

TAG ALLOCATION AND APPLICATION HUNT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the June 23, 2016 Meeting

The Tag Allocation and Application Hunt Committee (TAAHC) met at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 23, 2016 at the Great Basin College, 1500 College Parkway, Greenhaw Technical Arts (GTA) Building, Room 130, Elko, NV 89801.

PRESENT: Chairman Brad Johnston
Rex Flowers
Joe Crim
Peter Mori
Paul Valentine

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF: Bob Haughian – NDOW
Maureen Hullinger – NDOW

OTHERS PRESENT: Jack Robb – NDOW
Alan Jenne - NDOW
Gil Yanick – Carson CAB
Sean Shea - Washoe CAB
Paul Dixon – Clark CAB
Monty Martin – SCI
Sheri Crim
Josh Vittori

NOTE: A tape recording of these proceedings is retained by the Department of Wildlife and is available for review upon request.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call of Committee Members – Determination of Quorum – Commissioner and Chairman Johnston

2. Approval of Agenda – Commissioner and Chairman Johnston

Joe Crim motioned to approve the agenda.
Paul Valentine seconded the motion.
Motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes – Chairman Johnston

The Committee may approve Committee minutes from the May 11, 2016 Committee meeting.

Paul Valentine motioned to approve the agenda.
Rex Flowers seconded the motion.
Motion carried unanimously.

4. Member Items/Announcements and Correspondence - Commissioner and Chairman Johnston - Informational

Committee members may present emergent items. No action may be taken by the Committee. Any item requiring Committee action may be scheduled on a future Committee agenda. The Committee will review and may discuss correspondence sent or received by the Committee since the last regular meeting and may provide copies for the exhibit file (Committee members may provide hard copies of their correspondence for the written record). Correspondence sent or received by the department will also be discussed.

Chairman Johnston reported he had received an email from Cory Lytle in reference to the waiting period and has been forward on as part of the file.

5. Commission General Regulation 465 - Antelope and Antlered Elk Tag Application Waiting Periods – Management Analyst 3 Maureen Hullinger – Informational Item

The Department will present preliminary Nevada Administrative Code language amendments associated with the Tag Allocation and Application Hunt Committee's recommendations to change the tag application waiting periods

for horns longer than ears antelope and antlered elk. The tag application waiting period for antelope is recommended to change to 3 years, and the waiting period for antlered elk is recommended to change to 5 years regardless of harvest.

Maureen Hullinger reported at the last TAAHC meeting there was a recommendation to change the waiting periods for antelope and elk. At that time, it was recommended that the antelope waiting period be changed from 5 years to 3 years and the elk waiting period from 10 years to 5 years. After going through the minutes, it is unclear as to whether the motion made for antelope was to change the waiting period from 5 years to 3 years for both harvest and no harvest. For the elk, it was understood the proposal was to go the current 10 year waiting period if a bull is harvested and 5 years if no harvest, to 5 years, regardless of harvest.

Chairman Johnston stated his recollection was to change the waiting period on antelope horns longer than ears to reduce the waiting period if harvest from 5 years to 3 years and not to change the waiting period if did not harvest. This item will be discussed further during agenda item #8.

Although not a discussion point for the TAAHC, Maureen also pointed out that the language for the spike elk currently in NAC is incorrect. NDOW has identified a problem in the current language that needs to be corrected on subsection 3. If an applicant has not received a spike elk tag or a replacement tag in the previous year, the waiting period is 2 years, but it was approved as 1 year waiting period. NDOW is now correcting this language in regulation.

6. Commission General Regulation 466 – Partnership in Wildlife Draw Sequence Changes - Management Analyst 3 Maureen Hullinger – Informational Item

The Department will present preliminary Nevada Administrative Code language amendments associated with the Tag Allocation and Application Hunt Committee's recommendation to move the sequence of the Partnership in Wildlife (PIW) draw to occur before the initial big game tag draw. This change would allow all applicants to participate in the PIW draw if they choose.

Maureen Hullinger reported at the last TAAHC meeting there was a motion to bring the Partnership in Wildlife drawing forward in the draw sequence, to have the PIW drawing take place before the initial drawing for big game. In order to do this, NDOW would have to make changes in regulation. By bringing the PIW drawing forward, this would then make it its own draw process with its own section of language in regulation, and the PIW will have its own application fee and predator fee. As before, the fees were taken care of when a hunter applied in the initial big game tag application, when it was a subsequent option. Now everyone will pay the application fee if participating in PIW, and as a result, the \$3 predator fee will also apply.

Rex Flowers asked if the PIW application was going to be online only.

Maureen Hullinger stated you currently can apply for PIW on a paper application, but with the new language she is proposing that the PIW application will be online only.

7. Nevada Department of Wildlife Specialty Bighorn Sheep Tag Simplification Strategy Update – Deputy Director Jack Robb and Game Division Administrator Brian Wakeling – For Possible Action

Currently if a specialty tag holder (PIW, Heritage Auction Tags, Silver State Tag and Dream Tag) harvests a ram in a particular sheep unit, that unit is closed to the same type of tag holder in the following season. The Department will provide the committee with multiple options for the sheep units open to hunt with specialty tags in a given year while protecting smaller populations of sheep from over harvest.

Deputy Director Jack Robb noted several challenges identified by NDOW and sportsmen that result from closing a unit one year after harvest with a Heritage tag. For instance, on occasion we have auctions to sell Heritage tags that occur before all rams are harvested and it is difficult to predict in which unit a harvest may occur. Consequently, individuals bidding on subsequent Heritage tags do not know which units are available to hunt within during the subsequent year, and this fact may influence their willingness to bid on a tag. Deputy Director Robb stated he and Game Division Administrator Brian Wakeling came up with several options to initiate discussion regarding methods the Committee and Commission might consider to address this challenge.

Option 1 - The first option involves the establishment of a call-in hotline similar to that used for the black bear and mountain lion harvest. A unit may be closed once the allowable harvest has been met. The allowable harvest would be determined based on the number of tags established through quota setting, with units with up to two tags closed to all specialty tag holders; units with 3 to 5 tags will be closed after one specialty tag holder harvests a ram; units with 6 to 7 tags would be closed when two specialty tag holders harvest in the unit; units with 8 to 10 tags would be closed when

three specialty tag holders harvest in the unit; units with 11 to 15 tags would be closed when four specialty tag holders harvest in the unit; and units with 16 or more tags would remain open for all specialty tag holders.

Option 2 - NDOW could assign a number to each specialty tag. If hunters with the assigned tag numbers harvest in a unit in the prior year then that tag number is precluded to hunt in that unit during the following year. For example, the first Nelson Heritage auction tag would get tag # 1, and if tag #1 harvests a ram in the Muddy's, then tag #1 the following year would not be able to hunt in the Muddy's.

Option 3 - Would be to no longer consider these as a statewide tag and split the Nelson bighorn sheep units into north and south, split the California bighorn sheep units into east and west, and split the Nelson bighorn sheep auction tags north and south. The Silver State tag would be in the south units in odd years and in the north units in the even years. The PIW tag would remain in the north units and Dream tags would remain in the south units. These options are not perfect but are designed to be starting points for discussion. Attached to these minutes are the detailed descriptions of these suggested considerations for starting discussion.

In response to a question for the Committee, Administrator Wakeling reported that Arizona offers 3 tags for bighorn sheep and each of these tags is valid in specific units, such as tag #1 would be available for certain set of units, tag #2 would be available for certain set of units and so would tag #3. Arizona has one tag which is valid for their Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep units, one for their Nelson bighorn sheep units, and one for the Mexicana bighorn sheep units. All of Arizona's bighorn sheep revenues from these sales go into a similar fund account, whereas in Nevada each tag revenue is placed into a different fund account. If the Committee or Commission chose to go use this approach in Nevada, a consideration might be to rotate which tag was valid for specific units and species annually because hunters do place differing values on those units and species.

Deputy Director Robb suggested that the TAAHC Committee may wish to share these options with the CABs and hunting public for their feedback and determine if they would like to submit other ideas that may address the current challenges.

Josh Vittori speaking on his own behalf wanted the committee to also consider the regular sportsman when considering the objective of this change so they can also have the same opportunity as the specialty tag holders and maximize our dollars.

Chairman Johnston informed the committee he would be sending out these options to the CABs for further discussion.

8. Consideration of items on the Open or Closed TAAHC Topic Lists – Commissioner and Chairman Johnston – For Possible Action

The Committee will review any new suggested topics received from County Advisory Boards or the public and may take action to add and/or rank those topics on the TAAHC Open Topic List for future consideration for implementation, and may take action to move topics on the TAAHC Open Topic List to the TAAHC Closed Topic List.

Because of the earlier confusion regarding the waiting period for antelope, Chairman Johnston opened up A.6.2.5 – Antelope Waiting Period – Is the proposed 3 year waiting period for both successful and unsuccessful harvest, or is the proposal a 3 year waiting period only if the hunter is successful in harvest?

Pete Mori said his preference is to have consistency of a 3 year waiting period for both harvest and no harvest. He said he realizes there may be some fiscal impact with this and also feels the same way with the elk waiting period.

Sean Shea stated he also agrees with the 3 and 3 waiting period for Antelope.

Paul Dixon with Clark County Advisory Board agrees with a 3 and 3 waiting period. Consistency and drawing a tag in Nevada should be considered a great thing, and if you chose not to fill that tag for whatever reason and is no different than to fill it in his view point.

Chairman Johnston motioned to move forward with the regulation as drafted for the 3 year waiting period for Antelope for both harvest and no harvest.

Paul Valentine seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Johnston asked the committee to go through the TAAHC open topic list in an effort to agendaize some of the items on the list.

Maureen Hullinger informed the committee that on topic item T.8.1 – Split season – there are four topics associated with split season and these topic items have been addressed by NDOW Game Division. We currently do have split seasons for a lot of these hunts. She recommended these four topics be moved to the TAAHC closed topic list.

Chairman Johnston would like to agendaize topic item T.11.1.4 – Restricted Nonresident Guided Hunt – eligibility for Main draw and PIW. With the PIW already being addressed, he said he would like the portion of this topic regarding nonresidents being able to apply in the Main draw to be put on a future agenda for discussion.

Pete Mori said he would like to address topic item A.1.8.4 – High points/High age to be agendaized in a future TAAHC meeting.

Chairman Johnston said he would like topic item A.1.22 – No loss of bonus points for active duty military who leave the State of Nevada be agendaized in a future TAAHC meeting.

Rex Flowers said he would like to see topic item A.9.4.1 – Hunter Choice – to be moved to the closed topic list.

Chairman Johnston asked if there were any public comments on this topic. There was none.

Rex Flowers motioned that reference number A.9.4.1 – Hunter Choice, be moved to the TAAHC closed topic list.

Pete Mori seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Johnston said he would like topic item A.1.27 – Application and Bonus point eligibility – having the ability to apply for both spike and antlered elk - be agendaized in a future TAAHC meeting.

Rex Flowers also recommended topic item A.1.27.1 - Application and Bonus point eligibility – having the ability to apply for both ram and ewe hunts for bighorn sheep - be agendaized in a future TAAHC meeting. Rex also recommended moving topic items T.8.1, T.8.1.1, T.8.1.2 & T.8.1.3 – Split seasons to the closed topic list.

Paul Valentine motioned to move topic items T.8.1, T.8.1.1, T.8.1.2 and T.8.1.3 – Split seasons to the closed topic list.

Pete Mori seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Pete Mori stated that a topic has come up in different meetings which he has attended regarding how the main draw application deadline falls before the quota setting, and this has caused some problems, whether it is sheep disease event or auction tags that are sold before the quotas are set, and is this something the TAAHC could look at to have the quota setting occur before the application deadline.

Brian Wakeling said it is possible to make this change. It would involve some changes that may result in some resistance internally to the agency and with the public. This was one of the questions that was asked on the survey that was sent out through the Harvest Guidelines. Mr. Wakeling said he doesn't know exactly what the numbers are for those who were in favor of this, so he is not willing to speculate at this time.

Chairman Johnston suggested adding the timing of the quota setting and the main draw application deadline to the TAAHC open topic list.

Rex Flowers said the quotas would need to be set by March, with the application deadline adjusted to May; logistically he said he didn't know how that would work for the Department.

Brian Wakeling said that Antelope quotas would be very easy to set, and he encouraged the committee to consider whether or not the idea has merit. If the idea has merit, the department could make it happen. He recommended the committee and the commission focus on if this would be a positive change for Nevada, and if so, the Department would evaluate it further. He said he is reasonably certain we could get it done because other states already do this.

Joe Crim said he would like to see this done, especially for the general hunter, and it would be valuable information for them when they are applying in certain units.

Paul Dixon said yes, this should be on the TAAHC open topic list because we have had commissions in the past who decided to cut tag quotas by 30 or 40% and as for the public, if there were only 2 tags allocated in a unit, this would help

determine if the applicant would continue to apply or not apply in that area if he/she knew their odds of drawing were not good.

Pete Mori motioned to add this proposal of changing the sequence of the main draw application period and the quota setting to the TAAHC open topic list and weight it as a "1".

Paul Valentine seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Public Comment Period

Persons wishing to speak may do so at this time. Public comment will be limited to three minutes. No action can be taken by the Committee at this time; any item requiring Committee action may be scheduled on a future Committee agenda.

Sean Shea said he sent correspondence to the TAAHC back in May regarding nonresidents not able to apply for bonus points for Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep and Mountain goat because there is no quota set for nonresidents. Residents, however, are eligible to apply for these species and for bonus points. The problem is that residents can accumulate bonus points each year for these species, and if they move out of state and become a nonresident they take all of those points with them. And, realistically, they could have double the bonus points than a other nonresidents, making the playing field inequitable. Mr. Shea said he contacted Robert Henman of *Hunting Fool* who is the consulting manager for the organization. Since Mr. Henman works with nonresidents, Mr. Shea asked him if he would ask the nonresidents who put in for tags for all these different states if this was something they would be interesting in. The response received was overwhelming--nonresidents would buy the bonus point just to keep up with the residents. This would increase their chances on getting a tag once Nevada opens up these hunts again to nonresidents, and Sean felt it is currently unfair that the residents are able to buy and accumulate bonus points this entire time, then move out of state and have a huge advantage over the other nonresidents. Sean believes building bonus points for two additional species would help justify the cost of the nonresident hunting license. Lastly, Sean thought the department should consider allowing a onetime opportunity for nonresident to purchase bonus points for those species when those hunts were closed to nonresidents.

Chairman Johnston suggested adding this to a future TAAHC agenda and if there is appetite to address this then we could add it to the TAAHC open topic item list.

10. Future Committee Meetings – Commissioner and Chairman Johnston – Informational

The Committee may confirm the date and location of the next TAAHC meeting.

The Committee will reconfirm the date and location of the next TAAHC meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

Bighorn Sheep

Specialty Tags Closed Units

Challenge:

There are three types of specialty tags offered by the Commission: Heritage, PIW, and Dream Tags. The liberal hunting opportunities afforded by these tags results in challenges when allocating standard hunting opportunities for bighorn sheep tags because of the conservative hunt structure and the management objective to focus harvest on mature rams. The result is that few tags are offered within most units and if the specialty tag hunters choose to harvest within the same units, harvests sometimes occur that are excess of targeted objectives. In an attempt to distribute harvest equitably, the current structure limits harvest within units where the corresponding tag holder from the prior year harvested.

The current rule was developed in part because the harvest of California Bighorn Hunt Unit 041 has exceeded target levels at times, and the Desert Bighorn hunt in Unit 253 has long been a favorite with specialty tag holders

The current system functional response can place additional pressure on hunt units with small population of sheep or alternatively close hunts that have large population that have the ability to handle a heavier harvest.

There are three types of specialty tags for Nelson Bighorn Sheep:

- Three Heritage Tags
 - Two Heritage Auction Tags
 - One Silver State Tag
- One PIW
- One Dream Tag

Three types of specialty tags for California Bighorn Sheep:

- One Heritage Auction Tags
- One PIW
- One Dream Tag

Other approaches may be more equitable in distributing hunter opportunities for specialty and standard tag holders. For the purposes of discussion, the Department has prepared three options to initiate discussion.

Option 1

Establish a call in line for specialty tag holders such as the bear and lion harvest hotline that will identify and close units that have met allowable harvest for current year. Allowable harvest will be determined by the number of tags allocated during the general draw including resident and nonresident quotas.

Units with up to 2 tags will be closed to all specialty tag holders.

Units with 3 to 5 tags will close after one specialty tag holder harvests a ram.

Units with 6 to 7 tags will close after two specialty tag holder harvests a ram.

Units with 8 to 10 tags will close after three specialty tag holder harvests a ram.

Units with 11 to 15 tags will close after four specialty tag holder harvests a ram.

Units with greater than 16 will remain open for all specialty tag holders.

Option 2

Assign a number to each specialty tag. If a tag assigned number harvest in a unit in the prior year that tag number cannot hunt that unit the following year.

Nelson Heritage Auction Tag #1

Nelson Heritage Auction Tag #2

Nelson Silver State Tag #3

Nelson PIW #4

Nelson Dream Tag #5

California Heritage Auction Tag #6

California PIW Tag #7

California Dream Tag #8

Option 3

No longer consider any of these tags as state wide tags. Split the Nelson units into North and South units and the California units into east and west units.

For the Nelson units, have one action tag for each the north and south. Silver State tag will be south in odd years and north in even years. PIW will remain a north unit and Dream tag will remain a south unit.