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Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

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Kenneth E. Mayer
Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 14, 2008

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

FROM: Kenneth E. Mayer, Director

SUBJECT: Department Activities Report

Director's Office

Director Mayer said all future leadership team meetings will start at 1:30 p.m. from this date forward.

Director Mayer said the consistency of the Department's correspondence needs to be maintained throughout the Department, and he provided an example where a staff coordinator composed their own letter and then brought the letter to the Director's office for his signature, without going through their clerical, and the format is wrong. As follow-up, Executive Assistant Suzanne Scourby will provide a template on the intranet site, and he reminded the group that all Commission and County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife correspondence needs to be copied to the Director's office.

Director Mayer met with Department of Transportation Susan Martinovich regarding public works board and the Attorney General has issued two conflicting opinions. The civil deputy attorney general was there and they will work together to resolve the conflict and public works board will be directed to put off any action until this is resolved.

Director Mayer provided Assemblyman Claborn's letter which was a response to Chairman Bentley who had responded to an earlier letter (Laughlin), and assigned Game Division Russ Mason to help draft a response in conjunction with Chairman Bentley.

Director Mayer reported that we had a good meeting with new acting director of Natural Resources Conservation Service Curtis Tarver and that he is high energy and many good ideas were shared. Director Mayer said he told them that Nevada is the only state in the country without cost shared positions and we hope to get somewhere with this new director. They have \$5 million and now have \$100,000 for WHIP.

The Board of Examiners meeting is tomorrow with Deputy Director Doug Hunt and Chief of Fisheries Rich Haskins attending.

Director Mayer attended a Homeland Security meeting on March 13 and the local chapter of Safari Club International's banquet March 14.

Director Mayer said the 2FG helicopter is broken and Air Operations now only has one helicopter and the fixed wing needs its engine replaced, and there is only \$20,000 left in the Heritage fund and hope we would have savings to put in the Cessna. A special Heritage Committee meeting will be held to discuss funding of the repairs so that spring survey flights can occur as scheduled. Director Mayer said he needs two things by tomorrow: A Heritage project proposal for the engine, and to schedule a conference call for Heritage Committee meeting via teleconference prior to the Commission meeting.

Budget Analyst Kristen Kolbe would like to tour NDOW Fallon, Elko, and Winnemucca offices on April 14 and 15, 2008, and also needs to see Ely at some point.

Director Mayer said Judge Winmill decided that stipulated agreement for sage grouse will hold, so decision will not be made under this administration. San sent estimate for western US is \$288,000 which will be sent by Director Mayer as chair of the WAFWA Bird Committee to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and we requested \$40,000 and have a back-up with Nevada Mining Association.

An email from Nevada Woman in Mining was received requesting that Chief of Habitat Dave Pulliam attend a "Women in Mining" event on March 29, 2008, in Winnemucca.

Deputy Director Hunt will be sending out a memo on indirect costs, and Sherry Fenison asked that on grant amendments, instead of saying percentage, you say "negotiated rate as of today's date," and will save time later on having to amend grants. She also asked to remind everyone that no coding of travel or salary to the Commission or the Heritage.

The Fiscal Analysis Team (FAT) will meet March 12 and the Lands Committee on March 14, 2008. The next FAT Team is scheduled for March 26, 2008.

Director Mayer attended the Reno Boat and Home Garden Show, and was told by staff that they could have sold many more licenses if they could take credit cards and ATM cards.

NDOW has received notification by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that each state wildlife agency will receive a technical review or desk audit, of civil rights compliance such as anti-discrimination and environmental justice among our programs, practices, marketing, and procedures for volunteers, advisory boards, and license sales. Ms. Jolly will head up the preparation and coordination for this Federal review.

Leading up the Bill Draft Request ideas to be sponsored by NDOW which must be proposed to the Governor by April 3, NDOW has approximately 12 ideas for new appropriations and/or statute changes, and three to be sponsored by other organizations or legislators. Some notable NDOW sponsored ideas include nuisance bear program funding, Greater sage grouse and wildlife corridor mitigation by energy developers, and strengthening the wildlife laws in Nevada to resemble other members of the Wildlife Violator's Interstate Compact.

Credit card acceptance meeting with Department of Administration Staff – no credit card fees (also known as merchant fees) can be charged for face-to-face transactions per the merchant agreements that all must accept, which were prepared by the credit card associations. A larger "credit card team" will be collecting data from our license offices across the state, requesting collecting Best Practices input from other states via the USFWS California Federal Office's ability to survey, and getting quotes from various processing agents on equipment, software, etc.

Completed updates to the following policies and procedures, awaiting Director's signature: Prescription Drug Policy (replacing Chemical Restraint of Wildlife Policy), Public Records policy (replacing all related policies on public records requests), and Moving and Interview Expense Policy (replacing Duty Station and Moving policy). All of these policy updates were based on NRS changes, SAM changes, and/or federal requirements.

Conservation Education

Conservation Education held its monthly Division coordination meeting/conference call March 4, 2008.

Acting Publication Coordinator completed and emailed the February Wildside Employee Newsletter.

Staff, with help from the GIS shop and regional fisheries staff, completed the update to the "Fishing in Nevada" pamphlet which features Western Region urban fisheries and upcoming fishing clinics distributed at the Reno Boat Show.

The website coordinator completed daily revisions and uploads to the website, including big game harvest data, updated map section and a redesigned photo memories page. Website statistics for the month of February: 97,294 visitors (3,354 per day). The top five pages in order of visitation: Hunts; Hunt Applications; Fish; Fishing Reports; and Harvest Statistics & Draw Odds.

Staff met to discuss completion of Wildlife Management Area brochures.

Staff distributed Free Fishing Day Poster Contest flyers to an expanded list of schools this year statewide. The Southern Region angler educator posted the contest information to the Clark County School District intranet for teachers, so we anticipate better exposure to Free Fishing Day and the contest this year.

Print media exposure for calendar year 2007 was quantified in terms of advertising equivalency (the value if the exposure were paid advertising) and lineage (the number of newspaper column inches run) as follows: Value from NDOW media releases

\$313,525.00, value from NDOW-related stories \$408,960.00; total value of print exposure \$722,485; total newspaper lineage 18,842". Nuisance species topped the list in terms of lineage with 3,607 column inches devoted to bears and 672 inches to quagga mussels. (Coverage of Nevada bears spanned the west from the Los Angeles Times to the Kodiak Daily Mirror.) NDOW's fishing reports resulted in 564 inches of newspaper column space, and the spring announcement of big game seasons resulted in 331 inches. Rounding out the top five is a story on a Utah man sentenced for unlawful trapping and transport at 234 inches.

The Outdoor Educator Coordinator (OEC) completed three press releases for statewide release; completed budget and revised MOU for Archery Trade Association; and completed NBWC commendation letters for Commission mail out.

Volunteer Coordinator conducted sage-grouse lek survey training for volunteers near Wellington. Birds were scarce, but more than 40 volunteers showed up at 5 a.m. to receive training on lek counts.

Game Division

The regularly scheduled Game Division southern region coordination meeting was held March 6 in Las Vegas. In addition to Southern Region staff, supervising biologists from the Western and Eastern Region, and the big game staff specialist, participated. A host of topics were discussed, including mule deer prescriptions, the status of the aerial program, big game status reports, the new firearms policy, policies concerning the release of big game GIS maps (to whom, under what conditions, when), and compensation tag concerns. The next regional meeting will be with the western region staff and occur in Reno on March 12.

The Game Division has scheduled regional quota meetings for the week of April 7. The Western Region meeting will be held in Reno on April 7, the Southern Region meeting will be held in Las Vegas on April 9, and the Eastern Region meeting will be held in Elko on April 11. Also that week, the interstate deer herd management meeting (between NDOW and the California Department of Fish and Game) will be held on April 10. The statewide Game Division quota setting meeting will be held April 16-17 in Reno.

Game and Habitat Division personnel attended the March meeting of the Nevada Wildlife Coalition on March 5. Revision of the Wells Elk Sub-Plan was presented by revision proponents from Elko County, along with the recommendation that the Sub-Plan revision be tabled rather than pursued at the present time.

The Division has finalized a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on Wildlife-Livestock Disease Risks with the Department of Agriculture and the University of Nevada, Reno College of Agriculture. Points of contact on the MOA are Russ Mason and Mark Atkinson (Department of Wildlife), Phil LaRussa and Anette Rink (Department of Agriculture), David Thain and Mike Teglas (University of Nevada). Signatories are Kenneth Mayer (Department of Wildlife), Anthony Lesperance (Department of Agriculture), and David Thawley (University of Nevada). The Nevada Woolgrowers' Association agrees with and supports the MOA.

Helicopter NGF2 experienced an engine failure and was forced to land during a survey flight in Elko County. The Division is revising big game spring survey flights to

emphasize Elko and White Pine Counties. It is unlikely that surveys will be flown in southern and western Nevada in time for quota setting because of overall scheduling delays caused by equipment maintenance concerns (January) and poor weather conditions (February).

Department of Wildlife employee Scott Roberts stationed in Winnemucca has been selected as the new deer and antelope compensation tag biologist starting April 1.

The retirement party for Larry Teske will be held at the Red Lion Inn in Elko on April 12 starting at 5:30 pm. and the recruitment for the Battle Mountain Game Division biologist position is now open.

Habitat Division

The Division continues negotiations with SNWA to secure 2043 acre feet of water rights, implement appropriate water facilities, purchase additional water rights and possibly a piece of adjacent property. The project is a partnership to enhance the Overton WMA and for SNWA to pass through the area their Muddy River Water rights to Lake Mead.

Division is continuing work on setting up a meeting of state and federal agency directors to discuss the Governor's "War on Cheatgrass" to establish partnerships and specific roles. A Nevada State Lands Q1 application is being developed to fund the planning portion of this effort.

Draft input has been developed and submitted to the Western Governor's Association's Land Use Working Group. The 19 Western Governors have asked that crucial habitat and wildlife movement corridors be mapped and that recommendations for actions by the Governors be prepared for protecting these areas. A second meeting will be held in Portland on March 19 and 20.

Discussions have been initiated to determine why BLM issued five geothermal leases, one drill permit and have a pending application for geothermal development within the boundary of the Carson Lake and Pasture that federal legislation passed in 1990 directed the area be transferred to the State to be managed for wildlife. The area was also designated as part of the "Western Hemispheric Shorebird Network". Geothermal development would be inconsistent with the designation and the congressional intent.

Habitat staff will be cooperating with the Bureau of Reclamation in the development of an EIS required for the transfer of Carson Lake and Pasture to the state.

Coordination with the Nevada Mining Association and representatives from Barrick-Goldstrike and Newmont mining companies resulted in a donation of \$40,000 to provide NDOW additional support for developing input for the US Fish and Wildlife Service pertaining to the status of Sage-grouse in Nevada. The information will be used in USFWS's analysis of the status of sage-grouse range-wide with regard to listing or not listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Habitat personnel attended a briefing on development of county land bills for Carson City, Lyon, Mineral, and Esmeralda Counties. Staff from Senator Reid's, Senator Ensign's and Representative Heller's offices presented the briefing.

Law Enforcement

The Law Enforcement In-Service training will be held in the Southern Region from March 10 through March 13, 2008.

Bill Draft Requests for the Law Enforcement Division are being drafted to address primarily "clean up" language in current statute.

Bobcat and gray fox trapping season ended Feb. 29. The average paid for bobcats at the Nevada Trappers Association Fallon sale was \$485. This was the highest average in the thirty year history of the fur sale. The top price paid for one cat was \$1,069. Lack of access in January and Feb. due to drifting snow reduced trapper activity and the catch greatly in the Eastern Region.

Work continues on the mountain lion case in which a lion was shot while in a trap and the tag purchased after the fact. An extensive report was written and numerous interviews conducted. Meetings are scheduled with the District Attorney's Offices in Storey and Washoe Counties to discuss charges and prosecution.

Investigation into possession of a pickup deer head was concluded. A picture was circulated through e-mail of a man holding a dark horned 6 x 9 that he had found while snowmobiling in Elko County. Investigation identified the man and confirmed that the man and several friends had found the remains of the buck in January in Unit 061 while on a snowmobile outing. The cause of death was undetermined but appears to be natural.

Staff attended the 11th District Coast Guard Meeting in San Diego. The meeting dealt with issues affecting the States and the Coast Guard on the Colorado River; met with Riverside Resort personnel on the Laughlin access area. The negotiations are in regard to extending the lease agreement with the Riverside resort for maintenance and future development.

Game Wardens in the Southern and Eastern region conducted shed antler patrols in Lincoln County last weekend; however, the patrols were hampered by heavy snow but approximately 25 contacts were made with people hunting.

Operations Division

NDOW is supporting the lapsed angler research efforts of Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation and Southwick and Associates. To that end, our data entry of manual licenses is being augmented by the staff of Wildlife Administrative Services (WAS). It is routine at this time of year that we have a backlog of sold licenses to be entered, with WAS assistance, a backlog of received manual license remittance copies (received from license agents statewide) should be accomplished no later than March 14. As more licenses agents are online with NWDS, the fewer manual licenses our staff will be required to key.

The License office mailed Heritage and Landowner Damage Compensation packages this week. The Heritage vendor packages solicit vendors for 2009 tag auction, and the Landowner Damage Compensation packages include copies of the signed cooperative agreements and application for tags awarded to land owners.

Several programming changes have been initiated recently for both our Nevada Wildlife Data System (NWDS) and Application Hunt Systems (AHS) and the License staff is conducting testing of those changes now. NWDS changes include the addition of the new one-day fishing permit ("Take Me Fishing") and the addition of beneficiary information to boat titles. AHS changes include adding the capability to purchase game stamp privileges and Mt Lion tags via the draw process, and eligibility changes for the youth deer hunt. Also new this year will be the mailing of a post card announcement to those big game applicants who have applied online in the past.

The big game application period starts March 24 at 8 a.m. and runs through April 21 at 5 p.m.

The Human Resource (HR) staff attended training for the development of an Human Resources database.

Wildlife Diversity

Larry Neel, NDOW Wildlife Diversity staff specialist, was selected for the 2007 Partners in Flight award at the Fourth International Partners in Flight (PIF) Conference, February 13-16, 2008 in McAllen, Texas. The award recognizes exceptional contributions in protecting migratory and resident landbirds and their habitat. Neel has been a leader in PIF for almost 15 years. As a member of the Nevada Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV) steering committee he has contributed extensively to the IWJV plan that integrates recommendations from all bird initiatives. Larry also co-authored the Intermountain West Regional Shorebird Plan. He helped co-found the Great Basin Bird Observatory (GBBO), pushed for funding of the NV Breeding Bird Atlas, and promoted the new NV Statewide Breeding Bird Monitoring Project. Neel has chaired the Western Working Group (WWG) of PIF for the last four years, managing the often strong opinions and differing perspectives of representatives from 12 western states. Congratulations on a job well done, Larry! Thanks go to Rex Sallabanks of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for nominating Larry for this honor.

Nevada's Wildlife Action Plan also outlines the need to initiate projects incorporating locally raised sportsmen's conservation donations into restoration projects. Wildlife Diversity staff in the Winnemucca office have been working with the Nevada Chukar Foundation to fund the construction of a greenhouse for sagebrush and bitterbrush seedling propagation at the local high school. With the wildfires that have ravaged large tracks of sagebrush habitat this year in northern Nevada, establishing a local source of native plants to re-vegetate these areas is critical. Using State Wildlife Grants and other funding, the Wildlife Diversity Division is providing technical assistance and on-the-ground coordination of planting activities. Word of this project has spread fast and the number of high schools participating is growing. Continued investment of State Wildlife Grants will help restoration efforts and build an educational link.

Leadership Team Adjourned 3:15 p.m.