

Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners  
Bear Regulation Committee

Approved Minutes

Nevada Department of Wildlife  
1100 Valley Rd.  
Reno, NV 89512  
Thursday, May 10, 2012

Committee Members Present

Chairman Commissioner David McNinch  
Commissioner Jeremy Drew  
Commissioner Jack Robb  
Judi Caron  
Kathryn Bricker

Department Personnel Present

Mike Dobel, Western Region Game Supervisor  
Larry Gilbertson, Game Division Chief  
Carl Lackey, Western Region Game Supervisor  
Pete Bradley, Staff Biologist  
Jody Wilkinson, Recording Secretary  
Kristy Knight, Staff Law Enforcement  
Mike McCusker, Western Region Law Enforcement Supervisor

Others in Attendance

Elaine Carrick - No Bear Hunt NV  
Catherine Smith - Self  
Lloyd Peake - Self  
Rick Hopkins - No Bear Hunt NV  
Carolyn Stork - Self  
Don Molde - Self  
Ann Bryant - Bear League  
Buck Sampson - (Tasiget) Band of Paiute  
Lisa Bonta - Self  
Pamela Gartin - Self  
David Edwards - Self  
Bob Brunner - Self  
Toree Warfield - Self  
Tina Nappe - Self  
Joel Blakeslee - Self  
Rex Flowers - Self

**1. Call To Order- Committee Chairman McNinch**

For those who have been coming to meetings over a long period of time, you would have been aware of one of our gentleman that had come to our meetings, Dan Heinz. He passed away a little over a week ago. I just wanted to make a quick comment about him before we call the meeting to order. He was a strong advocate for healthy wildlife populations and wild areas. Probably better than anyone was able to walk the fine line between many of the people in this room. He was able to get up here and represent whatever side he needed to represent. He could do it better than anybody and he probably drew people together in a lot of ways. He had a broad interest in wildlife and the betterment of habitat and wild areas. He did it with extreme wit and he did it with a high level of respect. With him in mind, I hope we are able to conduct our business in a similar manner today.

**Meeting called to order: 1:05 p.m.**

**2. Approval of Minutes - 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 DREW: MOVE TO APPROVE AGENDA**

**COMMISSIONER ROBB: SECOND**

Public Comment - None.

Approved by all members - Motion passes.

**3. Member Items - Announcements**

Committee may present emergent items. No action may be taken by the Committee. Any item requiring Committee action will be scheduled on a future Committee agenda.

Judi Caron: I would like to report that I have received written correspondence from Jody, from the department, different points of view, quite a few the past couple of weeks and I just wanted to bring that to your attention.

**4. Approval of minutes - For Possible Action**

Minutes from prior meeting will be presented and are support material.

**Public comment: none**

**COMMISSIONER DREW: MOVE TO APPROVE.**

**JUDI CARON: SECOND**

Discussion: Judi Caron: Offer a correction to minutes - pg 10 the 3 paragraph change "commission" to "committee" and spelling of name is Judi throughout the whole document.

Chairman McNinch: Does the motion maker and the second approve of the changes?

Commissioner Drew: Absolutely.

**Motion approved**

**5. A. Bear Population Status Report from NDOW Staff - Informational.**

NDOW biologists will present the bear population status for 2012 with a presentation of recent computer model population estimates.

Carl Lackey: Discussed recent population estimate and how the quota was established and why we made the one change to the recommendation.

- Program Mark has been used 3 times in last 10 years.
  - Beckmann's 2002 study with sample size of 99 bears
  - Dr. Sedinger in 2008 with sample size of 197 bears
  - 2011 estimate with about 252 bears in the sample size
- Study area described as Tahoe Basin, Carson Front - Reno to Gardnerville, Truckee, Eagle and Carson valleys and to a certain extent the western flank of the Pine Nut Mountains and Virginia Range mountains
  - 1997-2011, we have had close to 100 bears that we have handled in those outlying areas, 34 of those have been marked (ear tag or tattooed)
  - A very rough population estimate was done using those numbers compared to the number of bears that were killed during the hunt and came up with 286.
  - Our most recent population estimate is 456 bears, you cannot say it is a statewide estimate, it is for the study area but it does include those bears with much lower capture probabilities in those outlying areas.
- With the higher population estimate, 253-456, we are not increasing quotas.
  - Recommended quota of 20
  - Look at 3 year averages per our Black Bear Management Plan
    - Look at Percent females in the harvest
      - If somewhere in the 30-40% range - considered moderate harvest
      - If greater than 40% combined with any other harvest criteria then need to look at adjusting quota.
    - Percent adult females within that female portion of the harvest
    - Median age of all of the males killed during the hunt
      - If median age starts dropping below 2 you need to decrease harvest
  - Removed separate female portion of quota this year for two reasons
    - Last year we did not have an approved management plan.
      - This year we do with the harvest criteria
      - No need for an artificial cap at 6, which is 33% of the harvest.
      - Will be looking at this at a minimum every 3 years or sooner if needed
    - Hunters expressed concern about wanting to fill the tag with the first bear they saw to make sure they got a bear before the hunt closed.
      - By removing the separate female quota it may remove sense of urgency to fill a tag and hunters will hunt more for a male as opposed to first bear seen which could possibly be a female.
- Population estimate of 456 - last year quota was conservative, less than 10% of the estimated population in 2008, this year it is less than 5% of the estimated population.
  - When simulated model includes first time event bears & all bears killed on capture, it raised the population estimate to almost 800.
    - Obviously cannot use bears like that in survival estimates because they are dead on first capture but they can be included to a degree as recruitment.
  - Sport harvest in last 15 years had 149 bears killed by cars, 330 documented mortalities in the last 15 years.

- Level of sport hunt mortality not detectable in the model on single year basis.
- If quota of 20 bears was met every year for 5 years without recruitment or immigration - still going to have more bears than previous 2008 estimate.
- Last year we had 1150 applicants for the bear hunt, this year over 2300.
- There has been some criticism of our bear data but we do have some of the best data for any bear population in the U.S.
  - Population estimates have not been published but are in review
  - Addressing comments - they did not question methods or results - want more detail in some of the sections.

Kathryn Bricker: In setting the quota was there consideration to the concerns regarding the impact on the bear population due to the drought and reduction in food in the wild land area?

Carl Lackey: Again, the quota is super conservative. We are killing more bears on the average per year for other reasons than we are during the sport hunt. Two, the climatic conditions change yearly. I don't see any reason to change quota this particular year based on projected climatic conditions. If climatic conditions this year affect the population and we see that in future analysis, we have ability to adjust quotas at that time.

Kathryn Bricker: You feel that your sample size, from the hunt, is statistically significant enough to be able to determine that? I noticed that Dr. Stringham commented that the 3 year intervals for reevaluating data would be statistically insignificant what you could deduce from that and may take 10 years to catch something and by that time it would be well beyond the time it should be caught in order to make correction.

Carl Lackey: I disagree with that and I will let Dr. Jon Beckmann and Dr. Jim Sedinger address that. I just said that it may take several years with low harvest numbers but by the time we see it in some of these numbers there is plenty of time to address the population as a whole.

Kathryn Bricker: I guess we will conclude that that is a difference of expert opinion at this point since one expert said one thing and you all disagree.

Chairman McNinch: Does any of the committee members have questions to start off for Jon Beckmann or Dr. Sedinger?

Commissioner Drew: I have a couple questions for Dr. Sedinger. Could you give us a basic overview of how you went about developing and driving some of the bear data that Carl has been discussing?

Dr. Sedinger:

- There are a couple different approaches used within Program Mark.
  - When Carl catches a bear and puts a mark on it and then records a number of encounters of those bears subsequent to that.
  - Survival estimates from the disappearance rate of those bears.
    - Accounting for capture probability allows us to estimate recruitment rates.
  - Those two things together are where our estimates of lamda come from.
- Estimations of population size are based on an approach within Program Mark we would classify as an open population model.
  - Animals are free to enter and leave the population at any time.
  - In contrast to a closed model, which Dr. Stringham assumed we were using.
    - This doesn't make any assumption of animals entering or leaving the population.
  - We can use the probability of encountering a bear that is alive to get an estimate of how many marked bears were alive and in the population.
  - From all of the bears he encountered we estimate the proportion of the total population that is marked and we use those two things to drive a population estimate.
    - One other complication that is addressed is the fact that some bears that were alive in the summer of 2009 died before they could have been encountered again and it adjusts for that.
    - It is typically in all of these approaches conservative because we know that individuals vary in their probability of being encountered in a sample.
      - Difficult to get an overestimate out of these techniques.
  - In response to Dr. Stringham's critiques
    - Took our overall estimate of lambda - allowed for uncertainty in the estimates produced that are relative to around the year 2000.
      - Those varied, mean estimate was about 180.
      - Confidence intervals were +/- 117.
        - Some uncertainty in how many bears there were at that point in time.
    - Allowed lamda to be variable year to year.
      - Estimate of the mean lamda is 1.16 - standard error was .04.
    - Each simulation picked lamda at random from a normal distribution that had a mean of 1.16 and standard deviation of .04- 100 times - produced 100 different simulations of different starting values and where we might get to.
      - Makes the case that we are in the ballpark of what is occurring currently.

Chairman McNinch: Understanding that in any given year that the hunter take would not likely register on any of the simulations for Program Mark to determine our population estimate. If our take is less than recruitment, so our population continues to grow because we are so conservative with our quotas, as we move forward if after 3 years each individual year would not record individually. How would it record cumulatively, how would that reflect in a program to help us understand that better when that gap continues to get wider?

Dr. Sedinger:

- When Carl mentioned that we couldn't measure the effect of harvest, what we are really talking about is the effect of harvest on survival rate, because even though our estimates of annual survival are pretty precise if we assume that taking some bears out didn't in some way improve survival of the remaining

- individuals or that the bears removed didn't already have a high probability of dying for another reason so that every bear that was shot was one less bear that was going to be in the population a year later.
- When you take 14 and divide by 400 we can't measure that effect on survival.
  - I think the question you are really asking is what about changes in population size.
    - If we get back to 2008 estimate of 250, that is a detectable change.
    - Not going to detect changes of less than 100.
    - If you look at the confidence levels on the current estimates, double those, it is roughly the amount of change you can detect.
    - When we start talking about a change of a couple hundred bears that is a detectable change.

Chairman McNinch: You briefly mentioned the sub program that you are using, the methodology that is being used does not rely on a closed system, it accounts for the immigration and emigration, so is there a need to understand more of the dynamic of the immigration and emigration or does the model override the need to have specific data to that?

Dr. Sedinger:

- It would be valuable to be able to differentiate.
  - Same applies to emigration and mortality.
  - For bears that disappear it cannot be determine whether it died or went somewhere else.
  - Carl can with radio-tagged bears that have mortality sensors on the animals.
    - If only ear tagged or other passive marker - the program approach does not allow distinguishing those two kinds of disappearance.
    - Conversely doesn't allow to distinguish the two possible kinds of appearance - dispersal into the population vs. births .
      - Valuable to have a clear understanding.
      - Recent Heritage proposals are aimed at improving/understanding those demographic rates.
      - Software itself isn't going to help - basically a data collection issue to do that.

Kathryn Bricker: My understanding was that the population estimate is 456 going into this meeting, am I correctly understanding now that you are saying it is a range of 253-456?

Dr. Sedinger: No, our estimate is 456 with some uncertainty because we are estimating this from data. The confidence intervals/standard errors are around +/- 49.

Kathryn Bricker: You are saying that it would require 100 bears approximately to be able to detect changes.

Dr. Sedinger: In that size, yes.

Kathryn Bricker: On the data you are using is it demographically or spatially explicit?

Dr. Sedinger: It is explicit to the area where bears have been marked and encountered. Other than that no. We are not subdividing that into sub areas.

Commissioner Drew: Do we have enough data at the present and given the proposed quotas, do you believe those are sustainable and safe at this time?

Dr. Sedinger: This is just a personal opinion, I would say given the level of the quota and our current estimate of population size and the monitoring that is occurring, it is highly unlikely that you are going to do long term or sustained damage to the population with the current harvest. I think if you were coming in with a quota of 50 bears that would be a different story. Obviously you have climate effects etc. - there is some risk of population decline but given the monitoring that is occurring you are going to catch any kind of problem before there are serious issues.

Chairman McNinch: You had mentioned in some of the paperwork you provided that some studies were ongoing. In the September meeting I believe you made a comment that you referenced a project you were working on or one that you were very close to moving forward on having to do with movement of urban interface bears back into the wild land population.

Dr. Beckmann:

- We have a couple different studies and components of this study in the works.
  - A graduate student looking at identifying core habitat through models.
    - Use resource selection function models or resource selection probability function models - not sure at this point which models we are going to use.
      - Allow us to determine the probability of use of different habitat types and different parameters that would drive habitat use for bears in the Great Basin and face of the Sierra.
      - Then use the core areas to model corridors or movement across the valley bottoms between those.
  - Working with other folks at UNR beginning to look at genetic structure component of this population - level of connectivity from a genetic perspective between populations in California and the Sierra Nevada to the Great Basin ranges.
  - Looking at recruitment by back country bears into the population.
    - Increasing sample size to get handle on recruitment by females in areas that are not down in these urban interface areas.

Chairman McNinch: The particular interest to me, understanding the population dynamics. I know there were some hypotheses that were being considered and it had to do with the potential that we were hitting a carrying capacity in the Sink and that that might be causing some of the bears to recruit back into the wild lands. I guess I am interested in that dynamic and where we are at and what type of timeframes we might be before we get some findings?

Dr. Beckmann:

- Love to be able to do that and with some of the collar continuation that we are doing with the collared bears we will be able to address that at some level. There are logistical constraints and funding constraints to address that exact question. We are still looking for some additional funding to build that. We should be bringing those resources on with the Ph.D. student that is coming but in

terms of timeframe, the data will take several years to collect and analyze, so we are looking at the ability to address that specific question probably within the next 2-3 years.

Commissioner Drew: Based on your understanding and knowledge of this population do you believe the quota of 20 bears that we are considering now is sufficient to damage the population long term?

Dr. Beckmann: In my opinion, based on the level of monitoring and the data that has been collected in this state and understanding the level of the detail of that data in the plan monitoring, the harvest that has been proposed should not have long-term negative consequences on this population. The caveat I always put in there, is that whenever you are hunting a species the best thing that you can continue to do is to monitor that population. I am confident that the level of monitoring that is being done will allow us to detect changes before we run into any problems.

Chairman McNinch: One of the comments that has been most thrown out is the comment in one of your papers having to do with the likeliness that immigration of bears from California into the population is likely what is helping the wild land bear population in Nevada grow. Has that changed?

Dr. Beckmann:

- Two components to the population and the direction it is headed.
  - Recruitment into the population local.
  - Immigration.
  - Of course you have the flip side, emigration out of the population and death.
    - Two components probably playing a role in this populations growth that we have been documenting over time.
    - Working on data that we are collecting, especially with genetic analysis, trying to get handle on relative role of two different components to population growth over time.
    - Trying to disentangle relative role of births, cubs from females already in Nevada relative to role of immigration from California.
      - As data is collected becomes a higher probability that we may be able to disentangle - collecting data from multiple sources not just GPS and survival but genetic sampling that we will be doing with the proposals put together.

Kathryn Bricker: How do you feel about the fact that the California bear population is now said to be stable although it is decreasing in terms of just pure numbers, do you see that impacting on what it appears you said you don't have the answer to anyway?

Dr. Beckmann:

- California side I have to default to the managers and biologists collecting data on that side.
- Look at California that has such a large population - they don't really have a great estimate of population size.
  - Look at trends through harvest data.

- Numbers have probably not been done at level of detail that would need to be done to make really conclusive statements that populations are going up/down or stable.
  - We can say from our data in the Great Basin on the Nevada side where we collected data that we have a high enough percentage of population mark that we have narrow confidence intervals and we have a reliable confidence in our estimate of land and growth rates that the population in Nevada has been growing in Nevada over the last 10 years of data or so.
- B. NDOW 2012 Bear Quota Recommendations to support/oppose or take no action, and recommend action to full Commission. - Possible Action**

Carl Lackey:

- Same quota recommendation as last year - 20
- Last year missed dividing the two hunts out by Resident and Nonresidents
  - Residents - 41 tags
  - Nonresidents - 4 tags
  - Quota of 20 for either sex

Kathryn Bricker: Did I understand your earlier presentation that you said that one of the compelling reasons that the quota numbers on the number of females that could be taken were changed was to remove the sense of urgency for the tag holders?

Carl Lackey: That was one of the reasons. I do feel that by removing that we may actually harvest fewer females.

Kathryn Bricker: What proof do we have of that?

Carl Lackey: It is my opinion based on talking to all of the tag holders last year.

Commissioner Robb: By removing the requirement of 6 females you may take some stress off those people going out and they may hunt longer in pursuit of a larger bear. If you start getting toward the female harvest quota and you are going to get people out there that want to harvest a bear and may harvest one that they may not have harvested if there wasn't that sense of urgency. You are looking at them to shoot a more mature bear and a male under that thinking.

Carl Lackey: Two of the hunters did that. One guy killed a female, the fifth female, who had spent considerable amount of time scouting and hunting and he told me that it was a really big female and he shot it knowing that the hunt was possibly coming to an end. The hunter that shot the last bear treed a female the previous day. No cubs were with her. I talked him out of shooting her and continuing the hunt, which he did and ended up harvesting a male the following day. I think it is a real concern. We could still hit that 6 mark, which is about 33% out of the 20, but it might extend the season with some favorable seasonal conditions.

Kathryn Bricker: So, we are basing this on an assumption that fewer females or not so many females will be killed but the reason we are doing it is actually for the benefit of the hunters to not have them feel any pressure?

Carl Lackey: That is not really my wording, the other reason as I stated is the fact that this is in our Management Plan. If we don't follow those harvest criteria in the approved Management Plan why have them in there?

Judi Caron: When I was attending one of the county game boards there was great discussion about removing the restrictions for 6 females to close hunt and I was trying to think of it both ways and the more I read and the criteria that you have set in the Black Bear Management Plan if we are trying to see the 3 different thresholds that you say of percent females in the harvest, the percent of adult females in the female harvest is it beneficial to remove that bias of 6 so we would have a red flag if you were killing more females than you were males? Would that put us in the criteria to look at the population that maybe it is a heavy harvest? If we went this year without limiting to 6, just opened it and you did have more females harvested than males depending on the age structure would that be a red flag of the population that it is a heavy harvest?

Carl Lackey:

- Absolutely, it is not that artificial cap.
- Our population estimate is consistently bias males to females 2:1.
  - More males in that population because we are on the edge of an expanding population.

Judi Caron: I first thought to be safe to put it there at 6 but the more I read, my personal feeling is I think it is best to take out and see where it lays with the hunters, to get a clean look because the numbers are so small, I think it is wise to take it out.

Carl Lackey: Last year we killed 14, if we killed 6 females and the hunt ended who is not to say the population was hurting and if the hunt had continued maybe we would have killed 10 or 12 we would have never known that with that artificial cap.

Commissioner Robb: Do any other western states have any type of caps on female harvests?

Carl Lackey: Not that I know of, no. We did it because the hunt was brand new and we wanted to put in protection for the female part of the population, which is now in the Plan.

Commissioner Robb: If there was an anomaly and all 20 bears killed were females, how much of an impact would that have on our population?

Carl Lackey: Depends on population size. It is definitely something we are going to be looking at.

Larry Gilbertson: We brought lamda into the discussion on setting quotas last year. We use that in our discussion to come up with a really safe level of harvest. Based on that last year we could have killed 12 females, we cut it in half. Now we have a more robust and bigger population size this year than last year, odds of taking 12 females out of 20 is really unlikely given the demographics, males outnumber females about 2:1. Worst case scenario described at the Washoe County Game Board was that we could shoot 20 females. I bet money that can't happen. We have been hunting mountain lions since 1968 and we have never killed more females than males and

they are every bit as hard to tell out in the field in hunting conditions. It is because of their proportions in the population. Based on proportions in the populations that worst case scenario is pretty much impossible. It is a safe harvest level.

Judi Caron: When the quotas are discussed within the agency, how many people were involved in that? What are the checks and balance within the agency?

Larry Gilbertson: We had our big game quota meeting a week ago and every biologist in the state was in the room. Our staff specialist in charge of big game, Mike Cox, Tony Wasley and Pete Bradley, who is new and is going to be taking on the responsibility of statewide bear management along with Carl, all of these individuals were present. The biologists bring their recommendations forward, they do population analysis, as staff we go over their numbers to check and look for accuracy and we discuss it together. In the case of bears last year, we brought the discussion all the way up to the Director's office. We knew how sensitive it was. We don't take these things lightly and we know how serious it is to various user groups out there. We come forward with the best recommendation that the data can support.

Judy Caron: You said you took that to the Director's office last year. Did you follow those same procedures this year?

Larry Gilbertson: Not this year because we were all at the meeting, we brought the data forward and had a stronger population estimate. We are not changing the quota recommendation. Just based on the hunter success we could have. On a normal year on other big game species if you had lower hunter success we will sometimes increase the quota level because our data showed us that the hunter success wasn't as high as we expected. For hunter success on bears we chose Utah's, which was 44% and it is the highest in the west and they allow baiting. We knew we weren't going to get that level of success. Again, another place that we used a conservative number to make sure this bear harvest would be low on purpose. We could have recommended a higher quota this year just based on a little bit of data. We saw what hunters were able to harvest in that length of a season. We shortened the season this year. Based on shortening the season we might expect even lower hunter success, so we could have increased the quota. Instead we are keeping the quota conservative and looking at it over 3 years. We would like to not have the female restriction so that we can allow hunters to go out and hunt bears and act like hunters that aren't worrying about a season closing and see what hunters normally take and what the sex ratio of the harvest is. We want to make that determination.

Commissioner Robb: Did you take into account the portion of the hunt unit that is no longer accessible to hunters and take into account the population that may live in that?

Larry Gilbertson: We didn't worry about it due to where the distribution of harvest was last year. Hunters can do without that piece of country and have a successful hunt.

Public Comment period time specific - 6 minutes organization - self 3 minutes

Dr. Rick Hopkins: Live Oak Associates Ecological Consulting Company in California

- I want to present that California is an important contributor to what is going on in Nevada and there has been some misunderstanding about what has gone on in California and I think that what we have in California is a much more stable or non-growing population over a long period of time that has been suggested in the past.

Carolyn Stark: Handed out schedules see exhibit file

- What has changed in the bear's environment? Until NDOW can explain increases a quota shouldn't be sent. Bears are low producing mammals and broad suppositions have been made such as improved bear boxes, possible increased litter sizes and immigrating bears from California. Because of large variations without concrete explanations NDOW hasn't met its burden that hunting will not seriously jeopardize our bear population.

Don Molde: Copies of 2008 Carnivores Urban Landscapes and Longitudinal Studies by Beckmann and Lackey (did not receive a copy for the exhibit) and Dr. Beckmann's letter to Mr. Lackey of September of 2011 (in exhibit)

- 2008 paper describes study of 12 urban bears and 10 wild bears all females looking at age of first litter production, productivity after that and when they die.
- Urban bears in Tahoe started litter production about age 4, quite productive later and all dead by 10. Tahoe is sink with  $\lambda$  .75 meaning that even with the productivity urban female bears had they couldn't support the population, it was a loser.
- Wild land bears do a little better, their first litter comes at age 7, pretty good about 8 or 9 years of age and 6 of the 10 were still going at age 10. The wild females were clearly the most important.
- Astonished nobody has suggested based on terrific data that it is utterly crazy for us to kill female bears, particularly wild female bears, particularly older female bears. Hunters like to kill big animals. If hunters get a chance to shoot a big wild female bear he is killing the very animal that we need to stay alive to keep the bear population growing based upon Lackey and Beckmann's data.
- There shouldn't be any females killed in this hunt.

Buck Sampson: Handing out flyers with consultation laws - see exhibit file

- Read handout - see exhibit file
- Hunt violates ordinances in the Executive order 13175 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments and 42 USC Section 1996 Protection and Preservation of traditional religions of Native Americans.
- We have tribes that are down here with allocated land (pointing to a map), which is clearly in the Pine Nut range mountains. These are allocated lands belonging to Indian people. You guys coming through here are trespassing without permission, consent or even consultation with this tribe. It is a violation of tribal sovereignty, but carrying any type of firearm could be considered an act of war. The tribes on the California side and on the Nevada side, nobody has even contacted us about sanctioning a hunt.
- Respect our people, respect our tribe, respect our boundaries.

Lisa Bonta: Asking for quota of 0 bears be murdered. As Native Americans we have proof that this bear hunt is not legal as our tribal governments were not properly consulted. The approved map as Buck showed included tribal allotments and I am

asking that the Pine Nut mountain range and the Northern Rim of Lake Tahoe be excluded from this hunt. We have consulted with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, they will be posted with "No Hunting", "No Trespassing" signs and we ask that be respected. We are approaching all of our tribal governments concerning this bear hunt to inform them and confer with them. The allotments are sovereign land and we as American Natives have the inherent right to protect our land and our sacred bears.

David Edwards: I am against killing bears.

Pamela Garden: Until the Department can explain what accounts for this dramatic increase in the rate of population growth this state has not met the burden of proof that hunting will not seriously jeopardize the viability of our bear population.

Bob Bruner:

- State law requires you to manage wildlife so you need to manage the bears. You need to understand how many bears are out there. In order to do that you are going to have to do samples. You are going to have to continue with this. We have already heard that this population of bears is almost 30,000. James Johnson drew a line in the 1860s through the middle of that population. So taking 20 bears out of that population is not going to decimate that population. How many bears are in the state, what is their population density, all of those questions can be answered better with more research and more understanding of what is going on.
- Mr. Lackey has already told us that he is working mostly with conflict bears. The huntable populations are in areas where there is no conflict, so we are hunting in new areas that Mr. Lackey hasn't been marking many bears and so we are finding new information. The only information we have right now is from the harvested bears that say they are big enough, old enough and not enough females that we are showing an under harvested population. There are additional studies going on to see what kind of transportation between the states are, what kind of recruitment there is. You need to continue with the same type of information, the same type of hunt so you can get better information about what you are supposed to do and how you can do it best for the bears.
- Sportmen and women would want a healthy population no matter what first off, not how many they can harvest, what is a healthy population. Populations go up and they go down, they die off if they are left alone. We know we can manage better. You are required by State Law to do better.
- As far as First Nation, what is the antelope quota on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, we don't have one. They are a sovereign nation. They can do anything they want on their nation. We respect everything that they have going on. We are talking about my rights in my sovereign nation. Federal law says that the State has to manage wildlife. The State has determined that you folks understand what best is going on and to manage the wildlife. Not doing anything, not doing studies, not doing a hunt is not doing what you are mandated by law.

Elaine Carrick: Reading an excerpt from Dr. Stringham's report - see exhibit file

Catherine Smith: visual aid board

- California's population increased about 15.7% from 2002-2008. That is an average of approximately 2.6% per year and this was compared to our lambda of 1.16 or

- 16% per year. They compared a 6 year increase of 15.7% at 2.6% per year to our 16% increase per year. You really can't compare those two things, 6 years versus 1 year. Our bear population increased actually approximately 40.6% during this same time period from 180 to 253. That is still only an average of 6.8% per year not 16%. It is great to have all of this data and these population estimates but then we have to look and see if those numbers make sense. We have no reason for our bear population to be growing at a much larger rate than California who reports a revised stable population. We have no bear awareness program, our bear habitat in Nevada is not as good as the habitat in California, which theirs is actually best at the cascade of northern California.
- The State has not met its burden of proof that hunting will not seriously jeopardize the viability of our bear population and we are hunting in areas that have marginal bear habitat that we could potentially extirpate the bears, or get them so low that they could have an unsustainable population in the Sweetwater and the Pine Nuts so we have no real idea of what the bear population is.

Anne Bryant - Bear League: I am working with a doctoral student from UC Berkley on a bear study. We are capturing, collaring and tagging bears on the California side, in the Basin, along with the Truckee River corridor. Right now we have 6 remaining collars on the bears. Their range is enormous. It is bigger than we had previously imagined. None of the collared bears have gone into Nevada. We had estimated on the California side that we had about 300 bears within the Basin including the Truckee River corridor. I always used to assume that there were about 200 on the Nevada side. What we are determining now in this study that we are doing, if I have known 6 of these bears that we captured just in 2 years I don't know 300 bears in California on the Tahoe side. So, we are thinking that there is way less than what we had figured. I don't think you can depend on bears coming in from California to replenish the ones that you are taking by whatever means is happening. It is not going to be your answer for being able to continue this hunt. I don't think you can set a quota of any more than 0 for this hunt.

Lloyd Peak: It seems to me that because there is so much conflicting information and unclear assertions about the bear population that NDOW has not yet shown sufficient evidence that hunting will not seriously impair the viability of our bear population and thus I don't think any quota should be set at this time without clear resolution of the issues raised in the Department's own studies.

Torrey Warfield: To a lot of people these animals are very precious. I just don't think we have the right to harvest them. I think this hunt is wrong and our quota should be zero.

Joel Blakeslee: Thirty five years ago I heard a lot of these same arguments about bobcats. They were going to be extinct, they were going to do this and they were going to do that. We now have 35 years of excellent data. These are the same points that were brought up by Commissioner Moli and others at the time. The thing we need to do is get some data and have some hunts. I think we are going to find that there is no problem having a hunt.

Chairman McNinch: I would like to ask if there is anybody who has not had an opportunity to speak as public comment. Seeing none we will close our comment period for now and we will take a 10 minute break.

Meeting called back to order. Open things up for dialogue and discussion.

Commissioner Robb:

- There are a couple faces in here that were here starting at 8:00 this morning when our first meeting started, the Heritage Project proposal meeting that Commissioner Wallace chairs. That committee had available funds of \$525,796.00 in Heritage money that we could allocate across 14 Department proposed projects and about 9 out of Department proposed projects. Total proposed projects far exceeded the amount of money we had. We had to go in and divide that money up amongst worthwhile projects. The reason I am bringing this up is because it was stated during public comment that Nevada Department of Wildlife is in the bear hunt for the money. That is so contrary to the truth. We make hardly anything on the bear hunt, \$100.00 a tag, 45 tags, that is no money. Today at the meeting one of the longest discussions was on two projects, project 1312 and project 1313, submitted by Carl Lackey. Project 1312 bear DNA sampling and dispersal. Project 1313 black bear reproduction success. The dollar amounts requested were \$61,000.00 on DNA and \$40,000.00. So, \$101,000.00 was requested by NDOW for bear studies. This has not been approved by the commission yet so it is not final at this point but out of the Heritage Committee we approved funding to go towards the Commission for approval, \$40,000 in bear DNA sampling and \$30,000 in black bear reproduction success.
- This isn't about NDOW making money. The sportsmen of the State of Nevada are the ones and only ones that pay into the Heritage Fund. It is through hunting license sales, people buying in a second opportunity. It is people buying Heritage Tags at auction. It is 100% sportsmen dollars. At this point there is \$70,000 of sportsmen dollars going to study these bears and answer a lot of the questions that you guys have.
- Earlier above those things project 1301 for example, Mike Cox trap and transplant big game monitoring program. There was a request for \$150,000. We didn't have enough money to go around. The committee approved forwarding \$90,000 as a recommendation to the commission for approval. We had representatives from Nevada Bighorns Unlimited and other NGOs in the audience and knowing that we were going to come up short on funding we pretty much put those NGOs, NBU and others on the spot saying we have a \$60,000 deficit, are you guys coming to the plate and without a doubt they are. They will come to the plate with that money and more. The sportsmen are ponying up a ton of money for the big game and bears and everything to do with it. My question is, we have a lot of question about science and data. Carl had requested \$101,000 and he has \$70,000. We are looking for \$30,000 and it will get a lot of the data that you guys are after. It will show dispersal, reproduction rates, DNA analysis. That DNA analysis will be coupled with DNA analysis performed in California, using the same criteria same baseline and everything. It will answer a lot of the questions but we are short \$30,000.00. Sheep lovers step up to the plate and they bring a lot of money to the table. I see every group bringing money to the table, Mule Deer Foundation, Elk Foundation. I am just asking if we can get any money out of the bear people to help Carl and the scientists get to the answers we are all looking for. The money thing was brought up a couple of times. I am here to tell you that sportsmen are stepping up.

Kathryn Bricker: As a member of the public the idea of feeding money into a system where we are actually marginalized from having a true voice and representation is

really the big issue. If you look at the public who would like a non-lethal approach to bear management puts into, Anne Bryant is the Founder and Executive Director of the Bear League, their budget is over \$160,000.00 a year. The reason the public puts money in there is simply for the reason that they philosophically comfortable with that approach versus not so with the Department because of the basically sportsmen backing in which decisions are made. Beyond that if you look at the numbers within Nevada membership of a group like Humane Society of the United States and compare that to the Nevada membership of groups such as Safari Club International, NRA (although I take issue with that because I know many members of NRA are not sportsmen), but if you compare those numbers of membership and the dollars that go into those organizations the more humane member of the public, those numbers dwarf a more consumptive orientation of the population. I think if there is a lack of money going into this system is because there is a lack of representation. I agree with everyone that it is wonderful that this bear committee has been formed because it is a step in the right direction of a person who has a different point of view such as myself and those who I represent to be able to sit at the table and have a voice and not marginalized as I felt I was for the first year in being able to make a 3 minute comment. I think that you will start seeing plenty of money when there is the representation given to different philosophical orientations within the Department.

Chairman McNinch: We are going to pull ourselves back. We were kind of flirting with the edge of the agenda item, which has to do with the 2012 bear quota recommendations. I think where Commissioner Robb was heading with some influx of money and some opportunities to do studies that that might help us zero in on our population, which is tied to the quota. We are kind of working the fringe of our agenda item so we will try to bring it back to the center a bit more.

Don Molde: I appreciate Commissioner Robb's comments and what Kathryn echoed. I would point out today that some of us spent from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars just to prepare for this meeting. I would guess that the people in this room and a person who is not here has put close to \$10,000.00 together to bring you what you have heard today. I do have another idea, the \$3.00 predator fee, next Legislative session let's go down and tell the Legislature we would like to use some of that money for predator or large carnivore research instead of fruitlessly killing coyotes. I think there is money to be had and I will actually make a donation to the bear program based upon what you have said because I believe I am in a position to do that. I think other money will be coming. I am greatly in favor of what you have said. I like the representation idea as well.

Chairman McNinch: Dr. Molde, I did have that conversation with Director Mayer here a little while ago that there is certainly a lot of opportunities out there and we do have to keep our minds open with regards to getting some of this work done and keeping our minds open to potential funding sources.

Jon Beckmann:

- I just wanted to make a couple of clarifying statements just so everybody is clear on the science and what was said and particularly with the 2008 paper that myself and Carl published and human wildlife conflicts because it has been cited an awful lot here today and throughout the discussion over the last couple of years with this.

- The first thing I want to point out is that when you look at the estimates of lamda in this paper. These are based on life table parameters. So there is some issues potentially with life tables and the fact that if you get towards the end of life tables the variance in the error estimates of lamda go up. One of the things that we hear repeatedly stated from our data is that we estimated a lamda of 1 in back country. Actually what we said in that paper is that because of the truncation of the life table data that is the minimum lamda. If you look on page 173 what we right is, "in reality lamda was likely even higher for wild land bears making the difference between urban and wild land females even more extreme". For clarification so everybody understands that the estimate of lamda that we estimate at 1 was a minimum estimate for lamda and we are underestimating that because of the way that life table data are constructed. So there are some adjustments that you can do. In reality lamda was higher than 1 in back countries and we state that in the paper on 173.
- The second point I want to make is that we did estimate lamda as .75 in urban areas, which is fine. But just remember that urban areas, I have heard stated several times, that that is the Tahoe Basin. That is not the Tahoe Basin, that is a small section of the Tahoe Basin. Even today, urban areas only cover 7% of the landscape in the Tahoe Basin. So, it is an estimate in those urban areas not the entire Tahoe Basin.

Pamela Gartin:

- A question I have is not just what is the size of the population and the vagueries with the immigrants from California but what is the health of the population? I don't know how to define as the scientist would a healthy bear population. From what I read it seems like we have a somewhat unhealthy situation where bears are being drained from the wild land into the Tahoe area and their mortality rate goes up. What is the population in the wild lands? We know what it is pretty well in the urban areas but do we have an idea of how the hunt is going to really impact the wild land bears. If they are growing at possibly more than 1 lamda in the wild what is the impact of concentrating the hunt on the wild land bears?
- How are these wild land bears going to be effected and is our population a healthy one and how do we determine that? Healthy meaning reproductively. Are our own bears reproducing at a rate that we would expect them to if they were a healthy population or are we relying on the immigrants to sustain it?

Chairman McNinch:

- There was a similar question early on and I know that Dr. Sedinger and Dr. Beckmann have both stated on the record that based on the modeling that they have done that the population is healthy for purposes of harvest in the wild.
- The trick is in my mind with this discussion is it all depends on who you ask in this room. There is going to be a pretty wide range of opinion and I think that is what we are trying to sift through. Where are there similarities, where is there agreement, where there is disagreement. As you form your own personal opinion you are going to have to interject all of these factors and make a decision for yourself as to where you sit on the issue and that is a real challenge, for me.

Judi Caron: When we take on a new species and start to study it and get outside help from the University of Nevada, Reno, and our scientists locally in our state when we are looking at this as a Department over the last 10-15 years, who else is looking at this? When we are doing these papers and acknowledging these papers density,

population growth, are these papers being looked at by other members in the scientific community? Would that have been a red flag if we were moving in the wrong direction at the very beginning of these studies? Would someone else broader outside of the state of Nevada see that to bring something to us?

Carl Lackey:

- If I am right you are asking if the work that we have been doing for the last 14-15 years has gone through a peer review process.
- Yes, all of our publications thus far other than that biological bulletin, which I wrote for the Management Plan several years ago, all of our publications, have gone through the peer review process.

Judi Caron: Not being a scientist, who does the detailed reading of this and giving the feedback?

Dr. Beckmann: Journals will ask, if you submit a paper for publication they will ask experts in that respective field. So if it is population, ecology or bears specifically to review it. They will make comments, they will make a decision, go through the science and the math and decide if it holds up to the test of reliable data collection, the assumptions being met and the correct methodology and the correct way that that the data were collected and the interpretations and they review that. They either accept it ultimately in publication with some alterations based on input in the review process or they will reject a paper if it is not passing the test of peer review. It goes through the greater scientific community, sometimes even globally.

Judi Caron: If there is something wrong and their figures are calculated wrong or something is not being looked at or entered into it, you are going to be notified or whoever submitted to reevaluate?

Dr. Beckmann: Correct, the reviewers and the editors will say this is not correct, you have made a calculation error if they catch it in that kind of stuff. That is part of the entire process.

Judi Caron: What have we been seeing from the beginning of this when we first started these studies, have we had any feedback from peer review that we are missing something in the equation?

Dr. Beckmann: The reviewers of any individual paper will only look at generally what is in that paper. They won't know all of the additional questions that you are asking in the larger study. They may not know if you are doing a genetic component or whatever, they are looking at reviewing what is in front of them from the methodology and the background that is given in the paper at that point. If there is an error in the paper that is an egregious enough error then it will be rejected and not make it to peer review publication and come out into the scientific journals.

Judi Caron: If something had come back by that, we have had different administrators since we started these projects or research, our Administrator or Director of our Department obviously would have been aware of that. Someone would have been aware that something is wrong in how we are looking at this data that we are collecting to be submitted.

Dr. Beckmann: Yes

Kathryn Bricker:

- I would like your response to the fact, Dr. Molde pointed out accurately, that those of us who do not feel that we are at the point that we should be setting quotas and conducting bear hunts. We have spent sizeable money to ask for peer review of everything that has been made available by the Department, both the data and the data analysis, and the responses we have gotten have been consistent. They have been from Dr. Hopkins and Dr. Stringham, both who I think are nationally renowned in their field and certainly as reputable as all of you are. In addition to them disagreeing that you have met the burden of proof that an annual hunt is sustainable, the 9 member committee of the National Sierra Club committee for wildlife and endangered species, all of whom also are experts in this field, they unanimously and independently make this statement and go into great detail but they say as well that the Nevada Department of Wildlife has not satisfactorily met the burden of proof that an annual hunt of resident black bear populations is sustainable.
- That is quite a body of independent peer review that rejects your conclusions. How do you feel about that?

Dr. Beckmann:

- Let me preface my statements with this. As a scientist, as a broker of information I do not come into this from my perspective as a partner on this research of trying to support the hunt or not. I am interjecting data into the decision process.
- One of the things I think people need to understand is that the science process, it is never as fast decision process at times. So, we have the data published up to this point and we continue to work on that publication. We are working on publishing the data for the current population estimates and that is in the peer review process now. That is undergoing peer review at the Journals and that process takes some time.
- In terms of your question. What we are doing is publishing the data to get into the discussion of the decision process.

Kathryn Bricker: You do not support then at this point and time the decision that we have a population who should be hunted and that is sustainable?

Dr. Beckmann: I am not saying that. I am speaking only from the data. We are presenting the data. I am not stating anything more than we have an estimated lamda up until that point of 1.16.

Kathryn Bricker: Am I correct to say, that you are not saying that we have a sustainable population for a hunt? You are not making that statement?

Dr. Beckmann: What I stated earlier is that based on our population estimate that we have at this point and the level of harvest that has been recommended by the Nevada Department of Wildlife, in my opinion based on the data that the harvest quota that is set right now should not negatively impact the population. Remember what I said earlier, my caveat is that we need to continue the monitoring of the population over time because populations are not stasis in time, they can change over time, and different environmental factors. That is where I stand.

Judi Caron: You are saying from the information that has been collected and from what has been submitted by the Department recommending a hunt in our state if they keep the quota at 20 as purposed, we as hunters of the community, would not impact the stability of the black bear population today, it would still continue, we wouldn't be negatively impacting the resource?

Dr. Beckmann: All things equal, correct. But again I go to that caveat as long as we continue to monitor because things could change. The Department continues to do that in collaboration with myself and other scientists.

Judi Caron: It goes along with the Black Bear Management Plan that the Department has put together that as long as their criteria and objectives are to be met it would keep the population stable or increasing.

Dr. Beckmann: Under the current conditions, correct.

Kathryn Bricker: We are also correct that we do not have the funding to implement that Management Plan is that correct?

Chairman McNinch: I am not sure that I have heard that necessarily. That maybe a question for NDOW. Certainly some of the goals and objectives in here are certainly being addressed as part of the Heritage Program money that was requested. There is no doubt that the agency suffered some pretty significant blows to its budget just like any other government agency but I think that this is the agencies attempt to stabilize and to establish some funding to address some of the issues in here.

Kathryn Bricker: Is there any component of this decision making process in the attempt to set a quota that we are doing the equivalent of going forward with a plan which is an unfunded mandate? If it requires which it does and we don't know that we have the funds to do what in fact needs to be done for that to be done correctly should we at this point even be having the conversation of quotas and bear hunts?

Ken Mayer: We have a system in place to provide the monitoring that we need to do on an annual basis based on the data the need to collect to be able to monitor the condition of the bear population. What Commissioner Robb was talking about is some additional things that we would like to learn about the bear population. It is not information that we absolutely have to have in order to have a bear hunt, it is to learn more about this bear population. In no way does the proposed projects have any bearing on our ability to monitor the population and be able to come back to you on an annual basis and say yes we are doing okay or no we need to back off because we are noticing things within the population. We have adequate money and resources to do what we need to do to monitor the population through time.

Commissioner Robb: There is nothing in those Heritage Proposals that we were just speaking about that were critical. It is not day to day operation. It is not population modeling. It is enhancing Nevada's wildlife, is what the Heritage Project is about.

Ken Mayer: Yes and enhancing our knowledge of the bear population. But, not critical data that tells us one way or the other whether we should be hunting or not hunting. The other thing we talked about using the predator fee money, I need to

read it again, but I think there is probably latitude within current legislation to be able to provide funds to do some of this work as well referring to research.

Commissioner Drew: Did I hear Larry mention earlier that you have an additional staff specialist in the office to help with some of the bear issues as well?

Ken Mayer: As you know, Kevin Lansford, our predator biologist moved on and we have had that vacant for a while for salary savings issues. We have now just filled that and so we are going to have another person in the office, the predator person, actually working with Carl to give him some help. That person's responsibility is going to be what Kevin was doing including some bear work.

Commissioner Drew: So, to some degree you have actually enhanced or increased your capacity to address bear issues, whether it be monitoring, data collection, etc.

Ken Mayer: Absolutely.

#### Public Comment

Elaine Carrick: I wanted to comment on what Chairman McNinch had said. If you ask someone in the room should we be having a bear hunt or not and it depends on what expert you ask. Basically, I think there is enough differences of opinion between experts that you really have to ask yourself can we really go on with a bear hunt when there are differences of opinion and conclusions that experts have made, do we have enough bears and can it effect the population? I know human nature definitely has a comfort zone when you are listening to people that you are familiar with and are within the sphere of your area but the experts that have spoken, Dr. Hopkins and the paper I believe you have with Dr. Stringham, these are people that were given information and they came to totally different conclusions. This cannot be ignored. I think you do have to take that into consideration and possibly step a bit out of your comfort zone to look at what these people have said as well as the experts from the Sierra Club. This is too important of an issue to say we will go with the experts that we like and we want to go with them. You have to look at the whole picture and possibly look at things more carefully at this point.

Kathryn Bricker: I would add to that the public funding that would come as a result of that approach.

Chairman McNinch:

- Before we move on. Elaine, I agree with your thought process there but at the same time there is very few processes that you can't interject out at some level. It doesn't necessarily even take experts to come in and create doubt and then make the argument. Even though I understand what you are saying I think we need to be careful going down that road. Having doubt is one thing and understanding two sides of the issue but to create that as part of the game plan for not moving forward. There is some danger there in my mind.
- The funding aspect of it. In all honesty, I am not sure the representation aspect of it. I would hope that the need and the desire to help out would override the caveat that there has to be equal representation. I would hope that that would be the case. I get frustrated with the discussion because it is almost an impossible task. Everybody in the state has a responsibility. They want to claim

ownership of the wildlife but they don't want to pay for it. You guys have heard me the whole time I have been on this Commission and to have strings attached to it just doesn't do any good for the wildlife.

Don Molde:

- I would remind you all that you don't have to keep killing bears in order to learn something about them. You can do research on live animals.
- In the view of some the black bear is the slowest reproducing mammal in North America short of the musk ox.
- In terms of numbers in California, it has been mentioned that the bear population maybe somewhat flat. If you go to the California Fish and Game site and look at bears, if you look at the point population estimate, forget about the confidence levels, the point estimate for 2008 was 35,500 extrapolating from their graph. 2009 down to 32,000. 2010 down to 26,000. It has dropped around 10,000 animals in the last 3 years.
- In Dr. Beckmann's 2008 paper he states that in 2002 he noticed a decline in wild land bear density to 3 bears per 100 square kilometers, which I reinterpreted to 3 bears per 36 square miles or 1 bear per 12 square miles. I know it is not a very good way to measure density or humans for that matter in terms of where they live in Nevada. That is an astonishingly low density estimate in my opinion. That makes me worry about Pam's concern whether there is viability in the wild land bear population is something that we ought to think about. He has not addressed that to this point. I would like to hear something about the wild land bear density determination that he made now 10 years ago and where he thinks it stands now.

Dr. Beckmann: The data is 10 years old and we haven't estimated densities since then. We could do that with the data that we are generating but those density estimates in back country areas are a decade old now so they are out of date. We don't know what the current density estimates are but we are collecting the data to be able to do that.

Bob Bruner:

- I think this all points to the fact that we still need to have more research to answer these questions. The way to do that, what we understood, what we learned from this last hunt was a tremendous amount of things. We found out that the bear hunters and the public are not in conflict. We found out that the bears are hunted in a different area. We found out that all the bears are very old, very heavy and we had the right male to female ratio in there. We found out a lot of things from just one hunt. Not only do we have all of these studies that are ongoing, new ones that are going to be paid for and an additional hunt to just go ahead and go on.
- Remember too that this whole population, when you take a look at the population of fish in Tahoe you don't say what is the population of fish on the Nevada side. We have studies that we are paying for that are going to move forward and give us what kind of movement is that. But for right now with the information we have from the bears that were collected we have a stable population and we need more information and more money to find out more answers about what is going on.
- You do have representation. Sportsmen don't have 100% representation on this board and they were able to put forward money. So, let's get these answers and make good decisions for the bears.

Cathy Smith: I noticed other bear management plans of multiple other states have hunt units organized like we do for other species in Nevada with how many you can take out of that particular hunt unit. Since we don't know bear densities we don't have a good idea of what the bear population is the Pine Nuts and Sweetwaters and those areas. Obviously that bear habitat is vastly different than the habitat up near Tahoe Basin and the Carson Range. I believe that the old densities that we have been given are probably comparable or even lower than the ones in Southern California, where I don't believe they hunt in some of those areas. You could hunt out all the bears in the Pine Nuts or Sweetwaters because people focus there, since we don't have these separate density levels. Kentucky did something different with their bear hunt, which was recently started. They have a small population like ours. I don't think they will come out and say what their total population is, but they did a big study and put quite a bit of money into their bear research where they did the hair snares and found out that 77% of the female bears den in this area so they are not hunting in those areas. They have a two day bear hunt, no baits, no hounds and that is it. That is what they feel comfortable with their numbers. It would be a nice idea to get these different numbers to see if we should be doing like we do for the other species here, should we only be hunting two or three bears out of the Pine Nuts. Instead of saying you can hunt all 20 bears out of the Pine Nuts.

Ann Bryant: Originally when this was brought up that Nevada was going to consider a bear hunt, one of the honest answers from the commission was, "because the hunters want it". Now, I am hearing today that possibly it is because that we need data. You said the information that is coming in from the hunt and you need more money for studying more. Let me explain that in California there has been a hunt since the beginning of time. In one year 1960 something they called the hunt off because they weren't sure of what the population was. However, all of the rest of these years for over 100 years there has been a bear hunt in California. What have they learned from dead bears? Not much. We still don't know in California how many bears we've got. Carl and Jon's study from a few years ago was superb. They didn't kill those bears. They captured, tested, and determined what their age was, health was, where they came from, they collared some and they tagged some. The information that came from that is what provided the data that we are all arguing about right now. I have never argued with that data. That is clear and concise. I don't agree that you have to kill bears to study them. I also don't agree that that is where the money has to come from. The study that is going on in California, of which I am helping, I am helping him get money. I just went and sat down at a hearing for a grant where because I told the grantor that I support this data that he is collecting and support this study, hands down they wrote him a check for \$10,000 just like that. I could do that just as easy with Carl if he could go back and do what he did with Jon, capture bears, collars and tags and follow them. That is the way to study bears. Don't kill them. I really think if you want the data and want the funding, nobody is going to give money to a program that kills bears. My group would definitely support going back to what Carl was doing before. We were very proud of that and that is what we recommend.

Joel Blakeslee: I just wanted to address the question that the lady asked about the reproductive health and viability of the populations and there is a lot of assumptions going around that if you kill the bears that things are going to be bad. It is quite possible and I would say probable that in a population that is dominated by older class animals, especially a large carnivore, that you would probably stimulate that

reproduction due to inter specific competition. In other words, old bore bears are known to kill younger bears. By the harvest you might actually stimulate that population.

Kathryn Bricker: Dr. Hopkins, I was interested by a comment you made. What I am understanding is that Dr. Beckmann is saying that we have a 16% growth rate in Nevada currently, that we are understanding in California the population is stable and Dr. Molde said there has actually been a drop of 10,000 bears in California over the last 3 years. One of the potential assumptions for the Nevada growth was that perhaps we could postulate that there is an increased immigration from California that might be explanatory to this. You made the statement, assuming that Nevada is the western edge of the contiguous California population, you made the statement that in Placer and Eldorado counties it was 5.7% of the total California harvest occurring. We have the data for 2010 and 2011 from those 2 counties. If we went over a 10 year average they kill about 40 bears a year in each of those counties. Your statement was 5.7% of the total harvest of California came from those two counties. The Lake Tahoe edge of those two counties is the eastern most border and for 2010 and 2011, which are the only years we have the data on, there were 0 bears killed in the Tahoe Basin in Eldorado county and 1 in Placer county in the last 2 years. Does that indicate to you that there is some sort of edge limiting immigration?

Rick Hopkins: I cannot speak to why the hunter distribution, I can speculate that they probably are disproportionately not coming into the Tahoe Basin to hunt maybe because of large human populations that are there various times of the year. Most of what I understand the number of bears killed in those two counties is really on the other side of the ridge. That would basically be the western side of the Sierra. Hunters are like anyone else. They tend to be lazy, you are not going to go someplace where it is really hard to get something. You are going to find the places where you have better hunter success. There is probably some access issues and issues related to dealing with the human populations that do occur in the Tahoe basin that may complicate hunting there.

Kathryn Bricker: I am sure that is true. I read somewhere and is this true that for every 1000 feet gain in elevation because of the reduction in sources of food there is a reduction in bear density. Is that explanatory to a degree?

Rick Hopkins: Bear hunters don't always distribute out to where the greatest number of bears are. There have been a lot of studies that look at hunting of various species and a lot of road access dictates to a large degree where the hunting tends to occur. If you have two areas one with much higher density than the other area but the one area with much higher density has very poor access they are going to tend to go to the area with the better access.

Kathryn Bricker: So, we shouldn't be looking as we have in these meetings in the past really then at what's going on in terms of hunting in Placer and Eldorado counties in the Tahoe Basin as being an indicator of anything to do with the species population.

Rick Hopkins: Using harvest data to infer much about what is going on with populations of anything becomes extremely challenging and almost certainly a poor way to judge changes in population. CAFG is suggesting the harvest last year was

fairly low and they are suggesting the harvest was low because of the high snow fall. That is not an unreasonable hypothesis. It is not tested but that is their guess. There are a lot of factors that go into the change in terms of hunting and hunting success. Some of which could be changes in the population of the animal and some of which is a lot of noise. It is highly suspect to use harvest or change in harvest numbers as an index of what is going on with population. It might give you some indication of what you need to look at but I wouldn't rely very heavily on harvest data to really tell you much about how populations are changing.

Kathryn Bricker: If we were using the harvest data as is suggested here for our Nevada bear hunt to make judgment about how our Nevada population is going would we as Dr. Stringham has said have anything that is statistically significantly given the things you have said in combination with the small size of our harvest? Are we really going to come with anything?

Rick Hopkins:

- It is hard. Mr. Lackey made a point that is well taken when he said that 20 bears we are not sure we are even going to see much as we go down the road. The problem is that is a double edged sword. Because of sampling bias, I agree the likelihood of ending up with 20 female bears in a harvest is very low, it is not zero but it is extremely low. Because of sampling bias, you have this notion that you have this criteria set to tell you if you have exceeded some rational or some point that the population is at some risk. The sampling bias alone could swamp any outcome of that. With a small quota like 20 it s a double edge sword, maybe it is not effecting the population much if you are monitoring it well but the problem is that monitoring those 20 because of sampling bias who knows what you are really getting. You could get 60-70% female in one year and that doesn't mean that necessarily that you have overharvested. You can't really infer much from that. Again the number is small.
- In California harvest rates can go as high as 1700. They should be harvesting bears based upon hunt areas that are sort of ecological regions so you look at what is going on with those data for that region. You should not lump and pull all the data. Beckmann mentioned the large confidence intervals. Part of the reason for those large confidence intervals is they are pulling all of the harvest data they collect over the entire state of California. If you would look at suitable ecological areas you would learn a lot more about how the harvest is/is not effecting.
- If all of the bear harvesting now gets shifted because the Tahoe Basin becomes an uncomfortable place for bear hunters to go, not that there aren't bears there, but that is not an appealing place to hunt you may be shifting all of your harvest into one sub region of the state.

Kathryn Bricker: Is that what Dr. Stringham was referring to when he said spatially explicit data being necessary?

Rick Hopkins: I think so. Just reading what he wrote.

Kathryn Bricker: So within Nevada with our different habitat areas do you see the Pine Nuts and the more desert areas we are now funneling more of the hunting or the hunters are showing greater preference, is that less desirable bear habitat because of the dryness compared to the areas we have ruled out in the Tahoe Basin?

Rick Hopkins: From what I understand it holds lower densities than others. As I understand it the Pine Nuts support, because of the habitat quality, would support lower densities, particularly some of the areas in California.

Kathryn Bricker: Would your recommendation to set quotas as we do with other game species in Nevada more explicit to the spatial?

Rick Hopkins: I would be concerned if you've generated estimates over a certain size area and then a substantially smaller area is where all of the harvest is occurring, that would concern me. Because your assumption is that you are spreading that harvest over the larger and now if you are shrinking it to the smaller those are concerns of mine. I will not admit they are not intractable to solve but they are things to consider and they would need to be part of a plan up front. We know that harvest is not equally distributed across the landscape so we should anticipate those issues upfront.

Chairman McNinch: The one thing that I think hasn't been pointed out to this point is that I think there is a general agreement that the population is growing. There is always going to be debate in that arena. Assuming that there is a 3-7% growth rate with no hunting, at some point you are going to have a population that theoretically can sustain a hunt. Whether it is at a 16% growth rate or a 3%. Ultimately, the decision has got to come down to is hunting bears the right thing to do or not. Why wouldn't we, based on what you have seen, why would tell us that we are not there now?

Rick Hopkins:

- The answer is probably a yearlong seminar. Essentially questions related to whether or not you should or should not hunt large predator are really questions that engage both evidence and values. Certainly evidence to the degree and there is always going to be disagreement at evidence and can you collect more information to support or not support. In the end, the problem becomes that a lot of people try to rely on evidence to support the value side of the equation. This isn't discussed enough in ecology when we look at these questions. It is not a simple, we have enough to hunt or we don't have enough to hunt. It really is an interaction of evidence in values that make that determination. Choices of whether or not you think something should be hunted really become a value statement. That is not an evidence based question. It is unfortunate that much of our conversation becomes one of how many should we kill. I know Beckmann and Lackey have done quite a number of interesting studies.
- The issue becomes one of conservation and how we connect these things. We lose the big picture of conservation in these discussions about whether there should or shouldn't be a quota. The more interesting and more important questions are to what degree does California will continue or is important to support or sustain a population of bears in Nevada. I think it is an unanswered question but one that needs answering. At what point is it totally self sustaining. If connectivity becomes problematic with increasing development and bear immigration becomes lower is that sustainable with what we have. We focus all of our energy on whether to hunt bears and we seem to be losing the fact that if we lose connectivity you may not be hunting bears at all in Nevada, if it is a critical process in terms of keeping the population going.

- When you are looking at marginal habitat (edge of the range) and looking at making decisions in a political boundary it is complicated. The question gets down to how well you monitor it and how well you catch mistakes.
- It comes down to a personal sort of thing that I cannot answer for you.

Chairman McNinch:

- We do lose sight of what we are trying to accomplish. We are trying to balance the needs of a lot of user groups/interests. I am having trouble plugging in where it is good for the bears right now.
- I have told a number of folks I have talked to I am still not sure where I stand on the whole thing but asking these questions and getting some input helps straighten these things up for me. What place does hunting have in this system right now at this point and time?

Any other thoughts from the audience if not I am going to bring it back to the committee.

Commissioner Robb: There has been a question we have Sierra Club, multiple doctors on the outside looking in. We have been asked with these other opinions if we should question ourselves. It was asked are we going with the ones that we are more comfortable with. The people that are telling us their opinions from University have lived this for the past 15 years. It is not that they are any smarter than anybody's expert it is they know the subject matter better than anybody's expert. In looking at that one thing I don't discredit anybody else's expert it is that they have not been absorbed in it for the amount of time and seen the amount of variances. It is just the amount of time they have had to analyze it. That is what is going to help me make my decision and recommendation going forward today.

Commissioner Drew: A lot of the discussion today comes down to more of the value question that Dr. Hopkins talked about and that was should we are should we not have a bear hunt. That is a debate that we are going to have as long as there is a bear hunt. In my opinion, it is probably a good debate to have and remind ourselves of. But, today the job at hand is to look at quotas. When we look at quotas we are supposed to take into account the Department's recommendations, the County Advisory Boards and the public. We have had a lot of input on all of those facets but to me when I look at the Department's input and recommendations I believe they are based on a lot of really good hard work by some dedicated people. I believe there are several impartial parties who have helped and reviewed that data and they all share the same opinion that at this point and time the recommended quota essentially is sustainable with the caveat that we need to continue to monitor. Part of the monitoring is exactly what we do every year. There is a reason that we have this same debate on big game species, whether it is bear or deer or anything else every single year and that is to make sure that we are reviewing the most current and up to date data. In this particular instance the most current and up to date data tells me that it is okay to have a quota of 20 bears. Then you look at the social aspect of it with the County Advisory Boards and the public and we are right back to where we are when we started the debate on whether the hunt should even be here or not. It is split. In that instance my heart of hearts tells me you go with the data and what the experts have said, again it is not discrediting anyone else who has reviewed the data but even Dr. Hopkins has stated that the work being done in Nevada is great. There are questions that we need to continue to answer and we will do that. Those

are questions that may or may not have been answered without a hunt but it sure got a lot more attention recently and we are moving in the right direction. At this point I have no reason to argue or dispute what the Department has recommended.

Judi Caron: I mirror a lot of both what Jeremy and Jack have said with the workings of the Department, the conclusions, how we gathered all the information, reviewing it, the public input process, putting this committee together, identifying a strong interest of both the consumptive and the non-consumptive users, recreational opportunity, what's best for the bear, our values, social issues that everybody touched on. I have learned a lot about bears reading different opinions, views, considerations, respect for our biologists, respect for people commenting and coming to the meetings. I have a list of questions I could still ask. My final question I really have is to the Director, all the thought process that goes into our quota systems, a lot is built on trust and the knowledge within our biologists for our state and I think it is because of their love for wildlife, it doesn't matter if it is a big game species or species we hunt, it is the love of wildlife and having it for everyone to enjoy be it recreational use in your own choice. With anything that you heard today and the criticisms or questioning and working with the public and with your staff would it still be a quota of 20 you would recommend and support coming from your Department?

Ken Mayer: We all got into this business because of our respect and love for wildlife and management. We are not here to be a proponent of the hunt quite frankly. What we are here to do is tell you based on our experience and education, which is quite significant and the fact that we want to make sure that we are ultra conservative we brought in other experts outside that are independent and don't work for me or feel pressure from the Committee or Commission to look at the data we have collected, look at our methodology, help us establish a route in which we would then provide an assessment to have that input. We have done that analysis and give you what we think to be a reasonable proposal. If you are going to go forward with the hunt, which the commission already did decide that there was going to be a hunt. The second part of that if you are going to hunt what the quota is going to be. I feel pretty confident based on what I heard today that it would not change my mind at all whether we would submit you 20 bears or 15. I think we could have probably submitted a quota higher than that. But, my instruction to the staff was to be conservative and being a certified wildlife biologist as well, I know what went into those models and how the conservatism in every step with what we do. We have some of the best data in North America on this bear population. I feel confident that if things go south and I don't believe hunting is going to make things change in this population, it will be other factors and we would be able to monitor that and we would be the first ones to come back and tell you we suggest you back off or curtail the hunt. What we are trying to do is provide enough for people to view and appreciate and know there is a healthy viable population out there as well as provide for people that want to utilize the resource, which we have a mandate to provide for that in this state.

Judi Caron: Mr. Chairman with the answer that I just heard and my use of outdoor recreation as a consumptive user and when there is a sustainable population, and I think I have heard that today, I think with the science and what I believe in and what we are charged to do to listen to the public, counties and everyone and take the best science available. I heard that today. I would be going forward with supporting the Department's recommendation.

Kathryn Bricker: The commissioners of the Wildlife Commission, decided to have a bear hunt and they are comprised of consumptive users exclusively to include our public representative. So there is a complete bias within the decision making system. We have heard from people today that the bias doesn't include that the decision is very disrespectful of Native American cultural integrity. It disrespects the vast majority of the people who share habitat here in Nevada with the bears. It basically is a decision made by and for hunters. As in other states as long as that system is in place we are going to continue to get these outcomes and they are value outcomes. I think that to me if we look at the larger landscape that we have this complete vacuum in the decision making process of anything but consumptive users and if we could spread that knowledge into the larger picture, I think there are way more reasons to not have a bear hunt and not go forward with the quota than there are for doing so. That being said I think the balance of power in this room is such that we all know what the outcome is going to be here today. As in every state and multiple studies in public policy who look into these sorts of things it forces the public to go outside the system with public initiatives to the legislature and to change the system because it does not accommodate. It does not accommodate the cultural integrity of our first Nevadans. It doesn't accommodate my values and everyone I know. We are highly offended by this bear hunt. That said, I would have this false hope of us seeing the larger landscape of the decision we are making and realize that this time, in this place with this species we should not be setting a quota. We should respect the larger landscape in which this decision is being made and be respectful of that.

Chairman McNinch:

- When I came in today I came to talk to Ken and Larry a little bit this morning and I will be honest why. There was some concern that I wasn't necessarily for me as a person respectful of the work that is done by NDOW. Based on some comments that I made and I want to make sure that NDOW understands you guys have my utmost respect. Mike, Larry, Carl and everybody else. You guys need to know that. I also told everybody that I wasn't sure. I haven't been real open about where I am at and I wasn't sure. I am to the point now where the conservative side of me is going to come out. I am going to make some key points: I have said on the record a dozen times over the years I do believe in multiple use, it is the most challenging management system but it has to work that way. It is an important component. I do view hunting provided we have healthy populations as a very viable management tool. That is going to immediately philosophically separate me from other folks. In my mind that includes bear hunting. If there are healthy viable populations I believe that hunting is a viable management tool. I do believe that this particular hunt does little to resolve a number of our major issues, the nuisance bear issue, gathering information and things of that nature. There is certainly information to be gathered and I am struggling with that. I do believe that you get information. We have collection permits that issued through the Department for these very reasons where people come in and they want to shoot a certain number of a species to gather information so there is a place for it. If we move forward we have the threats of lawsuits hanging over our head and I hate being leveraged that way. It doesn't work very well on me. But at the same time I think everybody needs to understand, vote against the hunt, you have certain interests suggesting that their right to public lands and to have opportunity on their public lands are being violated. If you support the hunt we are damaging interests with regards to religious grounds and for philosophical reasons. There is really no win in this in a lot of ways. We all know that.

- I am not convinced that hunting is the best way to move forward to get the information that we need to deal with bears in Nevada. Do I think they are increasing? I do. There was a time you didn't see many bears. Over the last 10 years I have probably seen 20-25 and I don't even frequent the mountains like that. So antidotal I do believe there is an increase in bears, which tells me at some point, I do understand the nuisance bear issue, I understand the need to manage it and the pressures that being put on the public agency to deal with these things. Whether we like it or not the public agency is tasked with management of wildlife for public safety reasons. Those are issues that we can't get around. They have a responsibility to make sure the animals they are responsible for aren't impacting the public from a public safety standpoint.
- My decision today is not based on a no confidence vote of the agency. It has nothing to do with that. It is not commentary on the agencies performance and how they do their job. I know a lot of these guys. I do firmly believe and very confident they work with a high level of integrity. The models are what they are. There is a lot of information in there. I have been supportive of establishing the hunt because I do believe it is a management tool. I participated as Kathryn did in the season setting, which was a function of if this hunt goes through this would be the preferred way of doing it. Now we are down to the quotas, which is actually where we are going to head with the numbers. I couldn't agree more with Ken. I think there are other factors that will cause problems rather than the hunt. I personally need to understand those a little better. I think there is a time and a place for the hunt, I am just not convinced that it is today.

Commissioner Robb: **MOVE THAT THIS COMMITTEE FORWARDS THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT'S RECOMMENDATION OF 20 BEARS FOR A QUOTA THIS YEAR TO THE COMMISSION.**

Judi Caron: **SECOND.**

Commissioner Drew: Can I just add Jack and Judi for clarification that you are proposing to accept the Department's recommendation for hunt 6151 as well as 6251 in addition to the harvest objectives?

Commissioner Robb: Correct.

Chairman McNinch:

- We have a motion to accept the Department's recommendations and we have a second. Is there any discussion on it? I would like to introduce the concept of I think at a minimum I would hope that part of our recommendation to the Board is to strongly, if that is the direction that we are going to head, that there be a very strong support or statement that the monitoring aspect of this is absolutely essential. I think that we can all agree on that I don't think there has been any discourse or any argument against the monitoring aspect and that we do need to do what needs to be done and that is with the bears in mind. Is everybody amenable to that as part of the comment back to the Commission?
- Any discussion?
- Call for a vote:
  - All in Favor: Commissioner Robb, Judi Caron, Commissioner Drew
  - Those Opposed: Chairman McNinch, Kathryn Bricker

- The recommendation of the Department we will forward as a recommendation to the full Commission for consideration.
- C. **Potential Workshop at Incline in June regarding bear related issues to support/oppose or take no action, and recommend action to full Commission. - Possible Action**

Kathryn Bricker:

- I agree in terms of doing well for the bears. There is no more critical area than addressing this. I agree it probably more so than the hunt. I think we as a bear committee and as a Department give this our full attention and commitment. This is an area where all of us who are on both sides of the issue regarding the bear hunt. I don't think we are opposed in any aspect of this or we will at least identify a few that are probably inconsequential. I think we all agree that there needs to be serious work done in this area that we have a problem and we are underfunded. Representatives of the Department, Mr. Lackey was one of them and the Washoe County Sheriff's Department and different citizens of Lake Tahoe, who kind of stack up on different sides of the issue in terms of the urban bear. Some of them call the Department in and want them killed and some of them have the opposite. So, all of those different orientations were at this particular meeting. I was not.
- It seems to me we need a lot more money in dealing with our urban bear issue and it seems to me that the Department agrees that education can be addressed by any entity. The difference of opinion is on the deterred of errors.

Carl Lackey: Education is by any entity as long as it is correct education. Hands on handling of bears and dealing with the bears should be done by the accountable parties only.

Kathryn Bricker: We need to bring the different stakeholders, you (Carl), the public and the different agencies such as Bear League and others and bring everybody to the table and define where we agree and where we don't agree and then I guess see what we can do. Maybe rather than getting into this now that is going to be the first thing we do at this meeting.

Chairman McNinch: Part of my concern was that as a Commission the Department has been up to Incline discussing enforcement issues. They have done Bear Aware Programs. There has been some interaction at that level but the Commission has not had a presence at Incline, right in the heart of this thing. I guess that I wanted to at least make sure we gave it a little bit of air time to determine if we saw benefit in doing a workshop up there. This wouldn't be something where we are necessarily debating a bunch of science. Start with a real basic level. Give people an opportunity up there to tell us where they are at. I suspect there is a lot of people that are very strong bear advocates. I suspect there is quite a few people that are pretty irritated with getting the doors ripped off their cars. I think it is important to provide that opportunity for those folks that don't come down here to have a forum to participate or to come forward and open a dialogue with them. Otherwise, I feel like it is a ticking time bomb. It is an unexplored area. I don't know if it is everybody is so mad they can't see straight or if there is actually legitimate energy up there to do something positive, I don't know. I think it is a stone we would be

sorry if we didn't turn. I just wanted to get something on here to bring it to the Committee and get everybody's feedback.

Commissioner Drew: The thing in terms of educating myself that I would like to see is maybe a representative not only from Incline but people from Douglas, Carson and Washoe counties who deal with these issues. Maybe give us a sense of what tools they have in place. I think what I want to see come out of this so we are productive is what are the commonalities? Are there things that this Committee can recommend that we actually take some action on in terms of whether it is something in regards to wildlife feeding that we take to the Legislature. Whether it is something with handling of the garbage, things of that nature. Are there tangible things that we can run with that are common to everyone at this point?

Kathryn Bricker: There are a very large array of issues that need to be vetted. Each of those you mentioned. We pretty much looked at every bear management state plan on dealing with urban bear issues and I think our personal favorite is Florida because for each bear habitat region they actually have developed their policies with the public. It has been a partnership between the public and the Department in developing their bear management plans and their policies for dealing with urban bears who become nuisances. We have a problem with the word nuisance bears. I think there has been a lack of that here. The more that we can follow models such as the state of Florida in involving the public and having a real open dialogue so that the Department can see where the differences are. We feel that some of the data being used now doesn't reflect the latest data and dictates that we can consider changes in policy. I have full confidence that if we did have good dialogue that it would be very constructive and instead of people, as they are now, demonizing the Department or individuals that people would have a sense of investment in what the outcomes are. I think we can all work together. Some great studies can come out of it. I think great cooperation could come out of it. I think it needs to be done and should be done and will have a lot of positive outcome well beyond what you mentioned.

Judi Caron: I think that is the next step and that was the goal from the very beginning was the education part of it, ordinances that would come out of that to better the wildlife, something needs to be done and I think we are all aware of that. Reading the Bear Management Plan some of the goals and objectives that the Department has put down are the same things that Jeremy and Kathryn both have mentioned. I think collectively we are all on the same page. Our county commissioners need to be addressed. There are things I think we can do maybe go through the legislator to correct some of this and I think it is a wonderful idea.

Kathryn Bricker: We see a lot of potential for innovation and also private/public partnerships. I think we have an opportunity to be absolutely at the very top of urban bear management and be very innovative. We discussed plans that we were a little late in applying for grants for that we think would be very innovative. We think that if we were able to present them to the Department they would be agreeable and that it would make sense to all parties involved. I think you just really need the energy of the people cooperating and participating. Ultimately, if 80% of the Basin is non-developed and only 20% is where the people live it shouldn't be all that hard to keep the bears in the 80% if we get our act together. We discussed different programs based on all the research that is coming about certain types of behavior of

urban bears of how we can deter that. We have a lot of ideas and I think the public wants to be involved, they need to be involved. By the time there is a call to the Department to come up there it is too late. That bear is already habituated. It has to start at ground zero with the person who encounters the bear coming into the urban interface. You have to set those boundaries for bears right now. You cannot think it is cute and enjoy watching it and then when it gets older and your neighbor leaves their trash out and gets in the trash all of the sudden now you don't like that bear being there, when in fact it is there because you allowed it to start with. I think if you don't get all of the people involved and have them take ownership in the decisions and the policies then it is going to fail ultimately anyway because it is going to have the same outcome. All the enforcement in the world isn't going to be as good as having people do the right thing and knowing the right thing to do. I think that would be the outcome of it.

Chairman McNinch: If the Committee is in general in agreement we don't have to put a lot of detail into how it would be set up. I think certainly a recommendation if the Committee has the appetite we can move it forward to the Commission and just let them know that the Committee feels that there might be value in a workshop set up properly and to ask for the Commissions support or to allow the Committee to put together a workshop. I don't know if the Commission can come up applicable boundaries if it sees fit or whatever the case maybe. I think that the idea behind it in my mind that it has the involvement of the Committee and certainly is something that is supported by the Commission. It is not necessarily an NDOW function in terms of them taking the lead on it. They would have to assist us in getting it put together and maybe providing some input or some presentations. It is not an NDOW function; it is something that is on behalf of the Commission through the Committee. I think that would be an important distinction that we would have to make. It is intended to get the Commissioners. NDOW has a presence up there, for better or for worse, their presence is there. They have made communications over the years. The Commission is what I believe needs to have the presence. It is an action item, so I will ask if there is any public comment.

Public comment:

Tina Nappe:

- The whole urban bear thing, which you have done so much work on Kathryn, is something that has really struck me, something where local governments really are responsible for nuisance animals. They are really responsible for the health and safety of people. Among the things that you are looking at and maybe you have already discussed this is a way of funding the programs. My concern with the black bear issue and particularly with nuisance black bears and any sort of property and personal issues that people may have is how the whole thing is going to be funded, either through the Department or more of it through the local level or the non-profit level. I don't know whether this is possible at all to do but I hope you would consider additional fees on Waste Management as a way of helping to fund some of the education. I think the local government needs to be responsible or with its allies for the education on nuisance bears, also for monitoring garbage and trash, also for having fines and if Department of Wildlife is called in there needs to be a way for the Department of Wildlife to get reimbursed for its costs. If more of the burden isn't on local government there is no reason for them really to get that involved and I think that has been one of the real problems that we have had.

- One of the things that is very positive about the bear issue that has come about is that it does provide an opportunity not only to expand the public interest in wildlife, which I think has been not as strong as it could be, but also as a way of expanding support and responsibility. Local governments probably need to start looking at some wildlife programs of their own.

Lloyd Peak: Opening a dialogue with folks in Incline and some other areas where these conflicts occur. I live in a small mountain community for 25+ years, we had bears all over the place. To my knowledge, never had a single problem. It was the culture in that small community. Simple things. Some owners would rent out cabins on holiday weekends and they would make it clear to the folks they were renting to even to the extent of putting up signs inside their cabins about simple things to do to avoid having any problems with bears. It is a matter of developing the culture in the community.

Elaine Carrick: I do think that your having a conference/workshop would really be a good idea. I know Incline Village General Improvement District (IVGID) has been working on this bear problem for years. It has gotten better but they have signs "A fed bear is a dead bear", I don't know why but there continues to be a problem. I think if you have some sort of a workshop up there and maybe more than once and get the people involved that could really be a help. There are a lot of condos up there. They do not have garages and that is part of the problem. People have to be educated and they have been trying to do this up there that you have to put your garbage out in the morning rather than the night before. I think this is an awareness thing and having a workshop up there is a great idea. You might get some good ideas from the people that attend the workshop that maybe IVGID hasn't thought about to make this work better for everybody.

Back to committee:

Chairman McNinch: Like I said, I think if we were to move forward with a recommendation to the Commission it would be pretty broad, largely conceptual that we as a Committee that we would try to move forward with something to see if we could generate a little bit of energy that direction.

Judi Caron: Are you trying to maybe make this workshop that we would partner with somebody up there to begin with, maybe like the Bear League to hold this together?

Chairman McNinch: Here is my thought, I think there are a number of groups that have a vested interest in bear management. I would certainly hope that a handful of these groups at least from a financial standpoint or from a standpoint of helping to put something together would step up like they have done in the past. The Friends of Nevada Wildlife as an example because that represents a pretty broad constituency base, do something like we did similar to Verdi. To where maybe a group like that sponsors it so people see that we might have our differences in some arenas but we can come together on some common issues or at least show people that it is okay to agree to disagree and then turn around and work on something in conjunction with each other in another. This is probably a more important area to try to instill that thought than any other item that I have been associated with, maybe the trapping is a close second, but certainly the bear thing. At some point we have to make people understand it is okay to agree to disagree. Even as deep as these things might affect

us and turn around and join forces that we have in common. It is the only way we are going to move forward on some of this stuff and I think the bear issue is a good place to try to get some success in that arena.

Judi Caron: **RECOMMEND THAT THE BEAR SUB-COMMITTEE ASK THE NEVADA BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS TO BE ABLE TO CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP WITHIN THE TAHOE REGION AND GIVE US THE FLEXIBILITY TO WORK WITH PARTNERS IN DEVELOPING THE AGENDA AND ALSO TO TAKE CARE OF THE FUNDING TO HOLD THIS AT THE LAKE.**

Commissioner Drew: **SECOND**

Ken Mayer: I suggest getting the people that can actually set the regulations and ordinances in place, get them in the room so they know this is serious and the public is demanding that they do something.

Chairman McNinch: Kathryn and I can get together and put a real broad structure on things provided that the Commission is supportive of us. The Commission support is important because I want this to be something that we say that this Committee is here, representing the interest of the Commission in a lot of ways. At least from the standpoint of having some dialogue.

Commissioner Drew: Would we need to amend the motion to assign you and Kathryn as the lead on developing that?

**AMENDMENT TO MOTION: ASSIGN KATHRYN BRICKER AND DAVID MCNINCH AS LEAD TO DEVELOP THE INFORMATION WORKSHOP.**

Call for vote: All approved.

#### **6. Future Committee Meeting - Possible Action**

The committee will discuss possible future agenda topics set a date and time for the next committee meeting

Kathryn Bricker: I think that one thing that never got addressed specific to this bear hunt is last year there was really a feeling, I realize you cannot accommodate much beyond the tag holders for whatever reason there maybe, but it would be nice if there were representatives of the public allowed to attend the mandatory indoctrination. There was not a good feeling that that was not allowed. I don't want to do it to create problems within that session so it would have to be someone who could conduct themselves properly.

Ken Mayer: One suggestion - we were concerned because we didn't know what kind of activism was going to be there. We didn't want to be disrupted, we wanted to make sure that the hunters got the message. One alternative, we might be able to video tape it and make that available online and people can then see it. We can only accommodate so many. We are going to have 45 people and they often brought a person with them. We can look at some alternatives.

Commissioner Robb: There wouldn't be a problem with any person on the Committee actually attending that meeting?

Ken Mayer: I wouldn't think so as long as we limit it to that.

Commissioner Drew: I attended it last year: 1) you need the right people in the room so the right information gets absorbed and I think if you open it to the public you open a potential for some conflict that we don't need to put public and sportsmen who are outside of the sphere of the conflict that is going on in that position.

Kathryn Bricker: What would be your recommendation so the public feels that they are not being excluded?

Commissioner Drew: I think Ken probably has a good point and videoing it and putting up on the web maybe you could break it up into segments so if you didn't want to watch the field dressing portion of it you don't have to watch.

Chairman McNinch: Any other agenda items?

Commissioner Drew: I think get through the workshop and see where we sit and what we can move forward with.

Public comment - None

Chairman McNinch:

- Is there any additional comment or discussion from the committee?
- Future Committee Meeting - I think the best course of action is let some stuff pan out - we will see what the Commission says about our recommendations. I will put out some ideas on when we might want to meet again based on some coordination.

7. **Public Comment Period** - This period is for general comment on anything not on the agenda. No committee action will be taken but may be scheduled on a future committee agenda. The 3 and 6 minute time limits still apply.

- Public general comment - None

8. **Adjourn - Possible Action**

Commissioner Drew: **MOVE TO ADJOURN.**

Judi Caron: **SECOND**