

# Wildlife Advisory Committee

## Meeting Summary

Friday, June 11, 2021

Start time: 9:00 A.M.

Whatcom County Planning and Development Services

Northwest Annex Portable Conference Room

5280 Northwest Drive

Bellingham, WA



QUORUM		
Members Present		Public Present
Frank Bob		Wendy Harris
Greg Green		Susan Kane-Ronning
Robert Waddell		Rick Eggerth
Joel Ingram		Michael Maudlin
Vikki Jackson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Analiese Burns
Chris Kazimer		
Stephen Nyman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Staff Present</b>
Shannon Crossen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amy Dearborn
Trevor Delgado		Kelly Chamberlain
Barry Wenger	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Erin Page

1. Barry Wenger opened the meeting at 9:04
2. Barry opened for Public Comments
  - a. Wendy Harris encouraged committee to be more expansive with Species of Local Importance List, noted that the List is necessary to protect biodiversity or anything considered locally relevant
    - i. Wendy also recommended the Committee consider including species that may already have protections at state or federal level
    - ii. Barry responded the current list is kind of a test run for the methodology of constructing the list
      1. Wendy responded the legal structure does not allow for any kind of restrictions on protections etc.
    - iii. Barry asked Wendy to email comments to the Committee for further review
3. No Announcements
4. Michael Maudlin with the Nooksack Tribe guest speaking about WSDOT Fish Passage Project

- a. Michael asked the Committee for specific recommendations on fish/wildlife passage types that should be implemented, or locations where a crossing could be naturally upgraded from culverts
  - b. Shannon Crossen noted there is a lot of room for improvement in ecological connectivity but there is not a simple way to prioritize and that location context is extremely relevant
    - i. Shannon pointed out as an example the current Padden Creek fish passage improvement project which will function for fish as well as larger wildlife
    - ii. Shannon also mentioned fish vs. wildlife connectivity are completely separated from each other so she recommends working with someone very experienced to avoid limiting the scope of a potential project
    - iii. Wendy asked if riparian areas are primary mean to preserve and restore wildlife passage
      - 1. Shannon replied riparian areas are very important and that banks and vegetation need to be preserved along with waterways as much as possible – but connectivity and preservation methods are very dependent on the type of species in question
5. Mount Baker Group Sierra Club guest speaking on collection of Wildlife Data
- a. Chair Rick Eggerth and Susan Kane-Ronning, Vice Chair
  - b. Mount Baker Sierra Club has been collecting data for the last 5 years – looking into why so much wildlife cross the road
    - i. The Group has collected all Animal Control data on animals killed and picked up, data set does not include WSDOT pickups
    - ii. Susan has aggregated data for deer pickups only and laid it over a map indicating numerous hot spots throughout the county
    - iii. The Group would like the if the data could be evaluated for traffic management and development (lowering speed limits for example)
    - iv. City of Bellingham is using a Sierra Club pamphlet with advice on driving safely and how to react to animals on the road
  - c. Rick noted the Sierra Club would really like to expand awareness and allow consideration during development and to get ahead of the issue as much as possible
  - d. Amy Dearborn agrees the Sierra Club data fits well with the mission and goals of the Committee but that the Committee is young and that Whatcom County Public Works may have more tools for implementation
  - e. Analiese Burns noted the City of Bellingham is finalizing a Wildlife Corridor Analysis, Analiese is comparing the analysis to the Sierra Club data and is wondering if there are key crossings in the city that stand out as primary concerns
  - f. Vikki Jackson asked if the Group’s map is available to the public – being able to view publicly could be useful for additional analysis
  - g. Vikki also asked also if any other animal data have been analyzed as it may be interesting to investigate where the smaller species are crossing instead

1. Susan explained no other animal data have been analyzed in this way; deer are the most socially noticeable and the time investment for analysis doesn't allow them to research all species
6. Whatcom County planner Erin Page speaking on Old Growth definitions and methodologies
  - a. No adopted methodology exists to survey potential old growth forests to determine if they meet the working definition the County uses
  - b. Erin asks the Committee if looking at this methodology is within their purview or if not, if the Committee can recommend some resources to aid standardization of the methodology
  - c. A DNR Committee was formed in 2005 to create a methodology which stated that Old Growth is a habitat, Erin states she's been told DNR is looking at "the essence" of the forest when determining whether or not it is Old Growth
    - i. Shannon and Wendy noted this kind of habitat protection definition would be a proper use of the Species of Local Importance List
  - d. Amy asked Erin to distribute the data she has so the Committee can look into it and loop back with recommendations at another meeting
7. Species of Local Importance List Update from Amy
  - a. The List is being reviewed by the Natural Resources Committee for Council and then will be moved to Council for consideration
  - b. Amy believes the Committee will be able to update the List as needed once the methodology is established
8. Barry adjourned meeting at 10:24