

UTAH WILDLIFE BOARD MEETING

August 8, 2007, 9:00 a.m.
1594 West North Temple, SLC, Utah
Revised August 7, 2007

AGENDA

1. Approval of Agenda ACTION
-Dr. Jim Bowns, Chairman
2. Approval of Minutes ACTION
-Dr. Bowns
3. Old Business/Action Log CONTINGENT
-Dick Diamond, Vice-Chair
4. DWR Update INFORMATION
- Jim Karpowitz, DWR Director
5. Time Certain 3:00 pm Jerold C. Kennicott- Board Appeal POSTPONED
6. Dedicated Hunter Program Information INFORMATION
- Jill West, Wildlife Program Coordinator
7. Bucks, Bulls and OIAL 2007-2008 Proposals INFORMATION
-Kent Hersey, Big Game Project Leader
8. Cougar Proclamation and Rule R657-10 ACTION
-Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Program Coordinator
9. Furbearer proclamation and Rule r657-11 ACTION
-Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Program Coordinator
10. Henry Mtns. Additional Bison Permits ACTION
- Bill Bates, Wildlife Program Manager
11. Henry Mtns. Bison Management Plan ACTION
- Bill Bates, Wildlife Program Manager
12. Resolution 2782 – Grand County Council Rep CANCELED
13. CHA Variance Requests ACTION
- Boyde Blackwell, Public Lands/Private Wildlife Coord.
14. Swan Application Online Only ACTION
- Craig McLaughlin, Wildlife Section Chief

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15. Variance Request – Jess McConnell
- Martin Bushman, Asst. Attorney General

ACTION

16 Other Business
- Dr. Bowns

CONTINGENT

UTAH WILDLIFE BOARD MOTIONS

August 8, 2007, 9:00 a.m.
1594 West North Temple, SLC, Utah

1. Approval of Agenda ACTION

MOTION: I move that we approve the agenda as revised.
Passed unanimously

2. Approval of Minutes ACTION

MOTION: I move that we accept the minutes for the June 7, 2007 Wildlife Board meeting as presented.
Passed unanimously

3. Bucks, Bulls and OIAL 2007-2008 Proposals INFORMATION

MOTION: I move that the DWR do a model scenario of statewide spike only hunts with the limited entry portion being determined by age structure on the different units, and continue to include some management bull harvest.
Passed unanimously

4. Cougar Proclamation and Rule R657-10 ACTION

MOTION: I move that we approve the Division's recommendation on the Cougar Proclamation and Rule R657-10 as presented.
Passed 4 to 1 with Keele Johnson opposed.

MOTION: I move that the DWR do a model scenario to manage mule deer on a smaller population basis, herd by herd instead of by regional boundaries.
Passed unanimously

5. Furbearer proclamation and Rule R657-11 ACTION

MOTION: I move that we approve the Division's recommendations on the Furbearer Proclamation and Rule R657-11 as presented.
Passed unanimously

6. Henry Mtns. Additional Bison Permits ACTION

MOTION: I move that we go with the Division's recommendation of Option #3, issuing 143 bison permits which include an additional 64.

Passed unanimously

7. Henry Mtns. Bison Management Plan ACTION

MOTION: I move that we accept the Henry Mountain's Bison Management Plan with the caveat that the committee stay together.

Passed unanimously

8. CHA Variance Requests ACTION

MOTION: I move that we approve the CHA variance requests as presented.

Passed unanimously

9. Swan Application Online Only ACTION

MOTION: I move that we accept the recommendation to have Swan applications be online only.

Passed unanimously

10. Variance Request – Jess McConnell ACTION

MOTION: I move that we grant the variance request of Jess McConnell.

Passed unanimously

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1594 West North Temple, SLC, Utah

Board Members Present

Chairman Jim Bowns (excused)
Dick Diamond – vice chair
Allan Smith
Keele Johnson
Lee Howard
Paul Niemeyer
Rick Woodard
Jim Karpowitz – Exec Sec

RAC Chairs Present

Amy Torres - Northeastern
Brad Slater – Northern
Ed Kent - Central
Rick Larsen – Southeastern Attending for Jim Gilson
Jake Albrecht – Southern

Public Present

Virgel Fangel
Roy Aanerod
Ernie Millgate
Mack Morrell
David Brinkerhoff
Bryan Pearson
Celeste Pearson
Ken Madsen
Cory Warren
Craig Edwards
Omero Torres
Verland King
Paul W. Pace
Todd Bingham
John Keeler
Tim Donaldson
Margaret Bird
Byron Bateman
Ernie Perkins

Division of Wildlife Resources

LuAnn Petrovich
Craig McLaughlin
John Fairchild
Cindee Jensen
Mark Hadley
Dean Mitchell
Kevin Christopherson
Staci Coons
Greg Sheehan
Ron Hodson
Rick Larsen
Boyde Blackwell
Robyn Pearson (DNR)
Director Mike Styler (DNR)
Darin Bird (DNR)
Clint Sampson
Casey McVay
Mark Ekins
Jodi Becken
Ryan Kanen
Celia Burnell
Martin Bushman
Dana Dolsen
Kevin Bunnell
Teresa Bonzo
Kent Hersey
Tom Beckam
Tyler Thompson
Alan Clark
Mike Fowlks
Justin Dolling
Tom Aldrich
Doug Messerly

Vice Chairman Diamond will be in charge of the meeting. He said we are having audio problems and asked those present to bear with us. He excused Chairman Bowns who

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recently had heart surgery. He welcomed the audience and introduced the Wildlife Board members and RAC Chairs.

1) Approval of Agenda (Action)

The Board Appeal, agenda item #5 has been postponed. Item #12 has been canceled.

The following motion was made by Rick Woodard, seconded by Paul Niemeyer and passed unanimously.

MOTION: I move that we approve the agenda as revised.

2) Approval of Minutes (Action)

The following motion was made by Paul Niemeyer, seconded by Rick Woodard and passed unanimously.

MOTION: I move that we accept the minutes for the June 7, 2007 Wildlife Board meeting as presented.

3) Old Business/Action Log (Contingent)

Vice Chair Diamond presented this item. Turkey depredation permits will be presented at the September Board meeting. The status on the remainder of the issues is as listed on the log. (See Action Log)

4) DWR Update (Information)

Jim Karpowitz, DWR Director said that since our last meeting we had a fatal bear attack up American Fork Canyon. Our personnel responded to that incident appropriately and actually tried to kill the bear the day before the tragic event. It drew a lot of media attention. Out of this tragedy has come the opportunity to educate people on camping in the wild. We have dealt with 100 bears this summer, moved 20 plus and killed 11. It has been an unusual summer, partially due to the dry weather. Our people have responded to these incidences and our policy is working. Our thoughts and condolences go out to the family that lost their son.

It has been unusually dry this summer with lots of fires, about 700,000 acres have burned in Utah this year. Some very valuable wildlife habitat has been lost and animals have been displaced. We have a very good watershed and habitat program to help reseed and rebuild. We will have to deal with some displaced animals around the state through depredation. We have \$500,000 annually to spend on depredation. Because of the last two mild winters, we have been able to carry some money over, so we have some additional money to deal with depredation for farmers and ranchers that are impacted by displaced animals.

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We are experiencing some other effects of the drought. We have seen some drop in water supplies at fish hatcheries. We have had some fish losses and had to move them more quickly than we would have liked out of hatcheries. Some of the streams and reservoirs are down at this point, at critically low levels. We will deal with these situations as they come along. We have joined with the Department of Agriculture in an unusually huge seed order for reseeded of rangelands around the state. Through Utah Partners for Conservation and Development, we will continue to improve habitat and deal with these fire situations.

We have had some personnel changes in the Division. Dean Mitchell is now Chief of the Conservation Outreach Section.

On Quagga mussels, there is going to be a news conference later today announcing that there have been some preliminary findings indicating that there are quagga mussels in Lake Powell. This is a serious concern to not only the DWR but Parks and Recreation, and Water Resources. They impact fisheries, water delivery systems, and boating and recreation.

In anticipation of this, the Division is gearing up to deal with this problem. Larry Dalton has been asked to serve as a coordinator in the Aquatics Section to deal with aquatic nuisance species. We are in the process of hiring a biologist in each region to deal with this serious problem. By boating season next year, we will have numerous personnel in place to educate the public and prevent the spread of quagga mussels. We have approached the legislature for 1.6 million dollars to address this problem. We think if we are proactive we can contain it and minimize its spread. We are following the model of Minnesota who has contained it to four waters in their state. We are more proactive than any state in the west with the exception of California. We are out ahead of this and hopefully will stop the spread of this nuisance species.

It has been a hectic summer and we have had lots of difficult things to deal with. Director Karpowitz thanked the Division people for their diligence and hard work. Mother Nature continues to challenge us.

Vice Chairman Diamond asked if we lost any big game animals, particularly and if so, will it impact the big game season?

Director Karpowitz said some of the fires burned so fast we probably did lose some game animals. Other fires that were slower burning displaced animals. We do not have any units that we feel we need to close to hunting. There are still plenty of places available to hunters. We do have a CWMU or two that are completely burned. Director Karpowitz said he signed an order yesterday to open a season early on a CWMU to get some antlerless elk harvest before they cause serious depredation problems. We will just have to deal with this as it comes along. We are not out of fire season yet.

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Vice Chairman Diamond said on behalf of the Wildlife Board, they are proud of the DWR and how they handled the bear incident, particularly in dealing with the media in that very difficult and heart wrenching situation.

5) Dedicated Hunter Program Information (Informational)

Jill West, Wildlife Program Coordinator presented this item. She said they are not recommending any changes. The Division reserves the right to revisit the program in a few years, continue to track what is happening and potentially make recommendations in the future. We are just shy of the 10,000 cap on Dedicated Hunters. She proceeded to give a report on what the committee has been discussing. The committee convened March 2007. The purpose was to evaluate changes in rule needed to accommodate hitting the 10,000 cap. Committee members included representation from MDF, SFW, SFH, RMEF, FNAWS, dedicated hunters and DWR volunteer program personnel.

Ms. West then gave a brief history of the program. Sportsmen originally asked the DWR to create the program and it benefits the hunter, the Division, and the resource. A graph was shown relative to the growth in the program from 2001-2007. We are at 9,977 Dedicated Hunters at this point. Charts were presented on where Dedicated Hunters live and where they hunt. She went over the rule itself and it does state that no more than ten thousand certificates of registration for the program may be in effect at any given time. CORs are issued on a first-come, first-served basis at Division offices.

There were three questions the committee addressed. First, should we keep, raise or eliminate the cap? Second, should we go first come, first serve or to a draw? Third, should we go to a no preference system, or a preference system? These issues were discussed in detail.

Between the meetings, Ms. West sent out a small survey to dedicated hunters who are up for re-enrollment. The survey results showed that guaranteed region is the most important reason for joining the program

Other committee concerns were if the DWR can effectively manage more than 10,000 Dedicated Hunters, maintaining high quality, meaningful projects and the fact that opportunity needs to be available to all.

The Committee's recommendations are as follows: Keep 10,000 cap, keep the first come, first served approach and keep the playing field level (no preference). To handle the logistics an online-only application process is recommended.

Mr. Niemeyer said he remembers hearing statistics that said dedicated hunters kill less deer.

Ms. West said yes 1 in 6 dedicated hunters kill deer, and 1 in 4 other hunters.

Mr. Howard said perhaps we could leave opportunities for nonresidents to be dedicated hunters. He asked about priority.

Ms. West said there is some priority built into the system, because we send a reminder for re-enrollment to every dedicated hunter. Currently, the application for dedicated hunter in the proclamation is hard to locate. If you do not know it is there, it is kind of hidden. We are going to make that application more obvious in the future.

Mr. Johnson asked about determining the projects. Who determines them?

Ms. West said it varies by office. In Northern, Central and Southern they have a full time person coordinating volunteers. In Southeastern and Northeastern, we do not have a full time person and the Outreach Manager covers the program. In Southeast we recently had a seasonal person approved for the program. There is an internal DWR person who communicates with the regional biologist and that is who Forest Service and BLM biologists will contact. Sportsmen's groups might also contact the biologist.

Vice Chairman Diamond asked how they handle people who are not currently on the committee, but would like to be on it.

Ms. West said there have been several who would like to participate on the committee. This last time around regional personnel handpicked people who might have been involved in the past or had some type of familiarity with the program. We are open to new people, but we need to keep it a manageable number. If the Board has some names for her, let her know.

Vice Chairman Diamond thanked Ms. West for all her hard work and praised the program.

6) Bucks, Bulls and OIAL 2007-2008 Proposals (Informational)

Kent Hersey, Big Game Project Leader presented this agenda item. He will discuss two items today, first on the 2008 big game application and second on deer and elk management in Utah. The DWR is recommending the 2008 big game application be online only. Looking at past numbers on bucks, bulls, and OIAL applications, in 2006 we had a total of 226,881 applications and of those 23,000 were paper. In 2007 total applications were about 246,000, but decreased the paper applications to only 18,000. The justification to expedite this process to online only is last year we had great success with online only antlerless. Faster turn around, get drawing results earlier, less personnel time and improved accuracy are also benefits of online only. We will provide assistance for those without internet access by sending them out a card that indicates that they can call in and get the application filled out over the phone.

Mr. Hersey went on to his presentation on deer and elk management in Utah. Over the years there has been a disconnect between the Division and the public on what the DWR

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is trying to accomplish through management of deer and elk. Our purpose today is to inform the public about how we manage deer and elk populations and why we manage them the way we do. He also wants to discuss advantages/disadvantages of different types of deer and elk management and show how deer and elk populations respond to different types of management.

We manage deer in two different ways in Utah, general season, to provide opportunity and limited entry, to provide quality. Throughout the state we have 27 general season units, 8 limited entry units and 2 premium limited entry units. He then went over the advantages and disadvantages of these two types of management. He also discussed the buck/doe ratios. He then presented the deer population model. The model parameters/assumptions are the population constant at 10,000 deer postseason, reproduction = 60 fawns/100 does postseason, and harvested bucks and does to maintain population size and buck/doe ratios. Mr. Hersey then showed a series of charts on reproduction comparison, opportunity comparison and age of harvest comparison.

Mr. Johnson asked why manage to these scenarios if we do not have this number of deer. We are so far below where we should be with our deer herds this is irrelevant.

Mr. Hersey said it will not be too long before we get there on our deer population.

Director Karpowitz said the principle is the same on the model. If you trade bucks for does, you have fewer fawns, no matter what the population.

In summary, Mr. Hersey said that if we decrease the number of bucks/100 does, it will increase the population growth. If we increase population growth, we increase hunting opportunity. If we increase hunting opportunity, the down side is we will decrease the quality of the bucks being harvested. In Utah, we try to stay somewhere in the middle with general season opportunity, limited entry for quality and premium limited entry for very high quality.

He then went on to discuss antler restrictions. Hunters who think it will increase quality of bucks on a unit often propose this. It has been tried by numerous western states, including Utah. He then showed some slides with data from the 1980's when Utah tried this proposal. These graphs reflected antler restriction on buck harvest, success rate, hunters afield, bucks per 100 does, bucks greater than 2 point per 100 does and illegal kill.

In summary for antler restriction, research shows it does not work. Lower harvest, lower success rates, fewer hunters afield, a shift in hunting pressure to older bucks, fewer mature bucks and increased illegal/accidental kills are all negative effects of antler restriction.

Mr. Hersey went on to discuss elk management. We manage elk in four ways in Utah, any bull units, limited entry only, limited entry with spike hunt, and limited entry with management bull hunt. He then showed a chart with units listed according to hunts. We

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need to get the 70 bulls per 100 cows ratio down, because this makes for poor quality of reproduction. He then went over the advantages and disadvantages of these four types of management. He showed a series of graphs looking at how these management types affect the bull segment of the population. These included charts on limited entry bull elk age structure, le w/spike, le with management, le only on harvest, hunters afield, and le age objective management. He explored each of these scenarios.

In summary, if we decrease bull: cow ratio, it will increase population growth. If we increase population growth, it will increase hunting opportunity. If we increase hunting opportunity, it will decrease the quality of harvested bulls. In Utah, we try to stay somewhere in the middle with any bull for opportunity, le with spike for quality plus opportunity, le with management bull for quality plus some opportunity, and le only for quality.

Mr. Johnson said, relative to the elk, at the WAFWA conference, the number one topic was retention and recruitment of hunters. We are in trouble in this state in this area. He would like to put a study item on the action log which would be a statewide spike only on elk and get rid of all the open bull units. By going statewide we would have le tags and then look at age structure in the various units after the spike hunt. We would also need a management bull hunt on the units to take down the mid range bulls. This would increase opportunity and start addressing recruitment and retention of hunters. He would like the DWR to look at this type of change over the next year. This would be one system and less confusing. Spike only is the way to manage elk.

The following motion was made by Keele Johnson, seconded by Lee Howard and passed unanimously.

MOTION: I move that the DWR do a model scenario of statewide spike only hunts with the limited entry portion being determined by age structure on the different units, and we continue to include some management bull harvest.

Mr. Howard asked on the deer management, why did they use 1986 and 1989 data?

Mr. Hersey said that is when the study on three points only was done in Utah.

Vice Chairman Diamond said from experience during those years, you find a lot of two points under a pile of brush when hunting three point only.

Mr. Johnson said, on mule deer management, in Dahl sheep management in Alaska, when they went to full curl harvest, they thought it would decrease harvest, but it increased it and the herds were healthier. He then referred to an article by Adam Bronson talking about smaller unit management on mule deer populations. Currently, we manage by region. Colorado has been doing that and is having success.

The following motion was made by Keele Johnson, seconded by Paul Niemeyer and

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passed unanimously.

MOTION: I move that the DWR do a model scenario to manage mule deer on a smaller population basis, herd by herd instead of by regional boundaries.

Vice Chairman Diamond said this has been discussed for years and what it leads to statewide limited entry deer hunting. The general population is against it. He cautioned against this suggestion.

Mr. Johnson said Colorado has been doing this and it is bringing herds back. Opportunity will not bring a deer herd back that is in the toilet. We cannot continue to manage on a regional basis. In the 60's we gave four permits per hunt. We had lots of out of state hunters and a great deer herd. Our herd has crashed.

Mr. Woodard asked if this is not being covered on an April 5th action item that Mr. Woodard requested.

Director Karpowitz said it is partially, but not in as much detail. The Division can look at this.

Vice Chairman Diamond went over the comment cards and said there would be a time limit. If the comment comes from a representative of an organization, they have five minutes, and an individual will have three minutes. The RAC system allows for public comment around the state.

7) Cougar Proclamation and Rule R657-10 (Action)

Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Program Coordinator presented the 2007-2008 Cougar Harvest Recommendations. The discussion topics are the cougar management plan, objectives and review of harvest data. Mr. Bunnell went over the history of the cougar management plan that was put together in 1999. It is a ten-year plan. He went over the goal of the plan, management objectives and harvest management criteria. He then presented a graph on cougar mortality 1989-2007 and cougar pursuit 1995-2007.

Cougar are managed in eco-regions. He went over the management performance of the various units for 2006-07. Harvest was 292 last year with an average age of 2.9, slightly below last year at 3.2. Percent of females last year was 42%. Adult survival is at 63% and greater than six years of age is 11%. Several of these areas are below what the plan calls for. It is not a cut and dried thing when looking at several areas and the conclusions that are drawn for management.

Last year we talked a lot about hunt strategy comparisons. He then showed a chart comparing the 2006-2007 strategies, ie, split units and harvest objective plans. They really cannot determine how to use the split strategy at this point. They will continue to use it. On the phone survey the summary report showed 65 conflicts reported out of a

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total of 12,876. 63% of conflicts were with other cougar hunters. We have tried to reduce pursuit in the fall when big game hunters are out. On the population question, 453 cougar hunters were asked if they thought the cougar population was increasing, decreasing or stable on the units they hunted. Those who thought it was increasing 6%, decreasing 66%, stable 15% and unknown 14%.

Mr. Bunnell then went over research data from studies that are going on in the state. The research update covers population densities on the Monroe and Oquirrh units.

On the recommendation summary, they propose total permits/ quota= 492 (-7%) with 16 le units with permits at 129, 15 split units with permits at 182 and 17 harvest objective units with 162 permits. There are no significant changes to rules or procedures.

Last year, at the Board meeting, a motion was passed for the Division “to look into the viability of cougar permits for landowners who have substantial amounts of land.” The discussion focused on using the “turkey model.” After looking at that, the Division decided it is not a viable option for several reasons. 1) The primary motivation for the initial request was to provide opportunity to remove cougars from private land with the assumption that these removals will prevent later depredation. The DWR has never advocated preventative control of cougars or bears to protect livestock based on the following: 1) landowners and livestock producers have ample opportunity to remove depredating cougars under existing rules in addition to the help of wildlife services – this system is preferable because it targets offending animals where as “preventative” removals are non-selective. 2) There are only 6 of 50 cougar units where greater than 50% of the available cougar habitat is private. 3) These six units would only provide 4-9 landowner permits annually – requiring biologists to meet with landowners to review applications would require an excessive amount of time relative to the number of permits involved.

Kirk Robinson asked about the pamphlet that was created last year to help hunters tell if they are after a female or not. The numbers are still too high. What is the plan to keep it at less than 40%?

Mr. Bunnell said they sent the pamphlet out to all who drew out a tag. It will take some time and it is a good educational tool to help identify the age and sex of the animal.

Craig Edwards asked about the rationale for keeping a unit on a predator management plan.

Mr. Bunnell said we have dropped several of those off in the last few years. We did a revision of the policy that regulates this and when you have been on the plan for three years and it is indicated that the cougar population is at a low level, it might be indicating that predators were not the problem. That is why these have been dropped.

RAC Recommendations

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Central – Mr. Kent said there was discussion about average age of animals being taken, and questions about exploring a reduction in permits that are now proposed in hopes of more cougars reaching breeding age, thus increasing the populations. The way things are structured now, cougars are being treated as a disposable predator. The Division's recommendations passed 6 to 1.

Northern – Mr. Slater said there was similar discussion in their RAC. There were some questions on chronic cougar depredation. The Division's recommendations passed unanimously. There was a motion requesting the Wildlife Board to consider forming a focus group for dealing with chronic cougar depredation. This passed 10 to 1.

Southern – Mr. Albrecht said they accepted the Division's recommendations unanimously.

Northeastern – Ms. Torres said their concern was the Three Corners area where there have been sheep released. The Division said that issue has been taken care of and they can call Wildlife Services if there is a problem. They accepted the Division's recommendations unanimously.

Southeastern – Mr. Larson said they had some questions on the Division's management strategy on a variety of predator issues. They accepted the Division's recommendations 8 to 1.

Public Comment

Kirk Robinson, Western Wildlife Conservancy said he appreciates the efforts the Division is making to manage the cougar population according to the plan. We are going in the right direction. He had two comments. On the positive side, in an area where there are so many variables, it is wise to move cautiously in cougar management. Reducing the number of permits gradually is good. On the negative side, we are now eight years into this plan and we are about where we have always been, relative to the performance targets. We are just not there and not moving toward them, with the exception of a few units. The reason for this is cougar killing was overdone about 7-10 years ago. We need to get the average age of cougars up and lessen the number of females in the harvest. Also, a lot of the fears people have had about cougars are simply not true.

Craig Edwards, representing Utah Federation of Houndsmen addressed the Board. They have about 500 members and are a non-profit organization with a membership including guides and outfitters. They started the group three years ago and are moving forward strongly. He thanked the DWR for listening to them and working with them. They had representatives at all the RAC meetings and gave their recommendations at each. They support the Division's recommendations. Three changes they would like to see are all in Southern region. On the Fillmore/Pahvant, Mt. Dutton and Fillmore/Oak Creek units, they would like to see the permits dropped to six, total. These units have a lot of issues and the permit numbers are too high.

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Byron Bateman, representing SFW said they voted unanimously to accept the Division's permit numbers. We are moving in the right direction and must manage to the prey base. Mule deer is a big issue. We need to stay with the Cougar Management plan and not establish additional focus groups to talk about isolated problems. The plan will be up for renewal in two years and issues can be addressed at that time. It is hard to stay within the management plan, because we have PMPs that override it, but it still is a good working tool that we have had for the last eight years. We need to stay with it.

Diamond asked Ms. Bonzo to address the three units in Southern region that were discussed by the Houndsmen.

Teresa Bonzo said they were very comfortable with their permit recommendations on the three units in Southern. On the Mt. Dutton, it was increased by two, from ten to twelve. Recently, she received reports from Wildlife Services, that just in the last few days, 41 ewes and lambs were lost on a herd on the Mt. Dutton unit. We are comfortable with being close to objective and would like to remain with the recommendations.

Vice Chairman Diamond asked why the sportman's harvest hasn't taken care of these problems.

Ms. Bonzo said in the last few years the reason might be the weather conditions. Also, the Fillmore/Oakcreek has been an area that is a potential big horn sheep transplant. It was taken off PMP and even with the low harvest, we still want to stick with our recommendations.

Vice Chairman Diamond asked about the focus group recommendation from the Northern RAC.

Mr. Bunnell said this would be a working group. We could do this, but we are just on the threshold of revising the Cougar Management plan. This is a narrow recommendation and we could do it. Also, Wildlife Services would need to be part of any discussion.

Mr. Slater said their RAC would probably be okay to look toward revision. Some improved communication with Wildlife Services might be helpful with their situation.

The following motion was made by Lee Howard, seconded by Allan Smith and passed 4 to 1 with Keele Johnson opposed.

MOTION: I move that we approve the Division's recommendation on the Cougar Proclamation and Rule R657-10 as presented.

Mr. Johnson said he gets nervous as we decrease these permits relative to the deer population. He likes having lots of lions around if the prey base is there, but right now it is not there. We have reduced permits over the last three years.

8) Furbearer Proclamation and Rule R657-11 (Action)

Kevin Bunnell presented this agenda item on the Bobcat plan and recommendations for 2007-2008, and some changes in the trapping regulations. He went on to discuss the goal of the plan, which is to maintain a healthy bobcat population within existing suitable habitat and provide quality recreational opportunities for bobcat harvest while considering the social aspects of bobcat harvest. Population objective, including strategies and performance targets, and bobcat harvest was presented. Bobcat take is driven by pelt prices. Over the last several years it has been high, being driven by the Asian fur market. Fur prices did drop by 1/3 this year. The average cost per bobcat pelt went from above \$300 to about \$200. After going over the data, the Division's recommendation is to remain at baseline, following the plan. This is six tags per individual with the current season length and no cap on the number of tags available.

Moving onto general recommendations for furbearer, it is proposed to put out a three-year proclamation. The DWR is working with the Utah Trappers Association to develop recommendations and promote techniques to help trappers avoid non-target species (cougars, deer, and domestic animals). Some suggestions include the use of smaller traps, do not use four coiled traps, anchor traps solidly, and if a kitten cougar is caught, pull traps from the area. These are suggestions. Also, bobcat tags will be available online only.

Mr. Bunnell went on to the recommended changes to trapping regulations.

1. To require all snares, except those set in water or with a loop size less than 3 inches in diameter, to be equipped with a breakaway lock device that will release when any force greater than 300 pounds is applied to the loop. Breakaway snares must be fastened to an immovable object and solidly secured to the ground. The use of drags is prohibited. The reason for this recommendation is to reduce the number of non-target animals (e.g. deer, cougars, domestic animals) captured in snares.
2. Clarified the definition of an "artificial cubby set."
3. Separated "bobcat permits" from "bobcat tags" – made consistent with big game permits.
4. Clarified what documentation needs to accompany harvested bobcats
5. Clarified the legal methods for removing animals from traps at night.

Ken Madsen of the Trapper's Association, asked about trap nights when animals are caught. When the question is asked over the phone on the survey, is there any consideration given if the trapper is new or experienced?

Mr. Bunnell said it is a random sample. We do not have any way to gage experience.

RAC Recommendations

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Northern – Mr. Slater said there was some concern with respect to dogs being caught in traps. They passed the Division’s recommendations unanimously.

Central – Mr. Kent said they passed the recommendations unanimously.

Northeastern – Ms. Torres said they passed the recommendations unanimously. There was a lot of public support for the proclamation.

Southern – Mr. Albrecht said one person expressed concern on how to enforce the breakaway snare recommendation. They passed the recommendations unanimously.

Southeastern – Mr. Larson said they had very few comments and they passed the recommendations unanimously.

No public comment

The following motion was made by Lee Howard, seconded by Keele Johnson and passed unanimously.

MOTION: I move that we approve the Division’s recommendations on the Furbearer Proclamation and Rule R657-11 as presented.

Mr. Niemeyer said he thinks it’s great how the trappers are organizing. This is a step in the right direction.

9) Henry Mtns. Additional Bison Permits (Action)

Bill Bates, Wildlife Program manager presented this item on additional bison permits for 2007. They did the helicopter survey on 7/31-8/1 and counted 563 total bison, including 463 adults and 100 calves. With the 78 permits issued this year, we project that we will be way over objective. What we found is that bison are more clumped and easier to survey during dry years. The recent rains made it easier to find bison by following tracks. We also found the bulls. For the last three years, our ratio has been 30 bulls per 100 cows. We probably counted 60 bulls for 100 cows this last time. We need to take action to get back to objective. We considered three options to reaching objective: one year with 234 permits in 2007, two years with 166 permits in 2007 and 2008 and three years with 142 permits in 2007-2009. They are proposing the three year scenario and today we would look to add the additional permits for this year. Next year we can bring back harvest numbers and adjust accordingly. They are asking for 20 permits for an October hunt, 20 cow permits for a late cow hunt and an additional twelve bull or any hunter choice permits in both of our two hunter choice hunts. For the October hunt, we would propose that the entire unit be open. We had about 120 bison that were down on winter ranges during the summer and we would like to have five or six Division people down there during the hunt and try to find any of the bison that are in that area. We will call the hunters ahead and have an orientation. The two hunter choice hunts are the same time period. We have 35 cow permits that were drawn through the drawing that are good

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from December 8 through December 31. We propose to add another 20 permits that would overlap that hunt from the 17 of December through the 31st. We will notify the hunters that have already drawn a cow permit that once the 17th comes there will be a little more competition. This concluded the recommendation and he asked if there were any questions.

Vice Chairman Diamond clarified that the RACs did not have this information, because the count occurred just recently.

Mr. Smith asked if it might be better to approve the plan first, then numbers.

Director Karpowitz said regardless of what happens with the plan, this has to be done.

Mr. Howard asked where all the acreage is for bison habitat.

Mr. Bates said they are looking at just the Henry's. The rest is public land.

Mr. Albrecht asked if on the animals to be hunted, does that include recruitment?

Mr. Bates said for next year we are dealing with the recruitment, but it is not set for 2008 and 2009. We can adjust accordingly.

Paul Pace asked if insightability was considered.

Mr. Bates said yes.

Mr. Johnson said recently there has been discussion that this is one of the only genetically pure bison herds in the world. Do any other states want some of these bison?

Mr. Bates said he has contacted Montana and they are looking to get some.

Mr. Johnson said there are organizations looking to list bison. By being proactive, we can keep this from happening.

Public Comment

Mack Morrell, Wayne County Farm Bureau addressed the Board. The last three years there have not been enough permits issued to even cover the calf recruitment. They want to get down to the 275 target as soon as possible. They would like to do the two-year option. This problem of too many bison is impacting the economy in the area. Bison are taking from the cattle. They have a working group planned and would like to make some adjustments, including a drought number at 275 with no increase.

Paul Pace, Utah Cattlemen's Association addressed the Board. Last year we harvested 19 animals. Boom and bust does not help the herd. We counted 400 last year and should have reacted immediately. Historical sightability is at 85%, not 95%. That would have

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made the difference of where we are at now. He was glad to be in on the counting. It was a cooperative effort that needs to continue.

Verland King said they do not like the boom and bust way of managing bison. That mountain takes quite a hit and a lot of people come along when somebody gets a bison permit. The land takes a lot of abuse during that time of year. This bison herd needs to be managed a lot better.

Dave Brinkerhoff of the Henry Mountains Grazer's Association addressed the Board. The boom and bust way of managing is not good for the land. When that many hunters come, it impacts the area. They would like to see the numbers reduced as soon as possible. We need to consider the calves coming into the herd.

Mr. Howard asked how many tags we are considering.

Mr. Bates said 64 additional tags on an emergency basis. We have already pulled the alternate list for hunters. We have ample number of hunters.

Director Karpowitz said the last time we had a high count similar to this, we added 6 additional hunts. It was a huge effort to reduce that herd by 100. None of the hunts had more than 20 hunters on them, some as few as 14. He wants to get the herd down quickly, but you reach a point of diminishing returns when you have more hunters and the success rate goes down to 50-60%. It is a boom and bust management if we go with the one-year option. He went over the three options and spoke for the three year. It is more gradual and if we look for more permits, harvest will go down. If we can give some bison to Montana, we might not need so many permits in the next two years. In 1990 we had a total of nine hunts and killed 150 bison. We have got to kill almost that many this year with what we have recommended.

Mr. Niemeyer asked if a large portion of bison are removed from the herd would they disperse into the park?

Mr. Bates said it might drive them into places where we do not want them. We want to keep some semblance of normalcy. They did not see any in the park.

Mr. Woodard said this is a OIAL hunt for those who get the permits. We need to keep that in mind with whatever option we go with.

Vice Chairman Diamond said we need to take action to bring these herd numbers down. We just need to decide on the option.

The following motion was made by Allan Smith, seconded by Lee Howard and passed unanimously.

MOTION: I move that we go with the Division's recommendation to go with Option #3, issuing 143 bison permits, which include an additional 64.

10) Henry Mountains Bison Management Plan (Action)

Bill Bates, Wildlife Program manager said there were three minor changes made to the original plan based on comments at the RACs. There are no tribal lands on the Henry Mountains. This unit is down in Southern Region. There are 300,000 acres of bison habitat on the Henry's. Bison were transplanted from Yellowstone in 1941. He then went over the natural history of the bison and how they spread in Utah. He also discussed forage allocation by the BLM and SITLA grazing leases. Disease concerns, current population status, including post season population trends, reproductive ratios, and harvest of bison on the Henry Mountains was discussed. Also the fact that the Henry Mountains bison herd is one of four remaining genetically pure, disease-free herds.

The Henry Mountain's bison committee is a diverse group. They have 23 regular members representing the livestock community, county commissioners, and sportsmen. They have had some very direct discussions. They listed their issues and concerns. Issues and concerns include:

1. Implement habitat projects to resolve conflicts between bison and livestock, focus on winter range.
2. Maintain viable bison numbers to prevent ESA listing.
3. Share SFH allotments with livestock.
4. Bison use on winter ranges during the summer.
5. Haze bison on winter ranges/seedings when doing damage.
6. Maintenance of fences and water SFH allotments.
7. Unresolved issues at current objective.
8. Taylor grazing act issues.
9. Management of other wildlife species (deer)
10. Permittee drought related expenses
11. WSA issues
12. Consistency with BLM RMP
13. Accuracy of bison survey

Mr. Bates then went over the management goals and objectives of the plan. The population management goal is to maintain the Henry Mountain bison herd as a disease-free, genetically viable, free roaming population in balance with available habitat and other land uses. Strategies and objectives were then discussed relative to this goal. The next two goals discussed were habitat management and recreation. Strategies and objectives were outlined to accomplish these goals.

Mr. Howard asked if there were any fires on the Henry's this year.

Mr. Bates said no.

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Mr. Johnson asked when the bison go onto the winter range in the summer, have we considered hunting them?

Mr. Bates said this is not a good idea to hunt when it's that hot. When you have a 2000-pound animal down during temperatures of over 100 degrees it is not good.

RAC Recommendations

Northern – Mr. Slater said they passed the proposal unanimously

Central – Mr. Kent said he was not at the meeting, but he did get a report from the vice chair. Genetic integrity was discussed and we they feel we must keep a certain number in this herd. Also competition between bison and cattle for grazing, and maintaining a viable herd was discussed. The Division's recommendation passed 5 to 2.

Northeastern – Ms. Torres said there was a discussion about the competition between deer and bison. They passed the Division's recommendation unanimously.

Southern – Mr. Albrecht said they have two RAC members on the Board who are Henry Mountain users. In discussion there were several issues brought up including drought, keeping the genetics in tact, a viable herd, trust between the DWR and the Henry Mountain users, how we got from 200 to 275 AUMs on SITLA lands, resource damage on winter ranges, damage to fences, water devices, etc., sightability concerns, and sportsmen money being put into habitat. With that the final motion was to accept the Henry Mountain Bison Management Plan as presented with the following conditions: no road closures, seasonal or otherwise; if range conditions are down according to BLM, there will be no increase in bison numbers; range improvements that are promised will be in place and usable before there is any increase in population; maintenance plans will be implemented on all range improvements that are initiated and the bison committee stays in place to monitor the affected parties. The vote was 4 to 2 with 1 abstained in favor.

Southeastern – Mr. Larson said they entertained similar comments and questions as the other RACs. They accepted the management plan, 8 to 1.

Public Comment

David Brinkerhoff, Henry Mountain Grazers Association and permittee, addressed the Board. He said he is the most affected of all the permittees, because he deals with the buffalo year round. They are either on his summer or winter ranges. This is a small area to deal with these kinds of numbers. They need to work together on the plan and there are still issues that need to work through. He disagrees with some things in it. It is a good plan. There is a lot of four-wheel traffic there along with a trophy mule deer area. The biggest problem is winter range, which is critical to the cattle operation. There is also the issue of suspended AUMs (4,000). The active AUMs we are unable to fill since the buffalo are usually there in the summer months. We have seen resource damage there

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in the past, because of the buffalo, that might never be restored. There needs to be some drought stipulations in the plan also.

Verland King, representing private land on the Henry's is also President of the Henry Mountain Grazers Association, and a permittee. He said there is a lot of good in the plan, but also some stuff that needs to go. He is excited about the habitat work that will be done. The numbers are ridiculously high on this unit. They were high last year and higher this year. He would like to see the target population stay down until 2012. We have nothing in the plan to address the numbers being too high in the plan. The plan needs work. Overall he would support the plan and he wants the committee to stay in tact to keep working on it.

Paul Pace of the Utah Cattlemen said they will support the plan if the committee can keep going. He commended Mr. Bates for his perseverance. There has been a lot of compromise. There has been a lot of progress made, but neither side is completely happy with it. If we keep working on this, the ultimate winner will be the resource. The second winner will be the buffalo herd. He asked for a correction on the plan, Steve Dalton is the manager of the Sandy Ranch, not the owner. Concerning sightability, they need a compromise between 85% and 95%. He wants to proceed forward with the committee. The plan needs to be dynamic.

Mack Morrell of the Wayne County Farm Bureau is also in agreement that the management committee should stay in tact and work out the differences. We went through this with the antelope. Right now, the DWR lacks credibility, because of the discrepancy in the numbers. When somebody puts pressure on them to count and do it right, they came through. The DWR should not have to be policed if they have integrity.

Ken Madsen of the Utah Trappers Association said they support the Division's presentation.

Todd Bingham, Farm Bureau said they realize there are disagreements, but they support the plan generally. This is a contentious issue. The AUM problem is not going away. He thanked the Division for addressing the emergency permits. There is a need to have a plan in place and how we continue to address the permit issue. He thanked the outgoing Board members.

Byron Bateman thanked Mr. Diamond and Mr. Smith for their service on the Board. SFH does hold 2500 AUMs on the Henry Mountains, plus 500 other AUMs. That is enough to support a population of 150 bison plus what the BLM has already allocated. This is enough to support 430 bison. 430 is the magic number to have a viable bison herd on the Henry Mountains and enough to keep it from becoming listed. The plan has everything we could come up with to address every situation they could think of. It is not a perfect plan and needs continual adjustment. SFH is continuing to work on the area with projects and resources. We need to get the plan in place and keep the committee going. An annual range ride will really help. Grazers participate in the counts also, not

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just the DWR. They want a win/win for everybody and it can happen if we work together.

Don Peay of SFW said this is a great area and a unique piece of public land. There are not a lot of private land issues, since it is 98.5% public land. We do not have animals migrating to other states or an Indian reservation. This is a treasure in the United States. The plan will move forward and we need to continue to work together, meaning money, time and effort. Mr. Peay said he appreciates working with these members of the committee. SFW will fight for the Division to use the AUMs that they lease from SITLA for wildlife.

Mr. Peay then referred to Antelope Island, which is 22,000 acres, and there are 600 bison there. The Henry's is 15 times the area and we are looking to accommodate 300 bison. This plan that is being approved does not include the 2500 AUMs that SFW has. Over the next two years, hopefully we will resolve what will happen with those. Mr. Peay thanked the outgoing Board members for their service to wildlife.

Vice Chairman Diamond said this issue can get worked out. The struggle is indicative of progress that is being made on this issue. He has seen this same struggle on other issues in the past and we are headed in the right direction.

RAC Recommendations

Southern – Mr. Albrecht said that the road closures they discussed are addressed in the plan, so that part of their concern is taken care of. The other issues are range improvements and range conditions that they would like in place before there is an increase in population. The last request is that the committee stays in place.

Vice Chairman Diamond said these issues have been covered in the Division's recommendations and asked if Southern RAC would be satisfied that their considerations have been heard.

Mr. Albrecht said from discussion today that would be fine.

Director Karpowitz said he has been associated with the Henry Mountain herd for a long time and we have never had a plan. We have had a lot of discussion about this herd through the years, but no plan. There has never been a standard and firm understanding of where we are going and what we are doing. When he heard about the high bison count, he seriously considered pulling the plan from the agenda with the approach that we will table it until we get the herd back to objective. He read the plan cover to cover and decided we need this plan now more than ever. There are a lot of good things in this plan and we need to keep in mind that it is not written in stone. It is a good idea for this committee to meet annually, review the progress of the plan and make periodic adjustment. If this does nothing else, but get this committee to look at this plan and review things annually, it is a good thing. Mother Nature always throws us a curve and

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the plans need to be dynamic. The Division will continue to manage this herd in close cooperation with the various users on the mountain.

Mr. Smith said he knows how important winter ranges are and how long it takes to get them to come back, even under great conditions. He called the BLM in Richfield on the Resource Management Plan. They said it will be this fall when the RMP goes out on the street for review by the public. It has 90 days thereafter for official comment. The timeframe puts their plan in place by next summer most likely. The regional manager in Richfield is in favor of the plan. The Division is better off with a plan, given the indications for the future.

He went on to say how much he has appreciated serving on the Board for the last six years. He praised the Division personnel and those on the Board. He expressed appreciation to the conservation groups also. He thanked everyone for this opportunity.

Mr. Howard said the lack of credibility on the counts can be blamed on the budget of the Division. Recently, we have had good people in the legislature and gotten the money to do the correct thing. The Division is not quite as destitute as it has been in the past. As far as the ranchers are concerned, he would love to have a partner like SFH on the ground as they put up \$500,000 to help with grazing.

Mr. Niemeyer thanked the bison committee members for all their time and effort.

The following motion was made by Paul Niemeyer, seconded by Keele Johnson and passed unanimously.

MOTION: I move that we accept the Henry Mountain's Bison Management Plan with the caveat that the committee stay together.

11) CHA Variance Requests (Action)

Boyde Blackwell, Public Lands/Private Wildlife Coordinator presented this agenda item on Statewide Commercial Hunting Areas (CHAs). He will cover the 2007 Application Issues and Recommendations.

For the 2007-2010 CHA, they send out 125 application renewals. They approved 70 for renewal. They have four variance requests and five recommended species denial or species restrictions. The first variance request is the Box Elder County CHA, the boundary that is contiguous with the Salt Creek WMA (rule require ¼ mile separation). The recommendation is to accept with the following conditions: During waterfowls season shooting hours limited to one half hour before sunrise to official sunset, all pheasants released must be banded, the sportsmen check in their birds and we collect data as to the number and the date. The request was also presented in 2004 and it was approved by the Board at that time.

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The next variance request is for the Connor Springs CHA. That boundary is contiguous with the public shooting grounds WMA (rule requires ¼ mile separation). The recommendation is that we accept without conditions due to DWR's adjacent low quality habitat. It was also approved in 2004.

The third variance request is for the Avalon Hunting Preserve. They are requesting a variance for a year round dog training area. The recommendation is to accept with conditions that the area is no larger than 80 acres as in past years and that the area not be an area that is used by wild birds or wild populations. This was approved in 2004.

The last variance request is for the Castle Valley Outdoor LLC #1. They request a variance of the total acreage allowed for their CHA to be 12,543 acres. The rule allows for a variance less than 1,920 acres but only that much may be used at any time. The reason for this is to allow birds an opportunity to escape to surrounding areas and rest places. It also reduces the opportunity for some of these CHAs to be able to take up huge areas and take potential opportunity from the sportsmen. The Division's recommendation is to accept with conditions allowed by Rule 657-22-8-3.

Mr. Blackwell went on to present the species requests. Five CHAs requested the hunting of Hungarian Partridge. The Division recommended a denial of Hungarian Partridge hunting outside of established statewide seasons and bag limits. Allow for hunting of wild Hungarian Partridge as well as release and hunting of pen-reared Hungarian partridge is only during prescribed Hungarian Partridge season. Hunters must adhere to the established daily bag limit and possession limit.

Mr. Slater asked if all five variance requests were from Box Elder.

Mr. Blackwell said three were from Box Elder, one from Northeast and one from Southeast.

RAC Recommendations

Northern, Southeastern and Northeastern accepted the Division's recommendations unanimously.

The following motion was made by Keele Johnson, seconded by Paul Niemeyer and passed unanimously.

MOTION: I move that we approve the CHA variance requests as presented.

12) Swan Application Online Only (Action)

Craig McLaughlin, Wildlife Section Chief thanked the three outgoing Wildlife Board members. The Division is requesting taking swan applications online this year. Our application period starts in two days and that is why it has been brought to the Board

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before the proclamation meeting. Presently, most applications are being presented online. Those who submitted through the mail last year will be informed by mail, offering any assistance they might need to accomplish this.

The following motion was made by Allan Smith, seconded by Rick Woodard and passed unanimously.

MOTION: I move that we accept the recommendation to have Swan applications be online only.

13) Variance Request – Jess McConnell (Action)

Martin Bushman, Assistant Attorney General presented this request. Jess is a lifetime license holder and would like to exchange his any legal weapon permit for a statewide archery permit based on the fact he is in the military and his orders have changed. He will not be here for his hunt in October. When he submitted this request statewide archery was sold out. Jess would like to request of the Board a variance to hunt the archery season with his any legal weapon permit.

The following motion was made by Paul Niemeyer, seconded by Keele Johnson and passed unanimously.

MOTION: I move that we grant the variance request of Jess McConnell.

14) Other Business (Contingent)

Director Karpowitz thanked the three outgoing Wildlife Board members, Dick Diamond, Allan Smith and Jim Bowns.

The meeting was then adjourned.