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STATE OF NEVADA  
**DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE**

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** May 28, 2010

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

**FROM:** Kenneth E. Mayer, Director

**SUBJECT:** Leadership Team Reports – May 2010

**Director's Office**

Leadership Team members compared notes from the May 14 and 15, 2010, Commission meeting for follow-up by staff:

- Commissioner Raine requested a bear hunt proposal discussion item on the June agenda – wild land bear population statistics relating to science of a limited quota hunt
- Restrictions and regulations proposed for domestic bred captive wolves
- Clark County Shooting Range Status Report on meeting facilities issue
- Staff to draft letter for Commission opposing closure of College of Agriculture and sale of Main Station Farm
- Staff to prepare a draft letter for Commission on supporting Ruby Pipeline
- Submit 2011 and 2012 calendar and committee meetings – CABMW workshops odd years - 2011/2013/2015/2017/2019/2021

Items for the June 25 and 26, 2010, Commission meeting:

- Finance Committee meeting in June 2010 will address CABMW budgets
- Duck Stamp Projects from Habitat Division
- Lyon CABMW budget as they did not submit a request before the deadline
- Meeting will start Friday on June 25 at 1 p.m.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) sage-grouse mapping meeting in Denver was attended by Director Mayer which was also well attended by BLM staff.

Director Mayer attended the Governor's May Cabinet meeting and Directors were advised that General Fund cuts may be as high as 50 percent for the next biennium and the Department needs to figure out how to reduce its General Fund dollars. Management Analyst 3 Jolly is accumulating cost-savings and revenue generating ideas for services not currently charged for. The need for future fee increases will be evaluated. Director Mayer had a later separate meeting with Governor Gibbons and Nevada Association of County representatives regarding status of sage-grouse.

Professor Kurt Pregitzer is leaving University of Nevada Reno (UNR) to be the Dean of the College of Natural Resources at University of Idaho.

Director Mayer and San Stiver made a sage-grouse presentation to Senator Ensign's staff on May 26, 2010.

Deputy Director Cates provided information to the Leadership Team on the Capitol Improvement Project (CIP) for the Ely office with enlarged office space, a lab, storage, and is tasking the chiefs to talk with staff to determine needs now and in the future.

Director Mayer met with Elko County Commissioners Charlie Myers and John Ellison to brief them on the Ruby Pipeline and the status of the deer herd. He conducted an interview on status of the deer herd with Elko's KNEV TV while in Elko.

Director Mayer and staff attended the joint NDOW/BLM Coordination meeting which was one of the best meetings that he has attended.

The Washoe County goose round-up was discussed. Geese will be translocated to Overton as Wildlife Services will continue to remove geese as part of its airport safety program.

The website Division home pages need to be reviewed monthly by each chief or their representative to insure that the site is updated and committee staff needs to review their committee sections to insure that all materials are posted.

The Department's Deputy Attorney General Nhu Nguyen traveled to Washington, D.C. to testify as the Department has intervener status in the lawsuit between In Defense of Animals and the BLM.

The group discussed the Department's recommendation for a zero quota for the bighorn sheep units affected by the bighorn sheep die-off. We will need to prepare for a statement for release after the Commission meeting if the units are closed and perhaps have a statement for Systems Consultants which would state "the bighorn sheep in those units experienced a catastrophic disease event."

Training for strategic plan and performance measure indicators occurred.

The Directorate staff attended the Interim Finance Committee meeting to present the agency budget splits and although staff was ready for the presentation that lack of a quorum prevented approval of the plan.

Director's Office staff working on the following Internal Department Policies and Procedures: a new Water Development Atlas Funds Policy, a new Volunteer Refreshment, Per Diem, and Awards Policy, and updates to the Commission and Committee Support Policy.

Director's Office staff submitted, by the May deadline, eight bill draft requests (BDRs) to be considered by the Executive Branch for possible submission to the legislature. Five BDRs were housekeeping and three BDRs were substantive. One BDR will assist law enforcement across political boundaries with an interstate compact and state adaptation of the Lacey Act, as well as make Nevada accident reporting consistent with federal boating law. Another BDR will provide peace officers discretion in the child firearm law for non-violent violations, as well as to provide some guidance for juvenile court judges on poaching penalties. A third housekeeping BDR will expand the special fishing permit to include nonprofits for the benefit of children, as was previously available before 2003. The next two housekeeping bills will probably be considered budgetary bills, not required until September along with the agency budget: Bill to broaden the use of the habitat conservation fee to allow for use in general management of wildlife, the way most other wildlife agencies do. This bill would not change the existing fee (\$3) on annual licenses, but does require this conservation fee to be paid on all permits, such as short-term fishing and hunting permits. The next bill will establish a separate gift account to facilitate and promote gifts and donations to the department. Many agencies have similar funds. This would allow creation of a non-executive budget which would simplify the process of accepting donations with reporting requirements to the Legislature. This will have no impact on the Heritage Account. Of the three substantive bill drafts, one BDR will create an Interstate Boundary Waters Fishing License for non residents to help Nevada be competitive once again with the Arizona Colorado River Fishing license, and by adding California border waters as a bonus, giving us another marketing tool. Another substantive BDR provides substantial civil and criminal penalties for injurious aquatic wildlife (piranha, pike, and snakehead), and aquatic invasive species (lists of species and infested waters determined by regulation). This bill also provides clear authority to regulate, address aquatic invasive species, including authority to inspect and impound boats with invasive species, and help fund an Aquatic Invasive Species Program through an add-on \$10 user fee to all boat registrations. The shed hunting permit BDR will give clear authority to regulate shed hunting, require education, and help pay for the program through a user fee for commercial collectors up to \$1200, to be set by regulation.

Director's Office staff is requesting that NDOW be granted an agenda item on the last Public Lands Committee meeting of the year July 30, 2010, which would be held in Ely, and would like to make presentations on the following three items: The benefits of outdoor recreation to the state, how fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing are drawing tourist dollars into rural economies; Partnership for Resource Conservation and Development (also known as the War on Cheatgrass) and its progress including introducing the new coordinator; and may share the conceptual summaries of the Department's BDRs that relate to public lands.

Work continues on updates to outdated Department Policies and Procedures. The MA 3 is bringing together Departmental Federal Aid Coordinator, Budget Analyst, Hunter Education Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, Conservation Education Chief and Deputy Directors to resolve some issues associated with interpretation the Federal Aid In-Kind Match Policy for Volunteers, the creation of a Volunteer Refreshments Policy, and aspects of their implementation, i.e. volunteer work hours used as in-kind match for federal aid, and employees serving as volunteers in capacities unrelated to their jobs. With new people come new interpretations, and the on-the-ground work by our coordinators and volunteers will be explained more thoroughly to improve understanding. These policies are guidelines that include what Nevada statutes and the Federal Aid requirements we must meet, while still providing the flexibility to assure that our dynamic agency can fulfill our mission and our employees and volunteers are supported in doing that. Additionally, the statewide coordinators are collecting the policies from other state wildlife agencies to help us avoid “reinventing the wheel”.

MA 3 and the NDOW Credit Card Team met a few weeks ago with the contractor for the State of Nevada who is the specialist for credit card acceptance and processing for state agencies. Mr. Izzy Hernandez was a wealth of information and will assist the agency in moving forward to accepting credit/debit cards at the counter for NDOW offices across the state. While it has been verified that according to credit card company regulations, no merchant can charge a convenience fee for face-to-face transactions such as at a counter (to recoup the credit card fees charged to the merchant), Mr. Hernandez explained that there are options for NDOW to keep the start-up and implementation costs down. Operations Chief will be preparing an executive summary for the Director on the next steps to move forward in this goal.

### **Conservation Education**

The Outdoor Education Academy was held at South Lake Tahoe May 21-23. Fifty-five volunteer hunter and angler education instructors from around the state participated in training classes on National Fly-Fishing in Schools Program; Angler Education Program Discussion; Volunteer Database; Medical First Responder Training and how to improve a Hunter Ed class using Laser Shot and Hunter Ed Tools software. Thank you's go out to Game's Kevin Lansford for his presentation on “Game Management and Wildlife Conservation;” to LE's Paul Dankowski and Steve Tomac for their “Nevada Wildlife Law and Most Common Wildlife Violations” and Rob Buonamici for being our keynote speaker.

Western Region Hunter Education staff are reviewing the option to return the hunter education program in Carson City to the Capital City Club, instead of continuing to use the Fuji Park Pavilion. A memorandum of understanding with both the gun club and Carson City will be necessary for this change to occur.

The Humboldt County Shooting Range is scheduled to open June 6 in Winnemucca. The Pittman Robertson Funds Section 10 Range Enhancement funds paid for \$80,000 in improvements to the range, including a small building with a bathroom.

Work continues to revise the Overton Nature Center contract with PBS&J. The original contract terminated March 30, 2010. Final plan sets are pending.

Staff are reviewing a grant opportunity with together with the Fisheries Division to educate the public to Clean Drain and Dry to avoid spreading a new disease: Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS), which can wipe out fisheries. VHS is a fish disease that is prevalent in the Great Lakes, and is transferred from bodies of water via ballasts in boats. This disease has had severe impacts in the Great Lakes.

Staff developed press releases on recommended quotas, the Wildlife Commission meeting, Wildlife Heritage Trust Fund expenditures, and approved quotas. A video news release on mule deer was provided to Reno area television stations.

The Lapsed Angler Outreach program, funded by a grant from the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation matched with License Dollars, is well on its way for 2010. The second postcard will be mailed out June 21, with a target and emphasis on dads for father's day.

Southern Region staff attended and spoke at the annual Nevada Wildlife Federation banquet held at the Clark County Shooting Park Education Center. Several NDOW volunteers were recognized during the event: Dave Rojas, Hunter Educator of the Year; Carpenters Training Center, Conservation Organization of the Year; and Monte and Jeylene Ash, Wildlife Conservationist of the year. In addition to hosting Hunter Ed courses, the Carpenters have provided significant labor hours in preparing the CCSP education center for use by the Hunter Education program. Monte and Jeylene have been the mainstay of CWD testing efforts in the Southern Region.

Eastern Region media efforts included writing press releases on the Bighorn Sheep Die-Off for the agricultural periodicals and one on Big Game Quota Recommendations. Director Mayer was also on a 5 minute segment that aired last Monday on Elko's KENV TV. Thursday, the monthly 5 minute segments on the three Ruby Broadcasting radio stations talking about quotas and the commission meeting were completed.

Nevada National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) moved to the next level two weeks ago with 30 participants, including one home-schooled student, traveling to Louisville, KY for the National Tournament. More than 7,000 youth participated in the event. Though official results have yet to be released, at one point an archer from Fallon was in line to place 11<sup>th</sup> overall in the middle school age class.

Applications have begun to come in for the NASP Grant provided by Nevada Bighorns Unlimited. NBU generously agreed to support purchase of archery kits through a targeted grant to schools that showed both commitment and need for the program.

Eastern Region staff participated in the annual Elko County School District Special Needs Fishing Day, providing all the gear and volunteers to take 15 to 20 special needs kids fishing at the

Spring Creek Marina. While not many fish were caught, it was a beautiful day and it was lots of fun. Staff also held a 2-day fly fishing clinic last week with casting instruction in the park in the evening and float tube fishing at Dorsey Reservoir. This was the culmination of the fly tying class with students using the flies they tied. Ten students and 3 volunteer instructors participated.

NDOW's *Wild Horse Position Statement* was forwarded to Mike Reese, Clark CAB member for discussion at this week's CAB meeting. He is waiting for the Wild Horse fact sheets currently being prepared by the Habitat and Game Divisions.

The Department's Recreational Boat and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) lapsed angler outreach project is moving forward on schedule. Radio ads began airing on Reno and Las Vegas ESPN affiliates and will run through late August. We are featuring a Shakespeare promotion/rebate in the first postcard and our lobbies statewide and this is creating a bit of buzz nationally as it seems some states are fearful of using the promotion. NDOW's postcard is featured in an RBFF newsletter article highlighting our use of the rebate promotion. Last year's seed list, with a few additions, is being used and an email went out last week asking listees to contact Outdoor Education Coordinator (OEC) as soon as they receive the card.

### Fisheries Division

Staff received a call from an angler who reported catching a northern pike in the Truckee River, May 24, 2010. He said he was fishing just downstream of the Lake Street bridge and the fish was approximately 3 pounds. Unfortunately, the fish got off before he could pull it up onto the bank, so we couldn't confirm the identification, but the angler says he is certain that it was a pike as he has seen many while fishing some infested waters in California. In 1997, a pike was caught by an angler in the lower Truckee (9.5 pounds), so the occurrence of pike in the Truckee is possible.

Utah has possibly detected quagga mussels in Sand Hollow Reservoir, which is a pump-storage reservoir on the Virgin River near St. George. This is probably no big surprise because of lots of boat traffic to there from Lake Mead, but the first Utah detection off the main Colorado River system. As yet unconfirmed, they have collected "a" mussel which is undergoing PCR testing to see if it's a dressinid mussel for sure or not. The Utah folks will undoubtedly increase the pressure on Lake Mead NPS to "do something".

A meeting in Ely was held on May 21 between Fisheries and Steptoe WMA personnel to discuss the future of Comins and Bassett lakes. Several possible plans were discussed for the two lakes to get rid of northern pike and reintroduce game fish. The proposed action to a mercury issue at Comins will be finalized later this year with recommendations from the EPA and NDEP, who have been sampling the area for the past year.

May 1, 2010, saw the opening of four settling ponds at the Mason Valley Hatchery for the first time in history for one day and one day only. The four ponds were open from sunrise to sunset

with a three fish limit, any size. The main reason for the opening was to support a kid's fishing day locally (Yerington area), although the ponds were open to fishing for everyone. The first pond in the series was dedicated to kids fishing from 8 am to noon, with fishing done by age groups. According to the ticket count, 112 kids fished and caught 11 fish that ranged in length from 17 3/8" to 22 1/4". The largest pond, Kuenzli, produced a 7-pound LMB. A total of several hundred people attended the event that was supported by the Yerington Lion's Club and NDOW. Law Enforcement, Hatchery and Fisheries personnel were in attendance at the event.

### Habitat

Habitat staff continues involvement in the Ruby Pipeline Project. BLM Permits for the project have not been received. As a result, the construction schedule is slipping and construction is not expected to commence until some time in July. Details are being worked out for specific construction practices such as stream crossings and environmental compliance. An internal meeting was held with the BLM, agency Law Enforcement representatives, the Law Enforcement and Habitat Divisions to discuss the issues of the Vya Labor Camp and possible budget support. In addition a notice to hunters who draw tags in the construction area may be developed to warn them of activity. The group is expected to have representation at the Contractors orientation meeting in Elko.

The Nevada Partnership for Conservation and Development recently held a meeting to discuss the organizational Charter, local working groups, current pilot projects and how the organization will proceed with business. Materials including a brochure and website are being developed to increase public awareness.

Cost estimates are being obtained for water sampling and analysis necessary to obtain a permit to release water from the Mason Valley WMA to the Walker River. NDOW is obligated, through an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation, to make a good faith effort to release approximately 1,500 acre feet of water per year for delivery to Walker Lake. When cost estimates are finalized, NDOW staff will apply for a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to help defray costs associated with water sampling and obtainment of the necessary permit. NFWF has been tasked with purchasing or leasing water from willing parties on the Walker system and has expressed interest in assisting NDOW with its efforts to deliver water to Walker Lake.

Habitat and Diversity Staff met with state and federal agencies to discuss database management, data security and data sharing between the agencies. We are collectively attempting to share formats and make the information compatible. The next meeting will occur between the data managers.

Habitat and Diversity staff conducted a field review of proposed high voltage transmission line routing in close proximity to Carson Lake. The lines (in support of geothermal development) are expected to be between 75 and 100- feet tall and if close enough to the lake, could pose a

significant collision concern. A meeting with the BLM and other agencies is scheduled for June 16 at which time NDOW will express its concerns.

Habitat Staff will be looking to supply alternate funding of select Heritage Habitat projects that were not supported by the Commissions Heritage Project funding decisions.

The Supervising Habitat Biologist for the Western Region has retired.

At a recent Division staff meeting it was announced that both Division Chief Pulliam and Staff Specialist Gebhardt will be leaving NDOW. Mr. Gebhardt's responsibilities will be covered by Elmer Bull (who will be covering the Water Development, Duck Stamp, Upland Game Bird Stamp and Habitat Conservation Fee programs) and Steven Siegel (who will cover the Mining and Industrial Pond Permit Programs).

Staff will be submitting a grant through the BLM for the Abandoned Mine Program before he leaves. The Acting Division Chief will be named upon Mr. Pulliam's departure.

### Operations

NDOW Helicopter display and flight for Truckee and Verdi Elementary Schools students – Chief Pilot Lloyd will support a Con Ed request for a brief helicopter flight and static display schedule at Verdi Elementary School on June 4. Students at the Truckee Glenshire and Verdi Elementary Schools are participating in the Truckee-Verdi "Adopt a Mule Deer herd project." Two lucky students, selected based on their academic performance and involvement in project, will be offered a brief flight on the Department's Bell Jet Ranger helicopter.

Video Conferencing coming soon to the Elko office – With the new T-1 line installed in the Elko office, IT staff to spend week there later in June setting up the new router and configuring all staff computers. Additionally, a TV monitor will be set up in the conference room to support video conferencing. Once the set up is completed, users at the Elko office will be able to participate in video conferencing with the NDOW offices in Las Vegas and the Kietzke Lane office in Reno. The remaining stage of this project is to set up the conference room at the main office on Valley Road with similar conferencing equipment. We anticipate these video conferring facilities will be able to support most of the agencies communication needs, with the exception of commission meetings.

Resolution to federal audit land holding discrepancies commences week of June 1 – Bill Bennett, NDOW's Land Agent, begins the effort with the assistance of the Nevada Division of State Lands to resolve the acreage discrepancies which were identified in the Jan 2010 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) audit report. Discrepancies were identified between the numbers of acres accounted for by the USFWS and NDOW records. Approximately 20 parcels in varying sizes are under review. These discrepancies are expected to be resolved no later than December 2010.

New efforts underway to bring credit card use to customer service counter – with the assistance of Department of Administration, staff continues to evaluate the possibility of allowing customers to use of credits cards for transaction activities at our customer service counters.

### Wildlife Diversity

Annual shorebird and waterbird surveys are underway across the northwestern part of the state. In Lahontan Valley, shorebird surveys were conducted twice. Numbers were higher during the initial survey, however, temperatures during the second were low and many birds were concealed in thermal cover. Waterbird surveys on Walker Lake in late April resulted in 92 common loons, 649 eared grebes and 670 American white pelicans being counted.

Work with the USFWS on wildlife habitat enhancement at Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge continues. Native seed combinations have been selected and ordered based on soil types, wildlife benefit, availability and cost.

Northern goshawk dawn acoustical surveys in the Lake Tahoe Basin continued this month. Three surveys were conducted, however no goshawks were detected.

Considerable time was spent on Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in April. Four meetings were attended and several days spent developing contracts for funds available through the Environmental Improvement Program (EIP).

Review of geothermal exploration, wind energy, fuels treatments and other projects were made and comments submitted to the Habitat Division.

Winnemucca personnel worked with consultants to the Ruby Pipeline Project and UNR to develop and refine possible on-the-ground research projects to evaluate effects of pipeline construction on pygmy rabbit populations.

Wildlife Diversity Division staff attended a Las Vegas and Pahrump BLM District Resource Management Plan (RMP) meeting to identify potential species models that could be useful indicators for land management practices as part of the RMP revision. Staff developed species model spreadsheets noting limitations of any current models and appropriate citations.

Tonopah staff spent time coordinating and implementing aerial and ground surveys for cliff nesting raptors and sage grouse. Aerial surveys yielded 34 golden eagles (mostly individuals on nests), 20 prairie falcons, one large unidentified falcon (peregrine or prairie), nine red-tailed hawks, 10 turkey vultures, seven kestrels, 14 common ravens, one unidentified accipiter, and one northern harrier.

Staff attended the Pet Desert Tortoise Workgroup meeting to discuss various alternatives to reduce the prevalence of unwanted pet desert tortoises. A follow up meeting is scheduled for May 12.

Staff has spent time reviewing and preparing responses to various habitat documents and also attended an allotment tour with BLM. In addition, the Biological Resource Team (BRT) is nearing completion of the Delamar, Dry Lake, and Cave Valley Monitoring Plan.

Staff reviewed numerous scientific collection special use and falconry related permits, coordinating and initiating contracts, uniform development, preparing for upcoming field surveys, edits and completions of job progress reports and budget submissions. Staff also provided revision recommendations to special use and commercial collection permits.