

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

Minutes

November 9, 2019

WDFW Staff Present:

Patricia Thompson – WRAG Contact patricia.thompson@dfw.wa.gov; 425-379-2302
Penny Becker

WRAG members Present:

Jasmine Fletcher Glaze, Jennifer Teitzel, Sonnya Wilkins, Craig Moran, Alysha Evans, Alicia Bye, Jenny Schlieps, Suzanne West, Cindy Daly, Emily Meredith, Irene Holmes, Nicky Finch

Not present:

Lynn Tompkins (conference phone glitch)
Samantha Gleissner

Welcome and Introduction:

Thompson welcomed all former WRAC members and all new WRAG members. Each members introduced themselves.

Logistics, Reimbursement and Paperwork:

Thompson went over the appropriate volunteer and reimbursement paperwork.

Agenda Review:

Thompson went over the agenda for the day.

Advisory Group handbook:

Thompson walked through the handout and discussed the purpose and role of advisory groups. Becker discussed the role of advisory groups to the Director, explained rules around lobbying and representing the WRAG.

Expectations for what the group should accomplish:

It was concluded that many of these expectations are the Group's proposals for discussion ideas, needs, goals, and concerns.

- Increase awareness of veterinarians in the state about what their role could be in wildlife rehabilitation;
- Increase public awareness and knowledge about what they should do when they find injured wildlife;
- Assist Department in processes and regulatory pieces- refine processes and procedures around the new rules;
- Increase recruitment of rehabilitators; Find solutions to bring on new rehabbers in ways that don't decrease oversight or getting good quality rehabilitators;
- Cervid rehab improvement- advise on endorsement training and exam, avoiding habituation, and on release methodology;
- Networking to get to know other rehabilitators in and out of state, being aware of other rehabilitators' practices and facilities – determine how to work together;

- Develop consistency in facility protocols among all facilities to increase quality of care overall;
- Creating language that everyone can use when interfacing with the public on standards of care and limited resources in way that promotes rehabilitators as professionals and supports each other when difficult decisions need to be made (such as having to euthanize so many animals);
- Speak well of each other in the community;
- Ways to make veterinary care and services more accessible by educating and outreach to vets;
- Clarification of WDFW and WWRA roles - where they intersect, where we can partner and where there are divisions of work to avoid duplication or contradictions of work;
- Communication with others like falconers, biologists, others that can help rehab community, including within the rehabilitation community;
- Improve public's perception and opinion of the Department;
- Public education, getting info out to the public- rehab centers may be able to use non-releasable animals to help educate about conservation and biology (opportunity may only apply to certain facilities), create education animal protocols; see SCP qualifications;

Overarching goals

- 1) Best possible animal welfare
- 2) Care and feeding of wildlife rehabilitators
- 3) Meeting the Public needs

Decision Making:

Thompson presented unanimous consensus, sufficient consensus, voting/majority, and executive decision models for decision-making. Jasmine expressed that she liked the sufficient consensus model used by the WRAC group when working on the rules revision. The group asked a few questions, and then decided upon the sufficient consensus model for WRAG work. In sufficient consensus not everyone must agree with the decision but everyone can live with it. The group agreed on the use of thumb signals for determining support or need for more discussion. Thumb-sideways members may need more discussion or are signaling they can accept the decision which will be clarified. Minority perspectives and differing opinions will be documented.

Review and Revisions to the Charter:

The group revised the draft Charter and Penny recorded edits in track changes. Revised draft will be emailed to all members with the minutes for review.

Mission

The Wildlife Rehabilitation Advisory Group provides the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife with recommendations on wildlife rehabilitation, wildlife health and welfare, conservation, and captive wildlife topics, which may be used in Department decision-making as it pertains to professional wildlife rehabilitation activities.

Vision

The Wildlife Rehabilitation Advisory Group envisions that Washington's wildlife receive the best available care from qualified and permitted wildlife rehabilitators.

Goals

- Successful release to the wild or to end suffering;
- Bring about more professionalism and respect for wildlife rehabilitation;
- Mastery of wildlife rehabilitation- best possible care;

- Protect wild populations from acquiring emergent and existing diseases, and protect the public from improperly treated wildlife;
- Veterinarians to provide stabilization and ending suffering;
- From those persons qualified from permits issued by the Department;
- To ensure that humane care and treatment is provided for all wildlife in rehabilitation, professional standards are upheld, and the public has qualified facilities to take sick, injured, or orphaned wildlife;
- Education and communication;
- Form or strengthen relationship between WDFW, rehabbers, veterinarians (maybe vets);
- Professional rehabilitators should assist public to ensure that wildlife is admitted to an authorized wildlife rehabilitation facility.

Ground Rules

Most ground rules centered on respect and productive communication

- Listen respectfully (no interruptions, no side conversations)
- Respect each other and their space to talk
- Keep an open mind and don't jump to conclusions
- Let everyone have equal time to speak
- Realize that there are differing opinions in the group which is okay and agree to disagree
- Compromise
- Critique ideas not the person
- Recognize different roles and responsibilities and that each person has their own situation in rehabilitation and therefore will bring different perspectives – view this as a strength and not contention
- Note and respect both agreement and dissenting opinions
- Seek common ground
- Remain factual
- Bring a positive attitude
- Be present and involved when you are in the meeting
- Do your homework and come prepared

Social media

Meeting discussions and materials will be posted only on the WDFW website

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/advisory/wrag> and Facebook. WRAG members may re-post material from WDFW sites to their own social media sites. WRAG members can create messaging within the meeting setting and with approval by the group and WDFW PI staff to post to WDFW social media and WRAG web page. WRAG members may link to WDFW pages.

WDFW Advisory Group Handbook was noted as a source for ground rules

It was agreed that ground rules should be respected inside and outside of the meetings and when discussing with people outside the group.

Roles, Responsibilities and Structure

A few things on ground rules will be in this section

Open-minded, positive, etc.

- Thompson to edit and use notes to revise the charter and re-distribute
- **ACTION ITEM All members** - send literature or materials to Tricia and she will send out to the group

Discussion Topics for the WRAG

Topics/Issues/Needs identified by WRAG members:

It was concluded that many of the items listed in the section Expectations for what the group should accomplish are the Group's proposals for discussion ideas, wildlife rehabilitation needs, goals, and concerns

See WILDLIFE REHABILITATION ADVISORY GROUP DISCUSSION NEEDS table

- See the bullets at beginning of meeting
- Educate veterinarians
- Trained transport network

A table was provided by Thompson of some ideas and discussion needs of WDFW

Recruitment of new wildlife rehabilitators was the first on the list and members jumped directly to tackling that need.

Look at recruitment of new rehabilitators vs. increasing capacity for species most in need

1) *Recruitment of Wildlife Rehabilitators*

- Eastern Washington: because there are such long distances, as a recruitment tool determine where in state there is most need then have qualified staff or rehabbers conduct a speaking tour to talk about the reality of rehabilitation (not glamorize it, but find people who are committed/serious enough and follow up with them).
- **Notice on WDFW website** to solicit Wildlife Rehabilitators – start a Facebook campaign? Thompson mentioned that WDFW PI is starting a series of “articles” on wildlife rehabilitation;
- Create a “**We need...**” flyer and tell how and where to get training;
- Establish a **statewide transport system** for additional capacity to places that don't have the capacity- this would help to get animals to facilities that specialize;
- **Meet with veterinarians**, most do not know that being a rehabber was possible nor did they know that they didn't need to the 1000 hours
- Use **Facebook** to recruit members
- **Educate animal shelters** about wildlife rehabilitation and how to get people permitted for wildlife rehabilitation
- **New rehabbers needed especially for the Cervids** due to inability to transfer them across state. Hope to get more rehabbers up to speed in E. WA that will eventually become permitted for Cervids.
- For small facilities especially, capacity is an issue so need is for additional facilities and not just transport assistance to existing facilities.
- **NOVICE PERMIT** Is there a need to look at species specific needs and then recruit and get someone up to speed (e.g. for novice permit) for permitting for one taxa/species only? Graduate from “easy, common” species up to other species.
- Should we have **separate mammal and bird tests**?
- **Have classes of permits** like Falconry – Apprentice, General, Master like Minnesota
- Send a **recruitment team** made up of WDFW and rehabilitators – partner with WWRA

2) *Getting permit hours towards a permit (currently only exclusively through time at a rehabilitation facility).*

- Need to **provide resources to get the training** even if WDFW cannot provide it right now. Some hours could be done online, but there may be no substitute for hands-on experience. A large part of the

problem is that people do not have a permitted facility anywhere close to them. Is there a job for them or do they have to start a home-based business? Is it possible for the **rehab community to invest in providing more opportunities** to get experience?

- **Novice permit**- this was an idea that came up around
 - Must be mentored by a permittee, only permitted for the common species, must have a veterinarian of record
 - Must have some number of hours to qualify by fewer
 - For new rehabilitators it is difficult to find answers and nowhere to do the hours to qualify
- Create a **“training” category** like Subpermittees or Apprentice
- Provide training resources, **funding is a big challenge** for those starting, they are providing the money, it is not employment
- High failure rate
- WWRA Pilot program to train already-permitted rehabilitators within their first 5 years. Go to WWRA/NWRA conferences, 2-3 week intensive internship including lodging, travel, etc. plus help to backfill with work at home – can this be done for those seeking permits.
- WDFW provided training in an area of the state where there is a need to get people started?
 - Will this training count towards permit hours?
- **Subcommittee** to discuss/work on this? Maybe the NWRA could do the training/help with this? Could get **students from Central to help with training** on biology, etc. and/or get students interested in attending?
- **IWRC Training here** - Minimum registration of 20 people to get IWRC class?
- **Current rehabilitators to help set up mentorship/internship opportunities.**
- Are there an **academic course or lessons** that could be done (basic vet training, basic biology, natural history) to get people started and count towards permit?
 - Getting someone up and running (e.g. as a raptor rehabber, is not going to happen quickly with just a couple classes/NWRA, etc.)
- Can we have a **Cervids only permit**?
- Does training have to be wildlife based?
- **Tiered permitting** is possible? More time to get first species, then less to get second, then after more experience you get permitted for all?
- **Set a cap** on the number of hours that education can count
- **Education credits:** Points for vet, Points for nursing degree, Points for biology degree
- WDFW build a training facility in Eastern Washington so that rehabilitators could get experience there?
- Concern expressed about lowering/watering down standards for entry to the profession leading to inhumane care;
- Question about experience that can be gained from a **domestic vet for basic medical care** (would need to be structured and call out specifics about what would need to be taught to someone from vet school to get credit), **credit towards hours** would be # of hours/task (**like IV fluids**);
- New Mexico- developed **species resource team networks**. Brought in **IWRC** to do initial care training- then had an umbrella permit, recruit, train them for all species. Had to have a veterinarian and had to check in with species resource team when they got in a new animal, then could only move up a level after doing so much of that work;
- WRAG agreed that **Central and Southern WA priority areas** for getting more rehabilitators on board;
- Subcommittee to discuss the topic in more depth?

- Need to call out how those 1,000 hours are obtained - feeding, IV, versus doing dishes, etc. (percentages already on the application but this needs to be reviewed);
- Do a list of tasks in front of the veterinarian in order to move on to the next stage.

Tricia will get data for species needing rehab the most and where the concentrations are such as deer in eastern WA and raptors in central WA. Tricia to get specifics on the need from the Department- what species, where, etc. so that can focus on finding solutions- will send to the subcommittee on Path Forward.

Quick poll of the room: Distance learning should count hour for hour with a maximum threshold (e.g. 15%)? There was little support in the room for that percentage

- Add in more hours specifically for the education requirement part (tack on to the 1,000 hours) instead of in substitution for it?
- Alternative ways to get 1,000 hours for people that logistically cannot get that done (East side specific)
- Suggestion for 1-pager with all rehabilitation facilities listed and what happens at these centers
- Tricia to provide a Map of all rehabilitation facilities in WA where vets will do 48 hour stabilization (include counties on the map)
- App- 'Animal Help Now' to get people to the right place; AHN has some errors.

Subcommittees:

1) Recruitment of New Rehabbers

- Nicky
- Emily CHAIR
- Jenny
- Cindy
- Suzanne

2) Path to Getting a Rehab Permit for Those Interested (species capacity/needs will be provided by Tricia to help the discussion)

- Jenny
- Alecia
- Jasmine
- Irene CHAIR
- Alysha
- Jennifer

3) Outreach and Public Education

- Craig
- Sonnya
- Jennifer CHAIR

- Subcommittee chairs to coordinate with Tricia and their members to create brief charter (with template delivered by Tricia) by December 1st

Next meeting: Olympia- Natural Resource Building Directors Conference Room 5th floor (we will try to set up video in case of those travelling long distance in bad weather)- Jan 11th

- Thompson to send Doodle poll for the April meeting and beyond

Nominations of Chair of the WRAG:

Sonnya nominated herself, seconded by Alicia.... Sonya elected by the group. Sonya nominated Jennifer as vice-chair, Alicia seconded.... Jennifer elected as vice-chair.

Subject matter expert visits were discussed

Check out/Adjourn

ACTION ITEMS

All members

- If you have literature or materials, send to Tricia and she will distribute to the group

Sub-committee Chairs

- Coordinate with Tricia and their members to create brief charter (with template delivered by Tricia) **by December 1st**

Tricia

- Get data for species needing rehab the most and where the concentrations are such as deer in eastern WA and raptors in central WA.
- Get specifics on need from the Department- what species, where, etc. so that can focus on finding solutions- will send to the subcommittee on Path Forward
- Provide a Map of all rehabilitation facilities in WA and where vets will do 48 hour stabilization (include counties on the map)
- Send Doodle poll for the April meeting and beyond