

**MEETING NOTES**  
**WDFW Master Hunter Advisory Group**  
**Meeting Number 9**  
**September 3, 2009**  
**Ellensburg**

The meeting was called to order by Bill Vincent, Chair, at 9:00 AM. The attached agenda was followed with modifications as appropriate.

Attending were:

Ray Boone	Jim Reinbold
Ron Poppe	Mike Estes
Dustin Albright	Bob Cromwell
Bill Madison	Bob Holtfreter
Bill Vincent	Mike Parris
Brian Davern	Harold Costa
George Coulbourn	

Walt Christensen, GMAC

Chief Bruce Bjork\*  
Mike Kuttel \*  
Capt Rich Mann (part time)\*  
Sgt Eric Anderson \*  
Anthony Novack\*

\*WDFW Staff

Absent: Mike Britton  
Richard Mathisen

**1. Call to order and Announcements**

After call to order, MHAG Chair Vincent reviewed the day's agenda and discussed administrative matters related to the Meeting. Expense forms will be e-mailed to the members by Mr Vincent. They are to be returned to Mr Britton.

**2. Approval of Notes from Meeting No. 8 July 9, 2009**

The Notes were approved as distributed.

### **3. Reports on Action Items**

All Action Items were completed except as discussed below.

### **4. Public Communications**

**a) Information and Outreach Meetings:** Mr Albright led this discussion. He noted that we had several options for 2010: no meetings, 2 meetings as before (one East and one West), regional meetings, and a web-based option. A detailed discussion followed during which all of these and other options were discussed and evaluated.

It was decided to continue with the 2 meeting concept for another year. Consideration also will be given to inviting Jim Posewitz, the renowned advocate for Hunter Ethics, to make presentations at these sessions. Meeting organizers will investigate the possibility of scheduling the meetings in conjunction with sportsman's shows as a convenience and attraction for Master Hunters.

**Action Item No. 1:** Mr Davern will discuss possibilities with Mr Posewitz.

**Action Item No 2:** Mr Albright will lead the planning for the 2010 I&O meetings. Messers Davern, Coulbourn, Mathisen and Estes will assist.

**b) Orientation Meetings:** The Group confirmed the value and appropriateness of continuing these meetings. It was noted that these meetings should be held in January to coincide with the application open period. It was agreed that the Westside meeting would be in Olympia as in the past. The Eastside location warrants further study.

**Action Item No. 3:** Mr Madison will lead the planning for the 2010 Orientation Meetings. Mr Coulbourn will assist. The Eastside location must be identified, speakers selected and the PowerPoint presentation reviewed for currency.

### **5. Illegal Hunter Behavior Study**

Mr Novack updated the Group on the status of this initiative. The importance of conducting a follow-up study in 5 years to evaluate differences using the same process was affirmed. Chief Bjork suggested that a Memorandum of Understanding among the three parties (CWU, WDFW and MHAG) might be helpful. The need for funding for student research participation was discussed. If an MOU is developed, the MHAG will be given an opportunity for review by return e-mail.

**Action Item No 4:** Mr Estes will draft an MOU among CWU, WDFW and the MHAG regarding the Illegal Behavior study.

**Action Item No 5:** Mr Holtfreter will look into CWU support for an MOU and for the follow-on study.

**6. Quinault Valley Signage:** Mr Costa reported on his recent tour of the area. He found support for the program but concern among landowners about the taking of bulls. This issue was discussed briefly but without resolution. The need for signs remains an important initiative.

**7. Update on 3911 Orientation Meeting:** Mr Boone reported that approximately 80 people attended including at least 10 who were not Master Hunters, but who were interested in the Program. This year most of the attendees were from the Westside and a majority of them from King Co. Mr Boone suggested that this represented an evolution resulting from local hunters now being sufficiently briefed and having their landowner arrangements in place.

**8. Meeting with the Director/support from others in the Department:** Mr Vincent reported that the meeting had been cancelled due to the imminent announcement of a permanent Director. In the ensuing discussion it was affirmed that the Chair of the MHAG must obtain prior support from the Group if he intends to speak as its representative.

The broader issue deals with several concerns. Mr Estes expressed a need for performance data regarding Master Hunter hunts. How can we be sure that we do not compromise desired herd populations and ratios?

Mr Vincent addressed the need for criteria in the use of both Master Hunters and Hunt Masters.

Mr Kuttel suggested that Master Hunter hunt boundaries should include at least half public land or land that will be opened by the landowner.

Mr Boone observed that his “unsuccessful” hunts in the Peshastin area had achieved their objective: on mornings when he hunted, the elk stayed away. On mornings when he didn’t hunt, they invaded the orchards. Hazing can frequently be more effective than removal of an animal.

**9. Election Planning:** Mr Kuttel noted that for the 2010 term all three elected positions are open (Chair and Vice Chair are one year positions, Secretary two years). Nominations were made at the meeting (see below). Additional nominations will be accepted until November 1. Elections will be held at the December MHAG Meeting. Since appointments to the MHAG last for 3 years, the eligible members do not include those whose appointments end with this term. New terms will begin at the completion of the December meeting. This allows for overlap between officers since appointments to the MHAG run from March to March.

Nominations to date: Chair: Mr Albright

Vice Chair: Mr Cromwell  
Mr Poppe

Secretary: Mr Mathisen  
Mr Reinbold

**10 “Wall of Shame”:** This initiative involves the publishing of information on the web-site regarding Master Hunters who have violated laws and regulations, and hence been suspended from the Program.

This concept was discussed at length. As with the study of illegal hunter behavior discussed above, such information can be used counter to its intent. However such information is a matter of public record. It was noted that the Hunter Education Program publishes an annual incident report that deals with injury and damage by hunters using firearms.

It was decided to proceed with the initiative. The consensus was that it reinforces the fact that we are serious about “zero tolerance” and that the small number of violators underscores that fact that the bulk of the Master Hunter Corps is comprised of ethical sportsmen. It may also serve as a deterrent for all hunters who might be tempted by unethical behavior.

The following concept was provided to Sgt Anderson: Provide a discussion of the incident analogous to that used by Hunter Education (above). Do not identify names. (It is public record, but many people have similar or identical names.) Post the information annually and keep it for one year.

The need for a preface to put the information into context was identified.

**Action Item No. 6:** Sgt Anderson will develop a model for the web-site.

**Action Item No. 7:** Mr Davern will draft a preface to the “Wall of Shame”. Mr Coulbourn will assist.

**11. GMAC interface:** Mr Kuttel and Mr Christensen discussed the presentation by Mr Kuttel and members of the MHAG (Messers Coulbourn, Cromwell and Estes) at the August 15 GMAC meeting. The desire to develop a working relationship was affirmed.

Following is a synopsis of points made by Mr Kuttel during the GMAC meeting:

1. No Master Hunter elk hunts should be conducted except to curtail damage.
2. Master Hunters are not a recreational user group. Master Hunter hunts are not recreational hunts: their purpose is damage control.
3. Hunt area boundaries should include significant area open to hunting.
4. The Department should have prior assurance of landowner participation.

5. The image of Auctions and Raffles is counter to the concept of fair chase.

Mr Christensen reviewed the GMAC process and conduct of business. He noted that all GMAC members in attendance had reviewed the information on the Master Hunter web-site prior to the meeting. He stressed the importance given to promulgation of information to the public and the hunting community.

During the discussion of elk damage, Mr Novack pointed out that only Region 3 has the capability of making accurate counts of herd population and ratios. That is because they are the only Region with a comprehensive feeding program, which attracts essentially all of the herd. Based on counts, the Colockum herd is back to around 4500 animals, which is at capacity. Bull to Cow ratio is below the target of 15:100. This is not a Master Hunter issue as bulls are not taken from the Colockum herd in special hunts.

**12. Master Hunter assistance to Disabled Master Hunters:** Mr Vincent reviewed the disabled hunter regulations, and especially the role of the “Companion”. There are thought to be around 20 disabled Master Hunters. Most have long-term relationships with their Companions. However, from time to time a need arises for new Companions.

Mr Kuttel advised the Group that a forthcoming WAC change will require that Companions for disabled Master Hunters also be Master Hunters. That is because regulations allow the Companion to shoot an animal for the disabled Master Hunter under certain circumstances.

The MHAG formally endorsed the disabled hunter program and agreed that members of the MHAG may serve as points of contact by disabled Master Hunters seeking a Companion.

**13. Web-site update:** It was agreed that the MHAG Secretary will serve as focal point for corrections and updates to the Master Hunter web-site. All members are responsible for review and identification of need for updates. These are to be forwarded to the Secretary.

**14. Demographics:** Mr Kuttel provided an update of Master Hunters by County.

**15. GPS locator:** Mr Cromwell discussed the status of his ongoing project to load a GPS device with GMU boundaries from WDFW on line information. He has a 4 month on-the-ground test program underway. The possibilities for error include the validity of the Department’s data and conversion errors. However, tests to date show excellent correlation to actual position. The cost of a suitable device is around \$150. Adding topography costs around \$100 and adding map data (roads, etc) would be another \$100. No decision regarding marketing the service has been made.

**16. Master Hunter designator:** Mr Kuttel has been assured the 2010 licenses would indicate Master Hunter status. This has been an unusually challenging initiative on his

part. He noted that licenses obviously won't show status if a Master Hunter certifies after purchase.

**17. Herders:** Mr Kuttel reported that as of this date, 671 volunteer herders and hazers had registered on the web-site. This is a very encouraging start. Key now is to get Regions to make full use of this resource.

**18. Hot Spot hunts:** Sgt Anderson discussed the Hot Spot tool. The WAC specifies that Master Hunters are to be the priority group used for this problem. However, the Region Captain has the authority to designate the hunters to respond to such problems, and they usually call up local hunters with open tags. Clarification is needed.

**19. Recruitment for the MHAG:** Expressions of interest are being received. Mr Kuttel encouraged the members to stimulate appropriate people with whom they are familiar to apply. There are 5 open seats each year. While an even distribution by Region is desired, such is not mandatory. Expiring members may re-apply, however the intent is to refresh the MHAG with new members.

**20. Future directions for the MHAG:** An extended discussion on this subject was initiated by Mr Kuttel. He had previously provided the Group with some suggestions (see Attachment 1). Mr Kuttel noted that now was the time for transition from getting organized and solving a backlog of problems to focusing into the Vision.

Potential areas for concentration were discussed as follows:

1. Increased focus on Ethics
2. Promotion of the concept of "Stewards of the Hunt" for all hunters
3. Developing a partnership between GMAC and MHAG
4. Expansion of Conservation work
5. More emphasis on hazing vs. killing
6. Retention of hunters: 1/3 of Hunter Ed graduates remain after 3 years
7. Increased focus on poaching prevention (TIP: Turn in a Poacher)
8. Development of a Speaker's Bureau
9. Promotion of the Master Hunter Program in hunter Education classes

All of these potential initiatives were discussed. Mr Boone suggested that the MHAG might try to change the perception of hunting among non-hunters. Mr Davern observed that much good might be done if we could reach out to women, since they are

significantly less involved in outdoor sports and because many single parent families are headed by women. Mr Coulbourn opined that our most difficult challenge was in reaching the non-hunting community. He noted that the large number of outdoors-focused organizations seem to concentrate on their constituencies.

This area of discussion will continue as the MHAG continues to evolve.

**21. Recognition of Mr Kuttel:** Chief Bjork reviewed the contributions of Mr Kuttel, MHAG liaison during the past several years. He praised Mr Kuttel's leadership, initiative, dependability and sense of ownership. In particular, Chief Bjork noted that Mr Kuttel consistently provided concise well thought out work.

All agreed that the achievements of the Group would not have been possible without his judgment and dedication. Mr Kuttel was presented with a plaque commemorating his accomplishments by the Chief. The MHAG presented Mr Kuttel with a gift certificate from a well known sports vendor.

**Next meeting:** Meeting No. 10: Thursday, December 3, 2009 in Ellensburg: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 3 PM, all agenda items having been addressed.

Respectfully Submitted,  
George Coulbourn

**Attachments:**

Action Items, Meeting No 8

Action Items, Meeting No 9

Agenda

Attachment

## **MHAG Action Items Meeting No 8**

**Action Item No. 1:** Mr Costa will coordinate with EITW and the prior Lead in developing and implementing plans for the Elk Area 6064 posting project. Mr. Kuttel will forward a complete list of current Master Hunters from Clallam, Jefferson, and Grays Harbor counties.

**Action Item No. 2:** All MHAG members are to review the draft letter to Master Hunters and to provide comments to Mr Kuttel by July 24.

**Action Item No.3:** Mr Holland will provide email addresses to Mr Loveless of WDFW.

**Action Item No.4:** Mr Kuttel will forward the Peer Review/Ethics Matrix to the MHAG to support future discussion.

**Action Item No.5:** Mr Vincent will attempt to arrange formal reciprocal attendance at meetings of EITW, GMAC, the Enforcement AC and the MHAG.

**Action Item No.6:** Mr Poppe was designated MHAG Liaison to EITW, and requested to pursue this interest, with the assistance of Mr. Estes.

**Action Item No.7:** Mr Mathisen will examine the process and suitability of seeking copyright or trademark protection for “Stewards of the Hunt”.

**Action Item No.8:** Mr Kuttel will make such revisions to the draft firearm qualification documents as appropriate and make modifications to the Shooting Proficiency Requirements/Certification sections of the website.

**Action Item No.9:** Mr Kuttel will post this new Conservation hour credit opportunity on the web-site and include it in the Chief’s letter.

**Action Item No.10:** Mr Vincent will provide Mr Novack with input from the MHAG by July 18. Members desiring further discussion should correspond with Mr Vincent in the interim.

**Action Item No.11:** Mr Vincent will attempt to stimulate responses from the Wildlife Program on the draft Hunt Master Guidelines.

**Action Item No.12:** Mr Mathisen will draft a notice for a future edition of “Instructor Talk” discussing the program requirements and encouraging Instructors to consider becoming Master Hunters.

**Action Item No.13:** Messers Albright, Coulbourn, Cromwell and Estes agreed to “proof-read” the draft web-site postings on an expedited basis as soon as they are available.



**Mtg # 7 Continuing Action Item No. 2:** Mr Estes will lead an activity to evaluate the effectiveness of these meetings as they relate to candidate success. Specifically, does attendance at the Orientation meeting enhance the likelihood of the candidate actually becoming a Master Hunter?

## **MHAG Action Items Meeting No 9**

**Action Item No. 1:** Mr Davern will discuss possibilities with Mr Pesowitz.

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# **MASTER HUNTER ADVISORY GROUP**

## **WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

**Agenda for MHAG Meeting #9**  
Ellensburg Quality Inn, Fireside Room  
September 3, 2009  
9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

### Old Business

- Approval of meeting notes from July 9, 2009 business meeting. (5)
- Status of assignments from last meeting.(5)
- Committee reports (10)
- Comments from Enforcement Chief Bruce Bjork. (15)
- Public Communications Planning for 2010---video Posewitz presentation at an I&O meeting and post on website (Albright). (15)
- Illegal Behavior Study of Washington Hunters and Master Hunters (Novack). (20)
- Progress on Quinault Valley Signage Project (Costa and Holland). (5)
- Update about the Elk Area 3911 public meeting in Ellensburg on July 18, 2009 (Boone). (5)

### New Business

- Proposed meeting with the WDFW Director (Vincent). (10)
- Planning for Elections of all Three Executive Committee Officers (Vincent). (15)
- Master Hunter Disciplinary Actions page concept-Wall of Shame. (Kuttel et. al.) (10)
- Results of the Game Management Advisory Council (GMAC) briefing on August 15, 2009—discuss GMAC recommendations (Kuttel, Cromwell, Estes, Coulbourn). (15)
- Formal Action to provide assistance to Master Hunters issued Disabled Hunter Permits in finding local Master Hunters to serve as Designated Hunter Companions (Kuttel and Vincent). (10)
- MHAG Recruitment Process Update and Planning-vetting and December 3 interview process. (Kuttel and Vincent). (10)
- Liaison Update (Kuttel and Anderson). (10)
  - Website updates (need MHAG lead to assist WDFW)
  - Commission briefing on rule amendments
  - #Master Hunters by County
  - Posting of GPS Boundary Directions.
  - Position on funding of Jim Posewitz via WHEIA Account
  - Initialing of the Chief/Chair memo to all Master Hunters
  - Master Hunter license designator

## Lunch

- Where the MHAG goes from here (see Kuttel memo)
- Defining the “Ethical Standards Bar” in consultation with Jim Posewitz (Davern and Coulbourn).
- Good of the Order
- Adjournment

### Secondary priority topics that could be placed on future meeting agendas:

- Trade Mark/Copy Right for “Stewards of the Hunt”.
- Wildlife Program input on Hunt Master/Coordinator guidelines (Cromwell and Vincent).
- Use of Master Hunters as part of the Hot Spot damage control concept.
- Cross representation with EITWs, GMAC, and the Enforcement Advisory Committee.
- Partnership with GMAC in defining the criteria when Master Hunter seasons are established and for minimum access levels within hunt areas.
- Peer Review concept for unethical behavior.
- Development of descriptions/requirements/expectations for Master Hunter seasons for posting on the website.
- Clarification of ALEA Grant funded expenses for MHAG.
- Update on WDFW discussions about Elk Area 3911 Master Hunter seasons.

## Attachment 1

### WHERE THE MASTER HUNTER ADVISORY GROUP (MHAG) GOES FROM HERE

I have worked for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and its predecessor agencies for almost 37 years pre-retirement and post-retirement. But I have never worked with an advisory group as committed and dedicated as the MHAG, or one with so many members that so freely “role up their sleeves” and get involved.

It has truly been a privilege to be part of the MHAG team and a partner in reinventing and strengthening the Master Hunter Permit Program.

I have a great deal of respect for those sportsmen that still care about the heritage of hunting and are willing to be outspoken advocates for it. It is a gross understatement to say that the members of the MHAG really do care. Each was selected to bring different strengths and viewpoints to the table. Many are true champions for the “cause”.

We have come a great distance since early 2008. Critical flaws related to WDFW support and administrative processes have been addressed, thanks in large part to Chief Bruce Bjork. Accountability and disciplinary standards for Master Hunters have been strengthened. Identity and credibility issues that existed with the public and some landowners have improved markedly. A state-of-the-art website exists, thanks in large part to Webmaster John Burrows. An aggressive statewide Public Communications Plan has been implemented. Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission members were so supportive that the Commission created a specific policy for the Master Hunter Program. The Master Hunter Permit Program has become a legislatively mandated program with all the necessary authorities!

So now what? This is not the time to bask in the sunlight of positive progress, quite the contrary. Most of the hard lifting associated with the necessary bureaucratic phase may be pretty much behind us. But now comes the most important phase, in my opinion. That would be implementing the MHAG Vision Statement.

We have already discussed many great ideas to help accomplish that Vision Statement. My advice to the MHAG is to select the best of the best so that the limited resources of the MHAG and WDFW can be concentrated to ensure success. Do not spread the team too thin.

My suggestions include:

- Defining ethical standards, responsibilities, and expectations for all Master Hunters--- create the “ethical behavior bar”. Don’t forget that such standards should actually apply to all hunters not just Master Hunters. Getting Jim Posewitz involved would add great credibility to the effort.

- Market the “Stewards of the Hunt” role of the MHAG. Carve out that niche. Define what “Stewards of the Hunt” means (maybe in conjunction with Jim Posewitz). This process should involve an ethical standards critique of the WDFW Auction and Raffle program.
- Work with WDFW and GMAC to define the criteria/guidelines that determine when Master Hunters are to be used; and how the boundaries for all game depredation seasons are developed. This should include the active use of the “hot spot” concept for Master Hunters; the routine contacting by WDFW of all landowners inside potential boundaries BEFORE seasons are established; and the development and circulation of lists of willing landowner participants to all hunters drawing special permits whether they are for Master Hunter seasons or for general damage seasons.
- Actively promote key volunteer Conservation Projects. Project activities such as critical game habitat protection/enhancement; increasing private land hunting access for all hunters; mentoring of first time hunters and persons of disability; and game damage depredation resolution should be considered as priorities. Strengthen your partnerships with Eyes In the Woods, Washington Hunter Education Instructor’s Association, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, and other organizations in this regard.
- Don’t forget that killing a problem game animal is not the only option or always the best option. Perhaps high profile herding and hazing efforts can be promoted by the MHAG as an alternative to damage seasons----that may be the case with the Blue Mountains Herd and Colockum Herd in some areas.
- Work with the WDFW and GMAC to determine why only 30% of Hunter Education students are still hunting in the state three years after certification. Advocate for WDFW to put much more effort into the recruitment and retention of hunters---the hunter replacement rate in Washington is estimated to be .46 by the National Shooting Sports Foundation.
- Get directly involved with the Enforcement Program’s Turn In A Poacher (TIP) program.
- Start a “Speaker’s Bureau” amongst members of the MHAG and systematically schedule and present marketing/informational presentations to every hunting organization in the State. Maybe even some of the more progressive schools and civic groups could be included.
- Develop marketing/informational materials that can be distributed at Hunter Education training classes statewide to influence students and their parents/guardians to pursue further study and skill development through the Master Hunter Permit Program.

Good Luck and God Bless.

Mike P. Kuttel Sr.  
September 2, 2009

