

WHATCOM COUNTY

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Mark Personius, AICP
Director

Wildlife Advisory Committee
Meeting

LOCATION

**Hybrid Meeting: Zoom (details below) and
Northwest Annex Conference Room
Whatcom County Planning and Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226**

Date: February 9, 2024

Time: 9:30-11:00 A.M. Pacific Time PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Whatcom County PDS is inviting you to a scheduled in person or Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85757293268?pwd=cEdZL3drNU14Nzd5Nk96bHFsem9pZz09>

Meeting ID: 857 5729 3268

Passcode: 478633

Dial by your location:

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdiYWtN4H7>



Wildlife Advisory Committee Draft Meeting Agenda

for
February 9, 2024
9:30-11:00 A.M.

1. Call Meeting to Order, Roll call/Determination of Quorum
2. Agenda Review & Approval (5 mins)
3. Approval of Meeting Summary from January 12, 2024, and January 26, 2024 (5 mins)
4. Open Public Comments or Member Announcements (10 mins)
5. Discussion, Deliberation, and Decision Making
 - a) Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update – Development of a list of major issues that should be addressed or addressed differently in the Chapter 10, Environment (60+ mins)
6. Future Agenda Topics (5 Mins)
7. Adjournment

Attachments:

- Meeting summary from 01/12/2024
- Meeting summary from 01/26/2024

Next Committee Meeting:

March 8, 2024: 9:30-11:00am, Hybrid- Northwest Annex Conference Room

Individuals who require special assistance to participate in the meetings are asked to contact us at least 96 hours in advance. The staff contact at Whatcom County Planning and Development Services is Priscilla Drewry, pdrewry@co.whatcom.wa.us, 360-778-5979.

WHATCOM COUNTY WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date: January 12,2024

Location: Zoom and Northwest Annex Conference Room @ Whatcom County Planning and Development Services office at 5280 Northwest Dr, Bellingham, WA 98226

Start Time: 9:35 a.m.

Quorum: Yes X No _____

Members Present		Public Present
Anne Johnson	Y	*Analiese Burns, COB
Barry Wenger	Y	Emily Wirtz
Cris Gonzalez	N	
Erin Deinzer	Y	
Jennifer Plombon	Y	Staff Present
Karen Hardesty	N	Priscilla Drewry
Stephen Nyman	Y	Cliff Strong
Susan Kane-Ronning	Y	
Vikki Jackson	Y	
Kristi Park	N	
Vacant		

I. Announcements, roll call and agenda.

Roll call was taken and a quorum was present. There were no proposed changes to the agenda.

The WAC discussed member, Cris Gonzalez, who has not attended a meeting since August 2023. Priscilla Drewry noted that she has attempted to contact Cris Gonzalez several times with no response. Barry Wenger moved to recommend removal of Cris Gonzalez from the WAC and this was seconded by Vikki Jackson. All were in favor of recommending removal.

II. Review and approval of December 8, 2023 meeting.

The committee reviewed and approved the December 8th meeting summary with minor changes. The motion to approve was made by Vikki Jackson and seconded by Jennifer Plombon.

III. Open Public Comments and Committee Member Comments

Susan Kane-Ronning discussed that she did not send letters around regarding the proposed federal actions pertaining to the Spotted Owl, Canada lynx, and Wolverines because the committee did not have a full discussion at the last meeting and she would like input into the letter. She said that she would draft a letter regarding the Barred Owl/Spotted Owl issue and send it out on January 15, 2024 for those members who want to be involved in responding to the federal proposals. Further discussion was saved until the end of the meeting.

IV. Discussion, deliberation, and decision-making

a) 2025 Comprehensive Plan Review Kick-off: PDS staff will provide an overview of the task and process for the Committee's

Cliff Strong, Senior Planner, discussed the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Review, explaining that the plan will describe the County's goals and programs over the next twenty years. All County committees are being asked to provide proposed updates. The plan should be complete by June 2025. The County recently received State funding and the consultants have been retained. The Wildlife Advisory Committee (WAC) has been asked to focus its review on Chapter 10 of the Comprehensive Plan. The WAC should consider what we believe are major issues to be addressed and review these items by February 2024. We should compile a master list of issues. Priscilla will provide the list to the consultants.

After the draft Comprehensive Plan is completed in early summer, the consultants will provide it back to the WAC for further review and comment.

Cliff does not want comments from the WAC that are outside of our scope. He commented that recent legislation passed that pertains to the Comprehensive Plan involving climate change and permit processing, but he could not recall anything involving wildlife. He will confirm this with his colleague. Anne commented that several sections of Chapter 10 seem to be beyond the WAC's scope of duty. Cliff said that at least four other committees are reviewing Chapter 10. The WAC should look specifically at the goals and policies identified in sections 10K and 10L of the Comprehensive Plan and read the County Council's Priorities as listed in Resolution 2022-036.

Priscilla Drewry stated that the goals and policies of the Plan are the major focus, and our review is somewhat big picture and less about word-smithing which the consultants will handle.

Stephen Nyman noted that none of us know which goals were met from the existing Plan. Priscilla responded that the long-range planners are actively working through the chapters now. Barry said that appendices and background information are helpful as they lead to greater comprehension of the document.

b) Vote to adjust meeting from 90 mins to 120 mins

The WAC discussed extending monthly meetings to two hours until the 2025 Comprehensive Plan review is complete. All members agreed. The WAC also discussed and agreed to a special meeting from 9:30 - 11:00 a.m. on Friday, January 26th, 2024.

c) Chapter 10 policy overview and work session

Regarding the meeting on January 26, 2024, Priscilla Drewry stated that she will place committee member comments into one document and send it out prior to the meeting for member review as a Word document. Members will use track changes in reviewing and commenting on the document. She asked that members focus on 10K and 10L goals and priorities. Stephen Nyman agreed but commented that members should not limit their review to these two areas. He also noted that the general statement should not be vague but more detailed than the current language possibly with subheadings listing components, guidelines, decision makers, etc. Barry Wenger, who has experience with policy drafting, discussed the importance of including key definitions in the appendix and the importance of clear language such that it could be defended in court by the County. Priscilla Drewry stated that an example of this could be defining phrases such as “wildlife corridors”. Stephen Nyman suggested that the members highlight words or phrases that appear repeatedly and need to be defined.

Priscilla Drewry asked that all comments and suggestions be provided back to her by 12:00 p.m. on Monday, January 22, 2024.

Priscilla stated that the WAC could form a technical subcommittee to work through the plan revisions and conflicting language. Vikki Jackson and Barry Wenger are interested in working on the subcommittee.

VI. Future Agenda Topics

Susan Kane-Ronning brought up the Grizzly reintroduction letter, that was not done before the deadline to submit. She discussed the Barred Owl and Spotted Owl letter due by January 16th and will draft that letter to send out for individuals to endorse as “Wildlife Advisory Committee Member”. Susan addressed opportunity for a letter regarding the uplisting of the Wolverine and a letter regarding the recovery plan for the Canada Lynx. Susan will draft these letters and send them out to Priscilla to disperse before the next meeting for discussion at the January 26th meeting.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:27 am.

WHATCOM COUNTY WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date: January 26,2024

Location: Zoom and Northwest Annex Conference Room @ Whatcom County Planning and Development Services office at 5280 Northwest Dr, Bellingham, WA 98226

Start Time: 9:33 a.m.

Quorum: Yes X No _____

Members Present		Public Present
Anne Johnson	Y	Sophia Rice (Lummi)
Barry Wenger	Y	Emily Wirtz (Lummi)
Cris Gonzalez	N	
Erin Deinzer	Y	
Jennifer Plombon	Y	Staff Present
Karen Hardesty	N	Priscilla Drewry
Stephen Nyman	Y	Cliff Strong
Susan Kane-Ronning	Y	
Vikki Jackson	Y	
Kristi Park	Y	
Vacant		

I. Announcements, roll call and agenda.

Roll call was taken and a quorum was present. There were no proposed changes to the agenda.

Stephen announced that Cris Gonzalez resigned as an appointed member. She did not have time to continue due to work schedule conflicts.

Susan asked if we would still have a quorum if she were to leave the meeting.

Stephen started the meeting by apologizing for the process he took with addressing the letters. He stated that he should have spoken with Susan Kane-Ronning first. He realized it was insensitive and that was not at all his intent. Stephen stated that he will do better in his role as chair.

III. Open Public Comments and Committee Member Comments

There were no public comments.

IV. Discussion, deliberation, and decision-making

a) Chapter 10 Work Session

The Wildlife Advisory Committee discussed, reviewed, and brainstormed Chapter 10 policies for recommendation to the consultant for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Barry stated that the committee should use already vetted definitions as much as possible in updating Chapter 10 of the Comprehensive Plan. Barry also urged that the committee replace all soft language with mandatory language such as “shall” and “must”. Cliff Strong agreed.

Cliff said that many of terms are defined in County Code. He is in charge of updating the definition section. He also noted that many terms are outdated and need review.

Priscilla noted that our end product will be a memo to the consultants. Priscilla placed a working document draft memo on the screen.

Cliff stated that the review will split the goals and policies and supporting maps section from the explanatory text. Barry commented that an introduction providing an overall summary would be helpful.

Barry suggested that we add the term “fungi” along with “Plants” and “Animals”. The committee members appeared to be in general agreement.

Priscilla noted that she will take note of the memo recommendations made by the committee today to add to the working document of the draft memo and type them out at the end of the meeting.

Barry would like the memo to recommend that the Comprehensive Plan classify all streams and/or riparian areas as “wildlife corridors”. The group discussed his statement and potential problems with doing this. Priscilla noted that the County Council has a list of priorities and possibly that list should be referenced in the memo.

Cliff Strong strongly suggested thinking about things that are not in the Comprehensive Plan that need to be addressed.

Stephen and Priscilla asked for further comments by the end of the day on February 5th for our next committee meeting on February 9th (9:30 - 11:00 a.m).

b) Up listing the Wolverine Letter, Canada Lynx Recover Plan Letter

The committee next discussed the letters drafted by Susan Kane-Ronning regarding the federal proposals pertaining to Canada lynx and wolverine. Stephen stated that he believed the WAC should not be drafting and submitting letters on issues as a committee, except to the County Council. The WAC should be making recommendations to the County Council as tasked. The WAC can move things in front of County Council if the timeline allows and it is up to the County Council to decide if it wants to submit a letter. Members can otherwise sign these two letters individually (but not on behalf of the committee). Barry agreed.. Barry commented that he will still list his committee membership by his signature as well as other relevant background

experience. Susan stated that her letters are as comprehensive as they can be given limited time constraints. She asked that those members wanting to sign on as individuals email her by Sunday, January 28th.

VI. Future Agenda Topics

- Memo to Consultant

VII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:59 am.