

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife

DRAFT Minutes

Thursday ~ August 1, 2019 ~ 6:00 p.m.
Nevada Department of Wildlife
Conference Room B
1100 Valley Road, Reno, Nevada

MEMBERS

Steven Robinson, Chair
Arnold Pitts, Vice-chair
Meghan Di Rocco
Anthony DoMoe
Ray Kabisch

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE [Non-action item]

Vice-chair Pitts led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Vice-chair Pitts called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was established

PRESENT: Meghan Di Rocco, Anthony DoMoe, Ray Kabisch and Arnie Pitts.

ABSENT: Steven Robinson.

Jen Gustafson – Deputy District Attorney, was also present.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS [Non-action item]

Gerald Lent provided a handout to the board (copy on file) read the following into the record:
Public Comments Washoe CAB agenda item 3, August 1, 2019

For the record, my name is Gerald Lent, former Chairman of the Board of the Wildlife Commission and I have a degree in Biology. I have written remarks for the record.

Does this Board care about their legal duties to bring wildlife issues up regarding their county, which I believe is Washoe?

I don't want to embarrass anyone, but have any of you read NDOW's Big Game Herd Status Reports that show what is going on with big game in Washoe County?

If you did and I doubt it, you should be concerned, yet you chose to do nothing!

In almost all areas of Washoe County there is low recruitment of our deer herds and a major reduction of deer tags for hunters to enjoy. Do you care?

NDOW consistently blames this on habitat, fires, weather, or whatever other excuse they can come up with, but they NEVER mention predators might be responsible. NEVER. NDOW is extremely biased against predator control for DEER except they believe in predator control for sheep, not deer. (see APHIS-Wildlife Services June newsletter) link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GTkbB8GluSw2app35ON3sTZKdxma00Tz/view?usp=sharing>

Vice-chair Pitts closed public comment.

4. APPROVAL OF JUNE 13, 2019, MINUTES [For possible action]

Chair opened the agenda item and hearing no public or board comments asked for a motion.

It was moved by Member Kabisch, seconded by Member Di Rocco, to approve the June 13, 2019, minutes, as submitted. The motion carried: Chair Robinson absent.

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5. BOARD MEMBER MEETING ASSIGNMENT [Non-action item] –Discussion of member(s) to attend the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners meetings on:

5-1) August 9 and 10, 2019, White Pine County, Nevada – Vice Chair Pitts will attend both days.

5-2) September 20 and 21, 2019, Las Vegas, Nevada – Vice-chair Pitts recalled that Chair Steve Robinson would attend both days.

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

6-1) Correspondence (including sportsmen’s concerns) and Announcements; Vice-chair Pitts noted Gerald Lent comments and correspondence from David Gough – Nevada Chapter Chair of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.

6-2) Overview of the June 21 and 22, 2019, meetings of the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners. No update provided.

7. SMART SCOPES [Non-action item] – An informational update regarding the current legal status of archery and rifle “smart scopes” which have an internal range finding function and compensate for target range and/or angles

Vice-chair Pitts expressed an interest in the topic and asked for input on the subject on how much technology should be used in hunting and what it takes to make a clean kill and increase chances of not just wounding an animal.

Deputy District Attorney Jen Gustafson cautioned the Board against moving into what could be considered deliberation as this is only an informational item.

Mel Belding recalled that the issue had been discussed at the Commission level in the past and that he believes a tracking scope is illegal. Mr. Belding noted that a range finder is allowed in most instances and it was determined that this type of scope is not typically used by individuals confined to a wheelchair.

Member Di Rocco left the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

Mr. Belding noted that there are some reasons to have a scope guide.

Mike Cassidy noted that as an archery hunter he believes that it should also be fair for archery hunters and that the use of a scope is not currently allowed for archery. Mr. Cassidy pointed out that it should be up to the hunter so long as it is within reason.

David Gogh read the following into the record:

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August 1st, 2019

To: Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife

Re: Agenda item 7, Smart Scopes

Fair chase topics demand our continued vigilance and advocacy. We not only must abide by the principles handed down by Theodore Roosevelt and other sportsmen; we also must update and elevate those principles to address our rapidly changing culture and advancements in technology.

The Nevada Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers would like to thank the Wildlife Commission and the Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife for their appetite to discuss difficult and debatable fair chase issues. We look forward to our continued work with the Commission and CABs across the state to uphold the fair chase ethic for our hunting traditions and conservation of wildlife.

David Gough

Nevada Chapter Chairman

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Rex Flowers recalled that the topic had been brought up at the meeting in Hawthorne (Nevada) on Friday. Mr. Flowers noted that while smart guns are outlawed smart scopes are not. The issue is that the smart scope will automatically adjust so that the hunter only needs to press a button. Mr. Flowers expressed his opposition to adding a new regulation that may result in unintended consequences in the future.

Gerald Lent recalled previous discussions with Tina Nappe about finding a fair way to allocate tags and demand success went into effect.

Member Di Rocco rejoined the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

Mr. Lent continued noting that the muzzle loader is more like a rifle today rather than the traditional weapon. Mr. Lent cautioned that rifle hunter concerns also need to be considered.

Vice-chair Pitts closed public comments and commented that archery should not, in his opinion have a scope and that muzzleloader weapons do not have the same distance as a rifle. Vice-chair Pitts expressed his thanks for the public comments on the topic.

Responding to Member Kabisch's inquiry about state law on the use of scopes, Mike Scott – NDOW, commented that while he does not have a background in law enforcement he believes that a smart scope is legal.

Mel Belding noted that while the scope is legal it cannot set the trigger off.

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- 8. 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 a proposed regulation relating to amending Chapter 502 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). This regulation would provide direction for allowing the transfer, deference or return of tags under certain extenuating circumstances after the passage of Assembly Bill 404 of the 80th Legislative Session.

Vice-chair Pitts opened the agenda item and asked for Board comments.

Member Kabisch commented that while he likes the idea of being able to return a tag under special circumstances there is a concern about the tag transfer that allows someone else to gain access to a tag that could lead to altercations such as a grandparent passing a tag to a grandchild. Member Kabisch is unsure how to address those types of transfer issues.

Vice-chair Pitts pointed out that individuals serving in the military that have drawn a tag should be able to defer the tag in the event the individual is deployed. Member Kabisch noted that a letter from a physician should be sufficient for extenuating circumstances and noted that the next person in line would be entitled to the tag. Vice-chair Pitts is not sure he can agree with the proposal.

Member DoMoe concurred that military personnel called to active duty as an acceptable reason to defer. However, there is concern about other activities that would be similar to ticket scalping.

Vice-chair Pitts opened public comment.

Mel Belding comments that this is, in his opinion, a perfect example of if it is not broken then there is no need to fix it. Mr. Belding pointed out that this was not initiated by the Commission, NDOW or any of the CAB's but is a legislative proposal from the LCB that may force the Commission to take action. Mr. Belding does not believe there is any need to fix that which is not broken.

Rex Flowers commented that while he appreciates that a tag can be deferred due to extenuating circumstances he believes that the recommendation should be to eliminate the ability to transfer to another person. A similar proposal in Elko County that would allow the transfer to a child, step-child or other immediate family members. Mr. Flowers believes that the language should not allow for interpretation and main transparency. Mr. Flowers noted that this proposal is the result of legislative action and that he prefers to keep the current process that allows the deferral to the following year in the event of a heart attack or similar health issue.

Gerald Lent recalled that while he did not testify on this at the legislature there was a Commissioner from Carson that got a Desert Sheep tag and had requested and received a delay due to a hunt in Alaska. Of particular concern is the potential misuse of “extenuating circumstance”.

David Gough concurred with Mr. Belding's statement that if the system is not broken why open this up. Mr. Gough believes that the Commission should not approve this proposal.

Mike Cassidy concurred with Mr. Belding comments.

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Vice-chair Pitts closed public comments.

Member Di Rocco commented that there are some individuals that could use the ability and that she does not think it fair to an individual in service to the Country not to be able to defer. Additionally, there are a number of unanswered questions such as whether a single person could return the tag or pass it along to another person.

It was moved by Vice-chair Pitts, seconded by Member DoMoe, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners deny Commission General Regulation 485, Tag Transfer, Deference, and Return Program, LCB File No. R022-19 as written as it needs additional review and discussion. The motion carried: Chair Robinson absent.

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 September 12, 2019.*

The September 12, 2019, agenda may include, but is not limited to: 1) Presentation on how the wildlife count is conducted in Washoe County; and 2) Discussion on predator issues.

Mike Scott – NDOW, noted that he believes that the Commission will have a presentation on habitat.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS [Non-action item]

Mel Belding commented that while he has been attending these meetings for many years that the Washoe County Board has over the past 4 to 5 years been aggressive in holding NDOW on Mule deer tags. Mr. Belding recommended that the Board develop their own agenda on issues of concern to residents of Washoe County rather than the more meaningless issues.

Gerald Lent read the following into record:

For the record, my name is Gerald Lent, former Chairman of the Wildlife Commission.

For starters, I find it very hard to try to explain the obvious to those who need the obvious explained to them! This is why I choose not to attend this Board's meetings.

Rex Flowers recalled a number of discussions about deer, habitat and predator issue. Mr. Flowers emphasized that the "clock is ticking and time is running out" to prepare for the March and April Heritage and Predator Project proposals.

David Gough commented that a focus on rural Washoe County areas needs to keep an eye on future development as it moves into areas that will decimate game and non-game species.

11. ADJOURNMENT [Non-action item]

Vice-chair Pitts adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.