

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville Jr. High
165 S 700 E, Springville
March 23, 2010 @ 6:30 p.m.

Motion Summary

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

MOTION: To accept the agenda and minutes as written
Passed unanimously

Elk Management Plan

MOTION: To accept the elk management plan as presented
Passed unanimously

Bucks, Bulls & OIAL Permit Numbers

MOTION: To accept the 2010 permit numbers as presented
Passed unanimously

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville Jr. High
165 S 700 E, Springville
March 23, 2010 @ 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

John Bair, Sportsmen
Larry Fitzgerald, Agriculture
Byron Gunderson, At Large
Richard Hansen, At Large
Gary Nielson, Sportsmen, Vice Chair
Fred Oswald, Non-consumptive, Chair
Duane Smith, Non-consumptive

Members Absent

Micki Bailey, BLM
Matt Clark, Sportsmen
George Holmes, Agriculture
Jay Price, Elected
Allan Stevens, At Large
Larry Velarde, Forest Service

Others Present

Rick Woodard, Wildlife Board Chair
Ernie Perkins, Wildlife Board member
Doug Jones, Forest Service

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- 1) **Approval of the Agenda and February 16, 2009 Minutes (Action)**
- Fred Oswald, RAC Chair

VOTING

**Motion was made by Byron Gunderson to accept the agenda and minutes as written
Seconded by Duane Smith**

Motion passed unanimously

- 2) **Wildlife Board Meeting Update (Informational)**
- Fred Oswald, RAC Chair
- 3) **Regional Update (Information)**
- John Fairchild, Central Regional Supervisor
- 4) **Elk Hunter Survey Results (Informational)**
- Kent Hersey, Wildlife Program Coordinator
- 5) **Elk Management Plan (Action)**
- Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

John Bair – Before we capped the spike tags, how many were we selling? When the cap was higher we weren't selling all the permits. If you bump the cap to 15,000 are you going to sell that many spike tags?

Anis Aoude – I feel we could. We have more units now and they are closer.

John Bair – On the Wasatch the number of people is affecting the quality of hunt because there are so many rifle permits. I think trying the elk committees proposed split on the Wasatch would be a good thing.

Anis Aoude – That wouldn't change the number of people, it would actually increase the number of people that would be hunting. If you are using primitive weapons and their success rates are lower then you have to have more hunters out there. Once we do reach

objective permits will be reduced. I think that problem will take care of itself if we stick to the plan and harvest enough now to reduce it in the future.

Larry Fitzgerald – On your elk numbers you said in 1975 you started with 18,000 elk and through the abundance of available habitat you have increased the numbers to what they are today. On the page before that on habitat you said the west is over grazed so why do you continue to increase numbers if it is overgrazed.

Anis Aoude – As I mentioned we do have both habitat objectives in the plan as well as some incentives to those who graze private and public land to mitigate for losses due to more elk. We are not thinking we can increase elk under the given resources, we are hoping to create more resources to be able to have more elk.

Larry Fitzgerald – Why don't you do the habitat work first before you suggest increasing numbers.

Anis Aoude - We have been doing a lot of habitat work for the last five years. We have probably done over 1 million acres of habitat improvement, not all of it specifically geared to elk but it certainly has improved elk habitat in the process.

Questions from the Public

Michael Anderson – With regards to objective one, while there is no evidence to show a direct conflict between deer and elk is there any biological evidence to show deer and elk don't compete especially when it comes to nursing cows and nursing does.

Anis Aoude – That is a question that has not been answered. There are people on both sides of that issue. There is not a lot of good research out there to say one way or another. Certainly there are instances when elk can affect deer but probably no instances where deer can affect elk. We hope to do some research to look at that and other states are doing some of that as well.

Wes Bennett – You mentioned incentives to be able to increase the elk population, could you explain what those incentives are?

Anis Aoude – There are no incentives specific to the plan. We want to form a committee to research some ideas to help not only private landowners but those who graze on public land as well.

Wes Bennett – We have heard rumors of giving elk tags to the ranchers.

Anis Aoude – Those are just rumors. There is nothing in the plan specific to that. We didn't feel it was the place of this committee to come up with those.

Koby Cowdell – Has there been talk of putting a cap on the spike permits on a unit by unit basis to avoid over harvest on any unit?

Anis Aoude – There was talk about it in the committee but it really wasn't warranted. Hunters spread themselves out fairly well. We haven't seen any excessive harvest on any specific unit. On units like the San Juan I think we harvested six spikes on that unit. It was a non-issue.

Gordon Cook – You talked about the reason for increasing spike tags being to increase hunter opportunity. Is it also part of the plan to increase spike tags in order to bring cow to bull ratios in line?

Anis Aoude – That is the main reason why we have spike hunting on our limited entry units. If we did not have spike permits on those units we would have bull to cow ratios that exceed one to one which is not healthy for production of calves.

Gordon Cook – If you need to bring bull to cow ratios in line was it considered to increase the number of draw tags for mature bulls?

Anis Aoude – Certainly it was considered but you cannot raise the bull permit numbers high enough while maintaining antler quality. People do want the quality. That is why we harvest the

spikes once they are not a yearling they can contribute to that older age class. You can in a way have your cake and eat it too.

Gordon Cook – In light of that have management bull tags been considered?

Anis Aoude – Certainly.

Gordon Cook – Then why isn't it part of the plan?

Anis Aoude – Because it is not feasible. Again we would have to issue so many permits and every age class would be susceptible to harvested where in a spike hunt only the yearling age class is susceptible to harvest. Once they become a two year old they are basically safe until they are harvested with a limited entry permit.

Chris Heninger – What is the formula used to determine tags on a unit based on the age class?

Anis Aoude – The current formula we use is based on a steady approach to objective. For example if we are 20 percent over objective we try not to issue more than 20 percent increase on a unit. We know how many permits it would take to get to objective but to try to recommend that in one year would shock most people. We have tried in the past and it is never passed so we take a steady approach to get to objective.

Chris Heninger – So when we are changing from 5 – 6 age class to 5.5 – 6 help me understand what that means.

Anis Aoude – All that does is scrunch down what we are managing for. Basically it moves it to the higher end of range. When you average all the ages if you are in that range you don't increase permits, if you are outside you could increase or decrease permits. If you manage for 5 – 6 you have a larger range where you could stay status quo. This makes us either go up or down a lot quicker.

Chris Heninger – The formula is still unknown to us as the public.

Anis Aoude – It is not complicated. If you are above objective you raise permits if you are below objective you reduce them. You never go up over the percentage you are above objective.

Chris Heninger – How are you determining the age class?

Anis Aoude – These are the animals that are killed. We ask them to send the teeth in and we age every bull that is sent in. Then we average the ages.

Chris Heninger – Is that mandatory?

Anis Aoude – No but we do get a sufficient sample size to statistically draw conclusion to every unit.

Chris Heninger – Has it been recommended that the Wasatach and the Manti units be split because they are so large to create more opportunity for more units?

Anis Aoude – That doesn't create more opportunity unless you change the age class. That was discussed but the committee felt it would be better to keep them as they are.

Comments from the Public

Gordon Cook – Overall I do like the plan. As I read the results of the survey, I guess it is always subjective to interpret those results, the way I saw the comments and the way the Division interpreted them was different. I want to hunt elk every year and my first choice is going to be to hunt in an area where I can hunt a mature bull. There was a question on the survey that said many people didn't hunt in a particular year because they didn't draw so that means their major objective was to hunt a large bull. Beyond that if you don't have the opportunity to harvest a large bull then you go to the next best thing. If your only opportunity to hunt becomes the opportunity to hunt a spike bull or an antlerless elk then that is probably what you are going to do. In any case it was indicated on the survey that the outing with the family and the overall hunt experience was the highest priority. It doesn't matter what I hunt, it's always going to be a family outing and I enjoy the experience but I want to emphasize that everyone wants to hunt a large bull as often as

possible. I would like to see the Division continue to pursue objectives in the plan that would help increase those opportunities.

Koby Cowdell – I would like to see the Division manage on a bull to cow ratio in addition to age objective. I think the two together would be more productive. I would like to see more primitive weapon tags, more like what was offered on the Wasatch or what is offered on the units without a late season with the 50, 30, 20 split. I think a lot of hunters would like to see that across the board also.

Michael Anderson – Vice President of Bow Hunters of Utah – I want to thank the RAC for the opportunity to speak and the elk committee for all their work in putting this together this management plan. Overall BHU supports the recommendations however we would like to object to the changes the Division has made to the elk committee's recommendations specifically with regard to the Wasatch unit. We support a weapons split of 65 percent archery, 15 percent muzzleloader and 20 percent rifle. The reason for this is there seems to be a perception that somehow weapon choice is almost like a religion or a political party, once you are a rifle hunter you are a rifle hunter for life and that is not true. In a recent poll we did we found 40 percent of our membership was just as likely to pick up a rifle or a muzzleloader as a bow. Bow hunting allows the maximum opportunity. We propose all units other than the Wasatch should have permits allocated with the following split; 50 percent rifle, 30 percent archery and 20 percent muzzleloader. Again the best way we can maximize opportunity is to reduce harvest by using primitive weapons. Anis made the comment that spike hunting allows an opportunity for people to hunt elk; that is not true. We know that hunting a spike and hunting a mature bull are two totally different hunts. The more we can do to promote the use of archery and muzzleloaders will benefit everyone involved. This will decrease rifle hunters. Every hunter who draws a bow tag is one less hunter in the draw system competing for a rifle tag. Thanks.

Ben Lowder – Vice President of the Utah Bowman's Association – Overall we support the plan as presented. We had an opportunity to sit in on the elk committee. We would like to see one change concerning the Wasatch mountains tag split. The elk committee recommended 50 percent archery, 30 percent muzzleloader and 20 percent rifle. The survey supports this proposal in many ways. It supports more primitive weapon hunts. It also supports less rifle tags in the rut. Kent Hersey said while he was presenting 'people want to hunt a very large animal and they want to hunt it quite frequently'. Using this approach on Wasatch provides that opportunity. In closing we do support the plan but we would like to see that change made on the Wasatch.

Wes Bennett – Utah Wildlife Cooperative – We want to thank Division and the volunteers on the elk committee who have taken the time to draw up this plan. We want to thank the RAC committee for allowing us to respond. Our proposal is that we would like to see the management objectives and weapon types set to allow for three hunt opportunities. We suggest a hunt opportunity designated as premium limited entry. This designation should include those units on which the DWR is recommending age objectives of 7.5 – 8 and 6.5 – 7. We support setting the weapon types at 60 percent rifle 25 percent archery and 15 percent muzzleloader. Limited entry units would include those units that have age objectives or 5.5 – 6 and 4.5 – 5, however we suggest that those

designated as limited entry units the range be 5 - 6 and 4 - 5. We also suggest that weapon type be revised to 50 percent rifle, 30 percent archery and 20 percent muzzleloader regardless if those units have a late season rifle hunt. We believe this configuration of premium limited entry, limited entry and general season units is a common sense compromise that better addresses the desires of hunter by allowing more opportunity in the future while preserving quality. We feel that these proposals are more consistent with the goals and strategies outlined in the management plan, specifically objective number one, continue to encourage primitive weapon opportunities that provide hunting opportunity with reduced harvest.

Jeremy Hanson – Utah Wildlife Cooperative – I want to concur with what Wes just said. I would also support a bull to cow ratio along with the age objective. Thank you.

Ryan Thornock – Utah Farm Bureau – We had a position on the elk committee and we appreciate that. It was a great committee. In general we support the elk management plan. Our main concern is the numbers objective. We prefer that the habitat be the driver for numbers rather than numbers being the driver. A little later tonight we will talk about buffalo numbers on the Henries and we think that illustrates the concern we have quite well where the population objective seems to have over ridden the habitat concern there. As long as these working groups consider habitat and make that the deciding factor on numbers we think it's a great plan. Thank you.

Dave Woodhouse – Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife – We would like to give our support behind the plan as Anis has presented it to you with two exceptions. First the age class adjustment. The committee spent a lot of time and tried to follow the survey. It is not a big different but we would like go with what the committee recommended. It is about a half a year on the 5.5 – 6 units. We would recommend and support the trial run on the Wasatch with more archery permits. As Anis said, we do some crazy things here in Utah especially with elk. If you look at the draw odds they have gone down every year since 2002. Our tag numbers have increased and the draw odds have gone down. It started at 1 in 39 and now it is down to 16.2. With the numbers that Anis has presented in this plan that is going to go down even more. The application numbers have stayed fairly consistent the last five year and the tag numbers are going up. We need to see what we can do on the Wasatch. There would be more opportunity for more people. There are some rifle hunters that would be displaced and would be upset but at the same time if the archery hunt can take the pressure off it would allow people to hunt sooner and more often in the long run. I hope you can take that to heart and address that archery situation on the Wasatch as the elk committee recommended it. Thanks.

Mike Christensen – I support the Division in moving the age class down to 5.5 – 6 year old. I have come to RAC meeting for a long time and I remember when units like the Monroe had a 7 – 8 year old age objective placed on them. They rarely ever met that objective because the hunters were satisfied with shooting 6 – 7 year old bulls. Raising that age objective to 7 – 8 means that we had to carry bulls for eight years before they are eligible to be shot and meet objective. I think that is an unattainable objective.

Chris Heninger – I would like to second what I have heard. My feeling as a public person I feel that the age classes that are set are not met because hunters see a big bull

and pull the trigger. I have seen it in the field many times where a three year old bull gets shot on the Pahvant or on the San Juan opening day five minutes into the hunt. I would like to see more factors in how this is managed with bull to cow ratios and habitat and mandatory tooth collection. I would also like to see the Wasatch archery opportunity reconsidered. That unit is enormous and I think there are far more elk than the Division determines there are. The archery proposal would allow more people to get through the draw and address this bog down of preference points which as we all know is getting ridiculous.

RAC Discussion

John Bair – Are bull to cow ratios taken into consideration in our management?

Anis Aoude – It is and it isn't. It's probably the poorest number we have when it comes to elk.

John Bair – You said the harvest survey is not mandatory but if you don't return it they dig you with a \$50 fee.

Anis Aoude – Harvest reporting is mandatory but returning teeth is not because. Here is the reason why we don't make it mandatory. It is not that we don't want to make it mandatory, however say someone harvests a bull and cuts off the skull plate and comes off the mountain. When he sits down to do his harvest survey and if it is mandatory to turn your teeth and his teeth are on the mountain he is not going to go back up and get them. He is going to say no I did not harvest. That is going to skew our harvest data. I would rather have a more accurate harvest survey and depend on people to turn in the teeth than skew than harvest survey. It is still a statistically sound sample we are getting. Another reason is that it is hard to make it mandatory with the mail system. It would have to be some sort of certified mail to make sure they sent it in. Or they would have to bring it in to the office. We have talked about providing more incentives to make sure we get more teeth. We do want to get as many as we can get but the benefits of getting all of them doesn't out weigh the downfalls of getting all of them.

John Bair – We have talked a lot about this Wasatch thing tonight. You mentioned that even though you would have a smaller number of rifle hunters, percentage wise you would have to put more tags out there to get the harvest. This is my perception, when you go archery elk hunting it's just you and a buddy. When you go rifle elk hunting it's you and your whole ward. I am sure that adds to the crowding perception. I understand having the unit I want to put in for cut down but I think we should try this and see what happens. We can guess what will happen until we try it and then we will know. Other than that I think the plan is really good.

Duane Smith – On the survey do we have any idea how many responded that are rifle hunters as opposed to archery hunters? If there were more archery hunters than that would skew the data.

Kent Hersey – We don't have that broken out. All I can say is that it was random selection so in theory it should be representative of the hunting public and how they put in for the draws.

Duane Smith – I probably doesn't though because of the added nature of the organization of the bow hunter clubs verses the common rifle hunter. I am the opposite of John. I have heard the archery and muzzleloader hunters cry for years and years for more and more and more permits and a higher and higher percentage. Around town I hear the rifle hunters cry because there are fewer and fewer permits being made available to them.

They are stupid in that they are a silent majority but still it seems the squeaking wheel is getting the grease. John was just talking about the squeaky wheel have more grease. I don't agree with the proposal on the Wasatch.

VOTING

Motion was made by John Bair to split the Wasatch unit permits 50 percent archery 30 percent rifle and 20 percent muzzleloader

Anis Aoude – This would have to be for 2011 because the guide book is already in place for this year.

Motion dies for lack of second

Richard Hansen – If they did something like that how many more permits would that make available?

Anis Aoude – It wouldn't be as many permits as you would think. I am not sure. Right now we issue about 400 permits on the Wasatch and it may go up to 450.

Fred Oswald – We did hear some comment on desire to change the age objectives.

Gary Nielsen – I had a chance to sit on that elk committee and we spent numerous hours going over all of these things. We dissected that survey as far what people would prefer and came up with this plan that pretty well mirrors what they want. I liked the idea initially with the Wasatch but at this point we have already increased primitive weapons hunt numbers quite a bit at the sacrifice of the rifle hunters.

**Motion was made by Gary Nielsen to accept the elk management plan as presented
Seconded by Duane Smith**

Third John Bair

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

- 6) **Bucks, Bulls & OIAL Permit Numbers for 2010 (Action)**
- **Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator**

Questions from the RAC

John Bair – How many sheep are left on the Provo Peak unit?

Anis Aoude – Eight to ten.

John Bair – I have seen three right here, is that all the rams there are?

Anis Aoude – That is probably all the rams there are. There used to be about 13 rams.

John Bair – Do you want me to just snub those out for you?

Anis Aoude – Let's wait them out and see what happens.

Richard Hansen – How are the sheep doing on the Nebo?

Anis Aoude – It is holing its own. There are about 30 to 40 sheep there.

Richard Hansen – I saw 16 together with a couple really nice rams.

Anis Aoude – It is doing fine. What happens is sometimes you get a disease that will affect all age classes or sometimes you have no fawn production.

Questions from the Public

Mike Christensen – What is the harvest like on the buck bull combo deer hunt?

Anis Aoude – It is fairly similar to the general deer season, around 25 to 26 percent.

Koby Cowdell – I noticed there was a big reduction in the west desert antelope tags, why is that?

Anis Aoude – Our west desert units are very prone to drought. When you have drought you don't have very good fawn production which leads to fewer bucks being produced. We follow that. We figure how many bucks we can harvest.

Dave Woodhouse – On the management hunts on the Henries and the Paunsaugunt, how did that turn out?

Anis Aoude – We harvested a fairly old animal between four and four and a half on average which is what we see on our premium limited entry hunts. For the most part people followed the rules. I think law enforcement is dealing with a few issues. For the most part it was successful.

Dave Woodhouse – So we targeted the animals we wanted to?

Anis Aoude – Yes.

Comments from the Public

Ryan Thornock – Utah Farm Bureau – There has been a long history on bison numbers on the Henries. The fact that there were 487 permits issued in the last three years lets you know that is well over objective to try to get to 275 and got to 292. This current objective has created some chronic winter habitat problems. The livestock operators on the Henries are running at about 35 percent of their AUM permit capacity. They also have suspended AUMs. That happens with the BLM feels there is some concern about the habitat. In addition to those suspensions the operators have voluntarily had to drop their capacity down to about 35 percent because the weaning weight of their calves was low because of the habitat. There is a Henry Mountains bison committee. They have met and discussed this plan to go to 305 next year and then to 315 and 325. Part of that plan says that concerns would be addressed before the numbers are increased. The committee concluded and recommend that the concerns about the winter habitat have not been addressed and therefore they recommended that the numbers stay at 300 for five years until the winter habitat problem is resolved. Like the Division said there has been a lot of investment made in habitat. The problem is that none of that has been directed or successful on the winter habitat. The desert range is a limiting factor in the area. Livestock operators also have a great investment there. The purchase price of an AUM is anywhere from 70 dollars to 120 per AUM. There is well over one million dollars there in investment just to lease those. They have also participated in water and habitat improvement projects. Everyone has a great investment there and would like to see it be successful. The bison committee felt that their recommendation of 300 for five years was a very fair compromise until winter range issues can be addressed. We would appreciate a motion reflecting the bison committee recommendation be made. Of course the Division opted to follow plan and we understand that a plan should be followed but we have all seen plans be amended when there is a concern. Plans can't always guess what the conditions will be or if habitat projects will be successful. The committee was made up of sportsman, livestock operators, other agencies and the all came together and agreed on 300 for five years. It would require an amendment to the plan. If there is a motion to be made it would be a motion to amend the plan.

Dave Woodhouse – SFW – We would like to give our support to the plan. We would like to recognize the work they have done with the sheep and a couple of new units opening this year. That is a lot of hard work from a lot of people to make this happen.

RAC Discussion

Fred Oswald – We have a letter from the Henry Mountain Grazing Association. To clarify is that who you are representing here tonight?

Ryan Thornock – They are a part of that committee.

Fred Oswald – I just want to be clear. Are you saying that you are speaking on behalf of the management committee or on behalf of the grazing association?

Ryan Thornock – I can't speak for the committee. I am here on behalf of the grazing association tonight but the committee did recommend 300 for five years. That is what they recommended to the Division and the Division opted to stick with the plan which is to increase to 305, 315 and 325.

John Bair – I think the Division has done a good job here. As far as I can see these numbers reflect the management plans that we have all put together.

VOTING

Motion was made by John Bair to accept the 2010 permit numbers as presented

Seconded by Gary Nielsen

In Favor: John Bair, Gary Nielsen, Richard Hansen, Byron Gunderson, Duane Smith

Opposed: Larry Fitzgerald

Motion passed 5 to 1

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

45 in attendance

Next board meeting March 30 & 31, 2010 at the State Capitol Building, Senate Room 210, Salt Lake

Next RAC meeting April 27, 2010 at Central Region Conference Center

Northern Regional Advisory Council Meeting Motions
Wednesday March 24, 2010
Brigham City Community Center

Review and Acceptance of Feb 17, 2010 Minutes

Motion: Approve as amended.

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Elk Management Plan

Motion: Recommend approval of the elk management plan as presented with the addition to Population Objective 1, Strategies, f, excluding Forest Service lands.

Motion Carries: For: 8 Against: 4

Bucks, Bulls & OIAL Permit Numbers for 2010

Motion: Accept the permit numbers as presented.

Motion Carrier: Unanimous

**NORTHEASTERN RAC MEETING SUMMARY-MOTIONS PASSED
UBATC, Vernal/March 22, 2010**

6.ELK MANAGEMENT PLAN

MOTION: to accept the plan as presented by the Division
Passed 9 to 1

Opposed: I would like to see the spike numbers stay at 12,500. Other than that I am in complete agreement

7.BUCKS, BULLS & OIAL PERMIT NUMBERS FOR 2010

MOTION: to go with the permit numbers from Division with the following exceptions:

1. Exempt the Anthro Unit from the general elk season spike hunt. (I'm concerned about the lack of bulls hunters are seeing on the Anthro unit. I feel that continuing the spike hunt on the Anthro would further decrease the bull numbers.)
2. Keep the spike elk permits at 12,500 statewide. (I feel we may be increasing too fast and want to be more conservative on that).

Motion passed 8 to 1, with 1 abstention

Opposed: Because I don't think it's going to make a difference.

Abstain because I don't think I know enough about this to vote one way or another.

NORTHEASTERN REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY
Utah Basin Applied Technology College (UBATC), Vernal
March 22, 2010
Started at 6:30 pm; Adjourned at 9:30 pm

RAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mitch Hacking-Agriculture
Rod Morrison-Sportsmen
Ron Winterton-Elected Official
Kirk Woodward-Sportsmen
Kevin Christopherson-NER Supervisor
Floyd Briggs-At Large
Curtis Dastrup-Agriculture
Loran Hills-Non consumptive
Beth Hamann-Non consumptive
Brandon McDonald-BLM
Amy Torres-At Large
Bob Christensen-Chair

UDWR PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Randall Thacker-NER Wildlife Bio III
Lowell Marthe-NER Wildlife Bio II
Torrey Christophersen-NER Lieutenant
Bryan Clyde-NER C.O.
Kent Hersey-SLO Wildlife Bio III
Anis Aoude-SLO Wildlife Pgm Mgr
Derrick Ewell-NER Wildlife Bio II
Charlie Greenwood-NER Wildlife Pgm Mgr

UNEXCUSED RAC MEMBERS:

Carlos Reed-Ute Tribe

WILDLIFE BOARD MEMBERS:

Del Brady

1. WELCOME, RAC INTRODUCTIONS AND RAC PROCEDURE: Bob Christensen

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES: Bob Christensen
MOTION by Floyd Briggs to approve the agenda and minutes.
Second by Beth Hamann

Passed unanimously

3. WILDLIFE BOARD MEETING UPDATE: Bob Christensen

The venomous snakes motion made to the Board was approved except for the rattlesnake proposal. Three reasons: Overwhelming opposition from public; there appeared to be an absence of support of public at RAC meetings; opposition by multiple agencies concerned about having rattlesnakes in their possession.

4. REGIONAL UPDATE: Kevin Christopherson

Roger Schneidervin Aquatic Manager will be retiring in June. He has done a great job and we will miss him.

The UDWR website has been hacked. It is the fourth time since December. Today, it was hackers from Pakistan. So part or all of the web site has been down. Firewalls are in place to prevent any information from personnel or draws from being hacked into. It is just the main Wildlife website.

Stream Access Bill: Four years ago, the Supreme Court opened up stream access to the public. This year, House Bill 141 passed, restricting public access similar to what it was like four years ago but there's a lot of speculation about it. This does not affect our walk in access or other angler access agreements. There are still lots of great places to go fishing. One part mentions that you can float in the river but you can't touch the bottom. At the last minute, they put some provision for portaging around things but we have to figure out what that means in a practical sense.

Aquatic Nuisance: We've been working with Wyoming on the Aquatic Nuisance program. Wyoming recognized the concern. They had a couple boats with mussels on them so they've been trying to adopt our laws. They received 1.3 million in funding which will help provide three technicians to work on their side of Flaming Gorge. Arizona passed a similar law but there was no money attached.

Budgeting and Funding: Most of our funding is restricted license dollars. We did take almost a \$500,000 cut this year, on top of cuts last year and another one before that, but we're not anticipating layoffs. We may have to reassign what employees do. The programs funded by general fund dollars include endangered species work and some law enforcement.

The Hunting on Antelope Island bill went through. It's a State Park operation.

Questions for Kevin:

Amy Torres: Can you give us an update on the Goslin herd?

Kevin Christopherson: Disease has shown up in the Goslin bighorn sheep population. We decided to eliminate that herd so it would not spread to the Bare Top herd and other herds nearby. We wiped out that entire herd and killed 51 animals. We're hoping we caught it in time and it hasn't spread to any other herds. It was a sad project our biologist worked very hard getting this population started.

Beth Hamann: What about sage-grouse being listed as endangered?

Kevin Christopherson: They are “Warranted but Precluded.” That means they’re not listed as threatened or endangered. They were precluded in large part because of State’s actions to preserve them, but we’re not out of the woods yet either.

5. ELK HUNTER SURVEY RESULTS: Kent Hersey

See handout

Questions from RAC:

See handout

Loran Hills: I was interested in the part where they underscored the elk and how that might skew the results of your survey because if somebody harvests an animal and they’re thinking that it’s not as good as what it really is, then they’re going to be more dissatisfied, not realizing that they really got a good animal. So I’m kind of curious about that.

Kent Hersey: Some people are really interested in that number and some aren’t. Some people are actually really happy with an animal until they find out it’s not a 370. Making it into a Boone & Crockett book is really important to somebody. We have to manage to people’s expectations and they expect to see one of those really large bulls available for them to harvest.

Loran Hills: But they still don’t want you to lower the quality but increase opportunity. It just seems like a Catch-22 for management to me.

Kent Hersey: It is. And the more surveys you do, people want to hunt every year and want to harvest a big animal every year.

Mitch Hacking: Any idea how many doe tags or cow tags are used during the season?

Kent Hersey: Some people buy a tag and don’t hunt but we sell them all with the exception of a handful where the land has access issues.

Mitch Hacking: Because a lot of people want to go with their family. It sounds like they’re putting their money where their mouth is.

Kent Hersey: Absolutely, and some of them are hard to draw for.

Questions from Public:

Greg Gilroy: Is that survey separated between people with maximum points and people with 9 points or less? To me it’s kind of a loaded deal because most of your people have less points. Surely, those people that are a long ways away from drawing are going to

want to hunt more often, but people that have waited a long, long time have paid their dues. I was wondering if any of that's taken into consideration?

Kent Hersey: We didn't stratify out the number of people who had greater than 10 bonus points because it would put our sample size too small, but we did stratify it by people who put in for limited entry only vs. those who only put in for general season, and those who put in for both. People who put in for limited entry-only were more quality-oriented than those who put in for the general season hunt. When you take the general season people into account they still want that high quality even without looking at it from a standpoint of those who have 15 bonus points or not. It's a valid point but taking the data as a whole, people indicated that quality is important.

Clay Hamann: Why did we put forth this plan based only on the survey where the survey doesn't give you the opportunity to explain how you feel about the particular question? No public input was taken at the RAC meetings so that hunters had an opportunity to explain how they felt. This plan is based on your interpretation of the survey rather than the actual feelings and comments of the hunters.

Kent Hersey: The survey was just a part of what we did. We had a full committee with 15+ members who got input from their various groups, SFW, RMEF, and the RACs each had representatives, and their input from the general public, as well as the survey, and that was incorporated into the plan. So the survey was not the sole factor.

Anis Aoude: This RAC meeting is where you give the public comments.

Bob Christensen: **Comments from the Public will be combined with Elk Management Plan. If you have comments on the survey you can make it then as well.**

I also want to take a moment just to thank our RAC members. The committee had a representative from each RAC. We had Kirk Woodward as our representative on the elk committee and also as an alternate we had Rod Morrison. I just want to thank them for their efforts there with the elk committee. There were several meetings they had to travel to and we appreciated their input.

Anis Aoude: I too would like to actually thank all the members of the committee that helped us formulate this plan. I would like to reiterate that the committee served as an advisory committee to the Division and then this is the Division's recommendation. Again, this is a public process by which we can gain those folks that may not have been at the table when we formulated this plan and we can gain that comment, and as we know, things have changed through this process by the time they get to the Board. The ultimate decision maker is the Wildlife Board and this is how we gain the comment for that.

6.ELK MANAGEMENT PLAN: Anis Aoude

See handout

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: On the general season spike hunt, the 12,500, now are these the hunters that can go into limited entry units too?

Anis Aoude: That's correct. Those are all on limited entry units. It is a general season hunt that happens on limited entry units.

Mitch Hacking: And they can go on any unit they want, is that correct, for Diamond Mountain right now?

Anis Aoude: Right.

Mitch Hacking: How did that work? Are you able to manage the population objectives that way? Will you know how many hunters will be going into some unit?

Anis Aoude: It doesn't matter how many go into it because we're only harvesting males and all we're hoping is they will harvest some spikes. We actually want a lot of spikes harvested on some units because bull/cow ratios are out of whack. Harvesting bulls does not affect the population. It does affect the number of bulls in the population. It doesn't affect how populations increase because really only the females are bearing young. So you actually want to carry fewer bulls if you want to increase your herd because we are mandated to keep the population at a certain level. So if we're carrying more bulls, we actually can't produce as many animals annually.

Mitch Hacking: Theoretically, that whole 12,500 could go into one limited entry unit.

Anis Aoude: That never happens. We've had it on the eight units, the same number... and we saw this year there weren't any issues at all, I mean, there are always going to be some issues, but they were minor compared to the benefit.

Kevin Christopherson: We had the officers out this year looking in the Book Cliffs because we were concerned about that very thing and just didn't see the problems. We were worried everybody was going to run to the Book Cliffs because they didn't have that opportunity before, and Diamond. There were hunters out there but we didn't see the conflicts. We were pleasantly surprised.

Mitch Hacking: Years ago on Diamond Mountain in the general season, if you just opened it up, everybody wanted to go to east cove. We had to set them down and say you gotta go here and here. But you've had pretty good luck with this?

Kevin Christopherson: Last year worked really well.

Anis Aoude: I mean there're units all over the state so I wouldn't anticipate everybody just deciding they wanted to go to one unit when they can go in their backyard. If you're just going to hunt a spike, you're going to go to the closest place, more than likely. We've had eight units in the state that have been in this program for over 10 years. That's why we decided to move it to the rest of the state, because it's worked so well on those units, maintaining bull/cow ratios that were productive.

Rod Morrison: I'm kind of concerned about adding more permits to the spike hunt already. We've only had that in effect on our areas for one year and we have recently added the late hunts on the bulls. It's been several years but I'm just concerned about us taking too many bulls and then trying to increase it again this year. What are your thoughts on that?

Anis Aoude: I don't think there will be an issue at all. I would feel comfortable even issuing more than 15,000 permits. The models indicate that we can harvest the spikes at a higher level and not have an effect on the older age-class bulls. So this is basically a compromise. I think the Division would feel comfortable issuing even more but this is what the committee felt comfortable with issuing

Rod Morrison: On obtaining your age objective, how do they do that? How about a person that never took a bull? I know of a couple instances on Anthro that they did not find bulls. They bought conservation tags and they did not find a bull that was quality enough that they wanted. Is that factored into it?

Anis Aoude: No. It's only on bulls that are harvested. That's what makes it so good, because we don't want to know what bulls are out there. We want to know what ages are being harvested because that's the sample we're trying to get.

Rod Morrison: Is that a fair comparison though for those that could not find a bull that they did not take or want to take and then theirs is not figured in because that would definitely lower the age objective.

Anis Aoude: No, it wouldn't lower the age objective because they're not factored in. The only ages that are factored in are the bulls that hit the ground.

Rod Morrison: It would if you added zero to the ones that was not taken.

Anis Aoude: No, but those aren't zeroes. They just didn't choose to pull the trigger. There could have been a big bull out there they didn't see. So you can't factor in the folks that decided not to pull the trigger just because they may have had bad luck. There's a lot of whole different things. That's why we concentrate on the actual bulls that were harvested and then from that we can tell, if "X" amount were harvested that were this old, there had to be this many of that age in the population.

Rod Morrison: I'm just a little bit concerned because it seems like the age objective is always over objective on all of our units and therefore we're adding more tags, and I do know of some instances where they could not find a nice enough bull.

Anis Aoude: The non-harvest doesn't factor in so it shouldn't sway. It shouldn't lower the age objective or raise the age objective. It doesn't do anything to the age objective because those animals didn't get into the average.

Rod Morrison: Maybe we ought to look at factoring in some of that because some of them are dissatisfied hunters and the age objective is over age objective.

Anis Aoude: We do have a satisfaction rating on all of our hunts and all of them are in the satisfactory level. So, if there were a disproportionate amount of hunters that were dissatisfied, we would see it in the satisfaction rating on those hunts. We ask, "Were you satisfied, on a range of 1-5." So we are looking at all of those things, concurrently. If the age objective was being met and everybody was feeling dissatisfied, we would know that. That's not the case.

Mitch Hacking: On the 250,000 acres of habitat, is that a combination of SFW, DWR, Mule Deer, RMEF, or is that just UDWR's?

Anis Aoude: All of those groups you mentioned cannot spend their money except through the DWR.

Curtis Dastrup: You said you wanted to go from 68,000 to 80,000 elk and some of the units are now over?

Anis Aoude: There are a few units that are over.

Curtis Dastrup: Most of the 250,000 acres are wintering grounds and calving grounds. So, where are we going to find the extra habitat for that many more elk? And then you talk about mitigation. How do you mitigate lands that are lost with a highway?

Anis Aoude: Usually what we try to do is have set aside pieces of land or improve habitat on different areas to try to mitigate for that. It's not easy. Once it's lost, it's lost but we try to improve habitats to mitigate for what was lost.

Curtis Dastrup: The thing that concerns me is a lot of the private land is intermingled with public land. The public lands, we run the elk on, they're on there, and then they spill over into the private lands and some of those guys are not going to be too happy about that.

Anis Aoude: Right, and that's why we're not saying that we will have 80,000. We're saying it's all based on unit committees that will have those private landowners represented, will have land management agencies represented, everybody will be at the same table. If they decide that an increase in elk is not the best thing, then it won't

happen. It's based on those unit committees. That's why we said 80,000 is the goal that we would like to get to; we didn't say that's what we will have.

Curtis Daststrup: Elk are quite gregarious animals and sometimes in the wintertime and early spring why, they're pretty hard to control.

Kevin Christopherson: Our sense is that most of the increases, if they come, will be south of I-70 because of what we think is the available habitat and the ability to absorb these increased. But it'll be unit-by-unit. But our sense is there won't be many increases in northern Utah.

Kirk Woodward: Help me understand. The monies from Sportsmen or for Rocky Mountain, you mentioned that they cannot be spent, except through the Division. So if Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation or Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife gets sideways with the Division, they can maintain their assets without spending them on habitat?

Anis Aoude: They have to spend them in a certain amount of years or else they'll be in trouble with the IRS because as a 501-C-3 they can't maintain more than a certain amount in their bank account over three years.

Kevin Christopherseon: That's the conservation tag money.

Kirk Woodward: So the conservation tag goes into their coffers and they file their Form 990 and it shows how much net assets they have that are available. That's a public record and they only have a few years to use that?

Anis Aoude: Yes, because they are a non-profit, they can't hold it in perpetuity. They have to spend it because that's what they formed that group for.

Questions from the Public:

Brad Horrocks: Where does the sportsman's tags play into these numbers here, the ones you sell at auctions, the ones you draw?

Anis Aoude: Those are not included in the drawing.

Brad Horrocks: So they are not listed here.

Anis Aoude: Correct. The convention permits are but the, well, they're incorporated when we say how many animals we want to kill, and then we pull them out.

Brad Horrocks: That's what I'm asking. Where are the tags accounted for?

Anis Aoude: They're accounted; well they're taken out of that because those are the ones that go into the drawing.

Brad Horrocks: So, like the sportsman tags that they sell at these auctions, different things, are accounted for in here?

Anis Aoude: No, they're not in there, but they are accounted for when we calculate how many animals we want to harvest. Then we pull them out, because these are only the ones that will go into the drawing.

Brad Horrocks: So like the landowner tags on Diamond, the percentage that the landowners get are off these numbers here.

Anis Aoude: That's correct.

Brad Horrocks: Your tags are taken out above and beyond that.

Charlie Greenwood: They're off the total number...

Brad Horrocks: Yeah, total number of landowners, but the sportsman's tags.

Anis Aoude: You're talking landowner association permits, how are they calculated, is that what you want to know? They're off the total permits.

Brad Horrocks: No. I'm saying, your sportsmen's tags are not accounted for here. So if you say you are going to give 140 tags away on a unit, you may actually be giving 160 because you sell 20.

Anis Aoude: We don't sell anything. They go to the groups and then they sell them.

Brad Horrocks: All right, so they are not accounted for in this list here.

Anis Aoude: That's correct. Those are only draw permits.

Brad Horrocks: Okay. Clarified that. Now those teeth that you survey, how many of them do you survey?

Anis Aoude: We don't survey, people turn them in and we age them. It depends, on some years we've had as high as the 80s or as low as 50%.

Brad Horrocks: Do you age all the ones that are turned in?

Anis Aoude: We certainly do.

Brad Horrocks: How do we get a copy of that report?

Anis Aoude: Actually, every one that's aged goes on the web site.

Brad Horrocks: Off you guys' web site on the computer?

Anis Aoude: Yeah. People can go on and see what age their elk was.

Brad Horrocks: So we can, like on the Diamond Mountain unit you can tell me that there was 50% of them turned in and you aged 50% of them. The ones that don't get turned in, what happens there? Do they get penalized?

Anis Aoude: No, they don't get penalized. It's not mandatory right now, it's voluntary.

Brad Horrocks: So if you don't turn in your harvest survey...

Anis Aoude: If you don't turn in your harvest survey, you are penalized.

Brad Horrocks: Okay, so the statistics are coming up with these ages. It should be made mandatory that they're turned in on all of them or they don't get to put in next year or they get penalized. If not, you're only aging, if there's 50% of them turned in, 50% of the hunters may turn them in, 50% of them may not. You don't have a true age then.

Anis Aoude: We do have a true age. It's a statistically sound sample. It's plenty of sample to tell us what's out there.

Brad Horrocks: And it does not take in the ones that weren't happy.

Anis Aoude: Well, the ones that didn't shoot, no, obviously not. If there's no animal, there's no tooth.

Brad Horrocks: All right. So we can get on your web page somewhere and find these reports on there.

Anis Aoude: No, you can find out what age the animal was. The actual statistics I can get to you if you want.

Brad Horrocks: Okay. How do you want to get them to me? Do you want me to give you my address afterwards?

Anis Aoude: Sure.

Brad Horrocks: I would them on the Diamond Mountain unit. All the teeth and how many of them were turned in and what we've done.

Anis Aoude: Sure.

Alan Conway: On your 20% spike deal, you're looking at that statewide, or do you keep a kind of close look, like say, Book Cliffs are 30% success?

Anis Aoude: We do look at it statewide, but we do gather that on a unit-by-unit basis so we could deal with elk on a specific unit if there was excessive harvest. That's never happened yet, but if there is concern on a certain unit we could address it.

Jean Dickinson (Landowner in the North Slope, Three Corners area): A question about the herd age objective in our area was set on a population that was over the population objective. And then how or what do you believe the proposed action on raising the average age on the limited entry bulls, how's that going to affect herd numbers or cow numbers, population numbers? And also, echoing probably Mr. Dastrup, we have concerns about how you're going to affect habitat, hunt opportunity and hunt quality.

Anis Aoude: Raising the age objective will not affect at all the population level because basically, we're only harvesting males. We affect population by harvesting females and maintaining a number of total animals. So, if we harvest fewer mature bulls, hopefully with the spike harvest and the antlerless harvest, we can get the population to the level we want it so it shouldn't make that much of a difference whether we're harvesting older or younger.

Jack Lytle: Are you gonna have a spike harvest on Three-Corners?

Anis Aoude: The Three-Corners doesn't but we will be harvesting antlerless on it to reduce the population. Now, as far as what the objective will be on that unit, that's up to the region and the regional committee. You probably have had a committee for that unit before. I'm not sure who was involved, and a representative from private landowners. Population levels will be hopefully suitable to both habitat and the private land interest. We don't want to increase elk at the detriment of other resources.

Comments from Public:

Ken Labrum (SFW): I was pleased with what the committee came up with and we'd like to recommend that the RAC go with it.

Kim Lawson (Utah Bowman's Association): We would like to support the elk plan recommended by the Division of Wildlife with one change: the recommendation from the elk committee included a provision to change the allocations raising elk archery on the Wasatch unit. We'd like to try this approach to provide more opportunity. This recommendation is supported by the elk survey of DWR. Two survey questions asked hunters about their feelings about moving the rifle hunt away from the rut and increasing opportunity for limited entry hunts, etc. We agree the Wasatch Mountains is the best unit to try this on because it's very visible.

Clay Hamann: I expressed earlier, my dissatisfaction with the process went forward with not taking public comment. The most common complaint on elk and deer hunt is crowding and this plan does not take into consideration anything to change the situation. Elk hunting is a family hunt and they ride 4-wheelers on the mountain and it does get crowded. There are a couple of different things that could have been done and

commenting now is probably too late. I think we need to look at splitting the elk season into an early and late general season hunt, making it less crowded. The other option would be to go back to the Wednesday opener like we had previously. A lot of people didn't go up until the weekend and it helped spread out the pressure. This plan does not take into account that number one complaint that I've always heard which is overcrowding. The same process is going forward now with the mule deer plan. The whole idea with RAC process is to get public comment. By forming these groups, I think it is a wonderful way to condense the process, but the public is left out. We were told that this summer we will get a final version of the new deer plan and that again, has been without any input from the public and hunters who would like to see some changes made. I find that very unsatisfactory.

Kevin Christopherson: I appreciate your comments, Clay. The RAC process works really well for some things. For getting a lot of public comment, it's not particularly good. We really count on these people (the RAC members) talking to their constituents. If we held another public meeting just for public comment, would anybody come? Is there an interest in that? There are some big changes coming down the pike about split seasons. Who would come if we held a public meeting and just listened to you guys? Would anybody show up?

Raise of hands

Clay Hamann: Make it available on the internet.

Kevin Christopherson: There is a place on the internet where you can submit your comments.

Clay Hamann: I couldn't find it on the internet.

Kevin Christopherson: It's there. Maybe it needs to be easier to find, if it's not hacked.

Kirk Woodward: With putting this committee together came one step closer to having public input. Previously the Division would propose something and this was the first meeting that we had input.

Clay Hamann: Before, the RAC had an informational meeting where it was presented and took public input and six months later the plan was presented. We did take public comment and after six months the Division would come up with a proposal and then it would come to the public as an action item.

Kirk Woodward: That's still the same process. This committee was just an extra steering committee.

Clay Hamann: We had a meeting where information was presented and then it was cut off, and there was no opportunity for the public to comment on the presentation.

Bob Christensen: That's something we'll take into consideration from now on. That's a point well taken. Thanks, Clay.

Dan Abeyta (US Forest Service): We've had several chances over the past three or four months to provide comments through Ron Rodriguez. It's a good plan from what I've read and from what I know about it and we support it. We do want to say though that we want to recommend that the plan doesn't move forward with this new incentive plan for public land grazers, for people who hold permits for public land grazing. We're concerned about the legal aspect of that because a permittee holder for public land grazing doesn't have any other authority other than just to graze. And so then when we start providing incentive plans for the public who has a permit to graze on public land, we're concerned about the legal aspect of that and how it's going to appear to the rest of the public, the whole preferential treatment aspect of that. So that's our recommendation is that it moves forward but that this incentive plan for grazing on public land, incentive to not graze, whether that's elk tags or money, whatever that is, that it moves forward without that part of the plan.

Ryan Thornock (Utah Farm Bureau): We had a seat at the table with the elk committee and we appreciate that (John Keeler?) participated. We agree in general with the elk plan. Our only concern is like what Mr. Dastrup mentioned. We're a little bit uncomfortable with a numbers goal rather than a habitat driver, and we know that the local committees are supposed to analyze habitat before they recommend numbers increases but that is our main concern with the plan. We feel like the habitat should determine numbers, could be higher, could be lower than the number objective.

Daniel Davis (Bow Hunters of Utah): We were honored to have had a seat on the committee as well. The plan does a good job of addressing a few important issues. We feel that the area that we need to look into is providing opportunities for limited entry hunt more than once or twice in a lifetime and this plan falls short of that, which was provided in the survey. In order to bring this into closer alignment with what sportsmen want, we would like to amend the proposed plan: March 5, 2010

1. Take the units that are proposed to be managed for 5.5 to 6.0 year old age class and drop them to the 5 to 6 year age class, which is in conjunction with what the DWR is recommending.
2. On the Wasatch unit weapons split with 65% archery, 15% muzzle, 20% rifle, BOU would propose this split be a two-year trial period.
3. With the weapons splits that the committee proposed for units that do not have a late season rifle hunt (i.e. 50% rifle, 30% archery, 20% muzzle loader), we propose that these splits be put in place with all units across the board less the Wasatch due to the two year trial period.

It is the position of Bow hunters of Utah that these small changes would bring the elk plan into closer alignment with the wishes of sportsmen across the state as evidenced by the DWR sportsman's survey.

Comments from RAC:

Brandon McDonald (BLM): Speaking for the BLM, as you all know, we do not manage for population numbers but rather, we manage the habitat. The two objectives BLM looks at in light of this management plan would be habitat management as well as maximum numbers of recreational use, whether it be the northern areas or the Book Cliffs. We have a long ways to go as far as habitat treatments, but within the last two or three years, with the number of pinion-juniper treatments, sage brush and fire suppression, we've come a long way in developing more winter range for elk. It's just been an ongoing process and I think it's getting better to manage those numbers.

Mitch Hacking: Could I direct this to the Forest Service? We've got permits and run cattle. Are you talking about, on Page 11, where it talks about forming a new committee to develop incentive programs?

Dan Abeyta: Yes

Mitch Hacking: Why would it be illegal to increase habitat that both benefits both livestock and wildlife?

Dan Abeyta: It's not legal to give an incentive to a private individual who has a public land grazing permit, which is quite different than someone who has private property, with a CWMU program or the Walk-In Access program, but when someone has a public land grazing permit, that's kind of a different situation. If you look through the elk management plan and you read about where they're talking about incentive programs, it's all connected with private land. So this is kind of a new thing because it's on public land. So to provide an incentive to a private individual who has a grazing permit for not exercising that grazing permit, opting out for say, elk tags or money, that's where we're having a problem.

Mitch Hacking: Is that the incentive you're talking about is monetary incentive?

Kirk Woodward: I don't think that that or any other part says we're going to pay landowners to take away AUMs or livestock, but if there was money available to permittees to help develop water resources or riparian areas, to help develop on their permit better grazing for their animals and for wildlife. It doesn't say specifically we're going to buy AUMs.

Dan Abeyta: It doesn't, but it's like leaving the door open for something similar to what's going on with the CWMU program.

Anis Aoude: Your concerns were brought forward by the Forest Service at the meetings. That's why we're going to formulate a committee to look at options and include the Forest Service. If those options are going to be illegal or unpalatable, then they likely won't happen. We have to find something to give them an incentive to be all right with having more elk.

Jack Lytle: Would you expect the BLM and Forest Service to be on that committee so those issues can be maintained and raised?

Anis Aoude: Yes.

Dan Abeyta: It's one thing to talk about doing it on private land. It's another to do it on public land. We're drafting a letter that all five Utah Forest Service supervisors will be signing and presenting it to the Wildlife Board.

Floyd Briggs: Is there a statute that on public lands if you increase the number of elk, do you increase the grazing AUMs in the same areas?

Anis Aoude: No, the two are not linked. The land management agency sets AUMs for the grazers. The DWR sets the objectives for the wildlife.

Mitch Hacking: This committee looks like an important committee because this habitat thing is really snowballing, not only helping livestock but really helping the wildlife. It tickles me to see this committee being formed and what could come out of it with the Forest Service, that does increase habitat.

Anis Aoude: And the committee felt like we needed somebody other than the elk committee because it's going to take thinking outside the box to get this accomplished.

Mitch Hacking: It's almost impossible to get a reservoir built on Forest Service lands.

Anis Aoude: The committee should be formed in a little less than a year and where it goes is anybody's guess.

Loran Hills: Going back to what Clay was saying, I was wondering about this public process "process." You said, "Thank you for your comment." What happens after that? Where does the comment go? Do we ever talk about it again or does it just roll forward?

Bob Christensen: We had an informational item, and probably took questions but we didn't go to comments. And so in the future we can do that to make sure we get public comments on the informational items as well.

Loran Hills: I think you're right. When it comes to the mule deer season and the overcrowding issue, it seems like it could be a lively discussion, but is it too late?

Clay Hamann: At this point, as far as comments on the elk plan it is probably too late because it was not addressed by the elk committee. If it's incorporated into a motion by the RAC, it will at least go to the Board but with four other RACs, it will have no weight. If it had been part of the elk committee recommendation it would have been presented statewide and addressed.

Loran Hills: So basically it would be five more years before we talked about the plan again and talked about overcrowding.

Anis Aoude: There were crowding issues on the survey and the elk committee did spend quite a bit of time on this. There were some crowding issues on the elk archery hunt but it did not appear to be an issue. There are some crowding issues on the archery hunt and we dealt with that with some delayed seasons.

Kevin Christopherson: These (RAC members) are your representatives. You can call any of your representatives any time. You don't have to wait for the meeting. The expectation for us as the Division is that these people don't just vote their mind; they're supposed to have already collected public comment and bring that with them to this meeting and then you guys add to that. It doesn't always work that way but that's our expectation.

Curtis Dastrup: We have to come up with a five-year management plan. As I understand that, that's not set in stone. That can be changed next year if there's crowding problems but I keep thinking, "Why have we got a crowding problem and especially in the deer hunt, when we got 36 to 40,000 hunters out there and there used to be 160,000 out there don't have nearly as many people as there used to be?"

Clay Hamann: More 4-wheelers and less enforcement.

Jean Dickinson: If we have a comment now based on an answer, can we put in another comment?

Bob Christensen: Yes.

Jean Dickinson (Three-Corners Landowners' Association on North Slope, Three Corners): It is the consensus of the group that we want the bull age to be maintained at five to six for that Three-Corners area.

Bob Christensen: In the future, Clay, we will make sure we take comments on those informational items.

MOTION by Kirk Woodward: to accept the plan as presented by the Division
Second by Amy Torres

Favor: Mitch Hacking, Ron Winterton, Kirk Woodward, Floyd Briggs, Curtis Dastrup, Loran Hills, Beth Hamann, Brandon McDonald, Amy Torres.

Opposed: Rod Morrison. (I would like to see the spike numbers stay at 12,500. Other than that I am in complete agreement).

7. BUCKS, BULLS & OIAL PERMIT NUMBERS FOR 2010: Anis Aoude

Questions from RAC:

Kirk Woodward: The sportsmen have sent lots of e-mails, lots of phone calls that are just angry that we have 41 bison sitting on Antelope Island but people who been putting in for years cannot draw a Henry's tag. What's the justification for moving those animals, yet decreasing the sportsmen opportunity?

Anis Aoude: It's basically following the plan of 275 bison allowable for last season and that's what we did. Now we can start increasing again. The plan stipulates that we had to get down to 275 before we could go back up. We got down to our objective, now we have to issue fewer permits to get back up.

Kevin Christopherson: And the hope is to have more permits in the future. Get the herd up to 305 and then we'll be able to issue more permits after that.

Kirk Woodward: I think their concern is they'd be at 305 without 40 of them that are sitting at Antelope Island.

Anis Aoude: As you recall, last year we recommended going right to 305 but due to the RAC and Board process, they said, "No, you will get to 275," so we had to remove those excess animals.

Kevin Christopherson: And what we removed were calves or yearlings. These weren't animals that would have been harvested anyway.

Kirk Woodward: And that's been my answer thus far but I needed to be able to answer them better. I'm afraid that public perception, that's going to be a tough one. For sportsmen who have put in for so long and their chance of drawing is limited.

Anis Aoude: I agree. Their chance of drawing will probably be the same from now on. The reason we were able to offer that many permits the last three years is because we were trying to bring the herd down.

Mitch Hacking: At the September meeting, we were over-objective and had to haul 40 of them out. I didn't realize we had to get down before we come back up.

Anis Aoude: We actually recommended going to 305 and staying there, or the other option was going down to 275, and not all the RACS but some of the RACs wanted to go down.

Kirk Woodward: That was the recommendation of the landowners down there.

Anis Aoude: And that's what the statewide plan indicates. We just wanted to have a smoother transition.

Beth Hamann: We had that special meeting where they said they mis-counted. We have 150 buffalo we had to get rid of. So we had a special hunt. And our option was to have a special hunt or move the buffalo to the Book cliffs. I don't remember the option you're talking about. It wasn't brought up at the special meeting.

Anis Aoude: It was a year ago and based on that, the September plan had to stay at the 275 number. Now we have a herd of 305. We're not reducing, so we won't be offering as many permits. That's not a whole lot of animals you can harvest every year.

Beth Hamann: What were the 2008 stats?

Anis Aoude: They were about 170 tags. We issued over 487 tags in the last three years to try to get down to objective.

Questions from Public:

Ryan Thornock (Utah Farm Bureau): It's my understanding it never did get down to 275. How many did it get down to?

Anis Aoude: 292. This is wildlife management. You're never going to be right on from a biological aspect. Hunter success can vary from year to year; are all kinds of variables. To try and hit an exact number is impossible.

Brad Horrocks: I kind of feel a little bit like the health care bill. How do we get the rest of the story? You sat here four or five months ago and know what your plans were. Why don't you be up front and tell us? I get frustrated.

Anis Aoude: We had a meeting where we said we would like to get to there and they said, "No, you'll get to 275." We did give the option of hunting more. So those were the cards we had on the table, and were the cards we played.

Clay Hamann: Did we get buck/doe numbers on the Vernal unit? What kind of difference did it make to shorten the hunt?

Charlie Greenwood: It went up a little bit Clay. I think it went up to 12 this year but it's still below 15. The year before I believe it was 9 in that specific area but I don't have my data here.

Comments from the Public:

Ryan Thornock (Utah Farm Bureau also representing the Henry Mountains Grazing Association). I understand you cannot get a number exact at 275. The concern is that that's been the objective number for many years. It seems to me that if you're managing

for 275, some years you would be a little below that, some years you would be a little above that. The fact is that the last time the herd was at the objective number, was in 1982. and since then it has been exceeded by an average of 148%, the average number of animals being 408 head and that's Division numbers. As livestock operators, we support the multiple-use of public lands. The bison herd has been chronically above objective in the Henrys and this has created chronic winter habitat problems for livestock operators. Those on the Henrys in the problem area are running at 35% of their AUM permits and that comes at a substantial cost to them. When they can't run those animals on their winter range they have to take them home and feed them and that's thousands of dollars in feed. We realize the Division and other sportsmen's groups have contributed over a million dollars to habitat there and that's great, that benefits everybody. But I think it also needs to be noted that AUMs are purchased as part of a base property and when these operators buy a piece of land, those AUMs are valued at anywhere between \$70 an AUM up to \$120 an AUM and if you add all of the AUMs on the Henry's Mountains, that adds up to well over a million dollar investment the livestock operators have also made, so everyone involved there has a significant financial investment and everyone is concerned with the habitat. These plans are amended regularly. When conditions on the ground warrant a change, a change can be made. The Henry's Mountain Bison Committee recommended that the level go to 300 for five years in order for this winter habitat problem to be addressed. The Division responded with a letter and said, "No, we're going to go ahead and increase the numbers and follow this plan." We understand the idea of following a plan but prior to this, it hasn't been followed as far as managing to that number of 275 and because of that we have this winter range problem and it needs to be addressed. These operators down there feel like there's collateral damage to these buffalo numbers. There's also a number of suspended livestock AUMs. That's done by the BLM whenever they think that there's a habitat problem. Those have not been reinstated. Livestock operators are voluntarily operating at a small fraction of their permits that haven't been suspended. The bison committee felt that their recommendation of 300 for five years was a very fair compromise. It was made up of agencies, livestock operators, sportsmen, and it was a well-rounded group, and they thought that 300 for five years was a good compromise. Until these impacts and winter range issues can be properly addressed, then we'd appreciate a motion reflecting the bison committee recommendation of 300 permits.

Clay Hamann: I'll pass. I like the plan.

Kenny Labrum (SFW): Like to go with the bison plan as presented by the Division and recommend approving that.

RAC Comment and Discussion:

Mitch Hacking: Concerning the September meeting, I went back and read the minutes and I felt as a member that I was deceived and manipulated on that 40 head of buffalo.

Kevin Christopherson: What was the problem?

Mitch Hacking: If I had known that in 2010 the objective was going up and that by pulling 40 head out of there and the next spring they were going to be dropped by 80% in the Henrys, I was just floored when I seen that.

Anis Aoude: We had to move them or we would have had to kill them. Because we had recommended a year previous to this and were told we had to go to 275.

Kevin Christopherson: They (permit numbers) would have been dropped either way. The only difference would have been whether we shot them on the Henry's last year, or whether we moved them to the Book Cliffs. The elevated permit numbers of the past few year's numbers were to meet the population objective.

Mitch Hacking: What would happen if we increase those permits by 40? What would that do to the objective?

Anis Aoude: You would be down to 250 animals post-season and it's really not biologically sound. We want to maintain them around 275 and higher.

Kevin Christopherson: You remember part of the concern last year was hunter crowding. The big issue that the hunters raised was that if you put an additional 40 hunters on top of once-in-a-lifetime hunters they would be mad; if you move juveniles (bison), it would be okay.

Mitch Hacking: I missed that the landowners on Henry Mountains wanted it so we supported it.

Anis Aoude: I guess we didn't do our job if you feel you were slighted. It's just that when we got to that point, we felt that everybody knew the past results.

Amy Torres: I think that's the sole source of confusion. It should have been brought up, but at the same time, the September meeting was in compliance with what we had already talked about with the Henry Mountains plan from earlier. I was confused at first too, but then I remembered that we had agreed to it and the plan is sound.

Kirk Woodward: When you go from that many tags to this few tags, not everybody out there understands it because they're not sitting in these meetings. It's going to be an obstacle.

Floyd Briggs: With the deer, it says in the Memo last year the Division would reduce permits in Northern and Northeastern region by 2000 and 1000 permits, respectively. We reduced the days of the hunt by a couple days and if we're going into a split season in 2011 and our increase, the buck/doe ratio is increasing as slightly as it is, it looks like we could reduce the permits by 1000, not just eliminate the increase of 1000.

Anis Aoude: I don't think we can reduce permits further. It wouldn't benefit a whole lot except for reducing opportunity for hunters. That's just following our statewide plan.

Bob Christensen: Since 2005 I think it's been down to that 13,000 level.

Curtis Dastrup: This is the third year.

Kevin Christopherson: At least the third year

Mitch Hacking: On the information I got on the 305 objective, is that just a yearly deal or for five years?

Anis Aoude: Our plan is 305 for 2010, 315 for 2011, and 325 by 2012, and that would be the end of the plan and we'd have to renew the plan after that. By the end of the plan we would like to have 325 bison post-season.

Ryan Thornock (Utah Farm Bureau): Our recommendation is to keep it at 300 for five years to we don't have to keep addressing the habitat problem.

MOTION by Rod Morrison: to go with the permit numbers from Division with the following exceptions:

- 3. We need to exempt the Anthro Unit from the general elk season spike hunt. (I'm concerned about the lack of bulls hunters are seeing on the Anthro unit. I feel that continuing the spike hunt on the Anthro would further decrease the bull numbers.)**
- 4. Keep spike elk permits at 12,500 statewide. (I feel we may be increasing too fast and want to be more conservative on that).**

Second by Curtis Dastrup

Mitch Hacking comment. The Farm Bureau wants the bison population kept at 300 for five years. I recommend a 300 bison cap on the Henry Mountains for three years until the problems of winter AUMs are resolved.

Kirk Woodward: It has to be related to the numbers for this season only.

Anis Aoude: If you want to deal with numbers for future years you can ask the Board to amend the plan.

Favor: Mitch Hacking, Rod Morrison, Ron Winterton, Kirk Woodward, Floyd Briggs, Curtis Dastrup, Brandon McDonald, Amy Torres

Opposed: Beth Hamann. Because I don't think it's going to make a difference.

Loran Hills Abstain because I don't think I know enough about this to vote one way or another.

Motion passed

Meeting Adjourned 9:30 pm

**Southern Regional Advisory Council Meeting
Beaver High School
Beaver, UT
March 16, 2010
7:00 p.m.**

1. REVIEW & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

MOTION: To accept minutes and agenda as written.

VOTE: Unanimous.

2. ELK MANAGEMENT PLAN

MOTION: To accept the Elk Management Plan as presented.

VOTE: 6 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstained

3. BUCKS, BULLS & OIAL PERMIT NUMBERS FOR 2010

MOTION (BISON): To go with what the committee recommended, 300 adults post season for 5 consecutive years. Need to have some credence for committee decision. Review in 2015. Bison will be radio collard to get credible counts.

VOTE (BISON): 8 in favor, 2 opposed.

MOTION (ALL OTHER PERMITS): To accept all remaining permit numbers as presented.

VOTE (ALL OTHER PERMITS): 9 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstained

**Southern Regional Advisory Council Meeting
Hurricane High School
Hurricane, UT
February 9, 2010
7:00 p.m.**

RAC Members Present	DWR Personnel Present	Wildlife Board Present	RAC Members Not Present
Rex Stanworth Dale Bagley Layne Torgerson Cordell Pearson Chairman Steve Flinders Dell LeFevre Clair Woodbury Mack Morrell Paul Briggs Sam Carpenter Steve Dalton	Douglas Messerly Natalie Brewster Blaine Cox Teresa Bonzo Jim Lamb Anis Aoude Jason Nicholes Sean Kelly Dustin Schaible Kent Hersey Vance Mumford Brent Farnsworth Wade Paskett Justin Shannon Josh Pollock Lynn Chamberlain	Jake Albrecht Tom Hatch	

Steve Flinders called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. There were approximately 43 interested parties in attendance in addition to RAC members, members of the Wildlife Board, and Division employees. Steve Flinders introduced himself and asked RAC members to introduce themselves. Steve Flinders explained RAC meeting procedures.

Steve Flinders: . . . And I'll ask you that if you want to get some more information or a clarification that you form it in a question. We'll then move to questions from the public, and then we'll proceed to comments. And somebody hold up a comment card. They're out on the table and the officers have them. I need you to fill one of those comment cards out and let us know what agenda item you want to speak to and get that up here to me if you would. You'll have three minutes for individuals, five minutes for a bona fide group. We'll then proceed to comments from the RAC and move into motions and voting. With that we'll look for a motion on the agenda and minutes from last meeting guys.

Review and Acceptance of Agenda and Minutes (action)

Rex Stanworth: I'll make that motion (inaudible).

Steve Flinders: Motion by Rex. Second? Seconded by Paul Briggs. All in favor? Any against? It is unanimous, it looked like.

Rex Stanworth made the motion to accept the agenda and minutes as presented. Paul Briggs seconded. Unanimous.

**Wildlife Board Update:
-Steve Flinders, Chairman**

Steve Flinders: Let me brief you, the (unintelligible) RAC, those that care about the Board meeting on March 4th. If you recall most of the discussion was about venomous snakes and the CIP rule amendment. Somebody catch those doors. Quite a bit of controversy ensued between our meeting and the Board meeting. There was a letter from the Six County Association of Governments and several animal control officers, especially from the northern part of the state, attended the Board meeting. And in the end the Wildlife Board passed the CIP rule but took all the provisions for possession for venomous snakes out. That's the simplest way for me to capture what happened. The other things that we passed here they passed as well. There was quite a bit of discussion about the draw process and the snafus right there close to the deadline and it boils down to software problems; and we were told it wouldn't happen again. I think it was 36,000 applications an hour on Sunday night when it went down. Any questions about the Board meeting? How about a regional update Doug.

**Regional Update:
-Douglas Messerly, Regional Supervisor**

Douglas Messerly: Thank you Mr. Chairman, I'll try to be brief in the interest of time as this meeting may run on tonight.

- We're having an extended spring, I guess that's better than an extended winter way to look at it. But a cold spring in Southern Utah. We've got some deep snow depths. We're actively watching our wintering big game populations, that's primarily deer, looking for places that we may have had some winter loss so that we can factor that into our management. I heard about another one here tonight. I would encourage you, if you're aware of things that would be of interest to the Division of Wildlife with regard to the survival of big game over the winter, or any game species for that matter, contact your local conservation officer or contact the regional office and we'll follow through and see if we can determine the extent of the problem.
- We had the grand opening of the Washington County Field Office. It is a satellite regional office that we've opened. It's adjacent to Quail Lake Reservoir, if you know where that is between Hurricane and St. George. We're providing services to the public there in Washington County and hopefully that will help some people in terms of their travel and their ability to get those services closer to home.

Douglas Messerly: And I think unless there are any questions, Mr. Chairman, that will conclude my remarks.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Doug. I have one question. There was some discussion at the Board Meeting about antler gathering and resource damage on the Henrys. Did the Wildlife Board or the director take any action?

Douglas Messerly: No, what we decided to do on the Henrys, specifically, was institute some high profile patrols, some saturation patrols to try and determine the actual extent of the problem and to see if we could curb the problem in that area. And as far as I know that situation has been addressed. I haven't heard anything more. One of the other things that we've done in the Southern Region, in conjunction with our officers and biologists out looking for winter mortality issues, is looking for antler gathering issues. We're monitoring that pretty closely, and we intent to enforce road closures etc. that the land management agencies and the Division of Wildlife have instituted on their properties. So we're keeping an eye on that. And if member of the public or the RAC see abuses of that please let us know and we'll address them as quickly as we can.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. I see no questions. Let's move on to agenda item number 5. It looks like Kent's ready to go with the survey results.

Elk Hunter Survey Results (informational) 5:40 to 20:08 of 3:37:59
-Kent Hersey, Wildlife Program Coordinator

Steve Flinders: Thanks Kent. Any questions from RAC members?

Questions from the RAC:

None

Steve Flinders: Seeing none we'll move to questions from the public. For those of you that came in late, this is an informational item so we won't be making a motion on this item but we'll still take questions and comments from the public. Comment cards need to be filled out for those of you that want to comment. So any questions for Kent from the audience?

Questions from the public:

None

Steve Flinders: Everybody's here and wants to move on. I don't think we've got any comment cards for this agenda item.

Comments from the public:

None

Steve Flinders: Thanks Kent. Next agenda item, we'll move on to the elk management plan. Anis Aoude.

Elk Management Plan (action) 21:29 to 37:33 of 3:37:59
- Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator

Steve Flinders: Thanks Anis. Questions from RAC members.

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Go ahead Steve.

Steve Dalton: Yes Anis, I've got a question on teeth. On the limited entry units are you going to demand that people return the teeth so that you can keep track of the age?

Anis Aoude: We're not going to demand it because there are some downfalls to demanding them, basically because they're based on you harvesting. We'll have people probably lying on their harvest report if they didn't send teeth in saying that they didn't harvest. So we'd rather have accurate harvest reporting and get as many as we can. We are going to think of different ways to incentivize people to turn in their teeth. That's something we are working on to try to get more of them. I think we get a large enough sample size that we could, I feel comfortable drawing conclusions to what the ages are.

Steve Dalton: What seems like might be a problem to me is if somebody shoots a three or four year-old bull they're not sending the teeth in so that's skewing your data.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, that's not the case though. I mean we look at all of, everyone that harvests has to actually send in a harvest report. And on those harvest reports they actually have to have measurements of width and main beam length. And we look at all the ones that don't get sent in and try to see was it those two-year-old, three-year-old bulls and that's not what it's showing us. So it's pretty random who's sending them in and who's not; which makes us feel more comfortable with the data than you would otherwise. I know it makes people uncomfortable when you draw a conclusion over a small sample size but this isn't a small sample size. We're getting 50 to 80 percent return; which is larger than anybody that does statistics would tell you is a good sample size.

Steve Dalton: All right. I've got one more question for you. We had some committees established in the past for some of these limited entry units. What happened to those committees? Have they been dissolved? And the only ones you're going to consider now are ones that are potentially slated for an increase in population?

Anis Aoude: That's correct. I mean in the past all the ones that we have had committees for were ones that had a potential to be increased. And I don't know which ones you're speaking about but . . .

Steve Dalton: The Boulder in particular.

Anis Aoude: Yeah I mean that one, uh, has a potential for increase and we'll probably . . . The thing is we won't reconvene those committees until we redo the unit plans, which will be following this plan. So those will be reconvened and new unit plans will be one-year lag behind this plan.

Steve Dalton: Ok thank you.

Anis Aoude: Yeah it will probably be this summer is what I hear from Teresa.

Steve Flinders: Go ahead Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Hi Anis. My first comment is to really just thank these guys that took part in this monumental task to try to come up with a new elk plan. I know I feel (unintelligible) frustration many times in trying to get back and forth with him and on doing this. But my question would be on these committees where we've had committees before and we're redoing the plan, what if the, if a certain area wants to get a committee and look at other possibilities in changing the way that we're structured now, even though we're not slated for an increase, is that still a possibility that we could do that?

Anis Aoude: Yeah. I mean if there's sufficient change that needs to take place, certainly I encourage the regions to form committees if they feel like there needs to be sufficient change. If it's just going to be continuing as we have in the past without increasing population objective or changing any thing in the plan there's really not a need to put people through a committee and do all that. But if there's sufficient change that needs to happen, yeah, I definitely think there needs to be a committee.

Sam Carpenter: What would be sufficient?

Anis Aoude: Basically, you know, changing a unit from limited entry to any bull. Changing the age objective, well you can't change the age objectives, those are kind of set by the (unintelligible). But changing the population objectives, like if you want to increase or decrease population objectives, those are the kind of things would be the kind of things that would require a committee.

Sam Carpenter: Okay. Another question is, can you explain to me what the dynamics are on a no elk unit? What exactly is that? I've talked to Dustin about it. I've found out a little bit about it. What does that entail?

Anis Aoude: Basically most of our any, or no elk zones are any bull units. Basically we encourage harvest of any bulls that are there. And then we issue some cow tags if we know that there are cows there. And then we try to harvest any other cows in some more creative ways; like this year on the Henrys and some other units we issued, we gave the opportunity for anyone who drew a tag on that Henrys unit to be able to go buy an over the country cow tag for twenty bucks or something like that. So I guess we're looking for ways to find those units that we want to manage for no elk, ways to harvest those animals.

Sam Carpenter: Ok so if we wanted to have the Paunsagaunt be a no elk unit could we get a committee together and go through this and strategize on how to handle that?

Anis Aoude: Sure, certainly. Certainly.

Sam Carpenter: Do I need to bring that up tonight to do that? Can we do that later?

Anis Aoude: No. You can start with Dustin and if he feels that's the direction he wants to go he'll get a committee together.

Sam Carpenter: Okay. Thank you.

Douglas Messerly: And I'll commit to you right now Sam that we will convene a committee for the Paunsagaunt elk unit management plan.

Steve Flinders: Go ahead Layne.

Layne Torgerson: Anis, um just one question on the way that the data is collected on these spike units with the proposed increase in permits over the next five years. How is that, I mean how is that harvest data collected? Is it just a random sampling or did he try to contact everybody?

Anis Aoude: No it is a random sample just like all of our harvest surveys are for general season. Basically we contact people; oh it's a phone survey. I'm sure all of you have gotten that phone call. And basically they keep calling people until they get the sample size they need to be statistically viable.

Steve Flinders: Questions? Go ahead Clair.

Clair Woodbury: Yeah, Anis like Sam I congratulate you guys on a job well done on this survey, on this elk plan. But I did have a question or two. You made the statement that you followed this public survey very closely but in going through it it looks like a significant majority want the status quo on these age limit objectives.

Anis Aoude: Sure.

Clair Woodbury: How do you reconcile, the premium seven and a half to eight-year-olds with what the public wants?

Anis Aoude: Sure. This is where the committee grappled with this quite hard and it went back and forth. They, the way they interpreted that is people perceived the status quo what the harvest ages are now on these units; which are actually higher than what we're, what the objectives are. So if we were at objective a lot of these units would have lower ages and lower quality of antlered bulls. So what the committee grappled with is do they mean they want us to manage down to those or do they like the status quo where we are now? Because where we are now is nowhere near what our old plan says.

Steve Flinders: Come back up to you there Mack.

Mack Morrell: On your new ages, I mean your population objective's 80,000, have you got that broken down by region?

Anis Aoude: No. And as I mentioned that will be dependent on what different unit plans add up to. That's a goal. That's where we would hope to get to. It's not broken down by different units. The units will have to set what the objective is.

Mack Morrell: So on your management group, if they decide not to increase the elk then that's what's going to happen?

Anis Aoude: That's correct.

Steve Flinders: Go ahead Dell.

Dell LeFevre: My question is, is I can give you a hitch on an elk on the Boulder. We started at 600 head. You guys guarantee us there'd be no more than 600 head. We took a 35 percent cut. Okay, I got 600 head permit on the Boulder. Can you figure out where the 35 percent cut was? And you just keep increasing the elk. You never, ever do any reseeds or (unintelligible) habitat. And I want to know why we keep getting the elk and you guys don't do anything. You sent the Forest Service out there last summer, spent your money. I got two teenage boys that cut more trees then they did in a week.

Anis Aoude: Well all I can tell you is our habitat projects are rolling as quick as we can. I mean specifically I can't say specifically on your area where it's happening. I'm not a, I'm not the person who does . . .

Dell LeFevre: But you keep increasing your elk. You just keep putting more, letting more elk go but you never, ever (unintelligible). You're just running the cowboy right off the hill.

Anis Aoude: I guess I don't know how to answer that. We have objectives in our plans and that's where we stick to, to the numbers that are in the plan.

Dell LeFevre: And I guess my question is how do you get an objective if you don't plan for it?

Anis Aoude: We do plan for it

Dell LeFevre: Well you do but you're still pushing the cowboy.

Anis Aoude: I guess I would disagree with you on that.

Dell LeFevre: An AUM is \$150.00 an AUM now and you guys have never bought nothing; you just put them out there. And you can't show me where the elk ever was on the Boulder before you started planting them.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions from anybody? Go ahead Dale.

Dale Bagley: On the spikes, what was the harvest rate this year and how much was that different from what it was statewide?

Anis Aoude: It was 17% success. And it's usually between 15 and 17, it varies annually.

Dale Bagley: Are you going to take those harvest numbers into effect when you look at the bull permits for limited entry? Are you going to work that in?

Anis Aoude: All those were taken into consideration when all these calculations were made, yes.

Dale Bagley: Okay.

Steve Flinders: Go ahead Mack.

Mack Morrell: On your habitat, you talk about aspen stands. Say it's in the decrease and that's due to overgrazing, by whom?

Anis Aoude: All ungulates.

Mack Morrell: Uh, I think particularly elk. You don't see livestock peeling the bark off of aspen trees.

Anis Aoude: Well that's your version (unintelligible). Uh yeah, yep.

Mack Morrell: And you don't, and elk winter on those small fledgling aspen that comes up. They take them right to the ground. Cattle don't do that, neither do sheep. They might pick some leaves up off the ground but that's all that they do.

Steve Flinders: Is there a question in there?

Mack Morrell: No I just made a statement. Comment.

Steve Flinders: Anis, one last question about habitat. As I read through the plan you talk about convening the working groups. Will the discussion center around habitat?

Anis Aoude: The local unit groups? I guess it could go any direction that committee takes it. Yeah, certainly habitat's going to come up. I mean if you're going to carry more elk you have to have more habitat, that's just a given.

Steve Flinders: Well I looked at the list of people you're going to convene that and I'm assuming the BLM and Forest Service people are going to want to talk about habitat.

Anis Aoude: Oh yeah. And I hope everybody else does as well.

Steve Flinders: And any (unintelligible). Yeah. Sure Rex.

Rex Stanworth: If I'm not mistaken some of the discussion about those committees was that SFW and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation wanted to see a better return for their money. So some of the discussions that will take place with those committees will be to say we've got money available and it can be made for that particular unit but what are you going to give us back in return for elk number? So is it water development, is it grass on the ground or whatever it may be. But some of those committee discussions will be how many more elk can you give us if we give this much money for that plan, as I remember. So there will be a lot of discussion pertaining to that effect. Rocky Mountain and SFW made sure that that was brought up in a very pointed way.

Steve Flinders: Another question down there.

Clair Woodbury: Just one little comment. I think a lot of these questions are coming up in the next section on the elk plan and setting up these committees. I think we might be jumping the gun just a little bit on that.

Steve Flinders: Well we are, this is the elk plan.

Layne Torgerson: Are we on to the elk plan now?

Steve Flinders: Yes Sir.

Layne Torgerson: The statewide management plan? My apologies.

Steve Flinders: Did you have something Cordell? Any other questions? Sure Layne.

Layne Torgerson: Anis, I want to go back to Steve's question about the mandatory teeth sampling. I mean over the years I've had a couple of limited entry permits. I know that we're required to do a harvest report or you're not eligible to put in for the draw the next year.

Anis Aoude: Right.

Layne Torgerson: Is there any way that that on these limited entry units so that we can get 100 percent accurate data, is there any way that we could implement a mandatory tooth sample sent in or you're not eligible to put in?

Anis Aoude: Yeah. And I tried to explain why that's difficult to do. Here's a scenario I'll play it out; The guy shoots his bull, cuts the antler skull, the skull plate off, capes it out, takes it and leaves the head on the mountain. He gets home and fills out his report and it says that you have to mandatory send your teeth in. So while he's filling out his report he says no I did not harvest because I'm not walking back out there. So it skews our harvest report. I would rather have a more accurate harvest report than to have everybody send their teeth in because I think we're getting sufficient data from the teeth. I think we can provide more incentives to try to get more of the teeth but to make it mandatory is going to skew our harvest data, because people are going to lie, believe it or not. Because only people that harvest have to send teeth in so it makes it more difficult to put the burden on that person that harvested.

Steve Flinders: Good questions. Any others from the RAC? Let's ask . . . Oh you got one more Clair.

Clair Woodbury: Yeah I do. Now that I know which unit we're on or what section we're on. I had a question on the local unit management committees and the makeup of them. As a representative along with Cordell and Rex and Steve of the general public, I didn't see any representatives from the general public on those local committees. Could you explain that?

Anis Aoude: Well yeah. I mean who is the general public and how to you pick them? That's the hardest part about having a general public be represented. I mean the person that ends up representing the general public is often affiliated with some group. So . . .

Clair Woodbury: I'm not. I don't think Rex is, or Cordell. I'm just a regular citizen.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, but I mean . . . Yeah. Yeah the thing is but why would we pick you versus any other average Joe off the street and how do we pick that person that makes it fair. What's a fair way to pick a person that represents the average public?

Clair Woodbury: Well what I'm looking at this break down I see a lot of the special interest groups represented but not the general public. How are the concerns of the people I represent going to be managed into this?

Anis Aoude: Yeah, and we're hoping that these sportsman groups have a broad enough, you know, breath that they're going to cover a lot of the public interest.

Clair Woodbury: You know I do a lot of hunting and stuff and most of the people I know don't belong to a sportsman group, like 99 percent of them.

Anis Aoude: Sure. And really on these unit plans they're mainly going to deal with population objectives and things like that.

Clair Woodbury: Exactly.

Anis Aoude: Which really, I mean, let's be honest . . . probably the average hunter wants more elk and so do the sportsman organizations. The land management agencies may want fewer if there's habitat damage and so would the ranchers because of the competition. So I think everybody's position is represented if you have . . .

Clair Woodbury: So that's why I come back to my original question. We have the survey but the survey can't speak for itself. I think there needs to be a spokesman on these committees, at least one.

Steve Flinders: It sounds like (unintelligible).

Clair Woodbury: What's that?

Clair Woodbury: Are you offering to be on every committee in the Southern Region?

Clair Woodbury: No no. I'm just talking for the people I represent, which I would guess to be 90 percent of the people in Utah, are general public; and not counting the non-consumptive that we don't have a RAC member for right now.

Steve Flinders: Well if you can think of a solution to that and make that to Anis or to us in a motion

Anis Aoude: Yeah, I mean a fair way to put that.

Clair Woodbury: Well I'm just asking questions. I've got comments later on. I can give you my comment if you'd like.

Anis Aoude: I mean that's what we struggle with is a fair way to pick the average person. I mean do you hold a lottery? If you pick one person the next person that wasn't picked is going to say what makes them more average than I am?

Clair Woodbury: Can't you make that same argument though on these special interest people?

Anis Aoude: No because we ask the special interest group to give us a person to represent that group.

That's their decision not ours.

Clair Woodbury: That ends my question but I'll come back in the comment section.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Clair. Okay, how about questions from the public? If you can keep these to questions we've got a comment period following this up. So any questions for Anis on the statewide plan

Questions from the public:

None

Steve Flinders: Come to the mic and give us your name. I don't see any questions. We'll move on to the comments.

Comments from the public:

Steve Flinders: I'll try to read a couple of names. The first name will be the person to come to the mic; give us your name and your comment. The second name I'll read will be the person that needs to be ready to come to the front when they're done. Braden Richmond. On deck will be Gene Boardman.

Braden Richmond: My name's Braden Richmond, representing the SFW board. And SFW's position is that the following units will be managed for seven to eight-year-old class bulls: San Juan, Boulder, Beaver, Pahvant, Monroe and Book Cliffs (unintelligible). And then that the following units be managed for four to five-year-old bulls: Cache, Three Corners, Box Elder, Paunsagaunt, Fillmore, Oak Creek, Deep Creek and Range Creek; and that the remaining units be five to six-year-old bulls. We understand that this is slightly different than the elk committee's proposal but this is what we voted on. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Braden. You don't have that written down somewhere do you?

(Unknown): Off of mic.

Steve Flinders: Yeah just read the shortest list, or we can read it up here if anybody asks. It's the four to five are the Cache, Three Corners, Box Elder, Paunsagaunt, Fillmore-Oak Creek, Deep Creek and Range Creek. Anybody that's interested to get that I'll keep that right here. Gene Boardman followed by Lance Roberts.

Gene Boardman: Gene Boardman, Hinckley Utah. And what I'd like to say first off is I wish to hell we'd get rid of this age objective thing. The elk just don't comply with it. And there's a lot of elk out there on the units that are being run for a seven or eight-year-old elk and people out there thinking that they're going to, if they go to seven or eight-years-old they're going to be 375-points or more. And a lot of them have a hard time busting 300. And so we limiting the hunting opportunities where all these elk are dying of old age because they can't get to the size that all these trophy hunters want. And I'd just like to see something done a little different and I think that age objective has really got us stymied in the way that we're managing elk and that there ought to be a different kind of program there. We're wasting resource by having such a limited number of hunters trying to chase 375-point elk while the others are dying away. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Sorry, Lance Roberts followed by Brian Johnson.

Lance Roberts: Hi my name's Lance Roberts. I'm just here representing myself and quite a few people in the back there as well, the public. We'd just like to say that we agree with what the Division has proposed as far as the elk management plan and keeping the higher age class. One thing that I would like to comment on as well is what Layne, and I think Steve, brought up is with the teeth collection. I think it would be very beneficial if we could figure out some way to make that mandatory; that way we'd have 100 percent collection of what's being killed and know exactly the age class. So that's all I have. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. Brian Johnson followed by John Keeler.

Brian Johnson: I'm Brian Johnson. I'm representing the Utah Bowman's Association. Utah Bowman's Association supports the elk recommendation by the Division of Wildlife Resources with one change. Anyway the change that we would like to propose is the change that the Division didn't go with with the Wasatch Mountains; and that was the tag allocation of 50 percent archery, 30 percent rifle, and 20 percent muzzleloader. And like this gentleman that spoke, the older gentleman here that said let's try something a little bit different. I can't think of a better unit than the Wasatch Front to put 50 percent archers on it and move the rifle hunters a little bit out of the rut. Because there are two questions on that survey that said, 1: Would you like to see the rifle hunt moved from the rut? I'm not sure how it was written but they wanted to see the rifle hunt move away from the rut and take more opportunity with limited entry. That's one unit to try it on. It's very visible to the rest of the state so I think you'll get a lot of feedback relatively quick if it's working or not. And I think that when it does work you'll see that you can manage elk and increase opportunity and not necessarily hurt your harvest objective with archers. And one more thing, I'd like to thank you guys all for your time. I know it's a ton of time to do what you're doing up there and we appreciate it. I was not involved with the committee, the elk planning committee but a couple of my good friends were. It's a ton of time that they put into it. And I'd like to also thank them because I know it's a lot of work. And so thanks guys, I appreciate it.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Brian. John Keeler followed by Verland King.

John Keeler: John Keeler representing the Utah Farm Bureau. As a member of the elk planning committee I'd like to thank those that participated in that process. It was a lot of time spent and it was really a lot of back and forth discussion on many of the issues. There is a diverse interest on that committee and it took a lot of effort to put the plan that is before us together. Everybody doesn't get exactly what they want on a committee, as is generally the case when you work together to try to accomplish something. But the age class and some of the other issues were extremely, uh, took a lot of time to discuss those out because there's those representing those people that are interested in quality and those that are interested in opportunity, and they each had to give and take a little bit. Livestock interests, as an example, were very concerned about the movement to the 80,000 numbers. And the reason for that concern is resource oriented. There are some concerns out there, some challenges with the resource, the winter habitat (unintelligible) regeneration and riparian degradation. And the Forest Service and BLM and other representatives brought those points out. But we need to be concerned about that because the resource is the paramount thing that we need to protect, because if that goes down we all go down. So we want to keep that in mind. But because of the concerns that we have with the resource the committee looked at those things and put into place in this plan certain things; that there

would be a committee or working group put together on each unit that is identified to have potential for increases. And so it's going to be very important that the members that are identified to participate in that that they show up with the information that they need to make a decision on that unit to see if the increase is warranted. Also, put in place are mitigation parameters. There is also an opportunity for the acquisition of properties to be leveraged in that effort. They're working on projects to help improve the range conditions. And then there was an agreement with a lot of people, in fact one of the questions on the survey was how elk hunters felt about compensating permittees who don't own land in a particular unit to be compensated for the contributions they make. And there was an agreement to work on those kinds of things also. I want to point out that we support the process. The process is the local working groups, the committees, the RACs and the Wildlife Board; that's the process. The plan, or plans in these processes, is a result of those processes. We do support the process. The plans will go back and forth based on certain things that happen. We can support the plan if those things were put in place to help improve the resource will in fact take place; if they don't we can't support the plan and we'll be back to talk about it. And finally I do want to say that it was mentioned by you Rex, that the sportsman expect a return on their investment. I think it's fair to say that livestock operators expect a return on their investment. They've been making investments on these ranges for decades and it's important that we respect all of that and try to get those returns; because we're all in this together. The people that aren't here at the table that would like all of us gone, they're working hard in their efforts too. So I hope we can keep the process going and work to protect the resource. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thanks John. Verland King followed by Reggie Swenson.

Verland King: I'm Verland King. I live in Bicknell. I'm, I run cattle on the Dark Valley Grazing Association. I, (unintelligible) reutilization changes on our grazing unit. Right now I've got 30 head of bull elk right on the border of my private land, which borders the forest. I think it's important that we manage these elk numbers based on possible droughts or possible snow pack like we have now down there. And so I've seen what snow and droughts does to livestock. I've seen what it does to the wildlife. Right now I'm holding my breath that when my fields green up that those elk will go up the mountain and not come down. I know Dell over in Salt Gulch had to quit farming part of his land because he couldn't, he just has to pasture it off because when you bale hay the elk come in and tear the bales up. You have to bale in the morning and get it hauled before dark. That's why I'm recommending that the RAC, this RAC votes to keep the numbers down where they're at and not go to the 80,000. Especially on the Boulder Mountain, I don't want to see a higher, a higher age group. Right now I've got trespassers going across my property to try to find a shed and it's quite a problem. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Reggie, followed by Gib Yardley.

Reggie Swenson: My name is Reggie Swenson. I'm here to read a letter from the Fish Lake National Forest Supervisor, Allen Rawley. UDWR Southern Region RAC, I'd like to take this opportunity to offer comments from the Fish Lake National Forest on the statewide management plan for elk. This appears to be a very compete plan. It has identified a number of tools, such as antelope antlerless permits, spike only permits, general habitat improvement, and actions to improve habitat effectiveness; and should provide great flexibility in management and will prove very useful to help meet the plan objectives. The introduction of the plan also does a good job of describing the life history of elk and that not all elk habitat is created equal. In general this is nice work. We do have a concern that in some very specific locations elk appear to be having a negative impact on our ability to regenerate aspen communities, which is a critical plant community for the elk. We will bring these specifics forward as

we work with the herd unit committees. We look forward to working with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources in the public process to develop the herd unit management plans and know that we can develop durable solutions for elk management by working through the process with local communities. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments. Sincerely, Allen Rawley. And we just want to thank the committee. And thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Reggie. Gib Yardley, followed by Braden Gardner.

Gib Yardley: I'm Gib Yardley from Beaver, Utah. I run cattle on the Southwest Desert and also on the Panguitch Lake unit. I and many of my colleagues are very opposed to increasing the numbers of these elks in the country. On the Southwest Desert I remember BLM acquired the Indian Peak unit and transplanted a bunch out there and said they were only going to have 200 out there. Then they increased it to 500. Those elk have spread all over that Southwest Desert from one end of that to the other till I'll bet you there's three or four thousand head scattered all over that whole thing. We have these droughts in this country and droughts out there; there was a terrible drought last summer. It never stormed at all. And up on the Cedar Mountain, and on the Panguitch Lake unit, it never rained at all all summer up there. And you people need to take into consideration the effects these droughts have and you need to take more of these elk off when it's droughty. Out there on the Southwest Desert there's a lot of those permittees that couldn't turn any cattle out on that thing. Of course it wasn't all the elk, a lot of those wild horses. I only could turn about two thirds of my cattle out there because of the drought. So when you take that into consideration, these drought conditions, on these elk I just don't think we should keep increasing these upper unit numbers. We worked hard to get a plan in the state that would establish numbers on all these different herd units and yet you just keep increasing them. And I think we need to decrease in some, on some of these units. And I think we need to take off more cows. We can't just keep so many cows and not damage the resources. So I think we ought to take off more cows too. And I'll tell ya, it costs a lot of money to keep up these years out on that Southwest Desert. I got eight windmills. And I spend a lot of money developing springs. And I just have to spend a fortune every year on those windmills. They're a, when they work they're a wonderful invention and when they don't they just break ya. They just cost so much money. Uh, we keep all that water out there and they told me here a few years ago that some of these hunters told me on these, they'd come out and help me a little bit on that windmill maintenance but I never have seen anybody show up. So please keep the numbers of these elks down and don't increase this statewide herd.

Steve Flinders: Thank Gib. Braden Gardner followed by Don Peay.

Braden Gardner: Braden Gardner, representing myself. I'd like to say that I like everything that's been presented. Everything seems to make sense. It's a happy medium between all parties. The one thing I would like to see a motion made, or make a motion that the tooth data be required. I don't see why that's so necessary or such an obstacle to overcome to get the tooth back. I think that would make more sense. We can see exactly what age class we're getting. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Don Peay followed by DeLause Christensen.

Don Peay: Yes, Don Peay, representing myself. I had one goal working on this committee, which was to come up with a plan that Commissioner LeFevre would vote for. Okay, try again next time. I think the important thing that the RAC needs to recognize is the committee really did look at the survey which was as good an attempt to get the broad representation of every elk hunter, whether you're a member of

a group or not. It was, and we really looked at that data. And I guess the one real question is that we spent a lot of time, it's been mentioned, is what's the status quo? Is that the ages of the elk we've had the last five years or where the plans are headed? And there's enough conflicting data but the committee recommended that if we didn't put the age classes where we did the hunters would not be happy where they're going; where the elk herd plans were headed. And I use a little bit of this analogy, go back to 2008 and a lot of people told some people in the government we're headed for a terrible economic disaster if we don't fix a few things. And everybody said we all got to have a big house and we all got to have all this stuff. So the economy crashed and then everyone said well why did the government let us do it? And that's kind of where this committee is. Utah's got the best elk herd and the best elk hunting overall in the United States. And we looked at all these other states; Colorado's losing elk hunters, about 5 percent a year. So we've got a great product. And what the committee tried to do was reach perfection and we put a lot of time into that and so . . . based on what the hunters wanted, and of course we all want a 400 bull every year for five bucks but. . . I think this survey did a better job than any survey I've ever seen of asking risk reward tradeoffs, and so that's what the committee came up with. And I think it's a pretty good plan. So thank you very much.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Don.

DeLause Christensen: My name is DeLause Christensen. I'm from Glenwood, Utah. I'm representing myself this evening. I want to start out by thanking you for your service. I especially want to recognize Mr. Morrell and Mr. LeFevre. I've heard your names for many years and I respect what you have done over the years for your industry. I want to tell you a little story. My grandfather owned 29 townships. They lost it in the depression. I watched my father stand while the bank auctioned off his cattle operation. My house, his truck, his car, everything we owned went in that auction. I know what you're talking about. I know how hard it is to make a living as a cattleman. Let me say this, I appreciate Mr. Stanworth's comments. I am not a cowboy anymore. I couldn't make any money at that. I tried when I was a youngster and it just wasn't my saddle to ride. I'm a hunter and a sportsman. And I appreciate you participating in this activity for us because this is about us, and I realize it affects you. But I appreciate Mr. Stanworth reminding the RAC of the money that's been raised by sportsman to try and help cattleman and sheepman on the ranch. Let me tell you what I did three weeks ago. We have a conference where about 20 or 30 thousand sportsmen came. The BLM came to a sportsman's organization here in the state and said we want to fix 50,000 acres of rangeland on the Paunsagaunt unit, and we got 2,200 letters from east coast anti hunting people. We need something to help with that. I went to that convention and I'm 300 pounds and 62 years old. And in two days I got 560 signatures from sportsman. Every single sportsman but two that I talked to wanted to support that plan. We know what that plan's about; it's to help livestock and wildlife. We're on your side in this guy. We don't expect you to give us something for nothing. I realize there's been a lot of sacrifice made over the years. I've watched it, I've lived it; so I know what you're going through. I don't expect you to give us anything that we don't pay for. Okay, enough said on that. Now, there's been nobody come to these meetings over the last 35 years more than me and complain about the DWR, nobody, I guarantee you. My name is despised in that Salt Lake office for the harassment that I've given these people. You can look in the records, it's there. But I want to tell you how well they've done with this elk management. I remember when all we had in the state of Utah were spike elk. Our technology is so efficient we can kill every single thing out there if we want to. With the roads, the equipment, the guns, the scopes, the scouting mechanisms we have today, there's nothing we can't kill if we want to. The DWR in the case of elk has done a fantastic job leading us to the kind of elk we have today. There's elk for trophy hunters. There's elk for people who just want to shoot an average bull. And there's meat for everyone that wants it. And

that's a great plan. There needs to be a plan like you've seen tonight where there is something for all those who want to participate. We can quibble a little bit about a number here or a number there and we'll do that. But I want to thank the department tonight for this plan and for the effort they've made and the success they've had with elk management. And that's all I'll have to say. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Do you also want to talk about the next agenda item? I'll save your card.

DeLause Christensen: Yeah. I want to talk on deer but not (inaudible).

Steve Flinders: I've got one more card. I'm unclear, Stanton Gleeve. Do you want to talk about the elk statewide management plan or about Mt. Dutton? Right now?

Stanton Gleeve: I'm Stanton Gleeve from Kingston, Utah. I guess what I'm representing is kind of ourselves. We run livestock on Mt. Dutton. I am on the board on the Henry Mountain Grazers, so I'm here with those folks too. What concerns me, we run sheep. I guess we're the last crazy people in Utah, in southern Utah that run sheep. We run two herds on Mt. Dutton. Last year we lost over 500 lambs and over 100 yearlings, and close to that in ewes; about \$70,000.00 dollars worth of sheep up on that. We've tried to turn that permit to cattle for years and the Forest Service won't allow that because of all of the creeks on there. They don't want cattle on the creeks. But yet they'll turn about and let these elk, which was supposed to be, well they were 500 a few years ago and then it got to 700 and the last I knew it was 1,200. But on our last count up there when they flew this winter around 2,200 to 2,300 is what's on there. They run right on the sheep range, winter and summer. Anyway what I feel like we do is we feed a herd of elk, which is way out of hand, and we feed our sheep to a herd of mountain lions that the fish and game manages. I think something ought to give here. Either they ought to control that bunch of mountain lions so we can run sheep or else the Forest Service ought to back off and let us turn our, put cattle on our allotment. We ought to at least be able to run cattle there. And that's where we're at; we're caught right in the middle. And I borrow money every year to stay in business. And I'm pretty well, I'm getting tired of it. At least the fish and game would ought to at least be held to their management, at least to their plan; which they say now is 1,500, I thought it was still 1,200. But 2,300 head of elk on there is just ridiculous. Anyway, I guess that's all I have to say.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. That's all I've got for comment cards. Have we left anybody out that wants to comment on the statewide elk management plan? All right. We'll now move to RAC comments.

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: At some point Rex I'll leave it up to your discretion, whether you want to talk now or towards the end, but you served us well on the committee and we appreciate your communication. Hopefully everybody that wanted to gave you the feedback that they could. But we hope to hear from you somewhere along the way here. So, discussion? Go ahead Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Well to start off, being from Kanab and down on the Paunsagaunt, the elk that we do have down there they've had very little success in counting them. We have a low number of elk down there. In suggesting that we go to a no elk unit, I feel like this would still provide opportunity on a yearly basis. The Mt. Dutton elk do migrate down there yearly. My real concern is the effect that elk have on mule deer. And I know that is a very controversial point and we can probably compare it to global warming; if you want to come up with the pros and cons on how people feel about that. Because

there is very little evidence but I can tell you that I've done an awful lot of research on that, mainly to satisfy my curiosity, because the Paunsagaunt didn't initially have elk, the elk showed up in the mid 80's. Places that I've frequented all my life on that unit that were honey holes for deer, after the elk moved in the deer were gone. And I struggled, you know, because of the argumentative nature of just the theory that there is some problems with interaction. And in all honesty I've been able to come up with just all kinds of, I guess you would call it, speculative nature problems. There is a study out there that's called the Starkley Project. This project . . . and I'll read this just for a minute. I know we've got time constraints here and I don't want to dig real deep on this; but this was a joint wildlife research project conducted by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, USDA, Forest Service at the Starkley Experimental Forest Range, 28 miles Southwest of LeGrand, Oregon. The project is designed to measure the population response of deer and elk to intensely managed forest and rangelands of the future. This started in 1989. They actually trapped deer and elk and put them in about a 20,000-acre incatchment (sic). The basis of this study was to see the interaction with cattle, more than anything else. But some of the things that come out of this study, and I'm just going to brush on this really quick; as we talk about models, Anis you know how we've gone through all this, and one of the things that they did an awful lot of up there was modeling. And one of the things they bring up here is in their elk modeling that elk were continued to avoid cattle. I know that that's probably contrary to what Dell and these guys are seeing, but this is what the study showed. And mule deer were more strongly avoided elk than elk avoided mule deer; that is by non significant mule deer variables in the elk models, but highly significant elk variables in the deer models. Now to me this says that yes there is interaction problems and there are negative effects. And as you get into the discussion portion of this it says that all of the analyses are consistent with the hypothesis of cascading effect of larger ungulates displacing smaller ones. In both, and it names the two study areas, and all three studies cited evidence of deer displacing mule deer. So, I mean yes, elk displacing mule deer. And what it boiled down to is when there's competition between deer and elk the deer will lose. So there's more, and I could comment further on it but . . . I really like the plan that you guys have put together. I think you've covered all the bases. I hear all the comments and the people that are concerned with their cattle and the different things, and you've allowed for that. You've made provisions where if they're going to increase elk on that unit you're going to put a committee together that is going to involve these people and they're going to have their say and they're going to work it out. And if it's going to be something and they don't want to see an increase it should be taken care of at that level and done that. I hunt elk every year. I love to hunt elk, you know, they're a big part of my life. I really struggle with increasing the number of elk in the state with the declining deer herd. I really feel like the deer herd is hurting right now. And increasing the elk population is not going to help that, it's going to work against it. And there is proof out there for those of you that do not believe that these interactions are negatively effecting deer. I can site an awful lot of stuff here that, the speculation and it's like I said on global warming... you know, how do you prove this stuff? It's just really tough to do. But the best part of your plan is you're addressing habitat. Habitat is the key to any of this. If we don't have the habitat we're going to lose the whole deal. Something Mack brought up about the cattle and the elk and the fact that they're going and eating these quakies clear to the ground, elk have luxury organs. These antlers require minerals. They've got to have phosphate, calcium. They have to eat that kind of stuff and they have to eat it to the ground. They can't have that magnificent rack and that coat eating cellulose. They can't live on grass. And when these elk need to grow this, these antlers, they have got to eat that type of stuff and they've got to eat all they can get. If they don't build their fat stores and get that magnificent set of horns they're not going to be able to breed. They're not going to make it as a herd bull and they'll struggle that way. So you know the old argument about cattle and deer eating the same thing, well that is true that the elk can get by on a lot of cellulose and things of that nature but to grow these antlers they have to go up and they have to have the

same type of, I guess you would call it herbaceous foods and high protein in order for this to happen and for them to have that. And anytime that happens that's gonna, they're going to be competing with deer on that because they have antlers as well. So there's a big difference in that particular part of their diet and their life.

Steve Flinders: Sam, I think we're getting a little off track.

Sam Carpenter: Okay. I'm sorry, yes and I'm sure I am. But I support what you guys are doing. I feel like you've really put together a good plan and I'm definitely in favor of it.

Steve Flinders: Anybody else got some discussion to move this along? Go ahead Dell.

Dell LeFevre: Okay I'm back on who loses. Hey, I wish I'd had this guy as my bodyguard for years weighing 300 pounds. I'd been a lot braver with the fish and game. You know it bothers me because on the Fish Lake you've got a four inch stubble when it gets down, grazed down to four inches left they're off. And on the Dixie it's only three inch. And they can control us; they can kick us down the hill and the elk still stays on the hill. And back to improvements, we just don't get any improvements. And I'm with Gib Yardley, it costs money to stay up there and we're doing improvements for the elk. And somewhere this thing has to balance out. It's like Verland King said, I quit farming in Salt Gulch because I can't compete with the elk. I've got a roughly 200-acre alfalfa field over there and I can't farm it. And at least this gentleman here realizes we do have problems. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Go ahead Mack.

Mack Morrell: According to the survey most hunters favor the current structure . . . so . . . Anyway I'd like to comment a little bit. Those of us who remember back in the 50's when a lot of this rangeland was overgrazed and we took substantial cuts and all. And we've got pictures to prove it back then and pictures today. There is monumental improvements back when they were just deer and no elk on the range. Now the deer's in the field and the elk controls the range. Now how do we control the deer out of the fields? You can't. And for address Sam again, you know we provide salt out on the range, trace mineral salt. Not only for the cows but I guess for all wildlife. And that's never been addressed. And I'd like to have a drought provision in this statewide management plan also, because we've experienced a lot of drought, now a lot of snow. Last week up in Lyman they picked a good shed right out of the manger where he feeds his cows. That's the problem that we're having.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Mack. Clair, do you still have comments down there?

Clair Woodbury: Thanks Steve. I would also like to thank the Division for this, really a terrific plan. I would like to see a couple of adjustments made. I still struggle with the age structure on these so-called premium units. Crunching the numbers in the last few weeks, in the last ten years most of the elk units in southern Utah we've seen an increase between 500 and 1000 percent on elk tags and elk kill and the age class stay the same. So we've obviously been underutilizing this great elk herd that we have. Also, I'd like to see some representation for the general public on these local elk committees; I think that's vital that a regular Joe like us have some say. It's a great problem that we have though. I appreciated DeLause's and Don's comments. I too started hunting elk when there were very, very few in Utah and to see . . . This is a marvelous problem that we have. Really, you know, how do we keep the elk down to numbers? How do we keep getting these very large trophy elk? It's a great problem and a shining

beacon for the whole western states. We've really managed their elk well. We're really the highlight of the whole west. And we can do a lot more. We have a lot of habitat that we can work on and improve. About 20 years ago I picked up in the Cedar City Division office a history of the elk in Utah and the potential that we have. It listed the, I've heard references to quaking aspen habitat and some problems we're having with it, but this study by the Division shows Utah second only to Colorado in elk habitat; and more than double Idaho, in third place. So we have a great opportunity to increase our elk herds by many numbers. But let's do it gradually. Let's do it as we improve the habitat. And again, I look forward to working with the Division on this great problem we have of a great elk herd.

Steve Flinders: Sure Rex.

Rex Stanworth: Clair, let me ask you a question? In the committee makeup, it lists two local sportsman's representatives. Would you rather change the terminology of local sportsman? Is there something that would give you more comfort? Because my understanding is those two people were to be nominated by the Division, correct?

Anis Aoude: Yeah and those were meant to be mostly unaffiliated. But as we all know, you know, it's hard to say what people's affiliations are when they're, you know, as a local.

Rex Stanworth: Would it give you more comfort if as the Division selects those two members to come to that RAC person who's in that area and say, we're looking at nominating these or do you have some people you would like to nominate for that committee?

Clair Woodbury: No I just . . . That would be good if we could designate those. We were already covered by SFW and the Mule Deer Foundation, RMDF, so if we could just aim it at . . .

Anis Aoude: Those would be separate from those other groups. And that's why we intended to have more local

Clair Woodbury: If local sportsman called em, local hunter, local user; even a non-consumptive. I think we need to mirror this RAC makeup, which is a very well put together.

Steve Flinders: I think those committees were meant to house those who have a vested interest. However you want to capture that in a motion.

Clair Woodbury: I will defer that motion to Rex; he's our local guru on this elk committee. But if you could maybe address that just a little that would satisfy me.

Steve Flinders: Give us your thoughts Rex, if you would.

Rex Stanworth: Well I think it's fair to say that the elk committee was lively, lots of good thoughts, a lot of good people there. One thing for sure, everybody was passionate about elk. The biggest thing that I kept disagreeing with in the plan was the chance of losing the opportunities for the sportsman. I sit on the RAC, I represent at-large. And when it was mentioned that we'd only lose 20 or 30 permits, was that a big deal? It's a big deal to the guy who missed that draw by one permit. And so that was where I came from. Personally I like the Division's idea of coming back and massaging that center group with that five-five to six. I like that much better. It will create a little bit more opportunity. I had some

heartache with the ten units of what I call premium/semi-premium, which are the seven and a half to eight, and the six and a half to seven. Half of that group is from the Southern RAC. So half of our elk units are going to be taken into those high old age bulls which everybody here says, oh I want it to be an old age bull classification. But what they don't realize is not today and probably not next year nor even the year after that but once this plan kicks in and we hit that objective, those numbers are going to most likely go down. So they're going to sit back and look at all these big bulls grazing on Monroe and the Pahvant and every place else but they're not going to be able to get a permit. So then they're going to come back in and say to us, hey guys there's a lot of bulls out there and I want to draw one, you need to give us more permits. So we just go through that cycle and that was the thing that I mentioned. I like the idea that we brought some of the permits out of the rut. Personally I, I asked that we take all of the permits out of the rut. If we'd have taken all of the permits out of the rut we could have had another group of people who could go hunt. And there are some states that do not have rut hunts. We speak out of both sides of our mouth. We talk about hunting in the rut but then we talk about we need to have big quality bulls. Well I can tell you I don't think Dell would have let anybody shoot the spider bull if that was on his ranch as one of his breeding bulls if it was throwing the kind of calves that everybody wanted. I don't think that most farmers would have let their 400 to 450 bulls be shot because they're in the rut and they're stupid. As a result of that what we do is we've been killing all of these premium bulls in that rut hunt and we're not getting them into the breeding sessions that they need to to build that herd. That was one reason why I liked the idea of the deer hunt coming out of the rut of the mule deer. It seemed like to me it helped us. I personally am in favor of an increase but being sensitive to those people who that increase will impact. I like the idea of the committees because the committees, local committees, for that unit are going to be able to sit down and listen to the Dells and the Macks and then throw a carrot out in front of them and say, but look . . . what if we could do this, because this is your concern is habitat, water or whatever it is, what if we did this and this for you what would you give us in return as far as elk numbers? So there's some give and take. There's some stuff put back into their own operations and hopefully the impacts will be lessened in hopes that it would increase their bottom line as well. I should tell you, I hate to throw hot water right in your lap Dell but quite honestly if you ask these gentlemen here where do they expect the 80,000 elk to come from the majority of those elk they're looking at in Southern Utah because there's nothing north. And so that 80,000 head of elk is coming here if, if the permittees and the Farm Bureau and all of these groups that come into these committees are going to be able to agree. So there is that opportunity for voice. And I think in that committee it's going to be strongly listened to and I think that we can come up with some alternatives that would maybe make it financially more feasible, more palatable I guess is the word, for you folks; in the event that you want to join in on the let's bring more elk into the state. Overall it is a good plan. It really is a good plan. Don, Don Peay has done an immense amount of work of coming up with the numbers. Don's a good salesman because he focuses on one question and he ignored the other two or three questions I kept bringing up. And that's okay. You know that's okay. But for the overall point of the plan I like it. Some of these folks out here who were a few numbers off are not going to like it in five years when potentially those numbers start to come down, the tag numbers start to come down when we meet these. You have to remember that from the original plan we decreased the age objective because we had so many bulls over age; and within one year of that plan the Big Game Board they were convinced that they needed to raise that elk age by one year on each classification. So we've increased one year and now we're increasing again; and so as long as everybody recognizes that. I guess in a nutshell that's my pros and cons to the program. Tonight we all got a warm fuzzy feeling that this is a great plan. In four or five years when the numbers start to go down we may not have that warm fuzzy feeling with the exception of, and Don brought this up, it's a very good point. If we're good salespeople and we can convince the people who, the landowners and the permittees to allow us to increase elk then

we're going to be able to increase numbers of permits. And so I guess quite honestly while I was a big thorn in the side of Anis, and Kent, and Don and the other eleven people on that committee, based upon the massaging by the Division on that center section, knowing that I'm probably not going to gain any support statewide for reducing those top two tiers of old age bull classifications, I'm probably going to vote for the plan with a few improvised recommendations that you gentlemen have said here tonight.

Steve Flinders: Well it's been a good discussion (inaudible) Go ahead Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: I just have a couple of things to say. I do appreciate the people that spent the time to be on this committee that came up with this plan. I personally have a real problem with the new age objective what they're trying to do. I think it's going to take away the opportunity for people to hunt. And the thing is, if you go with the age objective I don't think it's going to guarantee you're going to get 380 and 400 bulls. Just because they're older doesn't mean they're going to have bigger horns. And in Utah, I've hunted in a lot of states, okay . . . We have a great, great management plan in this state. I think the big thing is and I know you addressed the habitat thing but I think one thing that we forget . . . I mean we love to hunt. There's nobody that loves to hunt more than me. But I don't have any cows. When I was a kid my dad had cows but because of what happened we don't have any cows anymore. I think that we need to look at these people that have these problems like the cattleman, and like Stanton on the Dutton. I mean this Dutton problem has been ongoing forever. And I think maybe if we set these committees up and we take a look at these units and where we're having the problems and we address that problem so that we all get along, so we can hunt, and people can still run cows and run sheep on these mountains. I think we have to get along together, every one of us. Just a question, and maybe you can answer this for me; did we do a count on the Dutton and was it 2,300 elk?

Teresa Bonzo: Dustin, what was it with sightability? Dustin.

Douglas Messerly: What was the population estimate?

Teresa Bonzo: Population estimate with sightability on Mt. Dutton? Was it 1,800? The actual count was around 1,600.

Cordell Pearson: Okay, I just want to say one more thing to say real quick about the Dutton. The cow permits you put on the Dutton, okay, on the late hunt you don't even see a cow unless you have a helicopter to get up there. You can see them in a spotting scope. But you cannot kill those cows. I think what you need to do if we have an overpopulation on that mountain when we do our antlerless permits, we need to kill a lot more elk during that first hunt and forget about the late hunt; because them elk leave that mountain. What is not up high go to the Paunsagaunt, the Beaver and the Boulder. So we just keep issuing tags, issuing tags, issuing tags. What is the success ratio on antlerless elk on the Dutton, about 19 percent?

Dustin Schaible: It's 27 percent across the board last year. Both hunts were 40 percent, pretty much even.

Cordell Pearson: It went to 40 percent?

Dustin Schaible: Just, just this last year. We did some change with the dates.

Cordell Pearson: And you only had two hunts last year, right?

Dustin Schaible: Yeah, we did some change with the dates. We moved one . . .

Cordell Pearson: Okay, and I think there we're moving in the right direction. I don't want to get into the antlerless thing but I think that we need to address these problems with the livestock owners, you know. We all love to hunt and I think we can do something to help them out. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Cordell. Good point. Go ahead Steve.

Steve Dalton: I guess everybody else is going to do it I just as well do a little bit. I wrote a little letter. This was addressed to Rex and the sportsman in this state concerning this elk issue back when Rex was on the committee and it was still in the process. This is dated January 24th. I was in favor of SFW's recommendation at that point, to try and increase the number of premium units to the seven and a half-eight-year-old bulls. Aw, let me just read it. It's just a few sentences here. I said, I would like to see trophy management strategy to continue on these units. We were able to create the quality that we have right now and we should be able to maintain that same quality in the future. The one thing we do not all agree on is that we do not need to increase elk population overall to maintain what we have right now. I don't understand why we have to increase it to maintain what we've already got. We were able to achieve this at this stage, why can't we just maintain it? We don't have to increase it by another 1,500 head of elk or 2,500 head of elk in the state to maintain that kind of quality. Anyway I feel we should pay more attention to our mule deer herds at this time and need to get some deer back in Utah. Micro management deer herd unit by unit should allow us to achieve similar results to what we have with our elk herds right now. Simply stated we are the envy of all the other western states and let's keep what we have achieved. So keep what we've done with the elk and try to get the deer back on board. That's my opinion.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. More discussion? Again, the task at hand is to ratify this plan or some version of it that makes better sense to us after the comments that we've heard tonight, discussion. Are we getting close to a motion? All I said is we need to focus on the plan that's been proposed to us tonight and whether we want to ratify that or make modification based on the comment we've heard and ensuing discussion.

Rex Stanworth: Well it looks like to me, just going over a couple of points before I make a motion then; with Sam, in regards to the committee . . . does the language there make you happy or would you rather see it say the DWR will establish local committees to review individual herd unit management plans to see if herd size objectives could, it says could be revised. Are you happy with that? Because that could go up or down to me when it says revised.

Sam Carpenter: Yes, that's fine.

Rex Stanworth: Okay. So you're happy with the way that states. Okay. And Dell, the question I've got for you; knowing that this committee is there and that your group is going to have several, quite a few different representatives on that, are you happy with the way that the committee makeup is set in place and the opportunity? What would you like to see different?

Dell LeFevre: I'd like to see actual ranchers on there like Stanton Gleeve, guys that really have

problems to balance this thing out. You know right now, yeah John Keeler does a whale of a job but the thing is you look at this, the deck is stacked before we ever start.

Rex Stanworth: Uh huh. Okay. Now remember on this it says that the DWR, the landowner representative will be appointed by the County Commission or County Council.

Dell LeFevre: See and I never heard a thing about it, those County Commissioner.

Rex Stanworth: Yeah I know. But that's one reason why we put this in here because now the County Commissioner is going to be involved in this, in this committee. They're going to be aware of what's coming. That was one of the things we tried to make clear and I made it a point, the County Commission and these counties need to be informed about what's coming to them. So in that it says that the County Commission or County Council will represent a landowner representative. And that's beyond the BLM and . . . let's see, the Farm Bureau, the Cattleman Association, the Woolgrowers Association, there will be a land representative. Is one land representative not enough or do you? What we were thinking of is one person that could be a spokesman for that group of landowners in that area.

Dell LeFevre: But yeah that's okay. But look at the sportsman's you got on there. And you've got to say BLM to sportsman. They don't give a damn about us cowmen.

Rex Stanworth: Well I guess the bottom line comes down to, and you correct me if I'm wrong in this, but my thoughts are if we get into that committee and the landowner/wool growers and cattlemen or Farm Bureau are saying we're not getting enough here, we're not interested in any more elk. Even with the carrots dangled in front of us, if the group says no I'm assuming at that point in time the discussion is mute unless there can be another way of sweetening the pot. Am I right? I see what you're saying. You're thinking you may be outvoted.

Anis Aoude: Right. I think that's . . .

Steve Flinders: Anis, tell us about the last time we did this about four years ago. They don't have any faith in the process.

Anis Aoude: I guess I have faith in the process and I think the process worked the way it was supposed to. But you know this committee felt that there probably was not enough sportsman representation.

Steve Flinders: Were you the coordinator the last time these small committee met to discuss age population objectives?

Anis Aoude: I was. Yes.

Steve Flinders: What was the net result in the Southern Region?

Anis Aoude: Statue quo or even maybe a slight decline in populations.

Steve Flinders: That was the last time we did this. Do we think it will be different? Are there sufficient carrots?

Steve Dalton: (Inaudible not in the mic).

Anis Aoude: I guess we tried to be all-inclusive in these committees. You know if they need to be tweaked we certainly would love any comment from anybody here.

Steve Flinders: We are looking for suggestions to make these committees the best we can.

Rex Stanworth: I count seven folks on there that at least I would consider to be friends of the grazers and the permittees. If you look at the Farm Bureau, the Cattleman, the Wool Growers, the CWMU . . . I would think would be somebody that's in the same situation you are . . . local landowner or landowner representatives, and then the County Commission will be able to put one in there.

Clair Woodbury: Rex, I've also in my years on the RAC never seen the Forest Service or the BLM vote for more elk. I would put them on that category too.

Steve Flinders: Depending on who the player is there, typically it's a discussion about (unintelligible) conditions and problems. And hopefully it's talked about potential solutions.

Clair Woodbury: I agree with Dell that it seems to be stacked but I take a different view on stacked which way.

Rex Stanworth: Anis, have you got some sort of an idea as far as trying to make this to where those permittees/landowners are going to have a fairly decent say in what they want to see happen?

Anis Aoude: I'm not sure it's my place to really; I think the plan speaks for itself. I think we went through a lot of lamenting to put it together. If this body feels that it needs to be different it has to come from you guys. It does. It's not going to come from me.

Rex Stanworth: I just wondered if you had any suggestions for language.

Steve Flinders: That's, I can see the Division's best effort right there.

Anis Aoude: Right.

Steve Flinders: If we want to change it it's up to us to make a motion and the Wildlife Board to act on it. I think we're at that point; somebody needs to step forward and make that motion and see if it will get through the RAC.

Rex Stanworth: Well let's think about that for a second. Let's see, Clair, you had a concern about the committee makeup with a local person. Knowing that those two local representatives, two local local sportsman representatives are going to be appointed by the DWR, is there anything that you want to see else put in there?

Clair Woodbury: No I think I covered my concerns. Just so the regular Joes get invited and not just special interests.

Steve Flinders: The easiest solution there Rex may be to specify that that RAC member be an at-large

RAC member, if you wanted to say that.

Rex Stanworth: Okay, at-large.

Steve Flinders: If they have an interest or if the RAC wants to appoint one of the at-large.

Rex Stanworth: Okay. Let me just go back to Cordell. Cordell, on your's you've got an age classification problem, as I've had. Would you see any way, would you see anything there that would make you happy if it was changed one way or the other?

Cordell Pearson: I just said that I think it should say, stay the same way it was instead of being changed.

Steve Flinders: Yeah, we can break this plan down if we want to do separate motions. Are you getting closer Rex? You're really crunching over there.

Rex Stanworth: Yeah I know. I'm just trying to figure if there's a way to do this in one that would . . .

Clair Woodbury: Rex, can I throw in a little bit of advice here?

Rex Stanworth: Sure.

Steve Flinders: Go ahead Clair.

Clair Woodbury: I had a good friend call me on my way to this meeting and I asked him, well is there anything that you'd like me to say? And this is a 66-year-old gentleman, 13 bonus points, just about to give up applying. He says he's getting too old. But he said, just tell the RAC, and the Wildlife Board and the Division one thing, do what's best for the wildlife of the state of Utah. Now I know we're having a little heartburn with the age classifications. Is that the best thing for our elk herd? Is that going to overpopulate our elk herd with too many bulls and skew our bull to cow ratio where we're having to kill too many cows to reach our numbers objective? That's the concern that I might have.

Rex Stanworth: Right now the only thing (unintelligible).

Steve Flinders: You can't accommodate everybody. You come up with a perfect motion

Anis Aoude: We'll elect you president.

Steve Flinders: Yeah, I dare ya. No harm no foul. Go ahead Rex.

Rex Stanworth: I guess I'll make a motion that we accept the Division's elk management plan with a couple of exceptions or notations, whatever you want to call them. One is that . . . no let's not do that. I'm going to go ahead and make a recommendation that we accept the elk plan as outlined. That there has been enough safety nets put into this in regards to the local committees, in relationship to the elk or no elk, because the committees are the ones that are going to decide if we should increase elk. So I'm going to go ahead and make a recommendation that we accept the plan as outlined.

Rex Stanworth made the motion that we accept the DWR elk plan as outlined. Steve Dalton

seconded.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Rex to pass the plan as written. Any seconds? Seconded by Steve Dalton. Any discussion on the motion? Everybody understand that motion? It ended up pretty simple in the end. Comment Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: I'd just like to amend his motion one thing. If you take a look at the book in the age objective has gone up. If you take a look at the age on the elk that have been killed in those units it's already up there to the same place. So I would just suggest that we keep the age limit the same as it was, we accept the plan. I think it's a great plan. I don't think we're gaining anything by this except cutting tags three years down the road.

Steve Flinders: The request to amend your motion by Cordell to keep the age objective status quo. Do you accept that amendment?

Rex Stanworth: I'll accept it and see how it votes.

Steve Flinders: The motion as amended. Steve do you want to second it?

Steve Dalton: No.

Steve Flinders: Motion as amended seconded by Clair. Any further discussion? The motion is to pass the plan as written with the exception of going back to the status quo or the old former age objectives. We'll call for a vote. All those in favor? All those opposed? Hold them up. Motion fails. Did you guys get that vote?

Natalie Brewster: I got 7 -3, 7 opposed, 3 for.

Rex accepted Cordell Pearson's amendment to his motion. The motion now reads to accept the Division's elk management plan as written with the exception of leaving the age objectives status quo, or retain the former age objectives. The motion failed 7-3, seven opposed and three in favor.

Steve Flinders: Yep. I'd entertain another motion.

Rex Stanworth: I'll make a motion that we accept the plan as written.

Steve Dalton: I'll second that.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Rex, seconded by Steve. To accept the plan as drafted. Any discussion about that motion? All those for the motion? Those against? Motion passes. Did you get that vote? Thanks everybody that was a great discussion and very thorough I think. How about we take a ten-minute break, twenty after.

Rex Stanworth made the motion to accept the Division's Elk Management Plan as proposed. Steve Dalton seconded. 6 for 3 opposed. Dale Bagley abstained.

Steve Flinders: Once in a lifetime permit numbers. Anis is up again.

Bucks, Bulls & OIAL Permit Numbers for 2010 (action) 2:08:31 to 2:21:16 of 3:37:59

- **Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator**

Steve Flinders: Thanks Anis. Questions from the RAC members on the presentation for Anis? Sam's got some.

Questions from the RAC:

Sam Carpenter: Real quick, have you got any of the data on the management hunt on the Paunsagaunt on how many were taken?

Anis Aoude: On the management bucks?

Sam Carpenter: Yeah. On how successful you felt it was.

Anis Aoude: I think there were 24. No . . . yeah I think it was 47 out of the 50 were killed. As far as ages, is that what, age data? I guess . . .

Sam Carpenter: Just whether or not you fell like it was a success and that it's going in the right direction.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, I think it was. And I would let the other guys speak if they want, but from . . . yeah let's have Dustin speak to it. I think it was a success but I'll let them elaborate.

Dustin Schaible: 45 were killed out of the 50 and the average age is 4.4. And I think it was a good overall successful hunt. I think having that old of an age really reflected, I think folks really taking the online orientation course really seriously and trying to target the mature three-points or less on one side.

Sam Carpenter: I'm not through with ya. Were the hunters happy, you know the people? I know you guys run a survey right out there on the ground.

Dustin Schaible: Yeah very much so. I think most folks that drew that tag were very satisfied.

Sam Carpenter: And you had some permits that didn't report, isn't that true? And did you ever, were you able to chase those down?

Dustin Schaible: Um, yeah. There were a few law enforcement cases that were ongoing with that.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions? Layne.

Layne Torgerson: I am going to base this as a question. Anis, I know that in the, whether it was last year, I think it was last year or the year before, there was some reduction in general season deer permits in the northern and the northeastern region due to winter kill. Would that be an option at this point to look at some reduction in general season deer permits in the Southern Region with the amount of snow that we've received down here and the concern that I've got some, had some concerns about winter kill?

Anis Aoude: You can certainly, you know, this is what, yeah this is the RAC to discuss that. It's not the Division's recommendation nor do we think there was enough winterkill to even get close to a reduction in the permit numbers.

Steve Flinders: Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Do we really have evidence of a winterkill? Have we gone out and looked and actually have . . . ?

Anis Aoude: Oh yeah. We do a weekly report on winter conditions. Again, I'll let the region elaborate on that.

Teresa Bonzo: We do weekly reports. The biologists and the conservation officers submit reports where they do around the state actually. And we have documented a few animals. You know the green up is coming so we may continue to see a little bit and then we'll start our range rides. We're really finding out. We don't think it's significant at this point. A lot of south facing slopes were still open. A lot of the pictures that have been submitted by the officers and biologists, the deer are still looking in pretty good condition. We also when we get older age class road kills we'll measure the xiphoid fat. Some certainly have more than others but we have documented a little bit but that's normal. We wouldn't call it significant or ever to the point this winter of needing to do emergency feeding or anything. So we're coming out of the woods, it's greening up. But how significant it may be is still to be determined.

Steve Flinders: Good questions. Any others? Well I've got one for the region, maybe even Sean. Some locals asked me about the limited entry elk permits on the Beaver, flip-flopped in the rifle hunt early versus late. Last year was 17 early and 26 late. This year it's 25 early and 16 late.

Sean Kelly: Yeah that's one of the unique things about the Beavers, the elk tend to be there in the summer and a lot of times leave in the wintertime. I had some complaints last year that by the time the late season got to hunt why those elk were already gone off of the unit. And so most of the time we try to keep most of the permits out of that early season hunt to improve quality of the Beaver as slightly less than other units like the Pahvant, anyway. And with those complaints we thought we'd try it the other way this year and see what happens.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. Any questions from the public?

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Come up to the mic and give us your name please.

Brian Johnson: Brian Johnson. And I don't know if it's the right time to bring it up but just noticing here on the Beaver that the tags actually went down, or sorry, for rocky mountain goat, the tags actually went down. Did the herd number go down? Or are you planning a big trap or is that? It doesn't make sense to me. I don't know what the objective or the herd number is.

Sean Kelly: Our rocky mountain goat herd on the Beaver has been doing so well that we were about double objective. And so we did relocation. We transplanted a lot of the nannies out of there and we're all season hunting trying to bring that population down. We're starting to approach our objective now

but we're still, but we're (unintelligible) a ways. So we're hoping with this next year we'll bring that back down.

Brian Johnson: Through trapping or through hunting?

Sean Kelly: Yeah, we have about as many billies and we did nannies so we took as many as we could through trapping or relocating; and also hunted nannies for a couple of years. But they got to be a little bit of a concern because our adult nannies were starting to leave the population and we had a pretty good group of big billies. And we still have a fair number of big billies so we're going to use just billy hunting pretty much to get the rest of the way down. So we are, we did reduce it from last year but it's still a significant amount of tags. You'll notice there's about 110 tags, 111 tags statewide and about 25 of those are coming off of the Beaver unit. So that's about one quarter statewide of the permits.

Brian Johnson: It just didn't make sense if the objective is higher than why you'd lower tags.

Sean Kelly: Yeah, we have about 125 goat objective and we're at about, at one time we were 250 so we're still coming back, or we're still over. I'm sorry I wasn't clear on that.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions from the public: Sure Sir, come up to the mic and give us your name.

Gene Boardman: Name's Gene Boardman. And on these permit numbers, what's I'd like to know is these numbers that are given are those the numbers that are in the draw? If they are is there any in the, is there any way of knowing what the total permit numbers are? And I'd particularly like to know on the southern general hunt what the percent of 18,000 or 19,000 or whatever it is, what percent of those are really in the draw? Thank you.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, all the permits I presented tonight are in the drawing. So, I guess that answers the question.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions from the public? We'll move to comment cards.

Douglas Messerly: I think if I understand Mr. Boardman's question correctly, he was asking how many the general season deer permits in the southern region, Anis, are actually in the drawing. As I recall dedicated hunters are taken out prior to the drawing and lifetime license holders are taken out prior to the drawing.

Anis Aoude: That's correct.

Douglas Messerly: So, can we answer his question with regard to those things being taken out? Do you know those numbers?

Anis Aoude: Do I know the number? Not off the top of my head, no I don't. 12,000 total statewide? Okay, roughly 12,000 southern region tags go to the . . .

Kent Hersey: Roughly

Douglas Messerly: The drawing.

Anis Aoude: For the drawing, yep.

Douglas Messerly: Okay, thank you.

Steve Flinders: Does that satisfy your question? For limited entry it even gets more messy. All right moving on to comments.

Comments from the public:

Steve Flinders: Dave Brinkerhoff to be followed by John Keeler.

Dave Brinkerhoff: My comments are on the bison. We've had a working committee for the past, since 2007 on there and it's, right here. I've got it in place and it's been a working really great. In that plan we built some safeguards to protect it from resource damage. The winter range seems to be, still be the issue that nobody seems to want to address in this situation. There's a lot of mouths eating on that winter range; we have the cattle, you have the deer. Right now the deer herd is, you know the Henry Mountains it is a critical part because of the winter range and the issues that the buffalo are on there, livestock's on there, we've got elk numbers on there that the DWR doesn't seem to want to get rid of that elk herd. Antelope are on that winter range now. And just here a month ago the observation of elk coming off of the Boulder Mountain going up Spring Canyon headed for the Henry Mountains. So there's another 75 head of elk that are headed for the Henry Mountains. But yet the DWR says we don't have a herd on the Henry Mountains. So these are concerns that I have. The forage or the feed that is on the allotments and the winter range is the critical part of this whole situation. I don't think anybody that has been involved with it really thinks that there is a problem with forage on the mountain part. There isn't a problem there. The problem is on the winter range and that's where the contentions have started in the past; and that's where the problems is. And in this plan we built in the safeguards to guard against the forage or the habitat being destroyed. And to me right now it is critically being destroyed, especially this winter. With the snow as heavy as it is, two, three, four feet of snow on the Henry Mountains, all of those buffalo are off on the south side of the mountain. I have had to bring three truckloads of cows out of there, besides shoot two or three because of the critical situation that that range is in today. On page six, one of the safeguards says that we will resolve the current issues, the current problems that we have today and address those and we haven't done that. Our first objective was to reach, to bring this number down to 275 head. We have never reached that objective. It is still over the objective of 275 and yet we're moving on. On the next issue on page eleven, item six, population increase will be delayed if vegetation shows a downward trend. On the transit they've studies there's three of those trends that are on the winter range, and every one of them are negative, stable or negative. The K Flat, the Stevens Mesa, the Swapp Mesa shows a downward trends. And that's winter range and that's the critical part of this whole equation. Page 12 is says increased forage will be allocated to bison and livestock. That's in the working plan. I talked to the BLM the other day and they're not going to increase my numbers. So I can't see how we can follow the plan the way that it's going. The only thing that we're following on this plan today is the increase of numbers. The safeguards that are in that plan have been ignored and we've stepped over them. The projects that have been done to increase forage has been minimal. We've had 40 acres on Cedar Creek Mesa bench out there; 40 acres doesn't go very far. I can't see, there's some chainings or some pinion cutting that has been done on Our Place Springs, that is again summer range. That is very minimal cutting. There's no stirring of

the ground and no seeds planted. Those seedings eventually needs to be maintained and they're on a downward trend at this point. The Bullfrog allotment where I run today, and that's where most of the buffalo are at this time, there are currently 3,000 some suspended AUMs on that allotment. That's AUMs that cannot be used by either wildlife or livestock. The active AUMs that can be used is 3,120 AUMs. The actual use of those allotments over the past several years has been 35 percent and that's because of the increase in the pressure on the buffalo being on those winter ranges. The only thing that I can see that we're following on that plan, and this plan is available and it's out there and if anybody needs a copy of it why we can get one from the DWR or we can get one from the working committee, the Bison Working Committee. The only thing that is followed on that plan, if you will study it, is the increase in numbers. I think that the real issue here is the winter range, the forage that is on that winter range. We are doing damage, gentleman. And to me, to me that's going to hurt me in the long run. And for us to go ahead and increase buffalo numbers until we reach objective, until we reach the 275 objective, is wrong because it does not follow the plan. I think that there is, in our plan I think there's a lot of things that have been hammered out. And we can work together on that group and come up with issues but when we come to a decision and it's sent up north and they've rejected it I think there's something with the way it's the committee is. If the committee and that local group comes up with a decision, and that's what we did just three or four weeks ago and we sent it north and it was completely rejected. And they've done exactly what they wanted to do. And I respect what they're trying to do but I think there's times when if we need to follow a plan, and that's what this management plan is about, is to be mindful of the resources that are out there and to take care of them. And I'd just like to thank you for listening to some concerns that I have. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. John followed by Stanton Gleeve.

John Keeler: John Keeler, Utah Farm Bureau. I was part of that committee also. I think it's important, as I stated before, in the elk plan that the thing that we need to protect the most is the process. The plan is a workable document. This group got together and there was a lot of discussion on this, the issue of the numbers. And it was pointed out that we really never got back to the 275 before we started going forward again. And the reason to get back to the 275 was because of the resource. You got to give it a rest. You got to get it growing. Those projects that have been in place they've got to get going. And then to move ahead before you even got back to where you should have done just kind of side steps that. And we had a big discussion about it and it got a little contentious at times. The BLM identified some resource concerns. We've got to be concerned about that. That winter range is critical. And there's some that just don't seem to give much importance to it. And I think we, I just have to keep being persistent about that. These projects that have been identified here and the money spent, that's a lot of money. And there were some projects; but the projects need to be in these key critical areas and many of them have not been. And it was kind of thrown in our face that well if you don't go along with this then, you know, we're going to take the money away. That's not the way to look at this thing. That money needs to be spent there but those projects need to be in the right areas and they need to be producing before those animals get out there. And it was mentioned that there's other species now that are on the increase out there and they're putting pressure on that sensitive range out there. So we need to be vitally concerned about that. This committee recommended 300 and that was a compromise. And so I would recommend to this group that we go to the 300 and then issue more permits based on that. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thanks John. Stanton Gleeve, followed by Verland. Is that King?

Stanton Gleeve: I'm Stanton Gleeve again, Kingston, Utah. I'm representing the Henry Mountain Grazers. I'm on that board. And I just want to add to it that everything David says is the truth there; that they need to follow a management plan. We all, all of us down there have to follow management plans. And we've all taken cuts down on that desert over the years. And no one's got any of that back at all. So there's no reason for that buffalo herd to increase at all until the range will handle it. Until the reset of us, till we all start seeing an increase in numbers there. And anyway I'm just in full support of what he said. And the other thing I wanted to, I'm probably out of place but I'm going to add just one more thing back to that elk count. Biologists here wasn't going to let us fly anybody that represents livestock on that count. We had to call Tom Hatch a state representative to get a stockman on that plane. And then we didn't get to fly the first day so we had to take his word on that. Paul Hatch flew the next two days and he told me that he counted seventeen hundred and fifty something elk in those two days. Then you flew a third day and we didn't get to fly with you that day. So we're just taking your word. But Paul Hatch, and I'll take Paul Hatch's word, that's Tom Hatch's brother. He said seventeen hundred and fifty something elk was counted in those two days. And then if you add twenty percent to seventeen fifty seven that puts you up about twenty two hundred. And they're supposed to have twelve hundred there and ya say fifteen. But anyway I just wanted to get it out, I'm out of place in the meeting but I just wanted to clear that matter up. Anyway, thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Verland King.

Verland King: Verland King, Bicknell, Utah; private landowner on the Henry Mountains also a member of the Henry Mountain Grazers Association and the bison-working group. David (unintelligible) is handing out a letter that the Henry Mountain Grazers Association drafted. It talks about several things. You've heard a little bit about the committee meeting we had earlier, I guess probably last month or this month; these months run together. But uh, you can read through that under section A, I'd like to point this out: As permittees and members of the historical management group the Henry Mountain Bison Working Group, we look forward to the upcoming bison study. We pledge our full support to this study, the bison study. The bison study will begin the winter of 2010. Bison will be collared and radio transmitters, and then their migration, grazing and breeding patterns will be studied. This study will also help provide the answer to the sightability question. Do we count bison from helicopter, when we count bison from a helicopter do we count 85 percent or 95 percent of the total population? The resulting information will be, will result in huge increase in the knowledge base that has been used to manage this magnificent animal. Gaining this knowledge will be the best thing that can happen for the bison and for the resource. This is something that we've pushed forever since the committee was formed. The data that they use now, and I've said it in every RAC since then, has been based on studies done over 30 years ago. We need more information. We need to know migration patterns. We need to know sightability. There's so much we can learn. And Utah State's ready to go with this study. And we met at the bison committee, the bison-working group. We were told that there was money available. So we were excited about that. This will eliminate one of the things David talked about in the bison plan about the sightability and getting back to the 275 before you go up. And these are some of the things that we had built into the bison- plan as safeguards, that and the resource trends. And these trends are arguable whether they're, we've gone up or not. We, but we'll just have to figure that out. Okay, under C, bison numbers have reduced by hunting and transplanting from 515 in the winter of 2008 to the current is 352. And this is based on some numbers they gave us, the DWR gave us at our bison meeting. As of January, on the next page, first paragraph at the bottom, as of . . . I think they said February 2010 the bison herd was 292 adults with 60 calves from last year; and those would go in this year and make 352. And then they use that number and went through how they were going to hunt and get the total head

down to 305. We feel that if we honor this bison-plan we need to go down to the 275, as John Keeler said, for management reasons for the resource. You can see over the three years that we, since the plan was adopted, and even more if you go back and check out the count numbers, we've never reached the 275. The lowest we've got is post season adults is the 292 was their number this spring. So we've never gotten down to that. And part of the reason is we need better values to figure into their uh, their model. Something's not right because every year for the last three years, post hunt, they're supposed to be at 275 and it hasn't worked that way. Right now we're at 295 and, 292, and without counting the calves coming in. And that number will be good until we count again and it's possible we'll be to the, well according to, to uh, the history the last three years we'll probably be up to the big game board asking them to increase these numbers because of the count that we do in the end of July. So we feel that increasing to the 305 is just part of the plan, there was other caveats that needed to be fulfilled before you did this. And as John said, in our bison committee meeting we agreed to go to 300 and we, it has become obvious to us that the two year that's talked about in here to allow habitat projects to increase and become established is too short a time. And in fact we recommended in the bison committee meeting that they ought to hold it at 300 for five years. So . . . and then we also . . . talked about some other things that we, that were written up and presented up north and were rejected I guess. Uh, but I believe that's it. Are there any questions or?

Steve Flinders: Thank you. We may call on you later as we deliberate things. Those are the cards I've got for buffalo. I tried to group them a little bit to make that flow better. Randy Johnson followed by Wade Heaton.

Randy Johnson: Thank you. Randy Johnson of Marysvale, Cedar City. Some people think my residency is out on the desert sheep units. Anyway, Mr. Albrecht asked me the other night if I would come and comment on the recommended desert sheep tags for this year, primarily in Southern Utah. On the Kaiparowits East, the current recommendation is for four permits. I would agree that's about where we should be. I appreciate the job that Dustin and Jason have done as biologists on our sheep units, and also on the job Teresa did on the transplant from Nevada to the Kaiparowits West and East. On the Kaiparowits West right now we have two permits plus one auction tag for a total of three permits. That's a good solid number. That particular unit is really starting to grow. It could be one of the top trophy units in the state here within three more years. On the Kaiparowits Escalante we currently have six permits plus one auction tag. The Escalante is in trouble. And I believe it's in trouble because of the mountain lions. It's a very difficult unit. I've been in there for fifteen to twenty years and I've seen the numbers decline. Last year we had some really good hunters who drew out on that unit and they really struggled to find the sheep. I had a hunter in there in November, we were able to find sheep but we're just not seeing the numbers we have in the past. On their aerial survey next year if the survey goes down again, as it did a year before last, I would recommend that you reduce those numbers. I'd take a close look at that unit. Right now with the seven permits let's see what happens. But that unit's the one that I'm really worried about. On the new Zion unit you have five permits plus the sportsman tag is going to hunt there and the governors tag. You'll have a total of seven on this new unit. Normally that's a lot of tags to put on a new unit, however, I think the numbers justify that. We need to take a close look after the hunters get through next year. Right now that's going to be an incredible unit and if we don't reduce the numbers they could have some problems with disease; and the park service isn't really cooperating either. So we'll see where that goes. And one other comment, most of you are aware of it on the Gosland unit in Northern Utah they've had a pasteurella problem. They're having to kill all of those sheep. So we spent a lot of money that we're going to lose. But I just had a thought . . . as we're killing those sheep why couldn't the Division at least take the capes off of the animals and sell

them to taxidermists around the country. You can, a full body cape on a sheep you can get \$1,500.00 dollars out of it. And to just kill them and not be able to at least recuperate something from those is really a shame. And I don't know what the legality is of that but I had that mentioned to me, it's just a thought. Thanks for your time.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Randy. Do you have something to add Anis?

Anis Aoude: Yeah. We are attempting to get capes on the ones that we can access, just so you know. And we do have a policy that covers what we can do with them.

Steve Flinders: Just rams?

Anis Aoude: Uh, yeah, yeah.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. Wade, followed by Jeremy Chamberlain.

Wade Heaton: Wade Heaton representing the Alton CWMU. Just wanted to make a few brief comments about the Paunsagaunt numbers. And first I wanted to commend the Division, especially Dustin, our biologist. They have made strides to include those people that have vested interest in the Paunsagaunt. They've made great strides in including us in the process, getting input from us. Anyway, it's just been awesome so I wanted to thank them for that. Um, I support the recommendation to leave the trophy permits the same for the Paunsagaunt, that number. We also support the increase in management buck permits from 50 to 75. As Dustin mentioned that hunt was pretty successful. And I think it's going to alleviate the problem that we had down there. Instead of increasing trophy permits this was a new idea and you guys were bold enough to approve it and it looks like it's going to work. So I wanted to thank you for that. And also, want to support the seven tag increase for the bull elk. And we'd support any other tag increase for elk that you felt like throwing our way. But uh, also, wanted to make one quick mention that's been brought up several times with regard to general season permits. I think it's important that a few of the gentleman, I believe Layne brought up, about some of the areas where we're having struggles on the general season units with the deer; whether it be numbers, habitat, winter kill, deep snow. I think we need to be flexible. We need to be mindful of those areas so that we can make changes if we need to. And it kind of (unintelligible) it's going to be a different discussion, but it leads us right back to these smaller units. And I know it's, there's some discussion and a little ball rolling and I just say we continue looking at that because I think it's very, very important. That's all, thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Wade. Jeremy Chamberlain followed by Lance Roberts.

Jeremy Chamberlain: Jeremy Chamberlain. I'm here supporting, or representing the Friends of the Paunsagaunt. And just as Wade stated, it's been, it's actually been real, it's been an enjoyment to be able to work with this Friends of the Paunsagaunt group, with the Division. I'd like to mention Dustin again. Dustin's been awesome as far as contacting us, getting information to us, even before we ask it or even know about it. He's been very supportive and we appreciate that; along with other members of the Division. And then also the RAC members, I know that we've e-mailed you guys quite a bit and we get responses back from you guys. And it makes it, it's actually quite enjoyable to work between the ranchers, the sportsman, the Fish and Game, the biologists and the RAC; and we're accomplishing a lot. I think as the Fish and Game along with the RAC stuck their necks out with us on this whole management plan and I think we're going to see the fruits of our labors here in two or three years. And

also, I'd like to comment about what Wade said with the elk management plans. We're able to dictate or manage the elk numbers according to each unit. And hunter success ration, bull cow ratios, and we would like to do that with some of the deer numbers, or the deer units, excuse me. And anyway, thank you for your time.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Lance followed by Delause Christensen.

Lance Roberts: Hi, my name's Lance Roberts. Again, I'm representing myself along with a lot of other local sportsman. My comment would be just on the topic of mule deer. I think a lot of us as sportsman can agree on this that our deer herd, our deer numbers are struggling. I think we need to take into consideration what Layne had brought up earlier about, especially about our winter conditions this year, especially in the Southern and Southeastern areas where we've been hit so hard with all this snow. Believe it or not, I mean, no matter what anybody says that's definitely have an impact on our deer. So I would just like to request that the Division look at reducing the overall general season permit numbers. And if needs be increase the fee a little bit, I mean I think sportsman would pay a little bit more if they had a higher quality hunt and if we had better deer herds. So I think that we'd be in favor of increasing the fee a little bit to compensate for that gap that would be lost if permit numbers were down. But I just think we need to do something to help out our mule deer herd. Thank you.

Delause Christensen: Delause Christensen, Glenwood, Utah, representing myself. As much as I think the Division has done a wonderful job with elk I think they've done a lousy job with deer. Mr. LeFevre if we gave you the job of raising deer you'd have thousands of deer on your place. There are people I believe who think mule deer have no place in our ecosystem anymore. That elk are the animal for the sportsman. I do not believe that. I understand Mr. Carpenter's concerns. I've watched deer feed between the front legs of an elk. I've watched elk lay their ears back and drive deer off of water more than once. I recognize there's competition between those two species. But I also know there are other states who have the same issues who have deer. Gentleman we're out of breed stock. It isn't just how many buck are we going to take off of these units. We're out of does. And the does we have we're getting 35 to 40 fawns per year in the spring. There's something wrong here. We're making decisions right now regarding the number of deer permits and we could lose half of our deer herd in the next six weeks because now, right now, is the critical time for deer, isn't it Mr. LeFevre. Right now if we a heavy snow with these deer at the bottom of their protein level and we get a hard freeze and that snow crusts over those deer are gone. And we aren't going to know what we got until the first of May. And we know that. Yet because of our process here we are having to make a decision we shouldn't be making today. And we have no mechanism in place to be able to adjust to it if it happens. I don't know what's going to happen with this snow this year, and neither does anybody in this room. We ought to have a system in place where we can manage these animals, as they need to be managed unique to smaller units and to conditions that take place year by year. We can have deer on these units but not the way we're doing it now; and you know that and so does everybody in this room. We've got to have you ask the Wildlife Board to let us review that again and do something different than we're doing now; and we can't wait another five years to do it. Thanks. Appreciate your help.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. Gene Boardman.

Gene Boardman: Gene Boardman. The reason I asked the question a while ago about how many permits were actually in the draw is because this whole permit system has got to be just about like what you're seeing in Washington today; one group's got a little deal, another group's got a little deal. Cut a deal for

one group and cut out somebody else. And there's one group that always gets wacked at and that's the group that I represent; the 20,000 people that put in for a Southern permit this year and 10,000 of them won't draw. But there's 20,000 out there and they're your base. Now the gentleman just mentioned that things are looking tough and maybe we ought to look at cutting permits. Well we know where they're going to be cut and it ain't going to be the dedicated hunters and it ain't going to be the archers. It's going to be just one dog-gone group again, and again, and again, and again. And it's time that we started leveling the playing field here. And it's time we started thinking about how many different groups are we going to appease this year; and how many different groups are we going to give tags to so that their little effort can either create or save a thousand elk or whatever they think they're going to do with it. Gentleman this system's got to be simplified. And if we go to the smaller units, and I'm not against going to the smaller units, but if we go to it under the system we've got now those 20,000 people that I just said I represent are really going to get the short end of the shaft. Now the rest of them need to get a little skin in the game. Maybe we could have a five-day archery hunt like we have a five-day rifle hunt or something like that. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Gene. Rex, you wanted to add something?

RAC discussion and vote:

Rex Stanworth: Yes, there was a meeting in Delta last week about the Oak City boundary. The staff that was there did a great job, but that's not the reason I wanted to bring this up. We are getting four, five, six counts every year - - - Sean's aware of it and I've talk with Doug a little bit. I want the RAC board to put their heads together and think what they want to do, - - - but we have a severe problem on the Oak City unit of antlerless buck. They've been there for years and years and years. Unless there was an antlerless hunt, unless Sean would designate an antlerless permit to a couple of the landowners there that are watching those deer, Doug's of the opinion that we really, there's no mechanism by which we could take those deer out of there. Now here's a premium unit where we're trying to create premium deer and we got antlerless buck doing the breeding. And so I would really like to recommend that we look at those situations, Oak City being the forefront, to see if we can't come up with a mechanism by which we can cull some of those antlerless bucks out of that herd and leave the good bucks to do the breeding. So I'm not sure what that's going to need but I'm just telling you there is a severe problem there and it's been there for ten years and it's only getting worse.

Douglas Messerly: Well Rex as you mentioned you and I discussed this. A severe problem, how many of these bucks would you say there are?

Rex Stanworth: Well I think from what John, have you got any numbers? I mean, I, I'm thinking there's probably three or four but these are old age bucks and they're probably . . . and they're . . .

Douglas Messerly: All right, let's say there's ten.

Rex Stanworth: Okay.

Douglas Messerly: Okay let's say there's ten and I think that's probably an over estimate. I'm not sure that's a severe problem. Is there any indication that these bucks are fertile? Usually antler growth is associated with hormones and if there are hormone problems I'm wondering if there's not a problem with these bucks being infertile. The other thing is I'd like to correct you when you said that I don't see

any other solutions. There's obviously the Division of Wildlife could go out there and take these animals if we thought it was a problem.

Rex Stanworth: Well I got a landowner that said that if we would get him an antlerless permit he would help take those bucks out of there. I'm not a biologist, and Sean I'm sorry you went back to your seat, but I guess something has to be happening because we continue to get these antlerless bucks there.

Douglas Messerly: It could be a recessive gene. It could be like bald-headed guys. You never know. But, and I don't know, you know. I guess that probably the bottom line is it hasn't risen to the level of what we consider to be a severe problem. You know the Paunsagaunt is famous for cryptorchids, actually. And we end up with a lot of velvet bucks down there and things like that. We probably just can't take it upon ourselves to correct every genetic issue that there is out there. And you know certainly if it would ease the concerns of a significant group of people we can go take these animals out of the population. I'm not sure that it's going to make any difference. And then they could still show up particularly if it's a recessive gene that shows up only when X meets Y; and it may be that we can't get em out. I think the common thinking out there is that antlerless bucks are breeding antlerless bucks, or producing them. And that may or not be true. I stand corrected, are producing antlerless bucks. Please forgive me. I've said enough. Anyway we can talk more about it but I'm not sure that this body or the Wildlife Board needs to take action on this. Let's talk some more about it. If it really is that severe a problem we can address it.

Steve Flinders: We can all tune into that on the web. Anis, did you want to add something?

Anis Aoude: This is something. There's actually, this has been documented in that same exact area, way back in the 40's. So it's not a new phenomenon. And the fact that it's persisted is probably more that it's maybe a doe related genetic trait than a buck related genetic trait because usually bucks without antlers have less of a success breeding so it wouldn't have perpetuated itself. So there's really, you're not going to fix it by killing the antlerless bucks if the does are the ones that are holding the genetic trait. It's been in that same area, it was documented in a mammals magazine back in like '43 or something like that. And it's only a handful that we're talking about. I don't think it's an issue that rises to the level that we need to get an army out there shooting antlerless bucks.

Rex Stanworth: No, I'm not suggesting that but I guess what I'm suggesting is that there are some of those people that have got, they've taken a real hold of the Oak City unit as their own personal place and they watch it like a hawk and an eagle, and they're saying why are we letting that happen? Is there a chance? I don't know. If there's a 10 percent chance we ought to get rid of them.

Anis Aoude: Well no, and we shouldn't because I mean we're still carrying sufficient bucks, over 31 bucks per 100 does. So if those three or four, ten antlerless bucks are obviously depleting the number of antlered bucks in the population. If that becomes the issue then we could look at it but I don't think it's an issue.

Steve Flinders: Good discussion. For what it's worth, back in the early '90's we skinned one that came from that area. I think every natural history museum in probably the world wants an antlerless buck so there is a demand if you guys decide to start killing them. As we move on to a discussion up here, how about we separate bison and deal with that separately, is that okay with everybody? Why don't we tackle that first? That seems to be predominately the most emotional discussion we've had here first. So

let's focus on bison. Anybody want to . . .? Go ahead Steve.

Steve Dalton: Yeah I made some comments out in the truck before I came into the meeting. The thing that's really bothering me about this whole discussion with the bison is our committee met, just two or three weeks ago, we had an agreement with all of the members who were there. I don't know what happened to that but it went to hell in a hand basket and it's not what has been presented to us here. And what this brings up to me it seems kind of blatant, all the discussion we just had concerning the elk issues and the elk committees that are coming up, if we have issues there that need to be addressed at the committee level we address those issues and we arrive at a consensus with the committee and then it goes to Salt Lake and it's all thrown away? What's the sense? I mean you've lost your credibility as an agency when you do that. Anyway it's just really concerning to me. With our committee we agreed to 300 head of bison, post hunt, mature animals for the next five years. That was agreed to at our committee level. What we see happening now the DWR is going to 305, come hell or high water. And next year they're going to say it says in the plan, next year we're going to go to 315, the following year to 325. We never did hit 275, which was what was agreed to initially in the plan. Never did. The last three years you've issued an average of 162 permits, each of the last three years, average. That should show you that your model and what you agreed to do with the bison planning committee, you haven't even come close. We have been, we have been over population every year. And so consequently you have to issue more and more permits every year. So your model is flawed, seriously. It's been a, that's been an issue and an ongoing issue every year. Even before we came up with a plan it was an issue. The other thing we agreed to with our committee is that we would, we would look at what we had done after five years, in 2015, we would look at what we have been able to accomplish with population management at that point. We still haven't got the collars on these bison, which was part of the agreement we had initially with our bison management plan. We were going to collar a bunch of bison so we could add some credibility to the population and the counts we conduct. We still haven't done that. So this was part of our discussion at the meeting level and we agreed that we would put the collars on and give a little more time for some of these range projects to have an effect and an impact on the carrying capacity out there. But all of this time all this plan's been implemented and put into place we have been over populated with the bison every year, every time we've counted, and those bison are still there impacting the resource, the forage resource on the range. You act like that's insignificant. These guy's livelihood depends on that, that forage that the bison have been year after year after year using with this over population that's out there and now you guys think the most important thing in the world is to adhere to the plan. You haven't adhered to anything in the plan up to this point. It hasn't worked like you thought it was going to. And so who's taking the brunt of the impact of this is these guys that are out there on the range. I'm one of them included, myself. But this whole process is being lost somewhere when the committee makes an agreement and you have a consensus with your group you've assembled; and then it goes to Salt Lake and they say no, we ain't going to do that. What are these committees for if you aren't going to take the recommendations? The DWR was there, they were well represented there at the committee meeting. Don't those people that showed up there, Bill Bates and Wade Paskett, don't those people have any credence with the, when they agree to something at a committee level that has no weight? I don't understand. Anyway the point I'm trying to make here more than anything is the resource is getting no consideration at all. And this committee level meeting process that you've established apparently has no credence either. So all of this discussion we were just having about elk management around the state, these committees are going to be just disregarded, whatever they decide? That's what it seems like to me. I'm on the Boulder Mountain Elk Planning Committee, by the way, I guess I am if they haven't throwed me off yet.

Rex Stanworth: Steve I was gonna ask you. So having said that, what number do we need, what number are you thinking you need there to get down to there?

Steve Dalton: Well what we agreed to was 300 for five years. But if the Division's going to stuff this 305 down our throat for this year what I envision is they're going to say next year we have 315, that's what the plan called for; and the following year 325, with total disregard for the resource. And the BLM expressed some concerns over the resource conditions and the range trend that the Division is talking about, the studies that they presented. But all of those like David commented, almost all of those are on summer range. That's not the issue out there. Our issue is on winter range. I'm the one that started this major discussion on buffalo initially because my allotments were the ones that were getting impacted so heavily. And I initiated this bitching about the buffalo quite a while back and it was because our allotments were really getting hammered; habitual consistent abuse of the range resource by the buffalo on the winter range during the summer months. And that was my

Rex Stanworth: So tell me what number do you want me to put? What number should we put down? I mean they're suggesting 33 in both late, early and cow hunt. Is fifty enough? Is sixty enough?

Steve Dalton: We need to go back to the agreed to 300 post hunt adults for five consecutive years until we get an opportunity to see these range projects put into place and what kind of results we get from those and the radio collars put on.

Rex Stanworth: Okay.

Steve Flinders: Do you want to put that in a motion.

Steve Dalton: Yes.

Rex Stanworth: Tell us what the numbers are. Tell us what the numbers are that you want.

Anis Aoude: He can't calculate those numbers. It takes a lot of, you know, calculations to come up with how many you need to kill to get to . . .

Steve Flinders: Well he can make that motion and with your help make the calculations and let the Wildlife Board settle it.

Anis Aoude: Right, we can.

Rex Stanworth: So let's make the motion Steve.

Steve Dalton: Yeah, I'd like to make the motion that we go with what was agreed to with the bison planning committee at our committee meeting. We agreed to 300 post hunt adults for five consecutive years. And we will review this again in 2015. And we've got to continue on with the range projects as agreed and as planned and get these radio collars put on so we can finally add some credulity to their population counts.

Rex Stanworth: I'll second it.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Steve Dalton, seconded by Rex. Did you capture that motion?

Natalie Brewster: Can you clarify the motion?

Steve Flinders: He's got it written down here. Do you want to maybe give that to her? You can read it to her again.

Steve Dalton: Well it's 300 head adults post hunt and that was agreed to for five consecutive years. We will review that again in 2015. We need to access at that time the range conditions and the trend. Everybody needs to remember range is the most important issue here. Anyway, the radio collars need to be put on, which is in the works; it's supposed to happen this winter.

Steve Flinders: Is this still a motion?

Steve Dalton: Yes, this is part of the motion

Steve Flinders: Okay.

Steve Dalton: I'm still trying to get some credibility into this planning committee.

Steve Flinders: Okay. It's good justification. All right.

Steve Dalton: When we initially accepted the plan, if everybody will remember or go back to that, this committee was supposed to stay in place, that was part of the plans that was accepted from the Wildlife Board when we initiated the plan. Well that's great to have the committee stay in place but do they have no credence? Their agreement carries no weight with the Division? I don't understand. That needs to be in the motion as well. This committees recommendations need to have some credence with the decisions that are made concerning managing this bison herd.

Steve Dalton made the motion to go with what the committee recommended, 300 adults post season for 5 consecutive years. Need to have some credence for committee decision. Review in 2015. Bison will be radio collard to get credible counts. Rex Stanworth seconded. (Bison)

Cordell Pearson: Can I speak to the motion?

Steve Flinders: Yeah. Let's see if we can cancel the motion and restate it so we know what we're talking about. Read what you've got Natalie.

Natalie Brewster: Steve Dalton made the motion to go with the committee recommended, 300 head post hunt for five years, need to have some credence for committee decisions. Review again in 2015.

Steve Dalton: And I think the radio collars need to be part of this motion. Apparently they have a short memory. This is supposed to be one of the, this was part of the initial plan, the original bison plan that was put together. We were going to radio collar so we could get some credible counts.

Steve Flinders: Is it, can we boil the motion down to permit number recommendations that the Wildlife Board can deal with? I mean it sounds like the committee feels left out in the recommendation of permit

numbers and this permit number comes as a surprise and it's not supported.

Steve Dalton: It didn't really come as a surprise. We had a letter saying that this is what they were going to recommend.

Steve Flinders: Okay.

Steve Dalton: So it wasn't really a surprise but it wasn't what was agreed to at the meeting, at the committee meeting. And that really bothered me.

Steve Flinders: So a motion that directs the Division between now and the Wildlife Board meeting to come up with a permit number recommendation that does what you said, goes back to 300 adults post season.

Steve Dalton: The agreed to number at that meeting was 300 adults, post season for five consecutive years. That's what was agreed to.

Steve Flinders: Yeah, all we need to do tonight is this year; thank heavens.

Steve Dalton: Okay.

Steve Flinders: If that's, if that's distinct enough motion I don't want to restate your motion or make your motion for you but I think that the Division of Wildlife Board after reading this will understand your intent.

Steve Dalton: Well I wish I had a copy of the minutes that should have been taken at the meeting but no minutes were given out because apparently the Division decided that they weren't going to go along with what was decided. So I didn't receive any minutes from that meeting, and I didn't take my own. But I'll do better next time.

Steve Flinders: So Natalie read what you've got there and we'll see if it's specific enough for . . .

Natalie Brewster: Steve Dalton made the motion to go with what the committee recommended 300 adults, post season, for five consecutive years. Need to have some credence for committee decision. Review in 2015. Bison with radio collars get credible counts.

Steve Dalton: Okay, that sounds fine.

Steve Flinders: There's numbers in there. Rex still seconded. We'll start on that end. Go ahead Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: Yeah, I just want Steve to clarify something here. In this letter that we got, it says that we have 292 adults now. And didn't you just say that the recommendation was 300. Are you counting the other 60 calves in that?

Steve Dalton: No. This is post hunt adults. That's the only number we can (unintelligible).

Cordell Pearson: I understand that next year we'll be over by 30, I understand that. But do you want to raise permits this year? When we're 8 under what you're saying, really, if that's the actual figure 292.

Steve Dalton: Well the first year of this, of this count, the 300 post hunt adults will be 2010. That will be post hunt after the hunts in 2010. Right now the 292 is post hunt adults in 2009.

Steve Flinders: How about a question too. Justin, can you clarify for me what changes, and for the RAC, what changes this motion may be in your permit recommendations?

Justin Shannon: Um, without running the models, I mean if we're talking from going to 305 to 300 probably six permits, something like that. Six, seven. Yeah, we'd run it but that's what we're talking about.

Steve Dalton: This was the same discussion we had at the bison planning committee, but why? Why didn't we go with the 300 head that was agreed to at that meeting? That's what's killing me here you guys. I don't understand.

Justin Shannon: Sure. Steve, to be completely frank, I mean you've got to remember it's an advisory committee to the Division. That's what these things are. I know that the committee members, the permittees, the landowners, those people had a consensus on this. And if you remember at the meeting I told you, I said I will run this up the ladder but I highly doubt that Salt Lake is going to go for this, reason being is because we were never asked to change the plan. That we were never invited or asked to do that from the Wildlife Board; so hence we were sticking to the plan. The point of the meeting was how do we get to 305 and continue doing these things? And the committee took it upon themselves to change the objective to where they were going. So that's the logic behind not going with what the committee recommended because we already had a plan in place.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. Thanks Justin. I think we'll proceed from here with a motion. Sure Mack.

Mack Morrell: I'd like to comment on that just a minute. It seems like the only thing that they want to follow on the plan is the 305.

Steve Dalton: And increase the numbers.

Mack Morrell: You're ignoring the original plan, was 275. You're also ignoring the trend data. In the plan it says you have to have a trend analysis or when you do some reseeding or some development on new chaining or whatever you're going to do, you have to have a study before and then wait two years, have another one. And then determine whether that is successful or unsuccessful. That has never happened. And that's in the plan.

Justin Shannon: Would you like me to speak to that or no? Or was that just a comment?

Mack Morrell: The committee never saw any of the results.

Steve Flinders: We've got a motion on the floor. And it sounds like if we wanted to boil it down further, it's up to you and add an additional number of permits that reflects that 300. That level of specificity may help the Wildlife Board.

Steve Dalton: I don't think that needs to be done at this point. We'll have a count in August if we're over numbers they can issue the additional permits then and that's what was discussed as well at the bison planning committee. And I'm okay with that at this point. This would give us; this will give us what was agreed to at that meeting, essentially, initially anyway. That should do it.

Steve Flinders: Okay. Further discussion on the motion, Paul?

Paul Briggs: Maybe as much as a question as a discussion. But are we here tonight to decide on this years permit numbers? Is it appropriate to be talking about five years out at this point?

Steve Flinders: No. And the motion should reflect to look at permits this year, as Steve has suggested, to we could play catch-up next year. We're talking about five or six bison permits.

Paul Briggs: Do you want to deal with your motion before we have more discussion or do you want me to read this into the record?

Steve Flinders: If it's relevant to bison read it in.

Paul Briggs: Okay, this is the information I received from our Henry Mountain field station and our Richfield Field Office Manager concerning the issue. And there's quite a bit of discussion here in the front part that these gentlemen have already covered about the meetings that were held with the Henry Mountain Grazing Association and the committee. So maybe in the interest of time I'll just ready the summary here. The Division of Wildlife Resources recommendation at the March RAC meetings will be to follow the bison unit management plan to 1: Increase to 305 adult bison post season in 2010. 2: To initiate a bison research project to determine sightability of bison during the annual survey. 3: To continue to implement habitat improvement projects focusing on winter ranges. 4: Address unresolved conflicts between bison and livestock on winter ranges. The BLM Richfield Field Office supports this recommendation and has committed resources to the sightability study and continued habitat improvement projects. In addition the BLM has committed to collecting trend data during 2010 on the winter allotments where unresolved conflicts exist to provide additional information to DWR and the bison committee prior to the 2011 annual coordination meeting. And there's more up in the body about inviting permittees to participate in those studies and those kinds of things. But that's the BLM position on the issue.

Steve Flinders: Thank you, very relevant. Is it appropriate to take a vote now? Is everybody aware of the motion on the floor? Sam?

Sam Carpenter: I'm sorry. This is on bison. This is on the bison, okay. My concern is this a no-elk unit. Is that not true, a no-elk unit? Is that the way we're managing the Henrys? And did I hear the gentleman comment and say there's 75 elk out on winter range?

Steve Flinders: Having a no-elk unit is like having a no carp reservoir. They're always trying to get there.

Sam Carpenter: Well why aren't we trying to do something about the elk that are on there then? Why aren't we taking them off? I guess that's my question. And why can't that be incorporated in this

motion that they do take care of that problem as well? That's another problem that's going to have a big impact on your habitat out there, especially your winter range.

Steve Flinders: You can talk about that in April with the antlerless addendum, especially. Let's, let's, sure. . .

Dell LeFevre: Okay, I go way back on this thing. They've been so much mistrust in this buffalo thing. I go back 45 years at it. And I go back to these guys' grandpas, when I was a kid. And it's been broken promise, after broken promise, after broken promise.

Steve Flinders: Let's take a vote. Those for the motion by Steve, seconded by Rex? Those in favor please vote. Those against the motion? Keep them up. It passed.

8 in favor, 2 opposed. Motion passed. (Bison)

Steve Flinders: Thank you. That covers bison. Do we want to deal with once in a lifetime, and deer, elk, pronghorn? Entertain a motion, discussion on the balance. We heard some comments about . . .

Rex Stanworth: I just had a question in regards to what was said about the sheep.

Steve Flinders: Go ahead Rex.

Rex Stanworth: Uh, predicated upon the sheep, I'm wondering if we want to on the Kaiparowits Escalante, reduce that by one.

Steve Flinders: I think the comments were tonight were we're okay for now but let's see what happens at the next count. They count every two years. But that's up to you. You make the motions, not me.

Rex Stanworth: I'd make a motion that on the limited entry permits that we accept as given to us by the Division.

Steve Flinders: The balance of the proposal?

Rex Stanworth: Yes, on the balance of limited entry, lifetime.

Steve Flinders: Seconded by Sam. Motion by Rex. Accept the balance of the permit recommendations.

Natalie Brewster: Are we on once in a lifetime?

Steve Flinders: Everything.

Natalie Brewster: Oh, everything else? Okay.

Steve Flinders: Seconded by Sam Carpenter. Any discussion on the motion? You guys hear that motion down there? Did you get that motion? He's got a motion on the floor to pass everything else as is. Sure Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: I just have one question, you know last year this board there was a motion made that we start looking at units for deer. Is anything else happening with that?

Steve Flinders: Next fall. This summer and fall you're going to hear about it some more.

Cordell Pearson: Okay. All right.

Steve Flinders: Let's take a vote on this motion. Those in favor of passing the balance of bucks and bulls permits? Those against? Motion passes, unanimous.

Rex Stanworth made the motion to accept everything else as presented. Sam Carpenter seconded by Stan Carpenter. 9 in favor, 1 abstained. Motion passed. (All other permit recommendations)

Other Business

-Steve Flinders, Chairman

Steve Flinders: I don't have any other business short of . . .

Rex Stanworth: I got one piece of information on other business.

Steve Flinders: Sure Rex, what have you got?

Rex Stanworth: Uh, snow goose; snow goose hunt in Delta was a disaster this year. I'm thinking that based on what we saw that the hunt may be in jeopardy if the landowners have anything to say about it. So I would say stay tuned and we'll deal with Tom when he comes down, but there's some real problems with the snow goose hunt as it is being done right now.

Steve Flinders: The only thing I'll add is I'm going to be absent the next meeting and your vice chair will conduct the meeting. And I'll take a motion to adjourn. Motion by Paul.

Meeting adjourned at 10:52 p.m.

Southeast Region Advisory Council
John Wesley Powell Museum
1765 E. Main, Green River
March 17, 2010 @ 6:30 p.m.

Motion Summary

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: To accept the agenda as written
Passed unanimously

Approval of February 10, 2010 minutes

MOTION: To accept the minutes as written
Passed unanimously

Elk Management Plan

MOTION: To accept the elk management plan as presented
Passed unanimously

Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Numbers for 2010

MOTION: To accept the Bucks, Bulls and OIAL permit numbers for 2010 as presented
Passed with one opposing vote

Southeast Region Advisory Council
John Wesley Powell Museum
1765 E. Main, Green River
March 17, 2010 @ 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

Members Absent

Kevin Albrecht, USFS
Bill Bates, Regional Supervisor
Blair Eastman, Agriculture
Jeff Horrocks, Elected Official
Wayne Hoskisson, Non-consumptive
Todd Huntington, At Large
Derris Jones, Sportsmen
Laura Kamala, Non-Consumptive
Walt Maldonado, Sportsmen

Kenneth Maryboy, Navajo Rep.

Christine Micoz, At Large
Travis Pehrson, Sportsmen

Pam Riddle, BLM

Terry Sanslow, Chairman
Charlie Tracy, Agriculture

Others Present

-
- 1) **Approval of the Agenda (Action)**
-Kevin Albrecht, Assistantan

VOTING

Motion was made by Jeff Horrocks to accept the agenda as written
Seconded by Walt Maldonado
Motion passed unanimously

- 2) **Approval of the February 10, 2010 minutes (Action)**
-Kevin Albrecht, Assistant Chairman

VOTING

Motion was made by Terry Sanslow to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2010 meeting as written.
Seconded by Blair Eastman
Motion passed unanimously

- 3) **Wildlife Board Meeting Updates**
- Kevin Albrecht, Assistant Chairman

Terry Sanslow-It was a rather short the Board meeting. The one thing, they did turn down the venomous snake rule. They accepted one portion of that, which is the portion that said that anyone who wants a COR will have to come before the Wildlife Board. If we had had the information that the Wildlife Board had, we would have voted differently. A lot of people came in from county governments. They felt it was in the best interest of the public not to vote it in. I think it was an excellent rule in itself, and I think our RAC voted for the rule itself. There was a lot of time that went into it. The Board has county governments come in and fire and policemen, who all expressed concern. I think Bill will address the sage grouse and bighorn sheep on the Goslin Mountains. We will have to eliminate that herd because of the diseases in them.

Questions from the RAC

Questions from the Public

Comments from the Public

RAC Discussion

4) Regional Update

-Bill Bates, Regional Supervisor

Bill Bates-It's good to see everyone tonight. Last time we had our Wildlife 101 training. Chris wasn't there last time. Did everyone get the list of acronyms? If you have any questions on any acronyms or anything, it's okay to ask. 'Just wanted to remind you tonight that there five different factors, considered by biologists before coming up with a recommendation. These included: biological, technical, legal, financial, and socio-political. Keep that in mind tonight during the debate. Our aquatic section has been busy doing reports and have been planning a restoration on Ferron Creek to return native Colorado cutthroat trout, using eggs from Duck Fork Reservoir. We collected about 40,000 eggs. We will start the public meetings process to discuss the plan to treat various sections of Ferron Creek and introduce the native cutthroat trout. Our AIS technicians are getting going with an online certification for boats launching at the same waters. The Conservation Outreach section has been busy, sponsoring the tundra swan day a week ago. Guy Wallace will be sponsoring sage grouse watches down in San Juan County in early April. It's a real unique situation. Law enforcement has been working with shed antler hunters. SFW and the Mule Deer Foundation approached the Board and asked for an emergency closure of shed hunting on the Henry Mountains, due to extreme winter conditions. Rather than doing an emergency closure, we decided to monitor the situation closely and to work with the BLM to solve the problems. We came up with an action plan. Brent has been working with John Zappell of the BLM and U.S. Forest Service to put out news releases and signs. The Richfield District has put out a new travel plan, which requires that antler hunters on designated roads and trails. Our law enforcement has been down there the last two weekends, and we have checked 17 people the first weekend. Everyone had their shed antler certification. Only one person was found off-roading. This last weekend everyone was on the road although conditions remain pretty brutal. We are keeping a close eye on this. The habitat section is gearing up for pinyon juniper tree cutting on three areas in Carbon and Emery counties. The dedicated hunters are required to put in 40 hours this program period. We are getting a lot of interest in that. The wildlife section has begun antelope aerial flights and spring

deer classifications, beginning in late March. The USFS called for a 12 month review of the listing of sage grouse as warranted but precluded. They don't have the resources to go ahead with listing and decided to turn the matter back to state wildlife biologists to meet the need to prevent listing. Jim Karpowitz issued an emergency closure on the Goslin Mountain bighorn sheep unit. We intended to issue one permit, but with the pneumonia and pasteurilla outbreak, there have been about 50 bighorn sheep that have died. Everyone that put in for that unit will be given a chance to put in for another unit. Any questions?

Questions from the RAC

Travis Pehrson-On the juniper cutting project, do the dedicated hunters do that with a chainsaw?

Bill Bates-Yes. We have been talking with federal agencies to do maintenance of the old cuttings.

Travis Pehrson-Why are you using dedicated hunters?

Bill Bates-It's because we have a resource. All the trees are relatively small, so it's fairly easy to go through and buzz all the trees.

Travis Pehrson: Is this something that has to be approved by the BLM?

Bill Bates: It has to be approved by the management agency, whether it be forest service or BLM land.

Questions from the Public

Comments from the Public

RAC Discussion

- 5) Elk Hunter Survey Results (Informational)
-Kent Hersey, Wildlife Program Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Kevin Albrecht-One thing I'd like to say before we go to questions is that Kent, Anis and Justin have done an excellent job on this survey and are really to be commended on their effort. We really had an opportunity to look at what the public wanted, because of how well the survey was written. We appreciate the efforts of you guys.

Derris Jones-I assume the only cost of this survey is the man-power. What's the cost of the survey and evaluation of responses?

Kent Hersey-The costs and start up fees and results were minimal.

Derris Jones-It seems that these kinds of surveys could be used for a variety of purposes.

Kent Hersey-Even the manpower isn't that bad. In the past, it was much worse, because we didn't know how to use it. We can now use this tool more often.

Derris Jones- It seems to me that this tool is under-utilized. Is the manpower exorbitant?

Kent Hersey-Certainly, we can start doing this for harvest reports and things like this.

Questions from the Public

Dallas Leo of the Utah Bowman's Association-I was one of the lucky ones to be surveyed and I responded The UBA supports the elk plan presented by the DWR with one exception. The recommendation from the elk committee that the change tag allocation on the Wasatch Mountain unit. It's 50% archery, 30% rifle and 20% muzzleloader tags. We believe that it's an

important part of the objective to provide more opportunity on this unit, while maintaining the quality at the same time. Two of the questions included moving the hunt away from the rut and increasing opportunity through the use of primitive weapons. Both questions received favorable feedback. It seems like the Wasatch unit is the best unit to try to incorporate both objectives. Kevin Albrecht-I would like to have you give me UBA's written proposal.

Derris Jones-My question is how long you intend to use the Wasatch unit as an experimental unit for UBA's proposal?

Dallas Leo-With archery the success is lower, therefore we want to try the experiment on the Wasatch because of the largeness of the unit.

Derris Jones-Do you then want two years as an experiment? What do we use as a gauge to determine if your experiment works?

Dallas Leo-I think a survey would really help.

Verlan King-I have a couple of questions. It was developed by the elk committee. What elk committee was that?

Kent Hersey-It was the statewide elk committee.

Kevin Albrecht-The statewide elk committee consisted of a 15 person committee with one member of each RAC and SFW and RMEF, UBA, Bow hunters of Utah, Utah Farm Bureau, WMU and MBA.

Kevin Albrecht-Enumerated the agency and conservation organization representation on the committee and vouched for the scientific method used to derive its results.

Verlan King-It was convened in September?

Kent Hersey-Yes.

Verlan King-To make this survey up?

Kent Hersey-Everything associated with the elk management plan. The first duty was to develop the elk survey then to write the plan.

Verlan King-Do you feel that all the questions were scientifically sound?

Kent Hersey-Absolutely. That's why we had a group of people developing the questions and writing the survey. Members of the DWR were involved in writing the questions, and we have scientific background.

Kevin Albrecht-One of the things I would mention is that the DWR has a statistician that went through the questions. They did a very good job in wording those, so they felt they would get a scientific answer and was quantitatively analyzed.

Comments from the Public

RAC Discussion

- 6) Elk Management Plan (Action)
-Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Kevin Albrecht-I just wanted to commend the division people. Their help and efforts to coordinate the group was by far the best I've ever been a part of. I want to remind everyone that this is an action item, so we will start with questions from the RAC, then audience, then comments from the audience, then discussion from the RAC. Please hand in comment cards to me, if you'd like to speak before the RAC.

Todd Huntington-I just want some clarifications. Do the spike tags sell out each year?

Anis Aoude-Yes.

Todd Huntington-Waht is the percentage of success?

Anis Aoude-It ranges between 15-18 %

Todd Huntington-Why have you changed the age classes in percentages?

Anis Aoude-It makes us manage for the higher objective and end of the range.

Todd Huntington-What happens when it drops to 7.2 or something like that?

Anis Aoude-If it dropped below that, we would have to take action to bring it back up.

Todd Huntington-My last question. On the limited entry units, we have the early and late rifle.

If we divide that 30% archery, 60% rifle, 15% muzzleloader. It doesn't add up.

Anis Aoude-That's right. The figures are wrong.

Travis Pehrson-On the spike, by increasing it by 2,500 permits, if they decreased that, would they be able to give out more any bull permits?

Anis Aoude-The number of spike permits issued depends on the age objectives of the mature bull elk we harvest.

Blair Eastman-So are you trying to provide more opportunity?

Anis Aoude-One objective is to provide more opportunity and another is to bring the bull to cow ratio so that the herd is more productive. If we had a 1 to 1 cow to bull average, that would limit the number of calves that could be thrown.

Travis Pehrson-So instead of increasing the spike tags, what about increasing the primitive weapons?

Anis Aoude-If we increase the primitive weapons, the draws change. The people who recommended that didn't realize what that would do to the draws. If you increase primitive weapons, you increase the harvest and so decrease the average age at harvest.

Blair Eastman-I can appreciate that you are trying to increase opportunity, but at 20%, you'll be killing 600 more elk.

Anis Aoude-It won't be 600 elk. The percent success is more like 14-17 %.

Blair Eastman-So what percentage harvest would you like to see?

Anis Aoude-We want to be fewer than 20%.

Blair Eastman-It seems to me that you start getting more spike numbers out there and I will use the Manti as an example, that there will be a lot of competition by hunters.

Anis Aoude-The spike hunt begins early, and they do overlap with archery for part of the season, but the archers have the last 10 days to themselves.

Blair Eastman-I understand you are trying to run up the age at harvest, but I don't understand how you get the fractions since all the elk are born at the same time each year.

Anis Aoude-It does make sense when you consider that all the fractions amount to averages of bull ages at time of harvest. You increase quality by adding more older age bulls into the average.

Travis Pehrson-You are taking a 10 year old bull, a seven year old bull and 5 year old bull and by averaging them, you get a 7.5 year old bull average

Wayne Hoskisson-For the past three years, I've been working with a range permittee, and one of our conclusions was to ask the DWR to reduce the number of elk on the Tusher Mountain Range, and I see that the objective is 1,050 with a population of 800. I wonder how much attention has been paid attention to our concerns of lowering elk numbers?

Anis Aoude-We didn't look at any unit specifically, but if we get the statewide plan passed, it will serve as a foundation for formulating individual unit committees and plans.

Wayne Hoskisson-Part of the reason for the concern is the degeneration of aspen throughout the state.

Anis Aoude-We certainly realize the problem with aspen and the degeneration of aspen in elk habitat. There is some disagreement about what is responsible, but we will look at that. The 8,000 objective is based on these unit plan objective committees, coming up with individual objectives. If there is no concern on a unit, we would like to increase the objective.

Kevin Albrecht-I just wanted to remind you that if you have a comment, a division employee will come around and pick those up. Any other questions from the RAC?

Walt Maldonado-I understand that if the statewide plan is passed, then unit by unit plans will be looked at individually. Right now, looking at all the units, which ones can be increased?

Anis Aoude-That's an analysis we will have to make after the statewide plan is passed.

Walt Maldonado-My next question is are any of the other states doing these kinds of age objectives in their hunting systems?

Anis Aoude-Not that I know of. There are different ways to manage wildlife, but we have found this useful in managing our elk population.

Walt Maldonado-We are growing big bulls, so I was just wondering.

Travis Pehrson-I have heard concerns that raising the age objectives will limit the number of hunters and tags? Would that happen regardless?

Anis Aoude-Eventually, at some point, if we are to maintain age at harvest objectives, then permit numbers will have to be cut.

Derris Jones-The 20% trigger on spike harvest success, will that be an average over two years or what?

Anis Aoude-We will look at that one year at a time, because we want to be sure we aren't harvesting too many spikes.

Derris Jones-Will landowner and CWMU harvest be calculated into the average age on those units

Anis Aoude-Yes, we will calculate the ages of those harvests into the average age at harvest for those units. Just to clarify the issue, these are public permits.

Derris Jones-Is there a reason you aren't capturing private permit harvests?

Anis Aoude-We don't receive those as readily as we do the public permits.

Blair Eastman-I thought we were required to turn in our CWMU permit results? So you have the data in those age calculations.

Anis Aoude-Well, I don't think we require that.

Blair Eastman-We are required to return the teeth on those elk, so I would think we could calculate the ages.

Anis Aoude-Some forget and some don't comply fully.

Derris Jones-Is the DWR tracking the demographics of people who have successfully drawn the trophy bull permits? Are they older people?

Anis Aoude-We don't keep track of that. We do know they want older age bulls.

Derris Jones-Have the lowest two ages classes of bulls been bumped up?

Anis Aoude-They have been bumped up from 4-5.

Derris Jones-And if those lower age classes were taken back out from where they were, would that make a difference in lost hunting opportunity?

Anis Aoude-No. Moving the age class back a half year wouldn't make much of a difference.

Blair Eastman-You have indicated that there are 250,000 acres more of elk habitat, can you identify where those acres are?

Anis Aoude-No. These acres are projected improvement projects and core areas statewide, where we can grow elk.

Blair Eastman-And that would give you enough room to potentially to come up with another 12,000 more elk?

Anis Aoude-Yes, but that's not something I can say with any certainty, because you never know how range conditions will turn out.

Walt Maldonado-Is there any more opportunity for easier to access any-bull areas?

Anis Aoude-The way we have structured our any bull units is that access is limited on purpose to limit bull harvest. If they were easier to access, then we would over harvest the bull population.

Questions from the Public

James Gilson-Is late spike muzzleloader hunt considered part of the rifle harvest? Where are we in terms of what percent tooth returns? How many people actually turn in their teeth?

Anis Aoude-The cost is \$3-5 per sample. It varies from year to year from 50-80% return

James Gilson-I thought it was less. So that ends up costing \$15,000 at \$5 a piece. Another question, are you going to show the elk number recommendations in the next part?

Anis Aoude-Yes.

Verlan King-I have a question about how these committees work. Do you have a committee for each unit?

Anis Aoude-There is a potential for any unit for which there are changes that could be substantial to have a committee.

Verlan King-And their recommendations go where?

Anis Aoude-The recommendations are put together by regions and then through the public process.

Verlan King-Are unit committees seated to accomplish a specific purpose.

Anis Aoude-Yes.

Comments from the Public

Kevin Albrecht-We will now go to comments from the audience and we will hold individual comments to three minutes and five minutes if you are representing an organization. For organizations, we ask that you designate an individual to represent them.

Ryan Thornock of the Utah Farm Bureau-As was mentioned, John Keeler had a seat on the elk committee. We appreciate that opportunity. In general, we support the plan. Our main concern is the objective of a statewide elk. We feel like habitat should drive the numbers. The statewide or unit by unit elk herd objective should be dictated by habitat conditions. AUMs are suspended because of habitat, so should elk numbers. We encourage local committees to decide numbers on habitat. If conditions warrant an increase in numbers, then an increase in elk is okay, but if not, there shouldn't be an increase.

Verlan King of the North Valley Grazer's Association on the Boulder Mountains-We don't want to see the herd objective raised there. You have talked about age objectives and that is all you have talked about. Everything needs to hinge on habitat and range conditions. We believe that elk numbers should not be increased in case of a drought or heavy snowfall. Right now I've got 30 head of elk poised right above my farm. It's amazing to see the amount of forage that is taken by wildlife, before our cows are let into an allotment. Rest rotation is not happening. One farmer was forced to change his operation, because he couldn't harvest his hay, because the elk would come in the evening and eat his crop and tear his bales up. We need to manage for a lower number of elk and not just look at the high end objective. It's critical that we have these unit committees, who are familiar with individual circumstances. That would be my recommendation, not to go with the high end objective. Winter range is the critical factor.

Kevin Albrecht-During the elk committee, we did have a lot of discussion to address the issues that face farmers.

Don Peay of Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife-As a member of the elk committee, we spent hundreds of hours trying to make it perfect and would like the vote of the RACs. As far as the concern on the numbers, that can be determined at a later time. This plan doesn't set numbers, it sets the age objective for bull harvest. There has been 692,000 acres treated in the last five years and 250,000 more to go. With just over a million acres, there ought to be room for a few more elk. If there isn't, we shouldn't consider spending any more money.

Bart Kettle-In the southeast region, we have three elk eco-types: Wyoming sage, mountain browse, and the last is aspen forest. I want to express my concern about an increase in numbers, due to the range condition of these types.

James Gilson representing the Carbon-Emery Chapter of the SFW-We support the elk committee recommendations. It was good to see this committee come together and put in a lot of

effort. There is one discrepancy with tooth data however, I disagree that the division is comfortable with a 50% return of elk teeth. It's our belief that we are not getting the teeth of younger bulls. When a hunter kills a raghorn or spike or three year-old branch bull, they aren't interested in how old they are. On the other hand, if you kill a massive bull, you would like know how old it was. If we add another half of the returns we now get, it adds up to a cost of another \$15,000. It's a little money to spend for better data. I've talked to a lot of guys, who say that if they are mandated they do, but if not, they won't. If there's no penalty, then hunters won't. This skews the data, and gives the false impression of the quality of bulls harvested. A 100% data return will give us much better data.

Shayne Thompson-I would also support a 100% level of tooth collection. I am concerned about that, because I have seen the numbers of bull elk go down. I suggest we be cautious about any increase in the spike bull harvest.

Kevin Albrecht-There was a lot of discussion on that. The plan included a provision that if the harvest reached 20%, the division would have the opportunity to reduce the permits.

Kevin Albrecht-Bart Hansen of the Utah Wildlife Coalition couldn't come to the meeting, and asked that the coalition's written statement be read.

Bill Bates read the statement by the Utah Wildlife Coalition-We appreciate the time put in by the elk committee, and support the recommendations with the following reservations: They would like to see management objectives for three hunt opportunities: The first would be premium limited entry, which would include those units for which the age objectives are 7.5 to 8 and 6.5-7. We recommend setting weapon types as 60% rifle, 25% archery and 15% muzzleloader. The next opportunity would be for limited entry unit for which the division is recommending age objectives of 5.5-6 and 4.5-5. The bottom range for these should be revised to 5-6 and 4-5. We also suggest that the weapon types be revised to 50% rifle, 30% archery, and 20% muzzleloader. We want to suggest these changes because we think the three unit types: the premium limited entry, limited entry and general season units better addresses the desires of hunters.

RAC Discussion

Travis Pehrson- Is the 20% limit statewide?

Anis Aoude-The 20% ceiling will be statewide.

Travis Pehrson-Is there any way to make the ceiling unit by unit.

Anis Aoude-That's not our recommendation.

Blair Eastman-To answer James Gilson's issue, at our CWMU association meeting, there were 50% of the operators in the state and it was decided that operators have teeth from their harvested elk aged. CWMUs will be paying for aging the teeth.

Walt Maldonado-Why does the division not make tooth returns mandatory?

Anis Aoude-Here's the reason. The harvest report asks if you harvested or not. If you harvested and you were required to turn your teeth in, the hunter for the sake of ease would say he didn't harvest. We would rather have better harvest data than tooth data. 50% return of teeth or even less is statistically sound. Making a tooth return mandatory will only encourage dishonesty.

With that said, we are looking at incentives to try to raise the percentage of tooth returns.

Chris Micoz-Wouldn't concerns about habitat conditions be addressed by the regional committees?

Anis Aoude-Yes.

Chris Micoz-So we don't necessarily need to be concerned about habitat in approval on the statewide plan tonight?

Anis Aoude-Yes. If there are habitat issues, these should be addressed locally.

Wayne Hoskisson-I have some concerns that if you set a number of permit numbers, and the population is reduced because of habitat concerns, you will harvest a higher percentage of the population.

Anis Aoude-Because you have objectives on ages, you can only harvest what's available. If you over-harvest you will not meet the objective and the permit would be reduced the following year.

Travis Pehrson-With regard to habitat issues, sportsmen organizations have spent a lot of money on habitat improvement projects. Have the cattlemen's associations put up any money on habitat improvement projects? Aspen rejuvenation is a big concern. On the LaSal Mountains some patches are so thick, you can't walk through them. I would encourage the U.S. Forest Service to do more to rejuvenate aspen stands through more prescribed burns and more logging. I hope the cattlemen and sportsmen can come together and improve the habitat.

Derris Jones-I think the members of the elk committee did a great job with this plan, which will be a great foundation for years to come with state-wide application. The unit plans that come to us will probably have more controversy. They say the devil is in the details, but this has given the regions and public a good foundation to build upon. I would like to make a motion to approve the plan as presented.

Kevin Albrecht-Before we get to that point, I would like to see if there are other items of discussion. I appreciated the opportunity to work on this committee and learned a lot. It was the best run committee of which I have ever been a part. The plan was a compilation of thoughts from all the representative groups and coordination and meeting in the middle to achieve common ground. I again commend the division for their efforts.

Kevin Albrecht-Some of the issues placed before the RAC include mandatory tooth returns, recommended changes in the elk management plan, and the permit percentages put forward by the Utah Bowman's Association.

Derris Jones-My motion stands as stated. I have the advantage of having a background in statistics and am very comfortable with a 50% return of elk teeth.

VOTING

Motion was made by Derris Jones to accept the Elk Management Plan as presented.

Seconded by Jeff Horrocks

Motion passed unanimously

- 7) Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Numbers for 2010 (Action)
-Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Todd Huntington-I want to ask questions about the bison. Back in September when we talked about the transplant, we were told there was an estimated 452 adult bison. We issued 154 permits. We killed 108. How many did we transplant?

Anis Aoude-40

Todd Huntington-That's 304 and we are already at the higher objective. It seems like we are discovering that bison are pretty productive, so are we issuing enough permits to keep the population in check?

Anis Aoude-The new objective is 305. It is the number of cows that determine herd productivity, and we will have sufficient permits to control cow numbers.

Todd Huntington-I don't have the bison plan in front of me. What are the 2010 post-season estimates?

Anis Aoude-In the plan, we go to 305 after 2010. It goes to 315 in 2011. Then 325 the year after that.

Todd Huntington-You plan to stay at 325?

Anis Aoude-That's the plan.

Blair Eastman-That's 325 to the end of this plan. Then we start a new plan.

Anis Aoude-I don't anticipate that going up unless conditions change on the Henry Mountains.

Bill Bates-I want to add just one thing to add a little light on the permit numbers from last year. We had seven individuals that asked the Board for a variance on the permits drawn last year. They asked to have their permits validated this year.

Blair Eastman-Tell me again what the total number of bison are?

Anis Aoude-Right now we are at 292.

Blair Eastman-What percentage of those are cows?

Justin Shannon-The bull to cow ratio is 52 bulls per hundred cows.

Blair Eastman: So we have about 140 cows. What percentage of cows drops calves?

Justin Shannon-Last year, our calf to cow ratio was 24 calves per 100 cows. The three year average before that was around 50.

Blair Eastman-Using my calculations of production, the calf production will put you way over objective.

Justin Shannon-The count doesn't include calves. My numbers were cow to calf pairs.

Blair Eastman-Next year you will have another 75 head in the herd. When do you count the calves?

Justin Shannon-We count the calves in summer.

Blair Eastman-So this 292 includes the calves.

Justin Shannon-No.

Blair Eastman-When do those become part of the count?

Justin Shannon-That would be when they start having calves. Our objective is met on January 1st. Right now it stands at 292, but we aren't counting the calves born this summer. So the count is 292 plus 60 calves.

Blair Eastman-Those turn into adults.

Justin Shannon-That will be next year that they turn into adults. That's what we are killing with the 37 permits.

Blair Eastman-But that's not based on the 3-year average, it's based on one year. Your 3-year average is 50%. Based on your calf crop this year, you are over objective, even based on a 25% calf crop.

Justin Shannon-No. That's not necessarily the case. That's post season and it's not January 1st. What do you mean? Over the 275?

Blair Eastman-Even if the objective was 305, you would be over objective.

Justin Shannon-No, we're not. We're not counting the calves born this summer.

Bill Bates-Maybe I can shed some light on this. Our objective is on January 1st. You don't add the yearlings until the next year. We have talked about making this easier to understand. Right now we are basically 352 total bison and what we need to do is when we make the plan the next time is to make an objective for the summer count, but we can't do that until we redo the plan.

Blair Eastman-Okay, I understand what you are saying, but the truth is, right now, if you go out and count these bison, you will have 352 bison on the ground right now.

Anis Aoude-The calves don't count. Post-season starts next year. After we hunt them, then we make the count.

Blair Eastman-I don't think that's very good math, because you are counting the calf crop.

Anis Aoude-I know it is confusing.

Blair Eastman-You are going to have approximately 75 more on the ground.

Bill Bates-This spring we will have about 430 bison on the ground.

Blair Eastman-If we have 75 calves on the ground this summer, they will be adults in January.

Anis Aoude-No they won't. They will be adults the next time counts are made.

Blair Eastman-Just the law of nature tells me you are over objective.

Kevin Albrecht-The flaw in the plan is that count post-season. Hopefully the new plan will make it easier to understand.

Derris Jones-The other thing that is missing here is the natural mortality which is about 5%.

Travis Pearson-We seem stuck on the buck to doe ratio, but is there a way we can start to measure the deer on those units? We talk about 35 bucks per hundred does, but there are maybe only 200 does on the unit.

Anis Aoude-We don't manage by population. We manage by bucks to does. It's too difficult to measure a population. That's why we manage by bucks to does. If the buck to doe ratio were to drop, then we would reduce permits on that unit. It automatically adjusts to the population.

Travis Pehrson-Has there been consideration about doing counts? We've had a hard winter this year.

Anis Aoude-We have radio collars on the San Juan unit. I don't know what the data is, but there hasn't been unusually high winter mortality. We will have Guy Wallace speak to that.

Travis Pehrson-Have we had a large winter kill this year on the San Juan unit?

Guy Wallace-We haven't started the spring counts yet.

Travis Pehrson-What about your collared deer, have any of them died?

Guy Wallace-We had one flight and only had one mortality. It was a fawn. That was about three weeks ago. Another flight is scheduled. The earlier count was in Hart's Draw where we haven't had as much snow as we had on the south end. We are watching to see what happens to those on Cedar Mesa and areas like that.

Travis Pehrson-You collared 30 fawns and 30 does?

Guy Wallace: That's right. Sixty altogether.

Kevin Albrecht-At the last meeting, you mentioned how difficult it was to get into some of these areas where deer were, due to snow conditions. Have you been able to see where the deer are, given the inaccessibility of areas where deer occur? What are the conditions of those deer?

Guy Wallace-We haven't been able to get into those areas, but will do so, as road conditions permit. One thing I can say is that we haven't had long periods of extremely low temperatures, where we were down to zero for a long period of time. That has made the winter relatively mild. Those are the conditions that really affect deer mortality. I will be doing a survey this next week. However, the deer that have wintered in Monticello look like they are in pretty tough shape. They are eating everyone's shrubs.

Travis Pehrson-If there is a huge winter kill on the Elk Ridge side, will measures be taken to save the deer herd, such as reducing tags?

Guy Wallace-There's always that possibility.

Walt Maldonado-Was the CWD elk on the LaSals a cow?

Anis Aoude-Yes.

Travis Pehrson-Where was the cow?

Guy Wallace-It was on the south side of the LaSal Mountains.

Walt Maldonado-We've radio-collared a bunch of deer on the LaSals to try and monitor CWD. Have we heard the results from that?

Anis Aoude-Yea, basically we were looking at movements of deer and how the disease was spread and which areas were most prevalent for the disease.

Walt Maldonado-I was wondering if the study could tell us how many deer were moving in and out of Colorado.

Guy Wallace-I couldn't tell you that. There were some collared that went into Colorado. Some went back and forth into Utah. We know it does occur.

Todd Huntington-Just to make sure I know what's going on, the general season deer permits stand at 94,000. Is that right?

Anis Aoude-Yes.

Travis Pehrson-Are there other sheep herds that are struggling like the ones on the Goslin unit?

Anis Aoude-At this point, the disease appears to be confined to northeastern Utah.

Unfortunately bighorn sheep are very susceptible to disease.

Travis Pehrson-Are the Anthro/Range Creek sheep at objective?

Brad Crompton-I can't speak for the Anthro unit, but Range Creek is stable. The biggest issue is access to hunters.

Derris Jones-What percent success was there on these units?

Brad Crompton-It was around 55%

Walt Maldonado-How are the pronghorn herd doing that are on the San Rafael Reef?

Wade Paskett-The numbers are pretty stable. There hasn't been a decrease. We've installed some guzzlers out there.

Bill Bates-There were a combination of factors, which included poor counts conditions, variances in calf production and harvest and changes in annual precipitation and survivability based on habitat changes such as fire.

Questions from the Public

Don Peay-Isn't it right that we have 292 bison?

Bill Bates: Yes.

Don Peay-Hunt-During hunting season we shot 39 plus 7, which is 45. Plus we have a 5% mortality. We are under objective, because the objective is based on not counting the cows until the following year, because the plan is based on adults.

Bill Bates-There's a simple way of looking at this. Right now we have 352 total. We will have 95% survival. That puts us at 334. Subtract 305, and so we need to kill 29 to get to 305.

Don Peay-The math works out.

Blair Eastman-Except by next year, 2011, you are over objective.

Don Peay-No. The plan calls for adults.

Blair Eastman-The Henry Mountains has proven itself to not stay within objective. We have moved bison out of there. There are high hunt numbers. It's going to grow. If we were over 400 head, how are we going to keep in under objective? I don't think you can. Just look at the bison herd on the Ute Reservation. We can't control their numbers. They are going crazy, so I really do have concerns about the number of bison there.

Don Peay-My point is that I was trying to show you that math works.

Bill Bates-If we stay on top of counting the bison. We have safeguards in place to deal with the situation if we find that we go over objective. Two years back, when we got over objective, that was based on poor counting conditions because there was a lot of water which dispersed the population. What we've decided to do now is model the population as well as look at the count. If our count is very low, then we go by the population model. We are also doing a study with Utah State University for sightability. We will have someone on the ground for the next five years. If we can't get to objective with that amount of effort, then we will do something else.

Blair Eastman-I'm sorry to delay all this, but can you explain to me how with a bad count, we went from 275 to over 400?

Bill Bates-We had a combination of several things. One year we counted 265 total bison that included calves. The next year we only counted 172. Based on that, we had three cow permits that one year. That was a big mistake. That coupled with a big fire and great moisture, the mountain took off, and that's where we got into 50 calves per 100 cows. The long term average is 35 calves per 100 cows.

Verlan King-What is the process to amend the bison plan?

Bill Bates-The plan is up for review in 2-3 more years.

Verlan King-Between now and then, you can't amend it? Would it be something to go before the Board to do?

Bill Bates-That's something the Wildlife Board would have to do.

Kevin Albrecht-Such a change would have to go through the RAC process.

Shayne Thompson-Is it possible to know where we are in deer population percentages?

Anis Aoude-The percentage varies by region, and unit and year.

Shayne Thompson-I mean for the southeastern region.

Justin Shannon-I can't tell you what the percentage is region-wide. Brad, what is it on the Manti? We are about 52%. Guy, where are you on the Abajos? We are pretty close to 100% The LaSals is probably 67%

Shayne Thompson-The question I have is how we turn around the deer population? Is there a plan to get an increase somehow? A decrease in tags or something like that?

Brad Crompton-The biggest help is our habitat initiatives. Reducing the harvest is a short-term and minor fix. Habitat quality is the key. Our focus has been improving summer and winter range. That will make a long term upward trend.

James Gilson-What is the herd size of bulls on the Range Creek unit?

Brad Crompton-709.

James Gilson-And then on the Henrys and Paunsagunt, do you know the herd objective there?

Justin Shannon-On the Henry's its 9 or 10 and on the Henry's it's _?_.

Comments from the Public

Verlan King of the Henry Mountains Grazing Association and member of the bison working group-I have a letter from the Henry Mountain grazing association. I am president of the grazing association. I'm also a member of the bison working group. The Henry Mountain Bison Association looks forward to the bison study, which involves the radio-collaring of bison to evaluate migration, movements and grazing patterns studied. The association also looked forward to an answer from the sightability study. This is a big question we have—do we count 85 or 95%? The knowledge will help us management this herd, which will help the bison and resources. We have reduced the bison population through the transplants and hunts to the current 352 head. That number is from the bison committee meeting. Their model shows 292 cows, 60 calves now and yearlings and whatnot. The bison plan's objective has been 275 for three years. We counted them every year. The first time we counted them, they were over. They hunted them and brought them down to 275. The next year we counted and were over 100 at the end. This happened for three years during this bison plan, so there's basically something wrong with the bison model they are using. We feel the sightability is wrong. That's why we need the study done. We need to worry about the forage and winter range is a problem. In our bison committee meeting, we spent three hours discussing the proposal. In the plan it says, the objective in the plan is 305. As the bison committee, we believed we had safeguards place in the plan to help us protect the resource. Once the resource was protected, we would go to 305. One of those was the sightability being good. It's never been such that we can look at their model and say that's how many we have every time we count. At the end of July we always have more than what the model says we should have. We feel that that needs to be corrected before going to 305. We need to focus more concern on forage and habitat conditions and protect the resource before going to 305. It will take more than several years for habitat projects to provide additional forage. Why don't we go to 300 and stay there for five years. That will give time for the study to be done and for some of the improvements to come online as far as forage is concerned. Last night at the southern RAC meeting, they passed the motion to go with the 300 for five years. If you were to do such a motion, that's something the Board would look at to amend the plan.

David Brinkerhof of the Henry Mountain Grazer's Association-It's amazing how fast bison reproduce. The number of bison killed over the past 25 years show how fast they grow. That concerns me because of the resource. The winter range is the most critical. All these animals have to live on the winter range. There is plenty of feed for the summer months. Currently on the winter range, there are cattle on it, deer on it, elk on it and antelope on it. If we continue to increase grazing animals, the more critical the situation becomes. This past summer we've been in a drought condition, and we passed the forage safeguard to let us know when it was safe to move to the next level. There are five safeguards right now in the plan that shows we are not

meeting the safeguards to move to the next level. We right now have about 3,000 suspended AUMs.

Ryan Thornock of the Utah Farm Bureau-This issue has been real important to the stock operators for a number of years. As was stated by the division, the bison herd has been growing beyond its objective. This has created real problems for the winter livestock operators. The farmers on the Henry Mountains are running at 35% of their AUM allotment. That translates into 65 % more forage the operators have to buy for their cattle. The last time the bison were at 275 was in 1982. The bison plan calls for impacts to be addressed before an increase is considered. We appreciate all the dollars spent on forage. If dollars equaled AUMs, we wouldn't be having this problem, but a lot of times it takes years before the forage grows to the point where the grazers benefit from the project. The BLM has taken away AUMs and has said that will remain the case until some of the forage issues are addressed. Then they can be reinstated. They have not been reinstated. We would appreciate a motion to maintain the herd at 300 until forage situation is addressed.

James Gilson of the Carbon/Emery Chapter of the SFW-We support the division's recommendations for bison numbers and the bucks, bulls and OIAL proclamation.

Shayne Thompson-I support the division's recommendation and would to see micro management of some of the units where there is trouble, such as cutting permit numbers. Whatever is done, I would like to see closer management of deer units that are below herd objective.

Sue Fivecoat, Assistant field manager of the BLM Hanksville office-We would like to acknowledged the good work performed by the DWR and dealing with the bison numbers over the past few years. They have definitely worked hard to do the extra big hunts and the capture projects, so I think they should be commended to bring the bison numbers down. The BLM supports the bison management plan and its objectives. We feel it's important to have the continued support of the DWR and bison committee. A lot of progress has been made in the way the committee works together and the projects that have been planned and the projects that are planned. We support the sightability study and believe that's an absolutely important part. The DWR and BLM are working on the winter range issues, which will continue this year. We recommend working with the plan.

RAC Discussion

Kevin Albrecht-We will go to comments by the RAC. When we go into the motions, I think it would be best to treat the bison separately. On a personal note, when I was choosing a career because I could make a lot of money. No. Actually, those of you know that that it's the love and passion people have for wildlife. The reason I bring this up is the fact that in the past few years we have done a lot of habitat projects and seedings. In doing that, we have had a lot of court cases and a lot of that get held up in court by a lot of different groups. Usually they have supported the projects, but there has always been something behind the scenes by which they could land-rich by these projects. I bring this up because there are a lot of good things that have been done by the bison committee, but my fear is that all of the habitat projects and effort aren't lost in this fight that are happening in Utah. The Henry's is leading the way, because you have a free-ranging buffalo herd and you have one of the best mule deer herds in the world. I hope that's not lost and I hope that we will recognize that the biologists are not in this for the money. I hope we don't say, let's go back to the old 275, because there's too much of a fight and thereby lose all the future habitat dollars. I just hope the DWR keeps getting that encouragement to keep going.

Todd Huntington-If we go with the plan proposed by the southern RAC, that's valid for only three years, right?

Blair Eastman-The plan is going to be followed through for the next two years, right? And then these recommendations can be brought back up?

Terry Sanslow-Being on the RAC and working with the Wildlife Board, we put a plan in place and everyone agrees to it, and then the next go-around, we want something changed. We can't keep doing this. We've got to stick with the plans we have. See if they work out. If something catastrophic happens, or if someone issues an executive order to fix it, we need to really look at keeping the plans in place. It's really important. We keep changing the plans, and it makes us all look a little stupid.

Todd Huntington-Terry, on that same note, the division brought us the change. They wanted to change the mule deer plan.

Terry Sanslow-The main reason there were a lot of changes done this year is because those changes are coming up for 2011. My point is that we have got to stay with the plans. We vote them in and then vote them out. Unless there is strong, strong evidence that what we did was terrible, let's stay with it. We are talking about going from 305 to 315 to 325 on the bison for the next three years. If it's necessary, they can issue more permits next year or whatever. I can't see making five year decisions for a 3-year plan. Let's see it through.

Walt Maldonado-All of these plans come down to habitat. We are putting money and effort on the ground to do that and I'm not seeing anything. I would like to see a presentation from the division about on-going habitat projects--something similar to the wildlife management 101 presentation. Let's see a slide show of the highlights of what has been done on the Henry's. That makes our job a lot easier. I do read some of this stuff on the Internet and in magazines, but it doesn't come here to where we can all get a feeling about what's going on. That would help me make decisions. I don't know if the presentation would be from the Habitat Council, but I'd like to see it.

Bill Bates-As Chris Wood's supervisor, I think I can arrange to have him put together a presentation on the habitat work being conducted.

Walt Maldonado-Sometimes they do great work and they need a pat on the back and they don't get that. I'd like to give them a pat on the back if their work is actually doing any good.

Bill Bates-That's a good suggestion.

Wayne Hoskisson-In response to what has happened on the Henry Mountains, the loss of loss of 35% of their AUMs is dramatic. As to whether it's time to do something with the bison, I'm not sure. I'm not sure if I would be comfortable with a certain increase in bison and whether it be time to start raising bison numbers.

Bill Bates-The new plan is to start putting collars on the bison this summer. We will also be starting the sightability study this year and we have a proposal from USU to compare forage use by bison and cattle. These will be great studies on all these issues to find out what's really going on, so I'm really excited.

Kevin Albrecht-I have a question for Justin Shannon for his opinion about the condition of winter range and what you plan to do in the next five years?

Justin Shannon-Wade Paskett could tell us about some of the specific things that have been done. While he's coming up here to talk about the water projects and habitat enhancement projects taking place, we have to remember that it's very hard to take a rangeland from a poor to fair condition. It's much easier to go from fair to good. Low elevation areas in the Henry Mountains have little soil and precipitation. We may be spending a lot of money on seed and effort with little to show for it. At our last committee meeting, Steve Dalton brought up that attempts to improve habitat on summer and transitional ranges will give you more bang for the buck. Because bison are nomadic, they will use that forage and take pressure off the winter range. I am not opposed to doing work on the winter range, it's just a matter of producing results.

Bill Bates- Justin, there are some things we need to address with winter range right now.

Justin Shannon-We have a situation where we have bison down on the winter range during summer. We need to push them back up on the summer range to keep them from doing further damage.

Bill Bates-It's our experience that you can herd bison wherever they want to go.

Blair Eastman-Justin, can you tell us how many AUMs are allocated to bison?

Justin Shannon-I know we have enough for 305. That's what the plan is based on.

Blair Eastman-Are you going to use all of the allotted AUMs or just suspend a percentage?

Justin Shannon-It's a different issue-wildlife and cattle AUMs.

Wade Paskett-Currently this year, we have done several spring developments. We have fenced and put pipelines below springs to prevent trampling. We have done chainings on Cave Flat and have reseeded the area. The winter range is an issue, but we are trying to help David on his allotment with water availability and bison distribution by means of troughs, guzzlers, springs and catchment basins. These distribute bison and cattle use to reduce impacts in any one area.

Chris Micoz-This is off the bison subject. Do we have numbers for the Zion desert bighorn sheep unit and the numbers of permits for that unit.

Anis Aoude-The unit has roughly 240 sheep and roughly the same formula for determining sheep permit numbers as on other units.

Kevin Albrecht-I think we should keep the bison a separate issue from the rest of the Bucks and Bulls permit numbers.

VOTING

Motion was made by Terry Sanslow to approve the Bucks, Bulls and OIAL permit numbers for 2010 as presented by the Division of Wildlife Resources.

Seconded by Derris Jones

Motion passed with one opposing vote cast by Todd Huntington

Derris Jones-I'd like to say I only seconded the motion with the understanding that we follow through with the studies that have been promised to take place. Otherwise, the next time I will vote the other way.

Wayne Hoskisson-The reduction of AUMs borne by livestock growers on the Henry Mountains is indicative of a very serious problem. I would like to make a motion that the Wildlife Board considers revisiting the bison plan to begin addressing the issue. The value of the lost AUMs for cattlemen at \$70 per AUM is \$639,000, which is a staggering figure. At \$45 per AUM, that's \$410,000. The plan needs to be revisited as soon as possible.

Blair Eastman-Put that into a motion and I will second it.

VOTING

Motion was made by Wayne Hoskisson that the Board consider starting a revision of the bison management plan now rather than waiting two years.

Seconded by Blair Eastman

Discussion on the Motion:

Derris Jones-Can the BLM come up and give us a time frame of the AUM reduction of cattle. Is this standard or special due to the drought? Have you guys thought about what you will allow on the range next year?

Sue Fivecoat-I don't have the long-term actions in front of me to say what they have been. They were voluntary reductions in most instances. When we have had severe drought, we have required AUM restrictions. In recent years, the reductions have been voluntary.

Bill Bates-I've been going through the table in the material provided by the division for this presentation. Nasty Flat shows zero AUMs past use and 482 available. Those AUMs are owned by the SFW. They have asked for non-use. I don't know how many of these other AUMs fall into the same category. The table needs more details to help us see the real picture of what's going on.

Travis Pehrson-I am going to make a comment in behalf of sportsmen. You cant' blame bison for their loss of use. Cattle grazing has also contributed to the problem. When we consider the habitat projects undertaken by sportsmen organizations and agencies, the cost comes out to about \$3,000 per buffalo. Have the stock growers invested \$3,000 per cow? Maybe their losses wouldn't be as bad, if they had invested some money into habitat improvement. You can't blame it on just buffalo or deer. Livestock usage is as much to blame.

Wayne Hoskisson-The reason I would like to see the bison plan revisited is that this has been an on-going problem. We've been discussing who is to blame for poor range conditions. Which problems are caused by bison and which by wildlife? I'm not for one side or the other, but it's a problem experienced everywhere in this state. We need to start somewhere.

Kevin Albrecht-We have a motion on the table. I will call for a vote. All in favor?

Motion failed. In favor were Wayne Hoskisson, Blair Eastman, Walt Maldonado, Christine Micoz, Charlie Tracy Opposed to the motion were Todd Huntington, Travis Pehrson, Derris Jones, Jeff Horrocks, Terry Sanslow and Laura Kamala.

Kevin Albrecht-Motion failed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

15 public in attendance

Next RAC meeting Wednesday, April 27, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. at the John Wesley Powell Museum, 1765 E. Main in Green River.

Next Wildlife Board Meeting, March 30-31, 2010, Senate Room 210, State Capitol