

**Whatcom County
Council Climate Action and Natural Resources Committee**

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
(360) 778-5010**



Committee Minutes - Final

**Tuesday, October 24, 2023
10:15 AM
Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 10:45 A.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON,
SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil,
OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Kaylee Galloway

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 10:23 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, and Kaylee Galloway

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, and Carol Frazey

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2023-682](#) Report from the Parks and Recreation Department

Bennett Knox, Parks and Recreation Department Director, reported on:

- Projects accomplished since April
- Updates on capital projects
- An update on the Plantation Range and plans for a site characterization
- Current projects
- Mid-biennium budget requests in the context of broader initiatives and future projects

He answered whether the Council on Aging is also helping with other senior centers around the county besides the one in Bellingham, and whether a request for a dog park in Point Roberts can be prioritized.

This agenda item was REPORTED.

2. [AB2023-691](#) Update on status of North Cascades ecosystem grizzly bear restoration

Elenbaas updated the Councilmembers on the plan to reintroduce 200 grizzly bears starting in 2024. One of the biggest conversations was habitat and the human impact on habitat. The data that was presented was on how much recreation has increased and how that impacts the movements of grizzlies and his question was whether we are going to manage the bears or manage people in their area. He was told they were going to manage the bears and not hinder people in the area, but all the presentations were around other areas where they have looked to expand core habitat and in which they have excluded people. He spoke about the implications of the “10(j)” designation (coming from section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act) and said he questions whether that is feasible because it is typically

reserved for populations that are isolated, and it would be hard to argue that the introduced grizzlies would be isolated from the natural population in the British Columbia habitat since the habitats are connected. He stated he reached out to the Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Tribe to get their perspective. The First Nations and tribes in Washington may not all be in alignment on whether they support it not so he wanted to get the input of our Whatcom County neighbors and see how they felt. He stated the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is open for public comment until November 13, 2023 so he would encourage anyone who would like to, to comment on the EIS.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Kaylee Galloway-via email 10/27/2023

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Kaylee Galloway, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

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