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MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 14, 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: June Leadership Team – June 21 and 28, 2010

Director's Office

Director Mayer discussed the review of all heritage projects conducted by Fiscal Services staff to determine compliance with appropriate regulations. Almost all projects submitted were determined to have deficiencies, including those submitted by the Department. This should be a wake up call that we need to do a better job in the future.

Director Mayer and Deputy Director Haskins and staff attended a meeting regarding the development of conservation agreements (CA) and candidate conservation agreements with assurances (CCAA) for sage grouse. The meeting was co-sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and was attended by some 30 people.

Director Mayer was appointed to the Great Basin Environmental Program by Governor Gibbons and attended the first meeting in Salt Lake City.

Leadership Team reviewed the draft agenda for the June Commission meeting and determined coverage of agenda items.

Deputy Director Haskins and the Leadership Team discussed Priorities of Government (POG) training that they attended and the deadline for submissions to the Fiscal Services is July 14, 2010.

Close out memorandum for Fiscal Year 10 has been issued and Fiscal Services has over 200 documents without invoice or purchase order and will be working with staff to finalize closing ends.

Reviewed the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners' meeting June 25 and 26, 2010, in Ely: Formalization and review of Heritage projects tasked to Gabe Pincolini; Chairman Lent and Commissioners Cavin and Capurro requested hard copies of the Department activity report; Commissioner Howell requested that the bear season process be on the August agenda; Commissioner Cavin requested that application hunt deadline information be consistent wherever it occurs, i.e. the website, brochures, regulations – and clarify if deadline is mail or email; Chairman Lent requested Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Stockton to research statutes of any unsubstantiated claims against public officials; the Commission asked whether the hunt application change regulation would be ready for review by next meeting; CGR 383 August agenda; Chairman Lent requested copy of internal policy on Commission and Committee Policy and Procedure: graduated penalty for poaching of large animals staff to develop regulation; Paul Dixon Clark CABMW requested that sportsmen have choice between online small wallet size tag or the larger tag that is sent to you; starting balances of accounts needs to be provided to the Commission when requesting expenditure of funds; bighorn sheep disease update needs to be standing item on every agenda; wolf regulation; report due to Commission on project status for duck stamp and upland game stamp requests; petition accepted from Nevada Guides and Outfitters Association; and DAG Stockton requested list of recipients for landowner compensation tags and elk incentive tags for elk, antelope and mule deer.

Conservation Education

Both the coyote and the predator management brochures are now out for printing bids, so they should be ready for distribution in the next couple of weeks

The webmaster set up a new email newsletter system for distributing emails via our listserv. This new system provides better usability and database management. It will also allow us to track emails distributed by NDOW using Constant Contact, a leading email marketing provider.

Chief and staff prepared for the Boone and Crockett Club's 27th Annual Big Game Awards held June 22 - 26 and the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno. NDOW had a booth and Director Mayer will be the welcoming speaker at the opening ceremony June 25.

Paid weekly fishing reports began running this week on two Las Vegas area radio stations. Reports are recorded in-house then sent via e-mail to the station where they are tailored for the specific stations. The two minute weekly fishing forecasts are scheduled to run on 16 different radio stations in Carson City, Elko, Ely, Fallon, Las Vegas, Reno, Winnemucca, and Yerington. The fishing promotion will continue through July, running on Friday mornings between 10 a.m. – noon on the contracted stations. The promotion is running parallel to the Lapsed Angler Outreach program, NDOW recently mailed postcards to those

anglers who have still not purchased a license this year. The weekly fishing forecasts are also available online at www.ndow.org

In addition to preparing the new weekly radio report, Eastern Region staff filled in as a guest columnist on Nature Notes for the Elko Daily Free Press; worked with habitat staff to write a column on energy, wildlife and NDOW's participation in the various energy projects around the state; and prepared the weekly radio, TV and fishing report for the Elko newspaper.

Southern Region staff attended a Bureau of Land Management (BLM)/NDOW coordination meeting in Las Vegas. The BLM is beginning work on an environmental assessment for Master Guides and subguides. Eastern Region staff went on a Eureka RAC field trip with Habitat for the BLM 3 Bars Project.

Preparations are currently under way for the 2010 antelope workshops scheduled for July 7 at the Education Center at the Clark County Shooting Park and July 15 at the William Raggio Building on the UNR campus. Letters were mailed Friday inviting the over 2800 antelope tag holders to either seminar.

Southern Region personnel prepared and delivered a presentation on “marketing your programs to the public” to Clark County School District staff and other educators.

Fisheries

In the Southern Region, initial creel surveys of Dacey Reservoir at Kirch WMA found that the reservoir has been consistently producing rainbow trout in the 16-28” range. It’s a bit early to tell for sure, but the approach of limited stocking and tackle restrictions seem to be having the desired effect.

The June Amargosa toad surveys went very well last week with excellent weather conditions and abundant animals contacted at most sites. Almost 200 toads were captured at the Spicer property on Monday night, approximately 70 percent were new captures including a lot of larger adult toads; this reflects the good survey conditions as these animals have obviously been around for a few years.

NDOW held a field trip after the White River Recovery Implementation Team (RIT) meeting to look at the restoration project completed last fall at Flag Spring, Kirch WMA. This looks great – the new Middle Flag Spring channel is forming up nicely and we are now finding White River spinedace using the channel areas of North and South Flag Springs where they were previously absent because of water velocities. Total available spinedace habitat in the upper spring system is probably increased by at least 50 percent.

USFWS has received fish passage funding to complete a fish passage structure at the lower end of the River Ranch reach of the Pahranaagat River. This area is where Pahranaagat roundtail chub get diverted into an old drain ditch and can't get back out. A site visit was completed with the USFWS contractor on Thursday and it looks like they will be able to complete the project by late this summer.

In the Western Region (WR), most of the WR crew will be working on Crowley Creek this week conducting a top-to-bottom fish sample for the purpose of collecting fin clips for genetic evaluation. Last year, genetic work conducted on LCT originating from the bottom end of Crowley (Priority I LCT recovery/donor stream) revealed introgression with introduced rainbow trout. There is a complex of several large beaver dams separating the LCT in lower Crowley from those above, so we're hoping that the fish above the dams are still pure and we can eradicate the hybrids below.

Last year was our first attempt to establish a refuge of Walker Lake tui chub in Rose Creek Reservoir in the Wassuk Range. Tui chub are spawning en masse at Walker Lake, so we'll be out there this week collecting fish to supplement the population at the reservoir. Access to the reservoir was late in coming this year so we'll also have our first opportunity to see if the first introduction was successful.

The road into Marlette Lake was finally cleared of snow June 24. The crews and trailer moved in the following day. As of June 29 we had 500 ripe females to spawn (rainbow trout), which were spawned June 30. Spawning was July 2. The station is expected to be open for another 10 days.

Game

Upland Game and furbearer season recommendation adjustments were presented at the June Commission meeting. Other Game Division topics that were presented at the meeting included Wolves, Bears, the Wells Elk Plan Amendment request, a Mule Deer Restoration Sub-Committee meeting and an Elk Damage-Incentive Sub-Committee meeting. The Mule Deer Restoration Sub-Committee meeting was held on June 25. Habitat staff Lee Turner made an excellent presentation on a new habitat restoration program he is heading up for the Department that will be similar to Utah's and hopefully result in significant expenditures of dollars on the ground for the improvement of range resources (wildlife habitat) in Nevada. The Elk Damage-Incentive Sub-Committee meeting was also held on June 25 and presentations were made to provide updates of the elk damage fund and ongoing projects and the elk incentive tag program. The Committee has decided to pursue changing the terms of the current elk incentive tag program to allow the use of those tags in any season similar to the deer/antelope compensation tag program and to explore emergency big game tags that are coordinated with the landowner to address big game depredation issues similar to Idaho's program and to explore elk incentive tags for cow elk.

Just before and over Father's Day weekend three wildland bears were trapped and radio-collars were attached to one female which brought the total of working collars up to four. The biologist still needs to find and capture the three with failed collars. A game warden investigated an incident on June 19 when a 17-year-old shot a bear in the Virginia City Highlands. Apparently the bear had been on his deck, etc getting into a fridge, cooler and trash left outside. The individual was advised that they should remove the attractants and our policy is that we try to remove attractants before we set traps to remove bears. He had told dispatch that he was going to shoot the bear if it came back. He shot at the bear as promised. Apparently it kept coming onto his deck despite his yelling and chasing it. A warden responding to the call set a trap Saturday night in case it came back. A bear was in the trap Sunday morning but may have been a separate bear. In late July NDOW biologists located and killed a large black bear that had been causing many problems over the past two years. This bear was caught and collared in early 2009 in Stateline and weighed 580 lbs. At the time the bear had not been observed but was tipping over trash cans. A radio collar was attached to the bear. Last summer he started breaking in to homes and killing livestock all the way from Fallen Leaf Lake in South Lake, CA to Washoe Valley. This summer alone he killed 12-15 sheep in Washoe Valley. California Fish and Game was receiving complaint reports because of this bear also, but they couldn't catch him. The bear was finally located near Hobart Reservoir on an earlier flight this month. Lathrop interns found his signal from the ground but could not get a visual. Using dogs the biologist was finally successful in locating and removing this problem bear.

Capture results from the 2010 Canada goose capture and release program resulted in 298 birds caught. The total includes 148 juveniles, 112 unmarked adults and 38 recaptures. A total of three mortalities occurred at the holding facility (two juveniles and one adult), which equates to 295 birds being relocated this year. NDOW banded 257 previously unmarked Canada geese (146 juveniles and 111 adults). Recaptures recorded totaled 38 (22 from the Truckee Meadows, 1 from Carson City and 15 from Lake Tahoe). Recapture rates are as follows: overall 25 percent, Truckee Meadows 28 percent, Carson City 14 percent, Lake Tahoe 24 percent. This year's overall return rate is above the nine year average of 19 percent. This was due to the higher than average return rate experienced in the Truckee Meadows this year (average is 14 percent). Carson City and Lake Tahoe's return rates have declined over the last three years. The following table shows the release history for the 2010 capture effort:

Location	Adults	Recaptures	Total Adults	Juveniles	Total
Overton WMA	12	3	15	100	115
Key Pittman WMA	29	8	37	22	59
W.E. Kirch WMA	31	6	37	18	55
Wildhorse Reservoir	39	21	60	0	60

Carson Lake	0	0	0	6	6
Total	111	38	149	146	295

Wildlife Services bled a total of 41 adult Canada geese to test for the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza. They were bled instead of swabbed because current research suggests that in general Canada geese do not test positive for avian influenzas with swabs, however, serology should show exposure. Also, at the time of sampling Canada geese are no longer shedding the viruses through cloacal or nasal secretions.

Staff also assisted Elko regional biologists in locating radio-collared Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep to monitor for survival and lamb production in the wake of the winter die-off in the East Humboldt's and Ruby Mountains. A total of 155 bighorn mortalities (52 rams, 85 ewes and 15 lambs) have been documented in the Ruby Mountains and East Humboldt Range, equating to a 46 percent observed mortality loss of the estimated population of both units pre-disease event. Nine of 16 marked bighorn are still alive in the Rubies. Two of these have suckling lambs and one other unmarked ewe has been observed with a lamb. Three of nine marked bighorn currently alive in the Rubies were given Draxxin. Twenty bighorn including seven rams, 10 ewes, and three lambs have been observed in the Rubies. Fourteen bighorn including three rams and 11 ewes have been observed in the East Humboldt Range.

Some monitoring of springs and water developments in the Southern Region has been implemented to document reported bighorn use from nearby Death Valley National Monument and chukar production in other areas.

The Lincoln County biologist is attending a meeting with Lincoln County Commissioners regarding a field trip with Senator Rhodes to review the Table Mountain area where development of a wind energy site has been proposed. A field tour with BLM was attended to look at various sagebrush and P-J treatments to compare methods and results.

Biologists in the Southern Region are working with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to put together a Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation project to remove nine miles of old dilapidated barbed wire fence and possibly install six elk jumps in a portion of the fence that needs to remain in place. A young bull had become entangled in the fence in the past.

Habitat

Ruby Pipeline Project: NDOW and the BLM have signed and therefore approved the Cooperative Conservation Agreement for Sage grouse and Pygmy Rabbit. The BLM plans to issue the Record of Decision to Ruby the week of June 28. This decision will include many pages of requirements which will need to be met prior to issuance of a Notice to Proceed. Safety training will be required of all

NDOW employees in order to be present on the project site during construction. Construction start continues to fall behind schedule and concerns are increasing that this will impact mule deer during the late fall/winter season. A contact phone number has been requested from Ruby for the public (including hunters) to call for current project information. Conservation Education will place a project map on the NDOW website which depicts the project location and access roads planned for use during construction.

Wild Horse Strategy: Habitat Chief Dave Pulliam presented testimony to the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board at their recent meeting in Denver to provide a review of the new BLM strategy. His review was mixed with the plan containing some encouraging strategies while also presenting measures which could result in an increase in wild horse use areas. There is great concern regarding the impact of some strategies upon wildlife. The Department is working with WAFWA to develop a review position and response.

Support letters continue to be provided for all planned wild horse rounds ups.

BLM: The Winnemucca District Draft Resource Management Plan was issued for review. It is expected that the BLM will release the contracts for work on the Ecoregional Assessment for the Central Great Basin and Mohave regions this week. NDOW will play a key role in development of those assessments. Nevada BLM has come up with additional mitigation funding for sage grouse.

Carson Lake and Pasture: A review of electric transmission line routing alternatives was provided to the BLM in regards to connecting the proposed geothermal development on the east side of the area to a grid connection in Fallon. Any alternative that would encroach on the transfer lands or routed through NDOW's 80-acre parcel were identified as problematic. The concerns include shorebird and waterfowl collision with wires and towers and new opportunities provided for nesting and perching of raptors and ravens.

Renewable Energy: NDOW responded to a data request from the State Energy Office for areas of high wildlife resource values that would be avoided in a request for land from the BLM for energy development. Data layers of habitat for game and non-game species were provided along with advice regarding the data's use. State Lands will be developing the mapping for the request.

Projects continue to roll in with additional requests for geothermal leases and wind energy projects.

Partners for Conservation and Development: Activities concerning the Nevada Partners for Conservation and Development (NPCD) include giving a presentation at the Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition's annual meeting, participating in a field visit to the 3Bars restoration project site and giving a presentation to the Battle Mountain BLM who will be overseeing the

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 3Bars project. Staff presented NPCD to the mule deer subcommittee in Ely in June.

Staff continued dialog and meetings with BLM, NRCS, private landowners and livestock permittees for project work in Paradise Valley, the Pine Nut Range, the Desatoya Range and the Wassuks. Projects are focused on Pinyon-Juniper thinning treatments and noxious weed treatments. Continue meeting with NDOW game, habitat and diversity biologists in their respective areas to make project site visits.

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs): A Wildlife Management Area coordination meeting was held last week at the Kirch WMA. Managers from the Western WMA complex, Steptoe Valley, Kirch, Key Pittman, Overton and the Franklin Lake / Bruneau River complex attended the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to allow each manager to discuss current management strategies being used on their areas with the overall goal of trying to make sure that we're all up to date on the most current and most efficient methods of accomplishing tasks that need to be done on our areas. From that standpoint, the meeting went very well. The meeting also provides a great opportunity for our managers to socialize and this year's meeting included a fishing expedition on Wednesday evening during which everybody had the opportunity to enjoy the great bass fishing at Adams-McGill and Dacey reservoirs. The meeting concluded with a tour of a proposed pond leveling project during which valuable ideas were conveyed on how best to accomplish that project.

The habitat staff specialist for WMAs attended the recently held meeting of the Board of Wildlife Commissioners in Ely and presented lists of projects proposed for funding through duck stamp and upland bird stamp funds. The Board approved Duck Stamp funding for 23 projects totaling \$141,036. However, the Board postponed approval of 10 upland bird stamp projects proposals pending the provision of additional information concerning details of salary expenditures and status reports on some projects that were funded in fiscal year 2010. That information will be provided at the August Commission meeting.

Law Enforcement

Game Wardens participated in a national campaign on detecting boaters Operating under the Influence (OUI). Operation Dry Water in Nevada netted 3 OUI arrests; two in the Southern Nevada and one in the Northern Nevada. 129 citations were written for other boating violations and 150 warnings were issued.

Game wardens are being pulled off of law enforcement patrols and investigations to respond to numerous bear complaints.

Operations

Big Game Draw results and other draw-related issues – here's some highlights from the 2010 main draw (draw 5), as reported by our contractor, Systems Consultants:

Total Applications for the 2010 draw were 150,819. This is a drop off of 1,020 from 2009 when we received 151,839 total applications

The total 150,819 applications in 2010 were comprised of 143,967 on the web and 6,852 on paper. There is growth in the web applications from 143,585 in 2009 (382 more in 2010 to make 143,967) and a drop off in paper applications from 8,254 in 2009 (1,402 less in 2010 to make 6,852)

The total clients in 2010 were 54,923, a growth of 569 over the 54,354 who applied in 2009. These 2010 clients were divided between 39,247 residents and 15,676 non-residents

The average number of applications submitted by clients in 2010 dropped off slightly -- to 2.75 in 2010 from 2.81 in 2009. This explains how we could see more clients and yet less applications in 2010

We identified the primary culprit for the drop off. Namely, in 2009 the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep hunt was offered to non-residents and garnered 5,662 applications (1,845 for bonus points and 3,817 for the hunt itself). This hunt was not offered in 2010. If even 5,000 of those applications received in 2009 for this hunt had been received in 2010, we'd have easily ended up with a nice growth this year

The "second draw" (Draw 6) deadline is July 6 at 5 p.m., with refund processing to commence shortly thereafter. The "first-come, first-serve draw" (Draw 7) begins July 23.

Pilot III interviews to begin soon – With the recent promotion of Bob Lloyd to Chief Pilot, we've been recruiting for the vacant Pilot III position. To date 13 applicants have successfully passed the Department of Personnel's screening process with the plan to fill this position by the end of July.

Information Technology staff are headed to Elko later in July to include installing the video conferencing equipment in the conference room, finalizing the remaining actions for the new T-1 line, and installing new computers for staff.

Engineering and Maintenance continue bringing improvements to NDOW, the supervising engineer, has received submittals from four engineering consultant

firms competing to take on the development of mandated Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) for NDOW's dams. Of the 20 dams owned by the department, six must have EAPs because they are classified as "high hazard" or "significant hazard" structures. In the world of maintenance, a project is slated in July is asbestos abate at the residence at Overton.

Land Committee meeting anticipated for late July – Bill Bennett will update committee members on the current status of the land-related projects underway, to include an update on his research effort to resolve the various noted discrepancies identified in the January 2010 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service audit report. Our deadline to resolve these discrepancies is December 2010.

Wildlife Diversity

Wildlife Diversity Division staff in Tonopah continued sage grouse surveys, cliff nesting raptor surveys, shorebird and waterbird surveys, and Toiyabe spotted frog egg mass surveys.

The Southern Region reptile biologist conducted reptile pitfall arrays, conducted surveys for Gila monsters, and assisted with Amargosa toad surveys.

Las Vegas staff continued peregrine falcon surveys, and assisted the Game Division with aerial sage grouse surveys and raptor surveys in Tonopah. Staff also participated in the 2011 Western Bat Working Group conference planned for Las Vegas.

Staff continues surveys of the statewide Breeding Bird Survey and Nevada Bird Count surveys via USGS and Great Basin Bird Observatory.

Staff provided species-habitat predictive models status spreadsheet to BLM partners as a guide to be used for development of the Las Vegas District Resource Management Plan and revision.

Wildlife Diversity Division staff has been actively working with private landowners and agency partners (NRCS, Lahontan Audubon) for wildlife surveys and restoration efforts in Pahrnagat Valley.

Staff has spent time reviewing and preparing responses to various habitat documents, including the Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, solar energy projects, and others.

In addition, the Biological Resource Team is nearing completion of the Delamar, Dry Lake, and Cave Valley Monitoring Plan. Wildlife Diversity Division staff has been active in providing wildlife comments during development of the plan.

Staff reviewed numerous scientific collection special use and falconry related permits, coordinating and initiating contracts, final edits and completion of job progress reports, and budget submissions.