

## Game Management Advisory Council Meeting Notes

December 9, 2017

WCA Boardroom  
1301 N Dolarway Road  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

**Members in Attendance:** Jake Weise, Dave Duncan, Jerry Barron, Art Meikel, BJ Thorniley, James Horan, Rob Mccoy, Al Martz, John Magart, Gregg Bafundo, Warren Gimlin, Shawn McCully

**WDFW Employees:** Anis Aoude, Ciera Strickland, Dan Brinson, Jeff Burnham

**Welcome and Introduction:** Rob called the meeting to order and introductions were made all around. Meeting notes from the previous meeting were approved.

Anis introduced Dan Brinson to the group.

### **Agenda Items:**

Internet was not initially accessible.

Note Approval –

1. Rob turned the meeting over to Jake Weise for the Permit Allocation Subcommittee
  - a. Try to set the allocation per tags for equal success rates over each category
    - i. Same success percentage from the mandate
    - ii. Worked with those in WDFW to get to these allocations
    - iii. Mandate is to ensure same success rate in terms of harvest for all user groups
    - iv. Prior subcommittee groups were close to reaching that
    - v. 3 years ago, a strong shift towards youth
    - vi. Typically, modern firearm runs about at the target success rate
      1. Muzzleloader – high
      2. Archery – slightly below, greatest variations
      3. All based on 3 year averages
    - vii. Only three or four units where they could shift from Muzzleloader to Archery
      1. Not much availability or areas where allocations could be shifted to try and reach the desired equitable success rates
      2. Trying to determine what and where changes can be made
      3. Issues with looking at all of the variables

- a. Something that we should stay on top of and continue monitoring and adjusting
  - 4. These are statewide averages
    - a. Focusing on specific districts or GMUs can have detrimental impacts within that area to try to target the statewide average.
  - 5. Question – should archery have the same success rate?
    - a. Determine the goals
  - 6. Question – Are you taking into account the age class of animals taken?
    - a. How did it account 3 years ago?
      - i. Archers generally get does
      - ii. Elk – there was a discrepancy between 5/6 points Bulls
        - 1. What is a quality bull?
          - a. Was 5 pt, now 6 pt
        - 2. Archers were high in quality bulls
        - 3. Changing it to a 6 pt – evened out the numbers
      - b. Account for high predator areas so we don't have to decrease the level and availability of youth hunts
      - c. Resource allocation has always been due to percentages, not tags
      - d. Many areas are not conducive for certain types of hunting
- b. Rob turned it over to Dave to introduce an issue.
  - i. The article “Words Matter” went to the Commission
  - ii. The Coalition feels very strongly that this should be the management style moving forward – it is “holistic” managing.
    - 1. Aiming to preserve and conserve
    - 2. Lessen the cost and increase the quality of life by limiting depredations
    - 3. Worked hard to develop the level of trust
    - 4. Anis addressed the group
      - a. We were instructed to only use the information that we had at the time.
      - b. People asked the department to put it online
      - c. Predator prey research was in response to this
      - d. Harvest data not the best to use
      - e. We were mandated by Legislature to perform the assessment and produce the report
    - 5. Need to conduct the research
    - 6. Need to do the Post-delisting plan
    - 7. Article is contrary to what people in the NE are seeing – big issue

8. The hunters in these areas are not seeing animals
    - a. Hard to believe that predators aren't causing an issue
    - b. Need to complete the studies
  9. Do not want to end up where Oregon is
    - a. Promised that the post-delisting plan
    - b. Priority to be a post-delisting plan
    - c. Moose population down 75%
    - d. WTD recruitment is low
    - e. No elk calves
    - f. Wolf packs are larger, spreading within that area and not outside that area
    - g. Need to manage wolves
  10. An in depth discussion of an article written by the Capital Press
    - a. Potential desire for WDFW to make a statement
    - b. Discussion of how statements are viewed
    - c. More clear description and statement from WDFW
    - d. Motion by GMAC formally requests to provide a post-delisting plan amendment for 12 months, Jake made a recommendation that a letter from GMAC be sent to the Director and CC to Commission.
  11. Similar situation to what happened in Idaho and Montana
    - a. Moose is a good indicator of what is happening
  12. Further description of the report listed on the WDFW website
    - a. Requested by the Legislature
    - b. What was the content?
    - c. Satellite view/Broad view
  13. GMAC members agreed that a statement should be made by WDFW
  14. Need for baselines many years ago
  15. WDFW does want to complete and move towards a post-delisting plan
  16. What happens if preliminary findings from the current project/research tell us that we need to act now?
  17. Let's not forget all predators – cougars may not be receiving the attention that they deserve
2. WDFW Working Lands Partnerships presented by Jeff Burnham, Statewide Range Ecologist
    - a. Statewide Range Ecologist
    - b. Presentation was over Farming, Grazing, and Forestry
    - c. Wildlife Areas have different goals
      - i. All vary
      - ii. Working lands partnerships can provide aid
    - d. Partnerships provide stewardship benefits

- e. Aid in achieving goals
    - i. Goal 1: Conserve and protect native fish and Wildlife
    - ii. Goal 3: Promote a healthy economy, community etc.
  - f. Farming Partnerships
    - i. Revenue is put back into the Wildlife Area
    - ii. Numerous benefits for wildlife and the public
  - g. Grazing Partnerships
    - i. Monitoring points, measuring ecological integrity (vegetation, soil and habitat)
    - ii. Profits help maintain fences and other projects
    - iii. Facilitates Livestock movement
  - h. Forestry Partnerships
    - i. Prescribed burning
    - ii. Forest Thinning
    - iii. Forest Management
  - i. Questions
    - i. Windmills?
      - 1. We do have biologists that are involved with that process
    - ii. Nice to see the value in the monetary funds going towards these projects.
      - 1. Success Projects
    - iii. Each area has a management plan (WLAs)
3. Hunting Season Proposals for 2018-20 Presented by Anis
- a. Crossbow discussion prompted
  - b. Anis began the discussion with the hunting season proposal presentation
    - i. Outline and process
    - ii. Currently developing recommendations for commission
  - c. Anis went through the recommendations as have been decided are moving forward – reference presentation
  - d. Suggestion to add the certificate for black bear test on the license
  - e. May be issues with the computer sign-up (Dave)
  - f. Change the percentage of allocated permits for youth (Deer Issue A)
  - g. Clarification on GMU 450 Elk Issue (Elk Issue B)?
  - h. What is the youth situation with the Colockum? (Elk Issue D)
  - i. 603 GMU may not have a population healthy enough to harvest antlerless in that area
    - i. Discuss with Region 6 staff
  - j. Anis brought up the issue of the 209 primer and explained the survey efforts and the results that have resulted that it is recommended that they be allowed for muzzleloaders
  - k. Goose area number 4 – written odd. Is there any way to clarify and clean up the language?
  - l. Do we have a baseline for the moose population?
  - m. Are the flight surveys going to be conducted using the same methods?

- n. Having an extended season may not solve any of our population issues in regards to turkeys.
    - i. Price is also an issue for some public
  - o. NWTF – not represented at the Bighorn show (Spokane area)
- 4. More opportunity for general spring bear seasons
- 5. Why is there not a goat season in the cathedral peak area?
- 6. Lifetime license similar to Idaho?
- 7. Lots of things that we cannot control, timber practices, agricultural etc.
  - a. Can control doe harvest
  - b. Buck Escapement
  - c. Small steps (3 pt min on whitetail, minimize doe harvest etc.) that can be done right now.
  - d. Simplifies things
  - e. Point restrictions? Should they come back to aid in the population recovery?
  - f. 5 days in between elk and deer season. Can't we fill in that 5 days? It is lost opportunity.
- 8. Young survival in areas with bear and wolf populations
  - a. Liberalizing hunting limits in certain areas to provide relief to fawns
- 9. Why do we continue with the quotas with spring bear hunting when we never seem to reach them and they may not be serving the purpose?
- 10. Discussion about spring bear hunts and permits/quotas ensued.
- 11. Discussion about cougar management ensued
  - a. Discussion about needing a cougar management plan
    - i. How Oregon handles cougar populations. Oregon has a year-round season statewide, or until quotas are met. The quota is 970 and you can buy 2 tags. The harvest through Jan was 560, more than double Washington's harvest of 277. The blue mountains quota is 270.
- 12. Moving management suggestions forward
- 13. Developing the appropriate measures and guidelines to management
- 14. Facilitating change
  - a. Takes significant time
- 15. How can GMAC gain some accomplishments and support these decisions, ideas and opinions?
  - a. Need to see some change
  - b. Actions and support taken seriously
  - c. Group wants to make some change for wildlife
  - d. Need direction
- 16. Add to presentations – “GMAC supports this decision”
- 17. Have a “sit-down” with the leaders, including Director so we can discuss these issues and be listened to.
- 18. What is the “role” of the GMAC and how can we be effective?
  - a. Think that our voices are not being heard
  - b. Does this conversation materialize into something down the road?

19. Baiting turkeys should be the same under the deer rule
20. Discussion about press releases and interaction with the press overall
21. Recommendation for press release in the following week
22. Appreciation for standardizing and annual surveying and reporting
23. Harvest reporting and non-reporting discussion Al's comments will be incorporated.
  - i. Approximately 50% of hunters report harvest (compliant). There is a phone survey done to determine the success rates of the non-compliant. This number is added to the compliant number to get overall harvest-success-etc. As a rule of thumb about 10 years of surveys the non-compliant hunter harvest adds another 38-42% of the compliant harvest, to come up with the total estimated harvest. 2015 District 1 to bring harvest numbers up to 60% number was used instead. This means non-reporting hunters were 50% more successful from one year to the next! This doesn't happen.
24. Next meeting and agenda items were discussed
  - a. March 3<sup>rd</sup> proposed meeting, will be changed if it conflicts with the Commission meeting
  - b. Agenda items:
    - i. Legislative Update
    - ii. Predator Prey Study Update
    - iii. Discussion about permit levels
      1. Do your homework if you have questions or concerns about specific hunts
    - iv. 3-year package final/GMAC comment
    - v. Wolf Update
    - vi. Miscellaneous/Other

Anis will send out the August meeting notes again since internet wasn't working at the December meeting.