

Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council

March 1, 2024 Meeting Notes

1:00 -4:00 pm
Online via Zoom

WDAC Members

Present: Trina Bayard, Denis DeSilvis, John Farnsworth, Patrick Gallagher (Vice Chair), Joe Gaydos, Sarina Jepsen, Jerry Joyce, Jeff Kozma, Nancy Lee (Chair), Glen Mendel, Monika Wieland Shields, Anne Van Sweringen, Todd A. Wildermuth

Absent: Matthew Danielson, Kathleen Gobush, Marie Neumiller

WDFW Staff Present: Hannah Anderson, Brandon Austin, Wendy Connally, Taylor Cotton, Janet Gorrell, Jenna Judge, Tom O'Brien, Kara Whittaker

Welcome

- Agenda Review, Notetaker Selection
 - No changes to the agenda were made except to correct an error in the scheduled time. The agenda is attached.
 - Notetaker for May meeting: Glen Mendel
- Review Sept Action Items
 - Taylor sent out a list of candidates and upcoming PSRs.
 - Tom sent out a copy of Kara's presentation.
 - Wendy did not send a draft of the SGCN criteria, two-year timeline, and FAQ since they are still under development. Discussion on this issue was deferred to later in the meeting.
- Notes from the previous meeting were accepted without revision. Adoption was moved by Nancy Lee, seconded by Glen Mendel, and adopted without objection. Joe Gaydos abstained as he did not attend the previous meeting. Monika was commended for the quality of the notes.

Action Item: The notetaker will send out a draft of the notes within 2-3 weeks of the meeting. The draft notes will be finalized and sent out prior to the next meeting.

WDAC

- Priorities
 - Prioritize involvement in land-use planning.
 - Seek opportunities for engagement in Biodiversity Investments.
 - SWAP committee look for cross-program opportunities (e.g. game management plans) to achieve conservation beyond spp. by spp.
 - Focus on thematic priorities (e.g. habitat connectivity across ownerships) and assess tools and programs to address connectivity.
 - Glen suggested that the mitigation ratios, associated with net ecological gain, be included in the WDAC priorities.

Action Item: WDFW staff will try to produce an update on mitigation ratios and net ecological gain. This will be added to the May meeting.

- Review WDAC Charter
 - Membership. Recruitment will be held in the 3rd year of member terms (2025) unless there are substantial vacancies.
 - Item 7—recognize that not all statements will be unanimous.
 - Election of Chair/Vice Chair. Stipulated for the first meeting of the year but we've held elections in fall meeting.

Action Item: Nancy will review the WDAC Charter and send an email to solicit comments. Draft of the review will be circulated and will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Progress on Biodiversity investments

- Wildlife Diversity Division & Regions
 - Hired Jenna Judge as the Wildlife Diversity Assistant Division Manager and Jessica Stocking as the Coastal, Marine, Flyway Section. Also hired a herpetologist (to be named soon). Multiple regional staff hired or are being recruited.
 - Legislative update document available.
 - Current efforts include Bull frog management and Cascade red fox research.
 - An update on the new Grant Opportunity program was shared. Program will further develop over time.
- Ecosystem Services Divisions & Regions
 - Tom shared a diagram of Ecosystem Division positions. As the positions are filled, they now have the capacity to do significant work.

Legislative Session

- FY 2024 Short Session is coming to a close. There are four relevant bills that have passed.
 - ESB 6120 addresses the “Wildland Urban Interface (or WUI)” which is defined by an intermediate density of human structures and vegetation (as a presumed proxy for wildfire hazard). The bill eliminates the requirement that all jurisdictions statewide create defensible space (i.e., heavy thinning and clearing of vegetation and debris) around structures in the WUI because the DNR WUI map doesn't represent actual wildfire hazard. The bill also directs DNR to create new maps that depict actual wildfire hazard and risk for more appropriate hazard mitigation areas. The Bill passed both the House and Senate. A link to the WDNR Wildland-Urban Interface map was provided: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=21683af70ece4bd495c319915f7a9232>.
 - SSB 5972 requires that any use on neonicotinoids insecticides on outdoor plants be applied only in the production of agricultural commodities and/or by a licensed application and is prohibited in non-agricultural areas. Passed the Senate and House.

- SHB 2293 convenes an avian salmon predation work group. WDFW is looking to build capacity to support this. Passed the Senate and House.
- SSB 5667 Concerning eligibility, enrollment, and compensation of small forestland owners volunteering for participation in the forestry riparian 50-year easement program. Passed the Senate and House.
- Prepping for 23-25 BN
 - While the 2023-24 session is scheduled to adjourn on March 7, 2024, preparations for the 2023-25 biennial session have already begun.

Subcommittee reports

- Species of Concern
 - A letter to the Director concerning the killer whale PSR was submitted.
 - A letter to the Director concerning the northern spotted owl PSR was submitted.
 - An online Doodle scheduling poll for bald eagle and peregrine falcon PSR reviews has been distributed. These are two delisted and recovered species. WAC asks us to revisit them one time 5 years after delisting as a final step.
 - The Wolf PSR will be presented to commission soon.
 - Overview of PSRs due or overdue spreadsheet has been distributed to everyone.

Action Item: Taylor will send out additional information on listed species and recovery plan status.

- Wildlife Area Planning
 - Methow Wildlife Area and Recreation Plan—final in winter 2025.
 - Scatter Creek Habitat Management Plan amendment to existing plan.
 - Cowlitz Draft plan early 2025
 - Skagit Wildlife Area starting SEPA this month.
 - Wenas Wildlife Area
 - Olympic small units
 - Simcoe –Review draft and submitted letter.
- State Wildlife Action Plan
 - Moving slowly but additional materials will be coming out in the next few months. Sticking with SWAP name. Plan framed as synthesis where it will be a go-to plan with relevant information in a single location.
 - Focus on Species of greatest conservation need but include all wildlife.
 - Integrates effects of climate change
 - Species of greatest information need.
 - Target timeline being developed. The plan needs to be completed by October 2025. Concern by members about progress and if there are adequate resources to get this done.
 - The timeline and framework should be released to WDAC by the end of March.

Action Item: SWAP framework to be completed and distributed in March.

Action Item: A SWAP timeline needs to be finalized and circulated to the committee.

State Listing Process Review

WAC 220-610-110

- Finalize WDAC proposal and letter.
 - Review of drafts at last two meetings. Last meeting included draft of letter.
 - The final will be sent to WDFW, and it is up to the agency to decide if they will do anything with the suggestions.
 - Proposed Changes: (see p 3 of Todd's letter)

Action Item: Nancy will send out a note to start the proposed WAC revision review process. Members to review the document over the next two weeks and submit any comments.

Planning for May in person meeting

- Identify Topics
 - Mitigation ratios
 - SWAP framework and timeline
 - Habitat conductivity
 - Charter revision
- Location @ Woodland Park Zoo (Seattle) with a potential visit to Northwest pond turtles rearing program.

Action Item: Respond to Doodle poll on meeting date immediately.

Meeting Wrap-up and Review of Action Items

No additional items were raised.

Action Items. The following action items were identified.

- The notetaker will send out a draft of the notes within 2-3 weeks of the meeting. The draft notes will be finalized and sent out prior to the next meeting.
- WDFW staff will try to produce an update on mitigation ratios and net ecological gain. This will be added to the May meeting.
- Nancy will review the WDAC Charter and send an email to solicit comments. Draft of the review will be circulated and will be an agenda item at the next meeting.
- Taylor will send out additional information on listed species and recovery plan status.
- SWAP framework to be completed and distributed in March.
- A SWAP timeline needs to be finalized and circulated to the committee.
- Nancy will send out a note to start the proposed WAC revision review process. Members to review the document over the next two weeks and submit any comments.
- Respond to Doodle poll on meeting date immediately.

The meeting adjourned at 3:59 pm.

Notes taken by Jerry Joyce March 1, 2024.

Details on ESB 6120 in the first draft were corrected by Kara. Omission of Simcoe WA corrected in Wildlife area planning notes.

First draft circulated March 5, 2024. Final draft distributed March 28, 2024.

Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council

Friday, March 1st, 2024, 1-4pm

Agenda

| TIME | SUBJECT | TOPIC LEAD/SPEAKER |
|----------------|---|---|
| 12:45 | Optional: early check-in, Zoom testing | All |
| 1:00 | Welcome Agenda Review, Notetaker Selection Review Sept Action Items | Nancy Lee, Chair Patrick Gallagher, Vice-Chair |
| 1:10- 1:30 | WDAC <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review PrioritiesReview WDAC Charter | Nancy Lee Patrick Gallagher |
| 1:30- 2:00 | Progress on Biodiversity investments <ul style="list-style-type: none">Wildlife Diversity Division & RegionsEcosystem Services Division & Regions | Hannah Anderson Tom O'Brien |
| 2:00 - 2:20 | Legislative Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">FY 2024 Short Session coming to a closePrepping for 23-25BN | Hannah Anderson Tom O'Brien Council Members |
| 2:20 | BREAK | |
| | Subcommittee Report outs | |
| 2:35 - 3:00 | Species of Concern | Patrick Gallagher Taylor Cotten |
| | Wildlife Area Planning | Denis DeSilvis/Jeff Kozma Janet Gorrell |
| | State Wildlife Action Plan | John Farnsworth/Glen Mendel Wendy Connally |
| 3:00 - 3:30 | State Listing Process Review (WAC 220-610-110) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Finalize WDAC proposal and letter | Todd Wildermuth |
| 3:30- 3:45 | Planning for May in person meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify topicsLocation @ Woodland Park ZooVisit to Northwestern Pond Turtles? | Nancy Lee Patrick Gallagher |
| 3:45- 4:00 | Meeting Wrap-up, Review Action Items | Nancy Lee Patrick Gallagher |
| 4:00 | ADJOURN | |