



Fish and Wildlife Commission Presentation Summary Sheet

Meeting date:

6/23/2023

Agenda item:

Periodic Status Review Gray Squirrel – Briefing, Public Comment

Presenter(s):

Taylor Cotten and Mary Linders

Background summary:

Staff will be presenting the draft Periodic Status Review for the Western Gray Squirrel. The squirrel is currently listed as a threatened species in WA. The Periodic Status Review summarizes the biology and conservation concerns for the species and recommends changes in status. Staff are not asking for a vote on the status of the species at this time, that will be included in subsequent commission meetings after the draft Periodic Status Review is finalized.

Staff recommendation:

Uplift the Gray Squirrel from threatened to endangered. No vote during this commission meeting.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

If approved, the Western Gray Squirrel will be added to the endangered wildlife list. A change in status would also be communicated to the Department of Natural Resources for their forest practice considerations.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

None anticipated at this time.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

The Periodic Status Review had its own 90 day public comment period. Through that process we identified areas of confusion with western gray squirrels and eastern gray squirrels and what this status review and potential rule change could mean (incorrectly) for the common nonnative eastern gray squirrel. We also identified misunderstanding or confusion in the results of the data collected and analyzed to inform the draft Periodic Status Review which we have worked to clarify with stakeholders and have attempted to address in our presentation to the commission.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

No action at this time. Once the Periodic Status Review is final, if appropriate we will return to the commission after filing of the CR102 and SEPA for rulemaking.

Draft motion language:

N/A

Post decision communications plan:

N/A
