



STATE OF NEVADA

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

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Kenneth E. Mayer
Director

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: Jan. 25, 2008

TO: Board of Wildlife Commissioners; Governor's Office; County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife Members; Department of Wildlife Employees; and Director Allen Biaggi

CC: Kristen Kolbe, and Eric King

FROM: Kenneth E. Mayer, Director

SUBJECT: Jan. 7, 2008, Leadership Team Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Director Ken Mayer, Deputy Director Doug Hunt, Management Analyst III Kim Jolly, Executive Assistant Suzanne Scourby, Game Division Chief Russ Mason, Chief of Habitat Dave Pulliam, Chief of Fisheries Rich Haskins, Chief of Conservation Kelly Clark, Chief of Law Enforcement Rob Buonamici, Chief of Operations Bob Haughian, Chief Fiscal Financial Services Officer Dave Prather, Chief of Wildlife Diversity Laura Richards.

Director's Office

Director Mayer attended the Jan. 2, 2008, Coalition of Nevada's Wildlife meeting in Reno. Director Mayer told the Leadership Team that they need to plan to attend Coalition meetings regularly to provide information and answer questions. The Coalition's meetings are always on the first Wednesday of each month. To be successful in building strong relationships Director Mayer and the Chief of Fisheries Rich Haskins attended the Colorado River Fish and Wildlife Council meeting in advance of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) mid-winter meeting which was attended by Game Division Chief Russ Mason and Commissioner David McNinch.

Director Duane Shroufe announced his retirement from Arizona Fish and Game Department after 20 years as director. His departure from WAFWA will create a big

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leadership gap. As a result of his retirement and other director changes, Director Mayer was asked to serve as the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) representative on the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Executive Committee. In addition, he has been appointed to the WAFWA Audit Committee and also currently chairs the WAFWA Bird Committee that is focusing on sage grouse. While it is important for Nevada to be a recognized leader in the Western, Director Mayer has also informed the Association that he needs to spend most of his energies on NDOW, and thus cannot take on any additional committee assignments. He said the WAFWA mid-winter meeting was very good, and he appreciated all of the Division Chiefs assistance with completing assignments. Director Mayer said all the western states are hurting financially and the cost of gas has been especially hard on state agency budgets. He said most states are implementing policies to reduce mileage costs. Director Mayer asked the Leadership Team to put on their thinking caps and propose some cost-saving measures too as costs are a serious issue for NDOW. Deputy Director Hunt said we could see savings if we switched from 4 x 4's in some cases and he is concerned that we have become accustomed to being independent with our vehicles. Director Mayer said he will brainstorm ideas to reduce our expenses and will consider appointing a team to look into reducing expenses. Currently mileage, utilities and the Wildlife Commission, are the agency's biggest single expenses.

Urban Fishing has been one success story for many states. Thus, we need to brainstorm ideas to increase our urban fishing opportunities. Chief of Fisheries Rich Haskins said in Southern Nevada the urban ponds have some of the highest angler use days in the state, and they are stocked with trout in winter and catfish in summer. Mr. Haskins noted that they are expensive programs as far as fish costs but gets people hooked on fishing for urban populations. Chief of Wildlife Diversity Laura Richards said Fuji Park's urban pond in Carson City should come online this summer. Director Mayer said he would like to look in the future for establishing a statewide urban fisheries coordinator whom would look at getting grant money from the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation or the National Shooting Sports Foundation for hunter recreational efforts.

Director Mayer said recently a National Park Service's biologist died of plague he contracted while performing a necropsy on a mountain lion. Director Mayer said all Department personnel need to all be cognizant of our policies and procedures to be safe. Our existing Policy and Procedures needs to be sent to all field staff as a reminder of the protocols that need to be followed.

Director Mayer said the Management Assistance Team, Leadership Training nomination will be out soon. Therefore, we need to budget for one of our staff to attend.

Director Mayer said at WAFWA the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) director delineated six strategic priorities for the remainder of his tenure: 1) Energy development on public lands, 2) completing the land use plans, 3) focus more on natural landscape conservation system, 4) Healthy land initiative is going through reorganization again to a three tier system, 5) sage grouse, 6) pre-evaluate mitigation policies. In addition he said that travel management exceptions for retrieval of big game can be made at the state district level.

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Deputy Director Hunt said he was invited to speak at the NDOW retiree luncheon in Reno. There were about 34 retirees present. He said the number one recommendation was to use caution in establishment of a bear hunt.

The Department's Lands Committee will be moved to later this month; Board of Wildlife Commissioners agenda day is from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 17, 2008, and if you are not here to send someone in your stead if you have agenda items for that meeting; CCP meeting on Jan. 23, 2008, was postponed; and Interim Finance Committee is Jan. 24, 2008 and Dave Prather will check what items the Department has.

Deputy Director Hunt said four requests to fill are being held, but he will sign-off on them with a hire date of April 1, 2008. Director Mayer requested that a monthly personnel vacancy report be provided to the Leadership Team, and we need to schedule the data storage meeting for later this month, and we need data guides.

Deputy Director Hunt and Chief Game Warden Rob Buonamici have discussed finalizing procedures for petitions and appeals. He said Leadership Team meeting tentatively scheduled for the end of January in Southern Nevada with Arizona Fish and Game has been postponed, and a date will be looked at later.

The Fiscal Analysis Team (FAT) met last week and looked at budget and strategies to optimize cash flow, and brought over \$800,000 into 4456. The team said we need to save every dollar we can and will go back to IFC in March with mileage, Commission, and utilities to augment budget and that we don't plan on purchasing vehicles until spring. Need to save \$400,000 between now and the end of March.

Agenda items for February Commission meeting are due with the draft agenda being mailed this Friday, which is four weeks until the February Commission meeting. The agenda day meeting is next Thursday, Jan. 17, 2008, to review presentations and support material, travel.

The Wild Horse Commission meeting is Friday in Carson City and Director Mayer and Chief of Habitat Dave Pulliam plan to attend.

Working on a Manual for County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife members, goal is to have it ready for Orientation Committee to review and adopt before the March CABMW workshop.

Also working on a Climate Change "White Paper" that identifies how Nevada is affected, and how Nevada could benefit from funding should America's Climate Security Act pass. This would become our issue sheet to inform our Congressional Delegation.

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Focusing on revision of the following Department policies and procedures: equipment use, duty station/moving, prescription drug, ADA policy (titles 2 and 3), and public and confidential records policy.

Beginning the back up for a budget request for Low Cost License Reimbursement as NDOW has typically asked for in past years.

The NBWC Legislative Committee will meet Jan 15, 10am in Director's office and by conference call, to further discuss the Committee Charter.

Upcoming plans for this week: Director Mayer plans to attend the antelope capture this week which is a great opportunity for volunteers and interested persons to get directly involved in what we do; Dave Pulliam and Director Mayer need to work together this week on proposal for Sagebrush Initiative Director's Council goals and objectives for cooperating agencies on sagebrush restoration; he will attend the chukar dinner in Winnemucca on Saturday. If all goes well the delisting of wolves expected to happen March 28, 2008. NDOW will be working on its response to the delisting once it happens.

Conservation Education

The volunteer coordinator was activated as part of the state's Joint Information Center over the weekend due to the flooding in Fernley.

A mountain lion was killed Jan. 2 in Las Vegas. Wardens and metropolitan police did a house to house search. The young female mountain lion was taken with a dart, later euthanized in line with the agency's Human Wildlife Conflict policy. Staff handled interviews with all three television stations and print media, as well as calls and complaints from the public about euthanizing the mountain lion.

Watchable Wildlife in Nevada Magazine - Staff have worked to get the photos collected, and identify where the species could be viewed in the state. We are hopeful this will become a regular page in the magazine.

Staff has sent an email with a list of special opportunities for hunter recruitment to the director.

Staff is scaling back printing on a number of regulation brochures and this year the Application Hunt Brochure will not be mailed, instead a post card will be sent to all applicants who applied online last year which will reduce printing by 44,000 copies. Staff also expect to reduce printing of the fishing regulations by about 15,000 copies. Fishing Regulations are now at printer.

Staff will be participate on a Reno television program, Lawyers Guns and Money, with the state budget cuts being discussed.

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The sportsmen's calendar is now posted online at www.ndow.org, and groups can email NDOW webmaster Aaron Meier at ameier@ndow.org to post events and meetings to the calendar.

Fisheries Division

No report submitted.

Game Division

Division personnel have received word that the Humane Society of the United States has retained a private investigator to report on trapping in the Lake Meade National Recreation Area. According to conversations with the investigator, the primary focus is on bobcat trapping.

Division personnel have completed post-season helicopter deer and pronghorn surveys. In Area 10, 7,760 deer were classified with ratios of 30 bucks/100 does/48 fawns. This is the largest fall sample on record.

Division personnel have attached 18 radio collars to mule deer in Units 061 and 071 to assess extent of migration into Idaho along the Bruneau River, Sheep Creek and Owyhee River, evaluate how the massive Murphy Fire and other wildfires affect deer wintering and migration in NV and Idaho, assess deer use of seeding projects that have been put in over the past 15 years, assess how deer move through active mining lands, and obtain deer blood samples for long-term health assessment of NV's deer resource.

Division personnel attended the Elko County Wildlife Advisory Board Meeting. Of special interest is a push by sportsmen to consider amending the Wells or Eastern Elko County Elk Management Plan. Recent vegetation monitoring work paid for with sportsmen's dollars and recent wildfires are providing support for a potential elk increase in the area.

Habitat Division

Jay Wolf accepted the water development position in Las Vegas and will begin work Jan. 14.

Staff attended state mining biologist meeting in Las Vegas.

A bid has been accepted from Kenworth for water development transport truck and will come in under proposal.

Mike Zahradka has been selected as manager of the Steptoe Valley Wildlife Management Area.

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Restoration of wildfire areas is underway. Cooperation with Ely, Battle Mountain, Elko and Winnemucca BLM Districts in implementing rehab has been going very well. Nearly \$1,000,000 has been expended on seed and application to date. Funding sources include Heritage; Conservation fee; Landowner Incentive Program; Q1; Mining Assessment fees; and wildfire restoration donations. Restoration efforts include: 30,000 acres on Murphy fire in North Elko County (46,000 lbs. sagebrush, grass and forb seed); 3,000 acres of seed and aerial application on an Ely BLM chaining project; Argenta Rim area 900 acres watershed mix; West Fork fire in eastern Elko County (1000 acres watershed mix and 3000 acres sagebrush, grasses and forbs); 8,000 acres sagebrush in the Shoshone range; 15,000 acres sagebrush, grass and forbs in Humboldt County fires; and several other small fires in important sage grouse and mule deer habitats are also being seeded.

Twenty-five hundred pounds of sagebrush seed (Pure Live Seed) have been donated by Native Seed Company of Utah. This seed will be applied to lower elevation efforts in critical mule deer winter habitat that was treated last year but did not receive significant moisture in an attempt to enhance successful restoration.

Habitat Division has received the project design and cost estimates from Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) for project work on the Overton WMA to facilitate more effective and efficient water use on the management area. The Division is now preparing a proposal for SNWA to fund securing 2000 acre feet of water right, implement appropriate water facilities, purchase additional water rights and possibly a piece of adjacent property. The project is a partnership to enhance the WMA and for SNWA to pass through the area their Muddy River Water rights to Lake Mead.

Law Enforcement

Eastern Region staff is working on multiple trapping cases involving bait. Citations were issued. Several guide cases are being investigated. A residency case involving big game is being investigated. Game wardens assisted Idaho on a varmint hunt out of Twin Falls, Idaho, sponsored by Sportsman Warehouse. Wardens are working on taxidermists' license renewals. An antelope poached off I-80, left behind hide and guts, investigation pending. Bones from a cow elk located in Warm Springs near Bruno Canyon, game warden made contact with a hunter in the area, resulted in citation issued for spotlighting and loaded guns in a vehicle.

A game warden gave a presentation to a Department Public Safety Academy class on wildlife and boating safety laws.

Game wardens located two unlawfully killed cow elk in Area 22 and 23. The investigations are ongoing into the wanton waste cases.

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Game wardens investigated a possible poached mule deer buck near Stampede Gap. A continuing investigation is underway to determine the circumstances surrounding the death of the animal.

Wardens have seen a marked increase in trapping activity. An increase in trap vandalism has been reported along with traps being stolen.

Urban bobcat calls are ongoing and game wardens in the Southern Region continue to respond to a high number of calls in the Las Vegas area.

Southern Region wardens participated in the annual Shop-With- A- Cop, for local children in the Laughlin Area.

Southern Region wardens are continuing investigations into residency fraud cases involving Utah residents in connection with Southern Nevada.

Wardens in the Las Vegas area responded to a mountain lion call in a residential area of North Las Vegas. The lion was later captured and euthanized. National and widespread local media attention resulted from the capture attempts and later euthanasia of the animal. Opinion was mixed and a high volume of calls resulted from the event.

Angler activity increased at the Urban Pond areas in the Southern Region. Angler activity on Lake Mead and Lake Mohave showed a significant increase over the last month. Compliance was high with some citations issued Fishing No License.

Overton Wildlife Management Area has seen high usage from hunters and significant increase in birds. Wardens patrolling the area have written an increased number of over limit citations, along with other miscellaneous citations.

Southern Region wardens have seen an increase in trapping activity along with the recent snow fall in the central part of the State.

Wardens investigated a Utah resident for several felony and gross misdemeanor violations concerning illegal take of a big game animal. The investigation is ongoing.

Urban Wildlife call in the Southern Region near Searchlight, Nevada, a man killed a bobcat with a tire iron after it scared him by entering his garage while he was grilling on a BBQ. The man fell during the incident and went to the hospital with minor injuries due to the fall. The cat is being tested for rabies per a request by Clark County Animal Control.

Game wardens this past weekend worked a predator hunt in Lincoln County. A number of contacts were made during the weekend. Several licensing issues arose but no citations were issued.

Two hundred and twenty applications were received for three vacant game warden positions and at this stage of the process we have two viable applicants.

Operations Division

No report submitted

Wildlife Diversity

Staff worked on short horned lizard contract with UNLV and participated in a Southwest PARC, (Partners for Amphibian and Reptiles Conservation) conference call. A newly developed venomous reptile brochure is being distributed to several agencies.

Southern Region staff commented on numerous habitat issues including the Coyote Springs Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), the Toquop Energy Plant EIS, the Virgin River HCP and the West Wide Energy Plan.

Staff attended the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Desert Complex, Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) meeting and provided further inputs relative to integration of Nevada's Wildlife Action plan into the CCP. Reno staff will help with integrating those inputs.

Staff provided comments to the most recent Table Mountain wind energy wildlife monitoring and mitigation plan and participated in a December conference call with the project proponent. This has been a long process and involves quite a bit of coordination and communication exchange to try and get the best monitoring and mitigation product for wildlife.

Staff attended the December Biological Work Group meeting for the Spring Valley Implementation Agreement related to water withdrawals by Southern Nevada Water Authority. A long-term monitoring plan is being developed for a dozen or so springs to monitor and assess impacts from water withdrawals. Our agency continues to offer comments related to the best science.

Staff attended a Nevada Bat Working Group meeting in December. Coordination between the Bureau of Land Management and the Nevada Division of Minerals has improved greatly. Work continues on coordinating data, survey needs and prioritizations.

Staff assisted Game Division with the Southern Region sheep capture and checked in and sealed numerous bighorn sheep and a mountain lion.

Staff met with Robin Powell, Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA) Coordinator for Nevada to discuss how to link the Wildlife Action Plan and the IBA program more effectively with some on the ground projects and planning efforts in southern Nevada.

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Staff attended a spotted frog meeting in Reno in late November. December was occupied with trapping pocket gophers in Little Fish Lake Valley and data analysis.

Staff are preparing year-end job progress reports and data assimilation as well as preparing for winter raptor counts in January. Staff has coordinated comments on Scientific Collection and Special Use Permits. Staff will attend a Wildlife Diversity program meeting the end of January in Tonopah.

Within the Lake Tahoe Basin, work continues on the winter furbearer project including snowshoeing into possible snowshoe hare sites, and the set-up of four backcountry camera units. Snowshoe hare cameras will be set-up in late January. Staff also burned 62 slash piles within several treatment locations on four projects in the Tahoe Basin.

Eastern Region staff assisted with wildfire rehabilitation efforts in the Tuscarora, White Rock, Cedar Mountain, Gollaher, Jarbidge, Independence and Bruneau River areas.

Eastern Region personnel responded to over 20 wildlife callouts including several for injured golden eagles, rough-legged hawks, bats and American badgers.