



Jim Gibbons
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

1100 Valley Road
Reno, Nevada 89512

(775) 688-1500 • Fax (775) 688-1207



Kenneth E. Mayer
Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 4, 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 attended the North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, last week. He said the value in his attendance and other leadership team members attending the conference is the opportunity to meet with the "who's who" in the conservation arena. Director Mayer said he is on the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Executive Committee and attended several meetings at the conference of that committee and the committee work is very useful to the agency. He said he was able to identify areas where money may be available for NDOW programs such as \$6 million available in State Wildlife Grants.

Director Mayer said climate change was discussed at the conference, while legislation has been drafted but will not be voted on this year because the presidential election. The CARA program looks like it will be around for one more year and may be dovetailed into climate change legislation in the future.

Director Mayer said an emergency sage grouse meeting of all directors was held on Tuesday at the North American to discuss where to discuss how to update the Conservation Assessment (CA). The current effort was being directed by the U.S. Geological Service and will be published as a monograph and not a WAFWA product. The timeframe for publication of the monograph does not meet the timeframe for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Therefore, the WAFWA directors voted to initiate their

own updated chapter 6 of the original CA. The WAFWA Technical Team will have until June 6 to complete the update and present to the directors by July as a final product.

Attended the March Commission meeting County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife workshop and both were productive meetings.

Conservation Education

The Big Game Tag Application brochure was received March 17 from Publications Printers. For the first time, the brochure was direct mailed to license agents. This year's advertising in the brochure totaled \$9,100.

Conservation Education supervisors and program leads met to discuss the FY 09 delegation and FY 10-11 budget requests.

The Conservation Education Chief assisted U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with final compilation of the Nevada native fish poster, which will be printed and distributed to 350 elementary schools statewide and made available to classrooms participating in the Trout in the Classroom program.

The Conservation Education chief made a presentation to the Ormsby Sportsman's Association in Carson City on March 19 and attended the Wildlife Management Institute's North American Wildlife conference.

Website Coordinator continued work on edits and layout of 2008 Hunt Book; worked with NDOW Kietzke office, JLH and SCI to straighten out shipping problems with the 2008 Big Game Tag Application Book; Website Coordinator working with DOIT to get subscription page up and running and to open a new listserv to handle our email invitations.

Staff worked on layout to develop Keep Me Wild web pages and materials.

The new FTP site is now up and running, please see the e-mail sent 3/14/08 by Aaron Meier for details on logging on. Please remember that it is for file transfers only and should not be used for file storage, DOIT will regularly purge all files from the new site.

Using emergency funds appropriated last fall, placed radio for bear awareness to educate the public in northwestern Nevada on bear awareness and removing attractants before problems occur. Two spots will run, in 80/20 proportion, on bear aware practices and on coyote/general urban wildlife awareness. The spots will air on seven stations of different formats, beginning April 7 and running through May 4. A minimum of 592 spots will air, estimated to reach 66% of persons 25-54 in the Reno area an average of 8 times. A less extensive schedule will run in late summer. Also in the process of producing collateral materials (brochures, fliers, etc.) for download. The spots reference the "Keep Me Wild" content area on NDOW.org, currently under

construction using materials borrowed from California Fish & Game. Lists of contacts at municipalities and homeowner's associations are in development.

Staff provided a budget for urban bear outreach to be used in the agency's BDR.

Staff participated in the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority's (RSCVA) Hunting and Fishing Events Committee. A hunting and fishing expo is under consideration as a winter (January-March) special event with the goal of generating room nights in the area. There are three other event ideas under consideration.

Staff has responded to media requests for information documenting the increasing price of hunting licenses, tags and application fees. One request came from a writer on assignment from Petersen's Hunting magazine.

Received notification from the National Shooting Sports Foundation of their award of a \$56,125 Hunting Heritage Partnership Grant and this grant is to pursue hunting recruitment and retention activities through March 13, 2009.

Outdoor Education Coordinator (OEC) made urban fishing/volunteer opportunities presentation to local seniors group; began 2008 Outdoor Education Academy agenda to be held in the Las Vegas area April 25 – 27.

Volunteer Coordinator meeting with volunteers and assigning leks on an ongoing basis, also traveled to Elko and met with regional personnel.

Fisheries Division

Lockes Ranch – it appears that after several months of delay, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is finally completing the biological opinion for the funded restoration work that we will be doing under contract. The difficulty now will be scheduling to complete the work this spring. The contractor is starting the planning for Little Warm Spring restoration at Duckwater so that may help as he will be in the area.

Amargosa toad – USFWS is reviewing the listing petition and has not issued a finding but likely response will be that the petition is accepted but that emergency listing is not warranted. This will trigger the 90-day review for a determination. Amargosa Toad Work Group meeting is in Beatty this week (4/2) and we will be discussing implications of the listing petition and need to update the conservation strategy with other agency partners. Local response has been muted so far. Coordination with Nye County is unclear since Dr. Jim Marble is no longer with the county.

Northern Leopard Frog (NLF) – Listing petition for NLF in the Western U.S. was originally submitted in 2006 and recently "amended" to request listing as "significant part of range" rather than Distinct Population Segment. Region 2 USFWS is the lead office, recommended to the regional director in February a finding that the petition provides "substantial information that listing under the act may be warranted". It's not clear that

USFWS has moved this forward; petition covers NLF distribution in 18 western states including NV.

Development of a management plan for the new Lake Mead Systems Conveyance and Operations Project (SCOP) pipeline is underway; we are participating in identification of guidance for water quality requirements and monitoring needs for sport and native fish.

Game Division

The Division is proceeding to hire a seasonal biologist to assist the upland game specialist in the development and implementation of upland game policies and guidance documents, and the collection and interpretation of sage grouse data in response to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requests pertinent to the ongoing review for the listing of this species.

The division is working with southern Nevada waterfowl hunters to assess whether the hunting opportunities provided by nuisance Canada geese translocated to the Overton Wildlife Management Area out-weigh the potential for increased damage caused by these birds on golf courses and other areas in proximate municipalities.

The division is preparing to interview candidates for the Battle Mountain wildlife biologist position opened by the retirement of Larry Teske. The division also is preparing to interview candidates for the term bighorn biologist in the southern regional office.

The Division Chief attended the 2008 North American Natural Resource and Conservation Conference in Phoenix, March 24 - 27. Among other benefits, the U.S. Geological Survey and USDA Wildlife Services have agreed to support an organizational meeting of agriculture and wildlife veterinarians from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada to initiate the Great Basin Wildlife Health Initiative. Also, he met with the Deputy Chief of the U.S. Forest Service for Wildlife to discuss issues hampering sage steppe restoration projects on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Elko County. In response to expressed concerns, the Chief Archeologist for the Forest Service met with Forest Service Region 4 archeologists to streamline and simplify clearance activities needed for habitat restoration activities. A follow-up conference call is scheduled among NDOW and Forest Service wildlife and archeological staff in Washington D.C., Ogden Utah, and Nevada.

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has recently developed a position statement on trapping that labeled the use of foot-hold traps as inhumane. This statement is problematic for wildlife veterinarians for several reasons. For that reason, the American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians has developed an alternative position statement and submitted it to the AVMA Animal Welfare Committee with the request that the AVMA revise the recently adopted policy. The AAWV statement indicates that the capture and handling of wildlife is necessary for wildlife conservation, research, disease surveillance, management, and the protection of property and human and domestic animal health. Foot-hold traps are important tools for achieving these

objectives, and, when used properly, are humane, safe, and practical. Nevertheless, significant opposition to the use of foot-hold traps exists due to both real and perceived risks. Research into methods designed to reduce injury and otherwise improve trapping methods, and public education and outreach, are necessary to resolve this conflict.

Habitat Division

A Nevada State Lands Q1 application has been developed and submitted to fund the development of a multi-agency plan for implementing aggressive actions for restoring Nevada sagebrush habitats. Preparations for a workshop of federal and state resource management agencies heads is in preparation. This is a part of the Governor's "War on Cheatgrass".

Discussions have continued with regard to geothermal leases issued by BLM within the boundary of the Carson Lake and Pasture. 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". Meeting with an Interior solicitor, Bureau of Reclamation and the Proponent (Vulcan Power) have been conducted. The process of negotiation and communication will continue.

Habitat staff is cooperating with the Bureau of Reclamation in the development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required for the transfer of Carson Lake and Pasture to the State. Clearance requirements are to be completed by 2010 and at that point BLM will perfect the transfer.

Habitat Chief participated in a panel discussion on Mining Law Reform at a Forum sponsored by Women in Mining. The event was held in Winnemucca last Saturday, March 29.

Law Enforcement Division

An Operation Game Thief report identified two men suspected of shooting a deer from a vehicle on a County road in northern Washoe County. Quick coordination on behalf of the game warden, who was hundreds of miles away, resulted in the suspect and vehicle being identified through license plate records, a Modoc County California Sheriff's Deputy being able to locate and confirm there was indeed a doe deer that had been shot and killed at the location, and two Washoe County Sheriff's Deputies were able to make a vehicle stop to identify the occupants and photograph guns and equipment. Interviews were completed early the next morning and defense attorneys were hired. Evidence collection in the field determined that a total of THREE deer had been shot and killed and charges will be filed with the Washoe County District Attorney's Office.

Western Region Game Wardens reported numerous fishermen out along the Truckee River and urban ponds. Violations encountered included fishing without licenses and fishing with barbed hooks in the trophy section of the Truckee River. A few citations

were issued and numerous warnings given; Western Region game warden watched the occupants a vehicle that appeared to be dumping litter. Contact was made with three individual, one of which was a 24 year old male who had 5 outstanding misdemeanor warrants and two 18 year old who were in possession of open containers of alcohol. Lyon County Sheriff's Deputies were called to transport the 24 year old male to jail in Yerington.

As snowdrifts recede, Spring Creek area residents are discovering dozens of dead deer in various states of decay. Some are victims of automobile collisions, others are winter kill. Whatever the cause, calls for service to remove the deer from residences and yards are impacting warden work and patrol schedules. Assistance with this job from other Divisions is greatly appreciated.

Southern Region Game Wardens rescued people on board a disabled vessel that was being blown into the rocks on Lake Mohave Saturday during high winds. The vessel was overloaded and short life jackets. The boaters were taken to safety and the vessel towed to shore.

March 21 - March 24 was the time frame of the shed antler project which took place in Lincoln County. Eight wardens from across the Southern and Eastern Regions were involved in this informational patrol effort. This project concentrated in the area of the White Rock Mountains which are in the Northeastern portion of the county, Hunt Unit 231, as well as Units 222 and 223 which are heavily used deer and elk winter ranges in these areas.

During the weekend, wardens patrolled in the three hunt units while one or two stayed at the OGT trailer to inform people who stopped by about shed antler hunting. People contacted either at the base camp or out in the field were asked to fill out a short questionnaire and were also handed a flyer on the Do's and Don'ts of shed antler hunting. In total 105 people were contacted on Saturday and Sunday. Shed Hunters accounted for 49 of the contacts while the other 56 people were inquiring about shed hunting activities.

Operations Division

The big game draw started at 8 a.m. on March 24 with the first online application processed at 8:11AM that same day. As of midnight Sunday, March 30, Wildlife Administrative Services has received a total of 12,855 applications. For comparison, last year at this time they had received 7,862 applications. We are 7,993 applications ahead of last year's total relative to the deadline. The application period closes at 500PM April 21.

FY08 Computer Purchase Pending – Pat Wlodarczyk is finalizing with the Division Chiefs the required computers for staff to be purchased in FY08. Pat will soon determine the best vendor options available to the department and place the order.

NDOW Staff Participates in UNR “Career Fair” – The “Career Fair” at the University of Nevada, Reno, is scheduled for April 15. This information event will be addressing career opportunities for science, engineering and technology majors. Kris Ross and Pat Sollberger will be in attendance addressing NDOW employment opportunities.

Training for Western Region Administrative Assistants – On April 1 Western Region Administrative Assistants assigned to our customer service counters received refresher training in boat registration and titling. Additionally, licensing staff, with the assistance of Don Sefton, Systems Consultants, provided training on the Application Hunt System and the big game draw process. This training was timely considering we are now into week two of the big game application period.

Wildlife Diversity Division

Wildlife Diversity staff attended the following meetings: a Desert Tortoise Council Symposium meeting, a Coyote Springs Investments Habitat Conservation Plan meeting, a Spring Mountains Conservation Agreement meeting, a Groundwater Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) meeting, an Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge Symposium, a Nellis-Department of Defense (DOD) Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans (INRMP) workshop, a Biological Work Group meeting for the Spring Valley Stipulation Agreement (Groundwater Withdrawal), and a Bureau of Land Management Las Vegas coordination meeting.

Staff attended a workshop in San Diego regarding sustainable INRMP training and provided a presentation of historical development of the State Wildlife Action plans and the great projects that our state is undertaking. The training was attended by DOD, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and representatives from numerous state wildlife agencies.

Staff coordinated and assisted with the Lida area abandoned mine claim marker pull project. Of note is the high incidence of pollinating insect mortalities in the mine claim markers. The project was a success with over 980 markers removed.

Staff continues to handle urban wildlife calls and review Scientific Collection Permit applications.

Staff continues to participate in the Catamount wind energy and development of wildlife protocols associated with the proposed wind farm near Searchlight, Nevada.

Staff completed winter raptor surveys in southern and central Nevada. Inclement weather prevented repetition of routes run in January in Big Smoky and Reese River Valleys.

Staff continues to provide notes to the Groundwater EIS for Eastern Nevada, both in terms of substantive edits and available support documents. Unfortunately, as was

found by all partners upon review of the EIS in meetings in Ely last week, poor products (drafts) keep coming back.