

**MASTER HUNTER ADVISORY GROUP**  
**PURPOSE, ROLES and OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
*(Adopted July 18, 2014)*

**ADVISORY GROUP PURPOSE**

- Master Hunters are ambassadors of safe, ethical, responsible, and legal hunting and are stewards of the hunt. Members of the Master Hunter Permit Program (MHPP) give back to the wildlife resource through their volunteer work and they strive to promote and strengthen the heritage of hunting through their actions. The WDFW Master Hunter Advisory Group (MHAG) represents Master Hunters statewide, and advises WDFW on issues and opportunities relevant to hunters, Master Hunters and the Master Hunter Permit Program (MHPP).
- The MHAG works in partnership with WDFW to identify and foster meaningful volunteer opportunities for hunters and Master Hunters throughout the state. These opportunities are intended to promote the conservation ethic and address priority needs of the Wildlife Program and the Department, as well as to develop a dependable means of coordination and management of Master Hunter volunteer efforts within each WDFW Region.

**LONG RANGE ADVISORY GROUP ROLES**

- Assist the Department with the development and implementation of communication mechanisms particularly for Certified Master Hunters.
- Conduct Master Hunter Special Hunt Management meetings targeting communities and stakeholders where local issues and concerns require MHAG involvement. These meetings will only be held in coordination and cooperation with WDFW. The chair will appoint a Temporary Advisory Group Lead to assist the Department in facilitation and coordinating these meetings. Recommendations of the Temporary Advisory Group will be made, as necessary, to WDFW through the MHAG Liaison and Hunter Education Division Manager.
- Provide recommendations on MHPP policy, as requested by the Department.
- Provide recommendations on statutes and rules associated with the MHPP, as requested by the Department.
- Assist the Department in the development of MHPP curriculum, prerequisites, tests, and requirements.

- Assist the Department with the implementation of a MHPP applicant test proctoring system throughout the state including WDFW Regional Offices.
- Routinely evaluate MHPP materials (forms, curriculum, study materials, identification items, examinations, etc.) and make recommendations to the Department.
- Review MHPP processes to improve qualifications, monitoring, and administration of the MHPP.
- Routinely evaluate the MHPP webpage and make recommendations to the Department.
- Provide Master Hunter communication conduits in each of the six administrative Regions of the Department. MHAG members residing in each Region will assist the Department by handling contacts and inquiries from MHPP applicants and Certified Master Hunters about enrollment, certification requirements, re-certification, volunteer projects, issues, complaints, violations, and other topics. Advisory Group members should also assist with MHPP meetings in their area, interface with local Department personnel, promote and advocate for the MHPP, and help with the evaluation of local Master Hunter seasons, when requested by the Department. Advisory Group e-mail addresses will be displayed on the MHPP webpage and arranged by geographic area.
- Conduct evaluations of Master Hunter general seasons and permit seasons as requested by the Department. Make recommendations to the Department. Evaluations will reflect consultations with participating Master Hunters; Hunt Coordinators, if applicable; associated private and public landowners; and appropriate Department field personnel with responsibilities for the area. Evaluations will also comment on the effectiveness and efficiency of hunts in achieving stated Department management objectives. Reports will also include any pertinent regulatory or ethical violations by Master Hunters that have been reported.
- In partnership with the Department, prepare annual MHPP progress report for submittal to the Director and Fish and Wildlife Commission.
- Sponsor and promote selected wildlife conservation volunteer projects for all hunters and Master Hunters designed to address the priorities of the Wildlife Program and Department.
- Assist the Department with the design, implementation, and updating of a recruitment process for future members of the MHAG.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- **Membership**
  - All Advisory Group members must be Certified Master Hunters in good standing.
  - Membership should include at least two Master Hunter representatives per Department Administrative Region, and a maximum of 15 members in total.
  - Members will be appointed by the WDFW Director to three-year terms, unless there is a need to fill a vacated position in order to finish an uncompleted term due to unforeseen circumstances. WDFW will advertise the application period through news releases and the agency website. Appointments to MHAG will be made consistent with WDFW policy (appended below).
  - Five new or repeat Advisory Group members will be recruited each year. Additional members will be recruited if unexpected vacancies occur. See Master Hunter Permit Program Policies and Procedures-Master Hunter Advisory Group Recruitment and Selection.
  - The Advisory Group Chair may recommend to the Department that appointed members be terminated if they a) are absent without excuse from two or more scheduled meetings in any 12 month period; b) violate the provisions and intent of MHAG Operating Procedures; c) are unable to fulfill their responsibilities as a member; d) have failed to meet obligations to which they have volunteered to perform or to which they have been assigned to perform; or e) have used abusive language and/or shown disrespect for other members, the Department, or the public.
  
- **Expectations of MHAG Members as Regional Representatives**
  - Communicate routinely with WDFW Regional Office staff and District Office staff closest to your place of residence, about issues and opportunities associated with the MHPP, as well as ways in which assistance can be provided by Master Hunters.
  - Facilitate meaningful volunteer opportunities for Master Hunters.
  - Assist WDFW, as requested, in addressing issues that arise between Master Hunters and WDFW Regional staff, and/or between Master Hunter and landowners, and/or Master Hunters and the public.
  - Serve as direct communication link with other Master Hunters, and others who are interested in the MHPP.
  - Solicitation of views and opinions from other Master Hunters on program issues and opportunities.
  - Representation of other Master Hunter's views and opinions while serving as a member of the MHAG.

- Facilitate the improvement of the public perception of hunting through your own actions demonstrating the highest hunting ethics and standards
  - Facilitate the improvement of safe hunting and potentially becoming certified Hunter Education Instructors.
  - Assess existing and possible new ways to ensure responsible, respectful, and ethical practices of Master Hunters during Master Hunter hunts.
  - Facilitate the improvement of the image of Master Hunters, MHAG, and MHPP to WDFW staff, the hunting public, and the general public.
- **Officers and Duties** (Elected officers will include Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary)
    - Officer elections will occur during the meeting prior to the expiration of officer terms or at the end of officer terms, with the goal of avoiding empty officer seats. Elections will be by verbal vote or by written ballot of MHAG members, and will be managed by the Department.
    - Chair: The Chair will serve a one-year term but may be re-elected to additional one-year terms depending upon his/her appointment status. Duties of the Chair include:
      - Determining the order of business at meetings. Robert’s Rule of Order will be used as a guide.
      - Presiding over formal Advisory Group meetings.
      - Cooperatively working with the Department to set meetings and formulate agendas.
      - Representing the Advisory Group during formal testimony and during scheduled meetings with the Wildlife Program Assistant Director, Director, and Commission members.
      - Serving as the primary Advisory Group contact for the MHAG Liaison and Hunter Education Division Manager.
      - Assisting the Department with the writing of MHPP reports and conducting necessary briefings.
    - Vice-Chair: The Vice-Chair will serve a one-year term but may be re-elected to additional one-year terms depending upon his/her appointment status. The Vice-Chair will normally succeed the Chair but must be appointed by a majority of Advisory Group members. Duties of the Vice-Chair include:
      - Acting on behalf of the Chair when the Chair is unable to perform his/her duties
      - Serves as “sergeant at arms” during business meetings
    - Secretary: The Secretary will serve a two-year term. Duties of the Secretary include:
      - Taking notes during MHAG meetings, which will constitute a summary of the discussion, and will also accurately capture votes taken and recommendations made.
      - Providing meeting notes to the Chair as soon as possible after meetings.

- **Subgroups**

- Temporary and standing subgroups may be established and terminated by the Chair, in consultation with the Department, at any time. Leads for standing subgroups will be appointed by the Chair, and must be members of the Advisory Group.
- Temporary subgroups may be led by a Certified Master Hunter that is not an appointed member of the Advisory Group.
- Temporary and standing subgroups have no standing or official authority to represent the Advisory Group as a body. Leads of all subgroups must report back to the full Advisory Group where formal recommendations to the Department are subsequently discussed and either approved or disapproved.

- **Recommendation-Making and Consensus**

- Advisory Group business will only be conducted if a quorum of appointed members is present (half of the appointed members plus one member).
- The Advisory Group will strive to operate by consensus. Consensus is defined as all Advisory Group members being able to live with the recommendation. However, if a consensus cannot be achieved, the majority vote of the quorum will form the basis of formal recommendations.
- Proxy votes of members not able to be in attendance at meetings are allowed. Proxy votes must be coordinated through the Chair in advance of the meetings.
- Amendments to the governing principles and procedures must be approved by a majority of appointed Advisory Group members.
- Advisory Group members recognize that under the WDFW statutes, regulations, and policies, final decision-making authority relative to the MHPP rests in the hands of the Department. The Department is committed to administering the program in a way that has achieved concurrence and support from the Advisory Group to the extent possible.

## **EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

- All communications with the Department pertaining to matters of Advisory Group and Department work, policy positions, and administration must be routed through the Chair.
- The Advisory Group as a body, and individual Advisory Group members, will not communicate with the Fish and Wildlife Commission, Director, Deputy Director, Wildlife Program Assistant Director, or elected officials without providing advance notification to the MHPP Liaison or the Hunter Education Division Manager.
- Formal testimony and interviews with the news media made on behalf of the Advisory Group, as a body, will not include personal opinions. The MHAG Liaison and Hunter Education Division Manager will be briefed in advance of such communications.

## **MEETINGS**

- There should be a minimum of four Advisory Group business meetings held annually, approximately every quarter. Exact meeting dates will be determined by the Advisory Group in conjunction with the Department.
- Meetings will be held in Ellensburg, unless weather conditions or other factors dictate an alternate location or the use of teleconference or phone conference technology.
- All Scheduled MHAG meetings will be held at locations that provide reasonable accommodations to persons-of-disability.
- Advisory Group meeting agendas will be jointly developed by the Advisory Group Chair, the MHAG Liaison and the Hunter Education Division Manager. Agendas will be circulated to Advisory Group members in advance of meetings. Meeting agendas, including meeting dates, times and locations will be posted to MHPP webpage. The Chair will determine the order of business at meetings. Robert's Rule of Order will be used as a guide.
- Summary notes for each meeting will be taken by the secretary, approved by the Department in consultation with the Chair, then distributed to the Advisory Group and posted on the MHPP webpage.
- Meetings will be open to the general public.
- Meeting guests are to be introduced to the MHAG members and given an opportunity to make comments, as time allows, and at the discretion of the Chair. Potential guests should attempt to contact the Chair and seek scheduled time for desired presentations in advance.

- Advisory Group members are required to apply the following process ground rules:
  - Seek to learn and understand each other's perspective.
  - Encourage respectful, candid, and constructive discussions.
  - Provide balance of speaking time.
  - Seek to resolve differences and reach consensus.
  - As appropriate, discuss topics together rather than in isolation.
  - Make every effort to avoid surprises.
  - Limit sidebar conversations
  - Turn off cell phones or put them in silent mode during formal meeting sessions
  - Use lap top computers only for meeting related business.



# **Master Hunter Permit Program**

## ***Master Hunter Advisory Group Recruitment and Selection***

### ***Purpose & Scope***

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*The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has established the Master Hunter Permit Program (MHPP) to effectively manage wildlife in instances when a higher proficiency and demonstrated skill level are needed for resource protection or public safety.*

*This policy establishes guidelines and procedures for the recruitment, selection, and appointment of members to the Master Hunter Advisory Group (MHAG).*

### ***Policy***

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*All MHAG members shall be a certified Master Hunter in good standing*

### ***Procedures***

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#### **Master Hunter Advisory Group Recruitment**

- 1. WDFW shall post on the Master Hunter page of its website an announcement that applications are being accepted for MHAG positions. WDFW may also notify local news media that applications are being accepted. The announcement shall include instructions and the deadline for application submittal.*
- 2. A complete application must be submitted to the WDFW Master Hunter Permit Program during the open recruitment period.*
- 3. An application submitted after the deadline will not be considered, and the applicant must resubmit his or her application during the next open recruitment period.*



### **Master Hunter Advisory Group Member Selection**

1. *The WDFW Hunter Education Division Manager will forward all complete applications to the MHAG for further review and consideration.*
2. *The MHAG Chair and Vice Chair shall review all applications for merits of the candidate. The MHAG (may be a selected sub-committee) may also choose to interview each candidate.*
3. *The MHAG Chair shall provide his or her candidate appointment recommendations to the Hunter Education Division Manager for further review. The number of names recommended shall not exceed the number of available openings on the MHAG; however, the MHAG may choose to recommend fewer candidates than the number of available openings.*
4. *The Hunter Education Division Manager shall conduct a background check on each recommended candidate. Based on the findings of the background check, the Hunter Education Division Manager shall notify the MHAG Chair of the final candidate recommendations that will be forwarded to the WDFW Wildlife Program Assistant Director for final review.*

### **Master Hunter Advisory Group Member Appointment**

1. *After reviewing the applications of the top candidates, the Wildlife Program Assistant Director will provide the WDFW Director with his or her recommendations for appointment.*
2. *The WDFW Director shall make the final appointment decision for those candidates the Wildlife Program Assistant Director has recommended.*
3. *All candidates will be notified of their selection status.*