

## Game Management Advisory Council Minutes

June 7, 2014

WCA Boardroom  
1301 N. Dolarway Road  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

**Members in Attendance:** Dean Holecek, Mark Pidgeon, Shawn McCully, Dave Duncan, Ren Sarns, Jim Stephenson, BJ Thorniley, Darrell Moore, James Horan, Paul Schneider, Lee Davis, Terry Mansfield, Rob McCoy, Kevin Frankeberger Ph.D, Al Martz, Jerry Barron, Jake Weise, Randy Mesenbrink, Jan Patrico,

**WDFW Staff:** Kristen Mansfield, Jerry Nelson, Brian Calkins, and Dave Ware

**Guests:** Becky Frankeberger

**Welcome and Introductions:** Meeting called to order at 9:10 am; the membership list was passed around for updates.

**Approval of the June 28, 2013 Minutes:** Postponed adoption

**Approval of March 1, 2014 Minutes:** Mark moved to adopt the March minutes approved unanimously.

**Elk Hoof Disease Overview:** Comprehensive overview provided in a PowerPoint presentation by Kristen Mansfield on what we know to date.

**Discussion:** A suggestion was to place a hoof disease photo in the pamphlet so hunters know what it looks like. The silviculture practices have changed in recent years and herbicides are more widely used. There was speculation that Mount St Helens eruption may have contributed as we saw both Boisford & JBH refuges have the disease. Question: Can the disease be passed from mother to calf? Answer: No. Question: Does the ash restrict the bacteria? Answer: So far we don't know. Question: Is the meat ok for consumption? Answer: Yes. Question: Are the animals that are affected always selenium deficient? Answer: Yes, however there is nothing you can do about that anyway. Question: Does this bacterium need something else to make the disease able to penetrate the hoof? Answer: Yes, they need access to the inner hoof such as a lesion and then they burrow into otherwise healthy tissue. Question: Is this disease new? Answer: We are not sure, but it was first diagnosed in California in dairy cows in the 1990's. It behaves like a new

species, but could also just be something that has just become able to infect animals effectively. Question: Can it be transmitted on shoes or boots of people? Do we know how it is transmitted? Answer: Some things are known to aid in transmission but not enough is known. The suggestion was made that soil sampling might be helpful. WDFW is also contacting the National Academy of Sciences to have them review our process. The disease has been studied in dairy cattle for many years so it's difficult and outreach will be critical. It seems like a captive population would help with research especially mode of transmission. This disease should get more attention on a global basis. Question: How will elk feeding stations contribute to the transmission of this disease and WDFW should look at reducing them in Yakima area. Question: Are other areas of the state showing signs of the disease? Answer: There is one case to date that was reported in the Skagit herd. Question: Can the disease be transmitted between elk and deer or elk and cattle? Understanding the issue is important so use the pamphlet & allow paper reporting of the distribution; Question: What portion of the herd has the disease? Answer: We don't really know but that is an important question. Question: What about the immune system, is it affected? Answer: The USDA is studying if it is or not.

**Hunter Access – GoHunt and Reservation System** – Online presentation of how to use these programs provided by Brian Calkins;

**Discussion:** After the demonstration suggestions were made as to how we could increase use and ease of use. Suggestion: It would be better if each GMU could be clicked on and then it showed you how many animals were harvested in the GMU. Question: Are these sites available on accessible software? Answer: Not Yet. Question: Is there viewable information about private vs public lands? Answer: There is a layer showing public lands and one for lands that WDFW has under agreements. It was suggested that the driving directions should show highway maps. However, the system actually uses independent mapping services. It would be helpful to have timber company access information available on this system as well. It would also be helpful to have multiple sites combined into one reservation when using the hunt by reservation tool. Phone numbers for the local landowners being posted on the web site for the hunt by written permission sites would be helpful to allow for hunter contact to landowners go more smoothly. Question: What is the incentive for landowners to participate in the WDFW access programs? Answer: The landowners receive technical assistance with USDA programs, signs, better enforcement presence, cash payments, and habitat enhancements. There should be more accessible information about where lands are available and where they are located with boundary information. A suggestion

of using the old green dot system to assist in boundaries was posed. The old green dot system is still in use today.

**Wolf Management Update:** Update of trapping, depredations, and policy development was provided. An up to date map was handed out and notes were available.

**Discussion:** There have been reports of sightings south of I-90. The second female in the Ruby pack was not bred by the escaped cattle dog. Wolf Advisory Group and WDFW Staff are working on how we deal with lethal actions. Also we are creating a checklist and considering codifying. Comment: Most contentious issue still to deal with is post delisting (state) management. Comment: WDFW may want to start looking for wolf activity South of I-90. Some members feel there are wolves there with the possibility of a breeding pair with pups. To clarify, the control protocol covers everything from first report through multiple depredations. It will have varying actions, up to pack removal, that would be included. Comment: It will be important for the public to see that step by step protocols are needed.

**2015-21 Game Management Plan:** Dave Ware provided an overview of the major issues identified in the plan

**Discussion:** Dave gave an overview and described the public comment process and public meeting schedule. The plan will be out for review soon with public meetings scheduled in June. Members were told to watch for the WDFW news release. The August commission meeting will take comment and request adoption of the game management plan in September. There is some chance that this could be confused with 3 year package process as they are being completed at the same time.

Major issues were identified to include:

- Predator Prey Management
- Wolf Management
- Hunter Recruitment and Retention
  - Are there stats on success of mentoring programs?
- Non-Toxic Ammunition
  - Could this apply to rifles or upland hunting? Yes, but depends on situation. AZ voluntary program was used as an example.
- Hunter Access
- Wildlife Conflict

- Bear damage Why reduce the number of permits. Want to develop other alternatives to address problems. Could be spring hunts. Depredation kills are a big percentage of total take.
- Depredation hunts on fee access properties. Will be part of the discussion
- Bears peeling in overstocked stands hunters can't get through. Hunters can't be effective in these areas unless baiting. Not using hounds for damage could be a big problem. Helping hunters focus on damage sites is a strategy we have had some success with.
- NE Washington 42 taken with 195 permits. Could we go to a quota.
- Disease in Wildlife
  - Add feed stations to this issue.
- Baiting of Deer and Elk
- Equipment
- Others by Group
  - Drawing Point System or other permit system changes. Would be in 3 yr package. Comment: Should be in GM plan too.
  - Feeding Wildlife—Only thing that did pass when proposed before was associated with large carnivores. Comment: Raccoons can be problematic too—some cities have addressed this.

**Process comment:** This is supposed to be an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) but this is a plan. Usually alternatives listed within this plan describe different outcomes that might occur. This is a project EIS and alternatives are unlimited and include all comments. The general population public survey was reviewed as well.

**Send out the June 2013 minutes along with these.**

**2015-17 Hunting Season Overview:** The members went through the three year hunting season package.

**Discussion:** Allocation Committee—Shawn went through the minutes. The Allocation topics were discussed and the membership tried to stay away from other topics. A suggestion was made about shifting the archery season which currently floats. Archers have proposed WDFW create a set date for archery seasons. The previous shift model was to reduce trophy harvest in order to allocate a portion to other hunter groups. Question posed: Should Roosevelt and Rocky Mountain elk seasons be the same? The members asked for new statistics to evaluate if the two subspecies should be treated the same. There needs to be a new comparison. We will revisit this option in future meetings. The members proposed some options for

youth hunters. There are a low percentage of Hunter Education graduates that make the decision to buy hunting licenses. The older age groups (over 65) are less likely to continue hunting as shown by our statistics. The members want to emphasize generating hunting interest in our youth hunter education graduates. There was talk about creating a separate seasons for youth that is outside the general season. This would help avoid having dad or mom do the harvesting. There was a suggestion of offering a higher percentage of second tags or lower the cost of the second tag. We currently have lots of opportunity in deer but not a lot in elk. The members suggested we allow youth to kill any buck. The membership also discussed the possibility of implementing a special mentor hunt permit. Antlerless hunts in WT units were proposed as well. The membership recognizes that we need to create opportunities for new hunters. Possible incentives geared towards female hunters were proposed as well. Special permits and earlier seasons for new hunters were also discussed. The question, "What is a mentor?" was rhetorically proposed. Permit allocations were discussed. There are about 400 elk permits for Y/S/D. There is a need more for youth permits because currently they are hard to draw. The membership looked at 800 tags for youth. Seniors get highest share of the permits. Access Issues were discussed as well. Fee hunting issues and hunter crowding in R-5 were discussed. There was a suggestion to add a unit for Muzzleloaders. Fire restrictions are sometime problematic so it was suggested that shifting archery could help address some closures during fire season. The membership suggested that Margaret and Toutle should become general season hunting units. Also shifting Modern Firearm seasons in the Yakima area. The membership requested we try to get data on different age groups over time. Who keeps buying licenses? Other issues for committee to look at: WDFW should start keeping statistics for each user group for harvest to help with allocation. Muzzleloaders are currently getting about 4% more harvest rate than the percentage of hunters who are muzzleloaders. WDFW's Allocation formula and hunter participation are both considered in both permit and general seasons. Archers often have more general season opportunity. Comment: Limit doe tags for GMU 117/121. The committee wanted to give youth more opportunity but split the allocation between all 3 weapon types. They would like to see more opportunity going to youth. Seems we are not thinking outside box but changing within the box. Maybe WDFW needs to try new things rather than just making adjustments to current regulations and seasons. We need to stem the loss of new hunters and change the public's opinion of "Fee for this and that". Our big problem is the diminishing number of hunters. Some feel that it is becoming rich man's sport. Suggestion to start figuring ways to engage use without costing dad for two licenses was proposed by the membership. Youths and new hunters in general need to be successful early and often to keep generating an interest in

hunting. Cost is a prohibitive issue for hunters that are leaving high school. Every change upsets somebody and the committee works within a set number of tags and season structure. There are limits. Suggestion: WDFW could create a low income tag with reduced fees. More low income hunters would purchase a license and continue to hunt. This option may be a way to get people back or recruit new hunters. Also it would provide a possible meat source for these families. Other side of the coin is hunting may be a priority for low income hunters and they do buy licenses so it will not have much of an impact. WDFW could also combine youth and senior seasons. This may spark granddad taking the grandkid and create a hunter the grandkid. Reducing season length may not affect harvest that much but may improve herd health. The other side is that we may lose hunters and increase crowding because there is less time to hunt.

**General hunting season ideas:** Expand 200 series of GMUs for mule deer harvest. Many of the GMU's in the 400 series are closed during late archery. GMU 418 is one to look at. There is an issue regarding crowding and how to deal with it. A possible solution is to have 2 seasons (early and late) as separate tag choices. Does the agency try to educate the public about Biology vs Recreation or public opinion? Wildlife management is still a democratic process that involves public opinion. We try to be factual and deal with the biology as best we can. The idea of Expandable broadheads was proposed but there is concern, especially for elk. (WS bowhunters, WSAA and TBW) Jerry: Handgun rules in FRAs. Revolver type cartridges some saying some autos are adequate. Also talked about was the 24 caliber restriction on big game. Some want the ability to use .223 or 22-250. The recent cartridge advancements are making smaller calibers more effective and more user friendly for special groups. The committee will take no position at this point. This is probably not a resource/biological issue. WDFW will be looking for comments during the public comment for 2015-2021. Muzzleloader regulation's main issue is the allowance of inline muzzleloaders. The Fish and Wildlife Commission is reluctant to allow optic changes for all muzzleloaders as well as change to allow modern primers etc. They believe that is too much modernization and beyond intent of a separate season. The issue is really about bullets, if you have the right ones, then they are effective. We will work with enforcement to make sure rules enforced make a difference. Disabled Hunter Rules questions: When will we see differences in those rules for qualifying? When will see change in scopes on crossbows? (process) Will it be in three year package? The committee was asking for non-magnified version. The hope is that the pistol and rifle decisions are results oriented such as in foot lbs of force, minimum caliber Etc. One state has a rule on length of cartridge which would be enforceable. Antler restrictions are always an issue. WDFW can possibly shift

late muzzleloader seasons away from overlaps with tribal seasons. This would result in less pressure in north Olympic area. Also WDFW could limit the number of species a hunter could apply for. This idea was not popular six years ago. There seems to be a problem with auction tags. Raffle hunts are a little different but overall they are better.

July 26 tentatively next Meeting:

- Game Management Plan
- Allocation Committee Update

December Meeting: doodle the date

- Review/approve June 2013, meeting minutes.
- Overview of proposed 15-17 hunting season recommendations
- Wolf Population Update