

AGENDA



Washington Department
of Fish and Wildlife

Cowlitz Wildlife Area Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (W.A.A.C)

May 9, 2023

Location: WDFW Office, 110 Main
Ave. Morton, WA

6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Meeting called Richard Vanderlip, Cowlitz Wildlife Area Manager
by

Attendees: Richard Vanderlip, Sandra Jonker, Nick Steveson, Sean Shannon, Eric Russell, Larry and Tina Jorgensen, Jay Payne, Danielle Green, Charles Edmonson, Michael Callahan, Pat Coleman, Vic Khvoroff, Neil Rico, Roger and Ramona Wallace

Please read: Cowlitz Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Charter

6:00– 6:20 **Introductions**

Introductions – Richard Vanderlip. Richard led a round of introductions of staff and advisory committee members.

Welcome | Sandra Jonker, Wildlife Program Manager. Sandra provided a warm welcome and overview of the purpose and intent of wildlife area planning and the role of the wildlife area advisory committee.

6:20 – 6:50 **Overview of the Wildlife Area – Richard Vanderlip.**

WLA units overview | Richard Vanderlip

Species, Habitat, and Recreation Information

Management issues and concerns

Richard provided a detailed overview of the wildlife area units, resource information, and issues and management concerns for each unit.

6:50 – 7:20 **Overview of the Planning Process-Holly English**

WAAC Role and Charter (Discussion)

WLA Planning 101

Holly led a discussion on the charter, which outlines role and responsibilities of both advisory committee volunteers and WDFW staff, including the level of commitment required, ground rules,

expectations, and timelines. Holly then provided an overview of the statewide planning framework, a timeline for the Cowlitz WLA plan, and next steps.

7:20 – 8:30 Scoping Exercise – Holly English

Discussion of major issues and concerns on the wildlife area. Holly led a visioning exercise with staff and the advisory committee, asking them to identify what they loved and cared about on the wildlife area. The answers are as follows:

- Wetlands – as they attract wildlife/waterfowl
- Hang gliding (flying opportunities)
- Viewing bald eagles
- Camping at Dogpatch
- Represents “home” – historic family ties, traditions, and memories
- The place as a whole – greater than the sum of its parts
- Deer and elk hunting, trails, access to the high lakes, recreation opportunities
- Hiking opportunities and native plant diversity
- Wildlife habitat and public access
- Scenic value and open space
- Greenery

The second question asked of the committee was what they were most concerned about – what are management issues that we should focus on in the plan?

- Elk Hoof Rot/ Disease – improve habitat for greater resilience. Continue to use best available science.
- Health of deer population
- Public access comes with problems – how do we keep it clean? How do we get funding and capacity to deal with trash/littering?
- Sanitation and trash are major issues. Need solutions. Look to Montana example. Consider large dumpsters at select sites.
- Highway 12 traffic/future WSDOT expansion/increased truck traffic impacting wildlife and wildlife area
- Protect the scenic corridor and involve the White Pass Scenic Byway group
- Habitat protection/improvement should be for ALL wildlife
- Open access restriction for vehicles needed to protect wildlife
- Improve hiking opportunities and outreach so people know where to go
- Increase capacity to organize and utilize volunteers
- Build capacity by utilizing Master Hunters, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and youth groups.
- Improve native plant diversity.
- Pre-commercial thinning: use greater spacing to stimulate a broader and healthier understory. See Pacificorp example.
- Dogpatch: trees encroaching landing area for hang gliders, creating a safety issue for lesser skilled flyers.

Eric Russell from Tacoma Power updated the committee on the 2036 relicensing process and explained Riffe Lake levels are lower due to some weaknesses in the dam structure that are susceptible to a large seismic event. Lake levels are currently under study but will remain at 776 for now. Tree encroachment is happening in areas that were previously submerged, and more wildlife are using this area as a result.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Advisory Committee Members		
First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Larry & Tina	Jorgensen	Cloud Base Hang Glider Assoc.
Eric	Ollikainen	Dog Mtn Hang Gliding (CBCC)
Jay	Payne	Ag. Lessee
Ann	Lindh	Local Citizen – Horse Riding, Hiking
Michael	Callahan	Local Citizen -- Adjacent Landowner
Pat	Coleman	Dept. Natural Resources -- Local Resident
Vic	Khvoroff	Local Citizen -- Weed Board District Five:
Charles	Edmonson	Lewis Co. Weed Board – Mgr.
Bob	Amrine	Lewis Conservation District
Neil	Rico	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation / Hunter
Rodger & Ramona	Wallace	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation / Hunter