



Minutes

**Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting**

April 23-24, 2021 – Webinar

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**Attendance**

**Commission**

Barbara Baker, Vice Chair  
Donald McIsaac (Friday only)  
Kim Thorburn  
Molly Linville  
James R. Anderson  
Lorna Smith  
Fred Koontz

**Staff**

Joe Panesko, AGO  
Kelly Susewind,  
Director  
Amy Windrope, Deputy  
Director  
Karen Edwards  
Benjamin Maletzke  
Dan Brinson  
Taylor Cotton  
Hannah Anderson

**Commission Staff**

Nichole Kloepfer

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**Friday, April 23, 2021**

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

**1. Call to Order**

**a. Commissioners' Discussion**

Commissioner Linville spoke recently at the Washington Emergency Management Operations Center in regards to lessons learned with preventing and suppressing wildfires. She was happy to report that HB 1168 passed unanimously which will be great for wildlife prevention and suppression, and the future of the areas damaged by the recent wildfires.

Commissioner Anderson reported the passing of Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe council member Kurt Grinnell due to a car accident. He will be greatly missed by the tribal community and those he has impacted with his leadership in fisheries management.

**b. Meeting Minute Approval**

The Commission considered approval of the March 25-27, 2021 and April 9, 2021 draft minutes.

**Commissioner Anderson made motion, seconded by Commissioner Thorburn, to approve the minutes of the March 25-27, 2021, webinar as presented. All in favor. Motion passed.**

**Commissioner Anderson made motion, seconded by Commissioner Koontz, to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2021, web conference as presented. All in favor. Motion passed.**

**c. Committee Reports - This Section constitutes the formal minutes from each of the listed committee meetings:**

**Wildlife Committee**

**Commissioners in attendance: Anderson, Baker, Thorburn, Linville, Koontz, Smith, McIsaac**

Commissioner Thorburn announced that Donny Martorello has accepted the chief scientist position within the Wildlife program. It will be a slow transition from his current role.

Staff provided a briefing and there was good commissioner discussion on the status of recreation planning from the Lands division. The Commission previously received an initial briefing on these efforts and preliminary planning. Over the next few meetings, the Commission should start seeing the proposed rules associated with the development of expanded recreational opportunities on department lands.

The committee was provided with a high-level overview of the R3 initiative (recruitment, retention, and reactivation efforts) that will be advanced as part of the implementation of the strategic plan R3 is a national effort spearheaded by AFWA in response to the decrease of sportsmen and women and their importance to wildlife conservation. The department notes there is an additional R (relevance), which was also discussed in the committee meeting.

**Fish Committee**

**Commissioners in attendance: Baker, McIsaac, Anderson, Koontz, Smith, Linville**

Commissioner McIsaac reported that staff provided a debrief on the North of Falcon outcome and the impacts on Willapa, Grays Harbor, and other fishing bodies.

Constituents voiced concern about the steelhead guide public meeting and the cancellation of it. Due to Chair Carpenter’s absence, a reschedule is unknown and staff will follow up with the those who have concerns about it. Opportunity to provide comment on the issue will be at the June Commission meeting. Constituents also voice concern about alternative gear and concurrency with Oregon. Alternative gear will be discussed further under the Directors report.

Ron Warren announced his retirement at the end of June after 41 years with the agency.

Commissioner Koontz gave kudos to staff for their efforts with virtual access to North of Falcon process and meetings this year.

**2. Open Public Input**

The following people provided input on various topics:

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|---|--|
| Nathan Ereth – Steelhead concerns         | David Linn – Chronic conflict zones        |
| David Moskowitz – Wild steelhead concerns | Marie Neumiller – 3-year season setting    |
| Rachel Haymon - Klickitat County cougars  | Wayne Johnson – Wolf conflict              |
| Martha Hall – Conflict management         | Rachel Bjork – Wildlife committee feedback |

**3. Director’s Report**

The Deputy Director provided oral highlights on the following:

- Washington State junior stamp contest
- North of Falcon debrief
- Region 2 director hire status
- CFO, 2<sup>nd</sup> round interviews
- Department legislative budget update
- Range rider qualification evaluations
- Pinto Abalone recovery plan

- Update on WA/OR concurrency efforts
- Alternative/pound net gear update

Deputy Director Amy Windrope provided an update on tort settlements.

**4. Lands Transactions - Briefing, Public Comment and Decision**

Karen Edwards, Real Estate Manager asked the Commission for a decision to approve the Ebsen Water Access donation. This proposal is to acquire by donation 7 (+/-) acres in Asotin County from the Wild Steelhead Coalition. This site on the Grande Ronde River has been operated and maintained by Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife for many years under an agreement from the past and current property owners.

The property acquisition costs are being provided by the Wild Steelhead Coalition and WDFW Region 1 combined. This water access is immediately adjacent to the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area and contains a popular hand boat launch, restrooms and five primitive camping sites of public recreation opportunities.

The following people provided comment:  
Rich Simms

**Commissioner Anderson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Thorburn to approve the transaction as presented by staff. All in favor. Motion passed. Commissioner McIsaac abstained as he was not present for the presentation and the vote.**

**BREAK**

**5. Annual Wolf Management Report - Briefing**

Benjamin Maletzke, PhD, Statewide Wolf Specialist and Dan Brinson, Conflict Section Manager, Wildlife Program provided the Commission with an annual wolf update.

**LUNCH**

**6. Sage Grouse Periodic Status Review – Decision**

Taylor Cotten, Conservation Assessment Section Manager and Hannah Anderson, Wildlife Diversity Division Section Manager asked the Commission for a decision on the Periodic Status Review recommendation to up-list the Greater Sage Grouse to endangered.

**Commissioner Thorburn made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Smith, to adopt the recommended rule changes to WAC 220-200-100 and 220-610-010 as presented by staff. All in favor. Motion passed.**

**7. Gray and Humpback Whale Periodic Status Review – Decision**

Taylor Cotten, Conservation Assessment Section Manager and Hannah Anderson, Wildlife Diversity Division Section Manager asked the Commission for a decision on the Periodic Status Review recommendation to maintain the status of the Gray and Humpback Whales.

**Commissioner Smith made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to approve the recommendation that the gray whale and humpback whale maintain its current status as presented by staff. All in favor. Motion passed.**

The Commissioners requested that if there are significant changes to the status in the near future, that staff come back to the Commission.

**8. Executive Session**

Pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i), the Commission met in executive session. No action was taken, and the public was not permitted to attend.

**RECESS**

**Saturday, April 24, 2021**

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

**9. Open Public Input**

The following people provided input on various topics:

Adrienne Dorf – Wolf presentation concerns	Chris Bachman – Cougar management
Susan Kane-Ronning – Wolf presentation concerns	David Linn – Wolf conflict & rulemaking
Rachel Bjork - Wolf presentation concerns	Robert Sudar – Alternative gear
Paul Rudnick – Tadpole permitting	Nathan Ereth – Steelhead concerns
Stephanie Taylor - Wolf presentation concerns	
Gabrielle Gilbert – Cougar management Klickitat County	
Lynn Mason - Cougar management Klickitat County	

**10. Miscellaneous and Meeting Debrief**

Commissioner Thorburn noted that the Non-Native Game Fish and Fisheries policy commission briefing appeared twice on the Year-at-a-Glance meeting schedule. Program staff will follow up.

Commissioner Anderson requested a yearly committee preview, similar to what is done for Commission meetings. Vice Chair Baker suggested that this item be brought up in a Commission workshop.

Deputy Director Windrope provided an update to remote hybrid meetings and will distribute the information to the Commission and add it as an agenda item to Executive committee.

Commissioner Thorburn and Koontz discussed the agency's mission and how the public perceives conservation efforts.

**11. Executive Session**

Pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g), the Commission met in executive session. No action was taken, and the public was not permitted to attend.

Vice Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

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Nichole Kloepfer, Executive Assistant