consultation. (Governor)
3. **Provide training on tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, co-management, and working with tribal governments, to all department staff and for all commissioners. (Commission)**

F. ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND USE OF SCIENCE IN DECISION-MAKING

1. **Complete the process of developing, refining, and adopting a “use of science in decision- making” policy. (Commission)**
2. *Continue to support and invest in WDFW work to make information available. (Department/Staff)*

G. OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT WITH PUBLIC AND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

- 1. Implement a process to build common understanding and find common ground among varied interests. (Commission)**
- 2. Continue recent efforts to increase communication about WDFW'S work and impact. (Department/Staff)*