

Governor Jay Inslee Fills Three Vacancies on Fish and Wildlife Commission

Inslee Reappoints Chair Baker and Chooses Two New Eastside Commissioners

OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES, March 1, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Governor Jay Inslee has filled the three seats on the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission that became vacant last December with the expiration of the terms of Commissioners Barbara Baker, Kim Thorburn, and Don Mclsaac.

Governor Inslee reappointed Chair Baker for another six-year term and tapped two people from eastern Washington to fill the remaining seats: Woodrow "Woody" Myers, a retired wildlife biologist with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and Steven Parker, a former fisheries biologist for the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.

"We are pleased that Governor Inslee reappointed Commissioner Barbara Baker and that he selected new Commissioners with the experience and expertise to critically evaluate and apply the science behind the complex issues that they will be called upon to decide," said Samantha Bruegger, executive director of [Washington Wildlife First](#).

In a reshuffling of the seats, Inslee tapped Thurston County resident Barbara Baker to fill the western Washington seat vacated by Don Mclsaac, who did not seek reappointment when his term expired in December. Baker is an attorney who worked for decades in the state legislature, including for 10 years as the chief clerk for the Washington House of Representatives. Inslee first appointed Baker to the Commission in 2017, the Commission elected her as vice chair in 2019, and she has served as chair since early 2022.

The appointments mark the end of the service of Commissioner Kim Thorburn, a controversial figure known for her public criticism of fellow Commissioners, WDFW staffers, and members of the public. Thorburn was on the losing side of votes to ban wildlife-killing contests and [eliminate recreational spring bear hunting](#), siding with extreme hunting groups in proclaiming such changes to be the start of a "culture war."

"We are glad that the Commission will be able to operate at full strength with nine members," Bruegger said. "We hope the new appointments will enable the Commission to break through the gridlock experienced in recent meetings and move forward on important issues, like the Conservation Policy."

Inslee declined Thorburn's request for reappointment, selecting Steven Parker of Yakima County to replace her. Parker retired in 2019 as the technical services coordinator for fisheries resource management for the Yakama Nation. He has a master's degree in fisheries science. In his application, Parker emphasized that fish and wildlife "are owned by the public, not by the managers," and that the Department has an obligation to preserve fish and wildlife for future generations.

In a shift to move more Commission seats to the eastside of the state, Governor Inslee selected Spokane County resident Woody Myers to fill the at-large seat formerly held by Barbara Baker. Until his retirement in 2017, Myers had served as a wildlife biologist for WDFW for nearly 40 years, largely as a big-game researcher focused on deer, elk, and moose. In his application for the Commission, Myers discussed the threats to fish and wildlife from climate change and habitat loss, emphasizing the importance of staffing the Commission with "knowledgeable people who will make science-based decisions to help ensure these resources and their habitats continue for future generations." Although he is a lifelong hunter and fisher, Myers acknowledged that most people in the state do not hunt or fish and asserted that it is "important that future management decisions be made that respect all these values."

"The sentiments expressed by new Commissioners Myers and Parker show that they understand their solemn duty to protect Washington's fish and wildlife for all current and future Washingtonians," said Washington Wildlife First Board President Claire Loeb Davis. "As they begin their service, we hope these Commissioners will translate these sentiments into bold action to bring [badly needed reform](#) to the Department, transforming it into an agency that values science, prioritizes conservation, and represents the values and interests of all Washingtonians."

Samantha Bruegger

Washington Wildlife First

+1 970-531-6720

sbruegger@wawildlifefirst.org

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/619758655>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2023 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.