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Governor

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DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

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KENNETH E. MAYER
Director

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 22, 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 –
Sept. 15 - 19, 2008

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenneth E. Mayer".

Attendees: Directory Mayer, Deputy Director Doug Hunt, Chief of Habitat Dave Pulliam, Acting Chief of Conservation Education Lynne Foster, Acting Chief of Wildlife Diversity Shirley Atkinson, ASO III Dave Prather, Acting Game Division Chief Mike Dobel, Acting Chief Game Warden Jim Herndon, Fisheries Chief Rich Haskins, Operations Chief Bob Haughian, and ASO II Daralyn Dobson.

Director's Office

Director Mayer said the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) conference went very well and he met up with other NDOW staff - Chief of Conservation Education Kelly Clark and Boat Staff Teresa Jarrett. Director Mayer said he is on the Executive Committee of AFWA and they also discussed National Association of Safe Boating Law Administrators' issues and reapportionment of funds. Bylaws amended and this is a fish and wildlife agencies association and AFWA allows industry and others to vote and has not been a problem before, and then after an Executive Session, voted to rescind the votes on all the bylaws and take another look at this matter in six months.

Director Mayer mentioned that in 2010 there is no conference location for AFWA and he is going to suggest that Nevada host AFWA in 2010, and he will discuss the issue further with Executive Director Matt Hogan of AFWA.

Director Mayer said the White House has formed a commission on Hunting Heritage based on the North American model. He said there are eight white papers and President Bush has embraced this and the conference will be in Reno at the Silver Legacy, Reno, on Oct. 1 through Oct. 3. NDOW will be participating and will be sending a list of major sportsmen and others to be invited by the White House, a total of 1,500 invitations will be sent. The format for the

conference is expected to be Oct. 1, registration and hosted evening ice breakers; Oct. 2, will be the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture presentations with Governor Gibbons making a speech; Oct. 3, will be the focus groups and breakout sessions, until noon. The end result will be a proclamation by the White House and taking hunting into the future and hopefully this will be the template for the next president. If staff want to go please let the Director's Office know as there may be the opportunity for more to attend.

Director Mayer said regarding sage grouse, he spent time with Jay Slack and others and this week the Technical Committee recommendation should be out and his gut feeling is that they will list the bird. If Mr. Hall decides not to list we need to use this opportunity to put things in place to prevent listing.

Director Mayer will be attending the Governor's Cabinet meeting in Carson City on Tuesday, and the 102 Ranch Open House sponsored by the Truckee River Flood Project.

September Commission meeting report – Director Mayer heard many positive comments about the joint Commission meeting from Nevada Commissioners and California Commissioners. For the November meeting commissioners requested reports on Overton Interpretive Center and Lake Mead Hatchery; and he noted that the date of November meeting has been changed from Nov. 14 and 15, 2008, to Nov. 21 and 22, 2008; Commission Roles and Responsibilities needs to be on the agenda for November; law enforcement liaison committee may be formed; and the chairman may be contacting staff to the committees for further information.

Deputy Director Doug Hunt said he attended the Intermountain West Joint Venture Management meeting in Spokane, Washington, and two projects prioritized and approved – New Mexico and Montana. The conference was well attended, and presentation was given on State Wildlife Grants/Action Plans.

The Department's Budget Hearing is this Friday at 10:30 a.m., Board of Examiners meeting is tomorrow and next deadline is Oct. 6, 2008. Interim Finance Committee met last week and all requests were approved.

Game Division

Both Rodney Johnson and Scott Roberts are addressing numerous requests by landowners regarding participation in the Mule Deer and Pronghorn damage compensation tag program. We are attempting to remain consistent in how we administer the program. With this in mind I would ask that all questions or requests relative to this program be referred to Rodney Johnson at 775-233-1245.

Game Division has been conducting aerial surveys since mid-August when we began desert sheep surveys in the south. Most recently we have moved 3FG north and are attempting to complete pronghorn and California bighorn sheep surveys in Washoe and Humboldt Counties. 3FG is in Carson City for a 100 hour inspection this week and we hope to finish flights in

Humboldt County during the week of the September 22. It should be noted that there is the possibility of flying over hunters in the field during these flights. If any complaints are received relative to these flights please refer them to Mike Dobel.

Game division recently completed aerial chukar density surveys in Elko, Lander, Humboldt, Pershing and Washoe Counties. From the information obtained during these flights a Chukar Hunting Forecast was produced for the state and is available online or at various department offices. Costs of the flights were covered by Nevada Chukar Foundation.

Over the next four months NDOW employees will be validating bighorn, lions and swans at most of our offices. Occasionally, we may have issues relative to coverage and the game division asks that all NDOW employees involved with the process remain patient and chip in wherever possible to complete this task.

Habitat Division

Habitat Division Chief presented a presentation on NDOW's regulatory responsibilities relative to mining and an update on the sage grouse and pygmy rabbit status reviews at the Nevada Mining Association Convention on September 4.

The Habitat Division continues to participate and provide information to the Governor's Committee on renewable energy transmission access. Steve Siegel will represent the Department on the sub-committee for identifying environmental constraints to energy access development.

The Habitat Division is participating as a cooperating agency for the BLM's Programmatic EIS for Solar Energy Development in the west. The Southern Region Supervisory Habitat Biologist will have the lead in development of Department inputs.

The Wildlife Management Area managers, staff biologist and Chief held their annual coordination meeting Sept. 9 through the 11.

Operations Division

Operations Division is hosting three key meetings this week with select Department staff: (1) "Return of Tag for Any Reason" – this meeting will determine the remaining procedural aspects needed to fully implement the recent regulation change which now allows for the return of the tag for any reason. Any staff having questions about the "devil in the details" behind this regulation change should contact Julie Meadows in the License Office at 688-1512.

(2) A proposed new Commission General Regulation (CGR) on Department errors – The director has tasked the Operations Division to put together a new/modified CGR to allow for an expanded assessment and response to department errors. A draft has been developed and other select Department staff (Chief of LE, Deputy Director) will also assist in evaluating various scenarios that such a new CGR could provide remedies for. Expected completion date is unknown. (3) Implementation strategy: Early Release of Draw Results Information – We spent time with Don Sefton breaking down all the findings and recommendations from the "Early

Release of Draw Results Information” report presented by the Director at the recent commission meeting. This meeting will set the stage for the Department to determine costs, procedural and programming changes and timelines in which to implement changes deemed feasible cost effective by the Director. The Director’s goal is to have any approved changes in place prior to the application period of the 2009 Big Game Draw

License Office is working on issuing approximately 30 deer tags for Cherry Creek depredation hunt.

In order to improved communications in the Department’s Air Operation community, a routine series of meetings is being proposed. Desired to take place on a monthly basis, an executive overview meeting is planned for early October. This meeting will include the Director’s Office, Chiefs of Game and Operations, and the chief pilot. Another meeting is being planned for which will include the Chiefs of Game and Operations, along with select field staff and both pilots. These two venues are being designed to improve communications at all levels of our aerial survey program.

Continuation of the Tag Allocation and Application Hunt Committee (TAAHC) is under evaluation. The Commission Chairman contacted the Chief of Operations to determine staff position on whether or not the TAAHC should continue. The chairman will make a decision within the next few weeks.

Wildlife Diversity Division

The Division Chief is away this week at the Federal Assistance Conference in Newport, Ore., where she will deliver a presentation on implementation of Nevada’s Wildlife Action Plan.

Staff recently attended a Clark County Commission meeting to relay impacts to wildlife from a proposed ordinance that would allow feral cat proponents to trap, neuter and release feral cats throughout the County. Proponents argue it is the solution to the Counties feral cat problem. The Commissioners voted to delay and resubmit the proposal, which will be heard again on September 16th at 10:00 am at the Clark County Commission Chambers. NDOW sent a letter to the Commission expounding the impacts from feral cats to wildlife, the disease concerns as well as concern with wording of the ordinance.

The Division, together with the BLM and three proponents of wind energy development projects has recently begun a joint free-tailed bat radio telemetry study at Rose Guano Cave in the Snake Mountains. Rose Guano Cave supports a large migratory population of Mexican free-tailed bats and three wind developments projects are in the planning stages in the Valley, just west of the cave. It is hoped that information from the study will allow us to determine which flight characteristics the bats use when exiting the cave each night to forage.

Wildlife Diversity staff continued trapping efforts for Greater Sandhill cranes in the western part of the state. Attempts were unsuccessful in August, but a greater working knowledge was gained regarding possible techniques and methods for future use. Trapping efforts will continue until 3 cranes are caught or until they leave their breeding grounds. Trapping the birds and attaching satellite transmitters to adult sandhill cranes scattered throughout Humboldt and

Washoe counties, will provide better understanding of their migratory route and wintering grounds.

Over the past year, the Division has been worked to develop a Data Management Policy and Procedure document; the final draft will be completed this week and sent out for review by Division Committee members. It will likely be ready to implement by October.

Staff continued to oversee Nevada Conservation Crews working in the Tahoe Region this month. As part of the Riparian Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project, crews finished off work laid out for the season. This included stream bank stabilization efforts where 125 feet of stream bank was stabilized using downed dead aspen. Removal of encroaching fir, decadent willow and alder were also completed.

Fall migratory shorebird surveys were conducted in the Lahontan Valley and Humboldt Sink in August. A larger number of birds were counted during the first survey period compared to the second period in late August. Spring Unit at Carson Lake, was the only unit that held water for shorebirds during the August survey.

Coordination with the U.S. Forest Service on construction of wildlife friendly closures at abandoned mine sites in the eastern region continues. Closures at Ward Mountain are scheduled for September and at Spruce Mountain as time and weather permit. The Division has also deployed reptile/small mammal arrays in northern Elko County to survey and inventory populations along two riparian systems – the Bruneau River and Salmon Creek. Coordination with the BLM on fence configurations for the aspen fencing project on Beaver Creek also continues and the Nevada Conservation Corps crew is working to complete the previously approved projects on Stag Creek.