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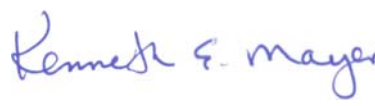
KENNETH E. MAYER
Director

RICHARD L. HASKINS II
Deputy Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 16, 2009

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

FROM: Kenneth E. Mayer, Director 

SUBJECT: Department Activities Report
Leadership Team Meetings for September 2009

Director's Office

Director Mayer introduced and welcomed new Deputy Director Patrick Cates to the Leadership Team and said he will be assisting Cultural Affairs, his former agency, for a short term while they fill his old position.

Director Mayer said he just participated in a online "survey monkey" (**SurveyMonkey.com** is a revolutionary tool to create and publish custom surveys in minutes, and then view results graphically and in real time) and wants the Department to look into using this technology.

Director Mayer reported on the September Commission meeting and assignments from that meeting: Provided committee list assignments for uploading to the website; letter from Chairman Lent to Director of DOIT requesting state emails for the Commission; need to provide science backup to the article written by Aaron Meier on sheep population numbers; Public Service Announcements (PSAs) done to increase attendance at County Advisory Board Meetings to Manage Wildlife (CABMW) meetings and the public's role in participating at the CABMW meeting; correction to June minutes; define Commission's role and facilitate budget participation; big game release plan on December agenda; Commissioner Cavin noted that there is no place on the timeline to build in setting the quota for the Silver State tag; Chief of Habitat Dave Pulliam needs to resend the legislative report for Commissioner Raine and the Commission; the habitat book that Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agency's (WAFWA) provided needs to be ordered and sent to each County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife (CABMW) chairman; Director Mayer will call

CABMWs to encourage them to send items about mule deer management; and ask Tony Wasley to update our "Best Management Practices" for individual deer herds. Fisheries Chief Mark Warren is requested to answer Commissioner Raine's question on Ruby Marshes being overgrown with weeds; Commissioner Capurro requested that the age structure be increased for youth hunters and would like something on the December agenda; Commissioner Raine requested that he is able to participate in aerial surveys this fall and would like to see flight schedule.

Turkey season clarification for Overton Wildlife Management Area was discussed and it was decided that the Game Division and License will send a letter to each turkey tagholder clarifying that they are not limited to the two units printed on their tag. There is precedent for sending such a letter to hunters. The letter will state that hunters carry the letter while hunting and wardens will be copied. Director Mayer said this error is an example of the need for a team to be assembled to help insure that these type of mistakes do not happen. This will be an opportunity to review the regulation and brochure process, and once completed the processes need to be memorialized in a Department policy. Regarding the goose season correction for Overton Wildlife Management Area, Game and Conservation Education Divisions agreed to make public announcements via a news release on goose season dates.

The MA III attended the quarterly Sierra Front Bear Working Group (comprised of representatives from all the local governments in Northern Nevada) and shared that local government are progressing with bear-proof container ordinances. Washoe County District Health Department will be amending their trash ordinance in December 2009. This means that the District Board of Health will be the Board voting on the bear issue, rather than the Washoe County Commissioners. Also, Carson City Board of Supervisors held their first reading on their bear-proof container ordinance and it passed unanimously. Carson City's ordinance includes language which prohibits intentional feeding of bears as well. This was recommended by NDOW after Incline Village General Improvement District (IVGID) reported a citizen "frosting" the trees outside their bakery and the IVGID was frustrated that they had no legal standing to require them to stop. The second reading for Carson City's ordinance is Oct. 15 at 8:30a.m.

The MA III contacted the local muzzleloader clubs in Nevada to educate and gain feedback on the recent Commission topic, a reasonable accommodation for visually disabled muzzleloader hunters in order to comply with the USFWS/ADA requirements. Ms. Jolly spoke at the Reno-based Lakes Crossing Muzzleloader club, whose members were very receptive to the strictly worded language that the Department is proposing. Their club will be sending a support letter shortly, and will attend the next Wildlife Commission meeting when the ADA regulation is scheduled. Ms. Jolly will attend Lakes Crossing's meeting again in November to reach any members that did not attend in October. Also, she is speaking at the

Carson City-based Eagle Valley Muzzleloader Club Friday night. The Las Vegas-based Spring Mountain Free Trappers Muzzleloader Club was also contacted and understood the issue. The Nevada Disability Advocacy Council also informed us that they will attend the next Wildlife Commission meeting when the ADA regulation is scheduled.

Director Mayer tasked new Deputy Director Patrick Cates with continuing the work on establishing the Nevada Wildlife Foundation.

The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) has list of actions to be taken and Director Mayer forwarded the list to the Leadership Team. There were over 100 action items identified by WAFWA for the coming year. The director also noted that for next year the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) is budgeting \$4,000 for director's costs to attend AFWA. Thus funds normally budgeted for the director's travel costs could be used for someone else to attend.

A letter from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has been received with a deadline of Dec. 31, 2009, for the muzzleloader sight accommodation.

Director Mayer said Operations Division is to delineate the process to obtain a Waterfowl Stamp after the season ends.

A teleconference with Allen Biaggi of Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and Susan Martinovich of Nevada Department of Transportation is scheduled to discuss Public Works Board project approval. Deputy Director Haskins said after the three directors meet that will lead to facilitating a later meeting with Director Andrew Clinger of Department of Administration to clear-up the issue of what Department projects need Public Works Board permits.

Deputy Director Haskins said the agency's request for exceptions to the furlough policy are in limbo and we need to follow up on the forms for the dispatch center. Chief Game Warden Buonamici said employee moving expenses within his Division are impacting their operating budget and he asked the chiefs for their input on implementing a cap on moving expenses. Director Mayer said for the chiefs to convene a group meeting to decide the moving expense cap as soon as possible.

Nuisance Wildlife Policy Discussion (Sept. 21, 2009): Director Mayer said on the website identify most frequently asked questions (FAQ's) and ask the regional staff to get involved by providing the best answers. Operations Chief Haughian said he has about 20 people on his staff who deal with the nuisance wildlife calls and wants to insure that they have the same information for the public, and he was told that guidance is forthcoming. Chief of Game Atkinson said his field staff also need guidance on calls as it is not for them to determine politically what the response is to a nuisance call. Director Mayer said we need a policy applied

consistently; however, if they have doubts about a sensitive call they need to run it up to the leadership team and code the hours appropriately. He said to look at the budget and see if there is any money that can be carved out to pay for costs being incurred, as the reality is that the Department must handle some nuisance wildlife costs. In the policy it was agreed that dispatch's phone number should be listed in the memorandum for staff and in the second memorandum provide more details.

The Habitat Division reported that Estill letter is complete and Ruby Pipeline agency directors' meeting is being coordinated and staff is potentially looking at Sept. 24, 2009. Habitat Division is also attending the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Coordination meeting. Deputy Director Haskins had it on the calendar for Nov. 4, 2009; however, the date is to be verified.

Deputy Director Haskins asked about the development status of policy and procedures regarding water development, and Game Division's policy for trapping and transplanting policy and procedure.

Staff has developed the agency calendar and the calendar can be accessed by the Division Chiefs.

Fiscal Services Section is working on the vehicle purchasing priority list, which needs to be prepared for January. One exception would be the fuel truck for air operations for November which may be sent to IFC/BOE in November.

Dale Hansen has been promoted in the Fiscal Services Section and is the federal aid coordinator. The chiefs need to insure that he is on email lists for grants.

Deputy Director Haskins said Sensitive Species list for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is being worked on. Administrator Jennifer Newark of Heritage sent a letter that kicked off the effort and is satisfied with direction we are going and wants to meet with Nevada BLM to make sure of the list. He said for staff to keep pressure on and to follow-up. He said that this is important because NDOW has no regulatory authority so it must go through another agency.

Per the request of the Director the MA III has been working with State Purchasing to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) to obtain cash ATM machines at NDOW offices where licenses are sold. Although the state has several offices with kiosks to pay (like DMV), the state does not have any contracts on ATM machines that allow pulsing of cash. NDOW's Credit Card Team determined that at this time cash machines are the most economical option and will improve customer service since we cannot take credit cards yet. The RFP is complete and the State Purchasing Division should be releasing it shortly.

Staff are updating the following internal Department policies and procedures: NDOW Computer Use Policy (incorporating new DOIT Security measures and other items), NDOW Leave Policy (incorporating new laws/regulations regarding Parental Leave, Pandemic, Telecommuting, and sick leave), NDOW Dress Code (which will include formal business dress for certain meetings where staff represent the Department).

Game Division

Game Division, Director's office attended productive coordination meeting with APHIS Wildlife Services to discuss upcoming predation management actions and field opportunities for FY2010.

Game Division is working with Department of Agriculture and NDOW Fiscal Services to complete, and pay for, final laboratory testing for the FY2009 State of Nevada Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance program.

Game Division has begun discussions related to potential Heritage Grant proposals for FY2011.

The Area 10 Game Biologist job posting resulted in approximately 70 applications. A short list of preferred candidates has been determined and final interviews are scheduled to take place October 26, 2009.

An elk depredation hunt has been established for Lages Junction. The purpose of the hunt is to harvest 15 antlerless elk (cows and calves) using the alfalfa fields in the vicinity of Lages Junction (Elko and White Pine Counties). The hunt dates are October 17 through November 1, 2009. There is an 8-year history of elk damage to fields and fences in this area.

During the Las Vegas Commission meeting Commissioner Raine requested the ability to participate in aerial survey and monitoring efforts this fall.

September agenda items: Big Game Release Plan for Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011 and a request for desert bighorn sheep from Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. The Commission will hear a request from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources for desert bighorn sheep to be captured during fall/winter field operations in FY2010.

Game Division received a wildlife damage complaint related to quail on a vegetable growing operation in Silver Springs. NDOW currently has no budget to respond to such complaints however, regional biologists are making an effort to work with the landowner to resolve the problem.

Pittman-Robertson funding requests for big game (W-48) and sage grouse (W-64) have been approved by the USFWS for FY 2010.

Recent waterfowl die-offs in the Reno/Sparks area have been investigated by the NDOW veterinarian and partner agencies (Department of Wildlife, USDA-APHIS WS). Avian botulism has been confirmed by lab analysis. Discussions are taking place that will establish management guidelines (water temperature and water level monitoring and manipulation) to reduce the potential for additional die-offs.

Lek data for 25 sage grouse trend grounds in White Pine County show a 17 percent decline compared to 2008. A record total of 145+ leks were visited in 2009 and 1,048 cocks were observed. Twelve new leks were found in 2009.

Fisheries Division

Last week the Fisheries Division held their annual fish stocking meeting. Hatchery Supervisors and Regional Fisheries Supervisors worked together to plan out the stocking for 2010. We plan on planting 106 waters throughout Nevada with 1,222,725 fish. Of these, 449,250 will be stocked in the Eastern Region, 338,350 in the Southern Region and the remaining 435,125 in the Western Region. Approximately 1,113,475 will be put in as catchables (>6 inches in length), while the remaining 109,250 will be stocked as subcatchables (6 inches or less in length). Species stocked include 114,800 brown trout, 39,500 tiger trout, 51,000 Pilot Peak cutthroat trout, 60,600 triploid rainbow trout, 883,525 rainbow trout and 73,300 bowcutts.

This week we will be meeting with Buck Johnson, owner of the Alder Creek Ranch and the primary water right holder for Onion Valley Reservoir. Buck requested a face-to-face meeting to get to know each other and discuss the future of the reservoir as it relates to fishing.

Virginia Lake is being partially drained by the City of Reno in order to repair the discharge gate. Fisheries will contact the City to determine if a salvage operation is necessary. Fish may be netted and transported to another urban pond.

Law Enforcement

Charges have been filed for killing an antelope in the wrong area in northern Washoe County. The hunter had an Area 3 tag and killed his antelope in Area 1. The gentleman lied about the location of the kill, but after a thorough investigation the hunter confessed that Area 1 was his preferred choice to hunt.

An antelope hunter when checked stated he was out looking for antelope and when asked for his tag, he hesitated, and then admitted the tag was on a small antelope he had concealed in his truck. The tag was not punched.

Reports have been coming in on bull elk being shot with hunters either not following up or not locating the carcasses. This makes for long investigations to determine if illegal activity occurred or wounding loss occurred.

Two serious injury accidents occurred over the weekend at Lake Mohave and Lake Mead.

Conflicts regarding "ownership" of water hole blinds have resulted in charges being filed against two hunters.

A Texas landowner called in regard to collecting mule deer semen from post harvested mule deer bucks. Texas landowner has been working with a Nevada licensed guide in putting this project together. Idea is for the hunters immediately upon killing their deer would collect those parts holding the semen, freeze them.

Cabela's has donated savings certificates for Law Enforcement's "Thanks for Doing it Right" campaign. Game wardens will be giving the certificates out to hunters and fishermen who have followed all the laws, with an emphasis on young hunters (while supplies last).

Habitat Division

Habitat staff attended several meetings with federal and state agencies with regard to impacts of the Ruby pipeline project and the development of mitigation packages.

Habitat staff attended the Nevada Agriculture Commission meeting.

Staff attended the Experimental Stewardship meeting in Cedarville, California.

Northern Water development crew is fully staffed. Southern Region crew recruiting is ongoing to fill the final position.

Job progress reports are being finalized for submission to the USFWS relative to our federal aid grants.

Wildlife Diversity Division

Wildlife Diversity and Habitat Divisions continue to provide input on the Ruby Pipeline Project. As part of the Biological Resource Team (consisting of BLM, NDOW and USFWS), Division personnel worked to complete a mile-by-mile

habitat classification analysis along the proposed pipeline with respect to Greater sage-grouse, pygmy rabbit, other sagebrush obligates, and big game species. This will serve as a basis for applying mitigation ratios to determine the ultimate mitigation compensation Ruby will entertain dependent on route. Work also began on developing a comprehensive package of mitigation options.

Along the eastside of the Lake Tahoe Basin, riparian wildlife habitat enhancement efforts have been completed for the season. This year, Division personnel supervised Nevada Conservation crews as they worked to treat approximately 10 acres of aspen habitat in the Hobart Franktown area. This included understory thinning of conifer species within riparian aspen stands. Personnel also continue to provide expert input on terrestrial and aquatic attributes for creek restoration efforts around the Tahoe Basin.

As part of long-term waterbird monitoring, fall shorebird surveys were conducted in the Lahontan Valley. At Carson Lake, only one water unit (Big Water) held water for shorebirds and water birds. An impressive number of American avocets (10,000) were observed during the first survey week while large numbers of long and short-billed dowitchers (7,000) were recorded during the second. All counts of shorebirds proved to be higher than those on Stillwater NWR.

Wildlife Diversity staff, working with USFWS Refuge staff, continued to conduct discovery surveys for American pika at lower elevation sites on the Sheldon Wildlife Refuge. Using GIS, potential habitat has been identified and mapped. During the first two weeks of August, personnel visited a number of these sites. This effort resulted in newly confirmed locations being recorded and habitat attributes noted. A more detailed plan will be developed to systematically survey sites next year.

