

# Science Integrity Policy

Big Tent Committee & FWC

Amy Windrope, Tim Quinn, and Ken Warheit

March 20 & 21, 2025 – Kennewick, WA



# Development of the Science Integrity Policy

## Timeline #1

Date	Event
Mid-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best Available Science (BAS) discussions with WDFW staff initiated by a FW Commissioner               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Consideration of WAC 365-195-905 (Growth Management Act – BAS)</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Mar-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FWC BAS policy (v1)</b> presented &amp; discussed at Big Tent</li> </ul>
Apr-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informal discussion of BAS policy</li> </ul>
Jun-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update to Big Tent</li> </ul>
Oct-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update to Big Tent</li> </ul>
Jan-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FWC BAS (v2)</b> presented at Big Tent               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Comments and edits</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Jan-Mar-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioners provide edit to FWC BAS (v2)</li> </ul>
Mar-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FWC BAS (v3)</b> presented at Big Tent               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Comments, edits, and agreement to post FWC BAS (v4) to public</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Apr-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FWC BAS (v4)</b> posted ~1 week before FWC meeting</li> </ul>
Apr-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General overview of comments presented at Big Tent               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Overall request from public was to delay decision and extend public comment period.</i></li> <li><i>Commissioners agreed and postponed further discussion to June FWC meeting</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Jun-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of Tribal and public comments on FWC BAS (v4) at Big Tent               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Based on comments, FWC decided to regroup and committed to consult with Tribes</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>



# Detailed analysis of Tribal and Public Comments

## Best Available Science Policy Summary of Public Comments

FWC – Big Tent Committee

Tim Quinn, Amy Windrope, Ken Warheit

June 20, 2024 – Vancouver, WA



- 6 Tribal & 201 responsive public comments
  - 119 pages of comments
  - 90% opposed
- Policy was a mix of BAS and procedural matters – decision making, which muddied the message
  - Little trust of the decision makers
  - Decisions made with “biased” science
  - WDFW science is the “final say” of BAS – “adjudicated” by WA State Academy of Sciences
- “Best” is in the eye of the beholder
  - Not easily defined – that is, no consensus
  - Assurances that “their science” is included as BAS
  - No consensus as to what “type” of science should be included - biological, social, indigenous
  - We concluded that “best” is value



# Why is a BAS policy needed? What are the foundational elements of a BAS policy?

**In other words, when a scientist presents scientific information to the FWC and the FWC makes use of that information, what is expected of that scientist and of the commissioners themselves?**

- Scientific processes and findings are: Credible, transparent, and unbiased
- All parties adhere to professional standards: Ethical, honesty, objective

We used these concepts as the basis for a science integrity policy instead of BAS



# Development of the Science Integrity Policy

## Timeline #2

Date	Event
Jun-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on comments FWC decides consider a new direction for the BAS</li> </ul>
Aug-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on policy to Big Tent – back to the drawing board               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Separate and remove procedural/decision-making components from the science components</i></li> <li><i>Commit to consult with Tribes (focus on Tribes that provided comments to BAS draft policy)</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Oct-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big Tent Chairperson meets with WDFW staff to discuss new draft focused on scientific integrity (v1)</li> </ul>
Nov-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduced to Tribes and subset of the Big Tent the scientific integrity concept, based on the National Science Foundation (NSF) statement, instead of BAS</li> </ul>
Dec-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Scientific Policy (v1) sent to Tribes for comment</li> </ul>
Feb-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received comments from the Tribes with a message of broad acceptance of the policy               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Delivered by NWIFC</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Feb-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met with representative of NWIFC to discuss the comments</li> </ul>
Mar-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scientific Integrity Policy (v2) with some edits suggest by Tribes</li> </ul>
Mar-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present Scientific Integrity Policy (v2) to Big Tent and FWC</li> </ul>



# Science Integrity Policy

## Fish and Wildlife Draft Policy: Development and Application of Scientific Integrity

**Purpose:** This policy describes expectations of Commissioners and agency staff when conducting, managing, applying, and communicating scientific findings and activities. The policy describes behaviors that ensure scientific process and findings that inform decisions are credible, transparent, and unbiased. Though this policy does not intend to describe decision making, the Commission recognizes its obligation and shared commitment to the tribes in resource management.

The following is adapted from the National Science Foundation statement on Scientific Integrity (<https://new.nsf.gov/policies/scientific-integrity#what-is-scientific-integrity-877>).

### Definitions:

**Ethical behavior (conduct)** refers to activities that reflect norms, such as honesty, lawfulness, equity, and professionalism, for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

**Inclusivity** refers to the recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of participants of all backgrounds.

**Objectivity** refers to the quality of being unbiased, honest, and impartial.

**Professional practices** refer to conducting oneself with qualities that are characterized by skill, competence, ethics, and courtesy.

**Scientific activities** refer to activities that involve the application of well-accepted scientific methods and theories in a systematic manner, and includes, but is not limited to, data collection, inventorying, monitoring, statistical analysis, surveying, observations, experimentation, interpretation, study, research, integration, economic analysis, forecasting, predictive analytics, modeling, simulation, technology development, scientific assessment, informing decision-making.<sup>1</sup>

**Transparency** refers to ensuring all relevant data and information<sup>2</sup> used to inform a decision made or action taken is visible, accessible, and consumable by affected or interested parties, to the extent allowable by law.

### Commissioners and agency staff commit to adopting and acting in accordance with the principles of Scientific Integrity:

Scientific integrity is the adherence to professional practices, ethical behavior and the principles of honesty and objectivity when conducting, managing, using the results of and communicating about science and scientific activities. Inclusivity, transparency and protection from inappropriate influence are hallmarks of scientific integrity. (<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2024/nsf24007/nsf24007.pdf>)

Scientific integrity is a model of behavior, and a series of practices grounded in ethical principles and professional standards. It focuses on how science is conducted and communicated, ensuring that the process and findings are credible, transparent, and unbiased.

As a model of behavior, scientific integrity means that individual scientists, institutions, and policymakers uphold these principles in how they gather, analyze, and present information, while fostering an environment where trust in science is built through ethical conduct.

<sup>1</sup> Includes adaptive management to test if results are meeting expectations.

<sup>2</sup> We interpret that phrase "relevant data and information" to include "what we do not know" or our uncertainty.



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# Questions?

