

**MEETING NOTES**  
**WDFW Master Hunter Advisory Group**  
**Meeting Number 6**  
January 22, 2009  
Ellensburg

The meeting was called to order by Mike Estes, Chair, at 9:00 AM. The attached agenda was followed.

Attending were:

Ray Boone	Ron Poppe
Dustin Albright	Mike Britton
Bill Madison	Bob Cromwell
Richard Mathisen	Mike Parris
Mike Estes	Harold Costa
Jim Reinbold	

Absent: George Coulbourn, Brian Davern, Bob Holtfreter, Bill Vincent

WDFW Staff:

Capt Rich Mann  
Sgt Mike Sprecher  
Mike Kuttel  
Anthony Novack

Representing Eyes in the Woods:

Rick Holland

**1. Call to order and Announcements**

MHAG Chair Mike Estes called the Meeting to order at 9 AM. He reviewed the day's agenda and discussed administrative matters related to the Meeting. Mr. Estes then explained the absences of Mr. Coulbourn, Mr. Davern, Mr. Holtfreter, and Mr. Vincent.

**2. Introduction of new MHAG members.**

New MHAG members Mr. Poppe, Mr. Mathisen, Mr. Cromwell, Mr. Costa, and Mr. Reinbold were introduced to the group and received their name badges and binders. The new members were warmly welcomed to the group.

**3. Approval of Notes from Meeting of October 23, 2008**

The Meeting #5 notes were approved as distributed.

#### **4. Reports on Action Items**

Action Items from the previous meeting (Meeting #5) were reviewed.

Action Items 1 and 2: Completed.

Action Item 3: The ALEA grant is proceeding on schedule. (See Agenda Item 5 below)

Action Item 4: Mr. Madison reported on his research into other potential meeting facilities. The MHAG accepted his recommendation to continue meeting at the Ellensburg Quality Inn and to avoid scheduling a MHAG meeting during rodeo week.

Action Item 5: Three new applicant Orientation Meetings have been scheduled (see Agenda Item 6 below) and the news release has been issued. An Information and Outreach meeting is scheduled for March 14 in Kennewick. Mr. Albright presented options for other I&O meeting dates and locations and will schedule meetings shortly in Longview and Spokane.

#### **5. Status reports from ALEA Grant**

In Mr. Holtfreter's absence, Mr. Estes briefly explained the status of the present ALEA grant funding. Mr. Britton explained the process and timing for the 2009-2011 grant application. Mr. Kuttel distributed copies of the draft grant request that Mr. Britton prepared. Suggestions from several reviewers have been incorporated: this is revision four. Mr. Kuttel made additional suggestions for consideration by the MHAG to further improve the application. Suggestions included emphasizing landowner cooperation for adequate signage in the Quinault Valley and outreach to recruit more Master Hunters in Chelan, Franklin, and Benton Counties. Mr. Kuttel also mentioned the possibility of a new Master Hunter hunt around North Bend that may provide a role for the MHAG.

Mr. Kuttel strongly suggested the MHAG consider pursuing a partnership with Eyes in the Woods (EITW) to help facilitate and coordinate volunteer conservation projects in each of the six DFW regions. Mr. Holland of EITW expressed willingness for increased cooperation between the EITW and MHAG and pointed out present cooperation by our groups through the CORT requirement for Master Hunter certification. Mr. Holland provided statistical evidence of the recent increase in CORT training. In 2007, 307 students received CORT training in 25 classes. In 2008, 1059 students received CORT training in 47 classes. During the first three weeks of 2009, 132 students have already attended CORT. The significant increase in the number of training sessions and persons trained was accepted by attendees as evidence that the partnership between EITW, MHAG, and WDFW is working. Mr. Holland said that EITW is not certain whether they will be submitting an ALEA grant to establish and coordinate Master Hunter volunteer conservation work during this application cycle, but the concept is still under consideration.

Mr. Kuttel suggested that the MHAG attempt to facilitate volunteer projects that highlight the potential for Master Hunters to address priority needs of the Department such as wildlife, habitat, hunting access, safe/ethical/responsible/legal hunting, mentoring of first-time-hunters and hunters-with-disabilities, and that continue the heritage of hunting. This is especially important given pending cutbacks within state government.

Attendees were informed that the Washington Hunter Education Instructors Association (WHEIA) was unable to cover the cost of the liability insurance policy that provided protection to volunteers and private property owners where youth events and youth mentoring activities are held. Insurance coverage is important to enable youth mentoring activities to continue to grow the next generation of hunters. Mr. Kuttel suggested that the MHAG also strongly consider pursuing a partnership with WHEIA to facilitate the securing of funding for necessary policy premiums and to increase the involvement of Master Hunters with mentoring efforts.

Mr. Novack suggested that MHAG may want to pursue funding sources other than ALEA in the future; through partnerships and projects to make the Master Hunter corps more available to assist with such projects. Mr. Estes suggested that he, Mr. Kuttel, and Mr. Britton continue to work on prospects to expand the partnership with EITW. Mr. Poppe briefly spoke about volunteerism becoming quite addictive once a person gets involved.

## **6. MH Orientation and I&O Meetings**

Orientation meetings have been scheduled in Yakima, Spokane, and Olympia on Saturdays in February for persons interested in becoming Master Hunters. Mr. Kuttel discussed the agenda for the meetings and requested involvement of local MHAG members at each of the meetings. A supply of handouts and application packets was transferred to Mr. Estes and Mr. Britton for the Yakima and Spokane meetings. DFW Enforcement Officers will be present at all three meetings.

The dates and locations of the Orientation meetings are:

- Feb. 14, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the West Valley Fire Department in Yakima, 10000 Zier Road. Take the Nob Hill Blvd. exit off I-82; turn left onto 72nd Avenue and right onto Zier Road.
- Feb. 21, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council headquarters in Spokane, 6116 North Market Street.
- Feb. 28, from 1 to 4 p.m. in Room 172 of the Natural Resources Building (NRB) in Olympia, 1111 Washington Street, off Capitol Way. Directional signs are posted in NRB parking lots.

Dates and locations were discussed for three I&O meetings for already certified Master Hunters. A meeting has been scheduled in the Tri-Cities (details shown below). Arrangements for meetings in Longview and Spokane will be finalized within the next week or two.

- March 14, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Benton County PUD Auditorium in Kennewick, 2721 W. 10th Avenue (Intersection of Highway 395 and 10th Avenue)

### **7. New Master Hunter Test**

Mr. Kuttel distributed copies of the completed new MH exam and explained the process of bringing the exam to its present final form. Several MHAG members and DFW staff have devoted time to prepare, review, and validate questions. A motion was made and approved to implement the new exam for tests administered in 2009. Mr. Kuttel said MHAG members have until Monday, January 26 to suggest final changes or corrections, if needed.

Appreciation was expressed for the extensive time and effort by Brian Davern and Mr. Kuttel in putting this exam together.

### **8. Update on Colockum Elk Study and Elk Area 3911 Season**

Mr. Novack distributed a revised copy of the new 3911 maps that reflect changes recommended for adoption by the DFW Commission for the 2009-2010 hunting season. Once approved, the maps will replace those currently posted on the Master Hunter web site. We discussed the removal from area 3911 of several sections: the Wild Horse Wind Farm operated by Puget Sound Energy, the upper valley Easton section, and the Vantage block between I-90 and the Old Vantage Highway. There was discussion about the potential need for additional signs along the wind farm boundary but it was decided that additional signage would probably not be beneficial. Mr. Novack believes the boundaries are marked well enough.

Mr. Novack proceeded with an interesting discussion on the collaring of additional elk in the Parke Creek area. Only one collared elk has been lost. Poor flying weather has been hampering recent efforts to locate all 49 collared elk. He also indicated there may be opportunity for MH help in elk hazing for the upper valley BLM property and that the possibility for future elk hunting opportunity for Master Hunters on the Heart K Ranch is being discussed.

Sgt. Sprecher reported that some Master Hunters are still being caught breaking the law and committing ethical violations. It was noted that at least six serious issues occurred during the 08-09 Master Hunter seasons in Elk Areas 3911 and 3912. Those incidents lead to the issuance of five citations and the subsequent suspension from the Master Hunter program for life for two individuals. The other three cases are pending.

Overall, Captain Mann and Sgt. Sprecher felt there was some improvement in behavior this year. They also indicated that the hunt is working as intended and there seem to be fewer issues with problem elk than in the past. Mr. Novack said that a local landowner who has been impacted by elk feeding in his fields and has been critical of DFW in the

past attended a recent Big Game Management Roundtable meeting and expressed support for the new MH Program and the Elk Area 3911 hunt.

All those attending the MHAG meeting reinforced the fact that the vast majority, almost all in fact, of Master Hunters do follow the law and do hunt ethically, responsibly, and legally. However, the actions of a few can impact the image of the many. The MHAG needs to discuss ways to further minimize the occurrence of such conduct and to limit the impacts of such conduct. The MHAG discussed the potential for playing a role as “Stewards of the Hunt” in evaluating such events and preparing opinions for consideration by the Director. Consideration of such an initiative was deferred to a future meeting.

### **9. Draft RCW (Statute) and Draft WAC (Commission Rule) Discussion**

Mr. Kuttel said the Peer Review Committee component of the current Master Hunter rule is deemed “arbitrary and capricious” by legal counsel assigned to DFW, thereby possibly exposing the MHAG to liability issues. Therefore, peer review has been dropped from the draft statute (RCW) and draft rule (WAC).

Non-Residents, apart from those already grandfathered, will not be eligible to apply for MH status in the future if the draft statute and draft rule are approved as currently suggested. Also discussed were the possible addition of administrative requirements to the WAC and the need for a legislative sponsor for the Master Hunter statute.

### **10. Dates and locations for 2009 Meetings**

The MHAG will plan for four meetings in 2009; roughly one meeting every three months. The schedule adopted in October 2008 needed to be revised due to the delay of the December 2008 meeting until today, due to winter weather issues. Discussion of scheduling conflicts led to the following proposed tentative meeting dates: March 5, June 4, September 3, and December 3. Meetings will be held at Quality Inn, Ellensburg, 9AM to 3PM. Mr. Estes will confirm availability of the Fireside Room on March 5 with the motel catering staff.

### **11. Election of MHAG officers**

Mr. Estes led a brief discussion about the election of a new Vice-Chair to replace Mr. Vincent, who will become MHAG Chair effective March 3. Mr. Albright was nominated for Vice-Chair and was elected by unanimous ballot.

### **12. Recognition**

Mr. Kuttel presented Mr. Estes with an award plaque commemorating his year of service as the first MHAG Chair. Appreciation was shared for the positive changes to the Master

Hunter Program and progress made by the MHAG this past year. Mr. Estes recognized Mr. Kuttel for his invaluable support, vision, and seemingly endless energy.

### **13. Department Liaison update**

Mr. Kuttel talked about the new Master Hunter patches to replace those previously distributed that had a misspelling. . The new patches are expected to be available for distribution soon. He discussed anticipated DFW budget shortfalls for the upcoming biennium and the uncertainty created by poor economic conditions. Possible impacts to programs of interest to the Advisory Group were discussed.

Mr. Kuttel reported that certification rates for 2008 MH applicants are 183 out of the 1,034 who purchased packets. That is about 18%, and not far below the historical 25% completion rate. The success rate will still raise some because there are still a few 2008 applicants who are just completing the last of the program requirements. About 200 hunters have already applied during the 2009 open enrollment period that began on January 1.

### **14. Miscellaneous Topics Discussion**

Mr. Kuttel led a short but active discussion of the following talking points, some of which will be completed shortly and others of which will serve as an outline for future meeting discussions.

- Submittal of an ALEA Grant for the 09-11 Biennium for funding of activities of the MHAG.
- Evaluation of the current Master Hunter applicant study materials and curricula, and suggestions for improvement.
- Evaluation of current Administrative Requirements for Certified Master Hunters, and Master Hunter Applicants (might include levels of required conservation hours; requirement that a Master Hunter must qualify with any legal hunting implement used during a Master Hunter season; mandatory attendance at certain Master Hunter public meetings; etc.).
- Facilitation of a partnership with Eyes In The Woods Association to create the Regional Coordination of Master Hunter volunteer conservation work; development of projects; and to focus on the priority needs of wildlife, habitat, hunter access, mentoring, ethics, etc.
- Investigate alternatives to the Peer Review Committee concept to promote ethics and sportsmanship in the ranks of Master Hunters.
- Facilitation of a partnership with the Washington Hunter Education Instructor's Association (WHEIA) on an effort to provide mentoring to first-time-hunters and hunters-with-disabilities.
- Facilitation of consistent protocols for Hunt Masters throughout the state.
- Approval by legislature of the Master Hunter statute during 2009.

- Approval by Commission of an updated Master Hunter rule during 2009.
- Assume the "Stewards of the Hunt" role on behalf of the Department.
- Development and implementation of an e-mail communications system between the Department and Master Hunters.
- Continued improvement of the image of Master Hunters with the Department, landowners, and hunters.
- Finalization of a new 100 question Master Hunter test that is properly weighted and validated.
- Facilitation of a statewide Master Hunter test proctoring system in 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dustin Albright

**Attachments:**

Action Items, Meeting #5  
Action Items, Meeting #6  
Agenda for January 22, 2009

## **MHAG Action Items - Meeting #5**

**Action Item No.1:** Mr. Coulbourn will reformat the master plan for issuance as a Study Guide. (Attached)

**Action Item No 2:** Mr. Kuttel will post the updated 3911 maps on the web site.

**Action Item No 3:** Mr. Britton will develop the grant application as discussed.

**Action Item No 4:** Mr. Madison will investigate potential Ellensburg meeting locations and report to the Group at the next meeting.

**Action item No 5:** I&O and new member Orientation meeting organizers will provide dates and locations by next MHAG meeting.

## **MHAG Action Items - Meeting #6**

**Action Item No 1** Finalize and submit the ALEA grant application. (Britton)

**Action Item No 2:** Confirm I&O Dates and locations to Mr. Kuttel by February 6.. (Albright)

**Action Item No 3:** Discussion of “niches” will be an agenda item for the next MHAG meeting; potentially taking a few hours. (Vincent/Kuttel)

**Action Item No 4:** CORT Briefing at March 5 meeting. (Vincent/Kuttel/Holland)

**Action Item No 5:** Post availability of Master Hunter items for sale (pins, patches, decals) on the MH web page. (Kuttel)

**Action Item No 6:** Discuss and organize possible legislative testimony in upcoming RCW hearings. (Vincent/Cromwell/Albright)

**Action Item No 7:** Prepare drafts agenda, handout list, and talking points for the upcoming Master Hunter Information and Outreach Public Meetings. (Kuttel/Albright).





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

**Agenda for MHAG Meeting #6**  
Ellensburg Quality Inn, Fireside Room  
January 22, 2009  
9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Procedural Business

1. Call to order and announcements (Estes)
2. Approval of official notes from October 23, 2008 meeting

Old Business

3. Status report on Action Items (Estes)
4. Status reports from Committee & Initiative Chairs
  - Ways & Means Committee (Expenditure Status, Holtfreter)
  - ALEA Grant Application (Britton)
  - MH Candidate Orientation (Estes/Kuttel)
  - Information & Outreach Meetings (Albright)
  - Special Hunt Coordination (Boone and Holtfreter)
5. Update on 2009 validated/balanced MH test (Davern)
6. Status of draft MH statute and WAC 232-12-073 revisions. (Kuttel)
7. Update of Elk Area 3911 Partnerships (Kuttel/Estes)
8. Discussion of July – December, 2008 Progress Report (Kuttel)

New Business

9. Nomination of Vice-Chair (Estes/Kuttel)
  - Candidate must have 2 or 3 year remaining appointment term
  - Election at February 19, 2009 MHAG meeting

10. MHAG meeting dates (all Thursdays) and locations. (Estes/Kuttel/Madison)
11. MH access to hunts. Need for consistent Hunter Master protocols. (All)
12. License revocation protocols / 2008 hunting fatalities. (Kuttel)
13. Update by Liaison (Kuttel/Wisner)
14. MHAG future niche(s) (All)
15. Other Topics (as time permits)

Conclusion

16. Recap Action Items. (Albright)
17. Next meeting: date, location, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
18. Good of the Order
19. Adjourn