

# **Proposed Translocation of Mountain Goats**

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## Summary Sheet

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**Meeting dates:** December 8-9, 2017

**Agenda item:** Proposed Translocation of Mountain Goats – **Briefing**

**Presenter(s):** Dr. Richard B. Harris, Mountain Goat and Sheep Section Manager,  
Game Division, Wildlife Program

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**Background summary:**

Mountain goats are not native to the Olympic Peninsula, having been introduced by a hunting group in the 1920s prior to designation as a National Park. When goats became numerous in the 1970s, Olympic National Park (ONP) began studies and made numerous efforts to remove them once it was clear they were damaging native ecosystems. A renewed effort began in 2010. Simultaneously, WDFW, USFS, and interested Tribes had concluded that mountain goat populations in some portions of the North Cascades had been so depleted by a history of over-hunting that active restoration was appropriate. A federal NEPA process began in 2013, and the draft EIS published in late July 2016, with public comment ending on October 10, 2017. The preferred alternative in the EIS is to transfer as many goats as can be captured (estimated ~ 350) to WDFW jurisdiction; through analysis and field investigation, we have identified 12 translocation sites. Remaining goats on the Peninsula will be lethally removed, first using skilled volunteers operating under NPS supervision, and later, if necessary, using contracted or government-employed staff.

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

WDFW views the preferred alternative as a fiscally sound way to meet our mountain goat restoration objectives, because NPS will fund capture and delivery of mountain goats to staging areas, requiring WDFW to fund only the translocation portion of the operation. As with any large project, however, objections to the plan have surfaced. The department plans to address some of the more substantive concerns, including 1) skilled volunteers are a tool in lethal removal; 2) genetic concerns on moving Peninsula goats to the North Cascades; 3) concerns regarding translocated goats potentially becoming an agricultural nuisance; and 4) concerns regarding human safety from translocated goats.

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**Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:**

Budgeting will be via a combination of Pittman-Robertson funds, mountain goat auction/raffle proceeds, and contributions from participating groups.

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**Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

A 70-day public comments period has ended, to date, ~ 2,200 comments were submitted. WDFW participated in 4 public meetings led by NPS, and also performed outreach to wilderness advocacy groups, hiking groups, and hunting groups. WDFW has also featured the project on its Facebook site. The Commission will be briefed on concerns expressed through these processes.

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**Action requested:**

N/A

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**Draft motion language:**

N/A

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**Justification for Commission action:**

N/A

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**Post decision communications plan:**

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*Form revised 9/13/17*