

Summary

Meeting dates: February 7, 2014

Agenda item: Federal Affairs Updates

Presenter(s): Jennifer Quan – Special Assistant to the Director

Background summary:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (department) daily activities are intertwined with federal funding, federal agency partnerships, and implementation of federal law. Approximately 30 percent (~\$54 million annually) of the department's operating budget consists of discretionary and mandatory federal funds. The department is engaged in many large-scale conservation projects (e.g., the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, Puget Sound Nearshore and Estuary Restoration Program) that could only occur with a strong federal partner. Federal laws, such as the Magnuson Stevens Fishery and Management Conservation Act and the Endangered Species Act provide foundational sideboards for the department's management of species and habitats in Washington state. In all cases, the department relies on strong congressional and DC-level agency/policy-maker support and engagement.

Recent changes in congressional representation, a series of "Continuing Resolution" budgets, the Budget Control Act of 2012 (establishing sequestration) and the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 have impacted a number of federal funds that support the department's activities. To address these impacts the department is working strategically to conduct outreach and education to department stakeholders, the State's congressional members, and the DC-level policy makers on the benefits of federal investments in fish and wildlife programs in Washington State.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

This is an informational briefing. Staff will update the Commission on:

- Status of the federal budget as it pertains to the department
 - Status of federal projects/initiatives requiring strong delegation or DC-level engagement
 - Outreach strategies with stakeholders, the congressional delegation, and other DC-level agencies/policymakers
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Public involvement process used and what you learned:

In January 2014, WDFW initiated discussions with commercial and recreational fishing representatives from Puget Sound, Lower Columbia River and the coast, to share the status of and risks to federal funding for fisheries management. There is a strong interest from this diverse group to coalesce around common messages on the importance of federal funding for conservation and sustainable fisheries in Washington state. WDFW will continue to work with this group to develop a strategy to deliver key messages to Congressional members and Federal agency decision makers, with a goal to ensure sufficient and stabilized federal funding.

Large federal projects will undergo public involvement process as mandated by Federal Laws (e.g., Administrative Procedures Act, National Environmental Policy Act).

Federal budget priorities are coordinated with the Governor's office, federal agency administrators, other state agencies, and key stakeholder/partners such as the Association of

Fish and Wildlife Agencies, The Nature Conservancy, and the Coastal Conservation Association, to align where we have common and/or overlapping goals.

Action requested:

N/A – informational briefing only

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

N/A

Communications Plan:

N/A
