

March 11, 2025



PUGET SOUND RECREATIONAL CRAB AND SHRIMP ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHARTER

FINAL

Group Purpose and Authority

The current [Puget Sound Crab Fishery Policy \(C-3609\)](#) went into effect on September 30, 2010 and the Puget Sound [Shrimp Fishery Policy \(C-3610\)](#) went into effect on December 14, 2012. These policies contain explicit guidelines aimed at promoting healthy and sustainable populations of crab and shrimp in Puget Sound. They emphasize collaboration with the Tribal Co-Managers in structuring management measures to ensure healthy and sustainable crab and shrimp populations and equitable sharing of the harvestable surplus. Formerly two separate advisory groups, the Puget Sound Recreational Crab and Shrimp Advisory Committee (RCSAC) was formed in 2018. The RCSAC is a volunteer group that provides a forum for discussion of issues relevant to the recreational crab and shrimp fisheries within Puget Sound. The purpose of the RCSAC is to develop recommendations to help WDFW achieve the overall mission and management objectives for the Puget Sound crab and shrimp fisheries.

The RCSAC does not create rules or policies although the committee can have significant impact on the management of Puget sound crab and shrimp resources. This group provides insight, recommendations and advice to the Puget Sound crustacean program staff regarding potential policy changes, management actions, harvest seasons, regulations, education and outreach opportunities and stakeholder communication.

Committee Membership

The RCSAC is comprised of up to 11 members who represent the recreational community in various Puget Sound Marine Areas. WDFW strives to construct a committee with a broad knowledge and experience in the recreational crab and shrimp fishery and that represents the demographic diversity of the recreational crabber and shrimper community throughout the Puget Sound region. Committee members must have the ability to address issues in a thoughtful and productive manner, willingness to

engage in the management process, and ability to communicate with fishery managers and other recreational and commercial fishers or organizations.

Member terms are two years in length. Terms will begin in March. Committee meetings are held twice a year with the possibility of additional calls or meetings as needed based on emergent fishery issues.

WDFW is committed to addressing disparities in outcomes for marginalized and underrepresented communities throughout Washington and reaching out to inspire these communities to participate in all WDFW programs and activities. We aim to foster a culture where every member of the RCSAC feels valued, supported and inspired to represent and speak for the recreational harvester community. This includes providing opportunity and access for all people across differences of race, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, religion, national origin, disability/abilities, political views, and socioeconomic background.

Standard Committee Procedures

Governance

- **Advisory Group Handbook:** This document applies to all WDFW advisory groups, including the RCSAC. Members are expected to familiarize themselves with WDFW’s Advisory Group Handbook ([available online](#)).
- **Selection:** WDFW solicits RCSAC applications and selects members to provide a broad and balanced experience with the fishery. Committee members are appointed in March and will serve through February.
- **Withdrawals:** If an appointed member needs to withdraw, they must submit in writing their resignation. WDFW may recruit a replacement member to fill the gap.
- **New recruitments:** WDFW may add to the RCSAC membership as needed to enhance the group’s representation and effectiveness.
- **Removals:** Members are expected to participate regularly and constructively in accordance with the ground rules and principles in this charter document. WDFW may dismiss members who fail to do so.
- **Alternates:** The Department values having one core group work together iteratively, and thus, substitutes for members will not be allowed.
- **Meeting times/travel:** WDFW will attempt to schedule meetings to best fit the availability and convenience of RCSAC members and necessary staff from WDFW. Meetings will take place a minimum of two times per year.
- **Charter document:** The charter document provides guidelines under which the RCSAC will operate. The charter will be reviewed and revised with each term or as needed to assure it accurately represents the committee procedures.

Roles

RCSAC members engage with WDFW staff, attend meetings, communicate with relevant stakeholder groups to refine and build support for preferred management options, and collaboratively work together to produce recommendations. WDFW staff will orchestrate a fair process for the RCSAC, including planning meetings, facilitating dialogue, and liaising with co-managers and other stakeholder groups. Ultimately, WDFW will develop final rules for Director approval.

Members engage with WDFW Staff to help advise rule development, which includes:

- Attend advisory group meetings and participate in conference calls
- Provide advice to the Department on agency-proposed regulations, policies, and management plans
- Communicate stakeholder opinions, attitudes, and needs to the WDFW staff
- Identify areas of concern and recommend change
- Keep up-to-date on issues and regulations affecting crab and shrimp fisheries
- Keep the Department advised on current trends and developments in crab and shrimp fisheries
- Provide advice regarding enforcement and regulatory compliance issues
- Assist the Department in developing communication strategies and communicating with members of the public
- Be respectful and carefully consider the views of others
- Educate members of the public and encouraged them to share their ideas with relevant RCSAC members or via opportunities for public participation.

Communication

The RCSAC recognizes the importance of communication for the purposes of increasing public understanding and awareness, soliciting input and fresh ideas from others, enhancing the understanding of considerations for the deliberations, operating transparently, generating buy-in, and collectively understanding and owning the story of the Committee's process and recommendations.

Core elements of how the Advisory Committee agrees to manage communications include:

- The RCSAC will direct all communications to Puget Sound Shellfish Management Unit Lead(s). Contacts are listed below.
- Meeting materials will be supplied to all members of the Committee and posted on the [RCSAC agency webpage](#) following each meeting.
- Members of the RCSAC will not speak on behalf of the Committee or rulemaking process when expressing their personal opinion or perspective to members of the public
- Members will proactively engage with their constituencies (per the roles listed in this charter) in a manner that aligns with the communication values and purposes described in this section.
- Members will respectfully hold one another accountable to these rules, and any member found to be disregarding these rules or communicating in poor faith will receive a warning. After a

member has received a warning and they continue to violate communication rules, they may be dismissed from the Committee.

- The RCSAC and WDFW Puget Sound Crustacean program staff will coordinate to develop and promote several purposeful public engagement options to determine the most effective opportunities for public engagement.

Ground Rules for Conduct

Members will be active participants in meetings, which includes:

- Showing up on time, rested, and prepared
- Keeping electronics and other multitasking confined to breaks
- Abstaining from side conversations and commentary
- Expressing views and concerns honestly, openly, and in a timely manner rather than withholding, withdrawing, or venting concerns via other channels
- Participating in facilitated activities in good faith that they are intended to bring out the best group outcomes
- Sharing collective responsibility for the success of each meeting and the process as a whole
- Respectfully holding one another accountable to these ground rules

Members will lean into respectful debates that deepen understanding, which includes:

- Listening with curiosity and an open mind
- Assuming positive intent and speaking with positive intent
- Making your values and interests clear, including explaining your reasoning and intent
- Not using personal attacks, passive aggression, extreme/all-or-nothing language, insults, or ultimatums
- Abstaining from “whataboutisms”- attempts to direct the conversation toward something other than what is being discussed
- Sharing supporting evidence and specific examples for views expressed and offering up data to support claims when requested
- Striving for consensus by offering up pathways for agreement

Members will conduct themselves in and outside of the meetings in a way that supports building consensus, including:

- Engaging in respectful discourse in alignment with these ground rules outside of meetings
- Respecting the confidential nature of some topics by not sharing outside the RCSAC group through email or social media. Items considered confidential may include draft season schedules, personal information about other members of the RCSAC, enforcement proceedings, and/or any materials labelled as ‘confidential’ or ‘not for distribution’.
- Not recording meetings/conversations, or using ideas offered or statements made in the meeting against one another outside of the meetings

- Operating in good faith
- Engaging with partners/caucuses outside of the process to bring them along and make sure their interests and concerns are accounted for in the process

Members who are unwilling or unable to adhere to the group’s ground rules may receive a warning. After a member has received a warning and they continue to violate ground rules, they may be asked to leave a meeting or be formally dismissed from the RCSAC.

WDFW Puget Sound Crustacean Program Staff

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