

# Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife

## Minutes

**Thursday ~ September 13, 2018 ~ 6:00 p.m.**  
**Nevada Department of Wildlife**  
**Conference Room B**  
**1100 Valley Road, Reno, Nevada**

## MEMBERS

Steven Robinson, Chair  
Arnold Pitts, Vice-chair  
Sean Shea, Secretary  
Meghan Di Rocco  
Michelle Spencer

### **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** [Non-action item]

Chair Robinson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **2. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** [Non-action item]

Chair Robinson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. A quorum was established.

**PRESENT:** Meghan Di Rocco, Steve Robinson and Sean Shea.

**ABSENT:** Arnie Pitts and Michelle Spencer

Jen Gustafson – Deputy District Attorney was also present.

### **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS** [Non-action item]

There were no public comments.

### **4. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 2, 2018, MINUTES** (For possible action)

Hearing no public comments Chair Robinson asked for Board discussion or a motion.

***It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member Shea, to approve the August 2, 2018, minutes as submitted. The motion carried: Members Pitts and Spencer absent.***

### **5. BOARD MEMBER MEETING ASSIGNMENT** [For possible action] – *A discussion and selection of member(s) to attend the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners meetings on: 1) September 21 and 22, 2018, in Las Vegas, Nevada; and 2) November 2 and 3, 2018, in Reno/Carson City, Nevada.*

Chair Robinson will attend the September 21 and 22, 2018, meeting via teleconference.

Member Di Rocco will attend the November 2 and 3, 2018, meetings in Reno/Carson.

Member Shea noted that the TAAHC will meet on Friday September 21, 2018.

### **6. COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND LIAISON UPDATES** [Non-action items]

*6-1) Correspondence (including sportsmen's concerns) and Announcements* – Member Shea outlined complaints he has received about non-receipt of acknowledgement of tooth collection data for lions and bears. Member Shea encouraged NDOW to resume the practice of distribution cards to the public and post the information on the NDOW website.

# *Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife – Minutes*

September 13, 2018

Page 2 of 6

No correspondence was received.

6-2) *Overview of the August 10 and 11, 2018, meetings of the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners* – No report.

## **7. WILDHORSE MANAGEMENT STATUS REPORT FOR NORTHERN NEVADA** [Non-action item] – *An informational update on Wildhorse Management in Northern Nevada.*

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item and introduced Ruth Thompson of the BLM (Bureau of Land Management).

Ruth Thompson – Bureau of Land Management, provided an overview of the Wild Horse and Burro program for Northern Nevada pointing out that in Nevada there are 83 Herd Management Areas (HMA) with ±45,000 animals. Ms. Thompson noted that the goal is to manage the herds for to improve rangeland and animal health. Wild horses do not have a lot of natural predators and the growth rate is ±20-percent. Ms. Thompson pointed out that the long term holding of animals uses approximately 58-percent of the BLM's annual budget. In Nevada the priority is focused on public safety and nuisance animals as well as prioritization of wildlife habitat and court orders. Ms. Thompson pointed out that the Northern Nevada Correction Center facility serves as one of the holding and training centers for animals to be used in horse mounted patrols as well as fertility control. Ms. Thompson then outlined the fertilization program using PZT that has ±90-percent success rate. However, the program requires annual gathers of about 90-percent of the population to be effective. Ms. Thompson then pointed out that wild horse are extremely dominant resulting in deteriorated range lands and water resources along with keeping other wildlife away from the limited resources. Ms. Thompson noted that on a national scale the BLM is partnering with other agencies to train and move animals through the adoption program as other options are being reviewed.

Allen Sheperd – BLM, noted that nationally the BLM has about 47,000 horses on both private and other property. It is hoped that 5,000 horses will be moved this fiscal year. Approximately \$58-million of the annual \$77-million budget is committed to protecting public and private lands. Mr. Sheperd then outlined the restrictions on the sale of wild horses that cannot be euthanized at public expense. In Nevada the shortage of water resources as well as public safety on highways is the primary focus for the BLM. Drawing attention to the number of wildfires and devastation of habitat in Humboldt County and other areas, Mr. Sheperd noted that there will likely be starvation due to the loss of winter habitat for horses that cannot be moved.

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item to public questions which resulted in the following dialogue. Under the 1971 Wild Horse and Burro Act the BLM can use a variety of methods to control population including euthanasia under certain circumstances. It was pointed out that the animals cannot be sold or sent outside the U.S. As the dialogue continued it was explained that the BLM is using fencing to keep wild horses and borrow away from certain water resources. It was suggested that the public contact elected officials at the federal level to seek modifications to the existing legislation to develop a program that will allow sale of wild horses/burros to other countries.

Mr. Sheperd noted that while the BLM has transfer authority that was granted in 2017 and renewed in 2018 there has not been any momentum at the federal level to take the next step. The concern is

## *Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife – Minutes*

September 13, 2018

Page 3 of 6

that some countries still eat horsemeat and that there is a need to overcome that stigma. Mr. Sheperd emphasized that the legislation is very precise and direct on the tools that are available.

Ms. Thompson noted that there have been a number of restoration successes where populations have been reduced after the loss of habitat. Ms. Thompson explained that the wild horses will move on to other area when habitat is destroyed and that gathering of animals for sterilization. Ms. Thompson pointed out that once fences are removed the animals return to the area.

Alan Sheperd noted that the Martin Fire has been identified as an area for rehabilitation and that nearly 1,000 animals will have to be removed before rehabilitation can begin. The intent is to keep horse and burros out of the area until the revegetation has an opportunity to grow it is not likely that additional funding for fencing will be provided so the intent is to remove more horses. The contraceptive vaccine works best when retreated with a 90-percent success rate. The retreatment over successive years is more effective. Mr. Sheperd noted that access to the same herd is crucial in reducing the number of foals overall. In Washoe County there are some 6,000 animals and while the goal is a 50/50 success ratio it is more 40, 40, 20 and 40 for adults. Responding to concerns about Nevada becoming a moonscape due to loss of water resources and other rangeland devastation, Mr. Sheperd explained that as public servants BLM staff is not allowed to lobby Congress. Mr. Sheperd encouraged those present to voice their concerns to their Congressional delegation allow the BLM to use tools that will enable the BLM to adequately address the issue and provide additional funding. Mr. Sheperd commented that sterilization is an option that is being explored and drew attention to a study being conducted in the State of Utah. Mr. Sheperd reiterated that the vaccines need to be administered multiple times over a number of years to be sustainable. Mr. Sheperd then noted that the use of Jack Donkeys had also been effective in reducing the number of wild horses. However, they cannot be translocated, which would be a violation of the rules. Mr. Sheperd noted that the Jack Donkeys are very aggressive in the control of their harems.

Ms. Thompson noted that she did not have the actual AML number at hand requested by Mr. Belding for the Little Wahee.

Mr. Sheperd believes that the proposal of 20-percent is at the low end of the spectrum.

Member Di Rocco left the meeting at 7:01 p.m. resulting in a loss of quorum.

Mr. Sheperd commented that the population figure is close to the target over a 5-year timeline and that the BLM is required to follow specific guidelines. Mr. Sheperd noted that there is little information in scientific books when looking at water management trends of population by species.

Member Di Rocco returned to the meeting at 7:03 p.m. restoring quorum.

Mr. Sheperd commented that time is needed for revegetation before allowing animals back. Responding to Mr. Belding's comment about education, Mr. Sheperd explained that it comes down to human nature for the most part and that it is necessary to sometimes keep Mother Nature at bay, which is occurring in many areas. Mr. Sheperd recalled his 4-month stint as the Acting Division Chief in Washington D.C. during which he met with staff and elected officials. Mr. Sheperd noted that it is difficult to convey the information in terms that are easily understood by those not involved in the day-to-day operation of the BLM.

# *Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife – Minutes*

September 13, 2018

Page 4 of 6

Chair Robinson expressed his appreciation for the presentation.

The meeting recessed at 7:19 p.m. and reconvened at 7:21 p.m.

8. **COMMISSION GENERAL REGULATION 478, BIGHORN SHEEP EWE AND MOUNTAIN GOAT ONLINE COURSE, LCB File No. R151-18** [For possible action] – *A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify recommended amendments to Chapter 502 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). This regulation would require all bighorn ewe and mountain goat tag holders to complete an online course. This regulation would eliminate the need for a physical inspection for hunters that harvest a ewe. It would also require the tag holder for ram bighorn sheep, mountain goat, and mountain lion or bear to provide questionnaire information during the already required post-harvest physical inspection and eliminate the subsequent need for successful tag holders to also submit a questionnaire.*

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item and asked for department input.

Jack Robb – NDOW, explained that the intent is to develop video footage and documentation that allows NDOW to reach out to those having tags to better enable their ability to differentiate the species and sex of the animals as well as to simplify the process.

Member Shea expressed his support for the education component and suggested similar classes for horns shorter than ears for antelope as bucks are being shot.

Mr. Robb commented that staff will continue to evaluate other ways to educate hunters, which will take time to develop and roll out. Mr. Robb believes that this is a good suggestion.

Chair Robinson recommended the Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance as a resource due to the detailed photos of female Mountain Goats.

Responding to Member Di Rocco's inquiry about whether members of the public and non-hunters such as herself could avail themselves of the classes, Mr. Robb stated that the public is encouraged to attend and participate in all NDOW education offerings.

Chair opened public comment.

Rex Flowers suggested a minor modification to language in the LCB under item 3 by changing the phrase "may" provide information to read "shall" provide information.

Mel Belding commented that he supports the return to mandatory education especially with the Ewe hunt.

Chair Robinson closed public comments.

Member Shea expressed his support for the mandatory educational component.

## *Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife – Minutes*

September 13, 2018

Page 5 of 6

***It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member Shea, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Commission General Regulation 478, Bighorn Sheep Ewe and Mountain Goat Online Course, LCB File No. R151-18, with the following modification to page 4 under 502.405, Item 3 4<sup>th</sup> line change the word “may” to “shall”. The motion carried: Members Pitts and Spencer absent.***

- 9. COMMISSION REGULATION 18-01, AMENDMENT 2, FISHING SEASONS, BAG AND POSSESSION LIMITS, AND REGULATIONS FOR MARCH 1, 2018, THROUGH FEBRUARY 29, 2020** [For possible action] – *A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify recommended amendments to Commission Regulation 18 - 01 to modify the harvest limits for Lahontan Reservoir to allow the harvest of white bass or white bass hybrids under 15 inches to be included in the 15 game fish limit, in Churchill and Lyon Counties; to modify the general harvest limit for Pershing County to remove the reference to white bass and white bass hybrids; and to adopt a limit of three game fish for the James Kinney Pond in Humboldt County.*

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item and asked for department input.

Travis Hawks – NDOW, outlined the modifications to clarify and remove confusion on the harvest limits for Black and White Bass species that occur in Rye Patch and Lahontan Reservoirs.

There were no public comments

***It was moved by Member Shea, seconded by Chair Robinson, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Commission Regulation 18-01, Amendment 2, Fishing Seasons, Bag and Possession Limits, and Regulations for March 1, 2018, Through February 29, 2020, as written. The motion carried: Members Pitts and Spencer absent.***

- 10. FISCAL YEAR 2019 BIG GAME RELEASE PLAN** [For possible action] – *A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify plans for big game capture and translocation for Fiscal Year 2019. The Department will also share plans regarding the translocation of up to 50 pronghorn to fulfill the original request from the Yakama Tribe in Washington for 100 pronghorn originally approved by the Commission for Fiscal Year 2018. In Fiscal Year 2018, only 50 of the original 100 were provided to the Yakama Tribe in Washington.*

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item asked for Department input.

Jack Robb – NDOW, noted that this is an update to a previous Commission approval of up to 100 pronghorn sheep to the Yakama Tribe in Washington. Mr. Robb noted that the response from surround property owner had been positive and that the Yakama Tribe has been proactive in providing information and data. The topography of the area closely resembles that of the State of Nevada.

Chris Cefalu - Nevada Big Horns, recommended that the transplant of sheep be approved.

# *Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife – Minutes*

September 13, 2018

Page 6 of 6

Member Shea believes that that matter will come back at the next meeting.

***It was moved by Member Shea, seconded by Chair Robinson, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve FISCAL YEAR 2019 BIG GAME RELEASE PLAN to the Yakama Tribe, as written. The motion carried: Members Pitts and Spencer absent.***

- 11. WASHOE COUNTY ADVISORY BOARD TO MANAGE WILDLIFE MEMBERS AND/OR STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS, REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND SELECTION OF TOPICS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS** [Non-action item] – *Selection of additional agenda item(s) for the next meeting to be held October 25, 2018.*

Chair Robinson recommended that the October 25, 2018, agenda include a presentation on Predator Control.

- 12. PUBLIC COMMENTS** [Non-action item]

Rex Flowers drew attention to the Landowner Tag item on the Commission agenda and recalled that this Board had previously recommended a slowing of the process. Mr. Flowers hopes that at the next meeting a statement on behalf of Washoe County can be made to slow the process.

Mel Belding expressed his appreciation to the Board for being proactive in bringing presentations such as the Wild Horse program to meetings.

- 13. ADJOURNMENT** [Non-action item]

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

**AS APPROVED BY THE WASHOE COUNTY ADVISORY BOARD TO MANAGE WILDLIFE IN SESSION ON OCTOBER 25, 2018.**