



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

MHAG Meeting #34, Meeting Notes
 January 29, 2016 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
 Washington Cattlemen’s Association, Ellensburg

MHAG Members		WDFW Staff	Guests / Coordinators
Region 1	John Glenewinkel	Dave Whipple Hunter Education Division Manager	Shane Briel Eyes in the Woods
	Shawn Woodard		
	Tim Bruya		
Region 2	Carissa Craghead, Secretary	Kris Thorson Hunter Education Division Specialist	James Conway Region 3 MH
	Bernard Brown (excused)		
Region 3	Lance Ostrom	Aaron Garcia Region 3 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	Phil Aigner Region 1 MH
	Tom Conrads		
	Robert Cernick		
Region 4	Jim Fitzgerald, Chair	Steve Dazey Region 4 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	John McGlenn (excused)		
	Jim Slyfield (excused)		
	John McAuliffe		
Region 5	Chris Brong	Bill Montgomery Region 6 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	George Dennis, Vice Chair		
Region 6	James Zimmerman (excused)	Captain Rich Mann Region 3 Enforcement	

Procedural Business

- Call to order and announcements at 9:05 a.m.
 - The following items were added to agenda:
 - MHAG elections - Chair, Vice-chair, and Secretary
 - Master Hunter Damage Hunts (at end of meeting, if there's time)
- Introduction of members and guests
 - Excused members: Jim Slyfield, John McGlenn, Jim Zimmerman, Bernard Brown
- Approval of Meeting #33 notes from October 9, 2015
 - Approved by unanimous vote

New Business

- **WDFW Reports and Updates**
 - MHPP 2015 Applicants (*Dave Whipple*)
 - Dave presented the following statistics:
 - 2012
 - 510 Applicants
 - 179 (35%) took the test
 - 49 (28%) passed first time
 - 77 (59%) retook the test
 - 44 (57%) passed second time
 - 2014
 - 521 Applicants
 - 197 (38%) took test
 - 88 (45%) passed first attempt
 - 76 (68%) retook test
 - 55 (72%) passed second time
 - Bernard Brown emailed re: difficulty in passing MH test
 - Testing statistics:
 - 375 applicants in 2015
 - 228 (61%) did not take the exam
 - 147 (39%) took the exam
 - 101 (69%) passed the test on 1st or 2nd attempt
 - 59 of the 147 (40%) passed the 1st time
 - 42 (48%) of the 88 that failed 1st time passed the 2nd time
 - 14 (33%) of 2nd takers failed the second time
 - 2 did not take the exam a second time

- There was a question on how many master hunters are not renewing their MHPP certification.
 - There was a suggestion to possibly conduct an informal survey of master hunters as to why they are not renewing.
- The comment was made that instead of a survey, which is time and staff intensive, it may be appropriate to examine the data for dropout (non-renewal) rates for each region, to identify any regionally-based issues.
 - WDFW will examine the renewal rates by region, and bring that information and recommendations to the next MHAG meeting.
- There was a suggestion to put more effort into Regions and HQ on low impact or light duty MH Projects.
 - WDFW will review the possibility of having projects like this and report at the next MHAG meeting.

- Volunteer Program Update (*Dave Whipple for Christine Redmond*)
 - Christine wanted to encourage MHAG members to start thinking about potential National Hunting and Fishing Day (NHFD) activities.
 - Perhaps there's a NHFD opportunity for folks w/ special needs, who might not otherwise get the chance
 - We only see each other a couple more times before the event day this year (Saturday, September 24)
 - A handout of possible NHFD ideas was distributed, and the group was asked to be prepared to present and choose ideas at the next MHAG meeting.
 - Christine's challenge to the group this year is this: However BIG or small, let's have an event/activity in each region this year!

- Region 3 Volunteer Projects & Coordination (*Aaron Garcia*)
 - Aaron has taught two upland bird clinics and one turkey clinic. These clinics are a "how-to" on hunting those species. Participants were then given the chance to put their teaching to use in a hunt.
 - http://www.yakimaherald.com/sports/outdoors/following-earlier-success-state-program-for-novices-expands-to-pheasant/article_ea5b3536-b37c-11e5-9491-c7d762904862.html
 - Aaron also helped connect an elderly elk hunter in the Teanaway area to a master hunter who helped the hunter with harvesting a great elk.
 - <http://www.tri-cityherald.com/sports/outdoors/article51651360.html>
 - Aaron coordinated elk hazing/herding projects within Region 3 to help with depredation issues.
 - He also worked with master hunters to work on fencing projects.

- Region 4 Volunteer Projects & Coordination (*Steve Dazey*)
 - Steve facilitated a Snap Trap varnish project for regional bio so the traps could be deployed later this year.
 - Master hunter Gary Powell supplied lumber for boardwalk building, organized his employees for a volunteer day to assist in building the boardwalk on Snoqualmie Wildlife Area
 - Also, Steve assisted with various Boy Scout projects on the Snoqualmie WLA.

- Region 6 Volunteer Projects & Coordination (*Bill Montgomery*)
 - Bill read a letter from the WDFW conflict specialist Tammy Conklin on MH Greg Glass and his great service in removing elk and being a great ambassador for the MHPP.
 - Bill has also worked on getting MH's to haze animals in the Orting area.
 - Region 6 has been getting calls about deer with arrows sticking out of them in Sequim and has a MH that is out trying to locate the animal(s).
 - Bill has been working on getting a super-volunteer for the Lakewood area and now has a MH lined up.
 - There was a MH that removed junk from a WLA access road that was blocking access illegally. The MH used his own heavy equipment to remove the block and restore access to the WLA.

- Topics (*Kris Thorson*)
 - Kris is working on getting WDFW "How To" clinic booklets and curriculum established.
 - Clinic booklets for the turkey and upland birds clinics were distributed to the MHAG members.
 - There was a suggestion from George that the booklets may be a possible replacement for the current MH materials.
 - Another suggestion was that WDFW make the clinic booklets available online for those that may not have the time to go to a clinic.
 - WDFW staff will look into the best way of presenting the clinic booklets online and report back.
 - Kris is working on creating an "Enhanced Hunter Education" curriculum that would be a compilation of the clinic booklets and more.

- Kris is also working on the Instructor Advisory Committee's roles and responsibilities and modeling them after the MHAG roles and responsibilities.
- Answers to emailed MHAG questions (*Kris Thorson*)
 - Several questions were posed to Kris while working on the agenda for the meeting. The questions were answered and sent to the entire MHAG via email.
 - Turnbull Wildlife Refuge issue:
 - What is the actual plan for the Turnbull Area and the December Master hunter hunt in GMU 127-130?
 - Hunter Education staff is working with the Game Division on this question. This information will be presented at the next meeting
 - Eastern WA duck/goose seasons:
 - The length of hunting for ALL Eastern Washington duck/geese is the same but the actual total days of hunting for most hunting is markedly diminished in Spokane and Pend Oreille County because of annual freeze. Can there be a change in total days to hunt per area that would allow earlier start and earlier stop to allow same reasonable hunting days for ALL Hunters?
 - Under federal rules we are restricted on the number of duck season zones we can have. We currently have 2 zones, eastside and westside. Seasons within all areas of each zone need to be the same. Most harvest on the eastside occurs in the Columbia Basin, so seasons in that zone are set to account for optimum bird availability in the s. basin (as late as possible).
 - Mt. Goat population & body condition:
 - How is the goat population faring, and what were the success rates this year?
 - The goat population is stable, and hunting was about average of the last few years.
 - There was question raised by Carissa on MH damage hunt guidelines. Since this is a large item that wouldn't have been accurately tackled in an email, it will be discussed at the end of this meeting.
 - Kris also mentioned that the Hunter Education Division is having In-Service Training for Hunter Education Instructors and would love attendance by MHAG to talk about what it is MHAG does.

- **MHAG Member Updates (*MHAG members*)**
 - MHAG member volunteer work/activities, news/issues from your region, etc.
 - Jim Fitzgerald
 - Jim worked on the MHAG recruitment for members to fill the five available seats this year.
 - Assisted with building the MHAG agenda and resolving issues that may have arose with the agenda.
 - Jim taught in some Hunter Education classes in the fall.
 - He will be the MHAG representative at the Sequim Hunter Ed Instructor In-Service Training.
 - Carissa Craghead
 - Carissa is working with the Ephrata Sportsmen Assoc. to develop an archery range.
 - Carissa also taught in some Hunter Education classes.
 - Tim Bruya
 - Tim will be at the Region 1 Hunter Ed Instructor In-Service Training as the MHAG representative.
 - Tim emailed Kris about the questions he received from MHs on the Turnbull elk season and goose seasons.
 - Tim has committed to do a NHFDF activity in July rather than September
 - Tom Conrads
 - Tom investigated the competition he encountered for the September 26, 2016 NHFDF activity he had near the Tri-Cities.
 - Tom worked with the Yakima Firing Range staff and proposed signage for hunting areas. MHs could volunteer to locate boundaries and post the areas accordingly. There was no support from the Firing Range upper management for more signs because they could be used by soldiers who are training to figure out where they are when sometimes they are supposed to get lost.
 - Tom also suggested increasing the black section of the current B3 target used by MHs to qualify or increase size of target.
 - Kris will work on this and send a draft target out to MHAG members to test out.

- John Glenwinkel
 - John worked on getting an archery club moved into a classroom
 - John is a part of the National Shoot To Retrieve Association and they will be holding trials starting in March. John would like to do upland bird clinics in combination with the trials. <http://www.nstra.org/>

- John McAuliffe
 - John is working on setting up classes for Hunter Education for the coming year.

- George Dennis
 - George worked on the MHAG recruitment for members to fill the five available seats this year.
 - George is a Range Safety Officer at the Cowlitz range and spreads the MH word while volunteering at the range.
 - George is teaching in some Hunter Education classes this year.
 - George attended the Commission meeting on January 22, 2016 to listen to and report to MHAG on a poaching presentation given by Chief Crowne
 - He is also planning a NHFD event.

- Chris Brong
 - As a county commissioner, Chris knows a lot about Payment In Lieu of Taxes and discussed its impacts to counties.
 - Chris distributed several articles on the below topics.
 - Larry Cassidy
 - County opposition of WDFW purchase of private lands
 - Legislature does not address/increase PILT payments
 - MT case study; adjudicated dept. responsibility to manage publicly owned wildlife vs. allowing wildlife to be managed by private citizens (Ted Turner & bison)

- Robert Cernick
 - Bob was able to harvest in 3911 this year.
 - He also helped haze elk out of 3911 conflict areas.
 - This is Bob's last meeting and he thanked everyone for opportunity to be on MHAG.

- Shawn Woodard
 - Shawn will be volunteering at the Bighorn Show for Inland Wildlife Council in March.
 - Shawn is planning on becoming a Hunter Education Instructor and starting to teach in classes.
 - Shawn also raised a question: “Why can’t a MH use a MH MF tag on a MH MZ season?”
 - Captain Mann answered that the implement choice was put into place to try to address overcrowding. Also when setting seasons the biologists use a formula that allows for the number of days to hunt and average success rates allow the removal of the surplus carrying capacity.

- Lance Ostrom
 - Lance has been receiving emails from MH’s on elk hunting in Region 3.
 - He has moved to Region 2 temporarily but is still serving on the MHAG.
 - Lance is helping facilitate hunters getting info on the Yakima Firing Range and to determine where the hunt boundaries are.

- Bernard Brown report by Dave Whipple:
 - Bernard attempted to get young hunters coupled with guides and friends on pheasant and waterfowl outings; one success with a 13 year old pheasant hunting.
 - Blue tongue is an issue with the people Bernard has talked to. What was the effect for fall 2015, and future effects?
 - Bernard did not use his doe tag in Steptoe unit, as the ranchers and farmers whom he typically hunts on were concerned about the number of residual does for 2016. Though he explained that they were also the people who clamored for more doe harvest in the past, as their crops were depredated. They did agree, but still, he honored their wishes and did not harvest a doe this fall.

- **2016 MHAG Recruitment (*Jim Fitzgerald*)**
 - The MHAG leadership wanted to recognize the outgoing membership for their service to the MHAG and MHPP. Those not returning are Robert Cernick, Jim Slyfield, and John McGlenn. Thank you for your efforts to the MHAG.
 - There were 25 applicants for the five open seats on MHAG
 - John Glenewinkel, George Dennis, and Jim Fitzgerald served on the selection Committee from MHAG
 - Kris and Dave were the WDFW staff on the committee.

- The committee recommended that the director appoint Tom Conrads and Jim Zimmerman to another term.
 - He agreed and appointed those members to another three year term.
- The committee recommended that the director appoint the following new members. These members will begin their three year terms in April.
 - Shane Briel of Region 6
 - David Floyd of Region 4
 - Jeff Larsen of Region 4
- **Elections of Chair, Vice-chair, and Secretary (*Jim Fitzgerald*)**
 - The current leadership terms were coming to an end at this meeting. Selection of new officers needed to happen before the next meeting.
 - The appointments will be effective starting in April.
 - There was one nomination for Chair
 - Nomination of George Dennis to be Chair by Lance Ostrom, and seconded by Carrissa Craghead
 - Unanimous vote
 - There was one nomination for Vice-Chair
 - John McAuliffe self-nominated, seconded by Tim Bruya & John Glenewinkel
 - Unanimous vote
 - There was one nomination for Secretary
 - Carissa Craghead was nominated by Tim Bruya, seconded by Shawn Woodard
 - Unanimous vote
 - Recognition by Dave for Jim Fitzgerald's work as chair
 - **Thank you Jim Fitzgerald for all you have done as the Chair of MHAG in the past years. Your leadership has been valued by WDFW and all MH's.**
 - Recognition by Dave for Carrissa's continued support as secretary.
- **2015 MHPP Annual Report (Dave Whipple)**
 - The MHPP annual report is in draft form and is nearly completed
 - Dave will send the draft to the MHAG via email to review and comment.
 - Please review/provide input by February 12.

- **MHPP Applicant Test Questions (*Kris Thorson and Dave Whipple*)**
 - Currently the MHPP test proctors are not recording which test the applicant is taking. WDFW is going to ask that test proctors to record which tests the applicant is taking so we can identify any problem questions and assess the test questions.
 - It was suggested that we identify if there's a problem with particular questions before revamping the entire test.
 - John Glenewinkel had suggestions that the test should assess the knowledge of applicants. The ability to read and write are not indicative of knowledge. Master hunters need a great deal of knowledge to be stewards of the hunt and role models to the hunting community. The test may not be best way to assess and applicants skills/knowledge. John personally knows seven or eight individuals who are very intelligent but could not pass the current MH test.
 - There may be a MHAG Subgroup to review the test next year, after we compile the testing data and determine if there are problematic test questions.
 - John McAuliffe & Shawn Woodard volunteered to be involved in the subgroup.
 - There were several questions posed that WDFW will research and report on next meeting:
 - Can tests be read to applicants (like Hunter Education tests) or can there be an alternative way to administer test?
 - Can existing MHs tutor the applicants?
 - Would a "pre-test" be a good method to enable learning the materials?
 - What does WDFW really want MHs to know and be able to speak on?

- **MHPP Website changes (*Kris Thorson*)**
 - The updates to the website have been completed and are now online.
 - Kris asked the MHAG members if they have suggested improvements. Are there other ways to help to enhance the MH image?"
 - Kris requested the members look at the changes and please send any changes to him by Feb. 12
 - Carissa brought up the idea of a MH Facebook page.
 - WDFW will look into possibly implementing this in the future.

- **Assessment of possible implement requirements for specific hunts (*Kris Thorson and Dave Whipple*)**
 - WDFW reviewed this issue. It doesn't appear to be wide spread.

- If we did determine that this was going to be a requirement it would mean more qualifications and might mean a qualification each reapplication term.
 - WDFW has decided that this is too difficult to implement, and not apparently needed at this time. We will continue to rely on MHs being truthful about whether they are proficient with the implement(s) required for specific damage hunts (if any), and not accept the damage permit unless the MH is proficient.
- **Update on potential use of MH's to address bear timber damage (*Dave Whipple*)**
 - There was a WDFW stakeholder group charged with helping WDFW develop ways to address bear timber damage. The group recommended to WDFW staff that MHs help address damage on SFLO properties.
 - This would not be classified as a hunt. This would be a removal of bears damaging trees.
 - The stakeholder group has put forth the possibility of using bait for these removals. This would be able to be done based on director authorization.
 - Currently the stakeholder group has recommended that the carcass could be retained by the MH.
 - In meeting with Game Division staff, the Hunter Education staff recommended that a bear depredation course be required, in order to instruct MH's on identifying the signs and associated rules and sensitivities of this removal.
 - WDFW is waiting on final recommendation from the Wildlife Program senior staff before starting to implement this program.
- **MHPP Strategic Plan (*John M./Jim F./John G./John Mc/Jim S./Dave W./Kris T./Capt. Mann*)**
 - The members of the group had a phone meeting on the proposed youth hunts portion of the strategic plan.
 - John McGlenn had sent a draft form out to the MHAG membership to review and comment.
 - Kris is working with internal staff members to determine a suitable pilot location.
 - The process on how and what MHs would be expected to do are being developed by Hunter Education staff and Game Division staff.
 - This program will help landowners, as well as enhance the image of MHs and change expectations and behaviors
- **CORT Updates (*Shane Briel*)**
 - There were 155 CORT attendees in 2015.
 - Eyes in the woods held 11 classes.
 - There were 517 attendees for 2013-2015 timeframe.

- There were 39 classes held during 2013-2015 timeframe.
- There was a question on whether CORT teachers could earn MH hours teaching the course?
 - Dave will discuss this with WDFW staff members and report back.
- **MH Damage Hunts – Process and Expectations (this or next meeting)**
 - Carissa brought up this issue on damage hunt administration since she has been a part of Region 2 and Region 3 damage hunts
 - Currently there are guidelines that hunt coordinators should follow when administering hunts. There is a question on the consistency of administration.
 - Region 2 uses the MH list as a pool to randomly draw hunters from to alleviate calls from the MHs on when they think the conflict staff will call. Kris and Dave are working on a possible web page to allow MHs to see where they are on damage permit lists to help with this.
 - Having a MH In-Service Training is being considered giving the below information to the master hunters:
 - How the property is entered into the DMG system.
 - Why are the hunts run differently
 - Streamlined process
 - Other ideas are:
 - Possible mailing the rules/regulations to MHs
 - It makes sense to have a standardized policy and procedure that might have the below items as pieces of information the conflict staff give to the master hunters.
 - Maps of the hunt area to MH for DMG Permits
 - SPECIFIC INFORMATION on hunting dates, lands, etc. from Conflict staff.
 - The process where the number of damage permits is decided starts in January or February. This is information from the regional biologists and conflict staff that make their recommendation to the appropriate Section Managers in the Game Division. If approved, the recommendation is presented to the Game Division Manager. Once these are approved and the drawing deadline has come and gone, the conflict staff members are there to work with landowners to stop the conflicts they are having with deer and elk. If they feel that a hunter is needed, they will contact the hunt coordinator to have them contact the next master hunter. Sometimes the conflict staff members act as their own hunt coordinator. Other times, super-volunteers like Mike Britton and Steve Keisel are the hunt coordinators. There are guidelines (attached) that dictate the process on how these hunts may be run. Due to workload associated with calls from Master Hunters wanting to know where they were on the list and how long until they might be called, Region 2 modified their approach. Tracy, Dave, and Kris are working internally to streamline the process and remove the workload from the conflict staff so that there can be standardization statewide.

- A question was posed, “When MHs are drawn, can’t the specific information to that hunt be sent to the MH”
 - The answer is yes, the Hunt Coordinator gives this information to the master hunter. Maybe this is not done clearly in some instances.
- Jim Zimmerman volunteered to be on a work group if one is formulated
- Kris will report back next meeting with an update on the guidelines.

Conclusion

- **Recap Action Items (*Secretary Craghead*)**
 - Dave/Kris – MHPP renewal rates by Region
 - Need low impact MH opportunities
 - Turnbull elk hunts discussion next meeting
 - MH Annual report out and back to WDWF by Feb 12
 - Assess MH tests for next year
 - Feedback by Feb. 12 on MHPP webpage
 - MH website updates/feedback by Feb 12
 - Dave – SLFO bear damage
 - Teaching CORT class – hours count towards MH requirements?
 - Updated guidelines/information on MH Damage hunts
 - Look into different target for MHAG certification

- **Agenda Topics for Next Meeting**

- **Next Meeting Date and Location**
 - April 29, 2016 at the Washington Cattleman’s Association in Ellensburg

- **Good of the Order (*All; General discussion items by MHAG*)**
 - George Dennis gave a status report on elk hoof disease research in Regions 5 and 6
 - Report on Chief Crown’s report to commission on January 22, 2016

- **Adjourn**