

# Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife

## Minutes

**Wednesday ~ April 29, 2020 ~ 6:00 p.m.**  
**Teleconference Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84083710215?pwd=MkYzM2JDTnNnWml5QzdOLzcrUG5hUT09>

**Reno, Nevada**

### MEMBERS

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

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

Member Pitts led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Chair Robinson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was established.

Chair Robinson outlined the process for the public to address the Board using the Zoom program.

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

**ABSENT:** None.

Wade Carner – Deputy District Attorney, was also present.

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

Chair Robinson commented that in those wishing to address the Board should introduce themselves and that caution should be used to avoid distraction.

There were no public comments.

#### **4. APPROVAL OF MARCH 11, 2020, MINUTES** [For possible action]

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item and hearing no comments from Board members asked for a motion.

***It was moved by Member Pitts, seconded by Member Kabisch, to approve the March 11, 2020, minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.***

#### **5. BOARD MEMBER MEETING ASSIGNMENT** [Non-action item] – Discussion and determination of member(s) to attend the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners meeting on: 1) on **Friday, May 1, 2020 – 10:00 am; The meeting will be broadcast live at the following website:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrFHgHLMOMZa2Hx7og8pFcQ>; **Meeting materials are available at:** [https://www.ndow.org/Public\\_Meetings/Com/Agenda](https://www.ndow.org/Public_Meetings/Com/Agenda)

Chair Robinson pointed out that the meeting would be held via conference call and that information should be submitted to Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners.

Member Rhea commented that he would also try to participate.

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

#### **6-1)** Correspondence (including sportsmen's concerns) and Announcements

The March 27, 2020 did not occur and that correspondence had been shared in support of the bear hunt.

#### **6-2)** Overview of the March 27 and 28, 2020, meetings of the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners.

No report.

### **7. Commission Regulation 20-11, Big Game Quotas for the 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 proposed regulations for the numbers of tags to be issued for mule deer, pronghorn antelope, elk, bighorn sheep and mountain goats for the 2020 - 2021 seasons.

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item and stated there were no hunt numbers on any species other than deer so going with the quota form as the base group

**Antelope Horns Longer than Ears** – Chris Hampson – NDOW, noted that the surveys in Washoe County were cut short in September due to storms. Additionally, cold weather during September also pushed herds off their range. A lower fawn ratio in Unit 015 resulted in fewer tags recommended in some units. Mr. Hampson also noted that the hunter success rate in the Sheldon ranged from 66 to 70 percent in most Units with some as high as 88-percent.

Members Kabisch and Pitts expressed their support of the recommendation.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Rex Flowers noted the Muzzle Loader Hunt in Unit 015 success last season at 29 compared to 35 percent as an average over the past three years. Unit 033 population also stagnated. Mr. Flowers suggested an increase to 10 archery tags based on the average 29-percent success rate. Mr. Flowers pointed out that the impact of bucks to does can be reviewed again next year.

Chair Robinson commented that there may be a typo in unit 015 with a tag allocation that he believes should read 5.

Mel Belding questioned how do we dispose of the yearly buck when saying 29 to 30 bucks per 100 does. Mr. Belding questions what method is used to reduce the number of bucks.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

Mr. Hampson explained that one year old bucks are subtracted from the total number of bucks in the model.

It was suggested that the 15 tags might be a typo that added a 1 in front of the 5.

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Mike Scott – NDOW pointed out that the Hunt book also shows 15 and that the same recommendation was made last year.

Mr. Hampson commented that since Antelope tend have a lower success rate that he would have no issue to a recommendation to increase the number of tags.

***It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member Pitts, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve the recommend with a modification to Unit 015 increase the number of tags from 5 to 15; and Archery in 033 from 7 to 10 tags. The motion carried unanimously.***

### **Antelope – Horns shorter than ears – All weapons classes**

***It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member DoMoe, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Antelope Horns Shorter than Ears as written The motion carried unanimously.***

### **Nelson (Desert) Big Horn Sheep – Any Ram – Any Legal Weapon**

Chris Hampson – NDOW, provided an overview of the recommendation noting the density of the herds and limited water resources. Mr. Hampson noted that water levels are monitored closely. Mr. Hampson commented that there had been a number of reports of coughing and sick sheep which resulted in the quota being lowered in Unit 205. NDOW will continue to monitor the situation.

Mike Scott – NDOW, commented that some sheep were lost resulting in a more conservative recommendation.

Hearing no public comment Chair Robinson asked for a motion.

***It was moved by Member Pitts, seconded by Member DoMoe, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve the recommendation as written. The motion carried unanimously.***

### **Nelson (Desert) Big Horn Sheep – Any Ewe – Any Legal Weapon Hunt**

Chris Hampson did see a slight increase in the recommendation in the ewe harvest as the Department is still trying to lower densities due to water issues and disease. The recommendation is to continue a reduction in Unit 213 as well.

Responding to Chair Robinson question about whether excess animals can be transplanted to other areas of Nevada or Utah, Mr. Hampson noted that water issues continue and that sheep had been moved prior to the onset of disease. Additionally, the transfer of the species is somewhat difficult.

Mike Scott – NDOW, pointed out that currently Utah cannot take sheep this year. Other concerns include the need for a thicker coat to better withstand colder temperature in a new environment.

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Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Mel Belding commented that he would like to know if there has been a study on moving sheep to a colder climate and what criteria is used for transplants from southern locations. Mr. Belding recommended one tag and noted that there might be an added effort to find a Unit in Nevada that animals can be transplanted to.

Rex Flowers recalled that Chair Johnston had told him that the department cannot continue to move sheep annually without doing anything to address carrying capacity. It is hoped that the quota will be high enough to drive populations down with a 20-percent increase. Mr. Flowers is not convinced that the Department has met the direction given to manage sheep by having only twelve additional tags.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

During the discussion it was noted by Chair Robinson that there is a need to remove approximately 300 sheep which can be accomplished by transplant or harvesting. As the discussion continued it was pointed out that Utah was unable to accept.

***It was moved by Member Pitts to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve the recommendations on any legal weapon any ewe. The motion died due to lack of a second.***

***It was moved by Member Kabisch, to recommend that Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve the quota for Ewes in Units 268 and 213 with the rest as is for resident and non-resident. The motion died due to lack of a second.***

Chair Robinson concurred that there needs to be more intelligent management and does not understand why some animals cannot be moved.

***It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member Pitts, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve 268 and 272 as presented. The motion carried with Member Kabisch dissenting.***

### **California Bighorn Sheep Any Ram – Any Legal Weapon**

Chris Hampson – NDOW, provided an overview of the recommendations that increase by 9 tags over 2019 and hunts up by 1 or 2 tags with other units remaining unchanged. Mr. Hampson commented that the lamb ratios are fairly good in some units. However, there is still some concern which resulted in a decision to reduce tags in certain areas that are difficult to access even though some sheep have returned to the area. Mr. Hampson recalled issues with lions that were addressed by Wildlife Services.

There was some discussion about previous relocation of animals to other areas. It was noted that hunters have struggled to find Rams in the recent past. Mr. Hampson noted that the population is consistent in moving back and forth from Buckhorn Peak to Leadville according to data from collared animals. Mr. Hampson then outlined lion control on the north end of the Granites that is intended to take care of the area where sheep are located. NDOW has been monitoring collar data on the

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sheep's' movement for the past several years that was part of Project 38. Mr. Hampson then noted the improved water flows in the Granites and Leadville Spring. However, that most likely will change during the summer months although it is not an issue at the moment.

There were no public comments.

Chair Robinson noted that he concurs with what NDOW is doing.

***It was moved Chair Robinson, seconded by Member DoMoe, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve the recommendations as presented. The motion carried unanimously.***

### **California Big Horn Sheep – Any Ewe – Any Legal Weapon Hunt**

During the discussion it was pointed out that it is unclear if the tag recommendation mimics that of the previous year's hunt. The primary population concern for the populations in Unit 068 is due to fire and cattle grazing that was also impacted by fires. It was recommended that the supervising biologist from the eastern region address the concerns.

Chris Hampson – NDOW, noted that 15 ewes will be moved from this area in the next year and that there has been discussion about removals in the future. Any additional ewe tags will be dependent upon recruitment and improvement in the next year.

Tom Dunham – NDOW, commented that the intent is to try and hold the California Big Horn at the current populations as herd increases may come in contact with dispersed domestic sheep and goats in the surrounding areas. The intent is to maintain the current population with no growth. An additional capture is being considered this coming fall in order to mitigate changes. Therefore, the seasons need to be in place as one or two tags will not be a substantive issue. Currently it is unknown if there are plans for the Montana's and that there is no desire to see the California Bighorn herd increase as it may result in them exiting the region. Mr. Dunham commented that there is no biological difference in one or two tags.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Rex Flowers commented that that the issue with the current level and not seeing where a single animal would create the difference. Mr. Flowers recommended that the quota remain at 1 and that he does not see an issue with moving one more ewe from the area.

Mel Belding recommended that the tags be reduced to the same level as it was last year.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

***It was moved by Member Rhea, second by Chair Robinson, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners change Unit 068 to one tag instead of two and find places to transplant. The motion carried unanimously.***

### **Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep – Any Ram – Any Legal Weapon**

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Chris Hampson – NDOW, commented that the recommendation remains unchanged at 6 tags as recommended last year.

Responding to Chair Robinson's inquiry as to how the herd is doing, Tom Dunham – NDOW, noted that the herd in general is gaining ground in Unit 101 with some recruitment in unit 074. Mr. Dunham commented that it is Utah's turn in Unit 091 and that the single tag is being conservative rather than being more aggressive and having to lower the number of tags in the future. Mr. Dunham explained that there are not a lot of mature rams due to a previous disease event a few years ago. However, there are some decent middle aged Rams in the population but not like what has been seen in the past. The intent is to establish a more secure foothold before increasing the number of tags.

There were no public comments.

Chair Robinson commented that this appears to be positive steps for the herd and hope that it continues. Chair Robinson concurred with the recommendation as proposed.

***It was moved by Member Pitts, seconded by Member Rhea, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve the recommendation as written. The motion carried unanimously.***

### **Mountain Goat – Any Goat – Any Legal Weapon**

Chris Hampson – NDOW, noted that there is a 1 tag increase proposed due to higher densities.

There were no board or public comments.

***It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member DoMoe, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve the recommendation as written. The motion carried unanimously.***

### **Elk – Antlered and Antlerless – Any Legal Weapon Depredation Hunts**

Chris Hampson – NDOW, provided an overview of the recommendation for a modest reduction from the 2019 recommendations. Additionally, the Antlerless Management Hunts are closed for the 2020-2021 season based on Elk Plan recommendations.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Mel Belding noted that while a number of the Elk Sub-Plans haven't been reviewed in 20 years and he believes that all plans should be reviewed in a 5 to 10 year timeline. Mr. Belding commented that he believes it is time that the Elk plans are reviewed given the cap of 340 Elk in Units 078, 105--- and his observation of about 2,000 horses last year in that particular area.

Jonathan Lesperance concurred with Mr. Belding's timeline for review of the Elk plans.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

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***It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member DoMoe, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve the proposed Elk – Antlered and Antlerless – Any Legal Weapon Depredation Hunts Elk Plan as written. The motion carried unanimously.***

### **Elk Antlered All Weapons Classes**

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

***It was moved by Member DoMoe, seconded by Chair Robinson, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Elk Antlered All Weapon Classes as written. The motion carried unanimously.***

### **Elk Spike - Any Legal Hunt**

Tom Dunham – NDOW, provided an overview of the proposal noting that the decrease in Elk Spike was elk populations had reached the population objective to keep the bull population in check

Chair Robinson opened public comments.

Rex Flowers commented that with the decrease in spike bull tags in the foreseeable future that it would be nice to see the hunt go away if it is no longer needed.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

***It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member DoMoe, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve the Elk Spike – Any Legal Hunt, as written. The motion carried unanimously.***

### **Elk Antlerless - All Weapon Classes**

Chair Robinson commented that it appeared to be the same as last year.

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

***It was moved by Member Kabisch, seconded by Member DoMoe, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Elk Antlerless – All Weapons Classes, as written. The motion carried unanimously.***

### **Junior Muledeer – Antlered or Antlerless – All Weapon Classes Hunts**

Chris Hampson – NDOW, provided an overview of the statewide recommendation of 17,796 tags for 2020 compared to 2019 recommendation with a slight increase in management statewide.

Responding to Member Kabisch's inquiry about the success rate, Mr. Hampson explained that there were some slight increases and decreases overall due to recruitment and that quotas may have been rounded up or down based on post season buck ratios.

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In response to Chair Robinson's inquiry about a fall survey, Mr. Hampson commented that areas are not flown every year and this year the decision not to fly was weather related. Mr. Hampson then noted that in the past NDOW had been more conservative based on populations. Recently there has been an increase in the buck population so the rifle hunt is again being used.

Mr. Hampson then outlined the process used to determine the quotas based on the mile and dry January and February. It was unknown whether the herds would stay on the summer range in Unit 013. Mr. Hampson then outlined recent surveys noting that the information is collected twice yearly. Mr. Hampson explained that there had been a loss in 014 due to lions and that there is a low number of collared animals. Additionally, lions were observed on the winter range which is where the impacts are seen.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Rex Flowers suggested that the youth tag remain the same as last year noting that the biologist had one unit that increased by 50-percent. The harvest in Unit 011 and 013 over the past three years indicate a total of 5 does that averages to about 2 per year.

Mel Belding concurred with Mr. Flowers and suggested that the Youth tags be reduced.

Chair Robinson closed public comment.

Member Kabisch suggested that Unit 011-013, 014, 015, 021 and 033 be reduced by half for the Junior hunts.

Member Pitts suggested that Washoe County develop a plan to get more deer up there.

Member Rhea also suggested a decrease in the Boulder Mountain area.

Chair Robinson recalled that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners had disapproved of reducing the tags for the Junior Hunt and had also disapproved in the past year for recommended changes to month long rather than 2 week seasons.

Member Kabisch expressed his appreciation for the information about the previous year's recruitment.

***It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member Rhea, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Junior Mule Deer – Antlered or Antlerless – All Weapons Classes Hunts with the following modifications: 011-013: 20 instead of 30 and 014: 15 instead of 20. The motion carried: member Kabisch dissenting.***

### **Mule Deer - Antlerless – Any Legal Weapon Hunt**

Chris Hampson – NDOW, commented that while the numbers are down an increase in hunter success rates in some units has been seen. Mr. Hampson noted that the past three years had some



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of the lowest harvest rates since 2000. Therefore, the intent is to try to keep the population to management objectives.

Mike Scott – NDOW, suggested that there may be a somewhat higher recommendation next year if needed to meet management goals. Mr. Scott pointed out that Mr. Hampson writes the reports while Mr. Scott's is to edit and assure consistency. Mr. Scott commented the recommendation is similar to last year's recommendation.

Chair Robinson suggested that the approach does not seem to be working well in this part of the state and that he believes a reduction may be suggested.

Member Rhea questioned whether it is lions, horses or some other issue affecting the populations.

Mr. Hampson noted that these discussions had occurred many times over the years. The impacts to water sources due to drought conditions force deer to move elsewhere and that lion depredation is an issue in 014. Mr. Hampson drew attention to fires on the west and east sides of the Granite Range and loss of winter range throughout Nevada. Mr. Hampson pointed out that the modeling has been accurate on the numbers expected to be harvested which are close to being achieved.

Responding to Member Kabisch about the 66 percent success rate, Mr. Hampson explained that a number of factors are considered including weather events hot and dry and other reasons that may cause a lower success rate. If a 100-percent success rate were to be achieved the number of tags would be reduced accordingly. Mr. Hampson suggested that Member Kabisch contact Cody Schroeder as he may be able to provide greater detail. Mr. Hampson noted that NDOW did not have an opportunity to fly last fall and that is why the average of the model being used is for the long and short term averages.

Chair Robinson noted his understanding that some of the better units in Utah are very successful for trophy bucks and questioned whether it is better to use that type of model or change the management plan.

Mr. Hampson noted that he would refer the issue to Mr. Schroeder;

Cody Schroeder – NDOW, explained that some units are managed more conservatively for a higher buck to doe ration that may also include doe hunts periodically. Mr. Schroeder pointed out that bucks also compete with does and fawns for food which also has an effect on herd.

Mr. Hampson pointed out that the recommendations are the same as the previous year and noted the underlying reasons for the recommendations to being the buck ratio down to 32 or 33. Mr. Hampson commented that NDOW flies annually.

Responding to Chair Robinson's inquiry about whether a trophy hunt is sustainable, Mr. Hampson explained that 4 or 5 lions were removed from the subject area (Unit 014) and that conservative recommendations were made where deer herds are currently in decline.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

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Mel Belding expressed his appreciation for what is being done and noted that Utah manages the Henry Mountains at a 45 to 50 bucks per 100 does and that buck tags have sold for as much as \$80,000.00. Mr. Belding suggested that Units 011, 012 and 013 be left at 50 and that the December deer hunt be removed.

Rex Flowers suggested that 011- 013 remain the same as last year at 50, 014-15, 022- 35 tags and 033-15.

Member Kabisch suggested that buck numbers might increase with a reduction in tags in 014 and reevaluate next year before bringing quotas up and reduce 014 to 15 tags.

***It was moved by Member Kabisch, seconded by Member Rhea, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Mule Deer Antlered Any Legal Weapon with a reduction in 011-013; 50, 014: 15, 022-35 and 033-15. The motion carried unanimously.***

### **Muledeer Antlerless Any Legal Weapon Hunt**

Chris Hampson – NDOW, noted a slight increase in Areas 6 and 7 with an overall increase of 75 tags.

Responding to Chair Robinson's inquiry about Area 6 about potentially transplanting animals to other areas, Tom Dunham – NDOW, explained that with CWD and other disease issues that the translocation of Muledeer, Elk and Antelope is not being considered at this time. Additionally, such transplants are not typically successful with Mule Deer. Therefore the intent is to harvest as no western states are moving animal due to disease issues. Additionally, while there are not any known cases of CWD yet there is no test for CWD on live animals. Mr. Dunham commented that while NDOW had not done any spring flights other surveys indicated the fall surveys and five year average with the mild winter losses were very conservative.

Mr. Hampson noted that while animals were being collared blood samples were taken for testing. The disease biologists are still working on the results to determine if there is an active situation in mule deer.

Mr. Dunham – NDOW, commented that the blue tongue mortality may be higher than normal in Areas 7 and 10 on ranches where private land is concentrated around meadow areas. Mr. Dunham noted that the intent is to keep the herd between 8,000 and 10,000 to avoid herds going into winter in rather poor condition.

There were no public comments.

***It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member Kabisch, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Mule Deer – Antlerless – Any Legal Weapon, as written. The motion carried unanimously.***

The meeting recessed at 8:50 p.m. and reconvened at 9:00 p.m.

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- 8. Commission Regulation 20-02 Amendment #1, 2020 Black Bear Quotas – For Possible Action** A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify proposed regulations for the number of tags to be issued for black bear for the 2020 season.

Chair Robinson opened the agenda item.

Mike Scott – NDOW, explained that there was no change to the quotas with the addition of a Dream Tag with a harvest limit of 20. Mr. Scott commented that there was no change to the season and that the Dream Tag, which is separate, comes out of the harvest limits.

Chair Robinson opened public comment.

Jonathan Lesperance – Nevada Sporting Dog Alliance, commented that the limits as written are supported as are the long term harvest metric of about 30.5 percent. Mr. Lesperance believes the regulation should be approved as written.

Mel Belding expressed his support for the NDOW recommendation and that Mr. Lesperance brings up a great point on the harvest metric.

Rex Flowers also supports the recommendation and pointed out that after the tenth year a study could provide the result of the decade of hunts and its effect on the bear population.

Mr. Scott noted that he is unaware of any specific ten year plan though such a plan could be developed by personnel having the necessary expertise in predator projects.

***It was moved by Chair Robinson, seconded by Member Rhea, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Commission Regulation 20-02 Amendment #1, 2020 Black Bear Quotas, as written. The motion carried unanimously.***

- 9. 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 June 17, 2020.

No new agenda items were identified.

Member Kabisch expressed his thanks to staff for their assistance and noted that the Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife was there for staff and is interested in hearing what can be done to assist NDOW in doing their jobs better.

Mike Scott – NDOW, expressed his appreciation for the work done by Washoe County on habitat, fire rehabilitation and other Washoe County Projects.

Chair Robinson commented that while it is nice to meet in the regular meeting room it is nice to have input statewide.

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

Mel Belding expressed his appreciation and Washoe County is a good example to others. Additionally Mr. Belding believes additional money should be expended on predator control.

### **11. ADJOURNMENT** [Non-action item]

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.