

Committee Members: Commissioner Johnston (Chair),
Commissioner Barnes, Commissioner Keil,
Commissioner Valentine, Cory Lytle, Larry Johnson, Bevan Lister

Staff to the Committee: Mike Scott
Tom Donham

**Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners
Landowner Compensation Tag Committee
Nevada Department of Wildlife
6980 Sierra Center Parkway, Suite 120
Reno, NV 89511
Friday, May 3, 2019 / 6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

NOTE: The Chairman, in his discretion or upon request, may take items out of order; combine items for consideration by the Committee; and may remove items from the agenda at any time.

TIME LIMITS: Public Comment will be taken on every action item after discussion but before action on each item, and are limited to three minutes per person. Public comment will also be taken on certain "Informational" items when indicated and at the end of the meeting for items not on the agenda. Persons may not allocate unused time to other speakers. Persons are invited to submit written comments on items or attend and make comment during the meeting and are asked complete a speaker card and present it to the Recording Secretary. To ensure the public has notice of all matters the Committee will consider, Committee members may choose to not respond to public comments in order to avoid deliberation on topics not listed for action on the agenda.

FORUM RESTRICTIONS AND ORDERLY BUSINESS: The viewpoint of a speaker will not be restricted, but reasonable restrictions may be imposed upon the time, place and manner of speech. Irrelevant and unduly repetitious statements and personal attacks which antagonize or incite others are examples of public comment that may be reasonably limited.

1. Call to Order – Chairman Johnston

Chairman Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Roll call was conducted, and the Committee members present were: Chairman Johnston, Commissioner Barnes, Commissioner Keil, Commissioner Valentine, Cory Lytle, Bevan Lister. Larry Johnson was not present.

Others in attendance: Tom Donham, Jack Robb, Brian Wakeling, Ed Partee, Maureen Hullinger, Paul Dixon, Doug Busselman.

2. Approval of Agenda – For Possible Action

The Committee will review the agenda and may take action to approve the agenda. The Committee may remove items from the agenda, combine items for consideration or take items out of order.

Commissioner Valentine moved to approve the agenda as presented. Committee member Lister seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-0.

3. *Approval of Minutes (January 24, 2019) – Chairman Johnston – For Possible Action

Commissioner Valentine moved to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-0.

4. *Report on Landowner Tag Program – Staff to the Committee – For Possible Action

The Committee will discuss the progress of the review of the Landowner Tag Program. The Committee may take action to provide direction to staff or establish findings or recommendations to present to the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners.

Staff to Committee, Tom Donham, reviewed 5 Issues that had been delegated to the Landowner Compensation Tag Committee by the TAAHC. The Issues included:

1. Comp Tag Private Land Season – Season would be from Nov. 1 – Nov. 30 within qualified Unit-Units.
2. Comp Tag Private Land Season – Comp tag only valid for private property for which tag was qualified for.
3. Doe Hunt – Landowner specify on which property to harvest 1-2% of does.
4. Review Process – NDOW look at process of how land owners get depredation tags for all species.
5. Landowner Program Stratified Hunt – Hunter must choose weapon type/season for tag (currently program allows hunter to hunt all seasons/weapon types).

Chairman Johnston moved to move Issues 1 – 4 to “Closed Topic List” based on discussion at previous meeting as well as this meeting. Motion was seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

Issue #5 – Stratified Hunt was discussed at length.

Committee member Lytle stated the non-stratified nature of the tag was initially instituted to increase the value of the tags. Currently, demand is high for tags and tags will hold value even in a stratified situation.

Committee member Lister asked, in light of overall program, how stratification would address the cap issue and administering the program.

Committee member Lytle stated it was a perception issue and not an administrative one.

Committee member Lister asked how the PIW and Heritage Tags worked.

Staff to Committee, Tom Donham, indicated that in the case of PIW and Heritage tags, the hunter did not have to select specific season or weapon classes, with slight differences between the two types of tags.

Committee member Lytle stated that it is simply something that sportsmen aren't happy about and making it a stratified hunt would put the program in a more positive light.

Chairman Johnston indicated that he has heard complaints that people with money can get a tag every year, as well as hunt with any weapon and in any season.

Commissioner Keil stated that often landowners are not being fully compensated for damage they are receiving, so anything that adds value to the tag is helpful.

Chairman Johnston also mentioned that sportsmen tend to be more understanding when people with large amounts of money can buy Heritage tags because those tags raise money that benefits wildlife.

Commissioner Barnes made the point that in his experience, and with those that have purchased many of his family's comp tags, most hunters only hunt a single season anyway.

Committee member Lister added that he has a family member that is in the guiding-outfitting business and that while the majority of hunters just hunt one season, there are some that hunt a few days here and there across more than one season, so the non-stratified hunt adds value.

Public Comment:

Tom Cassinelli – Stated that in Humboldt County, the CAB supported making the Landowner tags non-stratified to spread out hunting pressure. There was concern that all hunters would choose the later rifle season. At least by having a choice it might spread pressure somewhat.

He further stated that the Elk Incentive Tag Program and the Deer and Antelope Compensation Tag Program should not be compared. They are two different programs that have different objectives. Many people confuse the two, but no comparisons should be made. He also added that it would not hurt to find a way to make things more equitable, because some areas do get a lot more money for tags than others, but that is just how the program is.

Paul Dixon – Stated that as long as you have tag brokers and outfitters, the price of tags will keep increasing. He also said that if the program is about removing animals that the non-stratified hunt helps to increase success.

Chairman Johnston added that the program is about buying tolerance, and that sportsmen should recognize that overall it helps the resource.

Chairman Johnston made a motion to have Issue #5 moved to the Closed Topic List. Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-1, with Committee Member Lytle in opposition.

Staff to Committee, Tom Donham, reviewed two issues that the Committee had requested be on this agenda for further discussion and possible action at the previous meeting. The issues included:

1. Dealing with Landowner Tag Cap if exceeded
2. Landowner Qualification – When do landowners legitimately qualify for program or not

Issue #1 – Landowner Tag Cap – Chairman Johnston discussed a method of reducing number of tags to within cap using a percentage type calculation which could be applied evenly across all qualifying landowners. This would equitably reduce tags.

Committee member Lytle asked what NDOW's recommendation had been.

Staff to Committee, Tom Donham, explained that NDOW's recommendation had been very similar to what Chairman Johnston had described. It was based on a formula that applied a proportion (or percentage) to all landowners to ensure equitable distribution of the reduction of tags necessary to meet the cap. If the

formula resulted in a situation where a few tags needed to be reallocated, they would be reallocated based on longest tenure in the program.

The Committee also discussed sequentially increasing the number of animals that would need to be counted to qualify to receive a tag. As an example, if the cap was reached, the number of animals to qualify would increase from 50 to 51, to 52, and so on until the total qualifying tags was equal to or less than the cap. This would be an incremental increase to qualify for a tag.

The Committee was reminded that Director Wasley had pointed out that at times, counts of larger numbers of animals lack the same degree of accuracy that smaller counts have. This may result in some inconsistencies in adjustments.

Game Division Administrator Wakeling pointed out that the proportional reduction in tags and the incremental increase in tags to qualify could both reduce the total tags qualified if the cap were exceeded, however they approach the reduction in different ways. The proportional reduction would reduce tags the least for the landowners that qualified for the fewest tags, whereas the incremental increase would reduce tags the least for the landowners that qualified for the greatest number of tags.

Committee member Lister proposed a solution involving an incremental increase in the number of animals needed to qualify for a tag until the total number of tags dropped to within the cap, however those landowners receiving a single tag would be exempt. In other words, the first tag would qualify with a count of 50, any tags after the first would have an incremental increase added to qualify if the cap had been exceeded.

The Committee agreed that staff should develop a formula to review and discuss at next meeting.

Chairman Johnston inquired about whether the cap should be split to keep deer and antelope separate since antelope Landowner Comp Tags seem to be increasing at a greater rate, and landowners being affected by one species should not be denied a tag due to an increase in another.

It was determined that it would likely be possible to accomplish the split and still be in compliance with NRS.

Public Comment:

Doug Busselman – Stated it is a good idea to do the split without going to Legislature. He has been dealing with the Legislature quite a bit lately and would not look forward to the legislative process. If it did go to the Legislature, he would encourage the Committee to look at dropping the cap altogether instead of continually increasing it a little at a time.

Paul Dixon – Agreed that splitting the cap would be a good idea, and also agreed going to Legislature would be counterproductive.

Committee member Bevan Lister moved to have NDOW staff begin working on a Draft recommendation for a regulation and policy to split the cap between species. Commissioner Barnes seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

Issue #2 – Qualifying Properties

Committee member Lytle stated that there are properties that are being purchased and managed specifically for obtaining deer tags, and that it is not really a “damage” type situation. He asked if there is any way to determine what properties should legitimately be allowed in the program and which should not.

Commissioner Valentine asked how you would distinguish between a hobby farm type situation and a legitimate ag operation.

Considerable discussion regarding minimum acreage, crop types, Agricultural Use Assessment, and other ways to determine qualification.

It was ultimately decided that there was no equitable and consistent way to determine legitimacy of claims of damage and it would be up to NDOW to determine if there were egregious claims.

Staff to Committee, Tom Donham, asked how the Committee thought counts on properties at separate locations within and between units should be handled in regard to combining counts.

Chairman Johnston asked that a report explaining how situations are being handled now be given at next meeting for further discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm

5. Public Comment Period

Persons wishing to speak on items not on the agenda should complete a speaker’s card and present it to the recording secretary. Public comment will be limited to three minutes. No action can be taken by the Committee at this time; any item requiring Committee action may be scheduled on a future Committee agenda. In addition to this Public Comment Period, Public Comment limited to three minutes per speaker will also be allowed on each agenda action item, but not, unless otherwise noted, on reports or informational items.

No public comment.

*Support material provided and posted to the NDOW website (ndow.org), and updates to support material will be posted at ndow.org. Support material for this meeting is available for the public at the Nevada Department of Wildlife, 6980 Sierra Center Parkway, Suite 120, Reno, NV 89511 or may be requested from Cassandra Grieve at 775-688-1529. In accordance with NRS 241.020, this agenda closes three working days prior to the meeting date and has been posted at the following Department of Wildlife offices: Headquarters: 6980 Sierra Center Parkway, Suite 120, Reno, NV, 89511; Western Region Office: 1100 Valley Road, Reno, NV 89512; Eastern Region Office: 60 Youth Center Road, Elko, NV 89801; Southern Region Office: 4747 Vegas Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89108.

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