

**Mike Milburn**  
Chair  
Montana

**Doug Grob**  
Montana

**Jeffery C. Allen**  
Idaho

**Ed Schriever**  
Idaho



# Northwest Power and Conservation Council

**Thomas L (Les) Purce**  
Vice Chair  
Washington

**KC Golden**  
Washington

**Margaret Hoffmann**  
Oregon

**Charles F. Sams III**  
Oregon

## **Council Meeting Summary** **March 10 & 11, 2026** **Council Central Office and via Webinar** **851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100** **Portland, OR 97204**

This is a summary of the Council's March 2026 public meeting and the actions the Council decided upon. The meeting agenda and presentation materials for each agenda item during the meeting are posted at <https://www.nwcouncil.org/calendar/council-meeting-2026-03-10/>. The meeting recording and a copy of this summary will also be posted on that page.

### **March 10, 2026**

Council Chair Mike Milburn brought the Council Meeting to order at 9 a.m. Pacific Time. Council Members Jeff Allen, KC Golden, Doug Grob, Margaret Hoffmann, Thomas L. (Les) Purce, Chuck F. Sams III, and Ed Schriever were in attendance in person. The next Council meeting is scheduled for April 14 – 16, in Whitefish, MT, and via webinar.

### **Executive director report and state updates**

Executive Director Peter Cogswell announced the Council meetings in April in Whitefish, MT and May in Pendleton, OR will be 3-day meetings. He thanked members, staff, and the region for everyone's effort on the Fish and Wildlife public hearings and comment process. Director Cogswell also thanked staff for their work on the Council audit process. Lastly, he shared an update on the Central Office lobby remodel.

Member Hoffmann shared she is now serving on the Oregon Data Centers Advisory Committee, which has the goal of learning more about data centers to be able to make recommendations to the Governor that will help facilitate economic development while ensuring good stewardship of land, water, and energy use. Member Sams shared that Oregon's Environmental Restoration

Council is continuing work for the tribes, the state, and impacted communities. Member Purce shared that he felt moved by attending the public hearings in the different areas of the region and mentioned how his love for music connects with the culture and growth of our country. Member Golden briefly touched on Washington setting precedents regarding data centers and the work of Member Hoffmann. Member Schriever also shared that it was refreshing and genuine to attend the public hearings. Member Grob spoke about his experience attending the public hearings and the impact of the work of the Council on the region.

## **Council Meeting Agenda Items**

### **1. Comprehensive update on sea lion predation and management in the Columbia Basin**

Fish and Wildlife Program Scientist Kate Self introduced members of the team implementing the joint permit authorizing removal of sea lions from Columbia River waters, including Donella Miller and Doug Hatch with Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC); Robert Anderson and Chris Magel with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); Mike Brown and Shay Valentine with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW); Casey Clark and John Edwards with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW); and Sarah Maher with Idaho Fish and Game. The panelists provided an update to the Council on sea lion predation and management in the Columbia Basin. Robert Anderson shared an update on sea lion population trends and implications for the 120(f) permit. Donella Miller and Doug Hatch provided a brief history on sea lion predation on salmon, steelhead and white sturgeon in the Columbia Basin and management actions to date, including implementation progress and challenges. They discussed proposed changes to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and future outlooks for the Columbia Basin. During the discussion, member Allen asked the Council to consider supporting additional federal funding for sea lion management.

Presentation materials are available at [https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19781/2026\\_03\\_1.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19781/2026_03_1.pdf).

### **2. Briefing on Columbia Basin Water Transaction Program**

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Specialist Heather Hendrixson introduced Femke Freiberg and Alex Mahmoud with National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Matt Schwartz and Daniel Newberry with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to provide an overview of the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program (CBWTP), including background on the program and how it is implemented. They also highlighted accomplishments and trends in the program over time.

Presentation materials are available at [https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19780/2026\\_03\\_2.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19780/2026_03_2.pdf).

### **3. Update on Project Review – Fish and Wildlife Lands**

Fish and Wildlife Program Scientist Maureen Hess, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Specialist Heather Hendrixson and Project Review and Implementation Manager Mark Fritsch provided a brief update on the current stage and timeline of the Fish and Wildlife Program's Lands Review process that was initiated in November 2025.

Presentation materials are available at [https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19783/2026\\_03\\_3.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19783/2026_03_3.pdf).

#### **4. Power Plan Update**

Director of Power Planning Jennifer Light provided a brief update on the status of scenario modeling and then walked through what is anticipated over the next several months as the Council works towards a draft Power Plan.

Presentation materials are available at [https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19785/2026\\_03\\_4.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19785/2026_03_4.pdf).

#### **5. Final Ninth Plan needs assessment**

Director Light and Power System Analyst Dor Hirsh Bar Gai presented updates on the modeling approach for the needs assessment. Staff made refinements after some additional testing. The presentation also included the final set of needs assessment results to be used for the Ninth Power Plan.

Presentation materials are available at [https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19782/2026\\_03\\_5.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19782/2026_03_5.pdf).

#### **6. WestTEC 10-Year study**

Manager of Planning and Analysis John Ollis introduced Ryan Roy with Western Power Pool to present on the Western Transmission Expansion Coalition (WestTEC). Key deliverables from this initiative include both 10-year and 20-year studies. WestTEC released its West-Wide Transmission Study 10-Year Horizon Report in February of this year, and Roy presented on the report's findings.

Presentation materials are available at [https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19784/2026\\_03\\_6.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19784/2026_03_6.pdf).

#### **7. Study on retail electricity price trends**

Director Light introduced Ryan Hledik with The Brattle Group who presented on recent work completed by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and The Brattle Group exploring the factors influencing retail electricity prices in the US. The presentation also summarized the comprehensive work in the area of retail electricity price trends.

Presentation materials are available at [https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19786/2026\\_03\\_7.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19786/2026_03_7.pdf).

Member Milburn adjourned the meeting at 3:32 p.m. Pacific Time

The Executive Committee met in closed session to discuss financial matters.

### **March 11, 2026**

Council Chair Mike Milburn brought the Council Meeting to order at 9 a.m. Pacific Time. Council Members Jeff Allen, KC Golden, Doug Grob, Margaret Hoffmann, Thomas L. (Les) Purce, Chuck F. Sams III, and Ed Schriever were in attendance in person. The next Council meeting is scheduled for April 14 – 16, in Whitefish, MT, and via webinar.

Director Cogswell announced that the Council received a clean audit, which was reported during the Executive Committee session on March 10, 2026.

#### **8. Fish and Wildlife Division update**

Fish and Wildlife Division Director Patty O'Toole reviewed highlights of the division work plan for 2026, and informed Council members about important upcoming decisions and tasks for 2026.

Presentation materials are available at [https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19787/2026\\_03\\_8.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19787/2026_03_8.pdf).

#### **9. Fish and Wildlife Program Amendments**

Director O'Toole reviewed the amendment process and next steps, recapped the public comment period and hearings, then Council staff reviewed with the members the comments received on the draft 2026 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program.

Presentation materials are available at [https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19788/2026\\_03\\_9.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19788/2026_03_9.pdf).

#### **10. Council business**

##### **Motion to approve summary of the February 2026 Council Meeting**

Member Purce moved that the Council approve for the signature of the Vice-Chair the official summary of the February 2026 Council Meeting held in Portland, Oregon and via webinar, as presented by staff.

Member Hoffmann seconded.

No discussion.

Voice vote - all in favor, none opposed.

Motion was approved.

The approved summary of the February 2026 Council meeting and other materials from that meeting are at [https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19790/2026\\_03\\_10summary.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19790/2026_03_10summary.pdf).

### **Motion to appoint Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) members**

Member Purce moved that the Council:

- appoint Yolanda Morbey to the Independent Scientific Review Panel for a final four-year term through September 30, 2030;
- appoint Leslie Bach, Steven Lindley, Tracie-Lynn Nadeau, William Pine, Cisco Werner, and Michael Young to the ISRP beginning service in April 2026;
- appoint Michael Ford and Kerry Naish to the ISRP to begin service October 1, 2026, the start of Fiscal Year 2027; and
- appoint the 19 people listed in Table 3 of the staff memo to the pool of ISRP Peer Review Group members.

Member Hoffmann seconded.

No discussion.

Voice vote - all in favor, none opposed.

Motion was approved.

The decision memorandum is available at:

[https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19789/2026\\_03\\_10isrp-isab.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19789/2026_03_10isrp-isab.pdf).

No public comment.

Chair Milburn adjourned the meeting at 11:51 a.m. Pacific Time.