

WDAC Charter

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE WILDLIFE DIVERSITY ADVISORY COUNCIL CHARTER

Updates June 2024

MISSION STATEMENT – The Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council (WDAC) advises the Department through the WDFW Director’s office on matters pertaining to wildlife diversity in Washington State, whose stated mission is: “To preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.”

VISION - Wildlife diversity is recognized and supported by the public and government as having inherent value and is vital to maintain healthy functional ecosystems that contribute important ecological services and are essential to the well-being of Washington State residents and visitors.

MEMBER DESCRIPTION

Members will serve terms of three years. Members must submit a request to be reappointed at the end of this period. Members may be re-appointed for multiple terms. At the end of each three-year term, the Department shall strive to select new members for at least 1/3 of the Council membership. The Department shall seek and consider a broad range of stakeholders with a demonstrated interest in wildlife diversity that may include but not be limited to a breadth of geographic and age distributions, and gender, economic and cultural diversity. They may represent science, environmental and conservation organizations, land trusts, the agricultural and forest industries, sporting groups (hunting/fishing), tribes, members of academia, community groups, and those with other backgrounds.

COUNCIL ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND STRUCTURE

Member Duties through participation on the WDAC:

1. Provide advice to the WDAC on WDFW-proposed regulations, policies, and management plans for budgets, species, ecosystems, and Department lands. Such advice should consider:
 - conservation of fish and wildlife resources
 - the effect on local economies and social structures
 - the views of various constituent groups
 - potential conflicts among user groups using a specific fish or wildlife resource
2. Communicate stakeholder opinions, attitudes, and needs to the Department through the WDAC. Identify areas of concern and recommend change.
3. Prepare in advance for meetings and other activities, to effectively represent individual perspectives and those of the organizations or community represented.
4. Communicate information provided by the Department back out to the organizations and communities that Council members represent.
5. Actively participate in meetings.
6. Whenever possible, attend public workshops or forums established by the Department, such as Fish and Wildlife Commission meetings or regional meetings addressing fish or wildlife issues.
7. Participate in the WDAC process to act on all majority, minority or general correspondence to the Department.
8. Participate in at least one established WDAC sub-committee or workgroup to collaboratively develop:
 - a. WDAC goals and products
 - b. Majority opinions and recommendations on the assigned work task to be forwarded to the full WDAC.
9. Proactively develop and provide input to WDAC priorities, new initiatives, and new issues the WDAC may wish to address.

10. Members assume responsibilities outlined in this charter. Members who repeatedly or notably fall short of their responsibilities, or fail to meet the above expectations, may be removed from their position, consistent with WDFW Volunteer and Advisory Members policies.

Chair – Elected by WDAC membership to a one-year term. Term to run concurrent with WDFW fiscal year. Following the term, the Vice Chair will automatically assume the Chair position.

Duties:

1. Lead the development of WDAC goals and products
2. Manage and facilitate quarterly meetings
3. Prepare meeting agenda in coordination with WDAC members and Department staff
4. Maintain regular monthly contact with Department staff and distribute timely information to WDAC members
5. Sign and submit business correspondence to Department staff or the Director

Vice Chair – Elected by WDAC membership to a one-year term. Elections will be held during the June/last meeting of the fiscal year. The Vice Chair assumes the Chair position automatically for a period of one year at end of term of the seated Chair.

Duties:

1. Lead the development of WDAC goals and products
2. Act with full authority as Chair in Chair's absence
3. Assist Chair in preparing meeting agenda in coordination with WDAC members and Department staff
4. Participate in monthly conversations with Department staff as needed
5. Monitor committee work progress on assigned tasks
6. Maintain regular contact and information sharing with Chair

Standing Subcommittee or ad-hoc Subcommittee Chair - Appointed by the Chair to a term of up to three years or shorter term as needed.

1. Schedule subcommittee meetings and lead the group to completion of task(s) in a timely manner.
2. Communicate with the Vice Chair to help monitor the progress of the subcommittee or task force.
3. Report results of the subcommittee or task force to the Chair, Vice Chair and Council.
4. Provide subcommittee updates at each regular meeting.

MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

All Member perspectives are important and will be expressed in recommendations and correspondence to the Department. The council will attempt to achieve agreement on all issues. When differences in opinion arise, both majority and minority opinions will be presented in correspondence, accompanied by an analysis of potential outcomes or pros and cons associated with each position.

Caveat:

Unless specifically authorized, advisory groups do not have the authority to enforce policy or create rules, but their analysis and recommendations can play an important role in furthering the effective operation of the Department.

MEETING FORMAT AND GROUND RULES

WDAC will attempt to meet regularly with at least two meetings/year to be held in person.

1. Limit cell phone use to only essential business
2. Show respect
3. Raise your hand to speak
4. One person is recognized to speak at a time
5. Look to find common ground
6. Listen openly and do not pre-judge others' comments
7. Encourage sharing of diverse opinions and perspectives
8. Ensure that your voice is heard
9. Refrain from dominating group discussions; create space for others to participate
10. Differentiate opinion from fact; both are important but should be used differently
11. Practice curiosity and test assumptions; seek first to understand
12. Maintain focus on the objective or task at hand
13. Remain flexible so that the discussion focuses on the most important and timely work

AGENCY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Clearly define the advisory group's roles, responsibilities, and structure.
2. Provide background and other briefing materials.
3. Provide the Department's mission and goal statements and planning documents.
4. Provide timely opportunities for Members to counsel the agency on policy and provide timely communication on emerging issues.
5. Communicate the Members' comments, views, and perspectives to agency leadership, in a timely manner.
6. Schedule meetings in consultation with Members and provide meeting venues. Scheduling should consider the volunteer nature of advisory group members— choosing times and locations that are most convenient and scheduling as far in advance as possible.
7. Assist in facilitating meetings and conference calls and developing meeting agendas.
8. Be respectful of and carefully consider the views of Members.
9. Provide feedback regarding how the Department uses Member's input.