May 18-19, 2022, Commission Workshop Notes

Marcus Whitman Hotel 6 West Rose Street Walla Walla, WA 99362, Renaissance Meeting Room

May 18, 2022 – Day 1

Agenda Item 1: The Commission reviewed the agenda and discussed ground rules.

Agenda Item 2: "Mandala – Exploring Commissioner Experience", activity.

Each commissioner and participating staff answered the following questions.

- What is your "why" for being on the Commission?
- What are your personal characteristics/personal skills you bring to the Commission?
- What was your first car?

Agenda Item 3: Explore the Mandate

The Commission explored governing body and agency mandates. Joe Panesko spoke briefly on the provided mandate comparison. Deputy Director Windrope broke the mandate into clauses and asked the commissioners to pick the clauses that resonates most and least to them with the intent of looking for alignment.

Below are the mandate clauses that resonated the most with commissioners.

Mandate Clause 2: "The commission, director, and the department shall preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish in state waters and offshore waters."

- Aspiration balance
- Careful how we talk – not weaponize
- Optimize/Maximize opportunity
- Maximize tied to time frame
- "Meaningful" opportunity – social questions feed in

Mandate Clause 6: "The commission shall attempt to maximize the public recreational game fishing and hunting opportunities of all citizens, including juvenile, disabled, and senior citizens."

- Shall attempt to maximize hunting and fishing (concentrate the efforts to balance this)
- Maximize = not impair (the supply and resource)
- Maximize= all citizen participation
- Attempt = opportunity = try
- Maximize is about providing the experience of opportunity, inclusiveness – about access

Mandate Clause 7: "Recognizing that the management of our state wildlife, food fish, game fish, and shellfish resources depends heavily on the assistance of volunteers, the department shall work cooperatively with volunteer groups and individuals to achieve the goals of this title to the greatest extent possible."

- We are all responsible for conservation and volunteers are essential
- Commissioner culture is essential for recruiting volunteers
- Take care of resources and then mandate conservation and non-consumptive use

Mandate Clause 8: "Nothing in this title shall be construed to infringe on the right of a private property owner to control the owner's private property."

- Large tracts are essential, and we must partner with them to conserve
- Urban property owner impacts (Pocket Gophers)
- About building essential partnerships
- All properties can contribute to conservation
- Opportunity to not weaponize words in mandate (note confirmation bias)

The commissioners agreed upon the following preliminary alignment on the mandate and what it means to them collectively:

- Preserve, protect, perpetuate, manage, and then provide opportunity for fishing and hunting.
- Focus on habitat as a key threat and is tied to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage.
- Conservation relies upon partnership w/property owners.
- Volunteers are essential and should be honored to build broader community.

Agenda Item 4: The Chair and Vice Chair discussed culture and norm expectations for the Commission. The commissioners discussed roles and what a highly functioning Commission may look like.

A highly functioning Commission looks like:

- Personal responsibility for actions
- Disagreements result in better outcomes and solutions, all are a stronger product
- Meeting time management – prioritize efforts - workload balancing
- Clarity on questions and decision making
- Problems are confronted expeditiously
- Don't take it personally
- Recognition of each other's experiences and expertise
- Kindness is important
- Don't assume you know you're right, don't run each other down
- Accountability to our norms
- Have more in-depth conversations and develop solutions
- Staff and Commission should expect a "why" to questions

The Commission moved to executive session per RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) at 4:00 p.m. No action was taken the public was not permitted to attend. The executive session concluded at 4:30 p.m.

Recess

May 19, 2022 - Day 2

Agenda Item 5: Rules of Procedure discussion and public comment approach.

The Commission discussed the definition of policy, how science and policy interface, the most appropriate path to contribute to a "highly functional commission," and the Commission's use of existing policy in decision making.

Good questions to use:

- Are we following policy?
- Are you using best available science in understanding whether we are following policy?

Role of Policy	Role of Science
Define policy	Define best available science
Review process for identifying best available science	Be available for exploration of science provided
Clarifying uncertainty that is acceptable for decision making	Help clarify uncertainty and determine the rigor of information for that level of uncertainty
Be clear on questions asked	Be clear on questions answered

From Commission discussion the following was recommended:

- Addition of Commissioner standards
    - Don't imply motivations, or impinge character
    - Be respectful
    - Recognize expertise
    - Use facilitation ground rules like those used in the retreat to come to decision
    - Recognize social questions are about equity, inclusion, and balanced decision making

The Commission discussed approaches to motion procedures, action clarifications, amendments, and processes.

Why do we get in the "weeds"? Because…

- Staff/Department don't have clarity on the question
- We have expertise
- Desire to deeply understand
- We have highly specific questions based on our knowledge
- We don't know if science expertise or opinion is being limited by management
- We think of WDFW staff as colleagues
- We don't think staff is considering all science
- I am using my position to educate the public on my views/expertise
- We feel staff hasn't answered our questions

When in the "weeds" if an issue arises how can we best support each other?

ACTION: The Commission mutually agreed that amendments during conversation after motion made are allowable.

ACTION: The discussion of meeting locations and public comment approach was moved to Executive committee for decision making.

Agenda Item 6: Review of Strategic Plan – what do Commissioners want to work on?

The Commission discussed the short-term actions underway and identified the longer-term actions based on commissioner interests. The Commission agreed on the following prioritization of long-term actions.

ACTION: Their suggestions would be placed in a spreadsheet and commissioners can prioritize with respect to long term actions and where they could come to the commission for a briefing.

Agenda Item 7: The Commissioners discussed how they felt about items discussed for the day and discussed next steps. The following recommendations came out of next steps.

Recommendations

- Rules of Procedure additions
    - If people feel aggrieved, the Chair/Vice Chair will intervene.
    - Op-eds, published papers, and printed statements be run by the Executive committee as a "for your information", so the commission and staff have awareness.
- Commissioner strategic plan suggestions will be placed in a spreadsheet and commissioners can prioritize with respect to long term actions and where they could come to the commission for a briefing.
- Discuss and determine the role of guidance/policy in decision making.
- Have staff provide a list of possible agenda items for discussion and potential delegation.

Agreements

- To dos to science/policy group
    - Develop a check on questions asked – most important
        - How do we decide that question gets answered?
    - Develop a suite of questions up front for decision making.
    - Develop process for identifying best available science, incorporating new science, and navigating uncertainty.
    - Develop a process to identify and navigate risk.
    - Develop a path for Commissioner to engage earlier with the rulemaking process.
    - Identify ways commissioners can have confidence in science from the Department.

Future Conversations

- Parking lot items – Amy/Molly/Barbara will talk about how these will come back to the Commission.
    - Inclusive voices – moving forward
    - Carnivores, spending more time
    - R3 Conversation
    - Use of precautionary principle about risk analysis

- Agency and Commission Mandate - about where is there general alignment.

The Commissioners made the following suggestions for next workshop topics.

- Wrestling how we decide when more information is needed
- How do we measure success of the ideas we generated at the workshop? (Behaviors, mandate, priorities)
- Spend more time discussing prioritization of the strategic plan.
- Have a regular workshop, 2x year?
- How can we engage broader public?

Adjourned