

Eureka County Wildlife Advisory Board

Minutes

March 15, 2010

The Eureka County Wildlife Advisory Board met in the Eureka County Administrative Facility on March 15, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Chairman Chris Torres, Chad Bliss, Mike Taylor, Jim Evans and Dale Hornickle

Members Absent:

Others Present: Mike Podborny-NDOW, Joe Maslach-NDOW, Larry Gilbertson-NDOW, Assemblyman Goicoechea, Gary McCuin UNR Extension Educator, Jake Tibbitts- Natural Resources Manager, Kathy Porter-Natural Resources Assistant,

Call to order

Chairman Chris Torres called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. A quorum was determined to be present.

Review and Approve Minutes-

The minutes of the February 1, 2010 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved, on a motion made by Mike Taylor and seconded by Dale Hornickle.

Election of Officers-

Jim Evans seconded. Mr. Hornickle moved to that all officers remain in their positions for any other term. Mr. Taylor seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Budget- Discuss, approve or deny submittal of budget request to Commissioners for fiscal year 2010-2011.

Jake Tibbitts handed out a draft memo to be presented to the Eureka County Commissioners requesting \$40,000 for the FY 2010-2011 to pursue on-the-ground wildlife enhancement projects by the thinning and reduction of P-J around key springs and other water sources. As instructed by the board, Mr. Tibbitts looked into the estimated costs of hiring a contractor to write an EA for the enhancement projects on BLM administered lands, to expedite the process. The \$40,000 will go towards the expense associated with the EA. Chairman Torres asked if there are matching funds that could be applied for. Mr. Tibbitts reported that that the County's contribution can be used as seed money to apply for matching funds such as the Wildlife Heritage Trust Account and volunteer hours can be recorded to apply for in-kind funding. Mr. Bliss reported that water right holders are concerned that the BLM will require partial ownership of the water right when BLM dollars are involved in improvements. By Eureka County paying for the EA, BLM dollars are not spent therefore the water right holders issues with BLM involvement are removed. It has been clarified with the water right holders that neither the spring source nor the water improvements will not be touched, only the trees around the source. Mr. Bliss added that with the Sage Grouse being added to the candidate list, ESA protection being warranted but precluded, the Sage Grouse position could elevate quickly. These projects can also show that Eureka County has worked on Sage Grouse habitat improvement projects. Mr. Evans volunteered to write a small EA for no fee. Mr.

Hornickle suggested focusing efforts on one or two small projects, doing it well and then beginning the process on other projects. Mr. Bliss reminded the Board that Mr. Darrington of the BLM recommended including several spring projects under one EA to cut costs, since an EA can be very costly and time consuming. Chairman Torres and Mr. Bliss volunteered to attend the Commissioners budget meeting Wednesday March 17th at 1:00 p.m. to present the Eureka CAB's proposed budget item. Mr. Bliss moved to move forward with sending the proposal as written to the County Commissioners. Chairman Torres and Mr. Bliss will be present to answer questions. Mr. Hornickle seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence and reports

Wildlife and Mule Deer Enhancement Projects in Eureka County-

Discussion regarding proceeding with wildlife and mule deer enhancement projects in Eureka County

Larry Gilbertson of NDOW reported that big horn sheep deaths are still on the rise due to pneumonia in the East Humboldt and Ruby Mountain's. Mike Podborny reported they have counted 90 sheep lost to pneumonia. Some of the sheep they have administered antibiotics to have radio collars making them easy to track and monitor. Of the sheep that have been administered antibiotics some survive and some die. They will continue to monitor the sheep and to monitor the effects on lambs. Mr. McCuin asked if the illness has been identified specifically as pneumonia. Mr. Gilbertson responded yes, the micro plasma has been specifically identified. He went to say that sheep normally carry two forms of pneumonia but the micro plasma form usually kills the sheep when they get it. Assemblyman Goicoechea asked what the percentage of die-off is. Mr. Gilbertson and Mr. Podborny agreed the die-off is at least 50% and it could go as high as 80-90%. Chairman Torres asked if the illness will affect quotas. Mr. Gilbertson responded the quota recommendations will probably decrease to at least one this season and they possibly will have to close the season next year. Mr. Gilbertson and Mr. Podborny agreed they really won't know the effects on herds until next year. They have been reluctant to use the helicopter as it adds a strain to the ill animals and they probably will not even count this year. They will be capturing a couple of sheep that were transported to the Mount Moriah in 2006 to see if the micro plasma strain is present in those sheep or if this is a new strain. Mr. Podborny added that they want to study this illness rather than euthanizing the sheep. Mr. Bliss asked if they will be cleaning all of the equipment used on the ill sheep before capturing potentially healthy sheep. Mr. Gilbertson reported that this has been discussed with veterinarians already and they will be washing everything, including overalls and clothing worn by workers. Mr. Gilbertson added that a mountain lion had moved in on the East Humboldt sheep. This lion has since been killed.

Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners Agenda and support material

The Board reviewed, discussed, and took action on a few of the support materials and agenda items for the upcoming Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners' meeting. Any item that was not acted upon was either not of concern to the Board or there was not enough information to take any action. The specific items discussed and acted upon are as follows:

Reports-Informational

Action Item 1: Appeal-Mr. Robert G. Wallin

The Commission will hear an appeal from Mr. Wallin on the Department of Wildlife's denial of his 2010 master Guide License.

The board did not feel that they could provide any valid recommendation due to the lack of support material and interest in the matter.

Action Item 3/11: Commission General Regulation 380, Application Amendment, LCB File No. R155-09- Program Officer III Maureen Hullinger

The Commission may adopt a proposed regulation change that would allow a tag applicant to withdraw or amend an application previously submitted.

This item had been supported at a previous CAB meeting. Mr. Bliss moved to support the regulation as previously voted on. Mr. Taylor seconded, motion carried 4-1, Mr. Hornickle opposed.

Action Item 4/12: Commission General Regulation 354, Silver State Tag, LCB File No. R196-09-Program Officer OOO Maureen Hullinger

The Commission may adopt a proposed regulation change that would establish language for the Silver State Tag and drawing.

Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea addressed the ECAB concerning the unnecessary complications and delays of getting the Silver State Tag (SST) implemented while all CABs have been in support of the SST. Assemblyman Goicoechea requested the CABs engage again in communicating with the Wildlife Commission, the Governor and Legislators with their support of the SST. Assemblyman Goicoechea went on to say that he understands the unhappiness that the CABs, especially Eureka, have with the Wildlife Commission not listening to the Counties recommendations and comments regarding the SST. Assemblyman Goicoechea is also very aware of the disconnect taking place between the CABs, the Governor, Legislators and the Commission, and among the Commission members themselves. Assemblyman Goicoechea reminded the ECAB of the upcoming elections that will bring new leaders to the legislature. He asked the ECAB to use the system that has been set in place by sending letters, copying correspondence on important issues and copying CAB recommendations to the Governor and legislators. He stressed that it is important that the CABs make their voice heard by the right people who can help affect change. Assemblyman Goicoechea stated that the legislature passed the SST and that it should move forward expeditiously and not be held up through other measures. Assemblyman Goicoechea also stated that the language of legislation in regulation is seldom perfect and he recommended that the SST regulation go forward with the understanding that there will be possible changes later.

Mr. Bliss moved to support the Silver State Tag regulation language as drafted knowing there could be minor details to work out later. Mr. Taylor seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Item 5/13: Commission General Regulation 381, Crayfish Regulation, LCB File No. R176-09 Chief Game Warden Rob Buonamici

The Commission may adopt a proposed regulation prohibiting the importation, transportation or possession of certain crayfish, authorizing the Department of Wildlife to issue certain permits or licenses to an institutional member of the Zoological Association of America.

Mr. Bliss moved to support Regulation 381, the crayfish regulation. Mr. Taylor seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Action Item: 6/14 Commission General Regulation 382, Colorado River Regulation, LCB File No. R004-10- Supervising Fisheries Biologist Jon Sjoberg The Commission may adopt a regulation relating to waterways; requiring vessels to be operated at a reduced speed along a certain portion of the Colorado River.

Mr. Hornickle moved to abstain from giving any recommendation being Eureka is unaffected by the proposed regulation on the Colorado River. Mr. Taylor seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Action Item 7: Approval of Sponsoring Agency for Nevada Duck Stamp Art Contest- Chief of Conservation Education Kelly Clark

The Commission is being asked to select a sportsmen's group to sponsor the annual Nevada Duck Stamp Art Contest for the 2011 and 2012 contests.

No opinion on this matter.

F: Wildlife Damage Management Committee- Commissioner Raine

The Eureka CAB is continuing to work with moving forward with projects to enhance mule deer in Eureka County. Chairman Torres and Chad Bliss will be attending the County Commissioners budget meeting on March 17 and will be requesting a line item on the ECAB budget for the next fiscal year. The Board would use this money as seed money to move forward with on-the-ground projects that would enhance wildlife populations and protect wildlife habitat in Eureka County through thinning and reduction of P-J around key springs and other water sources. The board has already had discussions with BLM in starting the process to move forward with projects on BLM administered land. BLM has informed the board that if it wants to pursue a project, NEPA would need to be satisfied and that the process could be greatly expedited if the County were to fund the Environmental Assessment (EA). The county money would go towards the expense associated with the EA. Once the EA is finished, the project will be accomplished using in-kind volunteer labor (i.e., hand thinning with chainsaws) similar to the efforts that go into installation of water guzzlers. The board also hopes to use this county funding to leverage match funds from other sources including the Wildlife Heritage Trust Account.

Chad Bliss further informed that board that he had contacted two ranchers and Eureka Moly LLC and they are interested in having P-J cleared from around their springs on their private property and on their BLM allotments. It has been clarified with the water right holders that neither the spring source nor the water improvements will not be touched, only the trees around the source. The board discussed more springs that need cleared and will talk with more water right holders and permittees. The board is going to try to move forward with projects on private land while pursuing permission for public land projects. Jake Tibbitts will organize an April special meeting with interested water right holders, NRCS, NDF, and possibly BLM to discuss funding and logistics and to further the efforts on both private and public land. Members of the White Pine County Board will be invited also to sit in on the meeting.

G: All Gifts, Donations and Bequests to Nevada Department of Wildlife Presented to Commission for Recognition- Deputy Director Patrick Cates

The board did not have enough information to make an informed recommendation.

H. Trail Cameras- Chief Game Warden Rob Buonamici

The board discussed the pros and cons of trail cameras use and discussed the difficulty of enforcement. There was general consensus that trail camera use itself is not bad, only the ancillary issues that may be associated with trail cameras (i.e., manipulation of wildlife movement or behavior to get a picture). Since this item was not an action item, the board chose to gather more information to make an informed recommendation in the future if this comes up for official action.

I. Litigation Report- Deputy Attorney General David Newton

Mr. Tibbitts reported that Western Watersheds Project has filed an appeal on the decision of the Sage Grouse being warranted but precluded from the threatened list. There was no further information regarding litigation.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 10, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Tibbitts will contact the board with details of the April, special meeting.

Public Comment

Mr. Bliss informed the board he will be traveling to Las Vegas on Thursday for the Wildlife Commission meeting on Friday. Chairman Torres will also be attending the meeting.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Mr. Bliss and seconded by Mr. Mr. Hornickle. There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Approved this _____ 6th _____ day of March _____ 2010.

Respectfully submitted: ____/s/ Kathy Porter_____, Secretary
Kathy Porter

Approved: ____/s/ Chris Torres_____, Chairman
Chris Torres