

Utah Wildlife Board Executive Work Meeting
September 22, 2010, DNR Boardroom
1594 W North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah

Board Members Present

Rick Woodard - Chair
Ernie Perkins – Vice Chair
Jake Albrecht
Tom Hatch
Del Brady
Keele Johnson
Bill Fenimore
Director Karpowitz – Exec Secretary

RAC Chairs Present

Steve Flinders – Southern
Terry Sanslow - Southeastern

Public Present

Ken Clegg – CWMU Assoc.

Division of Wildlife Resources

Cindee Jensen
Alan Clark
Staci Coons
LuAnn Petrovich
Judi Tutorow
Teresa Bonzo
Anis Aoude
Rick Larsen
Kent Hersey
Doug Messerly
Greg Sheehan
Mike Fowlks
Rhianna Christopher
Greg Sheehan
Amy Canning
Mark Hadley
Bryan Christensen
Anita Candeleria
John Fairchild
Mike Canning
Lacy Welch
Dana Dolsen
Dean Mitchell
Heather Bernales
Mike Christensen

Wednesday September 22, 2010, 1:00 pm – 7:00 pm

1. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Rick Woodard welcomed everyone to the work session and introduced those in attendance at the meeting. He stated that would be no public questions or comment taken in this meeting. There will be time for that later when whatever decision comes out of this meeting goes out for public review. He then turned the time to Director Karpowitz.

Director Karpowitz said this Board meeting is probably one of the most important of his career. He has spent a lot of time contemplating what we might say and do, and talk about here today. He has spent a lot of time going over our current deer plan and data, our past plans and data, and beginning on Monday, working with the Division folks in detail on just what all of the information is telling us. As a Division, they want to present some information to the Board and then use the time for discussion. The two changes we

are considering are huge and will impact the public greatly. We need to carefully consider what we are about to do.

We will start off with a review of the deer hunters' survey that was taken in 2008, just prior to presenting the deer management plan, and take a look at what that is telling us. This survey is probably a better judge of what the public really wants, because we reached a much broader audience, and the sample sizes were huge. We will also take a look at our current deer management plan. There are some important things that we need to discuss relative to the deer management plan. One of the basic concepts is we should not develop strategies, unless we are all clear on the objectives. If we are all clear on objectives, we can adequately explain to the public as to why we do what we do and where it is moving us. He turned the time to Mr. Aoude.

Anis Aoude presented an overview of the deer hunters' survey, specifically on questions pertinent to the deer plan. The survey was conducted in July 2008 and was internet based. There was a random sample of anyone who applied for a deer hunt or purchased a 2007 deer tag over the counter. We stratified them based on weapon type and region.

Mr. Hatch asked about the timing on the deer hunters' survey. He hears a lot more information about the deer hunt right after the hunt than he does in July.

Mr. Aoude said it dealt with things more on a philosophical level than recent experience. The questions were based on their last five years hunting. We tried to make the questions not based on specifically this year's hunt and how many deer they saw. The survey was also to set up for the deer committee that happened September/October of that year.

Mr. Albrecht said this survey was put together by the Division, not the deer committee, is that correct?

Mr. Aoude said that is correct and then continued with the presentation, reviewing the questions that were asked in the survey. It was geared to get input on various management options.

Mr. Hatch asked how they defined an area.

Mr. Aoude said basically, geographically different area, when they actually picked up camp and moved. Most hunt one area, but some hunt two or three areas. We did not want to identify it as a unit, because that would involve boundaries and a lot of information. Also, many of the public do not know where the various units are. It bore out that people hunt mostly one area. He then went on to discuss the survey questions.

Mr. Albrecht asked why they used the term "every year" relative to hunting.

Mr. Aoude said they were trying to get at what people want. Do people want to hunt every year and most do want to hunt every year. He then went on with the presentation.

Mr. Johnson said any weapon folks are 80% of our hunters.

Mr. Aoude said you could look at just that and even within those, giving up hunting every year came last as a choice. The one that includes most of the hunters is the general season and limited entry. He then went on to the hunter satisfaction part of the survey.

Mr. Hatch asked about the neutral response of those surveyed.

Mr. Aoude said they had no opinion. The way they did it was a 1 to 5 range with 5 being satisfied. The 3 would be neutral.

Director Karpowitz asked if Southern and Southeast said they were dissatisfied with the five day hunt.

Mr. Aoude said that is correct.

Mr. Fenimore asked what the confidence level is on the responses here. In the past, the Division has used an outside source to do surveys.

Mr. Aoude said open internet surveys are those where anyone can respond. Ours was a randomized approach and it was like a mail in survey, but they answered it on the internet. The response was much better than the mail in surveys.

Mr. Hatch asked of the 9,000 responses, were they broken out by region.

Mr. Aoude said they did stratify it by region, so we got a broad response. They got enough response in each subcategory to make it statistically valid.

Director Karpowitz said the survey speaks for itself and we need to keep it in our mind as we go forward. Public opinion has changed some since 2008 when we had a hard winter in Northern region a few years back and then a hard winter in Southern last year. The hunts have been quite average for the past few years, but the survey is the best information we have and it speaks clearly for what the majority wants in the state. It is curious that they want limited entry hunting, but they want to hunt every year. You cannot ever quite get that out of the survey.

The next topic he would like to address is the management plan, (Attachment 1) p. 10, VI – statewide management goals and objectives. The first nine pages are background materially about deer, the history of deer management in Utah, issues and concerns associated with deer, but for today he just wants to review the management plan. The first part is about population management goals, and what are we going to do to get more deer in the state. It is safe to say that this is the number one concern of hunters in the state. The objective and strategies in the plan are very sound and they address all the things we need to do to increase the deer population. We are aggressively working on these objectives relative to things that are in our control. The habitat objectives – In the past five years we have worked on about 600,000 acres at a cost of 60 million dollars,

which is more habitat work than all the surrounding states together are working on. We are doing more on predator control than any other state. Before budget cuts we were sending \$600,000 annually to Wildlife Services to kill coyotes and now it is a little less than \$500,000. We have a good-targeted plan to remove predators. On highway mortality, there are many bypass structures and fencing projects going on in the state. The effort being made is very impressive. The Habitat Section will be bringing this information on the work being done on highways around the state to the Board. We are doing more research on various aspects of mule deer than at any time in the past. We have a mortality study going along with others. In summary, based on my experience with the Division, we have never done more than we are currently doing for our deer herd. I am confident that these things will work, given some time. It takes a long time to grow shrubs and we need to be patient with the habitat work.

Looking back to the 1980's, there were large deer populations, with some depredation situations that involved over 1,000 deer and several thousand deer on key winter ranges. We had a very large base herd of deer that was very productive. He then went over a handout "Postseason Classification" (Attachment 2). The record buck harvest occurred in 1983 when 82,532 bucks were harvested. There were also 13,000 does harvested. We were trying to reduce some of the big herds that were impacting the winter range. We did let those herds get way too big. It was way to nice to have 82,000 hunters that were really happy. The problem is the deer were destroying their future at that time and they had huge impacts on the winter ranges in the state in those years. He visibly watched what happened on Gordon Creek, Hard Straw, Beef Basin and all of our critical winter ranges in the southeastern region. They went from shrubs to grasses, which are not beneficial to deer. As a result productivity went down steadily for years. We should have been killing way more than 13,000 does during those years to get the herd down.

Director Karpowitz continued reviewing the handout. Habitat has changed in the world of mule deer and they have responded accordingly. We have bottomed out on population and we should be recovering with the management we have in place. This identifies the problem we are hearing from hunters today. Buck/doe ratios were not any better then than they are now, but there was such a huge volume of deer and hunters were seeing lots of deer. They were not killing big bucks with 80% of harvest being yearling bucks, but they were happy. Today we have hunters going out, but they are disappointed because they do not get the opportunity to harvest a deer. This information was shared to put this discussion in perspective. He has seen this happen over time and the deer have responded to changes in habitat. That is what is causing the dissatisfaction that we are hearing from hunters.

Mr. Fenimore asked what the estimated deer herd was in 1983-84.

Director Karpowitz said it was significantly bigger than now, but we did not estimate herds back then. When you had a bad winter, things bounced back quickly, because we had good fawn production then.

Mr. Fenimore said it would be useful to compare the population of Utah back then, relative to the deer numbers.

Director Karpowitz said if you look at the number of hunters afield in 1983, we had about 200,000, actual people that went hunting, not those who bought permits, and about 162,000 the next year. You compare that with what we have today at about 78,000 in the field for rifle and muzzleloader. We need to have this survey in mind as we decide where to go from here.

Mr. Johnson said he refers to the 60's and 70's as big deer years. The crash happened in the early 70's across the west. Sometime during that time period they were giving three buck permits to every hunter. We had half of California hunting in Utah. The small Utah towns would come alive with hunters coming from other states. The deer hunt holiday was a big deal. In the early 70's a collapse started and into the 80's. An interesting study would be what was happening with predator control, starting in 1960's, including buck/doe ratios, and doe/fawn ratios. When 1080 was removed, and trapping restrictions put in place, how did this effect it?

Director Karpowitz said there were a lot of things that were happening at that time. In 1976, Utah State hosted a workshop called "The Decline of Mule Deer in the West." So by 1976 there were already serious concerns. Poison was banned in 1972 and our elk herds started to come on pretty strong, although in 1976 we only had 12,000 elk. The interesting thing is the biggest decline in mule deer happened before the mid-70's. The real hay day, if you look at the harvest data, that goes clear back to 1925, the total number of deer harvested peaked in the late 50's, early 60's. That is when the Division was intentionally trying to reduce deer on winter ranges. That is when you could kill up to seven deer on some units.

Mr. Perkins asked what the management system was that started that culling.

Director Karpowitz said it was either sex hunt hunting up until the late 70's, with numerous opportunities for extra antlerless tags, plus you could take a second buck in some areas. Archery hunters could take a second buck up until the 80's. The whole thought back then was we have to get on top of the deer herd.

Until the early 80's we ran a large number of pellet group transects, which gave an idea of the relative amount of deer use on the winter ranges, and we looked at browse transects, where we would go to key winter ranges and actually measure the percent of forage deer had consumed. We would assign permits accordingly. It was an adaptive management. The transects were on the highest used portions of deer winter ranges and that was the problem. In order to have any effect on those areas, you had to really pound the deer. So in some areas we were harvesting a lot of deer and not having much effect on the browse, or use. We realized after a lot of years of that, if we keep this up, to make sure we have shrubs, we may run out of deer before we see the shrubs improve, so that was abandoned. In 1992, the legislature passed a bill that said every herd would have a herd size objective and that is when we started managing by numbers. Transects were

replaced with computer models. The negative side of that is we quit spending so much time in the field. That was a dramatic shift in management. Deer are hard to count and so you have to trust the model.

Director Karpowitz said he has spent a lot of time the last few days thinking back on the history and why there is so much hunter dissatisfaction now. It has been following trends in the population and habitat. That is how we got where we are.

Mr. Johnson said his Dad was born in 1931 and he said when he was young, it was hard to find a deer track, then with 1080 and trapping, it brought back the deer herd. There was lots of damage during the late 60's and early 70's because the population was way too high. Also back then, people were not as consumed with trophy sizes and things like antler gathering. These things weren't as important back then. We have a different pressure these days to manage for larger animals, that we did not have 30 years ago.

Mr. Hatch said the changes in the hunting community industry have been extreme. In our hunting camp it was probably the mid 1970's before anybody had a scope on their rifle. Trail cameras were unheard of and nobody used to scout for deer all summer long. ATVs have gained access to large amounts of area. All those things have really impacted our deer.

Mr. Fenimore said other recreational users put pressure on herds also.

Director Karpowitz referred to the plan to the section beginning management general season units for a 3-year average of 15-25 bucks/100 does and a 9-day long any weapon season. This is a real objective in managing the number of bucks in a population. He discussed hunter satisfaction relative to buck doe ratios. He then went on to look at a Buck/Doe Ratio chart (Attachment #3) Northern region is at 17 bucks per 100 does, Northeastern is at 15, Southeastern is at 18, Central is at 15 and Southern is at 18. If every unit was above 18, hunters would start feeling better about what they are seeing when they go hunting, in addition to all else we are doing to increase deer numbers. The objective is sound and all units need to be managed for a 3-year average of 15-25 bucks per 100 does. The problem is, with our current strategies, where the average is 15, there will always be some units below and above. We do have some very good performing units up near 20. He hates to see hunter opportunity limited on the units that have really good buck/doe ratios. On the other hand, we need a management plan that brings the poor performing units up to a level of more satisfaction.

Mr. Hatch said looking at the chart, it is hard to see any patterns, or trends. There are some dramatic jumps in the ratio.

Director Karpowitz said deer classification is subject to a lot of variables, such as weather and road conditions, and if the deer have moved to where they can be counted or not. There is a wide variability on those numbers and that is why a 3-year average is a good idea. Deer are also dramatically affected by hard winters and drought. It is

important that we look at the trends. He went over some examples of the trends reflected by the buck/doe ratios on this chart.

The management plan, as it is currently written, with the objective of 15-25 bucks per 100 does, with some minor changes in strategy, we can make a huge difference on buck/doe ratios in the state and on hunter satisfaction. I do not think we have to make huge changes to have some substantial results. As an example he then went over the handout, "Potential Deer Management Plan Adjustments" (Attachment #4). He went over the three strategies on the handout. The problem is in moving to step number two is he does not believe we will ever get to objective on the Vernal, the Oquirrh-Stansbury, or the Monroe. They are chronic poor performing units. They are dragging the regional averages down. There is a lot of hunter dissatisfaction on those units. Those three units would be removed clear out of the regional cap and manage them under a general season limited entry program. Those units would have a 50% reduction in permits. This would be locked in for three years, not moving units in and out, but being able to adjust permit numbers, then evaluating every three years. The regional caps would be adjusted annually until the regional average is above 18. Then at the end of three years if there are still units performing poorly, they need to move into the limited entry category. Essentially we are managing every unit individually, but it allows the hunters the opportunity to hunt more than one unit. Some units will be better than others. He continued to discuss the details on the handout. With some minor reductions in the caps in some of the regions, we can get every region to an average of 18 and every unit above 15. It is just adaptive management over the three years, by making adjustments.

Chairman Woodard asked if these numbers presented in the field counts and not in the computer model. He has never been a fan of the computer modeling.

Director Karpowitz said you must use a computer to get to a number for harvest. The computer helps you arrive at a number, and the adaptive management is the reality that tells you what needs to change after measurement. This (handout) is the first guess on what we need to do to get us there. Next year we would change permit numbers again as dictated by the post-season ratios.

Chairman Woodard said no computer model would override an in the field count, right?

Director Karpowitz said what the model does is give you a starting point and when you need antlerless harvest. It is all driven by post-season classification, which is actual observation of deer in the field. It is subject to variables. This does not affect the biology. It has been proven that any buck/doe ratio above 10 will be enough to impregnate all the does. This is a social decision on how much opportunity we are going to provide verses quality. That is what the Board has to balance.

Chairman Woodard said he likes 18 bucks per 100 does, because you need the bigger bucks around to get the job done early.

Director Karpowitz said this is not a biological issue. This is a social decision. Still, it is a good point that the more bucks you have the quicker the does can be impregnated and it contracts the breeding season. The bottom line of this suggestion is we will have to take about 9,000 deer tags out. We think we can absorb this cut in revenue right now without a license increase for a couple of years, but if we go much deeper, it will take out too much opportunity.

It is also a concern that limited entry by unit would eventually destroy the Dedicated Hunter Program. This proposal will preserve it. Basically we can preserve all of our existing programs. Archery hunters have not been touched with this proposal. The Board can decide if the archery hunters should make some sacrifices or not.

What Director Karpowitz would like today is some direction from the Board as to whether they want them to adopt these strategies, and if so they would approve something like this in November. Permit numbers will not be set until spring.

He has not talked about the change in season structure and intentionally left it to the last. He has read some of the responses from the public on this and about half of them like it. It has the potential to drive buck/doe ratios down, especially with the split season. He is also concerned about combined elk and deer seasons, reducing the quality of the general elk season. His suggestion is not to throw this idea away, but put it on the back burner now while we are making some other changes. He is nervous about making two major changes on top of each other. After we incorporated the first proposal for 2-3 years, then we could bring this in and try it.

Mr. Brady asked, on the Vernal Unit with 3,300 hunters, how accurate is that?

Mr. Aoude said it is based on the phone survey we do each year and it is stratified across the regions.

Mr. Johnson said he feels the biology of the animals in Utah is his main duty. Changing the hunt structure is not biological. Before the legislature put herd objectives in place, we were managing more biologically, being out looking at the habitat. We have changed from that to computer modeling and if we went to smaller unit management it would force the biologists to get out and start looking at plants again. The Forest Service and BLM is doing that, but the Division might not be so much. Their focus has also been changed in other areas.

Director Karpowitz said this requires us to look at each unit individually, because each unit has to be above 15 bucks per 100 does. We cannot just look at a region, but every unit individually and if it is not performing as it ought to we need to change direction.

Mr. Johnson said we are looking at buck/doe ratios, but the fawn/doe ratio is the real biology. What can we do about that?

Director Karpowitz said that is why he started with talking about what we can do to increase our populations. It is really based on fawn production. Until our ranges become more productive and we can do more about highway mortality and predation, then low fawn/doe ratios will continue, but we are doing all we can in that regard. We need the Board to determine where we are and where we want to be on the continuum of opportunity versus quality.

Mr. Albrecht said 18 is a lot better than where we are at. Looking at Monroe, Fishlake and Beaver, they have the largest amount of ATV trails in the state of Utah. ATVs are part of the recreation. If you cut the Monroe down 1000 permits, it is going to shift the ATV users to other areas.

Director Karpowitz said that is part of the plan in working with federal agencies to manage ATV use.

Mr. Albrecht said ATV use is a problem there and also the hunters. That is another reason the Cattlemen Association are upset because of the pressure the ATVs put on their livestock.

Director Karpowitz said when the Monroe comes out, the Southern region cap goes down by 2,000, so they cannot just move elsewhere, because they are gone.

Mr. Albrecht said they cannot play on the Monroe, so they will go somewhere else.

Mr. Johnson said in Alaska they limit motorized use during the first half of some of the hunts. That decision is made by their Wildlife Board. We are responsible on the way these animals are harvested and we could limit ATV use in certain areas during certain times. We have that authority.

Mr. Hatch said he disagrees since we do not have the power to authorize use, so how would we have the power to restrict use.

Mr. Johnson said we restrict the conditions on harvesting one of our animals.

Mr. Perkins said restricting ATV use would be following the Idaho model. It is within the Board's purview to restrict ATV use when they are used while hunting. We could not control recreationists.

Mr. Albrecht said those he is referring to are hunters with one permit and a family of 12 with 12 ATVs.

Mr. Perkins said Director Karpowitz talked of removing 3775, then 9000. Are the 9000 in addition to the 3775, and would those be in addition to the current 2000? .

Director Karpowitz referred to the middle chart on the handout. He said if you look at the Northern region at 21,000 right now, rather than 23,000 and the Northeastern is at

13,000, but the official cap is 18,000. Those were temporary reductions because of the winter. We would reduce those two further because they are the two units that are below 18 bucks per 100 does. The other regions actually look pretty good. To answer the question, the current cap is 81,000, the current number of permits is 78,000, and the proposed numbers of permits would be 73,775. Those are starting points for the 2011 hunting season. They would reevaluate at the end of that season and adjust accordingly. We don't want to take away opportunity until you see if it works.

Mr. Perkins said if we take out 9,000 tags which is around a $\frac{1}{4}$ million out of revenue over 3 years, what is the impact on other programs?

Director Karpowitz said right now we have somewhat of a surplus and as long as nothing comes with large budget cuts through the legislature, we can absorb that kind of loss from our balance we carry for emergencies. If these reductions go deeper over the next 2-3 years, we will have to adjust deer permit prices. The surplus we have is the sportsmen's money that has been put up for better management. It is the right thing to do.

Mr. Perkins asked about a variable permit rate.

Director Karpowitz said those fees are set annually and the legislature does not let us do any type of multiyear plan. We have to go every year and ask for an adjustment as necessary. A permit increase is really two years before the money gets to us. We will lose some federal aide by reducing hunters also. Mr. Sheehan can tell us the exact dollar amount if the Board wants the information.

Mr. Hatch asked how low we can go in numbers before the Division cannot manage. What if we cut another 5,000 tags?

Director Karpowitz said this is a starting point that we can absorb the cuts with these proposed numbers over the next few years.

Chairman Woodard asked with these cuts, are we losing any employees in the field?

Mr. Clark said we can maintain our current budget with these proposed numbers, apart from the legislature making some drastic changes.

Mr. Albrecht quoted the sentiment that "economics should not be part of the discussion when deciding big game decisions." That was in 1930.

Director Karpowitz said the permit reduction would cost us about \$275,000 if they keep putting in for tags. It would be \$603,000 if they cut another 5,000 tags. If they quit hunting totally there would be a loss of federal money.

Mr. Johnson said we should look at other ways to raise buck/doe ratios, perhaps with some antler restrictions such as only allow nonresident to take a four point or better buck.

Director Karpowitz said he is not a big advocate of antler restrictions. They did antler restrictions on the Henry Mountains for 13 years and it was awful.

Mr. Hatch said if it went to smaller management units, it would be the demise of Dedicated Hunter. Why?

Director Karpowitz said if we break the state into 29 units, we cannot let the 10,000 Dedicated Hunters have their choice of the ten best units, because the best units would always go to them. So we could no longer guarantee them the permit, and it would probably go from 8,000 down to 3,000 Dedicated Hunters. We rely on Dedicated Hunters for a multitude of things we do. With 10,000 hunters volunteering 40 hours each, it really helps the Division. We have a number of people who are willing to sacrifice to be in that program and we should save it if we can.

Mr. Hatch said he does not really like the program. He thinks we could get as much out of 3,000 as we can 10,000, if they are truly dedicated. Couldn't you implement some type of a draw strategy for Dedicated Hunters?

Director Karpowitz said the guarantee of the unit is what draws the Dedicated Hunters. You could, but you can't guarantee them a unit, only a three-season opportunity. Based on surveys they have done in the past, they are confident that most hunters would drop out under that scenario. Most in the program are there for a guaranteed unit to hunt.

Mr. Hatch said he disagrees, they want a guaranteed permit.

Mr. Perkins said he thinks they are there because they want to hunt Southern region, because harvest rate is more than twice what it is in Central, Northern and Northeast.

Mr. Johnson said maybe it is a moot point, because they are already in the best units.

Director Karpowitz said although it is based on a regional basis and the smaller you make those units, a higher percentage of the permits will go to the Dedicated Hunter.

Mr. Fenimore said regarding the revenue situation, where does it move the satisfaction index if you were to adopt this type of an approach? Is the pain worth the gain?

Mr. Aoude said we do not have that information. Obviously, if you have more bucks you will have higher satisfaction. Those who get to hunt have more satisfaction, but the opposite for those who do not get to hunt.

Director Karpowitz said when we cut 1000 tags out of Northern region, we got a lot of hate mail. With this cut, it could be 4000 more.

Mr. Fenimore said in reflecting on opportunity, is opportunity more important than the satisfaction of taking something home? What overall impact might the cuts have over time?

Director Karpowitz said the survey was clear that hunters want to hunt every year and this reduction will affect 4000 hunters who will not get to go hunting.

Mr. Fenimore said do we reduce opportunity, make it so more can harvest bucks, and eventually this might work against us?

Director Karpowitz said that is a real concern and that is why it is a difficult balance between opportunity and quality.

Mr. Albrecht asked what the original cap on Dedicated Hunters.

Director Karpowitz said it has worked up to 10,000.

Mr. Albrecht asked what the original number was. How much is spent on managing this program?

Director Karpowitz said probably around \$600,000 with five volunteer coordinators. There are some very skilled people in dedicated hunters, who give millions of dollars worth of labor. We depend on them.

Mr. Brady said with the cuts that are proposed, going back to increasing the deer herds, we could anticipate the herds growing which could save it 5-6 years down the road.

Director Karpowitz said it is very frustrating that the deer herd has not performed better. When we went to the 97,000 cap in 1994, we were optimistic. Since 1994 productivity has been very low and it is not performing to our expectations. What we have done in the last 6-8 years is going to pay off, but it takes a while.

Mr. Clark said in 1998, we set the cap at 10,000. Before that there was no cap. We are at 8400 now.

Mr. Albrecht asked how many hunting days, under this proposal.

Director Karpowitz said we do not see much effect on the numbers relative to season lengths. If we really want to change buck/doe ratios, you have to reduce hunting pressure. We will find out this year with the five-day hunt statewide. It won't hurt, but it could help. We must take pressure off the herds, then could offer a 7-9 day hunt. Colorado experimented with season lengths for years and eventually had to cut permits.

Mr. Albrecht said come November, what about the 3 or 5 day hunts in Southern region?

Director Karpowitz said what we would like to sell them on is if we reduce hunting pressure, the buck/doe ratios will go up and you won't need to be restricted to a five day hunt. If they insist on a five day hunt, that's fine. That is a separate issue that should be decided on independently of this issue.

Mr. Aoude said basically the difference between a 9 and 5 day hunt, it does not affect buck harvest. We would like people to have more time in the field, since it does not affect the buck harvest.

Director Karpowitz said the current deer plan uses a reduced season length in an effort to get the buck/doe ratio up. He thinks this is a social issue. If you cut the season short enough you don't have to cut any hunters, but Colorado tried and could never get there.

Mr. Albrecht said we have 5,000 hunters that live in Utah county, and they infiltrate the Fish Lake, Monroe and the Beaver. He does not believe Pine Valley sees that influx of people because it is another two-hour drive from Salt Lake City. It seems like the open areas with the ATV use and the family outings with 1-2 permits and lots of people is a problem. With unit by unit you could better control the number.

Director Karpowitz said there are pros and cons on hunt strategies, but through the years he sees that the public does not like sweeping changes.

Mr. Albrecht said there is a way we can make the Dedicated Hunter work with 5,000 and some of our units with a general season type of hunt where they can provide two out of the three and on the third year they could have a situation where there are not as many people hunting.

Director Karpowitz said if they get their choice of unit, you know where they will all go, Southern region.

Mr. Perkins said it is the hunt success. It is 50% in Southern region with a rifle. It is 22% in Central, Northern and Northeast.

Break

Director Karpowitz clarified a few points. The total value of our Dedicated Hunter Program in terms of hours donated is over two million dollars annually. I may have left the impression that we do not look at habitat any more, but we still use the transects and long term range trend studies in the development of unit management plans. We do not use that for our annual recommendations like we used to. What we want to hear from the Board today is if they would be okay with the Division bringing these changes in the management plan in November as a proposal to take to the public. It would be helpful to find out if the public thinks that's enough or not. That will lead us to where we will be in the spring. This would be presented in November as proposed changes in the plan and taken it through the RACs and the Board.

Another thing we would like to hear from the Board on today is in November we were planning to take out the season structure proposal, or should we put it aside at this point? It is not critical that it happen this year. His fear is that it complicates things, and drastically effects how we look and buck/doe ratio trends. That is a drawback, but there

are positives to it also as a neat recreational opportunity. This is what they need from the Board today. If we take this proposal on buck/doe ratios out to the public, we will find out how they feel about it. We need to put it as a proposed revision in the management plan before we make a hunt recommendation in the spring.

Mr. Hatch asked what about bringing this back and a more drastic proposal also. We could take both to the public.

Director Karpowitz said we could bring back two proposed modifications, this one, as our preferred option, and perhaps a limited entry by unit, and let the public weight those. It would give them something to compare as to the trade off in opportunity verses quality.

Mr. Hatch said if we take this as presented and the public is not behind it, we are two to three months behind already.

Director Karpowitz said that is a good point. We could bring out two alternatives. We would leave the objective the same with all units 15-25, plus another strategy option. The proposal today would be the Division's preferred option.

Mr. Fenimore asked about an internet survey for input. There has not been very good attendance at RAC meetings.

Director Karpowitz said these proposals need a lot of explanation and it would be difficult to do this online. Perhaps some definite questions will surface that could be addressed on the internet.

Mr. Fenimore said if the attendance at the RAC meetings is poor, you may get input, but it may be a narrow segment of the total hunting population.

Director Karpowitz said we might consider as we develop these two alternatives if we need some answers to some specific questions. We could do a survey very quickly. There are a few flies in the ointment even with this proposal. How we treat Dedicated Hunters is an issue. There are details that need to be worked through. We need some time to fine tune the two alternatives and then let the public decide.

Director Karpowitz said we probably need to come out of this with more than a management plan, but a decision because we will have to set up the draw contract. We will ask the Board to not only change the plan, but make the decision at the December meeting.

Chairman Woodard said in 2002-2003, the Division brought out unit by unit. It passed the RACs and it died at the Board. Is that how it happened?

Director Karpowitz said we took the proposal out. It went through the RAC process with a lot of negative comment. After that, the Division withdrew the proposal and the Board

did not vote on it. There was so much negative RAC and public input that the Division didn't bring it.

Mr. Clark said it was a 3 to 2 vote in the RACs with the majority, but never came to a vote with the Board.

Director Karpowitz said the devil ended up in the details and as the public realized it, momentum built to not do it. We will see if that happens again.

Chairman Woodard said if we don't think this is enough of a cut, wouldn't it be better to add in a license increase?

Director Karpowitz said the soonest we would do that is 2012. What the Board will decide is which strategy and plan adjustments will take place. We will bring two proposals to the Board if I am not told otherwise. We ought to show our slideshow that talks about what would have to change under limited entry by unit.

Mr. Johnson asked when the elk opener went from Wednesday to Saturday, what did it do to the elk? What if we went to a Wednesday opener on the deer?

Director Karpowitz said when elk went from Wednesday to Saturday, in his opinion, it went from a five-day hunt, to a seven or nine day hunt. Hunters stayed on the mountain longer with the Saturday opener. Presently, hunters are averaging just over three days hunting deer and if the opener was changed they might hunt straight through the weekend. The days afield would probably go up.

Mr. Perkins asked where the hunt structure fits into the proposals that will be brought in December.

Director Karpowitz said that is the other thing we need to decide today. His preference is we have plenty to address with the two alternatives. The Board has a huge decision to make in December, and adding hunt structure would add a lot of confusion to the public.

Chairman Woodard said he is going to poll the Board and get an opinion on this. The hunt structure is always an option to be used down the road if we want to.

Mr. Albrecht said hold off on hunt structure.

Mr. Johnson said hold hunt structure and flip the deer and elk openers as the hunt structure change. Get them both out of the rut.

Mr. Fenimore said hold off on hunt structure. With too many apples in the air, we might just confuse the public.

Mr. Hatch said put it off.

Mr. Brady said he is okay with putting it off, but he is really against the 30-day archery season and the pressure that it puts on the deer. It might be cut back five or six days.

Mr. Perkins said we are cutting, 9,300 tags and that is 20% of our current hunters are not going to have the opportunity to hunt.

Director Karpowitz said it is not quite that many because you add back in the 3,775 back in.

Mr. Perkins said then it would be 15% of the hunters. The hunt structure did increase flexibility and opportunity for our citizens and we have generally gotten reasonable support from the RACs on that so far. We have been working on it for a year and a half. He hates to take a year and a half of effort, put it aside and take away that opportunity without giving the opportunity with family elk and deer hunting combined and so forth.

Director Karpowitz said he agrees, if we did not have these other two huge decisions out there to be made. He thinks we should resolve the numbers of hunters first. The problem is buck/doe ratios and the only way to deal with it is with less hunters.

Mr. Albrecht said he would be okay with the proposal if our deer numbers and the people hunting were happy, but they're not. He said put this on back burner now. The other thing is we need to address some of the archery issues also.

Mr. Johnson said on archery, archery and muzzleloader are much less successful and maybe we should look to increase percentages on these over rifle, as a pressure type of thing.

Chairman Woodard said with the accuracy of weapons coming up, there will be a lot of decisions to be made in moving perhaps the most accurate of weapons out of the rut more towards the tail end of the rut instead of in the heart of it. That will be for another Board to decide.

Mr. Perkins said archery does have a lower success rate than either muzzleloader or rifle, which are nearly identical. Before I would pick on any one weapon, I would be interested in knocking back technology on all three types of weapons, on ATV use, 1000 yard rifles, 400 yard muzzleloaders, laser range finders, and six pin bows. I would look to cut back on technology before taking on the lowest success weapon we have.

Mr. Sheehan said in May there was a committee formed to look at what would happen with hunt structure changes and unit by unit. He gave an overview of what occurred in those meetings. The committee discussed Lifetime License holders, Dedicated Hunters and those types of programs. They gave this presentation to Director Karpowitz in early August. He went over those who were in attendance and the sections represented. They met six times. Their purpose was to identify programs affected by proposed changes with the hunt structure and unit-by-unit, and recommend some feasible program changes.

They covered many different options. He then gave the presentation with input from Division folks inserting explanations.

Director Karpowitz said let's skip ahead to limited entry by unit, because the Board has already indicated this is on the back burner. One of the benefits of today's proposal is we can implement it by 2011. If the Board goes with limited entry by unit, we will most likely not be able to implement it until 2012.

Mr. Sheehan said they will skip past all the split season discussion in the presentation and go to unit by unit for discussion. (See Presentation)

Mr. Hatch asked what they mean by a shift in permit weight.

Mr. Hersey said what that means is across the state you have certain units that are on the low end of the buck/doe ratio and some on the high end. If we are managing towards 20, you would cut tags on the units that are below that and raise permits on the units that are above in order to achieve the objective. Currently we have more tags in Northern region than in Southern, so if we were to manage them all for the same buck/doe ratio we would actually be pulling tags out of the North and putting them in the South, because that is where the buck/doe ratios are the highest. He then discussed a handout on what unit-by-unit would look like in an effort to answer Mr. Hatch's question. (Attachment #5) This is a very preliminary chart on how unit-by-unit could look just to give this committee an idea.

Mr. Hatch said he understands, but is not sure he agrees.

Mr. Hersey said if the goal is raise the quality as the current proposal suggests raising it from 15 to 18, then it results in reduction in permits. So for this it was to keep them the same.

Mr. Johnson asked what the current percentages are on weapon types.

Mr. Hersey said archery is 16,000 out of 97,000, about 18%, and muzzleloader is about 13,000, about 15% each year. Rifle and muzzleloader put into that same pool of 81,000, and we do not set a quota on muzzleloader or rifle. It varies by how many people apply.

Mr. Sheehan said Lifetime License holders and Dedicated Hunters were probably two of the biggest challenges they had as they worked through this. We have about 3,500 active lifetime license holders. Basically, not knowing what some of these unit sizes might be, we would grant our lifetime license holders their choice of units. If there was too much demand, we might have to do a draw amongst the lifetime license guys and when that is done we would go into the regular draw applicants. We would have to wait and see how it went.

Mr. Hatch asked how many lifetime hunters request permits in the various regions.

Mr. Sheehan said he does not have the numbers. It is not like 50% Southern like Dedicated Hunters. They are spread out more evenly over the regions.

On Dedicated Hunter, they looked at a phase out of the normal program, and maybe look at a one-year program. Draw a permit first and if you want to come into the office and upgrade, pay the fee and do around eight service hours. The three-year program could still occur, but perhaps some type of hybrid drawing. Some of the smaller units might have to be capped. Most simple would be the one-year, but we would most likely lose our volunteers.

On the youth hunters, they are still allowing 20% after lifetime came out. They could apply in a youth group and must have a rifle permit to hunt all seasons. They would continue offering 1,500 additional archery permits.

On Hunters with disabilities, there would be a pre-extension on units with seasons longer than five days, both early and late rifle seasons. This presumes that we have the new hunt structure, which might not be put in place at this time.

On Tribal permits, Southern and Southeastern would have to choose and this also presumes that we have the new hunt structure, which might not be put in place at this time. These are some of the things that were covered by the committee. There were all kinds of options explored. Most of us who were on that committee are in attendance today and if the Board has any questions, they could be addressed today.

Director Karpowitz said limited entry by unit has its advantages, but it has a high price, which includes losing the Dedicated hunter three year program, and hunters will be restricted to just that unit and can't move between units in the region. You can reduce the same number of permits as under our proposal, but it will not move the chronically down units up as quickly, unless you make very deep permit cuts. The public needs to understand the drawbacks of unit by unit and what the trade offs are.

Mr. Albrecht said on unit by unit, if we leave it at 15-25 bucks, he is wondering if 40% of the units at the current level now would be general season units, then 4-5 units would be more like limited entry. Couldn't the Dedicated Hunters be guaranteed in the general season area and one of three years they could be in the more limited entry units. One of the problems we have is catering to special interest groups, then every time we look to change things, we have to consider them.

Director Karpowitz said we can make some projections on that, but it will be a deeper cut than the other option we have proposed today.

Mr. Perkins said under the proposal presented today, at the point we get back to 18 bucks, we would be back up to the 97,000 cap. The proposal is a short term social benefit in quality in buck hunting with a depressed buck/doe ratio. What if we got back to our 400,000 goal, are we still going to cut permits if we have a buck/doe ratio of 15.

Director Karpowitz said if the herd gets more productive and starts to increase, buck/doe ratios automatically get better. You can see that on the 1983-1984 data. Yes, hopefully it's a short term fix. One caution is that once a unit goes limited entry, it never goes back. He has never seen the Board take a unit out of limited entry hunting. Even the Thousand Lake, which has no business being in limited entry hunting, we have tried several times and we just can't go back. We will make a side-by-side comparison of the two, and take it to the public.

Mr. Johnson said on those 3 units to be cut back, is the population down overall?

Director Karpowitz said he hasn't looked too close at fawn production, but it is probably low.

Mr. Johnson said what about predator management on those.

Director Karpowitz said we have not used buck/doe ratios to be our trigger for that. We've used population size. The units that are the farthest below objective population size, that is where we target the predator control. Vernal has a CWD positive unit and buck deer seldom live beyond 2-3 years on that unit. It is also probably part of the problem on the La Sals also.

Mr. Johnson said talking about backing them out on limited entry units, you would find substantial support in San Juan to remove Elk Ridge out of limited entry. At least south of Highway 95, because nobody ever hunts it.

Director Karpowitz said that option is available no matter what we do. That unit could have a smaller boundary.

Chairman Woodard asked for any other input.

Mr. Hatch said it is important that the Division be as fair as they can, be objective on both and give the pros and the cons.

Director Karpowitz said we will do that. We will tell everyone up front that we have a preference and we think it has the least impact on hunters. The other is quite drastic. Either way you have to make some sacrifices to increase buck/doe ratios.

Mr. Johnson said there are impacts on hunters, but also on the Division and the budget. He does not want the Division to be hurt by these sacrifices.

Director Karpowitz said we are trying to protect jobs and also the resource. There is a balance there. Neither proposal results in anyone losing his or her job.

Chairman Woodard said this would be taken out as either or and not stay with the status quo.

Director Karpowitz said they are operating on that assumption. That could be a third alternative, but he is not hearing that from anyone. Herds are generally doing a little better, but we cannot predict weather.

Mr. Fenimore asked how sound are the projections, given the whims of nature and weather patterns. In 2005 the estimated post hunt herd size was 296,000. The long-term objective of the current plan is 426,000. That is an increase of 130,000 deer.

Mr. Aoude said that is the long-term objective, but the short term is 350,000.

Mr. Fenimore said it is still a significant jump. We have moved 6,000 deer from 2005-2008. Given the situation, how realistic are these objectives?

Mr. Aoude said they are realistic in the long term, because much of the habitat work that has been done recently will not pay dividends until 15-20 years in the future.

Director Karpowitz said the plan also says we have to do certain things to get to that number. A plan is no good if it does not push you forward.

Mr. Fenimore said given the demographic projections of population increases between now and 2050, how many of those are going to want to hunt? Are we going to keep putting more sideboards on that opportunity as that population continues to increase of people.

Director Karpowitz said here is a real concern of his. If we go to unit-by-unit limited entry and really restrict deer hunting opportunity, we will be one of the only states that greatly restricts both elk and deer hunting opportunity. Then, you start losing family hunting and youth interest. Everybody loves Colorado's deer management, but they live and die on general season, over the counter elk sales. States like Nevada and Arizona that have limited in both have other sources of revenue that keep them afloat and their participation is dying off in those states. It is important that we keep hunter participation as high as we can biologically stand. Otherwise the whole North America model of wildlife management starts unraveling. That is not a good thing. We always have that in our mind when we make proposals.

Mr. Johnson said he thinks the drought is still affecting southern Utah. With the heavy winter, the deer just migrated down into the desert, and it was probably good for the deer herds, not detrimental, because it gave them good spring forage.

Director Karpowitz said what has not gone away is our battle to keep shrubs in the habitat. We must get shrub lands back because it is critical to the future of deer in the state. We are making progress, but that is really a battle. A big fire can take a unit right out of shrubs for 30 years. Habitat has changed dramatically over time. That's why bighorn sheep and elk are doing so well.

Chairman Woodard said when we take this out to the public it needs to be stated that no one on the Wildlife Board wants to take away opportunity. We have a real concern for the resource and we are looking to help the deer herd.

Mr. Albrecht said on money for coyotes and the cuts, what happened?

Director Karpowitz said they had to give up two million dollars of general funds over a two-year period. We cut the County Bounty Program, which we thought was the least valuable. The most valuable is the targeted, intensive Wildlife Services, coyote control. That was not cut. He would love to get that general fund back. We do need to get more money for predator control. Wildlife Services is telling us they can do more work, if we can get more money. Predator control has to be targeted in the right place, year after year, high intensity.

Mr. Albrecht asked if they approach the legislature every year.

Director Karpowitz said they have not been asking for general fund, since the cuts have been there the last few years. We need to be creative through things like our conservation organizations and other ways.

Mr. Albrecht said he has seen a lot of coyotes this year. Some way we need to get additional dollars.

Director Karpowitz said where we have seen results are where they have intensively removed paired coyotes before fawning.

Chairman Woodard asked what the feeling is on the bears. It seems we are seeing a higher population of bears.

Director Karpowitz said they are bringing a new bear plan. We are seeing bears in more areas. The plan has some flexibility to be more aggressive with harvest in certain areas. He would be careful not to blame poor fawn production on bears. Bears are minor in comparison to coyotes and other impacts.

Mr. Perkins asked, relative to predator control and approaching the legislature, have you considered the Colorado approach on vehicle deer mortality, putting reduced speed limit on critical roads with increased fines?

Director Karpowitz said the progress that has been made in the last few years is very significant in Utah. UDOT has been paying a lot more attention to deer mortality. They are putting up millions of dollars on bypass highways. There are areas of high deer mortality that need attention. Our Habitat people are going to keep working with them. A lot of fencing projects are being done to protect deer and elk. In Salina Canyon, we have one of the first retrofit highways going on. It has been time consuming for our people in working with UDOT, but there has been so much positive being done. We are putting together a presentation on what has been done that we will show the Board in

November. We also thought we would take it to UDOT and the Highway Commission to thank them for what they have done, and encourage them to keep moving in that direction. He is not sure legislation is really required.

Mr. Perkins said it would be a potential parallel approach though, because with the millions required for overpasses and big highway projects, we can only get a bit of that done every year. If UDOT and DWR could pick out critical miles that would benefit the deer herd, it would be helpful.

Mr. Aoude said they have identified those stretches and they are the ones that are being worked on. The approach we are taking now will buy us more in the future, than reducing speed limits. UDOT could say they have reduced speeds now and so we do not need to put in a structure. We would rather have the structure.

Mr. Johnson said on vehicle collision are they putting in new construction and also on existing roads?

Mr. Aoude said they are doing a retrofit on I-70 right now on an existing highway. Unless you have to get elk across, underpasses work well.

Mr. Perkins said there is an underpass going in Southern region now, that is potentially big enough that elk will use it.

Director Karpowitz said we have covered the agenda. With the proposal we made, does the Board have suggestions on what we should do with Dedicated Hunters on the three units. (Attachment #7) The handout shows how many dedicated hunters hunt the three units, South Slope Vernal, Monroe and Oquirrh-Stansbury. The question is, do we let them hunt those three units or exclude them?

Mr. Clark said they talked pros and cons. Oquirrh-Stansbury is the only place to hunt in that area for folks who live there and that is why they have become dedicated hunters. It does not look like any of those three units get so many hunters that they would dominate the tags. You could just do regions, or include those in. These are general season units.

Mr. Aoude said one approach that could be taken is every year you could estimate the number of dedicated hunters that hunted them and remove that from the cap on those units.

Mr. Clark said they talked about building a pre draw in.

Director Karpowitz said whichever program the Board adopts, there has to be a pre drawing for dedicated hunters that occurs in January. We will have to decide whether to treat those units as mini-regions or let the hunters in that region hunt those units. He does not know why someone would want to hunt the Monroe, when there are better units in the region.

Mr. Perkins said but in the case of the Oquirrh-Stansbury you are up to 690 dedicated hunters.

Mr. Clark said dedicated hunters can hunt all three seasons, so that is not an accurate number.

Mr. Perkins said 690 is well over half.

Mr. Clark said but many of them are hunting all three seasons there.

Director Karpowitz said if the buck/doe ratio perked up quickly on the Monroe, he could see hunters shifting over there. It might drive it back down. It is an issue we have not thought clear through. He said if we want absolute control on those units, the dedicated hunters should be eliminated.

Mr. Hatch said it is a problem we need to be ahead of.

Mr. Perkins said pick a number and guarantee a drawing where that number of dedicated hunters get that subunit and others get the regional tag.

Director Karpowitz said you could cap the dedicated hunters on each of those units.

Mr. Hatch said if we did that and they drew the Monroe, can they only hunt the Monroe?

Mr. Aoude said they could hunt the Monroe, but could not as well. At least 200 or so could hunt the Monroe, but they could also hunt the other parts.

Mr. Johnson said if they knew it was put in limited entry because of a problem, they might not want to go there. Maybe we could put those units into limited entry and put a five-year sunset on it, so they would come out then.

Mr. Larsen said we would need to describe it as a general season unit still, not just limited entry. We would need to come up with another name for these units. It would make it easier to move them in and out of the limited entry as necessary.

Director Karpowitz gave an example of limited entry on the Book Cliffs over time. He then asked if Ashley Green could come down and give the presentation on the road work that has been done.

Statewide Archery Discussion

Chairman Woodard asked about archery staying statewide. This discussion would give the Division a feel for how this might be addressed.

Mr. Albrecht said if we go unit by unit, the archery hunters would choose their units the same as everyone else. As far as today's proposal, our archery hunt needs to be shortened and they need to pick a region over statewide, with a cap in each region.

Chairman Woodard said he is in agreement with Mr. Albrecht.

Mr. Brady said the archers should sacrifice just like everyone else.

Mr. Hatch agreed.

Mr. Fenimore said he likes the idea of them choosing a weapon and choosing an area.

Mr. Perkins agreed, but does not feel a longer hunt is unreasonable with a more limited weapon.

Mr. Sheehan said when we went to statewide archery and bumped the tag numbers up, we started pushing people to the archery world. This is the first year they all sold out in the draw. We could probably propose the unit by unit, but if we cut the season, we might lose a lot of archers.

Mr. Albrecht said he does not feel they will lose a lot if we go from 28 to 21 days and give them a region. The impacts he saw with the archery hunters doing elk this year, limited entry plus the limited entry rifle hunters coming onboard. It is still a mess out there 2-3 days before the hunt starts.

Mr. Sheehan said maybe we have created a new bunch of hunters over the last few years.

Mr. Perkins said the archery would choose a region as opposed to the state and they could hunt anywhere in the region for the length. Would there be a quota?

Mr. Albrecht said yes, so many in each region.

Director Karpowitz said if you go proposal A, you could restrict them to a region. If you go limited entry by unit, they would have to be restricted to a unit, or stay statewide.

Chairman Woodard said perhaps Ashley Green can give us his presentation to the Board tomorrow.

Director Karpowitz said we had an emergency closure on Parker Mountain antelope on Monday. Through the summer, it became clear that there was a significant reduction there. All of those reasons are not totally clear right now. We are still investigating them. The herd is down enough that we cannot have the 300 doe permits in November, thus the emergency closure. There also will be no transplant this year. We sent a letter to the muzzleloader permit holders letting them know the herd is down. If they feel like they need to surrender their permit, there is a process for that. They do not get a refund, but they can get their bonus points back.

The buck hunt came off this weekend and was not a total disaster, but a lot of the hunters made it clear that there were not a lot of bucks.

Mr. Fenimore asked about the report of winter mortality on a number of antelope.

Doug Messerly said the report they received launched an investigation on this, but unfortunately we were unable to document the loss in the areas that were reported to us.

Mr. Hatch said the numbers are down. We always have a resident population of 30-40 on our ranch and he has only seen seven this year.

Chairman Woodard asked about it being relative to the heavy snow last year.

Mr. Messerly said it is possible, but they have not been able to explain this. They are out about 1000 antelope. The usual suspects that effect adult survival are out there. We have been on a campaign since 2005 to get the herd to an objective of 1,500 and we are there. The other important point is the ability of this herd to rebound.

Teresa Bonzo said over the past year we usually have about 70 fawns per 100 does. It is one of our most productive herds, but this year production is down to about 21 fawn per 100 does. They couldn't find the numbers to classify. These things also led to the closure.

Mr. Hatch said he has had several bow hunters tell him they have not seen as many deer in Southern region.

Ms. Bonzo said she has spent much of her time out in the Boulders this year and was seeing quite a few deer. On the collar study it shows we have lost about average adult doe over winter loss, but we had a little higher than normal fawn loss. The collar study has been really great.

Mr. Aoude said 60% survival on fawns in the collar study. This is actually average for more northern climates, and a little above for southern.

Mr. Messerly said the Monroe is not far from that on both adult and fawn survival.

Director Karpowitz said something we have learned is sometimes you don't know how bad the losses are until the next hunting season. If the southern region has had more loss than we can identify and buck/doe ratios are way off this fall, then the flexibility is still there to make some reductions in that region. As hard as we try, sometimes we don't know until the deer hunters get out there and help collect that information.

Mr. Messerly said he has not heard anything out of the ordinary on the archery hunt as far as not seeing deer. Which area were they referring to?

Mr. Hatch said Panguitch Lake and the Dutton.

Mr. Messerly said they did anticipate some loss on Panguitch Lake, particularly on the east side.

Mr. Albrecht asked how many doe permits we have on Panguitch Lake.

Ms. Bonzo said maybe there are 50 doe permits in one season and 100 in another. She would have to check those numbers.

Mr. Messerly said those doe permits are to address some problems we are having south of Highway 20. It is very valuable deer winter range there, because it is very narrow, between those foothills and I-15. It is all we have on the west side. The deer prefer that west side and we are being very vigilant in protecting that area, in addition to trying to improve it.

Director Karpowitz asked about the Bicknell sheep issue.

Mr. Messerly said they have bighorn sheep in the Bicknell area in Wayne County. It is of great interest to the locals. You can often see them off highway 24. There are somewhere around 25-30 animals and the concern is they will catch disease from domestic sheep, then they might transmit it to the Capitol Reef herd or the South San Rafael herd which would be disastrous. They have been thinking about this for a long time. In the end, for a potential course of action, call in hunters to harvest the rams on a special hunt for just that unit next fall. After that institute a removal program with long term maintenance for any other sheep that might have moved in there. Because of the domestic animals in the area, it is almost impossible to maintain a herd there that is not affected. In the interest in protecting those other flocks, this proposal would be necessary.

Director Karpowitz said if they show signs of pneumonia, we would have to eliminate them.

Mr. Brady asked what size of rams and how many are there.

Ms. Bonzo said when they flew in December 2009, they did count one class 4 ram and 3 smaller rams. There were 15 sheep total. The wild sheep are coming down the fence line right across from the domestic sheep.

Mr. Messerly said it is right down where the homes are. If it were an issue of working with one livestock operator to create a buffer it might be possible, but that is not the case. Overall this herd is not worth the risk.

Mr. Johnson said if these sheep have been exposed, disease will kill them within 14 days, 100% mortality.

Mr. Messerly said the potential exists as long as there is interaction.

Director Karpowitz said what they have learned is there are certain strains of pasterela that are lethal and some that aren't. You can only conclude that they do not have the lethal strains yet.

Mr. Messerly said with livestock animals, they switch in and out all the time and you never know when that strain is going to show up.

Mr. Aoude said even the less lethal strains can kill them if they are compromised in any ways.

Ms. Bonzo said Justin Shannon over in the Southeastern region has expressed to her over the last few months that he saw some sheep die off when he was doing his Masters'. He is very worried if one of these Sunglow sheep does go and make it over there and possibly have a strain and expose that herd. Maybe we have just been lucky so far.

Mr. Brady asked where these sheep came from.

Ms. Bonzo said they do not know.

Mr. Albrecht said the sheep have been seen as far north as the "B" above Bicknell.

Director Karpowitz said they have more likely come from the Capitol Reef sheep.

Mr. Albrecht asked if we would extend the boundary along the San Rafael, could they do a new hunt and eliminate them there?

Mr. Messerly said their recommendation would be for a totally separate hunt, so they can inform the folks of what they are getting into, and also better track and coordinate it. The potential of extending the boundary along the San Rafael to incorporate some harvest there presents some unique challenges. They would like to just have a separate hunt there, so we can control it better and achieve our objective.

Mr. Perkins said you mentioned that your plan developed a few years ago included transplant options, but there is no suitable, isolated, safe place to move them to.

Mr. Messerly said the place they discussed was the Mineral Mountains west of Beaver. It is suitable habitat, better some years than others. There are some livestock issues there also. In past years when we have done transplants we have picked the best locations, and so we are down to places that are more marginal, or have other challenges such as other livestock. Moving these potentially exposed sheep that will forever be viewed as tainted, it seems a shame to waste an option on that situation.

Mr. Aoude said relative to testing the sheep for disease, unless the sheep are actively shedding the virus, it is hard to culture, so unless they are showing symptoms, it is hard to see if they have one bacterial strain or another. Testing is not conclusive.

Mr. Albrecht asked about how they'd do a hunt.

Mr. Messerly said they would do a survey and identify the rams. A discussion took place on how they might remove these sheep. The people in the area have become quite attached to these sheep and it will be difficult for them to see them go, but it is a necessity.

Mr. Clark said we are looking to explore creating a new rule to guide how we would do a special hunt on these OIAL species in situations like this. We are going to have bison situations like this. We will look for some way we can use hunters to remove these animals.

Mr. Brady said in Northeast region there are buffalo from the Tribe moved over onto Moon Ranch.

Mr. Clark said the minute they come off tribal lands, they become the states.

Director Karpowitz said he has signed 2-3 authorizations as far west as the Avinaquin's for bison.

Mr. Larsen said they issued one tag on a hunter's choice animal to use out there. He was out there for six days and could not find one. It is not a slam-dunk when we call a sportsman in. We need to make sure the rule change goes through so we can talk OIAL when these depredation situations come up.

The meeting was then adjourned.