



MASTER HUNTER ADVISORY GROUP

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Notes for MHAG Meeting #56
August 19, 2022 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Washington Cattlemen’s Association, Ellensburg

MHAG Members		WDFW Staff	Guests
Region 2	Carissa Craghead, Secretary (excused)	Kris Thorson, Hunter Education Division Specialist	
Region 3	Jonathan Barr	Steve Dazey, Region 1 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	Wes Clogston		
	John McAuliffe, Vice Chair		
	Kyle Smith		
Region 4	Jeff Fjelstul	Aaron Garcia, Region 3 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	Jeff Larsen, Chair		
	Ian Stewart		
Region 5	George Dennis	Melia Devivo WDFW Ungulate Research Scientist	
	Keith Pfeifer		
	Dean Thornberry		
Region 6	Michael Bartoldo	Jen Mannas Wildlife Rehabilitation and Falconry Program Manager	
	Vacant		
	David Ward		
	Gary Tennison		

Procedural Business

- **Call to order and announcements (*Jeff Larsen, 5 minutes*)**
- **Introduction of members and guests (*Jeff Larsen, 5 minutes*)**

New Business

- **2022 budget request and legislative news/update (*Kris Thorson, 15 minutes*)**
 - No new changes since the March 11 meeting.
 - Please see the notes from the March 11 meeting for information or contact Kris for more information.
- **Chronic Wasting Disease (*Melia Devivo, 45 minutes*)**
 - Melia is the ungulate research scientist for WDFW.
 - She previously worked in Wyoming with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) there.
 - CWD is a form of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy.
 - There are no vaccines or treatments for these diseases.
 - The disease is caused by a prion (protein).
 - This protein is currently in all of us, but it becomes an issue when the protein folds on itself and the body cannot break down the protein.
 - There have been cows that were bred without the protein, and they were unable to be infected with the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad cow disease).
 - CWD only affects Cervidae family of animals like moose, deer, elk, and caribou.
 - Potential impacts of CWD could include:
 - Increased wildlife-vehicle collisions
 - Changes to age-structure and genetics
 - Changing predator-prey dynamics
 - Population declines
 - Transmission occurs from saliva, urine, feces, or the carcass when the animal dies.
 - Transmission occurs in two ways, direct transmission and indirect transmission.
 - Direct transmission would be from animal to animal and indirect transmission would be non-infected animals encountering feces or urine from infected animals.
 - There was a question from Gary on if there was a possible transmission route of urine scents that are bottled for hunters to use as a lure scent.
 - Yes, this is a possible way that CWD is spreading if the manufacture is not testing for CWD.
 - Jeff asked if predators like cougars could be spreading the prions from infected animals
 - The prions can be broken down in the gut, but it can also be spread.
 - Kris asked if the CWD prions can be passed onto predators like cougars.
 - There was a study done where cougars were fed infected meats and there was no indication the prion effected those animals.
 - Michael asked if CWD could be transmitted to humans.
 - It appears that CWD is only an issue for cervids and has not become a zoonotic disease like bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

- Jeff F. asked about the cerebral spinal fluid and if that was a method of transmission.
 - Transmission of the prion would not be from the spinal fluid as a live animal does not shed spinal fluid. However, when the animal dies and its carcass is consumed, the spinal fluids would then possibly be a method of transmission. The meat also has low levels of the prion.
- CWD presents itself with brittle antlers and retained velvet, emaciation, drooling, and the animals may have a wide-based stance and be uncoordinated.
- Most infected animals will look normal.
- The only way to know for sure is to have the animal tested from CWD.
- No detected cases of CWD in Washington state.
- CWD was detected in Montana in 2019 and in Idaho in 2021.
- WDFW has taken steps to reduce the risk of introducing CWD, but more can be done.
- The syndrome was first reported in the 60s in Colorado in captive mule deer.
- Free ranging elk and deer were diagnosed with CWD in the 80s and 90s.
- It was detected outside of the endemic zone in the mid-90s.
- In 2021 WDFW monitored for CWD by testing samples from check stations, WSDOT roadkill pits, taxidermists, and samples collected by appointment.
- The survey area was focusing on seven GMUs in eastern Washington.
- There were over 400 samples last year and there have been no detection of CWD.
- We are protecting cervids by having hunters who import animals harvested out of state to follow carcass transport guidelines:
 - Deboned meat where it was harvested.
 - Skills and antlers with velvet removed, antlers attached to the skull plate, or upper canine teeth (ivories) with all soft tissue has been removed.
 - Hides or capes without heads attached
 - Finished taxidermy mounts
- We can also help by properly processing the harvested animals and disposing of the carcasses correctly like:
 - Avoid cutting through bone, spinal cord, and brain
 - Avoid consuming CWD positive meat or feed it to other animals
 - Field dress game at kills sites
 - Properly dispose of animal carcasses in landfills if possible.
- WDFW is collecting samples for CWD monitoring efforts.
- Check out www.WDFW.wa.gov/CWD for details on how, when, and where samples are being collected.
- The 2022 CWD surveillance area has increased to all of region 1.
- Hunters can check the CWD test results of their animal on the website.
- The data in the lookup tool will be updated Sunday night so hunters may want to check on Monday mornings moving forward.
- The test for CWD may take several weeks to complete.

- For those hunters who go outside of Washington and are notified their harvested animal tested positive for CWD, they are required to report it to WDFW.
- WDFW will work with the hunter on how to safely dispose of the parts of the animal that they are not willing to consume.
- For more information on CWD see the following resources:
 - Wdfw.wa.gov/CWD
 - Email: CWD@dfw.wa.
 - Inland Northwest Wildlife Council – 509-487-8552
 - Cwd-info.org
- Jeff L. asked if there was a need for adding language in RCW 77.15.160 regarding wastage of game animal meat.
 - That was a good question and Melia will investigate if this is needed.
- If you want to send a sample, there is information on the website on what to collect for samples.
- Jeff F. asked if freezing and cooking the meat will destroy the prions.
 - The prions are extremely hardy and hard to destroy. Melia has used high concentration bleach to destroy the prion or incineration of the meat at extremely high temperatures.
- Michael asked if antelope can be carriers of CWD.
 - No, antelope are not a part of the cervid family have not shown any susceptibility to CWD.
- Jeff F. asked what we should tell other hunters about CWD and field dressing animals.
 - Melia suggested that we tell other hunters to take precautions like washing hands, leaving inedible parts in the field, etc.
- Steve asked if there was anything Master Hunters can do to help with the CWD surveillance.
 - Melia likes to work with volunteers, and they may be able to help talk to other hunters about surveillance and working at check stations.
- Jon asked if there was a desire to have samples from other areas of the state like region 3.
 - The surveillance is only in region 1 currently but if hunters see an animal that is presenting symptoms, WDFW does want to know about that.
- George suggested we add information about CWD and the possible volunteer opportunities into the September newsletter.
- There is a CWD management plan on WDFW's website at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/02292> that details what the response would be in the event CWD is detected in Washington.
- **WDFW reports and updates (*Kris Thorson, 45 minutes*)**
 - MHPP Participation statistics
 - As of August 16, there are 1,230 Master Hunters in Washington state.
 - In 2019, we had 110 applicants.

- In 2020 the open application period was not opened due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- In 2021 there were 42 applicants.
- As of August 16, there are 46 applicants for the 2022 Master Hunter open application period.
- Four applicants have completed the test as of August 16.
- Field coordinator reports
 - Steve Dazey – Region 1 field coordinator
 - Steve has visited several hunter education teaching teams in region 1 and find them to be doing well with mostly good attendance.
 - Traditional classes seem to be doing the best in filling seats in region 1.
 - Steve traveled to Clarkston to present an appreciation plaque to the Clarkston First Church of God who has been hosting and providing storage for the hunter education teaching team that teaches there for many years.
 - Steve also attended the memorial service for long time instructor and was able to present his years of service plaque and a coin to the instructor's widow.
 - He accompanied Jackie to the Vashon Island Sportsman's club and presented a 50-year plaque to the widow and family of Robert Stougard who had recently passed away.
 - Steve was fortunate to join Aaron and Dave in presenting the Howard Gardner Lifetime Achievement award to Howard in person with his family at the Seattle retirement home where he now lives.
 - Steve was contacted by an applicant with a suggestion to make the applications and other associated paperwork fillable so they can be more easily read by staff.
 - Aaron Garcia – Region 3 field coordinator
 - He worked on the turkey camp in April where we had a lot of mentees get out and hunt turkeys.
 - Aaron has been working on the second annual Chris Christensen deer camp event with the First Hunt Foundation.
 - The deer camp event will start on August 26 and 27 and have 12 mentees signed up.
 - Aaron is planning a fall turkey camp.
 - Aaron is also working with the region 3 wildlife area staff to have a pheasant hunting clinic in September.
 - Ephrata pheasants forever is also doing a youth mentored clinic.
 - There is a pheasant clinic also planned in St John during the youth season.

- Aaron is working with the local wildlife area managers to figure out if there are possible projects on burned areas of the Wenas or Whiskey Dick wildlife areas.
 - WDFW created the Howard Gardner Lifetime Achievement award in honor of Howard Gardner who taught for 65 years.
 - Any instructor who teaches for 55 years will be awarded the lifetime achievement award.
 - COVID related updates
 - There are no changes planned to the current protocols or SOP.
- **Update on administrative topics (hours, mileage reimbursement, vol requirements, etc.) for Injured Animal Transport (*Jen Mannas, 45 minutes*)**
 - Jen gave a quick background on the wildlife transport program.
 - There were 17,591 wildlife patients admitted for care in 2021.
 - There are now three more rehabilitation facilities in Washington since the last time Jen presented to the MHAG.
 - The volunteer opportunity will be to transport wildlife from point A to point B and possibly to assist in capturing injured animals.
 - This is a light duty volunteer opportunity.
 - Internal discussion has landed on a 1:1 volunteer hour credit from the pickup location to the rehabilitator, and then back to their home.
 - Jen's next steps are to finalize the details and then figuring out the interest level of the MHPP.
 - She is also going to create a rescue team packet that will give the volunteer some best practices and tips.
- **MHAG member updates and Master Hunter communications (*Jeff Larsen, 10 minutes*)**
 - Does anyone have anything to add?
 - Jeff has been contacted by possible applicants on what the MHPP is about and what to expect.
 - Dave Ward got an email from a hunter who wanted to get more involved in hunting and conservation and he wasn't in it for more opportunities.
 - Michael also talked to the applicant for almost 45 minutes
 - Ian had contact with a couple Master Hunters who had concerns reduction in deployment of Master Hunters by conflict specialists.
 - Ian also had been contacted by someone that had questions on the Master Hunter moose permit points and if they are planning to restart the hunt in the future.
 - The information about the moose permit can be found online at https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-06/master_hunter_moose_permit_changes_2018.pdf.
- **Lunch (60 minutes)**
- **2023 MHAG Workplan planning (*Kris Thorson, 60 minutes*)**
 - This agenda item will be to gather goals and projects the MHAG wants to accomplish in 2023.

- Kris felt that creating a MHAG workplan will help set goals and objectives for the coming year will help drive MHAG's work.
- Kris identified some possible work plan objectives:
 - Revisit the strategic plan and update it.
 - Update the Master Hunter Advisory Group Purpose, Roles, and Operating procedures.
 - Discussing term limits for members to allow for natural movement of members.
- George Dennis suggested doing what he termed as "fence mending" where the MHAG members would go out to meet with wildlife conflict staff to find out what the issues are and how to help mend the relationship with conflict staff.
 - Wes talked a bit about understanding the problem from the conflict specialists' side of the problem and how they may be able to work with the landowner and how to get a Master Hunter on the property.
 - Kris will work to set up a meeting between conflict staff and MHAG in the future and add this to the work plan.
- Dean talked a little about how to get bad actors removed from the program and until it changes, we may be having issues with moving forward with increasing conflict staff usage of Master Hunters.
- Michael had the idea to have some of the MHAG members attend regular Hunter Education classes for recruitment, engagement, and orientation to the MHPP as well as be a conduit to the field.
- Jeff wants to have an MHAG orientation meeting to help bring new members along and welcome them into the group.
- Kyle suggested we review the MHPP Pamphlet and update if needed for use at sports shows and outreach events.
- Through Kyle's point of being at sport shows, Kris will investigate MHPP or MHAG uniform stuff for MHAG members.
- Kyle also suggested the MHAG members possibly meet with regional non-government organizations to inquire about volunteer opportunities and if they have projects coming up to help get volunteers for.
- David Ward suggested we work with Weyerhaeuser to talk about access for hoof disease permits moving forward.
- **Volunteer opportunities discussion (Kris Thorson, 30 minutes)**
 - Kyle suggested MHAG reach out to non-government organizations (NGO) to promote their projects.
 - Dean suggested we add links on our volunteer opportunities page to other NGOs volunteer pages to help those groups with finding opportunities.
 - Steve cautioned that we need to make sure the applicants and or Master Hunters volunteer for projects that benefit wildlife and habitat.

Conclusion

- **Recap action items (Kris Thorson, 5 minutes)**
 - Kris will compile a list of MHs by region for the MHAG members to contact.

- **Agenda topics for next meeting (*Jeff Larsen, 5 minutes*)**
 - A discussion with Kyle Garrison on possible access to Weyerhaeuser for Hoof Disease permits.
 - Finalize the 2023 workplan for MHAG.
 - Jen Manas update on injured wildlife transport program.
 - Look into having an enforcement captain question and answer time around Master Hunters in the field and perceptions from officers.
 - What are the biggest issues the officers see in the field?
- **Good of the order (*All; General discussion items by MHAG, 5 minutes*)**
- **Adjourn**