

Game Management Advisory Council Meeting Notes

December 3, 2016

Washington Cattleman's Association Boardroom
1301 N. Dolarway Road
Ellensburg WA 98926

GMAC Members in attendance: Al Martz, Art Meikel, Bobbie Thorniley, Dave Duncan, James Horan, James Stephenson, Jerry Barron, Lee Davis, Mark Pidgeon, Randy Mesenbrink, Rob McCoy, Shawn McCully, Terry Mansfield and Warren Gimlin

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Staff: Anis Aoude, Eric Gardner, Jerry Nelson, and Mick Cope

Welcome/Introductions: Rob McCoy

- Members present introduced themselves and who they represented if organizations or just themselves as hunters;
- Notes from the June Meeting were not ready to be distributed, will be considered/approved at next mtg. Anis said he is committed to having help to do notes in future;
- Anis said he will recommend reappointment of members whose terms are up and who noted they would like to be reappointed. He will have agency distribute news release to media/contact list/GMAC members for three vacancies needing appointments;
- Members concerned that 2016 big game hunting seasons and regulations pamphlet was inconsistent with Commission approval especially with respect to special permits.
 - Problem seemed to be related to process, procedures, timelines to produce pamphlet.
 - Staff and members felt it made enforcement of regulations difficult.
 - Staff felt issues would not occur in future.
 - Members asked if GMAC could review pamphlet before going to print in future.
 - Possible problem with this is Commission approves changes and pamphlet goes to press within a few days.
 - Suggested that staff develop a flow chart showing processes, timelines, who recommends, who decides, etc for issues/items GMAC concerned with.

Regional WAC change proposals: Anis Aoude

- 3 year package:
 - Master hunter points: currently if drawn for a depredation hunt but not called on to go they still lose points accumulated anyway. Recommendation is to get points reinstated.
 - Comment: if youth involved they shouldn't lose their points either.
 - Comment: hunting public not always supportive of master hunter program. Not sure how extensive or why.
 - Question: is master hunter data up to date enough so that points can be reinstated. Answer, yes.

- Some members of GMAC felt that points should only be reinstated if MH were not called. If called to participate but unable to they should not get the points reinstated. Opinions among GMAC members Differed.
- Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP): hunting on private land – large tracks given certain number of permits, some controversy over this.
 - Should not be for private gain.
- Discussion on removing the mule deer 3 point restriction.
 - Comment: GMU 101 mule deer coming back but tribes can over hunt.
 - Comment: 3 point restriction may not be working to improve genetics. WDFW staff noted a lack of science to support 3 point restriction as a means of increasing the proportion of mature (3 point and larger) bucks in the population.
 - Comment: need to find ways to take 2 point restriction out (possibly using mentored youth).
 - Comment: the current system may be causing waste of illegal 2 point.
 - Comment: putting a antler spread restriction on the Super Twos .Simple effective solution. Also for the record, if you remove the 3 PT APR on MD in District 1 you will destroy the deer population(Everywhere is roaded).
- Comment: need to have discussion about Pope & Young re use of camera on bow. Current WDFW rule is no electronics on bow.
- Comment: recruitment of young and some older hunters would be more successful if cross bow could be used during archery season. Reason youth and some others may not be able pull back bows with greater than 40 lbs draw weight. Archery folks don't want cross bow use during their season but member thought staff should take issue back to them for possible rethinking.
- Comment: muzzle loading season in Colockum is changing elk behavior. More muzzle loaders in the area thus dispersing elk before modern fire arm season

Predator prey research: Jerry Nelson

- Jerry Nelson's power point presentation provided a summary of the proposed 4 year project to be conducted in 2 primary study areas starting in 2017.
 - Comments: suggest renaming "deliverables" to "outreach".
 - Comments: lack of emphasis on neonate deer/elk in the predator/prey study. Capturing deer at 6 months of age doesn't provide you with very much information on predation in the first few months of life when they are most vulnerable. Additionally, you can't get this information by looking at fall ratios as so many have been lost by then and you don't know what your twinning rates were for species like deer to make sense of the comp data. Jerry indicated that this was a money issue largely, although I did agree with him that some species such as migratory mule deer would be logistically challenging.

Wild future:

- Comment: proposal is to increase hunting licenses by 10% and fishing specific to license and species.
 - Hand outs: "Washington's wild future hunting". Governor's Nov 7, 2016 letter to the Commission, AFWA Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations on sustaining America's diverse fish and Wildlife resources and frequently asked questions related to the AFWA efforts to obtain new funding for conserving fish and wildlife.

- Comment: Concern that current fur buyers license too high resulting in only two fur buyers in the state.
- Comment: members need information of cost of hunting vs. number of hunters. Concern that WA has relatively small number of hunters but one of the highest costs for basic License. May be trying to compare apples and oranges, may not be comparable. Staff thought mostly comparable in western states.
- Comment: Didn't see the justification for a 10% fee increase as the industrial timberland component was open ended without any real strategy of how the funding would be successful (would it be used to free up land in current fee access or simply pay companies that already provide it freely), the phone app system was not a crucial necessity as you can download the regulations on your smartphone, and the increased hunting opportunity through conservation was also lacking detail on why important or how it would be successful.
- Alternative funding suggestions:
 - Consider individual license to recreate on public lands.
 - Governor request to WDFW to develop alternative funding handout. Anis, I suggest make this letter and establishing taskforce handout as attachments to the minutes or summarize them in the minutes.
 - Blue ribbon task force (handout). Anis, I suggest make the handout an attachment to the minutes or summarize it in the minutes.
 - Clarify that Wild Future and Blue Ribbon Panel efforts involved developing new sources of funding for wildlife conservation and were not intended to redirect existing funds used for hunted species to nongame species programs.
- Comment: land and water conservation fund being considered for reauthorization.
- Comment: Draft policy to the Commission to continue to consider alternative funding.
- December 9th is the next Commission meeting in Olympia.
- Comment: re discover pass, consider dropping cost to \$15 to folks 16 years of age and older, change % agencies get, State Parks should get full funding from general fund not discover pass, 2 cars to a discover pass is ridiculous.
- Comment: consider non-regulatory practical approach and invite all stakeholders to the table to discuss issues and solve problems. It was suggested that WDFW work with private landowners to keep large parcels productive as wildlife habitat using existing state and federal programs including the Farm Bill conservation titles.
- Shooting ranges should be run by the private sector though may not be cost effective.
- Add media to the task force. They know how to package issues for public and can keep public informed and if media involved task force members more attentive to issues and possibly working together.

Wolf population update: Anis Aoude

- Anis Aoude power point presentation provided an update of wolf population and management issues as of November 2016..

Member's issues:

- Resource allocation subcommittee. Need to reinvigorate because they can analyze if equity standards criteria should stay the same or change. Probably won't make changes for 2017 but could for 2018 (something about timely for the 2018 season/3 year package?).
- Comment: You can save about a week in time, and considerable \$ by using only the Raw Data (Hunter Report Cards) instead of the Projected Data Guesstimated Harvest numbers for non-reporting Hunters .
- Recruitment and retention:
 - Comment: not much activity by the Council in last year or so, mentoring should be emphasized, use depredation hunts as idea to get kids involved.
- Comment: allocation committee should be re-activated. Allocation of permits should be based on 3 year package unless things get really out of wac. Equity standards criteria should stay the same or change
 - Probably won't make decisions for 2017 but timely for 2018 season (3 year program).
- Comment: Muzzleloader seasons have changed the behavior of the Colockum elk herd
 - Comment: deer hunting puts pressure on elk too.
 - Elk are dispersed because of pressure.
- Comment: where will WDFW allow wolves?
 - Outlined in the current Wolf plan.
- Comment: recruitment and retention ought to be standing item on agenda as it is our future: Information from staff seems to show much discussion at national and regional level which seems like bureaucracy in action, but should have discussions at state and local level as to ideas that have worked. Anis will engage education program coordinator in discussion and ask to have that person at next meeting to provide update on status of effort.
 - Comment: mentoring program working good.
- Comment: web site very unfriendly. Response, WDFW agrees and working on it to be revamped. Suggestion, once Beta site developed, include staff, and advisory committees/councils to test before finalizing.
- Comment: consider Idaho draw species approach.
- Comment: allocation subcommittee very important to keep everyone getting fair share of opportunity.
- Comment: re predator prey relationship, what is wolf management going to look like when wolf delisted?
- Comment: members would like to see all WDFW legislative proposals.
- Comment: More information about the Westside elk herds and private land access issues.
- Comment: Olympic elk herd was not mentioned in the June meeting as part of the prey assessment
- Comment: Find ways to reduce crowds and look at other states to see what they are doing.
- Comment: Need mechanism for reducing turkey depredation large tracts of land.
- Comment: need more quality hunts.
- Comment: keep on top of ungulate management/predatory prey issue.
- **Next meeting:**
 - March 4th 2017 @ WCA Boardroom.
- **Potential agenda items:**
 - More in-depth discussion of importance of habitat (not sure what this meant?).
 - Mule deer 3 point restrictions.

- Wolf update.
 - Spring bear hunting.
 - Legislative update.
 - Status of recruitment/retention efforts.
 - Preference points.
 - Status of research (not sure what this meant).
 - Presentation by Shawn on Idaho preference approach.
- GMAC recommendation that WDFW send a letter of thanks to the Washington Cattlemen's Association for use of their boardroom in Ellensburg, WA.