

Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Olympia, Washington

June 7, 2014

Minutes compiled by: Joy Gaydos, Eric Gardner, and Cynthia Wilkerson

Attending WDAC Members: John Bork, Tom Campbell, Cori Carlton, Denis DeSilvis, Helen Engle, Sc.D., Joe Gaydos, James Hertel, Fred Koontz, Charles Lennox (Chair), Thomas Linde, Joe Miles, Cal Palmer, Ingrid Rasch, Kristina Schoyen, Joe Scordino, Martha Wehling, Dave Wertz

Attending WDFW Staff: Eric Gardner, Penny Becker, Cynthia Wilkerson, Lynn Helbrecht, Bruce Thompson

WDFW Action Items:

1. Distribute final, approved minutes from the January meeting
2. Future Agenda Items:
 - a. Setting of future WDAC meetings
 - b. Budget overview; possible subcommittee development (include updates on AFWA's Blue Ribbon panel)
 - c. Consider upcoming actions and where and when we might want to have meetings occur for 2015.
 - d. Include position statement information related to Fisher at next meeting. This will educate WDAC members for a potential position statement (subcommittee to draft) to WDFW Director after the Federal Register notification comes out.
3. Post-meeting, Ad-hoc discussion regarding the open comment period for the Game Management Plan led to WDFW organizing a conference call for WDAC members and WDFW personnel on July 7.
4. Note: Do not use NRB Director's conference room again – too small and no climate control on the weekend.

WDAC Action Items

1. Consider talking to Pacific Biodiversity Institute to see if they would consider a proposal in the Legislature to change the grizzly bear RCW – note: no individual WDAC member was identified for this task.
2. Draft a letter to Director, support for proper handling of Northern Leopard Frog/pesticide issue. Fred Koontz (Subcommittee Lead), Penny Becker (WDFW support), all WDAC
3. Establishment of Ad-hoc Subcommittees:

- a. WDAC structure (Amend council charter/work plan)- John Bork, Joe Gaydos, Ingrid Rasch, Thomas Linde (LEAD), Chuck Lennox , Eric Gardner (WDFW support)
 - b. Fisher reintroduction- Fred Koontz (Subcommittee Lead), Dave Werntz, Joe Scordino, Martha Wehling, Penny Becker and Jeff Lewis (WDFW support)
 - c. Input to State Wildlife Action Plan- WDFW (Lynn Helbrecht), Lead (Ingrid Rasch), Cal Palmer, Joe Miles, Fred Koontz
 - d. Candidate listing of species- Eric Gardner (WDFW support; remaining membership not completed)
 - e. Sage Grouse recovery- Penny Becker (WDFW support; remaining membership not completed)
 - f. Citizen Science – Cori Carlton(Lead), new WDFW Citizen Science FTE (WDFW support; remaining membership not completed)
 - g. Climate Change- Lynn Helbrecht (WDFW support; remaining membership not completed)
 - h. Respond to needs generated during the Legislative session and rulemaking process
4. Ad-hoc discussion re: Game Management Plan EIS – WDAC members will submit independent comments to WDFW if they choose to do so.

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order and general housekeeping and agenda review occurred.

Thomas Linde made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the last meeting. John Bork seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Subcommittees

The group discussed the previous efforts to establish subcommittees for planning the field trip and PLP Outreach, neither of which was successful. Some time was spent discussion potential future subcommittees; however that specific topic was postponed until later in the day. See Action Items above. Subcommittees suggested:

1. Legislative needs/Rule Making
2. Commission engagement (identified as being beyond scope of WDAC)
3. Citizen Science
4. Develop an ad-hoc subcommittee to develop a work plan for the next 3 years
 - Consideration – develop a 3-year work plan / strategic plan first; then develop subcommittees (standing or ad-hoc) as needed to reach needs
 - Consideration – sub-committees should be used to get more work done outside of regularly scheduled meetings.

Discussion focused on how to make subcommittees function. Process Improvement suggestions included:

1. ID issue clearly, with expectations, timeline and staffing identified at the meeting (not in a follow-up).
2. Assign WDAC lead (not WDFW person) and WDFW staff member as resource
3. Possibly allow time during the morning of the meeting for subcommittees to meet, although this concept was later questioned re: allow subcommittees to procrastinate or rely too much on this time to create product.

Status of State Wildlife Action Plan

Lynn Helbrecht gave a presentation on the ongoing SWAP revision, which included information on:

- Criteria for species of greatest conservation need (legal status and those that are in decline, but might not be listed)
 - Primary criteria (1) state or federal legal status and (2) high score for imperiled (Nature Serve Status)
- WDFW looked at 630 species, the selected those that met criteria 1 and 2
- WDFW pulled species off if they were peripheral (extent of range, etc.); some game species could be included
- There are currently 253 species proposed to be listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (145 were carried over from 2005).
- Species Fact Sheets for species included on list will be developed; might be an option to share with collaborators.

Advice/Input from WDAC to WDFW:

- **NEED: time to circulate this list (of accepted species and removed species) to partners in the state including state and federal agencies as well as NGOs.**
- **NEED: create a climate watch list**
- **NEED: classification system for each species that identify important umbrella species or keystone species whose conservation would benefit multiple other species.**
- **NEED: tell the story of the species that have benefitted from the last SWAP; also comment on how thinking about these species has changed over the last decade. This is an important messaging document**
- **NEED: also, this is an important tool for building collaborations with other state and federal agencies and NGOs. OPPORTUNITY FOR AN AD-HOC COMMITTEE?**
- **Note: a few marine species on tentative list for removal that should be questioned including Scoters, Common Murre, Harbor Porpoise, and others.**

2015 WDAC Meetings

- Next meetings are September 13 (Ellensburg) and November 15 (Olympia).
- Considerations – possibly meet in January, February or March (during legislative session); also consider meeting in May or June.
- **ACTION ITEM: Next meeting, consider upcoming actions and where and when we might want to have meetings occur for 2015.**

Status Reviews Updates

A presentation was made by Listing and Recovery Section Manager Penny Becker

- Steller Sea Lion (Eastern Distinct Population Segment)
 - Required to do status review as state listed species even though WA portion of population is small compared to entire DPS; Feds delisted eastern DPS.
 - Gary Wiles at WDFW working on draft status report; internal review completed by June 20, external peer-review in July (WDAC included); Public comment for 90 days; December or January for Commission Presentation
 - 2,000-2,500 animals in Washington with 9.13% annual growth with most animals on the outer coast; no recognized rookeries in Washington though some production occurs in Washington but not >50 pups born / year.
 - Draft recommendation would be delisting in the state (Federal MMPA would remain; as would protected species status in WA due to being a marine mammal)
 - **WDAC Advice: Consider press with state de-listing if approved by the commission; State does not have to take “credit” but it is a golden opportunity to have a conservation success story that highlights the work of WDFW and cooperating Federal and NGO partners.**
- Periodic Status Reviews
 - All 46 currently listed species need review every 5 years; they all will be completed over the next 3 years
 - List of 2014 Batch was presented
 - WDFW IT has put together a web portal for people to comment on Species Status Reviews
- Western Gray Squirrel
 - Largest native tree squirrel in Washington; Oak, Pine, Douglas Fir and Riparian areas

- Range from WA to California; ground foragers with forest dependency; nest makers
- Historically wide-spread, now only have 3 isolated populations
- State listed as Threatened in 1993 (Federal Species of Concern); recovery plan made in 2007; habitat group is assessing forest practices and have concern about increase in timber harvest (species has voluntary forest practice mandate, not mandatory); habitat loss to fire also could be important
- This was on year 3 schedule to get data prior to status review; citizen petition to WDFW Director has bumped up process to 2014
- WDFW investigating landscape-level conservation planning
- Brown Pelican
 - Draft periodic status review is underway and will be finalized in 2015
- Tufted Puffin
 - Incorporating external peer-review being incorporated
 - 90 day public comment period begins in early August
 - Commission review planned for late in 2014 to consider Endangered listing recommendation (first time listing a state species since 2007)
- Greater Sage Grouse
 - WA State threatened species; US Federal Candidate species (decision by December 2015; range-wide and potential for WA DPS of this)
 - WDFW summary document published on sage grouse in March 2014 available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01602/>
 - A recovery plan exists with recovery goal at 3,200 minimum viable population with range through most of historic range in Washington and recovery efforts including translocation and habitat restoration were discussed, including the CCAA program and details about potential US Federal Listing.
 - There will likely be opportunities for future WDAC engagement on this issue
- Grizzly Bear
 - Long-term topic of conversation for potential recovery actions that likely would include translocation of bears into the north cascades; A statute (RCW) exists to prevent translocation from outside of Washington; There is a focused interest by Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service for a likely reintroduction into Washington; There might be private/NGO interest in evaluating whether the RCW needs to be reviewed or changed.

WDAC ACTION ITEM: consider talking to Pacific Biodiversity Institute to see if they would consider a proposal in the Legislature to change the grizzly bear RCW.

- Emerging Issues

- Northern Leopard Frog; 1 remaining population in Grant County, WA; mosquito control is requesting spraying of adulticides (and have actually already begun spraying); a BMP document put together by WDFW, DOH and other groups was developed in 2004 and set sensitive places aside including the potholes; this is off-label use; the issue is being reviewed by WDFW, Ecology, Ag., etc.
- Fisher reintroductions in the N. Cascades are being considered after successful reintroduction on the Olympic Peninsula; this November, trappers in BC will bring animals down for reintroduction; there is a concurrent West Coast potential listing of the fisher in the West; this could include the WA population so a candidate conservation agreement is being developed with landowners so if landowners agree to certain things they will have coverage for any incidental taken their land if the species does become Federally listed.

Action Item: Draft a letter to Director, support for proper handling of Northern Leopard Frog/pesticide issue. Fred Koontz (Subcommittee Lead), Penny Becker (WDFW support), all WDAC

Note: Fisher reintroduction is possibly example of where WDAC can produce a position statement that will add value to WDFW's potential request for Federal Fisher listing of the Western DPS without including Washington.

ACTION ITEM: include position statement information related to Fisher at next meeting. This will educate WDAC members for a potential position statement (subcommittee to draft) to WDFW Director after the Federal Register notification comes out.

Emerging Issues/Briefs on ideas where the WDAC might be interested in engagement

- a. Long list of listed species (46) and candidate species (113) exists. By policy, these are important species to make progress on. Abbreviated status reviews are planned to see which need to be addressed
- b. What does it mean to be a candidate species in WA? A policy put species on as candidates as a communication tool saying they are of significance – what are we doing about them? Is there a reason to maintain these?
- c. Agencies are being asked to look at another 15% cut in general funds; this is just after the 10% reduction that had heavy impacts on the program. Does WDAC see itself in playing a role for this state request to cut funding and the potential impact on the wildlife diversity program? Note: if the WDAC would like to be heavily involved in budgets, than it might be a good idea to create a budget subcommittee that has the potential to more closely examine current spending

and be in a position to advise the greater Council on this and future budget issues.

- d. There has been extensive effort to look at landscape-level conservation efforts, but there has not been a prioritization exercise to identify important areas. How do you pull multiple resources together to develop a multi-phase effort to accomplish this on a state-based and locally based effort? What would be the opportunity and effort to engage the public on this? How do we incorporate game species? What about climate change?
- e. Prioritization by the diversity section: tools are being considered to look at prioritization to be able to show how priorities are selected. Staff has spent a lot of time considering what might help to prioritize actions. It would be of interest to hear from WDAC what we think might trigger priorities. Asking the diversity group what we want to be good at and what we want to be bad at might be helpful.
- f. Other ideas to consider for WDAC
 - i. Oversight of meetings, agendas and actions
 - ii. Re-visiting charter to see if it is adequate for the group's work
 - iii. Developing a work plan (and prioritizing goals)
 - iv. How subcommittees might help
 - v. Where are opportunities evaluating the economic importance of non-game wildlife (watchable wildlife) and how this could impact the budget
 - vi. What WDFW is doing to highlight the benefits of the diversity work?

Round Table Definition of Success

- Purpose of WDAC; Objectives and structure
- Making recommendations to Director (possible Measure)
- Budget; partnership, grants,
- Comment letter – support SWAP, increase Diversity budget, support use of CCAAs and other incentive-based tools
- Follow through on issues surrounding fisher listing proposal and conservation action
- Citizen Science
- Metrics for Cit. Science, Climate Change, Budget Advocacy, SWAP
- Results – value of Candidate Species policy list; something small, can show progress and connect with Director
- Leverage WDFW work, increase visibility, funding, SWAP
- Connect WDFW to citizens, advocacy, partnerships
- Clear and defined goals (short and long-term). WDAC as a group owns those
- SWAP, CCAA
- Citizen Science
- Connectivity, Acquisitions

- Improved Nongame conservation - # of recommendations to Director, Inc. budget, awareness, partnerships, pesticide issue, SWAP, budget, partnerships
- Advocacy – get word out, publicity, Commission make-up, seek Diversity interest representation on Commission
- Advocacy, climate awareness
- Adding value – specific # of recs to Director, Sounding board to Diversity Division, get specific (Candidate species policy), budget and marketing (part of 3-year work plan?)

Subcommittee Set Asides

- Field Trips
- Legislation and Rule-making
- Abbreviated Status Review format
- Advocacy/Outreach/Partnerships
- Marketing (audiences: communities, legislative, citizen science, PLP/fundraising)
- Sage Grouse: 6-12 months

Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council

Olympia, Washington

June 8, 2014

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TIME	SUBJECT	SPEAKER
8:30	South Puget Sound Wildlife Area – Western pond turtle recovery	Lisa Hallock, Michelle Tirhi
11:00	Scatter Creek Wildlife Area – Prairie restoration; Mazama pocket gopher, Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly	Dave Hays, Ann Potter

Those WDAC memers that were able to attended the field trip to the South Puget Sound Wildlife Area (SPS WA) and the Scatter Creek Wildlife area. Presentations were given by WDFW employees Mick Cope and Lisa Hallock regarding pond turtle and their recover program at the SPS WA. WDFW employees Dave Hays, Ann Potter, and Shane Belson preseneted information on prairie management and resoration, and butterfly conservation at the Scatter Creek site. I draft butterfly identificaiton phamplet was provided.

Post-meeting Ad-hoc discussion regarding the Game Management Plan

In mid-June, a WDAC member brought to the attention of the Council an opportunity for the public to comment on WDFW's Environmental Impact Statement addressing the 2015-2021 Game Management (GMP). Initial request was that the WDAC provide written comment to the Director regarding the plan and an electronic conversation occurred as a result of a response letter that had been drafted by the member. Subsequent discussion indicated that not all WDAC members felt sufficiently informed or desired to make a written statement regarding the plan.

WDAC Chair Chuck Lennox and WDFW lead Eric Gardner reviewed the guidelines for WDAC submission of a position statement and believed they had not been met for this issue and that significant work would need to occur by the WDAC in order to do so. So, instead, they suggested that the members' input be provided through alternative means (e.g. through an addendum to these minutes and/or via individual input to the SMP process). This approach was received with skepticism or as less than desirable by some WDAC members so it was decided that a WDAC conference call on the subject would be established.

On July 7, WDFW and Chair Chuck Lennox hosted a conference call on the GMP, attended by Director Phil Anderson, Game Division Manager Dave Ware, Diversity Division Manager Eric Gardner, and a quorum of WDAC members. WDFW staff heard input from WDAC members and reiterated that it would be appropriate for the WDAC to submit their comments as a group as long as they represented the majority view of the Council and if minority reports were included (per the Advisory Council guidelines previously shared with the Council). All present Council members felt that their concerns/input had been heard by the right people and that the effort to develop a WDAC consensus on the issue, even if granted a nominal deadline extension, would not be necessary. Instead, some of the members have or will submit their input as individuals via the public input process.

Key points in the last (but neither finalized nor submitted) draft of the letter were:

- The document is well written and covers most issues dealing with game species management.
- The document is lacking in discussion on habitat status and recommendations for habitat modification or maintenance to promote game species maintenance or expansion.
- No reference to impacts in this planning document on non-game species or listed species.
- The Game Management Plan could promote non-game species population and particularly listed species recovery by developing an all species management approach. Impacts from the Game Management Plan on habitat could have positive or negative impacts on non-game species.
- Recommend that WDFW broaden the scope of the Game Management Plan to address the issues identified above as well as game species habitat conditions, maintenance, and modification.