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MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 19, 2008

TO: Board of Wildlife Commissioners; Governor's Office;
County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife Members;
Department of Wildlife Employees; and Director Allen
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FROM: Kenneth E. Mayer, Director *Kenneth E. Mayer*

SUBJECT: Department Activities Report
Leadership Team Meeting Dec. 1 - 15, 2008

Director's Office

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) completed the four parts of their Conservation Assessment of the sage grouse, but have not compiled it. Although the status report on the sage grouse was supposed to come out in December, the Service missed the preliminary deadline for distributing their report for pre-review to the Judge and plaintiffs 60 days prior to that, which was October. As such, most likely their status report will not come out to the public until July.

Director Mayer announced that Chief of Fisheries Rich Haskins has been selected as the Deputy Director, and intends to seek support for a second deputy director position.

Chairman Lent will be mailing out a memorandum on Assemblyman Claborn's proposal to the CABMWs, with additional support material on the animal damage management legislation filed by Claborn.

Deputy Director Haskins will attend tomorrow's Cabinet meeting and provide the Governor with an update on the conservation assessment for the sage-grouse listing.

There was discussion about the printing of another Sportsman's Journal and whether the last journal has produced the results it was intended to; for sportsmen and sportswomen to use it to capture information during their hunting and fishing

experience in the journal, that would then be communicated back to NDOW on the post season questionnaire for upland game, waterfowl, and angler feedback.

The Director's Office has developed a form for all Divisions to document the working groups (local, state, federal, etc.) that their employees serve on as NDOW representatives which will be included in these minutes. This will help enhance the awareness and communication between divisions, the commission, and the public about what work and interactions NDOW maintains on critical issues with outside agencies and entities. Thanks to Jason Williams (Diversity Division) for providing this idea to the Leadership Team!

Director Mayer said the legislators are searching for any funding that could assist the deficit in the General Fund for the upcoming Special Session. Director Mayer said the Governor is instituting weekly cabinet conference calls on Thursdays at 4 p.m. for the next two weeks than will switch to 10 a.m. on Monday mornings and he invited the chiefs to come and listen in if they have time.

Director Mayer asked the group how the extended deadline for Heritage Project is faring: Game Division Chief Mark Atkinson said the extension assisted as the holiday interfered with submission of projects. Director Mayer said he hopes that staff submit worthy projects; including resubmission of some projects from last year.

Director Mayer attended Homeland Security Training and Internal Controls training.

Deputy Director Haskins said Administrative Services Officer III Dave Prather is working on cash flow analysis to insure that the agency can make payroll. Mr. Prather said \$1.2 million in the bank and that number is artificially low but what he wants to after they input all the data and as they work through the projections would want to meet with all the chiefs and obtain the meaning of the numbers. He said if we can get a jump on the analysis we could avoid freezing spending as was done last year and keep flow of money going so that work can go on and need to build the reserve account back up. Administrative Services Officer III Dave Prather said there are two budget issues that need to be determined by Director Mayer - how the reserve is this year, and then how we want the reserve to be for the next two years. Director Mayer said all Division Chiefs need to look at their budgets and let the fiscal staff know what upcoming projects and purchases are scheduled for this winter. Director Mayer said once the cash analysis is done he can determine what steps will need to be taken to save money.

Deputy Director Rich Haskins and Operations Chief Bob Haughian said we have three employees stationed in Battle Mountain and there is the possibility of obtaining better office space and storage area in Battle Mountain at an additional cost of \$3,700 per year. Acting Deputy Director Haskins said he would agree to go ahead with this, and the group decided to have Jerry Smith who is the lead work with NDOW land agent Dottie Hansen handle the lease and closing details.

Director Mayer said he would like an update from the agency's engineer on Onion Reservoir.

Director Mayer said staff is working on the report to Assemblyman Claborn in response to his recent legislative proposal. There are two things to consider: First is the comprehensive assessment of the deer herd to determine which herd growth is limited by predators and conduct predator management, and the second would be allowing trapping of lions. Director Mayer is meeting with Chairman Lent and Commissioner Cavin to discuss these proposals. Staff is to brainstorm the details of the Claborn proposal; such as determining the take of the lion was the lion taken in Nevada, how can we pay, do we have staff for check in and administration, and it is key as to what the Commission and chairman want to do as far as the idea. Director Mayer said he will present information to the Commission and see what they want to do, and he asked the Leadership Team to think about any ideas.

The Fire Symposium is at the Grand Sierra Resort Dec. 9, 10 and 11.

For December Leadership Team meetings will go through Dec. 15, 2008, and for those who are available, they will meet Dec. 22, 2008, and will not meet on Dec. 29, 2008. Director Mayer will be on leave Dec. 15 - 21.

Director Mayer selected Bob Haughian as acting director on Dec. 26 and said to have at least one office employee to man each office.

Conservation Education

Jake Sunderland is joining the Conservation Education Division as the website coordinator. Mr. Sunderland currently works as an online web developer for Swift Communications, the media company that runs six Carson-Tahoe area newspapers.

Southern Region staff met with PBS&J to discuss preliminary site plans and architectural renderings for the Overton Wildlife Management Area Wildlife Center. A design theme was selected. A public meeting on the center will be scheduled in the near future.

The publication coordinator and chief met with State Purchasing to establish a printing contract for all regulations; edits and layouts started for the 2009 spring Wild Turkey brochure, and work continues on the 2009 Fishing Seasons and Regulations.

Western Region staff produced three television segments for KOLO-TV Thursday segment on the following topics: Truckee River Low Flows; Quail at Healy Home; and Elk Bugling; and produced five radio segments on the following topics: Christmas Bird Counts; Return Card Great Information; Winter Wildlife Mule Deer; Fish Late Fall-Early Winter; and Fish Late Fall-Early Winter.

Southern Region personnel have received inquiries about the suspension of trout stocking activities by the Willow Beach Hatchery because they are looking for cutthroat trout virus.

Hunter Education and Law Enforcement staff met via teleconference to discuss recent hunting incidents and the need for additional education and agency messaging. Staff are reviewing options to communicate those needed messages and possible use of video products to disseminate that information.

The volunteer coordinator is working on the work program for Connecting Kids with Wildlife grant; and began planning spring Project Wild Workshops.

A news release promoting the sale of the Guzzler Atlas and the Nevada Record Book as Christmas Gifts was written and distributed to the media. The Atlas was just reprinted so there are plenty of copies available for sale.

The Outdoor Education Coordinator worked with NDOW contract manager and budget analyst to complete Humboldt County shooting range interlocal contract in time for January Board of Examiners' meeting agenda deadline.

Requests for hunter education classes are increasing. Classes for the Southern and Western Regions have been posted on the website for the upcoming year with more dates to be announced in the next month.

Fiscal Services Section

Administrative Services Officer III Dave Prather said he had received a list of questions from Eric King relative to the agency's budget and he provided a handout to the Leadership Team. Acting Deputy Director Rich Haskins asked each chief to read and familiarize themselves with the questions or if they could provide further detail.

Mr. Prather said the agency's cash flow will be in negative numbers during December, January, and February, as usual due to license drops, and he sent a spreadsheet out to the Leadership Team denoting the cash flows. Mr. Prather said staff are increasing the frequency of federal draws to keep the money coming in and are having a problem with the Coast Guard grant as they are slow in paying. He said if you see something that you could trim or cut back, that those items need to be identified. Two things to look at are these specific months and spikes from last year and see if we duplicate the pattern and if so to push it off, and secondly to be aware of what is projected and see if we will see same negative number. He said we need to shut off equipment purchases to discontinue spending and would like to have the purchase requisitions come through still so the paperwork can be processed so the items can at least be in the works. As far as, out of state travel, if there is travel you can postpone or delay that would be the most beneficial to the Department.

For further Commission meetings, travel to and from must be in a car pool and limited per the Green Team memorandum recently sent by Director Mayer.

Deputy Director Haskins was tasked by Director Mayer to draft a memorandum to inform employees of the freeze on spending, holding positions open, and will leave decision-making up to the Division chiefs and the acting deputy director. We may reach a point to say that there is no more money.

Game Division

Commissioner Raine participated in the helicopter survey of the 111-222 unit group out of Ely, spending two full days recording both deer and elk groups. It was noted that despite rough conditions Commissioner Raine participated fully in the survey and performed an excellent job of data recording. The NDOW crew enjoyed his company and NDOW greatly appreciates his hard work during the survey.

Current status of the Sportsmen's Journal was discussed: There is insufficient funding to print enough copies to distribute to all who purchase licenses. The Game Division considers the journal to be a valuable resource and worth the effort and will continue to seek sustainable funding sources. Sportsmen's groups and industry partners will be approached in the near future for additional financial support. A Heritage Fund grant proposal has been developed by the Con Ed Division. It was noted that Game Division staff were still actively promoting the Journal. Responses to request for donations earlier in 2008 were poor and insufficient funds were pledged to complete the printing. The value of adding a question regarding journal use to the angler/ game harvest questionnaire was discussed. Direct feedback would assist us in evaluating the overall value of the journal by the responses.

Law Enforcement

Wardens met with Douglas County Sheriff's Office, auxiliary training members from Washoe County Sheriff's office and the executive director of the Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) to discuss development of a boating law enforcement program that would be POST certified for training other peace officers in Nevada about boating law enforcement operation and a comprehensive boat enforcement program.

The boating education coordinator received an award from the Coast Guard Auxiliary for NDOW's continuing support of boating safety and education in Nevada.

Trapping activity is increasing: Baited trap line cases have been worked in Washoe and Mineral Counties; work continues to identify the illegal trapper in Mineral County; there have been numerous reports of trap disturbance and theft; many trappers report that the catch is off for bobcats while others are enjoying moderate success; a trapper was issued two citations into Nye County for disturbing a trap of

a lawful trapper; wardens released four mountain lions from traps and there was a lion killed in a trap last week and the trapper reported it and turned in the lion. In Washoe County, a juvenile trapper was caught using a pigeon as exposed bait which caught a magpie. The juvenile was contacted while checking the trap. Further investigation produced three bobcats caught last season which were not sealed.

Several sick and injured deer have been handled by Western Region Game Wardens in the last few weeks.

Navigation Aids work continued through November with the removal and refurbishment of buoys from several Western Region reservoirs.

A raptor case resulted in the issuance of two citations to the gentleman that was in possession of a raptor.

A case of mistaken big game kill also resulted in a citation for false information to obtain a resident license. A warden listened patiently to the hunter's story concerning the spike bull elk he mistakenly killed on a cow tag. The game warden noted that the hunters issue date of his Nevada driver's license matched the issue date of the hunting license. This is usually more than just coincidence. Upon further questioning, the hunter admitted to only having been in Nevada for two months prior to the big game application process and provided false information as to length of residency in order to be included in the resident draw.

A search warrant was served in Las Vegas concerning prohibited species. An investigation is ongoing with a possible Bighorn Sheep Illegal Killing.

Operations Division

Sandy Shavinsky, Administrative Assistant IV in the Las Vegas office, will retire at the end of this month. Sandy, an agency icon with over 25 years with the Department and 30 years with the State, has exemplified loyal and dedicated public service to for the Department of Wildlife and to Nevada's Sportsmen. She will be missed. Administrative Assistant III Kathy Teligades of the Las Vegas office will serve as "acting" until such time that recruitment and selection processes are finalized. Due to budgetary reasons, this personnel action is anticipated to be delayed until spring/summer of 2009.

Corrective action pending from "Early Release of Draw Results" findings – This week staff will present to the director a series of proposed corrective actions identified as a result of the controversial events of last summer when some staff and members of the public obtained premature access to the big game draw results. It is the director's intent to put the approved programmatic and procedural changes in place to support the 2009 big game draw.

Wildlife Diversity Division

Staff continues to coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Nellis Test and Training Range (TTR) relative to restoration of springs on the TTR. Staff also continues to work with the BLM and Clark County on restoration of springs in the Searchlight area.

Staff attended the Pet Desert Tortoise Task Force meeting with Clark County and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and provided Department comments addressing pet tortoises in Nevada. The issue is with the several displaced unwanted pet tortoises and needs to be discussed statewide with FWS and NDOW relative to direction (i.e. who is responsible for these tortoises in statute and how to enforce current laws and who, what will be effective or not, etc.).

Wildlife Diversity staff continues to meet with the National Park Service and University of Nevada, Las Vegas to coordinate development of a predictive habitat model for peregrine falcons and work on contract development related to the monitoring and habitat-modeling portion of the project with Clark County.

Staff continued to coordinate additional research efforts for the Lake Mead Science Symposium. Scheduled speakers added to the agenda included talks on studies of bats in the Las Vegas Wash, rangewide willow flycatcher surveys.

Staff continues to coordinate with BLM, consultants, and the project proponent in regard to the proposed Searchlight Wind Energy Facility. Pre-construction protocol surveys for birds and bats are occurring this spring and fall. In general, the survey efforts are moving in the right direction and NDOW and BLM continue to stay in contact with the consultants on methodologies and results.

The reptile biologist and Eastern Region staff submitted a publication to Herpetological Review for a northward range extension for the western banded gecko. Staff also worked on a manuscript with New Mexico State University's Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit describing the Gila monster habitat model development.

Staff assisted the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Amphibian and Reptile Subcommittee with the development of a State Wildlife Grant proposal addressing numerous needs identified in Nevada's Wildlife Action Plan.

Staff worked with California Department of Fish and Game to confiscate and safely return 14 banded Gila monsters, which will be used for educational purposes; commented on numerous habitat issues and meetings including: the Virgin River Habitat Conservation Plan and Partnership meeting. Staff met with proponents on wildlife survey protocols for Wind Energy near Searchlight, attended the Spring Valley Stipulation agreement Biological Work Group meeting and attended the 10 year anniversary of the Las Vegas Wash Wetlands Park.

Staff in Central Nevada trapped pocket gophers, assisted the Game Division with sheep sealing, analyzed spotted frog data, and attended the Toiyabe Spotted Frog meeting in Reno.

Abandoned mines in Nevada have become habitat for many of Nevada's wildlife resources. Several agencies including the Nevada Division of Minerals (NDOM), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have been tasked with protecting the public by securing these features. In order to protect the wildlife resources using these features, the NDOW has developed a relationship with NDOM, the USFS and the BLM to survey these sites for wildlife use. Several survey methods have been employed to evaluate these sites for wildlife activity. To better accomplish this task, underground surveys need to be done to establish occupancy during critical time periods. This past month, several Department employees participated in a training session on how to conduct underground surveys in southern Nevada. Participants were introduced to the subject by representatives of the US Park Service, Bat Conservation International and subject matter experts. One day was spent in the classroom and two days were spent getting practical experience in underground surveys.

The coordination with the USFS on constructing wildlife friendly closures at abandoned mine sites in the Eastern Region continues. Nine mine openings were secured with wildlife friendly gates. Planning to protect two Townsend's big-eared bat maternity roosts on public land has been initiated with the BLM. These roosts are priority sites for wildlife friendly closure activity as soon as the appropriate planning documents can be completed.

Final enclosure configurations for the Beaver Creek aspen fencing project have been completed. NEPA documentation from the Elko Field Office of the BLM should be completed this month. Construction will commence as soon as access is available in the spring of 2009.

An effort to develop a statewide Wind Generation Protocol with the BLM has been an ongoing effort by Department personnel. A draft of this protocol is being prepared for evaluation.

Input to land use planning by the BLM and the USFS continues to be a priority for Division personnel.