

**Waterfowl Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes
USFS North Bend Ranger Station
March 29, 2008**

Michael Crowder (chair) called the meeting to order by reading the Waterfowl Advisory Group (WAG) mission statement. Emphasized the need to focus on intents and purposes of the WAG during meetings.

Meeting attendees provided introductions. Members present (14): Michael Crowder, Roy Christopherson, Chris Dorow, Ralph Engle, Jason Gupton, Doug Hargin, Fred LeVering, Mike Meseberg, Dick Price, Patric Shearer, Dave Sievers, Fred Slyfield, Rodney Vandersypen, Ben Welton. Also present: Don Kraege (WDFW), Mikal Moore (WDFW), Brad Bortner (USFWS), Brad Johnson (GMAC), John Tierney (DU), Martha Jordan (TTSS).

Members were requested to update contact information (Don Kraege)

History and purpose of the WAG was discussed. Copy of the mission statement was provided to members. A bulleted list of meeting norms was also provided. List of past WAG recommendations was reviewed. Don Kraege recommended using the list to frame future discussions on unresolved issues.

ACTION: Dick Price requested legislative contact list for increase of state duck stamp cost.

MOTION: Approve minutes from July 2007 meeting. Passed unanimously.

Don Kraege and Mikal Moore provided an overview of proposed FY 2009 duck stamp and print projects.

- **ACTION: Reserve boundary signs need to be replaced on Frenchman Hills Ponds. Contact Greg Fitzgerald.**
- **MOTION: Support development of reliable public access to the Winchester RAA. Seconded. Passed unanimously.**
- **MOTION: Support WDFW recommendations for duck stamp and print projects for 2008-09. Seconded. Passed unanimously.**

Don Kraege discussed draft 2009-2015 Game Management Plan. **Requested WAG input on the plan by May 30.** Provided information on human dimensions survey of Washington hunters and general population.

Don Kraege discussed changes presented to Commission regarding early migratory bird seasons.

- Eurasian collared doves are establishing populations throughout Washington. WDFW proposes classifying as a predatory bird.

- Mourning dove season: WDFW is proposing increased mourning dove season from 15 to 30 days based on increasing call counts.
- Grays Harbor County: Change wording to Management Area 3 and change season to September 6-12, 2008, to be consistent with the remainder of Area 3.
- **ACTION: Suggestion to add waterfowl breeding population survey discussion to future agenda**

Michael Crowder requested WDFW consider moving crow hunting season opener to coincide with dove season (e.g. Sept. 1). Brad Bortner (USFWS) provided information on the difference between take of crows for crop depredation control versus hunting season. Hunting season constraints: must occur outside the primary breeding season and not exceed 120 days. Crop depredation control allows shooting of crows with a shotgun, but without calls/decoys (outside of hunting season).

MOTION: Evaluate moving opener of crow season to September 1. Seconded.

Discussion regarding regulatory differences between crows, ravens, and magpies.

Motion passed.

Update on SW Washington/NW Oregon goose management program (Don Kraege). Discussed biology of dusky Canada geese, history of population decline, overview of current season. New dusky Canada goose management plan is complete. Goose ID test is now available online. Late damage hunt is only for AHE hunters.

Brad Bortner (USFWS) led discussion of baiting regulations, and requested WAG members to pass information along to general public. Areas of concern include hunting near grain elevators and granaries near Kalama, Wallula, Lyons Ferry, Burbank, and Clarkston. "Zone of Influence" is the issue with grain elevators and feed lots, distance is not defined. There is no differentiation between hunting for dabblers or divers near grain elevators in terms of baiting laws. Discussed how to help identify areas (e.g. in pamphlet) to inform hunters of "areas of concern". Federal officer needs to define zone of influence for specific areas. Suggestion to obtain list of past baiting violation locations.

ACTION: Request to have federal officer attend future WAG meeting to discuss baiting.

MOTION: Do not define baiting beyond federal regulations, but list areas of concern in the pamphlet. Seconded.

MOTION AMENDED: To include term "feed lots" and include language to state "not a comprehensive list" (e.g. "including, but not limited to..."). Motion failed.

ALTERNATE MOTION: Include examples of "areas of concern" in pamphlet under federal rule summary. Seconded. Motion passed.

Next meeting: August 2 at Moses Lake Fire Hall (Dick Price will reserve).

Other Topics:

1. State Duck Stamp (Chris Dorow): WAG made recommendation to increase state duck stamp fee, tie state duck stamp to federal duck stamp increase. Discussed

potential to organize coalition to contact legislators. Emphasized this would be a fee increase, not a tax increase. Chris Dorow provided list of 6 legislators sympathetic to cause including: House members Lynn Kessler, Frank Chopp, and Brian Blake; Senate members Ken Jacobsen, Brian Hatfield, and Lisa Brown. Suggestion for a communication effort.

2. Federal legislation update (Roy Christopherson): NAWCA requested \$42.6 million, highest possible appropriation from Congress. Neither Washington senator signed Lincoln-Krapo letter of support for NAWCA. USFWS survey plane fleet needs to be replaced, is included in DMB budget. CRP contracts are expiring, legislators need to be reminded. Ralph Engle suggested members visit Ducks Unlimited website to contact legislators.
3. Battery-powered spinning wing decoys (Mike Meseberg): Meseberg requests group keep issue in mind. Three-year season package may provide opportunity to bring issue up again.
4. Fir Island/Skagit Flats (Dick Price): There was some concern that some state lands may be included in the new private lands access program funded by the Legislature in 2008. Rone Brewer (WWA) is working on the issue. Discussion: Focus is on private lands, will not apply to state lands. State lands are already under contract with NAWCA. Legislature would provide funds to study feasibility, may lead to more public hunting opportunity. Pat Shearer concerned about state of water control structures on the Farmed Island Unit.
5. Lead shot (Dave Seivers): Suggest that hunting community initiate discussion on potential lead shot ban for all hunting. Information provided that Department of Ecology is reviewing Chemical Action Plan for lead. Suggestion that hunting community needs to demand steel upland bird loads.
6. Waterfowl distribution issues (Chris Dorow): In the past the group has discussed creating flooded crop programs on public lands. Would hunters pay an additional access fee to use program? Chris Dorow found high acceptance among constituents.

MOTION: Support investigation of possible development and implementation of a program to use fees collected on QHAs dedicated to the improvement and administration of management of those properties, including developing food plots and a lottery-style program for allocation of hunting opportunities. Seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.