

PEAR Team Meeting 15 – Meeting Notes– September 18, 2024, 12-2 p.m.

Welcome & Icebreaker – Janette 12:03 pm

Icebreaker asking the group to respond to the prompt below.

- Name
- Pronouns
- Role(s) if you like
- How do you like to be supported?

Facilitators Present:

Janette Chien, she/her, Parks DEI Director

PEAR Team Present:

Clare Delong Tuminez, she/her, Communications Director

Reco Bremby, he/him

Mary Brown, she/her, Guide Manager at Alpine Events International

Denise Rochelle, she/her, Founder of The Bronze Chapter

Suzanne Kagen, she/her, Program Specialist 2 at Lake Sammamish State Park

Natasha House, she/her, Administrative Services Deputy Director

Jeff Vassallo, he/him, Tahoma Gateway Area Manager, NW Region

Angela Smith, she/her, Recreation Professional and Community Builder

Valeria Veasley, she/her, Policy Management Analyst

MJ Sampang, she/her, Washington Trails Association (WTA) - Community Partnership and Leadership Development Senior Coordinator

Stacy Coltrain, she/her, Ranger 1 Sequim Bay

Observers Present

Sophia Danenberg, she/her, Chair State Parks Commission

Tonna Jensen Sigler, she/her, State Parks Administrative Assistant

Heather Carrington, Central Lakes Area Administrator

Alyssa Smith, she/her, Recreational Boating Education Specialist

Becki Ellison, she/her, Executive Assistant

Owen Rowe, he/him Policy & Governmental Affairs Director

Alexi McHugh, he/him, Fellow at Indiana University

Chris Carlson, Parks Construction Project Coordinator

Philip Nontell, he/him, Senior Business Analyst

Agenda

Janette welcomed the group at 12:03 pm and reminded the team of our community norms that we developed as a group. We can work to support one another to be accountable for these norms. Please reach out if you would like to make any adjustments to these community norms.

Janette started the meeting with the ice breaker and shared the agenda

- Welcome new members!
- Welcome Commissioner Danenberg!
- Check in
- **EIR Topic: The Commission**
 - “Experience” a commission meeting
 - Public comment process
 - Reflect on relationship
- General updates
- Closing

Janette welcomed Valeria Veasley to the PEAR Team! Valeria shared that she works for the Policy & Governmental Affairs Office and has been with Parks for 32 years and with the state for 34 years. She came to Parks from the Nevada superior court. Janette shared that Val is such a wealth of knowledge and does a wonderful job of putting things into plain language.

Equity Impact Review (EIR) The Commission

Janette welcomed Commissioner Danenberg Chair of the State Parks and Recreation Commission, Term expires: December 31, 2026. Sophia Danenberg is a senior program manager and leads international environmental policy analysis at Boeing. She came to Boeing from United Technologies where she managed global environment, health and safety legislative and regulatory affairs, environmental technology programs, and energy efficiency and indoor air quality projects with governments, universities and businesses in Europe and Asia. Before starting her career, Sophia was a Fulbright Fellow at Keio University in Tokyo. She received her undergraduate degree from Harvard in environmental sciences and public policy and completed graduate courses in environmental economics and law at the University of Connecticut. Sophia is on the boards of NatureBridge and SheJumps. She also has served on the young professionals' committees for the World Affairs Council and Big Brothers Big Sisters, as the vice-chair of her local Sierra Club Inner City Outings, a track and field official for

Special Olympics, and a mentor for the Passages Northwest Girls Rock program, among other roles. Sophia was initially drawn to Washington by the access to the outdoors and believes that public lands are an invaluable asset to both individuals and businesses in Washington state. Sophia is an outdoor enthusiast and is an avid climber, hiker and mountaineer. She also enjoys snowboarding, skiing and cycling. In 2006, Sophia became the first African-American to summit Mount Everest.

Sophia shared that she is excited to be here and see what we are doing. This is such an important initiative, and she was excited when the legislature implemented PEAR. We can look at the policies that relate to the commission. Thank you for having me and letting me learn from you.

Janette prompted the group. When you hear "WA State Parks Commission" what are the first words or phrase that come to mind? Type in the chat:

- Policy makers
- Oversight
- Rules
- Care for parks
- Policy body
- Leaders
- Gate opener
- Team
- Policy
- Direction
- Citizen Representation
- Campfire Chats
- Public input
- Campfire chats
- Long range policy

What is the commission?

- 7 citizen members, appointed by the governor
- 6-year terms
- Helps guide the policies that steer the agency
- Commissioners may not hold elected or full-time appointive office during their service
- Receive no pay beyond legitimate travel expenses.
- Meet requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA)

For those familiar with nonprofit organizations, think of the Commission kind of like our Board of Directors and Diana Dupuis Executive Director or CEO.

When there are more than 3 commissioners in one meeting quorum (majority), the meeting is subject to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA. Outlined in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 42.30.030 meetings declared open and public

1. All meetings of the governing body of a public agency shall be open and public and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting of the governing body of a public agency, except as otherwise provided in this chapter.
2. Public agencies are encouraged to provide for the increased ability of the public to observe and participate in the meetings of governing bodies through real-time telephonic, electronic, internet, or other readily available means of remote access that do not require an additional cost to access the meeting.

Janette reviewed the photo of all of the commissioners on slide 10. Holly Williams, Scott Merriman, Sophia Danenberg, Parks Director Diana Dupuis, Ken Bounds, Laurie Connelly, Michael Latimer and Ali Raad.

What does the commission do?

The commission shall:

1. Have the care, charge, control, and supervision of all parks and parkways acquired or set aside by the state for park or parkway purposes.
2. Adopt policies, and adopt, issue, and enforce rules pertaining to the use, care, and administration of state parks and parkways. The commission shall cause a copy of the rules to be kept posted in a conspicuous place in every state park to which they are applicable, but failure to post or keep any rule posted shall be no defense to any prosecution for the violation there of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) changes (rule-making actions that affect citizens of WA)

Janette shared some examples of what the Commission does:

- Approve commission policies (e.g., Natural Resources policy)
- Develop agency vision and direction (Commission priorities)
- The Parks Director's "boss"
- Approve:
 - Agency budget request package
 - Land-use classifications and changes
 - Land acquisitions
- Advocate to the legislature

How often do commissioners meet?

- 9 meetings a year
 - 4 in-person in pre-determined locations
 - 4 virtual
 - 1 planning meeting

- All regular meetings are open to the public
- Time for public comment during all regular meetings (virtual, in person or written)
- When there are more than 3 commissioners in one meeting (majority), the meeting is subject to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA)

During a commission meeting

Work sessions are for information sharing & education. Staff present at work sessions. Less formal, time to discuss topics, provide updates, discuss something that will be a future agenda item or something commissioners want to know about.

Commission meetings are for formal requested actions and reports, where decision-making happens, where public comments happen, WAC (Washington Administrative Code) changes, policy changes, real estate decisions and major issues.

Janette gave a shoutout to Becki Ellison our Executive Assistant for the huge logistical undertaking planning Commission Meetings.

Challenges

- Lack of public participation, awareness or interest about commission meetings
- The public input we are getting is from specific user groups and not others
- The commission is not representative of racial and cultural diversity of WA communities (Governors' appointments)

How it's changed over the years

- Meetings changed from 8 in-person weeklong meetings a year to 4 in-person and 4 virtual
- Hybrid Participation from both staff and public comment since COVID
- Transparency with materials. All slideshows and agenda items posted on the website in advance. Written public comments are posted online. Notes and recordings are posted online after meetings. TVW provides recording and captioning.
- Commission Representation. We have attempted to move forward legislation that calls for the commission to be composed of people who represent the diverse lived experiences of WA

As a PEAR team, we will:

- "Experience" a commission meeting
- Discuss public comment process
- Reflect on some big questions

Reflect on the opening of the commission meeting:

- What stands out to you?
- How does the room set up feel as you enter? As a staff? As a member of the public?

- What do you notice about the people in the room? Or not in the room?
- What questions do you have?

The team was sent to breakout rooms for 5 minutes to discuss the questions above.

Janette invited each group to share out.

Room one: The set up is very formal, distinct separation of the commission at the front of the room, the pledge of allegiance at the front of the room was different from other public meetings they have been in, meetings are in the middle of a business day and makes it hard for people to attend. I've seen some where public input is just one-sided. Public comments can become an echo chamber if other points of view aren't present.

Room two: Formality, Roberts Rules of Order (RRO) and why we use it, enjoyed the progression of the land acknowledgement. It can be intimidating for Commissioners as well in a large room speaking to just a few people. When you want community participation sometimes people don't know how, it can be intimidating. Utilize Participatory Governance. "Tradition" Hats on vs hats off during pledge; Tradition -vs- protocol? Tradition is more of a military format of tradition.

Summary of Key Differences:

- Robert's Rules of Order focuses on creating structure, efficiency, and fairness in large groups, ensuring decisions can be made even when opinions differ significantly. It emerged in the late 19th century to bring order to increasingly large and complex meetings.
- Participatory governance centers on inclusivity, egalitarianism, and consensus. It often avoids formalized structures in favor of open, horizontal discussions and decisions, better suited for smaller or grassroots contexts.

In essence, RRO aims for procedural clarity and efficiency, while participatory governance values full participation and consensus, even at the expense of speed or simplicity.

Room three: The setup can feel a little awkward. You can't see who all is in the room. Is the room set up for accessibility? Are printed materials provided? Are there opportunities to have smaller table conversations. Timing of meetings can be tough for public participation. It felt very student council like. The Commission is more diverse than it has been in the past. It's nice to hear that the commissioners are from different parts of the state.

Room four: What is the need for the formality? How do you reach out to groups to have representation at these meetings. Socioeconomics and location play into participation. Do we offer translation services or live interpretation? What about a listening tour to help break down the formality? City of Bellevue has a Police Station meeting spot at the local shopping center (e.g., Crossroads) to help break down barriers. There is a very

diverse population locally, and I hear that it has opened LOTS of doors. Virtual has helped with the increase of public engagement. Its easy for special interest groups to override the public view.

Janette shared that the flag salute and no present tribal leaders were things that stood out to her. Later on, Becki clarified that the commission had gone on a tour with tribal leaders and had breakfast with a tribal leader that very morning but he was unable to make it to the commission meeting.

The group continued open discussion:

It can feel very intimidating or very legal if you aren't used to it. This is a very traditional way of sitting for commissions and council members. Sophia shared that it's unclear as a Commission how much of Roberts Rules is tradition and how much is required. Sophia mentioned that she has tried to bring in different groups (such as outdoor affinity groups specifically serving people of color) to present but they haven't thus far, it must be intimidating.

Becki shared that we are the only board that is still doing a pledge of allegiance. This will be considered for removal. Becki shared that Tribal Members are invited to every meeting to interact and welcome us into their land and space.

Are there mechanisms to capture the voice of younger perspectives/newer perspectives? A permanent seat (that changes personnel wise) that represents seasonals, low-wage workers, new-to-the-system employees that can ask questions and provide feedback in real time.

Does anyone track the most discussed topics brought up by the public throughout the commission meetings over the year? Or do the public do a survey post commission meeting to hear how their experience went?

Sophia shared that we go on Park Tours the Tuesday before that gives the Commission the opportunity to informally meet staff.

Janette shared that as a staff person it is intimidating to come with a great presentation, PowerPoint and have the answers to all the right questions.

Are other BIPOC groups and or citizens, legacy Washingtonians given the same level of inference importance and or focus as indigenous tribes/citizens? How effective is the outreach to my community?

Sophia shared that our relationship with the Tribes is quite different as a government-to-government relationship. It is very challenging to get diverse groups to attend because it is such a bureaucratic process. Sophia also shared that she is often one of the

youngest people in the room. Everyone on the commission is a grandparent or doesn't have children. This is also true for Fish and Wildlife. How do we as a commission do the work that the peer team is doing. Sophia shared that she is open to ideas and admits that it is a problem.

There are grants and funding specific for various ethnic groups would this be an opportunity to break down barriers to get more diverse groups into this space.

Sophia shared that Owen has helped work on this. Owen shared that we have seen some bills that do exactly what Angela described. The Boards and Commissions compensation has not been changed since 1984 the per diem is only \$50 per day. This needs to be fixed for Boards and Commissions statewide.

There are probably not a lot of republicans being selected by Governor Inslee for the Commission.

Over the last 40 years the Commission has been conservative regardless of who the governor is.

Owen shared that we requested legislation last year that when selecting commissioners, they should be from diverse lived experiences and geographic areas. Commissioner Danenberg shared that this was a small step to get Tribal representation on the commission. We should intentionally select Commissioners from across the state. There is no requirement for the state parks commission to have geographic distribution, but it just turns out that they are spread out. But still currently have a lot on the west side.

Public Comment Process

- In-person, limited to 3 minutes
- Virtual, limited to 3 minutes
- Written (email, letter)
- Call and leave a comment

Reflect on the public comment process:

- What stands out to you?
- How can we invite multiple perspectives that considers power imbalances in our communities?
- How can we support commissioners to receive these comments and make decisions rooted in Pro-Equity Anti-Racism?

The teams were sent back into breakout rooms for 8 minutes to discuss the questions above. Each team shared out about their breakout room discussion.

The Ability for PEAR to do a presentation in front of the Commission would be great. We should have the Commission do one of those nine meetings in an area that has a great amount of diversity. Go to where folks are that don't traditionally look like those that come to meetings. What about Lakewood, Tacoma or North Seattle?

The need to make sure we have diverse cultural perspectives available to the commission. Build relationships with Communities that haven't been historically included in parks. Removing barriers of access to commission. Not everyone is aware they can submit written comments. Maybe there is an opportunity to post information from commission meetings in the parks.

There's a big gap between technical solutions and adaptive solutions. For example, the push not to write tickets but to educate people. QR codes in parks could provide people in parks with a chance to provide written public comment. Connecting with other city departments to provide feedback would be helpful about how they engage in public comment.

Hold meetings in [Equity zones](#). Seek different diverse committees or groups giving feedback to the commission on a set policy or topic. Are the methods of communications updated? Surveys that are representative of the state to gather data, partnering with cities who hold public meetings on their parks.

It's very challenging to change people's mindset. If people don't already have a PEAR mindset it's difficult to ask them to look through a different lens. There needs to be more perspectives at the table to improve power imbalances. Legacy and privileged mindsets from those that made public comment at the Cama Beach meeting.

As a representative of the public how do you weigh comments when you continually hear one type of comment? It's a very hard job.

Sophia shared that we have Government-to-Government relations to bring in the Tribal Voice, but we don't have that with other communities. We also need to consider more than a local perspective. A local community doesn't necessarily understand the budget process and that if we are funding keeping the cabins open, it means that other maintenance in our parks is not happening. Part of the job as a commission is to consider: Is this a value to all Washingtonians? Someone voiced after the Cama Beach meeting that they were too intimidated to voice another opinion living in that community. I wouldn't ask someone to walk into that space and deal with that hostility. We need other opportunities for people to provide input because that space can be very intimidating.

Relationship

Janette provided an overview of slide 25. So, what is the current relationship between the PEAR team and the commission?

I want to start off with sharing that the PEAR Team has a great impact on an agency level – through our staff to PEAR team engagement doing the equity impact review. Our work here directly shapes many of programs and processes.

The PEAR team is the green circle. Our team includes community members.

The PEAR team includes two members of the Executive Leadership Team (myself and Clare, Director of Comms). ELT reports to Director Dupuis and who "reports" to the commissioners. ELT members provide regular updates to the commission about the various divisions. As part of this, I provide regular updates to the commission about the PEAR team.

Each commission meeting presents an opportunity for staff or a partner to present to the commission. The commission also receives public comment. We have the opportunity to present at a commission meeting and bring forward recommendations.

There are times when staff proposes changes to current Washington Administrative Codes (WACs), and the commission approves or denies it. Revised code of Washington (RCW's) are the laws of the land. WAC is the details. The commission approves any changes to the WAC. For example...land classifications, approving park master plans (that shape the future of a park), amending or creating rules (such as camping stay limits)

Reflect on PEAR Team Relationships

How can we develop intentional relationships with the commission, staff, or others to further advance our PEAR work? The group was invited to popcorn ideas verbally or in the chat.

- Is it possible to flip the structure where the Commission initiates comment. Are we limited to geographic areas for specific topics? Is it possible for the commission to go where people are.
- Are there other ways to make diverse cultural perspectives available to the commission? Can we use social media?
- As a staff member there was an opportunity to meet commissioners during lunch and talk more informally. It was a great way to highlight the work we are doing and bring focus to what staff are doing.
- Have a PEAR team member attend one commission meeting representing PEAR initiatives in support of our systemic change and work moving forward! We should have presence at four of the nine meetings minimum.
- Use language that everyone can understand in the community. Shed some formal layers but also include the common goal everyone wants to achieve in the space.
- Do we partner with outdoor retailers and share the comment options? Then we can get the community that travels to the park without using geographic proximity. Just a thought!

- I was just going to ask what community partners care about this work and are already in various networks? Is there a staff person who is charged with building and maintaining various stakeholder relationships in whatever regions.
- Metro Parks Tacoma has an event titled, Co-Create to Recreate, which invites a capped number of individuals to join at one of the MPT buildings (STAR center, People's Center, Eastside, Norpoint), and they discuss the budget and other topics at this level. Everyone gets free dinner, they can add questions or written comments, and has a Q&A. And the attendees meet MPT staff from a variety of departments. MPT sets a goal and vision to this space, and it has held so well AND helps allot budget items into specific parks and spaces based off public opinions.

Closing

Janette thanked the group and Commissioner Danenberg and asked a closing question. What is one thing you will do for yourself today? Meeting closed at 2:00 p.m.



PEAR Team Meeting 15

September 18, 2024

The Commission



Community Norms	Practices
GOAL ORIENTED & STRUCTURED MEETINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitators provide agenda, meeting notes, and organization • Time checks – limit tangents to keep us on track • PEAR Team meetings recorded during presentation portions
THOUGHTFUL PARTICIPATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center PEAR goals to empower discussions • Raise your virtual hand • Balance speaking and active listening • Open-minded observations and feedback, lean into curiosity, ask questions before assuming, seek to understand • Use accessible language (explain acronyms, terms, etc.) • Practice compassion, patience, and understanding • Trust the process; be open to feedback • Trust that we are stronger together than alone
RECOGNIZE EACH PERSON HAS UNIQUE EXPERIENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak your truth • Appreciate everyone’s differences and commonalities • Awareness of diversity within BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community • Awareness of privilege (white, able-bodied, education, etc.) • Notice and re-consider blanket statements
SUPPORT PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgment-free zone • Recognize this is an intergenerational space • Consider the role(s) of silence and its impact in our space • Take care of yourself • Acknowledge intent, assess impact • Honor confidentiality for the group’s contributions



Agenda

- Welcome new members!
- Welcome Commissioner Danenberg!
- Check in
- **EIR Topic: The Commission**
 - “Experience” a commission meeting
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Welcome new members!

Valeria Veasley

Parks staff



Welcome Commissioner Danenberg!

**Chair of the State Parks and
Recreation Commission**

Term expires: December 31, 2026

Senior Program Manager and
leads international environmental
policy analysis at Boeing



Let's check in!

- Name
- Pronouns
- Role(s) if you like
- How do you like to be supported?



Warm up question

When you hear "WA State Parks Commission" what are the first words or phrase that come to mind?

Type in the chat



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Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA)

RCW 42.30.030

Meetings declared open and public.

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Our commissioners



(From left to right)

Holly Williams, Scott Merriman, Sophia Danenberg, Parks Director Diana Dupuis, Ken Bounds, Laurie Connelly, Michael Latimer and Ali Raad.



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What does that mean?

Some examples:

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Challenges

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How it's changed over the years

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As a PEAR team, we will:

- “Experience” a commission meeting
- Discuss public comment process
- Reflect on some big questions



Let's watch a clip:

The screenshot shows a live broadcast from WTVW. The top navigation bar includes 'LIVE', 'Schedule', 'Shows', 'Documentaries', 'Podcasts', 'News', and 'Events'. The main video player displays a meeting in progress. The video title is 'Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission' with a subtitle 'July 18, 2024 9:00 am - Sheraton Ballington Hotel & Conference Center'. The video progress bar shows 6:02 / 4:24:44. The date and time '18/07/24 09:00:31 AM' are visible in the bottom right of the video player. Below the video player, the text 'Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission' is displayed, along with 'Download' and 'Audio' buttons.



Reflect on the opening of the commission meeting:

- What stands out to you?
- How does the room set up feel as you enter? As a staff? As a member of the public?
- What do you notice about the people in the room? Or not in the room?
- What questions do you have?



Discuss in Breakout Rooms!



Public Comment Process

- In-person, limited to 2 minutes
- Virtual, limited to 2 minutes
- Written (email, letter)
- Call and leave a comment

Let's watch a clip...



Let's watch a clip:

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

**Special Commission Meeting
Video Recording**



**July 15th, 2024
Stanwood, WA**



Reflect on the public comment process:

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- How can we invite multiple perspectives that considers power imbalances in our communities?
- How can we support commissioners to receive these comments and make decisions rooted in Pro-Equity Anti-Racism?



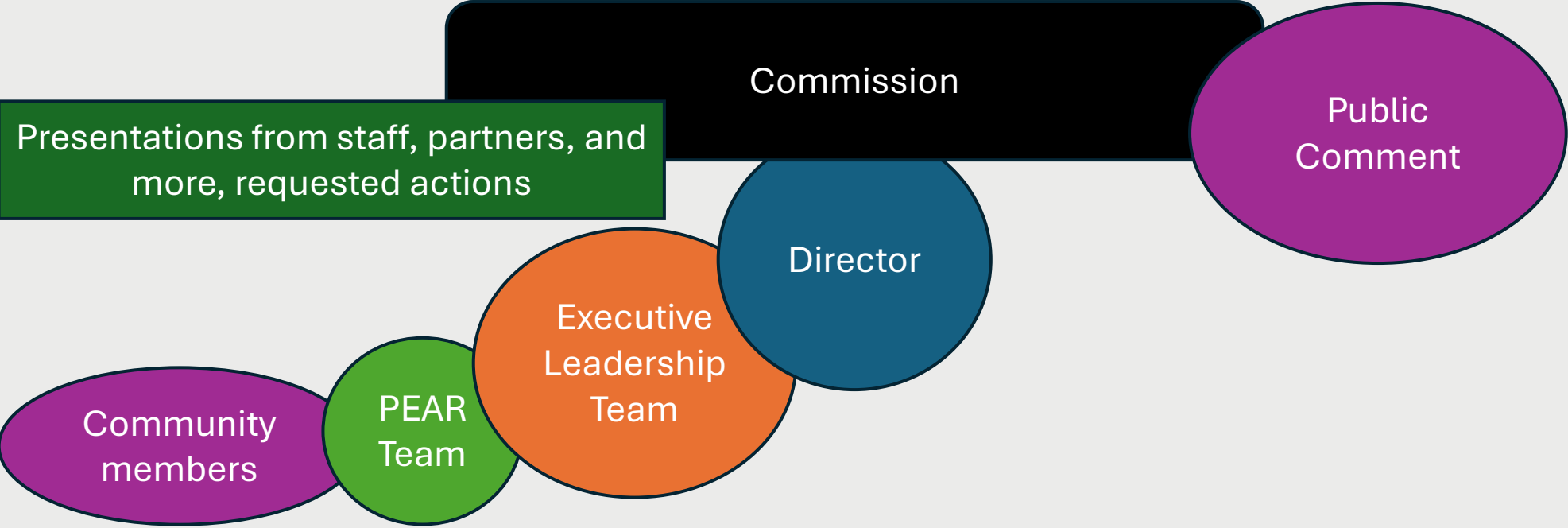
Discuss in Breakout Rooms!



Relationship

RCW (the laws)

WAC (the deets, regulations)



Reflect on PEAR Team Relationships

How can we develop intentional relationships with the commission, staff, or others to further advance our PEAR work?



Discuss in Breakout Rooms!



Updates for the good of the group



2024 PEAR Workplan / EIR (Equity Impact Review)

Date	EIR Topic	EIR Priority Category
Jan 17	Volunteer program	Visitor Experience / Community Engagement
Feb 7	HR Staff recruitment	Workforce Development
March 27	Interpretation	Visitor Experience / Community Engagement
April 24	Interpretation continued & DEI Roadshow Data	Workforce Development
May 15	Parks Planning public input process	Community Engagement
June 5	Partnerships program	Community Engagement
July	NO MEETING	
Aug 14	Emerging Leaders Program	Workforce Development – Career Pathways
Sept 18	The commission & conversation with Commissioner Danenberg	Community Engagement
Oct 16	Reservations program	Visitor Experience
Nov 20	Using Technology to Increase Access	Visitor Experience
Dec 18	Discount pass programs	Visitor Experience

Ongoing: DEI Learning, PEAR team feedback, reflection on PEAR team "roles in social change ecosystem"

Future Possibilities: PEAR team community building, participating in Parks events



