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Kenneth E. Mayer  
Director

**MEMORANDUM**

**#3 B**

**DATE:** August 22, 2008

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

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

**SUBJECT:** Department Activities Report – Aug. 11, 2008, Meeting

Attendance at Aug. 11, 2008, Meeting: Director Ken Mayer, Deputy Director Doug Hunt, Management Analyst III Kim Jolly, Executive Assistant Suzanne Scourby, Administrative Services Officer II Daralyn Dobson, Chief of Operations Bob Haughian, Chief of Fisheries Rich Haskins, Chief of Law Enforcement Rob Buonamici, Chief of Fiscal Services Section Dave Prather, Acting Chief of Wildlife Diversity Shirley Atkinson, Chief of Habitat Dave Pulliam, Acting Chief of Game Mark Atkinson, and Chief of Conservation Education Kelly Clark.

**Director's Office**

Director Mayer traveled with Governor Gibbons of Nevada and Governor Otter of Idaho last week in Salmon, Idaho, on a range ride sponsored by Cattleman's Association to discuss resource issues that affect industry in Idaho and surrounding states. Approximately 76 persons joined in the ride and Idaho Cattleman's Association hosted dinner for about 150. The discussions were led by the federal and state agencies heads that were represented for the topic area. Topics ranged from salmon, to water, to endangered species.

Director Mayer will be holding monthly meetings with Governor Gibbons and Chief of Staff Josh Hicks. The first meeting will be Aug. 14, 2008.

Commission meeting arrangements discussed and finalized, and the Wildlife Damage Management Committee will be cancelled until the new board chairman assigns new members.

Director Mayer asked that chiefs be present or send a representative from their division to attend the cookout for the joint Commissions on Sept. 4, 2008. The joint dinner is to be hosted by Friends of Nevada Wildlife. He said we need six NDOW folks to help the three cooks set – up and tear down the event.

The Director discussed increasing the Director's office budget to hire a contractor (approved by State Purchasing) to prepare the Commission minutes and subcommittee meeting minutes. The Leadership Team decided to include budgeting for the 2010 and 2011 biennium.

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Deputy Director Hunt said special reports from Division Chiefs are due to the Legislature as a result of Assemblyman Claborn's legislation. The deputy told the group that if you have responsibility for those categories to take note of the impending deadline.

### **Conservation Education**

A great deal of media has focused on Law Enforcement's capture of 119 African clawed frogs. Media reports have come in from across the country, including a site in Germany.

Upland game and furbearer brochures are ready for distribution, the youth upland game brochure is in its final proofing stage, and the "Color Nevada Wild" coloring book is currently being edited.

Publications cost estimates are pending for the Nevada Water Development Atlas, the How to Fish Nevada guide, and the Sportsman's Journal, a small pocketbook designed to help hunters and anglers track their harvest. A letter to sportsman's groups went out in mid-August requesting funds to support a reprint of the Sportsman's Journal. Once donations are received and a work program is completed to authorize expenditures, and a reprint will be ordered.

Due to the upcoming closure of the Soldier Meadows Road through the Summit Lake Tribe Reservation August 20 through September 3, advisory emails and postcard were sent to about 1,560 hunters in the surrounding hunt units to advise them of the temporary closure. Staff coordinated with Law Enforcement, the BLM, Summit Lake Tribe, and Sheldon NWR to share information about the closure.

Steve Kanigher, a reporter from the Las Vegas Sun, contacted NDOW in an attempt to localize a story out of Arizona. People who are losing their homes to foreclosure in Arizona are turning their pet tortoises loose in the desert and creating much concern for wildlife officials.

During the past month two people have gone directly to the media with their urban/nuisance/injured wildlife concerns rather than calling NDOW. They told the media they called the SR office several times but we refused to help them or the animals. Records show those calls did not come in to the LV office.

The WR staff produced two TV segments on the following topics: Fishing Marilyn's Pond and Bears: How is the Year Going.

WR staff produced five radio segments on the following topics: Summer Fish '08; Wildfires '08; Wildfires '08 #2; Sage Grouse '08 #5; and Hunter Education '08 #2—Summer.

The NDOW Information Service now has 9,365 email participants in its four list servs and continues to send updates every week. As of Aug. 11, 2008, there are 882 members on the Boating list, 1,804 on Fishing, 2,331 on Hunting, 2,133 on Habitat/Wildlife and 2,215 on NDOW All.

The Outdoor Education Coordinator has sent a revised Washoe County Archery Range inter-local agreement to FSS for BOE approval and also has begun coordination on the Winnemucca shooting range enhancement. In addition, Director Ken Mayer's winnings at the "Bucks for

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Bullseyes” archery contest at the Western Association and Fish and Wildlife Agency conference, has added \$2,000 to the hunter education coffers to support a beginning archery class in the Las Vegas area. Thank you Ken!

The Oxbow’s rehabilitation continues to be the focus of the Volunteer Coordinator and the WR Wildlife Educator. The request for Question 1 wildlife funds has been approved. A follow up meeting was conducted with Jerry Keir (Executive Director of the Great Basin Institute) to discuss trail materials, deck construction and possible funding/partnership with GBI. The volunteer Coordinator is also meeting with the City of Reno to discuss the existing lease agreement and the city’s plan to rip-rap 800 linear feet of the Oxbow Nature Study Area’s river banks. Invasive weeds continue to be a battle at the Oxbow.

The SR wildlife education coordinator completed an Environmental Education & Interpretation Certification course and will obtain the certification by doing an environmental education project. Graduation is set for November.

The Overton Interpretive Center area has been surveyed and PBS&J has initiated work on the site plan for the interpretive center and its parcel. No additional land acquisitions are being considered at this time.

### **Fisheries Division**

The City of Sparks is beginning work on another white water park in the Truckee River. Movement of resident fish through the site will be monitored.

Eastern Region is conducting an eradication project on Marysville Creek this week to secure a population of Lahontan cutthroat trout.

The issuance of a license to Southern Nevada Water Authority by the Division of State Lands to maintain a monitoring station on Spring Creek above Spring Creek Rearing Station is nearing completion. This station will provide valuable information on the potential long term impacts of ground water pumping in Snake Valley on adjacent surface waters.

Fisheries Division has been busy hiring two new biologists for the Western Region and two hatchery technicians for Gallagher Hatchery. These new hires are the future of the Fisheries Division.

A public meeting has been scheduled by the East Walker River Trustees (for the 2000 oil spill in the East Walker River), to take additional input on proposed projects and to collect new ideas.

### **Game Division**

Waterfowl: As discussed at the last staff meeting, the Director and staff attended the “Waterfowl Summit” hosted by the Canvasback Gun Club. This is the second year that NDOW has invited waterfowl conservation groups and agencies to collaborate on a draft CR for waterfowl regulations. The group agreed on a CR that recommended a delayed opener for the entire state in deference to dismal wetland conditions in Lahontan Valley which are partially attributed to the Truckee Canal breach last January. After the draft CR was accepted by the group, staff investigated federal rules that allowed individually-tailored conservative season formats for legally-defined geographic descriptions as long as these seasons fit within the frameworks for a

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federally-described zone. With this revelation, staff altered the draft to recommend a statewide duck season to begin on October 11<sup>th</sup> and a delayed opener for Churchill County (October 25<sup>th</sup>). This was consistent with of the discussion at the Summit.

Other issues facing waterfowl hunters this year include a closed season on canvasbacks, a reduced season length and bag limit for scaup and an increased limit for snow geese. Following the commission meeting, staff will meet with Western Region Con-Ed staff to develop media packages to inform our public.

Duck Trapping: Western Region staff is banding ducks at HWMA, Carson Lake and MVWMA in order to meeting banding objectives set for the Pacific Flyway. The USFWS is working hard on a Banding Needs Assessment document to guide future banding activities within various jurisdictions. Nevada will commence post-season pintail banding next winter. Avian influenza surveillance is being performed in conjunction with this live bird handling.

Dove Trapping: NDOW is committed to banding 525 mourning doves before the September 1<sup>st</sup> opening date. However, trapping efforts have not been highly successful. NDOW staff is working on modifications to trapping protocols to increase success rates.

Game Division conducted the first mandatory bighorn tag holder indoctrination of the year on Aug. 9.

The Cortez Range bighorn release continues to be circulated among local landowners. Mike Podborny will meet with the second largest landowner in the area (Tomera Ranch) on 8/11/08.

Game Division held an interagency coordination meeting with Idaho Fish and Game in the Elko Office 8/4/08 to discuss cooperative elk management across state lines that may include coordinated multi-state elk depredation hunts with Utah, Idaho and Nevada, sage grouse management and possible enhancement of sharp-tailed grouse resources through trapping and transplanting.

Field biologists have recently completed brood surveys for both sage grouse and chukar. Results will be forthcoming.

Game Division is preparing for a sage grouse capture in unit 022 and will conduct chukar density surveys later in the month.

A draft Predator Management Plan and Budget for FY 2009 has been completed and will be presented to the Wildlife Damage Management Committee at the Commission Meeting in Eureka for approval.

### **Law Enforcement**

Intense media publicity and more calls from the public continue following last week's African clawed frog case. The public continues to voluntarily turn in prohibited frogs to game wardens, and the Department has received national and international media coverage of this issue.

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The Division completed a draft wanton waste pamphlet to guide hunters on harvesting of various game and sportfish meat.

Boating Education participated in marina day at Cottonwood Cove where contacted 14 boats and 67 boaters were contacted. During contacts we checked boats for required safety items as well as informing boaters of the dangers of drinking while operating a vessel.

Southern Region Game Wardens conducted an OUI checkpoint at Cottonwood Cove, Lake Mohave over the weekend along with Arizona Game and Fish, and the National Park Service. Several citations were issued for safety violations and three arrests were made for OUI. A high percentage of boaters were checked for alcohol but were under the legal limit.

Archery season occurring has been busy with detected violations for shooting after hours, wanton waste of elk and illegal weapons during archery hunt.

Game wardens continue to struggle with vehicles breaking down. Despite preventive maintenance and careful use, the trucks are worn out. Some game wardens now have to use personal vehicles and we are paying them mileage while repairs are being performed on failing patrol vehicles.

Game wardens participated in the National Night out event to introduce public service employees, such as game wardens, police and fire fighters to the public.

### **Operations Division**

Recreational Boat and Fishing Foundation lapsed angler license data effort underway – Another significant data entry effort is underway to input manual license information into the Nevada Wildlife Data System (NWDS). By Sept. 1 the goal is to have data for an estimated 40,000 paper licenses keyed into the NWDS. The results of this coordinated effort between Conservation Education, the License Office, and Systems Consultants, will contribute to a regional marketing effort designed to bring lapsed anglers back to the sport.

NDOW's Information Technology staff grows by 100 percent -- After an extensive effort, a second IT position was recently approved and on Aug. 11, the Department's IT staff increased in size from one to two. Jason Copper, previously of the Wildlife Diversity Division, was recently hired into the new IT position.

### **Wildlife Diversity**

On Thursday, August 14, NDOW personnel will meet with Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) personnel and Don Paul of Intermountain West Joint Venture to begin our first shorebird management assessment meeting for the Lahontan Valley Wetlands. This first meeting was requested by Stillwater NWR refuge manager Mike Goddard as a preliminary planning and design meeting between professional staffs prior to a full partnership meeting to include stakeholders like the Greenhead Club and Audubon Society. In this first meeting, Don will introduce the Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network Site Assessment Tool, an evaluation spreadsheet similar to those used by The Nature Conservancy to guide conservation planning, and participants will co-design a workshop protocol and approach for the first full partnership meeting tentatively scheduled for September.

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Phase two of the Marlette water pipeline construction project is underway and includes installation of an above ground anchor system. The pipeline and proposed anchors run through sensitive wildlife habitat and staff will meet on-site with contractors this Wednesday to discuss placement options at two proposed anchor sites that lie in close proximity to Mountain Beaver habitat.

For a third field season, Diversity staff backpacked into the Pine Forest Range, northwest of Winnemucca, to trap yellow-pine chipmunks. Baseline population data and tissue samples for genetic analysis were gathered from 40 individual animals. Within the Winnemucca area, biologists also continued to coordination with the BLM concerning the Double H Mountains seedling project, the maintenance for greenstrips for fire breaks, and future fuel reduction projects.

During July, staff worked on a variety of bat projects in the western region. Nocturnal surveys on mines and water sources were conducted to determine species and population density. Staff also coordinated a fourth bat friendly closure (copula) on a shaft at the Murphy Mine in Pershing County. This grate, over an open shaft, will secure the opening to protect 200+ hibernating Townsend's big-eared bats and also prevent human injury. This project was completed on July 25th. In addition, an evening bat program was delivered to adults and children in Silver City and an interview with the Douglas Courier resulted in a press release in the Douglas Courier, Carson Times and RGJ on bat research being undertaken by NDOW biologists.

Personnel are also currently reviewing proposed Habitat Conservation Plans received in Round 8 of the Question 1 Program and will provide written comments within the week.