



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

MHAG Meeting #32, Meeting Notes
 July 17, 2015, 2015, 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 Wood Program
	Shawn Woodard (absent)		
	Tim Bruya		
Region 2	Carissa Craghead, Secretary (absent)	Kris Thorson Hunter Education Division Specialist	Mike Britton Region 1 Master Hunter & ALEA Grant Recipient
	Bernard Brown		
Region 3	Lance Ostrom	Aaron Garcia Region 3 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	Scott Phelps Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group
	Tom Conrads		
	Robert Cernick		
Region 4	Jim Fitzgerald, Chair	Steve Dazey Region 4 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	John McGlenn		
	Jim Slyfield		
	John McAuliffe		
Region 5	Chris Brong	Bill Montgomery Region 6 Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	George Dennis, Vice Chair (excused)		
Region 6	James Zimmerman	Captain Rich Mann Region 3 Enforcement	
		Christine Redmond Volunteer Program Manager	
		Rich Harris Section Manager: Bighorn sheep, mountain goats, moose, pronghorn antelope	

Procedural Business

- Call to order and announcements
 - Capt. Rich Mann stated a Master Hunter who was suspended for improper tagging an elk in Elk Area 3911 successfully appealed the citation in court, and has contacted Yakima Herald. Rich will contact the reporter to see if a story will be run.
- Introduction of members and guests
- Approval of Meeting #31 notes from April 24, 2015
 - Meeting notes were approved, with the correction that Jim Slyfield was in fact present.

New Business

- **WDFW Reports and Updates (*Dave Whipple*)**
 - Staffing Update: Hunter Education Division Specialist position filled
 - Kris Thorson has been hired as the new Hunter Education Division Specialist. Kris comes from WDFW's Wildlife Program Administration Division where he held positions in customer service and supporting Division Managers. Kris also has experience in WDFW's Licensing Division. Kris will work on policy and operational aspects of the Division, including managing MHAG to make sure we keep moving forward on implementing the strategic plan, and he'll also manage the Instructor Advisory Committee, Hunter Recruitment Retention and Reengagement advisory Group. Other work elements will include hunter clinics, continuing education, advance hunter ed curriculum, etc. Kris is an avid upland bird hunter, and also participates in deer hunting.
 - MHPP 2015 Applicants
 - 19 (5%) of the 375 applicants have been certified to-date. The deadline for completion of all requirements is Nov. 15
 - WDFW Shooting Ranges
 - WDFW is still moving forward with work to develop a shooting range on the Wenas Wildlife Area north of Yakima. Master Hunters will be needed to help run the range or provide a presence. Aaron Garcia has been talking with local Master Hunters to generate interest and support.
 - WDFW is also still pursuing a land acquisition near Ellensburg for purpose-built shooting range & educational center.
 - The 2015-2016 Hunter Education Pittman-Robertson budget contains funding for shooting range development. There may be additional range development opportunities in NE WA on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area.

- MH Crossbow Shooting Proficiency Standards
 - Jim Fitzgerald contacted George Coulbourn, Master Hunter and former MHAG member, who had proposed changes to the crossbow standards a few years ago. George proposed the new standard based on his experience shooting a crossbow and his crossbow research (he qualified under the former, more difficult standard). WDFW accepted George's proposal. Thanks go to George Coulbourn for his leadership.
 - The standards on the current shooting proficiency form are the correct, updated standards. WDFW has changed the website information to be consistent with the correct standards.
 - Jim Slyfield suggested the form and the web content be clarified by including that 5 shots are allowed while shooting off-hand and also shooting with a rest, for a total of 10 shots. MHAG & WDFW agreed, and WDFW will make those clarifications.

- Notification of Enforcement by MHs Harvesting Under Permits
 - WDFW Law Enforcement receives phone calls from the public, thinking they are reporting a poaching, when it (sometimes) is a Master Hunter with a special damage permit. Enforcement officers can be pulled away from important work and travel long distances to respond to those calls.
 - WDFW proposed to add language to Master Hunter special permits, requesting the Master Hunter to contact WDFW when they are taking to the field, but especially as soon as possible after they harvest an animal. This will likely prevent "false alarms".
 - MHAG agreed and had the following additional recommendations:
 - The process also needs to be used for Landowner Permits & Kill Permits.
 - WDFW should consider using the process for Hunter Education Instructor Incentive Permits as well.
 - The reporting should be recommended, not required (some MHs may not report, and there are cell phone coverage issues).
 - The Hunt Coordinator should help report the harvest as well.
 - There's a concern on how to report during non-business hours, and a recognition reporting may not be possible during non-business hours.
 - WDFW will work out a process, and language and the phone number to be added to the Master Hunter permits, and possibly the instructor incentive permits.

- IHEA 2014 Volunteer HEI of the Year
 - Steve Mills, Hunter Education Instructor from Toledo (Region 5) received the 2014 International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) Volunteer Instructor of the Year. Steve was also the 2013 Terry Hoffer Memorial Firearm Safety Award recipient. Steve could not attend the IHEA conference in Iowa, so WDFW's Director Jim Unsworth presented the award to Steve at the June 12, 2015 Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting. The Commission was very appreciative of Steve's outstanding contributions to Washington's Hunter Education Program, and to hunter education in general. Steve has helped shape & bolster WDFW's Hunter Education program into one of the best programs in the country, largely from "behind the scenes".

- New WDFW Wolf Policy Lead
 - Donny Martorello just moved into the Wolf Policy Lead position recently vacated by retiring Dave Ware. Donny joined WDFW in 2000, was the Carnivore Section Manager for Wildlife Program's Game Division, and has been the technical management lead for wolf management since 2012. Donny has also managed black bears, cougars, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, & moose for WDFW. He has a B.S. in Fisheries Science from Univ. of Idaho, and an M.S. & Ph.D. from Univ. of Tennessee in wildlife resources; black bear population demographics and black bear distribution predictive models.

- **MHAG Member Updates (MHAG members)**
 - MHAG members are doing great things around the state, such as:
 - MHAG Strategic plan work, clarifying MH shooting standards, administering MH tests, participating in Traditional HE classes
 - Participating in planning for National Hunting and Fishing Day events, Washington Outdoor Women, etc.
 - Conducting goose banding w/ WDFW, habitat improvements, etc.
 - Working w/ 4H shooting sports team, pursuing possible development of a year-round shooting range
 - Serving as a Chief Hunter Education Instructor and corporate liaison at Seattle Skeet & Trap (SST) to reserve the club & provide shooting instructors, many times to new shooters during events.
 - Following WDFW's efforts to develop the Wenas shooting range
 - Planning to help WDFW conduct bat surveys
 - Etc.

- **MHAG Strategic Plan (*John M./Jim F./Dave W./Capt. Mann*)**
 - Discussion centered on the top priorities of the strategic plan and updating MHAG members on the recent subgroup work. Some wording changes have been made. The point was made that we need to address potential MH liability issues associated w/ youth hunts, and weigh risks vs. benefits. WDFW and the subgroup will continue to flesh-out how to implement the top priorities, to enable implementation.

- **Master Hunter Elk Area 3911; Update & July 31 Orientation Meeting (*Aaron Garcia*)**
 - WDFW is hosting a Master Hunter and landowner orientation to Elk Area 3911 on July 31, 6:00-8:00 PM at Central Washington University. The goal of the orientation is to make sure Master Hunters attending understand the goals of the Master Hunter Permit Program, the goals for Elk Area 3911, and the recent boundary change. The early season for Elk Area 3911 begins August 1.

- **Volunteer Program Update (*Christine Redmond*)**
 - A checkbox was added to the volunteer Proof of Service form which lets WDFW know some volunteer hours are in CERVIS. This will negate duplication in reporting volunteer hours, and simplify the reporting process.
 - National Hunting and Fishing Day
 - MHAG members George Dennis and Chris Brong, along with Dick Miller and others are planning a youth shooting event at the Cowlitz Public Shooting Range. WDFW will be a partner and provide some firearms, ammunition, and some giveaways for the youth participants. The TIP trailer may be available as well. Youth will get in the range free, and will shoot their own firearms. WDFW Hunter Education Instructors will be available to allow youth to also shoot WDFW .223 rifles if they wish.

- **Region 3 Volunteer Projects & Coordination (*Aaron Garcia*)**
 - Due to time constraints, only a very brief summary of volunteer project coordination in Region 3 was provided. The following is a list of projects worked on by master hunters since the last MHAG meeting:
 - 3 targeted landowner projects in the Kittitas valley were initiated and 2 have been completed. 1 project had the lead volunteer drop out due to personal issues; Aaron Garcia will be re-organizing that project and getting more volunteers.
 - Volunteers were provided for a Mountain Goat survey
 - Volunteers were provided for a Goose Banding project
 - Aaron Garcia made initial contact with Region 2 and provided some volunteers for a habitat project in the Gloyd Seeps area.
 - Aaron Garcia has been working with DFW and DNR staffs to make sure volunteer projects are made available.

- **Region 4 Volunteer Projects & Coordination (*Steve Dazey*)**
 - Due to time constraints, only a very brief summary of volunteer project coordination in Region 4 was provided. The following is a list of projects worked on by master hunters since the last MHAG meeting:
 - Wood Duck nest box construction, placement, and maintenance
 - Ongoing projects on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area include coordinating the upcoming pheasant release
 - Buckley area Elk Fladry, Day Creek Elk fence maintenance
 - Slides scanned for and digitally stored for the archives
 - Headquarters unit of the Skagit WLA paint project
 - Ephrata area annual bat survey
 - Start to establish women only hunter education classes using an all-female team
 - Coordinator Dazey also reported on a troubling trend of master hunter applicants signing up to take the MH test at the Region 4 office and then no-showing

- **Region 6 Volunteer Projects & Coordination (*Bill Montgomery*)**
 - Due to time constraints, only a very brief summary of volunteer project coordination in Region 6 was provided.
 - Recruited 2 MHs with limited mobility to help with approx. 10,600 Small Game surveys because of the omission of the Wild ID numbers on the form they had to cross reference and manually write them in
 - Recruited a Super Volunteer for Wildlife Area Manager Belson to coordinate multiple projects in the Clallam, and Jefferson County area
 - Worked with conflict specialist Blankenship on Elk Fladry in the Bonney Lake area, and for elk hazing in both Bonney Lake and Orting area
 - Recruited 7 MHs to patrol the Snowy Plover nest sights project, although the project was canceled when due to the razor clam season being cancelled.
 - Helped recruit MHs for fawn collaring in Capital Forest
 - Helping recruit MHs for the bat survey
 - Worked with Larry Kinney of the Mt. Rainier Elk Foundation on fence repair in the Buckley Enumclaw area
 - Helped some MHs find hours working with Hunter Education classes.

- **The Status of Washington's Bighorn sheep herds (*Rich Harris*) – (*Approx. 1:00 p.m.*)**
 - Rich Harris, Section Manager in the Wildlife Program's Game Division, presented a PowerPoint on the history and status of Washington's bighorn sheep herds, including the transmission potential and effects of pneumonia, and WDFW's management approach.
 - The PowerPoint will be emailed to MHAG members.

- **ALEA Grant Update (*Mike Britton*)**
 - Mike Britton explained his ALEA grant, which reimburses for expenses related to volunteers who coordinate other volunteers on WDFW projects such as sage grouse trapping and release, gate repair, posting signs for WDFW's private lands access program, hazing projects, fence repair, coordinating sensitive Master Hunter hunts, etc. The project is now completed.
 - The project coordinated 628 hours of volunteer time on wildlife projects, equaling nearly \$17,000. Coordination of special Master Hunter hunts took over 273 hours with 1690 miles driven (\$950 in mileage). In addition, Master Hunters spent over 300 hours on special hunts, totally over \$25,000 in donated labor to address damage.

- **CORT Updates (*Shane Briel*)**
 - Shane explained the Eyes in the Woods (EITW) ALEA grant requests. One was to help run the CORT program (materials, instructor mileage, etc.), one was for the Matheny elk habitat project.
 - Regarding CORT, Eyes in the Woods is working w/ WDFW Chief Crown on development of new videos.
 - The fee access issue on private forestland has impacted the perceived need for participating in clean-up days

- EITW has updated website, and added contact info for the CORT coordinators. The issues w/ registration & email have been fixed so MHPP applicants should be able to contact regional coordinators to schedule a CORT class.
 - EITW is offering more CORT classes & recertification opportunities for the DNR Forest Watch Program.
 - EITW was approached by Dept. Health to possibly help address Lyme disease by becoming involved in the Pick a Tick Program, which asks hunters to collect ticks from harvest animals for Lyme disease testing, possible treatments, etc. Tick sampling went away w/ reduction of game check stations
 - The question is whether/how Master Hunters can play a role. EITW is asking for WDFW/MHAG endorsement.

Conclusion

- **Recap Action Items**

- Strategic plan will continue to be developed by WDFW & the MHAG subgroup

- **Agenda Topics for Next Meeting**

- The top priority for an educational presentation is an update on wolves: population, packs, etc., Wolf Advisory Group update, funding mechanisms, etc. The second priority is a moose presentation.
 - Update on WDFW process for asking MHs to notify WDFW (Enforcement) when they harvest on permits
 - MHAG member updates
 - MHAG strategic plan update
 - Briefing on the July 31, 2015 Elk Area 3911 Orientation
 - Shooting range update
 - Volunteer Program update
 - Region 3, 4, & 6 volunteer projects and MH coordination
 - CORT update
 - Etc

- **Next Meeting Date and Location**

- The next meeting will be October 9, 2015, at Cattleman's Association (Ellensburg), 9:00-3:00.

- **Good of the Order (*All; General discussion items by MHAG*)**

- None.

- **Adjourn**

- The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:20.