

# Wildlife Advisory Committee

## Meeting Summary

Friday, January 08, 2021

Start time: 9:00 A.M.

Whatcom County Planning and Development Services

Northwest Annex Portable Conference Room

5280 Northwest Drive

Bellingham, WA



| QUORUM          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                      |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Members Present |                                     | Public Present       |
| Frank Bob       |                                     | Alex Jeffers         |
| Greg Green      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                      |
| Robert Waddell  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                      |
| Joel Ingram     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                      |
| Vikki Jackson   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                      |
| Chris Kazimer   |                                     |                      |
| Stephen Nyman   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>Staff Present</b> |
| Shannon Crossen |                                     | Amy Dearborn         |
| Trevor Delgado  |                                     | Kelly Chamberlain    |
| Barry Wenger    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Chris Elder          |
|                 |                                     | Steve Fox            |
|                 |                                     | Atina Casas          |
|                 |                                     | Erin Page            |

1. Barry Wenger opened the meeting at 9:04
2. Barry asked if there are any announcements
  - a. Barry announced he has been working on the over-all Wildlife Advisory Committee plan, basing it on the Shoreline Management Program with a focus on wildlife code
  - b. Chris Elder announced his team is working on a Climate Action Plan which may be able to use the Committee's research – he will distribute more information as it develops
  - c. Amy Dearborn announced that Ryan Ericson has left Whatcom County so there is no Natural Resources Supervisor at Planning and Development services at this time; but Ryan will be staying on as a contractor to finish ongoing projects and will still be available to present the Committee's findings to Council
3. The Committee reviewed the meeting minutes from December as a group
  - a. Stephen moved to approve
  - b. Vikki seconded

4. Amy asked the Committee if anyone has volunteered to write the Species of Local Importance List itself
  - a. Amy has been compiling the members' reviews as they have been presented, but considers them to be detailed drafts that need some revising and formatting as a cohesive list
  - b. Barry also asked who will be writing introductory language to the list
    - i. Amy will be primary for this task with help from Vikki and Barry
5. Greg Green presented his review of locally important bats
  - a. Townsend's Big-eared Bats is the best candidate for the Species of Local Importance List
  - b. Greg had also considered Little Brown Bat, Yuma Myotis, California Myotis, and Big Brown Bat for the Watch List
    - i. These are threatened by loss of maternal colony habitats which may also fall into Habitats of Local Importance
  - c. Greg mentioned surveying of bridges for bat habitats
    - i. Atina Casas, habitat biologist, noted that surveying has only revealed bridge use by bats as near as Baker Lake
    - ii. Barry asked if nesting bats on bridges cause problems for human populations, Greg responded the nests are only a problem when they are disturbed by attempted maintenance, but there is no need for a change in maintenance procedures except to perform a survey if retrofitting is planned
      1. Additionally, Greg noted California is retrofitting many of their bridges to serve more suitably as bat habitats
  - d. Robert Waddell commented that Greg's emphasis on bat habitats is extremely relevant; since so little is known about the species themselves he agrees it is important to protect their known habitats when possible
  - e. Stephen Nyman asked if snags have any state protections as bat habitats that the Committee may blend into their recommendations
    - i. Amy noted Whatcom County uses the latest PHS (Priority Habitats and Species) recommendations during their permit review
    - ii. Robert mentioned he is unsure of specific recommendations from WDFW on snags but will do some research
    - iii. Vikki provided details on snag regulations directly from PHS, noting a 20-inch threshold on tree size
      1. Vikki suggested the Committee may be able to fill a gap and provide recommendations for trees under 20 inches
    - iv. Barry and Greg discussed the possibility and pros/cons of installing cable on larger snags that may be of public concern
    - v. Amy Dearborn informed the Committee on standard recommendations Whatcom County provides when processing Tree Removal Permits
6. Amy asked the Committee if they have any recommendations for bird species that should be included on the list

- a. Vikki mentioned she has been working on a list that is not quite complete but suggested the Pileated Woodpecker even though it is included in the PHS since it is a keystone species
7. Vikki mentioned in her research she has not come across any plant species she felt needed inclusion on the list
8. Amy asked the Committee their thoughts on considering raptor nesting sites as Habitats of Local Importance as there is not much guidance currently available regarding the permitting process
  - a. Multiple Committee members noted that these nesting sites are covered by the Migratory Bird Act but that it is weakly enforced
9. Amy lead discussion on general formatting and organization of the Species and Habitats of Local Importance Lists; the Committee planned to include an introductory section with descriptions as well as helpful processes and guidelines for the public
10. Vikki moved to adjourn
  - a. Stephen seconded
  - b. Adjourned 10:27