

**Southern Regional Advisory Council Meeting
Richfield High School
Richfield, UT
July 26, 2011
7:00 p.m.**

REVIEW & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

MOTION: To accept minutes and agenda as submitted.

VOTE: Unanimous.

COUGAR MANAGEMENT PLAN AND REVISED HARVEST RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION: To accept the cougar management plan and revised harvest recommendations as presented with the exception that the harvest objective season on split units begin on February 1.

VOTE: 10 in favor 1 opposed.

MANAGING PREDATORY WILDLIFE SPECIES POLICY W1AG-04

MOTION: To accept the managing predatory wildlife species policy as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

BOBCAT HARVEST RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION: To accept the bobcat harvest recommendations as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

WATERFOWL GUIDEBOOK AND RULE R657-09

MOTION: To accept the waterfowl guidebook and rule as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

CIP RULE AMENDMENT R657-3

MOTION: To accept the CIP rule amendment as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

WALK-IN ACCESS RULE AMENDMENT R657-56

MOTION: To accept the walk-in access rule amendment as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

FY 2013 FEE SCHEDULE

MOTION: To accept the FY 2013 fee schedule as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

ELECTION OF RAC OFFICIALS (CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR)

MOTION: To nominate Steve Flinders as chairperson.

MOTION: To close nominations.

VOTE: Unanimous

VOTE: Unanimous

MOTION: To nominate Cordell Pearson as vice-chairperson.

MOTION: To close nominations.

VOTE: Unanimous

VOTE: Unanimous

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RAC Members Present	DWR Personnel Present	Wildlife Board Present	RAC Members Not Present
Chairman Steve Flinders Rusty Aiken Dale Bagley Dave Black Sam Carpenter Bryan Johnson Mack Morrell Cordell Pearson Mike Staheli Layne Torgerson Clair Woodbury Mike Worthen	Kevin Bunnell Lynn Chamberlain Branden Davis Justin Dolling Micah Evans Teresa Griffin Heather Grossman Giani Julander Jim Lamb Leslie Macfarlane Doug Messerly Vance Mumford Jason Nicholes Dustin Schaible Lynn Zubeck	Jake Albrecht	Paul Briggs

Steve Flinders called the meeting to order at 7 pm. There were approximately 9 interested parties in attendance in addition to RAC members, Wildlife Board members and DWR employees. Steve Flinders had RAC members introduce themselves. Steve Flinders explained the meeting procedures.

Steve Flinders: It is 7 o'clock; let's get things started here tonight. I'm Steve Flinders representing the Fish Lake and Dixie National forests; serving as chair. I want to recognize Jake Albrecht from the Wildlife Board, in the audience. We've got a number of new RAC members. How about we start on my left, down on the end, and if you're new to us we'd like to hear a little bio. Not just the position you're serving but maybe tell us a little bit about where you're from and just . . .

Mike Worthen: My name is Mike Worthen. I'm from Cedar City, new member. I grew up in Parowan. Spent all my youth in southern Utah, mainly with my father who was a government trapper and lion hunter. Went to Utah State University and graduated with a wildlife degree in wildlife management. From there I went to work for Wildlife Services in Idaho as a state director, in California as a state director, in Colorado as the regional director for the western United States and the Pacific Islands. I

mainly dealt with predator control, migratory bird problems with crops, and human health and safety issues such as zoonotic diseases, rabies, airplane strikes and the likes. From there I moved to southern Utah, back to southern Utah and headed up an aviation training program for the predator control pilots in Cedar City and retired in 2008, and I'm currently employed by the Iron County as their natural resource director.

Rusty Aiken: That's a tough one to follow. Rusty Aiken; grew up in Kanab. I currently live in Cedar City, Utah. I graduated from Southern Utah College. Grew up loving wildlife, fishing and glad to be a member of the board.

Sam Carpenter: Sam Carpenter and I'm old. I represent wildlife or the sportsman.

Dave Black: I'm Dave Black from St. George. I was raised in Panguitch. I'm an officer in the Southern Utah Anglers in St. George, one of the local fishing groups. I have a degree in geological engineering. I work for one of the consulting firms in St. George. I have a strong interest in the youth and hunting and the traditions of fishing. And I just want to be here to do what I can to help.

Mike Staheli: Mike Staheli. I'm from Deseret, Utah. I grew up in Utah County and I've been in the Delta area now for forty years. I'm a lifelong resident of Utah; a hunter and fisherman my whole life. It's one of my keen interests is the wildlife in this state. I'm an at-large member.

Clair Woodbury: I'm Clair Woodbury from Hurricane. I'm also an at-large member starting my second round.

Douglas Messerly: I'm Doug Messerly the regional supervisor for the Division of Wildlife Resources in the southern region, based out of Cedar City. Myself and my staff act as executive secretary to this committee. We don't vote on any issues. We try to organize the places for the meetings and we're in charge of getting the minutes done for the meetings.

Steve Flinders: In case you're wondering because I didn't ask you to, Mike Worthen's at-large, Rusty Aiken's agriculture, Sam mentioned he's sportsman, Dave Black's at-large, and Mike and Clair are both at-large.

Mack Morrell: Mack Morrell from Bicknell, agriculture.

Brian Johnson: Brian Johnson from Cedar City. I'm non-consumptive, and I haven't grown up yet. Just wildlife has been a passion of mine and I'm just going to do what I can to preserve it.

Layne Torgerson: Layne Torgerson from Richfield. I'm a sportsman's representative.

Dale Bagley: Dale Bagley from Marysvale. I represent an elective official.

Cordell Pearson: I'm Cordell Pearson from Circleville. I represent at-large. I'm an old guy too but I'm not as old as Clair and Sam.

Steve Flinders: For those new to the RAC process let me real briefly go over it. There will be a presentation from the Division of Wildlife. We'll then go to questions by the RAC followed by

questions from the public. We like you to keep those to questions. Then we'll move on to comments. Please fill out a comment card and get it to us; make note of which agenda item you want to comment. And then we'll move on to comments from the RAC and proceed to motions and voting.

Review and Acceptance of Agenda and Minutes (action)

Steve Flinders: With that, unless there are any questions, take a motion on the agenda and last meeting's minutes. Clair.

Clair Woodbury: I move that we accept the agenda as written.

Mack Morrell: Second.

Steve Flinders: Seconded by Mack. Anything on the minutes? Do you want to include those in that motion?

Clair Woodbury: Yes, I also include the minutes from our last meeting.

Steve Flinders: Still seconded?

Mack Morrell: Second.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Mack. Any discussion on the motion? Those in favor? It looks unanimous.

Clair Woodbury made the motion to accept the agenda and minutes from previous meeting. Mack Morrell seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Steve Flinders: Wildlife Board was a long time ago. It was the fishing proclamation guidebook rather and the deer herd unit boundaries. Most of the discussion at the Board meeting surrounded the herd units. To jog our memory we talked about the inclusion of that portion between SR-50 between Scipio and Aurora, north of that, so what many folks call Jap Valley. That's part of the Manti Unit rather than the old, the general season boundary used to go down the river, now it follows SR-50. Does that capture that? Everything else was voted as we did here. Any other questions on the Board meeting? Seeing none we'll move on to regional update with Doug.

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

Douglas Messerly: Thank you Mr. Chairman, I'll try to keep it brief we've got a lot of action items tonight.

- First of all welcome to the new RAC members. We appreciate your attendance and your service. Don't be nervous, just work with us. There are some general announcements; on the travel reimbursements Giani has

prepared a form for you to make a note on there whether you drove or not for reimbursement purposes. And if you'll fill those out and get them to her before you leave I'd appreciate that.

- Our general season elk tags go on sale tomorrow. We don't expect a big rush I don't think. In years past they have sold out before the hunt but typically it's been just before the hunt. In any event they will be available beginning tomorrow and if you are interested in a general season elk tag that would be the time to go get one. You can get them online or at our agents or at our office.
- Left over deer tags also go on sale tomorrow but as I understand it only northern region deer tags are remaining. So if you have some interest in hunting general season deer in the northern region those tags will be available both online and at the office tomorrow.
- It's been a good summer for fishing. It's been kind of late getting to some of the higher elevation lakes but now is the time to start working towards those if you can as the lower elevation lakes get warmer and warmer. We've had some good fishing reports of wiper fishing at New Castle Reservoir. It's a lower elevation lake. But in addition to that I'm excited to report that as we presented to this committee some time ago that we accomplished the introduction of wipers to Minersville, Piute and Otter Creek. And at this point they are just fry, they are very small, but those introductions were made and they seem to be having some success there. But if you have interest in fishing the higher elevation lakes now would be the time to get there for those because water temps will be good for catching those active fish.
- I've been asked to announce that the goat watch is scheduled for August 6th, which is a watchable wildlife event that we typically host on the Tusher Mountains, where we take as many as three hundred people up and show them the goats on the top of the mountains. It will have to be cancelled this year due to the conditions of the roads. Apparently there were some avalanches over the winter, some debris left on the roads, and in addition to that there's still snow and damage from runoff that probably won't be prepared in time for that. So rather than having people come a long distance for no reason we're cancelling it for this year anyway at this point.

Douglas Messerly: So unless there's questions or anything that anybody's curious about, Mr. Chairman that's my presentation.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Doug. Question Clair?

Clair Woodbury: Yeah Doug just a question on the wipers on those three reservoirs you mentioned. What is the benefit of putting them in there?

Douglas Messerly: We've used the wipers successfully at New Castle reservoir; and essentially the situation we had there was a declining trout fishery due to the illegal introduction of golden shiners. The golden shiners had established themselves so well in the reservoir that they were successfully outcompeting the game fish for the available food. So the idea was proposed that we put a large predator in there, a fish that would effectively feed on the shiners. And the nice thing about wipers is

they are a hybrid so we can absolutely control their numbers, they can't reproduce on their own. And we can control their population levels by what we put in the reservoir in terms of stocking them and also by the limits that we allow people to take them out. So we can control that level at the level of fish in the lake. And the idea was to reduce competition for food resources by putting a predator in that would eat the shiners who were competing directly with the trout and the smaller small mouth for the available resources. And it's actually worked out very well. Trout growth rates are up. Small mouth bass numbers are up. And shiner numbers are way down. So we're in the phase now where we're trying to balance out the number of wipers with the sustainable level of forage that are there. But in a nutshell they're just an insurance against undesirable fish. So for example in Minersville, Piute and Otter Creek we have Utah chubs. And the idea is that these wipers will not only provide a recreational opportunity but they'll also provide some control of the less desirable fish. So that's the concept. It's worked well at New Castle. And they've been real popular with fisherman because they get big and they fight hard. And people like to catch them; they're kind of a colorful fish too.

Clair Woodbury: What kind of impact do they have on the trout? Do we plant big enough trout that they're not affected as far as predation by these wipers?

Douglas Messerly: Not one hundred percent. But what I can tell you is that elimination of the shiners has been much more beneficial to trout populations than what little bit of trout that the wipers do take. We make an effort to plant those fish big enough but honestly a four or five-pound wiper you can't, you know it would be difficult to plant a trout consistently large enough to avoid predation by that fish. We try to keep those numbers down by encouraging people to harvest them and controlling their numbers by the number that we put in. The benefits far outweigh the costs in terms of the actual impact on the trout. If we were to wave our magic wand and take all the wipers out tomorrow within a year the impact on the trout would be devastating. We'd start to see growth rates that were unacceptable and people would actually reject the fish because the trout don't grow fast enough to interest them at all even after two or three years because there's just not enough food available for them because the shiners are so thick. The alternative is a complete treatment of the reservoir to kill everything and start over and hope that someone doesn't illegally introduce something again. But our history has proven that that's a pretty futile dream. And so the wipers are just one solution that we've come up with to try and essentially institute an insurance policy against over population by less desirable fish. We do it with cutthroat in other lakes such as Panguitch and you know Kolob is a really good example of a place where the cutthroat keep the, I believe it's chubs in that case, maybe it's shiners, in any event they keep those fish under control there too. So these large predatory fish are, we're finding the best answer to control these because they're less environmentally controversial than Rotenone projects are, which are proving to be very difficult for us to accomplish it turns out. And in addition to that they provide a recreational opportunity that's a good fish for people to catch and eat. So it's the best of both worlds in that regard if we have to have something.

Steve Flinders: Thanks, good discussion. Any other questions for Doug? Moving on. Cougar management plan and revised harvest recommendations, an action item, Kevin Bunnell. We're going to see a bunch of you tonight Kevin. Without air-conditioning too. Wildlife Section Chief I forgot to say. I'm already used to it but maybe others in the room aren't. So, congratulations.

Kevin Bunnell: This will be the last time you'll see me doing cougar recommendations. It will be somebody else in the future.

Steve Flinders: Delegation.

Kevin Bunnell: Delegation.

Cougar Management Plan and Revised Harvest Recommendations (action)

-Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief 17:01 to 30:24 of 3:16:56

(See Attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Thanks Kevin. I think you're going to get a series of questions. And let me ask you one right now, with your hypothetical cougar management area, first unit was limited entry, does that unit close when those cats are taken?

Kevin Bunnell: N. A limited entry unit has a set season. They would get their set season but the harvest that took place on the limited entry unit would apply to the overall quota for the area. No, that unit would never close until the season was over for a limited entry unit.

Steve Flinders: I guess other questions as we break down this region specifically. We may want to look at those cougar management areas in our region to help us. . .

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah. You know I handed, you have a handout that has the harvest broken down by cougar management area over the last four years, it gives you an average. So that should give you a barometer of kind of how this, how this meets up with what's happened in the past. And so I hope that's helpful.

Steve Flinders: Other questions for Kevin? Go ahead Mike.

Mike Staheli: Mike Staheli. Yeah, on page 2 you talked about adult females and the harvest 17 to 20 percent, or and then proportions; proportion of adult females in the harvest 25 percent in your management areas.

Kevin Bunnell: Right, so that's under, so the difference there is whether you're under predator management or not. And that's talking specifically adult females where the quotas are all females.

Mike Staheli: All right. But as we look at the harvest quota and the female sub quota

Kevin Bunnell: No we are. So that's talking specifically to adult females that are three-years of age and older. It doesn't account for the one and two-year old females that are going to be harvested. So the higher percentage that you see here is accounting for the juvenile females that are going to come in the harvest as well.

Mike Staheli: So you're just talking about adults in the 17 to 20 percent.

Kevin Bunnell: Yes, that's just adults.

Mike Staheli: Now when they check in the cougar the DWR man he makes a judgment right there of the age and he's very close.

Kevin Bunnell: Well he does. He does based on, well but that's based on the eruption of the tooth and that tells you, that usually happens when a cougar's between 18 and 24 months old. Okay, but we've defined an adult female as three-years or younger so you don't have any way to tell from 24 to, which ones are between that 24 to 36 month old age.

Mike Staheli: Okay. Thank you.

Kevin Bunnell: Good question. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Bryan.

Brian Johnson: You talked a little bit about these sheep units how they're open all year. And I just have a question, they're just not getting hunted much, I mean once you mentioned access and low snow . . .

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah, and that's the case. You know these are mostly low elevation desert units. They're hard to hunt. They're cliffy. You know a lion is as likely to go up in the cliffs where the dogs can't follow it rather than go into a tree in those areas. In some places you're looking at a 10 to 15 mile horse ride just to get down into the area to start hunting. They're just difficult.

Brian Johnson: So the only people back there are sheep hunters.

Kevin Bunnell: Right. And under this scenario sheep hunters could have a harvest objective cougar tag in his pocket.

Brian Johnson: How about we just give them a harvest objective cougar tag? I'm just throwing that out there. If you don't like it throw it back.

Kevin Bunnell: It's a possibility but it's not an expensive tag. It's 15, 20, 25 bucks, something like that. We would encourage them to purchase one of those when they go hunt sheep, literally would.

Brian Johnson: How much is that tag?

Kevin Bunnell: Harvest objective tag is about . . . I've got the fee schedule here. I'm not sure. But anyway, uh . . .

Brian Johnson: So would that be something that you guys would look into discounting. Obviously you can do whatever the Board tells you to do, but . . .

Kevin Bunnell: I think that specifically would take, because it's dealing with a permit and with the fees associated, it would actually take legislation. So it would have to go through the legislature. But certainly it could.

Brian Johnson: It sounds like a building permit.

Kevin Bunnell: It is. I'm going to talk about fees here in a minutes and it's a whole, or at the end of the meeting, it's a convoluted process. But there's certain things the Board can do, there's certain things that the legislature has to do, and setting fees for permits is one of the things that the Board doesn't have the authority to deal with, the legislature has to.

Brian Johnson: Can the board waive fees? Or is that a lawyer question?

Kevin Bunnell: That's probably a lawyer question. I don't have Marty here.

Brian Johnson: And I understand that, sorry.

Steve Flinders: Other questions for Kevin on the presentation? Layne.

Layne Torgerson: How'd you know I had a question?

Steve Flinders: You were reaching for the mic.

Layne Torgerson: Kevin I know that you had a slide there that addressed the cougar, how many current predator management units do we have in the system; under the system that we're under right now?

Kevin Bunnell: I'd have to go back and look at that specifically Layne. It's probably fewer than what this would, because this would apply to the whole management area, which is a group of units. It's going to move it around a little bit but in terms of total units, and I've have to go back and look, but I think this would put more units under that scenario than we've had in the past. I can check that during one of the other presentations and let you know.

Layne Torgerson: So under this new scenario we've got five cougar management units, correct?

Kevin Bunnell: There are actually eight of them.

Layne Torgerson: Or eight.

Kevin Bunnell: Eight or nine.

Layne Torgerson: Is there, under that scenario is there predator management units in each area?

Kevin Bunnell: No, it would either be the whole area; the whole group of units would be under predator management at one time.

Douglas Messerly: Cougar management.

Layne Torgerson: That was the one slide that you showed us that showed the Bookcliffs and the I don't remember, Pine Valley was one of them.

Kevin Bunnell: So the areas that qualify right now would be this one, the Pine Valley, the Bookcliffs

and the Uintas are currently meeting that threshold of having adult deer survival below 85 percent.

Douglas Messerly: Let me finish answering this one. Another important point to remember is that some units are under predator management plans that are not addressed to cougars. So it's not a general blanket that you can throw out there. But more precisely a cougar predator management plan.

Kevin Bunnell: Right. There are certainly a whole lot of other units that would be under predator management for coyotes, or for ravens, or for, and that's not tied to this at all. And in fact we'll talk about that in the next presentation.

Mike Staheli: That was my question then. These areas that aren't meeting your objective of 85 percent, they have been identified as cougar problems.

Kevin Bunnell: Yes, they would, potentially, I mean in those situations we have some information that tells us adult survival is lower than we expect and we know that if cougars are going to be negatively impacting a population it's going to show up in that adult survival.

Mike Staheli: But you can't identify whether it's cougars killing that percentage or coyotes then?

Kevin Bunnell: We can't. But we don't know, well and I'll talk about this in a minute, if it's a coyote problem it's more likely to show up in the fawn to doe ratios because they're more likely to take the younger animals. Cougars are more likely to take the older animals. And so the next presentation I'm going to give you is proposing that we separate those two things out so that we can put the effort where we have information that shows it's needed.

Steve Flinders: Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: Yeah, I just kind of want you to clarify something a little bit if you will for me. The only deer that are tagged in the unit on the Monroe were on the Monroe Mountain? Or is there other deer tagged?

Kevin Bunnell: No, the only . . . So where the dots are is where we're or are the units where we're tracking the adult survival. We're spending about two hundred fifty thousand dollars a year doing it on these eight units. And we have to have a certain sample size and everything else to make it so that we get the information. And so what we did is we tried to pick units that we thought were representative of the surrounding units. So we're making the assumption that if adult survival is low on these units then it's similar on the surrounding units. And that's just an assumption that we have to make.

Cordell Pearson: Okay, yeah. So you're, the whole green area there with the dots on the Monroe, you issue 93 tags for that entire unit, is that correct?

Kevin Bunnell: So not 93 tags but we'd have a harvest quota of 93. So harvest objective tags are unlimited. Anybody, we will sell as many as people want to buy.

Cordell Pearson: But there's cap on that too right?

Kevin Bunnell: No there isn't. There is no cap on the number of harvest objective tags that can be sold.

Cordell Pearson: No, no. But I mean there's a cap on the amount of cougars that can be killed on the harvest objective.

Kevin Bunnell: Right. And that's what we're saying; we're saying 93 for that group of units.

Cordell Pearson: Right. So if they killed 92 during the limited entry and you sell 100 harvest objective tags they can legally only kill one cougar, correct?

Kevin Bunnell: They could. But that's not going to happen. If you look at the harvests; so let me go to this sheet that I handed out. The harvest on the Monroe unit for the last four years has been 44, 50, 40, and 51.

Cordell Pearson: Okay, that's just on the Monroe or is that the whole group?

Kevin Bunnell: No, that's that entire group of units.

Cordell Pearson: The whole. Okay.

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah.

Cordell Pearson: Okay. That's what I wanted to. So their percentage is like 50 percent?

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah. In the past they've averaged harvesting about 50 percent of what this overall quota is. And now that's exactly why we put the female. So and I want to make sure you're straight here. It's probably never going to close by reaching that quota. The female sub quota we put in there is kind of a safety valve. Okay, it's more likely to close by meeting that female sub quota than it is by meeting the overall quota. So if you look at the Monroe in the last four years it would have closed once based on meeting the female sub quota, even though it was only at about 50 percent of the overall quota.

Cordell Pearson: Okay. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Down on the end. Mike Worthen.

Mike Worthen: Yes, in the document you mentioned a sink; explore a sink management policy. I think I understand what it is where you've got a population of cougars that are doing quite well and maybe not accessible or whatever and using that area as kind of a breeding to populate surrounding areas. And you're just exploring that but how do you envision that to be working into this system if you're going to close partial units down and whatnot?

Kevin Bunnell: I think I understand your question. The way we've applied, we know that cougar populations kind of work in a source sink dynamic. Meaning there's, you're always going to have some females that are living in places where they're a long ways from roads and in canyons that are hard to get to that really aren't very vulnerable to harvest just because of where they live. And so those areas become sources as they have kittens and they disperse out to the other areas. That happens on a smaller scale probably than these big areas that we're talking about. We've actually gone back and mapped all the harvest for the last twelve years, to the point that we can, because we only get information based on

the unit and the drainage. And we can identify where those sources are. Despite, it doesn't matter how many tags we put out there there are some areas that it's just really difficult to harvest a lion in. And that's why these populations are resilient. If you go back to this graphic. . . We got really aggressive on lions in the mid 90's. But they didn't go away because they are resilient, because there are always going to be these pockets of animals that are hard, that really aren't very vulnerable to harvest.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Dale.

Dale Bagley: Traditionally Panguitch and Beaver units have always, they've been real quick to close under this management plan. Basically, I mean they could harvest everyone of the 93 off of the those two units and nothing would really force them to go hunt, say Dutton, which is not really a desirable unit. Is there any way to, I don't know what I'm trying to say . . .

Kevin Bunnell: To force some harvest into some of these other areas?

Dale Bagley: Yeah.

Kevin Bunnell: There is, and that's why we can use these, like the split units. During the, on these split units they start out as limited entry and we'll have a set number of tags in those areas and that's the only place that guy, that group of guys can hunt from November through currently the end of February. And so if we have areas like the Dutton or, say you take the Dutton versus the Beaver, we know that once the harvest objective season opens it's going to get a lot of pressure and they're going to harvest quite a few. We would probably put fewer limited entry tags in there because we know they're going to get harvest after the fact, we could put more limited entry tags in the Dutton to try to force some harvest in there during that portion of the season. So there is ways for us to still try to move or force people into certain areas where we need to get some harvest.

Dale Bagley: Okay. And then one more thing, on your female sub quota, that's not a three-year to where it triggers that. That would be a one-year deal?

Kevin Bunnell: This is a one in each season.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Dave.

Dave Black: I think you answered my question pretty well just with the last response. But it struck me a little bit odd the first time I looked at this. If we're going to move into a direction where we're going to micromanage the deer into these subareas, you know, why don't we do the same thing for the cougars? But if you're going to force a certain amount of tags in those areas then that helps explain it.

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah and the main difference is is just the scale at which the two different animals use the landscape. I mean cougars have a huge, use the landscape at a much greater scale than deer do. We were just reading a story on the way down; there was just a cougar that was hit on the road in Connecticut that came from South Dakota. These animals are capable and they do travel huge distances and they cover very large areas. And so it makes sense to manage cougars at a larger scale because that's the scale that they use the landscape on. Where deer are very traditionally go from point A to point B each year.

Dave Black: I just wanted to be clear that you would have a way like to manage the example was the Dutton, where maybe we really need to reduce the number of cougars but it's not an ideal place to hunt. And so if we have a way to get people in there because otherwise they maybe wouldn't, and if that's covered in this plan I think it's . . .

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah, and that's one of the things that we consider in terms of how we split out, you know, how many limited entry tags in each unit during the limited entry portion of the season. So yeah there is a way to do that.

Steve Flinders: So Kevin, to clarify, we're used to seeing individual units with individual permit numbers and hunt strategies. And we're looking forward to tonight as an endorsement of this plan or some modification of it . . .

Kevin Bunnell: Which still allows individual hunt strategies on the units but manages the overall harvest at a larger scale.

Steve Flinders: And will we see those individual strategies by unit and permit numbers?

Kevin Bunnell: Well we're recommending that they stay with exactly the way we recommended it last year.

Steve Flinders: Last year.

Kevin Bunnell: Because we're not, we're not changing that at all. And next, yeah certainly next time when we go back into a full recommendation cycle for cougars each one of these will say, you know, strategy and number of permits.

Steve Flinders: I think some of the questions and confusion have been what do we have out there now, what did we have last year? Monroe is limited entry.

Kevin Bunnell: No, Monroe is split. Essentially every unit in the southern region is split. Except there may be one or two harvest objective units that are straight harvest objective where we have bighorn sheep. So that's not changing at all.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Bryan.

Brian Johnson: We're good. Okay, it's my first day. Just questioning, and as far as management goes you mentioned that we're going to female sub-quotas because other states are doing it and you didn't want to go to that. And I'm okay with the female sub-quota; I mean other states are doing it, it seems to work. My question. . .

Kevin Bunnell: It works on this scale. Let me clarify that. We've tried female sub-quotas in the past. And what happened is we closed units down in less than 24 hours because you created a, you create a mentality that if I don't kill it the next guy's going to and people quit being selective. So they kill the first cat they see regardless of what it is because if they don't they're afraid the next guy's going to. Hopefully these are big enough quotas that I think, that I hope we can get away from that; that it's not just one or two and I've got to get mine before somebody else does.

Brian Johnson: Okay. Is there an online? I've never hunted cougars. Is there like an online?

Kevin Bunnell: There's an online; we post it online.

Brian Johnson: Is there an online course?

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah. You mean it terms of . . . sorry I'm cutting you off. Let me let you finish.

Brian Johnson: Is there an online course? I've had the opportunity to hunt bears in the state. I took a little class and learned a little bit about bears. And I was just wondering if the same thing was applicable for lions.

Brian Johnson: There is. There's a, it's not a mandatory course. In the last cougar plan the recommendation was to make it voluntary. We've created a course that everybody is made aware of when they draw their tag that they can go on. And what it's based on is how do you tell a male from a female, a juvenile from an adult. Which really isn't straightforward with an animal like a cougar.

Brian Johnson: I understand. So as I'm looking at this management plan, really some of these units that you're below 85 percent on, I mean, I honestly believe and I know this probably isn't the right place to bring this up, but the best way to get that under control is just let guys that are already out there take em. If they're already out there if you've got, I mean in Colorado and other states you can tag, you can tag out with, I mean, you can slap a deer tag on a lion if you got the chance, if you see one, and that to happen it's going to be so slim I could probably, there's a handful of sportsman here and they probably only seen ten lions all together without dogs aiding it. So I just don't know why in Utah we don't offer the tag down or however that goes. Maybe Doug can clarify that for us, I don't know.

Kevin Bunnell: It's probably tradition as much as anything. We've kind of gone down one path and other states have gone down others. I think you can accomplish the same thing either way. But it's not; it is something that certainly could be considered.

Douglas Messerly: Well and the other thing to remember is there's the non-consumptive side of people that are interested in wildlife management that one if to manage that harvest more directly and can be able to control it with things like female sub-quotas and those sorts of things along the way. And it seems like giving out free tags to sheep hunters or free tags to deer and elk hunters is probably counter productive to that in terms of being able to control who obtains those tags and the kind of harvest that results from that. So I think it needs to be more controlled, to answer your question.

Kevin Bunnell: And inn general, the states that have done that, either Washington or Oregon, I can't remember which one, and Colorado fits into this scenario for bears, is that they have gone through, there have been, voter referendums where they have actually, it is no longer legal to hunt cougars in, and I believe it Oregon with dog. And so they lost the ability to hunt with hounds. And so then they went to this, to more the strategy that you're talking about because they lost their most effective tool. Colorado did that for bears. They can still hunt, they can still hunt lions with dogs in Colorado but they can't do bears. So they do a similar thing with their bears, because they can't hunt them with dogs they had to come up with a different mechanism to get the harvest that they need.

Steve Flinders: Other questions for Kevin by the RAC? Sure Sam.

Sam Carpenter: You touched on this initially in your presentation about moving this harvest objective date on the split units to an earlier time. What are the negatives? I know we've talked about this in previous meetings and as I recall we recommended to have it moved up. Can you tell me what the negatives are in that why we're having such a tough time getting it through?

Kevin Bunnell: Our recommendation from the Division didn't change. It came through some of the houndsmen's organizations and they convinced the board to move it back. And really they're, what they were trying to do is have less snow days, or less days with good hunting conditions after it went to harvest objective. You know they may tell you something, they probably didn't explain it exactly that way to the Board but that's really what they were trying to accomplish. And they convinced the Board that it was a good idea. But they did promise the Board at the same time that the harvest would remain the same. I don't think it's really affected things much Sam. That our harvest has stayed . . . But what we've been to that scenario for two years now and our harvest hasn't changed. But our recommendation was always that we felt like more towards the beginning to middle of February was a more appropriate date.

Steve Flinders: Other questions from the RAC? Sure Mike.

Mike Staheli: I'd like to address that proposal to move that up. What it does, in my estimation is it allows the outfitters more access to kill these cougars on the harvest objective. Most of the sportsman in this state that have these harvest tags they go all the time, you know. But the outfitters when this harvest opens they're the ones that close it usually.

Kevin Bunnell: And so this actually gives the outfitters less time.

Mike Staheli: That's right. It hurts the outfitters; helps the regular sportsman.

Steve Flinders: And curiously enough they're the ones that asked for it and got it.

Kevin Bunnell: And I haven't actually understood that myself. It's been some of the outfitters that have asked for the later date. I don't think it's universal across the outfitters but some of them were the ones that were pushing it. So . . .

Steve Flinders: Another question Sam?

Sam Carpenter: Let me just ask . . . When you're talking about outfitters are you talking about houndsman?

Kevin Bunnell: Licensed guides, yeah.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Questions from the audience

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Come on up. Thanks for waiting. We've had lots of questions up here tonight.

Todd Abelhouzen: You bet. Todd Abelhouzen from St. George, I represent SFW. You used the term population concerning 85 percent of the mule deer numbers being a baseline where we start to put it into a predator management area. My question is, is the term population referring to the ideal or the wanted population or is it of the current population?

Kevin Bunnell: If I use that in reference to population that's in reference to adult survival, nothing to do with population. But of the collared does that we have we expect 85 percent of them to survive from one year to the next. So not talking anything about numbers in the population but just survival of the collared, the adult animals that we have collars on.

Todd Abelhouzen: That leads to where I was going with my basis question. If a population is in decline or not where we want it as an ideal population shouldn't that then in turn enhance or increase the number of predators, or in this case mountain lions, that are to be harvest? And really based kind of base that, shouldn't we be basing that on the mule deer herd or the population or the quality of the mule deer herd?

Kevin Bunnell: It's a good question; it's somewhat of a complicated answer. And it comes down to the quality of information we have. First of all our population objectives were set on each of these units were set years ago. They were, you know they were done by kind of a best guess. There's not a lot of science or data behind them. And so one of the questions, so then you're measuring it versus these objectives out there that honestly are probably changing year from year and over decades based on quality of the habitat and everything else. And then you're having to measure that against our population estimates, which we use the models that we've talked about, that everybody has a lot of questions of those. And so it's two pieces of information that there's a lot of uncertainty about, the population models and these objectives that we're far less sure about either one of those numbers than we are how many of the collared deer survived from one year to the next. And so what we're trying to do is tie it to a number that we really are comfortable with and we know something about rather than these things that have a lot of uncertainty associated with it. Does that answer your question?

Speaking from audience

Kevin Bunnell: On each unit it's, we try to maintain a minimum of fifty adult does I believe. But anyway it's enough that it gives us, I know that sounds low but that gives us the statistical power we need to really make a good call. And the difference is if you went from 50 to 200 your precision doesn't change hardly at all in terms of how certain you are with that number. I know that makes people nervous and your gains from that expense it doesn't buy you much.

Steve Flinders: Other questions from the audience? Yes sir, come up to the mic please. We need your name for the record.

Gordon Batt: Are you collaring does, bucks or a combination?

Kevin Bunnell: We are just collaring the adult does because the reproductive portion of the population, the population that's going to account for more deer in the future.

Speaking from audience

Kevin Bunnell: You know, they really don't. We have, and I'll give you an example, we have a big study going on on the Oquirrh Mountains, on Kennecott property, where we have several cougars harvested, or several cougars collared with GPS collars. And so when we, when they kill something, obviously there's a whole bunch of points that they cluster around and area and we can go in and document what they've killed. And when you look at that they're taking deer and elk, and does and fawns, and not a lot of fawns, but bucks and does in the ratio that the bucks and does are on the landscape. So they're not selecting one over the other. They seem to take them at about the proportion that they are there.

Name not captured: I spend a lot of time in the woods. I know the deer are declining. It looks like to me like you've got a super-duper management program. Why can't you cut the numbers down? And what effect are the parks having on your control over these cougars?

Kevin Bunnell: Let me clarify, why can't we cut which numbers down?

Speaking from audience

Kevin Bunnell: Let me tell ya, we've done that. If you look here at this graph at our cougar harvest. If you look back in the mid 90's ---- I'll just reach over here and explain this---- So the bars in the background are the number of permits that we've issued, that we issue on an annual basis over that time period. Okay? This line is the harvest, that yellow line. If you compare, so you compare 1997 where we had about 900 permits, we harvested over 600 lions that year. Compare that to 2005 where we had almost the exact same number of permits and yet we harvested just over 300. We have reduced that cougar population from what it was back in the mid 90's. And then we've adjusted, we've continued to adjust tags and we're not seeing much impact on the harvest. And so we're managing the cougar population at a lower level than it was and despite this, you know despite the cougar population being lower we haven't seen a big response from the deer herd on a statewide level. And so we're trying to put the effort into the areas where we think we can have an impact. So we're trying to use a rifle instead of a shotgun with this approach; if that makes sense.

Steve Flinders: Other question?

Nolan Gardner: Nolan Gardner, St. George. A question regarding that, regarding your hunt strategies, mid 90's to '05. Weren't the mid 90's when we went to full quota?

Kevin Bunnell: And that's representative on the bar here. So in 1997, the dark part is limited entry permits, the dark portion of the bar. And so if you compare these same two years we had way more of that harvest under a more restrictive harvest because we had more limited entry permits than we did split or harvest objective. Compared to 2005 where the majority of them were in the split or harvest objective category and we harvested half the number of lions, under a more liberal hunt strategy. Does that?

Speaking from audience

Kevin Bunnell: Right. And that's where as you can see the light blue bars, that represents quotas versus limited entry. The dark blue is limited entry, the light blue is quotas. So in '97 we first introduced the

quotas and you can see since that time the proportion of tags that have been under the quota system has increased over that timeframe.

Speaking from audience

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah, that's the number of, so that, but it means no limit on the number of people that can be out at an area where under a limited entry scenario there's only X number of people that can hunt in that area. Under a split it's anybody that has a harvest objective tag can go hunt there until the quota is met. I'm not explaining myself very well, I can tell.

Steve Flinders: Come on up Todd.

Todd Abelhouzen: We've been trying real hard to get educated about this so that we and to help me and the RAC and whoever else is in the auditorium here. Our concern is the mule deer herd. And if the mule deer herd is not at a level that can sustain growth because of the habitat, prey, predator prey relationship, highways, all those things, then we feel like the control of factors that we can control should be increased. So my question is, on these subunits that you have the eight, are we keeping track of whether or not that mule deer herd is at a level that is sustaining an increase, maintaining or decreasing?

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah. We look at our mule deer populations every year. And we model those populations to get an idea if they're increasing or decreasing. And that's, you know as much criticism as the models get based, because everybody wants them to give you an exact number, they're not as good at giving you an exact number but they are good at giving you the trend. Is it going up or is it going down? And absolutely we track that every year. And we, and that's part of what's going into this. The areas where we think that number might be going down because adult survival is low that's where we need to increase cougar harvest. In some areas maybe it's going up, or down, or staying stable because fawn production is low. In those areas we go after coyotes because that's the most likely culprit. So you have to look at what's causing the population to do what it's doing more than just what direction it's going. Make sense?

Steve Flinders: Question, Brayden

Brayden Richmond: Question, you kind of already addressed tonight that the concern about the harvest objective and wanting to move it early in February to the end of February. The question I have is do you have statistics that show a success rate of limited entry versus harvest objective? Because our concern is on the harvest objective it's a much harder hunt and so you statistically aren't harvesting. Your success rate isn't as high. So my concern looking at this, you know if we keep our limited entry flat-lined we're going to continue to flat-line our harvest even if we raise the harvest objective higher. Do you have percentages on that, statistics?

Kevin Bunnell: I guess I'm not completely understanding the question.

Brayden Richmond: Off the mic.

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah, the success rate on limited entry tag is higher because there are only 10 people on that unit during that time period where there could be 100 people on the same unit during the harvest objective season. So if you had 10 limited entry tags and they harvested 5, you know that's a 50 percent

success rate. And then when it transitions over to harvest objective you have 100 people to hunt that and you still harvest 5 then it's a 5 percent success rate but you still harvested 5 under each scenario.

Brayden Richmond: Off the mic.

Kevin Bunnell: I guess the history doesn't show that. Back in these years, you know if you look back in this series of years where we actually had lower number of permits we were harvesting a higher number of cats.

Douglas Messerly: Mr. Chairman, just in the interest of the meeting process, I'd like to point out that these proceedings are being tape-recorded. Everything that's said is being recorded and then it's transcribed into written minutes. But in order for the transcriber to be able to capture what's being said it needs to be recorded through the microphone. So I understand that in the heat of the moment we get in a back and forth conversations with the audience but take it from me, the person that transcribes these tapes hates that time because they are trying to figure out what's being said and it's not fair to anybody. So please, just in the meetings process use the microphone when you're speaking to the speaker. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Doug, good reminder. Any other questions? Yes sir, come on up.

Cale Batt: My name is Cale Batt, I'm from St. George. How many questions do I get? Is there a limit?

Steve Flinders: How many do you have?

Cale Batt: Maybe three or four. The first one is how do you, when you've reached the quota how do you notify the hunters that are out there hunting? Let's say the quota is reached, you know, and there's hunters out there how do you notify them?

Kevin Bunnell: We have a, everyone is required to, there is a phone line that they can call to see which ones are closed and which ones are open, and we list it online. Now there's a little bit of a time lag in that because there's, a hunter has 48 hours to report their harvest after they've done it. And so we may have, there is some scenarios where we've gone over the quota because of that 48-hour time lag. But over the last 3 years it's been probably a total of 10 cats statewide that have gone over the quota because of that time lag. So somebody may harvest on Saturday, we're not aware of it until Tuesday and so there's guys still hunting Sunday and Monday and they may harvest one or two in that time frame. And so there is a time lag but it's really a logistic thing in terms of people having time to, a reasonable amount of time to report the harvest to us and then us getting it updated.

Cale Batt: So, did you say that was by telephone?

Kevin Bunnell: It's both. There's a phone line for the technologically challenged and then we have it online updated as well where you can go to our website and find exactly what the numbers are.

Cale Batt: Um, I think the general sentiment is that there's more feeling for the deer than the cougars. I'm just wondering what's your feeling about that? You know like should we be more aggressive with the cougars to allow the deer to populate more?

Kevin Bunnell: That's exactly the question that we're trying to address by going the direction, by making the recommendation we are. Is we're trying to create what the Board asked us to do is create a closer link between cougar management and deer management. And so that's exactly what this is, what this proposal is, or this amendment to the plan is trying to accomplish, is a tighter link between the management of those two species.

Cale Batt: This will probably be my last question. What would be the potential problems with just an open hunt where, you know, anyone can buy a tag for a cougar, whenever they see one kill it and then kind of monitor the cougar population year to year along with the deer population?

Kevin Bunnell: You know Doug addressed some of that earlier. There's, you know there is a large segment of our population, particularly along the Wasatch front, that in the past has been very opposed to that. We have to respond to the constituents on both sides. And so what we're trying to accomplish is a balance that certainly it's slanted more towards deer at this point because that's where the problem is, but at the same time we're trying to strike a balance. Our charge is to manage all the wildlife in the state. So we feel like this is the responsible way to do it. This is giving an advantage to the deer herd and addressing and actively trying to reduce the cougar populations in those areas where the adult survival is lower than it should be because that's potentially a problem with cougars. But at the same time putting a safety valve in place to where it's not kind of a scorched earth type of a policy. And you know as an agency that's what we feel is responsible.

Cale Batt: So when you say scorched earth what you mean is um, people being upset that there's not enough cougars left?

Kevin Bunnell: Well whether they're upset or not, just decimating. And a lot of it is perception as well. You know like I said, these populations are resilient. They are going to come back. But there's a responsible way to do that where we think we're trying to strike the balance based on data, and there's other ways, we've chosen this route.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? We'll move on to the comment period

Comments from the public:

Steve Flinders: We've got some comment cards there Doug? Brayden Richmond followed by Todd Abelhouzen, and then Nolan.

Brayden Richmond: Brayden Richmond representing SFW. I'll be quick tonight, Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife. I just want to read our official position. Sportsman's for Fish and Wildlife supports the DWR recommendation on the cougar plan as presented with only one recommended change, move the harvest objective opening date to February 1st. This will allow additional opportunity during more favorable hunting conditions and provide a tool to help achieve the harvest objectives. Thanks for your service and consideration. SFW Board. I've got a copy for the Board.

Steve Flinders: We've got that. Thanks Brian.

Todd Abelhouzen: Todd Abelhouzen, SFW Dixie Chapter. Our position, or first of all thank you for being here Board. I want to recognize the new Board members. I think Dave Black thought you were

going to have a rack of ribs and that's why he said yes. Not a RAC meeting that was in Richfield. But we appreciate you guys, all of you that I know and those that I hope to get to know. And Doug, we feel terrible for your loss. In an open way I want you to know that as a group. I asked them to put this map up here and the reason why is our focus is protecting the resource. I think we have resource in many different ways whether it be natural resources with habitat, or wildlife, or hunter recruitment, youth recruitment. And I appreciate the constituents that live along the Wasatch Front, I used to be one of those. The reason I live in St. George is because there's more and more that are tattooed and ear pierced and in drugs and gangs and everything else. And our philosophy is that if you hunt with your kid you won't have to hunt for your kid. And we're losing opportunities because of our big game hunting opportunities. You know I spend a lot of money on hunts and so I'm one of those guys that writes big checks. And that has a negative effect on the public so we have to balance those things out. Our mule deer herd is declining. And I don't care which model you use, nothing against the time and the effort and the work that the Division of Wildlife spends in trapping and collaring and monitoring. I mean I can't even imagine, Doug showed me some of the collars that he has personally recovered and the time and effort spent, it's like it's a treasure, he's looking for a treasure on the side of a mountain based on a blip off of an animal that has been, that has died or the collar has been lost. So I know you guys spend a lot of time but we've got to do something for our wildlife and our mule deer specifically. Cougars are not the only problem but they are one of the problems. And if they're a problem that we can manage and that we can focus our control and effort on; obviously coyotes are bigger, a big problem, we have mortality on the highways, which we're working hard on. We have habitat and winter range issues, which we've discussed on some of the forage and things that we can plant. But if you look at this map we're trapping deer on the Pine Valley unit and we've now created a four unit regional unit that encompasses Southwest Desert, Zion and I believe the Paunsagaunt, along with Pine Valley. And I think this is a great illustration. And I actually wrote a letter to the SFW Board on my way up here while Nolan was driving like a maniac. The Pine Valley is a phenomenal deer herd and it has phenomenal opportunities to grow. Great summer range, good genetics. Southwest desert, Doug we know is phenomenal, very low deer populations and very hard to hunt lions up there because you've got the border. My feeling is we need to increase those numbers, not just, and I know it's going to come up in a year or two, but I think we need to not just bring the numbers all together, I think we need to increase the numbers percentage wise on these units. The Zion and the Paunsagaunt the deer are leaving those units when the snow flies, they're heading south to Arizona or into Zion National Park which is one of those lion harvest What do you call those areas where they grow mountain lions? A source. Because we can't hunt inside those areas and there's a lot of cats that come out of the Zion. There's a bighorn sheep unit there that I know is starting to thrive that are getting wacked, they're getting pretty hit by the lions. I think we need to increase the numbers and we need to focus on some of the resources that we can focus on. We recommend, individually in our chapter that that date be moved back to January 1st, giving the limited entry hunters that do work with . . . I believe Mike mentioned that they do work with the outfitters, giving them that first, you know, four to six weeks to hunt and then bringing in those harvest objective hunters, and giving us the opportunity to fill that quota every single year. And get that quota focused on, and again, it's something that we can focus on. But we will go along with the SFW recommendations and February 1st because we recognize that sometimes if you ask for too much you don't get anything. So again thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity to address you guys. And I think this is a positive step and I appreciate the efforts by the Division on this.

Steve Flinders: That's all the comment cards I have. Oh yeah, I can't count to three, I'm sorry.

Nolan Gardner: Sorry, I wish I could talk as eloquently as Todd and I swore I was never going to get up

here again after the last time. But our deer herd's in big trouble. And I think most of you know it. You know I think this is a great step changing that. But when you look at the numbers, and I don't know how many of you remember, I know Sam you remember, back in '98 when we went to the quota on the Pine Valley, and that's all I remember. I'm Pine Valley born and raised and that's where I really care. And I care about wildlife all over. But anyway, regarding the Pine Valley, for years and years we killed 17 to 18, 19 lions on the Pine Valley. We pushed and we got the quota and we went to . . . we pushed for 50 tags on the Pine Valley. They give us 40. The Division told us, they says, you can't kill 40, there's not 40 lions on that unit. Well I think, and Doug maybe you remember, was it four weeks or five weeks they killed the 40. It was really close. The next year. . . oh sorry, go ahead.

Douglas Messerly: Yeah the first year they filled the quota in spite of what we thought. The next year they were not able to fill the quota and they've never filled it since.

Nolan Gardner: The next year after the third year they didn't fill it, the way I remember it.

Douglas Messerly: Yeah, and essentially what it boils down to is these are long-lived animals and once you harvest that adult population they don't recover quickly. And in fact I don't think the Pine Valley's filled since 2000. In terms of the number of tags that are available, the amount of harvest that's available has not been achieved in spite of it being open to anyone who wants to hunt.

Nolan Gardner: But when we moved, when we moved the quota start date way back, what was it the first of March this last year, last couple of years. Huh? Last two years? When we move it way back there and then a lot of it as we all knew, as we all know it depends on the weather. I, I just have a hard time believing that for that big area we're only going to kill 48 lions. I think we need, I'd like to propose let's jump it at least 50 percent, give these deer a shot in the arm and help them out while we're in such a bad way. And also I want to, I'd like to see that quota date kicked back to the first of January. I talked to some of the lion hunters down there and they felt like they wanted it the first of January. I know that I bought a quota tag for a young man last year hoping that he could kill it but after it started it, between school and the weather and stuff he just, he wasn't able to get out when it was good weather and wasn't able to fill that tag. So it's not all just, it's not all just the uh, the guides and such. You know it takes opportunity away from the everyday person. So anyway I'd like to see that changed. If you could go first of January statewide I'd be happy. But number one, we need to get those numbers up and we need to help that deer herd out. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Nolan. Paul.

Paul Niemeyer: I'm Paul Neimeyer represented the Wayne, Sevier and Piute chapters of SFW. We concur with the DWR recommendations with exception we would like the harvest objective to start February the first. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. That's the final comment card. Seeing no others; open it up for RAC discussion and comment.

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: I've been mulling this over some since I read about the big change in the plan. And as a

public lands biologist I see pressure on deer winter range from folks looking for lion tracks. And when the quota's closed that pressure goes away. When the quota's open there's somebody driving some of these given routes everyday. And some of these choice wildlife management areas the Division owns that, they're better than the BLM and they're better than the Forest Service because they manage them just for big game and I'm not kidding, there's somebody up them every single day moving the deer. They drive every route. And the deer end up on the west side of the Beaver unit on private land and then Doug gets to hear about depredation and haystacks and other problems. These WMA's some of them are signed closed to motorized access but it's a lot of pressure for somebody to cut a track because they've got a hunter or somebody that wants to kill a lion. And so what I see here is I hope we don't throw the baby out with the bath water. We're going to keep these units open for a long time and these units that have winter range adjacent to these small communities, Beaver is just one of a whole bunch, we're going to put a lot of pressure on wintering deer. And I'm not kidding, 2 o'clock in the morning. Because I can see them out my bedroom window and I don't have the bladder I used to have. I think are you kidding me, do these deer ever get a break? So think about that harvest objective opening date. That's just what I see on the winter range. Other comments? Sure Mike.

Mike Staheli: Well I think we need to look at the lions also as a resource, they have been in the past. And we can't just kill them all, like he said, scorched earth we don't want to do that. I mean that's not a proper management. They are still a resource. We need to manage them as such. In the 90's I remember Pahvaunt over there, they gave us 40 tags over there on lions. If filled in about 10 days. The next year we had 30 tags, it filled in like 3 weeks. And then from then on it's been longer. But the deer herd didn't respond one bit. So there is a correlation but not as strong a correlation as some of us would like to believe. SFW would like us to kill them all. I don't think we can and I don't think we should because they are a valuable resource and we want to manage them to sustain a good population, not just. . . We need to do all we can for the deer, I agree, but we've got to do it responsible. And it's not killing all the lions. You can't show me where it's helped that much. I love the study that you're doing where you're looking at the adult does because as Doug told me, and I agree completely, that's the deer herd there. It's not the bucks, it's not the fawns, it's those adult does. He says you can't make them. It's what they survive. And so whether it's coyotes or lions we need to look at that. But I personally believe it's definitely coyotes. I've hunted lions on Oak City and Pahvant both. Oak City, a limited entry deer tag very few lions. The deer numbers have gone down every year since 90, and it's not the lions. It just is not. Thank

Steve Flinders: Other comments? Sure Dale.

Dale Bagley: The previous plan, or the plan that we're currently on, I mean it already dealt with eco-regions which is the same as a cougar management area, I guess, I'm guessing anyway. So really about the only thing we're changing is the when versus a unit closes in the region or the management area closes. I mean that's basically the gist of the whole change isn't it?

Kevin Bunnell: Well and these, these areas are quite a bit different than the eco-regions. The eco-regions are based on, there was only four of them in the whole state. So the whole Colorado Plateau, the whole northern mountains, the southern mountains. . . I can't remember what the . . . so we've gone from four to nine by managing under the cougar management areas rather than eco-regions. So that's, it is still managing on a broad scale but we've brought it down a little bit. Just to answer your question.

Dale Bagley: While you're up there I want to ask you one more question. Can you accomplish the same

thing leaving it as a, having your cougar management area but closing them on an individual basis instead of as a whole region or a management area? Can you accomplish the same thing or does it have to work as a cougar management area?

Kevin Bunnell: We could do it that way. But then it comes, it goes back to . . .let me give you a scenario and this is what happens in this Monroe unit on a fairly regular basis. The Fish Lake is one of those units that usually closes fairly soon after we transition from limited entry to harvest objective. So we may have a quota of ten on the Fish Lake unit. Well the Thousand Lake unit just next to it we usually have a quota of seven or eight and we rarely harvest more than one or two, right? And so in the past we've . . .and the cougars don't use the landscape just based on the Fish Lake, they're using this at a broader area. And so what this is doing is it's now taking those six or seven tags that haven't, or that quota that hasn't been taken on the Thousand Lakes unit in the past and allowing that to be distributed throughout these other units. That's really what it's designed to accomplish.

Dale Bagley: Okay, thanks.

Steve Flinders: Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: I just have a couple of comments on this thing. I mean it's a nightmare, we all know that our deer herds gone. And I'm not going to blame the cougars for all of it but I can tell you one thing, I've hunted cougars since I was 15 years old. I used to chase cougars when there was a bounty on them. They were kind of hard to find then. Okay? And we had 10-80 then. That's probably the reason. Now we have the fact that we have cougars, we have coyotes, we have bears everywhere. Okay? All these factors plus everybody says the habitat, the winters or whatever. Well you know what, we had harsh winters 35 years ago and there were thousands of deer. I'm not blaming it all on the habitat, or the winters; I think that's part of it. But I think that these, the coyotes are a big problem. But here's one problem that I have with the quota on the female lions. Now we chase cougars. You will get on, now I'm not saying you can go out and kill 40 big toms on the Beaver. You probably can, you're probably not going to find them. But you can kill 150 females. I think were we're losing the thing here is we have so many female cougars now that they are overtaking our deer population and we're not killing them. If we have a quota of 15 on the harvest objective and once we get to 15 we whack it off. Okay? I think this is something that needs to be looked at, not just a set figure, I think we need to take a look at okay when that harvest objective opened it took four days for them to kill 15 females in a unit. Okay, maybe on the Dutton they never did kill em. But I think that's something that you have to look at that we're overlooking. And when we're saying we're going to judge this male and female I don't think you can do that. And if you chase cougars, or anybody in here will tell you that when you hit a track right now and you drop off into a canyon you will hit four or five, and I'm not talking kittens, okay, yearlings, females, cougar tracks. I can take you to a place on the Beaver that I guarantee you any given day when it snows I'll show you four sets of cougar tracks in one canyon. Now I don't know what the answer is. I think one thing that would help that, I think that if we did move that date up to February 1st it would give people that are not outfitters or that don't have dogs, that maybe have a dog, the opportunity to kill a cougar. But when you leave it the first of March the snow is gone. And I know exactly what you're saying about the deer, okay, we do put stress on those deer out there running around. And I know that cougar hunters go out at 2 o'clock in the morning; trust me I know. They do. But we can't have everything right so we have to take things one-step at a time. And I think that this is a big thing if we will move that harvest objective back to February 1st and give these other people an opportunity to harvest some of these cougars, according to the plan, then I think we're going to see things changing.

That's all we have to say.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Cordell. Other discussion? I'd entertain a motion. Sure Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, I totally agree with what Cordell is saying. I'd like to make a motion that we accept the proposal as presented on the Cougar Management Plan and Revised Harvest Recommendations with the exception of moving this harvest quota date on the split units up to February 1st.

Layne Torgerson: I second it.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Sam. It was seconded by Layne.

Kevin Bunnell: Steve can I ask just for a clarification, just for our sake. Now there's two different dates that deal with the harvest objective. There's the date that we close the limited entry season and then we always have about five or six days to give us a chance to summarize all the harvest and understand what's left in terms of the quota. So are you, and the date that we've dealt with in the past is what day the limited does the limited entry season close. And that's been February 28th. Are you saying move that date back to February 1st? And that would mean, so what that would mean is the harvest objective season would then open on either the Saturday or the Monday following February 1st.

Sam Carpenter: Well that's kind of what I was asking about when I asked the question about negatives in moving that. And I never did hear that come out. Is that a problem for you (unintelligible)?

Kevin Bunnell: No we can do it either way. I just need to know which date you're talking about. Are you talking about the date . . .

Sam Carpenter: The harvest quota days when we split units moves back to February 1st. And they can start hunting on February 1st.

Kevin Bunnell: Okay, so that means we close the limited entry season before that time. Okay, and that's all the clarification that I needed.

Sam Carpenter. Okay.

Kevin Bunnell: Does the February 1st refer to the opening of the harvest objective or the closing of the limited entry because they are not the same. There are four or five days between the two.

Sam Carpenter: The opening of the harvest objective.

Kevin Bunnell: Okay, that's just for clarification for the meaning.

Steve Flinders: The motion remains unchanged? Is that what you thought you seconded? I'll restate that motion. Will you read it back to us?

Giani Julander: To accept the Division's proposal as represented with the exception of moving the harvest objective quota date on the split units to February 1st.

Steve Flinders: So they start hunting February 1st. Harvest objective opening date. Does that work Sam? Discussion on the motion? Anybody need any clarification to know what we're voting on? Let's vote. Those in favor? Those against? Motion passes. I had one against.

Sam Carpenter made the motion to accept the Cougar Management Plan and Revised Harvest Recommendations as presented by the Division with the exception that that the harvest objective opening date be moved to February 1st of each year. Layne Torgerson seconded. Motion carried 10 in favor 1 opposed. Mike Staheli opposed.

Steve Flinders: Do we need to take a break or do you want to move on? It's hot. Let's take a break. Ten minutes.

Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04 (action) 1:36:59 to 1:44:20 of 3:16:56
-Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief
(See Attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the RAC. Go ahead, Sam.

Sam Carpenter: You may have said this and I just totally missed it, but you said it wouldn't work to use the same numbers for the entire state, what was the reasoning there, why?

Kevin Bunnell: Just because the northern part of the state is typically much more productive. We usually have a much higher fawn to doe ratio on our northern units than we do in the south, just because there's more precipitation, better browse, just a difference in the habitat and the precipitation regimes in north versus south.

Sam Carpenter: Okay in reading this, maybe I'm not understanding what you're doing here. You're saying that the doe to fawn ratio is below 70 percent it will be enacted in the northern but it has to be below 50 percent in the south two out of three years before we enact a predator management plan?

Kevin Bunnell: That's exactly what we're saying. And the reason is . . .

Sam Carpenter: Deer are deer. We need, you know, if we're trying to increase the herd why . . .

Kevin Bunnell: They are but, but when you look at the . . . we've got 30 years of deer classification data, right? A good year, and really a good year in the south we would have 65 to 70 fawns per 100 does. That's about where it caps out in the very best years. Where as in the north, on the Cache there's times that we've had 110 fawns per 100 does. And so it doesn't make sense to put the same criteria under those, you know given the potential of the production to have the same criteria apply in both places.

Sam Carpenter: Okay. I see what you're saying.

Steve Flinders: Other question? Sure, Layne.

Layne Torgerson: Kevin, on the money that is appropriated for coyote control, how is it decided, how should I word this? How is it decided where that money is going to be spent? I mean . . .

Kevin Bunnell: That's exactly what this is to deal with. If the units that would qualify for predator management for coyotes, so following these criteria right here those are the units that would, that we would have predator management plans for. And then it goes a step beyond that. Once we've identified which units make the most sense then our regional biologists coordinate every year in about the end of November with Wildlife Services to say, okay not just the Monroe unit for example, but these specific areas on the Monroe unit is where we want you to focus your efforts. And that's on the fawning grounds and so it's different areas than they're going to be focusing efforts for livestock control. And that coordination, it could get better but it's way better now than it was three or four years ago and we'll continue to work on it.

Layne Torgerson: Is there, I know that you mentioned that a lot of the money is spent on helicopter time, which I know because I've got friends that work for Wildlife Services, that the helicopter time is generally, I mean, ideal conditions is fresh snow on the ground, they go fly, fresh coyote tracks they can get those coyotes out of the brush and take care of them. Is any of that money appropriated for dening summer coyote controls or does that just come from the federal funds?

Kevin Bunnell: There is more that's specifically for deer. There's two times a year when you can have a positive impact. So what you're trying to do, and our wildlife services guy here correct me if you feel differently, but you know you're never going to effectively reduce a coyote population. They are just too productive. There are studies out there that say you'd have to kill 75 percent of the coyotes for 10 consecutive years to have a meaningful impact. And we're just not capable of reaching that level. And so what you're trying to do is you're trying to break up, you're trying to limit reproduction. Okay, and so a coyote killed in February is likely to be paired. And if you can take either the male or the female out in February you're going to eliminate reproduction from that pair for that year. Whereas if you kill a coyote in November there's time for them to re-pair and you haven't done anything in terms of limiting reproduction. So you can have an impact by coyotes that you take kind of in that January through March timeframe by breaking up pair bonds and eliminating reproduction. And then the other time where you can have a positive impact, specifically for deer, is just prior to when the fawns hit the ground. That's a harder time to do it because you don't have snow on the ground, you don't have all these, it's harder to locate the coyotes but if you find a den of coyotes in a fawning area certainly we want to remove that den. Some of the information indicates, and this is specific to sheep, depredation on sheep, but two individual coyotes versus a pair of coyotes that's raising pups, the coyotes raising pups will take seven times the number of sheep than two individual coyotes. And so if you can eliminate reproduction you can largely eliminate their need to kill larger prey. Does that fit your experience as well?

Mike Worthen: Yes, I think it's very well stated, but I would add one thing in there too, that the use of the helicopter is done with ground crews to where you have an individual out there trying to elicit a vocal response from the coyotes and then point the aircraft in there which makes it twice as effective as just going out and hunting willy-nilly in that area. And especially in the spring once the brush leaf out those pups will basically howl about any time and give away where they are.

Kevin Bunnell: And so you can be effective when you don't have ideal snow conditions but it does take a ground crew coordinating with the helicopter.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Seeing none, questions from the public? For Kevin on the presentation.

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Come up to the mic. Give us your name if you would.

Brian Snyder: Brian Snyder. Vance knows me pretty good. In the last two weeks I've called coyotes. In three days I've called 13 coyotes in, killed 13 coyotes. So who, we know that if we kill the pups and all that this time of year, but who's going to do that? The government trapper's spread so thick and he's only obligated to sheep area. Is there a way we can like increase the bounty to like have the average Joe go and kill? I've got several friends that love to den coyotes but they don't, with price of gas and the economy and everything. But if they had a twenty-dollar bounty boy they'd go tear it up. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: There's a question there about bounties Kevin.

Kevin Bunnell: There is. I'm trying to . . . so the bounty program is administered through the Department of Agriculture not through the Division of Wildlife. And I think there is some ways to make it more effective. And it will take coordination between the Division and the Department of Agriculture but also I think the sportsman's organizations can help us be, can help us influence that as well. I mean if you, given that there's certain times of the year where it's more beneficial to kill a coyote than other times of year maybe the bounty gets increased during those months. Or I think there's potential with that program but it's a roundabout way from the Division's standpoint because we don't administer the bounty program. It will take coordination between a couple of different agencies.

Douglas Messerly: In addition to that the Department of Agriculture distributes that money to the counties. And in the past the counties have actually administered that bounty program. And you know in the counties that I'm familiar with, Iron and Washington Counties, it's been twenty-five dollars not twenty. So some of the counties have opted out of the program. Dale perhaps you can tell us about Piute County. But what the experience was is that in most counties the bounty money wasn't being spent. And the thought that was applied to that was would that money be better spent on helicopter time where we could target animals, as Kevin has described in great detail here, to try to be most effective? To eliminate the pairs before the pairs occur and thereby eliminate dens than to pay people to shoot coyotes out on the valley floors in the dead of winter at twenty-five dollars a piece having virtually no impact on their predation on big game, specifically deer. So that's kind of the history of the bounty program. The other thing is that the bounty programs have been fraught with fraud. Coyotes were claimed to have been killed in certain places that they weren't necessarily killed in. And the overall effectiveness of a bounty program hasn't been that great in my opinion anyway. And so I think with proper administration it could be if you could target people to specific areas, if you could target them to certain times of the year. But the cost per coyote killed from the helicopter, do you have any idea what that is Kevin?

Kevin Bunnell: It varies but it's a lot more than twenty-five dollars.

Douglas Messerly: Yeah. And but how many people with the price of gas being four dollars a gallon, I mean twenty-five dollars worth of gas doesn't get you very far these days. And so it's something to be considered certainly and we would like it if sportsman would participate but it's really hard to get them

to the top of the mountain in June in thick oak brush to try to kill a coyote, which is where it needs to occur rather than on the desert floor in January when it's five degrees above zero.

Kevin Bunnell: I just added, I mean. Where did the gentleman go that asked the question? Oh anyway. Never mind then. But any individuals that like doing that I would strongly suggest that you talk with a local biologist and ask him, where are the places, the times and places? You know let Vance and let these guys draw some lines on a map and say go kill coyotes here the end of May and first of June because that's where the fawns are going to drop.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Kevin. Other questions from the audience? Sure Todd.

Todd Abelhouzen: I have a question but I have a comment. Nola Gardner's the representative for Washington County, works with the county commissioners and we have done some things to increase specific time sensitive areas like March to June and increase the bounties and done some incentives for specifically people who are dening and doing that sort of thing. So that's why they're in the back talking. My question is, earlier in the intermission one of the people asked me why aren't they taking some of this money for these hundred thousand dollar elk tags or deer tags like on the Henry's or Paunsagaunt or wherever, I mean I don't think they're selling for a hundred on the Paunsagaunt, but you guys get my point. And I'd like to know what the Division's answer for that is. I know what our answer is. You know I believe that we are taking a lot of that money and doing some things but we talk about budgets and how that focus is being directed.

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah, this additional money that's been committed by the Division is money that's been raised by conservation, the sale of conservation permits, specifically for deer. And it's appropriate to use it to from protection of deer from predators. So some of that's coming from the group, some of it's coming from the internal conservation permit dollars. But that's exactly where that extra \$400,000 dollars that's identified there is coming from.

Steve Flinders: Other questions from the audience? Do we have any comment cards? I don't believe we do. Have we overlooked any comment cards?

Comments from the public:

None

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: So I'll invite RAC members to comment on this or entertain a motion. Pretty positive feedback. Sure Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: I'd like to make a motion to accept it as presented by Kevin.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Rusty.

Sam Carpenter: I'll second.

Steve Flinders: Seconded by Sam. Any discussion? Seeing none, those in favor? Any against? It's

unanimous.

Rusty Aiken made the motion to accept the Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy as presented. Sam Carpenter seconded. Motion carried unanimously. (Mack Morrell was not present for vote)

Steve Flinders: Thanks Kevin. One more, bobcats.

Bobcat Harvest Recommendations (action) 1:58:21 to 2:05:21 of 3:16:56

-Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

(See Attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Thanks Kevin. That's a lynx, for the record.

Kevin Bunnell: It is, yeah. That picture was taken in Utah though. That was a lynx that was released in Colorado with a GPS collar on it and traveled into Utah.

Steve Flinders: Oh yeah. It's a Utah lynx.

Kevin Bunnell: Questions from the RAC? One on the end, sure Mike.

Mike Worthen: Yes, once the objectives are reached and the tags get increased back to six, would the dates revert back to mid November also?

Kevin Bunnell: Yes. The dates would go back too, I think it's the third Wednesday in November is the opening and no cap on the number of tags sold. That's part of that baseline, it couples all three together.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Questions from the audience?

Kevin Bunnell: I will mention, you know I did run this by the group that helped us formulate the bobcat management plan, they unanimously agreed to it, and that included the trappers association. They were supportive of the changes on both ends.

Steve Flinders: thanks.

Questions from the public:

None

Steve Flinders: No comment cards? Got a comment card coming. Okay, come on up.

Comments from the public:

Todd Abelhouzen: I was hoping not to comment on this but that's what they pay me the big bucks for so... We at SFW, and Todd Abelhouzen my name, we appreciate what the Division is doing to focus

their energy and their attention on predators and the proper management way. We also like, like we've discussed earlier with coyotes, when you don't have a bounty or you don't have an incentive for people to go out and do it the price of fuel and some of the other things can really have a negative effect. In allowing three cat maximum or quota however you put it, um, I think allows the trappers to go out there and set the number of traps with the requirements they have to check the traps and things like that. I think bobcats do have an effect on mule deer fawns. I've never watched a bobcat kill one and I do not want all the bobcats killed, for the record Mike. You messed up the last one so I want to make sure you know this one. And a public apology would not be unappreciated. But um, so we appreciate what the Division's doing here and we accept and follow their recommendation. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Todd. That's all the comment cards.

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: It's yours for discussion and motion. Sure Layne.

Layne Torgerson: I'd like to make a motion that we accept the amendment to the bobcat management plan as presented by Kevin.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Layne.

Brian Johnson: I'll second it.

Steve Flinders: Seconded by Bryan. Any discussion on the motion? Understand the motion? Those in favor? Any against? Motion passes, it is unanimous

Layne Torgerson made the motion to accept the Bobcat Harvest Recommendations as presented by the Division. Bryan Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously. (Mack Morrell was not present for vote.)

Steve Flinders: Moving on. Justin gets the mic. Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule.

Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09 (action) 2:09:22 to 2:23:26 of 3:16:56
-Justin Dolling, Waterfowl/Upland Game Coordinator
(See Attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Thanks Justin. Questions from the RAC? Finally a waterfowl picture.

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the audience? Come on up Paul.

Paul Niemeyer: Paul Neimeyer. I've just got kind of a I guess a comment and a question. But these cranes, these sandhill cranes we're starting to get a lot of them down here. A few years ago there was

10 or 15 and then 30 or 40 and now the last two years I've counted a couple times as high as 400. I know that Lynn has seen the Delta area but we're getting quite a few of them. And the question would be is what would we have to do to get a hunt down here so these guys could take a little advantage of that instead of having to go up north? That's the question I guess.

Justin Dolling: That's a fair question. The way sandhill crane populations are assessed is we do a staging population count typically in September and then they do a wintering count in Texas in I believe January. And those two bits of data go into how we make or how the states get allocated a harvest allocation. And so if we, I'd have to ask the question or pose the question to the Fish and Wildlife Service but if we expanded our fall staging population census to include some of these southern counties and document birds present in September and if the populations continued to do well on the wintering grounds in Texas then there would be possibly an opportunity to look at a harvest allocation here for the southern part of the state.

Steve Flinders: Interesting. Any other questions? I don't have any comment cards.

Comments from the public:

None

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: It's up to you guys. Motion, discussion?

Cordell Pearson: I make a motion that we accept DWR's proposal as presented.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Cordell.

Rusty Aiken: I'll second.

Steve Flinders: Seconded by Rusty. Discussion on the motion? Let's take a vote. Those in favor? Any against? Sam are you for or against? He's for it. We lost Mack Morrell, let the record show. Couldn't stand the heat.

Cordell Pearson made the motion to accept the Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule as presented by the Division. Rusty Aiken seconded. Motion carried unanimously. (Mack Morrell was not present for vote.)

Steve Flinders: Okay, moving on to agenda item number 9, CIP Rule Amendment. Kevin.

CIP Rule Amendment R657-3 (action) 2:26:59 to 2:38:39 of 3:16:56
-Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief
(See Attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Thanks. Any questions from the RAC? Sure, Mike.

Mike Worthen: Yeah, on the destruction of the eggs in the nest, does that also apply to cities and counties?

Justin Dolling: The way it's currently defined in the CIP rule, it's fairly loose, it just would apply to what we classify as urban environments. So the cities . . .

Mike Worthen: So the private land. Or it doesn't matter whether it's private,

Justin Dolling: It wouldn't matter whether it's private or state. It could be within a city, it could be within a county, as long as it's an urban environment.

Mike Worthen: Okay, and then another question, did the Fish and Wildlife Service just remove American crows and magpies off of the list that you can take without a permit when they're damaging property?

Justin Dolling: That's my understanding but I'm not 100 percent positive on that. I think there is a depredation order for American crow and for black tailed magpie.

Mike Worthen: And if that's the case I wonder why it didn't show up in here as being allowed to take without a permit.

Justin Dolling: That's a good question. I don't know if that, did that get captured in the rule to your knowledge Kevin? Do we have a copy of that, of that rule that we could look and see if that was even addressed in there?

Kevin Bunnell: The rule is in the packet so we could look that up. And I can make a phone call to try to clarify that. But regardless, I mean they are still technically would be considered protected wildlife in the State of Utah by definition. And so um, all it would mean is you would have to go through the COR process.

Brian Johnson: Just one question, on this destroying the nest. I understand that when you start talking about private property it gets to be expensive and I understand that it can be kind of a nuisance. Is there a trigger in place to, obviously they're going to track the number of eggs, is there a trigger in place to slow this down or if there's an issue where people are abusing that that they stop it or what does it look like?

Justin Dolling: There's not a trigger to my knowledge in the federal framework. But keeping in mind that these are urban birds, they become acclimated to urban environments. And so there's really a level of no net tolerance when it comes to these urban Canada geese. And so we're not dealing with typically birds that are migrating. We're dealing with nuisance urban Canada geese that are resident in nature. And so it's going to be self-limiting in my mind. As those numbers of individuals become less abundant in the city the need to do additional work will diminish.

Brian Johnson: Yeah, so the thought process is as this program gets implemented it will govern itself then?

Justin Dolling: Correct, correct. And the one caveat is they've got to come back online and report. And if there's the feeling that we're seeing abnormal levels of take, or if it's starting to effect our wild population, pair counts or production counts then at that point there would be some kind of a cap set or a reduction in the number that can be taken in each state each year. So there's always that option to open it up.

Brian Johnson: Okay.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Sure, Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: I have just one question. In that thing that listed the pigeons and the sparrows and stuff, what about those Eurasian doves shouldn't that be put in there? Or do we not worry about those?

Steve Flinders: They're good eating.

Justin Dolling: I believe they were included in there.

Steve Flinders: Just rock doves.

Cordell Pearson: I didn't see it but they might have been. They had rock doves, is that the same thing?

Justin Dolling: Yeah and they are dealt with through the upland game rule. They are considered protected wildlife. But in the upland game rule it doesn't require you to purchase a license to hunt Eurasian collared doves and there is no limit on Eurasian collared doves. You can hunt them year round. The only stipulation is that if you were to harvest a Eurasian collared dove during the regular dove season and you pluck that Eurasian collared dove then it would become part of your regular possession. So that's probably why it's not in here.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Questions from the audience?

Questions from the public:

None

Steve Flinders: Don't have any comment cards.

Comments from the public:

None

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: I guess we can work out the answer to Mike's earlier question at some point. What if that changes what we want to do up here? I think we're ready for a motion. Discussion? Dale.

Dale Bagley: I make a motion that we accept CIP Rule R-657-3 as presented.

Cordell Pearson: I'll second.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Dale, seconded by Cordell. Any discussion on the motion? Those in favor? Those against? It's unanimous.

Dale Bagley made the motion to accept the CIP Amendment as presented by the Division. Cordell Pearson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: Great. Number 10, Leslie, Walk-in Access Rule Amendment. Do we save the best for one of the last? We've been worn down.

Walk-In Access Rule Amendment R657-56 (action) 2:45:14 to 2:53:46 of 3:16:56
-Leslie McFarlane, Walk-In Access Coordinator
(See Attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Thanks Leslie. There's no dollar amounts in here?

Leslie Macfarlane: We've done the, it wasn't, we've just kind of done a schedule. It wasn't something that we put out I guess. But for a mile of stream, for a half-mile of stream we're paying about \$1,000 dollars.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. I'm completely clueless. So . . .

Leslie Macfarlane: Yeah, sorry I didn't put that in there. I guess I should add that it.

Steve Flinders: Somebody came along after I left the Division. Other questions from the RAC? Sure, Bryan.

Bryan Johnson: Are these walk-in areas for non-hunters as well that want to just go out and enjoy?

Leslie MacFarlane: You know we're going to leave that up to the landowners still to regulate on his property. Um, we're leasing the wildlife dependent recreation rights. So if you are there hunting or fishing we're going to expect you to have the authorization number. If you're there for another reason you have to have a permission note from the landowner.

Bryan Johnson: Okay.

Steve Flinders: You have to buy a license. Other questions? Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: Leslie, on the program requirements on the right there, it was so much stream, so much . . . is that and or or? Do they have to have all three of those to qualify?

Leslie MacFarlane: No, if they're doing a fishing property then they'd have to have a minimum of one

mile of stream. If they were doing a wetland for waterfowl hunting then we'd want it to have a minimum of 160 acres. Or if they were doing hunting property they would have to have a section of property for upland game hunting or deer hunting.

Rusty Aiken: Could a landowner regulate how many people access at a given day?

Leslie MacFarlane: Currently we do have some landowners that limit it to like 10 people per day. We are struggling a little bit with how we regulate that because it's up to us to stop those people. And so that's been hard, difficult on our part. But yeah, we have allowed landowners to do that.

Rusty Aiken: So when they check in you could say the quota is filled.

Leslie MacFarlane: Yeah, we're trying to do it online for those specific properties, like you'd have to go in and use your walk-in access authorization number to sign up. And once that was met then they wouldn't allow anybody else on but we're still working through that process.

Rusty Aiken: How is the landowner notified who is on there? Is there any communication there?

Leslie MacFarlane: Well right now we require registration boxes at the access point to the property. And so the landowner can go, but the problem is all that's there is John Smith, it says John Smith and there's ten million John Smiths. And so we're trying to work it so that with the walk-in access authorization number we'd actually have them write a number down and then you could tie that back to an actual person because we have the data on that person.

Rusty Aiken: Okay.

Steve Flinders: Good questions. Go ahead, Mike.

Mike Worthen: Yeah, I've hunted in . . . this is very similar to what Wyoming is doing. And I've hunted upland game in some of those walk-in accesses and it's great. It gives the hunter that can't get on private land a chance to hunt where they can walk in and once the season opener is over you very seldom see anybody out there. And it's a good program. I commend the Division for that.

Leslie MacFarlane: Well thank you. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Sure, Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: I have just a quick question. Where do the funds come from for this program?

Leslie MacFarlane: Currently, last year we receive about \$450,000 dollars from the legislature to operate this program. Last year they gave us a bump of \$300,000 to try to increase fishing access as well and add that to this program. And then we're also operating off of the federal grant of 2.2 million dollars that will last us about three years to get this program up and running.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Good questions. Questions from the audience? Shoot.

Questions from the public:

Brayden Richmond: I may not be smart enough to ask this question I don't really understand the program fully. But I just have a concern of why our federal government is paying three million dollars to give us access to private property. It seems like in our current economic times I'm having a hard time swallowing this pill.

Leslie MacFarlane: The money is actually a farm bill grant. And it is actually set aside for state agencies to increase wildlife habitat and wildlife programs. And this is the program that we presented to them and they approved it for our use of this funding.

Brayden Richmond: I guess along with that question, I didn't finish my question very well, but it seems like Utah has a, I believe we're the third largest state with public lands, seems like we could spend this money on public lands and not pay private landowners out of tax dollars.

Steve Flinders: Not really a question there, it's all right. I don't know enough about federal government programs to respond. If we had someone here from the NRCS we could talk about (unintelligible).

Leslie MacFarlane: The money was set aside, it's a farm bill grant that was put aside for each of the states. And each state had to write a proposal on usage of the money. And it was actually for private landowners; it's a farm bill grant to increase private property and wildlife habitat on private property. As part of that grant we wrote that we wanted to get public access onto private property for the use of wildlife, and the public use. Otherwise it's just not available to you. And when you've got counties like Morgan County in the northern part of the state, it's 95 percent private property. You can't go anywhere except for one wildlife management area that's owned by the Division of Wildlife there, unless we try and open up some of that. And some of this is coming from all of the stream access problems that we've had.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? We don't have any comment cards.

Teresa Griffin: Can I get one point of clarification? Just for the audience, how do they find out what properties are available and enrolled?

Steve Flinders: Good question.

Leslie MacFarlane: Oh, we have a website. We're actually working on fixing it but if you go to wildlife.utah.gov under the hunting section there's an area for walk-in access. But we're actually going to increase and make a whole interactive map so that if you put in a species it will pop up all the walk-in access areas that are available to the public to use, with all of the rules for the property and those kinds of things. We just haven't gotten that far yet.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Are we ready for discussion or motion? Doug's got a comment.

Douglas Messerly: I was going to let that go but I just can't. The notion in general in really broad terms to answer the gentleman's question about why the federal government's spending money to get access to private lands is a bigger notion. And that is that if we can make it profitable for people to have wildlife on their private lands they'll more likely provide habitat for them. I know landowners that loath the fact

that they have turkeys on their place because they have all these pesky people coming and asking them if they can hunt there and they don't want the people intruding. This program provides us with an opportunity to reward those people for having that wildlife on their land and in some cases to compensate them for the trouble that they cause. And you know there's no bones about it, people coming across your private land is bothersome to a lot of folks. And those people are not always respectful. You know I think from the big picture standpoint this is for the public welfare and it is for the public good to make it more desirable for private landowners to provide habitat and a place for wildlife to be. And if we can make that more palatable by them by being able to compensate them a little bit for the use that they get from the public then I think it's a beneficial program. So I think that would be the general thinking behind it. As to why the people chose to award our grant, um, I don't think they commented on that specifically but that's kind of what our thinking is and that's what we're trying to promote is a way to make it beneficial for private landowners to have wildlife on their land or at least a little less unbeneficial, if that make sense. So, the other comment that I'd like to have is Heather Grossman is her tonight and Heather if you could stand up. She's going to be our walk-in access representative. You'll see her burning all around the region trying to sign folks up. So Heather may be presenting or answering questions in the future on this program. Thanks Mr. Chairman.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Doug, well put.

Comments from the public:

None

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: Back to a motion or more discussion? Sure, Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: Yeah, I'll just have a little comment here first and then I'll make a motion. I think it's a great idea. I think we're giving money to the private sector to let us hunters come on their property and hunt where as if we didn't give them nothing al the game wardens do get called like this jerk is trespassing on my property and I want him off. I think it's a great thing. I didn't understand it at all either but if you can get 2 million dollars from Obama right now I love you to death. Anyway, I will make a motion to accept Rule number R657-56 Walk-In Access Rule as proposed by DWR. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Cordell. Seconded by Rusty.

Steve Flinders: Questions or discussion on the motion? Let's take a vote. Those in favor? Any against? It looks unanimous.

Cordell Pearson made the motion to accept the Walk In Access Rule as presented by the Division. Rusty Aiken seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Leslie. You're up Kevin.

Douglas Messerly: Kevin, it's been brought up, some people have a copy of the old agenda as to what happened to the sage grouse plan agenda item, could you explain briefly why that was taken off of the

agenda for tonight's meeting?

Kevin Bunnell: I will. What that was was an appendix to our sage grouse management plan that was specific to oil and gas development in particular and what rules and restrictions go on that. In order for that to work it take a lot of coordination w with the BLM because they are the ones issuing the permits for the drilling and all this. The BLM last week changed the strategy that they're taking and so we've had to pull back and now we're waiting to see what the BLM's going to propose so that we can propose a system that is complementary to it. So just a lot of moving parts with sage grouse right now and we got thrown a curve ball and so we've had to step back. As soon as we know where the BLM is headed we will come out with a proposal for that appendix.

FY 2013 Fee Schedule (action)

3:06:42 to 3:10:11 of 3:16:56

-Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

(See Attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Any questions from the RAC? Questions by the audience?

Questions from the public:

None.

Steve Flinders: We don't have any comment cards.

Comments from the public:

None.

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: Discussion, motion? Wolf permit? Go ahead, Layne.

Layne Torgerson: I make a motion we accept the fee schedule as presented by Kevin.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Layne, seconded by Clair. Any discussion on the motion? Those in favor? Any against? Unanimous.

Layne Torgerson made the motion to accept the FY 2012 Fee Schedule as presented. Clair Woodbury seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Kevin Bunnell: Steve, let me address the question from Mike earlier to the CIP. I called our avian coordinator and it is like we suspected, there is a mechanism through two different pathways that someone could that that's experiencing damage from crows or magpies. Because there is a federal depredation order they could contact Wildlife Services, that's the federal mechanism for dealing with that, or if they wanted to deal with it themselves they could go through the COR process and we could

issue a permit to do it. So just to clarify that.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Kevin. That finishes the action items except for election of officers.

**Election of RAC Officials (Chair and Vice-Chair (action))
-Douglas Messerly, Regional Supervisor**

Steve Flinders: Haven't I stepped on enough toes? I don't know how you want to handle this Doug.

Douglas Messerly: Well let me give a little introduction first. The reason that this item is on the agenda is that the rule that this RAC probably approved, the rule requires the election of new officers every two years. The rule holds that a person can hold two consecutive terms, two consecutive two-year terms as an officer of a regional advisory council. Two years ago Steve Flinders was elected as chairman and Cordell Pearson was elected as vice chairman. So it's time for us to have an election of new officer, both are eligible for re-nomination and election but we need to go through the process. I've got some ballots. What I propose is that Chairman Flinders handle the nomination process and let's decide who's nominated for each position. And then we'll go through a balloting process where I give each of you a piece of paper, gather them up and I'll have Gianni total them and announce who won the election. So that's what this agenda item is all about. And then the chairman that's elected will preside over the next meeting; presumably for the next two-year and the vice chair will serve in that capacity.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Doug. Well let's open elections, nominations for chair, please. Sure, Sam.

Sam Carpenter: It's my understanding that you're eligible again for election? Is that true Doug? I'd be really glad to elect that we keep Steve again for another term.

Brian Johnson: I second that.

Steve Flinders: Nominated by Sam, seconded by Bryan. That'll cost ya. Other nominations for chair? Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: I move that nominations cease.

Steve Flinders: Wow. Is there a second to that?

Cordell Pearson: I second it. I'll second it Steve.

Steve Flinders: Seconded by Cordell. All in favor? Those in favor? Any against? No we don't need those ballots. I sent an email to my bosses and said this is coming up, now would be a gracious time to say I'm too busy. Nobody responded. Unanimous.

Sam Carpenter made the motion to nominate Steve Flinders as chairperson. Bryan Johnson seconded.

Rusty Aiken made the motion to cease nominations. Cordell Pearson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Original motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: Moving on to vice chair nominations. They're open. Sure, Clair.

Clair Woodbury: I would nominate that gravely voiced gentleman at the end down there, Cordell again.

Sam Carpenter: I'll second it.

Steve Flinders: Seconded by Sam. I'd like to nominate Bryan, vice chair if you'll accept. Other nominations or second to my nomination? Nomination fails for lack of second. Other nominations for vice chair?

Rusty Aiken: I make a motion to uh, that nominations cease.

Steve Flinders: Second?

Brian Johnson: I'll second.

Steve Flinders: Brian seconds it. Those in favor? Any opposed. Is that all right with you Cordell? We're up again.

Clair Woodbury made the motion to nominate Cordell Pearson as vice-chair. Sam Carpenter seconded.

Rusty Aiken made the motion to cease nominations. Bryan Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Original motion carried unanimously.

Cordell Pearson: I don't want you breaking a leg again.

Steve Flinders: Yeah, heaven forbid. I don't have any other business. So a motion to dismiss, adjourn? Thank you.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm.

Southeast Region Advisory Council
John Wesley Powell Museum
1765 East Main Street Green River
July 27, 2011 @ 6:30 PM

MOTION SUMMARY

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

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

Cougar Management Plan and Revised Harvest Recommendations

MOTION: To accept the Cougar Management Plan and Revised Harvest
Recommendations as presented.
Passed: With four opposing votes

Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04

MOTION: To accept Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AgG-04
as presented.
Passed: With one opposing vote

Bobcat Harvest Recommendations

MOTION: To accept the Bobcat Harvest Recommendations as presented.
Passed: With one opposing vote

Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09

MOTION: To accept the Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09 as presented.
Passed: Unanimously

CIP Rule Amendment R657-3

MOTION: To accept the CIP Rule Amendment R657-3 as presented.
Passed: Unanimously

Walk-in Access Rule Amendment R657-

MOTION: To accept the Walk-in Access Rule Amendment R657- as presented.
Passed: Unanimously

FY 2013 Fee Schedule

MOTION: To accept the FY 2013 Fee Schedule as presented.
Passed: With two opposing votes

RAC Members present:

Kevin Albrecht, USFS
Seth Allred, At Large
Bill Bates, Regional Supervisor
Sue Bellagamba, Non-Consumptive
Blair Eastman, Agriculture
Wayne Hoskisson, Non-consumptive
Todd Huntington, Vice Chairman
Derris Jones, Derris Jones
Darrel Mecham, Sportsman
Chris Micoz, At Large
Travis Pehrson, Sportsman
Pam Riddle, BLM
Charlie Tracy, Agriculture

RAC Members absent:

Kenneth Maryboy, Navajo Representative

Other persons in attendance:

Mike King
Senator David Hinkins

Public in attendance:

30 People

**1. Welcome, RAC Introductions and RAC Procedures
Derris Jones, Chairman**

Derris Jones- I want to welcome all of the Public out tonight. It is good to see this kind of turnout tonight. I want to welcome two new RAC Members tonight, Seth Allred, from Emery County is the At Large Representative and Sue Bellegamba from Moab, and she is our Non-Consumptive new RAC person. Seth is replacing Terry and Sue is replacing Laura.

**2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes (Action)
Derris Jones, Chairman**

MOTION

Derris Jones- Asks for a motion to approve the agenda and minutes.

Blair Eastman- Motion to accept the agenda and minutes.

Chirs Micoz- Seconds the motion.

MOTION PASSED

Unanimously

**3. Wildlife Board Meeting Update
Derris Jones, Chair**

Derris Jones- Bill do you want to do a Wildlife Board update?

Bill Bates- Terry, you were at the meeting.

Terry Sanslow- I can remember some of it.

Bill Bates- Is that alright Derris?

Derris Jones- Sure.

Terry Sanslow- Dale Brady is the new Wildlife Board Chairman. Ernie Perkins remains as the Vice Chair. Everything else went pretty much as we voted, except on the issue of purging the points on the Dedicated Hunter. They went against us on that, because that is the policy that they are following now. In other words, you could put in for Limited Entry Deer or General Deer and your points are purged if you draw either one. So they went against us on that. On the boundary change for the La Sals and the Abjoho's, they took care of that before we got to the meeting, I guess Guy and them took care of that and it will be in the Proclamation we it comes out. On the recommendation that we made on putting more information on the maps and in the guide book, that will be taken care of and we didn't even have to go through that. When they put out the new guide book, all of the information for the airports and reservations and all of that will be in there.

Everything else went as we voted, there was one thing, they recommended, that the people with hawks and falconry, they wanted to be able to hunt turkeys and the Wildlife Board decided to put that on the action log and let the new board and board members deal with that and it will probably have to come before the RAC, because I don't think any of

us heard about that. The new board members, Kane is from Price and John Bear is from the Central Region and John is also from the Central Region.

4. Regional Update Bill Bates

Bill Bates- Before the Regional Update I would like to ask a couple of people to come up here. Laura, will you come up for a minute. Laura served eight years with us on the RAC, she did a great job and was here almost every meeting unless she had something really important to do. I want to give her a certificate, to thank her. Thank you and we appreciate your services.

Laura- I want to thank everyone and all of the division staff.

Bill Bates- Okay, Terry Sanslow. Terry also served for eight years and he was here almost every meeting, except for when he had surgery. Terry has done a great job serving as Vice Chair and Chairman.

Terry- I would like to thank all of the division people. The same with our RAC people, there are some great people on this RAC. I think they make some really good decisions.

Bill Bates- JD Abbott is our new Conservation Officer in East Carbon.

JD Abbott- I was born in Cache Valley in Logan, I relocated to Bear Lake, so I grew up in the Bear Lake area in Lake Town. That's where I went to High School, then back over to Logan for College and now I am in Price.

Bill Bates- We are finally up to full staff with Law Enforcement. First time we have been there for a long time. Hopefully we will get a lot of things done.

We are preparing to go down for our sales for deer permits to Navajo Nation, this year we are doing like we have every other year. We will sell 250 permits to the Utah Chapter Houses to Navajo Tribal Members. There will also be 20 permits for the South Eastern Region. Next year we are talking about keeping the arrangement the same which will make it a little bit different than the rest of the state where we are going unit by unit next year, the Navajo permits will probably still be good for all units within the region is what we are talking about doing right now. In order to change that, we would have to go in and re-negotiate the new memorandum of understanding with the Nation. I don't know if we will get that done before then. The Upland Game and Turkey Guide Books are now available and over the counter sales of general season elk and left over deer permits began today. We really didn't have a run on the house, it was pretty quiet there today, I don't know how we did online though. Aquatics section has been very catching Colorado cut throat trout up at Duck Fork, almost all of them have been caught through traps or by electro-fishing in the stream in the stream. We really didn't catch anything in the trap itself. They ended up getting about 36,000 eggs. A little bit less than they wanted and they are going to plant about 5000 5-7 inchers at Duck Fork today or tomorrow. Brent, when are we going to be planting these fingerlings at Huntington North?

Brent Stettler- That has already occurred about a week ago.

Bill Bates- Okay, last week Paul Birdsey helped get the study at Scofield Reservoir. We got a study going at USU where they are looking at the biological controls we are using and where we went to the 4 fish limit with the slot trying to get more aggressive large

predator fish into the system to take care of Utah's Chub problem. They are going to look to see if that is effective, if it isn't effective, we will look at doing a rotenone treatment in 2014. We have been stalking our lake and we have really good news, great news in fact, that the Community Fishing Pond at the Carbon County Fairgrounds is finished. I went and looked at it today, they are just doing a little bit of touch up putting up the fence right now and we are going to have, I think we changed that to the 13th rather than the 11th. Watch for news release on that for sure. As a part of International Days at the Carbon County Fairground, we are going to have a grand opening and have a fishing event out there. Brent has been busy, they did a Big Horn Sheep watch up at Sunnyside, and we have something rather unusual coming up this weekend, we have a Meet the Bats Night, where Tony, our Sensitive Species Biologists is going to take folks up Nash Wash and we already have 17 people that has already signed up which was kind of surprising. They are going to net bats and catch them, and see what we can catch. Brent has busy, him and his staff have been working with summer camp programs and we have Walt Maldonado has been very busy trying to get Dedicated Hunters to finish there service hours. Habitat actually had some disappointing news. It was just to wet this year, Cold Springs burn was canceled. We love the moisture but the snow wouldn't melt, then when it did, it rained. They had everybody up there, but hopefully we will get that done next year. They have been busy doing other things, they have several other projects they will be starting soon, they have Grimes Wash, which is by Castle Dale, or Orangeville, they had more, I can't remember off of the top of my head where the others are. We will get more information on that next time. Law Enforcement had a check point at Lake Powell, they didn't really make any Wildlife or boating violations. We already talked about hiring JD, and they have been doing a lot of checking fisherman for compliance. A lot of work with Aquatic and Invasive Species, something to just bring up for everyone's interest, we seem to be having a problem with people with float tubs, canoes, and rafts. People with boats understand that they are supposed to clean, drain, and dry, although we only have about 60% compliance which is disturbing. With people who use these other types of floatation instruments, they don't even know, so we are going to be working on getting the information out on that. One place that was kind of an issue was down at Polar Bottoms this year. We have a lot of flows at the San Rafael River and there was about 100 people every weekend that were going floating through the Gorge there and we didn't really have an effort there to let people know. The same thing happens in Moab, West Water, and Green River that is something we need to make everyone aware of. Carl Gramlich is in New Mexico right now working on YHEC which is Youth Hunter Education Challenge and maybe we will have a report for that next time. One thing we have done recently, we had a clean up and reorganize ordinance to reorganize Desert Lake. As part of the budget, cutting back process we have been put through, we lost a position in the region, and Roy Marchant who was the Watercraft Superintendent at Desert Lake has been reassigned to a position in Springville, and his responsibilities have been taken over by our Habitat staff, we have hired a guy named Dave Taylor to work as a seasonal out there, but we expect things to be handled a little differently at Desert Lake, we are hoping to do some more planning's and maybe take a little bit more direction with a more people involved. We had like 40 years of equipment that was collected back there, Duane Swasey, our Habitat Facilities Specialist said, we are going to clean this thing out, so we were taking old motors and boats and everything out and wasps were everywhere. The

thing that was a real surprise is when he put his forks on the bobcat underneath an old out house and 2 skunks ran out. One thing we haven't mentioned, we will be hearing from Leslie McFarland about the Walk-in Access Program and we recently hired Leroy Mead to be our Walk-in Access Biologist, he has taken that as a 3 year assignment and he couldn't make it here tonight because had already made commitment to go on a 50 miler with the boy scouts. I guess that is it unless you guys have any questions. Thank you.

**5. Cougar Management Plan and Revised Harvest Recommendations (Action)
Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief**

Todd Huntington- The female sub quote is if by some freak thing, the first, the top one was 33, harvest quota 8 females, if the first 8 lions killed were females, that's closed down, and those other 25 are off of the table

Kevin Bunnell- It is, but when you look at the historic harvest... that could happen, when we go back and look at the data, we would have some units that would close the case based on the female sub quota. This last year, 2 units in the state based on these numbers would have closed the Monroe and the Manti would have closed because they would have met the female sub quota, but it would have been very late in the year.

Darrel Mecham- Collared deer study, are you doing that?

Kevin Bunnell- We are doing that, we are in the second year of that now.

Darrel Mecham- When you talk about your female harvest, how many female lions totally were harvested?

Kevin Bunnell- Last year, 129.

Darrel Mecham- Does that count for under 3 years old?

Kevin Bunnell- That is everything that is total females, 129.

Kevin Albrecht- What is the survival on the unit of the Book Cliffs and the Pine Valley?

Kevin Bunnell- They are all right around between 79 & 82%, so they are not way below, but they are below that expected level. I think the worst one is 79% and I believe that was the Pine Valley.

Derris Jones- 85% adult survival, was that adult females or all adults?

Kevin Bunnell- I would have to ask, but I believe that most of the studies that track adult survival are based on females. I am certain that is based on adult female survival across the region.

Derris Jones- I would guess male adult survivals are considerably lower than that.

Todd Huntington- The trigger for predator management was the deer population objective numbers and now we are going to this adult survival.

Kevin Bunnell- Right.

Todd Huntington- When did that

Kevin Bunnell- That's what we are proposing, we had to put one of them first, because they both tied, we are proposing that change in the predator management policy in the next thing I will present.

Darrel Mecham- Does this have an effect like on the Fish Lake unit, which is usually closed because of your numbers? Now, are you worried at all about places with easy access and lions, will you have outfitter hunter sit there and harvest a mountain clean? Is that a biologically driven decision? I can see that happening in a heart beat.

Kevin Bunnell- There will be some easy access areas that will get over hunted; they are probably over hunted now. But I can show you a map that we have plotted, cougar harvest, every cougar that has been harvested to the point that we can, across the state for the last 15 years. And when you look at that, within everyone of these units, there is refuge, there are places that just don't get harvested because they are hard to access, they are cliffy, they don't have as much snow, so, we may temporarily reduce cougar populations in some areas, in a sense that is what the board asked us to do in the areas where it made sense. But in the end these populations are pretty resilient, and like we show on the Monroe, we took that population from 3 cougars per 100 square kilometers down to less than 1. We backed off, and in 3 years it was back to 2.5 & 3.

Darrell Meham- Was that from surrounding areas where lions refuge? I assume.

Kevin Bunnell- Some of both. Some from within because it has some refugees on it, then also it does have some productive units around it.

Darrell Meham- So is this a Wildlife Board driven decision or is the Biologists' deciding this is the way to go.

Kevin Bunnell- It is a little bit of both, the Board asked us to look at it. I have never felt comfortable with the way we have done predator management in the past because of the things I just talked about it. We were basing it on two pieces of information that there is a lot of uncertainties around. The model and the objective and how to handle the relationship between those two, now we can tie predator management to something that actually makes sense because we are looking at the adult survival in deer which if you are having a negative impact from cougars, that is where it would show up.

Wayne Hoskisson- I think that last year as we were learning how you determined deer population that what you found was that predators had almost now effect on deer population?

Kevin Bunnell- That is not exactly true. What we said is that when you look at the state as a whole, you can't say that there is a silver bullet for predators that would make everybody happy with deer. As a Biologist, I am in favor of this because this change doesn't put predator management in places where it doesn't make sense. It only puts predator management on cougars in areas where our adult deer survival is lower than we would expect, which is the segment of the deer population that cougars are most likely to impact.

Wayne Hoskisson- What do you think the probability is that what you are going to find is the case? That there are problems between cougars and

Kevin Bunnell- We will be able to track that because we will be tracking the cougar harvest and the percent of adult females in the cougar harvest which gives us a good indication of the trajectory of that cougar population at the same time we are going to be addressing that we are looking into the adult survival and we plan to do that, so if 5 years from now on a particular unit, where if we know we reduced the cougar population and yet the adult survival is still below 85% at that point we have a really strong case to say we tried and it didn't have the impact, there is no sense in continuing.

Wayne Hoskisson- And do we really have a great handle on what the cougar population is currently or what it has been historically?

Kevin Bunnell- I can't tell you numbers, but I feel very comfortable in that metric in looking at the proportion of adult females in the harvest. I am very comfortable that that tells us if the cougar population is stable, increasing, or decreasing.

Darrel Mecham- How many more permits is this?

Kevin Bunnell- It is the same number of permits that we recommended last year, we just pulled the quotas to these larger areas.

Darrel Mecham- It looked like a higher number to me.

Kevin Bunnell- It's not, we took the exact same recommendations and we just pulled them into the larger areas.

Kevin Albrecht- On the adult deer survival, if we adopt this plan, right now there is a study going throughout the state in those 8 areas. Will that have to continue at that level to be able to get the updated deer survival?

Kevin Bunnell- It will, and so that is in our plan, we plan on continuing that and we wouldn't tie this to that if it was something that we weren't planning on continuing in the pursuit for the foreseeable future.

Bill Bates- If somebody draws a limited entry permit, is it good on the entire unit?

Kevin Bunnell- No, on a limited entry unit, they just have one unit on that larger cougar management area that they can hunt, the same thing for the limited entry portion of the units that are under a split. They can only hunt that unit. So the only change, once the transition happens, now we are looking at a quota over a larger area than instead of our individual units.

Kevin Albrecht- Can you go to map where you showed, and in our region, will you explain that like with the limited entry unit and maybe what a number might be and then if the rest of the unit, the units didn't meet, how that might work.

Kevin Bunnell- Let me point one thing out first, now these 3 yellow ones, these are the areas that the San Rafael, The Rattlesnake, and the Kaiparowits where we don't have an appreciative deer herds. In these areas the primary prey is big horn sheep. We are treating those areas differently, we don't have adult deer survival, essentially our intentions are to keep the quotas high there and try to limit the cougar population because of the value we place on our big horn sheep population.

Justin Shannon- The Henries would be harvest objective, Elk Ridge would be harvest objective, The Abajos would be a split and The La Sals would be harvest objective.

Kevin Bunnell- You have a pool or quota, I think we are recommending 28, and then a female sub quota of 8, so all of these areas would stay open as long as neither of those were met, once one of them were met, they all would close.

Un-named Public- What happens when the Abajo closes on June 1st and the others stay open year around?

Kevin Bunnell- So the Abajo would close on the season date, the others would stay open to harvest because they are under a longer season. It would be the same as it is now.

Un-named Public- So the left over harvest from the Abajo could carry over?

Kevin Bunnell- It could eventually carry over to these other units.

Travis Pehrson- On the Abajo unit one, if they killed 8 females on the La Sals or Elk Ridge, or The Henries, the whole thing would be shut down.

Kevin Bunnell- It would. To put that into perspective, in the combination of these 4 units in the past 2 years we have harvested 3 females one year and 2 females the other. Now 3 years ago we did harvest 11 in the combination of these 3 units and we would have closed it. So occasionally that will happen, but for the last 2 years I think it has been 2 or 3 females in the combination of those units each in the last of those 2 years.

Kevin Albrecht- My question is similar to that other gentleman, like on the start dates and end dates, will they stay as they are now or if they would be synchronized to have the same starting and ending dates?

Kevin Bunnell- So a unit that is under a split scenario would still close at the end of May. The units that are under the harvest objective strategy would remain open until the following November. That wouldn't change. Since then, the other scenario that needs to be addressed, is if you have a straight limited entry unit, within one of these cougar management areas, if the area itself meets the quota, all of the units would close, but the limited entry hunters would have a season, on that limited entry unit, they would be able to hunt the rest of their season, just on the unit that their permits is specific for.

Kevin Albrecht- Can you give us an example of that?

Kevin Bunnell- I think the Vernon unit is a limited entry unit in this kind of west desert, northern west desert. The rest of these are all either split for harvest objective, so if we meet the female sub quota on the end of March, all of these units would close, the Vernon would stay open because those guys drew their limited entry tag, it says they have a season from the 3rd Saturday of November or the 3rd Wednesday of November through May 31st or June 1st. So we would honor that the season dates. We can do that on that unit because those are the only people that can hunt it.

Travis Pehrson- The La Sals and the Elk Ridge are under predator management plan, and The Abajo's wasn't, but now with doing this, none of them are.

Kevin Bunnell- For cougars, I think all 3 of them would still be under predator management for coyotes. That is based on the fact the adult survival is hire, we do have some issues with fawn production, so that points us into the direction of coyotes. I will talk about that in the next proposal. What we are recommending is based on higher harvest than we have had, even under the scenario you described.

Derris Jones- Are there any other questions from the RAC?

Kevin Albrecht- We only try to pick one area for the adult deer survival study within a large region, and say you have an event like you had a couple of years ago where you have a large snow fall down in Blanding, Monticello area, where you may have a large adult deer die out, but your representative area, say is on the Manti/Wasatch, how would effect them?

Kevin Bunnell- We have tried to group these units so that they have similar weather patterns and we are going on the assumption that if you had it in one area you would have it in one area it would be similar across that area. If you had a freak event, that is one of the items of uncertainty in this. You can't address every situation with one scenario that you didn't anticipate. Could someone get this out to the RAC members because it shows on each of these cougar management areas over the last 4 years, so you could look at it relative to what is being proposed and help put it in perspective, and I apologize, I meant to hand those out before hand and I forgot.

Derris Jones- If there are no other questions from the RAC we will open it up from questions from the audience and I would ask that you not add comments, lets get the questions out of the way and you will get a chance for comments after the question period. When you come up for questions, state your name and then ask your question.

Lloyd Nielsen- Basically all you have is female sub quota there. You can't go on the Abajos with an Elk Ridge tag to hunt the Henry Mountains, so basically all you have got is a female sub quota, what will shut down all of those units in that area?

Kevin Bunnell- We pulled the overall quotas, then we added a female sub quota. In most cases, when I look back at the data, the historic harvest, if any of these units shut down, it is most likely going to be because we meet the female sub quota.

Guy Webster- Can you go back to the slide you had on your female survival? So if your female survival is greater than 20%, that makes it on a definite downward trend as far as your (inaudible), correct?

Kevin Bunnell- No, there is some gap between the 17 & 20% and the 25% where there is probably some uncertainty, we know if we are above 25% based on some really good research that was done in Wyoming, that that population is on a downward trend. We are very comfortable that between 17 & 20%, it is probably stable, there is an area between 20 and 25% where we could be either way.

Guy Webster- So would I be correct in saying if we go another 3 - 8 units Wasatch/Manti last year, 37% bought (inaudible), Uintah's, 33%, we are defiantly impacting the overall cougar population?

Kevin Bunnell- If that continues, that is the other reason why we put this into a 3 year rotation, we pull all of the harvest over 3 years, so if you look at the previous 2 years to that and get an average of the 3.

Guy Webster- They are both in the 28-30% or greater, second, with a fast trend like this, can you biologically feel good with Wasatch/Manti being a 37% last year, 24% the year before, and then have a potential for 129 lions coming off of the Southeast Manti, can you biologically say that is a fundamentally correct biological decision?

Kevin Bunnell- If that happened, no. But that is not going to happen. And you know as well as I will, there is a point where you hit diminishing returns where guys aren't going to continue to hunt, yet we still know we have some refuges on the Manti that are going to continue to feed juveniles into some of those areas. If I thought that was a real possibility Guy, then No, it wouldn't be responsible, but I don't think it is.

Guy Wallace- So, biologically, you explained how this can be more beneficial than more leaving things into a smaller more precise units to have greater smaller control, I mean, we chose that the RAC and Wildlife Boards do that with deer because we want to have closer protection on smaller units, and everybody said that was biological, so it is not more biological sound to continue to do the same thing?

Kevin Bunnell- It's not, and I will tell you why, there is a big difference between the scale that the deer used to landscape versus lion. Lions use the landscape at a much larger scale than deer do. Deer are very traditional from one place to another, you know, the route the male lion may take, he may cross 2 or 3 units, and so lions are usually the landscape with a much broader scale than deer, so this actually makes more sense biologically for an animal like a cougar, because of the scale they move across the landscape.

Wayne Hoskisson- There was a cougar killed in Connecticut this year and it just happened when they did a genetic study on it, they found a match and this cougar probably came from South Dakota, so they do wonder.

Kevin Bunnell- Movements of that scale are certainly the exception, not the rule. But they do use the landscape that is a pretty broad scale.

Casey- Why do we focus totally on land to take care of (inaudible)? The reason I wonder, is I can take a 3 (inaudible) that lions or the coyotes are killing and people are killing. An example of that is you go on any CWMU in the state what do you see? Do you see the

deer? A lot of deer? Do you see predators there? Lions? Coyotes? What don't you see there?

Kevin Bunnell- You have fewer hunters, so you see more bucks, but that is not representative of the deer population. It's your adult does that determine what your deer population is.

Casey- If you look at it and this is just a proposal, we can cut hunters back and I am for lions, deer, and elk, I hunt them all. Our biggest problem is too many tags.

Derris Jones- We are addressing the cougar amendment so when we talk about...

Casey- This is an example, to tell them there are cougars on these CWMU's.

Kevin Bunnell- Let me address that, we just cut 7000 general season deer tags, we have a huge study going on highway mortality, this will actually focus predator management in the area where we actually have data that indicates it is a problem. Where before, it would be done on a broader scale in places where it didn't make since. I am a lot more comfortable with this that what we have done.

Casey- It is something you should look at.

Kevin Bunnell- Absolutely and we not trying to say it's not.

Dustin Hinkins- Say the Henry Mts., what is the deer herd on that? Is it stable or decreasing or what?

Justin Shannon- The fawn doe ratio the past 2-3 years has been well, but yes, they are stable.

Dustin Hinkins- Okay, so that shows that lions aren't killing on the Henry's this year.

Kevin Bunnell- We are not claiming that they are.

Dustin Hinkins- That is what I am saying, I can go kill all of the lions, but over there they are not going to get killed because you are traveling, nobody is going to kill them, the San Rafael, the only reason lions got killed there this year, is because the mountains around it are all draws, so we didn't have no where to go, so we went to the desert. I know that's what killed all of the lions out there.

Kevin Bunnell- But that has been a similar situation in the 6 or 7 previous years, there wasn't any harvest on the San Rafael.

Dustin Hinkins- That's because there was no snow there. Say Nine Mile and Range Creek, the Manti pulled more tags, you're not going to have (inaudible), all you are doing is focusing on your deer herd, you going to loose your sheep herd.

Kevin Bunnell- But we will, like I said, on those sheep units, we are putting a minimum harvest, they won't close down until we have met that minimum. Even if the surrounding area does close.

Dustin Hinkins- Yes, but your Manti, they can hunt that all year long until it is filled, well as soon as there is no snow, the elk, sheep and deer (inaudible)

Kevin Bunnell- How is that different than it is right now? There is very little pressure hunting in those areas right now.

Dustin Hinkins- Because there will be more quotas.

Kevin Bunnell- It could happen, we will have to wait and see.

Derris Jones- Let's try to keep comments for later and stick with the questions basically for clarification purposes.

Jed Wiggins- On your collared deer, is there any investigation going on to determine what killed that deer or are the lions going to get the blame for everything?

Kevin Bunnell- There is not, just because the amount of time and effort that goes into that. All we are looking at is that we know that there are some gaps here where we are making assumptions. I absolutely admit that. But it is still better than we have been, at least now we are basing the decision to put a cougar area under predator management plan on a piece of data that actually makes sense for cougars, rather than before, it was just a percent of the population relative to objective where it could be everything. At least now it is focused down to something that makes sense to me.

Jed Wiggins- (inaudible) very few cats and they get the money for everything.

Leroy Nielsen- When we look now at the quotas, is it going to show each individual unit?

Kevin Bunnell- No, it will show the one that is relevant.

Greg- Specific to the Wasatch Manti unit if you combine all of those units for the harvest for the last 3 years, how many lions that would equate that were sport harvested, not all harvested?

Kevin Bunnell- The management area is a broader area than just the Manti, but the Wasatch Manti take up most of it. In 2008 there were 65 sports harvested, this doesn't include Wildlife services, mortality, or livestock depredation, or anything like that, it is just sport harvest. So 65, 77, 82, then this year is 108.

Greg- Then the female number you were talking about earlier in the presentation, was 140 females killed (inaudible)

Kevin Bunnell- This is just sport harvest, it was 129 statewide.

Greg- I am looking at your report online and it is saying 118, 117, & 116?

Kevin Bunnell- For what year?

Greg- 2007-2008

Kevin Bunnell- This is the 2011 date. So this isn't online

Greg- Okay. Biologically, do you worry about for instance, your managing on a broader basis, and in the past, I think we had these smaller units, basically say on the Monroe and the units around the Monroe have failed due to that recovery (inaudible) going to this broader management unit, do you worry about those source carriers, not being able to supply these seek areas?

Kevin Bunnell- I don't because when we go back and look, we adjust the overall numbers 2 years from now. We are still going to use this data. If we are between 20-22% we reduce by 10% the overall numbers, if we are above that, we reduce by 20% and so the management plan is still going to come back... I will be perfectly honest, we don't know how it is going to play out. It is going to be in place for 2 years, we are going to combine all of the data together and then we are going to apply it to this. This I am very comfortable with, and if within these 2 years it does more than what we expected it to do, the plan will make an adjustment and those number of permits available in those areas is going to be reduced because the plan is written in a way that it mandates that they be reduced by up to 25%.

Greg- One last question, you are only counting adult females in those equations, and I am wondering why you are considering a (inaudible) in 2007, 2008 & 2009 statewide with only 2.9 years old.

Kevin Bunnell- The reason we base it on adult females again, is research is showing and I think it makes a lot of sense, that there is different age classes in the males and females have different levels of overbuild. Cougar population, if you went into a area where cougars have never been hunted, you just started hunting them, the first segment of the

population that would be harvested would be adult males because the what the hunters select for, that's the trophy, that's what everyone wants. So, once they are gone, the next two segments of the population that start getting harvested at higher rates are the sub adult or juvenile males, followed by the juvenile females, and those are pretty similar rates, just because the juvenile, once they are dispersing and moving more and crossing roads more often, they are likely to be detected. The least venerable segment of a cougar population would be the adult females, and so once that proportion of adult females starts to increase, its an indication that the others are not available, and so guys are happy to hunt harder to get to the adult females and you know at that point your population is in a downward trend, at the same time, we know that if it is in the 17-20% range, there are still some adult males out there, and some juvenile males and juvenile females then population is maintaining itself. That is why we base it on specifically on the adult females. It is the most sensitive segment of the population that tells us most about the trend of the population, if it is increasing or decreasing.

Guy Webster-(inaudible) Pine Valley, we can just use that, it would fit perfectly under this type of plan. The last 3 years, if we add them 3 together, that's 26% (inaudible) drew out through harvest.

Kevin Bunnell- You can't really take an average of an average but it is going to be somewhere close to that.

Guy Webster- But it is and anything greater than that 25%, but it also is under adult does survival of 76%, which one of these two are going to take precedence? It is going to take the doe survival to determine whether or not we change female cougar tags or do we (inaudible) cougar? Which one of these plans are most important?

Kevin Bunnell- It's going to be both. It's going to be our biologist sitting down and saying our adult survival is low but the data indicates that I have got either stable, or decreasing cougar population and they are going to have to make a call. It doesn't mandate you going to predator management. This is the very first time we have done this, so for the next two years, we are kind of going down that rode, but then our predator management plan will be renewed the same time we look at cougar recommendations, and that's a call that our guys are going to have to make based on their knowledge and looking at the data.

Lloyd Nielsen- What about all of the sheep on Elk Ridge down the canyon?

Justin Shannon- We tried to pick the units where we have just big horn sheep (inaudible), down to Elk Ridge, they have the deer that overlap with the big horn sheep down there. I agree with you, but how do you cut that sliver out?

Kevin Bunnell- All of the units, so these yellow areas are certainly not the only areas in the state where we have sheep, we have here and we have sheep in Flaming Gorge, we have sheep on the Wasatch Front, and we have sheep in a lot of different places. We are just treating those different because they don't have deer, we can't look at deer survival in those areas, because we don't have enough deer to look at. In these other units, like the 3 corners area where we have sheep or the Elk Ridge, that is where that minimum harvest number comes in on those other units. They won't close with the rest of the unit unless we have met the minimum harvest on those sheep areas. This is on all of the areas where we have sheep. It will only close if you also met the minimum harvest on that specific unit.

Lloyd Nielsen- If that is the (inaudible) 8 lions, no matter what (inaudible) there will still be 8 lions.

Kevin Bunnell- Because it is a sheep unit, yes.

Public- The yellow is one unit, right?

Kevin Bunnell- It is one cougar management area, yes. There will be one quota that will be applied to each of the combination of The Rattlesnake & The San Rafael.

Walt Peterson- Limited Entry on the Wasatch Manti, the females are taken during that, are they taken off of this?

Kevin Bunnell- Absolutely. Let's go back to the Vernon here, the females that are harvested on the Vernon, even though it is a limited entry unit, as straight limited entry unit, not even a split unit, they still apply to the female sub quota on the broader area.

Les- On those 3 other units, they have a minimum harvest,

Kevin Bunnell- They don't on those 3, because those 3 will just have a quota that will apply to those 3 and it will probably be high because there sheep areas and we just assume they stay open.

Les- That will be one number?

Kevin Bunnell- One number and it will be a combination of all 3 of those.

Les- Okay (inaudible)

Kevin Bunnell- So what we are proposing, those are the big horn sheep only units, 21 & 11, so these areas would not close unless you harvested a combination of 11 females or 21 lions total.

Casey- The sheep numbers on the Manti, are they down in the North or South.

Justin Shannon- The North San Rafael is continuing to decline, it has been on a decline since about 2002. We are initiating a study this fall. We are going to collar about 30 ewes and 10 rams, hopefully put some research on that from a graduate student and get some answers there.

Derris Jones- We will open it up to comments and suggestions from the audience.

Guy Webster- You have a slim chance of (inaudible) but for 129 cats taken off of the South East Manti with nothing to say, (inaudible) 21 cats off of Rattlesnake, we know you are not going to take 21 cats, because there is not 21 cats there. No way, no how. We don't need to have 10 cats taken off there. I like going out and seeing sheep too, but I also like to go and chase a lion. I have 2 kids here that will probably never draw a sheep tag, but these 2 kids have been on lion (inaudible) in that unit. There is more than just sheep, there is more than just deer, there is lions. There is no biological reason that we are going to go and take and change 28 cougar areas. It is not biologically sound, it's not ethical, and there is no reason for it. I will argue that the lions on Rattlesnake unit aren't going clear across to Range Creek, they are not going clear out on the Book Cliffs, they may run a 15 - 20 mile loop, but they are not going clear down on the San Rafael. They are staying in a smaller unit. The ones on the Manti are not going clear up around Strawberry on a routine basis, yes you have your strange ones, but we need to keep a closer management, just like we chose to do with deer, we need to have some better numbers, I think we need to be concerned about it. There is not a biological reason we should go away from how we have done this, the plan was put into place last year and I think we need to give it a chance to happen.

Lloyd Nielsen- I have hunted lions for over 30 years. I would really guard yourself on those numbers. Back in the 90's we opened quota to the state, which I am in favor of

quota, I think that is the way to manage lions. But we have got the numbers so high that we killed all of the lions off then its (inaudible) fault. So, then we went to this draw, which you can't manage them by the draw in my opinion. We need to watch the numbers of our lions, 129 lions in this little area... the area where we really slaughtered lions back in the 90's was down around Kanab or Enterprise, Cedar City and St. George. They still have lions coming in out of Nevada, they have canyons. Manti is kind of the central of the state of Utah, now do they have lion coming in and feeding a lot? I don't know. I don't know the area. I mainly hunt the south part of the state, but I think this is one we really need to aggress is the numbers on those lions on that unit. Other than that, I would support this. Thank you.

Jerry Ward- Sales for 30 years, I can tell you right now that the problem with the deer is not lions on the La Sal Mts. He is talking about the lions traveling, yes, there are lions that do that, but on the La Sals and the Abajos they are close, and there has always been a higher lion population on the Abajos then there was on the La Sals forever. Yet, they have all gone down too, they have all gone down. You could kill every lion up there and you would not make a difference, this has been going on or 15 years, we seen it 15 years ago. Nobody seemed to pay any attention that we were loosing deer. You can find 10 times the amount of deer killed by coyotes than you will ever find killed by lions.

Brett Guymon- I would just ask the RAC to consider rejecting this proposal, part of the management plan as it was originally proposed to go to this 3 year rotation. The main reason for that 3 year rotation was to allow the strategies to develop by the division to have effect. We are in year 2 of that 3 year rotation, and already we are making changes to the management plan that is supposed to guide how they managed, I would recommend and hopefully you would consider allowing that 3 year rotation to take place and give it time to work, I think by opening it up to the 8 management units, you really open this up to the possibility of absolutely enilating the lion population, simply because you don't have those surplus areas feeding those areas. I would like to leave it alone, since we made such drastic changes last year, and let the plan work. Thanks.

Leroy Nelson- I would like to say I support this plan. I have been asking for a female quota for about 15 years. I think it is something we can make work. I am worried about the numbers, like Kevin said, it is worth a safety net. Can it be a safety net if we raise from our yearly average up to 153 females? That is not a safety net to me. I think we need to lower them, we need to look at the units like the Manti, we need to get that female quota down to where it is actually going to be a safety net for us, but I do support the plan, thank you.

Mike Critcher of Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife- Sportsmen Fish and Wildlife supports the recommendation on the cougar plan as presented with only one recommendation for change. Move the harvest objective opening date to February 1st, this will allow additional opportunities during the most favorable hunting conditions and provide the tool that helped achieve the harvest objectives. Thank you.

Lana Scoggins- I think you guys are just asking to enilate the lion. Leave it to smaller units, if you split units and start earlier, then you are hunting some units and leaving other units alone. I say, leave it the way it is, like Brett said and give it a chance to work.

Walt Peterson- If we go to this plan, we are going to go right back to what happened 5-6 years ago, the first time we opened the South Manti and the North Manti to a split. We went in and the South was closed in 2 days, there was an overkill, we all know that there

are more cats on the South than the North. I hunted there 50 days straight, my wife had a kill tag, we didn't tree that many, when we finally did, tree a nice one, we took it. If they go to this, I guarantee it, a lot of (inaudible) and if there's 5 or 6 females, they will kill them and shut it down and go against the division proposal here. Just so we can save our population of cats.

Cody Webster- My concern is, say you take that South East section they have there, that big management unit, and if the quota is all filled on the La Sals, how does that help your deer population on the San Juan or vice versa and it can be the same in every one of those, you really aren't going to help the lion population, you are not going to help your deer population, you are just going to wipe out the area for both. I would say just leave it the way it has been.

Derris Jones- Any other comments from the audience? Okay, we will close public comments now and open it up to the RAC for discussion and comments and hopefully a motion.

Travis Pehrson- I had something for clarification, we talked about the female, if they were at 25% or higher that were on a decline, if they are only at 10% or 5%, does that mean the lion population on an incline?

Kevin Albrecht- Potentially, but that is why we don't look at any individual here. You take the cats for example, one year it was 10, next year it was 21, the next year it was 23. If you average those out, you are going to be in the 17-20% range over those 3 years. That is exactly the reason why we proposed going to this 3 year management scenario because that lets that even out over time and we get a number that we are a lot more comfortable with. I am not comfortable with that number on any individual year, I do think we have to sample sizes over a 3 year period where it becomes a lot more meaningful.

Travis Pehrson- So is there anything in place for the San Juan, you killed 11% for the past 2 years and then this year is 11%, does that mean it has been lower for a 3 year average? Will that increase the lion permits for that?

Kevin Albrecht- Yes, the scenario I talked about, if it goes above, it is exactly the same thing if it goes below and then if that is the case, the number of permits goes up exactly.

Darrel Mecham- There is a lot of uneasy amounts about the Manti, I understand it is a popular place, it is probably one of the closest places where we have the majority of our houndsman, but if you look at last year in particular, on the Manti, we killed 46 females. Under this scenario, the Manti would have closed down and 38. Not just the Manti, but all of the associated units. That was females and this is based on the annual quotas is based just on females. We killed 40 adult females last year. Under this plan, the Manti in particular that's why I think it is a safety net. It would have closed down last year under this scenario, where last year it didn't, based on that female sub quota.

Kevin Albrecht- What is the over all percentage of the deer population on the Manti?

Justin Shannon- 50%

Kevin Albrecht- What is the adult deer survival on the Manti?

Justin Shannon- 90%

Kevin Albrecht- So under this new cougar management plan will it take the Manti out of the predator management plan?

Kevin Bunnell- Yes, it would for cougars, the way that would happen is we would be basing that female sub quota at a 25-30% of the overall harvest, instead of 40-50%.

Todd Huntington- That is 90 on Wasatch and Manti, are you just asking for the Manti itself?

Justin Shannon- We don't break it up that way, we have all of our collars, there are some sprinkled on the north side of that road, so it would be part of the Wasatch, but I would say the bulk is on the Manti unit. Last year we were at 90. This year, we are probably about 95% adult survival.

Kevin Albrecht- That is my fear, you have the Manti that is 50% of objective, but the adult deer survival is 90%, and so under that it looks like that unit is doing fine.

Which one of those units do you have confidence in? 90 % over tracking with collars or 50% based on a an objective that was set 25 years ago in various ways around the state, and a model that is used to get the population estimate.

Kevin Bunnell- I understand that, but I truthfully say on the Manti, I feel really confident that our deer herds are way down from what the habitat could support. Where we are doing that study, is that really representative of what the deer survival doing on the La Sal or the San Juan?

Kevin Bunnell- We are using the San Juan separately from the Manti. It is a separate area.

Wayne Hosskisson- Where you have the old mountain units, these are (inaudible)

Kevin Bunnell- We are using them, some people call them bell weather units, we chose them because we feel like they are representative of the surrounding area, so we are absolutely making an assumption that what is happening on the Monroe in adult survival, we making a similar assumption that is a similar dynamic going on those units that surround it because it is similar weather pattern, similar habitat, and that is an assumption that we are making both on tracking deer survival and tying that to cougar management.

Derris Jones- Comments from the RAC

Darrel Mecham- I think it is great that you are trying a different approach, you are doing this, but when you pull the trigger one year into and you have limited entry hunters that are still going to be killing even though your female sub quotas are full and there are just holes here, I just have a feeling this is Wildlife Board driven and you guys. I can't help but feel that way because there are too many holes here.

Kevin Bunnell- Darrel, there is no doubt about it, we wouldn't be here if the board hadn't asked us to come. But, I still feel pretty comfortable about it. I think this makes more sense particularly on how we are gauging predator management than the way we were doing it before. It's both. I am sincere in that.

Kevin Albrecht- What units in the state are under predator management now?

Kevin Bunnell- 48 unit's total, and I would have to go look, I can't tell you off of the top of my head.

Justin Shannon- 22 of them are under predator management.

Kevin Albrecht- How many of those are under the adult survival would remain, there are only a few like the Monroe & Manti they all would fall out of that.

Kevin Bunnell- The Monroe has not been under predator management for cougars.

Kevin Albrecht- I thought it was under the 50% objective?

Kevin Bunnell- No, the buck doe ratio is low. I don't know how those 22 are distributed. What I can tell you is under this scenario, the Unitah's, the Book Cliffs, and the Pine Valley would qualify for that higher female sub quota because the adult deer survival is below 85%.

Wayne Hoskisson- The way I would vote on this proposal would depends on very much a couple of things, one is, how sure you are, that the cougar population is stable, and how sure you are that you would be able to pick out if this was affecting the cougar population negatively in a specific area, I think the advantage to this is we would get another data point out of this. One which I don't think is terribly important between cougar and deer survival, but if we would end up with some kind of information if this went on long enough. Is the population stable? Can you pick up if there are changes in the population? Can you pick it up in specific areas if there are problems?'

Kevin Bunnell- If you look at our harvest over the past several years, it has been right around 300 with some changes in the number of permits. I think our cougar population is stable, but I will say it is stable at a lower level than it was in the mid 90's. There were absolutely higher cougar densities in this time frame than there has in the last seven or eight years. You have to consider in 1993 we lost a whole bunch of deer as well, so it makes since for it to be stable at a lower level because the prey base for cougars is lower here, it should be at a lower level. This is a statewide level, can we pick up changes, I think we can at that cougar management area level, because that gives me enough data and harvest to have some confidence in that proportion of adult females in the harvest to let us know the trajectory of the population. I don't think we could pick it up on an individual unit just because we don't have the sample size to do so. I think we can do this cougar management area over a 3 year time frame, if I pull the harvest over three years at that scale, it gives us enough to keep pretty confident.

Wayne Hoskisson- The graph looks sort of ok, but it also looks like it is going to decline because the species of the population has a decrease in a steady state, in the Plateau in that critically point where it is recovery is limited, I don't know where that would be with cougar, but you do have a high peak in 98.

Kevin Bunnell- That is harvest

Wayne Hoskisson- You have had a slight decline the last several years, then it drops again, that is kind of a worrisome curve to me.

Kevin Bunnell- I am confident of the resilience of the population, we are not going to wipe cougars out. Even with using poison back in the 50's, 60's & 70's, they couldn't wipe cougars out and they couldn't do it with sport hunting. We can reduce density and then make it where they maybe harder to find.

Justin Shannon- It maybe misleading when we talk about the 22 predator management units and how they are just going to go straight, if you take the San Juan units we talked about earlier, like the La Sals have big horn sheep, but if you fill that, you still have the La Sal unit open, you have your minimum harvest required on those big horn sheep units. Even though we only have 3 of the cougar management areas under predator management for deer.

Kevin Bunnell- I thought that was only to be on the units that had the yellow, but that is not the way it is.

Kevin Albrecht- Do you see any unfortunate nightmares at all?

Darrel Mecham- In terms of?

Kevin Bunnell- It is still going to be whole units, it will be the same as it is now. I don't think it is any more complicated as it is right now where we have 40 some units around the state and some of them are closing at different times.

Derris Jones- Do you sheep there and do they have a minimum harvest?

Kevin Bunnell- Yes.

Derris Jones- Is that minimum harvest a harvest quota or is there going to be a third number before the harvest quota and the female sub quota and then the minimum harvest number?

Kevin Bunnell- Well, they won't have an individual quota, those are the only units that will have an individual quota, everything else will just be pulled at the cougar management level.

Bill Bates- Like the South San Juan, what would your minimum harvest be?

Kevin Bunnell- We will set those on what we set the harvest objective or number of permits we had last year. We just moved those over and made that the minimum.

Derris Jones- So, you just take the female sub quota off of those units.

Kevin Bunnell- You take it off of the table unless, if you happen to meet that minimum harvest, then the trigger for the female sub quota is met for the rest of the area, then you would close the one with them. It does force some harvest out of those big horn sheep areas.

Travis Pehrson- How come you don't have those numbers?

Kevin Bunnell- The are the same, we made that recommendation last year and so for the areas that have sheep, the minimum harvest will be what the quota was last year.

Bill Bates- Would it be possible for Justin to just tell us what those harvests are?

Justin Shannon- For the La Sals, it will be 7, San Juan Elk Ridge, it will be 10, the Henries will be 5, 9 Mile will be 13.

Travis Pehrson- Let's say, 8 females are killed on the Abajos, that shuts down all of that unit, but now the La Sals and the Elk Ridge are still open because nothing has been killed on them and you can still kill 7 on the La Sal and 10 on the Elk Ridge?

Kevin Bunnell- It's because they are sheep units. That is how that would work in this area. The Henries is a sheep area as well because it has the little rockies population.

Derris Jones- Is there more clarifications or discussion needed.

Pam Riddle- The past year, we have been trying to find ways to improve our deer herd and the division has been asked to look at maybe different issues, I think there are a lot of issues that affect our declining deer herds. It would seem that this plan is talking one issue and it seems to be trying to focus on areas where deer populations are struggling and there seems to be a gap that we don't reduce the female population of mountain lions below a limit that reduces our liability. It seems like the division has tried to make a pretty good attempt to try to target things, it is going to take a few years to try and figure out where those lion populations are impacting those struggling deer herds. In Moab, I do know that the lion populations are affecting our big horn.

Travis Pehrson- I agree, this is a good plan, at least it will shut down on some females that are being overharvested, and it would stabilize the lion herds.

MOTION

Derris Jones- Asks for a motion.

Wayne Hoskisson- Moves to accept the Cougar Management Plan and Revised Harvest Recommendations as presented.

Travis Pehrson- Seconds the motion.

MOTION PASSED

With five opposing votes.

6. Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04 (Action) Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

Derris Jones- Questions from the RAC

Charlie Tracy- What are the impact of black bears on these fawns?

Kevin Bunnell- That question comes up more and more, we have looked into it, all of the studies that have ever been done, the highest percentage that they have ever detected of fawns that have been taken by bears is 6%.

Derris Jones- What percent on the average of our deer herd units are under coyote predator management?

Kevin Bunnell- Under this scenario, I think it puts... of the 44 units to look at, it's somewhere between 20-25%

Derris Jones- Does the division feel that the resources for coyote control are adequate to spread the money over that many units or would it be better spent?

Kevin Bunnell- This is an effort to try and focus a little more than it probably has been and to put it in the area where we think we can get, we can actually have an impact. It depends on the year.

Derris Jones- Is there some latitude like if you have got 5 equal units as far as the need and 3 of those units got grid snow conditions, would the latitude that the division would say, let's really hit this hard this year, where we do have the good snow conditions.

Kevin Bunnell- Absolutely, wildlife services does that anyway. They go where they have the good conditions and also when our biologists meet with wildlife services, they prioritize the area. If we have good conditions, this is priority 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5.

Derris Jones- Questions from the audience? Comments from the audience?

Kevin Peacock, Chairman, Utah Trappers Association- Spending millions of dollars on coyote control, private trappers will be more than happy to take care of a lot of that themselves to give relax on that 48 hour trap check.

Derris Jones- Any comments from the audience? We will open up comments, suggestions, and hopefully a motion from the RAC.

Wayne Hoskisson- I think Wildlife Services should be disbanded and done away with, it would save us all a lot of money, so I would vote against anything that uses them.

Travis Pehrson- (inaudible) 350,000 every year

Kevin Bunnell- It has been in that area, the actual proportion of that is larger than that. That is the portion that we put specifically to deer. We maintained the 350 for deer over the last 5 years for sure and probably longer than that. The appropriation has flocculated between 500,000 and 400,000. We have had to make up the difference with some other types of money that has gone for other places like sage grouse, and different things, but we maintained about the same level either with division funds or the legislative funds.

Travis Pehrson- Have you thought about hiring trappers target coyotes?

Kevin Bunnell- It is just a question of effectiveness. Flying coyotes in from January, February, March from a helicopter in the areas where the fawning grounds are is by far the most effective. One place where I think we could use trappers more, but it is difficult

to do, just before the fawns hit the ground, if you have a den of coyotes that is in a fawning area, you need to get rid of that. The reason there is snow on the ground, you are not doing that from an aircraft. If we could focus trappers into that specific time frame and those specific areas, it may help.

Senator David Hinkins- A million dollars we get from the Federal Government, and that goes to Wildlife Services, there is a good chance that is going to be cut this year. It is a big possibility, right now we fund about 2 million dollars hosting predator controls, about \$150,000 comes from growers, and the Cattlemen's Association comes up with about \$400-\$500,000, and Wildlife comes up with about a half of a million dollars, what we did last year. Our big concern, we bought a helicopter, we have been renting it since we get 2-3 times the flying hours with this new helicopter that Wildlife Services has got. Our big problem would be this year, there is a possibility of losing that million dollar funding from the Federals, and if that happened, we are going to be in a real bind. Most of the wildlife is now down in the valleys. We probably have more deer down in the fields than we do in the mountains. There is a possibility I will be writing a bill for next year, we started it last year, but we held off having hearings at the RAC meetings, but we are going to try to tie it to licenses, it's a possibility. We are going to be looking at that real serious this year, so just be aware of that.

Kevin Bunnell- To put some numbers into what Senator Hinkins said, right now, it is costing us about between \$800-\$900 per hour for the contracted helicopters. To be between \$400-\$500 per hour, with now the agency owning their own. The money we give them goes a lot farther.

MOTION

Charlie Tracy- Makes a motion to accept the proposal as it has been presented.

Blair Eastman- Seconds the motion.

MOTION PASSED

With one opposing vote.

7. Bobcat Harvest Recommendation (Action) Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

Derris Jones- Questions from the RAC? Questions from the Audience? Comments from the Audience?

Kevin Peacock, Chairman, Utah Trappers Association- We as trappers are very concerned with the population of wildlife, furbearers and predators alike. We are very cautious when plans such as a bobcat management plan is being changed. We feel like it was very adequately planned in the beginning. We can monitor the results, but we feel the ability to monitor of this plan for an extra year is in the best interest of everyone. We fully support this plan. I would like to thank all of the RAC Members for all of the time you put on behalf of wildlife in general. Thank you.

Wayne Hoskisson- You say you support this plan, in other words you support to reduce the tags too?

Kevin Peacock- No, we support the recommendations they are making right now, the change in the management plan.

Derris Jones- Comments from the RAC?

Wayne Hoskisson- I would prefer we not change the plan, for one, there is no ecological need to worry about trapping bobcats and dropping down to 2 tags seems like a perfectly reasonable thing considering the population seems to be a little bit on the rebound. One year doesn't make much difference, I think the plan is good and we should leave it alone.

MOTION

Todd Huntington- Moves to accept the Bobcat Harvest Recommendation as presented by the Division.

Charlie Tracy- Seconds the motion.

MOTION PASSED

With one opposing vote.

**8. Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09 (Action)
Justin Dolling, Waterfowl/Upland Game Coordinator**

Derris Jones- Questions from the RAC? Questions from the Audience?

Comments from the Audience? Comments from the RAC?

MOTION

Charlie Tracy- Moves to accept the Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R57-09 as presented.

Pam Riddle- Seconds the motion.

MOTION PASSED

Unanimously

**10. CIP Rule Amendment R-657-3(Action)
Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief**

Derris Jones- Questions from the RAC?

Kevin Albrecht- Justin, on a lot (inaudible) on the golf courses, are a lot of those birds, are they nests, or do they nest in wetlands often and then fly into the golf courses?

Justin Dolling- There is a combination of both of those factors occurring, we have resident birds that are actually nesting on the golf course, this program is directed at those birds. But we also have birds that migrate down to the flyway and get displaced off of the Great Salt Lake marshes and move into the city, that is a little bit different issue, because those are wild birds that are being displaced, so this is targeting just those that are nesting in those city environments.

Derris Jones- I am curious, one the one protective native species, is there going to be some education out there to let angler know which crawdads they can catch and which ones they can't?

Kevin Bunnell- I am going to go ahead and say yes. The honest answer is, I don't know.

Derris Jones- Maybe the native one is so restricted in range that it's not an issue. Kevin Bunnell- I would be glad to find the answer for that Derris, but I don't know.

Derris Jones- Will they be able to remove the COR to house birds, startlings, pigeons, is the Asian Collared Dove already off of that list?

Justin Dolling- Yes, it is handled in our Upland Game rule, in that rule, you are allowed to harvest Asian Collared Doves year around without a license, the only exception is the regular white winged dove season and morning dove season if you pluck those Asian Collared Doves, they become part of your bag limit.

Kevin Albrecht- So, to clarify that Justin, under the follow up to Derri's question, so now, on the Rock Dove does it have to show that it is causing damage?

Justin Dolling- On the Rock Dove or the Eurasian Collared Dove?

Kevin Albrecht- Sorry, the Eurasian Collared Dove. It's covered under the old plan, that is correct.

Justin Dolling- It is covered on our Upland Game Proclamation. And no, you do not have to demonstrate that it is causing damage. In fact, they are in invasive species that is moving across North America. The thought is to allow for very liberal take of that specie, with the hopes that it doesn't eventually displace some of our native doves.

Derris Jones- Comments from the Audience? Comments/motion from the RAC?

MOTION

Charlie Tracy- I make a motion that we accept it as presented.

Wayne Hoskisson- Seconds the motion

MOTION PASSED

Unanimously

10. Walk-in Access Rule Amendment R657- (Action) Leslie McFarlane, Walk-in Access Coordinator

Derris Jones- Questions from the RAC? Questions from the Audience?

Comments from the Audience? Comments from the RAC?

Derris Jones- Does the landowner still have the opportunity to have a sign in box if he desires?

Leslie McFarlane- Yes, we will keep the registration boxes there if they desire to keep it.

Derris Jones- Do most land owners don't care who is on their property?

Leslie McFarlane- Some do and some don't. Some landowners have indicated that they would be out of the program if we removed the registration boxes completely. The problem that we are running into with the registration box, is because of privacy laws, we can't ask for any more than a name when they sign in, and there are 10 million John Smiths's. It doesn't tell you a whole lot. So if we keep the registration boxes, they can put down their authorization number and that would actually tie that to the person.

MOTION

Charlie Tracy- I make a motion to accept the Walk-in Access Rule Amendment R657-
presentation as presented

Todd Huntington- Seconds the motion

Derris Jones- All in favor?

MOTION PASSED

Unanimously

**11. FY 2013 Fee Schedule (Action)
Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief**

Derris Jones- Any questions?

Charlie Tracy- Are you anticipating any wolves coming here, are you going to let them
come or what?

Bill Bates- No

MOTION

Todd Huntington- I move to accept the FY 2013 Fee Schedule presentation as presented

Chris Micoz- Seconds the motion

MOTION PASSED

With two opposing votes.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

NORTHEASTERN RAC MEETING SUMMARY-MOTIONS PASSED
Bingham Research Center, Vernal / July 28, 2011

5. COUGAR MANAGEMENT PLAND AND REVISED HARVEST RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION: to accept as presented

Passed 5 to 1

6. MANAGING PREDATORY WILDLIFE SPECIES POLICY W1AG-04

MOTION: to accept as presented

Passed unanimously

7. BOBCAT HARVEST RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION: to accept as presented

Passed unanimously

8. WATERFOWL GUIDEBOOK AND RULE R657-09

MOTION: to accept as presented

Passed unanimously

9. CIP RULE AMENDMENT R657-3

MOTION: to accept as presented

Passed unanimously

10. WALK-IN ACCESS RULE AMENDMENT R657

MOTION: to accept as presented

Passed unanimously

11. FY 2013 FEE SCHEDULE

MOTION: to accept as presented

Passed unanimously

12. ELECTION OF RAC CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR-NORTHEASTERN REGION

MOTION: to nominate Floyd Briggs as NER RAC Chair

Passed unanimously

MOTION: to nominate Mitch Hacking as NER RAC Vice Chair

Passed unanimously

NORTHEASTERN REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY
Bingham Entrepreneurship & Research Center, Vernal
July 28, 2011

RAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rod Morrison, Sportsmen
Bob Christensen, Forest Service
Wayne McAllister, At Large
Mitch Hacking, Agriculture
Brandon McDonald, BLM
Ron Winterton, Elected Official
Floyd Briggs, At Large
Kevin Christopherson, Supervisor

DWR PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Randall Thacker, NER Wildlife Bio III
Amy VandeVoort, NER Wildlife Bio II
Dax Mangus, NER Wildlife Bio II
Ron Stewart, NER Conservation Outreach
Michelle Richens, NER Office Specialist
Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief
Justin Dolling, Waterfowl/Upland Game Coord.
Leslie McFarlane, Walk-in Access Coordinator

WILDLIFE BOARD MEMBERS:

Del Brady

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. WELCOME, RAC INTRODUCTIONS AND RAC PROCEDURE Floyd Briggs

Comment cards are on the table by the door

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES: Floyd Briggs

Sage Grouse was removed from the agenda.

3. WILDLIFE BOARD MEETING UPDATE: Floyd Briggs

There was a variance given because of a family death for a limited entry tag. It was a good meeting.

4. REGIONAL UPDATE: Kevin Christopherson

There have been some bear problems this year, but it is better so far compared to previous years. Elk depredation in the Ouray Valley has grow significantly. As a result, we are working with the refuge to get a hunt allowed on the refuge. It is likely that in the near future there will be a management plan to reduce the herd to zero because of farm land, but they are going to try it with hunters before we move in and remove the animals.

Fishing Piers: There are new fishing piers at Montez Creek and Pelican Lake. We are also in the process of instaling one at Flaming Gorge. It will hopefully be ready in August. We are working with Forest Service and Scenic Byway Committee to get the access trail opened for more hours.

We have recently lost two RAC members. Curtis Dastrup passed away and Brent Bibles had to resign. It would be good if we could get the new RAC members by August 17 for RAC training. Those who haven't previously been to one of these trainings are encouraged to go.

5. COUGAR MANAGEMENT PLAN AND REVISED HARVEST RECOMMENDATIONS (ACTION): Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief Introduced by Kevin Christopherson

At the request of the Board, we have been asked to make revisions to the cougar management plan that was passed last year. If the revisions don't pass the cougar management plan will fall back to the one that passed last year. See handout

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: Limited Entry tags go in a draw right?

Kevin Bunnell: Yes

Mitch Hacking: If someone draws a split tag and the harvest quota is met during the Limited Entry season then are all hunters done?

Kevin Bunnell: Not necessarily, but the harvest on the limited entry unit does count in quota for the larger areas. For example, Currant Creek is limited entry and thirteen guys draw, they will be able to hunt regardless of what happens in surrounding area. If ten of them harvest though, it counts as part of the quota for the larger region. Please refer to the handout for harvest quota. We may not expect an area to close under the predator management plan.

Bob Christensen: I am confused on percentages, is the quota based on all females?

Kevin Bunnell: Yes, the quota is based on all females right now, but we will be doing it by age in the future which you can tell by looking at the teeth.

Bob Christensen: When you make assumptions on units with adult deer survival isn't it significant from one unit to another?

Kevin Bunnell: We feel that numbers in a close area are pretty similar, but not units far away. For example, the Uintahs and Wasatch, Manti will not be assumed to be similar.

Randall Thacker: An example in our region is that the Avintaquin is part of Wasatch and Anthro is part of the Bookcliffs. So they will not be compared with Uintahs and are not representative of that type of habitat.

Rod Morrison: With the new recommendations, how will the numbers compare to last year?

Kevin Bunnell: The areas are not going to be closed based on total number of cougars that are harvested only on the number of female cougars that are harvested.

Rod Morrison: Have you thought of allowed for outfitters that may have people already booked for these hunts?

Kevin Bunnell: No, we are trying to keep it simple right now, but we may need to go back and revise the plan again in two years.

Rod Morrison: Our sheep area is not yellow is that because there are deer there?

Kevin Bunnell: Yes

Rod Morrison: Is the consideration for sheep still separate?

Kevin Bunnell: Yes for that specific area, it will make it a small area for predator management.

Questions from Public:

Josh Horrocks: What is this going to do to our units hunt strategies?

Kevin Bunnell and Randall Thacker: The split units will stay the same. Bookcliffs and Diamond will stay as split units and Three Corners and Daggett will stay as harvest objective.

Floyd Briggs: It appears that this may be better for guides?

Kevin Bunnell: It will allow them to have more flexibility.

Anthony McCrite: How have you used science to justify killing more cougars in one year?

Kevin Bunnell: We have not had the adult survival at the last go around. The adult deer statistics is the best science information we can use at this time. Secondly consider that cougar's use of landscape is a lot broader than deer.

Anthony McCrite: Why not change it last year?

Kevin Bunnell: The plan is adoptive. Things change with new data.

Anthony McCrite: Aren't you supposed to manage all animals, not just deer and sheep? I want to be able to hunt cougars in ten years and not only the more expensive game. I want my kids to have the opportunity to hunt cougars as well.

Kevin Bunnell: The board asked us to make these revisions. I really don't think it will wipe out cougars. If I did, I would not be making the recommendation.

Comments from Public:

Anthony McCrite: Houndsman are being double counted. When hunters cut same tracks 20 cut tracks suddenly become 40.

Kevin Bunnell: That's not how we get our data.

Mitch: What is the advantage of the split season?

Kevin Bunnell: The limited entry portion allows hunter to have better opportunity and be selective. Then we can transition to harvest objective and still meet the harvest quota.

Tony Domshell: Hunters don't have choice to be picky about what lion they harvest. Lions have decreased. Guides only care about the money and not the condition of lions. Guides are being illegal in the way they hunt and make it difficult for everybody else.

Kevin Bunnell: If you know of this then you need to call our law enforcement.

Tony Domshell: How do you keep track of the kills by cougars?

Kevin Bunnell: Collared animals help us keep track because we can track and determine a cause of death for the deer/elk.

Comments from RAC:

Bob Christensen: Highway mortality, predator death, etc. is studied with collars and data. It is easy to see the cause of death. I believe cause of death is reasonably tracked.

MOTION by Bob Christensen to pass as presented.

Second by Brandon McDonald

Public was trying to step in and make more comments Floyd overrode stating that the time for public comment was over and that we had a motion already on the floor.

Floyd Briggs called off discussion: As a RAC we need to stay unanimous if we split the board is less likely to listen to us.

Mitch Hacking: Can this be a separate motion?

Kevin Christopherson and Floyd Briggs: This needs to be done at a different time.

Mitch Hacking: But this is the purpose, to amend it now not after it is passed.

Floyd Briggs: Yes it can be changed, but we have a motion on the floor right now.

Bob Christensen stay as previously motioned to pass as presented.

Brandon McDonald second

Favor: Brandon McDonald, Rod Morrison, Bob Christense, Wayne McAllister, Ron Winterton

Opposed: Mitch Hacking

Passed 5 to 1

6. MANAGING PREDATORY WILDLIFE SPECIES POLICY W1AG-04 (ACTION): Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

See handout

Questions from RAC:

Brandon McDonald: Is there no fawn mortality in relation with cougars?

Kevin Bunnell: Not really. Cougars will take a few fawns during winter but statistics say other predators such as coyotes are a significantly higher cause of mortality to fawns.

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

None

Comments from RAC:

None

MOTION by Ron Winterton to approve as presented.

Second by Brandon McDonald

Passed unanimously

7. BOBCAT HARVEST RECOMMENDATIONS (ACTION): Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

We are in a situation we didn't expect because of the high prices of pelts and the harvest increase. See handout

Questions from RAC:

Kevin Christopherson: Doesn't the RAC need to vote on amendment to the plan and the management separately?

Kevin Bunnell: No, it will be voted on as package.

Kevin Christopherson: Could we follow as is without an amendment?

Kevin Bunnell: You guys address the issue and we will follow what you decide either way.

Wayne McAllister: Do you know the statistics for how many hunters are filling their quota?

Kevin Bunnell: Most of the furbearers filled their quota with three tags, but with six tags usually only experienced furbearers fill their quota. An exception to this is if there is a huge juvenile harvest.

Floyd Briggs: Were the prices of pelts still up?

Kevin Bunnell and Kent Fowden (President of Trappers Association): They are still in high \$300 in the past they have been in \$400. They have still been significantly high the last three years because there are fewer on the market.

Questions from Public:

Andy McCrite: If you are using the set days statistic for harvest, fifty percent is still way under normal. Wouldn't it make sense to reduce tags still?

Kevin Bunnell: We are not back to normal yet, but we are moving in that direction so it makes sense to leave the tag numbers the same instead of reducing them.

Comments from Public:

Kent Fowler President of Trappers Assoc.: We believe the plan is very comprehensive and are here to support the plan as presented. There is value in the ability to monitor the harvests for one more year.

Comments from RAC:

Brandon McDonald: There really is not a lot of data so I would expect more changes in this management plan than other animals.

Kevin Bunnell: Granted I can't tell you exactly how many are out there, but we seem to be increasing with the harvests and data that we do have.

Bob Christensen: Cougar has a primary and secondary objective, but bobcat does not?

Kevin Bunnell: That is correct.

MOTION by Rod Morrison to accept as presented.

Second by Ron Winterton

Passed unanimously

8. WATERFOWL GUIDEBOOK AND RULE R657-09 (ACTION): Justin Dolling, Waterfowl/Upland Game Coordinator

We can be more restrictive than federal regulations, but not more liberal. See handout

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: Why are sandhill cranes not on here?

Justin Dolling: Sandhill cranes are done during the upland game recommendations.

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

None

Comments from RAC:

None

Motion by Bob Christensen to accept as presented

Second by Wayne McAllister

Passed unanimously

9. CIP RULE AMENDMENT R657-3 (ACTION): Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

See Handout

Questions from RAC:

None

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

None

Comments from RAC:

None

Motion by Mitch Hacking to pass as presented

Second by Brandon McDonald

Passed unanimously

10. WALK-IN ACCESS RULE AMENDMENT R657 (ACTION): Leslie McFarlane, Walk-in Access Coordinator

Introduction of Amy VandeVoort, Regional Walk-in Access Coordinator

See Handout

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: Does a landowner have to do both fishing and hunting or can you do it individually?

Leslie McFarlane: We do it based on the landowner wants. It can be any combination of hunting or fishing.

Mitch Hacking: Is the reimbursement the same for any combination?

Leslie McFarlane: No, the reimbursement fee is based on use and landowner wants.

Mitch Hacking: Are there a lot of participants in Uintah County?

Amy VandeVoort: No, there are currently only two participants in Uintah County the rest are in Duchesne County.

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

None

Comments from RAC:

Floyd Briggs: There are pros and cons to the habitat if landowners sign up. They can get habitat advancement and then if they withdraw they still have the habitat advancement. Some may take advantage of that.

Leslie McFarlane: When projects go before the Habitat Council they tend to not get funded on private lands. So therefore, we try to work with the landowners to do small projects. This is for the small landowners to help them benefit from the use of wildlife.

Wayne McAllister: You may want to get in contact with the RCS.

Leslie McFarlane: Yes we have been and are continually trying to increase our contacts.

Ron Winterton: Is this generally accepted?

Leslie McFarlane: Yes, this is our effort to try and improve the program because of acceptance by legislation funding.

**Motion by Ron Winterton to approve as presented
Second by Wayne McAllister**

Passed unanimously

11. FY 2013 FEE SCHEDULE (ACTION): Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

See Handout

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: Is there a large enough wolf population in Utah to hunt?

Kevin Bunnell: Not that we know of right now, this is for the future when a population presents itself and they become delisted.

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

None

Comments from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: I would like to get first one.

**Motion by Ron Winterton to accept as presented
Second by Bob Christensen**

Passed unanimously

12. ELECTION OF RAC CHAIR (ACTION): Kevin Christopherson, NERO Supervisor

One of the challenges for Floyd is that he can't commit to attend all Board meetings. Is anybody interested in committing to that?

Floyd Briggs: What is tradition for Vice Chairs vs Chairs showing up to the Board meetings?

Del Brady: Northern and Central Regions have quite often had the Vice Chair show up. There are some legitimate reasons for the Vice Chair being there. This can be very time consuming for the Chair.

Mitch Hacking: Can we assign someone else to attend if the Chair or Vice Chair is unable to be there?

Del Brady: Some of the other RACs have had substitutes.

Kevin Christopherson: I have been a substitute in the past, but it is the Chair's job to explain the feelings of the RAC. Often their discussion will change the Board's decision.

Mitch Hacking: So will they accept a third person?

Ron Winterton: Our biggest thing is getting the commitment.

Kevin Christopherson: I will check on the rule, but for now we can proceed and I will check.

Del Brady: There have been incidences when this has happened.

Mitch Hacking: What about taking turns as the chair.

Kevin Christopherson: That is not the intent.

Bob Christensen: Yes it takes time to be the Chair, but that is one of the commitments of joining the RAC.

Ron Winterton: Are all meetings on Thursday?

Del Brady: Usually.

Floyd Briggs: Do the meeting go over more than one day?

Del Brady: Sometimes, but usually the RAC Chairs aren't required to attend because they are usually discussing other issues.

Kevin Christopherson: The RAC chair is suppose to change every year. So therefore, if you serve the whole eight years, everybody will be required to be either the RAC Chair or Vice Chair.

Brandon McDonald: How time consuming is it really? Is it just going to Salt Lake or is there a lot more involved?

Bob Christensen: That's about it.

Del Brady: It sometimes takes more than just one day because you need to be there by 9am and aren't finished until about 4 or 5 pm.

Kevin Christopherson: Bob did a really good job with emails etc. There are a few minor things like that, but they are not very time consuming.

Brandon McDonald: It sounds interesting, but I'm not sure I can really commit myself to juggling my full schedule.

Bob Christensen: Well vice chair is a backup position. The Chair and Vice are suppose to coordinate schedules ahead of time.

Floyd Briggs: What months does the board meet?

Kevin Christopherson and Del Brady gave months they don't meet

Nominations:

**Ron Winterton nominated Floyd Briggs as Chair
Second by Bob Christensen**

Passed unanimously

**Wayne McAllister nominated Mitch Hacking for Vice Chair
Second by Ron Winterton**

Passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville Civic Center
110 S. Main Street, Springville
August 2, 2011 ⌚ 6:30 p.m.

Motion Summary

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

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

Cougar Management Plan and Revised Harvest Recommendations

MOTION: To accept plan as presented
Passed 7 to 4

Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04

MOTION: To accept the proposal as presented
Passed unanimously

Bobcat Harvest Recommendations

MOTION: To accept the recommendations as proposed
Passed unanimously

Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09

MOTION: To accept the presentation as presented
Passed unanimously

CIP Rule Amendment R657-3

MOTION: To approve the recommendations
Passed 8 to 3

Walk-in Access Rule Amendment

MOTION: To accept the access rule amendment as presented
Passed unanimously

FY 2013 Fee Schedule

MOTION: To approve as presented
Passed 9 to 1 (one RAC member left)

Central Region Advisory Council
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110 S. Main Street, Springville
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Passed 9 to 1 (one RAC member left)

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville Civic Center
110 S. Main Street, Springville
August 2, 2011 @ 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

Matt Clark, Sportsmen
Timothy Fehr, At Large
Larry Fitzgerald, Agriculture
Sarah Flinders, Forest Service
Michael Gates, BLM
Richard Hansen, At Large
Karl Hirst, Sportsman
Kristopher Marble, At Large
Gary Nielson, Sportsmen, Vice Chair
Fred Oswald, Non-consumptive, Chair
Jay Price, Elected
Duane Smith, Non-consumptive

Members Absent

George Holmes, Agriculture, excused

Others Present

John Bair, Wildlife Board Member

-
- 1) **Welcome, RAC Introductions and RAC Procedure**
- Fred Oswald, RAC Chair
 - 2) **Approval of the Agenda and Minutes (Action)**
- Fred Oswald, RAC Chair

VOTING

Motion was made by Duane Smith to accept the agenda and minutes as presented
Seconded by Gary Nielson
Motion passed unanimously

- 3) **Wildlife Board Meeting Update (Informational)**
- John Fairchild, Central Region Supervisor
- 4) **Regional Update (Informational)**
- John Fairchild, Central Regional Supervisor
- 5) **Cougar Management Plan and Revised Harvest Recommendations (Action)**
- Kevin, Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

Questions from the RAC

Richard Hansen – Are you watching the areas with bighorn sheep?

Kevin Bunnell – There is one cougar management areas made up of the Rattlesnake, the San Rafael, and the Kaiparowits. We manage those areas for bighorn sheep and the quotas are set high. We doubt those areas will ever close. They are also areas that are very difficult to hunt and we get very little harvest out of them as it is. Those areas are separate. The minimum harvest that I talked about is for areas like Three Corners that are within a larger cougar management area

but have bighorn sheep. Those areas are Three Corners, Stansbury, Avintaquin, Timp, and Cascade. Those areas will have a minimum harvest and will not close unless those quotas are met.

Richard Hansen – There are some sheep on the Nebo.

Kevin Bunnell – If there are bighorn sheep there will be a minimum harvest.

Karl Hirst – Can you explain the relationship between the cougar harvest quota and the cougar harvest management criteria?

Kevin Bunnell – The difference is that one is based on total female harvest. We have set the female sub-quota based on the total female harvest at 25 to 30 percent because we can't tell the difference between a two and a three year old when they are checked in. The management criteria in the plan is set at 17 to 20 percent but that is only adult females.

Karl Hirst – So you can tell the difference between a three and four year old?

Kevin Bunnell – The only way we can tell the age is by pulling a tooth and sending it off to the lab to be aged. Every three years we send the teeth off and get all the ages back prior to making our recommendation and we base the recommendation on that proportion of adult females.

Karl Hirst – I must be missing something. If you can't tell the difference between an adult without a test then how do you shut the season down?

Kevin Bunnell – That is why it is based on total females.

Karl Hirst – So on the Stansbury unit if you kill a female it goes against that quota?

Kevin Bunnell – Absolutely. We can tell to a degree if a cougar is older than 18 to 24 months old based on a ridge that erupts on their canines but we can't distinguish between a 24 month old and a 36 month old without pulling a tooth.

Timothy Fehr – So the trigger is when the deer survival is below 85 percent. So of the 15 percent loss in a herd, what percentage of that is predation by cougar?

Kevin Bunnell – It ranges, I wish we could track cause of death on these units but we don't have the man power to do that. All we know is that 15 percent is a normal level of loss and above that is indicative of a deer population that has higher than normal loss of adult deer. We know that if cougars are going to negatively impact a population it is going to be by taking adult deer. We are creating a link here but we don't have cause specific mortality of each deer.

Timothy Fehr – It could be one cause but we don't have anything to say what it is?

Kevin Bunnell – We don't. If we have an area where the adult survival is 80 percent and we reduce the cougar population and deer don't go up then cougar is not the problem.

Kristopher Marble – Can we go back to the CMA map. Do we have any idea what the adult mortality is on the units that don't have all the little dots in them?

Kevin Bunnell – No. We are making an assumption that the units we are tracking are representative of the surrounding units. That is based on the fact that the surrounding units have similar habitat, similar weather pattern and so we would assume that survival tracks closely on those other units.

Kristopher Marble – Is there any way to track the mortality on surrounding units? I am wondering if it would make more sense to have CMAs around mule deer management units.

Kevin Bunnell – Each one of these are mule deer management areas. Without putting collars on each unit there is no way to track the adult survival on each unit. We are spending about a quarter of a million dollars to do it on these eight units so you can imagine what it would cost to do it on all 29 units.

John Fairchild – Do you want to talk about the comparisons we are also making between post season and spring fawn classifications?

Kevin Bunnell – That is more relative to coyote predation that I am going to talk about in the next presentation.

John Fairchild – Okay.

Sarah Flinders – The plan that was voted in is one year old and you eluded that the Wildlife Board had reasons that they wanted you to amend the management plan, can you explain?

Kevin Bunnell – Their reason is their focus is on mule deer right now. That is the reason. They wanted us to create a closer link between cougar management and mule deer management.

Sarah Flinders – Even before the plan is complete? Was there any discussion on finishing out the plan and making amendments to the new three year plan?

Kevin Bunnell – There was. The board decided they didn't want to wait so they directed us to amend the plan, it is that simple.

Sarah Flinders – Based on no sound data.

Kevin Bunnell – On their feeling that they wanted to act now.

Sarah Flinders – We know there are many other reasons for deer mortality. . .

Kevin Bunnell – And we are addressing as many of those as we can through habitat improvements and trying to reduce highway mortality. This is just one part of the puzzle. One thing I am very comfortable about is before we had about half of our cougar management areas were under predator management based on the percentage of the population relative to objective. We don't have very much confidence in either of those numbers. We have heard a lot of people complain about the models and they don't trust the models and we were basing that decision on model data which is good, it tells us the trend and is accurate, and on an objective that was set 25 years ago based on how many deer the biologist 25 years ago thought the unit had. At least now we are diving predator management with data that is relevant to the predator and the prey, adult survival.

Sarah Flinders – Based on the numbers you received in 2009/2010 for the deer population. And you feel that it is wise to jump ahead after one year of a plan with so many other factors and new data for the deer population. It seems to make sense to let a three year plan on cougar management play out before amendments are made.

Kevin Bunnell – I don't disagree. We passed a three year management recommendation intending to follow it. We were instructed to do otherwise so that is why we are here.

Sarah Flinders – I guess it is the instruction to do otherwise based on limited data that concerns us.

Kevin Bunnell – But that is the Wildlife Boards job, to direct management of these species. We are following the instruction we were given.

Matt Clark – So is this the Wildlife Boards plan or the Division of Wildlife Resources plan?

Kevin Bunnell – This is our recommendation. They asked us to just create the link. We looked at how we could do that and it seemed to make a lot of sense to use this adult deer survival to create that link. I think it is really the best way to do it. It is unfortunate that it happened one year into a plan. Frankly if we would have had this data when we were writing the cougar management plan we would have used it. Although it is very early in this plan it makes a lot of sense biologically to make decisions relative to cougar and deer based on adult survival.

Matt Clark – So going back to 1990 on this graph, there is no data or corresponding information that would show the link between cougar and deer?

Kevin Bunnell – Because it didn't exist. We didn't have adult deer survival. We have only had it for one year.

Matt Clark – But you have an idea of where the deer herds are at. I have been hearing the deer herds are down and have been going down for years. If you look at this graph the number of cougars you have been killing has been up and pretty steady but yet there is no correlation between the deer herds.

Kevin Bunnell – I made the statement we have reduced the cougar density in the state. The question is have we seen a corresponding rebound in the deer population?

Matt Clark – That is exactly what I am asking.

Kevin Bunnell – Not that we have detected but you need to remember we were hunting a cougar population in the mid 90s that was built up based on a deer herd that suffered two pretty substantial losses in the early 90s. Cougar densities are lower but deer densities are lower too. There needed to be a readjustment. It was certainly appropriate at that time to reduce the cougar densities because we have never really recovered from the winter of 1993.

Larry Fitzgerald – Can you estimate how many deer an adult female lion takes in a year?

Kevin Bunnell – Across the board, males, females, it's about a deer every 10 days on average.

Larry Fitzgerald – So that is a lot of deer the cougars are taking.

Kevin Bunnell – But you can't make the assumption that every deer a cougar doesn't kill is going to survive. The deer herd is going to level out with the available habitat and a lot of other factors regardless of what is taking the excess whether it is cougars or roads or anything else. That is why the long term solution is better habitat conditions.

Larry Fitzgerald – Where I live we have plenty of habitat and the deer herd is still struggling. Do you have data back to 60s before the lions were moved to a protected species of what the deer herds were back then?

Kevin Bunnell – Not off the top of my head. Probably 500,000 we are about 300,000 now.

Larry Fitzgerald – And since the lion has become a protected species there are more lions.

Kevin Bunnell – I don't think that lions, in fact there is no data that has ever shown that cougar predation will reduce a deer population. There is data that indicates that if a deer population is below its capacity cougar predation can keep it from coming back. Nobody is going to make the case that we have 300,000 deer now and we had 500,000 deer in the 60s is a result of cougar predation. You can't make that case.

Larry Fitzgerald – But in an area like where I live we have habitat but we have a lot of lions and coyotes, there is a correlation between what the lions are taking and the reason why the deer population is not growing.

Kevin Bunnell – I think in some areas it may be. That is why basing it on adult deer survival makes sense. We can focus efforts on areas where we can have a positive influence.

Larry Fitzgerald – This is the first year you have had adult survival. What was it before?

Kevin Bunnell – It was based on the percent of the population relative to objective.

Richard Hansen – I really like this idea that you have linked this. The percent of deer taken by cougars may not make a lot of difference but I have read that once a deer herd gets down they can't out produce predator mortality.

Kevin Bunnell – In some cases.

Richard Hansen - I like the idea and I am glad the Wildlife Board did this. We are going to find out some things and you can always back off based on what we find. I think there is no question that once they banned poison for predators the deer population went down.

Kevin Bunnell – But that also corresponded with a ten year drought through the 70s.

Richard Hansen – I don't doubt that but I think we have to be willing to look and see this is part of the problem.

Kevin Bunnell – Just to provide the counter argument to that, certainly there is evidence that a cougar population and predation in general can keep a population from rebounding after it has been reduced by whatever factor. But you look at the Monroe where we have been studying lions for 15 years. We took the cougar population on Monroe from three cougars per 100 square kilometers an average density down to below one and we didn't see any response in the deer herd.

Richard Hansen – So what was the reason?

Kevin Bunnell – I don't know but in that case it wasn't lions.

Richard Hansen – So we've got to find out.

Kevin Bunnell – And we are still looking. I am just saying don't expect it to be a silver bullet.

Richard Hansen – I don't think it is. I think it is going to be somewhere in between.

Kevin Bunnell – I think it will have a positive influence in some places and I hope we see that.

Richard Hansen – There was a time before cougar management that guys were killing cougars on the deer hunt while they were hunting. I don't think we know how many cougars were killed. When it got bad was after that ban. We go out hunting and I saw three cougars in one morning and I haven't seen that for 30 years.

Kevin Bunnell – And you may not see that again for 30 years.

Richard Hansen - The deer herds have never come back and I think we keep them depressed.

Questions from the Public

Kirk Robinson – Western Wildlife Conservancy – I was a member of the working group that wrote this plan. First of all concerning the sheep, am I to understand that all units with sheep will be managed this way or is there some trigger when the herd falls below a certain size?

Kevin Bunnell – Essentially all of our bighorn sheep units will be managed with a minimum harvest.

Kirk Robinson – Why is there not a trigger for sheep like there is for deer?

Kevin Bunnell – There is a trigger in the predator management policy that says bighorn sheep units below 90 percent of objective. So there is that trigger but none of our sheep units are anywhere near 90 percent at this point.

Kurt Robinson – In the case of the deer, suppose you have a predator management area and you don't find that the deer herd recovers after three years or so, what then?

Kevin Bunnell – These triggers just indicate when do you consider it. They are not automatic. At that point I would expect a biologist would say cougars weren't a problem so a predator management plan may not be appropriate.

Kurt Robinson – The 15 percent mortality seems to be a standard. Does that include hunter mortality?

Kevin Bunnell – No because we are looking at adult does.

Jason Binder – On all the units that are not under predator management plans are those units going to go back to limited entry only?

Kevin Bunnell – No they will still be split units but the female sub-quota will be set at the 25 to 30 percent level instead of the 40 to 50 percent level.

Jason Binder – In the last four years our overall female harvest has reached near 40 percent and last year our adult female harvest hit 30 percent. Isn't that a pretty good sign that we are damaging our lion population?

Kevin Bunnell – On which area?

Jason Binder – Statewide.

Kevin Bunnell – Let me use the Manti-Wasatch which many people here are concerned about as an example of what this will do. Last year on the Wasatch-Manti management area we harvested 108 cougars, 46 females. If we would have been under this last year this area would have closed March 8th when we had harvested 38 females and at that point we would have only harvested 88 cougars overall. The plan that we are going under would have limited the adult female harvest on that unit last year by a fairly significant amount.

Jason Binder – Do we have any data that shows how many deer are killed each year on highways?

Kevin Bunnell – We have some estimates.

Jason Walker – On these predator management units such as the Nebo and on the Timpanogos/Cascade for example have you seen a significant increase in deer as a result of more aggressive lion harvest?

Craig Clyde – We don't have that comparison.

Kevin Bunnell – We have been under predator management plans for sheep in small blocks.

Jason Walker – Do you do a spring count on deer?

Kevin Bunnell – We estimate deer population on a model and on those units it has been fairly stable over the last few years.

Ty Bolter – On the Manti-Wasatch unit you said there were 46 females harvested last year. Are those adult females or total females?

Kevin Bunnell – That is total and the plan is based on total females harvested.

Comments from the Public

David Hansen – I am asking that the RAC and Wildlife Board consider adding points to the youth elk drawing. As it is now there are no points awarded when they don't draw so a 16 or 17 year old that has been applying since they were 12 only has the same odds of drawing as a 12 year old.

Kirk Robinson – I am representing the Western Wildlife Conservancy. We are a 501c3 organization in Utah and I have been coming to RAC meetings since 1989. I was a member of the working group that produced this plan. I was the representative for the non-consumptive users group. I supported the plan and I studied the material and asked questions and tried to make insightful observations and was pretty satisfied with the plan. You could describe me as a cougar advocate and a wildlife advocate. I don't have any problem with hunting per say. I regard all wildlife species as equal. Everything is interdependent and if you start messing with one part you are going to have problems somewhere else and this is in fact what happened when the mule deer was at its maximum in the 50s and 60s. It was higher than it had ever been largely due to factors involved with settlement of the state. The fact that it is no longer as high as it was then by itself doesn't mean very much. There are a lot of other factors and one of them is loss of winter range and it has to do with human beings. To get to my main point, I went to the meeting this spring that Kevin called to hear the reasons for the request for the amendment. I confess I am a little uneasy about it because I see right away it will probably lead to the killing of more cougars and there is no guarantee that it will help the deer herds at all. Still I supported it because I thought it was worth a try and we will see what happens. If it works then presumably then adult deer survival will come up and the pressure is taken off cougars. If it doesn't come up then after a while we know something else is the problem and we can take the pressure off the cougars again. I think either way there is a safety valve here. I am uneasy about it but I am here to support it.

Bob Brister – Comment Card – Has DNR researched the impact of hunting of cougars on the social structure of cougars and cougar and human conflicts?

Dave Woodhouse – Representing Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife. I would like to thank you for all coming out. SFW is in support of the amendment to the cougar plan presented by Mr. Bunnell tonight. We feel with the new data from the deer study and the ability to tie the two together because the main predator of deer is cougar other than man. They go hand in hand. If we have a lot of deer we can have a lot of cougars. We support the amendment and ask the RAC to ask the Wildlife Board to look at opening the split seasons mid February so we have better opportunity in the snow. It is not changing the number of cougars harvested but it would allow for better conditions.

Jason Walker – I think there is still some good deer hunting opportunities out there. They are not like it was. I am impressed with all the habitat work that is being done for mule deer. I do like to run hounds on lions and I think the idea of a female sub-quota is a good idea. I would like to see the split season dates stay the same. I think the better hunters out there can still catch cougars effectively with the dates we have now.

Wade Lemon – I hunt lions for a living and have done for 30 years. I don't like the new plan and think they should leave it alone. Kevin put a lot of thought into that original plan, it was a good

plan and as Sarah mentioned they have only been in it one year and now they are trying to blindsides us and change it. A lot of thought and a lot of data went into the original plan. Two years ago we were trying to get it opened where the governor statewide lion tag could hunt the open areas and the closed areas. At the time the meeting was in Beaver and the DWR representative there said he didn't like it because say for example the Pahvant unit was closed and if we kill another lion that quota goes over. With this plan and that thought in mind we could kill 28 females on that Pahvant unit and none off the surrounding units. Along those same lines, I don't say this bragging but to emphasize a point, the Thousand Lake unit is an area of concern for deer. I believe the last four or five years other than maybe one, the only lions that have been killed on that unit have been by myself and my crew. It is a hard place to hunt. The Forest Service put road restrictions there and they don't open until April 15th so you basically have two roads you can't hunt in the winter. If there are better places to hunt I am going to hunt them. The way the existing plan is I go hunt the Thousand Lake and we kill some lions mostly in the spring when the road restrictions are lifted and the road restrictions are gone and we have a little bit of access. That being said, if the Monroe is open or Fish Lake is open I am not going to go to Thousand Lakes. I am going to stay where it is easy access and hunt. With the female quotas when they are reached, and they will be reached, those units will be closed and the Thousand Lakes will be closed and there won't be a lion killed on it. With the current plan and the deer units you can increase permits on a unit you are having problems on. Quotas were set they raised the quotas, we met those quotas. This is with the March 6th opening. Leave the March 6th opening. On Beaver not only was the quota reached but went over by several. I think most on San Rafael were killed by my crew. We hunt it when there is not a better area to hunt. If these other areas are open we are going to hunt the easier areas. Everyone will hunt the easy access areas. You are not going to go to the Henry Mountains. Leave it alone. It is a good program. Kevin Bunnell came up with it. Steve Flinders and Kevin Albrecht opposed the new plan and were in favor of the existing plan. When you have three of the top biologists in the state in favor of the existing plan why not listen to them other than be pressured into changing it by a bunch of arm chair referees.

Jason Binder – I have been talking to a lot of houndsmen in the state and guides and they do not like what they are seeing with the numbers of lion tags and the female sub-quotas. They feel it is way too high. For years we have been wiping out the lions and the deer are not coming back. I hope you all got my email. There are several things houndsmen want us to look at and one thing is putting all females in the management plan not just counting ones that are three years and older. When they are two they are going to start breeding and they ought to be an adult. That would change the numbers on overall female harvest. In the last four years we are close to the 40 percent female harvest. You can't manage a population when you are killing 40 percent of your females. If we went out and killed 40 percent of the doe deer we wouldn't have anything. The other thing we would like to ask is a 20 percent reduction in female sub-quota and 20 percent reduction overall in tags. It is already over 100 more than we have killed in the last several years and feel that the numbers are set too high. We sell 1,200 lion tags and we only kill 300 lions a year. I appreciate you for your time and effort you put into this. I know this is a hard subject to deal with. Thank you very much.

RAC Discussion

Richard Hansen – On these objectives if they reach the female sub quota that closes the unit right? There is a possibility that they may not kill as many cougars as they did before.

Kevin Bunnell – If you look at past harvest and where we have the female sub-quotas set these cougar management areas would close once every four or five years. And in almost every case it is going to be because the female sub-quota is met not the overall quota.

Timothy Fehr – Based on the fact that you originated the original plan, if you hadn't been directed to come up with a new plan is this something that you would have come up with on your own?

Kevin Bunnell – We wouldn't have written a new plan but if I would have had adult survival data available to me when I first wrote the plan I certainly would have included it so I think it is a good change.

Duane Smith – I don't see anything wrong with this. If we had this data it would have been included and it should have been included in the original plan. We have been asking for years to get some kind of link between mule deer and cougars. I support the amendment and don't see it will hurt anything. If anything it will protect the females.

Fred Oswald – Is that a motion?

VOTING

**Motion was made by Duane Smith to accept the amendment to the plan as presented
Seconded by Richard Hansen**

Matt Clark – I have a problem with this. I look at these great biologists than drafted this plan and most of us supported and to think the Wildlife Board is more prepared or more qualified to override that is undermining me as a RAC member. This will be the second plan that this is going to happen to. They did it with the deer. There was a five year plan and the Wildlife Board cut it off. If that is the way the state is going to run the management of our precious resource I think we are all wasting our time. I hope my fellow RAC members will see what is happening here and vote against this.

Timothy Fehr – I see a very questionable link to deer mortality on a one year basis. I would like to see the three year plan executed and see where the data is then. This is taking a chance. We are also part of a western cougar study, it is in your report and it is supposed to come out this year.

Kevin Bunnell – It is not a study. They are cougar management guidelines that were put together by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and this plan largely does follow that.

Timothy Fehr – You have enough information from it already?

Kevin Bunnell – I wrote the chapter on population management in it.

Timothy Fehr – I think this is a knee jerk reaction.

Kristopher Marble – Looking at the proposal what jumps out to me is that last year we adopted a plan and now we are looking at changing it again. My concern is how are we ever going to determine what works if we don't let the plan work. I think that we should continue the current plan and get some data and see where it takes us. If we see something that troubles us then we make changes at that point. This isn't just a cougar issue, it deals with multiple species. I would ask my fellow RAC members to reject this proposal and continue with the current plan.

Richard Hansen – I don't feel undermined at all. You all have a vote. This is about taking additional data and using it. The possibility exists that we will end up killing fewer cougars. To me it is more about being able to link the data. How many people hunt cougars versus how many hunt deer? That's what is driving this, to find out what can be done to help increase the mule deer population. For me, that is the Division's customer. I see no reason this is a bad thing. To find out information if there is a link.

Duane Smith – There is a lack of history here. We asked for this kind of data when the cougar management plan was there and we were told it didn't exist. Now that they have it even if we are

one or two years into a plan we will be one or two years ahead by making this change now. This is what we have asked for but were unable to get. Now we have a chance to get two years ahead of this with the data we will have. This is a good thing. Why not go with something that is better.

Sarah Flinders – If we have past history in the 50s and 60s I don't remember that. We are saying when cougar were protected and we had more the population of deer declined. If this amendment is going to allow possibly less cougar taken and we are saying the correlation right now is we have too many cougars hence we have less deer but this new amendment is allowing for less cougars to be taken then we are going to see less of a population growth.

Duane Smith – You would have to have your finger on pulse to see if that is working.

Sarah Flinders – We don't have enough data to have our finger on the pulse but if we are saying we are going to take possibly less cougars which means there are going to be more out there we are saying this amendment will actually create less of a deer population which is contradictory to what we are trying to get out of this. I think we do need to put more emphasis and trust in our states biologists and not the business. We could increase cougar populations with this plan.

Larry Fitzgerald – If we had perfect plan we wouldn't be here. As he stated, he didn't have this information a year ago. If we can't improve on a plan why are we here? We have more data now to vote on and I think we should call question.

Fred Oswald – I would like everyone to be able to voice your opinion.

In Favor: Jay Price, Karl Hirst, Michael Gates, Gary Nielson, Richard Hansen, Duane Smith, Larry Fitzgerald

Opposed: Sarah Flinders, Kristopher Marble, Timothy Fehr, Matt Clark

Motion passed 7 to 4

6) Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04 (Action)

- Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

Questions from the RAC

Timothy Fehr – At top of criteria it assumes that the habitat is not limiting. Does that mean habitat or anything else?

Kevin Bunnell – Specifically habitat. If habitat is the limiting factor then artificially increasing that population is going to do more harm than good.

Timothy Fehr – What about disease?

Kevin Bunnell – The only disease we deal with in deer is chronic wasting disease and it's not a factor that limits populations. If there was something else going on that would be part of the process.

Timothy Fehr – Should the table say 70 percent of fawns per 100 does?

Kevin Bunnell – No, it is 70 fawns per 100 does. It is not a percentage it is a ratio.

Questions from the Public

Kirk Robinson – On the hunting unit implementation of coyote reduction how will the Division encourage that? Is the money going to be offered as bounties?

Kevin Bunnell – In most cases that would go to Wildlife Services. There are bounty programs that are managed by the counties. That is not something we are involved in. Most of the effort that will have a positive influence is going to be through aerial gunning.

Kirk Robinson – I assume the assessment of habitat conditions will be made by the regional biologist. If the judgment is that the habitat is in good shape and should support more deer then you would consider predator management.

Comments from the Public

Kirk Robinson – First of all if I may, that was one of the better RAC discussions I have heard on a topic. I am not in favor of killing more coyotes. We have been waging a war on coyotes forever in this country and there are more coyotes now than ever. It is a wasted effort. They are part of the ecology too. I cannot support wasting tax payer money on a fruitless effort like this. It would be better to educate people.

RAC Discussion

Larry Fitzgerald – They have been trying to exterminate coyotes for 100 years and they haven't been able to do it. A lot of the ranchers are gone and these animals are one of the main reasons for that. One of the reasons the coyote population is so high now is because there has not been a lot put into Wildlife Services for the aerial gunning. I know the Division spends a lot of money for the aerial gunning. Do you know how much that is?

Kevin Bunnell – On average over the last several years we have put in 350K dollars which is appropriated by the legislature and the Division has put up an additional 175K for last year and 225K for this coming year in addition to the 350K.

Larry Fitzgerald – A lot of people try to hunt coyotes but are not very effective. Wildlife Services is getting the coyotes that the average public can't kill. If they stopped hunting them what would happen to the coyote population in the state? Do you have any estimates on how many Wildlife Services kills?

Kevin Bunnell – It is probably lower than you expect. Out of this money they take between 2,000 and 3,000 a year.

Larry Fitzgerald – I know a lot of these people and they do a good job. Last year I think the Division gave them extra money but the money came late so they weren't flying on snow so some of that money was probably wasted. I don't think people can understand what they guys are doing. What would happen to the coyote population if these guys weren't doing what they do?

Kevin Bunnell – To be honest this probably isn't effecting the coyote population. We are not trying to effect the population. What we are trying to do on a broad scale is eliminate reproduction in a given year. A pair of coyotes that is trying to raise pups, their intake of protein is about seven times that of two individual coyotes so if you can break up pairs in the winter and you can eliminate reproduction for the year then you have greatly reduced the potential they need to kill.

Fred Oswald – I think it would be worthwhile to make the presentation to RAC that you made at the Board.

Kevin Bunnell – As soon as I hire a new mammals coordinator he will be happy to do that.

VOTING

Motion was made by Jay Price to accept the proposal as presented

Seconded by Gary Nielson

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

- 7) **Bobcat Harvest Recommendations (Action)**
- **Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief**

Questions from the RAC

Gary Nielson – We found in our area with cats that because they could only catch a few cats they would turn the younger cats back because they only have three tags.

Kevin Bunnell – That happens more with a reduced number of tags but that happens even if they have six tags. I am comfortable we are on our way back.

Comments from the Public

Herb Carter – Thank you for the job you do. I am representing the Utah Trappers Association. Thank you for your time and Kevin for the time he puts into this. We would like to see you accept the amendment as presented.

VOTING

Motion was made by Timothy Fehr to accept the recommendations as proposed

Seconded by Kris

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

8) Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09 (Action)

- Justin Dolling, Waterfowl/Upland Game Project Leader

Questions from the RAC

Matt Clark – We peak out at about 50,000 swans, why are the swan tags so low?

Justin Dolling – It is an issue associated with the trumpeter swans. They in general across the flyway are doing very well but in the tri-state area, the greater Yellowstone area, they are struggling. Their populations are fairly stable, slightly increasing but the Trumpeter Swan Society was concerned that the few birds that pioneer out of the greater Yellowstone area were being shot in our swan hunt. As a result there was litigation that occurred. We were negotiating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In the end set those season frameworks and permit numbers and quotas for trumpeters were set in stone until that population exceeds 500 birds.

Matt Clark – How many trumpeters are killed in the state each year?

Justin Dolling – We occasionally shoot one. Last year we didn't harvest any. There have been years where we have been as high as two. We can tell that because another part of the settlement is that swans all have to be checked in. We have to measure the bill length and determine whether it is a tundra or a trumpeter. If we ever reach ten trumpeters our season would close down.

Matt Clark – With all this moisture are the WMAs in great shape? Are they full of water and habitat great this year? Us that are passionate about waterfowl want to know if this moisture is helping out.

Justin Dolling – If you're passionate about waterfowl hunting this will be a really good year in my opinion. The Great Salt Lake got a good drink of water, it rose almost four feet. I am sure you read that we had to breach some of our dikes on the WMAs and those are currently being repaired.

VOTING

Motion was made by Richard Hansen to accept the presentation as presented

Seconded by Matt Clark

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

9) CIP Rule Amendment R657-3 (Action)

- Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

Questions from the RAC

Matt Clark – I am a little concerned about the last part about geese. A lot of the geese that we hunt nest and are reared on golf courses. If people have the ability to start hammering all those eggs are you not concerned that will hurt the population that we hunt?

Justin Dolling – We have the mechanism of our pair counts where we assess the status of the population. That is ongoing so we can measure if our pair counts are decreasing as a result of this. The other thing we have is a long term study where we marked Canada geese within those urban environments and the birds that are raised in urban environments for the most part stay there. As part of the study we trans-located birds and most of the adults that were captured in those urban environments the first year 40 percent and the second year of those that were trans-located the second time 78 percent returned. They are pretty tied to those urban environments.

Matt Clark – So this may be an opportunity to scare those pairs out away from those areas and maybe back out into the more natural areas.

Justin Dolling – Not so much scare them as reduce their numbers in the city and if we do reduce their numbers we might see the wild birds not displace into the city in the numbers that they are currently moving into the city. Resident birds become and attractant.

Larry Fitzgerald – I live out in the country and I have a lot of critters that I have to tolerate and people say I have to tolerate them because the place where I live. I don't see how the geese are endangering anyone. If the geese are going to live in that area I think the people should have to tolerate the geese if they live in these areas.

VOTING

Motion was made by Jay Price to approve the recommendations

Seconded by Timothy Fehr

In Favor: Jay Price, Karl Hirst, Michael Gates, Kristopher Marble, Timothy Fehr, Gary Nielson, Richard Hansen, Duane Smith

Opposed: Sarah Flinders, Matt Clark, Larry Fitzgerald

Motion passed 8 to 3

Fred Oswald – So I can take information back to the Wildlife Board, do you want to tell me why you are opposed?

Matt Clark – The last point about goose eggs being allowed to be destroyed. Larry has a valid point. I think a lot of the birds we kill in the fall are hatched in urban areas.

Larry Fitzgerald – They have a saying that a true environmentalist is someone who already has their cabin built and doesn't want anybody else to disturb it.

Sarah Flinders – I concur with everything except on the waterfowl regulation.

10) Walk-in Access Rule Amendment (Action)

- **Leslie McFarlane, Walk-in Access Coordinator**

Questions from the RAC

Karl Hirst – What is the base rate, what are these property owners getting?

Leslie McFarlane – For hunting for 80 to 240 acres we pay about 460 dollars a year. With fishing we have had to increase the prices quite a bit to compete with other interests that want the water as well. For a quarter mile to a half mile of stream we are paying 1,000 dollars and then every quarter mile above that we are adding 250 dollars on top of that.

Duane Smith – When you are looking at a mile of stream is that a one mile straight line or as the stream meanders?

Steve Gray – I count the actual stream length.

Timothy Fehr – Could the registration process be part of the license system?

Leslie McFarlane – No. If you are choosing to go on the walk-in-access property then we would have you go on and register on a web site or call in. It won't be within the actual DWR system. We would put it out for bid for a company to set up. We could do it online for you if you came in.

Timothy Fehr – Is this still a trial program?

Leslie McFarlane – We have moved it to statewide. For the next three years we are operating off federal grants. At that point we will use the information we have gathered from the public to determine if the program was successful enough or not to seek permanent funding for it.

Kristopher Marble – So the additional 25 percent from the base rate for forming an association, where are those funds coming from?

Leslie McFarlane – Right now we are using a farm bill grant. It is a voluntary public access grant through the farm bill. We have 2.2 million dollars to administer that for the next three years. Currently the funding is being used from that grant. We also have received about 450,000 dollars from the state legislature.

Fred Oswald – Were the problems being created sufficient enough that required the registration?

Leslie McFarlane – The biggest problem is that we are not capturing how useful the program really is. We have an online web site and we can see how many people are looking at the properties. We have far more hits on our web site than we do have registrants. We feel like we are possibly missing a big part of the program that people might be using the properties more than we are aware.

Fred Oswald – So the registration is really to provide you with information on the program rather than problems that are being caused.

Leslie McFarlane – Exactly.

Questions from the Public

Ty Bolter – So it is unlimited access for public?

Leslie McFarlane – We still have to work within the framework of the landowners and some landowners have limited access to say ten people per day. Some places where we have seen problems is opening morning of turkey season. Tons of people show up because this is the only access they have to hunt turkeys. We have to find a way to regulate that more closely and limit access on some of those high use times.

Ty Bolter – Whose responsibility would that be to manage that?

Leslie McFarlane – It is the Divisions responsibility. In some cases the landowner has requested that the public still contact him still prior to entering so he knows who is there but they still let them on.

Jason Lowe – So these are all funded by grants and state funding. When that money runs out where are you looking at to get the funds to expand the program and keep it going?

Leslie McFarlane – My idea behind that is eventually you would pay a fee to get that walk-in-access authorization.

Jason Lowe – So you would pay a fee, more or less like a state park.

Leslie McFarlane – Exactly but it would be for private property.

VOTING

**Motion was made by Kristopher Marble to accept the access rule amendment as presented
Seconded by Matt Clark**

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

- 11) **FY 2013 Fee Schedule (Action)**
- **Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief**

Questions from the RAC

Matt Clark – Are there wolves in the state?

Kevin Bunnell – We have no evidence of any breeding or establishment of wolves. That is the other thing that would have to happen is we would have to have an established wolf population. We know we have wolves moving in and out of the state. We have documented them. We don't have any evidence of any residency or pack establishment that we are aware of.

Duane Smith – Have you addressed wolf management plan?

Kevin Bunnell – We have a wolf management plan in place and has been since 2005. It doesn't address hunting.

VOTING

Motion was made by Duane Smith to approve as presented

Seconded by Kristopher Marble

In Favor: Sarah Flinders, Karl Hirst, Michael Gates, Kristopher Marble, Matt Clark, Gary Nielson, Richard Hansen, Duane Smith, Larry Fitzgerald

Opposed: Timothy Fehr

Motion passed 9 to 1 (Jay Price left)

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

40 in attendance

Next board meeting August 18, 2011 at the DNR boardroom, Salt Lake City

Next RAC meeting September 27, 2011 at Springville City Civic Center

Northern Regional Advisory Council Meeting Motions
Wednesday Aug 03, 2011
Brigham City Community Center

Review and Acceptance of May 18, 2011 Minutes

Motion: Approve the minutes as written

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Cougar Management Plan and Revised Harvest Recommendations

Motion: Keep the current management plan that was passed last year.

Motion Carries: For: 12 Against: 1

Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04

Motion: Recommend the Wildlife Board adopt Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04 as presented.

Motion Carries: For: 9 Against: 4

Bobcat Harvest Recommendations

Motion: Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Bobcat Harvest Recommendations and amendments.

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09

Motion: Move to recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Waterfowl Guidebook and rule as presented.

Motion Carries: Unanimous

CIP Rule Amendment R657-3

Motion: Recommend the Wildlife Board approve the CIP Rule and Amendment R657-3 as presented.

Motion Carries: For: 11 Against: 2

Motion: Request the division provide a review of the nest destruction and transplant data next year with the Waterfowl Guidebook.

Motion Carries- Unanimous

Walk-in Access Rule Amendment R657-

Motion: Move to accept the Walk-in Access Rule Amendment as presented.

Motion Carries: For: 12 Recues:1

FY 2013 Fee Schedule

Motion: Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Fee Schedule proposal as presented.

Motion Carries: For: 10 Against: 3

Northern Regional Advisory Council

Aug 3, 2011

6:00 P.M.

Place: Brigham City Community Center

RAC Present

John Blazzard- Agric
Robert Byrnes –At Large
John Cavitt- Noncon.
Paul Cowley- Forest Service
Joel Ferry- Agric
R. Jefre Hicks- At Large
Russ Lawrence- At Large
Jon Leonard- Sportsman
G. Lynn Nelson- Elected
Ann Neville- Noncon.
Jill Silvey- BLM
Bryce Thurgood- At Large
Craig Van Tassell- Sportsman
John Wall- At Large

DWR Present

Jodie Anderson
Justin Dolling
Randy Wood
Ron Hodson
Kevin Bunnell
Leslie McFarlane
Scott McFarlane
Mitch Lane
Scott Davis
Clint Brunson
Cory Inglet

Wildlife Board

Ernie Perkins

RAC Excused

Jim Gaskill- At Large

Meeting Begins: 6:00 p.m.

Number of Pages: 22

Introduction: Robert Byrnes-Chair

Agenda:

Review of Agenda and May 18, 2011 Meeting Minutes
Wildlife Board Meeting Update
Regional Update
Cougar Management Plan and Revised Harvest Recommendations
Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04
Bobcat Harvest Recommendations
Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09
CIP Rule Amendment R657-3
Walk-in Access Rule Amendment R657-
FY 2013 Fee Schedule

Item 1. Welcome and Introductions

Introduction of RAC Members

Item 2. Review and Acceptance of Agenda and May 18, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Cowley- Approve the minutes as written.

Second: Cavitt

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Motion: Neville- Approve the amended agenda.

Second: Wall

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Item 3. Wildlife Board Update

Wildlife Board chose to keep the proposed number of applicants and decrease in required hours for Dedicated Hunter.

Item 4. Regional Update

- Ron Hodson, Regional Supervisor

Personnel Changes

Front counter tech Tiffany Hunt has moved to Ohio. Accounting Tech Vicki Summers is back.

Aquatics- Paul Burnett has gone to Trout Unlimited.

Wildlife- Box Elder Biologist Kirt Enright recently retired.

Habitat- Nate Long is the maintenance specialist.

Farmington Bay- Diana Vos came from the Salt Lake Office and is running the learning center.

Busy summer with cougars and bears.

List was passed out of all RAC members and their information.

Neville- Congratulate Ron on the nature center at Farmington Bay being the number 1 watchable wildlife place in America. Is that right?

Hodson- I think they listed areas in each state and it got listed as the place to go in Utah.

Neville- Congratulations on that.

Item 5. Cougar Management Plan and Revised Harvest Recommendations

- Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

See Handout

Public Questions

Ernie Millgate- You show the split seasons opening on the first or second Saturday?

Bunnell- Actually that was changed to a Monday.

Ernie Millgate- Are deer collared with GPS collars?

Bunnell- No, standard VHF collars.

Ernie Millgate- So you cannot go in and see what has caused the death of them?

Bunnell- If we had enough people and enough money we could. We are not monitoring them that intensively. In most cases, we just know if they are dead or alive.

Ernie Millgate- Are they staying at about 85%?

Bunnell- All but 3 of our units are above 85%. Some of them are pushing 90%.

Craig Edwards- On the Cache unit, haven't they had deer collared for 3 or 4 years.

Bunnell- That unit we have a longer history on because we used it as a pilot before we went statewide.

Craig Edwards- Do you have any data on what cougar predation is on adult survival?

Bunnell- We are not monitoring that intensively. We know what percentage it is. We are not trying to assign what the cause of mortality was. Randy could probably give you some of the history on where that has been over the course of the study.

Craig Edwards- I know that in one of the publications that the DWR put out, they had found a lot of fawns that had died in one winter but they just found them under trees.

Bunnell- Fawn survival is much different than adult survival and we are not associating fawn survival to cougars at all.

Randy Wood- We do not go in on every collar. We have found, this last winter, a lot of the fawns had just curled up and died. We have noticed a little mortality but over the years, I cannot give you numbers that were possibly cougar kills.

Bunnell- Has your adult mortality gone below 85% on the Cache?

Wood- No.

Bunnell- We have more history there than anywhere.

Tyler Pugsley- How many deer across the state have been collared for this study?

Bunnell- Right now, we try to maintain 50 adults per unit. We are right around 400 which is a really good sample size.

Tyler Pugsley- I noticed cougar harvest on the Cache unit was set at 43 or somewhere around there. Do you have any idea on how many cats have actually been killed off of the Cache unit in the past 5 years?

Bunnell- I do, I have exactly that. I had a really nice handout that summarized harvest at these cougar management areas over the last 4 years and I rushed out of the office and forgot to

bring it. In almost every case, when we look through these numbers and look at harvest that has happened in the past, on average these cougar management areas will close down once every 4 or 5 years. It is based on meeting the female sub-quota, not meeting the overall harvest quota.

Tyler Pugsley- The limited entry hunts that have been in the past limited entry cougar units. I see the list here with some that have been added on the harvest quota and on the split units as well. Will the units like the Box Elder raft river and Box Elder desert be maintained as one unit?

Bunnell- Yes, we are not recommending any changes to the hunt strategy on any of the units right now. What we passed last year will remain the same. The only difference is that on the quotas for the split and harvest objective units, we will be looking at those units on a broader scale.

Tyler Pugsley- Have all these other units that have been added, were they limited entry units last year?

Bunnell- Nothing has been added. Whatever the hunt strategy was last year, it will be the same this year on the individual units. This is just looking at the cougar management areas which are groups of units.

Jess Petersen- When you issue a certain number of permits like for Box Elder on the draw and then we get out there and we know everybody that has a permit and all of the sudden there are other people that show up that got permits someplace else.

Bunnell- How does that work?

Jess Petersen- What is going on there?

Bunnell- We have some of our cougar units that we call split units. They are kind of a hybrid between an open unit where everyone can hunt and a limited entry unit. For the first 2 ½ months of the season, from mid-November to currently the end of February, there are limited entry units that only guys with limited entry tags can hunt on that unit. After that season ends, about the end of February, we transition those units in to what we called harvested under a quota system. Under that system, anybody who has a harvest objective tag can then go to those units until we meet the harvest quota and then we shut them down.

Jess Petersen- Sometimes I notice these people the first day. Where are they getting their permits?

Bunnell- We have what are called pursuit permits where guys who are not out there to harvest, just to chase and treat cats to give their dogs and opportunity to work. You may be seeing guys out there who have pursuit permits but not harvest permits.

Jess Petersen- I am talking about these other guys.

Bunnell- If there is a fourth category; I don't know what they are.

Jess Petersen- I think they are the permits that you give through organizations around the state.

Bunnell- You are right, conservation permits. For cougars, conservation permits are issued at a regional scale. There are maybe 2 conservation permits for the northern region and they can hunt all of the units within the northern region.

Jess Petersen- A few years ago, you had a female quota on Box Elder.

Bunnell- A lot of years ago, yes.

Jess Petersen- A guide went out there and Saturday and Monday they killed the 2 females and the unit was shut down.

Bunnell- For that exact reason, we have resisted female sub quotas in the past on the individual level. Now, we are grouping a whole bunch of units together so that number is higher.

Jess Petersen- Don't think they can still do that.

Bunnell- I don't think they will do it near as quickly as they did.

Jess Petersen- Pursuit will still be allowed after the quota is filled.

Bunnell- Pursuit is allowed until the season ends on the unit whether it is filled or not.

RAC Questions

Cavitt- It seems to me that we are assuming that cougar predation is additive to the other type of deer mortality when we set these types of strategies tying it to deer survival. I am wondering if we know that for sure.

Bunnell- That is a basic assumption and the way we are making that assumption is that one of the primary qualifiers for ever entering a predator management scenario is that habitat isn't a limiting factor. That is the first thing you look at. If you are at capacity and your habitat is what is limiting it, there is no sense going into a predator management scenario. If we can demonstrate or eminent that habitat is not a limiting factor, we have a better chance that predation is not compensatory.

Cavitt- Are we comfortable with that across our units?

Bunnell- That is the very first thing that people are asking to look at when they are considering a predator management program.

Wall- On the deer that are collared, are they all at a young age or is there a variance on that age?

Bunnell- Some of both. We are collaring fawns and adults on these units. Some of the adults are the fawns that we collared and they are graduating to that adult category. We also supplement if we do not have enough adults every year to make sure we are maintaining an appropriate number of adult females. It is all does that we are collaring on each unit.

Nelson- Are these strictly harvest numbers?

Bunnell- That is not counted towards the goal.

Cowley- I am wondering if deer mortality rarely goes below 85%, why would we use that as a trigger.

Bunnell- I am not saying it rarely goes below 85%, I am saying that is the normal level. If it goes below 85% then there is reason to start asking questions.

Cowley- You could say the same thing for 80% or 75%.

Bunnell- That is based on lots of studies done around the west. 85% has come up over and over again. It is right in that ballpark that is normal survival for adult female deer.

Silvey- I am curious as to what the objective of the deer study is. Why aren't you trying to determine cause of death if you are trying to prove a relationship between lions and deer?

Bunnell- Initially, the point of the deer study was to improve our models that we use to model our deer population because they are very sensitive. One of the variables that go into those models is adult survival. If that number is 86% or 83%, it makes a big difference on the product. That was the main reason we started this study was to be able to improve our models and to have a better idea of what is going on with the deer population itself. It was just kind of opportunistic that we were able to then look at cougar management using that same number because they tie together very well. The reason we are not looking at cause of the death is because we just do not have time or money to do it. We do not have the resources to monitor that intensively.

Neville- On your deer models, what is your margin of error?

Bunnell- I don't know. I don't get involved with the deer models at a level that I can answer that.

Neville- On the property that I manage, they assume about 15-20% margin of error. It seems like that is a large margin of error.

Bunnell- That is a combination of a whole bunch of variables. We don't have a margin of error on the adult survival variables that goes into that. We know that based on the collars. The adult survival number on those units we know. There is no uncertainty on that because we are tracking.

Neville- To know the actual population size, not necessarily the survival rate.

Bunnell- We are not tying this to population size, we are tying it just to adult survival.

Blizzard- Are you monitoring this mortality over a year or do you know what kind of year mortality is taking place.

Bunnell- We get a general sense because we fly these units once a month to track the collars. On a month to month scale, we know when the mortality is happening and when it is not.

Blizzard- Are there any months that are greater than others? Obviously winter time.

Bunnell- Randy, do you want to respond to that for your units up here?

Wood- Typically, what you will see in the data we have is the higher mortality on these collars in the early spring, late winter timeframe. But they are dying throughout the year.

Bunnell- That is much more variable in fawns than adults. Adult mortality is more constant through the year where as fawns are much more sensitive to conditions in the winter.

Blizzard- But we don't collar fawns, just adults?

Bunnell- We are collaring both. We are only tying cougar management to the adult survival because that is where it makes more sense.

Byrnes- I noticed on your map that there was only one capture location for deer on the Bookcliffs, is that correct?

Bunnell- That is not accurate. I did not have access to that data. On the bookcliffs, it is a separate study. It is kind of opportunistic that we have collars out there right now and we are able to manage it separately. There may come a time down the road where that study ends and we will have to clump the bookcliffs with one of these other units. While we have the collars out there, we are going to treat it separately. There is actually a higher sample size on the bookcliffs than on the other units; I just did not have access to the capture locations.

Neville- Could you go back to the slide that deals with the deer percentages. Could you just leave that up?

Bunnell- Sure.

Public Comment

Kurt Wood- SFW- Considerable discussion over this. We would like to support the recommendation from the division on the cougar plan with one recommended change and that would be to move the harvest objective opening date to February 1st. We feel that would allow some additional opportunity during more favorable conditions, especially in the Southern units.

Craig Edwards- I don't see any reason why we have to start blaming the cougars again for our deer problems. It is a lot bigger problem than the cougars. We have been through this. 15 years ago we started it and we are right back to square one. The deer numbers haven't changed and we harvested the crap out of the cougars. What is the deer herd on the Oquirrh, is it stable?

Neville- It depends on if you talk to the guide or the residents of Copperton and Herriman. We don't know. We do know that we still have quite a few deer and that is one of the things we are addressing. Our guide feels that the population is declining.

Craig Edwards- How about the Henry's? What is the deer population?

Bunnell- The population on the Henry's has been stable with some slight increase over the past couple of years. A lot of factors have come in to that including a fire. How long ago was that?

Hodson- Eight years.

Bunnell- It improved the quality of the habitat significantly.

Craig Edwards- We harvest very little cougar on the Henry's. People would like to see the numbers increase there. It does not make any sense to us. I am a houndsman but I do love to hunt deer and elk. It does not make any sense to keep going after the cats. You need to have a better plan. Recommend that the board stick with our management plan that was put in place last year and worked very hard for. Recommend that you reject DWR proposal for cougar management

Ernie Millgate- Need to stick to cougar management plan that has already been passed. This was tried once and it didn't work, why are we trying it again?

Dave Ferguson- (Handout given to RAC) Would like to see cougar harvest be more restricted, not expanded. More along the lines of the cougar management plan that was recently completed.

Orin Midzinski- Opposed to this plan. We had a plan we enacted last year and it needs a chance to see if it actually works. I think it is a good plan. Roads are significant danger to deer. Coyotes are the main predator affecting the deer population.

Tyler Pugsley- Would like to ask the board to stick with the management plan for mountain lions that was passed a year ago. We need to look at the broad scale of predators.

Kenneth Duncan- Deer herds are not going to come back unless you kill off coyotes and do something about the highways. The trains also kill a lot more deer than you think. Until you take control of those things, your deer herds are not going to come back. Female sub quota, Fish and game need to be educated when checking.

RAC Comment

Leonard- I think we are right back where we were with the deer and several other plans that were put into place. We ought to stick with the plan that we have.

Thurgood- What was the harvest quota last year compared to what is proposed this year?

Bunnell- The quota has not changed. When we came up with these numbers is we just summed the quotas across that larger area. We took the recommendations we made last year and summed them up so now we are tracking it at a larger area than we had. If you added these units together it would be the exact same numbers. We did not have a female sub quota before so we added that. I understand the nervousness the houndsmen have. This will probably allow for more cougar harvest spread across the state than it did before. But, it will also shut units down sooner than they would have in the past if they need to be shut down. In some circumstances, it is going to end up harvesting fewer than the current plan. Don't think that is the case all over in general. This will probably result in higher cougar harvest but I don't think by much.

Wall- On the units that do get shut down, whether the quotas are met or not, can houndsman still pursue?

Bunnell- Yes, until the end of the season as long as there is an open season in the proclamation. The pursuit dates follow those with a couple of exceptions. We do close down some areas to pursuit in the fall during our big game hunts. That is really only relevant to a handful of units around the state. There is maybe a dozen of them.

Leonard- Someone who has drawn a limited entry tag and the unit gets shut down because of the female quota.

Bunnell- They are not subject to that closure. That just closes all the quota units in that area. If you draw a limited entry tag on a unit, you can hunt that unit for the dates on your permit.

Motion

Motion: Van Tassell- Keep the current management plan that was passed last year.

Second: Neville

Motion Carries: For: 12 Against: 1

Item 6. Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04

- Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

See Handout

Public Questions

Craig Edwards- The current cougar predator management plan, is it the same as this?

Bunnell- We just amended it to match this.

Craig Edwards- So, it does match this.

Bunnell- Yes.

Craig Edwards- How does the DWR determine whether or not if it is less or greater than 85%?

Bunnell- Using the collars that we talked about.

Craig Edwards- You are strictly going to use the collars?

Bunnell- It is the very best way to track survival. There is not a better way we could do it.

Craig Edwards- How have you been doing it or have you been doing it?

Bunnell- We have not had data in the past so that is why we were looking at the population estimate relative to the population objective. Now that we have this data, this is a much better way to do it because it uses the biology of the predator and prey to make the decision rather than if you are just looking at the percent you are of objective, you have no idea what might be causing it. This gives us a better indication.

Craig Edwards- When a doe dies that has one of those collars on, does that collar quit working or give off a different signal.

Bunnell- It gives off a different signal and we go collect it but like I said, we are flying on average once a month or once every other month. By the time we get there, it is too late to determine the cause of death.

Craig Edwards- It is going to be hard to determine exactly what killed that.

Bunnell- Rarely do we have the opportunity to determine that.

Craig Edwards- That is what I am trying to get at. How are you going to know? If the survivability is below 85%, you are going to kick it into PMP.

Bunnell- We are going to consider it but we will look at habitat and other things to see if it makes sense from that standpoint. Again, it is not perfect but it is certainly better than what we were using before.

Jess Petersen- It seems to me like there is a lot of people with hunting clubs and several states around us that are doing the same thing. They want to kill every cougar there is. I don't think that is the answer.

Bunnell- I don't either.

Jess Petersen- What have you got against paying bounty to individual hunters to kill coyotes?

Bunnell- There is a bounty program in several counties and those are run by the county not by us. The problem with bounty programs is that they are not focused either at the right time of year or in the right areas. This money we are spending, our biologists sit down with wildlife service's and they go over unit by unit where do we have issues with our fawn to doe ratio and what specific areas do we want them to focus their effort on? There is two times a year that you can be effective killing coyotes that would potentially help the deer population. One is in the February, March, April time period where you are breaking up pairs. You are eliminating production for the year. The timing issue is critical.

Jess Petersen- After listening to all of this, I get a real strong feeling that what you are doing here is a real good honest attempt.

Bunnell- I'm glad that you feel that way.

Jess Petersen- But it is leaving so much to guess work.

Bunnell- That is why in wildlife management it is called the art and the science. There is a lot of uncertainty in everything we do. We try to eliminate that the best we can. What we are proposing now is less uncertain than what we were doing in the past.

Josh Frasier- Are there a bunch of wolves in Utah because I have seen some out west. Are you taking them into account at all?

Bunnell- If you think you are seeing wolves, we would like to know about it. We don't have any evidence that we have been able to document of wolves being established in the state. If they are out there, certainly we want to be able to document that. In general, if there are, they are not the problem with deer.

Kurt Wood- Wondering if there has ever been any discussion or possibilities to maybe raising the bounty on coyotes in certain areas or at certain times?

Bunnell- I think that has some potential and some of our biologists have started those discussions with sportsman groups and with the counties. It is going to take a lot of coordination because we don't administer the bounty program. It is administered through the counties. If there is someone that is willing to organize that and focus the take of coyotes through the bounty program into the right areas at the right time of year, if the bounty program is intended to help deer, killing a coyote that time of year is much more valuable.

RAC Questions

Cowley- In this plan, we make two major assumptions. I was wondering if you could talk about those assumptions more. Number one, that habitat is not limiting and the other assumption I see is the sub-unit objectives are pretty close to accurate as to what those units can produce.

Bunnell- Actually, we are deemphasizing those objectives. We are making that one broad cut at 90% and then completely moving away from that and going to fawn to doe ratios and adult

survival at that point. Before, they were tied directly to that assumption that those objectives were accurate. We are trying to deemphasize that because we have a lot less certainty around those objective numbers than we do fawn to doe ratios and adult survival of deer.

Cowley- As I look at the flow chart here, that is one of the first questions.

Bunnell- It is the first question but again, it is a very first crude cut and right now 95% of the units in the state meet that first cut and then we start narrowing it down using the rest of the flow chart.

Cowley- Could you talk to your broad assumption up front as far as saying habitat is not limiting.

Bunnell- That comes down to the knowledge of the biologists on the individual areas that are right in the predator management plans. That is a call that the individual biologist makes when he starts considering whether a predator management plan is appropriate.

Thurgood- How much is funding or lack of funding for the coyotes? Are you underfunded when it comes to dealing with them?

Bunnell- We are going to test that. It is really a capacity issue with Wildlife Services. At what point do they not have the time or personnel to spend the money we give them. In the past \$350,000 was given, spent and were productive with it. This year, they are going to have \$575,000 so it is a significant increase. We are trying to find where that upper limit is.

RAC Comment

Ferry- I agree with Jess Petersen that in my opinion, a good coyote is a dead coyote. I would like to see some of that money go to help incentivize people to go out and shoot coyotes.

Bunnell- There is some potential increased capacity with the bounty program. As it is, the money that is going to the bounty program is not being spent.

Ferry- I don't know if people are aware of that or if it is just lack of interest.

Bunnell- That is something that is probably worth looking into a little bit more.

Ferry- Is this a way to get more cougar tags issued or kill more cougars? I am trying to understand the concern?

Bunnell- This happens prior to making the cougar recommendations. We determine what qualifies before we make recommendations.

Ferry- And that will determine how many permits are issued?

Bunnell- Yes, that determines whether we set that female sub quota under the new plan.

Nelson- With the bounty program, I know that Cache county for example manages that. Is the value of hide worth more than the typical bounty that is paid?

Bunnell- There are people in the audience that could probably answer that better than me. What is the price of a coyote pelt right now?

Stan Bassett- The price of coyotes goes up and down. They have been way down. This particular year, they went up. A good heavy coyote would be in the \$40+ range. If you get one early or late, you are looking worthless to \$5-10 dollars. Last year, they went up from a \$10 dollar average to the mid 20's. It is a significant increase. It looks like it will be a bit better this year.

Bunnell- So, the bounties are in that \$20-25 dollar range?

Stan Bassett- It is at about what they average. If you get a good heavy coyote with the bounty, you might get \$60+ dollars out of it.

Nelson- If a bounty is paid, typically do they cut off the tail or ears?

Stan Bassett- They cut off the ears.

Nelson- Does that ruin the pelt for sale?

Stan Bassett- If you are doing it for taxidermy, then it is ruined. However, if you sell them on the fur market, it typically does not matter unless they are buying the coyote and they sometimes use the face.

Bunnell- The reason that marking is done isn't to prevent them from selling them on the fur market, it is to identify them.

Cowley- Where we have already rejected the cougar management plan that brings into a lot of these same issues as far as the triggers, have we not rejected half of this discussion in the flow chart already.

Bunnell- Yes. Good point.

Thurgood- Can we split it up?

Byrnes- Let's just answer this question first. You can still use this policy correct?

Bunnell- We could still use adult survival as the trigger for predator management on cougars, it would just be administering it at a unit level, not at the cougar management level. We would still be grouping units. We would have to make some assumptions.

Byrnes- I think it is still valid.

Cowley- It seems to me like it would be in one way accepting the premise and the assumptions found in the cougar management plan at the same time that we have rejected that very plan.

Byrnes- You could also say that it is an improvement overlooking the percentage of the population which is the old method. Here, you are using adult survival to trigger that cougar portion of the management plan which is better data.

Bunnell- We only have it on eight units where as we estimate populations on every unit. So, we would still be applying that adult survival across a larger area than we actually have data for.

Byrnes- It would kind of be hybridized.

Bunnell- It would be kind of a hybridize between the current situation and what is being proposed.

Byrnes- Bryce, you wanted to break two things up?

Thurgood- I was just curious. If you break it up between the coyote and the cougar but I would actually prefer to keep it the way it is and just make it a hybrid.

Motion

Motion: Thurgood- Recommend the Wildlife Board adopt Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04 as presented.

Second: Nelson

Motion Carries: For: 9 Against: 4

Item 7. Bobcat Harvest Recommendations

- Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

See Handout

Public Comment

Stan Bassett- Utah Trappers Association- Utah Trappers Association believes in this plan and support this. We hope you accept this change to the plan.

Kenneth Duncan- Would like to see it dropped to 2 tags and move the season back to where it was. Would like a longer season and shorten the number of tags to give more opportunity. We do not have opportunity like the trappers.

Public Questions

Jess Petersen- Do you have any data that tells you how many cats were taken by houndsman vs. trappers.

Bunnell- We do. In general, it is a 90/10 split.

Jess Petersen- Why don't you give us more days with the hounds?

Bunnell- Because there is also some biological aspects to this. We want the kittens to be old enough. We start late and close it off before breeding season so we are not interrupting the breeding season.

Jess Petersen- You could start it even 2 weeks earlier. You have done that before haven't you?

Bunnell- Right, and the only reason we are reduced now is because we were in a situation where the bobcat population was in a downward trend. We were trying to limit harvest.

Jess Petersen- They are down. I am just recreational.

Public Comment

Ernie Millgate- I think it is a good plan. I am glad Kevin came up with that idea. It is a more subtle way of going. I agree with the state's proposal.

Motion

Motion: Ferry – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Bobcat Harvest Recommendations and amendments.

Second: Wall

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Item 8. Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09

- Justin Dolling, Waterfowl/Upland Game Coordinator

See Handout

RAC Questions

Ferry- The line on the swan hunt is the Bear River bird refuge. That line seems somewhat arbitrary where everything south they can hunt swans but north of that line they can't. People have asked me what is the possibility of getting that changed?

Dolling- It is a complicated issue. We almost lost our swan hunt about 8 years ago because of a very small population of isolated trumpeter swans in the greater Yellowstone area. The Trumpeter Swan Society was pushing really hard for a complete closure of tundra swan hunting because they felt like those few trumpeters that pioneer out of the Yellowstone area

and attempt to migrate, were being harvested by the states. Through a large negotiation process, it was settled that Utah could continue with the tundra swan hunt but they wanted the small pothole marshes north of Bear River protected because that is where they were getting trumpeter swan sightings. We had to go with a shorter season and not hunt as late into the winter to try and protect those few trumpeters that would pioneer out of Yellowstone. That was a negotiated process. That process also did identify when things could be liberalized. If trumpeter swan populations in the Yellowstone area exceeded 500 individuals, then it could be opened up and be liberalized. Currently we are sitting at about 325 so we have a way to go. Unfortunately, that population is just not taking off like the other populations in Alaska.

Ferry- I can tell them kind of the framework is over 500, then we can negotiate the boundaries.

Dolling- Yes.

Ferry- The Sandhill cranes number in the county were cut last year for this year. What is the reasoning for that? I have had a lot of people call and complain to me saying they almost cut it in half permits issued for Box Elder county.

Dolling- I don't have the numbers off the top of my head. I think we dropped it by about 10%.

Ferry- It went from 54 to 36. It was a pretty significant drop.

Dolling- The way we receive our harvest allocation.

Ferry- Is it a federal framework where they are migratory?

Dolling- It is a federal framework. The harvest allocation is based on state by state. The states assess their fall populations in September and then they also look at the winter staging population in Texas. Those two variables then generate the harvest allocation for each one of the states. Our harvest allocation went down. Technically, it is an upland game species that we deal with.

Thurgood- On the northern zone for the Canada goose, what is the purpose of the dates closing early in the northern zone vs. the rest of the state? Why not have it like the rest of the state where they are a little easier to hunt later?

Dolling- That happened before I started this position but it was my understanding that the counties here in northern Utah would prefer an early season. Based on those comments, we actually zoned the state and created a northern zone. What we were hearing from the other part of the state is that they prefer a later season. We tried to accommodate both groups with a zone boundary.

RAC Comment

Ferry- Commend Justin and Ron on the dedication and effort you put into controlling the phragmites. I have noticed a huge difference in the last 3-4 years.

Neville- You are also participating very heavily in the research going toward phragmites management. It is great that you are able to do that with the University.

Motion

Motion: Cowley- Move to recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Waterfowl Guidebook and rule as presented.

Second: Neville

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Item 9 CIP Rule Amendment R657-3

- Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

See Handout

RAC Questions

Neville- Do you know if the rehabilitated animals like porcupine and squirrel, I know sometimes they get relocated. Is that going to be nixed now?

Bunnell- If it is a rehab situation, that is a different rule.

Neville- O.K.

Bunnell- Rarely does that happen. There is not really much of a point to it. On occasion it happens. That is handled under a different rule.

Hicks- Urban goose nests. It says they have to register online to destroy goose nests. Does that mean each one will go up for review or do you just register online and get to knock off nests?

Dolling- You register on that website and then you are allowed to destroy eggs and nests.

Hicks- Is each application reviewed or all they all accepted if you fill out the form.

Dolling- They are all accepted.

Hicks- I ask this because there are not a lot of these urban goose nests. We have a bunch of goslings kicking around. Was wood impact some huntable wild population I would assume.

Neville- The banded ones.

Dolling- You are right. We do round up our urban geese and translocate those out to huntable areas. What we have found is that works well for the young. We will continue to do that. For the adults that come back and build nests and lay eggs, their return rate is very high. In a situation of reduced budgets, it is not cost effective to keep rounding up all these young and moving them out every year when the adults keep coming back. We need to somehow resolve that urban goose problem in a more permanent fashion.

Hicks- Is this an effort to try and reduce the DWR's urban goose roundup each year?

Dolling- I believe we will continue that and it will probably continue for some period of time. This is just one more tool we can offer those that call in and are extremely frustrated with nesting Canada geese. I don't know how many people will take advantage of it.

Hicks- The idea of that is to get rid of the urban geese but back on the duck, you have shortened the season where most of the urban geese move out to the field to be hunted. How does that reconcile?

Dolling- Shorten the seasons in what respect?

Hicks- It looks like the goose season will end January 14th in the northern zone without a split and previously it went to the end of the month with a split.

Dolling- In the northern zone it is the far north counties in the northern region.

Hicks- So, it is not going to be affected by urban stuff?

Dolling- It is not going to affect. It is drawn on a county line that runs along and takes off Bear River refuge and cuts to locomotive springs.

Ferry- Egg destroying. The problem is not the juvenile, it is the adults. Is this to try and ward off having to exterminate these adults that keep coming back?

Dolling- It is one way to deal with trying to short stop the growth of these resident urban Canada geese that keep building in numbers. I feel that those resident urban Canada geese also work as an attractant for wild Canada geese. It pulls them into the city.

Ferry- I look at the numbers and I think you showed 26 are Canada geese. Current population is 26% below our long term average right now and that gives me a little bit of heartburn going out and destroying nests when we are below our long term average.

Dolling- From a flyaway standpoint, it was 14% above.

Ferry- I am talking resident, local, state geese.

Dolling- I can go back to that presentation.

Ferry- It just seems counterproductive if we are trying to maintain a population to destroy those young. I understand they are in the wrong place.

Dolling- That is an excellent point.

Ferry- The adults are in the wrong place and all the juvenile geese are born in the wrong place. It seems to be this relocation program worked really well to move those birds because they have a great brood with no predators.

Dolling- It is a good point. We will continue to assess our status of our goose population.

Ferry- Utah is 36-37% below our long term average.

Dolling- For last year.

Ferry- Well, 50% over last year and 37% over long term average.

Dolling- When compared to last year's count. Last year's count was 37% below the long term average.

Ferry- Those numbers are a little bit concerning.

Silvey- As a point of edification for me I am guessing the DWR's organic act covers all wildlife, is that correct?

Bunnell- In state code, we are responsible for all wildlife with the exception of coyote, jackrabbit and muskrat raccoon.

Silvey- It varies from state to state, that is why I asked. You are going to have a complete kill lethal policy for skunks, porcupines and squirrels if they are caught within city limits?

Bunnell- Just if they are causing damage. It is a place where they do not belong. These animals also carry rabies. We don't want them around our urban populations.

Silvey- Are you concerned about the public relations aspect of that?

Bunnell- The only time this comes to our attention is when the public has a problem with them. We are giving them an opportunity to solve their own problem.

Silvey- What prompted spring snails to be on the list. It is not exactly like people are out picking up spring snails.

Bunnell- You would be surprised what people want to go and collect.

Blizzard- Old policy lined out.

Bunnell- Generally, strike out is something that is eliminated and underlined is something added.

Blizzard- What is the status of the crow and the black billed magpie?

Bunnell- Before, they weren't required to have a COR to control those two species when they are causing damage. The other species that are on that list are exotics, they are non-natives.

Both magpies and crows are native species. They deserve a little more protection. You can still get opportunity if you need to control those. You have to go through the COR process. There is actually federal depredation out on those two species. Wildlife Services has a permit to control those and will at the request of the public.

Neville- As far as Fish and Wildlife is concerned, for crows, magpies and ravens, I can't touch them even if they are a nuisance.

Bunnell- Actually for crows and magpie, you can because of the depredation order that is out.

Neville- They lied?

Bunnell- That is the way it was explained to me.

Neville- I really want to get rid of some.

Blizzard- Will you go shoot one and we will see what happens?

Neville- I can't shoot the broad side of a barn.

RAC Comment

Hicks- I have a hard time accepting the fact that anybody with access to a computer gets to destroy a goose nest. I think they should go through some sort of criteria or explanation. It does affect wild populations and the fact that we transplant those birds out there. I don't feel that was well thought out. They should go through a review process before destroying nests.

Ferry- Mirror what Jefre said in that I am afraid it will become a snowball effect. Once that word gets out, you will have the golf courses and everyone else who says it is a nuisance will be out there destroying these. I am afraid of what it might do to pull down these averages even further. See a significant decline in geese populations over the past 15 years.

Byrnes- Could you give us a number on how many geese you transplant?

Dolling- I want to say in total about 500 including adults and young.

Silvey- What percentage of the population does that represent?

Dolling- Of the urban population?

Silvey- No, of the Canada goose population in total.

Dolling- Probably less than 1/2 percent.

Thurgood- When the nests are destroyed, are they in specific areas that are closed to hunting?

Dolling- Yes and they are restricted to urban settings and they have to report. We then get a report generated on the activity that occurred in our state each year.

Thurgood- Strictly to closed hunting areas?

Dolling- Correct.

Hicks- In past years, they have pulled thousands of birds out of the urban setting and got either moved and transplanted or transplanted the young. Although they are born in an urban setting, when they are transplanting and banding the young, they are putting them in WMA's where they are being hunted by hunters like you and I. There is more than just the fact that they are born on a golf course and will never get an opportunity for a hunter to see them. They are actually being transplanted out. Some years, literally thousands of birds have been transplanted in this urban goose program.

Leonard- I understand and can see the benefits of that, particularly where you have willing cooperation between the landowner, conservation groups or whatever. What I have a problem with is making it overly restrictive for a private landowner to deal with problems on his property that are causing him damage. We need to always be aware of individual property rights and respect individual property.

Cowley- For me, as I look at what the division is doing in trying to protect many of the non-game species that are brought forward here. I really commend them in providing protection and restricting undesirable species from being moved into the state and actively sold.

Thurgood- Is this reviewed annually? Could this tell us how many people applied next year and how many nests were destroyed vs. how many birds were transplanted that we can kind of have an idea of what is working and what is not working?

Dolling- The information is generated off the website and reviewed annually. Keep in mind that the Canada geese are a federally regulated species. Fish and Wildlife regulate populations and if they see anything that would suggest those populations are being harmed by this program, they are the ones to pull the plug and we are out of business. We are at their mercy and they are going to be monitoring this very closely.

Cavitt- I think we all probably agree that there is a substantial problem with urban Canada geese and one of the things we know about nesting birds is that if we can disrupt their nesting, it often forces them or triggers them to move out to other areas. I think this is a good solution to try and discourage problems people are having with geese. Unlike the roundups, the adults that produce those young, they will come right back and nest in the same sights. I think it is a good option for those kinds of disturbance or problem situations.

Motion

Motion: Nelson- Recommend the Wildlife Board approve the CIP Rule and Amendment R657-3 as presented.

Second: Neville

Discussion on the Motion

Hicks- I would like to vote for this but I won't. I would if that thing was amended by a word or two. Is that possible?

Byrnes- You would have to make a motion to amend his motion. Then, we would deal with that first.

Hicks- Does that mean we would be here all night? I would like to say this should at least be under review. Is there a way to write this thing to say I would like to make a motion to amend this last portion on the Canada goose that says that instead of anybody with a computer gets to destroy a nest, that at least be reviewed and accepted by the DWR or something like that. I am not sure how to say that. I don't even know if that is how to do it.

Byrnes- I don't think you can place the division between the applicant and the fish and wildlife service. They are running the website, is that correct?

Dolling- That is correct. They are controlling the website and input fields. There may be some screening questions that are asked.

Byrnes- You have no authority?

Dolling- No authority to modify their website.

Byrnes- Or their approval to destroy nests?

Dolling- Exactly. But, if the RAC would feel more comfortable. I would be willing to come back and present the results of what happened last year.

Byrnes- A review.

Dolling- I will give you a personal review of how many nests and how many eggs were destroyed if that helps.

Silvey- What is DWR's authority in this matter?

Dolling- Our authority is within that federal framework. The US Fish and Wildlife has made this available but in order for us to act on it we have to incorporate into our own rule.

Silvey- We can choose to be more restrictive.

Dolling- Exactly.

Byrnes- I think the answer to your question on how you want to amend this is we can't do that. Justin is volunteering to give us information on how that worked next year.

Hicks- OK.

Byrnes- Because it is a federal deal, it is all or nothing.

Neville- There is also an avenue we can request Justin review it and possibly even email it out to this particular council so that we understand what we can formally ask the division to review it so that we have an understanding and if there is a screening. I doubt we can change it but it will inform us more.

Dolling- Absolutely.

Hicks- I think that is better.

Byrnes- After we vote on this motion, you can make a motion to request a review next year by the division presented to the RAC.

Motion Carries- For: 11 Against: 2

Motion: Hicks- Request the division provide a review of the nest destruction and transplant data next year with the Waterfowl Guidebook.

Second: Cowley

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Hodson- I wanted to point out that you make recommendations to the wildlife board.

Byrnes- The motion was close enough that it could still fall under that. We cannot require the division to perform work. It is outside our scope but we can request it.

Item 10. Walk-in Access Rule Amendment R657-

- Leslie McFarlane, Walk-in Access Coordinator

See Hand out

RAC Questions

Ferry- I have personally enrolled some property in this program. There has been talk of federal money also available. I don't know if that is out there being circulated because that might help generate additional interest from landowners.

McFarlane- We actually do have federal money. We have 2.2 million dollars that we will be using over the next 3-4 years.

Ferry- Is that in addition to rates that you are paying or is that above and beyond. Is there something above and beyond?

McFarlane- Yes, we normally are operating on a budget of about \$450,000 dollars that the legislature set aside for us. This last year they gave us an additional \$300,000 to work on fishing acts and that is in addition to that. On top of that, we applied for a voluntary public access grant through the farm bill and have received that. We will have 2.2 million dollars that

we will be spending over probably the next 5 years towards this program. That is what we are currently operating most of the program off of.

Hicks- Wondering how you came to arrive at this specific acreage? 320 acres seems like a weird number to come up with. Was there a working group of landowners that got together and came up with that?

McFarlane- Sort of. It was my idea. The minimum acres were already set at 40 and 80 and I just went four times that for an association and then I ran it past our walk-in access committee. They approved that. There is really not a specific reason why it is that.

Ferry- Based on the way land is broken up, it is a fraction of a section. They are usually in 40 acres. So you would do multiples of 40.

Hicks- That makes sense, half a section.

McFarlane- Half a section.

Cavitt- I see the registration boxes that you have pictured there. Is that not a sufficient way to keep track of utilization of these areas?

McFarlane- We have had a hard time with the registration boxes. In some cases, we have people who walk right past them. In other cases, they fill up so fast that there are not enough sheets in there for people to keep filling them out. In other cases, because of the privacy act, we are not allowed to ask for anything other than a name. There are a lot of John Smith's in the world. We cannot really trace it back to anybody identifiable. We still plan on keeping the registration boxes for landowners that choose to keep the registration box. In that case, they would write down their authorization number which would tie back to the person.

Byrnes- Are you going to have 24 access on this phone registration or will it just be operating hours.

McFarlane- We are going to have 24 hour access. We will bid it outside our agency hoping to get the same company that does the hit registration for us. They do it 24 hours.

Byrnes- Since you are doing a calendar year, will you allow someone to get a number before the expiration of the current one?

McFarlane- Yes.

Neville- How are you going to educate landowners that this is available for associations?

McFarlane- I planned on doing a mailing to our current operating landowners once this is approved or not approved. Then, our walk-in access guys do a lot of educational work with landowners. We have a goal that they have to contact 15 landowners per month in each of the 5 regions which is about 75 landowners. We are also working on redoing our whole website relative to this.

Lawrence- There has been a lot of work done on streams in northern Utah with easements and so forth. I know you have been talking with those landowners. Are there quite a few ready to go on this program?

Clint Brunson- Yes and no. With some of the rulings and things that have changed, I have found those that may have been willing prior to supreme court ruling want nothing to do with anybody public anymore. Some of them say that they will allow. I have been pounding the door pretty hard. Some that have allowed access in the past will not allow any access now. There has been some hurt feelings that clearly has been out of our control with supreme court rulings and legislative stuff. Things are progressing and I am getting properties enrolled.

McFarlane- There is a lot of bitterness right now and some of these landowners I have actually gone and talked to in addition to Clint and they tell me not to bother.

Lawrence- That legal action did not help at all.

Blizzard- I can tell you that Clint does a good job with this and he is a good salesman. In light of new lawsuits that have been filed for access to the stream, most landowners are very concerned about walk-in access and whether that is going to create a prescriptive easement for access to the stream. Are we creating an easement on our property by allowing walk-in access?

McFarlane- Not through the walk-in access program because it is not an easement and it is actually just an agreement between us and the landowner. It has got a pretty loose terming on it where either one of us can back out with 30 days notice. It hasn't established itself like an easement would. I will have to double check but I am pretty sure that is why we are using this program instead of anything else.

Cowley- It is more like rental access.

McFarlane- It is specifically leasing the rights for the property and it does not create it like an easement does.

Hicks- When a person happens on one of these walk-in access sites, are you saying they can access it right then or register for it anytime?

McFarlane- We are trying to keep it so they can be spontaneous.

Hicks- Excellent.

RAC Comments

Ferry- I put some river property on a walk-in access as well. It was an area where I was concerned about an easement because people were trespassing and walking it anyways. Placing it under a lease agreement protects me because the public that can't create this prescriptive easement on my property. It is actually a win/win. We have posted it and patrolled it and it works out really well. The lawsuit was a tough thing for landowners but sometimes you have to look past that and do what is best.

Leonard- Looking at recruitment of hunters and fisherman for the future, some of the factors that cause people to drop out of hunting and fishing is cost but complexity too. This is a great program and I applaud the division for what they have done. When you start adding the water regulations, you are adding to this red tape that we are getting and personal information. You already got a license that could be used at the registration point. There is probably a certain percentage of the public that is not going to do anything. I hate to see us create a lot more regulation red tape requirements when we are already kind of burdened by that, particularly in the hunting and fishing community.

Hicks- I think he has a point there. Although I think it is really cool that you can do it anytime, it seems like if you have a license, why don't you put in your license number. Wouldn't it make it easier if we had to punch in your license and your done.

McFarlane- The problem we have with our current license issuance system is that license numbers are used over and over again. They are not unique to an individual. I could ask for their customer ID number but then that relates to their personal information within our database. We were trying to do a number that was not only related to personal information but also that would tell us something. The license numbers are not unique. So, that was the purpose. We are dealing with so many different kinds of things. Fishing is not calendar year anymore. Hunting seasons go across things so we were just trying to look at a way we could do it where we would not have to regulate everyone's expiration date and that kind of stuff.

Ferry- I like the idea of having this registration because it gives the DWR and idea of who is actually using the program. It is just not a blanket of everyone who buys a license is assumed to be using walk-in access because that is not the case. I know that a lot of people do not sign their names down on the book. This gives the DWR the ability to improve the program and see what is working and what is not. Then, take it in a direction that is best for the public.

Lawrence- Will you follow up with these people who register and ask them which properties they used?

McFarlane- The plan is that we will be able to survey those people on an annual basis and get an idea on what kind of things they are experiencing, how their experience was and what places they used.

Neville- If they did not register and you were patrolling, is there any punitive actions?

McFarlane- With us putting into the rule, they could be cited for trespassing and asked to leave the property.

Neville- I don't think that is bad.

Hodson- That would certainly have big old break in period on it.

McFarlane- It is going to have to be a 2-3 year educational process on it.

Leonard- Number 1 violation that people are cited for hunting and fishing in Utah is not having a HIP number.

Ferry- Get your HIP number.

Cowley- My biggest concern is during economic times where funds are down and people are being laid off. It seems like we are building another program where we are going to leaden another contract which will continue to further reduce funds available for biologists. I can see the benefits of the program, it is just that putting together another register system and the operation of that and the contract of it concerns me.

Motion

Motion: Cavitt- Move to accept the Walk-in Access Rule Amendment as presented.

Second: Lawrence

Discussion on the motion

Ferry- I need to recues myself from this vote.

Motion Carries: For: 12 Recues:1

Item 11. FY 2013 Fee Schedule

- Kevin Bunnell, Wildlife Section Chief

See Handout

RAC Comment

Cowley- Why are we even entertaining that given the number of steps that would have to occur and the number of years to ever get here?

Bunnell- It is probably somewhat politically driven at this point. Nevertheless, it is what we are proposing.

Motion

Motion: Ferry- Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Fee Schedule proposal as presented.

Second: Blazzard

Motion Carries: For: 10 Against: 3

Meeting Ends: 9:48 p.m.