

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville Jr. High
165 S. 700 E. Springville
July 15, 2008 ☞ 6:30 p.m.

Motion Summary

Approval of the Agenda

Approval of the June 3, 2008 summary

Taking Non-game Mammals R657-19 (5-yr review)

MOTION: To approve agenda items; Approval of the Agenda, Approval of the June 3rd summary and Taking of Non-game Mammals by consent agenda

Passed unanimously

Cougar Recommendations

MOTION: To accept the recommendations as presented

Passed unanimously

Bobcat Recommendations

MOTION: To support the recommendations as presented

Passed 4 to 3

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville Jr. High
165 S. 700 E. Springville
July 15, 2008 ☞ 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

Micki Barney, BLM
Richard Hansen, At Large
Doug Jones, Forest Service
Ed Kent, Chair
Gary Nielson, Sportsmen
Fred Oswald, Non-consumptive, Vice Chair
Jay Price, Elected
Duane Smith, Non-consumptive

Members Absent

John Bair, Sportsmen
Calvin Crandall, Agriculture
Byron Gunderson, At Large
George Holmes, Agriculture
Allan Stevens, At Large

Others Present

Rick Woodard, Wildlife Board Member

Motion made by Fred Oswald to approve agenda items 1) Approval of the Agenda, 2) Approval of the June 3rd summary and 9) Taking of Non-game Mammals by consent agenda

Seconded by Duane Smith

Motion passed unanimously

1) Approval of the Agenda (Action)

Accepted by consent agenda

2) Approval of the June 3, 2008 summary (Action)

Accepted by consent agenda

3) Regional Update (Information)

- Craig Clyde, Wildlife Program Manager

4) Bucks, Bulls & OIAL Update (Informational)

- Anis Aoude, Wildlife Program Coordinator

Questions from the Public

Owen Boyer – I received and completed the mule deer survey. I was disappointed that they didn't have any questions about the option of smaller units so they can manage them better as they do in many other states. Why is that?

Anis Aoude – The reason that wasn't a question is that we have already taken public comment on that issue through the RAC and Board process as an informational item. The committee will be looking at that.

5) Shed Antler Gathering (Informational)

- Michal Fowlks, Law Enforcement Chief

Questions from the RAC

Gary Nielson – Do you really think that the reason people harass wildlife is because they don't know better and an ethics course would fix that? I am worried because the people who aren't the problem are the ones that could potentially get burned in this deal. I know we have an enforcement problem just because of the limited number of officers around. If we could enforce the laws that are in place we would eliminate the problem.

Mike Fowlks – You are correct. If a law like this passes it would affect 97 percent of law abiding people so that we can stop the 3 percent that are doing this illegally. The committee felt like by not charging for a permit and offering an educational component we might solve some of the problems.

Richard Hansen – Why would the opening date be January first?

Mike Fowlks – Again, this is just a proposal. One issue that has already come up through the course of this presentation is that we hunt cow elk until January 31st and therefore we would have to adjust the opening day.

Ed Kent – Isn't it counter productive to have people in winter range areas during the most stressful times for the animals?

Mike Fowlks – A lot of the people in there now and are not causing problems, however there are a few folks who cause problems.

Comments from the Public

Earl Bartholomew – I have hunted sheds on my feet for ten years or more and have enjoyed the hiking. I have never pressed the animals and I haven't seen many people doing that until the last year or two. More and more people are getting out there and I have seen ATVs going off the roads in the brush. It is unbelievable the places they do go. I am concerned about laws that are not enforced. The people that want to break the law will. I don't think 99 percent of us need education. We are law abiding. We care about the animals and we want to see them survive and we don't want to harass them. Most people are after elk sheds which don't drop until into March so I don't understand the January opener. I hope we keep this where people can get out and enjoy the outdoors.

Adam Warnock – I have been shed hunting for 10 or 15 years and it has never been a problem until the last few years. Everywhere we used to hike on foot there are now ATV tracks. I don't own an ATV and I find that extremely annoying. I wonder if the best way to solve the problem would be to police your own ranks. Make sure there are numbers on the ATVs so we can turn people in and give the law abiding people an incentive to turn people in. Make the ticket expensive if you get caught off road. These people are making decent money on their sheds and it is worth the risk of getting caught when the fine is so low.

Justin Allan – I don't think the shed hunters are the only problem. There are people out there nature hiking who let their dogs chase the deer. Antler hunters are not the only problems. To only put regulations on shed hunters seems unfair.

- 6) **Cougar Research Update (Informational)**
- David Stoner, USU

Questions from the RAC

Richard Hansen – When you looked at reproduction rates did you take into account the available prey such as deer herd population?

David Stoner – So in other words, is there a correlation between reproductive rates and the prey abundance? We really did not look at that. Unfortunately it is an opportunity we may have missed over the years to look at how the deer herds might have responded to these varying numbers of cougar abundance. What I can tell you, and this is only anecdotal, is that on the Kennecott site in 1997 or 1998 there was a massive elk removal. Around 200 to 400, mostly cows and calves, were taken to other states and we did note on our Oquirrh site the lowest reproductive rate the year following the massive removal. That is only one year and whether it is a cause and effect relationship I can't say. I can tell you that when it comes to deer, lions will eat every age and sex class but when it comes to elk they generally focus more on calves and to some extent cows. These are things we would like to look at.

Questions from the Public

Earl Bartholomew – I have read in the past that a cougar will kill between 70 and 80 deer a year and females with cubs will kill more. Can you substantiate that?

David Stoner – That is a great question, unfortunately it is inordinately very complex. We are working on that with the GPS collars that we are using on the Oquirrhs. We are able to go back and trace their steps through the course of the year and document exactly the number of kills that they made. 70 to 80 is rather high. In an all deer system with no elk or livestock or any other large mammals the estimates are one deer a week. You have all heard that which is fairly accurate. It does vary of course by age class. As you noted, females with kittens increases the predation rate to up to one deer every three days when those kittens are just about to disperse. So an average of once a week or 7 to 10 days might be more accurate. When there are elk in the area the predation rate on deer will be substantially lower because elk are larger and they feed on them longer. I can't give you any hard numbers but I assure you that next year at this time we will have some pretty hard data on that subject.

7) Cougar Recommendations (Action) - Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Program Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Richard Hansen – I remember when people would kill cougars on the deer hunt all the time. With predators at the top of the list for a lot of people as to why there aren't more deer, would it be possible to change the season dates so people could hunt cougars while they are deer or elk hunting? There is some discussion that the reason they had more deer then was because there were fewer predators.

Kevin Bunnell – Cougars can have an impact on deer. It is more in terms of a low deer population that is trying to recover. Certainly cougars add mortality in that situation. On the Monroe unit as an example, that cougar population changed drastically over a ten year period and the deer population changed almost zero from what we were able to gather tracking the deer population at that time. I am not saying that cougars can't have an impact on deer herds but I think predators become an easy scapegoat in some situations. When we did hunt lions during the deer hunt there was a lot of controversy because of people running dogs through people's deer and elk hunts. Because of the conflict between the deer and elk and cougar hunters we have moved away from that in certain areas. On the harvest objective units however, those are year-round units and anybody who is hunting deer on those units can also have a cougar tag.

Richard Hansen – Is the Nebo unit a harvest objective unit?

Craig Clyde – The Nebo is a split unit which would close the end of June.

Richard Hansen – Do you really believe that cougars aren't that much of a detriment to the deer herd? Why do we even worry about hunting them if it doesn't matter?

Kevin Bunnell – There are a lot of people here who will tell you that they hunt cougars for the sake of hunting cougars. It has nothing to do with the deer herds.

Richard Hansen – I realize that but I also know how many deer hunters there are and they provide the bulk of the financing and I think that most would rather have more deer and less cougars.

Kevin Bunnell - The areas that we do feel that cougars are having a detrimental impact to the deer herd are managed under predator management plans and we are actively trying to reduce the cougar population in those areas. That is not the case everywhere. Certainly cougars kill deer but there is also highway mortality, hard winters, hunter harvest and everything else that goes into what is controlling a deer population. In areas where we have reduced cougar populations we have seen very little response in the deer herd.

Richard Hansen – What about the Henrys? You had a pretty aggressive predator control program when you closed that unit. It made a difference I think.

Kevin Bunnell – The Henrys are under harvest objective. If you talk to people down there they will tell you that controlling the coyotes in the spring has had a much larger impact on that than cougars. I think that is the case in a lot of areas. We are very aggressive on controlling coyote populations on our fawning grounds.

Comments from the Public

Brent Magee – Utah Federation of Houndsmen – We are about 20,000 members strong if you let us count our dogs. We appreciate Kevin's willingness to listen to us and take our input. We were hoping for a little bigger reduction but the board has decided they support this proposal. We understand better than anyone that this is Utah and as long as there is one mountain lion alive on the mountain people are going to complain and blame them for everything from Mitt Romney's loss to the price of fuel. We are okay with this proposal but we are not going to support the Book Cliffs proposal. I was told that the Southeastern RAC voted that down. The reason being, we have no problem combining the two units, the problem we have is the harvest objective. The hound club despises harvest objective units. If it was a limited entry unit or maybe even a split unit we would support it. We would encourage you to vote that down like the Southeastern RAC did. We appreciate Kevin taking our input and we support his proposal.

Mike Madsen – I would like to say I represent the deer herds of Utah; they are not here to speak. We know that cats take deer and we think they take a lot of them. I think all the deer hunters here would love to see the area they hunt have better deer numbers. I would like to see the Division continue aggressive harvest of cougars. I like the harvest objective because I have heard of anti-hunters drawing limited entry permits to save the cats. I hope the Division continues to try to keep the deer numbers up by controlling cougars.

? - I don't have dogs but I would like to hunt cougars. Is there anything against trapping cougars? I think that would be a fun way to hunt cougars.

Kevin Bunnell – Trapping is not allowed.

RAC Discussion

Fred Oswald – I remain concerned about some of the objectives that are not being met, the young population of cougars and the percent of females killed. I think both of those things are of concern in terms of following the management plan. I think if I could get a second from a fellow RAC member I would probably make a motion that we reduce the number of permits by ten percent rather than three, but I think I am alone in the wilderness on that.

VOTING

Motion was made by Fred Oswald to accept the recommendations as proposed

Seconded by Doug Jones

In Favor: All

Motion passes unanimously

8) Bobcat Recommendations (Action) - Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Program Coordinator

Comments from the Public

Paul Jarvis – Utah Trappers Association, secretary – I would like to thank you for the opportunity to talk here tonight. I represent 750 members of the Utah Trappers Association and although we agree with the bobcat management program we disagree strongly with the trap days. There are many variables like bad weather, ice and snow that freeze the traps so they are not working, that make trap days inaccurate. If the traps are not working you can't be counting them against our trap days. That is one of the big things that we disagree with in this proposal. Another issue is how experienced are the trappers out there? A few years ago everybody in the business was experienced trappers. They could go out and catch ten cats in ten days with five or six traps. Now we have the younger generation involved and they are very inexperienced. These young trappers may go out and set 100 traps for 90 days and they might not catch a cat. That doesn't mean the cats are not there, it just means they don't know how to catch them. Trap days should not be included in the variables. We very much support what Kevin has to say but we don't support that. The Utah Trappers Association is very much against the four tag proposal.

Ed Kent - What is your proposal?

Paul Jarvis – That we have six tags instead of four. There is no reason to reduce the number based on trap days.

Ed Kent – Kevin, from a biological perspective can you explain how you estimate trap days?

Kevin Bunnell – At the other RAC meetings the Trappers Association has stated that they would prefer no reduction in tags but they have also stated that they would accept a one tag reduction instead of two.

Paul Jarvis – Yes.

Kevin Bunnell – So that is still their opinion. In regards to the bobcat management plan, the Trappers Association was involved the whole way when that plan was developed and when these variables were being discussed. The president at the time was part of the group who put the management plan together. Then at their annual convention, the

Trappers Association as an entire membership voted to support the bobcat management plan. At a certain level it is frustrating to see, we support it until it starts limiting things. In relation to the set days per bobcat, I do think there is some validity in the statement about traps freezing down. We did have a heavy winter last year and that may have inflated that number. To address the idea that we had a bunch of young trappers out there I went back and looked at the information and we had virtually the same number of trappers the previous season as we did last year. Despite that in the 2006/2007 season it took 244 days to trap a bobcat. In 2007/2008 that went up by 29 percent to 343. I do think some of that can be accounted for because of weather conditions but I do think that there is some real information in that number. We have harvested bobcats at record numbers for three years in a row and I think that has had an impact on the population as a whole.

Ed Kent – That is one of the variables you look at, what is the other?

Kevin Bunnell – The two variables that were out of line were adult survival and the set days per bobcat. As I mentioned with the cougars, adult survival is calculated by a model. The thing that drives that model is the number of cats harvested in the older age classes. We have been seeing reductions in those older age classes and a fairly large reduction last year.

Al Loris – I have trapped for a lot of years. I know that a lot of the cats that have been caught that are young or female are being turned loose. I think the reason for that is when you look at the market the cats that bring the most money are the largest cats which are older males. Trappers are turning loose the smaller younger cats because they can make more money harvesting the larger cats. I would support the Trappers Association with a one tag reduction instead of two.

Ken Duncan – Morgan Utah – I would like to support the DWR in lowering the permits by two. I am a houndsman and I think there are fewer cats out there. As a houndsman I want as much time as possible. With hounds you only have from eight o'clock in the morning until about noon to find a track and get a bobcat going. I would rather see fewer tags than a shorter season.

RAC Discussion

Fred Oswald – I would like to thank the Trappers Association for being here and for their recommendation. These are people who are important to us and I appreciate them being here. I know they want to be out in the field and have as much success as possible. But I feel very strongly that there is a reason we have management plans. Those management plans were formulated by everybody who is involved in this wildlife including the Trappers Association. There are four variables and the management plan says if those variables are out of sync then we need to do something about that and I think that is exactly what the DWR is recommending. It is not just the trap days which may have some controversy with the Trappers Association but it is also the adult survival rate.

VOTING

Motion was made by Fred Oswald to support the recommendations as proposed

Seconded by Doug Jones

Gary Nielson – It was a difficult year for trappers. We can't ignore the variables that are indicating a decrease in tags but you also have the fact that it was a difficult year with

traps freezing and being buried with snow. I think the trappers in the field have a pretty good idea of what is going on and I tend to side with them.

Duane Smith – By the same token we have a houndsman here who said that the cat population has decreased. We have models and management plans for a reason and we agreed to follow the variables and indicators the way they are and I think we ought to go with the Division on this. If it doesn't work this year and we don't see a response to that then we can make changes.

Gary Nielson – Is this a single year thing or a trend we are seeing? The guys down my way are not having any trouble finding bobcats. They are letting a lot of the little ones and the females go looking for the big ones. Maybe we ought to watch it another year and if it continues to stay down that would be the time to do something about it. This could easily be a glitch.

In Favor: Micki Barney, Fred Oswald, Duane Smith, Doug Jones
Opposed: Jay Price, Gary Nielson, Richard Hansen
Motion passed 4 to 3

- 9) **Taking Non-game Mammals R657-19 (5-yr review)**
- Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Program Coordinator

Accepted by consent agenda

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.
~ 375 in attendance

Next board meeting August 7th at the DNR Auditorium

Next RAC meeting August 19th at Springville Jr. High School

NORTHEASTERN RAC MEETING SUMMARY-MOTIONS PASSED
Uintah Interagency Fire Center, Vernal/July 10, 2008

8.COUGAR RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION: to approve DWR's recommendation on cougar harvest
Passed unanimously

9.BOBCAT RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION: to accept as proposed. I know the suggestion was brought up about the cold, but 343 above the 220 is way out there and the other variable seems to be a ways down there, as well.
Passed unanimously

10.TAKING NON-GAME MAMMALS R657-19 (5-YR REVIEW)

MOTION: to approve as presented
Passed unanimously

NORTHEASTERN REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY
Uintah Interagency Fire Center, Vernal
July 10, 2008
Started at 6:30 pm; Adjourned at 8:30 pm

RAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Floyd Briggs-At Large
Rod Morrison-Sportsmen
Bob Christensen-Forest Service
Kevin Christopherson-NER Supervisor
Amy Torres-Chair
Rod Harrison-Elected Official

UDWR PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Anis Aoude-Wildlife Pgm Coord.
Kevin Bunnell-Wildlife Pgm Coord.
Charles Greenwood-NER Wldlf Mgr
Ron Stewart-NER Cons. Outreach
Gayle DeCamp-Allred-Off. Mgr
Randall Scheetz-NER Law Enf
Mitch Lane – NRO Law Enf

EXCUSED RAC MEMBERS:

Karl Breitenbach-At Large
Carlos Reed-Native American
Kirk Woodward-Sportsmen
Beth Hamann-Nonconsumptive
Curtis Dastrup-Agriculture

UNEXCUSED RAC MEMBERS:

Dave Chivers-Agriculture

WILDLIFE BOARD MEMBERS:

Del Brady

REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA Amy Torres

MOTION by Floyd Briggs to accept the agenda with the amendment adding information on the Ute Tribe Bighorn Sheep Relocation Project by Charles Greenwood and the Pelican Lake campground proposal by Jason West - BLM
Second by Bob Christensen
Passed unanimously

APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND OLD BUSINESS Amy Torres

MOTION by Rod Harrison to approve the minutes and old business.
Second by Rod Morrison
Passed unanimously

UTE TRIBE BIGHORN SHEEP RELOCATION PROJECT – Charles Greenwood
NER Wildlife Manager

See handout

REGIONAL UPDATE Kevin Christopherson NER Supervisor

Crouse Reservoir, one of the Diamond Mountain lakes had a major winterkill, with a partial kill on Calder Reservoir. We are supplementing the fish stocking with 10 inch planters from the hatcheries.

Fox/KNEU Family Fishing Event:

This has been sponsored in conjunction with UDWR. 100 fish were tagged and put in each of three reservoirs: Sand Hollow, Steinaker and Red Fleet. If you bring in a fish with the tag to 98.5 the Fox, DWR or State Parks, you get a prize. You also get put into a drawing for a big prize. If you know someone who caught a tagged fish, make sure they bring it in.

Habitat Enhancements:

DWR has started a lop and scatter project on Winter Ridge in conjunction with BLM. The pinion juniper habitat had very little feed for wildlife. It will develop very nice meadows with forbs and grasses.

Other upcoming projects include:

5,000 acres total treated at Currant Creek

500 acres of cheat grass treated at McCook Ridge

500 acres treated at Brush Creek

500 acres Dead man Bench was also treated

Several prescribed burns have been planned when weather conditions are right.

Bears:

6/24/2008. This is a picture of a bear that was in the dumpster at Smiths. This one we trapped and try to make it afraid of us and release it a long way away so it hopefully it won't come back. Bears get acclimated to people and they come back and turn into a problem bear. We've blamed bear problems on the drought in the past. But we had three bears in campgrounds last weekend alone. This tells us that campers are not being as careful as they should be. People are unintentionally training bears to come into campgrounds.

The New Field Guide to the Flaming Gorge-Uintas National Scenic Byway is Available:

It was developed with a lot of support from DWR and is on sale now for \$15.00. It includes geology/paleontology, plants, wildlife, etc. We are thinking about making a DVD now.

Questions from Public: None

Questions from RAC: None

**BUCKS, BULLS & OIAL UPDATE - Anise Aoude, Wildlife Program Coordinator
(INFORMATIONAL)**

See handout

Mule Deer Population estimates are 302,430, down from the objective of 320,000
Elk population estimates are 68,825
Pronghorn 13,000 statewide
Moose 4,000 statewide but we need to move some from areas where we can't get hunters on them. Will transplant 20 to Colorado in winter 08-09
Bighorn sheep about 5500
Mountain goats about 1900
Bison 500 on the Henries (above objective)

Questions from Public:

Mitch Hacking: Where are the moose that can't be hunted?

Anis Aoude: In the Ogden Area

Mitch Hacking: Who paid for the capture to Colorado?

Anis Aoude: Colorado. We moved at least 60 moose last year because of heavy snows. Also, it is good politics to give animals to other states.

Bill West: regarding the proposed spike-only statewide, is it on general season or limited entry?

Anis Aoude: On limited entry units. Similar to what some other units already have.

Questions from RAC:

Rod Morrison: On desert bighorn, why do the numbers stay the same?

Anis Aoude: We only harvest males. You have almost as many born as are dying from old age. Males don't increase populations because they don't reproduce, and we haven't had any disease issues.

SHED ANTLER GATHERING - Mitch Lane, Northern Region, for Michal Fowlks (INFORMATIONAL)

See handout

The Board asked that we look into how shed antler gathering affects harassment of wildlife and degradation of critical winter range in Cache County. The season restriction didn't restrict people from going out and looking for antlers, it just prohibited them from picking them up, although there were some reports of stockpiling. A group of people addressing the specific concerns in the Northern region met and came up with the following possible options:

Proposed Options:

- Written authorization to gather shed antlers from January 1 to May 15
 - Authorizations would require an online ethics course similar to the extended archery authorization or the swan permit authorization
 - Shed antlers can be gathered without authorization any time after May 15
- Division should seek to be consistent statewide with regard to access and closure issues involving Wildlife Management Areas.

We would appreciate your input.

Questions from Public:

Mitch Hacking: Does it include private lands?

Mitch Lane: It can but mostly affects State, federal and private lands.

Mitch Hacking: Why wasn't there a landowner on your committee?

Mitch Lane: There are other players that will be involved. This was just kind of a brainstorming group for preliminary ideas.

Kevin Christopherson: They were dealing with a very specific problem in Cache Valley. It is very different than here. We have a lot of WMAs. Before we did anything like that, we would look at it region by region. Out here we would definitely include landowners.

Mitch Lane: Like I said, each region probably has different situations. This was to address very specific solutions for a particular area.

Rich Martinez: What was the specific problem?

Mitch Lane: The deer were struggling so everything was looked at that kept the herd from thriving. They thought antler gathering was having a significant enough impact to disturb animals and the winter range that it was worth addressing

Rich Martinez: I live close to Tabiona Stairs. Would something like that be a helpful solution there?

Mitch Lane: Absolutely. That's why we close our Wildlife Management Areas.

Questions from RAC:

Bob Christensen: I notice Nevada didn't look like they had any laws concerning antler gathering.

Mitch Lane: Chief Fowlks talked to their chief. They probably don't have the population issues. Right now they're just doing as-needed enforcement in areas where they probably have those accessible deer or elk herds that are shedding their antlers.

Garritt Beagley: Sheep Creek has a situation where people go over fences and chase elk and deer and harass them.

Mitch Lane: It is illegal and we have regulations in force to stop that.

Chance Gomez: What was the fee proposed?

Mitch Lane: Five to 10 dollars and considerably more for commercial buyers and sellers. Similar to the furbearer program where a trapper buys a furbearer license and a commercial fur deal is required to have a more expensive permit.

Please comment at DWRcomment@utah.gov

PELICAN LAKE CAMPGROUND PROPOSAL – Jason West, BLM (INFORMATIONAL)

We have received funding to develop the Pelican Lake area. We have had numerous fishing tournaments and are seeing more and more folks using the area. We have in mind making it into a showcase campground and spotlighting the world class bluegill fishery. We're soliciting input from the RAC and public to see what kind of facilities you would like to see in this area. It could be developed all the way to a full scale area with an R.V. dump, fish cleaning station, restrooms, like Starvation Reservoir. Let us know if you like it just the way it is or if you would like it to be improved. We have an engineer checking on water resources and have reserved a water hook up for the west side of the lake for a campground. If you would like to get hold of me or take a map, you're welcome to do that. This will be a four-phased project if we go all the way. We will probably start Phase I next year.

Questions from Public:

Zack Mecham: Are you going to do anything to have more shore access for fishing?

Jason West: They just put in an ADA pier that will extend 120 to 200 feet on the south side. As the water levels rise and fall, it's difficult to put anything but an elevated pier. There are concepts for elevated walkways but with the recession of water and reed lines I'm not sure it's feasible on Pelican

Gayle Allred: How can people contact you?

Jason West: Contact me at BLM

Jason West

Jason.west@blm.gov

BLM website Jason West

Or 781-4501

Mitch Hacking: What's the cost?

Jason West: It could go as high as 1.5 to 2 million dollars total project with a full time employee if we go year-round.

Jason West Comment. I take a lot of calls about recreation. One of the big resources we're seeing on antler gathering is OHVs on grid searches on wetlands. I think that's a major cause of antler gathering problems.

Questions from RAC: None

**COUGAR RESEARCH UPDATE – Kevin Bunnell for Dr. Wolfe, USU
(INFORMATIONAL)**

Have done a cougar research study since 1995. 190 cougars were captured. We had two study areas, the Oquirrh Mountains which is private, non-exploited lands, and Monroe Mountain, which are public lands.

We were trying to find the best method for doing population estimates. Several techniques were used for counting lions. We used scent stations to bring them in but those did not work. We used summer track counts but they were not precise enough. We used winter snow counts but you need ideal snow conditions which didn't happen very often. The harvest data is not based on exact science but it does show the trends.

Another state has started a new procedure of DNA testing. If it works, we may be implementing that in the future.

Questions from Public: None

Questions from RAC: None

**COUGAR RECOMMENDATIONS – Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Program
Coordinator (ACTION)**

See handout

UDWR is recommending restoring the Book Cliffs (Unit 10) to a single unit.

Pursuit Permits will be valid for 365 days (within approved season dates)

Questions from Public:

Brad Horrocks: Would you recommend Book Cliffs harvest objective?

Kevin Christopherson: That is the recommendation from the region.

Questions from RAC:

Bob Christensen: Permits increased on the North Slope West Daggett. I'm assuming that's for bighorn sheep.

Charlie Greenwood: It is. The objective has been reduced but people are still treeing lions, we're still getting predation on our bighorn sheep. We have people who aren't killing lions because they want to keep pursuing. By dropping it we actually work against ourselves and reduce our harvest.

Comments from Public: None

Comments from RAC: None

RAC Motion and Discussion:

MOTION by Floyd Briggs to approve DWR's recommendation on cougar harvest
Second by Bob Christensen

Passed unanimously

Bighorn Sheep Transplant Comment

Charlie Greenwood: We recommended Book Cliffs go to harvest objective. The Ute tribe sent a plan to transplant bighorn sheep into Willow Creek adjacent to BLM and Wildlife Resources ground so once again there's going to be bighorn sheep reestablished there, so that's another a reason to go to harvest objective.

BOBCAT RECOMMENDATIONS – Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Program Coordinator (ACTION)

See handout

We have had seven years of high harvest with high prices for the bobcats. The usual pattern is to spike and then decline after three years. When one or more of the variable factors gets out of line, we have two options, either lower the amount of tags or shorten the season length.

This year, two factors were way out of balance:

The set-days for bobcat were 343 when the normal average is 171 to 220

Adult survival was 58% when the average should be 65% to 72%.

Therefore, the Division recommends a 2 tag reduction from 6 to 4. Will return to baseline (6) when indicator variable returns to normal ranges.

Questions from Public:

Kevin Clegg: Have other states seen the same type of decline?

Kevin Bunnell: Everybody's seeing spikes. Every population's going to have a breaking point eventually. I think we may have started to see that this year and have headed it off but I'm not sure about other states specifically.

Questions from RAC: None

Comments from Public:

Lloyd Barton: (Utah Trappers Association). They are opposed to dropping the tags from 6 to 4. They attribute the number dropping to the extreme weather statewide. It doesn't matter whether you're experienced or not, if your whole trap line is frozen you cannot have functioning traps. Also the amount of snow restricted travel. They want to stick with the 6 tags.

Kevin Bunnell: In the other regions I heard they wanted a 1 tag reduction instead of a 2 tag reduction.

Lloyd Barton: We don't want a 1 tag reduction, but would accept it.

Comments from RAC:

Bob Christensen: There's still one variable that's out of place. With the one variable out of place it wouldn't reduce tags?

Kevin Bunnell: That one was way out, in conjunction with a decrease, representing a lot of effort, despite the snow and cold.

RAC Motion and Discussion:

MOTION by Bob Christensen to accept as proposed.

(I know the suggestion was brought up about the cold, but 343 above the 220 average is way out there. And the other variable seems to be way out of the range as well).

Second by Rod Morrison

Passed unanimously

**TAKING NON-GAME MAMMALS R657-19 (5-YR REVIEW) – Kevin Bunnell,
Wildlife Program Coordinator (ACTION)
See handout**

Questions from Public:

Rich Martinez: Do you have data on coyote populations?

Kevin Bunnell: We don't. We do track coyote harvest through our surveys so we can look at trends from year to year. We don't even have management authority of coyotes other than removing coyotes from fawning areas.. It's under the Department of Agriculture.

Lloyd Barton: What's your position on prairie dogs?

Kevin Bunnell: Our role is keeping them off the endangered species list. I know that sounds crazy because there are thousands in the fields. Up here in this part of Utah we have white-tailed prairie dogs.

Questions from RAC: None

Comments from Public: None

Comments from RAC: None

RAC Motion and Discussion:

MOTION by Floyd Briggs to approve as presented

Second by Bob Christensen

Passed unanimously

Comment to Dedicated Hunters: Make sure to get your name on the Dedicated Hunter roll sheets with your number and/or date of birth.

Next RAC Meeting will be held August 14, 2008, 6:30 pm, at the Uintah Interagency Fire Center (or the Field House of Natural History if the Fire Center is responding to a fire).

MOTIONS MATRIX
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL WILDLIFE ADVISORY COUNCIL
JOHN WESLEY POWELL MUSEUM IN GREEN RIVER
July 09, 2008

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: to approve the agenda as written.

PASSED: unanimously

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOTION: to approve the minutes of the 5-28-08 meeting.

PASSED: unanimously

COUGAR PROCLAMATION AND RULE

MOTION: to leave the Book Cliffs cougar units as they have been.

PASSED: Motion carried by a majority vote: 6 to 2.

MOTION: to approve the balance of the Cougar Proclamation and Rule as presented.

PASSED: Motion carried by a margin of 6 to 2.

FURBEARER PROCLAMATION AND RULE

MOTION: to approve the Furbearer Proclamation and Rule as presented, except that the number of bobcat tags be reduced by one rather than two.

PASSED: after chairman broke a tie vote.

TAKING NON-GAME MAMMALS R657-19 (5-YEAR REVIEW)

MOTION: to approve the Non-Game Mammals Proclamation and Rule as presented.

PASSED: unanimously

SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY
John Wesley Powell Museum in Green River
July 09, 2008
Commence at 6:30 p.m.; Adjourn at: 9 p.m.

RAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Albrecht, Kevin	U.S. Forest Service
Bayles, Lyle	At Large
Gilson, James	Sportsmen
Hatch, Jordan	Agriculture
Hoskisson, Wayne	Environmental
Kamala, Laura	Environmental
Larson, Rick	Regional Supervisor
Maldonado, Walt	Sportsmen
Riddle, Pam	BLM
Sanslow, Terry	At Large

EXCUSED RAC MEMBERS:

Adams, Bruce	At Large
Byrnes, Verd	At Large
Sitterud, Drew	Elected Official

UNEXCUSED RAC MEMBERS:

Lewis, Kurt	Agriculture
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UTAH WILDLIFE BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

DWR PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Aoude, Anis
Bates, Bill
Bunnell, Kevin
Fowlks, Mike
Gramlich, Carl
Kerstetter, Roger
Larson, Rick
Stettler, Brent
Stilson, Randall

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE **55**

CONDUCTING THE MEETING

-James Gilson, Chairman

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Questions from the RAC:

Questions from the Audience:

Comments from the Audience:

Comments/Discussion from the RAC:

MOTION by Terry Sanslow to approve the agenda as written.

SECOND by Lyle Bayles

PASSED unanimously

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Questions from the RAC:

Questions from the Audience:

Comments from the Audience:

Comments/Discussion from the RAC:

MOTION by Terry Sanslow

SECOND by Walt Maldonado

PASSED unanimously

OLD BUSINESS

Questions from the RAC:

Questions from the Audience:

Comments from the Audience:

Comments/Discussion from the RAC:

Vice Chairman Terry Sanslow attended the last Wildlife Board meeting and recounted the actions, which may be reviewed at: http://wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings/board_minutes/

MOTION by N/A

SECOND by

PASSED:

REGIONAL UPDATE

-By Rick Larson, Regional Supervisor

Questions from the RAC:

Questions from the Audience:

Comments from the Audience:

Comments/Discussion from the RAC:

MOTION by N/A

SECOND by

PASSED

BUCKS, BULLS AND OIAL UPDATE

-by Anis Aoude, Wildlife Program Coordinator

Questions from the RAC:

Laura Kamala asked for an update on status of CWD.

Anis Aoude indicated that the disease remains in the same units where the disease had been found in the past. CWD does not appear to be spreading. The LaSal Mountains research is nearly complete and a report will be forthcoming.

Kevin Albrecht inquired about the hunter harvest of collared lions within the Stansbury Mountain research area.

Anis answered the harvest was minimal, since the unit was so hard to hunt. Most of the cougar harvest occurred on the Oquirrh Mountains.

Kevin then asked about lion predation of bighorn sheep on the study area and if the extent of the impact were known. Anis indicated that since all sheep are radio-collared. We can account for all mortalities. Lion predation has been negligible.

Jordan asked about land ownership, where winter feeding sites have been set up. He also asked about the type of feed and its ingredients.

Anis Aoude indicated that feeding sites occurred on public and private land and that the feed was in pellet form and was high in protein and carbohydrates.

Jordan expressed concern that the Division considered so many trigger factors before feeding was implemented.

Anis answered that multiple considerations were the result of past experience and research.

Kevin Albrecht asked why the deer hunting and deer harvest was so much better in the Southern and Southeastern regions compared with the Northern region.

Anis answered that the answer lay in the large amount of public land, which provided better hunter access and allowed for more favorable hunting conditions.

Questions from the Audience:

Comments from the Audience:

Comments/Discussion from the RAC:

MOTION by N/A

SECOND by

PASSED

SHED ANTLER GATHERING --INFORMATIONAL

-by Mike Fowlks, Law Enforcement Chief

Questions from the RAC:

Terry Sanslow asked if the Northern Region program had been successful.

Mike Fowlks said it was hard to judge. There had been some reduction in shed antler activity and 10 citations had been written, despite the difficulty in enforcing the regulations.

Kevin Albrecht asked if federal agencies had been invited to participate in the steering committee.

Mike Fowlks answered that they had not been invited to this point, but would hereafter.

Questions from the Audience:

Lloyd Nielson asked how a spot closure would affect lion hunters.

Mike Fowlks replied that this was an important consideration that the committee would have to address.

Comments from the Audience:

Bart Kettle commented that instead of closing areas to shed antler hunting, the Division could regulate it with something like a dedicated hunter program, where antler hunters did so by permit and worked on winter range development as part of their membership in the program.

Comments/Discussion from the RAC:

Terry Sanslow indicated that closure could only apply to WMAs. Federal agencies would have to approve closure on land under their administration.

Mike Fowlks agreed.

James Gilson indicated that the SFW had worked on this issue. The organization was interested in making sure that antler hunting was not shut down, but acknowledged that the damage done by unethical individuals put this activity in jeopardy. We are at risk of losing this opportunity, if shed antler hunters don't change their ways. James suggested that an Internet course be developed to educate antler hunters, and then hold them responsible for their actions.

Terry Sanslow related that he was in favor for a statewide permit for the right to hunt antlers.

Terry didn't think an ethics course would help though. He suggested that a high permit fee be implemented for the right to hunt antlers. This money could help fund projects to address damage problems.

Wayne Hoskisson indicated that several U.S. Forest Service districts were in the process of looking at forest closures to address damage concerns. User damage is a big issue.

MOTION by N/A

SECOND by

PASSED

COUGAR RESEARCH UPDATE--INFORMATIONAL

-by Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Program Coordinator

Questions from the RAC:

Wayne Hoskisson asked if Kevin was familiar with the research being done in Zion's National Park, examining the relationship between cougars and deer in riparian systems. Kevin Bunnell answered that he wasn't familiar with that particular study, but was aware of others. After listening to Wayne's summary of this particular study, Kevin responded that deer issues inside the park were very different from those outside the park's protection.

Questions from the Audience:

Comments from the Audience:

Comments/Discussion from the RAC:

MOTION by N/A
SECOND by
PASSED

COUGAR PROCLAMATION AND RULE

-by Kevin Bunnell, DWR Mammals Program Coordinator

Questions from the RAC:

Wayne Hoskisson asked for clarification of the concept of "cougars per day."
Kevin Bunnell explained that it was a combined average of the experience of all hunters.
Wayne asked about the number of hunters participating in cougar pursuit.
Kevin didn't have a number, but gave 500-600 as his best guess.
Lyle Bayles asked why the cougar permits had been cut on the San Juan unit.
Bill Bates indicated that it was merely to be more realistic, since the actual harvest in prior years had not come close to 25.
Lyle Bayles contested a harvest objective strategy on the San Juan unit. He claimed that cougar hunters were taking females, due to their concern about the season closing before they had another chance.
Bill Bates conceded that he wasn't opposed to returning the recommendation to 25 permits.

Questions from the Audience:

Guy Webster challenged the Division about its recommendation for the Book Cliffs units. He asserted that the former management strategy had been effective and should not therefore be changed. Guy returned to the microphone again and again with a variety of complaints and challenges.
Kevin Bunnell responded with a variety of reasons, explaining the Division's rationale for a change, but finally acknowledged that the biologist who had recommended the recommendations was new and probably had not been adequately advised of the breadth of issues to consider.

Comments from the Audience:

Darrell Mecham initially expressed concern about the issuance of a 365 day license, but was assured that his interpretation was wrong. The 365 day license is merely an administrative change to bring all licenses into conformity with a 365 day validity.
Lloyd Nielson approached the microphone on multiple occasions to challenge the recommended changes for the San Juan unit. Lloyd argued in favor of leaving the San Juan as it had been. His livelihood was jeopardized by the new management recommendations and he wanted the council to reject the proposal.

Darrell Mecham countered Lloyd's arguments, proposing that a balance had to be maintained in wildlife, and that management can't be driven by a guide's livelihood.

Comments/Discussion from the RAC:

MOTION by Lyle Bayles to leave the Book Cliffs units unchanged from the previous year.
SECOND by Walt Maldonado
PASSED with a split vote: 6 for and 2 against. Opposing votes were cast by Wayne Hoskisson and Laura Kamala.

MOTION by Lyle Bayles to accept the remainder of the Division's recommendations for the Cougar Proclamation and Rule.

SECOND by Kevin Albrecht

DISCUSSION: Wayne Hoskisson urged that lion pursuit be curtailed until more data had been collected regarding the consequences of this activity.

PASSED The motion carried 6 to 2. Opposing votes were cast by Laura Kamala and Wayne Hoskisson.

FURBEARER PROCLAMATION AND RULE

-by Kevin Bunnell, DWR Mammals Program Coordinator

Questions from the RAC:

Laura Kamala asked for an estimate of the state's bobcat population.

Kevin Bunnell responded that the Division doesn't know for sure, but that 25 years of trend data helps us identify population trends.

Lyle Bayles asked about bobcat management in the surrounding states.

Kevin indicated that trapping was not allowed in Colorado. He didn't know about Wyoming or Idaho. Nevada allowed trapping for residents-only.

Terry Sanslow asked if we could follow Nevada in prohibiting trapping for non-residents.

Kevin answered that that was a question for the Attorneys General office.

James Gilson asked how many non-residents and residents participated in trapping.

Kevin answered that he didn't know off the top of his head.

James asked about the significance of the proposed reduction in bobcat tags.

Kevin explained that we could only describe the change in tag numbers as a percentage of the original number of tags issued.

Questions from the Audience:

Comments from the Audience:

Kevin Peacock, President of the Utah Trapper's Association (UTA) read a prepared statement, challenging the Division's rationale for reducing the number of bobcat tags by two.

Jason Branson expressed agreement with Kevin Peacock's statement and reiterated the validity of the UTA's contention that the reduction in harvest was due to the number of inexperienced trappers participating.

Comments/Discussion from the RAC:

Kevin Albrecht challenged the UTA to come up with a better tool for estimating changes in the bobcat population, if they found fault with the Division's methodology. In the absence of better tools, we are obliged to accept the ones presently in use.
Wayne Hoskisson supported the Division's position, which recommended a reduction in the number of bobcat tags.

MOTION by Lyle Bayles moved to accept the Division's furbearer recommendations, except that bobcat tags be reduced by one rather than two.

SECOND by Jordan Hatch

PASSED James Gilson broke a tie vote by voting in favor of the motion.

RAC members in favor of the motion were: Jordan Hatch, Lyle Bayles, Kevin Albrecht and Walt Maldonado.

Members opposing the motion were: Terry Sanslow, Laura Kamala, Wayne Hoskisson and Pam Riddle.

TAKING NON-GAME MAMMALS R-657-19 (5-YEAR REVIEW)

-by Kevin Bunnell, DWR Mammals Program Coordinator

Questions from the RAC:

Questions from the Audience:

Comments from the Audience:

Comments/Discussion from the RAC:

MOTION by Terry Sanslow to accept the Division's recommendations for taking non-game mammals.

SECOND by Kevin Albrecht

PASSED unanimously

OTHER BUSINESS

-James Gilson, Chairman

Questions from the RAC:

Questions from the Audience:

Comments from the Audience:

Comments/Discussion from the RAC:

Kevin Albrecht proposed that a dedicated hunter-type program be implemented for shed antler hunters, where persons paid a fee for the privilege, pledged to perform a certain amount of labor, and could be disciplined or dismissed for violation of the program's tenets. Kevin asked that this proposal be taken to the Board as an informational item.

ADJOURNMENT

James Gilson adjourned the meeting at 9 p.m.

**Southern Regional Advisory Council Meeting
Panguitch Triple C Arena
Panguitch, UT
July 8, 2008
7:00 p.m.**

REVIEW & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

MOTION: To accept minutes and agenda as written

VOTE: Unanimous

COUGAR RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION: To accept cougar recommendations as presented

VOTE: Unanimous

BOBCAT RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION: Motion to accept the Bobcat Recommendations with the exception that there be one fewer tag than presented

VOTE: 8 in favor 2 opposed

TAKING NON-GAME MAMMALS R657-19

MOTION: To accept the Taking Non-Game Mammals Rule as presented

VOTE: 7 in favor 3 opposed

**Southern Regional Advisory Council Meeting
Panguitch Triple C Arena
Panguitch, UT
July 8, 2008
7:00 p.m.**

RAC Members Present	DWR Personnel Present	Wildlife Board Present	RAC Members Not Present
Cordell Pearson Sam Carpenter Chairman Jake Albrecht Gary Hallows Dell LeFevre Rex Stanworth James Edwards Jack Hill Clair Woodbury Steve Flinders Steve Dalton	Chuck Chamberlain Douglas Messerly Natalie Brewster Teresa Bonzo Heather Perry Anis Aoude Kevin Bunnell Michal Fowlks Dustin Schaible Dan Sorensen Jim Lamb Jason Nicholes Micah Evans		Harry Barber

Chairman Jake Albrecht called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. There were approximately 141 interested parties in attendance in addition to the RAC members, Wildlife Board members and DWR employees.

Jake Albrecht: I would like to

Procedure for Dedicated Hunters to Receive RAC Credit (Informational)

- Heather Perry, Southern Region Dedicated Hunter Coordinator

Review and Acceptance of Agenda and Minutes (action)

Jake Albrecht: Thank you Heather. Okay, our first item of business is to accept tonight's agenda. Do we have a motion on that?

Jack Hill: I would so move, Mr. Chairman.

Jake Albrecht: Okay, we have a motion by Jack Hill. Do we have a second? By Cordell Pearson. Any other discussion? All in favor please say aye. Any against? Motion carries.

Jack Hill made a motion to accept the agenda. Cordell Pearson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Jake Albrecht: Our next item is last month's minutes.

Jack Hill: Mr. Chairman?

Jack Albrecht: Yes, Jack Hill.

Jack Hill: I would move for the acceptance of the minutes as printed.

Jack Albrecht: A motion to accept the minutes.

Rex Stanworth: I'll second the motion.

Jake Albrecht: We have a second by Rex Stanworth. Any other discussion? All in favor? Any against? Motion carries.

Jack Hill made a motion to accept the minutes. Rex Stanworth seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Jake Albrecht: Okay, Wildlife Board Update.

Wildlife Board Update:

-Jake Albrecht, Chairman

Okay at the last meeting in Salt Lake City;

- Hunter Education Rule was passed unanimous.
- Private Pond Rule, there was a little clarification, the way I remember, some additional work that needed to be done, but that also passed.
- The Upland Game Rule, we had a little bit of discussion over to Cedar last month, the Chukar Association and the DWR got together and worked out a few changes which ended up, I think they start the hunt the last weekend in September and they hunt through February. That's the way I remember it Doug. I know that we had some discussion in our RAC but we never did work it all the way through.
- The Bear Policy passed as presented.
- The Convention Permits passed as presented, also.

With that I'll turn the time to Doug for a minute.

Regional Update:

-Douglas Messerly, Southern Regional Supervisor

Douglas Messerly: Thank you Mr. Chairman. And Dell has pointed out that we do have a cooler for this year's July meeting and I think that's great; for those of us that were at the July meeting in Fillmore, or Delta last year. Just a items to update you.

- On July 15th the results from the antlerless drawing will be posted on the web and available at our office.
- On July 22nd the remaining antlerless permits will go on sale over the counter and via the Internet, if there are any antlerless permits remaining.
- Our annual goat watch day is going to occur August 9th, which is a Saturday. We'll meet at the south interchange in Beaver at 8:00 AM, is that right Lynn? Or contact our office if you would like to get more information about that. So typically they have a pretty good trip and get the opportunity to look at some of those mountain goats up on the Tushers.
- The condor day that we mentioned, I think at the last meeting, was held June 20th or 21st, I believe it was the 21st. About 350 people came up in the Kolob area and were able to observe 25 condors, I'm told. Lynn gave me a big flowery description of how they were flying. But in any event they were there and people got the opportunity to see them.
- Some of you may have heard or read in the newspapers, the governor's announced that the state office buildings are going to go to a four ten-hour a day work week, and that includes our office. And I thought I would announce that here. Beginning August 4th, we'll be working from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM at our office, Monday through Thursday and we'll be closed on Friday. That may be something significant for those people that wait until the last minute before their openers on Saturday so we're trying to get the word out as much as we can. This is an energy saving move and we support the governor in trying to accomplish that.

Douglas Messerly: So, unless there's any questions Mr. Chairman, that's my presentation.

Jake Albrecht: Thanks Douglas. Our next item of business will be Bucks and Bulls update. This is an informational item only but we would be glad to take public comment when we get to the part. So, Mr. Aoude.

Bucks, Bulls & OIAL Update (Informational)

5:07 to 24:06 of 1:55:17

-Anis Aoude, Wildlife Program Coordinator

Anis Aoude: Thank you Mr. Chairman

Questions from the RAC:

Jake Albrecht: Okay do we have any questions from the RAC?

Jack Hill: I've got one.

Jake Albrecht: Jack.

Jack Hill: You talked about sanctioned and unsanctioned feed sites.

Anis Aoude: Uh huh.

Jack Hill: What's an unsanctioned feed site?

Anis Aoude: That's a feed site where the Division did not feel that feeding was necessary but people fed there anyway.

Jack Hill: Isn't that against the law?

Anis Aoude: No it's not.

Jack Hill: It isn't?

Anis Aoude: Nope.

Jake Albrecht: Rex.

Rex Stanworth: Tell me where the Newfoundland mountains are? That's not familiar.

Anis Aoude: They're in Box Elder County, in the western part of Box Elder County, almost to the Nevada border. Kind of out in the middle of nowhere.

Jake Albrecht: Any other questions?

Jake Albrecht: Looking at your season deer harvest, if we look at the southern region on the archery, we had like 1,207. Uh, and this has been one of the items that the southern region has been concerned about, was the amount of archery hunters that came into our area. And I think this just kind of gives us some food to look at that when we're doing that mule deer planning thing that we're going through right now and see if we can spread those out a little ways. Because if we look at what the central region was, there's 336, northeastern was 528, northern was 265. So, we're more than double on all the other regions.

Anis Aoude: Right, but the success rates are fairly similar. So you know, per unit effort it's about the same. So I guess, yeah, you do have more hunters that do come to the southern

region. But the deer are here so they are able to take advantage of it.

Jake Albrecht: Okay, any other? Steve Dalton.

Steve Dalton: Yes, Anis, I'm wondering about, you said you transplanted a bunch of goats and you also transplanted a bunch of moose. Why aren't these animals used for more hunter opportunity in the state as opposed to transplants?

Anis Aoude: Yeah, uh, the goats, it's hard to provide more opportunity for goats because of the locations and the crowding issue of hunters on top of hunters. So when populations get high we do try to have nanny hunts on some units. Really that 's the only way to control populations. If you throw more billy tags out there you end up lowering the quality of animal out there and you could, you know you will reduce the population because some of the hunters will take nannies but usually uh. . I guess that's the things we're trying to weigh is the quality of the animals. And then with moose, similarly, most of those animals are in, we don't really have any other places in Utah we can put moose where they'll survive. So with their over populating an area we, we could kill them but a lot of those are in areas where we can't hunt them, in the urban interface, and that's the main reason why we move them. And a lot of times when you move animals to other states you can get animals in return. So if we need, say, big horn sheep, you know, they owe us one so it's kind of that type of, uh . . . So twenty moose really aren't going to provide that much more opportunity but they could buy us a lot more things in the future.

Steve Dalton: Ok so that's what's been done in the past is you're trading for other animals from other states.

Anis Aoude: A lot of times, yeah. Basically they pay for the transplant so they don't really owe us anything but if we need a source population and they have some sheep available, you know, it's kind of a tit for tat type of thing.

Steve Dalton: Ok, thank you

Jake Albrecht: Do we have any questions from the public then?

Questions from the Public:

None

Jake Albrecht: We don't have any comment cards on this particular discussion from the public so we'll go to comments from the RAC.

Comments from the Public:

None

Jake Albrecht: Any further comments?

Comments from the RAC:

None

Jake Albrecht: I thought that was very good and very informational. I appreciate you guys putting in the time to put that together. Okay our next item is Shed Antler Gathering. This is an informational item only. Michael Fowlks, Law Enforcement Chief.

Shed Antler Gathering (Informational) 29:09 to 33:31 of 1:55:17

-Michael Fowlks, Law Enforcement Chief

Michael Fowlks: Thank you Mr. Chair. It's good to be back in my home district. This is where I started my career with the Division. Anyway, we're here to talk about Shed Antler Gathering. This is an informational presentation. We're going to gather comment and through the RAC and Board process this time we'll come back with a recommendation when Anis brings the Bucks and Bull proclamation back out.

Jake Albrecht: Okay, question from the RAC. Rex.

Questions from the RAC:

Rex Stanworth: I've got one. Uh, you know Mike I guess I'm, it just seems like we have so much pressure on these animals and the resources there, you know, closures on roads and that, I think would be helpful. I know that would have to be in conjunction with Forest Service, most likely. But having, I know as a proposal they were thinking January 1 through May 15th, having a written authorization. But that January through March seems like to me that's an awfully stressful time for those animals. They're just coming out of what could be a harsh winter. I guess my comments would be I, I would be hard pressed to be, to go with a January 1st through May 15th. Now if they wanted to come back in with a later date maybe that would be something. Obviously, if it's illegal to do the horns but the people are still there doing GPS readings you really haven't accomplished anything. I mean that's, I, I don't understand that. But it looks like to me it's either got to be you can't be there or you can be there, um, if we're trying to protect the animals from that stressful situation. And the last comment, I was glad to know about the full skull mount, the horns. I asked Jim if he knew anything about, I'd never heard that that had been approved.

Michael Fowlks: Yeah we put that, there's actually an informational in this year's Bucks and Bulls proclamation.

Rex Stanworth: It is in there? Well that's an awesome thing. I think that will help you so I'm glad to see that's there.

Jake Albrecht: Any other questions from the RAC? Steve Flinders.

Steve Flinders: Mike is there plans to have federal agencies involved in that committee? Would the Forest Service, BLM?

Michael Fowlks: On the antler gathering? You know, in hind sight we should have had some

federal representation on that but it initially started out as an antler gathering season discussion and evolved into this and at that point it was a little late to get somebody else on the committee. But we're going to reconvene a committee, after we get the comments and stuff, and that's a good idea.

Steve Flinders: I'll save my comments for comment.

Jake Albrecht: Steve Dalton.

Steve Dalton: So if you're out in the area where there's an antler gathering season and you see an antler laying along side the road you can't stop and pick that up, I mean that's against the law to pick it up.

Michael Fowlks: That's currently what we have in effect in the northern region.

Steve Dalton: We're all a bunch of criminals, aren't we? What if you're out there, you know that's not your intent, you're just, you're out there doing something else and you see an antler, you just can't pick it up huh? You have to leave it there.

Michael Fowlks: Yeah, under a statewide closure for antler gathering that would be the case. In this case we make it legal to do if you have the authorization, under that proposal. And I guess there's another option here and that is not to do, not to change anything. I mean that would be another option that's available too.

Steve Dalton: Ok, thank you.

Jake Albrecht: I have a couple of questions Mike. Who enforces the laws on this and what's the fine if you went through the closure on it until the May deadline?

Michael Fowlks: Road closure with regard to ATV or something along that line?

Jake Albrecht: And the shed. Say you caught somebody out there that was . . .

Michael Fowlks: It's currently an infraction, if you violate the shed antler gathering and it's probably somewhere in the neighborhood, I haven't checked the bail schedule, somewhere in the neighborhood of fifty to one hundred dollars. Which is about the same that it is for if you violate a road closure with an ATV.

Jake Albrecht: If they went through the thing that you're going to have on the web and they still violated that, would they be able to put in the next year or has that been discussed?

Michael Fowlks: We haven't discussed that. No. They would just be subject to criminal penalty.

Jake Albrecht: Okay. Do we have any other questions? Sam Carpenter.

Sam Carpenter: You're talking about special authorization permits. Who would that be for and

how many would you give out? How would you control that?

Michael Fowlks: They'd be unlimited. It would be just like a fishing license or hunting license and theoretically you could set it up so they could get them online. They go in and answer the questions like they do on the swan permit right now. And you could just answer the questions, take the test, and then it would issue it to you online.

Sam Carpenter: Okay one more question. You did say that you were looking at this, the possibility of controlling this region by region.

Michael Fowlks: That's another option.

Sam Carpenter: As an aspect. I know that we don't have the, you know the snow problems in the south. And just like Steve saying, you know a lot of people are out there year round and it would just be a shame to have all these people be, not able to pick up a shed when they are so prevalent as they are in our area.

Jake Albrecht: Any other questions from the RAC? Do we have any questions from the public? Please come up to the mic. We have a couple, so just come up and introduce yourself.

Questions from the Public:

Steven Banks: My name is Steven Banks. The question I had was in regards to these regulations that you're proposing. Are there studies that, do we have any studies that show the actual impact that people are having as far as stress to the wildlife, and in regards to numbers? Because it appears from the numbers that we just saw that the deer population at least, is increasing. So how do we know just what effect is going on and if the population is still increasing why are we imposing these restrictions on people?

Michael Fowlks: I know of no studies, formal studies that have documented the uh, any negative impacts. I do know that there's lots and lots of anecdotal data out there of habitat destruction. And we routinely get calls on our help stop poaching line from people who are harassing wildlife trying to make antlers fall off and we're routinely investigating those. So that's where this is coming from is what people are seeing out on the ground and what they're calling us and talking about.

Jake Albrecht: Jake.

Jake Shoppe: Jake Shoppe. The first question is is you said there's, it's a two-fold problem, it's harassment. And my first question is don't we already have a law on the book that deals with harassment so why don't we address that through the harassment law? Why are we not doing that?

Michael Fowlks: We are dealing with harassment issues. It's like I just said, we get hot line calls all the time with people out harassing wildlife. It's a very difficult case to make. We do

make some of those cases. And we are, like I said, we're going to look at seeing if we can't beef up that law and make that harassment law easier to enforce.

Jake Shoppe: The second, you said it's resource damage. Don't federal agencies already have laws on the books to deal with people going off roads, rutting out roads, those sorts of things? So my point is, I guess laws are already there, why are we trying to make new ones? How are you dealing with resource damage issues?

Michael Fowlks: Myself and the federal agencies are concerned about the resource issues. With regard to ATVs you're going to see some potential statutory change with regard to those laws, beefing up the penalties for those, um, and seeing if we can't improve those. But we are currently enforcing those. Again, those are very difficult to enforce but we are out there working on those. And unfortunately it doesn't seem to be solving the problem.

Jake Shoppe: The other question I think Steve Flinders hit on a little bit, was why weren't federal land management agencies involved early on in the process. Probably the majority of species in Utah are on public lands, BLM, Forest Service, those sorts of lands. I don't know how you can ever get anything to work if you're not going to involve those folks; they're not going to support ya. So I just, why weren't they involved? And it sounds like you're going to try to involve them so maybe you've answered that one. Uh, third one is, as far as harassment goes, why or how . . . maybe this is more of a comment than a question. I'll try to make it a question, is that's, you still hunt cow elk in January and yet you're proposing to have a season to make other people jump through hoops to go out and hunt antlers. How will you separate out those people? You know if you're out hunting cow elk but you don't have an authorization, can you pick up an antler from last year that was on the ground? You've got some overlap going on there. How do you propose to?

Michael Fowlks: That's one of the details that will have to be addressed and certainly that is a concern. I mean if you have people out there legitimately harvesting elk, and hunting elk, it seems kind of counter productive to not let somebody pick up an antler if they find it then too. So we may have to figure out a way to change those dates. And like I said, this is all a proposal; we'll take comments and see if we can't come up with a good solution.

Jake Shoppe: Okay, one last question. Has anybody looked into the legality of what an antler really is? Is that wildlife? Is that a forest product? Who actually has the authority to govern that resource?

Michael Fowlks: That's a good question. We asked our attorney general representative and he informed us that it is wildlife or it's parts and that we do have jurisdiction on it.

Jake Albrecht: Do we have any other questions from the public?

Comments from the Public:

None

Jake Albrecht: We have no comment card so we'll go to comments from the RAC. Steve.

Comments from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: I don't want to speak for you Steve. Jake brings up some good issues. I just wanted to leave the comment that uh, at least I can't speak for the Forest in the state but in the southern region both the Dixie and Fish Lake Forest have completed travel management plans. There are portions of those plans that deal with this issue in a straightforward manner and also in some kind of sideline matters. But there are seasonal closures, there are restrictions relating to protecting wintering big game. And a good question is, is it a source of mortality with deer and elk doing as well as they are? Are we killing them by moving them off of these winter ranges? One thing we know for sure is if an area is grided by people, day after day, the animals probably won't be there. What are the costs associated with that? If everybody is a foot and not driving vehicles across it, they're not trashing the forage they're still moving the animals. And uh, I guess it would be nice to have somebody at the table and uh, I guess I'm offering up the Fish Lake and Dixie as partners in this effort and it's nice to have the state involved in educating the public to some of the travel management that 's going on.

Jake Albrecht: Dell LeFevre.

Dell LeFevre: You know I think it's a good thing that we harass them things. If it weren't for the shed hunters I'd still have elk in Salt Gulch. I had a girl in Boulder, 4-wheeler every night for two months, running elk out of the field. When they came back every night they just brought their buddies with them. So I just don't know whether you're going to harass an elk enough to lose a horn or not.

Jake Albrecht: Any other comments from the RAC? Okay, we appreciate Mike bringing that to us as an informational item. I'm sure you'll be receiving some e-mails on that. And we encourage the public to do so, to get involved and make your interest known there. Okay, our next item is an informational item only. This is a Cougar Research Update, Dr. Wolfe from Utah State University. Welcome.

Cougar Research Update (Informational) 46:20 to 1:03:20 of 1:55:17

-Dr. Wolfe, Utah State University

Jake Albrecht: Okay, questions from the RAC. Rex Stanworth.

Questions from the RAC:

Rex Stanworth: I guess one of the question I would have, is there any information being collected from the hunters themselves that validates some of this information for you?

Dr. Wolfe: Oh yeah. Actually we, when I was in Kevin's position and doing this sort of thing several years ago, we routinely collect information on age structure, on the percentage of females in the harvest, catch per unit effort, where actually some of those people we will send out how many days did you hunt, how many animals, not only the ones that you kill but actually

during the pursuit season. And quite frankly, that seems to be a fairly reasonable metric of trying to estimate . . . And I don't have that slide with me, but we have some pretty good correlations between, on a statewide basis, what the catch per unit effort was as opposed to the harvest and things like that. So, yes, this information is being correlated with that. It's just that with those other things what we try and do is, and Kevin will talk about this later on, obviously, but we try and put all those things together to come up with a signature for what's happening. Maybe not even so much on a single unit anymore but rather sort of an eco-regional basic and this sort of thing, are we going up or down. Okay?

Steve Flinders: I'll ask one. I've been around long enough to remember when you started this up there on Monroe, Mike. Uh, do you think cougars limit the deer herd on Monroe?

Dr. Wolfe: My considered opinion is no. So I think we went through a situation where we drastically reduced that population and I don't think we really saw a significant increase in deer on the Monroe and this sort of thing. Not to say that they don't, you know, far be it per say that they don't take critters and this sort of thing, but at least for that population, anyway, I don't think at this point in time that they have been doing that. So that would be what I think.

Jake Albrecht: Just for the minutes that was Steve Flinders. Any other questions? Okay, over a period of ten years, if I got you right, you collared 173 cougars.

Dr. Wolfe: 180, I think.

Jake Albrecht: 180.

Dr. Wolfe: Yeah.

Jake Albrecht: And that's over the ten-year period. How many do you estimate to be on the Monroe right now?

Dr. Wolfe: Clint, what do you think?

Comments made from audience: Inaudible.

Dr. Wolfe: And that's kind of what we started out with. I think our first year's estimate was 40 animals. Uh, you, I think collared something like 19 animals this past winter or something like that. So there was a large influx of, again, younger animals that came in as are, or let's say are part of this population recovery.

Jake Albrecht: Okay, my next question, and maybe you can't answer it but maybe Kevin could; is back in the '96, '97 years when you had the large amount of cougar hunters, how many permits did you have put out on that mountain?

Comments made from audience: Inaudible.

Dr. Wolfe: That doesn't mean they were killed but it meant that there were permits for that number of animals. And I think, yeah, the first year we did that I think there were 40 permits

out there and that was our estimate of the population at that particular point in time.

Comment made from audience: Inaudible.

Douglas Messerly: Kevin, can we have you come to the microphone.

Kevin Bunnell: During the treatment phase of the study on average 87 percent, there was enough tags there that represented 87 percent of the population estimate over that 5 year treatment phase. Then we backed off and after that the average was 20 percent, to see how quickly it recovered and what the dynamics were.

Jake Albrecht: Do we have any other questions from the RAC? Do we have any questions from the public? Please come up to the mic.

Questions from the Public:

Todd Abelhouzen: I'm plenty loud. You talked about not having any prey studies about the, about how the predators . . .

Jake Albrecht: Please state your name for the minutes.

Todd Abelhouzen: Todd Abelhouzen, from the SFW, Dixie Chapter. What are your plans on doing the prey studies and why haven't they been done with these other studies?

Dr. Wolfe: The reason they really haven't, well I can't say we haven't done anything but it's been largely incidental to other things. As I mentioned the primary objective of this study when we started, we were told when we were funded this, the primary objective was to look at cougar, methods of enumerating cougars, population estimation. And also, secondarily to look at the impacts of hunting. We were actually, at that point in time, specifically instructed don't worry too much about predation. But it's not like we don't look at that in this sort of thing. But our plans here now, and the other thing is you cannot do a predator prey study without a good estimate of the prey population which we, with all due respect, don't have. But we're looking at, with some of the things that we're looking at now, for instance in the northern region, with efforts to try and get better and realistic estimates of the actual number of deer that are there. If we combine that we've got a pretty good estimate of cougar, well we know what our cougar numbers and this sort of thing, we look at prey rates, we can do that also, I, you know, with GPS telemetry and stuff like that. So we'll be able to refine that considerably. But without knowing what's actually happening to the deer population you're kind of working in a vacuum. So that's what we'd like to do.

Comment made from audience: Inaudible.

Dr. Wolfe: Um, no. If you use, for instance, one of the things, have you guys talked about what's going on in the northern region? Anis, do you want to? We've got to spread the joy around, you know.

Anis Aoude: I guess they would be about equally as difficult to count, cougars versus deer.

Cougar, however, are less numerous so you can put more collars out and get a better estimate of how many cougars you have than you would deer. Deer are virtually impossible to survey via helicopter because you never get a good account. And there is no good sightability measure. So yeah, it's extremely difficult to get a number, a solid number on deer.

Comment from audience: Inaudible.

Anis Aoude: Right. Well to get, to get the precision you need to figure out if lions are having an effect, we know generally what our population is with a certain number, you know, on either end. But, really the effect that lions are have are going to be fairly, just as other things affecting deer populations other than lions. So to tease that out you'd have to have a fairly rigorous way to count them and we don't. We don't. Nobody has that capability yet. We're trying different methods try to get to that. We have a pilot study going on in the northern region right now to try to get us to that point. How much faith we have in that yet, it's not completed so it's hard to say, but it may pan out, it may not.

Comment from audience: Inaudible.

Jake Albrecht: If you need to come up, you need to come up to the mic so we can get this in the minutes.

Todd Abelhouzen: Just to make it simple I think that the mathematics are the key that we have a healthy lion population offset by a healthy deer population. And so, and I've talked to Mr. Meacham at Bryce Canyon and you know his, your guys' studies are awesome, what you guys do and collar them. But it would seem to me like you'd be able to see how many times a lion kills if you have a collar on him, and see what he's killing. Because they don't eat road kills, from my understanding, they eat fresh meat. And they're not vegetarian. They eat critters. Most of those critters are deer or elk, sometimes turkeys, wild horses, whatever. But my question is is if a lion eats a deer on average of every three days and you've got 3000 lions or 500 lions or 2 lions you ought to be able to calculate how many deer that those lions are impacting on any specific with some degree of . . . That's all I'm asking is . . .

Anis Aoude: I can address that.

Todd Abelhouzen: Okay.

Anis Aoude: Yeah. The thing is what we look at is overall over winter mortality or yearly survival of deer. Now a lot of things play into that including predation. The thing you cannot tease out, it doesn't matter how many deer a lion may kill; those deer may have died regardless of whether a lion ate them in that one year because there are other mortalities that happen. There's things called compensatory mortality and there's additive mortality. What you need to find out is how much of that lion predation is additive. Those animals without, without lions there are not growing in population.

Comment from audience: Inaudible.

Anis Aoude: Right, exactly. And that's exactly what we're trying to get at. You cannot get at it

with that kind of precision without having a real good handle on the deer population. And it's whether it's additive or not that we're looking at. You're going to lose so many deer every year. You're going to gain some and lose some. And what you want is to gain more than you lose, basically.

Comment made from audience: Inaudible.

Anis Aoude: Right, if you're trying to increase herds, in which we are for deer in this state.

Jake Albrecht: Do we have any other questions from the public?

Dr. Wolfe: Can I add something to this, briefly? Okay. The only other thing I'd add to that is that, your comment about yes, it is possible with collared lions, especially those with GPS collars on them, and we're doing some of this to know what the kill rate is. So and actually it's not three days, it's more like a week, okay? And it depends to some degree on what other food sources are there, whether there's elk there or other things and this sort of thing. And it also depends upon whether they're females or males, so the rate is variable on that sort of thing. But yes, we can do those kinds of estimates and actually in some ways, some of the GPS work that we're doing has tended to bear out some of the older anecdotal kind of things. But it tends to be about a week to nine days in this sort of thing.

Jake Albrecht: Any other questions from the public?

Comments from the Public:

None

Jake Albrecht: Okay, we don't have any comment cards dealing with this particular one from the public, so we'll go to comments from the RAC.

Comments from the RAC:

Jake Albrecht: Okay. I've got one comment dealing with Monroe Mountain and the deer to the cougar numbers. If I wasn't mistaken I think that's the only unit that we counted bucks per one hundred does that fell below the fifteen. Am I right?

Anis Aoude: It's no the only one below. (Comment not made from mic.)

Jake Albrecht: I think it was the only one in the southern unit. And I think if you'd check into that, I think it was the only one. So I think there is some tradeoffs there that are happening with the deer units on that Monroe Mountain. Okay, any other comments?

Jake Hill: Yeah, I'd remind the gentleman from SFW that those cougars eat a few lamb chops every year also.

Jake Albrecht: Jack Hill thanks for your comments. James Edwards.

James Edwards: Yeah I have a comment. Since 1993 we have taken about 7,500 lions, 50,000 coyotes and our deer population was about 300,000 then, it's 300,000 now. So I don't know whether this depredation and all these predators are having much effect on our deer herd or not. I think it's the man predator.

Jake Albrecht: Okay. Seeing we have no other comments from the RAC, we'll move on to Cougar Recommendations. This is an action item. Kevin Bunnell.

Cougar Recommendations (Action) 1:17:17 to 1:26:21 of 1:55:17
-Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Program Coordinator

Jake Albrecht: Okay, questions from the RAC. We're not leaving until 10:00. Questions from the public?

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: I have one question.

Jake Albrecht: We have a question from Steve Flinders.

Steve Flinders: Kevin, have you heard much from cougar hunters with regards to some of the seasonal closures that are going on around? I understand you guys are closing some WMAs.

Kevin Bunnell: In terms of access closures? Um, no I haven't. That would probably; you know the regional people would be best to ask that. Teresa, have you heard any?

Steve Flinders: Must not be that bad, it hasn't risen to your level. I've just heard some guys, local rumbling about it and wondered how big the issue was.

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah, none of that's bubbled up to where we've heard about it yet.

Questions from the Public:

None

Comments from the Public:

Jake Albrecht: Okay, we're going to go to the comment part of our RAC procedures. We have a couple of cards. Just for you people that are in the audience, if you want to comment you need to fill one of these cards out and get it to a DWR personnel and we can get your comments up here. I'm going to ask these people to come in the way I received the cards. The first one is Clint Meacham from Tropic, Utah. He is representing the Utah Federation of Houndsman.

Clint Meacham: Hi. Mr. Chairman, members of the RAC committee, I appreciate the opportunity to make a comment here. On behalf of the Utah Federation of Houndsman we would like to recommend that we agree with the proposals made by the DWR for the 2008

upcoming cougar season. And also, thanks for having the Southern RAC in southern Utah. We could go a little further south too next time.

Jake Albrecht: Uh, our next one is Todd Abelhouzen. He's representing the SFW, Dixie Chapter.

Todd Abelhouzen: SFW and the St George Dixie Chapter would also like to support the recommendations by the Division of Wildlife biologists and also point out that they've done a great job with managing the units for the mountain lions. We've banged heads for a lot of years with the houndsman and with trying to sustain a healthy deer herd, buck to doe ratios, herd objective, and we think that this has been a part, in some cases a very small part but a very valuable part in this process. I also want to thank the RACs for their involvement in dealing with this and listen to the people. We've noticed that the harvest of the cougars was over 700 at one point and now it's down around 300. And so we feel like that they've been managed aggressively, sometimes too aggressively for some people. But houndsman should have an opportunity to go out and enjoy that part of the process and there should be a healthy balance. So we appreciate that. Also, just on a personal note, we're convening a wildlife livestock planning committee; I'm on the committee. If anybody wants to comment to me, you want to write my e-mail down. If I don't like it I'll just delete it. No, actually I'll reply to you. And it's concerning the public lands grazing throughout the state, the opportunity that we have to enhance the BLM, and the Forest, and the state lands to increase the grazing opportunity for the livestock grazers, and also for the wildlife to enhance the herd. So that also will enhance the opportunity for lions to eat more critters. So, rta@ intermountainrecovery.com, spelled out. So, I appreciate that. I'm going home. Had a long day. Thanks.

Jake Albrecht: Thanks Todd. And that address will be in you guys' minutes. So when you receive those you will be able to get back with him. Uh, a comment question, Kevin. On the Monroe unit, what's the plans for, is the ten-year study up on that or is there a couple left?

Kevin Bunnell: Mike, Mike kind of mentioned that. We're moving into a next phase. You know we kind of went through that, you know we know we can reduce them, we know they'll come back. The question now is can we pick a level that we want to maintain them at and then can we adjust the harvest to try to maintain a cougar population at a density that we think gives that balance that the people referred to. And the recommendation this year is a step towards starting to figure that out.

Jake Albrecht: I'm just wondering if, if there was a way that you could go back like the '96, '97 era and see what those deer numbers were, bucks per one hundred does, and see if would it have followed in the trend.

Kevin Bunnell: I don't know Jake. Bucks per hundred does probably isn't a good indication of what's going on with cougars because, you know, they're, they're opportunistic predators. They're not specializing on a certain segment of the deer population. So I don't know if that's the best metric to try to measure what the impacts of cougars might be on a population. So, you know we can go back and look at it but I don't know how fruitful or how meaningful it would actually be.

Jake Albrecht: I was just wondering if there was a way that you could follow the trend like you did with the, with the cougars to see if the trend went down when the cougars went down or, you know, up and down or whatever.

Kevin Bunnell: It would be an interesting exercise.

Jake Albrecht: I'm just glad to see you got a few more tags on there.

Kevin Bunnell: Okay.

Jake Albrecht: Okay. We're to comments from the RAC. Do we have any other comments?

Comments from the RAC:

None

RAC Discussion and Vote:

Jake Albrecht: Seeing none, both of our people that came forward wanted to go ahead with the recommendations as presented.

Rex Stanworth: I'll make a motion that we accept the recommendation as presented by the Division.

James Edwards: And I'll second it.

Jake Albrecht: Okay, we have a motion by Rex Stanworth to accept the DWRs recommendations as presented. Seconded by James Edwards. Any other discussion? All in favor please raise your right hand. Any against? Motion carries unanimous.

Rex Stanworth makes a motion to accept, James Edwards seconded, motion carried unanimously

Jake Albrecht: Our next item on the agenda is Bobcat Recommendations. This also is an action item. Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Program Coordinator.

Bobcat Recommendations (Action) 1:33:57 to 1:39:40 of 1:55:17

- Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Program Coordinator

Jake Albrecht: Okay, questions from the RAC?

Questions from the RAC

None

Jake Albrecht: Questions from the public?

Questions from the Public:

None

Jake Albrecht: Okay, Ronnie Hunt, if you will please come forward. We have your comment card here. He's with the Utah Trappers Association.

Comments from the Public:

Ronnie Hunt: I've Vice President of the Utah Trappers Association. First of all I want to thank the RAC members for the opportunity to address you tonight and for your consideration of what I'm about to present. I'm speaking tonight and represent, representation of 700 members of the Utah Trappers Association. Although we agree with the bobcat management plan we do not agree with the data that shows reduction of tags is needed. Therefore the UTA does not support the two-tag reduction that the Division is asking for. The two indicators that triggered the reduction are adult survival and trap days. Adult survival is an equation used by the Division that we don't understand which makes it hard for us to dispute. The trap days on the other hand we can and do disagree with. Trap days have so many variables that we feel this to be useless information. The number of trap days per bobcat harvested is severely impacted by the trapper's experience level. An experienced trapper can easily take six cats with ten days, with ten traps in ten days where an inexperienced trapper can set one hundred traps for ninety days and catch zero cats. This does not mean that the cats are not there. It just means that they don't know how to catch them. The weather is another major factor in the trap days equation. Even the most experienced trappers have problems catching cats when wet weather and freezing temperatures combined. When trappers are asked how many traps they set for cats this year they will give you the total number. They will not tell you they had fifty traps buried under four feet of snow for sixty days. These traps that are inoperable should not be counted as trap days. If these inoperable traps are deducted from the trap day count we would fall within the baseline that which one point indicator would be triggered and no reduction of tags would be indicated. The other problem we have with the trap day data is the way it's collected. The Division hires a data collection company to randomly call trappers on the phone and ask them questions about the last trapping season. Trappers are sometimes very leery of this. They are not sure who they are talking to and their answers are guarded and inaccurate at best. I have spoken to many experienced trappers around the state who have never been called leaving us to wonder what percentages of experienced versus inexperienced trappers are being interviewed. The Division says they have been using this information for years and that it makes it more accurate. We dispute this. Years ago the majority of trappers were experienced with ten or more years. In rural Utah everyone had a dozen traps hanging on the barn and knew how to use them. Today inexperienced trappers outnumber the experienced and when they start out most are equipped only with what information they could get on the Internet. This is not a bad way to start but it takes years of hands on experience to make it all work. Without the trap day data a zero reduction would be indicated. Where we really don't understand the adult equation and how it plays into the picture the UTA would like to go on record stating if there must be a reduction in tags per trapper that one tag reduction should be sufficient. Once again, thank you for your time and I encourage you to consider this as you

make your decision.

Jake Albrecht: Okay, thanks Ronnie. Uh, we don't have any other. Could they get a copy of that for their minutes? Thanks. We don't have any other comment cards from the public so we will go to comments from the RAC. Rex Stanworth.

Comments from the RAC:

Rex Stanworth: I guess Kevin could give you a response back to that. Would you?

Kevin Bunnell: I guess my response to that um, you know we've been in a period of high pelt prices for seven or eight years now. And yet that unit, you know, catch per unit effort, number of set days per bobcat has stayed within that normal range for all seven of those years except for this year, which it went up significantly. I don't think that there's been a big increase of, you know there has been a bunch, a lot of less experienced trappers out there but they've also been out there the last five or six years as well and so I don't see that that plays into or has a big impact on why that variable jumped so significantly this year. In terms of the, you know, traps being froze down, you know that could inflate that number but that number's almost double outside of that normal range. And it's a, so you know I think there's something there, is, is, you know is the bottom line. In terms of adult survival, um, in a nut shell that's calculated based on the age distribution, you know, the number of two-year-old cats, number of three-year-olds, the number of four-year-olds, the number of five-year-olds. And you calculate an adult survival on that. So as you start to harvest fewer and fewer cats in the older age groups, usually the most experienced animals, the ones that haven't been trapped for the five or six years previously so they're, they kind of know the business. When you start eliminating those out of the population it's a good indication that your population has started to drop. And that's when that adult survival number start to come down is when you start losing those older age classes out of the data. Does that answer your question?

Rex Stanworth: Yeah. I guess one, one question; you're going to reduce it by two, will this come back to the RAC next year, as it was this year?

Kevin Bunnell: Yes. Yes bobcats come back every year. And if we get back within that baseline it automatically goes back to six.

Rex Stanworth: Okay.

Jake Albrecht: What's the season dates on bobcats?

Kevin Bunnell: Oh it's about from the middle of the third week in November through the middle of February.

Jake Albrecht: Any other comments, RAC members? Okay, no other comments from the RAC, so we're to the RAC motion, discussion and vote. Cordell Pearson.

RAC Discussion and Vote:

Cordell Pearson: I'd like to make a motion that we accept the DWRs recommendation except we only drop one tag instead of two.

Gary Hallows: Second.

Jake Albrecht: Okay, we have a motion by Cordell Pearson to make the recommendation that we drop by one tag instead of the two tags, and we have a second, if I'm not mistaken, by Gary Hallows. Do we have any other discussion?

Jack Hill: I've got a comment.

Jake Albrecht: Just one second Jack. I know that goes against your management plan, Kevin, the way that's set into the policy.

Kevin Bunnell: It goes against our recommendation. But actually the management plan gives the flexibility to reduce it by one or two tags. The Division recommended two tags because of how far those variables were outside of that normal range, and that's kind of the criteria we use to decide whether we did a one tag or a two-tag reduction.

Jake Albrecht: Okay, thanks Kevin. Jack.

Jack Hill: If the criteria has been in place for several years and we've used that criteria for several year and we've seen a reduction in the harvest of bobcats by 500 animals?

Kevin Bunnell: Actually Jack, this is only the second year of the bobcat management plan being in place. We, but we calculated those variables based on data clear back into the mid '80s.

Jack Hill: Isn't that, I thought that's what I said.

Kevin Bunnell: Oh, I misunderstood. I apologize.

Jack Hill: I'm sorry. Any way, the point is that if we're using the data for several years, many years, and the process is in place that we can increase the numbers next year if the numbers, if the, if the research is correct, I see no reason why we shouldn't reduce the number by two if it's going, if it's possible to increase the number back to six next year.

Jake Albrecht: Okay, we have a motion by Cordell to reduce by one, a second by Gary Hallows. All in favor, right hand. I count seven. How many did you get? All those against? Seven-three. Motion carries.

Cordell Pearson made the motion to accept the Bobcat recommendations with the exception that there be a one tag reduction instead of two tags as presented. Gary Hallows seconded. Motion carried 8 to 2. Jack Hill and Steve Flinders opposed.

Jake Albrecht: Okay, our next item of business is Taking Non-game Mammals R657-19. This

is a five review, action item. Kevin.

Taking Non-game Mammals R657-19 (5-yr review) (Action) 1:49:52 to 1:50:54 of 1:55:17
-Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Program Coordinator

Jake Albrecht: Any questions from the RAC, RAC members? Rex.

Questions from the RAC:

Rex Stanworth: I've got to tell you, when I see that we have to have a certificate for a kangaroo rat it tells me we have gone too far.

Jake Albrecht: Any questions from the public?

Questions from the Public:

None

Jake Albrecht: We have no comment cards from the public?

Comments from the Public:

None

Jake Albrecht: Well go to comments from the RAC, we've already had one.

Comments from the RAC:

None

Jake Albrecht: Any other comments? Okay, RAC motion. Rex.

RAC Discussion and Vote:

Jake Albrecht: Steve Flinders.

Steve Flinders: I'll make the motion we accept as presented.

James Edwards: And I'll second it.

Jake Albrecht: We have a motion by Steve Flinders to accept the presentation as presented on the five year review, and a second by Jim Edwards. All in favor, right hand. Any against? Nine-two? What was it? Nine-three. Motion carries.

Steve Flinders made motion to accept the Taking Non-Game Mammals Rule as presented. James Edwards seconded. Motion carried 7 to 3. Rex Stanworth, Gary

Hallows, and Dell LeFevre opposed.

Other Business:

-Jake Albrecht, Chairman

- Our next meeting is Waterfowl Proclamation and Rule, Turkey Hunting Guide and Rule, and Fee Proposals. Those will be August 12, 2008, 7:00 PM at the Fillmore High School, with air-conditioning

Unknown: Uh, Mr. Chairman. I have one question to ask the Division. I'd like to know how many limited entry applicants you received for the king snake drawing and the milk snake drawing?

Jake Albrecht: Uh, this is not an agenda item. But I just want to take a second and thank Commissioner, and uh, LeFevre, and Tom Hatch and whoever else was involved with getting us this place to meet tonight. It was very nice, air conditioning worked. I even thought about throwing my coat in, but I didn't. It's good to be back down here and visit with some of the people we know. So thanks again guys. Motion to adjourn. All in favor.