



**MASTER HUNTER ADVISORY GROUP**  
**WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**  
 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, W 98501-1091

**Notes for MHAG Meeting #47**  
**August 23, 2019 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**  
**Washington Cattlemen’s Association, Ellensburg**

MHAG Members		WDFW Staff	Guests
Region 1	Marji Bobiak	Dave Whipple Hunter Education Division Manager  Kris Thorson Hunter Education Division Specialist  Aaron Garcia Region 3 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator  Steve Dazey Region 4 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator  Bill Montgomery Region 6 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	Shawn Woodard		
Region 2	Carissa Craghead, Secretary (excused)		
	Jim Hope		
Region 3	Kyle Smith		
	Tom Conrads (excused)		
	Jonathan Barr		
Region 4	David Floyd		
	Jeff Larsen, Vice Chair		
	John McAuliffe, Chair		
	Ian Stewart		
Region 5	George Dennis (excused)		
	Keith Pfeifer		
Region 6	Jim Gleiter		
	Thomas Woodruff		

## Procedural Business

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

## Old Business

- **Budget News/Update (*David Whipple, 30 minutes*)**
  - A letter was sent to Master Hunters and Master Hunter Applicants in Nov. regarding the postponement of the application period.
  - Another letter was sent in late-June opening the application period.
  - Dave gave a quick overview of the budget information listed on the budget website <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/administration/budget/operating>.
  - Dave outlined the director's guidance on spending plans for the \$24 million infusion of general state funds.
  - He also talked about the \$2.5 million dollar decrease in the Pittman-Robertson funding from the federal government.
  - The Fish and Wildlife Commission approved the agency direction regarding the supplemental budget request for 2020.
    - In addition, the commission approved introducing a bill to change the physical structure of the state wildlife account. No change to restrictions on use of sub-accounts is proposed.
    - Currently the state wildlife account contains 26 sub-accounts, which have different restrictions on their use.
      - E.G.: Discover Pass sales revenue is dedicated to stewardship of WDFW lands used for public recreation purposes.
    - This accounting structure does not show the disparity between restricted accounts that only fund specific items/tasks and the non-restricted accounts that allow more broad spending authority to the governor's office or the legislature.
  - The commission also heard information about a bill that would decrease some fish and wildlife misdemeanors to infractions. Since some wildlife crimes are not being prosecuted in courts due to the higher priority crimes, misdemeanors would actually increase the effectiveness of fish and wildlife laws.

## New Business

- **WDFW Reports and Updates (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**
  - The 2019 open application period for the Master Hunter Permit Program (MHPP) started on Jul. 1 and closed on Aug. 15.
  - The 2018 application period had about 300 applicants.
  - There were 110 applicants as of Aug. 22.
  - Three applicants have taken the exam so far with two applicants failing with 74 and 76 percent scores and one applicant passed with an 80 percent score.
  - Keith asked if WDFW was tracking the test questions applicants got wrong so we could fix questions if needed. Kris responded that he is tracking this so we can do just that.

- Ian asked if WDFW was going to hold some orientations to the new applicants. Kris responded that until the program budget is known the department would not hold the orientations.
- Aaron Garcia, Region 3
  - Aaron noticed the rate of volunteer hours/projects requests this year is lower than in past years.
  - He is allowing Master Hunters to go pick up trash on WDFW lands for volunteer hours.
  - He is working on facilitating volunteers for a wire pick up project by several organizations that are planning to remove 10-15 derelict fence lines from wildlife areas.
  - Aaron has an east slope cascade cutthroat trout project coming up.
  - Mentoring opportunities will start ramping up for the fall and Aaron will work to match first hunt foundation mentors with mentees.
  - First hunt foundation has 128 mentors within Washington State.
  - He is also planning four pheasant clinics for this fall.
- Steve Dazey Region 4
  - Steve helped the Back Country Hunters and Anglers to recruit volunteers to help remove wire from the recently acquired Golden Doe unit of the Methow WLA.
  - He and four other volunteers presented at the All Mission Academy a hunter education and basic rifle safety training to 19 cadets. All 19 cadets at the end of the weekend had their hunter education card, Pro-Marksmen medal, and basic rifle safety certification.
  - Steve helped recruit volunteers to repair damaged pheasant holding pens at the Cherry Valley unit of the Snoqualmie wildlife area. Fourteen Master Hunters spent six hours performing tasks such as digging and then filling a 12' X 15" trench for ground wire, donating and running equipment used to move drain rock, hanging and stapling side wire, hog rining over 500' of fencing, and nailing braces on support posts.
  - He also assisted the mountain goat relocation team to recruit drivers for the last two time slots.
- Bill Montgomery, Region 6
  - Bill did a recruitment for the mountain goat translocation project.
  - He is also working on National Hunting and Fishing Day (NHFD) preparation.
  - Bill recruited Master Hunters for fence repairs from elk damage in Pierce and Thurston counties.
  - He recruited Master Hunters for the pond turtle enclosure annual maintenance at Phillips road.
  - Bill recruited Master Hunter and applicants to remove two illegal bridges across streams in Grays Harbor County.
  - Bill is also recruiting for the Washington State Fair trout pond.

- Kris Thorson
  - Kris has been working on Master Hunter renewals and applications.
  - He has also been answering questions on the Master Hunter Permit Program.
  - Kris also it the person in charge of maintaining the MHPP website.
- **MHAG Member Updates (*John McAuliffe, 60 minutes*)**
  - John McAuliffe
    - John has some hunter education classes scheduled for September.
  - Jim Hope
    - Jim has helped with a class this past couple of months.
    - He will help with NHFD on Sept. 14 at the North Central Washington Gun Club in East Wenatchee.
  - Keith Pfeifer
    - Keith has been communicating with Region 5 Wildlife Program Manager Jonker and Conflict Specialist Todd Jacobsen and helping where he can.
    - He has offered to mentor Master Hunters who are new to Region 5 damage hunts.
    - He also offered to help the new conflict specialist get oriented to the new area and job.
  - Kyle Smith
    - Kyle is looking forward to NHFD this year.
    - He has also started to proctor the MHPP exam.
  - Thomas Woodruff
    - Thomas wanted to volunteer for the mountain goat relocation project but was unable to get the scheduling to line up.
    - He is planning to help remove illegal bridges in region 6.
    - He is on the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area Advisory Group and met with the group.
    - Tom offered to teach his neighbor's kids about firearms since they are concerned with all of the national firearm violence.
  - Marji Bobiak
    - Marji has volunteered to help with cleaning up a shooting range.
  - Jim Gleiter
    - Jim has held three traditional classes.
    - He has completed two online classes.
    - He has two more online classes scheduled.
  - Jeff Larsen
    - Jeff helped with the mountain goat relocation this year.
    - He has scheduled his Master Hunter exam proctor dates for this year.
  - David Floyd
    - David has sent some golden doe volunteers to Steve.
    - He posted his Master Hunter exam proctor dates for this year.
    - He is working to get hunting access for mentored turkey hunts in eastern Washington.

- Jonathan Barr
  - Jon transported some owls and kestrels to Benton City to wildlife rehabilitators.
  - He met with some Master Hunters about the program's future.
  - He did some unofficial clean-up of a wildlife area and filled a truck and trailer with garbage.
- Ian Stewart
  - Ian participated in the hunter education instructor in-service training after the last MHAG meeting.
  - He has a hunter education class in two weeks.
- **NHFD Update (*Bill Montgomery, 30 minutes*)**
  - Tacoma Sportsmen's club is hosting a kid's day for the Bethel School District and will be promoting NHFD at that event.
  - Safari Club International purchased 700 rod and reel combos as giveaways for participants.
  - Mountain Mist has donated 1000 bottles of water to the event.
  - Bill has secured a donation for the water for the fish ponds.
  - He has received 3000 rounds of 20 gauge ammo for the event donated by Garages Etc.
  - There will be almost 40 conservation organizations at the event.
  - Bill is looking for volunteers.
  - We currently have 144 participants pre-registered as of Aug. 23.
- **Private Lands Access (*David Whipple and Ciera Strickland 30 minutes*)**
  - There are over 1.35 million acres of private lands hunters can access across the state.
  - John McAuliffe had a question about some Weyerhaeuser land purchased outside of Enumclaw by the Muckleshoot tribe and if the tribe allows public access.
    - Ciera did not know if the tribe is allowing access and suggested John contact the private lands biologist in the area because they should know.
  - There is a 5,000 to 6,000 acre parcel of land in region five that Weyerhaeuser has allowed access for hunting.
  - Because of the economic and other benefits many large industrial forest landowners are realizing by selling access, the department is working hard to maintain the level of public access on private timberlands, and increase it where possible.
  - Dave talked about a common misconception about private timberlands tax code preventing those landowners from charging access fees. The tax code does not preclude charging access fees.
  - Landowners who offer free hunting access are covered for liability insurance by state recreational liability immunity laws.
  - Ian asked if the hunt by reservation site would benefit by changing the program to more of a lottery tool.

- Ciera has looked at possible upgrades and changes to make the program better, including the possibility of a lottery tool.
  - Jeff identified that in region 4 there is a need to get access to tidelands for waterfowl hunting.
    - There is one private lands biologist that focuses on the Region 4 areas and works mostly in Skagit area to secure such lands.
  - Dave also talked about his thoughts of approaching some private timber landowners about possibly opening their lands for youth hunts, deferred hunters, first time hunters of all ages, disabled hunters, and veteran hunters in the future.
- **CORT Requirement Discussion (*David Whipple, 15 minutes*)**
  - This year the department elected to make CORT voluntary due to the timing of the postponed open application period.
  - Next year the department will most likely continue with the optional status due to budget uncertainty and possible postponement of the open application period.
  - WDFW will look at different options in the future if the program continues.
  - Dave asked for MHAGs opinion on the future of CORT training.
    - Dave Floyd feels that the program is good but Eyes in the Woods might not be the right delivery method. It might be better for WDFW to add this into the orientations.
    - Jeff Larsen thinks the information is beneficial and could be placed in the study materials or have another delivery method.
    - John McAuliffe thinks that conceptually it is a great message. It could be incorporated into the MHPP Handbook.
    - Marji feels the content is sound but should be given in an easier format.
    - Jon Barr thinks that marketing the program to non-hunters would get a lot of traction.
    - Keith likes the idea of WDFW creating their own information and incorporating it into the MHPP orientations. He also believes that the course should be shortened.
    - John McAuliffe thought if WDFW creates a video or training, the department can outreach to other non-government organizations to post to their websites.
- **Lunch (*30 minutes*)**
- **Possible Rule Change/Addition (*Kris Thorson, 10 minutes*)**
  - This is on hold until the budget situation is clarified.
  - The department did implement the MHPP expectations document in 2018. Requiring Master Hunters to sign the expectations has appeared to decrease the issues conflict staff are reporting.
  - Kris and Dave committed to have a workshop with the conflict staff if the program continues to discuss this and other possible challenges.
  - Keith brought up his mentorship in region 5 and John asked if this should be something that the Master Hunter community should be doing.

- Dave and Kris committed to talking to the conflict staff if the program continues about possibly having something like this in the future.
- **ALEA Grants and How They Work (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**
  - George brought up the idea at the last meeting.
  - Kris gave an overview of the ALEA grant Program.
  - He directed members to review the website for the ALEA grant program at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/habitat-recovery/alea>.
- **Brainstorm MHAG Future Efforts (*David Whipple, 60 minutes*)**
  - This topic came about from internal discussions about how WDFW can engage the MHAG and MHPP more.
  - The department wants to revisit the MHAG roles/responsibilities document and the MHPP strategic plan to see if there are improvements we can make.
    - Dave talked to MHAG about the roles and responsibilities document and the strategic plan.
    - WDFW wants to ensure the MHAG members are working on topics that they can help with and are passionate about.
  - WDFW gave the MHAG members homework on reviewing the MHPP strategic plan and roles/responsibilities document.
  - The department discussed communication from MHAG to Master Hunters and if it was effective.
    - Currently most communication emails to Master Hunters do not get a lot of response. In person chance meetings seem to elicit some feedback.
  - MHAG involvement/contributions to the Master Hunter Newsletter was discussed.
    - Dave would like at least one article from an MHAG member in each newsletter.
- **Standard Meeting Dates (*Kris Thorson, 15 minutes*)**
  - The idea of setting standard meeting dates came from a Hunter Education Instructor Advisory Committee member during another advisory group meeting.
  - MHAG liked the idea of setting standard meeting dates for the future.
  - Also discussed was the possibility to have the winter/early spring meeting on Skype at several locations around the state.
  - MHAG will try this for the Dec. meeting and see if it is a viable meeting option.
  - Kris will work out a meeting schedule and send it to the MHAG membership to determine if it will work. Then the next meeting date will be scheduled.

## **Conclusion**

- **Recap Action Items (*Kris Thorson, 5 minutes*)**
- **Agenda Topics for Next Meeting (*John McAuliffe, 5 minutes*)**
  - MHPP Future Efforts
  - Budget News/Update
- **Good of the Order (*All; General discussion items by MHAG, 5 minutes*)**
- **Adjourn**