

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife

Minutes

Wednesday ~ March 11, 2020 ~ 6:00 p.m.
Nevada Department of Wildlife
Conference Room B
1100 Valley Road, Reno, Nevada

MEMBERS

Steven Robinson, Chair
Arnold Pitts, Vice-chair
Anthony DoMoe
Ray Kabisch
Jim Rhea

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE [Non-action item]

Chair Robinson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

PRESENT: Ray Kabisch, Arnie Pitts, Jim Rhea, Anthony DoMoe and Steve Robinson,

ABSENT: None.

Wade Carner – District Attorney, was also present.

Chair Robinson called meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was established. Chair Robinson stated that item #9 on the agenda would not be discussed due to lack of adequate support material.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS [Non-action item]

Rex Flowers thanked the CAB in pursuit of a single season in 011-013 and 033. Noted success rate increase in 012 & 013 and the success of the month-long hunt.

Gerald Lent, representing the Nevada Hunters Association and Hunters Alert submitted a statement (A) requesting representation from the advisory board at the March 20/21 Commission meeting. He further presented details on predation by mountain lions on mule deer in Washoe County (specifically in unit 014). Specifically requested adding unit 014 to the predator plan.

4. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 15, 2020 MINUTES [For possible action]

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

It was moved by Member Pitts, seconded by Chair Robinson, to approve the January 15, 2020 minutes as written. The motion carried.

5. BOARD MEMBER MEETING ASSIGNMENT [Non-action item] – Discussion and determination of member(s) to attend the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners meetings on: 1) March 20 and 21, 2020, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Member DoMoe will attend the March 20th meeting.

Member Kabisch will attend the March 21st meeting.

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

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6-1) Correspondence (including sportsmen's concerns) and Announcements – Chair Robinson noted that John Zenz had contacted him about making public comments and that he had some discussions with sportsmen and friends and there was concern about having a meeting with the Corona Virus concerns active but that he stated we were moving forward with the meeting.

6-2) Overview of the January 29 and 30, 2020 meetings of the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners – Chair Robinson noted that we brought the predation management plan back to the CAB for input on possible changes and encouraged active input on the topic. He strongly recommended sending letters to the commissioners to clarify hunter support.

7. Request for up to 30 Pygmy Rabbits by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife [For possible action] – A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify a recommendation from The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife request for up to 30 pygmy rabbits from Nevada during late winter-early spring 2020 to augment their restoration efforts. Pygmy rabbits from Nevada are similar genetically to the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits, and these rabbits would be used to augment their semi-wild breeding population. The Commission may vote to endorse this request.

John Zenz petitioned to change the big game tag drawing to 1) give 25% of overall tags to max point holders, 2) reduce the number of choices to only 3 choices, and 3) allow only 50% of the tags in any unit to be issued to max point holders. Mr. Zenz provided an exhibit (B) to illustrate his petition. His stated goal was to encourage enabling younger hunters to draw tags earlier. His presentation focused on Antelope, Elk, Desert Bighorn, California Bighorn, Rocky Mountain Bighorn, and Goat tags. He presented that too many tags go to max point holders and that it doesn't leave enough for young hunters.

Member Pitts asked what the reasoning was behind only 3 choices.

Mr. Zenz replied that it was a strategic choice to remove applications from the system.

Member Kabisch asked how the statistical odds would be affected by the reduction to 3 choices.

Mr. Zenz replied that he felt it would improve the odds of hunters getting their choices.

Member Rhea asked if it was necessary to make the change for all species or just one, and if it affected all hunt types (archery, rifle, youth, etc).

Mr. Zenz replied that he envisioned the change affecting all hunt categories equally.

Member Kabisch asked about the order of draw names and who comes first; is it somebody with zero points?

Mr. Zenz replied that it they square up every body's numbers and take their very best number, starting with the lowest number.

Member Pitts: Do you think that there are a lot of people with max points that put in for only one area?

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Mr. Zenz: There's not that many; I looked at that and the 25% rule would allow these hunters to apply to those areas.

Member Rhea stated he was concerned that some of the loss of hunters with max points is that they die or that if we are taking a little opportunity away from 1st time applicants it discourages applications from new hunters.

Mr. Zenz stated that he didn't think the change would negatively affect new hunters.

Chair Robinson stated that the proposal states Desert Bighorn drawing that the 26, 25, 24, and part of the 23-point holders would have gotten tags

Mr. Zenz stated that those numbers were from the 2018 drawing and that he was using pure numbers.

Chair Robinson asked if this is just for the highest point holders or just for the top few.

Mr. Zenz replied that it depends on the ratio of tags to applicants at each point level until 25% is reached.

Chair Robinson asked how Mr. Zenz envisions the 25% of people being pulled out of the draw; if they failed on this draw would they be eligible for the regular drawing.

Mr. Zenz replied that there would be just one draw; there is no bonus point pool. Mr. Zenz stated that he spoke with Jack Robb about the proposal and that Mr. Robb was against it on the grounds that it would take tags away from kids.

Chair Robinson stated that there are questions that need to be addressed before presenting the petition to the commission.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Judy Caron thanked Mr. Zenz for the petition. She questioned as to how the petition will be presented, and with a recommendation that the petition be sent to the Tag Allocation Application Hunt Committee so we have multiple inputs.

Mr. Zenz replied that he was unaware of the presence of the Tag Allocation Application Hunt Committee and that there isn't enough public input into the committee.

Judy Caron requested clarification of the start date for action on the petition.

Chair Robinson noted that the petition was not dated.

Mel Belding requested clarification from member Rhea on potential loss of applications. Mr. Belding discussed concern as to clarification as to whether it was just max points or a different number. He would have requested 50% based on historical activity since 1992 and the fact that someone entering

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hunting today has better chances of getting tags than he did when he started, and that the financial impacts today are much lower than previously (due to use of credit cards now and not previously). Mr. Belding recommended requiring use of all 3 unit choices rather than allowing use of just one unit.

Rex Flowers requested that we recommend to the commission that it be denied based on the grounds that if they accept the petition that they have to initiate regulation making procedures immediately. He recommended that it be denied and sent to the tag committee. Mr. Flowers stated that there were too many questions still in place with the petition. He stated concern of growth in tag applications over recent years combined with removal of 25% of the available tags and a reduced number of tags.

Jonathan Lesperance stated that he agrees with Rex Flowers that it looks like a reduced opportunity for people at less than max tags.

John Zenz stated that he believes that the petition will result in increased applications.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

Member Rhea stated that he was neither for nor against the petition but needed more information

Member Pitts stated that he likes the idea of sending the petition to the Tag committee

Member Kabisch stated that he agrees with sending the petition to the Tag committee.

Chair Robinson stated that he agrees that there are questions that need clarified at the Tag committee.

It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by member Pitts, to recommend that the petition be denied and referred to the Tag committee for discussion and process. The motion carried.

- 8. WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT AND FISCAL YEAR 2021 DRAFT II PREDATION MANAGEMENT PLAN [For Possible Action] – A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify the proposed Fiscal Year 2020 Predator Management Plan.**

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item.

Chair Robinson specified item project number 46 that the commission wanted more opinions on how it could be expended, and that the commission wanted to do a 5-year study but there was no commitment to act.

Member Pitts agreed with Gerald Lent that a 5-year wait would be detrimental to game population; that action needed to be a priority.

Member Kabisch agreed to act on horse and lion numbers was necessary.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

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Mel Belding stated that he was thankful for the 014 predator project previously conducted. He stated that it isn't just lions, it also includes coyotes and bobcats, and that the conversation should be more generalized and that it should be focused solely on "predators". Mr. Belding stated that the 014 project had been considered a failure because the focus was on percentages instead of overall numbers; the herd size was actually increasing and the project was actually a success.

Judy Caron stated that the 014 project should be reexamined due to its overall success in raising herd numbers. Ms. Caron also stated that the focus should be on overall predation (not just lions). She also advocated for policy 67 and recommended a review of the policy by those present.

Member Rhea asked if Ms. Caron would recommend expanding beyond 014.

Judy Caron stated that expansion was recommended.

Gerald Lent stated that a previous study (*The Mule Deer Hunting and Management Experience, Attitudes, and Preferences, Nevada Mule Deer Tag Applicants* (no longer available)) identified that 76.2% of hunters stated that harvesting a large antlered mule deer was important to them. Mr. Lent also stated that hunters stated that changes would not change their loyalty to the sport in response to changes in policy. He then stated that 62.7% of hunters were satisfied with the number of large antlered mule deer seen. The survey also showed that predators were seen as a problem with mule deer populations. 27.9 of respondents were from Washoe county.

Rex Flowers stated that he sat on the CAB that eliminated the 014 project; it was eliminated because it was set up to increase the fawns per 100 does. He stated that it did increase populations and was a very successful project. Mr. Flowers stated Wildlife Management Damage Committee was meeting soon and that someone should ask for an immediate response for predator control in 014. He pointed out the lack of success in 014 last year, and the lack of proper management of wildlife. Mr. Flowers recommended creation of a triggering number to initiate a predation plan.

Joe Blakeslee spoke that he was on the predator management committee previously. He would rather have the money returned if it isn't used to manage predators. Mr. Blakeslee stated that lions are out of control and are negatively affecting the deer populations. He feels that studies are a waste of money.

Jonathan Lesperance stated that we've lost 60% of the deer herd since the 1980's peak, and that Washoe has lost 44% since 2011. Mr. Lesperance doesn't feel that spending money on a study to determine why is a waste; the money is better spent on a recovery program.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

Member Pitts questioned what to do with the current plan

Chair Robinson encouraged a proposal for additions, subtractions, or modifications.

Member Kabisch requested clarification on the ability to request information from previous CAB members; he specified Judy Caron.

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Judy Caron spoke that the key was to encourage protection of fawning grounds. Ms. Caron identified fawning seasons and spring. She referred to the population status and trend and noted that the herd populations are not expected to grow.

Member Kabisch stated that it would be preferred to use past experience to bypass the study and instead move forward with emergency action to protect fawning grounds and remove predators.

Chair Robinson stated that the emergency plan is in place and removing lions now; that as part of the project they don't need study completion prior to beginning action to curb predators.

Member Kabisch stated that he still wants to request emergency action based on the early results from the biologist's report.

Mel Belding recommended referring to projects 37 and 38 to expedite emergency action.

Chair Robinson thanked the community for their input and stated concern about some of the numbers achieved. He recommended that if a study is done it should happen in the Granites; he recommended repeating the predation project and encouraged communication with the Wildlife Damage Management Committee.

Mel Belding recommended reading the big game plan to understand maintenance levels of recruitment as a basis to create a number to trigger automatic start to a predator program. He recommended 35 fawns to 100 does as an example.

Rex Flowers stated that we could amend plan with 37-014 and 38-014 for immediate predator removal in unit 014; give it an identification number. An amendment to a plan in place, rather than a new plan. He recommended specifying the fawning grounds.

Chair Robinson stated that he liked the amendment recommendation.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member Pitts, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners to adopt the Wildlife Damage Management Committee Report and Fiscal Year 2021 Draft II Predation Management Plan as written with the following additions: We recommend that project 37 project A for the immediate removal of predators in Area 1 and Area 2 and amend project 38 to have an additional project 38A to implement immediate predator removal in Area 1 and Area 2. The motion carried.

Chair Robinson placed the meeting on break for 10 minutes.

- 9. MANDATORY INDOCTRINATION/SEMINAR FOR BIGHORN RAM TAG HOLDERS [For Possible Action]** – A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify the proposed mandatory indoctrination/seminar for bighorn ram tag holders.

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Chair Robinson stated that we were skipping item 9 and moving on to item 10.

- 10. COMMISSION GENERAL REGULATION 485, TAG TRANSFER, DEFERENCE AND RETURN PROGRAM, LCB File No. R022-19 [For Possible Action]** – A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify the proposed regulation listed above to amend Chapter 502 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC).

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item.

Member Rhea asked for clarification on whether transfer was a true transfer or a sale, and when the diagnosis had to take place on the timeline. He also sought clarification on the affect on next year's quote.

Member Pitts clarified that it is a deferral and you can end up with two tags the following year; that this allows people to take advantage of the system.

Member Kabisch agrees that the transfer side of this regulation can be abused more than it is used for good.

Member Robinson provided an example of how the regulation could be abused and stated that he doesn't like the way the regulation is written; that this isn't a big enough problem to create a regulation.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

It was moved by Member Pitts, seconded by Member Kabisch, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners deny the proposal for Commission General Regulation 485, Tag Transfer, Deference and Return Program, LCB File No. R022-19. The motion carried.

- 11. COMMISSION GENERAL REGULATION 490, PARTY BONUS POINTS AND FIRST COME FIRST SERVE, LCB File No. 103-19 [For Possible Action]** – A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify the proposed regulation listed above relating to amending Chapter 502 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). This regulation would allow children under 12 to purchase a bonus point if they turn 12 before the first day of the last season for that species. The regulation also addresses bonus points for sportsmen who apply as a party. Lastly, the regulation would allow a first-come-first-serve opportunity for returned tags that miss the 14-day deadline to be awarded to the alternate list.

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item.

Member Pitts stated his concern that this seemed like a hassle for NDOW.

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Member Kabisch questioned the 14-day deadline to be awarded to the alternate list; is it 1st-come, 1st-served?

Member Pitts clarified the 14-day deadline allocation

Chair Robinson stated that he likes alternate tags but is concerned about the work for the NDOW staff.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Judy Caron questioned the 14-day deadline as to whether she would have to pay another \$10 fee and that she disagrees with that.

Rex Flowers clarified that the \$10 fee was requested by the department because of when major fires occur.

Member Kabisch questioned where the tag money is held.

Rex Flowers recommended that Member Kabisch look up that information.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

It was moved by Member Pitts, seconded by Chair Robinson to approve Commission General Regulation 490, Party Bonus Points and First Come First Serve, LCB File No. 103-19 The motion carried.

12. COMMISSION REGULATION 20-10, MIGRATORY GAME BIRD SEASONS, BAG LIMITS, AND SPECIAL REGULATIONS FOR WATERFOWL AND WEBLESS MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS; PUBLIC HUNTING LIMITED ON WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS AND DESIGNATED STATE LANDS – 2020–2021 SEASON [For Possible Action] – A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify the proposed modifications in the regulation listed above.

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Jonathan Lesperance stated that he would like to see a return to Weekends, Wednesdays, and holidays hunting.

Chair Robinson asked Mr. Lesperance what days are currently open

Jonathan Lesperance stated it is currently 7 days.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

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Chair Robinson stated that his family enjoys Wednesdays.

Member Kabisch asked how the federal regulation with waterfowl and flyways dictates the days that can be hunt and limits.

Chair Robinson stated that the commission has very definite guidelines that are dictated federally.

It was moved by Member Kabisch, seconded by Member Pitts, to approve as written Commission Regulation 20-10, Migratory Game Bird Seasons, Bag Limits, And Special Regulations For Waterfowl and Webless Migratory Game Birds; Public Hunting Limited On Wildlife Management Areas And Designated State Lands – 2020–2021 Season. The Motion Carried.

- 13. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE CHANGES TO WATERFOWL HUNT ZONES for 2021-2025 [For Possible Action]** – A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify the proposed recommendations and possible changes to waterfowl hunting zones. The Pacific Flyway entertains changes to waterfowl hunting zones every five years, and potential changes must be noticed by May 1, 2020 to receive consideration. Any changes accepted by the Pacific Flyway will not take effect until the 2021 waterfowl seasons and would remain in effect until 2025.

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member Pitts, to approve and adopt as written REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE CHANGES TO WATERFOWL HUNT ZONES for 2021-2025. The motion carried.

- 14. 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 April 22, 2020.

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item.

Chair Robinson clarified that the agenda meeting will be held at this same location.

Member Pitts requests a television feed from Utah, Colorado, or Idaho Predator Management so we can listen to what they are doing in their state(s).

Chair Robinson stated that if a teleconference wasn't available that maybe someone else from predator management would be available; he will check on it.

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Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

- 15. PUBLIC COMMENTS** [Non-action item] – Comments heard under this item will be limited to three (3) minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife (Board) agenda. The Board will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to three (3) minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the Board as a whole. Please sign the sign-in sheet.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Gerald Lent recommended that we request Utah's deer management plan for review due to the success of their plan. Mr. Lent also mentioned the money raised by heritage tags in other states and how it can benefit Nevada.

Joe Blakeslee mentioned Utah has a \$50 bounty on coyote, as well as a \$1,000/wolf bounty in northern Idaho and \$500/wolf bounty in southern Idaho.

Jonathan Lesperance stated that project 45 is questionable as we already have a 20+ year bear study underway and we have a good handle on the bear population; the reason for fluctuations in our population is because of our shared border with California. The money is better spent on the Mule Deer Recovery plan.

Rex Flowers stated that item 9 on the agenda is just another way to manage individuals. He recommends we get back to basics and manage wildlife rather than individuals. Get back to managing wildlife.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

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

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

**AS APPROVED BY THE WASHOE COUNTY ADVISORY BOARD TO MANAGE WILDLIFE ON
APRIL 29, 2020.**