

BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS

Mule Deer Restoration Committee

Meeting

Nannini Administration Building - Elko
540 Court Street - Room 102
Elko, Nevada 89801
September 16, 2010 , 11:00 PM

MINUTES

Committee members in attendance were:

Scott Raine, Chairman – Commissioner
John Carpenter – Committee Member
Pat Laughlin – Committee Member
Cory Lytle (via phone) – Committee Member

Absent committee member

Wilde Brough – Committee Member

Staff and interested public in attendance:

Joe Bennett – USDA WS
Bill Taylor – USDA WS
Mike Laughlin – self
Tom Barnes - self

Agenda Item #1– Call to Order – Chairman Raine

Chairman Raine called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m.

Agenda Item #2 – Approval of Meeting Minutes from August 20, 2010 – Chairman Raine - ACTION

John Carpenter moved that the committee approve the minutes of August 20, 2010 and the motion was seconded by Pat Laughlin. Motion unanimously passed and minutes approved.

Agenda Item #3– Committee Member Items – Chairman Raine - INFORMATIONAL

Committee member Lytle expressed a desire to raise revenues specific for mule deer and posed the question of whether it was possible to incorporate an additional fee into the application process. Chairman Raine and committee member Carpenter both stated that any fee increase would need to be legislatively approved. Some discussion of logistics of fee increases ensued.

Committee member Carpenter requested a financial estimate to do a comprehensive predator control project including helicopter work in the Ruby's for 5 years from I-80 in the north to Overland Pass in the south. John carpenter asked to have that cost estimate on the agenda for the next meeting. Joe Bennett indicated that he would get with Wildlife Services director Mark Jensen and have something for the next meeting.

Agenda Item #4 – Public Comment – Chairman Raine – INFORMATIONAL

No public comment was heard.

Agenda Item #5 – Review for Possible Action, Issues Affecting Mule Deer. Issues to be Considered for Possible Action Include; Compatibility with Livestock/Grazing Methods, Predation, Hunting Season Structure/Threshold for Closure, Climate/Precipitation, Agency Bureaucracy (how to work with State and Federal agencies to enhance mule deer populations), Observational Biology vs. Biology of Game Production/ NDOW Agency Structure, Deer/Elk Competition, Development (urbanization, mining, energy, etc.), and Wilderness. – Chairman Raine – ACTION

Chairman Raine asked staff to the committee, Tony Wasley, about livestock compatibility with mule deer. Mr. Wasley addressed 3 main areas of concern relating to livestock and mule deer compatibility; 1) hot season use of mule deer browse species by cattle, 2) Removal or reduction of fawn hiding cover and thermal cover e.g. riparian areas, and 3) Long-term same season use of rangelands that result in detrimental shifts in the proportional abundance of species to the detriment of both livestock and mule deer, while also potentially increasing the threat of catastrophic wildfire.

Pat Laughlin encouraged NDOW to continue to work cooperatively with the land management agencies in an effort to lessen the detrimental impacts of livestock on mule deer.

Tom Barnes expressed his personal frustrations with the limited resources in the federal agencies to allow for permit modifications and threats of law suits when changes are proposed. Mr. Barnes emphasized that flexibility in grazing permits is the key to minimizing livestock impacts on rangelands and wildlife.

Discussion ensued.

Chairman Raine concluded on this issue that it required two statements. 1) a general statement on grazing compatibility and such. 2) a statement regarding cooperation and coordination with interested parties and that will be brought to the group in final language by committee members Carpenter and Lytle.

Predator control was then discussed. Pat Laughlin stressed several factors with respect to predator control; helicopter and fixed wing aircraft use as important tools for effective predator removal with emphasis on fawning areas and winter concentrations, do work on private property, use local houndsmen for lion removals, call wildlife services for specific lion removals, establish local helicopter contracts for removal activities, use all available ground tools including; snares, leg hold traps, calling and shooting, gas cartridges for dens, den removal, communicate with NDOW, communicate with local residents, obtain population estimates for predator and prey both before and after control activities, utilize draw stations, be more proactive with predator control, and conduct winter and spring projects in recently burned areas. Some discussion ensued.

Mr. Carpenter expressed a desire for the commission to further examine hunting season structures. Chairman Raine stated that many units have reduced or shrinking deer populations and that he thought season length was likely a contributing factor. Discussion ensued regarding potential strategies and language to address the issue. Committee member Lytle will draft some language for proposal to the commission.

Climate and precipitation were also discussed. Mr. Wasley offered some possible climate related harvest strategies management actions for the committee to consider and will formalize some language summarize his points for the committee.

Agency bureaucracy was discussed by the committee and Mr. Lytle shared his views and some possible solutions to burdensome bureaucracy. Mr. Lytle agreed to formalize his ideas for the committees review at a future meeting. Discussion ensued.

Some discussion occurred surrounding agency(NDOW) structure and if changes can/should be made.

Deer and elk competition was also discussed by the committee. Discussion surrounded the notion of limiting elk populations to their herd objectives. Some discussion ensued regarding harvest strategies for elk intended to limit herd size while simultaneously maintaining bull quality. Chairman Raine and Mr. Lytle will draft language specific to these goals.

Urbanization and energy development were discussed. Mr. Carpenter expressed his view that each area should be evaluated on a case by case basis. Chairman Raine stated that we must have development and therefore the question becomes, how many deer is it worth to see our economy grow. Chairman Raine expressed a desire for the Commission to see all input that NDOW makes to all federal agencies with respect to all of these projects. Mr. Wasley suggested that rather than inundate the commission with significant irrelevant readings, that perhaps the commission could request to be placed on the mailing list of the Nevada Clearinghouse. As a consequence, the commission could simply request a copy of NDOW's input as it relates to any project of interest to the commission while simultaneously avoiding unnecessary reading. Discussion regarding specific impacts of development and strategies to minimize those impacts ensued.

Wilderness was the next issue discussed. Chairman Raine suggested a recommendation to the commission to vigorously oppose any future establishment of wilderness in the state of Nevada. Discussion ensued with agreement with Chairman Raine. He and Mr. Lytle will draft language for the committees review.

Chairman Raine asked the committee for input on further items or language on previous items. Mr. Carpenter expressed his concern of over-flights of deer in the spring when they are pregnant. Some discussion ensued. Joe Bennett expressed his concerns about restricting aerial activities and its potential to limit wildlife services activities.

Mr. Lytle brought up stress caused by shed hunting and some discussion ensued. Chairman Raine indicated that perhaps a separate committee might be warranted.

Agenda Item #6 – Government Wildlife Population Management Methodology vs. Other Methods of Wildlife Population Management – Wilde Brough - INFORMATIONAL

Item postponed due to committee member Brough's absence.

Agenda Item #7 – Review of Wording for Final Recommendations on Items from the Mule Deer Restoration Committee Topics List – Chairman Raine – INFORMATIONAL

Wording on each of these subjects will be drafted by committee members and brought before the committee for review and potential adoption at the next meeting. Issues by committee member were reviewed and a list of issue responsibility by individual will be sent to the committee.

Agenda Item #8- Establish Date, Time and Location of the Next Meeting – Chairman Raine – ACTION

Date of the next meeting was agreed upon as November 18, 2010. The Committee desired to use the Nannini Administration Building again if it was available on that date. The meeting time will be 11:00 am.

Agenda Item #9-Adjourn – Chairman Raine

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:06 p.m.

Submitted
Tony Wasley
November 3, 2010