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STATE OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 30, 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 *Kenneth E. Mayer*

SUBJECT: Department Activities Report
Oct. 20, 2008, Leadership Team Minutes

Attendees: Deputy Director Doug Hunt, Management Analyst III Kim Jolly, Executive Assistant Suzanne Scourby, Conservation Education Chief Kelly Clark, Chief of Fisheries Rich Haskins, ASO III Dave Prather, Acting Habitat Chief Steve Siegel, Chief Game Warden Rob Buonamici, Chief of Wildlife Diversity Laura Richards, Acting Chief of Game Craig Mortimore, and Chief of Operations Bob Haughian.

Emerging Issues Discussions:

The Ely BLM District Office has issued categorical exemptions for 29 anemometer sites for a wind project in Lincoln County after a decision had been made with NDOW's concurrence that an Environmental Assessment would be prepared. No coordination or follow-up contact was made by the BLM after the change in decision. A letter has been sent to the District Manager expressing NDOW's disappointment with the lack of coordination on their part, a failure to follow what was understood procedure and the potential impacts to sage grouse and other wildlife species. The issue will be followed up at the Nov. 19 agency coordination meeting with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

A Movement and Disposition of Terrestrial Wildlife policy has been adopted. This policy provides a consistent methodology of dealing with problem wildlife and wildlife relocation projects. It addresses these wildlife issues from a global, as opposed to an individual animal perspective. Efforts will be underway with a long term commitment to educate Department employees, and the public on the sound scientific rationale and long term benefits to Nevada's wildlife.

NDOW is communicating with California Fish and Game staff and California hunters regarding proof of hunter education. Beginning with the next tag application period this spring, anyone born after Jan. 1, 1960, MUST show proof of hunter education in order to purchase a Nevada hunting license. A previous year's hunting license can ONLY be accepted as proof if it has a unique number or identifier clearly stating that a course of

hunter education has been completed. California hunting licenses do not show a hunter education number, and California hunters are being informed that their best option to ensure easy applications for tags in 2009, is to check the status of their hunter education at the Application Hunt web site at www.huntnevada.com and, if necessary, to pre-register their hunter education number before the tag application period opens. A press release on the subject will be distributed throughout Nevada and California and to California hunting publications. Additionally, all Nevada master guides, and an estimated 5,000 California hunters who have purchased a hunting license or applied for tags in the last two years, and who do not have proof of hunter education in their records will receive a letter informing them and their clients to pre-register their hunter education and their options to complete a class.

Staff reported that we have received no landowner complaints to date regarding administration of compensation tags in the Eastern Region.

Director's Office

Deputy Director Hunt will be attending cabinet meeting tomorrow, and will be on annual leave starting October 24 through November 3, 2008. There is a barbecue this Friday between UNR and NDOW for a meet and greet of our staff and theirs.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recently completed their review of NDOW in accordance with provisions of the federal civil rights laws regarding the public and volunteers. Overall, the USFWS approved of NDOW's programs and the progress the agency has made. NDOW has complied with federal laws and was noted as going above and beyond to implement some Title VI Federally Assisted Program Best Practices including: NDOW's publications reflecting the diversity of the population of Nevada, bilingual products available; NDOW's outreach to a variety of communities and organizations such as disability, tribal, women, and minority organizations; NDOW's zero tolerance to unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation which exceeds EEOC guidance; NDOW's offering of reasonable accommodation to volunteer instructors; conservation educators and volunteer instructors special angler clinics for children with disabilities, and the work NDOW is doing to expand adaptive training for veterans with disabilities. NDOW's offering of free or discounted hunting and fishing licenses to persons with disabilities, Native Americans and resident military service members and disabled veterans was noted.

Last Thursday, the Carson City Board of Supervisors voted to "continue the item" which would have added to the list of public nuisances allowing bears to access your garbage by not using a bear-proof receptacle. Carson City will hold a workshop on the bear-proofing/anti-feeding issue and re-introduce a revised ordinance in the coming weeks similar to Douglas County's existing ordinance. Carson City CABMW Chairman Gil Yanuck testified that only those people who had bears access their garbage would be affected. He also mentioned how his CABMW and Carson City legal staff started off modeling it after Douglas County's existing bear ordinance, but that this method provided more flexibility for the enforcers and the public. NDOW staff testified about the need and urgency to have some mechanism in place before the spring in Carson City.

NDOW staff also testified that we had been cooperatively working with the Sierra Bear Front Working Group, which includes Carson City, to get the anti-feeding/bear-proofing message out.

The need to update and maintain the Department's computer inventory was discussed. Computers are being transferred without the necessary documentation being submitted to our IT Specialist. Keeping this inventory current will assist in determining replacement schedules and aid in developing budgets.

Conservation Education

A preliminary report from the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation on NDOW's lapsed angler outreach program was received. Data was collected on anglers for the license years ending February 28, 2007 and February 29, 2008. Any angler who hadn't purchased a license by February 29, 2008 is defined as lapsed. On 5/1/08, a total of 47,546 oversized postcards were sent to lapsed anglers. A second mailing was sent on 6/10/08 to 39,933 (adjusted by returned mail for the first mailing). The final target figure was adjusted by the number of returned mail pieces and those who (after final data was delivered) were determined to have purchased a license by February 29, 2008. That figure is 36,943. Of those, 5.6%, or 2,065, purchased various licenses and permits equaling \$50,600 in receipts. Return on investment (ROI) for this project is based on the following: The revenue generated by the direct mail marketing program (response rate multiplied by the price of each fishing license) including the projected Federal Aid apportionments to the state from the Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) fund¹ divided by the expense associated with the direct mail marketing program including the cost of direct mail, radio and online advertisements, and public relations. The following chart details ROI:

Revenue and Return on Investment Generated from Response to Nevada's Direct Mail Marketing Program	
License Sales Revenue	
1st Mailing	\$32,075.00
2nd Mailing	\$18,525.00
Total License Sales	\$50,600.00
Agent Fees	
1st Mailing	\$1,348.00
2nd Mailing	\$778.00
Total Agent Fees	\$2,126.00

¹ Fishing license sales are used in calculating Federal Aid apportionments to the state from the Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) Fund. The benefits do not automatically accrue during the year of the marketing program, but will be delayed by two years. The reason for this delayed benefit is that there is a time lag in reporting the full year of fishing license sales to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and an additional time period required for the sales certification process. Thus, the benefits received in 2010 should be counted in the 2008 program since that was when they were generated.

Estimated Additional Revenue	
Sport Fish Restoration Fund	
Total Additional Revenue	\$15,466.85
Gross Program Revenue	<u>\$63,940.85</u>
Program Costs	
Direct Mail Costs	\$35,645.09
Advertisement by State Agency	\$ -
Incentives	\$ -
Other RBFF Marketing Costs	\$19,576.80
Total Program Costs	<u>\$55,221.89</u>
Net Program Revenue	\$8,718.96
ROI	15.8%

Although total program costs were \$55,221.89, NDOW's portion was \$17,822.54.

The overall response rate of 5.6% is very good by standard direct mail standards, where a 1-3% response rate is typical. However, benchmarked against other participating states, Nevada and Utah were in the 5% range and other states enjoyed 10-25% response rates. This will be explored during an upcoming Marketing Team meeting and at the RBFF's workshop in November.

Staff attended a Las Vegas Wash education committee meeting and prioritized educational/outreach efforts for this group. One top priority is educating the public about the negative effects that occur when exotic species are released into our waterways.

The number of students completing the online Hunter Education course is increasing as the fall hunting seasons begin.

The Verdi Crystal Peak Pond is near completion. Staff videotaped the construction site and the general area for future promotion of the new fishery.

Chronic wasting disease sampling is ongoing in the Southern Region with the help of volunteers.

Fisheries Division

The New Zealand mud snail (NZM) can now be added to the list of aquatic invasive species found in Lake Mead. While it is unclear what impact NZM might have on the Lake Mead ecosystem, the concern is now there is a source available in Southern Nevada which might be spread to other waters which will be impacted.

Game Division

A mouflon was sighted near South Fork Reservoir in Elko County. Though the Department just received this notification of an event taking place 10 days prior, direction to remove the animal was provided to the Eastern Region. The species is on the State's prohibited species list and there are disease transmission concerns between non-bighorn ovids and the state's wild bighorn populations. The Wildlife Health Specialist will conduct an examination of the animal if NDOW personnel are able to relocate and collect it.

Game Division is working with support from the Operations Division to ensure consistency in investigating mule deer and antelope damage complaints under the compensation program. Field investigations shall be conducted and tag issuance shall be determined in accordance with procedures that have been developed within the Western Region.

The Eastern Region is investigating a report of coughing bighorns near Contact.

Habitat Division

There will be a meeting on Oct. 23 with Ruby Pipeline – a 42 inch natural gas pipeline that will transect the state east west. Data indicates and NDOW is supporting a routing alternative that will parallel highway 140 through the Sheldon Antelope Refuge. The project proponents preferred alternative is currently south of the Refuge and transects much better wildlife habitat. The meeting will be with Ruby Pipeline (as represented by the El Paso Corporation), the BLM and the USFWS.

There will be a meeting next week with Ormat regarding their planned activities within the land transfer area of Carson Lake. The BLM issued Geothermal Leases to two firms (Vulcan and Ormat). NDOW has met with Vulcan and they have agreed to stay out of the land transfer area. We understand that Ormat has plans to develop drill sites within the land transfer area. The transfer is scheduled to occur by 2010.

Two interagency coordination meetings are scheduled for Nov. 18 and 19 with the USFS and BLM (respectively). A request was made to submit agenda items.

Law Enforcement

Boating Access Program Manager attended the States Organization for Boating Access 2008 annual conference. Topics discussed ranged from the upcoming Sport Fish Reapportionment in Congress which could possibly change upcoming program funding, guidelines and rules for Boating Access, Clean Vessel Act (CVA) and Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program; using Inmate Work Detail for partial In-Kind Match; the request for Boating Access Inventories for each state; and signage for projects.

Wildlife Violations and Investigation - An antelope was shot near Soldier's Meadows Ranch in Western Humboldt County with the buck shot and the backstraps taken; a bull elk was shot and the majority left to waste with only a portion of one backstrap removed on Robinson Summit West of Ely, wardens recovered a bullet and the wound path suggests the elk was shot in the head possibly at night; a cow elk hunter fired numerous times into a group of elk at 350 plus yards with a cow and calf killed, the hunter took the cow and left the calf to waste, covering it with grass and brush to hide it and when confronted by game wardens the shooter admitted to the crime, and citations were issued; and a buck was poached at the north end of Eagle Valley with the individuals who shot the deer being scared off because no parts were removed. Several cases have been made in the last week for killing a big game animal in the wrong area. None of the cases have had elements that would take the case to a felony level. All were handled with misdemeanor citations.

Wildlife Diversity Division

Staff continues to meet with National Park Service and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas to coordinate development of a predictive habitat model for peregrine falcons and work on contract development related to the monitoring and habitat modeling portion of the project with Clark County.

Staff met with Key Pittman Wildlife Management Area personnel regarding the riparian willow fencing restoration project which is moving forward with most fencing in place. This project will enhance willow habitat for migratory birds including the southwestern willow flycatcher.

Staff in central Nevada completed fall shorebird surveys in Big Smoky, Monitor, Little Fish Lake and Railroad valleys. Trapping of pocket gophers in the Tonopah Region has resumed including the continuation of an ongoing genetics study.

Staff continues to coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), consultants, and the project proponent in regard to the proposed Searchlight Wind Energy Facility. Pre-construction protocol surveys for birds and bats are occurring this spring and fall. In general, the survey efforts are moving in the right direction and NDOW and BLM continue to stay in contact with the consultants on methodologies and results.

Staff is in review of the revised Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan and comments are due by October 28, 2008. Staff also provided comments to the Spring Valley Stipulation Agreement Biological Monitoring Plan.

Staff continues to participate in the Southwest PARC (Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation) Steering Committee conference calls and assisted with the development of a 10-year anniversary article demonstrating PARC's success over the last ten years. Staff also revised a Southwest PARC regional brochure, "Living with Venomous Reptiles".

Staff attended the Virgin River Watershed Assessment meeting in Mesquite on September 19. A key topic at the meeting was the unauthorized release of the tamarisk beetle in the upper Virgin River near St. George and near Elgin in Meadow Valley Wash. The beetles are a biological control for tamarisk and have defoliated habitat and caused one nest failure for the southwestern willow flycatcher near St. George along the Virgin River. Given the beetles defoliate tamarisk, there will be more emphasis on restoration of willow habitat so birds have some habitat to move into once the tamarisk is defoliated. The USFWS Las Vegas Office has asked field personnel to not transport the beetle to new areas and to decontaminate clothes, vehicles and field gear to prevent transport.