

TAG ALLOCATION AND APPLICATION HUNT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the October 26, 2016 Meeting

The Tag Allocation and Application Hunt Committee (TAAHC) met at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 26, 2016 at the Department of Wildlife, 6980 Sierra Center Parkway, Reno, Nevada, 89511.

PRESENT: Chairman Brad Johnston
Joe Crim
Paul Valentine (by phone)

COMMITTEE

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rex Flowers

STAFF: Bob Haughian – NDOW
Maureen Hullinger – NDOW

OTHERS PRESENT: Jack Robb – NDOW Deputy Director
Monty Martin - SCI

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 – Commissioner and Chairman Johnston**

Chairman Johnston called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. **Approval of Agenda – Commissioner and Chairman Johnston – For Possible Action**

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

Joe Crim motioned to approve the agenda.

Paul Valentine seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0.

3. **Approval of Minutes – Commissioner and Chairman Johnston – For Possible Action**

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

Paul Valentine motioned to approve the minutes.

Joe Crim seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0.

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 said he had received an email in September. The correspondence was in regards to the allegations of continued abuse of party applications and returned tags. He stated he responded to the email explaining that the committee looked at this issue thoroughly and had previously received a report from Systems Consultants (SCI) addressing the idea of people turning in tags to get the bonus points back to gain an advantage for other members in a deer party application. Based on the information presented, the TAAHC determined no further action was required especially in light of the recognized legitimate reasons why people return tags, and the committee did not want to impinge on the vast majority of those who turn in tags with no deceitful intent. Chairman Johnston stated he did not receive a response back from the gentleman who sent

him the original email.

Chairman Johnston asked if committee members had any further announcements or correspondence to report. There were none.

5. Specialty Sheep Tags and Closed Units - Commissioner and Chairman Johnston – For Possible Action

CABMWs and public input were requested regarding the Department's proposals to address challenges with specialty tags and bighorn sheep unit closures. Chairman Johnston requested comments by August 10. The committee will review public responses and may take action to make proposals to the Commission. See Topic Item T.18.2.

Bob Haughian went over the CAB and other input regarding the options and comments received. Clark CAB supported option #1 - Establish a call-in line for specialty tag holders, such as the bear and lion harvest hotline, that will identify closed sheep units that have met the allowable harvest level for the current year. Allowable harvest will be determined by the number of tags allocated during the general draw including resident and nonresident quotas.

The Fraternity of Desert Bighorn Sheep and Stan Zuber supported option #2 – Assign a number to each specialty tag. If a tag with assigned number harvests in a unit in the prior year, that tag number will then be restricted in that unit the following year.

Lyon CAB supported option #3 – No longer consider these tags as statewide tags. Split the Nelson bighorn units into north and south units, and the California bighorn units into east and west units. For the Nelson units, have one auction 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.

Nevada Bighorns Unlimited (NBU) Reno submitted a letter to the department, dated October 25, introducing a different option. This option is that the Heritage and Silver State tags be given preference in a particular unit for three consecutive years, with the Dream and PIW tags being excluded from those units where the Heritage and Silver State tags have harvested. After three consecutive years of harvest in a unit, that particular unit shall be open to Dream and PIW tags for one year.

Chairman Johnston said he contacted Josh Vittori of NBU for clarification on the alternative option. NBU seems to be going with a hybrid of option #2. Heritage tags would be assigned a certain number and if Heritage tag #1 took a ram in a particular unit in 2016, then Heritage tag #1 for 2017 would not be able to hunt that unit. This would also be the same in respect to the Silver State tag. For the PIW and the Dream tags, those units would be closed for three years following another specialty tag harvest. Chairman Johnston indicated he was unaware of the history that was cited in the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn Sheep letter regarding option #3, which was previously proposed by a prior Game Division Administrator but was rejected by both NDOW and the public. The Fraternity also viewed option #1 as a "red herring" alternative, and the idea of having regular or real-time communication from hunters while in the field is not a very realistic expectation. As for option #2, after reading the letter, Chairman Johnston felt the Fraternity did not have strong support of this option either.

Jack Robb reported that one of the things being looked at is not only closing units, but leaving units open, like the Muddy's, which can afford the extra take. We have been shutting the Muddy's down and two Heritage tag holders harvested there this year. By the current rules, the Muddy's will be shut down next year and there is no reason to do this. Leaving the Muddy's open could alleviate the burden on the smaller units. This is a balancing act.

Chairman Johnston informed the committee that Josh Vittori also said this option would only apply, for instance, if there were less than 10 tags in a particular unit in a year and this would be more of a sliding scale.

Paul Valentine asked how much input do the biologists have on this and is there a way to address this year-by-

year on the Heritage tags in the units where the biologists have the greater concern.

Jack Robb said this would be a tough discussion because if you have 8 tags for the Muddy's, a biologist could look at this and say we could afford 5 tags for this area and the quota would be set at 3 tags for the general draw tag holder.

Chairman Johnston said he had a conversation with Mel Belding who thought this was a solution in search of a problem and that it could be addressed when the regulations are set on a year-by-year basis. This has been done in the past where units have been closed to specialty tags, but this does not address the concerns of the biologists with the quota settings and the resource side where this can have an impact on the value of the tags.

Jack Robb explained this has been done in the past with unit 041 where it was off limits to specialty tags due to the limited resources in that unit and this option has already been exercised. Just because this has been exercised does not mean we don't want anybody hunting in the unit, and if we put out a certain number of general draw tags for that unit, how do we limit the number of specialty tag hunters from going into those units? This would then bring you back to option #1 where you would need to call before hunting in a unit to make sure the harvest objection has not yet been met.

Maureen Hullinger provided clarification to Paul Valentine's question. As for 2016, the way the regulation currently reads for closed units on the statewide tags is the unit of harvest in the previous year is closed for the following year. For example, the unit of harvest for the Silver State desert sheep tag is closed for Silver State desert sheep the following year. This also applies to Heritage, Dream and PIW tags. Maureen also stated that the closed units are listed on these tags for the tag holder to further ensure the tag holder is aware of the unit(s) they are unable to hunt.

Joe Crim asked if in a given year, after the season is over, would we then know if the units took a beating or not, and to keep from watering down the hunt, and prohibiting people from hunting in there the following year, would it be easier to adjust the quotas in those units each year so you don't impact the amount of money a person is willing to pay for these specialty tags, along with the time and effort they are looking to invest in them.

Jack Robb said that if the Bares had primarily 8 sheep tags, 5 would go to the specialty tags and 3 would go to the general quota. He said he felt there would be an outcry over this by the general public. The Bares are also a number one unit choice by the general public, and taking some of the opportunity away from them and giving to the specialty tag holders would not go over well.

Regarding the quota setting, Joe Crim asked if that is based upon a quota setting in that given year or the prior year's quota?

Jack Robb said there are some things you would need to take into consideration, such as possible disease events, lamb recruitment, water year, and also the test site where you have sheep on the test site or off the test site. There are so many variables to consider.

Maureen said that the quota's for the specialty tags are set at the commission level and could be set as a recommendation to the commission if a change is needed due to some of these concerns. The only one that is in statute is the Dream tags which would have to be changed on the legislative level.

Jack Robb explained that any species that have over 50 tags given out in a year then becomes eligible for a Dream Tag. Silver State and Heritage tags come out of the Heritage tag quotas and there is a maximum for each species allowed in the Heritage quota. Even having Silver State in there, we have not met that quota or the total number of tags we can allot, and we could give out more auction deer, elk and sheep tags under this quota. In the past, the state of Nevada has issued only one auction desert bighorn sheep tag in a year because there was a commission that did not like auction tags. The commission then only gave out one tag instead of two tags. By doing this, it took away a \$100,000 opportunity from the heritage account, which then in turn took away \$300,000 in matching funds, ultimately taking away \$400,000 from doing good for wildlife, all due to the elimination of one auction tag. This is also something we would need to consider. \$125,000 of the recent

funding for the trap and transplant program came from the heritage fund. This one auction tag is paying for transplanting sheep, giving hunters more opportunity. The Silver State tag was developed as the poor man's governor's tag. This gives the ordinary Joe the same opportunity to draw one of these tags without spending a lot of money. If you were to take one of the Silver State tags off of the table, it's making better than \$100,000 and if you look at the ticket revenue it did about \$440,000 on four tags last year, with one of those tags being an antelope tag which could have brought in \$30,000. So it's generating money to get the 3-1 match. The Dream Tag is set up to do fire rehab, amongst other uses, which is critical in a high fire year. The specialty tags all have a benefit for the resource and to sacrifice one tag, how do we slice the pie to make sure we don't over sacrifice one area?

Chairman Johnston suggested doing a hybrid between option #1 and option #2. An example would be for desert sheep heritage tag #1 a unit would be closed if that tag in the prior year had harvested in a unit that has a quota of less than 7. If heritage tag #1 harvested in a unit in the prior year with a quota of 8 or more, there would be no closure for that tag. This would then allow the potential bidder to know in advance if a certain unit is closed prior to bidding on an auction tag. This would also protect the resource and maximize the value for benefiting the resource. Chairman Johnston said that the two biggest groups in respect to bighorn sheep, NBU and the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn, both selected option #2, and he suggested having a discussion around option #2. For example, desert heritage #1 would be open statewide except for that unit where heritage tag #1 was filled in the prior year, unless the quota for that unit was set at 10 or higher in the previous year. For the PIW, close the units for one year that the harvest occurred for those specialty tags in the prior year.

Jack Robb also suggested adding a caveat that the department and the commission may consider closing any additional units that may be a concern during the quota setting if needed for the specialty tags like PIW and Dream tags.

Chairman Johnston motioned to the committee that he would work with the department on developing an outline for this new proposal that blends option #1 and option #2 that were previously presented to the public so it could be presented again to the public and the CABS in hopes of getting responses for the November TAAHC meeting.

Joe Crim seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0.

6. Apply for Both Spike and Bull Elk Which Will Allow for the Ability to Apply for Bonus Points for Either – Commissioner and Chairman Johnston – For Possible Action

At the committee's August 11 meeting it was determined the committee would make recommendation to the Commission to go forward with a proposal to allow an application for both spike and antlered elk, which would allow a person to apply for bonus points in both categories as well. The committee will review and may take action on the proposed Commission Regulation to support this proposal. See Topic Item - A.1.27.

Maureen Hullinger explained the changes that she presented in the draft commission regulation for the language on the eligibility to apply for both spike and bull elk, as well as bonus points.

Chairman Johnston asked for clarification. If you put in for both the spike and bull elk, could you draw the spike elk and then render yourself ineligible to draw a bull elk tag?

Monty Martin with Systems Consultants (SCI) explained that your draw number will determine which species you would draw a tag for. If the spike elk random draw number is lower than the bull elk, you would end up drawing a spike elk tag. You would then receive a bonus point for the unsuccessful bull elk.

Chairman Johnston asked if there were any more comments from the committee or the public. There were none.

Paul Valentine motioned to support the regulation change in CR17-?? with respect to spike and bull elk.

Joe Crim seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0.

7. **Apply for Both Ram and Ewe of the Same Species Which Will Allow for the Ability to Apply for Bonus Points for Either – Commissioner and Chairman Johnston – For Possible Action**

At the committee's August 11 meeting it was determined the committee would make recommendation to the Commission to go forward with a proposal to allow an application both ram and ewe bighorn sheep, which would allow a person to apply for bonus points in both categories as well. The committee will review and may take action on the proposed Commission Regulation to support this proposal. See Topic Item - A.1.27.1.

Maureen Hullinger explained the changes that she made to the draft commission regulation for the language on the eligibility to apply for or bonus points for both ram and ewe.

Chairman Johnston asked if there were any more comments from the committee or from the public. There were none.

Chairman Johnston motioned to the TAAH committee to support the regulation change in CR17-?? with respect to ram and ewe eligibility.

Paul Valentine seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0.

8. **Allow Restricted Nonresident Guided Deer Hunt Applicants to Apply in the Main Draw, to Include Applications for Partnership in Wildlife (PIW) and Silver State Tags – Management Analyst 3 Maureen Hullinger – For Possible Action**

The committee will hear current information from the Department regarding CGR 466, which is to be workshopped at the Commission's November meeting. CGR 466 changes the drawing sequence for PIW and Silver State tags in the main draw. This regulation change will allow Restricted Nonresident Guided Deer Hunt applicants to apply in the main drawing, to include applications for PIW and Silver State tags. The committee will review the proposed regulation change and may take action to comment on and/or support the regulation change. See Topic Item – T.11.14.

Chairman Johnston said he received a call from Rachael Buzzetti and this was something that had been proposed by the Nevada Guides and Outfitters Association (NOGA). They are currently busy in the field and did not want their absence from this meeting to incorrectly portray NOGA as not having support for this agenda item.

Maureen Hullinger explained the changes she made to the draft commission regulation CRG 466 regarding the drawing sequence for PIW and Silver State tags in the main draw, and the allowance for Restricted Nonresident Guided Deer Hunt applicants to also apply in the main drawing, PIW and for the Silver State tags.

Monty Martin with SCI asked for clarification on how the PIW draw will work. Currently now you have to apply for a species in the main draw and if you want to participate for the PIW, you need to check a box.

Maureen Hullinger explained that the PIW drawing will be conducted sequentially prior to the main draw, so therefore it will be a stand-alone application and programming would be needed.

Chairman Johnston recalled the discussion on this agenda item in a past TAAHC meeting and the recommendation from the committee was that only the sequence of the draw was to change, and not have Silver State or PIW as a stand-alone draw.

Maureen Hullinger stated that when she was tasked with changing the language for the sequence of the PIW draw, she may have misunderstood the intent of the committee's recommendation and was under the

assumption this would be a stand-alone application along with all of the associated fees, like the Silver State draw is. She informed the committee if this was not the intent the committee, she would then need to send another draft language change back to LCB and this agenda item would need to be removed from the November commission meeting agenda because it would be a significant change. This change then, if approved, would not occur in 2017.

Jack Robb said he felt this may not need to come off of the commission's agenda. His suggested to leave this on for discussion. He suggested it would be worth leaving on the agenda as is, and to also recognize that it may not go forward but to have the discussion with staff on the recommendation on how we would need to proceed to change the language.

Chairman Johnston asked if there were any more comments from the committee and public. There were none.

Chairman Johnston motioned to inform the commission on how the committee arrived at this proposed regulation and to let the commission understand that the commission needs to make a decision on which path it would like to take.

Paul Valentine seconded the motion with the added comment that staff would provide information to give the benefits or the liability of this if it goes into a separate draw to help with the discussion at the commission level.

Motion carried 3-0.

9. 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 existing topics on the TAAHC Open Topic List to the TAAHC Closed Topic List.

Chairman Johnston informed the committee he had not received any new items for the TAAHC Open Topic list and asked if any committee members or the department has. There were none.

Maureen Hullinger reported that at the last committee meeting, T.5., Landowner Program topic items, were to be transferred to the Elk Incentive Compensation Committee. But currently this committee does not exist. Maureen asked if these topic items would still remain on the TAAHC open topic list for future discussion.

Chairman Johnston said the landowner tags continue to be a topic of discussion at a variety of levels and if the committee that these topic items were to be forwarded to doesn't exist, he said he does not want to move them to the closed topic list. He would like to either address them at the TAAHC or see if there is another committee that is now constituted to address them.

Chairman Johnston suggested putting the following open topic items to the closed topic list:

A.1-Bonus Points: A.1.20; A.3-Youth/Novice: A.3.7; A.4-Mixed Party Apps: A.4.1, A.4.1.1, A.4.2; A.9-Draw Process: A.9.1, A.9.3, A.9.3.1, A.9.3.1, A.9.3.2, A.9.3.3, A.9.4, A.9.12.1, A.9.18, A.9.18.2; T.2-Harvest Restriction: T.2.1, T.2.1.2, T.2.1.3, T.2.2; T.7-Trophy: T.7.1, T.7.1.2; T.8-Season Structure: T.8.5; T.9-Demand Success: T.9.1, T.9.3, T.9.6.1, T.9.11; T.10-Quotas: T.10.4, T.10.5.1; T.12-Archery Tags: T.12.2; T.18-PIW/Heritage Units: T.18.1.

The remaining items on the TAAHC open topic list have already been addressed and have been recommended to the commission or have been taken action on by the TAAHC for further committee action. The only items left are the ones that are related to the landowner program where the TAAHC is requesting a status.

Chairman Johnston motioned to the committee to remove those topic items from the TAAHC open topic list to the TAAHC closed topic list.

Paul Valentine seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0.

10. **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.

Chairman Johnston asked if there were any public comments, there were none.

11. **Future Committee Meetings – Commissioner and Chairman Johnston Informational**

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

Next TAAHC will be scheduled on Wednesday November 16, at 9:00 a.m. in Reno.

Meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

Pending TAAHC Approval