

# WDFW BUDGET AND POLICY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING SUMMARY

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**Tuesday, October 29, 2019, 10am-4pm**

**South Puget Sound Community College, Lacey Campus – Room 188**

**4220 6th Ave SE, Lacey WA**

## **BPAG Attendance**

Andy Marks, Coastal Conservation Association  
Brittany Gallagher, The Nature Conservancy  
Charley Wilkinson, Audubon Washington  
Craig Partridge, Capitol Land Trust  
Dick Wallace, Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups  
Gary Chandler, Assoc. of WA Business  
George Harris, NW Marine Trade Association  
Greg Mueller, WA Troller's Association  
Jason Callahan, WA Forest Protection Association  
Jen Syrowitz, Washington Outdoor Women  
Margaret Pilaro, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Assoc.  
Mark Pidgeon, Hunters Heritage Council

Mitch Friedman, Conservation Northwest  
Mike Petersen, The Lands Council  
Rachel Voss, Mule Deer Foundation  
Tom Davis, Washington Farm Bureau  
Tom O'Keefe, American Whitewater

## **WDFW**

Nate Pamplin  
Tom McBride  
Rob Geddis  
Lynn Helbrecht  
Carrie McCausland  
Kevin Wharton  
Kathy Backman  
Barb Baker, Commissioner

## **Welcome, Director's Office Update, and Q&A**

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Nate Pamplin updated the Budget and Policy Advisory Group (BPAG) on submission of the Department's supplemental and capital budgets to the Office of Financial Management in September. The Governor's Office received requests that outpace available budget resources; thus there will be competition for general fund appropriations.

Selections for two executive positions at the Department were announced. Kelly Cunningham is the new Program Director for the Fish Program, and the Fish Deputy Program Director is Craig Burley. Margen Carlson is the new Program Director for the Habitat Program.

Nate updated the BPAG on several high-profile Department issues:

**Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW):**

The Governor's task force is wrapping up its second year and will release recommendations in the next month. Major themes for the task force this year included climate change and the Growth Management Act. The task force continues to review the implementation of recommendations from their first year, and how to secure funding for those recommendations. Julie Watson is the Department lead for implementation of

SRKW work and will lead an advisory group for rule development on commercial whale watching guidelines. The rules are scheduled to be in place by December 2020. Applications for advisory group members are under review at this time.

#### Tribal Coordination:

The Department is hosting a meeting with treaty tribes to discuss a collaborative process to develop WDFW's guidelines for evaluating traditional hunting areas. Nate explained that while the state has no authority to determine the geographic scope, it is important to understand which tribes to coordinate with for wildlife management and which jurisdiction applies for licensures, regulations, and enforcement.

#### Puget Sound Salmon Management:

The Department is planning to submit the Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Management Plan to the National Marine Fisheries Service next month. The plan will serve as a 10-year ESA permit for Chinook fisheries. It is estimated that the review period by the National Marine Fisheries Service will take approximately 14 months. The Department submitted a letter to the Interior Department regarding a boundary dispute on whether the southern boundary of Skokomish tribal lands includes the Skokomish river.

#### Pinniped management:

Nate is meeting with representatives from Western Washington treaty tribes on November 1 to review analysis of harbor seal predation on out-migrating smolts. Later in November, there is a transboundary workshop on pinniped consumption of salmonids.

#### Wolves:

The post-delisting management plan is in the early scoping phase. Communication to citizens and stakeholders will take place through webinars, an extended comment period, and paper copies of the feedback form. The Department received a letter from Governor Inslee with concern over recent lethal removal in the Kettle Range and asked for a plan from the Department by December 1.

Owen Rowe, Policy and Governmental Affairs Director from Washington State Parks, addressed the BPAG about legislative requests from Parks for the 2020 supplemental budget. Parks commissioners were asked to develop legislation around a fee increase for the Discover Pass, and will propose a \$5 increase in the base fee of the Discover Pass fee \$30 to \$35, with no increase to the current \$10-day use fee. There is no request to change the distribution of funds from the Discover Pass, with Parks receiving 84% of the revenue and WDFW and the Department of Natural Resources each receiving 8%. Parks will also submit a \$4.5m request from the general fund for maintenance level needs. Owen noted that Washington State Parks needs the revenue to continue to maintain their current service levels. If approved, the increase in Discover Pass fees would take effect on January 1, 2021. The Parks bill also includes language to allow the Parks Commission to set prices for the Discover Pass and day use permits for future inflationary adjustments. The Discover Pass is the 4<sup>th</sup> most successful revenue pass in the nation and is projected to bring in about \$54m this biennium.

BPAG members expressed concern that the increase in the Discover Pass fees will reflect poorly on WDFW. Clarifying outreach to user groups was requested.

#### Introduction of Tom McBride, WDFW Legislative Director

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Tom McBride, the Department's new Legislative Director introduced himself to the BPAG. Tom is from the Spokane area, and has a hunting and fishing background from an early age. He joined WDFW after serving 25 years as the executive director for the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys.

## Strategic Planning Process Update

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Rob Geddis updated BPAG on the Department's Strategic Planning process. He introduced Lynn Helbrecht, Kevin Wharton, and Carrie McCausland as part of the strategic planning team working with Jeff Davis, the Department's Director of Conservation Policy.

Rob explained the steps the Department will take in strategic planning between now and June 2020. He presented information gathered from WDFW senior managers on desired future themes and asked how they aligned with BPAG members thinking. Rob also asked if there were any missing themes, and what measures the Department can use to indicate success. Rob will synthesize the information and provide the results to BPAG.

Rob also requested guidance from the BPAG on development of survey questions to external stakeholders to be used in the strategic planning process.

## Wildlife Governance Principles

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Nate Pamplin reviewed several documents regarding wildlife governance principles and discussed with the BPAG how they might influence the Department's conservation policy and principles.

- North American Model of Wildlife Conservation
- WDFW Mandate RCW 77.04.012
- Wildlife Governance Principles
- WDFW's Conservation Policy

In 2018, the Department's conservation policy was updated to identify and set expectations for interdisciplinary teams. BPAG discussed adding language to express the value of the resource and adding to the Department's principles elements of "good governance" from the Decker paper regarding accountability, transparency, engagement and accessibility. BPAG members discussed the mandate of the Department in Title 77 of the RCW, and its validity today and in the future. The Fish and Wildlife Commission is also engaged in a similar conversation.

## BPAG Member Updates

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Jen Syrowitz provided an update on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA). She also noted that the Pittman-Robertson Modernization Act, allowing flexibility for some Pittman Robertson funds to be used for work in recruiting, retaining, and reactivating (R3) hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation participants, does not have any Washington state sponsors.

## Next Steps

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- Department strategic planning will be standing item on the BPAG agenda, the draft will be used to help draft FY2021-2023 funding requests.
- Nate will schedule a conference call for the BPAG after the Governor's budget is released in December.
- The next in-person meeting will be scheduled in January or February. The meeting will include a long lunch break to allow time for BPAG members to schedule additional meetings in Olympia.