

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –
draft minutes

September 16, 2021

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** [Non-action item]
2. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** [Non-action item]

Members in Attendance

1. Steve Robinson Chairman
2. Arnie Pitts, Vice Chairman
3. Jim Rhea
4. Matt Malarkey
5. Coby Rowe

Others in Attendance

1. Jon Ewanyk, Washoe County Wildlife Biologist
2. Rex Flowers, public
3. Ash Caselli
4. Ryan Browne

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**-[Non-action item]

Rex Flowers provided public comment on behalf of the Coalition of Nevada Healthy Lands. Mr. Flowers said Chair Robinson had received an email from Judi Caron and asked that the email be forwarded to the full board. The email has also been attached to the end of these minutes. Mr. Flowers said the state of Nevada has been decimated by wild horses, specifically the riparian areas.

4. **APPROVAL OF June 17, 2021 MINUTES**-[For possible action]

No changes were noted.

Member Pitts motioned for approval of the June 17, 2021 CAB minutes. Chair Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

5. **BOARD MEMBER MEETING ASSIGNMENT**-[Non-action item]

Members of the CAB had discussion and determined which member(s) would attend the upcoming Nevada Board of Wildlife Commission meeting. Chair Robinson said that it was his intention to attend the meeting and recommended the new board members also try to attend if they were able.

6. **COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND LIAISON UPDATES**-[Non-action items]

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Chair Robinson opened discussion on the agenda item. Chair Robinson said he spoke with Ms. Caron regarding the email she had sent. He is said the email was encouraging the support of the Wild Horse and Burrow act. The email also called for the board to write their own letter that would be sent to the Secretary of the Interior. The correspondence noted the destruction of sage grouse land by wild horses.

Chair Robinson asked if there was any items that needed to be addressed from the August 6 Commission meeting. Member Rhea said he had attended and didn't have much to report. Member Pitts said he found the meeting interesting considering the Coyote Hunting Contest and said the meeting was particularly contentious with regard to that agenda item. Chair Robinson said he was disappointed with the dialogue around the contests and hoped there would be more fact-based discussion in the future. Member Malarkey added that he had two takeaways from the meeting. He noted the opposition to the contests was very well organized and the hunting side was much less organized. He hoped there would be a call to action by sportsman to become more involved in the issue. He also asked what the ramifications were for the Reno City Council's passing of their ban and what that ban would entail.

7. Commission Regulation 21-15, Fishing Seasons and Regulations for January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2023–[For Possible Action]

Chair Robinson opened discussion on the recommendation that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify the proposed fishing seasons, bag, and possession limits for the period of January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2023. He said the proposal appeared to only apply to White Pine County. Chair Robinson said he was in full support of the proposed changes. There were no additional comments from the board or members of the public.

Member Pitts moved to approve Commission Regulation 21-15, Fishing Seasons and Regulations for January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2023 as written. Chair Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Commission General Regulation 488, Landowner Compensation Tags, LCB File No. R083-19–[For Possible Action]

Chair Robinson opened discussion on the recommendation that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify changes to Chapter 502 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). This regulation would provide direction for allocating landowner deer and antelope compensation tags if owner applicants cumulatively qualify for compensation tags in excess of the statutory limit. This regulation was considered during a workshop in September 2019.

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Member Pitts asked for comment from the Department. John Ewanyk said that last year there were 502 tags available and there were 363 applicants for the deer tags, so there were some left over. Member Malarkey noted there were 87 tags picked for antelope. Member Pitts asked how the tags were treated. Mr. Ewanyk said that everyone is guaranteed their first tag and after that, everyone falls into the .5 multiplier. Member Malarkey noted that by his math the 2.5% on antelope would represent around 108 tags over the 87 that were given this year, and it would be roughly 436 tags for deer, based on what was given out this year. He then asked the department, in their opinion, how long it would take to reach the 2.5% threshold. Mr. Ewanyk said it was tricky due to various reasons and there is no way to tell what will be done with tags in the future. Member Pitts said it appeared there are more deer on ranches than in the past and said that may increase the tags. Member Pitts asked if the ranchers had been approached and what their feelings were, and Mr. Ewanyk said he did not know whether ranchers had been consulted. Chair Robinson said there are some states that have more comprehensive tags for landowners, and hoped that in the future, changes could be made to the program to benefit everyone.

During public comment Ash Caselli said he would like to see more discussion around depredation tags. He said the landowner tags were being used for income and he believed too many were being given out each year. Rex Flowers said this issue had been worked on for a few years and since 2012 mule deer numbers had dropped throughout the state, which has led to less hunting tags. He said many groups were consulted with regard to this issue, and the proposed plan was the best that the group could come to agreement on. He said there is a chance they could go over again, but overall, he supported the work that had been done. He also added that ranchers are not getting back in income what they are losing to wildlife.

Member Rhea asked if ranchers were required to submit crop loss data. Chair Robinson and Member Pitts said no, it was only the number of animals on the land.

Member Pitts moved to approve Commission General Regulation 488, Landowner Compensation Tags, LCB File No. R083-19 as written. Member Malarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Commission General Regulation 489, NAC 503.172, Shed Antler Season, R082-19–[For Possible Action]

Chair Robinson opened discussion on alterations to NAC 501 and NAC 503 to change the demerits for violation of the shed antler closure, increase the demerits for a violation of that regulation and require an online class in order to collect or possess shed antlers in the field. This regulation was brought as a petition by Elko CABMW in August 2019 and was considered during a workshop in September 2019 and August 2021.

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Chair Robinson asked if members of law enforcement would comment on the item. Kristy Knight, Game Warden, said the proposal considered changing the timeframe of the requirement of completion of an online class in order to collect or possess shed antlers in the field and changing the violation for not having taken the class or collecting outside of the timeframe. Member Pitts asked if someone had decided to go fishing in the area, but did not complete the online course, would they be able to go? Ms. Knight said yes, that was her understanding. Member Malarkey added that the online course probably was being used to collect data so officials could understand who was out in the field.

Chair Robinson said the elk season was still ongoing during the timeframe of the closure which he found troubling. Member Pitts said he was supportive of the proposal because it allowed for a better tracking of who was out in the field during the given times, especially in eastern Nevada where it gets chaotic. Member Malarkey said he was also in support because the demerits system does not require loss of license in the first offense, but if you violate it again then you will receive a larger punishment.

Chair Robinson asked if there was public comment. Ash Caselli said he was not in support because it appeared this only affected Nevadans. He also said he would be curious about what additional information the online class would provide that would be more than the basic hunter safety classes that are already offered. Rex Flowers said he felt the regulation still needs a lot of work. He said that he hopes the board votes against the proposed regulation because there was so much uncertainty in the proposed language. He said he also did not like that people can only take the class in a limited time because people don't know when they will be going fishing in Elko County. He wondered why the class wasn't offered in a larger window. He also noted the demerit system was too strong and it did not align with other demerit systems such as poaching crayfish.

Member Malarkey noted that the regulation said "any person" so by his reading the regulation would be for all individuals and not just Nevadans. Ms. Knight agreed with Member Malarkey's interpretation. Member Pitts said they had looked at other punishments, but the demerit system was what they could implement considering state law. Chair Robinson said that while he supportive the closures in the counties, he did not understand the logic of the proposal as written. He said the nine demerits for picking up a shed antler was too steep and should be reconsidered. He said he wished the Department would address the buying and selling of the antlers which is where the real problems exist.

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Member Pitts moved to deny Commission General Regulation 489, NAC 503.172, Shed Antler Season, R082-19. Member Pitts seconded. The motion carried 4-1 with Member Malarkey voting nay.

10. Commission General Regulation 499, Bonus Point Only Application Period –[For Possible Action]

Chair Robinson opened discussion to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify draft language amending NAC 502 chapters that would decouple the hunt application periods from the 7-day bonus point only application period and create a separate period for bonus point only purchases that would facilitate a more timely draw process and provide increased opportunity for bonus point purchase. The change also defines what “awarded” means to a successful draw applicant.

Chair Robinson asked the Department for comment on the proposed regulation. John Ewanyk said that during the time of the draw it is a lot of work for employees and by separating the bonus point only would help manage the workload. Member Malarkey asked how many only bonus point applications are handled each year. Mr. Ewanyk said it is quite a few but he did not have the exact numbers. Member Malarkey added that it made sense to separate the bonus point only applicants and would help other people.

During public comment, Rex Flowers said he had spoken to individuals regarding the proposed item and explained how he interpreted the proposed regulation. He said the reasons these changes were being made were to allow the main draw to be addressed first and then the bonus points would be considered separately. He said he hoped the board would support the proposal. Ryan Browne said he was against the proposal because he thought the current Nevada system worked well and was the best of all of the states. Ash Caselli commented that he had heard there may be manipulation of the system and he was curious if changing the bonus point system may allow for more manipulation.

Chair Robinson asked if there was further discussion from the board and Member Pitts noted that he did not see a way for further manipulation if the changes were approved.

Chair Robinson moved to approve Commission General Regulation 499, Bonus Point Only Application Period as writted. Member Pitts seconded.

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The motion carried unanimously.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS –[Non-Action item]

Rex Flowers congratulated the new members on their appointments and thanked them for their service on the board.

12. ADJOURNMENT [Non-action item]

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.

Danny Peltier

To: Danny
Subject: Request _ CONTACT NBWC COMMISSION MEMBERS

From: Judi Caron [<mailto:c243270j@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2021 2:48 PM
To: genegreen647@gmail.com; pegghughes50@yahoo.com; Paul Dixon <noxid1960@gmail.com>; burnside@charter.net; jcooney4@gmail.com; basinrange@att.net; basinrange@att.net; torgyman@hotmail.com; clytle@lincolnnv.com; rjacobson@lyoncsd.org; bunch.g.m.47@gmail.com; popechrissy@hotmail.com; joewwtp@sbcglobal.net; Steve <steve@nevadaperio.com>; mitchmccivars@gmail.com
Cc: Judi Caron <c243270j@gmail.com>
Subject: Request _ CONTACT NBWC COMMISSION MEMBERS

County Advisory Board (CAB) Chairmen, Board members and public,

Hello, my name is Judi Caron, I write to you today as a member of the Coalition for Healthy Nevada Lands Wildlife and Free- Roaming Horses and Burros (CHNL).

Many of your upcoming CAB meetings along with Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners meeting of Aug 24, 2021 will have the opportunity to address and voice recommendations in respect to our request for signees supporting CHNL letter to Department of Interior Secretary Haaland. For convenience a copy is attached here along with our Cover Letter that gives background of the CHNL formation.

Agenda Item# 10 Coalition for Healthy Lands Letter – Chairwoman East – For Possible Action ,

The Coalition for Healthy Nevada Lands has asked the Commission to sign on to the US Department of the Interior Secretary, Debra Haaland. The Commission may discuss and vote to take relevant action.

The intent of our letter to Secretary Haaland, is to impress upon her the severity of the situation, particularly here in NV and to demonstrate the broad diverse support for swift action to be taken to reduce populations to sustainable levels, as land health diminishes daily.

While some CAB'S might not be meeting or this particular item is not on your CAB Agenda's, your personal voice and point of view would be greatly appreciated of our ask of you, in contacting the members of the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners via phone, text, zoom meeting and or letters, please.

Sample recommendations: **a)** support letter as a signee **b)** request NBWC send Commissioners letter to Secretary Haaland and **c)** recommend both options **a)** and **b)**

Links to contacting NBWC:

written comments: wildlifecommission@ndow.org

zoom meeting: *If you wish to make public comment, please use this link for Friday, September 24, 2021.* <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83218371595?pwd=b0V2RklyTHgwKzJHbDExcE9iRTlrQT09>

phone and email: noted below

Thank you and please do feel free to call if you have questions.

Thank you all for your passion, time and involvement for Nevada's Natural Resources and all that cherish and depend on Healthy Lands.

Respectfully,

Judi Caron,

(775) 772-6028

Coalition for Healthy NV Lands

Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife

Past member and Chair Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife

Board of Wildlife Commissioners

NAME	LOCATION	CONTACT INFO
TIFFANY EAST Chair *Sportsmen (2023)	Reno	(775) 250-8092 tiffany@tiffanyeastpr.com
TOMMY CAVIGLIA Vice Chair *Sportsmen (2024)	Henderson	(702) 289-3375 tccaviglia1980@gmail.com
TOM BARNES *Ranching (2022)	Elko	(775) 744-4548 barnestk5@outlook.com
JON ALMBERG *Sportsmen (2022)	Ely	(775) 296-0706 alMBERGNV@gmail.com
SHANE ROGERS *Sportsmen (2023)	Las Vegas	(702) 245-5900 shanerogers9@yahoo.com
ALANA WISE *General Public (2024)	Henderson	(702) 213-0203 awise.nv@gmail.com
CASEY D. KIEL *Farming (2024)	Lovelock	(775) 560-5161 ckiel@coeur.com
DAVID MCNINCH *Conservation (2022)	Reno	(775) 747-7545 davidmcninch@att.net
RON PIERINI *Sportsmen (2023)	Minden	(775) 721-3346 pieriniron@gmail.com



To whom it may concern,

The Coalition for Healthy Nevada Lands, Wildlife and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros is writing to you, today, to ask for your signature to our attached letter to U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Haaland. Some current signers include:

- Nevada Wildlife Federation
- NBU Fallon and Reno Chapters
- Trout Unlimited
- Friends of Nevada Wilderness
- BHA Utah, Nevada, Arizona, Idaho, Colorado, Oregon, California, and Montana chapters
- Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife
- Nevada Chapter of the Wildlife Society
- Nevada Waterfowl Association (NWA)
- Sagebrush Ecosystem Council

Our organization has been the forerunner in Nevada working toward reduction of the overpopulation of horses and burros and the resulting destruction to habitat, wildlife and the horses and burros themselves. As background, our group came together in 2018 to educate the public on the issue by hosting a viewing of [Horse Rich & Dirt Poor](#) followed by a robust panel discussion. After this event, we decided to formalize as a coalition. These are our coalition members:

- Rebekah Stetson, President, Nevada Wildlife Federation, Ecosystem Health Consultant
- Willie Molini, Former Director Nevada Department of Wildlife, Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Council
- Mike Cox, Wildlife Staff Biologist, Nevada Department of Wildlife
- Keely Hopkins, Pacific States Assistant Manager, Congressional Sportsmen Foundation
- Karen Boeger, Founding Board Member, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, Director, Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife, Board Member, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
- James Sedinger, Foundation Professor of Wildlife Ecology, Emeritus
- Tina Nappe, Former Conservation member Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners
- Pat Bruce, Stewardship Program Director, Friends of Nevada Wilderness
- Judi Caron, Director, Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife
- David Ricker, Policy Chair, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, NV Chapter
- Sherm Swanson, Coordinator, Nevada Creeks and Communities Team, Rangeland & Riparian Ecology & Management Professor Emeritus, UNR: AVRS & UNCE, Member, Sagebrush Ecosystem Council

As listed above, we are a diverse group of committed and long-tenured conservationists and wildlife and range management professionals whose passion and mission is to ensure that Nevada's public lands are managed to sustain the critical ecological functions which they provide, including wildlife habitat water resources, carbon sequestration and forage resources for free roaming horses and burros and livestock. We have continued on that path of advocacy and education and most recently have crafted this letter to call upon larger action. Horses, the land and wildlife are suffering at alarming rates due to the drought.

We are asking all organizations and any key individuals to sign on in support of this letter.

Please email Rebekah at healthynevadalands@gmail.com with your agreement to sign on, the name of your organization and any key individuals who would like to sign on. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or comments.

Rebekah Stetson
Chairwoman, Coalition for Healthy Nevada Lands, Wildlife and Free Roaming Horses
775-342-7675

September 24, 2021

The Honorable Debra Haaland
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW MS 5311
Washington, DC 20240



Dear Secretary Haaland:

Congratulations on your new post as Secretary of the Interior. We are a broad coalition from Nevada that cares deeply about the welfare of our public lands, and have considerable long-term experience in working to conserve, protect and enhance these lands. This letter is to alert you to the urgent situation of increasing numbers of wild horses and burros on public lands. We would like to work with you to tackle the difficult task of bringing swift and effective management to the BLM Wild Horse Program. While we recognize this to be an issue of western public lands, Nevada is especially impacted as the driest state in the nation and is currently experiencing a severe drought. Nevada is home to over 50% of the nation's wild horses with approximately 45,000 horses on Bureau of Land Management lands in 2021. This is nearly four times the number of horses and burros that Nevada's lands can support and sustain. We urgently ask for your assistance in lowering their population in Nevada to protect the health of the land, the water, the wildlife and the horses and burros themselves.

Today, the excessive numbers of wild horses and burros on Nevada rangelands are degrading the health of our ecosystems, and putting many species of our native wildlife at risk. The Wild and Free-roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 stipulates that wild horses and burros shall be managed to achieve and maintain a "thriving natural ecological balance" on public lands, and the Act, with amendments, makes provisions to accomplish this end. In concert with the Act, the Bureau of Land Management has determined that, for the designated BLM wild horse herd management areas in Nevada, the land can support up to 12,811 wild horses and burros without degrading the carrying capacity of the land. Populations at or below 12,811, the "appropriate management level (AML)" would maintain the mandated "thriving natural ecological balance and multiple use relationships."

It is not our intent to be critical of the BLM as we have worked with dedicated employees of the Bureau and we believe that they know what needs to be done to realistically achieve a sustainable wild and free-roaming horse and burro management program. We recognize that insufficient financial and political support from Congress have substantially hindered BLM's ability to effectuate a truly viable wild horse and burro management program. We have a sincere interest in continuing to work with BLM and others to secure the necessary financial and political support.

As you may know, a bellwether species of the sagebrush ecosystem is the Greater Sage-Grouse. Current estimates show that the species has declined by as much as 78% since 1960. The USGS and BLM along with many others have invested substantial time and effort in planning, research, and conservation of sage-grouse and their habitats. [Recent research \(Coates et al. 2021\) of the USGS](#) serves to confirm the importance of AML and suggests the current AML numbers are on average correct. They found that sage-grouse decline substantially when free-roaming horse populations are above AML. This is a threat that we can do something about by working together to better manage free-roaming horse numbers.

In May 2020 the BLM submitted its report to Congress as required by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019, titled "An Analysis of Achieving a Sustainable Wild Horse and Burro Program". While we

are in support of this plan and "The Path Forward" we feel that they do not rise to the urgency of the situation, especially in Nevada. We feel strongly and have peer reviewed scientific data to show that the 20 years necessary to achieve AML under both of the above plans is untenable and that rangeland damage over the course of 20 years will be catastrophic. Wild horses have demonstrated their habit of doubling their populations every four or five years so that any delay in assertive action will further damage habitats. Without swift action, by 2025 Nevada could host over 100,000 horses. Not only will wildlife suffer drastic declines, but the land resource will be so badly degraded that its ability to sustainably provide water, vegetation and wildlife resources may be altered to the extent that recovery potential will be lost.

We think there is a "Better Path Forward"; the immediate and consistent implementation of an aggressive program to place excess horses on private pastures. Achieving AML within the next six years would save taxpayers millions of dollars. Once AML is reached, fertility control and adoptions could permanently maintain populations at sustainable levels. Cost for such an aggressive removal program would be high during the initial several years; however, the long-term cost would be significantly reduced. We believe that action must be taken now to reduce wild horse and burro numbers to sustainable levels or the ecological services of our precious and fragile lands may be significantly diminished for generations to come.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of our concerns and our proposed action to address this urgent situation. Please see the attached resources for considerable scientific information and publications to support our concerns and our proposed remedy including the [Western Governors Association Policy Resolution 2021-05, Wild Horse and Burro Management](#), which addresses their concerns regarding the wild horse and burro issue.

We look forward to working with you and the Bureau of Land Management to ensure a healthy future for our public lands, and the wildlife, wild horses and burros that are dependent upon them.

It would be our honor to meet with you and/or your staff and welcome an opportunity to host a tour of Nevada landscape.

Sincerely,