



Jim Gibbons

Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

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Kenneth E. Mayer
Director

DATE: March 6, 2009

TO: Board of Wildlife Commissioners; Governor's Office;
County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife Members; and
Department of Wildlife Employees;

FROM: Kenneth E. Mayer, Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenneth E. Mayer".

SUBJECT: Department Activities Report
Leadership Team Meetings – February 2009

Director's Office

Director Mayer attended the Governor's Cabinet meeting Feb. 17, 2009, and reported that the economic forecast projections are not good for Nevada and that gaming tax revenue is down. Legislative Director for the Governor's Office asked that if agency's have amendments to Bill Draft Requests (BDRs) that we send her a copy of the amendment prior to testimony. Agency representatives were admonished to not attend hearings without getting a preview of questions that will be asked by legislators and to know the answer to the question such as "why did you cut this." He has received budget memorandum from the Department of Administration Director acknowledging that budgets are not error free, and errors can be corrected. Director Mayer suggested a meeting with our budget analyst to correct errors.

Mountain Lion Legislation – Director Mayer said he met last week with Assemblyman Claborn and both agreed that we need to take more mountain lions, however the disagreement is how to accomplish that goal. The need is for a plan to take more lions and be proactive with our management tools. Mountain lion tag and possession regulation has been drafted and the noticing process for a temporary regulation is underway through the Law Enforcement Division.

Director Mayer and the team discussed the budget narrative for presentation to the Joint Finance Committee at the Nevada State Legislature.

Habitat staff biologist Steve Siegel is tracking legislation and Management Analyst III Kim Jolly will be back on Feb. 19, 2009. Senate Bill 29 is one piece of legislation that we should be tracking, and there may be other pending legislation that NDOW is left out of the loop on as well; Director Mayer will attend hearing next on NDOW's boat legislation which is clean-up legislation.

Director Mayer attended an archery trade show that has been held in Reno for the last 13 to 14 years; the Reno Boat Show in Reno this weekend and staff did a great job at promoting the agency; and attended the Sportsman's luncheon at the legislature which was a great effort by sportsmen to meet legislators. The agency's luncheon is April 9, 2009, letters have been sent to sponsors and theme of the breakfast is recreation as a powerhouse of funding for the state. The official name is "Conserve Wildlife."

Commissioner McNinch has requested that herd management plan process be discussed at the March meeting possibly during the workshop. Agenda items for the March meeting are due Feb. 23, 2009.

Administrative Services Officer III (ASO III) said the next Board of Examiners meeting is March 10 and we have several items. Heritage projects submitted by Department staff were provided to the Leadership Team for review and ranking.

ASO III reported that cash flow is doing better with staff keeping spending under control.

Deputy Director said a new fiscal note was assigned to Law Enforcement.

Federal Stimulus Package – Director Mayer assigned the Habitat Chief to contact the BLM to discuss potential funding for Nevada projects. Wildlife Diversity staff will contact the U.S. Forest Service, and NRCS.

A NDOW Lands' Committee meeting will be held to discuss upcoming issues. Law Enforcement In-Service Training is March 17.

March Commission meeting review of draft agenda – three petitions, carryover of items not concluded at the Feb. meeting.

NDOW Supervisor's Training has been scheduled for Dec. 9 – 11, 2009.

Conservation Education

Staff completed a "Take Me Fishing" banner designed for shows and events. The Free Fishing Day Poster Contest information will soon be distributed to 4th and 5th grade classes statewide.

A new web page was created and now features the *How to Fish in Nevada* book.

The Volunteer/Wildlife Education coordinator met with Washoe County representatives regarding Verdi expansion plans and met with Nevada Division of Forestry regarding Oxbow Nature Study Area plantings.

The Volunteer/Wildlife Education coordinator has been preparing sage-grouse lek survey volunteer efforts.

The 2009 Nevada Big Game Seasons and Application Regulations brochure and updated 2009 Hunt Unit Map was sent to the printer on Friday, February 13. A blue line is due back shortly.

The Website Coordinator met with University of Nevada journalism professor to discuss the idea of having his class build flash video games targeted towards children to host on the NDOW website to help children learn about boating safety and wildlife management.

Changes to the Las Vegas Boat Show have led some local boat dealers to create their own show, which will be held this month at the Sunset Station Hotel and Casino. The LV Boat Show is scheduled for March and will be held in conjunction with a home show at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

Western Region staff has been conducting Hunter Education Instructor training with four more potential instructors to attend classes this week. Eastern Region staff also working with two new instructors in Eureka to get them certified as instructors.

The Western Region spring and summer fishing clinic schedule was finalized and the WR urban fishing brochure was updated for distribution at the Reno Boat and RV Show. Hedwig the owl and Eastern Region staff made an appearance over the weekend at that show.

Southern Region staff has received some inquiry regarding the possibility of shed antler seasons in Nevada. A nonresident from Utah supports the concept, seemingly because it may limit competition.

Outdoor Education Coordinator (OEC) attended volunteer instructor dinners in Winnemucca, Tonopah, Las Vegas and Reno. Most dinners had record attendance with 105 in Las Vegas and 87 in Reno; Commissioner Mori attended the Elko dinner. OEC toured the Winnemucca public shooting range project with Humboldt County staff and other contributors. NDOW has committed \$80,000 of Section 10 funds to the project.

Sportsman's Warehouse in Henderson and Las Vegas has expressed great interest in hosting Hunter Ed classes. The Henderson store has a current list of more than 100 prospective students and is considering installation of a computer/kiosk where people can register for Hunter Ed classes without having to leave the store.

The SR Wildlife Ed coordinator participated in a multi-agency meeting regarding the interpretation plan/program for the Spring Mountain Range. It is apparent that if the hunter's or angler's story is to be included in interpretive plans, the NDOW must have representatives involved who will speak out on behalf of their role and contributions.

Game Division

Wildlife Health Specialist position: two short-list candidates visited Reno last week for face-to-face interviews. A final decision will be made by the interview panel before the end of the month.

Game staff selected bait sites and began baiting at Carson Lake in anticipation of NDOW's post-season pintail banding program. Rocket nets were used during the weekend (February 21st and 22nd) to capture both Tundra swans and northern pintail. The event was a great success (kudos to Craig Mortimore and Chris Nicolai) and a number of 'firsts' were recorded:

Most swans ever caught at once (n=55)

First time rocket nets have been successfully used to capture northern pintails (n=70)

First time a leg-banded northern pintail originating in Japan has been captured in Nevada

Lion harvest for the Eastern Region, year-to-date, has been 62 lions compared to 64 lions last year. One week remains for the season and with snow conditions still favorable more harvest is likely. The 5 year average for lion harvest (all known mortalities) in the Eastern region is 69 lions. The ten year average is 86 lions. Currently the region is 10% below the 5 year and 28% below the 10 year averages.

A radio-collared bighorn sheep was killed in the Delamar Mountains last week. NDOW biologists and APHIS-WS personnel followed up and determined coyote predation to be the cause of death. Within 24 hours of this confirmation and working with APHIS-WS, NDOW directed a focused aerial hunting operation in the area during which a total of 10 coyotes were removed. Three of these coyotes were located on the sheep carcass itself.

Statewide antelope and elk surveys are ongoing. Spring deer surveys will begin in eastern Region following completion of elk, sheep and goat surveys in that area.

Habitat Division

The Habitat Division continues to participate and provide information to the Governor's committee on renewable energy transmission access.

The Habitat Division continues efforts in cooperation with other divisions to develop guidelines for the review of wind energy projects.

The Eastern Region has prepared draft comments on the Mountain City, Jarbidge and Ruby Mountain Ranger District Travel Management Plan. Habitat staff has written a letter through the Director to Forest Supervisor Ed Monnig requesting an extension of the deadline for scoping comments and suggested a public meeting on the subject in

the Reno area. We have also issued an invite to brief the Commission at the March meeting.

The Director, Habitat Chief and Habitat staff have met with the contractor and a representative of the Utah Partners for Restoration in order to organize an April workshop for initiating a similar Partnership for Restoration in Nevada.

Three meetings have occurred with Headquarters staff on the Ruby pipeline project. Discussions were primarily held on wildlife concerns and the NEPA process.

A contract has been prepared and approved by BOE for the archeological clearance of the Toulon road that had subsided and was allowing water to flow from Toulon into the Humboldt sink. As soon as the clearances are complete, NDOW will initiate maintenance of that road.

Work continues on the Comprehensive Management Plan for the Carson Lake and Pasture area scheduled for ownership transfer to NDOW by June of 2010.

A House Bill has been initiated (HR 1018) that would amend the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act. The amendment would result in direction to BLM to expand horse management areas into areas not presently available for horse management. It would also eliminate the use of helicopters for removal operations. This bill could have devastating impacts upon Nevada's wildlife resources. Habitat Headquarters has developed comments and provided them to WAFWA and AFWA for development of testimony for a House hearing to be held March 4. Habitat staff will prepare our input in a letter to be submitted to the Nevada delegation and others as appropriate.

Habitat Division has led the effort to get Nevada wildlife data to the Western Governors Association "Western Renewable Energy Zones" project.

Law Enforcement

Information received about a possible over limit of waterfowl at Walker Lake resulted in interviews of several employees of a local sporting goods store in Reno. A day long investigation led to a citation for performing taxidermy work without a permit and a warning for possessing waterfowl belonging to other's without the proper tagging.

Information received about a person trapping quail and moving them to an enclosure at a residence in Reno lead to a citation for the unlawful take of game and migratory birds.

Two suspects in the unlawful killing of three mule deer out of season and without tags in northern Washoe County plead guilty to the charges. The shooter plead guilty to a felony of unlawful killing of a big game animal and his partner plead guilty to a gross misdemeanor of aiding and abetting in the unlawful killing of a big game animal. Sentencing is set for later in February.

The ongoing investigation where a group of concerned individuals in the Gardnerville area released a bobcat from a legally set trap and took the animal to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator has come to a conclusion. After many man hours of investigation, it appears that a large group of citizens removed the cat after it had drug the trap into a tree located off of a highly utilized dirt road close to residences. The individuals tranquilized the cat, removed the cat from the trap, and took the cat to a local wildlife rehabilitator, who then delivered the cat to a veterinarian. The cat was euthanized due to its wounds. The concerned citizens have refused to implicate one person who could be deemed responsible for the removal of the cat. The case is being submitted to the Douglas County District Attorney for review.

Southern Region Game Wardens began doing "Dock Walks" checking for boats with registration violations.

The Southern Region attended an operations coordination meeting with the National Park service and Arizona Game and Fish. Arizona informed the group that due to budget cuts they will not be doing boating safety patrols the remainder of this budget year and next.

While eating at a restaurant game wardens were grabbed by a frantic citizen who claimed his cousin just committed suicide. Game wardens immediately responded to a nearby residence to find a man with a gunshot wound to the head.

Western Region Game Wardens attended the Reno Boat, Sport and RV Show and assisted at the NDOW booth by answering questions and providing information to the public.

Work continues with the TRPA on quagga mussels issues and boat inspections, the Blue Boating Program where a fee will be charged to inspect each boat before launching into Lake Tahoe for a properly tuned engine, proper propeller pitch, marine sanitation and bilge issues.

Our Panaca Game Warden located a stolen car hauler and assisted Lincoln County with recovery. 3407 also assisted Lincoln County in the recovery of 27 flat panel TV's that were stolen from a freight train in a remote area.

Game Wardens in Las Vegas and Panaca assisted in bobcat sealing. Over 400 bobcats were sealed in Panaca.

Southern Region Lieutenant attended the District 11 U.S. Coast Guard meeting in San Diego to discuss Boat Safety issues on the Colorado River.

Southern Region Game Wardens conducted range qualifications.

The boating law administrator chaired the United States Coast Guard (USCG) task force on regulatory review for boating accident reporting in Norfolk, Virginia with 15 recommendations being forwarded to the National Boating Safety Advisory Council for their consideration to improve and clarify how boat accidents are reported.

Wildlife Diversity

Sagebrush restoration efforts continued across Humboldt County this past month. Sagebrush seedling plant survival monitoring in the Hot Springs Range indicates plant survival levels of 93%. Plant loss was most likely due to rabbit herbivory. Division staff also attended a meeting in Carson City with the Director Mayer to discuss pre-suppression fire projects in the Winnemucca area, coordination of those projects, and future funding for those projects. Attendees of the meeting were from NDOW, BLM, NRCS, and Nevada Division of Forestry.

Personnel attended the Annual Nevada Chukar Foundation dinner in Winnemucca last month. At the meeting, staff presented a poster on "Partnering for Sagebrush Restoration – a greenhouse project in Winnemucca." Governor Gibbons attended the dinner and took time to visit with staff and talk about the project. The Governor was very supportive and particularly excited about how the project brought together sagebrush restoration while providing a hands-on educational opportunity for young Nevadan's about the importance to sagebrush restoration to Nevada.

Desk editing and printing of the Wildlife Diversity Division's 2008-2009 annual report have been completed and final copies of the report are being distributed to partners and interested stakeholders. The report highlights the close coordination taking place between the Department's division's and our partners in the conservation community to keep wildlife and their habitats healthy and to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered.

Staff attended five days of federal assistance grants management training in Sacramento conducted by the USFWS. The course provided a conceptual and working knowledge of advanced administrative and financial issues in managing grant programs administered by Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Program.

Staff participated in several watchable-wildlife related meetings for events planned this spring. At the last Walker Lake Working Group meeting, it was decided that the Annual Loon Festival would no longer be focused on the spring migration of this bird (there has been a downward trend in the number of loons utilizing Walker Lake for the past ten years). Instead, the focus of the event will change to an education day focused on the Lake itself. The event will coincide with Arbor Day and Earth Day and feature an array of conservation groups and government agencies all interested in the conservation and health of this rare desert terminal lake. Nevada Department of Wildlife will still provide boat rides to the public in order to view the Lake and observe wildlife. Wildlife Diversity staff also participated in a Spring Wings Festival planning meeting.

Winter eagle surveys were conducted by Diversity staff this past month to assist in determining eagle distribution, relative abundance and population trends in Nevada. Within the Fallon area, eighteen birds (six different species) were recorded. These included a golden eagle and a pair of bald eagles; in the Carson City, Lake Tahoe area, two bald eagles and one immature golden eagle were reported.

Within the Tahoe Basin, the winter field season of the East Shore Furbearer Project saw six new furbearer camera sites being set up and monitored. So far this season, staff has recorded two target species, namely long-tailed weasel and northern flying squirrel.

Staff attended the Lake Mead Science Symposium at UNLV and helped chair the riparian shoreline and terrestrial wildlife portion of the symposium. A presentation was given illustrating the Gila Monster Habitat Model project in collaboration with the New Mexico Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit.

Staff attended the Biological Resource Team (BRT) meeting as part of the Delamar, Dry Lake and Cave Valley water project. There was considerable discussion as to whether to include Pahrnagat Valley and White River Valley as part of monitoring efforts in the monitoring plan.

Staff continues to coordinate with Department of Defense, Nellis Test and Training Range (TTR), and the BLM related to efforts to restore springs impacted by horses in the Cactus Range of the TTR. A planned reconnaissance survey is scheduled the weekend of March 6 and 7.

Staff finalized a new MOU for the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center with its partners Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and Conservation Centers for Species Survival.