



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Wildlife Program/Lands Division
WILDLIFE AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
GUIDANCE DOCUMENT
February, 2014



The intent of this document is to provide guidance to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) wildlife area managers in conducting Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) activities.

Acknowledgement

Members of the AC Steering Committee include: Richard Kessler, Ross Huffman, Kyle Guzlas, Mark Grabski, Dan Peterson, Margaret Tudor, Matt Monda, Ted Clausing, Russell Link, Paul Dahmer and Lauri Vigue. Clay Sprague, Lands Division Manager. Facilitation technical advice was also provided by Melinda Posner.

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CHAPTER 1

How to use this document

The intent of this document is to provide guidance to wildlife area managers. This document defines the purpose of advisory committees; describes the roles of agency staff and committee members; and outlines best practices for Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) recruitment, composition and productive meetings. It recognizes advisory committees as a critical tool to involve the public and interested stakeholders in lands management activities. It is recommended that each wildlife area manager carefully review the information in this document and apply recommendations to key areas needing improvement. In some cases this guidance will help managers develop a new WAAC. For more information please see the section “What does a successful WAAC look like?” on page 8 of this document.

Purpose of Advisory Committees

The purpose of Advisory Committees is to provide input through the development of each wildlife area plan. They also provide input about ongoing lands management activities that support successful implementation of the wildlife area plans, consistent with the agency mandate, purpose of lands and state-wide goals.

Public and stakeholder input through the land management planning process is a critical ingredient in developing practical and implementable plans that have the support of the local community. A well-functioning WAAC contributes to the agency’s objectives by:

- Identifying the issues and interests of diverse stakeholders who may be impacted or affected by lands management activities
- Providing local knowledge and expertise in wildlife area and lands management issues
- Communicating with their constituents and the broader community about wildlife area planning and implementation
- Developing public understanding about the agency’s mission and goals
- Building credibility, local support and constituencies for land management practices

WAACs should meet at least two times per year, but can meet more frequently when needed. WAACs also help the agency successfully implement the Conservation Initiative (Principal #6: *We collaborate with our conservation and community partners to help us achieve our shared goals*).

WAAC History

Wildlife Area Advisory Committees, formerly Citizen Advisory Groups (CAGs), originated in the mid-1990s during early wildlife area management planning efforts as a way to understand the issues and interests of affected stakeholders and interested citizens. The CAGs were re-initiated in 2005-06 with development of the original wildlife area management plans. At that time, the CAGs' role was to review the planning process in each of the wildlife areas. Member input consisted primarily of providing comments on the draft management plans and goals and objectives of each of the wildlife areas.

The now defunct Land Management Advisory Council (LMAC) was also a forum to involve citizens in land management activities of the wildlife areas. With the LMAC no longer in existence, statewide WAACs are a critical conduit between the agency's lands planning and management activities and interested citizens and stakeholders.

While WAACs will play a significant role in gathering public and stakeholder input, they will not always be the only outreach strategy used.

Background for Developing Guidance

In anticipation of developing the next round of wildlife area plans, in 2012 the agency convened a steering committee consisting of five wildlife area managers, two regional program managers and headquarters staff to develop guidance for the statewide Wildlife Area Advisory Committee process. For more information please see the Appendix.

In August 2013, a group of seven advisory committee members from different areas around the state met in Ellensburg to review the draft guidance and provide feedback. Input from this group has been considered and, in many cases, incorporated into this document. A complete summary of the meeting is provided in the appendix.

Current Advisory Committee Structure

As of 2012, WDFW has 17 active WAACs. Seven wildlife areas do not have functioning WAACs; others may be marginally effective. This is primarily due to the fact that WAACs were typically driven by management plan development which has not occurred since 2005. In order to improve trust and support with the local communities, WAACs should be used along with other outreach techniques to involve the public and other stakeholders in wildlife area concerns/issues.

Challenges of WAACs

The success of each public and stakeholder input process varies based on the geographies, personalities of participating individuals/groups, and specific

needs/goals of wildlife areas. Some of the specific challenges faced by wildlife area managers in developing and maintaining effective WAACs for their wildlife areas include:

- Diversity of opinions, perceptions, understandings and priorities of members
- Lack of clarity or agreement about committee vs, staff roles
- Public interest varies across the state by individual committee and geography
- Logistical challenges with wildlife area complexes spread over large geographic areas
- Finding new and interested members
- Land use controversies may dominate some advisory committee processes, (e.g. Snoqualmie, Skagit and Scatter Creek WAs)
- Limited or delayed progress as a result of public controversy, interagency coordination and/or conflicting legislative priorities
- Lack of participation by general citizens from lack of interest, intimidation about process/other members, or negative past history
- Imbalance of perceived “power” among members, who come from diverse backgrounds, play different roles within their organizations, and have varied knowledge about lands planning and management activities
- Domination of meetings/process by outspoken user groups and/or individuals
- Advisory committee meetings may require that managers play too many roles; including facilitation, taking notes, and answering questions; which impact effectiveness of meeting and follow-up.

Wildlife area managers may face several or many of these challenges, which may evolve or change over time. Managers have a responsibility to assess and understand the challenges facing their wildlife area, and to develop an WAAC strategy to manage most effectively.

CHAPTER 2

WAAC Roles and Responsibilities

Role

The role of the advisory committee is to provide public and other stakeholders' perspectives in WDFW wildlife area planning and management activities. WAAC participation will add credibility and support for land management practices and help build constituencies for wildlife areas.

Responsibilities

- Review information, discuss issues with other members and provide comments during the development of wildlife area management plans and updates
- Serve as spokespersons for respective interest groups, reporting back to the agency and committee about the interests and concerns of the larger stakeholder group
- Ask questions to understand the agency's mandate, goals and purpose of land management activities
- Identify an alternate from the larger stakeholder group who will serve when the primary representative is unable to participate. Coordinate all communication with the alternate and ensure the alternate can and will participate according to the advisory group ground rules and protocols.
- Provide input from a variety of user groups on resource issues
- Stimulate local interest in maintaining successful WAACs
- Act as a sounding board for wildlife area planning and management activities.
- Identify key issues of concern
- Provide input on how the WAAC could be more efficient and effective
- Be able to communicate about agency goals and wildlife area activities outside WAAC meetings
- Act in an advisory capacity, providing input and guidance to agency staff; the agency's role is to use this information to make sound and informed decisions. WAACs are not decision makers. They are not required to reach consensus or necessarily agree with agency directives.

Agency Roles and Responsibilities

Role

The role of wildlife area staff is to facilitate effective WAAC input in wildlife area planning and management activities by actively seeking and incorporating where appropriate WAAC input into wildlife area management planning, future policies, proposed actions or management activities.

Responsibilities

- Develop productive agendas, engaging WAAC members in appropriate topics
- Implement effective meeting management practices including establishing ground rules and charters, developing effective agendas, facilitating meetings, maintaining regular communications with WAAC members, and providing prompt meeting summaries.
- Clearly define and communicate regularly about the agency's mission, rules, regulations and policies
- Actively listen to WAAC input and opinions and consider carefully and fully and provide feedback as to why/why not certain input will be utilized.
- Provide timely follow-up to questions and concerns raised by WAAC members.
- Engage in discussions, answer questions to the best of agency ability, and be transparent in decision-making.
- Respect WAAC members' time and opinions
- Consider and utilize WAAC input to make sound and informed decisions.

Successful WAAC Qualities

What does a successful WAAC look like?

Successful public involvement processes can take all shapes and sizes. What works for one WAAC won't necessarily work for another. Similarly, the WDFW wildlife areas are different (size, location, area of influence, relationship to population centers and user/stakeholder groups). The following describes characteristics of well-functioning WAACs. There may be differences in structure, participants and frequency of meetings, to address local conditions. However, what managers should strive for in all WAACs across the state is for **WAAC members that understand their role and make valuable contributors to wildlife area planning and management activities**. Other qualities of successful WAACs include:

- WAAC members are actively involved; they:
 - Come to all WAAC meetings or identify an alternate to take their place
 - Respond to email messages and other communications
 - Attend tours/ meetings provided by the wildlife area
 - Communicate with their representative stakeholder group and bring group's concerns/issues/ideas back to the WAAC
- WAAC membership represents a diverse mix of users, affected stakeholders, and regulatory or other government agencies that is balanced between user groups, citizens, government officials and tribes
- WAAC members understand how their input is considered and incorporated into wildlife management and planning activities.

- WAAC meetings have clear agendas and clearly communicated desired outcomes with the wildlife area manager leading and facilitating the group (except in cases where a separate facilitator is used).
- Individual participants feel their time was wisely spent and can recall specific progress made by the group.
- There is time at each meeting for discussion among and from participants. Members may disagree but are respectful in their communication with each other, with agency staff, and agency staff with them.
- Meeting notes are clear and completed in a timely manner.
- Staff conducts proactive follow-up through timely meeting note distribution (within one week of meeting), follow-up phone calls and emails and other communication and actions.
- The meeting “process” and ground rules are clear including the roles of agency and WAAC members.
- The overall purpose of the WAAC is communicated clearly to all new and continuing members.
- WAAC members commit to meeting ground rules and model appropriately
- WAAC members understand agency mission, goals and objectives and this is reflected through WAAC comments and input.
- Decisions and progress are being made; there is no domination by one group or agency.
- There is open dialogue.

WAAC Recruitment

Desired qualities of WAAC members

Successful WAACs have members who are willing to engage in a respectful manner and participate effectively with others. When selecting members for the WAAC look for the following knowledge, skills, and abilities:

- Represents a larger group or organization that exists or is affected by activities within the geography of the wildlife area.
- Ability to think about entire ecosystems vs. singular species or issue; supports the concept of managing successful outcomes for the benefit of all species, including humans
- Willingness to represent the views and speak on behalf of larger stakeholder group
- Collaborative
- Can consistently prepare for, attend and participate in advisory committee meetings
- Experience in other advisory group processes
- Understanding and ability to work within defined WAAC role
- Listens to diverse points of view

- Has experience in particular field/interest/role that relates to agency mission (e.g., species, habitats, regulatory, environment, user, affected stakeholder, recreation)

WAAC Composition

There is no specific requirement for the size and composition of advisory committees. Generally, seven to 15 people is a productive group size but the number and types of participants will depend on the wildlife area users, stakeholders and management issues. Keeping the group to a manageable size helps meetings run efficiently and allows all members to participate. A balance between agency and citizen representation is desirable; however, the composition of each WAAC may be different and will be influenced by the types of wildlife area issues, users and interests. For example, in areas where user interest is high, it may be best to have a WAAC made up entirely of user group representatives. This would be supported especially in cases where wildlife area staff already coordinates regularly with other agencies and co-management partners.

Generally, each stakeholder or interest group will be represented by one individual. In some cases, the range and types of issues may be best addressed with multiple and different perspectives about the same issue. The committee should also reflect the geographic diversity of the area. If the wildlife area spans more than one county, for example, the committee may include representatives from each county.

The agency will seek broad and diverse presentation from interested and affected groups including local government representatives including elected officials, weed board, adjacent landowners, tribes, federal/state government agencies, user groups such as hunting, fishing, and other recreation, environmental and conservation groups, as well as agricultural, business, and education representatives. Other groups to consider include: WSU Extension or Conservation District. WAAC membership will require be reviewed by the Regional Wildlife Program Managers to ensure the composition of the WAACs are well balanced.

Each WAAC member will be asked to identify an alternate for occasions when they are unable to participate. It is the primary member's responsibility to coordinate all communication with the alternate and ensure the alternate can and will participate according to the WAAC ground rules and protocols.

There are no term limits set by the agency; however, depending on the wildlife area issues, participation from members and changes in user interest/participation, managers may recommend limits on terms served by committee members.

WAAC Recruitment & Application/Selection Process

To establish a new WAAC and/or to re-initiate a WAAC that has not met for some time, the wildlife area manager will initiate a process to recruit and select WAAC members. To do so, in addition to reaching out directly to groups that might be interested, staff may distribute a public notice and/or news release to the local media, asking for interested participants to provide a letter of interest. Managers may also want to send the notice to past advisory committee participants.

Letter of Interest

The letter of interest shall include the following:

1. Name, address, phone and email
2. Name and contact information of interest group you would represent
3. A description of why you are interested
4. A summary of your experience with this or other wildlife areas and land management issues (helpful but not required)
5. Your resume, if available

Agency Approval of Advisory Committee Membership

Letters of interest will be reviewed and Regional Wildlife Program Managers will make the final determination about proposed advisory committee members based on the WAAC purpose, desired qualities of advisory committee members and composition considerations listed in this document.

CHAPTER 3

WAAC Meeting Management

Effective Meeting Management

- Distribute a Doodle Poll or alternative meeting times for the meeting at least a month in advance.
- Be respectful of WAAC members' time. If managers do not have a true need to meet then don't. If managers take up their time to just update the WAAC on what they are doing WAAC members will begin to see their involvement as a waste of time and won't be as engaged. There needs to be always something for them to see in order for them to see their attendance as worthwhile.
- Clearly outline roles and responsibilities before each WAAC meeting – on Power Point, handout or poster.
- Develop preamble/ground rules for WAACs (See Appendix).
- At every meeting acknowledge ground rules
- Present interesting issues that are happening on the wildlife area; i.e., enhancements, new recreation, controversial issues
- Recruit other agency staff to speak on issues/topics as needed.
- Invite the Regional Director/Program Managers to meetings
- Include name tags, sign-up sheets, and enough copies of the agenda for the number of people expected. Consider a few copies of the wildlife area management plan (especially for new members) or send out the link to the plan on the WDFW website in advance of the meeting.
- Consider contacting some or all WAAC members before the meeting if additional information may improve their effectiveness at the meeting.
- Choose appropriate timing for meeting (weekday/evening vs weekend)
- Good meetings start and end on time. When you start late, you inadvertently penalize the punctual and reward the tardy. When you finish late, you also frustrate participants. People are busy. It is amazing how much you can cover if you know you absolutely must finish on time (<http://michaelhyatt.com/seven-rules-for-more-effective-meetings.html>)
- Develop a PowerPoint presentation highlighting accomplishments since the previous WAAC. PowerPoint helps moves the meeting along.
- Meeting notes should be taken during the meeting by a designated note taker or recorded as soon as possible after the meeting has occurred. An option is to have another Wildlife Area staff member or volunteer take notes. This information will provide an important summary for the plan updates.
- Post and regularly maintain meeting agendas, summaries and WAAC rosters on the wildlife areas agency website
- Consider meeting in the field occasionally instead of a conference room. It gives managers the opportunity to show accomplishments and problems first hand to increase their understanding and long-term interest.

- Encourage WAAC members to develop “ownership” on the wildlife area by participating in: volunteer opportunities; i.e. Citizen Science (Ecological Integrity Monitoring).
- Make sure the members know the sideboards the wildlife area managers have to work within. For example, describe contractual constraints (e.g. restoration projects conflicting with original intent of land purchase) which may limit certain activities on the wildlife area. Other examples are resource protection and archeological issues; salmon recovery conflicting with land use.
- A well run meeting will utilize WAAC members time well
- Depending on the objective of the meeting, the seating arrangement may be important to a successful meeting. For example, round table setting is appropriate when feedback from participants is anticipated.
- Create a Parking Lot of issues to be tabled, to be discussed at a future meeting.
- Balance participation from members so that one group or individual does not dominate the conversation. Actively facilitate to engage quieter members or ones that may be intimidated
- Provide refreshments
- Provide a social opportunity: Host a cleanup day/BBQ
- Consider awards and incentives (Discover Pass)
- Provide mileage reimbursement

Communications

It is important to maintain regular communications outside of the meeting to keep WAAC members engaged and up to speed. Schindler and others (2007) found that the most highly rated forms of agency-to-public communication were more interactive approaches (in other words, field tours, demonstration sites and small workshops) that provide opportunities for discussing local conditions.

Important points to maintain consistent communication with WAAC members includes:

- Contact members *at least* three weeks in advance of the meeting. A month is preferable. It is important to encourage people to come to meetings by calling them in advance and to demonstrate how important there participation is to the agency.
- Listen to what all of the members have to say and document the range of views.
- Demonstrate to WAAC members how their input is valued
- Demonstrate changes that have been made due to their participation
- Don't go into a meeting seeking input with your mind already made up. If you do, you won't listen and the group will see it.

- Consider providing information in the agency Weekly Reports to WAAC members – not necessary every week but save up some of the best items for their information; provide a website link.
- Send regular communications to members in between WAAC meetings. For example, quarterly updates and weekly reports
- Send an updated contact list out to the WAAC committee
- Consider additional meetings for high interest or controversial topics
- Consider development of a WAAC “work plan” that outlines the topics and timing the year’s WAAC meetings
- Consider organizing “offline” meetings if necessary with individual participants to work through difficult issue or personality conflicts

Ground Rules

Each WAAC is encouraged to develop their own set of protocols and ground rules. These should be acknowledged at every meeting and updated/revised as necessary. See the Appendix for an example.

Developing an effective agenda (See Appendix)

The agenda is one of the most important tools in effective meeting management. An effective agenda will, therefore, provide a working outline for addressing the matters that will be addressed at the meeting. It is very important that agendas be distributed (even as a draft) well in advance of the meeting (at least one week). This not only provides opportunity for participants to prepare but enables the meeting managers to check with participants to ensure they are prepared for the meeting (University of Washington Policy Consensus Center 2006).

Agendas should contain the following elements:

- The location, time the meeting will begin and end
- For each item, include time frame for discussion
- Objectives of the meeting
- Present interesting issues occurring on the WA; i.e. restoration projects, acquisitions, recreation, controversial issues

Meeting Summary (See Appendix for examples)

It is important that meeting notes be compiled as soon as possible after the meeting. This will ensure that translating the notes taken during the meeting in a summary for distribution is accomplished before normal memory loss sets in. It is equally important that meeting notes be distributed as soon as possible. They not only serve as a reminder to individuals of commitments made but participants should be invited to provide any clarifications, corrections and/or additions. It is also useful immediately following each meeting to send out a summary note that lists actions taken, assignments made with timelines for completion and a schedule of future meetings (University of Washington Policy Consensus Center 2006).

Facilitation

It may be difficult for a wildlife area manager to remain neutral in certain situations and a professional facilitator or other wildlife staff may be more appropriate. Basic facilitation skills include: setting agendas, keeping the meeting on task, ensuring equitable opportunities to participate, and managing minor conflicts or disagreements.

Funding may be made available to provide a professional facilitator when needed. Please contact Lauri Vigue, Lands Division, for more information. Human Resources (Department of Personnel) also provides a facilitation course for those interested in advancing their skills.

WAAC Charter

A charter will include a purpose, meeting protocols and agreements about engagement for WAAC and agency participants.

The charter should include:

- WAAC purpose as it relates to the agency's mission overall and to the specific wildlife area
- Number of members (list of members and their alternates if possible, or this could be an attachment)
- Consider removal from the committee after missing two meetings without providing an alternate
- Meeting protocols
 - Agendas, meeting notes, etc.
 - Conditions for neutral facilitator (if appropriate)
 - Meeting times, location and frequency
- Terms of members (if applicable)
- Agency Role/Responsibilities
 - Agenda develop and distribution
 - Meeting notes and distribution
 - Follow-up
 - Available for individual WAAC member contact
- WAAC Role/Responsibilities

Recommendations for WA Management Plan Development

As stated previously, WAAC members provide an important role in the development of the new management plans. During the development of the new management plans the recommendations are to hold three WAAC meetings at minimum. The times and topics of these are generally described below but will be determined with each WA planning process:

- Introductory meeting: introduce members to the wildlife area management planning process and the WAAC/Agency roles.
- Second meeting: WAAC reviews and comments on 1st management plan draft
- Third meeting: WAAC reviews and provide comments on final management plan draft

APPENDIX:

WAAC Steering Committee

In 2012, a steering committee consisting of five wildlife area managers, two regional program managers and headquarters staff was formed to develop guidance to re-energize the statewide Wildlife Area Advisory Committee process. For more information please see the Appendix.

Members of the WAAC Steering Committee include: Richard Kessler, Ross Huffman, Kyle Guzlas, Mark Grabski, Dan Peterson, Margaret Tudor, Matt Monda, Ted Clausing, Russell Link, Paul Dahmer and Lauri Vigue. Facilitation technical advice was also provided by Melinda Posner.

Goal of the steering committee was to re-energize the statewide WAAC process. Fully functioning WAACs will be needed for development of the newly developed management plans over the next few years and for ongoing public participation in land management.

Objectives: 1) To examine the roles, responsibilities and expectations of wildlife area WAACs; 2) To provide tools to the wildlife area managers to more effectively run their individual WAACs.

Example of an affective agenda

**East Okanogan County Wildlife Areas Citizen's Advisory Group
Meeting Agenda
Koala Street Grill
914 Koala Avenue
Omak, WA
18 January 2007
4:00p – 8:00p**

- 4:00p **Introductions**
- 4:10p **Wrap-up on Okanogan-Similkameen Conservation Corridor Program**
Scott Fitkin – Okanogan District Wildlife Biologist and Jeff Heinlen – Field Biologist
- 4:30p WDFW Pilot grazing program update – Jerry Barnes
- 4:40p **Update on Sinlahekin, Driscoll Island and Chiliwist Wildlife Areas and Draft Management Plans** (Copies of these plans can be seen and downloaded from the following links)
- Dale Swedberg, Manager - Sinlahekin, Driscoll Island and Chiliwist Wildlife Areas
Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Draft Management Plan
http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/pdfs/draft_sinlahekin_plan.pdf
- Driscoll Island Wildlife Area Draft Management Plan**
http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/pdfs/draft_driscoll_island_plan.pdf
- Chiliwist Wildlife Area Draft Management Plan**
http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/pdfs/draft_chiliwist_plan.pdf
- 5:30p **Update on Sinlahekin Fuels Management & Treatment Plan** - Dave Demyan and George Wooten
- No Host working Dinner**
- 6:00p **BLM-WDFW Sinlahekin Stewardship Agreement**
Mark Williams, Forester, Wenatchee, BLM
Pam Sterling, Grants Management Officer, Portland, BLM
Jim Hallberg, Coordinator, Stewardship Contracting & Biomass Utilization, Portland, BLM Oregon/Washington
Sally Sovey, Manager, Wenatchee Field Office, Wenatchee, BLM
Neal Hedges, Wildlife Biologist, Wenatchee, BLM
Jim Rees, Forester, Wenatchee, BLM\
- 7:45p **Wrap-up**
- 8:00p **Adjourn**

An example of ground rules

Meeting Ground Rules

- Everyone in the group is valuable and is treated with respect
- One person's concern is the group's concern
- One person talks at a time
- Stay focused on task and agenda processes
- Keep comments short (big ideas/concerns in 30 seconds)
- Confine discussion to the meeting topic
- Listen to understand
- No side conversations
- Do not interrupt
- No personal attacks
- Shut off cell phones and other personal devices

Two examples of meeting notes

#1 Oak Creek Citizen's Advisory Group Input

The following issues and inputs were addressed at the April 28, 2011 meeting. Member comments are in italics.

Attendee's

Don Witke-Wildlife Education Core

Dick Jacobson-Yakima County Noxious Weed Board

Resse Lolley-TNC

Paul Ziemantz-Motorized Recreation

Jim Stephenson-Yakama Nation

Ken McNamee-WA DNR

Brien Wiens-Fishing

Jim Walkenhauer-Hunting

Frank and Stormy Sweet-RMEF

Joan St. Hilaire-USFS

Issue: Update on progress of 2011 performance measures.

Response: *How large is the grazing lease on Worrel Ranch? It is 2340 acres. Will the lease be renewed? No, the lease expires in 2012 and will not be renewed.*

Issue: The spring closure is currently March1-May1, the proposal is to extend that to start when winter feeding begins and end on May1. This would potentially provide more area for elk free of human disturbance and make the Oak Creek closure area the same as other wildlife area closures in the region.

Response: *After a discussion on the reason for extending the time of the closure some AC members expressed concern for closing more public land to access when there is no evidence of an issue with people entering the area and disturbing wintering elk during the proposed time period (Dec-March). This closure would also reduce opportunities for predator hunting and other winter recreation. They felt this proposal should be tabled until there was more evidence of a need for a longer closure. A majority of AC members present supported extending the closure primarily to create consistency for the public and law enforcement, as well as to reduce the potential of disturbance to wintering elk.*

This proposal will move forward through the WDFW process for proposing closures which uses input from the AC in the decision making process. This process may take a couple of years and will include public comment. New Oak Creek green dot maps will be modified to show the difference in the closure on Oak Creek Wildlife Area versus other Wildlife Areas in Region 3.

Issue: Proposal to expand the closure boundary to cross Oak Creek and extend up to Indian Creek. This expansion would close the USFS 1400 Oak Creek Road to foot traffic. The change was proposed to reduce the potential for individuals sneaking into the closure area and would reduce disturbance to wintering and spring grazing elk.

Response: *In general the AC was not in support of this idea at the present. Based on information presented from Eyes in the Woods cameras and WDFW observations fewer people seemed to be entering the closure illegally. This closure would remove an*

opportunity for accessing public lands during the winter and early spring by closing the Oak Creek Road to foot traffic. This issue will be tabled pending additional information from Eyes in the Woods monitoring and wildlife area staff observations.

Issue: Proposed surplus of West Valley feed site property. WDFW has not fed elk there for 2 years and the property is part of a homeowners association. Lots could potentially be sold and provide additional revenue to the department.

Response: *The AC did not have an issue with selling the property. They would like to look into the idea of a land exchange with someone who owns property adjoining the wildlife area. They would also like to see a stipulation in the sale where the money would stay in the region and be used to support the wildlife area.* WDFW is researching the fund source used to acquire the property and this will influence the method of disposal. There is potential for a land exchange, this is 2-4 year process. Also, if the property is sold there is potential for the money to be used to purchase additional priority property across the state.

Issue: Update on additional items including: Mud lake access, DNR/WDFW land exchange, Rock Creek/Bald Mountain Phase II, proposed timber management/prescribed burning on wildlife area, Cowiche Mill Road fire, Yakima elk herd study, Rock Creek temporary grazing permit, HCP and the Discover Pass.

Response: *AC had questions about proposed timber management and loss of escape cover for elk, and would like to see input from Scott McCorquodale.* The proposed actions would create a landscape mosaic of different overstory and understory densities. The goal is to improve wildlife habitat and reduce the susceptibility of the area to disease and wildfire. We will review all proposed actions with WDFW biologists, foresters and elk specialists prior to any actions. *Is the elk fence rebuild completed?* Yes, the fenced was repaired before the opening of the modern firearm elk season. *What is being done to reduce the potential for contact between wild and domestic sheep?* We have modified the grazing route, added monitoring measures and WDFW staff will be on site while grazing is occurring, and in addition we will try to collar several big horn sheep to monitor movements. *Do hunting/fishing license holders have to purchase a Discover Pass?* No, they will receive a permit with the purchase of a license, in addition if you volunteer 24 hours with WDFW, DNR or State Parks you can receive a pass for free.

#2 A good example of a meeting summary from Region 4:

Wiley Restoration Work Group Meeting Summary Draft Summary 9.28.12

In attendance: Amy W, Belinda S, Steve H, Polly H, Betsy L, Bob B, Stan N.

Summary of Key Points /Decisions	Tasks
<p>Process Points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Next Meeting: Mid – December, date to be sent out before Thanksgiving. 2. Preliminary consensus on tasks to be completed in order for DD to take over system. 	<p>Amy will update document and provide to Stan for consensus from DD commissioners.</p> <p>Wiley Work Group needs to track volunteer/ non federal hours for funding match</p>
<p>Little Wiley Drainage Issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tide gate replaced by DD on 9/9/11 2. Consensus on increasing the height of the dike running from new tide gate up towards the little tide gates along Koetje's property to prevent over topping. The higher dike also allows a higher Geomorphologic WSE. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Belinda will check with Kye and Brian W. regarding excavation of reservoir for use of fill along dike (DFI). 2. Steve will contact Koetje for permission to increase height of dike. 3. Complete work by Oct. 31st.
<p>Determining Water Surface Elevation (WSE)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consensus on AG WSE of 3.9ft (88 navd) for Feb.15 --Nov. 1 2. Consensus on Geomorphologic WSE of 5.5 (88 navd) Nov.1-Feb 15 3. Adaptive management of Geomorphologic WSE <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Wiley Work Group will monitor the WSE of 5.5 throughout the winter to check for flooding on adjacent properties. If this level is too high, then pumping will commence in order to bring it lower. 4. Process for lowering WSE below 5.5 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Stan calls Steve and Brian b. Photos of flooding document impacts. c. Photo sites: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Mann Road looking south (Dallas) ii. Wiley's House iii. Reservoir Tide gate looking back at field intersection iv. Moberg d. Email is sent to Wiley Work Group for approval – 24 hours to respond. Silence is consent. e. To help understand pump activity – a data log will be installed that time stamps when pump is turned on/off. <p>Achieving Water Surface Elevation: On time/On budget: Pump will be installed on 11/15. Total cost ~53 K for all staff and equipment. High efficiency motor was chosen. Electricity is being upgraded as well.</p>	<p>Water Surface Elevation Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Steve and Bob will move staff gages down ~ 2/10 to improve accuracy and consistency. <p>Tasks for Adaptive Management of Geomorphologic WSE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Photo sites for monitoring of flooding over the winter will be set up by Steve and photos taken by Oct. 14th. 2. Steve will talk with electrician about installing data log. 3. Piezometer will be installed to turn pump on and off, set to appropriate WSE. 4. Bob and Stan will install new staff gage at Mann and Little Wiley Tide Gate.

<p>Resolving Tide Gate Issues</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dive inspection scheduled Oct. 24th, 9 am. 2. Estimated cost is 3K for inspection 3. Preliminary agreement on design to ensure that the pipes don't float again 4. If design is approved by DD, then construction could occur week of Oct. 24th. 5. Need to decide who is paying for tube inspection 6. Necessity of tube sleeves and lengthen of tube sleeves will be determined post – inspection. Installation will occur in 2012 	<p>Tasks to Fix Tide Gates</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ray Berg needs to be present for inspection and guide inspection. 2. Steve will provide conceptual design to Bob. (completed) 3. Bob will provide a preliminary design to Ray for final design by Oct. 14th. 4. Stan will check with DD Commissioners on Oct. 5th about what review of design they need in order to be comfortable 5. Steve will get sleeve estimate post inspection to funders.
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References:

Shindler, B; Brunson, M.W.; Stankey, G.H. 2002. Social acceptability of forest conditions and management practices: a problem analysis. Gen.Tech. Rep. PNW GTR-537. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station. 68 p.

Shindler, B; Gordon, R., Brunson, M. 2007. Public priorities for rangeland management: a regional survey of citizens in the Great Basin. Available: http://www.sagestep.org/pdfs/progress/citizen_survey_summary.pdf [2007, July 17]
 University of Washington Policy Consensus Center. 2006 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Lead Entity/Watershed Steward Training Ocean Shores, Washington

<http://michaelhyatt.com/seven-rules-for-more-effective-meetings.html>

What to do when a meeting goes off track

- Take a deep breath, remember:
 - o Remember you are not a neutral party; you represent an agency that has a specific mission and goals to accomplish.
 - o You can't accomplish mission and goals if there is staunch opposition. Even minor scuffles with stakeholders can lead to paralysis of the entire group's effort.
- Take another deep breath...
- Intervene. There are several ways to productively intervene - nonverbal: raising hand, walking closer to individual(s), gesturing "Timeout" and verbal: "okay, let's back up; let's stop a minute and see where we are"
- Typically, when you first think it's going off track, it probably is. The sooner you intervene the better, especially if you expect issue to escalate
- Refer back to agenda and where group is in the process Summarize in non-personal manner the last couple of comments – what led to where you are
- Identify the issue; call it out. Don't ignore or gloss over. Even if you're unable to solve it, participants will appreciate clear and honest approach.
- Propose solution (will depend on situation)
 - o Bring back to future meeting or through other communication
 - o Recognize the need for more time, more study, more input, more whatever you think will be necessary to move this forward
 - o Ask the group's permission to implement solution
 - o Ask key individuals to participate at "off-line" meeting
 - o Talk about the issue after the meeting
- Get back on track and/or call the meeting if there is no more progress to be made
- When you anticipate controversy in advance:
 - o Ask for help – neutral facilitator
 - o Don't wait until the meeting to talk with affected/angry participants
 - o Personal communication (face-to-face or over the phone preferred over email)
 - o Consider inviting other participants who can speak to issue from another perspective or someone who participants trust

**Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) Meeting – August 21, 2013
Advisory Committee Guidance Document Review
DRAFT Meeting Summary**

Introduction

Lands Division staff hosted a meeting with statewide representatives from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) Wildlife Area (WLA) advisory committees, formerly Citizen Advisory Groups (CAGs). The purpose of the meeting was to review the Wildlife Program/Lands Division Public Review Draft of the WLA Advisory Committee Guidance Document. The meeting was held on Wednesday, August 21, 2013, from 1-3:30 p.m., at the Hal Holmes Community Center in Ellensburg, WA. Seven advisory members attended, from various regions within the state. A list of attendees is attached.

Melinda Posner opened the meeting, thanked attendees for coming, and reviewed the agenda and discussion guidelines. She confirmed the purpose of the meeting was to collect feedback about advisory committees and how the agency can best support effective advisory committee processes in the future. She referenced the Guidance Document, which was developed with input from a steering committee of wildlife area staff who manage advisory committees at their respective WLAs, and 2 regional program managers. This document was circulated to attendees in advance. The agency will be writing new plans for each of the 32 WLAs and effective advisory groups are critical to the process. Statewide, some advisory committee processes are more effective than others, and some WLAs currently operate without one.

Melinda acknowledged email comments from some attendees prior to the meeting about other topics, and noted time at the end of the meeting for discussion of any additional items. Melinda reviewed the discussion guidelines and then asked participants to introduce themselves including name, affiliation and membership on existing Wildlife Area Advisory Committees (WAACs).

Before hearing participant feedback about the Guidance Document, Paul Dahmer and Lauri Vigue shared information about the agency's planning efforts.

Agency WLA Planning

Paul Dahmer shared the following points about the agency's overall planning process:

- Advisory committees (formerly called Citizen Advisory Groups or CAGs) were initiated in the 1990s. They were developed to review and provide input to the WLA planning process.
- They were re-invigorated in in 2005/2006 during the development of the original wildlife area management plans.
- There are 17 active WAACs currently; 7 WLAs do not have functioning WAACs.
- The agency's goal is to have functioning WAACs for all WLAs for this planning process.
- The agency is putting more emphasis on public involvement, and is developing

some guidelines for recreation.

Lauri Vigue shared details about the new management planning and WAAC process including:

- A cross-program steering committee was developed to help guide the wildlife area management planning process.
- Five staff “focus groups” are considering different elements of the plan including how it will be made available to public; mapping and data reporting improvements; developing performance measures, goals and objectives; and monitoring.
- Changes will be made to communicate about recreation more clearly.
- The first pilot will be kicked off in early 2014 with Swanson Lakes.
- An agency subcommittee developed the initial WAAC Guidance Document.
- A survey of wildlife area staff was completed to determine resource needs.
- Implementation of the guidance will take place over the next year.
- Facilitation training was provided to managers in July.

Participants had the following questions about the WLA planning process:

Q: Question; A: Answer; C: Comment

Q: Will all the WLA plans be done right away?

A: No, the agency will start with the first pilot at the beginning of 2014, and start a second pilot about three months after that. Over time, there will likely be several plans updated each year, with it likely taking about 10 years to complete them all. WLAs that are not being updated right away will do the shorter “updates” in the meantime.

Q/C: Will the agency develop an “overarching statewide plan” that is an umbrella document for all the plans? There is interest in understanding the statewide mission, objectives and goals for the WLAs.

A: As part of the planning process, the agency is developing an overarching guidance document, which will include information common to all plans.

Q: What percent of managers’ time does the agency expect will be spent on this project?

A: The intent is to minimize each WLA manager’s time by developing a template, providing the basic information already included in existing plans that needs minor updates and providing support from the administration.

Q: Will this group meet in the future, as a statewide advisory group about WLA planning issues?

A: That is not planned at this time; however, the agency may consider bringing this group back together for other issues.

AC Guidance Feedback

Melinda introduced the following topics, consistent with the Guidance Document. Participant responses follow each heading.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ROLE

What questions or comments do you have about your role as an advisory committee member?

- Agency should clearly state statewide mission, objectives, and overarching goals.
- WAAC composition is a big issue. Good that the agency stopped combining wildlife areas, e.g. Skagit WLA management was combined with Snoqualmie WLA due to budget cuts and this action impacted the existing CAG dynamics.
- Difficult to have citizens actively participate when there are multiple government entities and non-citizen groups represented on advisory committees.
- To be effective, citizen input needs to be valued; they need to understand how/how not input was considered and/or incorporated in planning and management efforts.
- Consider different formats, membership and roles so that citizens have a clear voice. Example: Wind Farm Technical Advisory Group (TAC) – includes citizens, agency and NGO entities but citizens are the only ones who “vote” to make recommendations. Agency representatives share technical input and are advisory only. (TAC members include 4 government and 4 private, and one power company representative.)
- Consensus may be too high of a goal; majority opinion is likely more achievable.

AGENCY ROLE

What suggestions do you have about the agency’s role in managing the advisory group process?

- Guidance Document says: Actively listen to the AC input and opinions and consider them fully. Citizen involvement involves really listening and providing feedback. Communication is everything. Need to understand why the agency is making decisions and rationale.
- Missing from the Guidance Document under agency role is a responsibility to circle back with advisory committee members. Often, there is no response or feedback after issues or questions are raised. This is critical and can be done with simple phone call or emails.
- There are examples of agency staff not listening, telling committee members to “butt out”, and/or making bad decisions. Need to have process to get back to agency leaders if active listening is not happening and/or if someone is recommending something in error or not in best interest.
- Agency needs to provide a clear mission statement – what does the agency want to achieve?
- Public participation needs to be elevated from the director down; often need a discussion to address questions. Demonstrated public participation skills should be required in job descriptions, evaluations, and expectations of WLA managers.
- Example: Brian Boehm (Snoqualmie WLA) does great job on public

participation. He reads the WDFW mission statement at the beginning of every meeting, which includes the reference to recreation. This is appreciated. He invites different groups of stakeholders to the meetings, to understand their issues, and also to help them understand the purpose of WLA. This is a potential area of new recruits for the WAAC. He stays on task, provides refreshments and is flexible. He has asked WAAC members to recruit new members. He invites the community to meetings. He has taken a lead role – ensuring the agency has equipment, volunteer work is done, and making sure what needs to get done on WLA gets done.

- The WDFW is missing an opportunity. Building public support and trust should be a key purpose of WAACs. Page 4 says “ACs will not be the only strategy for public outreach and involvement in many cases.
- Citizen input is part of the process. Not all WLA managers have bought into process.
- If staff can’t respond to an issue or question at the moment, they should give a timeframe for response and honor the commitment.
- Managers need to communicate with WAACs in between meetings. Example: Ross Huffman, WLA manager, consistently sends out updates to WAACs. Quarterly updates are needed at least. Another example is Brian Boehm, WLA Manager. He sends copies of his weekly reports to WAAC members.
- WLA managers should always send out summary reports. Members should be notified when they are posted on the website, reminders are good.
- Members need to have updated contact list of other AC members.
- Advisory committee members need to be aware of the constraints /side boards, e.g. salmon recovery conflicting with existing land uses. Staff needs to communicate this information and help citizens understand the issue. Example: Salmon recovery driving west side process.

QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE WAACS

What qualities contribute to a successful advisory committee? What is the best way to communicate between meetings? What can the agency do to encourage participation on a regular basis? What has worked well in your area?

- Meetings have to have a purpose. Regular meetings should consist of discussing “issues” at WLA. Need key purpose and continuity. When issues come up, have as many meetings as necessary to work through topic. Example of Oak Creek having only one meeting per year; not frequent enough. There is no shortage of issues.
- Meeting twice a year does not work. Quarterly meetings suggested, with preset dates and times.
- Some members don’t want to meet just to have a meeting. Need to have clear purpose. If the function of the WAAC is review/making recommendations on the management plan, that may take three monthly meetings. Then maybe the group doesn’t meet for a period of time.
- Other qualities of effective WAACS include groups where the members are very active members at the WLA. They contribute volunteer time, e.g., mowing Cherry Valley, pheasant releases. This goes beyond management planning.

- WAACs are effective as long as decisions and progress are being made, as long as there is no domination by one group or agency, and when there is open dialogue.
- Committee members will be more engaged when they see ideas incorporated into agency actions, meetings are set and notices are sent with the agenda in advance.
- Balance of user groups and differing opinions, staff in a listening mode, staff incorporates ideas into management, good communications between staff and advisory members throughout the year.

RECRUITMENT & COMPOSITION OF WAACS

What interests should be represented on a wildlife area advisory committee? What is the right balance? How best to recruit for members?

- Membership needs to reflect geographic area.
- Representatives of all user groups (livestock grazing, outdoor recreation groups, hunters, fishers, 4 x 4, hikers, bird watchers, plant/wildflower enthusiasts, adjoining landowners, etc.)
- Members should not all be of one of same interest – broader participation = broader input.
- Agency representatives' roles (including other state, federal and local agencies, in addition to WDFW) should be to bring information to the meeting and not be voting members. They are being paid to be there vs. volunteers, who are not.
- Input from other agencies can be valuable as long as it is not driving the process.
- On one WLA (Oak Creek), citizens are outnumbered compared to government officials. Each has different agenda. When there is a vote, the citizen is outnumbered.
- WAAC composition needs to be balanced.
- Page 20/21 of the document notes a good example of a meeting summary; note the membership though – it does not include many citizens.
- There are benefits to having other stakeholders on the WAAC. The land trust, for example, has conservation easements. They appreciate the WAAC approach because it provides an avenue to communicate with the WLA manager. There is value in being a member and hearing citizen input.
- With pro hunting/ fishing interest dominating WAAC meetings, very few people in the conservation community want to be involved in WAACs. They can be intimidated by other user group members. This is an issue on the Snoqualmie WA. Audubon example cited. Agency should consider about ways to engage stakeholders. Conservation members do not have experience; maybe anti-hunting; do not understand all of the issues. Consider a mentor process for the conservation person to see both sides.
- WLA managers should make room for members of the public that show interest.
- Participants questioned the need for term limits – recommending no limit on terms of members.
 - Members should serve as long as they wish. Institutional memory a good thing for the WAAC. Okay to have replacements with smooth transition but no need to have people end their time if things are going well. Many members have been with WAACs for over 10 or more years.
 - Alternates can be good, if individual members can't attend.

- Agency should clearly communicate about the expected commitment – at least two years is necessary.

WAAC MEETING MANAGEMENT & COORDINATION

What are key elements of a good meeting? What has worked well in your area?

What suggestions do you have for future meetings?

- Basic information about the WLAs is needed. Develop fact sheet, bring in specialists to present information and share expert opinions. Need to get more information out about what is happening on the WLA. This will also help with recruitment of new members.
- Wildlife Area website should include list of WAACs and WAAC members, agendas, meeting notes, etc., for the public to understand or participate.
- Agendas should show the purpose of the meeting.
- Communicate with advisory committee members via email and mail. Add members to relevant distribution lists.
- The regional director (RD) should attend WAAC meetings periodically; good for WAAC to meet this person; also necessary for generating agency support from citizens. WLA manager should invite the RD if there are key issues to discuss.
- Outside facilitators can be helpful if there are conflicts or issues that cannot be resolved within the group or by WLA manager.
- Requiring approval of Regional Wildlife Program Managers for WAAC membership is not supported. If the intent is to ensure balanced group, need to rewrite this section of Guidance Document. Implies that the manager can override. Could target specific individuals and/or limit participation because of personality conflict; not a good thing.
- WAAC is not the only way to involve citizens. Other public involvement efforts are recommended. In past, agency has not responded well to efforts to involve the public. Going directly to the Fish & Wildlife Commission is one way to make sure the public is heard.
- WAACs need to be aware if other “agency” meetings are occurring that might be helpful to managing/planning on specific WLAs (Page 14, bullet 10).
- Include all members in special tours and activities in the WLAs.
- Provide members with written information about expectations.
- Distribute meeting notes with attendee list to all.

OTHER COMMENTS

- Include executive summary in Guidance Document – one page; the document is also good reference for WAAC members.
- Advisory committees need to be nurtured. It is not easy. Can help agency move forward with community trust and support.
- Under Purpose on Page 4: add some language about public participation, list management plan last:
 1. Provide opportunities for participation in the management of WLAs.
 2. Provide information about WLA concerns and activities.
 3. Improve relationships and communications with the community.
 4. Assist in the development of the wildlife area management plans.

5. Provide input into the management plan biennial updates.
- On Page 5: Advisory Committee structure should not be driven by management plan development. It should be driven by a desire for two-way communication about wildlife area concerns/issues to improve agency trust and support.
 - On Page 7 under Responsibilities: “Review information and provide comments during the development of management plans and updates” should not be placed first on the bulleted list. Move it to 5, 6 or 7.
 - Participants expressed appreciation for the agency bringing the group together to hear their comments.
 - Participants would like to see the notes of the meeting and have an opportunity to review the final draft document.

STATEWIDE ISSUES

What other topics of concern or interest?

- Consider a group like this to advise about statewide issues including:
 - Budget/lack of funding
 - Acquiring new lands vs. operations and maintenance of existing lands
 - Different user groups competing for lands. There is a need for statewide guidance about how to address this. Is there authority to close lands to hunters/non-hunters?
- Permits and fees for events on WLAs – e.g. dog trials – would like to see clarification in writing (Noted as more of an issue on the west side)
- Example of when statewide WA group might have been helpful: Lands Division developed new public use rules re: waterfowl hunting. This raised some concerns and controversy. If it had been reviewed by an advisory committee first, it might have gone smoother.

Next Steps

A revised Guidance Document will be distributed to participants for their comments prior to finalization.

Attachments

- Agenda
- List of Attendees

WDFW Wildlife Area Advisory Committee
Public Meeting
Advisory Committee Guidance Input
Wednesday, August 21, 2013
Hal Holmes Community Center, Ellensburg

AGENDA

Welcome, Introductions & Meeting Guidelines	1:00
WDFW Planning Processes Overview	1:10
Advisory Committee Guidance Background	1:20
Advisory Committee Guidance Feedback	1:30
Other Topics of Interest	3:00
Adjourn	3:30

WDFW Wildlife Area Advisory Committee
Advisory Committee Guidance Input
List of Attendees

- Martha Jordan, Skagit Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC), Snoqualmie WAAC, Enforcement Advisory Group, swan recovery
- Lana Cruse, formerly with WSU in public outreach, interested citizen in Region 3
- Marc Eylar, Wenas WLA, Kittitas Weed Board,
- Jacquelyn Wallace, Okanogan Land Trust
- Jim Walkenhaur, Oak Creek WAAC , Yakima sportsman
- Bill Stegeman, Colockum WAAC, Wenatchee Sportsmen Association
- Art Kendall, Skagit County WAAC, WA Waterfowl Association
- Paul Dahmer, Lands Stewardship and Operations Section Manager, WDFW
- Lauri Vigue, Assistant Manager, Lands Stewardship and Operations Section, WDFW
- Melinda Posner, Facilitator/Environmental Planner, WDFW