# Notes for MHAG Meeting #52
December 11, 2020 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Teams Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MHAG Members</th>
<th>WDFW Staff</th>
<th>Guests</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Region 1</strong></td>
<td>Shawn Woodard (Absent)</td>
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<td><strong>Region 2</strong></td>
<td>Carissa Craghead, Secretary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jim Hope</td>
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<td><strong>Region 3</strong></td>
<td>Jonathan Barr</td>
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<td>Wes Clogston</td>
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<td>Kyle Smith</td>
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<td><strong>Region 4</strong></td>
<td>David Floyd</td>
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<td>Jeff Larsen, Chair</td>
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<td>John McAuliffe</td>
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<td>Ian Stewart, Vice Chair</td>
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<td><strong>Region 5</strong></td>
<td>George Dennis</td>
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<td>Keith Pfeifer</td>
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<td><strong>Region 6</strong></td>
<td>Michael Bartoldo</td>
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<td>Jim Gleiter</td>
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<td>Thomas Woodruff</td>
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<td>Dave Whipple, Hunter Education Division Manager</td>
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<td>Kris Thorson, Hunter Education Division Specialist</td>
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<td>Aaron Garcia, Region 3 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator</td>
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<td>Steve Dazey, Region 4 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator</td>
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<td>Amy Elliott, Region 5 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator</td>
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<td>Bill Montgomery, Region 6 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator</td>
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<td>Nate Pamplin</td>
<td>Director of Budget and Government affairs</td>
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Procedural Business
- Call to order and announcements (Jeff Larsen, 5 minutes)
- Introduction of members and guests (Jeff Larsen, 5 minutes)

New Business
- 2021 Budget request and legislative news/update (Nate Pamplin, 30 minutes)
  - Nate started off with a review of the 2020 legislative session and how WDFW’s long-term budget challenge was resolved.
  - For the 2021 legislative session, the campus will be closed, and the hearings will be virtual.
  - WDFW's agency request legislation for 2021 will include:
    - Indemnification Authority – The commission may indemnify the United States and its agencies as a condition of securing federal funds for purposes of fish, shellfish, and wildlife projects.
    - Hunting and Fishing Recruitment and Retention – Will align youth age for fishing and hunting, a $20 license discount for hunting ed graduates, and allow license fee promotions.
    - Technical correction in the wildlife account – Update the way WDFW reports and manages the funds appropriated to the agency.
    - Payment in Lieu of Taxes – Transfer the PILT obligation to the State Treasurers office just like the Washington Department of Natural Resources PILT is paid.
  - Jeff asked if the license sales data has been reviewed currently.
    - Nate gave a quick overview of the COVID situation and then talked about the license sales data.
    - The license sales were down until the governor lifted the stay home stay healthy order when the sales rebounded.
  - Jim Hope suggested adding a senior discount for hunting licenses just like the fishing licenses have.
    - Nate and the licensing staff did some research on the discount and the data showed the license price may not be a barrier for participation.
  - Michael Bartoldo suggested as a veteran to increase veteran offerings for hunting.
  - Dave Floyd suggested a lifetime license for youth like other states have enacted.
    - Nate stated that the licensing division manager and their staff are looking into ideas on how to allow for these kinds of opportunities and possibilities moving forward.
  - In June, the state revenue forecasters identified a possible shortfall for the state of $9 billion.
  - The state enacted a hiring freeze, spending freeze, and furloughed employees to save funds.
  - The WDFW has submitted an agency budget request to cover routine maintenance costs, a general fund backfill in some accounts that are seeing a
shortfall, and new enhancements WDFW would like to complete in the coming biennium.

- More information about the WDFW’s 2021 budget request can be found here: https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/administration/budget/update

**WDFW reports and updates (Kris Thorson, 30 minutes)**

- MHPP Participation statistics
  - As of December 1, 2020, we have 1,319 active Master Hunters.
  - There are 143 Master Hunters whose permits expired in 2020 and have not renewed as of December 1.
  - There are six Master Hunters whose permits expire between December 1 and December 31.
  - As of December 1, 2020, there are currently 277 Master Hunters whose permits may expire in 2021.

- Field coordinator reports
  - Bill Montgomery
    - Bill picked up some bat boxes west of Port Angeles for a project with Abby Tobin and Alex Biswas.
    - He is also working on a project on martin boxes for the watchable wildlife program.
    - Bill has Master Hunters that have been picking up grouse wings for identification.
  - Amy Elliott
    - Amy has a project she is working on with four Master Hunters.
    - She is also working with the hunter education instructors who are also Master Hunters.
    - Region 5 has employee of the month award and Thayne Aubrey, conflict specialist, won for December.
  - Steve Dazey
    - Steve wanted to congratulate Carissa Craghead for placing in the top three in a national 3-D archery tournament.
    - Steve has been contacted by some Master Hunters whose permits expire past 2021 and they have been asking how to get volunteer hours currently.
  - Aaron Garcia
    - The 3911 Master Hunter elk area hunting season has been interesting this year.
    - There is a change to the Pheasant Lane area of 3911 and the road Master Hunters used in the past to access DNR properties is now private.
    - WDFW is recommending Master Hunters not hunt the DNR parcels off the Pheasant Lane area.
    - He has had several issues in the wedge area of 3911 near the green gate as well.
• Aaron does have a MHPP project coming up to replace burned out fencing projects.
• Jeff asked about the old 3911 webpages was able to have the information posted there. The page has since not made it to the new webpage.

• **MHAG member updates (Jeff Larsen, 10 minutes)**
  o Does anyone have anything to add?
    ▪ David Floyd had conversations about the region 4 damage hunt and he has heard that the elk activity has been down from past years.
    ▪ Kris did not have any information on the number of hunters that had been deployed this year and in the recent pass.
    ▪ David is also ok with holding the Master Hunter exam, but he would need to find a location to hold the test.
    ▪ Kris and the WDFW staff are working on ways to safely hold the exam during the pandemic.

• **MHAG communications with Master Hunters (Kris Thorson, 10 minutes)**
  o Has anyone had communications with MHs?
    ▪ Ian Stewart
      • He has had a few Master Hunters contact him about the potential for a Master Hunter limping elk permit etc.
      • Also, he had a conversation with an archery hunter who was shot over in GMU 371 and why they cannot use any hunting equipment in Master Hunter hunts.
      • He had a contact about damage control hunts in region 5 based on historic norms.
      • He also fielded some questions on tag choices for some Master Hunter hunts and Kris will talk to the ungulate section manager about these hunts.
    ▪ Keith reached out to past applicants to the MHAG to inform them that there were seats available.
    ▪ Keith also had a new Master Hunter contact him about elk hunting in Washington.

• **MHPP Lost Opportunities Subgroup Report (Jeff Larsen, 30 minutes)**
  o The subgroup completed a PowerPoint presentation detailing the diminished opportunities for Master Hunters.
  o They solicited feedback from some Master Hunters about the program and opportunities.
  o Wes talked to several Master Hunters in 3911 about the program and most of the contacts are concerned with the drop-in hunting opportunities.
  o The special permit tag opportunities decreased from 26 percent chance of drawing a permit in 2010 to 14 percent chance in 2020 for elk.
  o Ian asked about the number of hunters deployed in years past
    ▪ Kris talked about how the damage season is so subjective and is very difficult to predict.
• COVID impacts to MHPP (Kris Thorson, 15 minutes)
  o 2019 Applicants
    ▪ Kris has received some emails and calls from applicants about when testing can resume.
    ▪ WDFW is unsure when the tests may resume due to COVID-19 restrictions.
  o Volunteer projects
    ▪ There was a bat box project that Bill was working on.
    ▪ Currently volunteer usage is extremely limited.
  o Renewals
    ▪ Of those Master Hunters whose permits were to expire in 2020, 202 have renewed.
    ▪ There are six Master Hunters whose permits were expiring in 2021 that have renewed already.
    ▪ How long should we allow those Master Hunters whose permits expired during the pandemic to renew once things have returned to some semblance or normal?
    ▪ Michael asked if we shouldn’t just set a deadline they have to renew by and call it even.
      • MHAG had a discussion on setting a date and finalizing a time to renew by or your out and WDFW staff will discuss the timeline.
• Virtual volunteer hour option (Kris Thorson, 30 minutes)
  o Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the lack of volunteer projects in 2020, WDFW along with MHAG developed a virtual volunteer option.
  o The option was offered to Master Hunters whose permits were expiring in 2020.
  o Since the end of the year is approaching and the number of volunteer projects in 2021 will also most likely be extremely limited due to COVID-19, WDFW offered the virtual option to those Master Hunters whose permits will expired before the end of March 2021.
  o Most state workers are planning to work from home until at least June 30, 2021.
  o Is there a need to offer the virtual option to all 2021 renewal applicants or should we only offer to those renewal applicants through June 30, 2021?
    ▪ The MHAG consensus was to open the virtual option to those Master Hunters whose permits expire before June 30, 2021.
• Renewal Notice Review (Kris Thorson, 15 minutes)
  o Kris has drafted an email he will send to Master Hunters whose permits are expiring during the next calendar year.
  o No comments were heard from the MHAG on changing the language proposed.

Conclusion
• Recap action items (Carissa Craghead, 5 minutes)
• Agenda topics for next meeting (Jeff Larsen, 5 minutes)
  o Virtual option discussion
  o Predator prey study information/presentation
• Good of the order \textit{(All; General discussion items by MHAG, 5 minutes)}
• Adjourn