
Summary

Meeting dates: February 8 and 9, 2013

Agenda item #5: Adapting to Climate Change at WDFW

Presenter(s): Lynn Helbrecht, Climate Change Coordinator, Habitat Program

Background summary:

Climate change is impacting natural resource management in Washington, through melting glaciers, warming air temperatures, sea level rise and changes in ocean chemistry. These trends are expected to continue and in many cases accelerate, resulting in potentially profound challenges for conserving and managing species and habitats within the next century. Specifically, warming temperatures will result in declining snowpack, lower summer stream flows, changes in the timing of stream flows, shifts in species' ranges, mismatches in the timing of ecological events and an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events. The frequency of catastrophic forest fires is also expected to double within 50-60 years and longer growing seasons will enable increases in pathogens and invasive species such as the pine bark beetle.

WDFW is committed to ensuring that we are responsive to these challenges. Guided in part by the Washington State Integrated Climate Response Strategy (April, 2012), our aim is to ensure that our investments in infrastructure, fish passage, land acquisition, habitat restoration and other activities are strategic in light of future climatic change, and will continue to efficiently meet our mandates. Our climate adaptation program has four major focus areas: education and capacity building, research and monitoring, integrating climate considerations into key agency programs (particularly those with longer time frames), and fostering collaboration with our natural resource partners. In the past year, working in partnership with the National Wildlife Federation and the Doris Duke Foundation, we launched a project to create a Climate Adaptation Handbook for WDFW, which will be developed based on the results of demonstration projects from the three resource programs, Habitat, Fish and Wildlife.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

N/A

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

N/A

Action requested:

N/A

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

N/A

Communications Plan:

N/A
