

WDAC Meeting – Ellensburg, May 04, 2023

Start at 9:18: 15 Members present, 5 WDFW staff

Taken and compiled by Jeff Kozma (Denis also took notes later in the afternoon)

Updates:

J. Farnsworth brought up that action items from previous meeting have not been acted on. Action items should be reference in future meeting agendas to see if they were completed. Nancy suggested putting timelines on action items when possible.

Commission – Two new commissioners; Woody Myers (ungulate researcher, but very non-game friendly as well) and Steven Parker (longtime salmonid person with Yakama Nation Fisheries). All nine have been confirmed by the legislature and at full status on the Commission.

- The Conservation Policy is out for public comment and would be a good time for WDAC to advise the Commission on conservation (comments June 30). This will guide Commission's Conservation Policy so comments are important. Trina asked how does the Commission plan to respond or incorporate comments. Hannah said she doesn't know. Staff will not guide WDAC commenting, etc. Trina says there is a lot of tension in the Commission and if we enter comments as WDAC, we'd be entering the fray. Suggested that we respond individually, but you are not representing WDAC (per Dennis)
 - **Action** – Hannah said she would send WDFW Agency Conservation Policy and we can compare to the Commission's Conservation Policy.
- Year at a Glance has PHS species coming including American White Pelican, Western Gray Squirrel, etc., to go to the Commission. Getting audience around recovery and conservation work/progress/challenges, while working with Wildlife Committee chairs. In June, PHS on the agenda with Wildlife Committee for various work in south sound prairies to brief the Wildlife Committee. Presenting WDFW White Nose Syndrome work to the Commission in June. We suggested a WDAC member can attend Commission meeting (Marie agreed to do that) but hasn't been to a meeting yet.

Agency – Director of Conservation Vacancy, Jeff Davis, has left WDFW. Department still seeking scenarios to fill that position and it will be filled as soon as possible. This position supervises the SWAP Coordinator position.

RAWA – Hannah saw email yesterday that there is still emphasis and will likely be reintroduced in Senate soon...five co-sponsors so far.

Legislative Outcomes:

Bills of Interest – House Bill 1181, on governor's desk, will put it into law when signed to put climate resiliency in landscape planning.

- SRKW – passed and heading to governor's desk. Changes the distance boats must stay from SRKW and simplifies it to 1000 yds for all. Makes it safer for SRKW from boat noise and better foraging. J. Joyce asked about provisions for enforcement in

the bill. Hannah says there aren't any, but there is for education and outreach, because it is a human behavior shift that is needed.

- Riparian funding (restoration) for habitat value. Grant programs through farms, private landowners, etc., for restoration work. This would be in riparian provisos (\$5+ mil) because the bills didn't pass, but funding can be approved.
- Safe Harbor agreement for NSOW – providing WDFW and WDNR to incentivize protection of NSOW habitat on private lands. Will allow landowners to enter a SHA under the DNR permit for a specific period of time (~30 years, but landowners can get out early if needed). Todd asked if this is meant for small landowners or large landowners...what will be the best conservation value. Wendy offered to do a presentation if enough WDAC members are interested.
- HB 1216 passed (clean energy siting effectiveness) and Puget Sound Shoreline Assessment Bill requires an assessment of in the water impacts along the near shore.

WDFW Budget and Investments – Restoring Washington's Biodiversity funding was partially funded. Handout was given to WDAC about what was requested; \$30 mil per biennium after this session. First two years are fully funded. Very significant additional funding for the WDFW Diversity Division. Natural Resource Divisions only get about 0.3% of the state budget. Ultimate objective is \$47.6 mil per biennium. Todd asked about portion that is on the ground stuff? Hannah says they are emphasizing early on species that are most imperiled, keeping what we have (known recovery actions), data collection pushed to out years for species we need to work on, partners to access some of the funding to continue work (\$1 mil/year), implementation of recovery actions, marine systems, etc. Examples are also listed in the handout. Hannah gave handout on building a climate-resilient WDFW. WWRP...the capitol budget has it at \$120 mil.

State Wildlife Action Plan – Joy Juelson presenting. Hired to do outreach on the Plan and reach out to the partners to see how the SWAP can be wildly successful.

Swap is a federally mandated statewide plan. Last update/revision in 2015. First one in 2005. WDFW anticipates it will take 2.5 years and multiple draft plans (currently about ~.5 year in). Triangle Associates takes the information and provides a summary of key themes and information to inform the development of the SWAP.

Land Use and Conservation Policy:

Kara Whittaker presenting on how WDFW works with local jurisdictions on land use planning. Main topics covered were Ecosystems Services Division, Riparian Ecosystem Science and guidance, Shoreline Mgmt. Act, and Growth Management Act.

Action – Kara to provide a copy of her presentation to the WDAC in .pdf format.

Possible outstanding action items (from 2/6/2023 meeting) (Item – owner):

1. Integrate WDAC SWAP committee into timeline for SWAP development – Hannah Anderson
2. Include WDAC SWAP committee members in meeting minutes – Hannah Anderson
3. Provide list of WDAC team members working on SWAP revision – Hannah Anderson

Action Items (from 5/4/2023 meeting) (Item – owner):

1. Distribute Agency's policy on conservation – Hannah Anderson
2. Provide presentation: How WDFW works with local jurisdictions on land use planning – Kara Whittaker to send to Hannah Anderson for distribution to WDAC
3. Update tentative schedule for upcoming PSRs – Taylor Cotten
4. Review draft of proposed revisions to WAC 220-610-110 and send comments to Todd Wildermuth – All WDAC members (not WDFW staff)
5. Develop a plan to distribute review comments regarding WAC 220-610-110 proposed revisions – Todd Wildermuth
6. Distribute new SWAP SGCN criteria to WDAC SWAP team – Hannah Anderson
7. Find location for west-side WDAC meeting on September 28 – Hannah Anderson

Committee Updates/Discussion:

Species of Concern – Patrick Gallagher/Taylor Cotten

- Kudos to Taylor from Patrick regarding Taylor's help
- Western Gray Squirrel – expect it
- Mardon Skipper – review is rescheduled per Taylor
- Coming up:
 - Island Marble
 - Northern Spotted Owl
 - Bald Eagle
 - Peregrine Falcon
 - Southern Resident Killer Whale
- Capacity issues are prevalent regarding WDFW Commission reviewing PSRs. Because of other items with which the Commission is involved, PSR reviews tend to be moved (“punted”) to later in the year.
- The wolf PSR is coming out and unlike previously, the WDAC will review and comment on it.
- The PSR for the American White Pelican will be presented again to the Commission next Friday.

State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) – John Farnsworth/Glen Mendel

Extensive discussion regarding role of WDAC; action items regarding SWAP from 2-6-2023 WDAC meeting; climate change info in SWAP; mechanics of SWAP upgrade; and the goal of making the SWAP accessible.

Wildlife Area Plans – Jeff Kozma/Denis DeSilvis/Janet Gorrell

- Jeff and Denis (mostly Jeff!) are reviewing the LT Murray WLA plan
- Janet gave an update as to what WLA's are coming up
 - Skagit – draft coming out this month

- Simcoe – Draft coming out this month
- Methow – 2nd planning meeting coming up; this is a combination of a wildlife area plan and recreation plan. This is a pilot combined plan.
- Cowlitz – coming in about a year

Listing WAC review – Todd Wildermuth

- Todd presented an extensive draft revision and walked us through the changes. (THE DRAFT IS NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION BEYOND WDAC MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATED STAFF.)
- Lots of discussion on some changes (such as the inclusion of “significant population segment,” etc.).
- The “heat” would be on the Commission to accept/reject revisions.
- This WAC only applies to Washington State critters, and not those listed by Federal or any other state.
- September Notetaker: We think this is Marie Neumiller or Monika Wieland Shields, probably the former. She was sitting next to Nancy, but Denis was unsure of the person’s name.