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DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

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KENNETH E. MAYER
Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 19, 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 - Oct. 5 - 16, 2009

Director's Office

Director Mayer reported that Senator Reid's Senator's has indicated that the Senator wants to discuss the Ruby Pipeline project to see where he can help the project along with the appropriate mitigation actions. He has been asked to come to Washington D.C. to talk about this and other wildlife related issues.

Director Mayer provided U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2009 final apportionment of WSR to 2010 Trial Apportionment. It appears NDOW will receive an additional \$2.5 million to 2010. This issue will be finding the state matching dollars.

Director Mayer asked the Leadership Team not to take their furlough days on Mondays as to not miss meetings.

Department of Administration has sent a memorandum that they are going to assess the state vehicle fleet and would like someone from NDOW to participate on the team. Lt. Paul Dankowski will be asked to represent the Department.

Director Mayer said the Heritage projects need to be submitted by staff and follow the process as delineated in the memorandum the internal deadline is Dec. 1, 2009. There were a number of projects that were submitted last year that were not funded that could be resubmitted.

Director Mayer reaffirmed that the Leadership Team notes need to be submitted by close of business each Tuesday. For meetings when specific topics are discussed then the Executive Assistant will take notes and prepare a draft to be finalized by the Director.

Deputy Director Haskins said he has a series of items for the Leadership Team to follow-up with: Washoe County School District has a high school student desiring to be an intern for the school year working in Conservation Education and he sent the email with the contact information to Chief of Conservation Education Kelly Clark; the Commission code for activities directly associated to the Commission meeting is "25" and for example staff attending the Commission meeting should use that code, but the code is only to be used for hard costs; sent email to Fiscal Services Section regarding Board of Finance meeting Oct. 13, 2009, relating to Question 1 bond funds and Chief of Wildlife Diversity Laura Richards will attend that meeting; has seen dates for northwestern Nevada round 11 of BLM Southern Nevada Land Acquisition meeting; email was sent to chiefs with new Commission committee designations; Department dress code policy and procedure has been sent for review by the Leadership Team; flight vendor contract monitoring may be transferred to Operations Division; Commission Regulation 07 - 07 amendment for the December Commission meeting has to be corrected and Chief of Habitat Dave Pulliam's staff will need to work with Game Division staff on the correction for Wildlife Management Areas and the second part of the fix is the spring turkey hunts. Deputy Director Haskins said the three staff members to work on the correction are Cameron Waithman, Craig Mortimore, and Elmer Bull, and possibly staff from Conservation Education. The lead for the regulation meeting is Elmer Bull in order to satisfy the suite of activities that occur on the Wildlife Management Areas.

The regulation review process meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2009, following the regular Leadership Team meeting.

Update on nuisance wildlife memorandum is that some codes are needed for Conservation Education and Operations Divisions to use and ASO III Dave Prather will provide the new codes.

Since July, Director's Office staff has been working with State Purchasing on a request For Proposal (RFP) for Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) in NDOW offices across the state where licenses are sold. With state government, nothing is as simple or quick as one would hope, as there are state purchasing statutes and procedures that each agency has to follow. However, the finish line is in sight. On Oct. 13 the RFP (RFP #1822) was released and posted via State Purchasing and can be found online at <http://purchasing.state.nv.us/services/sdocs.htm>. Any vendors wishing to apply must turn in their questions by Oct. 28 and their references by Nov.18. The review committee will evaluate submitted proposals on Dec. 1 and select the vendor that best meets those needs. After the letter of intent to award is prepared and the negotiation is done with the selected vendor, this new contract must be approved by the Board of Examiners (Feb. 9) before it is final. It will be final upon approval of the BOE.

Operations

The office of Patrick Cates, the new Deputy Director, is located at the Kietzke Lane office in Reno. Patrick is temporarily occupying the office of the Department's Land Agent.

Operations staff is working with Department of Information Technology to determine feasibility of establishing state email addresses (accounts) for member of our commission.

Lisa Schettler, the department's engineer, has departed NDOW. She's taken a promotion with Nevada Department of Transportation. Recruitment to replace her is underway and we hope to have the position filled by mid-November.

Operations staff worked with Buildings and Ground to find new facilities for the few staff operating out of the old facility at Mallory Way in Carson City. The new Game Warden office in Carson is now located in the Buildings and Grounds building. New and improved warehouse facility is now located at the old National Guard facility in Carson City.

The decommissioning of Schroeder Dam, in Beaver Dam State Park in Lincoln County, is progressing well and is expected to be completed by Mid-November.

Working groups continue efforts to deliver the legislatively approved Silver State Tag and Apprentice License to Nevada's sportsmen. By early estimations, the Apprentice License should be available for the Fall of 2010, and the application process for Silver State Tag should be in place by the Spring of 2011.

Operations staff, to include Information Technology, is working with Conservation Education to identify available teleconferencing facilities. Teleconferencing is desired to support both inter-departmental meetings, as well as commission and committee meetings. The initial evaluation is focusing on state university facilities.

Game Division

Game Division continues to refine capture and translocation plans for FY 2010, including source stock determinations, disease risk analyses, capture team contracts and biomedical protocols.

Recent complaints regarding a black bear - human interaction in Incline Village are being investigated. Game Division biologists have set a trap for the offending animal.

Reports of a sick desert bighorn sheep in the vicinity of Cottonwood Canyon (Wassuck Range) were received. Game Division biologist responded and located a young adult ram *in extremis*. The animal was

captured by hand and brought to Reno but arrived dead. A necropsy is being performed by NDOW's wildlife veterinarian and Department of Agriculture pathologists.

Eight estray domestic sheep have been reported from the East Range. The report has been forwarded to the Department of Agriculture. Follow-up will take place once potential owners have been notified.

Staff will begin collecting tissue samples from mountain lions and bobcats for the National Forensics Laboratory wildlife genetics program.

NDOW wildlife veterinarian attended the U.S. Animal Health Association annual meeting in San Diego. Among relevant issues discussed were domestic sheep – bighorn sheep disease interactions, approaches to control bovine tuberculosis in white tailed deer in Michigan and Minnesota and White Nose Syndrome in bats.

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 for Oct. 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 Oct. 17 through Nov. 1, 2009. There is an eight 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.

Fisheries Division

In the Southern Region, work continues on an emergency repair of the Muddy River fish barrier. The barrier was put in place to keep red shiners downstream and away from the protected species upstream. The Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) assisted in the project with labor, materials and a backhoe complete with operator. A permanent barrier is scheduled for construction in 2011 with BLM funding.

In the Southern Region a Las Vegas Review reporter is planning to accompany the hatchery crew from Lake Mead as they stock fish for “A day in the life of a fish truck driver” piece.

Routine fall population sampling is underway in the Eastern Region with electro shocking surveys completed on Cold Creek Reservoir and Comins Lake. Recruitment of largemouth bass was documented in Cold Creek Reservoir, which is needed to control the chub population.

Samples of largemouth bass and pike were collected from Comins Lake for the Environmental Protection Agency’s mercury study. Pike were again the most abundant fish contacted, followed by a few largemouth bass and three brown trout. There was very poor bass recruitment this year as dragonfly larvae were the most abundant food item in the pike stomachs. The largest age class of pike (~24”) is now sexually mature and will be spawning this spring.

Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) were augmented into Pole, McDermitt and Riser Creeks in the Western Region, after they were chemically treated to get rid of non-native salmonids in the past. A total of 110 were stocked into the three streams.

Crystal Peak Park Pond in Verdi is scheduled for a visit with Washoe County Parks personnel see the leak in one end of the bank. Treatment possibilities include lining a portion to the entire pond. Estimated costs vary from \$15,000 to \$50,000. Work is to be completed this fall and the new pond open to fishing for the first time spring 2011.

A gillnetting population sampling is scheduled for this week for Sparks Marina Park Pond and Tracy Pond staff have received reports of northern pike being captured in both ponds, although no actual specimens have been observed.

Staff received a report from a 13-year-old angler who said he caught a pike from Sparks Marina. His father reported the catch to the biologist who asked him to describe the fish to ensure he actually knew what a pike looked like. Last August, 1319 set numerous nets at Sparks Marina and did not catch anything unexpected and next spring staff will conduct additional sampling. Also had a report from an angler who claimed to be fishing the Tracy Pond (adjacent to the Tracy Power Plant – not the cooling ponds) that he too had caught numerous pike and nets will be set in the pond to assess species composition.

Law Enforcement

During the last month the Division has encountered several events involving individuals exporting deer semen from trophy Nevada mule deer. Individuals are attempting to introduce large Nevada genetics into their captive breeding

programs. One hunter reportedly paid over \$100,000 for a landowner deer tag for the purposes of collecting semen from a trophy buck. Legal issues include transportation permit requirements when a hunter collecting semen has a legal deer tag. Receiving states may have legal issues regarding importation and possession. Staff are monitoring other possible methods of semen take and possible trends in Nevada and other western states.

Conservation Education

The Conservation Education Division met at Lake Tahoe's Zephyr Point Conference Center Sept. 29 – Oct. 1, 2009. All staff was cross-trained in hunter education coursework and instructor evaluation, learned to conduct finger printing for instructor background checks, and archery education under the National Archery in the Schools Program curriculum. Staff learned about the North American Model of Wildlife Management, and initiated marketing ideas for the Aquatic Education program plan. Reporting of volunteer time was also discussed in detail.

The Duck Stamp Art contest deadline is Oct. 23 and the date for judging the contest is Nov. 7. Commissioners Wallace, McBeath, and Cavin have been notified of the date for the judging; however only two commissioners need to attend.

Video archives for the September Commission meeting were posted to the website Oct. 12.

The Conservation Education Chief attended the Carson City Supervisors meeting Oct. 15 where the city approved an ordinance to require bear proof garbage cans in affected areas.

Habitat

Habitat staff attended meetings with representatives of the Ruby Pipeline Project where federal and state agencies presented their mitigation recommendations. The meeting was productive but no agreements were reached on acceptable mitigation fund levels.

The habitat staff position to provide program leadership for the Nevada Partnership for Conservation and Development is advertised.

The Southern water development crew has the Wildlife Area Technician (WAT) III position filled and the Department is recruiting for the WAT II position. The northern water development crew is fully staffed. Both crews will be moving materials and equipment to Lincoln County this week and will be working together to rebuild five guzzlers, two for mule deer and three for antelope.

Work continues in developing job progress reports for submission to the USFWS relative to our federal aid grants.

Wildlife Diversity

Staff attended the media day event at the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center and responded to Clark County's proposed resolution to stop picking up unwanted pet desert tortoises. As a result of the resolution, staff proposed and discussed potential solutions to address the unwanted pet desert tortoise issues among Divisions, including potential modifications to existing state regulations and the adoption program. Staff met with USFWS staff to further discuss the situation.

Staff attended and presented at the Southwest Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Habitat Management Workshop and Annual Regional Meeting in St. George, Utah. Staff attended and presented at the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Amphibian and Reptile Subcommittee meeting in Austin, Texas. Staff is compiling herpetofauna collection regulations nationwide in preparation for a report and presentation at the Herpetofauna Regulatory Summit in Atlanta this November.

Staff in central Nevada will commence trapping of pocket gophers, and adapting the northeastern spotted frog species management plan to the Toiyabe sub-population.

Technical assistance and on-the-ground field work related to several sagebrush restoration projects in Humboldt County were undertaken during the past month. Staff worked with the BLM on fuels projects and sagebrush planting projects in the Double H Range and at the base of the Santa Rosa Range.

Wildlife Diversity staff continued greater sandhill crane baiting and trapping efforts in the western part of the state during September. To date no cranes have been captured, and trapping efforts have been suspended until next spring when breeding birds return to Humboldt County. As part of an ongoing wildlife water development study, a week of small mammal and reptile trapping efforts were conducted in the Owyhee Desert. This was the last survey period for this project and data will be compiled this winter.

Forest restoration and enhancement activities in the Tahoe Basin have finished for the field season. Eight acres were treated in 2009 and an additional two will be completed in 2010. Early results indicate the Hobart Creek riparian wildlife enhancement site has responded well to natural seed recruitment and re-seeding efforts did not need to be undertaken. As a result, site re-vegetation monitoring will continue for two additional years and management activities will be modified as needed.

Bat survey and monitoring continued throughout the month of September. In the Fallon area, fall activities and migration of tree roosting bats were recorded, while surveys of Brazilian free-tailed bats were conducted at McCarran Bridge in Reno. McCarran Bridge survey results recorded 30,000 individuals (including young of year). This represents an 85 percent decrease over the 2002 census (n=100,000). In addition to survey work, a presentation on bat conservation issues was given to approximately 100 members of the Sierra Club in Reno.

Personnel, together with staff from the USFS Carson Ranger District, conducted a preliminary field site visit in late September to determine if several proposed projects had the potential to impact mountain beaver occupied habitat. An active colony of mountain beaver was located on-site. To date, this colony represents the most easterly site in Nevada.