

# NEVADA BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS

## Wildlife Damage Management Committee

Nevada Department of Wildlife  
Western Region Field Office  
380 West B Street  
Fallon, Nevada

January 8, 2009  
8:00 a.m.

### MINUTES

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Those Committee members in attendance were:

Scott Raine – Committee Chairman  
Michael McBeath – Commissioner (Conference Call)  
Pete Mori – Commissioner  
Grant Wallace – Commissioner  
Mike Laughlin – Member  
Kevin Lansford – NDOW, Staff to Committee

Also in attendance were:

Mark Atkinson – NDOW  
Joe Bennett – Wildlife Services  
Jim Curran – Nevada Trappers Assn.  
Shawn Espinosa – NDOW  
Marshall Goldy – NV Big Game Restoration Group  
Mark Jensen – Wildlife Services  
Pat Laughlin – Self  
Ben Miller – Wildlife Services  
Tina Nappe – Self (Conference Call)  
Bud Sonnentag – Self  
Jack Spencer Jr. – Wildlife Services

#### Agenda Item #1 # 2 – Call to Order & Introductions – Chairman (Raine)

Chairman Raine brought the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. The Chairman introduced the committee members and asked the staff and those in attendance to do the same with who they are representing.

Agenda Item #3 – Approval of Minutes from the August 15th, 2008 Meeting – Chairman – ACTION

The Chairman asked for any changes to the minutes from the August 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, there were none.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as written. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Agenda Item #4 – Commission Member Items – Chairman

The Chairman asked for any items the Commissioners might like to bring forward to the Committee.

Chairman Raine stated he has been contacted by members of the public concerning alternative ways to manage predation. He made some inquiries on applications and funding from the Heritage program for some type of predator control. The Chairman was informed by Wildlife Services that they cannot apply for any Heritage funding, and asked for clarification from wildlife services. Mark Jensen (State Director for Wildlife Services), stated it was determined that Wildlife Services could not compete for funds against other projects.

Agenda Item #5 – Public Comment (*Please limit comments to 3 minutes*)

The Chairman asked for public comment. Some comments were received by teleconference (Tina Nappe) unfortunately the comments were unintelligible. The basic statement made was that Ms. Nappe believed that the removal of predators for the enhancement of game species was negligible at best and many of the programs projects were indefensible.

Agenda Item #6 – USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services Program Overview – Mark Jensen – INFORMATIONAL

Mark Jensen stated his title and affiliation and recognized members of his staff in attendance. Mark gave a power point overview of the current projects. Mark stated that their mission is to provide Federal leadership in the area of wildlife damage management. One way is to provide technical assistance over the phone, websites, etc., and operational control work is also done on site to deal with more complex problems.

Mark stated that one of the main functions of wildlife services is protection of sheep and cattle producers from predation caused by mountain lions, coyotes, etc.

Mark began going through his slides, but much of the discussion was lost due to malfunction in the recording equipment

MOU's and NEPA's and their function and purpose way described.

Wildlife Services obtains permits from the Department of Wildlife (NDOW) to perform wildlife control work statewide. Aerial depredation permits are also given from NDOW. Federal permits for birds are obtained annually. Up to 2500 ravens is not a limiting factor in this permit. (Comments from the audience were not intelligible).

Mark stated that Wildlife Services accountable to NDOW and other state and federal agencies because of the permits they work under.

Some slides were included showing sites where their lion hunters have been stationed and the equipment being used in the control project. Tools and methods used were discussed.

Mark stated that 70% of the coyotes taken are done so by aerial gunning.

Chairman Raine asked for any questions. Questions received from the audience were unintelligible.

Commissioner McBeath asked how these control projects are affecting the environment. Mr. Jensen stated that many of their methods on control have no effect, but if it was shown that adverse affects were occurring and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be written. The EIS would not prevent us from doing control work but more intensive analyses would be required. One of the triggers is when there is a negative impact on statewide populations of predators.

A question was asked on how population estimates are calculated. Mark stated that they work closely with NDOW and include some research. The best science we have available is used to make a population estimate.

It was asked if there is a way a sportsman can report an issue he observes while in the field. Mark stated that there is no formal way to report an issue, but their personnel are in the field all year round and information received is transmitted to them when received.

There was much discussion on mountain lion numbers and predation amounts. Mark stated that he has to trust his people in the field who use all methods available to do lion control work.

Chairman Raine stated that Wildlife Services is charged with responding to incidents, and NDOW is to be contacted the issue of public safety is involved. He also asked how well equipped is Wildlife Services to accomplish these incidents. Mark stated that the Chairman was referring to a recent situation. Kevin stated when the call was taken by the local biologist he contacted a noted lion hunter to take care of the offending lion. Commissioner Raine then read from Commission Policy #25 1.a. Chairman Raine belabored the point that Wildlife Services would respond to calls immediately especially when public safety is involved. Mark stated they would contact their contracted lion hunters and/or field personnel to hunt for the lion and take it down.

#### Agenda Item #7 – Review FY 2009 Predation Management Plan – Kevin C. Lansford - INFORMATIONAL

Kevin presented a review of the FY 2009 Predation Management Plan by a power point slide show.

Ongoing projects;

**Project #6A** – Delmar Mountain Bighorn Sheep Project – In FY 2008 added bobcats and coyotes in addition to removing lions as augmentations of sheep continue in the area. Most of the kills have been found on collared sheep.

**Project #14** – Wilson Creek/White Rock , Unit 231, Lincoln Counting–Removing coyotes to enhance fawn survival. Is a 6-year project that is now being statistically analyzed to see impacts.

**Project #15** – Horse and Cattle Camp Loop. Enhancement of high elevation fawning grounds, another 6-year project. 501 coyotes have been removed.

**Project #22** – Coyote removal to enhance fawn survival.

**Project #17** – Elko County deer and elk project. Hunt units 101, 105 & 107, lions and coyotes are targets for control. Lots of discussion on helicopter time spent on the area.

**Project #18** – Washoe County deer project. Lots of discussion (specific comments not intelligible).

**Project #19** – Emergency project after the devastating fires in 2006 that occurred in Elko County. Aerial hunting for raven control, islands of habitat protected with control work.

**Project #20** – Virginia Mountains bighorn sheep project. This control work was begun as soon as an augmentation of sheep completed.

Agenda Item #8 – Propose Changes to the 2009 Management Plan and Budget – Kevin C. Lansford – Committee – ACTION

Kevin suggested combining Projects 14 and 15 and increase the aerial hunting/survey time spent in the areas. Mark Jensen suggested that we rely on the field staff to select areas where the aerial work would be most beneficial. Chairman Raine asked for some public comment on what they feel is the best place to perform aerial work. Kevin felt we should continue our work on Projects 14 and 15 with the long-term time investment already spent.

The savings from combining Projects 14 and 15 could be used to increase aerial hunting in the high elevation fawning grounds in Project 17, the East Humboldts. Winter is the most difficult time to reach areas on the ground to do control work so aerial surveys being done at that time during peak fawning was discussed.

Motion and second to continue with the projects as recommended and allow flexibility in the plan's budget to allow money to be transferred to a different project to fund aerial hunting efforts where they will be most beneficial. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Agenda Item #9 – Discuss Direction for FY 2010 Predation Management Plan – Kevin C. Lansford – INFORMATIONAL

Kevin began by stating that Kelly Stewart and Cody Schroeder will be doing a statistical analysis on these projects hopefully by March, and he will present that information at the next meeting of this committee. The projects to be completed and analyzed are 14, 15, 17 and 19.

The Chairman asked if we would have a draft plan at the March meeting. Kevin stated a rough draft plan and a statistical analysis will be available.

The Chairman would like to Department to identify predator limited populations and he would like to find out deer numbers prior to the control work beginning and after it is completed and the hunting season is over.

The Chairman stated that one of the "pat" answers is the lack of precipitation that is a reason for the declining herds. This answer is not acceptable to him.

The Chairman stated we have projects in different areas and when we get done with the control work it doesn't look like we are "gaining" from the predators being removed. How do we find areas where we know predators are a limiting factor and propose them as new project areas.

It was discussed how predator control is measured. The Chairman asked Mark Atkinson if the Department will be developing different methods to identify projects in the future. Mark stated that we will establish criteria and solicit information from the field biologists or what

is going on their area and evaluate based on those findings. The direction of the management plan will come with field biologist input for the future of the program.

The Chairman asked what could NDOW do to better the 2010 Predator Plan for success. Mark Jensen stated what is beneficial to them is when a project is started they know "what they've got". As the work is done and more information is gathered then the project is successful. Kevin stated that we could better utilize the Wildlife Service's field personnel's information. Chairman Raine stated that if these personnel have some good ideas for projects that they should bring them forward to the Committee.

Agenda Item #10 – Establish Date, Time and Location of the Next Meeting – Chairman – ACTION

It was decided that the next meeting will be held in March in conjunction with the Commission meeting.

Agenda Item #11 - Adjourn

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:19 p.m.

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Respectfully Submitted  
Dawn Carter