

Wildlife Commissioner to Consider Adoption of Wolf Plan

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : November 22, 2011 at 5:00 pm

OLYMPIA, Wash. - After four years of development and extensive public review, the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission will consider adoption of a plan to guide state conservation and management of gray wolves as they re-establish a breeding population in Washington state.

The commission, which sets policy for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), is scheduled to take action on the department's recommended Wolf Conservation and Management Plan on Dec. 3, the second day of a public meeting set for Dec. 2-3 in Olympia.

The meeting will convene at 8 a.m. both days in Room 172 of the Natural Resource Building at 1111 Washington St. on the Capitol Campus in Olympia. An agenda for the meeting is posted at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/commission/minutes.html> on WDFW's website.

Key aspects of the wolf conservation and management plan recommended by WDFW would establish recovery objectives for gray wolves in Washington, along with strategies for addressing their interactions with livestock and wildlife species such as elk and deer.

WDFW began developing the plan in 2007 anticipating that gray wolves would naturally migrate to the state from Idaho, Oregon, Montana, and British Columbia. Since then, five wolf packs have been documented in the state - three in northeastern Washington and two in the north Cascades.

The gray wolf is currently listed as endangered throughout Washington under state law and as endangered in the western two-thirds of the state under federal law.

Since 2009, WDFW's proposed plan has been the focus of 19 public meetings, written comments from nearly 65,000 people, a scientific peer review, and recommendations from the 17-member citizen Wolf Working Group, formed in 2007 to advise the department in developing the plan.

The commission also accepted public testimony at four workshops this fall, but will not hear additional public comments Dec. 3.

On Dec. 2, the first day of the meeting, the commission will consider proposals by WDFW to acquire land in Mason, Wahkiakum, Grant and Asotin counties to preserve critical habitat for fish and wildlife. The department is also proposing a timber-thinning project on the Scotch Creek and Sinlahekin wildlife areas.

In addition, WDFW will brief the commission on proposed new sportfishing rules for 2012-13, posted at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/rule_proposals/. WDFW staff will also brief the commission on the department's WDFW's Fish Program, Enforcement Program and Private Lands Program