

Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, June 25, 2024: 9am- 4pm

Woodland Park Zoo, Basecamp NW Room

WDAC Members

Present: Denis DeSilvis, John Farnsworth, Patrick Gallagher (Vice Chair), Sarina Jepsen, Jerry Joyce, Jeff Kozma, Nancy Lee (Chair), Glen Mendel, Anne Van Sweringen, Todd A. Wildermuth, Kathleen Gobush,

Absent: Matthew Danielson, Marie Neumiller, Trina Bayard, Joe Gaydos, Monika Wieland Shields, Tom O'Brien,

WDFW Staff Present: Hannah Anderson, Wendy Connally, Taylor Cotton, Janet Gorrell, Jenna Judge, Julia Michalak, Margen Carlson, Julia Smith

Guest: Katie Remine, Living NW Conservation Manager, Maddie Diaz intern, Woodland Park Zoo (for our tour of W. Pond turtle captive rearing)

Welcome – Nancy Lee and Patrick Gallagher

- Agenda Review, Notetaker Selection
- Minutes review - Approved
- Action Item review of action items from the last meeting– meeting notes out soon after the meeting, update on mitigation ratios (deferred until later), and net ecological gain - today, WDAC charter review, Taylor sent recovery plan status, SWAP framework and timeline.
- Charter Update – Nancy walked us through minor changes to the update. Delete use of alternate attendance option. Attendance requirement discussed and termination of members – see Advisory Council Handbook Guidance, Election and officer cycle timing, discussed subcommittee chair duration (up to 3 years) and ad hoc committee instead of task force.

Action Item: Elect Vice chair,

Action Item: Nancy will do final draft of Charter Update for review at next meeting.

Connectivity in WA – presentation by Julia Michalak, PHS Manager

Action Item: WDAC to consider possible future engagement in reviewing connectivity mapping in the fall.

WDFW Conservation Director – presentation by Margen Carlson, Conservation Director

- Described Roles, Vision and Priorities
- Net Ecological Gain – legislative proviso - change from no net loss, which does not deal with legacy losses, new proviso builds on previous provisos as no net loss is not being achieved. WDFW to provide policies and programs to the legislature for their consideration.

Woodland Park Zoo and Living Northwest Trail tour

- Northwestern Pond Turtle rearing lab tour – lead by Katie Remie, Woodland Park Zoo

Wildlife Diversity Grant Program – presented by Jenna Judge, Assist. Diversity Div. Mgr.

- Discussed this new grant and the process for this grant
- Over 40 proposals submitted
- Went over the selected grant recipients and grant titles – mostly or entirely for surveys and well distributed around the state

Legislative and Budget Update – presented by Hannah Anderson / Margen Carlson

- Outcome of 2024 session – priority bills discussed = 2293 study of avian predation on salmon, 2424 government-to-government meetings with Colville Tribes (focus on wolves & guidance for FWC Commission), 5924 – landscaping for commercial or residential building permit that required 15% planted to pollinator habitat, 5897 – use of neonicotinoid pesticides restricted for non-agricultural use, 6120 wildland urban interface code and state building code – will need WDFW coordination to protect habitat.
- Budget 25-27 Agency requests - \$7M for accelerated safety package for employees
 - \$404k non-lethal wolf hazing for SE WA
 - \$224K bear hazard assessment and bear-human conflict work
 - \$1.657 M habitat recovery work post wildfires
 - \$2M forest health and fuel reduction
 - Recovered \$625K biodiversity funds from Lake WA predator suppression
 - Programs: Brian Abbott FBRB increased by \$22M
 - Whale watching rules due soon
 - Net ecological gain proviso report due
- 2025-27 legislative request proposals
 - Increase renewal fee for personalized license plate – non-game focus and not increased in over a decade – estimated revenue is \$1.6M for a biennium
 - Increase efficacy of enforcement for fish and wildlife
- Operating Budget Update
 - Commission approval in August
 - Gov's budget in Dec
 - Maintenance level is for areas where costs are increasing that WDFW does not control
- Policy level packages – list shown with lots of items (31?)
 - Climate resilience
 - Land stewardship
 - Restoring WA biodiversity
 - Wildlife disease surveillance
 - Riparian Systems Assessment

- Safety phase 2 – equip. for field staff, employee training + volunteer safety and FY4
- Biodiversity funded for 1st and 2nd step, now going for Steps 3 and 2. FY 24= \$8M, FY25= \$15M, FY26= \$21M, F27= \$24M

Subcommittee Reports

- Species of Concern – Patrick Gallagher
 - Last committee letter in March for S. Resident Killer Whale
 - Friday the WDFW Commission agreed with maintaining status quo that delisted Bald Eagle and Peregrin falcon
 - Pygmy rabbit PSR out for review
 - Marbled murrelet coming soon
 - Isl. Marble butterfly coming
 - Sharp-tail grouse PSR in early 2025
 - Common loon PSR in 2025
 - Recovery Plans – The Endangered Species Unit is planning for recovery plan prioritization, recovery plan training, and then begin to complete recovery plans (4 species soon?) – may have recovery plans for WDAC reviews in the future
 - Patrick will remain as lead on this committee, even though he is becoming Chair of WDAC

- Wildlife Area Planning – Denis DeSilvis and Jeff Kozma = nothing to report, but there was a brief update on Wildlife Area plans schedule by Janet Gorrell (WDFW).

- Listing WAC ad-hoc Committee – Todd Wildermuth – the final recommendations from the committee were submitted since the last WDAC meeting, and this committee has been closed out
 - There is no requirement for WDFW to respond, or accept any committee recommendations
 - Internal consideration by staff for the listing recommendations
 - Rule revision process will likely be initiated within the next year

- State Wildlife Action Plan – Glen Mendel and John Farnsworth
 - Glen showed the committee engagement timeline, and bullet points of the committee comments to WDFW and the WDAC
 - Glen offered clarifying comments to further the discussion regarding the WDFW response (since the committee has not had time to review the WDFW response and coordinate). These were Glen’s views, and not from the Committee at this time. The emphasis in the Committee submittal was about harvested SGCN with limited or no status and trends information, and the hope that a thorough evaluation by WDFW of whether this management approach was consistent with the goals of the SWAP. This comment was for SGCN management criteria consistency with SWAP goals, not SGCN selection criteria. He also noted that a few species in this category could be argued to possibly be ecologically

functionally extirpated. He concluded with a reminder that there is still uncertainty remaining about SWAP committee and WDAC about how and when their engagement in SWAP is desired. The review and discussion of the WDFW response comments was put off.

SWAP Progress Update – presented by Wendy Connally, SWAP Coordinator

- Graphic of Timeline shift was shown and discussed
- Showed plans for more engagement, facilitated meetings, WDAC engagement
- Slide of revision milestones
 - Draft criteria and content (June through Nov) – SGCN, HGCN, Threats, Actions development and review,
 - Engagement scoping (June-August)
 - Draft plan (early 2025) – describes how SWAP will be organized
 - John Farnsworth asked for a meeting between Wendy and the SWAP Committee to improve coordination with the SWAP Committee and for WDAC involvement. Many questions about the Committee comments and WDFW’s response should be addressed there.
 - Discussed how to get possible SGCN information from outside of WDFW to be captured, and when in the schedule that fits.
 - Coordination upcoming for SWAP Committee and WDAC between now and the next WDAC, other than the Zoom meeting to be scheduled with Wendy = tune into the SWAP Webinar and surveys, framing, and then second set of webinars and surveys will occur later.

Action Item: Coordinate committee review and arrange for a meeting with Wendy. Committee to put together an agenda for the meeting and invite all WDAC.

Action Item: Between now and next WDAC, the SWAP Committee can participate in the SWAP Webinar, and conservation meetings.

Wrap up; next steps, action items, agenda items and notetaker selection for next meeting – Nancy Lee, chair

Next meeting – October 3 (tentatively?) – likely in Yakima. Glen will contact the Yakima Arboretum and check availability and costs to provide to Hannah.

Agenda - possible topics for next meeting

- Mitigation ratios – Glen will send out email to coordinate with WDAC for what this agenda item should include and notify Hannah.
- Conservation benefits agreements such as Safe Harbor -Julia Smith
- Kathleen Gobush as notetaker (tentatively?)
- Vice Chair election – postponed – Nancy or Patrick with send email to for request for candidates and selection of Vice Chair.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm.

Notes taken by Glen Mendel, June 25, 2024.