

## ADVISORY BOARD TO MANAGE WILDLIFE

MONDAY

AUGUST 8, 2017

PRESENT:

**Eric Clifford, Chairman**  
**Peggy Hughes, Member**  
**Jim Curran, Member**  
**Jason Sibley, Member**  
**Tim Gubler, Member**

ABSENT:

The Churchill County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife convened at 6:03 p.m. in the Churchill County Complex, Suite #102, Fallon, Nevada. The following business was conducted:

Agenda Item 3: Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 4: Posting of Agenda.

Chair Clifford verified the agenda had been posted.

Agenda Item 5: Review and adoption of Agenda.

Member Curran moved to adopt the Agenda for the August 8, 2017 meeting. Member Hughes seconded the motion, which carried unanimously with Member Olsen absent.

Agenda Item 6: Review and adoption of Minutes for May 9, 2017.

Member Hughes moved to approve the minutes for May 9, 2017. Member Curran seconded the motion, which carried unanimously with Member Olsen absent.

Agenda Item 7: Correspondence:

Chair Clifford stated he did not have any correspondence to review.

Agenda Item 8: Appointments:

- A. Consideration and possible action re: Introduction and welcome of newly appointed board members: Jason Sibley and Timothy Gubler and acknowledgement of the reappointment of Jim Curran for another term.

Chair Clifford thanked Pete Olsen and Jesse Lattin for their service on the Board and welcomed the new members.

- B. Consideration and possible action re: Items listed on the final Nevada Board of Wildlife Commission's Agenda for August 21 and 22, 2017.

Chair Clifford stated there were a couple of action items from the Commission's agenda the Board could take action on. The first item was #8; Aquatic Invasive Special Management Plan. Member Curran stated there was no support data provided, which made it difficult for the Board to take action on.

Chair Clifford went to item 9C; Draft Arbitration Process for Applicants Dissatisfied with the Elk Incentive Tag Awards. Member Curran stated he read it and did not see where there were any changes to comment on. Chair Clifford said there had been some disgruntled people with the tags on private land. Member Curran stated this year in the regulations there was a maximum number of tags that could be given for damage and they actually had more applications than the administrative code allowed.

Chair Clifford went to item 9D; Protecting Wildlife from Toxic Ponds. He said it was a first reading and he did not see anything to take action on.

Chair Clifford went to item 11; Commercial Reptile Collection. He said only a little material was provided to the Board. Member Curran stated he did not have much to comment on. There was no action taken.

Chair Clifford went to item 19; County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife Workshop opening comments.

19A: Mule Deer Management. Chair Clifford said the Department would provide an in-depth briefing discussing the processes used to monitor herds and derive quotas. The Department would share feedback received through a recent professional peer review evaluation. The Department would provide a description of how scientific data was used to meet harvest objectives.

19B: Evaluation and Review of the Landowner Deer and Antelope Compensation Tag Program. Chair Clifford said the Department would provide an overview concerning the current deer and antelope compensation tag program, recent updates to statutes, share current practices, identify areas for necessary improvements, and provide a potential provision process for the Commission's consideration. The Commission may provide the Department

with direction following consideration of this proposal. Chair Clifford called for public comment.

Greg Tanner said with respect to the deer and antelope compensation tag program. His concern was that since its inception in 1991 there were no provisions within the regulations or statute to discourage deer use or antelope use on private land. It only compensated private landowners for "damage" and the way the regulation was set up, they were compensated with a tag for every 50 deer or antelope that the state counts on that were private. The unfortunate aspect of this, beginning in the early 1990s was that this, to a large degree, was responsible for creating large, private land deer herds that formerly occupied public lands. He noted that was particularly acute during drought years; when the country dries up and everything heads to an alfalfa field. He said because of the value of the tags, landowners were not inclined to allow any public hunting on their private lands. There were all kinds of deer refuges around, which was not good for the deer or the public and there was no provision anywhere in the regulations to discourage that use. He stated he went to the Commission and asked for their cooperation in amending the regulation, but he was surprised at their reaction, because they themselves bought those tags and they were not interested in changing the provisions. He thought the regulation could be tweaked to require private landowners to do something to discourage deer use so as not to encourage these massive buildups of deer for their private gain and benefit.

Member Curran asked what Mr. Tanner had in mind for the Commission to do, because the development of sprinklers and pivots around the State had probably as much impact on the deer and antelope populations moving around. Mr. Tanner stated regarding the situation with elk, the Department committed to fence elk out and it worked with a one-time expenditure and investment in fencing material. Now of course, that was funded by the additional application fee for elk applicants, but similar tools were available to deal with the deer and antelope phenomenon. He was not suggesting that everything be fenced, but there were ways to discourage that type of deer and antelope use. In his opinion, it had changed the characteristic of the state's deer herd tremendously and negatively. He said they also had disease issues that were attributable to large deer herds in an alfalfa field or wet environments that were conducive to disease transmission.

Member Curran stated he agreed with Mr. Tanner, especially in Area 32 and 14. Since it was up for review, Mr. Tanner felt it was unfortunate that none of the Board members would be able to attend the workshop, but these minutes would be sent to the Commission and they could learn of this Board's concerns through that avenue.

Chair Clifford thanked Mr. Tanner and stated he would make this part of his report to the Commission.

Chair Clifford stated there did not appear to be anything else on the Commission's agenda to discuss; therefore, he moved back to the local agenda.

C. Consideration and possible action re: Discussion of fisheries restoration in the Lahontan Valley.

Member Curran stated after five years of losing practically every wetland and waterway in Churchill County he knew Mr. Urquhart was involved in trying to restore as much as the budget could handle for fisheries and he wanted to know what NDOW had planned for the next year or so. Chris Urquhart, NDOW, stated the State was coming out of a huge drought and even through the tough years TCID had been able to manage to put some water in the reservoirs around Churchill County. This year we went from zero water to everything filled up with a lot of water. What came of that also, was a lot of really good habitat, it had been dry for so long that a lot of cottonwoods, willows and other stuff grew in those areas that were normally inundated with water where it could not grow. He stated they had a normal pot of money from the State, separate of the federal grants for warm water fish purchases. Lahontan Valley was all warm water, which meant they had to come from another source and had to be purchased. Their regular budget cycle was every couple of years and they had a normal amount of money to buy wipers and walleyes, but they also put in for some additional funding through their Habitat Conservation Fee and ended up with another \$60,000 from the western region to buy more fish. One of the challenges he was hoping not to run into but did, was in their federal grants they had to identify each individual species and which water they would be put into. He said even it was an augmentation to an existing species the government was cracking down on what they moved and where. He said two weeks ago he wanted to try to get some bluegill from a source they had up north and start rebuilding Harmon Reservoir and bring bass in there, but he got told he could not do that because he did not have bluegill written in a specific work program grant for Harmon Reservoir. Those were the kinds of things they did not anticipate becoming a challenge for rebuilding the reservoirs, but they could move a lot of fish around that were identified. He said what they had done so far for Lahontan Valley had mostly been related to the Lahontan Reservoir itself. He discussed the contract process with the supplies and how many of each species they were going to get. He mentioned they were trying to figure out how to get some fish to Indian Lakes and Harmon Reservoir even though they were connected. Member Gubler asked what was going to be put in Harmon Reservoir. Mr. Urquhart stated channel catfish, white bass and crappie. He said they were hoping to find a source for white bass, because they had been really hard to find through commercial operators.

Member Curran asked if there were white bass in Lahontan. Mr. Urquhart stated there weren't many; crappie did well for a long time and throughout the drought, but in the last couple of years they had seen a decline in them. He thought this fall and next year should be a tremendous hatch. He said they were trying to figure out the exact wording so they would not find themselves with restrictions from the government about where they could put certain fish. Member Curran stated he knew there weren't any sources for bullheads and yellow bellies, but for this valley that was an extremely popular fish. Mr. Urquhart stated he knew that and talked about how they had traded fish under an Interlocal agreement with other areas.

Member Curran asked if the ponds in Dixie Valley went completely dry this last year. Mr. Urquhart stated they did not. Member Curran asked if they still had bluegill in Dixie Valley. Mr. Urquhart said not so many bluegill, but there were a ton of sun fish and some ponds had bass and a few red ear fish. Member Curran asked if the Hazen ponds had gone dry. Mr. Urquhart stated they had gone dry, but they could take some bass out to Dixie Valley for those ponds and he noted there was even some catfish. Member Curran stated they had an old agreement with Schurz about going in to Weber Reservoir and getting some brown bullhead fish but he did not

know if that would happen again. Mr. Urquhart stated one of their biologists had said he had seen a whole bunch of bullheads, but he could not remember where he saw them.

Member Curran asked if the same restoration efforts were going on at Rye Patch. Mr. Urquhart said Rye Patch had actually done a little better, because they did not have the carp issue that Lahontan Reservoir had. He said the black fish did not do well in warmer water. He said when the ditches started to dry up people would call him and they would bring him some of the bigger fish to use in his tank.

Member Curran was surprised the federal government allowed tiger muskies. Mr. Urquhart stated they had to do an Environmental Assessment before they could put them in. He stated the sportsmen in Lovelock knew about spawning of white bass upstream and they kept it quiet for a while. He fished Salt Creek and there were channel catfish that were just tremendous.

Chair Clifford asked how much Walker Lake had gone up this year. Mr. Urquhart stated over the last two weeks it had been coming up about one inch per day and that was at the high flow, but it had tapered off. Overall he thought it was around nine to ten feet. He stated it was not enough for them to see the fishery reestablish itself. He said if we had two or three more years like this year, it would be viable and they had the fish to do it. He stated they anticipated the conditions deteriorating in Walker Lake or they wouldn't have any had Tui Chub or cutthroat trout; they moved a bunch out of a nearby reservoir and they had been monitoring them. He noted they would be getting some fish to put back into Walker Lake from places in California. He said it was amazing to see the water come into Walker Lake and watch it rise and he would come back in the fall and let the Board know exact numbers.

There was no action taken on this item.

D. Consideration and possible action re: Nomination and election of board Chair and Vice-Chair positions.

Chair Clifford stated he was resigning as Chair. Member Curran nominated Peggy Hughes as Chair. Member Hughes accepted the nomination. On call for the vote, the motion passed five in favor, none against.

Chair Hughes nominated Jim Curran as Vice-Chair. Member Curran accepted the nomination. On a call for the vote, the motion passed four in favor, one against.

Agenda Item 9: Future agenda items.

There were no future agenda items.

Agenda Item 10: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

**6:52 p.m.** There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned without objection.



Eric Clifford, Chairman  
Churchill County Advisory Board to Manage  
Wildlife

*Minutes prepared by:  
Jaime Deller, Independent Contractor*