

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife

MINUTES

Thursday ~ June 13, 2013 ~ 6:00 p.m.
Regional Emergency Operations Center
Conference Room
5195 Spectrum Boulevard, Reno, Nevada

MEMBERS

Rex Flowers, Chair
Daryl Harwell, Vice-chair
Michelle Spencer, Secretary
John Reed
Sean Shea

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE [Non-action item]

Chair Flowers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL [Non-action item]

Chair Flowers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was established.

PRESENT: Rex Flowers, Daryl Harwell, John Reed, Sean Shea and Michelle Spencer.

ABSENT: None.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS [Non-action item]

Gerald Lent recalled having previously asked that his comments be included in meeting minutes. Mr. Lent noted that he has an issue with the minutes, which he believes are incomplete. Mr. Lent drew attention to a complaint filed with the Nevada Attorney General as states were not included in Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners meeting minutes. Mr. Lent explained that during testimony on the Predator Plan Project 18, that deer herds in the Granites, Unit 014, is up by 76.5 percent since 2004 and the state overall deer herd is down 3-percent. In 2004 we had only 44 total deer tags issued compared to the current recommendation of 196 tags, with 48 Junior tags. Mr. Lent noted that there are more Junior tags than the total number of tags issued in 2004. An extra 152 hunters now get to hunt this unit. Therefore, you should recommend that this project be continued for one more year and maybe the deer herd might double.

Chair Flowers asked that Mr. Lent save any corrections to the meeting minutes until that agenda item is heard.

Mr. Lent then read the duties of the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners, which includes the evaluation of local opinion by the County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife. Mr. Lent noted his concern that the Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife had not conveyed their recommendation on extending Project 18 an additional year because the item had been pulled from the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners' meeting agenda. It is Mr. Lent's opinion that the failure to provide that input is a dereliction of duty.

Chair Flowers pointed out that Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners received the meeting's action report from the Board Secretary (Michelle Spencer) and the draft meeting minutes and were therefore aware of this body's stance even though the matter was not on the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners.

4. APPROVAL OF MAY 2, 2013, MINUTES (For possible action)

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Chair Flowers opened public comment.

Gerald Lent asked that the word “sheep” be changed to read “deer” under Project 20 on page 10.
Chair Flowers closed public comment.

Chair Flowers asked that Project 22, page 4 be modified by changing “Molder” to read “Molde”; page 5 read “higher Coyote cub births...” and page 13 change “Rees” to read “Reed”.

It was moved by Member Reed seconded by Member Spencer, to approve the May 2, 2013, minutes, as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

- 5. BOARD MEMBER MEETING ASSIGNMENT** (Non-action item) – *A discussion and selection of member(s) to attend the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners meetings on: 1) June 21 and 22, meeting in Ely, Nevada; and 2). August 2 and 3, meetings in Fallon, Nevada.*

Chair Flowers and Member Reed will attend the June 21 and 22, 2013, meetings in Ely, Nevada.

Member Reed will attend the August 2 and 3, 2013, meetings in Fallon, Nevada.

- 6. COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND LIAISON UPDATES** (Non-action items)

6-1). Correspondence (including sportsmen’s concerns) and Announcements – Chair Flowers noted that he had not received any correspondence and that this would be Member Harwell’s last meeting. Additionally, Member Reed may be seeking a second term.

6-2). Overview of the May 10 and 11, 2013, meeting of the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners – Member Reed commented that he found the Heritage Committee meeting informative and that there was nothing specific to report from the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners’ meetings.

- 7. FISCAL YEAR 2014 WASHOE COUNTY ADVISORY BOARD TO MANAGE WILDLIFE BUDGET REQUEST** [Non-action item] – *An information update on the FY (Fiscal Year) budget request for the Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife.*

Chair Flowers commented that while the Department (Nevada Department of Wildlife) had recommended a total budget of \$3,909.00 credit had not been given for the additional meetings that required a recording secretary. Additionally, the Department’s budget included an incorrect per diem allowance. After a discussion with the Department the budget was increased to \$4,786.00 rather than the \$3,909.00. It is Chair Flowers’ calculation that the total funding available for FY (Fiscal Year) 2013-2014 will be \$5,708.00, including the unexpended fund from FY 2013.

- 8. FISCAL YEAR 2013 AND FISCAL YEAR 2012 HERITAGE PROJECT EXTENSIONS** [For possible action] – *A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify extension requests for*

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extension of 2013 Heritage projects as provided for in NAC (Nevada Administrative Code) 501.340.

Chair Flowers outlined the agenda item and explained should the project extension not be approved that the funding will revert to the Heritage Fund or reallocated to other projects of same FY. Chair Flowers opened the meeting to public comment.

Gerald Lent drew attention to the first proposal noting that, in his opinion, it had not changed since he had served as a member of Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners. Mr. Lent noted that he had not yet received a response to his inquiry and that if the Department (Nevada Department of Wildlife) was waiting for sportsmen to bring in samples for the research there would be no research. However, it is Mr. Lent's belief that this is a good project but does not appear to be "going anywhere." Without any progress on the project Mr. Lent suggests that, if the board finds it appropriate, to recommend that the funding be reallocated.

Chair Flowers closed public comments.

Member Shea commented that he believes that all taxidermists were asked to provide samples, which he has done.

Member Reed suggested an update on the progress thus far for Project 12-30 and suggested that if the project is "languishing" that the \$30,000.00 funding be used for other purposes.

Larry Gilbertson – NDOW (Nevada Department of Wildlife), commented that samples may be obtained during deer collaring and that Cody Schroeder is in charge of that program. Mr. Gilbertson noted that Mr. Schroeder is working on a Graduate Degree and does the radio telemetry and follow-up on mortality signals.

Member Reed noted his concern about the accuracy of the report based on the lack of expenditure over the past 11.5 months.

Chair Flowers noted that the NDOW website is lacking any significant information on habitat related issues and wonder whether the process was "stuck" in a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process since habitat generally falls back on the BLM (Bureau of Land Management). The recent update of the NDOW website has resulted in a lot of missing information. Chair Flowers also noted that Heritage Projects have until June 30 to complete their project with reports typically being submitted within 30 to 60 days after that.

Member Reed noted that it was difficult at best to make an informed decision without proper information.

There was minor discussion about the expenditures to date on other 2012 and 2013 projects being considered. As the discussion continued, it was pointed out that the telemetry equipment for the Sage Grouse project was being reimbursed. Other discussion noted that the board was not required

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to take any specific action on the agenda item. Other discussion noted that the timeline for Heritage project would also be addressed in the update to Policy 25, which is a separate agenda item. Discussion then noted Member Harwell's concern about whether NDOW had an agreement with UNR (University of Nevada, Reno).

It was moved by Member Reed, seconded by Member Harwell, to recommend that NDOW (Nevada Department of Wildlife) compile all pertinent information on the extensions before the June 20, 2013, Heritage Committee meeting, to better explain the scope and status of each proposal.

Discussion then turned to Project 12-30, 13-04, 13-05 and 13-20, which all indicate little or no action thus far. As the discussion continued, it was pointed out that if there is no forward movement on the project that the project should be terminated and funds allocated to other projects.

Member Reed noted that without the information to determine the worth and status of the proposals the intent is to provide an opportunity for project proponents to provide the information needed to make an informed decision.

Chair Flowers suggested that a recommendation to the Heritage Committee could be to take no action and extend the consideration of the matter until the August 2013, meeting.

Member Reed withdrew the previous motion. Member Harwell withdrew the second.

It was moved by Member Reed, seconded by Member Shea, to recommend that Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners take no action on the Fiscal Year 2012 and 2013 Heritage Project extensions until information on the status of each proposal is made available for consideration. The motion carried unanimously.

- 9. FISCAL YEAR 2013 AND FISCAL YEAR 2012 HERITAGE FUNDING REALLOCATION** [For possible action] – *A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify the reallocation of unused Heritage funds from a previously approved 2012 project to any other previously considered 2012 project application as provided for in NAC (Nevada Administrative Code) 501.300.*

Chair outlined the agenda item, noting that, in his opinion, this would be a moot point given the actions taken for Agenda Item 8. Chair Flowers opened public comment.

Gerald Lent reiterated that while he supports Project 12-30, which had been approved two (2) years ago, nothing has been done either last year or this year. Mr. Lent expressed concern that the project proponent is depending on hunters to provide samples, which he does not believe will be done. Therefore, project proponents should gather their own deer samples to keep the project valid. Since nothing has been done the past 2-years, Mr. Lent believes the money should be reallocated and used for a better project

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Chair Flowers closed public comment.

Member Spencer commented that the intent of taking no action was to assure that the information provided was factual.

Chair Flowers noted that Washoe County is only one of the seventeen County Game Board advising Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners and that should the Heritage Committee decide to take action that project not showing any action should be terminated and the funding as suggested by Mr. Lent.

Member Shea concurred and suggested that any project not have any action or expenditure in two fiscal years should be terminated and funding reallocated.

No specific action was taken. Chair Flowers will attend the Heritage Committee meeting and recommend that funding be reallocated on project that have shown no action or expenditure.

10. FISCAL YEAR 2014 HERITAGE PROJECT PROPOSALS [For possible action] – *A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify Heritage Project applications for 2014.*

Chair outlined the agenda item and noted action taken at the previous meeting.

Hearing no public comment Chair Flowers asked for board discussion or action

Chair Flowers commented that he had attended the meeting during which Commissioner Jack Robb had made the recommendations. Chair Flowers noted that he had somewhat different levels of funding in mind that he would share after board discussion.

Members Shea and Spencer had no specific comments.

Member Reed commented that he had watched the meeting and believes that Chair Robb had done a “good job” and had cut several project requests by ± 50 -percent. Member Reed concurred with the recommendations developed by Chair Robb.

Chair Flowers suggested that Project 14-03 retain the same level of funding as the previous year of \$40,000.00; Project 14-07 be given the full request of \$25,000.00 noting that the proponent had secured \$311,600.00 in other funding with a total project value of \$336,600.00; Project 14-08 and 14-09 should also receive \$25,000.00; Project 14-04 funded at \$25,000.00; Project 14-06 be funded at \$26,796.00 same as last year; and that Project 14-12 not be funded as the Duck Stamp Fund has sufficient money to fund the project. Chair Flowers noted that Chair Robb had asked whether other funding sources were being used and that funding from other organizations such as NBU (Nevada Bighorns Unlimited) and others may be needed for seed and other projects due to drought and fire conditions.

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Discussion then focused on the different terrain and time frames for Project 14-07 and 14-08. It was noted that some project areas encompassed smaller land mass and may have terrain and access issues.

It was moved by Chair Flowers, seconded by Member Reed, to recommend that Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Heritage Projects as follows: 14-01 \$94,446.00 rather than \$90,000.00; 14-02 no change; 14-03 \$40,000.00 rather than \$30,000.00; 14-04 no change; 14-05 \$38,758.00 rather than \$25,000.00; 14-06 \$26,796.00 rather than \$35,000.00; 14-07 \$25,000.00 rather than \$15,000.00; 14-08 \$25,000.00 rather than \$35,000.00; 14-09 \$25,000.00 rather than \$35,000.00; 14-10 no change; 14-11 no change; 14-12 no funding refer to the Duck Stamp fund; 14-13 no change; 14-04 no change; 14-05 no change; 14-16 no change; and 14-17 no change. The motion carried unanimously.

11. **COMMISSION REGULATION (CR) 12-06 AMENDMENT NO. 2 – SEASONS, BAG LIMITS, AND SPECIAL REGULATIONS CHANGES FOR SAGE-GROUSE, BLUE GROUSE (DUSKY AND SOOTY), AND WILD TURKEY, 2013-2014 SEASON** [For possible action] – *A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify recommended changes to the existing CR 12-06 to modify regulations for seasons, bag limits, and special regulations for Sage-Grouse, Blue Grouse (Dusky and Sooty), and Wild Turkey for the 2013-2014 season.*

Chair Flowers outlined agenda item. Hearing no one wishing to speak on the matter closed public comment and asked for board discussion or motion.

Responding to Member Shea's inquiry about alternating units for the Sage Grouse hunts, Mike Dobel – NDOW (Nevada Department of Wildlife), explained that NDOW uses WAFWA (Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies) guidelines and conducts annual surveys of the spring populations, production and recruitment. Additionally if there is no hunt wing data cannot be gathered that provides valuable information on the ratio of male/female. The intent is to assure that the populations are not impacted by a hunt. Based on those guidelines most areas have populations that are more than adequate to have a hunt.

Chris Hampson – NDOW, noted that habitat and proximity to urbanized areas are key elements in recruitment and populations. In Unit 022 the hunt was cancelled due to low nesting success rates. Mr. Hampson noted that lekLek counts continue annually and that seasons have been shortened in some areas due to low lekLek counts. Mr. Hampson emphasized that NDOW closely reviews each season to better match the season length with biological data.

Larry Gilbertson – NDOW, explained that Sage Grouse had been hunted earlier in September in the past. This issue is complex and season timing, length and bag limits have been discussed many times over the past 30-years. Mr. Gilbertson noted that the public had indicated a desire for multiple seasons be open together so that the number of trips could be reduced due to the price of gas. A number of studies have indicated that the harvest in some areas such as Eureka County had been rather light and that seasons would be closed as necessary to prevent a statewide closure. The fact

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that the sage-grouse resource supports hunting shows that there is no need to list them as endangered.

It was moved by Member Shea, seconded by Member Reed, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Commission Regulation 12-06 Amendment 2, as written.

Responding to member Reed's inquiry about why Merriam Turkeys were not included, Mr. Hampson explained that he does not believe there is sufficient population to support a hunt.

The motion carried unanimously.

12. COMMISSION REGULATION (CR) 13-07 AMENDMENT NO. 1, 2014 HERITAGE TAG VENDORS [For possible action] – *A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify vendor recommendations to the Commission for possible action regarding the 2014 tags.*

Chair Flowers outlined the agenda item. Hearing no public comment Chair Flowers asked for board discussion or a motion.

During the discussion it was noted that the PIW (Partners in Wildlife) and Heritage tags were taken from the limited number of Desert Bighorn tags in the general hunt. It was suggested that a further discussion about Bighorn Sheep in Unit 32 could be added to a future agenda.

It was moved by Member Reed, seconded by Member Spencer, to recommend that Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Commission Regulation 13-07 Amendment 1, as written. The motion carried unanimously.

13. BIENNIAL UPLAND GAME RELEASE PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2014 AND 2015 [For possible action] – *A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify the proposed Upland Game Release Plan for FY (Fiscal Year) 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.*

Chair Flowers outlined the agenda item noting that he had failed to agendize the Upland Game Stamp project requests. Hearing no public comment, Chair Flowers asked for board discussion or a motion.

During the discussion it was noted that most transplants occur on private land rather than public lands due the complexity in securing approval for such releases. Typically, Upland Game Birds disperse to surrounding areas very quickly.

Larry Gilbertson – NDOW (Nevada Department of Wildlife), explained that there had been some discussion about releasing Merriam Turkeys in northern areas. It is unclear whether Merriam Turkey were native to the Sierras.

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It was moved by Member Shea, seconded by Member Reed, to recommend that Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve the Biennial Upland Game Release Plan for Fiscal years 2014 and 2015, as written. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting recessed at 7:29 p.m. and reconvened at 7:38 p.m.

14. DUCK STAMP REQUESTS [For possible action] – *A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify proposed projects submitted for Duck Stamp funding.*

Chair Flowers opened the agenda item and hearing no public comment asked for board discussion or motion.

Member Reed stated that he had no concerns with the proposal and stated that Carson Lake, Mason Valley and the Scripps need to be funded as they are the most easily accessible to residents of Washoe County.

Member Harwell outlined his concern about the \$3,750.00 for weed control noting that some areas such as Franklin Lake are dry and had been for some time. Additionally Lockes Ranch is all upland and, in his opinion, is not pertinent to waterfowl. Other concerns include Steptoe and suggested that a detailed report on what herbicide was used and the type of vegetation the herbicide was used on.

During the discussion it was pointed out that the best method to reduce cattails was to use water management techniques rather than herbicides. As the discussion continued it was noted that both the Duck Stamp and Upland Game Stamps funds tend to have a large rolling balance that could be used for other projects.

It was moved by Chair Flowers, seconded by Member Reed, to recommend that Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve Duck Stamp Request with the following modifications: 1) Wood Duck Project be increased to \$43,250.00 from the \$23,750 requested; 2) increase the Fiscal Year project total to \$162,450.00 from \$142,950.00. The motion carried unanimously.

15. FIRST READING OF REVISED COMMISSION POLICY NO. 25, WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT [For possible action] – *A review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify a first reading of Commission Policy No. 25, Wildlife Damage Management in accordance with Commission Policy No. 1.*

Chair Flowers outlined the agenda item and asked for public comment.

Gerald Lent commented that in light of the passage of AB455 this update might not be valid with the Governor's (Brian Sandoval) veto of AB345. Mr. Lent believes that they had counted their chickens before they were hatched and indicates to him that the Director and predator biologists do not know

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what they are doing and that the Director is not supervising his employees. Mr. Lent noted that amended Predator Committee read “that in light of passage of AB345 old Commission Policy 25 may no longer be valid.” Mr. Lent stated that this was an embarrassment as the Governor had vetoed it and that the Department counted their chickens before they hatched. Mr. Lent reiterated that this goes against what the Governor intended based on his veto of the legislation. Mr. Lent does not believe that the Director provides leadership in the agency and that a third revision to the Predator Management agenda was sent earlier today (June 13, 2013). Mr. Lent believes that this body should not vote in favor of a change to Policy 25 but should recommend that Policy 25 remain as it is currently written. Mr. Lent stated that it boils down to the Director not knowing what his guys are doing and that this embarrasses everyone as the Governor made it clear he does not want this by his veto of the legislation.

Chair Flowers closed public comment.

Member Reed noted his concern about the use of the term introduction without any clarification. Of particular concern is that non-native species could be introduced into the state under this somewhat vague language and suggested that the matter be sent back for revision and clarification.

During the discussion it was suggested that perhaps the language should read game rather than wildlife populations to preclude the introduction of inappropriate species. Other discussion noted that part of the change may be due to a desire to use Predator Control funds for other activities such as habitat and non-lethal predator control as discussed by the Predator Committee.

Larry Gilbertson – NDOW (Nevada Department of Wildlife) explained that the original Policy 25 had been written before NRS 502.253 was originally passed using a variety of existing NRS (Nevada Revised Statutes) language. With the potential for passage of AB345, direction was given to revise the policy and incorporate as much as possible from the proposed legislation. It was indicated by the Governor that AB345 was not needed because it duplicated some existing NRS and as the policy was being revised by the Commission to incorporate issues that generated AB 345. Therefore, NDOW’s direction from the Governor’s office is to review the discussions and deliberations for AB 345 and include them in Policy 25 before forwarding this to the Commission.

Responding to Chair Flowers’ inquiry about how often Policy 25 was to be updated, Mr. Lent explained that it was to be reviewed every five (5) years and that the last update was 2 or 3 years ago. Mr. Lent pointed out that Mr. Gilbertson had testified that the new Policy 25 would never have been written that way if AB 345 was not passed into law. Therefore, in light of this Policy 25 should not be changed at this time,

Mr. Gilbertson noted that proposed legislation rarely stays with the original language and that Policy 25 will not have to exactly mimic AB345 as the Commission updates the policy.

Other discussion focused on the word “introduction”. It was suggested that the language be modified to assure that only native or extinct native game/wildlife animals be reintroduced.

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Mr. Gilbertson noted that part of predator management includes the ability to look at the system as a whole and determine if something else might be beneficial to the system overall. Mr. Gilbertson noted that if staff were to rewrite Policy 25 based on what was in AB345 that wording would be somewhat different.

Discussion then noted that Eastern Nevada has a somewhat different process as the BLM jurisdiction is different than that of Western Nevada and that while the State of Nevada “owns” the animals the BLM manages federally owned lands. Other discussion noted that the name of the Predation Committee is being reviewed and may be changed by the Commission.

Chair Flowers reopened public comment.

Gerald Lent stated that while the recommendations were based on the passage of AB345 that was ultimately vetoed that the Policy now needs to be rewritten.

Chair Flowers closed public comment.

Member Spender suggested that the Board take no action and remand the matter back to NDOW staff for revision.

It was moved by Chair Flowers, seconded by Member Reed, to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners take no action on Policy 25 based on AB345 and subsequently vetoed by Governor Brian Sandoval and that the Policy be reviewed and rewritten before being presented to Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners for a first reading. The motion carried unanimously.

16. WASHOE COUNTY ADVISORY BOARD TO MANAGE WILDLIFE MEMBERS AND/OR STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS, REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND SELECTION OF TOPICS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS [Non-action item] – *Selection of additional agenda item(s) for the Thursday, July 25, 2013, meeting. **NOTE:** This meeting is scheduled to be held at the Regional Emergency Operations Center on Spectrum Boulevard.*

The July 25, 2013, meeting agenda, may include, but is not limited to: 1) Introduction of new member(s); 2) Election of Officers: Chair, Vice-chair and Secretary; 3) Review and possible action to approve the 2014 Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife meeting calendar. It was also suggested that an update on wind and solar arrays be scheduled for the September meeting.

Member Reed submitted a spreadsheet of legislative actions followed by NDOW (Nevada Department of Wildlife) (copy on file).

17. PUBLIC COMMENTS [Non-action item]

Gerald Lent provided a handout (copy on file) and explained that the graphs showed that the top two (2) deer producing units in the state have predator control projects in place. Mr. Lent noted that the

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Commission (Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners) has appointments to the White Pine Elk Incentive and Damage Arbitration Panel and the board should look in to why Bill McBeath gets six (6) Elk Compensation Tags on his ranch when he has deeded the land over to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Mr. Lent believes they are counting Elk on property that does not belong to him and that provided an overview of the information and graph of deer herd population in the Granites, which has the two largest herds in the State of Nevada. Mr. Lent suggested that that be taken into account before deciding to terminate the predator project. Mr. Lent then drew attention to the White Pine Elk Arbitration Plan noting that most Elk are located on property deeded to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Mr. Lent believes that a future Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife agenda should include a discussion of the number of incentive and damage tags on property deeded to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

18. ADJOURNMENT [Non-action item]

Chair Flowers adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

AS APPROVED BY THE WASHOE COUNTY ADVISORY BOARD TO MANAGE WILDLIFE IN SESSION ON JULY 30, 2013.