

Subcommittee Members: Arnie Pitts, Dan Ryan,
Joe Zweifel, Larry Johnson, Steve Robinson

Staff to the Subcommittee: Jon Ewanyk
Tori Cernoch

**Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners
Mule Deer Enhancement Oversight Committee
Mule Deer Enhancement Program Subcommittee
Washoe County; Management Area 1, 2**

**Nevada Department of Wildlife
1100 Valley Road
Reno, Nevada 89511**

Wednesday, June 1, 2022 / 6:00 p.m.

DRAFT Minutes

1. Call to Order – Department Representative

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m.

In Attendance:

Arnie Pitts, Subcommittee Member
Dan Ryan, Subcommittee Member
Joe Zweifel, Subcommittee Member
Steve Robinson, Subcommittee Member
Tori Cernoch, Department Representative
Jon Ewanyk, Department Representative
Pat Jackson, Department Representative, Staff Specialist
Mark Ono, APHIS-WS Nevada State Director

Absent:

Larry Johnson, Subcommittee Member

2. Approval of Agenda – Department Representative – For Possible Action

Subcommittee Member Ryan motioned to approve the agenda.

Subcommittee Member Robinson seconded the motion.

The motion passed.

3. Approval of Minutes (November 23, 2021) – Department Representative – For Possible Action

Subcommittee Member Ryan motioned to approve the minutes.

Subcommittee Member Robinson seconded the motion.

The motion passed.

4. Approval of Minutes (April 20, 2022) – Department Representative – For Possible Action

Department Representative Ewanyk opened the agenda item for public comment.

Rex Flowers commented that the April 20, 2022 Minutes did not adequately reflect comments from both Department Representatives and members of the public. Mr. Flowers stated he would like to see the Minutes rewritten accordingly. In agreement with Mr. Flowers, Subcommittee Member Robinson stated he also did not approve the April 20, 2022 Minutes, citing lack of thorough inclusion of detailed public comment.

Subcommittee Member Ryan motioned to not approve the minutes.

Subcommittee Member Robinson seconded the motion.

The motion passed. Department Representative Ewanyk voted against the motion.

5. Member Announcements and Correspondence – Informational

No announcements were made.

6. Management Area 1 and 2 – Informational

The Subcommittee discussed habitat, predator, and investigative projects pertinent to the mule deer herd in Management Area 1 and 2. Department Representative Ewanyk presented information regarding the collaring project. Department Representative Cernoch presented information regarding potential habitat projects in Hunt Unit 014. (Attachment A)

Mr. Ewanyk presented information regarding predator removal work, specifically the use of Project 37 for removal of lions in Unit 014. Mr. Ewanyk stated for the record that Project 37 focused on the removal of mountain lions for the protection of big game. Subcommittee Member Ryan requested greater understanding of the details of Project 37.

Subcommittee Member Robinson asked if it would be possible to use Project 38 as well as Project 37. Mr. Ewanyk stated for the record that Project 38 focused on the removal of coyotes for the protection of big game. Staff Specialist Pat Jackson stated that research shows that removal of coyotes in this type of situation is not effective and therefore not defensible by the Department.

Subcommittee Member Ryan requested information about potential limitations of use of Project 37 funds, given that the funds are used statewide and not targeted solely for Hunt Unit 014. Staff Specialist Jackson stated that the only limitations the Department foresees are staffing-related.

Subcommittee Member Robinson asked what the current cost was per individual mountain lion removed. Staff Specialist Jackson responded that the Department has some flexibility with regard to budgeting and would likely be able to meet project needs.

Subcommittee Member Zweifel stated that there is a belief that the Department should focus on using contractors due to concerns about lack of staffing at Wildlife Services. Mark Ono, APHIS-WS Nevada State Director shared information about Wildlife Services staffing efforts. Mr. Ono stated that he is very confident that vacant positions will be filled with announcements going out in the next two weeks and that there are already potential candidates for the positions that are very capable and well-trained.

Subcommittee Member Ryan shared some pros and cons of relying on Project 37. Mr. Ryan requested pros and cons from the Department's perspective regarding relying on Project 37.

Subcommittee Member Pitts requested discussion regarding moving forward with the Subcommittee's current predator removal proposal.

7. Public Comment

Mel Belding expressed curiosity about Staff Specialist Jackson's statement about Project 38's use not being scientifically valid for this project. Mr. Belding agreed that habitat restoration efforts should be focused on private lands, as project work would be able to move forward without NEPA.

Matt Melarky shared that it cost the Department a lot of money per individual lion removed and urged the Subcommittee to move forward with its own predator removal project.

Mark Ono stated that as a manager of a federal program, Wildlife Services must ensure that any predator removal projects be defensible. There is research showing that in a mega-drought cycle, like what Nevada is experiencing currently, perhaps the Subcommittee should be considering projects that maintain deer numbers rather than trying to increase them. Mr. Ono continued stating the Department is able to create peer-reviewed research that actually demonstrates mechanisms that allow for maintenance of deer herds. Mr. Ono stated that if there is no published research supporting predator control projects, it is extremely difficult to fulfill the NEPA process and that anecdotal information is not useable in the NEPA process.

Rex Flowers thanked the Subcommittee for the informational and educational materials shared during the meeting.

Matt Malarkey commended the Subcommittee for project ideas and for information brought forward during the meeting and that these are the kinds of materials that are useful for the public.

8. **Future Subcommittee Meetings – For possible Action**

Subcommittee Member Ryan stated any lawsuits over predator projects are to be expected, and that the Subcommittee should meet within the next 60 days to rework the predator project.

Subcommittee Member Zweifel stated he would like to see a field trip date selected or any mechanisms for greater efficiency within the MDEP process. Subcommittee Member Ryan requested that the Department seek greater clarity on open meeting law and quorum specifics.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.