

NEVADA BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS

Wildlife Damage Management Committee

Nevada Department of Wildlife
Conference Rooms A& B
1100 Valley Road
Reno, Nevada

June 28, 2008
11:00 a.m.

MINUTES

Those Committee members in attendance were:

Clint Bentley – Chairman
Jim Jeffress – Commissioner
Dave McNinch – Commissioner
Pete Mori – Commissioner
Scott Raine – Commissioner
Mel Belding – Member
Joel Blakeslee – Member

Also in attendance were:

Joe Bennett – Wildlife Services
Marshall Goldy – Self
Matt Goldy – Self
Ira Hansen – Self
Mark Jensen – Wildlife Services
Kevin Lansford – NDOW, Staff to Committee
Ken Mayer – Director, NDOW
Don Molde – Self

Agenda Item #1 – Call to Order – Chairman Bentley

Chairman Bentley called to meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Agenda Item #2 – Introductions – Chairman Bentley

The meeting was held immediately following the Commission meeting so no introductions were necessary other than stating the meeting name.

Agenda Item #3 – Approval of Minutes from the March 29, 2008 Meeting – Chairman Bentley – ACTION

The Chairman asked for any discussion on the minutes prepared for the March 29th meeting. Commissioner McNinch stated that because he was not at the meeting he would abstain from voting. There being no further comment, it was moved and seconded to approve the minutes as written. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Agenda Item #4 – Commission Member Items – Chairman Bentley

The Chairman asked the Committee members if there were any items they wanted to discuss, there were none.

Agenda Item #5 – Public Comment (*Please limit comments to 3 minutes*)

Don Molde – Presented a hard copy of a letter he previously sent by email earlier in the week that is contending the sportsmen comments that there is a profusion of predators in Nevada that are impacting the deer herds. He has also provided information that was used to develop the tables attached to the letter. Dr. Molde also stated that his position is far more credible with the information he has provided. Those in attendance who would like a copy of the letter were invited by Dr. Molde to contact by his email address (skyshrink@aol.com) and he would send the information to them.

There was no further public comment.

Agenda Item #6 – Review the Assessment of Projects 14, 15 and 17 – Kevin C. Lansford – INFORMATIONAL

Kevin gave a power point presentation with a synopsis of the three projects. (This presentation is held at the Department of Wildlife's Reno Office and can be viewed there upon request with advance notice).

Projects 14 and 15 - The Horse and Cattle Camp Loop and the White Rock in Hunt Units 222 & 231 – This project was scheduled for conclusion this year, but it will be continued to work on an assessment by an independent person from UNR. This person will assess the data to get a clearer picture what we think we are accomplishing.

Project #17 – Elko County Deer and Elk in the Ruby Mountains in Hunt Units 102 & 103 – This project is “on paper”, in its final year unless the Committee decides to continue it. A four-year assessment of the project with one year left. The treatment areas are Unit 101 the East Humboldts, Unit 107 the Wood Hills, and 105 Spruce Mountain (the south end of the Pequops). Control work is being done on lions and coyotes to try and enhance fawn production and winter survival. Commissioner Mori asked why the treatment areas and control work were in different mountain ranges. Kevin stated that treatment is

occurring in Units 101, 105 & 107, and we are using control in Units 102 & 103 as a comparison. Kevin stated that the work being conducted is not a total control area because sport hunting of predators also occurs in this mountain range, so this causes some “noise” in assessing the data. Commissioner Mori asked what the distance was between the areas. Kevin stated in some locations the distance is only across the road, and these units were selected for their similarities in habitat.

Kevin stated that has been working with Kelly Stewart of UNR (the current large mammal ecologist) whose field of expertise is deer and elk, and she is very up-to-date on predator issues. Discussions have been concerning how to set up projects better so when they are compete we can determine if the control project has worked. We can pick an area and establish some criteria that will standardize how we do these projects. When a final assessment is prepared we won't have a stand-alone project but two or three that are set up the same way doing the same thing. All three projects can be assessed at the same time making the data more reliable/defensible, and we can basically go to the sportsmen and tell them which projects are working and which are not.

Kevin stated that future projects should better assess the size of the project, area and the herd(s) involved. Indicators that can be done prior to project work are to assess the health of the deer (basically does), habitat, surveys of predators, and fecal analysis. This information will provide better information to determine if the herd is being impacted by predators or if other factors are involved.

Kevin further stated that he, Mike Cox, Mark Atkinson, and Kelly Stewart are working together to put together a protocol and methodology to identify deer herds in Nevada that meet the criteria of a predator limited population. Commissioner Bentley stated that this effort is commendable and will become more important as this program continues.

Agenda Item #7 – Review Projected Budget for 2009 – Kevin C. Lansford - INFORMATIONAL

Kevin presented the Committee with a synopsis of the projected 2009 budget. A final was not yet available as the final bill has not been received from Wildlife Services yet. Some increases were gained in lion tag sales and application, so what we will probably receive last year will be the same for this year. Kevin further stated that we will have enough funding for one more proposed project during this fiscal year.

Two items Kevin is going to push for is more helicopter time for surveys and aerial hunting, and hire a lion hunter to get to a certain area to take a depredating lion when Wildlife Services is busy. The option of directing sport hunters to hunt areas for a fee or just direct hunters to hunt specific areas was discussed as a viable option. Kevin stated to be the most efficient and to be exactly where and when you need to

Agenda Item #8 – Review Potential New Projects for 2009 – Kevin C. Lansford – INFORMATIONAL

Kevin stated that we will have “a window of opportunity” depending on how efficiently the Committee assesses we use the contingency fund. One example is the raven project where we had an immediate need to go in and remove ravens to protect sage grouse nesting areas, and we had the ability to do so. The

contingency fund should be used for sportsmen's projects, while still performing control work on predators. Chairman Bentley stated that we need to spend a bit of money on research to keep the program in business.

Commissioner Jeffress asked if any projects have been proposed within the Department or other sportsmen's organizations. Kevin stated that none had been received from outside groups, and new projects this year revolve around lions, bighorns, and raven control. Kevin, Mike, Mark, and Kelly had a coordination meeting, and they gave all of the local area biologists a list of what the type of projects the group is looking for and how it will help them. These projects should be designed in 2009 and slated to begin in 2010.

Commissioner Jeffress brought up sage grouse areas that have ravens and overhead transmission lines. Kevin stated he has been working with Shawn on a methodology to identify areas where we can apply the tool for sage grouse enhancement, and have a methodology set up for pre-during-post analysis and surveys.

Mel Belding stated that it would be interested in finding out if there is a competition between different predators. Kevin stated that we learned from Pete Coates study on sage and sharp-tailed grouse in Elko County, that badgers predated more nest after ravens were removed in some areas.

Commissioner Bentley asked when we would have the projects that might be of interest for this next year. Kevin stated that projects they are working developing will be ready for 2010, as this is the final year for Project #17 and we have extended 14 & 15. There is a potential for a large project to be proposed in 2010. Commissioner Bentley stated that at our August meeting we will have no new projects to approve just a continuation of the current ones. Kevin stated we have the potential for a small project with a little left over funding.

Commissioner Bentley stated the sooner Kevin could provide the Committee with the larger scale proposed project the better.

Agenda Item #9 – Establish Date, Time and Location of the Next Meeting – Chairman Bentley – ACTION

Commissioner Bentley asked if we could hold this meeting on August 15, 2008 beginning at 10:00 am (Ultimately changed to 08:00 am) Commissioner Jeffress stated that the TAAHC meeting has been set for August 14th at 7:00 p.m., but it may be moved to the 15th at 8:00 am depending on everyone's availability.

Agenda Item #10 – Adjourn – Chairman Bentley

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

July 30, 2008

Dawn Carter
