



Minutes

Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission
Web Conference
Friday, January 13, 2023
Olympia, Washington

Attendance

Commission:

Barbara Baker, Chair
Molly Linville, Vice Chair
Lorna Smith
Kim Thorburn
James R. Anderson
John Lehmkuhl
Melanie Rowland
Tim Ragen

Department Staff:

Kelly Susewind, Director
Joe Panesko, AGO
Amy Windrope, Deputy Director
Richard Tveten
Julie Watson

Commission Staff:

Nikki Kloepfer

Vice Chair Linville called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

A. Forest Management Projects – Briefing, Decision

Richard Tveten, Forest Management Team Lead briefed the Commission and asked for approval Commission on forest management projects that involve more than a million board feet of timber harvest.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Smith, to approve the proposed commercial thinning projects as presented. All in favor. Motion passes.

B. Protecting Southern Resident Killer Whales from the Effects of Vessels – Briefing

Julie Watson, Killer Whale Policy Lead, provided the Commission with an update on a process to evaluate the effectiveness of statutes and regulations designed to protect Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) from the effects of vessels, including the licensing of commercial whale watching and the regulation of recreational and commercial viewing of SRKW.

The Commission approved a letter of support to the Legislature emphasizing the importance of implementing the Department’s recommendations to better protect Southern Residents from the effects of vessel noise and disturbance.

C. Future Meeting Planning

The Commission discussed upcoming meeting agendas and reviewed an updated year-at-a-glance.

Commissioner Anderson confirmed the Fish committee priorities for the next meeting.

Commissioner Lehmkuhl requested additional discussion on the Commissions role and processes with the Game Management Plan and to prioritize wolf livestock interactions, science policy discussions, and the Conservation policy at future meetings.

Commissioner Ragen requested information on how best to interact with the legislature given the recent start to the legislative session and agency related bills.

Commissioner Smith requested that committee meeting monthly to discuss the Game Management Plan and echoes Commissioner Lehmkuhl interest in further defining the Commission's roles and process with the plan.

Commissioner Thorburn asked about the Wolf Blue sheet being listed under the wildlife committee. That was decided by the Commission a few meetings prior. Commissioner Smith suggested recirculating the blue sheet.

Joe Panesko provided an update on the Sherriff Songer litigation not associated with the agency. The litigation is no longer active.

D. General Discussion

Commissioner Thorburn shared her experience attending Winter WAFWA January 5-9, 2023, in New Mexico.

Commissioners Smith, Lehmkuhl, Rowland, Anderson and Linville shared their experiences with the recent Wildlife School hosted by the Department in Wenatchee January 9-12, 2023.

Vice Chair Linville adjourned the meeting at 10:43 a.m.

Nichole Kloepfer 1/27/2023
Nichole Kloepfer, Executive Assistant