

Committee Members: Commissioner Kiel (Chair),  
Commissioner Barnes, Commissioner Rogers, Commissioner  
Almberg, Jim Rackley, Jeremy Drew, Charlie Clements,  
Josh Vittori, Cory Lytle, Alan Shepherd, Kris Boatner

Staff to the Committee: Mike Scott  
Alan Jenne  
Cody Schroeder

**Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners  
Mule Deer Enhancement Program Oversight Committee**

**Wednesday, October 27, 2021 / 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting held via [www.Zoom.us](http://www.Zoom.us)**

**DRAFT Minutes**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call of Committee Members – Chairman Kiel**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm

**In attendance:**

Commissioner Kiel, Chair  
Commissioner Barnes  
Commissioner Rogers  
Commissioner Almberg  
Jim Rackley, Nevada Muleys Association  
Jeremy Drew, Resource Specialist  
Charlie Clements, Rangeland Scientist  
Josh Vittori, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited  
Cory Lytle, Meadow Valley Wildlife Unlimited  
Alan Shepherd, Bureau of Land Management  
Kristie Boatner, US Forest Service  
Mark Freese, Nevada Department of Wildlife  
Mike Scott, Nevada Department of Wildlife  
Cody Schroder, Nevada Department of Wildlife

**2. Approval of Agenda – For Possible Action**

Committee Chair Commissioner Kiel motioned to approve the agenda.

Committee Member Lytle seconded the motion.

The motion passed.

**3. \*Approval of Minutes (June 2, 2021) – Chairman Kiel – For Possible Action**

Committee Member Rackely motioned to approve the June 2, 2021, Minutes.

Committee Member Commissioner Rogers seconded the motion.

The motion passed.

**4. \*Member Announcements and Correspondence – Chairman Kiel – Informational**

Chairman Kiel read into the record a letter received from the Washoe County Management Area 1 and 2 Subcommittee. (Attachment A) Game Administrator Scott commented that staff will work to engage the Washoe County Subcommittee to resolve the issues presented in the letter.

**5. \*Mule Deer Enhancement Program Charter – Workshop – Game Administrator Mike Scott – For Possible Action**

The Committee reviewed the language of the proposed draft Charter. The adoption of a Charter will facilitate the participation of federal land management agencies seeking to participate in the Program. Committee

Member Lytle suggested that the wording include the use of “habitat” and “non-habitat.” Game Administrator Scott commented that when a Subcommittee member is unavailable to attend a meeting or meetings, that a County Advisory Board (CAB) member fill in for the absent Subcommittee member. Chair Kiel responded that improvements to the Subcommittee process will possibly be discussed.

Public comment given by Judy Karen.

**Committee Chair Commissioner Kiel motioned to approve the Committee Charter with the changes presented by Committee Member Lytle and the correction presented by Game Administrator Scott.**

**Committee Member Commissioner Rogers seconded the motion.**

**The motion passed.**

**6. \*Mule Deer Enhancement Program Project Scoring Matrix – Workshop – Game Administrator, Mike Scott – For Possible Action**

The Committee reviewed the proposed draft matrices that will be used by the Committee to score and prioritize project proposals submitted by the Subcommittees. Game Administrator Scott stated the scoring process was more time intensive than he had anticipated, and that next year’s goal was to have the proposals automatically populate the Project Scoring Matrix and therefore streamline the process. Chair Kiel stated that the Committee would move forward with the review and asked if the present tool was effective enough to prioritize a list of projects. Game Administrator Scott confirmed the present tool was effective enough, although there was room for improvement. Commissioner Rogers asked if there were any items that needed to be eliminated in order to streamline the process. Game Administrator Scott confirmed that there were several questions on the form that did not make a positive impact on the process, and they would be removed on future forms. Committee Member Lytle asked about the best way to track the process of the proposed projects. Game Administrator Scott discussed the point and ranking system devised by Staff, as well as the complexities of the ranking system. Commissioner Almberg asked about prioritizing projects based on the return of the investment. Game Administrator Scott answered that it was his hope that through time, the agency would end up with projects all across the State.

Public comment was issued by Chris Jasmine on his experience working on the proposals for Management Area 7, Management Area 15, and Management Area 6.

Chair Kiel commented that the forms being used would most likely be in Workshop for the duration of the project as the Committee and the Subcommittees would probably always be improving on the process.

**Committee Chair Commissioner Kiel motioned to approve the Mule Deer Enhancement Program Project Scoring Matrix with the proposed changes to the adoption phase at the next meeting,**

**Committee Member Commissioner Rogers seconded the motion.**

**The motion passed.**

**7. \*Mule Deer Enhancement Program Project Proposal Scoring – Chairman Kiel – For Possible Action**

The Committee reviewed project proposals received from the Subcommittees using the approved Project Scoring Matrix. Game Administrator Scott stated that there were inconsistencies in the scoring due to the issues discussed earlier regarding the way the Habitat and Non-Habitat Proposal Forms were written, the questions that were asked, and how they were received and answered by Subcommittee members and Department Staff. Mr. Scott continued that the scores and rankings were affected by these discrepancies, but in general, the matrix did provide a prioritized list. Mr. Scott continued saying the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process needed to be addressed first before a Subcommittee could seek funding for their project.

Wildlife Staff Specialist Mark Freese suggested to remove the projects that have not addressed the NEPA process and re-rank the list, or perhaps to re-rank the list based on whether the NEPA process has been completed or simply not necessary. The Committee discussed the scoring of the NEPA column in the matrix.

Committee Member Drew enquired if perhaps the Washoe Subcommittee did not have the opportunity to review the final product for Washoe County. Mr. Scott answered that there may have been miscommunication

and that more communication was most likely needed. He continued stating that there were significant challenges in getting entire Subcommittees to gather. Mr. Scott stated the current process needed to be streamlined and communication be improved, reiterating that the Department wants to move forward together and make a better process. Committee Member Drew replied that he was hesitant to make a recommendation because the process was so new and untested, and he did not want a project to be discarded or pushed down the priority list due to lack of information or presentation. Mr. Drew asked what a recommendation from this Committee meant and what would happen once the Commission approved a project.

Game Administrator Scott advised that the projects presented on the screen at that moment did not require the NEPA process, only funding, and that they can be proposed to the Commission so that they may ask for that funding. Chair Kiel suggested that collaring projects be steered toward the Heritage Committee, as an example. Mr. Scott agreed.

Committee Member Commissioner Almberg asked about the listed estimated costs of the projects in general, asking if a project stated that its cost was \$25,000, was that per year or over 4 years and if the annual cost and total cost had been differentiated. Commissioner Almberg offered that perhaps there had been a misunderstanding of the question and what was really being asked for on the ranking and project sheets.

Committee Member Commissioner Barnes asked if the proposals clarified who owned water and if there were permittees and private landowners that need to be included. Chair Kiel asked how the Committee weaves due diligence into the project before it submits the approved proposals to the Commission for actual funding.

Wildlife Staff Specialist Mark Freese answered that it was part of the Department's standard process to make sure all stakeholders are on board. Getting agreement from stakeholders is part of the project implantation process but he admitted that nuance was not indicated in the present version of the form, although it should be.

Public comment received from Steve Robinson, Washoe Subcommittee, Larry Johnson, Washoe Subcommittee, and Mel Belding.

Committee Member Vittori stated that he was not comfortable moving forward with the process of recommending proposals to the Commission, given the experience had with Elko County and Washoe County. Committee Member Drew asked what the process was going forward and what the timeline was, asking the Department when the recommendations were needed and if there was more time to do due diligence.

Game Administrator Scott answered that internal proposals for Heritage Committee are due January 31, 2022, so there is time to reassess pertinent projects. February 15, 2022, is the deadline for federal aid proposals for the Game Division, so any internal projects need to be decided prior. March 1, 2022, is the deadline for predator related projects. Mr. Scott surmised the Committee would need its proposals in place by the end of January 2022.

Committee Member Drew asked if the Department had the capacity and bandwidth to reassess and resolve the current ranking issues and present again to the Committee. Game Administrator Scott answered that it was possible and reiterated that the program's process is still very fluid and that it was being created as it moved forward. Committee Member Lytle commented that there seemed to be a need for clarification between Department staff, field biologists, and the Subcommittee members. He continued that having the Committee meet again before the January Commission meeting would be a good way to get a better feeling for the proposals and to get a stronger consensus.

Committee Member Clements shared his concern going forward with any proposals at this meeting. He wanted the opportunity to reach out to the field biologists staffing the Subcommittees because his notes were not reflected in some of the proposals that came forward, particularly in Management Area 1 and Management Area 7. Mr. Clements wondered if the Subcommittee team put something forward and the Department changed it, and if so, a quick fix might be having each team have a chair that signs off with a Department representative so everyone is on the same page.

Committee Member Shepherd asked if there was a BLM or US Forest Service representative on each Subcommittee to verify the NEPA process aspect of the projects. Mr. Shepherd commented that those agencies have on-going and upcoming projects that should be known during the proposal process and be part of the due diligence in this process. Game Administrator Scott answered that some Subcommittees did indeed have BLM members onboard and that was the purpose of the Committee Charter, which was created to encourage federal partners participating in the process. Mr. Scott agreed that the participation of federal

agencies was crucial and that if there were Subcommittees that did not have federal agency participation, the Department would reach out and foster that participation.

It was agreed that the Committee would meet again before the Commission Meeting in January 2022, so that it could work through the challenges presented at this meeting.

#### **8. Mule Deer Enhancement Program Future Schedule – Game Administrator, Mike Scott – For Possible Action**

Game Administrator Scott presented the suggested dates for the process of the program. (Attachment B) Mr. Scott related the struggle for full participation among all the Subcommittees, suggesting in the future, staff would set a meeting date and those who can attend do so, and those who cannot attend have a substitute attend on their behalf. Mr. Scott continued that this might mean the Program would need to expand the number of people associated with the Subcommittees, and perhaps CAB members should be included to fill any gaps. There was discussion that December is the time of year when the project proposals should be complete. Committee Member Drew commented that alternates for each Subcommittee member was a good suggestion and commended all participants on the good work done so far.

Committee Member Commissioner Barnes also wished to commend Mr. Scott on the task of the Program, which he viewed as a big undertaking, continuing that it appeared to be successful so far and that the projects themselves looked great. Commissioner Barnes commented that the process was overwhelming, and the program was just in its beginning stages.

**Committee Chair Commissioner Kiel motioned to approve the proposed future schedule of the Mule Deer Enhancement Program as a framework for the future business cycle and meeting cycle of the Committee and its Subcommittees.**

**Committee Member Drew seconded the motion.**

**The motion passed.**

#### **9. Mule Deer Enhancement Program Improvements – Chairman Kiel, Game Administrator Scott – Informational**

The Committee discussed improvements to the MDEP process. Game Administrator Scott appealed to the Committee for suggestions to streamline the process and reiterated that he was working on getting the details in the forms to flow from one to the other and auto-populate so a simpler prioritized list can be presented for review.

#### **10. Public Comment Period**

Public comment given by Larry Johnson and Chris Jasmine regarding the numbers of feral horses on the landscape and their impact on the habitat in certain Management Areas.

Meeting adjourned 8:00 PM.

**From:** [Cody Schroeder](#)  
**To:** [Cassandra Grieve](#)  
**Subject:** FW:  
**Date:** Monday, December 13, 2021 12:19:20 PM

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**From:** Joe Zweifel <joe@wildliferevolutions.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 26, 2021 12:38 PM  
**To:** Wildlife Commission <wildlifecommission@ndow.org>; Mike Scott <msscott@ndow.org>; arnie@pittsorthodontics.com; Larry Johnson <konkowitz@gmail.com>; Steve <steve@nevadaperio.com>; Jon Ewanyk <jon.ewanyk@ndow.org>; Jim Rackley <James.Rackley@newmont.com>; Cody Schroeder <cschroeder@ndow.org>; Cooper Munson <cmunson@ndow.org>  
**Subject:**

As members of the Northern Washoe Mule Deer Committee we are writing to inform you and the wildlife commission that we are disappointed with the actions of the Nevada Department of Wildlife staff when submitting the Northern Washoe Mule Deer Committee proposals for project and management activities. Those proposals do not represent the substantive discussions and work of the mule deer committee, nor do they represent the views of the committee, rather they represent the views of the area biologist, predator biologist and Deputy Director. Unfortunately, the Department has been difficult to work with throughout this process, from organizing meetings to providing data to committee members. The Department's decision to submit proposals without allowing the opportunity for the committee to review the draft proposals is the latest decision that makes the committee members feel that the department is not working in a good faith and collaborative manner. This is especially frustrating because the committee members asked on numerous occasions to review and go over the draft proposals prior to them being submitted and only after they were submitted without prior committee review did we discover that the proposals were unilaterally modified from what the committee had discussed.

We are extremely disappointed that the Department essentially chose to eliminate the predator management proposal that we had discussed as a committee and instead submitted a proposal for removal of mountain lions that predated on collared mule deer. At face value, this proposal seems well-reasoned, however, according to the Department, that proposal was going to happen anyway as a component of the collaring project. That management proposal involved numerous logistical considerations and barriers and served more as an opportunistic harvest of mountain lions than a comprehensive predator management program to improve declining deer populations in Northern Washoe. The proposal that the Committee discussed as a group submitting represented the views and opinions on what actions were needed to address the low population numbers from members of the committee that are not employed by the Department.

By the Department unilaterally choosing to not submit that proposal due to the perceived opinion that it would not stand as high of a likelihood of getting funded, the Department denied the ranking

committee on proposals the opportunity to consider what the committee actually identified as the need for addressing declining deer numbers. The latest actions from the Department has left the Northern Washoe Mule Deer Committee with the impression that the entire concept of a mule deer working group is more a public relations ploy than a good faith effort to collaboratively work together under the North American Model for Wildlife Conservation. We have apparently wasted our time and good faith efforts. We feel the Department has abandoned their goal of reversing the downward trend of mule deer, and more importantly, their duty to protect and enhance our wildlife populations - all in the name of avoiding controversy.

We look forward to a response from the Department on how they intend to address these issues moving forward.

Sincerely,  
The Northern Washoe Mule Deer Committee

**Suggested Dates for MDEP Process:**

- January 1 – March 31:** Annual subcommittee meetings should be held to provide update and presentation.
- January 31:** Heritage project proposals due for NDOW staff.
- February 15:** Federal Aid project proposals due to Game Division Staff.
- March 1:** Deadline for Predator-related projects to be submitted to Predator Staff Biologist.
- April 15 – June 15:** Annual field trips to discuss projects, conditions, etc.
- June 15 – July 31:** Meeting to rank Limiting Factors, review Needs Assessments and Project Proposal forms.
- August 1:** Submit up to three (3) project proposals to NDOW Staff.
- August 1 – August 31:** Mule Deer Oversight Committee Meeting to review projects using the scoring matrices and develop a prioritized project list.
- Sept. 1 – Dec. 31:** At least one additional subcommittee meeting should be scheduled during this time to discuss future projects, successes, failures, ways to improve the process, etc.