



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

MHAG Meeting #23

March 13, 2013 - 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Washington Cattlemen's Association Offices, Ellensburg

Procedural Business

1. Call to order by Chair Mike Britton, 9:05 a.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Guests.

Members present:

Mike Britton, Chair	Jim Fitzgerald, Vice Chair
Craig Broadhead, Secretary	John McGlenn
Robert Scoville	James Reinbold
George Dennis	Dennis Clay
Mike Estes	
Roger Hurst	Bill Zachmann
Jim Zimmerman	Tom Conrads
Jim Sutton	

Members excused:

James Slyfield	Wayne Ward
Chris Brong	Greg Yonemura

WDFW Staff present:

Sgt. Carl Klein	Nate Pamplin, Assistant Director
Anthony Novak	Mike Livingston, Region 3 Director
Stephanie Simek, Conflict Section Mgr.	

Guests or Presenters:

George Colbourn	Dan Hasty
Mark Swalley	Ray Dashiell
Jim Gildersleeve	

3. Approval of Meeting #22 Notes from December 14, 2012 – Notes were previously approved by group and posted to website.

4. Reports from the Chair:

ALEA Grant Report:

Chair Britton discussed an ALEA grant process for a Region 1 pilot program for a volunteer coordinator. Selection will be May 1, grants awarded effective July 1, the new fiscal year.

Vice-chair Fitzgerald recapped the status of his ALEA grant which involves educating salal gatherers on the Olympic peninsula regarding proactive litter control. This requires using volunteers fluent in Spanish and Vietnamese. ALEA grant money would help with educational pamphlets and small backpacks for incentive.

Retention Committee Presentation

George Colbourn, guest and MHAG alumni, presented his research on the benefits of lifetime hunting licenses. George interviewed several state wildlife agencies where lifetime licenses are currently sold. Currently 20 States offer lifetime licenses. George believes lifetime licenses will provide retention, recruitment, and revenue. This is a positive way to engage hunters and keep them engaged year after year. George recommends that WDFW seriously consider offering lifetime licenses and make them as attractive as possible.

5. Liaison Report

Sgt. Klein presented the latest MHPP enrollment numbers, with 1,918 Master Hunters, 3 removals for law violations, and 5 or 6 with pending investigations.

Group Discussion on Enrollment Freeze and Plan Forward

The group discussed the planned move of the MHPP from the Enforcement Program to the Wildlife Program, which will take effect in July 2013. Sgt. Klein feels this is a better fit for the program, and will allow a positive move forward. Assistant Director Nate Pamplin states that the July 1 transition date is not a magic bullet, and the Agency still needs help and council from the MHAG to complete what is needed. AD Pamplin stated that Master Hunters need to put forth the positives of the program to help counter some of the negative perception. A key issue for the program to address according to AD Pamplin is the balance between private property rights and fairness of opportunity. AD Pamplin also stated that the Agency is leaning toward requiring all MH volunteer hours must be earned on Agency projects, but notes that a much better volunteer management effort must be implemented.

Sgt. Klein states that the biggest issue in the program still to address is to focus on the volunteer aspect of the program first, before any hunt damage opportunities are increased. The Department has to better align the use of volunteers with available projects to achieve Department objectives. Sgt. Klein may recommend that the number of volunteer hours needed to become a Master Hunter or to recertify be increased. The group discussed that volunteer work has to be done by law as part of the program. The Department has to commit to using volunteers, and volunteer coordinators in each Region are the key. A suggestion was made to use the work plan process so existing WDFW staff can commit time to manage the effort.

Two guests to the meeting described their frustration over the Department decision to suspend enrollment in the program. They described perceived untruths in the press release and information regarding the freeze, and stated that it is off-putting to those that may want to get into hunting. A recommendation was made to make hunting permits based on number of volunteer hours from one of the guests present.

6. Hunt Behavior Study Update.

Anthony Novack, Region 3, Deer/Elk Conflict Specialist presented latest results on hunter behavior study.

Anthony gave a brief update of the status of the study. The CWU Graduate student has not yet completed the mailed-portion of the study regarding Master hunters, so there is nothing more to present. It is expected that once this portion of the study is complete, the statistical significance or rates of violations will be more comparable to general hunters.

Stephanie Simek, the new WDFW Conflict Section Manager, introduced herself to the group. Stephanie stated the need for the Department and Master Hunters to work together to minimize wildlife/landowner conflicts.

7. Report on GMAC Meeting

Tom Conrads / Mike Estes presented what they learned at the March 9th GMAC Meeting.

Mike and Tom stated that there was discussion at the GMAC regarding the Hunter Access program, results of Colockum true spike regulations, 4 point regulations for NE GMUs, and a wolf management update. The GMAC stated that they needed a web presence similar to the MHAG web page.

8. Assistant Director Nate Pamplin

Nate Pamplin is the Assistant Director for the WDFW Wildlife Program, and introduced himself and provided his thoughts for the MHPP. AD Pamplin requested that Master Hunters help the Department with wolf management by learning the issues, knowing the facts, and help by being vocal where we can to combat misinformation and to utilize MH and MHAG credibility. AD Pamplin discussed the Discover Pass and the benefits of a stable funding source that isn't tied to hunters. Wildlife Program staff is not funded much by State; mostly fees. It has been very successful for outdoor recreationists, not just hunters, to contribute to wildlife management. He mentioned pending listings and U.S. Fish & Wildlife court decision impacts.

AD Pamplin discussed hunting access as a #1 issue, specifically regarding moneys for Farm bill access, private lands partnerships, SAFE program, and Sage grouse enhancement programs.

AD Pamplin stated there will be an increased effort by the Department to ensure the use of volunteers. This process has started with the appointment of people like James Chandler and Christine Redmond. Another effort that will take priority is the use of volunteers to help lead a Citizen Science effort, which could benefit the Department by doing things like conducting habitat inventories, birding, and other meaningful projects.

AD Pamplin discussed using applications such as GIS, ESRI, targeting specific species, and wildlife reporting.

AD Pamplin stated that the Hunter Education Program and the Instructors are a critical tool for the conservation of hunting in the State. Recruitment and retention is the key, and the Hunter Ed program sets the stage for both.

9. Report on Action Items:

- **ACTION ITEM 21-1.** Mike Estes review MHAG Roles and Responsibilities and Bylaws. **ON-HOLD PENDING PROGRAM ENROLLMENT SUSPENSION.**
- **ACTION ITEM 19 – 1** – I&O committee determine means of communication with MH via website and/or G-mail account. **TABLED.**
- **ACTION ITEM 22-1** – Letter of Expectation from MHAG to WDFW – Complete, but resubmitted as Action Item 23-1 (#5) above.
- **ACTION ITEM 22-2** – 2012 Annual Report **COMPLETE.**
- **ACTION ITEM 22-3** – MHAG Members provide Recruitment & Retention recommendations – **ONGOING BUT ON-HOLD PENDING PROGRAM REORGANIZATION.**

10. New Business

Group Recognitions and Installation of New Chair, Vice Chair, and New Members

Recognition was provided for Outgoing Chair Mike Britton, Vice Chair Jim Fitzgerald, and retiring MHAG members Mike Estes, Greg Yonemura, and Robert Scoville. Greg served one year, Robert a full term, and Mike Estes served over 5 years, and was twice elected Chair.

Jim Fitzgerald was installed by the group as Chair. John McGlenn was installed as Vice Chair, and Jim Slyfield, Tom Conrads, and Bill Zachmann were installed as new members.

Incoming Chair Comments

Jim Fitzgerald, incoming Chair, addressed the group stating he was looking forward to making a better program through using advice of all members, getting to know Regional offices, and rely on honorary members.

Conclusion

Recap Action Items – Action Items are as noted throughout this document in bold.

Agenda Topics for Next Meeting –

- None noted

Next meeting Date and Location – Friday, June 7, 2013 at 9:00 am, Cattlemen's Association in Ellensburg.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:45 p.m.