

**Southern Regional Advisory Council Meeting
Beaver High School
Beaver, UT
April 10, 2012
5:00 p.m.**

1. REVIEW & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

MOTION: To accept minutes and agenda as written.

VOTE: Unanimous.

2. DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT AND GENERAL SEASON DEER PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2012

MOTION: to accept the Division's Deer Management Plan Amendment as presented.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: to create a third buck to doe objective of 20 to 25 for those units in the southern region that are already at that ratio (specific units: Zion; Southwest Desert; Plateau, Thousand Lakes; Fillmore, Oak Creek).

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Carried 7:6, Steve Flinders voted to break tie.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: To omit the option of having unsold permits roll over from one weapon class to the next.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Carried 8:4

VOTE ON MOTION: Carried 10:2

MOTION: To accept the general season deer permit numbers as presented by the Division.

VOTE: Carried 11:1

3. BUCKS, BULLS & OIAL PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS AND RULE AMENDMENTS FOR 2012

MOTION: To accept the Division's permit recommendations as proposed with the following exceptions 1) reduce Dutton to 110 limited entry elk draw permits, 2) discontinue spike hunting on Monroe until it's at objective, 3) reduce Zion sheep draw permits to 5 total.

VOTE: Carried 11:1

4. ANTLERLESS PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2012

MOTION: To accept the Division's antlerless permit recommendations as presented.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: to include the following permit number adjustments: 250 antlerless antelope permits on the Plateau, rather than 100; and 500 antlerless elk permits on the Plateau, Fishlake/Thousand Lake, rather than 0.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Carried 9:2, Paul Briggs abstained.

VOTE ON MOTION: Unanimous.

5. ANTLERLESS CWMU PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2012

MOTION: To accept the Division's antlerless CWMU permit recommendations as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous.

6. BONUS POINT RULE AMENDMENTS – RULE R657-62-9

MOTION: To accept the Division's recommendation to rescind the bonus point rule as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

**Southern Regional Advisory Council Meeting
 Beaver High School
 Beaver, UT
 April 12, 2011
 5:00 p.m.**

RAC Members Present	DWR Personnel Present	Wildlife Board Present	RAC Members Not Present
Rusty Aiken Dale Bagley Dave Black Paul Briggs Sam Carpenter Chairman Steve Flinders Brian Johnson Mack Morrell Cordell Pearson Mike Staheli Layne Torgerson Clair Woodbury Mike Worthen	Bruce Bonebrake Teresa Griffin Jim Lamb Anis Aoude Jason Nicholes Dustin Schaible Kent Hersey Vance Mumford Lynn Chamberlain Giani Julander Heather Grossman Josh Carver Blair Stringham Jake Selby Greg Sheehan Josh Pollock Paul Washburn Trail Kreitzer Mark Ekins	Jake Albrecht	

Steve Flinders called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m. There were approximately 98 interested parties in attendance in addition to RAC members, members of the Wildlife Board, and Division employees. Steve Flinders introduced himself and asked RAC members to introduce themselves. Steve Flinders explained RAC meeting procedures.

I'm Steve Flinders. Welcome to the RAC. It's been months since we've done this. I found the screw Lynn. I represent the Fishlake and Dixie National Forests. I want to recognize Jake Albrecht from the Wildlife Board, here tonight. How about we introduce the RAC starting on my left, down on the end.

Mike Worthen: I'm representing the public at large.

Dave Black: Dave Black, representing at large.

Paul Briggs: Paul Briggs, I'm with the Bureau of Land Management, Cedar City. I represent the BLM in the southern region.

Sam Carpenter: Sam Carpenter, I represent the sportsman.

Rusty Aiken: Rusty Aiken, representing agriculture.

Bruce Bonebrake: Bruce Bonebrake, I'm the acting regional supervisor for the Division of Wildlife.

Mike Staheli: Mike Staheli, at large.

Clair Woodbury: I'm Clair Woodbury from Hurricane. I represent the public at large.

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

Dale Bagley: Dale Bagley. I represent an elected official.

Cordell Pearson: Cordell Pearson from Circleville. I represent at large.

Mack Morrell: Mack Morrell, Bicknell; representing agriculture.

Brian Johnson: Brian Johnson, Enoch; representing non-consumptives.

Steve Flinders: Great. I'd like to thank everybody for coming tonight. We've got a full panel and a busy agenda. To re-familiarize everybody with our procedure tonight, and those of you that are new to the process we'll proceed as follows: The Division will make various presentations according to agenda items. If you want to make a comment on one of those please fill out a comment card. Make note of which agenda item you want to speak to. Groups will be held to five minutes, individuals three minutes. After the presentation we'll take questions. We're glad you came; we want to hear from you. If you have a question step to the front, give us your name and ask the question. We'll do the same up here on the RAC and then we'll proceed to comments. After we take public comment we'll then deliberate up here and ultimately move on to motions and voting.

Review and Acceptance of Agenda and Minutes (action)

Steve Flinders: If there's not any questions we're ready for discussion and motion on meeting minutes and the agenda in front of you gentlemen.

Cordell Pearson: I'll make the motion to approve the minutes.

Mack Morrell: Second.

Steve: Motion by Cordell. Seconded by Mack. Those in favor? It looks unanimous.

Cordell Pearson made the motion to accept the minutes from previous meeting. Mack Morrell

seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: Moving on, how about a Wildlife Board update. I'll do that.

Wildlife Board Update:

-Steve Flinders, Chairman

Steve Flinders: See how rusty we are; it's been a long time. That meeting was back on January 12th, it had to do with bears. I looked through the motions; I believe they were emailed out to RAC members. There was a lot of discussion about the South Manti, and in the end there was an extension to the season on the South Manti much like we implemented here in the southern region. I don't see any other changes from what we passed here. In the way of falconry there was a number of variances, specific to that board meeting but nothing especially controversial. Any questions about that board meeting in January? We've since done the bear draw and started the hunt so things are moving along.

Regional Update:

-Bruce Bonebrake, Acting Regional Supervisor

Bruce Bonebrake: We've had a lot of personnel changes in the department over the last couple of months, I think before any of that was ever reported. I'll just go over a few of those so that everybody realizes where we're. Doug Messerly used to be the regional supervisor was reassigned. He's now heading up our local or our statewide law enforcement effort. I think Doug's very well suited to do that. He's already started his new duties. As I mentioned previously I'm the acting regional supervisor, I'm also the, my day job is habitat manager, has been for 23 years in Cedar City. Other changes, Mike Ottenbacher used to be our aquatic manager, he retired in December. We have an acting manager, Richard Hepworth. And a lot of you may know Richard or have heard his dad's name, Dale Hepworth who was our aquatic manager for years, and Richard is his son and he's doing a great job in that. Also in aquatic, Nick Braithwaite has taken over the aquatic invasive species biologist position. The Quagga muscle program, and he's in place. We've had a little switch around, our landowner specialist Heather Grossman, applied for and got the walk in access biologist job. So I encourage all of you that know her to get together with her especially if you have potential walk in access areas. We would really like to come up with stuff on private land where a private land owner can get actually paid for access, this is for hunting and fishing, and also wildlife viewing. So Heather is heading that up. And Jake Selby, who used to be with our conservation outreach, he worked on the dedicated sportsman program, Jake's now our landowner specialist. And there's one more, Blair Stringham, he used to be the biologist out of the Fillmore area, has recently accepted a position as waterfowl coordinator in Salt Lake. That job will be announced very shortly and Blair will be moving into that position I think next week. Is that right? Okay, um, other quick things; we've had a lot of problems the last, just actually the last couple of weeks with boats coming in from out of state that are infested with Quagga Mussels. As a matter of fact there was one that showed up just today at Lake Powell. It was stopped. It's a big barge. It was headed for Canada. Headed for Saskatoon up in Canada. I've got guys down there taking care of that right now. Fortunately it was not launched anywhere. It was from down at Lake Havasu. We've had a couple of these. One a guy actually turned it in to us at Sand Hollow that we had to decontaminate. And there's been a couple of other incidence. Very important that you get the word out and that everybody hear that we need to keep watching these if we're to keep Quaggas out of our waters. So far we've been pretty successful. Our lieutenant, Scott Dalebout, has set up Quagga points, check points. He's going to have a

couple of those. They will be in Bloomington on April 20th, May 11th, and June 15th. So we'll be monitoring that and we always pick up a few things when we do that. Scott's done a wonderful job putting that together and the rest of the state's kind of monitoring some check points at Wendover and on the Colorado boarder after that effort. Last couple of weeks we've had a few lions show up in the region; we always do this time of year. It's not that unusual. A lot of times this is when the females kick out the young. We've had a couple in Washington County recently at Laverkin and Brookside. We've been able to have, I think, pretty good outcome from those. The one that happened over the weekend down by Brookside we think we got the young back in touch with it's female. We won't know that for another few days but so far it looks like we were successful with that. But we continue to monitor those. If we see problems with the lions, if they're, you know, threatening in any way the public or pets then we'll take care of it, but otherwise we like to try to put them back out if we can. And lastly, I'd just like to talk about two of my favorite things, major highway projects that are going on in the region. We have two of them going on right now. One is I-15 south of Cedar City. Those that travel that interstate know how many deer we usually have killed along there. This year it's been light because the winter weather hasn't pushed them down, but a year like last year we kill hundreds of them in some of those stretches. That project started down south of Snowfield about milepost 31 last year and went up to the Kanarra overpass. The DOT has secured enough money and they've actually put the contract out and they've started this week. That will be fenced all the way to Cedar City north exit in the next couple of months. And we've monitored underpasses there that are already existing that we know get used. We're feeling pretty good about getting that taken care of. And the other big one hopefully will start sometime this summer. We've got roughly half the money to begin on the SR-89 project on the Paunsagaunt. I know a lot of people have been real interested in trying to protect that migrating deer herd. I've been working with the DOT to come up with some structures that are both cost effective and hopefully it will be working for the deer. They have enough money probably to put in two of the structures right now and some of the fencing; and we'll go from there. If we get all the money we may be able to complete that project in two years. And that's about it Steve.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. We're excited to have Bruce with us. We hope he'll do this longer than an acting. Maybe this will peak his interest for a while. He's been especially effective and good to work with on these highway projects and fencing. Hope he sticks around a while. Any questions for him on the regional update? Well let's dive into the meat of this agenda then. Anis, if you're ready, deer management plan amendment and general season deer permit recommendations for 2012.

Deer Management Plan Amendment and General Season Deer Permit Recommendations for 2012 (action)

-Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator 13:36 to 27:13 of 5:22:49

-Teresa Griffin, Regional Wildlife Program Manager

(see attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Thanks Anis, I'm sure we're going to have some. Questions from the RAC for Anis on the presentation? Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Anis, first off, I think you guys have done a terrific job in trying to put something together here that's going to work. I noticed that you're using this hunter success ratio as one of the main

criteria on adjusting tags. Is that just that survey where they call around random people and ask them for harvest? How do you know (unintelligible) harvest numbers are?

Anis Aoude: Well we know harvest numbers annually through a survey like you mentioned.

Sam Carpenter: I haven't been called in fifteen years. Is that a large enough survey to be determining tag numbers?

Anis Aoude: It certainly is. Yeah. It's probably one of the best statistically sound surveys we do is our harvest survey. We try to get between 20 and 25 percent of hunters on each unit surveyed.

Sam Carpenter: Okay. Well shouldn't we, if we're going to use that criteria, start having people fill out a form at the end of the season, send it in and have an awful lot better survey to (unintelligible)?

Anis Aoude: Actually there's more bias in doing that than calling people at random because that bias is towards people that harvest versus people that didn't harvest. There's many ways of getting harvest data: one of them is asking people to fill in a card and return it. That does bias towards people that harvest. Most people that don't harvest just chuck it so you end up actually showing that you harvested more than you harvested.

Sam Carpenter: Well one of the things that's done in other states is if you don't send that in you can't apply the next year.

Anis Aoude: Yeah. And that's been done in other states; it hasn't shown to increase the accuracy in those states. Basically if they compare their data they're getting now with the data they got when they used to do it the other way it's, the accuracy is no different. I mean we certainly could go to a mandatory reporting. That about triples the cost and doesn't increase accuracy a whole lot. We feel comfortable that our statistical sample is a sound way to get harvest surveys. It's been done that way in many states for eons. In some states that have actually done mandatory reporting have gone back to doing a sample because they find out the cost wasn't worth the benefit. So I mean we've looked at this quite a bit. It's not something we take lightly. And if that's what the public wants, mandatory reporting, we could do it. I don't think it will improve the accuracy of the data. It will increase the cost.

Sam: Okay, so let's take for instance one of your 15-17 units, 15 to 17 percent buck to doe ratio units. It turns up after your classification to have let's say a 20 to 100 buck to doe ratio. What criteria, or what would it look like for an increase in tags? How would that work?

Anis Aoude: It just depends how far above objective they are. And you know we would have to play it into the formula to see how many permits we would have to increase to get it to that 16 point.

Sam Carpenter: So you're not going to trigger it just on the ratio? If the harvest is the same from year to year but the ratio is going up?

Anis Aoude: The ratio is what drives it. The harvest really, the harvest shows up, I mean the harvest is what drives the buck to doe ratio. So if you have a certain number harvested and you have too low of a population or too few bucks you will reduce your buck to doe ratio automatically. There's just no way around it. So the buck to doe ratio is the best indicator of harvest.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, so is it fair to say the buck to doe ratio is going to be the trigger?

Anis Aoude: Yes, that's definitely what the trigger will be.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, thanks. That's all I have.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, it's the best piece of data that we have, is our buck to doe ratios, because we get a large enough sample size with confidence to say that that's a good number.

Steve Flinders: Mike.

Mike Worthen: Yes, uh, based on that question that Sam just asked regarding how the buck to doe ration was determined or how the harvest was determined. Was there sufficient data on all the new units to apply that or? Because I mean you're splitting units here and I just wondered if that went across the board to where you had enough or not.

Anis Aoude: Yeah. There were a few that we didn't have and on those we stayed conservative.

Mike Worthen: So what did you use as a basis on those?

Anis Aoude: We did use that data but then we kind of gave it a gut check, you know, is this, could this be right. And based on basically the knowledge of the biologist of the unit and all the other things. Uh, you know where we had data that was irrefutable, we said this is the data, but where we had questionable data we certainly didn't push the envelope I guess, we stayed on the conservative side.

Steve Flinders: Along that vein, can you put that slide up with the buck to doe ratios on it? We're talking about the logic that you use for these recommendations and assuming the demographics that some of these are the same, look at North Slope versus Beaver. North Slope . . . are they on the same slide? (Unintelligible) 18 to 20, about three year buck to doe ratio averages the same, permit recommendations are the same, what's the population?

Anis Aoude: Uh, the population on . . . ?

Steve Flinders: Beaver's 11,000, the North Slope's 5,700.

Anis Aoude: Yeah.

Steve Flinders: How would you explain that? What do you think?

Anis Aoude: Well the success rate's a lot slower, a lot lower on the North Slope, obviously. I mean it's lodge pole pine. If you don't catch those bucks right as they're migrating you're not going to catch them. So there's a lot lower success rate. So success rate plays into it, of course. But it all comes out in the wash when you look at buck to doe ratios.

Steve Flinders: So the pressure per capita is not the same because we're hunting different areas.

Anis Aoude: Exactly.

Steve Flinders: I couldn't think of it, but the example was perfect right there.

Anis Aoude: Yeah. Yeah, I mean buck to doe ratio just tracks harvest success so well because you're targeting the animal that is being harvested. So however many bucks you have left after the season's over tells you how successful the hunt was.

Steve Flinders: Yeah. Dave did you have a question down there?

Dave Black: Yeah I did. On the slide that you brought up that talks about fawn production trends. I was a little bit surprised to not see a dip, maybe two or three years ago. And I'm just speaking for the Panguitch Lake unit. We've hunted that area for a long time. And it seemed like this year there was an obvious age class of bucks that were just not there.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, actually there as a dip in the wait, so this is a year lag. So like the 11 data is this year, this fall's, this past fall's. Yeah, I don't know how to explain it.

Dave Black: And you know and by not seeing that age class it seemed like the buck to doe ratio that we saw in the field was a lot lower than we've seen in the past, because in the past we've seen a lot of bucks. You could always see the 2-points and the stuff that you'd normally drive by and they just weren't there to drive by.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, and it could have looked like that on the Panguitch. Keep in mind this is a statewide perspective. So the northern units could outweigh the southern depending on how. . . So this is average statewide. Each unit could be a whole lot different. Like one year, or a couple of years ago we had pretty high winter mortality in the northern part of the state so their fawn to doe ratios looked really bad. Down here it probably didn't look bad at all. So it varies. This washes out a lot of the unit-by-unit variability.

Dave Black: Well and you know I admit that this is very biased for that unit but to then recommend a lower buck to doe ratio, you know, the 15, 17 group when last year we were out hunting we see that our number of bucks was way down. I'm just trying to calculate in my head, you know, maybe we should be in the 18 to 20 (unintelligible) more conservative group.

Anis Aoude: Well the thing is . . . Sure, the objective you set should have nothing to do with what you see in the field. They should be what you want to see in the field. So what we're saying is to provide opportunity on that unit, if you manage for 15 to 17 bucks per 100 does you can have X amount of permits. You could certainly manage it for a higher buck to doe ratio. You will see more bucks post season, you'll probably see more bucks during the hunt but you would have to cut permits proportionally to get to that. So it's a trade off whichever way you look at it. Just keep in mind that the objective you set shouldn't, you know, is not based on what you see in the field it's what you will see in the field in the future based on the harvest that we'll have in the future. So just because you saw fewer bucks doesn't mean we should manage for a higher buck to doe ratio; the bucks in the field were probably lower than what they should have been. I don't know if that makes sense but basically if you base it on just what you see, what you saw may not be, may have been you know, 10 bucks per 100 does. If you manage for 15 bucks you would have probably saw a lot more bucks. So you know, 15 bucks per 100 does is what

we've managed for for a long time and in most years that was a sufficient number. Again, I don't have a problem with managing for any numbers; just keep in mind that if you do you have to cut permits on that unit.

Dave Black: Okay.

Steve Flinders: Let's take Clair's.

Clair Woodbury: Yeah Anis, great presentation there. I did have one question; you're increasing the lower success rate tags into archery and muzzleloader. And that's something I've felt for quite a while would be a solution to cutting, instead of cutting all tags. You made the statement that you assume that we won't sell all of those tags. What do you base that data on, on that statement?

Anis Aoude: We base it on, well, we could sell them all if they were a statewide permit. But some units are just less popular than others so there will be permits for that unit where there won't be enough archers that are interested in that specific unit. That's what we base it on. We know, we know for example how many archers hunt the Cache. And I'll tell you that the number of permits we'll have on the Cache is greater than the number of archers that hunt the Cache. So unless more people are willing to hunt that unit those will probably go under-prescribed.

Clair Woodbury: What about some of the more popular units?

Anis Aoude: The more popular units I'm sure will sell out in the draw.

Clair Woodbury: But what I'm asking is why not make more muzzleloader and archery tags and a few fewer rifle tags to give more opportunity?

Anis Aoude: So the balance we tried to strike is the majority of hunters are the rifle hunters. So if we take permits away from them and put them into the lower success rate hunts they're going to scream. So we're trying to strike a balance; have more lower success rate hunts but still not cut rifle permits so much that most rifle hunters sit home. We don't want anyone to sit home I guess is what we're trying to accomplish.

Clair Woodbury: Thank you

Steve Flinders: Rusty and then Brian.

Rusty Aiken: Anis, appreciate your crew and how they've developed a broader brush of the units we're going to hunt. I'm wondering why you missed the 20 to 25 category of buck to doe ratios?.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, and the reason for that, honestly, is our general season units are geared towards opportunity. And once you get into the 20 and above range you're really going into limited entry territory. And if you want to do that I would prefer you just move it into limited entry because the permits become so few that it's not worth managing general season units for . . . it becomes so few permits that it may as well be limited entry. The way that the function of the curve goes is that as you get higher and higher you have to cut more and more permits because success rates increase, increases that much greater. So when you get in the 20's you're cutting permits so much you might as well move

up to 25 and call it limited entry.

Rusty Aiken: Well you currently have 5 or 6 that are in that buck to doe ratio now; specifically the Zion is a unit I'm familiar with. So you're able to maintain that buck to doe ratio without being limited entry reducing permits. You can keep the permits the same and maintain that 20 to 25.

Anis Aoude: Sure. And the Zion unit specifically, and if I'm wrong they can correct me, is a product of inaccessibility. So private lands, a lot of different areas that people can't get to, that's why you're maintaining that high buck to doe ratio. I don't, even if you increased permits on that unit I don't think you would get the harvest. And that's why we actually left it status quo, the number of permits, even though we could increase permits on it we didn't. So that one, it is 18 to 20 and will likely always be above 20 whether you raise permits or not. It's one of those units where harvest is limited by access more than it is by the number of permits that you can put on the unit.

Rusty Aiken: But if we did create another window there, another tier I guess, to protect that, would that be something you'd be willing to do?

Anis Aoude: I would not. That would not be my recommendation, no. Another tier, all it would do is limit opportunity so much on those few units that they would no longer, in my eyes, be general season units. They would be limited entry units. And I would rather, if we were going to do that, is move them to a limited entry and just, you know, call a spade a spade, basically. Because when you get to that high of buck to doe ratio you are, if you're doing it on a non-private lands unit you will have to reduce permits so an extent where it becomes so hard to draw that people, it's not general season anymore. People aren't going to hunt it every five years.

Rusty Aiken: Even though they're maintaining it now.

Anis Aoude: They're maintaining but that's a unique situation. I think right now you could maintain it even if you give more permits on that unit you will maintain that 20-buck per 100 does or more.

Rusty Aiken: So you're going to maintain it at the 3,600 even though it goes over objective, is that what you're saying?

Anis Aoude: Even if we put more, yeah, we actually didn't increase permits on that unit even though it's above objective because we know there are access issues. But we've done the same thing on the Morgan South Rich in the north. We left the permits the same because even if we increase them people can't access the deer because of private land issues. So on those units where we know buck doe ratios are going to remain high we're not going to increase permits because there's access issues.

Rusty Aiken: By the second weekend most of those deer are out of private lands and they're on the lower grounds, and they're in public lands and they're accessible.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, but obviously they're not harvesting them because the buck to doe ratio is still high.

Steve Flinders: Brian.

Brian Johnson: What are the success rates on general season muzzleloader?

Anis Aoude: They're roughly . . . they're similar to the rifle hunt. So they're about a point or two below. So if on an average unit its 25 percent success rate the muzzleloader may be 23 or 24.

Brian Johnson: So you're saying we're 25 percent harvest success rate or what is the . . . statewide?

Anis Aoude: Yeah it varies by unit. Well statewide on average, there's no one number; that's what I'm saying. It varies annually and it varies by unit. But roughly it's going to be around 28 percent statewide where rifle is around 30.

Brian Johnson: And what's archery?

Anis Aoude: Archery is around 19.

Brian Johnson: Okay, the concern that I have is the last thing you said, and I'm all for opportunity and selling tags. The last slide you mentioned selling archery tags as muzzleloader tags, I think that the ratio should directly be proportionate to the success rate. I'm just worried that if you don't, you mentioned you're not going to see the archery tags and I'm all for opportunity but the opportunity ought to be ratio to the success rate. I'm afraid that one year you could have a no sell of archery tags and bombard it with muzzleloader tags have a 40 percent success rate on that and then boom, you're in the 10 deer per 100, 10 bucks per 100. I just think that if you're going to do that it ought to me a mechanism to be ratio to success rate so if you have 100 archery tags you knock out X amount of percent (unintelligible).

Anis Aoude: And we could do that, but as I mentioned earlier, yeah we could certainly do that and that restricts opportunity obviously.

Brian Johnson: A little bit.

Anis Aoude: And revenue will be restricted as well. But here's the beauty of doing it this way; if we do over harvest buck doe ratio is going to come down so the following year we would have to correct the total amount of permits on the unit to bring that buck doe ratio up which would level off over time. So over time we'll have the right number of permits on each unit for the right weapon types. It just, it levels off. It takes care of itself I guess is what I'm saying. And I don't anticipate very many units getting into that approach. You know we've thought about this a lot. It's not something we just threw up this.

Brian Johnson: I commend you. I mean it's an excellent brainchild here. I just, that's my concern. I don't know if any other RAC members have the same concern. That's just a concern that I had.

Anis Aoude: It's going to be a handful of permits. It's not going to be like half the permits on the unit. Because here's why, archers, as you know, if you buy an archery tag on any unit you can hunt statewide during the extended archery. So you can hunt any extended archery unit in the state. So the draw is going to be someone that wants to hunt the Wasatch Front extended archery will go and buy a Cache tag, let's say, and not hunt the Cache but hunt the extended archery instead during the extended season. So I believe the permits will all go during the archery season. And if they don't and we see that it's a big fallacy, you know, nothing we do here is irreversible. You know the following year we say, you know, that didn't work the way we wanted it and then we could change it. But I think it will. Based on all the information that we have it shouldn't be that big of an issue. But again, you know, I'm not saying it

won't but it's something that can be reversed. Again, it's adaptive management so we're always changing to figure out, and that's why we manage by buck to doe ratios because you can change permits to keep the buck to doe ratio what you want it.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Cordell's got one too..

Cordell Pearson: I just have a real quick one. Evidently you counted the deer on each unit, correct?

Anis Aoude: We don't count deer. I'm not sure what you mean by counted the deer.

Cordell Pearson: So then we have no idea how many deer there are on the Beaver. All we know is there's 18 bucks per 100 does.

Anis Aoude: No, we have population estimates for each unit.

Cordell Pearson: Can you tell, what is the estimated population on the Beaver, do you have any idea?

Anis Aoude: Uh, I don't have that off the top of my head.

Steve Flinders: 11 thousand is on the sheet in front of us.

Anis Aoude: Around 11 thousand.

Steve Flinders: Other questions, Mike.

Mike Staheli: One question I had is this recommendation that you have, it more or less maintains the status quo. I think there's 500 less permits. Is there any mechanism to increase this deer numbers in the state? Or are we just going to keep them right where they're at?

Anis Aoude: Uh, okay, so there's probably some confusion between harvesting bucks and increasing the populations. The number of bucks we're harvesting now is not reducing the population. It's basically killing the surplus bucks. Yeah, we are doing lots of things to increase populations, including habitat treatments, including highway-crossing structures, including predator control. Those are the things that raise population levels. How you harvest bucks does not raise population levels because those are surplus bucks that are not, you don't need that many bucks to perpetuate the population.

Mike Staheli: Don't you believe that the more bucks per 100 does the more in-sync those does fawn and you have a better survival rate?

Anis Aoude: I do not. And there's a whole slew of research that says to the contrary. I know that belief is out there. But from every research that's been done on any mule deer herd has not shown that synchronicity to be in place if you have a higher . . . Let me show you an example. Our Bookcliffs herd, we're almost at 40 bucks per 100 does. We have 30 fawns per 100 does. So it makes no difference how many bucks you have. All the does are getting bred. For example, I know the majority of the does are getting bred. You're worried about spreading out the rut. The studies, all the studies that have been done is the biggest driver to how compact the rut is is the condition of the doe. Because does come in estrus if they're in good condition. If they're all in good condition they come in estrus together. If

habitat conditions are not good then does come into estrus at different times and that's when the bucks breed them. So the bucks are only, they're going to breed the doe when she's in estrus. And if they're all in estrus at the same time they're all going to get bred at the same time. .

Steve Flinders: What's that minimum threshold Anis?

Anis Aoude: Uh, buck to doe ratio? I think there's research that says it can be as low as five and still have 98 to 99 percent pregnancy rates.

Steve Flinders: And we're three times that. More questions? Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Yeah, Anis. In listening to you, what you said to Rusty just a moment ago, and to make sure that I heard you correctly, did you say that should the Zion unit or any of these units maintain a buck to doe ratio higher than we're managing it for that you have no intention to raise tags?

Anis Aoude: Specific units that we know that access is the issue, yes, we will not raise tags. Because we know that if we offer more tags people are going to have a hard time finding a place to hunt. On specific units where we know that the limiting factor is access and not . . . obviously on public land units where we have a lot of public land we will raise permits to maintain that buck doe ratio. But there's a few units in the state, and there are a few, you know maybe three, I can think of maybe four. So like the Nine Mile unit is limited by access, the Zion unit, that whole Morgan South Rich, those units you can't issue more permits. If you issue more permits you're just going to have hunters that can't find a place to hunt. So those units are limited by the number of hunters that can find places to hunt. Other units that have public land we will raise permits and bring that within objective. Does that make sense?

Sam Carpenter: Yeah, well with that in mind, then why do you object to making the buck to doe ratio in the category that it runs and we don't have to rely on trusting you not to change it and add tags to it? I mean the buck to doe ratio, you tell me it's the trigger and I look down the road and see them increasing permits on buck to do ratios (unintelligible).

Anis Aoude: Did you see us increase, did you see us increase permits here?

Sam Carpenter: No, no.

Anis Aoude: Well there's a reason why we didn't increase permits. It's because of access issues.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, but you're really making the case for Rusty's point to make that just a higher buck to doe ratio and leave it as is with the permits.

Steve Flinders: I would interject that now that we're unit by unit, who's to say that in five years you couldn't come up with a late season, a late season hunt unique to Zion? That like the old muzzleloader in November used to be. I mean we do have opportunity to go after that additional opportunity that doesn't fit into this current scheme of general season units.

Anis Aoude: So let me explain why we wouldn't do that. If we went above the 20, and there may be some years where it drops below, they move off that private land earlier and we harvest them. So we set it at 20 to 25 or whatever. On that year now we all of a sudden have to cut permits when it really wasn't

warranted, because it was just one of those things. So to set the bar high leaves, cutting permits when you don't need to and never raising permits where the system we have now we know that this unit can only hold X amount of hunters, so we issue those permits even if it goes above we're not going to issue more. So where we're erring on is the side of opportunity. We don't want to lose opportunity. And on these specific units we're not going to gain opportunity because we know we're limited by access. Does that make sense? Because those anomaly years are what drives those units. Say it was one of those years where everything lined up, the stars all lined up, they harvested a few more bucks, buck to doe ratio dropped below 20. All of a sudden we're finding ourselves cutting permits when we probably didn't need to because the following year the access is going to be the same. So that's, those are the things we think about when we're setting permits. It's always erring on the side of opportunity because we don't want to cut opportunity if it's not warranted.

Sam Carpenter: Okay. Then give me an example of what it would take to raise permits on the Zion.

Anis Aoude: I don't know. . . private land becomes public. That's what it will take.

Sam Carpenter: I know the Zion pretty good and I can tell you that there is some up there that is private but it gets through that one oak belt, but when these deer migrate down and we're doing nine day hunts you're going to have all the deer down on the sands and with plenty of access.

Anis Aoude: Then we then we should see the buck to doe ratio drop below 20.

Steve Flinders: What will be different now is the Zion unit post-season classification now that we're looking at separate units, won't be carrying other units. Those deer are counted where they are at that time of year and attributed to that specific unit. So management works both ways. Well now they're rolled into wherever they might be. Other questions, Rusty?

Rusty Aiken: Sorry, Anis.

Anis Aoude: Oh no worries.

Rusty Aiken: Okay. So if I remember right, back in the 5-day hunt era, the Zion got down to a single digit buck to doe ratio, 8 and 9. The pressure from the Pine Valley being 5-day those guys came over onto the Zion unit and hunted the last four days of the hunt. And our buck to doe ratios went down. And that's why we asked to go to the 5-day.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, 'm not familiar enough with that area.

Rusty Aiken: The pressure on the second weekend can make a big difference on that unit because that lower part is 90 percent public.

Anis Aoude: Well and that's the beauty about managing unit by unit. If it does drop we lower permits. I mean it's a simple approach.

Rusty Aiken: Well my question is, if it's already in that objective let's create another window there for those units.

Anis Aoude: Because that, yeah, we could. And if that's the way you guys want to approach it that's fine. But it does, it will on some years cut permits when they're not warranted.

Rusty Aiken: (Not in mic).

Anis Aoude: Right. But the three year average will, if one year drops, like you say, it could drive the whole three year average. Again, I don't have any problem with it but it's not going to be our recommendation, but certainly this RAC can recommend it. Yeah, that's our rational; we're always erring on the side of opportunity.

Steve Flinders: Mike.

Mike Worthen: On that same issue, prior to this coming year, the Zion unit has always been kind of a last chance effort unit where you're getting the Panguitch Lake unit hunters, the Monroe hunter units, those that maybe didn't get successful with the deer moving out, and that last weekend, like Rusty said, everybody's coming down there, you won't have that this year.

Anis Aoude: No.

Mike Worthen: And therefore it may be another reason to argue for increasing permits because you're only going to get those local hunters there anymore.

Anis Aoude: Well and that's something we're not going to consider unless we see something really change. Again, that's why we set permits where they are because we want to harvest X amount of bucks and maintain a certain buck to doe ration.

Mike Worthen: And I understand this year's going to be sort of a test year for everything.

Anis Aoude: It's going to be a test for everything. But our best educated guess says that this number of permits should be sufficient. And again, that's why we use buck doe ratios; if it's not, and those vary then we can either increase or decrease permits. It's adaptive management. You're always looking at it. You're never counting on something to go perpetual. I mean it's basically, you're always, there's checks and balances and that's the beauty of it.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Dave.

Dave Black: I just have a comment. There are a lot of things going on in the state right now that are kind of exciting that make you feel good. You know the governor signed a bill we can hunt more coyotes. Uh, driving up the highway today I see more deer fence that was built in the last few months and some new deer fence is being built today. There's some planned deer crossings. All these things make me feel real good. Um, and then when we come here talking about how we're going to set the number of tags, and I realize this is a science, but most of us as the public are not educated in that science and so you know we go back again on what we see in the field, what we feel is going on. It seems to me like that for this first year maybe instead of erring on opportunity we should err on the deer. And maybe instead of saying you know we're doing all these things to save our deer herd, to improve our deer herd, maybe we should cut our tags instead of cutting our tags less than one percent from last year maybe we should cut our tags two or three percent. And say this is what we're doing in this area. We want to get our

numbers up; we want to get our populations up. The first year let's err for deer and then we can get better accounting, and then let's err on opportunity. But it just seems like that's the again to make you feel good about what we're doing setting the tag numbers is we're going to error for deer because we want to improve our deer herds.

Anis Aoude: Actually, and I think there's always confusion between buck harvest and populations. We actually need to harvest those bucks to increase the population. That's something that people don't realize. If you're carrying excess bucks and there's limited resources you're going to have competition between bucks and does. And you should only carry a certain amount of bucks. Again, you know how many bucks that is that's can be socially driven. It shouldn't be above a certain number. So just because we're harvesting bucks it doesn't mean we're doing bad for the population. It actually means we're harvesting surplus animals to keep that population healthy. And then how many bucks we harvest, you know, a few less a few more, yeah, it may make you feel good or it may not, but biologically it's not an effect that you're going to see. And just to clarify something, we set objectives to err on the side of opportunity but our permits are actually very conservative so we went on the low end of everything to make sure we don't overshoot that objective and we're not over harvesting. So we actually, our recommendation is even though the objectives are such, we set our permits so we're not over harvesting the bucks. We have, you know, didn't really go as, we could have increased permits on some of these units but we limited ourselves. And then on the ones where we cut we cut even more to make sure we get there. And I think you'll see that reflected in the recommendations. Even on the total number was 500 reduction from last year, remember it used to be 97,000 so we've cut 10,000 permits already. So this last 500 is just a token. I think those 10,000 that we've cut over the last few years have already gotten us on the road on a lot of these units. Plus, we exchanged the split. That put more permits into archery, which reduces harvest. So there's a lot of moving parts. Even though you may look at it and say hey, it's only 500 permits; it's substantial so far what we've cut since the cap of 97,000.

Steve Flinders: Dale, you had a question?

Dale Bagley: On the Monroe unit, how many hunters have you averaged out over the last 3 years on that unit?

Anis Aoude: Monroe unit, has roughly had around roughly 1,400 hunters. 1,400 permits sold.

Dale Bagley: Okay, that unit, I mean it's chronically under the buck to doe ratio. Right now it's at 12. So giving out 1,000 permits, how many years is it going to take us to get to that target range? I guess you're saying 16 if it is a 15 to 17.

Anis Aoude: Sure.

Dale Bagley: How many years is that 1,000 permits issued, how many years are we looking at before we get to the buck to doe ratio?

Anis Aoude: Yeah, I wish I could tell you the number of years it would take. I mean it could take one year of good production and you're there. But it could take three or four years of lousy production and you may not get there. But you will get there with this number of permits. It may happen in two years, it may happen in three years. It's, you know, it's a permit that will, that given the current population, so we're not talking population increase, will maintain 16 bucks per 100 does on that unit.

Dale Bagley: And then, I know you're doing a study on there. What are you finding as far as pregnant does? Are they being covered there now?

Anis Aoude: Yeah. So basically we captured 80 . . .69 does, 68 were pregnant; so almost 99 percent fertility rate.

Steve Flinders: Good question Dale. Any others? I've got one, Anis. Talking about the statewide plan that we're amending. Is there currently a split? You talked about 60-20-20. Is that anywhere in the deer plan?

Anis Aoude: It's not.

Steve Flinders: Should it be?

Anis Aoude: Yeah. And that's part of our recommendation is we go to that split. So that would be an amendment to the plan as well.

Steve Flinders: Any more questions from the RAC? Questions from the public

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Again, we'll do comments in a minute. If you've got a question for Anis, please come to the mic and give us your name. Yes sir.

Gene Boardman: The name's Gene Boardman from Hinckley. I'd like to go back to the cut where you have the number of archery hunters, rifle hunters and stuff. Okay, now I'd like to know where those gifted hunters that can have three permits fits in this picture here. Thanks.

Anis Aoude: I think he's talking about dedicated hunters. They can only if they draw the rifle permit. So they have . . .Okay, so dedicated hunters, as you know that the rule went through here, basically once the current dedicated hunters roll through the system in the next two years, 15 percent of the permits will be allocated for dedicated hunters on any given unit. So once that cap is reached they can't draw that. So they have to draw it and 15 percent per unit is set-aside for dedicated hunters.

Steve Flinders: Come up to the mic for us sir. We've got to catch it in the minutes.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, the current dedicated hunters, is that what you're talking about? Yeah, the current dedicated hunters we've split them among all weapon types so they're equally divided. Yes, they're equally divided. The next two years until they phase out.

Steve Flinders: Other questions for Anis? Yes sir.

Lee Tracy: Lee Tracy, Enoch. Do those permit numbers that you've shown us include dedicated hunter and lifetime license holders?

Steve Flinders: Can we get your name for the record?

Lee Tracy: Lee Tracy, Enoch.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Lee.

Anis Aoude: Yes, yes, those are the total number of permits that will be available. So you would minus the dedicated hunters and lifetime license out of those. Those would come out of those same numbers. So they will be subtracted from the total.

Lee Tracy: You mentioned a quota for the dedicated hunters; is there also a quota for the lifetime license holders per unit?

Anis Aoude: There is not.

Lee Tracy: Our group United Wildlife Cooperative did have one unit concern and that's the Plateau Thousand Lakes unit. There are 400 tags issued there. It was our understanding that quite a few of them were dedicated hunters and lifetime license holders, is that correct?

Anis Aoude: Yeah. So that unit is unique because it went from limited entry, partial limited entry to totally general season. And yeah, there was, there's going to be roughly . . .out of 400 permits 320 will be dedicated hunters and lifetime license holders. Now keep in mind once that unit is hunted by those folks they'll probably realize that it's not a limited entry unit anymore and specifically dedicated hunters will no longer be able to hunt it once the quota is set on it. So there's still the chance that lifetime license holders will choose it at a disproportionate rate and if that happens in the future we may put a quota on lifetime license holders per unit.

Lee Tracy: Without the calculations, so that basically leaves 15 archers, 15 muzzleloaders, and whatever's left for the rifle hunters. Well we had some concern about that and wanted to verify that information. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Lee. Other questions?

Deloss Christensen: Deloss Christensen, Glenwood, Utah. Anis, last year we were here and um I think, and this is my question, that you said if the wildlife board chose option 2, which was to manage by units, that you would be required to reduce the number of tags by 13,000, is that correct?

Anis Aoude: That was 13,000 total. We cut 7,000 last year.

Deloss Christensen: No, I'm wondering about the, the presentation that you made said that if we took that measure, if that was the option, that we would have to cut 13,000. Nothing was mentioned about you'd already taken 7,000, was it.

Anis Aoude: No., I think you're incorrect. Can I answer that? So yeah, that presentation was made when we had 94,000 permits. That was cut last year to 86,000. And if we still, if we go to 80,200 it would be more than 13,000 permits cut.

Deloss Christensen: I just want to go on record that I believe there was an effort to make that appear as if there was 13,000 tags cut from last year to this year, and that was the big issue. The second issue I have is: do the number of tags have anything to do with the budget that has to be created through the selling of permits? Is there any portion of that that's a factor?

Anis Aoude: Yeah, I mean, obviously permit sales is how the Division is run. So if we reduce permits, markedly we have to do some cutbacks. Now, having said that we could actually if it were a strictly I guess money driven system the best way to approach it is to sell very few tags and increase the price because that's where you make the most money. It would require less management, a whole lot of things. But the Division is, the reason we have more permits is not to raise more money, it's to create more opportunity. Because the way our system works is the more sportsmen we have the stronger representation we have both to state and federal entities. So if hunting is to sustain itself we need larger representation. So we're not so much worried about the money; we are worried about keeping hunters hunting. And that's why we do it, not for the money. Because if it were a money driven thing, you know it's shown that if you want to make money you sell few tags and you sell them for a lot of money. And that's not what we're trying to do.

Deloss Christensen: Is it more important to the Division then to provide more opportunity or grow more deer?

Anis Aoude: I don't think that's an either or. We want to grow more deer and provide more opportunity. That doesn't have to, those two are not mutually exclusive.

Deloss Christensen: You mention you are doing a lot of things besides the buck harvest to grow more deer, is that correct?

Anis Aoude: Yes. Obviously, I mentioned a few things, habitat, highway crossings, predator control, all those things are meant to increase out deer population.

Deloss Christensen: Would you mind putting that slide up that shows the fawn doe ratios for us? So as you look through that ten to twelve year period there, how are those other tools that you're using, how are they doing as far as growing more deer?

Anis Aoude: So basically our habitat initiative started around '05. So, you know we've had ups and downs. And specifically habitat treatments usually don't pay dividend for 10,15,20 years. And a lot of that is dependent on what the weather is following those treatments whether they're successful or not. So we're doing all the right things. Just because we haven't had the right precipitation regime or whatever, doesn't mean those things are not successful. As far as highway crossings things, we've only been doing those for the last five years or so. And those are dependent on migrations and things like that. So those will pay dividend here in the near future. A lot of them have only been in place a year or two. So to tie a direct correlation with buck doe ratio with the things we're doing isn't always easy to do. A lot of it is weather driven. Precipitation, probably if you graphed the precip to that same graph it would mirror it almost exactly. So the precip actually is the driver more than anything else. But if you can increase all these other things then even if you get a little precip it would go a long way to improving buck doe ratios.

Deloss Christensen: So would you attribute then, the number of deer that we had in the 1980's to weather?

Anis Aoude: Yeah, most certainly I would. I mean if you look at the number of years back to back that were wet in the 80's, no doubt about it. That is exactly what caused our high deer numbers. I wouldn't flinch at saying.

Deloss Christensen: So do you think the efforts that you're putting into highway control, habitat restoration, buck harvest, these other issues that you haven't mentioned but you claim you're doing, then are for naught?

Anis Aoude: No, they're not for naught because here's why, basically to increase populations you have to reduce mortality which is what we're doing with highway crossings. And then you have to improve nutrition, which is what we're doing with our habitat treatments. Now habitat by itself is not going to do one so you have to hit it from every angle. You have to reduce mortality and increase production. The habitat side increases production, the highway mortality, coyote control, all these other things reduces mortality. Those are where your deer are going to grow. You're going to have more babies; you're going to lose less due to mortality. And I'm talking the female proportion of the population.

Clair Woodbury: Point of order Mr. Chairman. I think we're limited to three minutes per person.

Deloss Christensen: Okay, just one other question if I may.

Steve Flinders: Sure.

Deloss Christensen: If the RAC would request it would be appreciated if this slide would also include a slide exactly the same but just for the region that we're talking about, because this really doesn't mean much to us other than as a state. And what we're dealing with here is the units in our area and it would be most helpful if we could see what the trends are for our region. So in the future it would be appreciated if that could happen. Would that be possible?

Anis Aoude: Yeah, certainly.

Steve Flinders: Hey Deloss, while you're up how about giving us the rest of your comments. You made good points there. To finish it off do you want to use your comment card?

Deloss Christensen: Uh, no (inaudible).

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Other questions for Anis from the public?

Brayden Richmond: Brayden Richmond. I have a question, kind of going with Rusty and your conversation Anis. And this is just a question, it's not agenda driven. I'm curious on the Division's comments on this and maybe your personal opinion. Now that we've gone to the smaller units and have the opportunity to micro manage I guess I'm wondering why we're still committed to the idea of general season units and limited entry units. It seems like most units are limited entry, we can call them what we want. I like the idea of having my cake and eating it too, being able to apply for a good tag and then a better tag. But I wonder what are the Division's thoughts on that versus putting them all together and

then we could have a unit like the Henrys where we manage for 40 bucks. We could have a unit like the Zion where we manage for 30 bucks and then we could have general units where we manage for 15 and people could pick their poison.

Anis Aoude: I'm not sure I fully understand the question but I'll answer it as if I do. Basically we do have both. We have units where we manage for low buck to doe ratios to provide more opportunity and we have units where we manage for high buck to doe ratios where a person may have to wait between 10 and 20 years to draw. So I'm not sure exactly, lumping them all together what would that do? Not a whole lot. Basically it just limits a person to either one or the other. The public at large does not like that. They want their cake and eat it too so those guys that do want to hunt every year or every couple of years want to be able to put in for general season and still have the hopes of drawing a limited entry unit. And when we've done surveys and that's what we've seen. That's why we haven't gone to pick your poison. And we don't want to create division amongst the hunters. Either you're a general season hunter or you're a limited entry hunter. I think we all want everything. We all want to hunt every year and we all want to kill a big buck every year. But obviously that's not possible. That's why we separated those two. And we want hunters to be able to put in for both. That's our philosophy on it. I hope I got it right.

Brayden Richmond: Yeah, actually I think you got to the question I was asking. So it comes down to just people what that and we're trying to deliver what they want.

Anis Aoude: Exactly.

Brayden Richmond: Okay.

Steve Flinders: Another question?

Scott Christensen: Scott Christensen, Loa. Just real quick, I sent an e-mail a couple of months ago, my concern about the increase on the 400, 500 permits that were estimated. It looks like 400 for Thousand Lake. It sounds like we're kind of up against the ropes with dedicated hunter and lifetime tag holders. But more than anything I appreciate those of the RAC that got back with me and at least took time to read the e-mail. To my question, is there any way we can see the data, I attended the Richfield town hall meeting where they handed out a survey on what hunters would like to see for buck to doe ratios in the specific regions. Is there any way to get a copy of how that was tallied and what hunters in that meeting, and maybe even all the meetings? I'm just curious because at that meeting as I went around the room and talked with other sportsmen the census was to try to keep between 20 and 25 bucks per 100 does on most regions. I was just, that's what I would like to see personally. I'm just curious to know how the rest of the state fell in, and how might I get that?

Anis Aoude: Yeah, every region compiled it on their own so we didn't get a summary of that. But I will, you know, just from memory, the Richfield, is that the one you?

Scott Christensen: Yeah.

Anis Aoude: The Richfield was an anomaly. So they were probably on the far end. The majority of the ones that I attended everybody wanted actually the lower buck to doe ratio, the 15 to 17. And it varied widely. The northeast region wanted 18 to 20. So it varied all over. So it wasn't very concise that one group wanted it one way or the other. And that's why we came up with the mixed approach. There were

a few that wanted that 20 to 25 or whatever, but we as a Division did not feel that was general season so we did not recommend it.

Scott Christensen: So, just so I understand correctly, the consensus was, in the Richfield the region, the unit surrounding that region, the bulk of the hunters did want the 20 to 25, do you know?

Teresa Griffin: Yeah, some of them even wanted more than that.

Scott Christensen: Some wanted more? But then even none of the recommendations based off the chart were even in that category. Was there a reason? Just felt, didn't want to do it?

Anis Aoude: Yeah. And I think I already addressed that. The reason is that gets into the limited entry category. And if we want to move units to limited entry then let's move them to limited entry. If we're going to hunt general season we're trying to provide opportunity. And those two objectives maximize the number of permits we can put on there while maintaining a certain amount of quality of bucks. That's the approach we took and that's why we didn't recommend anything above 20 bucks per 100 does.

Scott Christensen: Okay. I guess I just see it as a name. It's about the health of the herd. I guess the other concern I'd like the RAC to kind of listen to as Anis made his presentation, it was very concerning to me as a sportsman how much emphasis was put on opportunity throughout Anis's presentation versus overall health of our deer herd and just general concern. I just feel like we're kind of on the wrong track. We need to really focus on overall health, you know, fawn production. I agree with Anis's, the number one factor but it seems like we're talking more about opportunity than even anything else.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. Do we have a comment card for you?

Scott Christensen: I kind of covered it there.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. Nolan. Question.

Nolan Gardner: Yes. I'd like to know Anis's opinion on the Pine Valley. You've got a unit that has plenty of access. There's, when the deer get down on the winter range, which on their nine day hunt they're going to be there, there's hardly any cover and yet we've so far been able to keep in the mid 20 buck to doe ratio. What's your answer to that?

Anis Aoude: I guess I'm not sure what the actual question is. How have been able to maintain 18 bucks? You got me. I guess the numbers of permits available are such that maintains that. That's really the only driver that drives buck to doe ratios is the number of permits you have on a unit.

Nolan Gardner: But we have not, and we've been lucky with weather the last few years.

Anis Aoude: Sure.

Nolan Gardner: And we've only had the nine-day for the last . . .

Anis Aoude: Yeah, I guess maybe, I don't know if Jason's here but he probably would be better to

answer that than myself. I'm not that familiar with the unit. All I can tell you is in generalities. But you know in general if you have a certain number of permits on a unit that maintains a buck to doe ratio that number of permits provides a certain success rate and harvests that many bucks. But Jason can, migration stuff I'm not.

Jason Nicholes: What was the question again?

Nolan Gardner: Well he'd said that on a unit where you have low access then you have a higher buck to doe ratio, you can put more hunters out in the field. But on Pine Valley when they get down on the winter, in which most of them do, it's very easy access, there's no cover, and yet so far we've been able to keep a mid 20-buck to doe ration. And my fear is that if we try, it won't be hard at all to drop your buck to doe ration down, what you're trying to get and that's, we don't want that. But anyway I just, that was the question.

Jason Nicholes: Okay. Um, well the, you know I think it's the number of hunters that we've had. We've had fewer numbers of hunters on the Pine Valley unit over the last three years than we did 6 or 7 years ago. It has dropped about 800 hunters, you know, compared, this year, the last 3 years compared to what we had 8 or 9 years ago. As well as production, you know which can affect the number of bucks available the next year significantly.

Steve Flinders: Next. Another question?

Cody Smith: I have a card. My name's Cody Smith. I figured since they were talking about the Pine Valley I'd come up because that's . . .

Steve Flinders: We're doing questions.

Cody Smith: That's fine. That's fine. I was just letting you know I had a card. So my question would be on the Pine Valley, the population objective is 12,800 deer. Right now they have it estimated at 13,000 deer, so basically we're over objective. And my question is to Anis or Jason, do we feel that 13,000 deer on the Pine Valley is over objective? And while we're looking at that I know that we had a guy up here that hunted Panguitch Lake, Panguitch Lake is actually at objective, and do we feel that it's at objective? My opinion is I don't, but I'd like to get the Division's opinion.

Jason Nicholes: The Pine Valley's objective is 12,800 and we are currently estimating it at 13,000, slightly over it's objective. And we'll feel pretty confident in that number, you know in our modeling it comes right in line, everything checks out with the buck to doe ratio. It all makes sense that we do have 13,000 deer. One thing is, is could we possibly increase the objective on that unit? Sure. You go back to prior to 2002 the objective was 16,000. And as a result of the drought that unit was on a DCI reduction and reduced to 12,800.

Cody Smith: So with that being said my question would be why wouldn't we want to increase the population? Why would we, I feel like when I see the 13,000 here I feel like I'm being constrained, that we can't go above that. The 13,000 is our objective, we're there, now we're going to give out 3,600 rifle or deer tags, 2,200 on a herd that migrates early and has a very limited area to migrate. So why wouldn't we shoot for 16,000 or 18,000?

Jason Nicholes: And that possibly can be done and next year we're going to be looking at our unit management plans for mule deer and that opportunity to increase that population back to whatever level we feel is sustainable could be done.

Anis Aoude: One thing I want to clarify, these buck permits will not reduce the population. This is something that everybody confuses. We hunt bucks because they are surplus. The population could be 14,000 next year. What controls population is antlerless harvest, doe harvest. We have 0 doe harvest on that unit so it has a potential to grow and we're not stopping it from growing. We're not issuing buck permits to reduce that population. Is that, we're giving buck permits to harvest bucks, enough bucks that can be harvested without reducing population growth. So that population is left to grow. We are not controlling that population by hunting bucks.

Cody Smith: I understand where you're coming from on that. I do with all respect want to point out that that is the Utah Division's perspective on managing deer, not necessarily what our neighbors in other western states are doing. So when I refer to it as that it maybe because I have a different perspective. And there are actually different studies out there in other states and they're managing it differently. My next question is, specifically Sam Carpenter brought up on the harvest information where we're only getting 20- 25 percent of the information for that unit, I think that's really low. I know in my occupation and what I do if I only had 20 percent I wouldn't have a job. I know in other states that have a unit-by-unit management it is done differently. There are actual deer counts and not deer estimates. And I think that's something that the RAC board needs to look at.

Steve Flinders: Is there a question in that?

Cody Smith: Yes. That was it. I'm done. So appreciate it. Also I just want to say I appreciate your guy's time, appreciate the time of the Division.

Steve Flinders: I think you answered that Anis. It's called a statistically valid sample.

Anis Aoude: Yeah. Well since you mentioned other states and what they do, no other western state counts deer. It is just not done. And I don't know what study he's referring to, you know, I talk with other state agencies on a regular basis on part of the (Unintelligible) mule deer working group. They all estimate their populations similarly to what we do.

Steve Flinders: Let's not talk about this anymore on this agenda item. This is antlerless stuff. We're talking about herd objectives and doe permits. Let's talk about the deer plan and deer permits. Any other questions for Anis? Feel free to come up. We appreciate your attendance tonight and feel your passion and interest. These are big changes we're making.

Bart Albrecht: Yes, I'm Bart Albrecht. I'm from Loa as well, and interested in the Thousand Lake deal. I was wondering who made the recommendation or who made the change from it being a limited entry to a general unit?

Anis Aoude: That was the Division's recommendation and it went through the RAC and Board process back in November when we went to unit by unit. And that was approved by the RAC and Wildlife Board.

Bart Albrecht: So on the recommendation or on the acceptance of the tags that you're putting on that unit, going off what your trends are and what your buck-doe ratios are, my figures come up with about 788 total deer for that unit and you've got over 400 tags for the unit. Are you really concerned with the health of the unit or is that any way we can adjust on that?

Anis Aoude: Certainly we're concerned with the health of the unit. I'm not sure where you come up with the population estimate; it's clearly higher than that. And the number of bucks harvested. . . .Do you have a specific question?

Bart Albrecht: Yeah. Are you familiar with the unit?

Anis Aoude: I'm not particularly; you know I'm not the biologist for that unit. He is here and you can ask him yourself. We couldn't harvest the number of bucks we harvested on that unit if there were only 750 total deer.

Bart Albrecht: Well going off of what your percentage of harvest was and the deer between your success and your buck to doe ratios, that's what your figures would be, would be about 788 head of deer for that whole unit. And with the tags that you've got on that unit now you would be suggesting that there would be anywhere from 24 to 3,000 head of deer on that unit.

Steve Flinders: Is there a question in that? I'm not sure we're all following you. What unit are we talking about?

Bart Albrecht: Thousand Lake unit. And they've upped the tags on that unit from a year ago over a thousand percent, .by over a thousand percent. So if you . . . I've got them at 30 percent success on the tags that they had issued. That would leave it at about 133 bucks per 100 does which would put it at about 788 head of deer for the whole unit. So if you up those tags to 400 tags they're suggesting that there's 2,400 head of deer on that unit and that unit's not big enough for 2,400 head to begin with and if there was you'd be seeing them. When I was 20 years old you could ride up that way and you could count a thousand head of deer in a night but you're lucky if you can see 10 head of deer up there in a night.

Steve Flinders: Teresa, can you or Jim walk us through the numbers on Thousand Lake? Briefly.

Jim Lamb: It will have to be slowly.

Steve Flinders: How many limited entry tags have there been, do you recall?

Jim Lamb: About 50, total. That's the average over the last few years. Buck to doe ratio's been high. On paper the Thousand Lake unit looks fantastic. It's got a great buck to doe ratio. It's got a great average age of harvest. It's a tough unit to estimate because it's been a split unit. It's been a limited entry unit on part of it, on the public land, and it's been a general season on the private land. It's difficult to collect reliable information on that. And so one of the things that we have a real problem with this year with the Thousand Lake unit was how many dedicated hunters and lifetime license holders selected it. Now, we could have gone two routes; we could have let the dedicated hunters and the lifetime license holders have all the permits and told the general season hunters sorry. Or, we could have given the lifetime license holders and the dedicated hunters an opportunity to hunt and then provided

some opportunity for the general season hunter. And that's what we chose to do is give the general season hunter a little bit of opportunity. Now, the permit numbers on there are high, they are. We have contracts with lifetime license holders and dedicated hunters that we can't get out of. We can't tell them no, under those who are signed up right now. Those who sign up this year are under a completely different program, which Anis has already explained. Those dedicated hunters in the future only 15 percent of them will be able to participate in that hunt., Now as we've said several times tonight this year to go into this kind of a system in any unit in the state is going to be different than anything we've ever tried. The Thousand Lake unit is no different. And it's going to be really different than the way it's been. And the buck to doe ratio is going to reflect that increase in pressure. I have had dedicated hunters calling me quite regularly and asking me how they can now get out of hunting the Thousand Lake unit. They can't. They made their choice. They are stuck with the tag and we're stuck with giving them a tag. What that's going to lead us I don't know. It gives me heartburn; it's given me heartburn for six months. It's probably given a lot of people heartburn and I don't know what we can do about it. I hope that answered your question Bart.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Jim. Another question?

Bart Albrecht: Yeah. One thing that also needs to be addressed on that is those Thousand Lake bucks are highly in the production system on the south end of the Fishlake and the north end of the Boulder Mountain. And if you're going to lose breeding stock you're going to lose breeding stock on both those units as well, drastically.

Jim Lamb: We're very well aware of that also. Anything else?

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Keep these as questions and we can move on to the comment period if you would please..

David Puffer: I've just got a question. My name's David Puffer from Minersville. And on your buck to doe ratio on poaching, how many percentage does that fall into that? What's your percentage that falls into that? Say poaching and party hunting, I commend you guys, but I think a lot of it falls into an average hunter being ethical hunting. I see it a lot, party hunting. You hear a lot about poaching. So I just wanted to know how that falls in.

Anis Aoude: So if poaching or party hunting happens prior to our classification it's all included. So basically if your party hunting and you harvest a bunch of bucks we classify after the season's over. So that's all included, we know how many bucks are left. Any poaching that takes place after the season closes if we don't catch them we can't really tell how many are poached; if we do catch them that's calculated in. I don't, you know, on some units it may be an issue; on some units it's not so much. So it's really a hard thing to get a number on. I'm sure it happens. How much it changes buck to doe ratio, if it was a chronic problem you would see it the following year, so your buck to doe ratio would be a lot lower the following year because you have the poaching that happened after the season, then the season, and then when you count them again you have a lot fewer bucks. So it all eventually gets wrapped into that buck to doe ratio. So as long as the buck to doe ratio stays above or within the limits that we want it poaching should be included in that because those bucks are not alive anymore. I don't have a percentage.

David Puffer: I say 20.

Anis Aoude: I think that's a very high estimate. Because most poachers are poaching bucks, and usually big bucks and the proportion of those in any population, even a population that's lightly hunted, is not very large.

Steve Flinders: Other questions for Anis, on presentation?

Jason Aiken: I'm Jason Aiken from Cedar City. One quick question about the rollover of tags where if a unit is undersold. If you turn, to me if you turn and sell those tags the reason you're not selling them is because it's a commodity that's not really wanted; the bucks aren't maybe what they need to be. Why would you sacrifice selling those tags and then maybe reducing your buck to doe ratio and then having to lose those tags the next year because your buck to doe ratio is so low? Why not just hold on to those tags, not sell them, and maybe see how your buck to doe ratio comes out and adjust the tags next year accordingly?

Anis Aoude: Okay, a couple of reasons for that, if you don't sell the tags, it creates an environment where you're not knowing how many permits. So yeah, we thought of that. The thing is when we set permits on a unit it's total of bucks we need to harvest, and we know how many bucks need to be harvested. So issuing those permits back may harvest a few more but it's not going to be enough to drop buck doe ratios as much as you would think because muzzleloader success is almost the same as rifle. So those aren't going to be, the only time is if a lot of archery permits were left over, which I don't see that happening. We've sold 16,000 archery permit statewide now for umpteen years, and that's roughly the number of permits we have. So even though there may be a few left over if you turn them back into, so say it's 100 and you harvested 25 more bucks on the unit. So that 25 more bucks on the unit isn't going to make a big difference in the buck to doe ration. So like 100 permits isn't going to be 100 dead deer I guess is what I'm trying to say because there's a success rate with every weapon type. Even though it may be 19 for archery and 25 for rifle, you know that 5 percent success rate isn't going to harvest a whole lot more bucks when you're talking 100 or 200 permits. The effect isn't going to be as big as it's perceived. We've done the calculations. You know you may harvest 10 or 15, maybe 100 extra bucks on a big unit, but on the small units it's going to be 2 or 3 bucks difference. Not 2 buck per 100 does but 2 or 3 bucks total.

Jason Aiken: Okay, one more question. It goes back to the comment that Rusty made about the 20 to 25, instead of doing a 15 to 17, and 18 to 20. What's the possibility of a 15 to 20 and 20 to 25, just as you just mentioned you're really not going to be able to tell the difference between you know those 2 or 3 bucks per 100 does. So how would you make the difference between a 15 to 17 and 18 to 20 when you can do a 15 to 20 and a 20 to 25 and then you can actually see the difference?

Anis Aoude: If you have that broad of a range basically what you end up doing is never doing anything with permit numbers. They will neither increase nor decrease because you're always going to be within that range on any given year. So if you're managing for 15 to 20, as long as you stay above 15 you're never going to be able to increase permits. So when you have a 15 to 18, if you get above that 18 you have the potential to increase permits, and similarly 18 to 20. If you're 20 to 25 and once you get above that 20 you'll never be able to increase permits. So the reason we shortened the range is if we have more deer and more opportunity we can increase buck permits. If we don't then we can reduce them. So that's why the short range, is when the opportunity presents itself we want to be able to provide more hunting permits. If you have a big range you'll never be able to do that because you never hit the top end.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Other questions?

Corey Jones: Yeah, Corey Jones. I got a question. Say this whole numbers that we come up with, say it doesn't work this year and next year our buck to doe ratio goes down, take like the Beaver unit for instance, you're going to want to cut all the general season tags but what are we going to do with the dedicated hunters? Say half the unit's we get too many tags on, are we going to cut the 10,000 of the dedicated hunters back? What are we going to do with the dedicated hunters? Because all of the general guys are going to be stuck without a tag but yet the dedicated hunters, the lifetime obviously is going to have their tags, but are we just going to be sitting here without an option where you know the dedicated hunters can just get their first choice so.

Anis Aoude: So next year is the last year the dedicated hunters can pick a unit and there will be roughly a thousand of them left. So I doubt they're all going to go to the Beaver, they may. They haven't this year even though we make them pick any unit in the state. They're pretty much equally distributed themselves with the exception of the Thousand Lakes because everybody thought they were getting a limited entry unit. But after next year dedicated hunters are limited to 15% of the total permits. So if permits are cut so are their permits cut. So basically if there's 1,000 they can only have 150 permits total. So if those 150 are already filled with dedicated hunters no new dedicated hunters can go on to that unit. So that's already built into the future way we set permits. So if we want to take a pessimistic approach that this isn't going to work and buck to doe ratios are going to drop next year, we'll reduce permits. There will be fewer dedicated hunter permits as well as fewer general season permits. All of them will be affected equally.

Steve Flinders: Good question. Any others?

Comments from the public:

Steve Flinders: Seeing none let's move on to comment cards. I've got a stack of these. We've tried to decide and discern which agenda you mean. If I call you and you mean a later agenda item just let me know. I don't want to force you to the mic. Nolan Gardner. I remind you of the three-minute time limit. We again appreciate you coming and want you to be able to get your point across. Nolan is followed by Gene Boardman.

Nolan Gardner: Nolan Gardner, Dixie Wildlife Chapter of SFW: A few of us talked the other day. We'd like to see that third tier, that 20 to 25 so that we didn't lose ground on some of these units like Pine Valley and Zion. So that's very important. Anyway I hope we can get some more support on that. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Gene followed by Wade Heaton.

Gene Boardman: I'm pretty well burned about what I've just learned here. When we had talked about this 30-unit deal this RAC, as I understand it, we said we'd go along with it as long as everybody bit the bullet. Now it looks like the dedicated hunters have two years before they have to bite the bullet. And that's a bunch of BS, because that's the way that we said okay we'll go to 30-units. We'll go to 30-units

if the archers go to 30 units and if the dedicated hunters have to draw with the rest of us. I'm also burned about that we discussed a proclamation here a while back, there wasn't a damn thing said about cutting groups that could draw from 8 to 4. Now what have I got? I've got two groups of 4 in. If one draws this year and one we'll never get on the same year. If I put in for a second unit and one draws one unit and the other happens to draw the second choice I've got two deer camps 200 miles apart. Who the hell come up with that? It seems like everything we do is to take away from the rifle hunter and to take away from the family deer camp. If the family deer camp's such a terrible thing and it's causing all these problems let's just abolish it now and then I won't have to keep getting up here and fighting for it every year. I'm really, it's really tough. And then we just said, well we're going to whack out 5,000 permits out of the rifle hunt but we want all the rifle hunters to, we don't want rifle hunters to stay home. Well 4 or 5,000 of them are going to stay home this year, with the recommendation that we saw earlier. And it's really putting the pinch on us. The other thing I know I want 25 or more bucks per 100, but I don't want to hunt every 4 years to get that way and that's what it's going to take. If we go to 25 bucks per 100 does I'll draw once every four years. I'd like to see this dedicated hunter program go away. I've never seen or killed a deer that was there because of a dedicated hunter program. I don't think I've ever seen a deer that was there because of the dedicated hunter program but I've sure lost a lot of tags. Over a three year period when we cut our general season back to 5 days I had 5 days of hunting opportunity over 3 years while the dedicated hunters had over 100. So we've got to start looking out, and I want you at large members and you sportsman representatives to start taking care of us that are rifle hunters and us that are trying to keep a deer camp going. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Wade, followed by Craig Christiansen.

Wade Heaton: Wade Heaton, representing myself. First I just want to say I really think the Division's doing a good job. I think they've had a difficult assignment but I think they've tried to grasp what the public and Wildlife Board wanted to do. It's not a simple process. I think all of us need to be a little bit patient. This is a jumping off point; at least that was my understanding. As we get started into this, this is not the beginning and the end right here. I think this is just a place to start and that we are going to have to make some changes as we go along. And I do think we need to be just a little bit patient. Having said that I'm not very patient. I do have a few recommendations if I could. Number one is: the reason why we went to these 30-units is just so that we can give the Division and the biologists a mechanism to do some fine tuning in these individual units. So they don't have to affect an entire region, they can fine-tune one unit all by itself if it has issues. So having said that I'm a little frustrated. The Division in their attempt to simplify, and I'm not saying anything bad about it because I understand where they're coming from, but in their attempt to simplify we're trying to fit it all in one or two boxes. And I just think that's the wrong direction. We've got 30 units; they're all different. For all I care we can have 30 boxes. The whole concept of these smaller units was to get outside of the box; you're still trying to shove it into two boxes. So I would just encourage, and it doesn't need to happen this year that can happen over time; but I really think we need to look at individual units and their needs and that's what we give them. And not try to shove them into one or two tiers. I personally support the idea of having a third tier, the 20 to 25. We're not going to limit any more. We're not moving to limited entry. The units are there now with the numbers that they've been hunted for the last 10 years. That is their current buck to doe ratios, 20 to 25. So there's nothing with leaving it there. You know we don't want to change all these units, just leave them where they are. Fit them into the category that they are best described under now. Last thing, these permits that are undersubscribed, these hunts that have permits left over after the drawing, it doesn't make a lot of sense to me for let's move them into the next hunt. There's a very good reason why they go undersubscribed. And so let's just let them die. You know we don't need to

keep pushing them on to the next hunt. We can let those die without affecting any of the deer herd. Appreciate you guys. Appreciate your time and all that you do. Thanks..

Steve Flinders: Thanks Wade. Craig followed by Lee Tracy.

Craig Christiansen: Craig Christiansen. I'm here to represent Utah Bowman's Association. I want to thank everyone for being here tonight. I appreciate the time you're putting forth into this. Utah Bowman's Association wants to applaud the efforts of the Wildlife Board and the Division of Wildlife Resources in their effort to restructure the general season buck to doe ratio objectives. Over the last couple of years we've seen the Utah hunters are split almost evenly as to whether they want more trophy quality units versus more opportunity units. And we believe that the DWR's recommendations reflect these views, thus the Utah Bowman's Association supports the DWR recommendations as presented. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Lee followed by Perry Hanks.

Lee Tracy: Lee Tracy, United Wildlife Cooperative. The United Wildlife Cooperative supports the Division's recommendations for the 2012 buck deer permit numbers and the DWR recommended buck to doe ratio objectives in the southern region. We realize that this is a unique situation this first year and that many of the numbers and so forth will be modified probably in the next year, but we recommend this start. We would also like to recommend, and I'm not sure if this fits in the antlerless category or the buck category but we would like to recommend that the December 1 to December 15 antlerless deer only portion of the Wasatch Front extended area be eliminated so that we can increase the doe survival there and increase the population because that unit is under population. So that's our recommendation. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Lee. Perry Hanks followed by Tommy Cage.

Perry Hanks: Perry Hanks, Salt Lake City. I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to address you, and thank you for your efforts helping our wildlife. I know you guys put a lot of time in and it's much appreciated. I'd also like to thank the Division for the hard work that they've done this year. I would not want to be in their seat for anything. It's been tough, I know. So I really appreciate their efforts in this. I'd like to support the United Wildlife Cooperative's recommendation as well. And since their recommendations follow along with what the Division's are, I'd ask this RAC to approve those recommendations. And at the very least if you make any changes don't make anything drastic. This is the first year of a brand new program, we've got to get our feet wet first and look at it later, one year down the road, two years down the road. It's an evolving thing. And I think it's going to be a good thing for hunters. I think everybody in this room understands that buck to doe ratios and tag numbers do not grow deer. They don't affect the health of the herd. A couple of folks mentioned that the Division needs to focus on growing our deer herds and I think they're doing that. I think they're doing the best job they can. It's a tremendously difficult issue and it's not just in Utah, it's throughout the west. Mule deer herds are barely holding their, own across the west. So I commend the Division on doing the things that they can. I appreciate it. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Tommy, followed by Mike Ahlstrom.

Tommy Cage: Tommy Cage with the United Wildlife Cooperative, and also a member of the media in

southern Utah, with Cherry Creek Radio. And I too want to thank all of you for your service to wildlife and want to thank the Division for all your fine work. I see a lot of bald spots, especially Anis, I guess you pull a lot of your hair. And you know it's really a difficult job to be in the position you're in. Socially I understand being in the media for 20 years and carrying a target on my back. A lot of times you make decisions, you say things that are unpopular, and a lot of times you don't make a lot of friends. It's really difficult what you have to decide here, not only tonight but then it goes to the other RACs and then they have to make decisions that are probably going to be in line and probably not very popular. The southern area I hear referred to a lot of times as the peoples republic of mule deer in southern Utah. I want to change that and dedicate airtime to your effort on Cheery Creek radio stations to make sure, I know Lynn Christensen does a lot of work, and I just want to make sure that through the United Wildlife Cooperative we start to work with the groups, Sportsmen For Fish and Wildlife, we'll work with the Utah Bowman's Association, we'll work with the Rock Mountain Elk Foundation, we'll also work with the Mule Deer Foundation, just to make sure that the education on this process continues with our audiences because I think this is a very important issue. It affects all of us. Obviously you can hear tonight that it's a very passionate thing. We all care greatly about mule deer. Sportsman, it touches a very deep nerve. This tradition is held very strongly and deeply in a lot of our families and we truly all care about this. So I do want to support the United Wildlife Cooperative's statement on this issue. I want to support the Division's recommendations and hope that the hybrid solution does get voted upon and advanced to the Wildlife Board by this RAC tonight. But I also want to pledge that I will work with the RAC and make sure that education continues in southern Utah. So you have my commitment through Cherry Creek radio, along with Lynn in the outreach program to continue that. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Mike followed by Scott Christensen.

Mike Ahlstrom: Mike Ahlstrom. I have had an opportunity to work with Dustin on a couple of elk committees and I talked to him today. And I really do appreciate the work. I understand that this has not been an easy process for the Division. And we're pretty picky; you know our hearts are all in it. I think everybody's trying to do the best they can. But I think, I really want to just talk mostly about what Wade started to talk about. We now have the opportunity; we have 30 units. We can manage 30 units. Now if that means on the Pine Valley, I've hunted Pine Valley for 27 years. And I hunted it back when there were 17 of us in camp and if we got a 2-point in a 5-day hunt we were so happy that, I mean, we got a 2-point. You know back when I was a little kid that was a big deal. And last year there were 3 of us that had tags and we had a great hunt. There were only 3 of us in camp and that part of it stinks, I feel your pain. But I really believe some of these units like the Pine Valley, like the Zion, we really need to look at. When that migratory, when we have that first storm last year the first 5 days were tough, the storm hits and it happens year after year on the Pine Valley, and these bucks just get hammered, hammered in that lower country. There's no cover. There's specific areas that we can take the opportunity with 30 units to manage for those type of things. Pine Valley, what brought it back from hunting 2-points to last year we hunted 3 bucks over 200 inches, was five-day hunt. I watched it. I've seen it and I know that that's not the popular phrase with the Division but I've seen it. Consequently I was also, I live up in Tropic and so I live right there on the Dutton. When we had the one, the southern region I was what that did to the Dutton because now all of St. George came to the Dutton that second weekend and it was the demise of the Dutton. So I truly believe that we have to manage these individual units. If we want to have a couple of them that are currently in that 20 to 25 range let's keep them there. Let's play with that for a little while. If we need to have a 5-day hunt on the Pine Valley and the Zion let's have a 5-day day on the Pine Valley and the Zion. I see no problem with that. I also, I like to err on the side of caution. If it means this first year to see how things go we need to cut the tags a little bit more I'm okay with that.

I've got three kids that haven't hunted yet and if it means they have to go another year I'm okay with that too. They go with me but they may not have a tag. We have to grow deer; we have to manage for the individual units. The other suggestion I would like to make is mandatory harvest reporting. And I know the Division says well we get our surveys but what would be wrong with when I apply for my license online the first thing I enter my social security number and my birth date and the first thing that pops up is where did you, you had these tags last year, fill these out, it takes me two minutes and then I go on with my application. I believe the mandatory harvest reporting is a must. A lot of the other states do it successfully. But we're not other states but it can be done and I don't think that would be a very expensive option. Again, I appreciate the RACs time, the Division's time. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Scott.

Scott Christensen: My recommendation, I'd just like to see this RAC support some of the other sportsmen in here like Wade had just mentioned. I too would like to, we do have 30 units, let's try different things. We don't have to confine ourselves into two ways of thinking. I also would like to see at least a third tier. Personally I don't like the 20 to 25. I do agree with Anis that that's too big a gap. I would like to see that narrow between 23 to 25. Shoot, I'd like to see at least a couple of units on the 30 to 35 just to see the outcome. We have a lot of opportunities to test different things and I hope this RAC will recognize that those in certain regions like the Richfield area, there are a couple of units that are affected by them. Obviously the public supports a higher buck to doe ratio there. They also recognize it will limit opportunity and I'd definitely like to see that third tier added back that was originally added and the Division had decided to remove it in their recommendation. I too agree with the mandatory harvest report. I can appreciate Anis's point. I'd like to go the next level and mandate tooth data as well so we know exactly how old the harvest is. If we're just shooting a lot of immature deer versus mature deer. One thing that hasn't been brought up I'd like to see mandatory reports for all limited entry hunts too. I think that data gets skewed. I sat on an elk committee this year and it was pretty obvious, we felt like some of the data was off because it wasn't mandatory to send those teeth in. And I'd like to see that changed as well. I know it hasn't been talked about but since I got the mic I brought it up. So, thank you for all you do.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Deloss. That's the only comment cards I have for this agenda item. If anybody was overlooked I'll have you come up after Deloss.

Deloss Christensen: Thanks Mr. Chairman and Board and the Division. Just want to make a comment regarding the overall deer herd in our area of the state. And I know that you know this . . . This is nothing that each of you don't know already. I remember when Dell LeFevre sat on this RAC 2 years ago and he said to us as a community here, you people are out of deer. I heard the same thing from his replacement this year during the elk committee plan meetings. You all know each one of you; even the younger ones of you know we are out of deer. I've sat in these meetings for 36 years. I remember when Dwayne Washburn had to become a legislator to try and change DWRs management of mule deer to save mule deer. I remember when Don Pendleton had to get the community organized in Richfield to get the buck doe ratio moved from 4 to 15. I remember when Pratt Seigmiller from Marysville came and wept at every meeting, cried to the humor of the Division and the 30 year olds there when he said, if you keep doing what you are doing you are going to lose your deer. Now each one of you know that those men have been proven to be true. Their statements are here today for you to see. I'm here to tell you they were right and you know they were right. And if we don't do something different than we're doing now we're going to lose the rest of them. You know, Mr. Black, how many you used to see. Mr.

Pearson, you know how many. Mr. Torgerson, you know how many. You know how many you see now. There is no doubt we have lost our deer herd and we're going to continue to lose it if we don't do something. We tried to put something in place to help the Division do that. Nothing we've seen here tonight helps that. We cannot make recommendations from this side of the table. We have to have you step up and make recommendations in the form of a motion to fix this issue. There are units that need to be closed. They need to be closed completely. If you are going to let this continue just do what you've always done. My recommendation is that you recommend in the form of a motion that we close some units that have low fawn doe ratios until you see that line start up and I don't care what the weather is. We raise cattle and sheep and goats every year, we don't care what the weather is. That's my comment. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Let's take a ten-minute recess and take this up more. We'll be back in at 7:30.

Wiley Hughes: I'm from St. George; the Pine Valley unit is my backyard. I get off early every day so I get to go spend time pursuing my passions, trapping, hunting, outdoors, that's my passion. Now as grown up in St. George and I got here late and the gentleman who was here speaking about the deer herd and how if you shot a 2-point you were excited. I shot that 2-point. I hunted the whole 9-days, saw one forked horn and I shot it. That was my first deer, I was 17. After that they went to the draw to get a tag. I wasn't too happy about that. I didn't put in for a couple of years. Went on a mission, came back got married and my brother-in-law got me into hunting again. It's amazing how that 5-day hunt has affected the deer herd. I'm out there all the time, whether it's pushing cows, whether it's outdoors, I'm out there. I see it. I know what's out there. Now when it comes to the herd now a days I'm ecstatic as far as it's came and I don't want it to go back. I don't want a plateau. I want it to continue to get better. Because I think if we plateau and sit we're only going to regress. And so I firmly want a 23 to 25 buck to doe ratio. I don't want to go down to 18. Yeah the herd's improved. It's a descent herd down there in Pine Valley. I mean and a lot of the hunters know that, that's why they go there. But I'm asking you please do not drop it to an 18. Do not. Keep those bucks out there, not just for the hunters. Shoot my family, fifteen minutes we're on the 4-wheeler, we're in deer country in the winter range and we're watching those magnificent animals. I can see people from subdivisions such as Diamond Valley, people go up there in their mini vans and watch em, that there is something special; to be able to see that. To have those people that aren't sportsman be able to go out and appreciate those magnificent bucks out there. And if we drop it down to an 18, lower than 20 it's going to do nothing but hurt us. And I'm very passionate about that. And I just, and hopefully you guys can appreciate my passion for that and take that into consideration. Thank you for your time.

Steve Flinders: thank you. I'd like to see 2 different motions, management plan and amendments first. Then we'll do comments and discussion about permit numbers.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Thanks for coming up tonight.

RAC Discussion and Vote:

Steve Flinders: That's all the comment cards I have then. I think what I'd like to see happen is we do two different motions. Let's do, let's entertain the management plan and amendments first. Yeah, we'll do that. So let's talk about, let's do comments from the RAC. What I'm getting at is let's keep it to management plan first and once we decide on the management plan then we'll do comments and discussion about permit numbers. Does that make sense? That helps to break out the comments we've

heard from the public and restricts our thoughts. We need to decide on the buck to doe ratios and the weapon split. You know once the management plan's set then these other things will fall into motion, buck to doe ratios on these units, all that's based on the management plan. Is that all right? So RAC comments, discussion dealing with the deer management plan, and revisions brought before us tonight.

Mike Staheli: I'd like to make one comment, Steve. That is, the current plan before these recommendations has never been implemented. The RAC last year, the Big Game Board all approved this, the 18 to 20. I think we ought to give it a shot. I understand we don't want to tie the Division's hands and more or less there's some of that right now with this plan that's currently in. But I'd like to give it a shot the way it's already been approved. I don't like to see a new plan every year. I'd like to see us fine-tune it but this is a whole new thing, basically. I mean there's approximately 6,000 tag numbers difference between what was approved last year and what they're recommending. Anyway that's my comment.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Mike. Sam.

Sam Carpenter: The RAC and Board did not approve 18 to 20 last year. We approved 18 to 26.

Mike Staheli: Oh well right. I wasn't on the Board last year but . . . yeah, okay. I'd like to see that get a shot.

Sam Carpenter: You're suggesting blanketing the whole state with one buck to doe ratio?

Mike Staheli: Is that what the RAC approved last year?

Sam Carpenter: That's what the deer plan calls for, yes.

Mike Staheli: Then I would.

Brian Johnson: I don't think just because a RAC last year, if there's a better system, I don't think we need to be bound to anything last year per say. I just think we need as a RAC, you know, individually go through this year-by-year and that's kind of why they have the RAC system. So that's just my thoughts on that. I'm just throwing that out there.

Steve Flinders: Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: I'd like to see a little broader buck to doe ratio, the lower unit, 3 tiers, so it would be adding a 20 to 25 buck to doe ratio on units that already were within that objective, so it wouldn't deviate tags.

Steve Flinders: Other discussion. In the way of summary comments from the public, I didn't hear anything to make the buck doe ratios any lower. So if you guys are on track with what we're hearing from the public in terms of buck to doe ratio. Sure, Clair.

Clair Woodbury: Steve that would be the public that's at this meeting. There's been hundreds of people approach me; to a person they want a chance to hunt which means the 15 to 17, to a person. They're not going to be to this meeting, so it doesn't mean that they don't count.

Steve Flinders: Well put. Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: I don't know maybe Sam corrected but it was 18 to 25, not 18 to 20, correct?

Sam Carpenter: 18 to 25 I believe was the recommendation last year.

Cordell Pearson: Yeah, last year. Yep. While I have this thing. . .

Anis Aoude: That is what I have in my presentation. If this isn't accepted it would go back to 18 to 25. And the permit numbers reflects that change. Although, if this RAC wanted to shrink that they certainly could. You know if you so wish. It's kind of whatever, anything is possible I guess.

Cordell Pearson: Well I think we spent, and everybody, most of the people were here last year and we spent this much time or more doing what we're going again tonight going through the same thing over and over again. And I think with that much time spent and this much, there's not a whole lot of difference in there and I think we should go with last years plan, 18 to 25, statewide.

Steve Flinders: Further discussion? Clair.

Clair Woodbury: Yeah Steve, you know it's no secret to anybody out there that I've been totally opposed to this new plan. To answer Mike, two years ago we started a new deer plan, a new 5-year plan or a 3 to 5 year plan. Last year we changed it. This year it doesn't look to me like it's a change but a fine-tuning. And Anis the last six months I had a no vote on what we were going to do tonight. You might have got me on because the general public that I represent wants to hunt. There's more ways to get a higher buck to doe ratio than cutting tags. There's the weapons adjustment that you presented, more primitive hunting weapons. There's others that I mentioned last year, last fall, limiting the access, which I lived through many years ago in Oregon that worked beautifully, shutting roads down temporarily. Montana uses that system I think right now. There's other ways than just cutting opportunity. The gentleman that lamented the demise of the family hunt I'm wholly with him. We must keep our family hunts going however we do it. To cut drastically I can't be a part of that. I will vote for this new presentation even though it's 8,000 below traditional, 9,6000, I will go with it as the best we can do right now.

Mike Staheli: I'd like to make one more comment.

Steve Flinders: Sure Mike.

Mike Staheli: I think the division had an email plan and they emailed a lot of people and they in turn emailed the RAC. I got 78 e-mails. And that's not a problem. I appreciated that. But I kept a running total of how many were for lowering it, raising it. And in my e-mail basket, and the people I knew, they wanted to either keep it as it was approved last year or raise it. And after listening to Anis I don't think we need to raise it too much more. But I think we need to give this plan a chance to work you know, the way it was approved. But anyway, just to point out that I did get a lot of e-mails, lots of them.

Steve Flinders: Sure Dale.

Dale Bagley: My opinion personally is, I mean we've spent way too much time on this buck to doe

ratios. The goal we need to be focused on is the overall population, which is the objective of 411,000. We went to a 30-unit plan. I think every unit needs to be managed under its own benefit to what's going to raise us to that 411,000. I don't know maybe an question for Anis, will 18 to 25 bucks to doe will that get us to that 411,000 faster than 18 to 20? I mean what are we looking at there? What's the quickest way to get us to that overall objective?

Anis Aoude: To be honest with you the number of bucks you harvest, anything above 5 bucks per 100 does is surplus. So you could have 10 bucks per 100 does and population would grow at the same rate. It's not a buck problem, it's a production problem, it's a fawn problem. So, it's really irrelevant. I mean if you want 15, it provides more opportunity. If you want 18 it provides less opportunity. If you want 20 it provides even less opportunity. It is not going to effect how many does get bred, how many fawn get born. What affects that is habitat, weather, and predation. Those are the . . . That's the honest answer. That's why we struggle with it so much. It's not really a biological problem; it's more of a social problem. Even though we do delve a little bit into the social sciences, as biologists we struggle with this when people tie buck harvest to populations because as long as you have enough bucks to maintain production . . . And every rancher knows this; they don't keep too many bulls. They only keep enough bulls to service the number of cows that they have. You don't need surplus bucks. It doesn't, it doesn't make a healthier population. We have 40 bucks per 100 does on the Bookcliffs; we have 30 fawns per 100 does. So it doesn't matter how many bucks you have it's how productive the range is, how good the vegetation is, how many predators are on the landscape, what other things are killing these fawns. That's really what matters. So I know it's not the answer you're looking for but there really isn't a biological number that, anything above 10 is going to do you, is my answer to you. And anywhere you guys pick above that we can manage for. All you are cutting is hunters, the higher you go.

Steve Flinders: Clair. Sure Mike.

Mike Worthen: I'm listening to some of the discussion up here, I have to agree that the public that I've been, that has been calling me and has been sending e-mails, and that I've talked to at some of the open house, by in large they want more opportunity to hunt. And that's just simple the truth. For just the average hunter, not the ones that go onto sportsman's groups or whatever, just these guys that go out and take the family, they want more opportunity to hunt. And based on what was said about harvest, you know I'm in a conflict because as a biologist I want to see that bigger buck, as a hunter I want to see that bigger buck and I know that once you start increasing the buck to doe ratio you're going to get that bigger buck. If you decrease it you're not going to get the bigger buck. Maybe I'm past the age of shooting the 2-points but and just seeing one once in a while is great for me even if I don't even shoot one. I guess I'm to the old age point now. But anyway, I'm really running a conflict here because I do represent the public at large and I know what the public at large, at least the ones that have been calling me have been saying. So I'll probably vote for this plan but with reservations.

Steve Flinders: Sure Dave.

Dave Black: I'm torn too. I've become educated tonight, I guess. I always thought we needed bucks. That's what we put in the tags for. We're not putting in tags to hunt does. We don't have the deer now that we've had before and that's a given. We're old enough to know what we have today and I don't think we'll ever have it back. There's more people. It's all, you know, I don't think it's coming back but we need to manage it the best we can. Where I am is again, I think we need to err on the side of the deer herd and not err on the side of the opportunity this first year. I want it to get back to where everybody

has an opportunity where the deer herd comes back. I'd rather sacrifice this year to see if it makes a difference. I would encourage us somehow to decrease the number of tags a little bit more. Right now we're looking at it from last year, less than one percent decrease. And I would like to see a little bit more if it's across the board or not. If it means that you know, all the units we don't go less than 18, maybe all the units are 18 to 20. The proposal last year is 18 to 25 and maybe the new proposal ought to be 18 to 20 and let's see how it goes for a year. To me that errs on the side of the deer herd. I'm also in favor of keeping things status quo on these areas that are producing a better buck to doe ratio. And if we have a unit, the Pine Valley that's, the Zion, that has higher units I'd like to see that third tier.

Steve Flinders: Clair... Sam...

Sam Carpenter: Wow, this is a tough one because I was involved heavily in trying to get this unitized to get all the units handled. But I do feel strongly that each unit is different and has a different potential. I think it's wrong for us to set a buck to doe ratio lower than we are carrying right now. I think we need to protect these units and not just trust the department that they're not going to raise tags. And everything now is just speculation. We have no idea how this is going to end up. We need some data to look at and see what we're going to have in the future. And it's been very very hard for me to accept that the bucks have nothing to do with the population, in fact it's still an oxymoron to me. I just feel like more bucks, you know, then that's a deer and we count it too. But where habitat is limited I can see where that is not true that bucks do compete and we need the does to survive and be healthy so the fawns do. I agree with what Wade said about we've got to be patient and we can fine tune these units once we get some data and have a little better understanding what they're going to do and how to react on this stuff. And we may see a drastic change and may have to do something. I understand what Deloss is saying. There are units that need to be closed but I'll say one thing about that Deloss when we closed the Paunsagaunt after three years we still didn't see any growth. It takes a long time for these deer to come back. And there's so many variables out there. And I think they've got a good idea going with all the habitat and water projects and now we're going to attack the coyotes and try to do something like that in the fawning areas. And I just think we've got to play this out and see what we're going to have, get some data. I like. . . Deloss, you know I'm really passionate about these deer. And I agree that I think the model is like 20 percent high on the units I know. I do not believe that we have the number of deer on the Zion or the Paunsagaunt that this model is projecting. And if you know about modeling and you look at it, a lot of ways, a lot of things can affect that model and make that back end look different than it really is. That said, I really feel the Division is trying to do the right thing here. And I want to support them enough to get this started. I do think we need to protect those units that have a buck to doe ratio that is out of bounds with what they're recommending and put a higher number on it, that third tier they're talking about. And let's let this ride out a couple of years and see what we've got and then make some decisions on what we can do to fine tune it.

Steve Flinders: Other comments? Discussion items? Layne.

Layne Torgerson: I'd like to mirror what Sam just said and going back to Wade's comment. There's been a lot of time spent on this, with everybody on this Board and the Wildlife Board and the Division. But this is a tool to manage hunters. It's not a tool to grow more deer. We can grow more deer with some of the other things we have in place. But we've got to recruit fawns to grow more deer. But we've got to give this management plan an opportunity to, we worked really hard on this the last couple of years, as we all know that have been on this board for three or four years. We've got to give this management plan an opportunity to work. There are tools in place if it's not working on individual units where we can

tweak those, as Anis pointed out earlier. If the buck to doe ratio is lower after the post hunt counts next year we can tweak that unit. Take some permits away from there. If the buck to doe ratio is higher then we add permits to that unit. But those tools are already in place. We've just got to give it an opportunity to work. And so I just, I feel really strongly about let's give this thing an opportunity.

Steve Flinders: Who else? Brian? Hand him a mic. Even though you don't need a mic.

Brian Johnson: I don't need a mic. I mean you can probably just hear me like this. The way I see this guys is it's boiling down to one of two things. Because the way these this RAC and the Board works is you know it's going to go through 5 different RACs. And the way I see it tonight we're either voting on more opportunity or less opportunity. That's the way I see it. I had, I don't know how many e-mails, more of them lean toward more opportunity and I responded to a lot of them. I didn't respond to all of them. But tonight as we vote if we vote for the new plan we're voting for more opportunity. We vote for the old plan less opportunity. I think that as we get to fine-tune these we'll do that as we progress but that's basically what we're voting on tonight. And we just need to be accountable for whatever we vote on. Because I don't think that a person in here is going to see a difference in the quality of deer between 18 and 20. I don't think it's going to happen as far as our quality of deer goes. So the difference is we're either going to have more families out there hunting or less families out there hunting. So that's my two cents.

Steve Flinders: Mack.

Mack Morrell: I rarely make comments. But as we sit here nobody wants to do anything. It took 30, 40 years to screw up the deer herd, and you can't fix it in 1 year. You just can't do it. So therefore I make a motion we go with the recommendation of the DWR on the plan as is with two sets of buck to doe ratio or whatever. Leave it that way and then see what happens. You know. I mean everybody's talked about it but nobody's bold enough to make a motion. And we're going to be here until 2 o'clock in the morning if something doesn't happen.

Clair Woodbury: I'll second that.

Brian: So just to be clear your motion is?

Steve Flinders: Motion is as presented.

Mack Morrell: As presented.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Mack. Seconded by Clair. Any interest in adding the 60/20/20 weapon split?

Mack Morrell: No.

Steve Flinders: Do you have that motion? The deer management plan as presented. Discussion on that motion..

Rusty Aiken: I'd like to amend that motion to include a third tier, the 20 to 25 tier. And it would include the units that are currently in that objective currently. They are taken out of the 18 to 20 and put them in the 20 to 25.

Steve Flinders: Any second on the amendment?

Mike Staheli: I second it.

Steve Flinders: Seconded by Mike. Discussion on the amendment?.

Sam Carpenter: I would say we just recommend amendments on the regions in the south and let the other RACs take care of their end.

Steve Flinders: What units would that be?

Sam Carpenter: There are 4 of them in the south; I believe it is the Zion, West Desert, Thousand Lakes and that other sub-unit of that south west. Let me look and I'll get it.

Steve Flinders: So the amended motion is it would be, Rusty did you say 20 to 25?

Sam Carpenter: It's called Fillmore Oak Creek. There are only 4 in the southern that fit that criteria. I don't know any of the other units out of the southern district to be making recommendations to do anything with.

Steve Flinders: Discussion on the amendment. Mack, do you or Clair have any interest to adopt that in your original motion? Or we can treat it separate. Any objections?

Mack Morrell: Let's treat it separate.

Steve Flinders: Will do. Any other discussion on the amendment? Paul.

Paul Briggs: Would it make sense since we're talking about going to unit by unit management to consider that after we have some data with these buck to doe ratios as well? For a starting point stay with Mack's recommendation. Go with the Division's proposal and maybe address these altering these per unit buck to doe ratios when the management plans come up. I'd support staying with Mack's original motion.

Steve Flinders: That's a good rejection, yeah. Further discussion? Brian.

Brian Johnson: I'm just not 100 percent clear on Roberts Rules here.

Steve Flinders: We're gonna vote on this amendment.

Brian Johnson: The amendment first.

Steve Flinders: It's essentially a stand-alone motion.

Brian Johnson: Okay, just wanted clarification.

Steve Flinders: We're going to deal with it first and then go back to the original motion. Further

discussion? We'll vote on the amended motion on the table. Does everybody understand it? It relates to the southern region. Those in favor of the amended motion? Did you get that vote? And those against. What did you get? Okay, the amendment passes.

Rusty Aiken made the motion to amend the original motion to include a third buck to doe ratio objective tier of 20 to 25 bucks per 100 does for the units in the Southern Region that are already at that objective. These units include: Zion, Southwest Desert, Thousand Lakes, and Fillmore Oak Creek. Mike Staheli seconded. Motion passes 6 in favor, 6 opposed. (Cordell did not vote but later stated that he did not hear the call for votes against.)

Steve Flinders: Okay, now let's go to the original motion.

Brian Johnson: I just want to make sure I was clear. It didn't state in the recommendations the 60/20/20 split. It does not?

Anis Aoude: Yeah it does. That is the split we're recommending. So if you adopt that you basically adopt that.

Brian Johnson: Okay, that's . . .

Steve Flinders: If it says as recommended then we'll adopt it.

Brian Johnson: Check, perfect.

Steve Flinders: Sure Dave.

Dave Black: Can I amend the motion again?

Steve Flinders: Yeah we can until we get everybody so confused we can't follow. We can do it one more time.

Dave Black: I'd like to amend the motion to move the Panguitch from 15-17 to 18-20.

Steve Flinders: Second on the motion, amended motion? Sam seconds that. Go ahead Dave. To take the Panguitch Lake unit from 15-17 to 18-20 buck to doe ratio. Motion by Dave seconded by Sam. Discussion on the amended motion? Those in favor? And those against? Did everybody vote? We don't want that look on Layne's face. So we'll vote on the amended motion right now for Panguitch Lake from 15-17 to 18-20. And hold your hands up high, those for the amended motion. Panguitch Lake 15-17 going to 18-20, for Dave's motion. Those against? I'll vote against it. Motion Fails.

Dave Black made the motion to move the Panguitch Lake unit from a 15-17 buck: doe ratio to an 18-20 buck: doe ratio. Sam Carpenter seconded. 6 in favor 7 opposed. Motion fails. (Steve Flinders voted to break tie.)

Steve Flinders: So let's go back to the first amendment. They don't have to vote. There's 12 RAC members despite me. So on a night like this we can get ties. When there's an objection like this we can do a revote, it's a significant thing. I defer the counting to those who are looking at us and can see it

better than me. Everybody in favor of voting for the original amended motion that talks about. . Reread the motion. Yeah we did. The objection has been raised that we have a recount, revote on the amended motion dealing with the third tier, the 20 –25 that affects 4 units in the southern region. Is that objection seconded. So do we need to restate the motion? Is everybody thoroughly confused? It's the third tier motion, the 4 units that are going to be 20 to 25. Those voting in the affirmative please show it by raising your hand high. What have you got? Those voting against it raise your hand. Another tie? I'll vote for that motion. I heard that from the public tonight. I took the count. I appreciate people who drove here tonight and took time to comment. Hopefully that makes a difference.

Rusty Aiken made the motion to amend the original motion to include a third buck to doe ratio objective tier of 20 to 25 bucks per 100 does for the units in the Southern Region that are already at that objective. These units include: Zion, Southwest Desert, Thousand Lakes, and Fillmore Oak Creek. Motions passed 7 in favor, 6 opposed. (Chairman voted to break tie.)

Steve Flinders: Now we're back to the original motion. That is the balance, that's how this is supposed to work. That's the balance of the management plan. Does that make sense everybody? Mack's original motion. It has those two amendments. One amendment passed and one that the Wildlife Board will hear about that failed. Any discussion on that original motion and the balance of the management plan?

Sam Carpenter: So the one about the Panguitch Lake failed, true? the one about pang lake failed, other passed.

Steve Flinders: True.

Sam Carpenter: And the other one passed. And now we are voting on . . .

Steve Flinders: The balance, essentially. Further discussion, any other changes to it?

Sam Carpenter: I have one more question, I'm sorry. We talk about the tags that are rolling over from archery to muzzleloader to rifle. Is that part of this motion? It is.

Steve Flinders: Anything that's not permits, it's related.

Sam Carpenter: Can we possibly stand another amendment? To be totally confused here. I would like to see this rollover thing put aside until we have some data on whether there's going to be any tags rolled over and see what it's going to affect.

Steve Flinders: Is that a motion?

Sam Carpenter: That's a motion.

Steve Flinders: Second? Is that Cordell? Motion to not change permits from archery to muzzleloader. Discussion on that amendment?

Brian Johnson: Would you guys entertain if we sold them and just kept it at a certain rate proportionate to success? So if you had 100 tags left over you only sold 65 to the next one?

Sam Carpenter: I wouldn't.

Steve Flinders: Sam wants to keep it simple. Any other discussion about this next wrinkle? Let's vote on that third amended motion to the motion. Those in favor of not converting the permits. Those in favor hold them up. There's lots of hands to count tonight. And those against. That looks like it passed. Did you vote Brian?

Brian Johnson: Yes sir. I voted for the losing team.

Steve Flinders: I'm going to have to start asking for who abstained. Any abstentions there? Motion passes whether you missed one or not.

Sam Carpenter made the motion to omit the rolling over of unsold permits from one weapon class to the next. Cordell Pearson seconded. Motion carried 8 in favor 4 opposed.

Steve Flinders: Okay, so now we're ready for the balance. Any further motions? Voting on the original motion. Those in favor? Any against? Motion passes.

Mack Morrell made the motion to accept the general season deer management plan as presented, with the amendments voted on above. Motion carries, 10 in favor, 2 opposed. (Cordell Pearson and Brian Johnson opposed.)

Steve Flinders: So Anis how are we going to vote on permit numbers if we just threw a wrinkle in what you brought us?

Anis Aoude: Well uh, yeah, I mean we can change the permit numbers accordingly based on the new objectives that you guys passed. That's not a problem.

Steve Flinders: So we've got to do deer permit numbers. That wasn't in Mack's motion.

Anis Aoude: I think it was because it's basically set to balance.

Steve Flinders: Well it's not how he stated it originally. But somebody make us a quick motion that allows him to adjust those permit numbers based on what we changed and what's been given to us for the units we didn't change. Yeah, but people aren't likely to impact the southern region. I don't want to leave any grey areas.

Sam Carpenter: I'll make that motion that Steve said, and that is to give Anis the power to change and adjust tags to the recommendations.

Steve Flinders: So that's the balance of the recommendation process relating to deer because we just really dealt with the management plan in a large part. Seconded by Rusty. Any discussion on that. Do you guys know what we're voting on? We're voting on Anis's presentation that we didn't already cover in the motions as they're specifically worded, captured in the record. Any more discussions? Those in favor? Rusty. In favor still voting. Any against? Thank you.

Sam Carpenter made the motion to accept the general season deer permit numbers as presented. Rusty Aiken seconded. 11 in favor, 1 opposed. (Brian Johnson opposed.)

Steve Flinders: Agenda item 6. Bucks Bulls and Once In A Lifetime Permits and Rule Amendments.

Sam Carpenter and Anis Aoude discussion regarding permit numbers. There will be fewer permits on the table

Anis Aoude: What's that? It will change the numbers slightly. It will probably be, I don't know roughly, I'm just throwing rough numbers, 200 fewer permits.

Sam Carpenter: We already fall within those ratios. That's why I thought it wouldn't make any difference in tags.

Anis Aoude: Yeah but there are some that are above 20 now would, where we would increase permits we wouldn't increase those permits.

Sam Carpenter: Well they're not above the 20-25 that we, on the 4 units that we talked about. Those tags are already set. I don't know why we would be adjusting tags.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, so to get to 18 we recommended a reduction in tags on those units. Now we would increase them again so there would be more, there will be fewer permits on the table. Yeah, okay I was confused where we were. All right, moving on to the rest of the agenda. I just want to go on the record I do appreciate all of your work including all of the folks that showed up and the passion that was presented here tonight. I just want everyone to know that I share that passion and no one wants more mule in this state than I do. And I hope everybody realizes that I'm not in this job because I hate mule deer. I mean it's obvious I'm not in it for the pay either. So just keep in mind that we're all on the same team and although we disagree on the fine details I do want mule deer more than anyone can imagine. Multiply this passion five times and that's what I have.

Bucks Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations and Rule Amendments for 2012 (action)

-Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator 2:56:41 to 3:10:06

-Teresa Griffin, Regional Wildlife Program Manager

(see attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the RAC? Sure Mike.

Mike Worthen: Anis, on the moose permit. I noticed that the non-residents actually increased while the residents decreased is there, what's the.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, the way we calculate our non-residents is it's a round up thing. So if there's 5 permits 4 go to residents, 1 goes to non-residents. So if you have 9 it's still only 1 non-resident in 9. So you can decrease permits and still have that 1 non-resident. So even though we decreased permits the non-residents remained high. Does that make sense? Because you can have 5 permits and still have 1 or you can have 9 permits and only have 1 non-resident. So you could increase resident tags without

increasing non-resident tags but the inverse is also true; you can reduce resident tags without reducing non-resident tags. We just give them the benefit of the doubt because they don't get as many permits, especially moose where there's so few permits. So that's the rule we use; if there's 5 permits when you round you round up, so 4 and 1.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Sure, Mack.

Mack Morrell: What's happening to the bighorn sheep west of Bicknell on the Velvet Ridges? Are those going to be removed?

Anis Aoude: Those are in the process of being removed but I don't know the exact down to the minute play by play. Maybe Jim can fill you in on that..

Jim Lamb: I met with the county commission a week ago yesterday. We have a plan in place right now; it has no expiration date. It calls for DWR removal of all big horn sheep in that area, rams and ewes, and lambs. We had a provision last year where we used public hunters to take some rams and what we found out is we start shooting rams and they get out of there. So any time that those are seen and someone will notify me then we'll go try and take them until we don't see any more.

Anis Aoude: Thanks Jim.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? That's for disease issues.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, correct. So those of you that are not aware there's a group of big horn sheep near Bicknell that have regular contact with domestic sheep and both, we're afraid that they're going to go somewhere else and infect sheep and the livestock operators are afraid that their operation may be hindered because of that so we've decided to basically remove that population. We looked at different options and really that was the only viable one.

Steve Flinders: Other questions from the RAC? Sam.

Sam Carpenter. Anis, on the rule you've got here on using dogs, I received a letter from Gordon Poppitt. I don't know if the rest of the RAC probably had one too. And he had some good points. Then I seen where Ernie had replied to that. What's your take on that as far as enforcement? It seems like that's kind of opening a can of worms.

Anis Aoude: You know if there are some law enforcement folks here I would rather they answer it because I delve very little in the enforcement field. I don't know if someone wants to handle that. Basically I'll tell you what our law enforcement chief says, he thinks it's enforceable. Ernie's comments are based on what Mike Fowlks, or chief, relayed to him. So if Ernie wrote in his e-mails basically he's just regurgitating what Mike had told him. So they don't seem to have an issue with enforcement. But if any of the guys here want to add to it.

Sam Carpenter: Okay. I guess, I just wondered how you determine what breed of dogs you're going to allow to do this.

Anis Aoude: I guess it doesn't really matter as long as it's one dog on a leash. You know if it's a poodle

and he can blood trail, let him blood trail. And you know the biggest provision is it's got to be on a leash. And if it's one dog on a leash we don't see how that's going to interfere with anyone else's hunt or cause any harm.

Sam Carpenter: So if you drop the leash and it's out there then it's okay.

Anis Aoude: Then you could be sited, yeah.

Steve Flinders: There will be a rich market in Norwegian Elk Hounds now. Other questions, Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: How long a leash? And I think he asked is that one dog per hunter or one dog per animal?

Anis Aoude: It's one dog per downed animal. And the leash can be as long as you want as long as you've got that dog on the end and you're holding one end it's called a leash.

Rusty Aiken: On the tooth data on the Paunsagaunt deer and then also on the elk, so CWMUs and conservation tags are they in that data?

Anis Aoude: On the Paunsagaunt?

Rusty Aiken: Paunsagaunt deer.

Anis Aoude: I believe they are. We've run it both ways and it doesn't vary a lot.

Steve Flinders: Other questions?

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the public on the presentation. Yes sir, if you want to come to the mic.

Gene Boardman: Gene Boardman, Hinckley. I'm wondering about the numbers here. There were 200 permits of different kinds passed out in Salt Lake here in February before these numbers were ever approved, plus I keep reading about different sportsman's organizations offering a tag for here and a tag for there, conservation tag, and the governors tags, and all these extra things; and I wonder where they fit into the numbers you're giving us on this.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, that's a very good question. So basically the conservation tags, which are the ones that are auctioned off or sold, those are not included in this. So when recommendations are made those are taken into consideration and then they make recommendations. The convention permits, which are those 200 that the gentleman mentioned that are drawn, you know you have to put in a \$5.00 during the convention, are included in these. So those do come out of this number because we consider them a drawing. They get drawn there and the others get drawn in Fallon. So that's the way we handle that.

Steve Flinders: Other questions from the public?

Comments from the public:

Steve Flinders: Seeing none let's move on to comment cards. Wade Heaton followed by Gary Syrett.

Wade Heaton: Wade Heaton representing the Alton CWMU. Just wanted to support the Division's recommendations for the Paunsagaunt. We fit into the Paunsagaunt as our CWMU fits in. We feel like we're on a good track with where we're at on those Paunsagaunt numbers. The Paunsagaunt's done very well these last few years, and a big part to you guys. So thank you again. My hats off to you. We also support the reduction in management permits from 75 to 50 on the Paunsagaunt. Our buck to doe ratio has come into line, which was the purpose of the management hunts. So again, hats off to you guys for having some foresight and approving that hunt. It has accomplished its goal; and so warrants a reduction on those permits. So, thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. Gary followed by Brayden Richmond.

Gary Syrett: Gary Syrett, Friends of the Paunsagaunt. Just to reiterate what Wade said. We want to thank the Division, the RAC for listening to us the last few years. The Paunsagaunt is in great hands. I'd especially like to thank Dustin for his hard work. His counts have come in, the numbers are looking better than ever; and we support the Division's plan for the Paunsagaunt this year. Thank you.\

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Brayden followed by Paul Neimeyer.

Brayden Richmond: Brayden Richmond representing the State Board of Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife. Just one comment. I gave a handout, I don't know if those got distributed up there or not. Only one concern with the plan, other than that we support it; in fact just a general comment on the last section 2. We, Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife really feel like the Division's done a good job this year and a lot going on and we want to generally support them. So thank you. The one comment that we do have on Dutton we're a little concerned with the elk numbers. I think the best way to look at this, actually back up and look at the Beaver and the Pahavant. When those age classes drop by more than one year, we saw a drastic reduction in tags. On the Beaver we saw 40 percent reduction when that age class dropped by 1 percent. On the Dutton over the last 3 years it's consistently dropped in age class yet we're only reducing tags by 10 percent. We'd really like to encourage the RAC to make a motion that we drop the Dutton tags down to 100 tags, maybe 110 versus the 140 something that's currently recommended. We'd just like to stop this downward trend before it gets worse. We'd like to keep this moderated instead of drastic changes. So if we could ask the RAC to make that motion we'd appreciate it.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Brayden. Paul, followed by Randy Johnson.

Paul Niemeyer: My name's Paul Neimeyer. I guess I've got a comment a little bit on these 30 deer units, and it's already passed and whatever. But in all those years when, from the late 70's is when we started to drop these deer. We've tried a change in hunts, we've gone to horn restrictions, shortened hunts, we've changed seasons, and we've done everything. But with these 30 units, the one thing that was always the failure in those is hunter shift. You know if you went to horn restriction they moved out of that unit and then as soon as they thought there were some bucks then they all moved back in and undid whatever good we did. But like the Pine Valley unit where they're talking about the season being so effective, you know if you have a lot of snow, well there's one of these deals that when we see some data and get some things going you know we could change that season. There's just so many things we can do with that. And we do need to see, like Wade and some of these guys have talked, we need to see a little data. But that's kind of the beginning of a lot of things that we can do. The other thing is change is

where we don't have to open that hunt on that third Saturday in October. It gives us some flexibility. So I think we're going the right direction on there. The one thing that I'd like to talk about, well one other things, mandatory reporting. We've fought about that from as long as I was on the RAC or the Board. Where we put in online why can't we fill out our previous years hunting report online before you can apply for another hunt. Now I know, I've hunted that Monroe enough and I've watched that, two years ago I had a permit there and I hunted that late hunt, and I know that what those guys kill almost without exception. I can almost account for every bull. And the average age data on that was still low but it was higher than it really was. And the guys that kill those bigger bulls they're pretty proud of them and they're going to report them but some of these guys that don't they're not very happy about it and they just don't do it. So it's not hard to do and then the other thing is you don't have to hire somebody to be calling around doing all these phone surveys. That would be automatic. We put in so early any more before the draws and before the permit numbers are even set. I think that's something we really need to honestly look at. The other thing is on the Monroe, now we originally agreed on this that on these units that weren't spike and we made them spike, that if they were below objective we wouldn't hold a spike hunt on them. And I don't know where that all went; but at any rate the Monroe, the herd objective is 1,800 on it. We've bounced back and forth from somewhere in 900 to as high as 1,400 on that unit. But now you can see the age has dropped down on those bulls but the thing you can really see if you're really aware of it and watch those elk, the quality of them is down. So I think we need to go back and look at that. And where we're that far under objective on that unit I don't think there should be any spike units, or any spike permits on that unit. And that was agreed to at one time and I think it's still somewhere around. But we've kind of got away from that. So there's a lot of hostility down that in that area about that Monroe because it was a premier unit and now it's way down from where it was. But that would be my recommendation is to, until that herd unit gets to objective take the spike tags off of it. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Randy.

Randy Johnson: Hi, it's been a long night. I'll bet I'm the only one here that probably addresses the desert sheep recommendations and it's my privilege to do so. My name's Randy Johnson with High Desert Wild Sheep Guides. For the past 25 years I've had the honor and the privilege of spending more time on foot in your desert sheep units than I think probably anyone in the state. I understand your sheep. I've seen a lot of positive that's taken place with desert sheep over the years. I've also seen some negative. As some of the negatives that I've seen happen, for instance with our Escalante unit we had a lot of good solid sheet numbers there at one time. We started transplanting sheep off of the Escalante. And then some cougars moved in and now our herd is suffering over there. It isn't the quality that it once was. We've seen a decline in numbers. And with that comment I want to address the recommendations on our relatively new Zion unit. The Zion unit is a different sheep unit in Utah because it has Arizona genetics. You don't get Arizona genetics with our Utah sheep very seldom. Those sheep were transplanted into the Zion in 1975. We didn't even know that herd was growing until the last 2 or 3 years. It took from 1975 to now for us to get those kind of healthy numbers that we're seeing down on the Zion. Last year we had 5 resident tags. We had 1 non-resident. The governors tag I guarantee is going to hunt there, the sportsman's tag is going to hunt there and you had another hunter this past year that hunted here who had, his wife had got injured and he left the state last year and they reissued his tag, so we had 9 tags last year. We had a good count on the tag on the unit with their aerial survey, however, with the recommendation to go to 8 resident tags you'll have 1 non-resident, you'll have the sportsman's tag, you'll have the governor's tag, you'll have 11 sheep tags on that unit. Sheep hunting is a different animal. It's a fragile animal. And last year we took 2 170 rams off of that unit. Do you know how long it takes to grow a ram to reach Boone and Crocket caliber of 170? Those rams were 9 and 10 year old

rams. If we have 11 hunters on that unit it's going to turn into a zoo. And the reason I say that is because on the Zion you have the park boundary, you have a lot of private land, and so you have only three or four key access points. Most sheep hunters want a pristine experience. They don't want to go to a trailhead and see 20 other people going in to hunt a desert ram. And that's what's going to happen with the unit. I know that our biologists are looking at transplanting probably 20 to 30 sheep, that's the recommendation, off of there next year. If we manage it with the transplant we manage it. We've got to be careful. But if we take 11 rams off of there this year it's going to take the unit front to back to mediocre in no short time at all. And it's not my intent tonight in no way to impugn the integrity of our biologist. I work with those people. I respect them. They work very hard. Once in a while I'll disagree with them and I tell them that. And I would recommend that on the Zion unit you leave the number the same, 5 resident tags. Thanks for your time.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Randy. Scott Christensen followed by Deloss.

Scott Christensen: I didn't have this on my comment card but I'd just like to echo what Randy said about those sheep. I've had a little bit of opportunity to hunt with him and some of his outfitters. He really knows those animals and cares for them deeply. There are more opportunities than there have ever been, let's not by our eagerness hurt our future opportunity. My main comment was also to echo Paul Niemeyer's comment about required tooth data. This past year I sat on the Fishlake committee on working on the elk herd. One of the biggest things that I saw, and it was explained to me by the Division was the way that the age class was picked and it was by hunter harvest. But where we don't require the tooth data to be sent in it was very obvious. I did some surveying of people that I knew had drawn and asked how many sent in their tooth data, I mean it's not any official data, but everybody that shot a big mature bull sent in their tooth data for the Fishlake, everybody that shot a younger bull, maybe a rag horn or just not a big mature bull, said well I didn't shoot a very old one so I didn't send it in. So I think I'm really, I saw some real concern that our age class was showing actually higher than what's actually being harvested just because those that shoot the younger bulls aren't sending their tooth data in. So I would strongly urge the RAC to pass a motion to require that all teeth be sent in. Not just for elk but for all animals, I would love, but I understand the constraints of the Division, but as a minimum for limited entry units, deer, elk, sheep, everything of that nature. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Deloss.

Deloss Christensen: I'm not going to yell at you this time 'cause I don't care about elk as much as I care about deer. I would like to remind this RAC that we put the Monroe unit on the spike hunt list, this RAC voted not to. We met in Richfield that year and you got a lot of input and I think voted very responsibly. And then the Wildlife Board because it was a 4 to 1 vote that the other RACs didn't vote not to put spike hunting on the Monroe. So the Board overruled you and we had the spike hunt. But, at that time we said to you, that you're getting ready to raise the number of trophy bull permits. At the same time you're going to open it to spike elk hunting. And I guess you believed us when we said please don't do that at the same time. Let's go slower so we can see what the results are going to be of the overall elk population, and particularly the bull population with just the added trophy tags. Well we now know what happened, and that is that this desire to reduce the number of bulls on the unit so that there could be more cows on the unit so that we could produce more elk on the unit hasn't worked. We're still under objective. And I think if you look at the data we're more under objective than were when we started. I've taken the last Wednesday before the 4th of July for the last 16 years and driven up to the Monroe cove side where Big Lake and Deep Lake are. And I've counted the elk at daylight. And I go on that

Wednesday because all of the people that were there camping for the weekend are gone and the new group hasn't come in yet. So it's the quietest day on the unit that I can go up. And I drive exactly the same road every year and count the bulls. I've counted as high as 104. And Vance probably can attest to this because he's been there now 7 years and saw when we had numbers in the 80's and 90's up on that area. Last year, well two years ago the count was down to 32, and this year the count was down to 22. And I actually took another route at the end of my trip because I didn't have hardly any bulls, and 6 of those 22 were on a road I never take. So the consequence of killing from both ends is having a major impact on that unit. And Mr. Niemeyer's right, and he experienced it not only from his observation during the summer when those animals are very visible but when he actually hunted and had to try and find something to harvest. They're gone. We've killed them. So if you could at least stop one end or the other. I would like to see you ask the Board again this year to stop that spike hunt until we can get some of those bulls back. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. Mike Ahlstrom.

Mike Ahlstrom: I just barely slipped that one in under the wire didn't I. Just a couple things; I just can't echo enough the mandatory teeth and harvest data. It just doesn't make sense not to get all of that data. The Dutton elk, I know we're talking about a lot of the same stuff but I think the more you hear it the more you might believe us and get our feelings. We're at the 4th year of doing spike elk hunts on every unit, is that correct? This will be the 4th year? So we're getting really close to that time when, you know the Dutton's a 5.5 to 6 year old age class. So now we're getting close to where you're starting to see less and less of these bulls coming up. You know in the years past hunting the Dutton and being on it a bunch you saw that bottom end, those bulls coming up, and we're not seeing them. So, consequently, yeah, we've given more opportunity but we're taking away opportunity on the top end. We've got to drop those numbers. If we want to have spike hunts we need to, we can't harvest 147 bulls off of the Dutton and maintain quality. So that needs to be dropped without question. There's just not enough bulls coming up through and the next two or three years we'll see that more and more drastic. And I echo what Randy was talking about on the sheep on the Zion. It is phenomenal to go down there and look at those sheep. I mean, I don't know how many of us have seen 170 inch ram on the hoof but that's pretty impressive; and to be able to go down that and do that, I hate to see that go away. I'm not saying that the number's wrong, I just want to be really careful. I hate to see us all of a sudden say holy crap now we've got 155's on the Zion when we had a whole bunch of 170's. So thanks for your time.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Mike, I don't have any other comment cards. Did we miss anybody for this agenda item?

RAC Discussion and Vote:

Steve Flinders: Let me start off with a question for Anis about where we are in the process, we've got a proclamation in print but you're asking for some amendments tonight, what about mandatory tooth reporting, and for harvesting reporting including teeth?

Anis Aoude: Sure. Um, I mean both of those can be implemented. It would take a lot more work. The one concern we always have had on mandatory tooth reporting is that those that harvest and don't bring the head out or the tooth will lie on their harvest report saying they didn't harvest. So it skews your harvest report, which you need more than you need your age data. So, and then to make it mandatory you have to do a whole lot of things. You have to have registered mail to make sure they received

whatever. It's not as simple as everybody's making it sound, I guess. There's a lot of cost to it and there's a lot of bias to it as well. We currently get 70 to 80 percent return. Any biologist worth anything will tell you that's more than sufficient. Not only that we do get the mandatory harvest reporting and we tie that back to how many people didn't report and what kind of bulls they killed, so those that didn't report, didn't send a tooth in, we look at that antler measurements and all that and we compare those that did and didn't send in and statistically there's no difference in the age, antler quality of those that sent teeth in versus those that didn't send teeth in. So I understand there's the perception that there's a bias there, and there may be a few guys that shoot a dink and don't send teeth in, I would agree with that. But at least the overall data doesn't show that. We've looked at, because we require all hunters to measure the antlers when they send the mandatory report in. And the data doesn't bury it. I have nothing, I'm not opposed to any of that, just realize there's a high cost to it and enforcing it is almost a nightmare. I mean basically you're asking people to send stuff in the mail and if it's not certified they can say we sent it. There is no way you can penalize them. There's a lot of things that needs to be worked out on the tooth end of it. The mandatory reporting can be done; it's not free even if it's online. There is a cost for everyone that reports. You can't do it while they're putting in for applications because it's too late. We are already way down the road of setting permit numbers by that point. We need that data by the end of January early February to make recommendations to you now. So to do it during that time, during the application period is not something that could be done. That's why we make mandatory reporting so many days after they've harvested so we have that data that quickly. So all of it is possible. None of it is easy. If it were we would already be doing it. And the cost may be more than the benefit that we get out of it. Well the cost will be more than the benefit that we get out of it.

Steve Flinders: Yeah, thanks Anis. A follow up question about spike hunts, when under objective, remind us what's currently in the proclamation? (Unintelligible archery?)

Anis Aoude: There's nothing in the proclamation about, there is on archery cows. So when you're archery hunting on all units you can take either a bull or a cow but on units that are below objective, 75 percent or lower, you cannot take a cow. There is nothing in the rule that says that you cannot take a spike. And to my, from what I remember there never was. At least when we went to statewide spike it was in the new statewide plan and the only thing that was in there is that we would move slowly towards that 15,000 that we've already reached. And the success rates are fairly low on most units.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Discussion, questions? Yeah, sure Mike.

Mike Staheli: Is it possible to exclude one unit from the statewide spike plan?

Anis Aoude: Everything, everything is possible.

Mike Staheli: It's possible. Okay. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Mack.

Mack Morrell: Several years ago I attended the meeting in Bicknell and they tried to take off some genetic 5-points on Monroe. Is that still a problem or not? That's all they could produce was 5-points I thought.

Anis Aoude: Basically . . . Well you're talking about the management bull hunt that they had?

Mack Morrell: Yeah, yeah.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, what ended up happening is they ended up harvesting a lot of younger bulls that were 5-points instead of what was wanted. And it didn't really achieve . . . I you put enough permits to make a difference you're going to end up shooting a lot of younger bulls that have more potential than just shooting them as spikes. So that's why we decided to move away from that and hunt spikes to reduce bull cow ratios instead.

Steve Flinders: Other questions, discussions? We have also heard about the Dutton tonight. Do we want to talk about age data or review the age data for the Dutton? Brian.

Brian Johnson: Can I ask a question of Randy over there? You seem to spend a lot of time with those sheep. Um, most of those units as I've learned the mountain lion hunt on those are objective based, right? Harvest objective?

Randy Johnson: I would think so . . . (off mic)

Brian Johnson: So do you pack a cougar tag in your wallet?

Randy Johnson: I don't (off mic)

Brian Johnson: As much time as you spend out there? If you did would you be able to harvest any lions on that?

Randy Johnson: I've seen lions but not that often. I've found more dead sheep than I've seen lions (off mic)

Brian Johnson: So just, and I know this is taking up time and I'm sorry.

Steve Flinders: Are we going on a lion hunt here tonight?

Brian Johnson: I'd love to. But I'm just wondering what are your suggestions on the lion issue with those? Sorry, I'll talk to you after and we can get you on the record.

Steve Flinders: (Unintelligible) there may be a lion problem and not . . .

Brian Johnson: I'm just dumb. I'm just asking somebody who spends time on that unit.

Randy Johnson: On units that they can get in to our biologists try to get hunters in there to take the lions. On the Escalante it's a whole different world over there. You can't get 4-wheelers, horses, it's all backpack and then you've got the Glen Canyon National Recreation area who will not let us aerial gun them so it's a whole new problem. We're hoping we can get someone in there to snare them. But it's an issue on that unit right now.

Teresa Griffin: Yeah, and also that's something that we've been working with Randy getting some good locations. Dustin has seen some issues out there and we will probably try to get wildlife services in there also because it is, it's at least a day long trip, Randy, to even get in there? A couple of days. Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, we're looking at different options.

Steve Dalton: As far as the Dutton elk age data, 2009 was 6.0 and 5.6., 5.0 last year for 3-year average age of 5.5. The objective is 5.5 –6. For what that's worth. We've heard some issues with bull elk numbers on the Dutton. Any other discussion Cordell?

Cordell Pearson: I think on the Dutton and the Monroe I don't think the spike hunt is a problem at all, especially on the Dutton. I think they need to cut those bull tags probably in half, and they need to cut the ones on the Monroe. I mean it's a proven fact; I mean the success ratio on spikes is 13 percent. They don't kill that many spikes. The problem is not with killing spikes, it's that we're issuing too many tags on both of those units for mature bulls.

Steve Flinders: Other comments? Are we getting close to a motion? Sure Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Almost. I'd like to ask Paul what he thinks about that comment. Mr. Neimeyer.

Steve Flinders: Monroe elk permits, Paul.

Sam Carpenter: On what he just proposed there.

Paul Niemeyer: I think they killed 225 spikes on that Monroe last year. And that's bulls that you're not going to recruit into that older age group. But what I'm getting at and I will try to pull a GRAMA request on that, but we did talk about if that unit was under objective that we wouldn't hunt spikes on it. And then that did go. I was on the Board at that time. But the Monroe is a more open unit and it won't take the pressure that some of these other units will. And you can see how when they got given a lot of tags . . . And we haven't really seen the real affect of these spikes even yet; we haven't hunted them long enough. But when you don't recruit those back in you're going to see, you're going to see this quality at Monroe go down even more than it has. And you can look at the bulls and you can talk about tooth data and all that but you can go around and look at these bulls and they're not the kind of bulls they were. The biggest bull that I know that was killed on the Monroe last year was a 5-point. Now granted that was a giant 5-point but that was the biggest bull that I know of that was killed. And there might have been, you know, there was obviously 6-points and stuff killed but that, the quality's not there like it was. And like I say, we're just starting to tip the iceberg on harvesting this many spikes. And that's a lot to pull out of, you know when you've only got 1,400 head total on a unit and you pull that many spikes out of it you're not going to have the recruitment that we've had in the past..

Steve Flinders: Thanks Paul, further discussion? Motions? We can talk to Anis about spike hunting across the state.

Sam Carpenter: I'll go ahead and make a motion.

Steve Flinders: Sure Sam, or Layne.

Sam Carpenter: I make a motion that we accept the Department's proposal as recommended with some exceptions. 1) Cut Dutton to 110 permits 2) Discontinue spike hunting on Monroe 3) Zion sheep tags go to 5 total tags 4) Recommend mandatory reporting on elk teeth. It's like Paul says, they've tried, and tried, and tried. I know Anis said that it's not going to be significant but let's try it and see if it is or if it

isn't, and if it will make a difference in our classifications.

Steve Flinders: Second to the motion? Seconded by Layne.

Layne Torgerson: Second.

Steve Flinders: Discussion? Question on the motion?

Brian Johnson: I would love to take those one at a time if we could. Those four, those four exceptions. Is there any way that you would be open to up and down those one at a time?

Sam Carpenter: Absolutely.

Steve Flinders: Well we've got a motion and a second now.

Brian Johnson: Well I made an amendment.

Steve Flinders: We can vote on it as it is and see where it goes. I prefer we do.

Brian Johnson: Okay. I just, and then as we discuss this if we go mandatory reporting the Division has expressed their concern with the cost and we've already cutting tags I'm really concerned with burdening the Division with the added cost and not necessarily the benefit. I like a lot of your, I like a lot of those motions but the mandatory reporting really kind of spooks me as far as the extra work for the lack. And I worry about that. That's my concern.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. Other comments or discussions, feelings about the motion? We can talk about it all you want here. Sure.

Brian Johnson: I make a motion that we amend Sam's motion to drop the mandatory reporting.

Steve Flinders: This is you making an amended motion.

Brian Johnson: Amended motion to drop that.

Mack Morrell: I second it.

Steve Flinders: So an amended motion, there is no mandatory so it's statue quo.

Brian Johnson: That's, unless we vote up and down with it. He's got to accept it first doesn't he?

Steve Flinders: Yeah, we're kind of in a conundrum here, a trap between these so . . . Sam do you want to change your motion or?

Sam Carpenter: Okay. Let me ask a question. Providing that I do drop that are we going to have an opportunity to add that amendment and vote on it after the fact?

Steve Flinders: Except your motion said that you accept the Division's recommendation with the

following exceptions.

Sam Carpenter: And I am willing to go back and reinstate that without the mandatory tooth on there and then add that at a later time.

Steve Flinders: Unless there's further objections, since we have a motion and a second that essentially does that. Does anyone object to Sam doing that now? There are no objections then you can do that.

Sam Carpenter: Consider it done.

Steve Flinders: So you pulled mandatory reporting?

Sam Carpenter: I did.

Steve Flinders: Let's restate that motion so no one is confused. That motion, as I understand it is what the Division recommended with the exceptions of 1) that the Dutton have 110 total permits. 2) The Monroe no longer has a spike hunt. 3) The Zion has 5 total sheep, ram permits.

Sam Carpenter: That's it right there. You've hit them all.

Steve Flinders: And that's it. Do you still second that motion? That's my question.

Anis Aoude: Mr. Chair. One of those is not doable because there is already a 1 non-resident and that cannot be changed. So it could be 5 total but it has to be 4 and 1. Or 4 and 1, whichever. If you want 5 total permits it has to be 1 non-resident.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, yes.

Anis Aoude: Because that's already in the proclamation and gone to drawing and all that.

Steve Flinders: That's the motion. So it's 5 total permits as I said it. As I restated it. Do you still second that Layne? Does everybody understand the motion on the floor? Sure Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: The 5 tags on the sheep that excludes conservation, governor's tag, those kind of things, right?

Anis Aoude: Those are just draw permits. Those other ones can still hunt there.

Steve Flinders: These are permits that go into the draw. Good Question. Does everybody understand the motion on the table? Further discussion? Those in favor? Raise them up there. Those against? Passed.

Sam Carpenter made the motion to accept the Bucks Bulls and OIAL permit numbers as presented by the Division exceptions. 1) Reduce Dutton to 110 limited entry elk permits 2) discontinue spike hunting on the Monroe until it is at objective (3) reduce Zion sheep permits to 5 total. Layne Torgerson seconded. Motion carried 11 in favor, 1 opposed. (Paul Briggs opposed.)

Steve Flinders: So we're done with bucks and bulls.

Sam Carpenter: Unless we want to make an amendment on mandatory reporting. I would like to at least see a vote come out of this and get it down on the record. But I would still like to see . . . I make a motion that we have the mandatory tooth mail in on the elk hunts, limited entry elk hunts.

Steve Flinders: Second? Seconded by Rusty. Discussion? Sure Dale.

Dale Bagley: On your general season harvest surveys when you have the people call, about how much does that cost a year to run that?

Anis Aoude: I don't know if I have those numbers on the top of my head because we do them all, it's everything. (Unintelligible) wouldn't have them either.

Dale Bagley: Paul, I think Paul alluded to the fact that when we do our online applications if we were required to fill out that before we could even apply in January then that would eliminate that.

Anis Aoude: As I mentioned that would be too late for us to use that data.

Dale Bagley: It would be?

Anis Aoude: Yeah. So it would have to happen earlier somehow. And we do, all the limited entry has to have mandatory reporting. We just don't require it for general season. If we required it for general season it would roughly double our costs or general season surveys, which is roughly

Dale Bagley: So it wouldn't save money.

Anis Aoude: No, you're not going to save money in any way. So roughly it's around \$100,000 dollars that we spend on our surveys currently. So it would be around \$200,000 maybe \$250,000 to go for everyone to be able to do it.

Dale Bagley: Even eliminating the cost of hiring whoever makes the calls?

Anis Aoude: Well it still has to go through a company. I mean we're not going to . . . Even our current harvest surveys, the ones that are for limited entry cost us a certain amount per survey. None of it is free. And then there's a whole slew of thing that go along with that. So if you're adding another 80 or 90,000 that have mandatory, along with that comes all those that don't do that. So you have to send them three letters each, making sure that they got a chance to do it. And then if they don't do it then you have to, you give them an out; right now they can pay \$50.00 and still get into a draw. So there's, it's not just an upfront cost. I mean there are a whole lot of other costs. It's not a simple make it mandatory and it shall be. There's a lot of follow-up we have to do because we're a state agency to make sure that we give them every chance possible to do it. Yeah, if we were a private company, you know, we could say sorry, but we're not.

Steve Flinders: Further discussion about the motion?

Anis Aoude: Yeah it's roughly about \$1.50 per survey. Whether it's phone or Internet, it's similar, yeah.

Steve Flinders: Ready to vote? Those in favor of the motion? Mandatory tooth reporting. Did you get that? Those against? With one abstention. Motion fails. Any further business on this agenda item? Seeing none. Let's move on.

Sam Carpenter made the motion to make it mandatory for teeth to be sent in on limited entry elk hunts. Rusty Aiken seconded. Motion fails, four in favor, 6 opposed. (Brian Johnson, Mack Morrell, Cordell Pearson, Dale Bagley, Clair Woodbury, Mike Staheli, Paul Briggs, opposed, Layne Torgerson abstained)

Steve Flinders: Antlerless permit recommendations. I'm starting to think we should have had a meeting last month Anis.

Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2012 (action)

-Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator

3:59:00 to 4:03:10 of 5:22:49

-Teresa Griffin, Regional Wildlife Program Manager

(see attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Any questions? Sure, Mack.

Mack Morrell: On the Henry Mountains where you don't want any elk yet you have 20 and you're only issuing 8 permits. If you don't want elk then why don't you issue 20 permits or more so they can get them off?

Anis Aoude: Sure, so on that it's also part of the control permits. So anyone that hunts that unit for any other antlered animals can also buy one over the counter and harvest one as well.

Mack Morrell: You did that last year but how many bought the extra permits?

Anis Aoude: Uh, geeze I don't know if I have that information. I can get it but I don't know it right off the top of my head. The hard thing about that unit is if we issue a bunch of permits folks are going to think that there are actually elk out there and we'll have a bunch of people running around that can't find the elk. That's why we're trying to go with the control permits. These are people that are already out that and know the area, are hunting it. They may be more apt to actually harvest an animal versus not.

Mack Morrell: But your population has stayed the same for the last three years.

Anis Aoude: Which in our, I guess that's, it's actually not increasing which is remarkable for elk.

Mack Morrell: It's not decreasing either.

Anis Aoude: Well, I mean if you know how elk grow in other places if we're able to even keep them at 20 I think we're ahead of the game.

Brian Johnson: Anis, is there a social issue as far as if you put a bunch of elk tags out there and you've got somebody that's got a premium tag like the Henry Mountains, that would irritate me. So I see what you're doing.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, that's part of the issue as well. And again, it's a far out of the way unit. Not a lot of people know that unit well. If you put a bunch of permits you bet you'll sell them but once they get out there and they don't see any elk you're going to have a lot of angry . . . antlerless hunters and a lot of angry premium hunters.

Brian Johnson: Do you guys advertise? How does the education go as far as letting these people know they can buy an extra elk tag? Do you put a mailer in their . . .

Anis Aoude: I'll bet we could do a better job on that.

Brian Johnson: I think there are people that don't realize they can get an elk tag because. .. I mean.

Anis Aoude: Yeah. Well I agree, I think we could do a better job of that.

Steve Flinders: Other questions for Anis? Mack.

Mack Morrell: Got one more. On the antlerless elk, just in the southern region only, you've got an planned objective yet your population is under objective and you're still taking antlerless off.

Anis Aoude: Which unit are you talking about?.

Mack Morrell: Like Monroe. The objective is 1,800 and you've got 1,400 and you're taking 20 off.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, those are dealing with depredation issues in the valley.

Mack Morrell: What about in the Boulder you've got 1,500 and you've got 1,350 and you're taking 240 off.

Anis Aoude: Again, those are to deal with depredation issues.

Mack Morrell: Okay, just wondering. And then on the Fishlake you're at objective and you're not taking any off.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, that one is a little bit unique. It's one that we usually fly this year, and they did fly but they weren't able to fly the surrounding unit. And when they flew it they didn't count the number of elk that they usually do. But having not done a complete survey they weren't comfortable with issuing permits. And another part of that is a committee was formed that will likely increase objectives slightly on that unit so with those two things coming together the region decided not to issue any permits until they're more comfortable with the population there.

Mack Morrell: I was the RAC member assigned to that committee and I'll report in on that in the discussion.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Sure, Mike.

Mike Worthen: Yeah, on the Panguitch Lake unit you mentioned that the antlerless deer hunts were

because of damage done to the winter range by the deer, excessive deer. Was that across the board or is it specific spots?

Anis Aoude: No, it's specific. It's basically on the Parowan front.

Mike Worthen: From Parowan to Buckhorn Flat?

Anis Aoude: Uh, I don't know if I know that unit that well.

Mike Worthen: Or is it even smaller than that?

Anis Aoude: I'll have Dustin address that. I think he knows the specific areas.

Dustin Schaible: There are 2 different areas that we've got 2 different hunts; one's called Summit and one's called Cottonwood. Basically it takes in from Cedar to Highway 20, I-15 to the 7,000-foot level. So we really tried to target exactly where crucial winter range is at.

Steve Flinders: Anis, you brought up elk management plans, we're going to see those next month at this meeting?

Anis Aoude: Correct.

Steve Flinders: How many other units do you anticipate increasing? I mean we're used to seeing recommendations that are (unintelligible).

Anis Aoude: Yeah, I just barely got them and I'm still going through them. So I don't see a whole lot of increases in the state. It's not going to be substantive. I don't, I can't say a number right now because I don't know. I know that one specifically because we knew it was going to come up so I asked the region what they thought and what their recommendations, why they recommended 0 permits and that was their rationale.

Steve Flinders: So we know how many it's going up, did you say that?

Anis Aoude: I think they're recommending 800 increase. 800 add increase. I mean you're going to see it next month so it's not secret but that's the only one that I really, you know, have a number for just because it's the only one I . . .

Steve Flinders: Regardless of what's going on next month unless we have some hunt, a hunt, we could increase permits on, there's no way to add a hunt after next month's meeting.

Anis Aoude: There is not. Yeah, it's one of those where. . I think not only are they anticipating the increase but they also are not comfortable with the flight they just had. It wasn't that it was definitely their low but it was that they're not sure because they didn't get, they fly them, they fly the units surrounding so they can get a better feel. Just snow conditions didn't allow it. It wasn't even a very good flight on the unit they did fly because of snow conditions. It was one of those things where because they're not sure of the population level they don't want to, they've had lots of high, a high number of permits the last few years and so they don't want to compound that.

Steve Flinders: Do you have a question Rusty?

Rusty Aiken: A comment I guess. The Parowan front doe situation, I was on a field trip with the Division, the BLM was there, some of the sportsman, whatnot, a couple of years in a row now, there was a suggestion this year that to maybe narrow the, they have an elevation line put 20 as the upper boundary and they thought they might be able to tweak that a little bit and close that in. And go narrower around Cottonwood to try to target those problem areas a little better. I'm thinking it could be done this year. Anis Aoude: (Unintelligible) narrowed? Or, what's the rationale for narrowing that?

Dustin Schaible: I think a lot of those deer still move a lot more north and south than east and west and I think there's also some law enforcement issues there. And I think our goal is to try to reduce mouths. I mean as you've seen the damages there and so we don't want to do anything that would lower harvest. I mean that 150 is still pretty low in terms of the overall mouths that still probably need to be removed. So I guess we don't want to further restrict those hunters. Do you know what I mean?

Rusty Aiken: Nope.

Anis Aoude: Another aspect to that is when hunters are there they move the animals as well. So it's better to have hunters across the range keeping those deer at higher elevation than have them, so not only killing the animals but moving them up on the hill, keeping them from that lower range from being degraded. So it's best to have pressure throughout that way you're not moving the problem from one area to the next.

Rusty Aiken: Right, Gary and Jason were there; they thought it was a pretty good idea, at the time. It would be narrowing it not further north, shorten it closer to Cottonwood where the damage is being done. So, something to look at.

Steve Flinders: Sam.

Sam Carpenter: I keep hearing rumors of transplanting deer. Is this the area they're considering doing that?

Anis Aoude: Yeah, this is the area. So if we do transplant and we are looking at it, it would be a research on it if we can transplant and how effective that would be. So that's still in the works. It's something that sportsman want us to do. The SFW would be willing to fund it totally. Because the Division really doesn't feel that it's research that we want to do because we have other things that we want to look at that are more important. So yeah, we want to do a research project. If that occurs it may occur this year and if it does we would limit the number of tags based on how many deer we move. There's a lot of moving parts to a research project so I don't know if it will happen this year. So if we do do it, it may be an emergency type of closure where we have to reduce permits or whatever. Even if we did do it we could still harvest 150 animals and move 100 animals and I think that population can still sustain it. So yeah, I mean that's something we're looking at and it's still in its infancy. We're looking at where to put them, sample size, all those things that go into a good design study so we can track them and make sure whether it was successful or not. Because we've done transplants in the past and they've never been successful. But they also have never been documented very well either. So we want to make sure that if we do do this we want to document it well.

Sam Carpenter: Would this require collaring these deer? And how far away do you have to move them?

Anis Aoude: Yeah. Those are the things that we're going to try to answer with this research. The places we've moved them, it depends on so many variables. If you move them into winter range that has poor summer range they could do not so well because the summer range is not going to support them. If you move them into areas where there's good winter range and good summer range if they're not familiar with it, mule deer are, you know, a hard species to transplant because they're so traditional in their movement. We have to figure out a good place to put them where they would thrive both on winter and summer range and we're still looking for such a place. Again, it's not an easy thing to do. And we want to do it in a way that succeeds. I mean we know what fails and we don't want to repeat something that's failed. So we're looking to do it right and try to get a result that's duplicable. Again, even if it is successful it's probably not a tool that we'll use a lot because if populations ever rebound because of good conditions you'll have very few places where you can put deer because they're going to be doing well, hopefully, throughout the state. So this is kind of a unique situation. It gives us an opportunity to do some research and if it's all paid for we're not opposed to it.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? RAC? Dale.

Dale Bagley: I want to put Vance on the spot real quick. You don't get out that easy Vance. On this new Greenwich hunt, and we're both aware of the problems there, and I realize what you're trying to do. But if I'm a limited entry bull hunter I'm going to be pissed. So is there any compromise you can give those limited entry hunters 5-days and open that up after that?

Vance Mumford: As far as the season dates, so you're talking about the early, early? Yeah. You know that's something that we tried this year to try to reduce those elk that are coming into hay fields in September. And you know, we could take that off, those dates off, those early dates. And we talked about that. That was a big issue.

Dale Bagley: I'll probably get hung for even suggesting it.

Vance Mumford: You know what, one of the challenges we have with elk management is depredation. And so we want to make sure we're putting our best foot forward to try to reduce to increase tolerance of elk numbers. And so that's why I thought that overwrites the dates overlapping the limited entry elk hunt. And it's a very small area. The other reason I thought that it would be okay to do those dates was the area size. But yeah, the dates are always negotiable.

Dale Bagley: That's fine. I won't, I'll stay out of it because it is kind of a conflict of interest. But I mean when I did draw had that effect on it I might have been a little upset so I can see some other guys, you know, under those circumstances.

Vance Mumford: I understand.

Steve Flinders: Other questions?

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Now we're ready for questions from the public. Sure. Thanks for everybody's patience; it's been a long night.

John Keeler: John Keeler with the Utah Farm Bureau. A couple of questions have already been asked but I would like to re-ask them. In the first couple of pages of this document that was handed out with the plans tonight, the recommendations, one of the recommendations was that you, the Division, would use antlerless to get to or stay within objective. Yet on the Fishlake in the limited entry bull, that could have shown an increase, it was a green; there was no increase recommended. On the Dutton, it is over objective but a 22 percent reduction in the recommendation for antlerless. On the Thousand Lakes zero. On the Boulder, it's only 10 percent below objective but a 62 percent reduction in antlerless permits. So the question is why?

Vance Mumford: Yeah, if I could answer the question on the Fishlake, as Anis explained we look at all the different factors when we estimate our elk population. And so our models and our other information says we're about at objective. But when, as Anis explained, when we flew it this winter, and we all know how little of a winter we had, we had elk wintering really high and in different places and so I didn't trust my count. My estimation after we added our sightability index was about 4,000 elk with the actual count that we had on the Fishlake. With our objective of 4,800 that's a big gap. And I wanted to make sure that we did not over harvest the Fishlake. And so that's why I did not recommend any Fishlake cow elk permits this year. Now our plan next year is to fly all those units, the 4 units there, and get the best estimation that we can on that. And if we are indeed over objective on the Fishlake depending on how the Board votes on any population increase then we'll make good on our objective and harvest enough cows to bring it back down to objective.

John Keeler: Would you do the math for calf recruitment on a herd of 4,800?

Vance Mumford: Sure. If you have a herd of about 4,800 animals you'll probably give birth to around between 1,200 and 1,400 calves that spring. And so that's a lot of elk. That's a lot of elk. And half of those calves will be bulls and half females. And so those bulls will be subject to spike harvest and the cows would be subject to any antlerless harvest.

Anis Aoude: To clarify, given that production we could get to objective in one year if the objective is raised. But we would have to harvest 700 antlerless animals to keep it where it is now. That just kind of puts it in perspective in more than just numbers.

John Keeler: Well I think it's a good question asking why, because if you look at the history of that unit and the numbers that have been there and the numbers you've been taking, that is, that just doesn't cut the mustard.

Steve Flinders: Other questions from the audience? Yes sir.

Scott Christensen: Scott Christensen. Just a quick comment. I appreciate Vance and erring on the side of caution until they have better data to know what to do on that. I want to shift gears a little bit from elk over to antelope a little bit. I guess I'm a big fan of the Plateau antelope herd. I'm just curious, I couldn't find any data, do you, maybe Jim can tell me what the herd size is now and what objective is for that unit now. I've never really known.

Jim Lamb: The objective on the Plateau pronghorn is 1500. We counted it about 10 days ago and when we added in our sightability we came up with 1,660 for an estimated population out on the Parker.

Scott Christensen: And so, remind me again, the sightability factor versus non-sightability.

Jim Lamb: We estimate on a fixed-wing flight for pronghorn that we see about 70 percent of the animals that are there; so when we get done flying we just add up what we saw and then we add 30 percent more.

Scott Christensen: And I don't know how we start this process but as a hunter how do we make recommendations, kind of like the elk committees, to possibly increase that herd?

Jim Lamb: We actually have a pronghorn committee. We met the day after the flight with the pronghorn committee and I suggested that we increase the objective on the Parker and the committee chose to .. . We had focused, in the last 5 years our plan had focused on reducing the herd and getting it to objective, which the objective that was chosen in 2005 was 1,500. We were able to make it to that goal and the committee wanted us to focus now on habitat and water development on the Parker and see where we are. I generally meet with that committee every single year. Kind of informally, except on the years where we actually rewrite the plan. And so they function pretty well. And we've made some commitments to do some more habitat work. And I'm getting some information from the permittees on where the water developments need to be

Scott Christensen: Okay. I guess I'm confused because, what, only 4 years ago we were at 4,000 on that unit? 3,000 plus. Where did the water go in the last 2 or 3 years if it supported that many animals back then?

Jim Lamb: Well this, like so many decisions we make in wildlife, we have social components, political components and biological components and we have to combine all of those to come up with something that 's workable.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? So there was no plan prior to that was there Jim, a formal pronghorn plan?

Jim Lamb: Not before 2005.

Steve Flinders: Yeah. Other questions from the audience?

Comments from the public:

Steve Flinders: Seeing none let's move on to comment cards. Is Durrell Yardley still here? We wore him out. John Keeler, on the phone. Amy Barker. Let me pass these letters.

Amy Barker: Amy Barker, District Ranger, Beaver Ranger District. And I apologize for reading this but you guys should all have a copy of it. We would like to take this opportunity to offer comments from the Dixie and Fishlake National Forest on the proposed harvest levels of elk for the 2012 grazing hunting season. We support the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources efforts to manage elk and deer to the population levels identified in the existing herd management plans. The existing herd management

plans were built collaboratively with sportsman, landowners, land management agencies, and UDWR. It is important to honor these plans and agreements made through the planning process. We do have a concern that 6 of the 9 herd management units that lie within lands administered by the Dixie or Fishlake National Forest are either at the management plan objective or above. Under the proposed antlerless elk recommendations the following management units are currently at population objectives or over, including Fillmore, Beaver, Mt. Dutton, Fishlake, Zion, and Pine Valley. With limited antlerless tags or no tags the ability to hold population level objectives at the current level or even decrease a population as a whole is not obtainable. Based on the current trajectory of population numbers these units will continue to grow due to annual recruitment of calves and be substantially outside of the plan population objectives within the year. With the limited number of antlerless elk tags being offered in these 6 units our inability to regenerate aspen will increase. The Dixie and Fishlake National Forests are aggressively managing habitats for big game species as well as all other wildlife species on the forest. While many vegetation treatments are continually modifying vegetation in an effort to maintain quality habitat across landscape these landscapes are continually changing due to the number of environmental factors. Managing ungulate use is an important component to the success of managing these landscapes. Successful management of key species such as aspen is important to the overall health of the ecosystems we manage on the national forests. Within some specific areas in herd management unit locations elk to appear to be having a negative impact on our ability to regenerate aspen communities. In some cases it also appears elk grazing in riparian areas in the spring is having a negative impact. Both of these plant communities are critical for elk habitat and other natural resources. As a result of these habitat concerns the Dixie and Fishlake National Forest support the current population numbers as identified in the existing management plans and recommend the DWR make antlerless recommendations that will keep populations within existing plans. We look forward to finally finalizing the elk herd unit management plans and are confident we can develop durable solutions for elk management by working through the process with local committees. Thank you for your opportunity to provide comments. It was signed Rob Mackorder, Forest Supervisor of the Dixie National Forest, and Allan Rally Forest Supervisor of the Fishlake National Forest. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. John Keeler.

John Keeler: John Keeler, Utah Farm Bureau. We have several items that we want to discuss as it relates to antlerless elk numbers. Some have been mentioned. First of all many of the units are at objective. The snow pack in the southern region has not been that great so we have the potential to be sort on water. This issue that was mentioned by the Forest Service of the lack of aspen recruitment is one area where environmental groups are forcing the forest service to take action. There's a group put together that's on the Monroe Mountain that's doing some analysis of what's going on there, trying to find out what's going on. But ungulate grazing, grazing pressure is one of the big factors. And of course, the Forest Service when that is brought up the only animals that they can control are the livestock. So there's continued pressure to reduce or control the livestock. When we bring up elk numbers then the answer is always well we can't control those numbers. Well in this process we can. And we would like to recommend some antlerless hunts, particularly on the Fishlake, Thousand Lakes. This is a serious problem one of which if, I believe personally, that if the environmental groups are successful in getting rid of the livestock numbers they're going to go after the hunters next and they'll use wolf to do it. So I think we have to be concerned about the resource. There's a lot of talk about numbers, higher, lower, this way, that way, but the terms been used let's caution on the side of being more restrictive. I think we should be cautioning on the side of the resource. If we've got a resource problem then let's do something about it. And these elk numbers are, these increasing elk numbers are a real problem, a real

concern and they are a big part of the problem. As mentioned before, there's, I think a, nobody said for sure, but a recommendation on the change of these elk unit plans for next month's RAC meeting. And somebody said something about 800 increase. I don't know which unit that's on, it's just one, or two, or three. But just on one unit you've got a calf crop of 1,200 coming up and you're only going to take off 800? Or are you wanting to add 800 more on that plan? That doesn't seem to be too responsible. Last year when we met in the deer unit talks about the deer plan, mule deer plan, there were hunter, after hunter, after hunter who stood up and said they believe part of the problem was the large number of elk on these units that was partially responsible for the decrease in deer numbers. The Division's response to that is there's no scientific evidence to demonstrate that or show that, but still it exists; people believe that. Many wildlife biologists believe it. So it's still a factor that needs to be looked at. The Farm Bureau has stood up many, many times, as you know, and been concerned about the increase in elk numbers because obviously we're representing livestock industry. But we've got to be concerned about this resource or these environmental groups are going to shove it down the throats of the Forest Service. They will cause a change. There will be a change. And I think we've always been more or less allies as hunters and livestockmen because we know in agriculture you have to have hunters to control the numbers. We need to control these numbers. They are getting too large with these elk numbers. We would like to recommend on the Thousand Lake unit that there at least be a 500 antlerless hunt on that unit. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thanks John. Lee Tracy, followed by Brayden Richmond.

Lee Tracy: I'll make this short and sweet. The United Wildlife Cooperative supports the Division's recommendations regarding the 2012 antlerless deer, pronghorn doe, antlerless elk, and antlerless moose permits. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Brayden, followed by Cody Smith. Is Cody still here?

Brayden Richmond: Brayden Richmond representing the Beaver SFW chapter. I've got several things to talk about so hopefully I can link it all together. First I want to talk about the range ride that Rusty talked about down in Paragonah, one of the few places we're seeing an antlerless hunt proposed. Beaver chapter has come to the RAC for the last several years very concerned about this hunt. This range ride was a good opportunity for us; it opened our eyes. One of the things that Rusty brought up in the question and answer though, and I didn't see Gary or Jason here. Are either of them? Oh, Jason is here. Okay, great. When we met there it was pretty obvious the damage that occurring there but it, you know, it really is occurring in Cottonwood, south of Paragonah down into Summit. Our real concern is, my personal experience on that hunt this last year, I didn't have a tag but I was down that during the hunt and I watched people, the majority of the hunters I saw were north of Cottonwood towards Highway 20. And the range up there was better than south of there. We would support the Division, now if you listened to me the last couple of years that's new, we would support the Division in removing mouths off this range but we would strongly encourage the Division to tighten these boundaries around this Cottonwood area. In fact part of that discussion that day was that the Division would really like to propose 300 tags not 150, but the social aspect didn't allow them to do that. I would suggest that the Division propose how many tags they need to remove and we would be more apt to support it if they would isolate the area that's getting damaged. I really think if we tightened up that area we could add tags or remove mouths, you know, we've talked about the transplant too, that's another way to remove mouths off of there and I think there's some good options to do that. But we don't want to see that hunt continue with the boundaries up to Highway 20 and we will continue to fight that. Which leads up to my

second problem that I'm having a hard time understanding. There was a gentleman here early that discussed this. He talked about the objective numbers on these deer and I highlighted on Beaver, the objective is 11,000 and we're at, our estimates are 11,000. Paunsaugant, our objective is 5,200 and we're at 5,200. Panguitch Lake we're 8,500, population's at 8,500. That's a little fishy to me that our populations are exactly the objective. I think we have some problems there. There's two other units on here that I find even more interesting the Zion is, objective is 9,000, population is estimated at 10,500 and Pine Valley's at 12,800 and population 13,000. As I understand it we're over objective. We're supposed to have doe hunts. We're supposed to remove mouths off of those ranges. On the Beaver in discussions I've had, the habitat is good. The habitat can support more deer. So according to our current numbers, at 11,000 deer if next year we count 11,020 we should remove 20 mouths off of that unit, yet our habitat can support more. My understanding is the reason the Division's not proposing more doe hunts on the Zion where it's 1,500 over is because the habitat can support it. I think we need to get our data to match up. We're playing games here and it makes it awfully hard for me as a public member to come and try to participate if we're playing games with numbers. If we can support more deer let's raise our objective. If we can't support more deer then we've got to deal with that. But let's have our numbers and our data work together. Just a concern. Another issue that we talked about at the Beaver SFW committee we'd like to throw out the idea and get some thought going. We'd like to talk and maybe get with our local biologists and go over this some more but the idea of removing the elk off of the Minerals and Bald Ridges, we have an incredible deer gene pool out there. There's some suggestions of deer and elk don't get along real well, you know that can be debated, but we'd rather work towards our deer and we have plenty of places to hunt elk. We'd like to just put that bug in your ear. And I think that's all I have. Oh, I guess I have one more, one more, just a think to throw out; and this is not the time or place, I understand that but I've been to a couple of RACs now and told it's not the time or place at any of the RACs, we continue to kill cow elk on all these units. On San Juan, which is the unit I'm most familiar with, we're killing almost double the cows as we are bulls. Our bull to cow ratio now is approaching 2 bulls to 1 cow. You know, we're talking about antlerless and we're talking about killing cows so I guess it's as good a time as any. We've got to figure this out. I'm not sure what the solution is. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Brayden. And we have information. Blair, the new elk plan. Does that address elk west of 15? So we'll see that in the new plan hopefully. Strategies for next year. Further comment cards? Wade Heaton.

Wade Heaton: Really quickly. Wade Heaton supporting Friends of the Paunsaugant or representing Friends of the Paunsaugant. I support them as well. But uh, two quick items both on the Paunsaugant. We're happy to see the increase in cow elk permits. We've kind of had a phenomenon going on down there with our elk that's been a little bit unusual. A lot of the elk are starting to stay on the unit, winter on the unit. They're moving farther south into some lower elevation country and we might end up with our own elk herd now and not share it with the Dutton. And because of that Dustin has really worked hard on that and increased those permits. We really want to keep that number of elk on the Paunsaugant to a minimum. So we support that increase. As well on the doe side, we support having no doe hunts on the Paunsaugant. We've done a lot of habitat projects, a lot of water projects. The range looks pretty good and we think we can support a few more deer on there so we're happy to see that's there's not going to be any doe hunts on there this year. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Paul, do you want to read that letter into the minutes from the field manager for the BLM?

Paul Briggs: If you'll bear with me, I know it's been a long night. The BLM would like to take this opportunity to read a letter of support for the Division's recommendations on antlerless permits. It's from the Cedar City Field Office of the BLM, where the 150 permits that we're talking about on the Panguitch Lake unit are located. Dear Regional Advisory Council members. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on antlerless recommendations tonight. We support UDWR's recommendation for the Panguitch Lake units specifically with regard to continued issuance of antlerless permits. This is the only unit in the state where antlerless permits to deal with habitat damage on rangeland are proposed. BLM has been concerned about the condition of these rangelands for years. We've implemented habitat restoration projects on over 6,000 acres of crucial winter range in cooperation with our many partners. Along miles of the Parowan front the public land available for these deer during the winter in only one mile wide. Somewhere around 2/3 to 3/4 of the deer on the mountain in the summer will migrate to the west side for the winter. The valleys where these deer once wintered are no longer available. Interstate 15 blocks access to many lands and many lands are developed for housing or agriculture. BLM has been renewing livestock grazing permits in this area; many areas did not meet BLM rangeland health standards. We have implemented changes to livestock seasons use on several allotments to address range concerns. Also, portions of the winter range are unallocated and receive no livestock grazing. BLM agrees with DWR that the winter range cannot support additional deer. A severe winter would result in high deer mortality and additional damage to the habitat. We encourage the RAC to allow the harvest and use of these deer by approving the antlerless permits. Thank you. And Elizabeth Burkhart, the field office manager, signed it.

Steve Flinders: That's all the comment card that I have. Did I miss anybody?

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: Further comments and discussion for the RAC? Mack.

Mack Morrell: I'd like to address the antelope first. With the sightability and recruitment coming in and what we're taking off, that population would be about 500 over objective. And where the antelope winter, which is up at Tursa, there were 4 permittees that has suspended AUMs that they cannot use because of antelope and the past use up there. They've devastated it. So I would recommend, well I'll get to that motion later, but so we're going to want to increase the doe antelope permits. Second of all, I said that I would report on the Fishlake elk committee meeting. I'll just summarize briefly, the forest ranger assigned to the was Jason Kling, out of the Richfield office, and also Curtis Robins from the Fremont River district office; both managed for that Fishlake. And when Vance went around for the vote and they voted to increase, but Jason was about the third to the last and if he'd of made his statement first they wouldn't have recommended an increase. He specifically said, in conversing with Robins, the two rangers said, the Fishlake cannot sustain an increase in elk, period. That's what he said. Okay? And that's right, Paul, we were there. Now, with aspen I think a lot has been said about that aspen regeneration. They say a healthy forest has aspen regeneration and that's not happening in the Fishlake; they're losing it. In fact last summer Dr. Clarence Kay, Charles Kay, did some studies up there and in the past several years and showed where the ungulates specifically elk, has taken the aspen stand out. They got a place they call Pando up there which is known world wide for the longest or oldest stand of trees or organism, and that's aspen stand, and that's being decreased because of elk. Now one question for Vance: You indicated you counted 4,000 elk and then quit. What's your sightability?

Vance Mumford: That's a good questions Mack. We actually counted just under 3,000 elk and with our

sightability of 70 percent that came to about 4,000, just over 4,000 elk was our estimation.

Mack Morrell: And well I understand that because the elk cross I-70 it wasn't counted?

Vance Mumford: Yeah, elk, elk, what we're finding more and more is elk just don't know the boundaries that we like to assign to them. And so they can . . .

Mack Morrell: And that's why I think your count is unreliable because I think they collared some elk at Dutton and found out where they summered and where they wintered because you've got to count the Dutton, Monroe, the Fishlake and the Boulder all the same year to get a reliable count. And that hasn't happened yet.

Vance Mumford: Right, correct. And the weather just didn't allow that this year so what we like to do is. . .

Mack Morrell: Yeah, I understand that.

Vance Mumford: Yeah, just regroup next year. Get the best most solid count that we can get and then adjust our antlerless numbers to reflect that.

Mack Morrell: Now when we went to the Fishlake Committee, there was a graph that shows in 1975 elk population about 18,000 and now there up at 75,000. And I would rather, I would guess the deer population runs just opposite of that. And all we've heard in these RAC meetings this last year is more deer, more deer, more deer. And I think the elk is increasing and subsequently the deer herd is decreasing. I know on the winter range they compete with the same forage, not on the summer. And when there's a social thing with elk and deer. Deer is a very fragile species and they move. There's no deer where the elk is at; they just move them out. So . . . I think that based on what the Forest Service said and the Farm Bureau that we need to take 5 to 800 off the Fishlake because if not, if we ever get a decent count you'll be having a blue light special like we did several years ago and that won't go over very good

Vance Mumford: Understand Mack, it definitely does. And that's the dilemma that we're in is do we issue antlerless tags on what we think is there or what we counted? And so, and that's why, like I said, I want to err on the side of caution. And I can catch up next year if need be.

Mack Morrell: Yeah, because you've got recruitment coming in.

Vance Mumford: Yeah, definitely will have.

Mack Morrell: Yeah and ease. Yeah, so you're over objective.

Vance Mumford: Yeah, but we will, it's a winter objective and so we do, we will have, you know, a lot of large bulls and spikes harvested this fall. And so there will be harvest you know before count next year.

Mack Morrell: Yeah, but you're not going to harvest 800 or so. So anyway just a comment.

Vance Mumford: Sure. Probably not. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Other comments, discussion about what we heard here tonight? Do we want to tackle this? A species at a time? I don't care, you, see your way ahead and take us there.

Clair Woodbury: I move that we accept the Division's recommendations on these bulls and once in a lifetime as presented, excuse me, antlerless as presented. Thank you.

Cordell Pearson: Second.

Clair Woodbury: It's a long night and I'm getting tired.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Clair. Accept as presented, is that? Do we have a second? Cordell. Discussion on that motion?

Mack Morrell: Is it time for amendments?

Steve Flinders: You can jump in with one.

Mack Morrell: I would like to amend the motion by adding the Plateau on antelope doe to 250 instead of 100. And amend the motion for the Plateau, Fishlake, Thousand Lake elk, which is zero, to 500.m zero to 500.

Steve Flinders: Is that amendment seconded? Seconded by Mike Worthen. Discussion on the amendment? Clair, do you want to entertain that as part of your motion, original motion? You don't have to.

Clair Woodbury: No.

Steve Flinders: Okay, we'll treat the amendment as a separate motion for now. More discussion about that motion? Brian.

Brian Johnson: I know you're probably tired of hearing from me but I really like the sound of my own voice in the microphone because it comes off and hits me in the back and it's really cool.

Steve Flinders: We were worried about that.

Brian Johnson: I'm glad you like that. I am concerned about a blue light special. You're the biologist on that. What are your thoughts on 500 cow elk tags? I mean you're the guy that's on that unit.

Vance Mumford: You know it's, if we give out 500 elk tags it kind of would depend, our success rate would depend on what season we put those in. It would probably result in anywhere from a 200 to 350 elk harvest. It wouldn't decimate the elk herd if we are closer to 4,000 or 4,800, but it would set us back quite significantly. If we're at 4,800 and we harvest that many you know that would be great.

Brian Johnson: So socially, what's the best move here. I mean that's, I feel bad for you.

Vance Mumford: Um, yeah.

Steve Flinders: I don't have a vote on this issue unless we're tied. And I . . .

Brian Johnson: Let's hear what you've got to say.

Steve Flinders: And I, well I didn't mean to make people think I was equivocal about bucks and bulls from an agency point of view we're worried about multiple use management and we're worried about healthy vegetative communities and habitats, and worked every day to expand quality and quantity of habitat. The proportions of antlered animals out there are for the public to decide. I have my own personal views but from an agency point of view, you see what I mean, the number of bucks or bulls doesn't matter. But in terms of antlerless at the very least it would be nice to see some hunt for the Fishlake so that whether this plan passes or not next month and the numbers in that plan and more discussions about things, there's no hunt at all available right now. It would be nice to see something there.

Clair Woodbury: If there's 4,000 elk there we have no business shooting any cows.

Brian Johnson: If there's not a hunt available we wouldn't have an option. Would you be able to bump that number, would you entertain bumping that number from 50 to 250 just so there's the option?

Mack Morrell: You're going to take only 250 off anyway.

Brian Johnson: Just throwing out ideas.

Steve Flinders: Any other discussions (unintelligible)? Sure.

Sam Carpenter: Mack, can you tell me again which unit you want to up the harvest on the doe antelope?

Mack Morrell: It's recommended 100 and I want to bump that 150 to 250, which would put that down close to objective with recruitment. It's 100 and now we want to, I want to put that 150 more which would be 250.

Clair Woodbury: Isn't this unit already being doubled from last year on the does being killed?

Anis Aoude: There were no permits last year. There were a few token permits on depredation but none on the unit.

Steve Flinders: Just recently met objective.

Clair Woodbury: Isn't that the 47 on the Plateau? Or 2011? 47 last year and doubled to 100 this year.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, they were valley hunts, they were dealing with depredation, the hunts last year..

Steve Flinders: Landowner, over there.

Anis Aoude: Yeah, well they were in croplands.

Steve Flinders: Further discussion? We've got an amended motion on the floor that we'll vote on first.

Brian Johnson: Well, I'm just wondering about shrinking those boundaries up on that Summit. I would like to see that get shrunk around that Cottonwood area.

Steve Flinders: Lets deal with amendment and then you can make another amendment if you want.

Brian Johnson: Okay, I'll get into that in just a minute I guess.

Steve Flinders: Let's deal with this amended motion. Any other discussion about Mack's amendment? Is everybody clear what it is? 250 on Plateau Antelope and 500 for Fishlake, Plateau, Thousand Lake. Those in favor of the amended motion? Hold them up there. Did you get that count? Those against? We had an abstention over here I could see. One against? Motion passes. The amendment passes.

Mack Morrell made the motion to include the following permit number adjustments in the motion: 250 antlerless antelope permits on the Plateau, rather than 100; and 500 antlerless elk permits on the Plateau, Fishlake/Thousand Lake, rather than 0. Mike Worthen seconded. Motion carries 9 in favor 2 against. (Paul Briggs abstained.)

Steve Flinders: Any further amendments to Clair's original motion to pass as recommended?

Brian Johnson: Um, I would like to see that get shrunk. I don't know the solution.

Steve Flinders: You can make a motion and recommend, ask the Division to do that, to focus on that. We've heard comments about it tonight.

Brian Johnson: Okay, I would like to make a motion that we shrink that Parowan front, Cottonwood unit just to get closer to that Cottonwood area.

Steve Flinders: Seconded by Rusty. Any more discussion?

Paul Briggs: I'd like to add a little bit to the discussion on that. Just having experience with that, hunted the last several years, and Dustin you guys from the Division chime in, but those 150 deer aren't on that same little tract of land all winter. They're not the deer that are necessarily there during that hunt. They're not necessarily those same deer. You need to spread those hunters out a little farther than you're thinking to get as high a success rate as possible on those 150 tags. Or, you know, I guess, if you shrink that down there we'll see what happens with the success rate but that's my prediction, you'll have a much lower success rate than you're after.

Steve Flinders: Chime in Anis.

Anis Aoude: Another thing that may result is you'll deal with a problem here but you're moving the problem somewhere. So it's always best when you're dealing with such a long and narrow piece of real estate is to put pressure on it all so you keep the deer up a little higher.

Brian Johnson: What if the . . . and this is just a question. I'm slow so bear with me. What if you

lengthened the hunt from being a 15 day hunt to being a 30 day hunt or a 45 day hunt so as those deer want to be in that certain area you're targeting more of that specific deer because if you've only got a 15 day hunt it's like boom and they all scatter like you're saying. Would that help or not?

Anis Aoude: Well certainly lengthening the hunt will help. But concentrating in on area is still going to let, those deer that are being pressured for 30 days they move to surrounding areas and harm that habitat. You know it's not like these deer are not moving side to side, it's all winter range. Yeah, the damage is there because they're using that more but once you put pressure there you're going to put them elsewhere. Again, it could work; it may backfire. And that's why we would rather see pressure along the whole winter range, which is all critical, than just moving the problem down and keep moving it back and then you're basically, you know, always having to change boundaries to deal with one little specific area when you know you have a problem range wide.

Dustin Schaible: I just wanted to add that Summit area actually looks a lot better and we don't want to just push deer south, you know, into some of the habitat that does look good. And then there's alfalfa fields all spread out through there. So I mean, it's a balance, just what Anis is saying. Just trying to reduce mouths and I think they're utilizing that whole front.

Steve Flinders: Is that clarified?

Anis Aoude: And hunters are pressure more than, you know it's the pressure more than the harvest is what we're looking for. So, I mean it's nice to get the harvest but you're also keeping them off that range for at least the period that you're hunting them, which will save a few plants.

Steve Flinders: Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: The south, so I guess it's the Summit unit. We didn't want any change on that. The only change we wanted was the north end of the Paragonah unit or Cottonwood. And there's a cove around on 20 where a lot of the Beaver deer migrate down on there that has it's own water. And we didn't go there with the field trip but I've been there, some other people have been there. It does not have the damage that's related to Cottonwood. So we're just trying to isolate those deer north of that. Just shorten the boundary to the, from the north. That's all, pretty simple.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Rusty that helps. Any further discussion? Let's have a vote on that amendment. To shrink that boundary around Cottonwood, which is a little nebulous, I realize, but it gives the Division a chance to work on something and give to the Wildlife Board.

Sam Carpenter: Do we have a boundary in mind then? Is it something we can live with?

Steve Flinders: We don't have a specific boundary. We have a concept in mind. Unless you want to stay here a half hour and we get out maps. I don't know what else to do.

Brian Johnson: That's kind of what I was thinking.

Steve Flinders: It's something we're going to have to let them come up with a boundary and I take it to the Board meeting, or you can take it to the Board meeting. Is everybody okay with that? I don't know what else to do in the essence of time. But to focus pressure around the heart of the damaged range.

Those in favor? Did you get that? Those against? I work for the federal agency and look out for that vegetative community, so just leave it as it is. I vote against it.

Brian Johnson made the motion to adjust the Parowan Front Cottonwood hunt boundary to focus specifically on the Cottonwood area. Rusty Aiken seconded. Motion failed 6 in favor 7 opposed. (Chairman voted to break tie.)

Steve Flinders: Back to the original motion to pass the balance of this antlerless recommendation as presented, if there's no further amendments, Clair's original motion. Any further discussion? Those in favor? That looked unanimous. Thank you.

Clair Woodbury made the motion to accept the Division's antlerless permit recommendations as presented with the amendment above. Cordell Pearson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Antlerless CWMU Permit Recommendations for 2012 (action) 5:04:44 to 5:08:50 of 5:22:49

-Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator

-Teresa Griffin, Regional Wildlife Program Manager

(see attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

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

Mike Staheli: There's no moose then? No antlerless moose?

Teresa Griffin: Nope. This year no moose are being recommended at all.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions? Brian?

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the public?

Comments from the public:

Steve Flinders: I've got a comment card for Wade. Have you got a room here yet?

Wade Heaton: Don't worry; I'm not going to ask you for more elk tags. But if you felt inclined I would. No, just wanted to support the Division's recommendation. On the doe hunt as well we're not having one on the CWMU for the same reasons we talked earlier. And for the cow elk we've only got 5 this year on the CWMU, and that's the same as the Division's recommendation. Thanks.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Wade. That's all the comment cards I have.

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: Discussion, motion?

Bryan Johnson: I make a motion we accept their proposal.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Brian. Seconded by Rusty. Any more discussion? CWMUs? All those for? Any against? That looked unanimous.

Bryan Johnson made the motion to accept the Division's recommendations for antlerless CWMU permit numbers as presented. Rusty Aiken seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: Bonus Point Rule Amendment, Greg. Did your voice come back?

Greg Sheehan: Nope. So I'll go really quickly.

Steve Flinders: This agenda has this as number, we have two eights. I feel like we're not getting anywhere.

Greg Sheehan: Because it's 10:30.

Bonus Point Rule Amendments – R657-62-9 (action) 5:10:47:46 to 5:15:50 of 5:22:49
-Greg Sheehan, Administrative Services Section Chief
(see attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Any questions?

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the public? Both of you.

Comments from the public:

Steve Flinders: No comment cards. Glutens for punishment.

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: What I want to know is how you can bequeath bonus points to your kids? Because if I had 16 or 20 bonus points that going in my will. Any discussion up here? Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: How do you know if someone passes?

Greg Sheehan: Some people we don't know. Some people will be contacted by family because we might be mailing them postcards that say it's time to apply or other things out there. And so they'll call and say quit sending us this, this person's passed away. And then we go in and take them out.

Rusty Aiken: And you delete that one?

Greg Sheehan: Yeah. Yeah. But some people may have passed away and we don't know it yet.

Steve Flinders: Layne.

Layne Torgerson: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a motion that we accept the rule change as proposed by the Division.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Layne. Seconded by Mike. Discussion? Ready to vote. Those in favor? It looks unanimous.

Layne Torgerson made the motion to accept the Division's recommendation to rescind the bonus point rule as presented. Mike Staheli seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Other Business

-Steve Flinders, Chairman

Steve Flinders: I have no other business other than let's never stack the agenda like this again. Next meeting is at 7 o'clock in Richfield.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45.

**Southeast Region Advisory Council
USU-East Campus, Jennifer M. Leavitt Student Center
451 E. 400 N., Price, Utah
April 11, 2012 @ 5:00 p.m.**

Motion Summary

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

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

Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations and Rule, Amendments for 2012.

**MOTION: To accept the Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations and Rule Amendments as presented, except that we change the buck deer ratio on the Manti-San Rafael and San Juan units from 15-17 bucks per 100 does to 18-20 per 100 does.
Passed with one opposing vote**

Limited Entry Deer Permit Rule Amendments

**MOTION: To accept the Limited Entry Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations and Rule Amendments, except that the number of limited entry bull elk tags on the Central Mountains-Manti unit be reduced to 360.
Passed with a majority vote: 6 in favor. 4 opposed.**

Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2012

**MOTION: To accept the Antlerless Addendum as presented
Passed unanimously**

Antlerless CWMU Permit Recommendations for 2012

**MOTION: To accept Antlerless CWMU Permit Recommendations for 2010 as presented
Passed unanimously**

Bonus Point Rule Amendments-R657-62-9

**MOTION: To accept the Bonus Point Rule Amendment as presented
Passed unanimously**

Nine Mile Moose Management Plan

**MOTION: To accept the Nine Mile moose management plan as presented
Passed unanimously**

Southeast Region Advisory Council
USU-East Campus, Jennifer M. Leavitt Student Center
451 E. 400 N., Price, Utah
April 11, 2012 @ 5:00 p.m.

Members Present

Members Absent

Kevin Albrecht, USFS
Seth Allred, At Large
Bill Bates, Regional Supervisor
Sue Bellagamba, Environmental
Blair Eastman, Agriculture

Wayne Hoskisson, Environmental

Jeff Horrocks, Elected Official
Todd Huntington, At Large
Derris Jones, Chairman

Kenneth Maryboy, Navajo Rep.

Darrel Mecham, Sportsmen
Christine Micoz, At Large
Travis Pehrson, Sportsmen
Pam Riddle, BLM
Charlie Tracy, Agriculture

Others Present

Sen. David Hinkins

- 1) Welcome, RAC introductions and RAC Procedure
-Derris Jones, Chairman

- 2) Approval of the Agenda and Minutes (Action)
-Derris Jones, Chairman

VOTING

Motion was made by Kevin Albrecht to accept the agenda and minutes as written
Seconded by Jeff Horrocks
Motion passed unanimously

- 3) Wildlife Board Meeting Update
-by Derris Jones, Bill Bates and Justin Shannon

Derris Jones-The last meeting in December was on the bear. For new things coming up this year, we are going to have three harvest objective units, three limited entry spot and stalk, and 12 units will have extended spring seasons and this was a three year rule, so we're not going to have to be

meeting on this until 2015. Is there any particular questions on the bear? Instead of spending a lot of time going through what the Board did?

Bill Bates-I might just add something. One thing of interest is that we do have three harvest objective units and one of them starts right away. Justin, do you know which ones they are?

Justin Shannon-One was the Nine Mile, the others were the Avintaquin and one in the southern region. One is a spring season and it begins right now; one is a fall season that will be a harvest objective after the limited entry hunts; and one is similar to a split season the way they have it with cougars, where limited entry gets to hunt first. Whatever is not killed is open to harvest objective later. So there are three different types is what the plan called for.

Derris Jones-Which is the Nine Mile-Range Creek?

Justin Shannon-That's the split one, so the limited entry guys get to harvest as many as they can and whatever is not filled, that will be harvest objective in the fall.

Derris Jones-It's limited entry this spring? It's harvest objective until fall?

Justin Shannon-Yes. It's in the northeast region that has the harvest objective spring right now.

Derris Jones-Let's go to the regional update, Bill.

4) Regional Update

-Bill Bates, Regional Supervisor

Bill Bates-I don't have a lot tonight because of the length of the meeting. If you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer those, but in the interest of time, I think we will just move on tonight, if that's alright.

Questions from the RAC

Travis Pehrson-I have a question. I was listening to the Wildlife Board meetings and how did the Division get the 1.75 million dollars for the coyote control? How come that didn't go to the Wildlife Services?

Bill Bates-Well, some of that does go to the Wildlife Services. There were several different appropriations. We had 1.1 million dollars from the new money from Sen. Hinkins bill that put a five dollar additional fee on all big game permits and then Sen. Okerland had one that just appropriated \$500,000 to the Division for predator control. That coupled with the existing money we already had will come up to 1.7 million dollars. We were already putting in 375,000 dollars to coyote control. What we are going to do with that money is \$675,000 is going to go the Wildlife Services for targeted coyote control. \$100,000 will go to cover the county match for the bounty program. There will be \$100,000 for the Division so there will be a total of \$200,000 put into the bounty program. There will be \$400,000 put into private contracts. That's where we contract with certain individuals to go and kill coyotes at certain places and certain times and we will pay them a certain amount per coyote. What we are also going to do is we are going to take \$250,000 and hire three individuals. One will be to coordinate the program statewide, and one will be in each of the two Wildlife Services area in the state. There is a northern and a southern area, and they will administer those private contracts and also direct Wildlife Services on where we want to target coyotes. There will be another \$175,000 that we are going to use for unforeseen things that haven't come up yet. Some of this money will also go into the Monroe deer study, where they are going to be looking at different levels of coyote control on the northern unit and part of the southern unit and then will switch and then they will switch after three years to see if this makes a difference. In a nutshell, that's where the money is going. None of it is going to any already existing program in the Division. It's going to kill coyotes statewide. Does that help?

Travis Pehrson-You are hiring three new people to use up some of that money. Wildlife Services already has employees to do it.

Bill Bates-I don't think they would agree with you on that. If you think about the workload associated with setting up contracts to hire people to go out and kill coyotes statewide, we want

those guys who work for Wildlife Services out doing their jobs, killing coyotes. It seems like a waste of resources to have them involved in administrative contracts, so...Anis, do you want to elaborate on that?

Anis Aoude-Basically, what those people are going to do is coordinate between the Division and Wildlife Services. There will be no overlap in efforts, and that we are targeting the right areas at the right time, so that those two people will be doing. Also, they will be doing some coyote removal themselves. There will be a person in Salt Lake who will be doing contracts, so we are going to have around 100 contracts through different individuals, doing coyote control, so that's the current structure as it stands. As Bill mentioned it's still preliminary. This is just a sketch that Director Karpowitz put out there. These projects don't start until the 1st of July.

Bill Bates-The intention is for killing coyotes.

Derris Jones-Are there any other questions before we dive into the agenda? Okay, let's hear what you have to say, Anis.

Questions from the Public

Comments from the Public

RAC Discussion

5) Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations and Rule Amendments for 2012 (Action)

-Anis Aoude, Wildlife Program Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Derris Jones-One thing I want to ask is, before we can act on any of this, do we have to act on the deer management plan?

Anis Aoude-No, if you accept our recommendation, you are automatically amending the management plan. If you do not accept our recommendations and modify them, however you would modify them, would modify the plan. If you say that you want 18-25 statewide, then the plan doesn't change, so anything you do will leave the plan alone or modify the plan. We can make any modification that you guys come up with, if the Wildlife Board approves them.

Todd Huntington- Anis, where are dedicated hunter tags in all this?

Anis Aoude-Dedicated hunter tags come out of this total number, so basically each unit was limited to 15% that go to dedicated hunters. Of course, that doesn't take place until two more years. There are current dedicated hunters that have their choice and a unit may have more than 15% that go to dedicated hunters. Within two years, there will be only 15% of any unit that will go to dedicated hunters. That comes out of that total pot.

Kevin Albrecht-Is the buck to doe ratio on a three year average? If there was a loss, it would take three years.....

Anis Aoude-It would. Of course, if we see that being the effect, we see a declining trend usually we recommend a decrease in permits before it actually gets to a three year average. Obviously, because this is a new thing, we will be watching it very closely. If it does affect any unit, we would want to be cutting permits quickly rather than waiting.

Derris Jones-On the units that have the lower buck to doe ratio on primarily public land units, some will have CWMUs on it, if we don't meet our buck to doe ratio, will you revisit the CWMU as well and cut permits with them?

Anis Aoude-No, we are not, because CWMU units and they can manage them as they so choose. The only restriction on CWMUs is they must offer a similar opportunity as that outside. They usually manage for a higher buck to doe ratio than the surrounding area. It's no different that the

old plan. All units are 15-17 or 15-25, and CWMUs still manage that way. So it shouldn't affect how the CWMUs are managed at all on their buck harvest. They are their own limited entry unit and don't fall into the general season framework.

Derris Jones-But their deer are still biologically part of the whole herd...

Anis Aoude-They are. On those units that have CWMUs, we have made those higher objective units, because we know they will be higher regardless.

Derris Jones-Any other questions? Go ahead Travis.

Travis Pehrson-How come we use a three year average? How come we aren't using a year to year now?

Anis Aoude-We've always used a three year average. The reason for that is so we aren't yo-yoing with our permits. It keeps you steadier. The worst thing you can do for wildlife management is having a ton of permits one year and having few the next. If you use a one year objective, you would be doing that. It could have been a blip on the radar. It's best to have a three year average to mitigate against that.

Todd Huntington-Do you use a rolling three year average?

Anis Aoude-Yes, so it's always the last three years.

Travis Pehrson-How come we take a 10 year average on the hunters though instead of just a three year to figure out the tag numbers?

Anis Aoude-We use a 10 year average so we have enough data, so we can create that formula. The more data you have, the more realistic the data...We use a three year average toWe could use a 10 year average, but you would hardly ever change the permits. You want to be reactionary to what's happening on the unit, but you don't want to be so reactionary that permits are fluctuating year to year. That's why we use three years. The reason why we use 10 years to come up with the formula is because this is the first year we are doing this, and we wanted to make sure that at a certain buck to doe ratio, what kind of permits are needed to maintain that number of bucks in the unit, so we use different methodologies to achieve different goals for different needs. We needed a long term data set to come up with permit numbers for the first year. We don't need a long term data set to tell us what's happening right now.

Derris Jones-Any other questions from the RAC? We will open it up to questions from the audience. I ask that we keep it to questions right now. We will go to comments later. No questions? Okay, then we'll go to the comments. If I call your name and your comment is not for this particular segment of the bucks and bulls, just tell me you want to reserve til we get to the other part of it.

Questions from the Public

Comments from the Public

Randy Quayle-of the Utah Bowman's Association. We applaud the efforts made to reconstruct the buck to doe ratio objectives. Over the last couple of years, we've seen that Utah's hunters are split almost evenly as to whether they want more trophy quality units vs. more opportunity units. We believe that the DWR's recommendations reflect these views, thus the UBA supports the DWR' recommendations as presented.

Jeremy Hanson-of the United Wildlife Cooperative. We support the DWR's big game tag allocations and ask that others do the same. As you consider the buck to doe consequences, we ask that you keep a few things in mind. Hunter recruitment and retention is lower than it's ever been in Utah. Schools no longer close for the opening of the deer hunt and many of our neighbors frown upon the idea of hunting in general. We urge you to be cautious about adopting a management strategy that further reduces participation. We believe this to be counter productive as it does nothing to promote the biological well-being of the herd and overall population numbers and only hurts our sport and we lose more participants. The single largest group for prudent wildlife management is the hunting community. Reducing tags to increase the buck to doe ratio only does a disservice to this group and undermines the long-term viability, whether the

hunters realize this or not. We often hear about the great hunting in Colorado and their high buck to doe ratios. What we don't hear is that after raising the buck to doe ratios, the number of deer hunters who apply for tags has been reduced by half and overall deer numbers have not improved. In fact, populations continue to decline in many portions of the state. Colorado continues to search for answers just as we do. They also have many hunters that are dissatisfied with their management plans and are calling for higher buck to doe ratios and deeper tag cuts just as we do. We hear hunters say that they would rather sit out several years so they could harvest a mature buck, but we already have those hunts in Utah for limited entry units. It seems we want to have our cake and eat it too. As this trend continues in Utah and across the West, we will continue to see our hunting heritage come under fire, and may become extinct as we lose more of our hunting constituents. We need to keep our units as opportunity friendly as possible, so our youth can stay involved and be able to draw tags on a regular basis, so their family can continue to hunt together as much as possible.

Chad Kulow-I represent the Carbon-Emery chapter of SFW. We represent the sportsmen and appreciate all the Division does. We do agree with many of the things presented today. The Division has recommended 15-17 bucks per 100 does for our area here. We have a different recommendation. We don't agree with that. We don't agree with the 18-25. That's way too broad. We want to recommend 18-20 to be our buck to doe ratio, and the most important thing to point out is that does not take away opportunity. We talked about numbers last night. The hunter cuts would go from 8,400 to 8,100 to get that objective of 18-20. That's not a loss of opportunity whatsoever. SFW has worked very hard to recover the deer herd. We want to bring our deer back. Also, we don't want to see more archery permits issued than already are and that those permits stay within the classification from which they originally were.

Derris Jones-Chad, just a quick question. Was that 18-20 for every unit in the region?

Chad Kulow-No, just for the Manti.

Kallen Cowley-I've got 10 years before my kid gets to hunting age and I want to get my kid involved. I will give up my tag for my kid. The father should be more concerned for his kid hunting than himself. That said, I think the recommendation for dropping deer tags is good. I want to see my kid and other kids hunt. I recommend not selling more archery tags. Archery is getting really big. There are more archery hunters every year. It's not hard to shoot a deer with a compound bow at a 100 yards as long as you practice, so there's no difference in opportunity for someone to pick up a muzzleloader or archery.

Bart Kettle-I represent myself as a sportsman. My comment is that it seems like it's been a millennium getting to this point on our deer hunting structure. Issuing buck permits has very little to do with the size of the deer herd. It is a hunting structure only. It's not going to affect every variable of the deer herd. What the DWR has recommended is pretty close to center ground. I think we can all find something we dislike, but we can find something we like. I support their recommendations.

Troy Justensen-representing SFW. I'd like to comment on one thing that what has been brought up here about avoiding loss of opportunity. We ask the RAC to recommend to the Wildlife Board that those unsold permits stay within the classification whether that be archery, muzzleloader or rifle. The opportunity is there if people want to take it. So if those permits go unsold, that's the way it is. We recommend that we stay at the numbers that are committed to those weapons.

Shayne Thompson- representing the SFW. With the respect to opportunity, I am one who really wants opportunity, but when I take my child out there and can't find a buck, she doesn't want to go hunting. It's too much work. The opportunity comes with numbers. We've got to get our deer herd back, and then all this goes away. The faster we do that, the faster we will have opportunity for our youth. I strongly support keeping the buck to doe ratios at 18-20 to bring that back faster. We can always add permits later on. The DWR presentation is fair, but I just want to get aggressive, but I just want results quickly. Just 10 years ago, we had more opportunity then and we are still on the downward trend and we've got to turn that around. Those who want more opportunity at the expense of the deer herd, that's a concern to me. We don't all have to have a tag

in our hand to go out in the field. There can be two or three in the party and not everyone needs a tag and everyone can still enjoy it and take care of our resource too.

Derris Jones-That's all the comment cards I had that wanted to speak about deer. Did I miss anybody? That being the case, we'll close the discussion from the public and go on to the RAC to discuss what they have heard from the DWR and the public.

RAC Discussion

Travis Pehrson-I've pulled up 2010's general season sub-unit harvest data and on the San Juan in 2010, that 900 rifle permits and for the muzzleloader 424 permits and for the archery, they had 402 permits. That equals about 1,800 tags. The recommendation under this plan is 2,500 tags altogether. If they went to the 18 bucks per 100 does, it would be 2,100 tags, so it's still an increase. I want to change it to adopt the 18 bucks per 100 does. It's going to be 300 more permits even under that plan.

Derris Jones-And that's 18-20 or 18-21?

Travis Pehrson-At 18-20, there is 2,100 permits for bows. If it's 15-17, it's 2,500 permits for bows. So either one is an increase. It's either an increase of 300 permits or an increase of 700 permits.

Derris Jones-I just wondered if the 18-20 is what the SFW brought. The DWR's high end was 18-23, wasn't it?

Anis Aoude-The plan as is currently written calls for 18-25, but even if you went to 18-20, it would be the same.

Travis Pehrson-So if we adopt this plan, I would suggest that we put the San Juan on the 18-20 instead of the 15-17 just because that's still an increase of tags.

Kevin Albrecht-One of the things I notice in Anis' proposal was that 16 of the units that are to be 18-20 statewide. Fourteen of those units are to be 15-17 statewide, but if you look at the southern region, it has one unit that's 18-20 out of four, that's higher than 50% statewide, yet in the southeastern region it's 25%, but if you look at the private land and the access in that, it's quite a bit lower than that, because of the amount of people that can get to that unit.

Derris Jones-Anyone else have any comment or question or matter for discussion?

Blair Eastman-Anis, what's the reasoning behind these unsold tags. Was it revenue driven or was it...?

Anis Aoude-It's both revenue and opportunity driven. So basically we realized that currently we sell all our archery permits, but we realize that when we go to unit by unit, because archers in the past could hunt statewide. Not that they'll limited to certain units, there will be from our data, we know that certain units do not have that proportion of archers in them. We believe they will all sell. The reason I say that is, a lot of folks will buy those archery tags just to hunt those extended archery units, not to hunt the units they draw them on, because if you draw an archery tag, you can hunt any of the extended units. So, it's basically a way to ensure that because we are going to a new system, we don't know how many permits may go unsold. Part of it is revenue driven, and part....

Blair Eastman-So there's an incentive there to get people to buy those tags.

Anis Aoude-Right, and really by making them no longer available after the archery season ends will encourage archery hunters to buy them before the archery season ends so they can hunt the extended areas. So, we're incentivizing them to go on the archery season, but if they don't for some reason...I don't see a large number of permits going this route, but just in case there are, so that's the rationale.

Derris Jones-I see two basic issues. The buck to doe ratio specifically on two units--the Manti-San Rafael unit requested a difference from the DWR recommendation and Travis wants to see the San Juan also be bumped into that higher buck to doe ratio. The other one is how to handle the unsold deer permits. If there's no further discussion, I suggest we entertain a motion either breaking those up or make sure you include both those items in how you want to see that handled.

Justin or Anis, if we change those units from 18-20, what would the total number of deer tags in the southeast region be decreased to?

Justin Shannon-Are you talking about the San Juan specifically?

Derris Jones-The San Juan and the Manti-Central.

Justin Shannon-The Central Mountains-Manti would go from 8,800 to 7,500. The San Juan would from 2,500 to 2,100 permits.

Derris Jones-What's the total number of tags?

Justin Shannon-That's 1,700 fewer permits with both. Can I speak for the San Juan real quick?

We did meet with the local sportsmen down there in Moab and representatives from San Juan County and we had a candid discussion about what they wanted to do. It was unanimous that they wanted 15-17, so I just thought the RAC should keep that in mind. As far as the lower numbers...

Travis Pehrson-How many sportsmen were there?

Justin Shannon-There were representatives from SFW, UWC, RMEF and local sportsmen from Moab, so we tried to represent everybody we could as far as sportsmen.

Derris Jones-What's the trend of that population. It must be on an upward trend if they had fewer tags in 2010 than you guys are recommending for now.

Justin Shannon-Well, 2010 is kind of an anomaly. You'll remember that on the LaSals, we had to do five day hunts back in 2008 and 2009. When we had that five day hunt with a mid-week opener, we had people flooding to the San Juan and then they would go to the LaSals after its opener. So in 2008 and 2009, we did have 2,500 or 2,600 hunters on the San Juan, but then that next year when we opened up the LaSals everybody hunted over there, so that's why the long-term data on total harvest or total number of hunters is what we are looking at, because that was just a mess, trying to make sense of that.

Derris Jones-What percent of that objective are we on those two units? The Manti and the San Juan?

Justin Shannon-The Manti is just over half. The San Juan is roughly 80%.

Derris Jones-So, in good conditions, we could at objective in one or two years?

Justin Shannon- Yea, and we're doing better on the Abajos than on the Elk Ridge side.

Travis Pehrson-For clarification on the SFW meeting, when you went to that, it was represented by one member. I'm on the same board and they brought the recommendation back and on the nine members on the board, they agreed with me.

Derris Jones-So the SFW group definitely want to see the higher buck to doe ratio?

Travis Pehrson-Right.

Derris Jones-Anyone want to take a stab at a motion?

VOTING

Motion was made by Charlie Tracy that we move the Manti-San Rafael and San Juan units from 15-17 bucks per 100 does to 18-20 per 100 and accept rest of the Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Recommendations and Rule Amendments for 2012 as presented.

Seconded by Jeff Horrocks

Motion passed with one opposing vote cast by Sue Bellagamba

5a.) Premium Limited Entry Deer Permit Rule Amendments

-Anis Aoude-Wildlife Program Manager

Questions from the RAC

Kevin Albrecht-Does the DWR have to be contacted before a hunter can track a wounded game animal with a dog on a leash?

Anis Aoude-No, it's not required, as long as you can show that you are tracking an animal and your dog is on a leash.

Derris Jones-Can you pack a legal firearm, while trailing a wounded animal?

Anis Aoude-Yes, that's why you have to do during lawful hunting hours of the wounding.

Derris Jones-If it's wounded the last day of the hunt, do you still have 72 hours?

Anis Aoude-I'm not sure how that will be interpreted. Are there any law enforcement persons who would like to interpret that?

Derris Jones-So, it's not meant to extend the season?

Anis Aoude-No, I don't believe that was the intent of the law.

Bill Bates-I would assume that after the season you would still have the opportunity that you could contact an officer and they could go with you.

Anis Aoude-Yes and that has always been the case.

Travis Pehrson-Is there any intention of making more buck management permits available on limited entry units, like on the Henry's and Paunsagunt?

Anis Aoude-There is not currently any plan to do that. There was a recommendation by the Wildlife Board to look at that on the Book Cliffs unit, but we wouldn't look at that until the statewide plan is up for renewal in another year or two. The reason we do not recommend that, is the only reason we use that is to reduce buck to doe ratios on units where we are harvesting so few animals. That is not needed currently on limited entry units, because we do maintain our buck to doe ratio by the number we harvest, so it would have to be something out of the ordinary to be able to do it.

Derris Jones-Any other questions from the RAC? Any questions from the audience?

Questions and Comments from the Public

Troy Justensen-Anis, can you clarify on the Henry Mountains where those four additional permits are going? Are they all rifle or archery or muzzleloader?

Anis Aoude-They will just be split among the weapon types.

Troy Justensen- Also, if you could describe how you come to permit number recommendations for like elk on the Manti and that...what the procedure is?

Justin Shannon-It's just like looking at a three year average on age data and going through and figuring out if we are above or are we below in adjusting permits accordingly on that data, and with the Manti in particular...Are you talking about the Manti in particular?

Troy Justensen-Yes.

Justin Shannon-We look at two things, one is the trend and one is the three year average. So, if we are still above the three year average and the trend is headed down, we will increase, but not substantially and visa versa.

Derris Jones-Any other questions from the public?

Kallin Cowley- I was just wondering about the number of sheep permits on North San Rafael and south.

Justin Shannon-There are two permits on the north and one on the south. Out-of-state hunters in the drawing and those which buy a conservation permit can hunt both north and south. We also wanted one permit for the public.

Kallin Jones-Can the San Rafael support the harvest of three rams?

Justin Shannon-Yes, but that's a unit we are very concerned about. We have a research project going on right now and we are trying to figure out what the limiting factors are there. Usually the non-resident hunters contact us and we encourage them to hunt the south.

Shayne Thompson-What percentage of the teeth does the DWR get from which to judge the average age of harvested bulls?

Anis Aoude-It varies, but ranges from 50-80% Last year was 76% return.

Shayne Thompson-Is there a trend of quality going down?

Anis Aoude-We don't address quality, because that's built into the ages. When you are managing for a 5.5 to 6 year-old bull, you are assuming that is not going to be the highest quality bull, but we do see a declining antler size in the harvest. We are seeing a trend of smaller bulls, but that is what you would expect if you are trying to harvest more bulls.

Shayne Thompson-Is there a reason we don't work to cut more teeth to get more accurate information on ages.

Anis Aoude-The only way we could is to make it mandatory and it's really problematic to do that for several reasons. One reason is only those who harvest have to turn them in, so what happens is that people who may left the lower jaw on the mountain are going to lie on their harvest report if they don't turn them in. So we would rather have a better harvest report than the ages. When 75-80% return, is a great return. We do look at those who don't send their teeth in, and do look at the antler measurements, and compare those who sent teeth vs. those who didn't, and if they are bigger animals, and there was no statistical difference between the two. We feel very comfortable with the return we are getting. We do get the argument that those who get the smaller bulls don't send the teeth in, but that doesn't prove to be the case, looking at the antler measurement data. We do provide incentives for those who turn in teeth. We put their names in a drawing. Making it mandatory is very difficult because you have to use certified mail, you have to have several reminders, which brings the cost much higher.

Derris Jones-Let's go to the public comments.

Kallin Cowley-When Anis said it was difficult for bull elk hunters, it's not that big of a deal. When I killed my sheep, I had to cut the liver out and put it in a baggie, I had to take blood, I had to do all sorts of stuff to bring back on my harvest and I don't think it would be too hard to take out the teeth. Another issue is the increase of tags on the Manti, I would not like to see that increase. I've seen a real decrease in size of bulls on the Manti and I think it's because we are killing too many bulls and surrounding areas. In my opinion, it would be better for the teeth to come in. My buddy and I are taxidermists. This year we didn't see a bull over 320 and we probably got 30 bulls. In 2010, we got six bulls over 350. We've seen a decrease in bull size. I would want to see no increase in limited entry bull tags on the Manti.

Paul Pace-As a member of the Henry Mountain Grazing Association, we stand completely behind the recommendation of the DWR and we thank everyone who has helped on the Henry Mountain bison study. We have acquired a lot of good information, and we appreciate working together with everyone. We recommend staying with the DWR recommendations.

Lee Tracy of United Wildlife Cooperative. The UWC supports the DWR recommendations for the 2012 limited entry and premium limited entry buck deer, bull elk, pronghorn buck and OIAL permit numbers as well as the rule changes. We appreciate the work that you guys are doing.

David Brinkerhof of Henry Mountain Grazer's Association-This probably a first, but I would like to say a few words about the working committee. I think it's helped a lot to solve some of the issues that we are concerned with and with DWR's concerns. I think it's made a difference in our attitude, which has improved. As long as there are no surprises when we come out of those groups, I think it has made a lot of difference with both sides. There's one concern that I have for this year. I'm in favor of the recommendations that the DWR has come up with but my cattle are on the Henrys during both winter and summer and what I've seen is a drought in that area, and it's pretty serious. If it continues, we may need to take more buffalo off the mountain. That's about all I needed to say. You talked about the deer herd on the Henry's. You need to be careful on hunter numbers, because what I've seen this year tending livestock, the coyotes are on the increase. That will affect the deer herd.

Kerry Larsen-I want to talk about aging the elk. Anis talked about the average percent of hunters who submitted teeth was 75-80. If 75% of the bulls are 6 years-old and the others are two years-old, what is the average if you throw the others into the six year-olds? Why not a mandatory requirement? Then we have 100%. I think the data will show we are averaging about 5.1 %

Derris Jones-I think it's worth having Anis repeat what he said earlier just so you can see the DWR's reasoning for not making it mandatory.

Anis Aoude-Your contention is that those who are shooting younger bulls are not turning in their teeth. What I indicated earlier is that we do look at that. Everyone has to turn in a harvest report that harvests an animal. So what we do is, we look at those who turned in a harvest report, but did not turn in a tooth. With those harvest reports, they have to give us antler measurements. We

compared antler measurements of those who did turn in teeth with those measurements of those who did not teeth. Statistically, there was no difference, so the argument that those that are shooting younger bulls are not turning in teeth is not a good argument, because the data does not support that.

Kerry Larsen-So you say you are getting 100% on your harvest reports?

Anis Aoude-Yes, We get 100% on harvest reports or as close as you can get. Harvest reports are mandatory. Those who turn in teeth and those who don't are compared as far as antler measurements. Statistically, there is no difference. That's how we justify no having mandatory reporting. It seems easy to say that we should make them do it, but because we are a state agency we have to give them notice and the cost ends up being more that we get out of the teeth.

Bill Bates-And also a big complicating factor is what if someone's tooth gets lost in the mail.

They can say that they put them in the mail and it was lost. How do we prove that? So how do we deny someone the chance to apply if their tooth was lost in the mail? From a legal standpoint, we've been told that we can't require that.

Derris Jones-That's all the comment cards I have. Troy, do you want to speak again? Go ahead.

Troy Justensen of the SFW-We support the DWR's recommendation with the increase of permits on the Henry Mountains. We also support the bill to allow a dog to help retrieve game. Our biggest concern lies with the Manti with elk and I handed out two sheets to everyone. It gives you the last three years on the Manti. Last year, we were at 6.1. Our age objective is 5.7. In 2009, we had 360 permits and now the recommendation is 482. If you look at the rate of decline of where we are coming down, our fear is that we are getting so close to the age objective that with the increase of permits, we are going to overshoot the objective and be under objective, and we will have to cut permits dramatically to get back to that age objective. You can see the rate of descent there is coming down. What we'd like to do is be proactive and ask for a reduction in permits, since we're getting close to the runway, and slow down our descent and level out. We recommend we have a reduction of permits and go back to 360 permits like we had in 2009, and possibly down to 320 permits. We believe that based on the DWR's numbers and tracking this trend that those reductions are justified. If you look at the Pavaunt unit, the same thing happened. Now, they are at a 40% reduction in permits to bring that back to reach their age class objective. Speaking about OIAL, we support the DWR's recommendations to cut permits in the north San Rafael. We also support the DWR's recommendations to increase the number of tags on the Zion unit. Zion is a great unit with a lot of sheep and has a built in nursery with Zion's Park built in to it. Increasing 9 permits will decrease the trophy quality, but there is room for more opportunity. I don't think that nine permits is going dramatically cut that. We'd also like the division to explore the concept of increasing the opportunity on sheep with issuing some archery permits. We appreciate all you do. You have a tough job, but we ask that you consider these recommendations.

Eric Luke with the Carbon-Emery SFW-Just a couple of points I'd like to make. The tooth data that is analyzed each year does include the CWMU units. As a general rule, those CWMUs are killing older bulls. They have fulltime guides to scout and guide and those hunters have a higher success rate than the general season hunter. It definitely impacts tooth data for the general public. I'd like to make a recommendation that those CWMU teeth are analyzed separately, so they don't affect the general public. Also, we support the change on the Manti for reducing the number of bull permits as Troy just said. We don't want to overshoot the runway.

Shayne Thompson-I'm also concerned on the bull elk numbers on the Manti. I've been out there a lot and have watched this downward spiral. I've been on several hunts helping people and the late season. The bulls are trending down. I support what Troy said.

Personally, I know people who have shot two year-old bulls, who did not turn in teeth. The quality of bulls on the Manti has plummeted in the last 2-3 years, so I recommend that we really cut back.

Derris Jones-Did I miss anybody else?

Chad Kulow-I just want to reiterate some things about the teeth data. I guide on the Scofield West CWMU and the size of bulls that are taken are large, because the clients want a trophy bull. The

number last year was 6.1 and our objective is 5.75. That's not a huge number, but it's falsifying the number for general season hunts. There are also spikes that are killed on limited entry, which is sad, but people are doing it. About the 3-4 year-old bulls, what are these guys using to measure size with? To some guys, a 360 bull is a 400 bull. A 300 inch bull to a lot of guys is a 350 bull, so numbers are falsified enough that the trend is pulled in the wrong direction, I believe. If we don't level out, we will be in trouble. The same thing happened to the Nebo not long ago. Those tags were cut. We don't want to see 40% of our tags cut next year like on the Pavaunt. That's the direction we are heading if we don't make a change quickly, so whoever makes and seconds a motion, keep those things in mind and throw that out separately. I have a concern about the Henry Mountains drought and the four tag increase in bison, let's take our hats off to the DWR, we are where we want to be right now, but why change it? Why change a good thing? Considering the drought, you look at the animals that were killed this year, we've never had that many big animals killed on the Henry Mountains. We are going to see a change this year, and take that into consideration, we need to level that out as well. I agree with the dogs. I have an experience on the Henry Mountains to support the dog rule. I shot a 240 deer on opening morning with my bow, I begged Shaun Spencer to allow me to track that buck and bring a dog in, but this rule wasn't in place and that buck was lost. I ended up shooting a 220 deer. But why the 72 hours? I hated to see that bigger deer go to waste. That's another reason not to increase the tags. How many deer are wounded that aren't reported?

Derris Jones- I'd like the division to put into perspective what CWMU teeth have to do with....

Anis Aoude- So they are using the data, but I just checked the data on the Manti and the CWMU data would change the average from 6.1 to 5.9 . It would make a difference of 2/10 of a year. It does make a little difference, but that's not the case statewide. There are some units where that brings it down, so it can vary from one unit to the next. Another thing I wanted to bring into perspective, they talked about a couple of units that fell behind objectives. Those units were not overharvested. Those were units where the objective was raised in the statewide plan, so we started out behind the 8 ball and now we are reducing permits to get there. They weren't units where we overharvested. We were harvested, based on old objectives. The objectives got raised, so we are catching up. A lot of things are thrown out here and some things are not taken into consideration about why it's happening. I agree that the Manti is a unit, where we are still raising permits, but we haven't reached objective yet. Whether we need to slow down or not is really hard to say. We did the same thing a few years ago, the ages went down and we reduced permits and the ages went back up, so it's hard for our biologists to anticipate where the ages will be.

Derris Jones-Do you guys model what you predict with the number of tags that you are issuing what the ages are going to be next year?

Anis Aoude- Yes, the ages will come back down, but we can't predict where that will be. We know many permits it will take to stabilize the age. It's lower than it is now, so there will come a time when we will have to start reducing permits, no doubt about it, but I don't know when we will reach that point. The number that it's going to take to maintain 5.5-6 year olds is lower than it is currently, but we're playing catch up still.

Derris Jones-Did we get all the public comment? We will close comment to the public and open it up to the RAC.

RAC Discussion

Kevin Albrecht-One thing I want to bring up is that I would like to commend the Henry Mountain grazers and the division in coming together and making things better for both groups.

Derris Jones-It appears that the two biggest issues that the public brought forth was mandatory tooth sampling and the number of tags on the Manti for limited entry bull. Is there any other issues?

Todd Huntington-One thing that I'd bring up too late for this year, but I think the north San Rafael desert bighorn unit needs to be closed for a period of time and let that herd grow and recover. If you lose a non-resident tag in the process, darn.

Derris Jones-That's the problem with setting seasons before we do data collections. Anyone want to make a motion or do we want to discuss any of this, before a motion?

Travis Pehrson-Are there any concerns from the DWR about the drought on the Henry's?

Justin Shannon-Yea, there is always a concern with any animal we manage and their habitat. We want healthy robust populations of bison and deer. If the habitat is suffering, because of that, then it's not a win-win. Yes, we are concerned.

Bill Bates-Justin, I suppose if things got bad, there's something you could do this year.

Justin Shannon-Yea, we've talked to the committee down there. It's hard to predict. We don't know what kind of spring rainfall you are going to get. We don't know what kind of fall rainfall we will get. We don't know how that's going to occur. What we do know is that we didn't a lot of snow down there this winter. If the drought becomes severe, we can always propose more tags or talk about late season transplants. We don't want to see the habitat be damaged, especially when we've spent so much time and effort in building the habitat.

Travis Pehrson-One more question. I didn't see the Book Cliffs bison hunt yet. Is that coming up?

Justin Shannon-It's there. There are four tags.

Anis Aoude- The tags are in a limited area in the northwestern part of the unit, butting against the tribe. We are basically taking advantage of tribal bison that are coming off the tribe. We still don't have enough bison from the transplants that are old enough to harvest yet, but there are some bulls and cows coming off the tribe. They winter in a certain area and that is where the hunt will take place.

Darrel Mecham-Do you have a feel for how many bison we have in Thompson now? I've spent two days up there last week and you have bison in Thompson Canyon and on Deer Point, Renegade, quite a few.

Anis Aoude- Yes, I don't have the numbers with me.

Derris Jones-Do you still hope to have the option to do the depredation bison hunts, like the past couple of years?

Anis Aoude- If they come off the unit, yes. We've got to hunt on the unit now, but if they come off the unit, they would be considered nuisance bison, then we will still have that hunt.

Derris Jones-That's essentially if they cross the river?

Anis Aoude- Yep.

VOTING

Motion was made by Travis Pehrson to accept the DWR plan as presented, with the exception that the Manti limited entry elk bull tags be reduced to 360.

Seconded by Charlie Tracy

Motion passed with six in favor and four opposed. The motion carried. Those opposed were: Todd Huntington, Kevin Albrecht, Seth Allred, and Darrel Mecham.

6) Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2012

-Anis Aoude-Wildlife Program Manager

Questions from the RAC

Blair Eastman-On the Nine Mile, offering the antlerless tags to the antlered hunters, where we are already right at objective, actually I think we are a little bit low based on the counts, and we did reduce the overall cow numbers on the two cow hunts, but then we offered extra tags to everybody who basically comes in and gets a bull tag, why did we do that?

Brad Crompton-Basically, we keep the same number of hunters afield with the opportunity to kill some cows. For the past couple of years, we've averaged somewhere between 8 and 14 cows getting killed during that hunt. It adds some opportunity, but we're not really killing that many elk as we thought we would.

Blair Eastman-So even though we've gone from a limited entry to a general season bull hunt, we are going to be offering more cow tags to bull elk hunters.

Brad Crompton-There will be more guys afield out there, obviously this year. But in the past if you're a hunter, which has been quite a lot on that unit you could purchase one of those permits as well. And any bull hunters on the rest of the unit...but that Range Creek south portion that we opened up will have a whole lot more guys on it with a cow tag in hand. Generally speaking, in October, the opportunity to kill a whole lot of antlerless elk is pretty limited just because the elk are at a higher elevation, as you are aware.

Blair Eastman-So you don't think there's going to be an impact?

Brad Crompton-The harvest will increase. What we really did is we got rid of the October hunt that we used to have that had really low success--that was about 10%. We've kind of used this antlerless control permit to substitute for that. We've averaged about a dozen dead elk a year. It may double, but still not a very big impact, and we cut tags by nearly 200 this year, so it should even itself out.

Blair Eastman-What if we have another big snow year and have a wipeout hunt again?

Brad Crompton-History has proven we can grow elk just fine. It's deer that we can't grow very well, so they'll come back.

Derris Jones-Anis, I've got a question on the Paunsagunt deer unit that's getting close to objective and we're going to hunt does because of habitat conditions, and on the management bucks they didn't increase any management bucks. Wouldn't it make sense that if you are almost to objective to get rid of bucks that are never going to be trophies and replace them with does, so we have more fawns?

Anis Aoude- So the hunt is on the Panquitch unit, not the Paunsagunt unit. There are no doe permits on the Paunsagunt unit, except for those associated with agriculture.

Questions from the Public

Kallen Cowley-Are the doe permits only on the Panquitch? How many are in Carbon or Emery counties?

Anis Aoude- There are none.

Kallen Cowley-So it's only depredation?

Anis Aoude- Yes. There are 150 on the Panquitch to deal with habitat damage and 140 are spread in different areas of the state to deal with depredation issues.

Comments from the Public

Jeremy Hanson with the United Wildlife Cooperative. We support all of the DWR's recommendations on antlerless deer, pronghorn, elk and moose. We'd like to propose on the extended archery on the Wasatch and all extended areas to do away with the December 1-15 doe only portion. We've polled our membership and some people are concerned that it's starting to hurt the population. We want to eliminate the last two week doe portion.

Lee Tracy-I'm going to represent myself rather than the United Wildlife Cooperative, because I don't agree with them on this thing. I was one of those folks that took the range ride on the Parowan front. The recommended 150 is simply the number of deer recruited into the herd that use that unit and winter range. The habitat is deteriorating year by year and it continues to deteriorate, so we asked the opinion of the wildlife biologists that were there how many does will it take to turn this habitat around. We were told 400-600 for the next two years. I personally recommend that we double the number of doe tags on that unit. You won't see the southern RAC proposing that simply because we were under some pressure to...we were working with the SFW and the BLM and DWR and other people and we were afraid the number proposed by the DWR would frighten too many people, because the deer herds are being lost. But if we don't do something more than we are doing now with that particular unit, we won't have any deer there to hunt at all.

Kerry Larsen-I have a concern about the number of elk permits for the Central Mountains-Manti. Last year there were 860 permits. This year, the proposal is 1,900, which is more than a 100% increase. The population estimate went from 11,700 to 12,500 which is about an 800 increase. I'd like to recommend that the RAC reduce that number somewhere back around 860 or maybe 1,000.

Derris Jones-Brad or Wade, do you want to address that? Tell us the reasoning for that.

Brad Crompton-Yeah, just to clarify this. By design over the last few years, we had 600-900 antlerless tags on the Manti and we were slowly growing that herd of elk toward its objective of 12,000. We were gaining 300-400 elk per year. We knew that this year we would probably reach that objective, and then we had really poor success and a pretty good calf crop to where we overshot the objective by quite a bit. In order to catch up with that and next year's calf crop, you really have to be aggressive on the antlerless harvest, so we are as conservative as we dared go to get it back to objective. We are obligated to manage near that 12,000 elk and if we manage like we did this past year, we'd be over 13,000 in a hurry and they are tough to stop once you get them rolling.

Derris Jones-Out of a population of 12,000 elk, how many calves are going to be born?

Brad Crompton-Roughly, there would be at least 3,000 calves born each year. 1,500 female calves would hit the ground every year. You've got to keep up with that just to maintain it. So you can see this is on the conservative end of things. It will get us there in 2-3 years, if things work out right.

Kallen Cowley-I recommend 1,400 and then come back next year and come back next year to see if the number needs to be increased. Then it's not such an impact if we do kill 1,900.

I would rather shoot under and catch up next year than kill a lot. Then we can adjust one way or the other. Last year, a lot of people didn't kill elk just because of snow conditions.

Another thing. I don't think we should kill more does. I was going to ask Justin... how hard is it to trap and transplant does where the habitat could sustain them?

Justin Shannon-Currently we have a policy against that. It's not a matter of effort, it's socially whether we want to do that or not. Right now, we have a policy against it.

Kallen Cowley-Why?

Anis Aoude-There are many reasons we do not transplant deer. The first is that it's never shown to be successful. The majority end up dying. You are putting a lot of effort into it and the majority die. The other issue is disease. You don't know what diseases they have. You move them into habitat, where they mingle with other deer and there are those issues. The third point is that if an area is void of deer, there's a reason for that and it's not because there were never any deer, there are other issues like habitat or predation or something else. Unless you deal with the issues, you won't solve the problem by putting more animals there. So there's lots of reasons not to move deer. We are doing a research study on a small scale to learn how transplanting deer works, but that's purely research and not something we will use as a management tool, unless we are 100% sure that will be useful. Until we do that research, we won't just move deer, just because we have too many somewhere. Our main tool is still going to be harvest.

Kallen Cowley-That being said, keep it at 150, do the research, save as many deer as possible, cause we are losing them by hundreds.

Eric Luke-I'd like to bring up a point about the antlerless elk on the Manti. This is the third year of their data. They fly it every third year. It's due to be flown again next year. I know they have models to come up with these numbers, but I would recommend that we reduce the numbers of antlerless elk permits until we fly it next year and see where the count really ends up. Then we can make a better judgment on whether those tags need to be increased.

Troy Justensen-We would support the division in issuing the antlerless deer permits, knowing the habitat is the most crucial thing. Worst case scenario, if we can't come up with a solution for these deer, we understand they have to be harvested otherwise we will lose them all. We do believe there have been advances in the ability to transplant deer. SFW has offered to foot the bill for this. The thing that Anis alluded to is transplanting 150 deer. It would be an extensive study

to see if we can do things differently to ensure the success rate. I know one thing for sure, if they have a bullet in their head, they are dead. If you transplant them and lose 90%, you still have 10%.

SFW representative-I think all of us agree that 1,900 is too many cows on the Central Mountains-Manti. We are proposing to meet a middle ground to make everybody happy. That would be 1,200 cows. We would fly it next year. Blair has the same concern that I have. You kill too many cows and we will be in trouble. You are giving that cow tag to an antlered hunter.

Bart Kettle-I want to comment on some of the debate regarding the Manti cow elk numbers. It's important to note that we are at 50% objective for deer on the same unit. There's some indication there could be direct or indirect competition of elk with deer, so when we are voting on this, we have to be aware that we are in a scenario where we can't have our cake and eat it too. We may have to make a decision here. There's quite a bit of range trend data to suggest that habitat condition in the southeast region is in decline, whether the elk are to blame for that is a subject of debate, but if we have a herd that looks like it can sustain that harvest in elk and we have a herd of deer that isn't doing well, we have to make a decision, which one we are most concerned about. Regarding deer transplants, deer have a high degree of fidelity. They don't adapt well to change in their environment. I see bucks on the same winter and same summer ranges in half a dozen years in a row. There's been quite a bit of research on transplants and on highway migration corridors being cut off. Time and again, it shows that deer don't adapt. They are creatures of habit, so my take is that we are much better off to use that money to change habitat conditions than try to deal with transplants.

RAC Discussion

Kevin Albrecht-One comment I have is that I do appreciate the concern of the public about the antlerless harvest on the Manti. One thing I do want to address is an appreciation to Wade and Brad and the DWR. There's a lot of work that goes into spring rides to check utilization on plants, where you check browse use. There is data to show how much use a plant can stand before its lost, and there's a lot of work that goes into looking at that and working with other agencies. Many of those plants are 85-90% utilized, and there's a lot of discussion going on about going that far. Like Brad said, the antlerless tags are on the conservative side, although as sportsmen, we want the best. There are consequences when we don't do that. Many parts of the Manti are at 38% moisture this year, and with that said, cattlemen have been advised that they may be bringing cattle off the mountain early. It will be a hard pill to swallow, if at the same time, we let them know that we are going one to 2,000 over our elk objective.

Pam Riddle-I'd like to add to that the BLM is starting to warn ranchers that there will be cuts in grazing, and as we look at allotments and elk utilization, it becomes a problem, when we have populations of elk that are over objective, so as we move into a drought situation, we need to consider that.

Blair Eastman-I do have a comment. Why is it that there are zero tags on the Thousand Lakes-Fish Lake, yet it's at objective?

Anis Aoude- Yes, that's a tricky one. Here's what happened there. They flew that unit and snow conditions weren't very good, so they didn't get a good count. Because they counted few animals and because of the anticipated increase in objective, to be on the safe side, they recommended no permits. If the anticipated increase in objective is not approved, they will be behind the 8 ball next year and they will have to increase permits by quite a bit.

Derris Jones- It appears that the number of cow tags on the Manti was the big issue. There was the recommendation to double the Panquitch doe tags and doing away with the extended doe only hunt but by far most of the comments were on the Manti cow tags.

If we're ready for a motion, ...

Travis Pehrson-So if SFW is willing to pay for the 150 doe transplant, is the DWR going to go for that?

Anis Aoude- Because of the range damage in this area, the SFW had wanted to transplant animals instead of killing them, and as a division, we have tried it in the past and it has never worked very well.

Travis Pehrson-Isn't the Henry Mountains deer herd a transplant?

Anis Aoude- There were deer transplanted but there were deer already there. The results are mixed whether the transplant was a success or not, because not enough animals were tracked to be able to tell. The majority did die directly after they were transplanted, but the existing population started rebounding directly after that, whether that was because of the transplant or because of range improvements, is really hard to tease out. What SFW proposed is to pay for the entire thing, because the division didn't have a way to use our resources to fund a transplant that we seen failed so many times in the past. They were willing to fund it and fund the research that goes along with it, so we are willing to do a good research project. We still haven't decided where we will transplant them to. A lot of details still need to be worked out, where a void habitat may be. We don't want to put them on top of other deer, just because we don't know what the effect will be disease wise and predators. There's a lot of factors there. We don't know what will happen. If it works, we may be able to replicate it. If it doesn't, we can put the debate to rest, so we will do it one more time and do it correctly and see what the results may be.

Travis Pehrson-You say, one more time, but can you tell us when you have done it. Give us an example.

Anis Aoude- The southern region moved deer out of the Beaver area to the west desert and the majority of them died.

Travis Pehrson-What is a majority? Can you give us some numbers?

Anis Aoude- I can't. This has never been studied well. This is why if it is done again, we want to make sure it's studied well. They were following these animals but none of them had radio collars. If you don't radio collar every animal, you don't know the fate of every animal. The majority were not seen again. The radio-collared deer were found dead and the deer with ear tags were not seen again. Either they wandered far away from that area, or they died somewhere and were never found. None of it is well documented, but most of the biologists that worked on those projects are retired now, but will tell you that they would never move another deer.

Unfortunately, they didn't document it well, although their remembrance was that the projects were failures.

Charlie Tracy-Is that just with deer or everything else?

Anis Aoude- No, its' mostly with deer because deer are so traditional in their movements, so basically if you move them away, they want to try and find where they were, and if they can't find it, they end up in sub-optimal habitat, where predators are more effective or they can't reproduce at a high enough rate to maintain. There's a lot of different things going on. Most animals we can transplant. We have had good success with sheep, and elk. Pronghorn do well with transplants. Just mule deer do not do well, because of their migratory nature and traditional movements.

Shayne Thompson-In the 1940s, Arizona Fish and Game took deer from the Kaibab and trucked them to California, floated them in a boat to an island of San Jose and they are there today, so there is some success in transplants.

Anis Aoude- If all the habitat requirements for deer are located in a small area, they will do just fine. They transplant mule deer in Mexico and Texas all the time, but they can live their whole life inside a square mile. When they have to make migrations to find summer and winter range, that's when you have a problem. Every Intermountain West state that has transplanted has seen the same failure rate that we have.

Blair Eastman- What's the success rate on the cow hunts on the Manti unit?

Brad Crompton-Its' around 50%

Anis Aoude- The hunts vary. Statewide we run 40-60%

Blair Eastman-So two years ago, Brad, when we had the big success on the cow hunt, does heavy snow affect the Manti like some other areas?

Brad Crompton-Yeah, they do. One thing we've done by design is to minimize the late season hunts on the Manti to not disturb the deer and use the hunts as much as possible to help with depredation, but those late season hunts are 80-90% success. They are very effective hunts. This year was an exception. The late season hunts were terrible. The permits that we have recommended this year--only 20% are for the late season, so the potential to have a huge harvest is against the odds.

Blair Eastman-So a heavy snow can impact it, but overall for the Manti, the weather is not going to be a huge impact in the tag numbers over a three year period.

Brad Crompton-Shouldn't. Most of the harvest is happening in October. Things happen in October that varies your success, but not as dramatically as it does in the wintertime in December.

VOTING

Motion was made by Blair Eastman to accept the Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2012 as presented.

Seconded by Pam Riddle

Motion passed unanimously

7) Antlerless CWMU Permit Recommendations for 2012

-Brad Crompton-Regional Wildlife Biologist

Questions from the RAC

Any comments from the RAC? Any questions or comments from the audience? Then we'll go back to the RAC. If there's no discussion, we'll open it up for a motion.

Questions from the Public

Comments from the Public

RAC Discussion

VOTING

Motion was made by Kevin Albrecht to accept the Antlerless CWMU Permit Recommendations as presented.

Seconded by Blair Eastman

Motion passed unanimously

8. Bonus Point Rule Amendments-R657-62-9

-Brian Christensen, DWR Licensing Specialist

Questions from the RAC

Derris Jones-Any questions from the RAC? Any questions or comments from the audience?

Questions from the Public

Comments from the Public

Kallen Cowley-If a bonus point holder is not contributing, I suggest that they be notified by email for those that you do have. For others, go with the letter. I would suggest notifying them. If they

do it, they do it. If not, cut them. That would be my suggestion. I would actually keep this in place.

Derris Jones-Any other comment? We will close to public comment.

RAC Discussion

VOTING

Motion was made by Kevin Albrecht to accept Bonus Point Rule Amendments as presented.

Seconded by Travis Pehrson

Motion passed unanimously

9. Nine Mile Moose Management Plan

-Brad Crompton, Regional Wildlife Biologist

Questions from the RAC

Derris Jones-Questions from the RAC?

Travis Pehrson-How many moose are there now?

Brad Crompton-About 30. We just flew it a few months ago. We count more there than on the Manti, and we have put moose there.

RAC member?-Where will the transplanted moose come from?

Brad Crompton-It is anticipated that some of the nuisance moose from the Wasatch Front will be transplanted there.

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

Questions from the Public

Comments from the Public

RAC Discussion

VOTING

Motion was made by Jeff Horrocks to accept the Nine Mile Moose Management Plan as presented.

Seconded by Kevin Albrecht

Motion passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

35 public in attendance

The next Wildlife Board meeting will take place on May 2-3 at 9 a.m. at the DNR Board Room at 1594 W. North Temple, SLC

The next southeast regional RAC meeting will take place on May 9 at 6:30 p.m. at the John Wesley Powell Museum in Green River

NORTHEASTERN RAC MEETING SUMMARY – MOTIONS PASSED
Bingham Research Center, Vernal/April 12, 2012

5. DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT AND GENERAL SEASON DEER PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2012 – Anis Aoude

MOTION: That the Division should manage for an 18-20 buck doe ratio statewide, this motion passed.

Passed 5-3

Andrea Merrell: Just from emails and presentation, I keep thinking from a public's standpoint they're more in favor of the 15-17 and 18-20 as presented by the DWR.

Carrie Mair: I found the same information from the public. On top of that there's also the data. For example the Vernal Unit, if we raise the objective to 18 bucks, the chance of ever adding more tags on that unit is slim to none.

Bob Christensen: I think there needs to be some units that are at the lower ratio. In South Slope Vernal, I would stay lower and go with the higher on the other units. I would rather not go statewide.

6. BUCKS, BULLS AND OIAL PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS AND RULE AMENDMENTS FOR 2012 – Anis Aoude

MOTION: to go with the Division's recommendations with the following changes, a reduction on Book Cliffs deer tags by 50 and a reduction of available elk permits on the Book Cliffs to 130 tags.

Passed 5-3

Carrie Mair: Why are we reducing the buck permits in the Book Cliffs?

Rod Morrison: Because of dissatisfied hunters. I know of many that did not fill their tags because of the low quality. It took 8 – 9 years to draw and they want a better quality.

Carrie: I think we're cutting off our nose to spite our face. We're at objective.

Floyd Briggs: Doesn't that go in line with splitting the state in units?

Carrie Mair: I don't know why we're splitting it in units if we're managing the whole state the same anyway.

7. ANTLERLESS PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2012 – Anis Aoude

MOTION: to accept antlerless permit numbers as presented by the Division

Passed 7-1

Kirk Woodward It's purely personal. I think that it totally goes against our elk management plan to increase elk numbers and so I don't like to see the increase in cow elk permit numbers.

8. ANTLERLESS CWMU PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2012 - Charlie Greenwood

MOTION to accept Charlie's proposal

Passed unanimously

9. BONUS POINT RULE AMENDMENTS – R657-62-9 – Bryan Christensen

MOTION to approve

Passed unanimously

NORTHEASTERN RAC MEETING SUMMARY

Bingham Entrepreneurship & Energy Research Center (Bingham Center), Vernal

April 12, 2012, 5:00 pm

RAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rod Morrison, Sportsmen
Kirk Woodward, Sportsmen
Andrea Merrell, Non-Consumptive
Carrie Mair, At Large
Bob Christensen, Forest Service
Mitch Hacking, Agriculture
Floyd Briggs, RAC Chair
Wayne McAllister, At Large

RAC MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Beth Hamann, Non-Consumptive

RAC MEMBERS UNEXCUSED:

Ron Winterton, Elected Official

WILDLIFE BOARD MEMBERS:

Del Brady

UDWR PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Boyde Blackwell, NER Regional Supervisor
Ben Wolford, NER Conservation Officer
Charlie Greenwood, NER Wildlife Manager
Ron Stewart, NER Conservation Outreach
Gayle Allred, NER Office Manager
Randall Thacker, NER Wildlife Biologist
Dax Mangus, NER Wildlife Biologist
Derrick Ewell, NER Wildlife Biologist
Lowell Marthe, NER Wildlife Biologist
Amy VandeVoort, NER Wildlife Biologist
Anis Aoude, SLO Wildlife Pgm Coordinator
Bryan Christensen, SLO Wildlife Licensing.

1. WELCOME, RAC INSTRUCTIONS AND RAC PROCEDURE: Floyd Briggs

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES: Floyd Briggs

3. WILDLIFE BOARD MEETING UPDATE: Floyd Briggs

I was not at the last RAC and so I don't have information on the Wildlife Board Meeting. I did not hear of anything that this RAC information about.

4. REGIONAL UPDATE

Administrative:

Our Northeastern Regional Office will be moving June 4, 2012. It will have a nice conference room, so we could probably hold RAC meetings there.

Aquatics:

- Electrofishing on the Green River below the Flaming Gorge Dam on the evenings of April 16 and 17
- Fishing clinics are being held to help youth and adults learn fishing basics.
- An urban fishery is being built in Vernal. We will update you as we go along.
- Cutthroat project at Lake Canyon Lake. We'll start collecting eggs the end of May

Wildlife:

As part of our bear monitoring effort, four bear dens were entered. Two had new cubs, one had a yearling cub, and one had none.

We are in the process of surveying including spring deer classification, sage grouse lek counts, aerial flights, spring range rides and habitat assessments. If you want to participate in any of these, let us know.

Sensitive species:

We are doing surveys for yellow-billed cuckoos. This is important to keep species from being listed. An example of that is Pika and pygmy rabbit data has kept these species from being listed in Utah.

5. DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT AND GENERAL SEASON DEER PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2012 – Anis Aoude

Questions from RAC:

Carrie Mair: Would it be advantageous to have more than the two options of objectives?

Anis Aoude: If you go lower, you have more permits; if you go higher you'd have to raise permits. Most hunters do not want to fall below 15 bucks per 100 does. We didn't want to go above because we wanted to give as much opportunity as possible.

Carrie Mair: If there was a broad spectrum of the state between 13-20 or 10-20 and it was sent to the RACs would that be a more precise way to do that?

Anis Aoude: It does complicate things because of the many tiers. It would be a moving target. We'd rather have a set target so we're not guessing every year. Doing it the way you propose leaves it open to a lot of interpretation and wondering what the objective would be each year.

Carrie Mair: What is the term on this objective?

Anis Aoude: The life of the plan. We like to look long-term instead of always changing things.

Carrie Mair: Would we like to see "X" amount of years?

Anis Aoude: We would like to see at least five years but the plan is due for looking at in the next couple of years.

Bob Christensen: Regarding the buck/doe ratio on the Vernal unit, are buck/doe numbers pretty much what they should be to get to that objective?

Anis Aoude: Yes. Populations could rebound though if moisture is better, but we feel this is the permit that is needed to maintain the ratio.

Bob Christensen: What was the reason for going to 18-20 instead of 18-25?

Anis Aoude: It was adopted from the statewide plan that was in place before. A smaller range allows us to add opportunity instead of limiting permits.

Bob Christensen: In that smaller range, are there going to be problems hitting that range and being too small?

Anis Aoude: The three year average should mitigate it.

Carrie Mair: Does the objective of bucks/doe correlate to population size?

Anis Aoude: No. They're meant to deal with numbers of bucks hunters see when they go hunting. We've found when you're above 15, hunters are happy. I

Carrie Mair: Based on the harvest report, what percentage of bucks are yearling bucks?

Anis Aoude: Yearlings are the majority of the population. Every year about 50% of the harvest are yearlings. The majority of hunters have no problem taking a yearling.

Bob Christensen: Wasatch Mountain/Avintaquin was originally 15-17. It was changed to 18-20. Why?

Anis Aoude: I think the Division got enough other comments other than open houses to change it.

Kirk Woodward: If we had gone to 18-25 what number would be the base?

Anis Aoude: We'd still stay at 19.

Questions from Public:

Regarding Deer General Season

Joe Hadlock: How far off are you on population objectives? It seems like the main concern is population and size.

Anis Aoude: It depends where you are in the state. A lot of southern states are at objective. The Northern states aren't. Here, we're dealing with buck hunting so it's not going to affect populations. That would be habitat, highway control, etc. What we're doing here tonight is hunter harvest which does not have the same impact.

Thad Beal: Our unit is the second lowest in the state. That doesn't say much about game management in the past. I think the RAC needs to remember that. All the guys here tonight voiced the same opinion. We have the best units in the state. Hunter attitude is pretty low. You've hit us with everything you can to make us stay home. 11/100 is not good. Keep the permits low. Let the herds build back up. Don't worry about loss of opportunity. We've lost opportunity already.

Comments from Public:

Perry Hanks: (NE Utah Wildlife Cooperative) Mule deer hunters are passionate. We would do whatever it would take to help herds grow healthy and strong, including cutting tags, if cutting tags was biologically sound. The buck/doe ratios have zero bearing on the health of our herds. It's strictly social issues. Please understand that. If cutting tags would help a herd that didn't have enough bucks, go for it, but that's not the case. I attended the other RACs. Some hunters were mad about losing tags. Sometimes our passion is misplaced. When the tags are cut, deer herds are still in the same shape. If we want our herds to rebound, we need to address the right issues. All RACs are facing tough social issues. The majority of deer hunters just want to get out and hunt.

Greg Gilroy (NE Utah Wildlife Coalition): When you get around to 10-11 bucks, there are some genetics involved that affect the bucks. We're against the 15-17 slot. We're willing to give back and forth. We need to statewide go with the 18-20. How can you decide what's working and what's not when there are so many patterns? The buck/doe ratio isn't the true issue but we work on that the best we can. 500 bucks cut statewide is a waste of time. We would like to get the state all on board. That will cut the tags a little bit but not as much as the 18-25 would have.

Ken Powell (Mule Deer Foundation and NE Utah Wildlife Coalition): I'd like to see 18-22 bucks/100 does. We still have to have opportunity for hunters. Everybody I talk to are ready to shut it all the way down.

Andy Adamson (Wildlife Cooperative): We support the Division on big game allocations. Hunter retention is not like it was. Schools no longer close for the opening day of the deer hunt. Reducing tags only does a disservice to this group. We hear about great hunting in Colorado but since raising levels and cutting tags, the number who apply has been reduced by half and the overall numbers have not improved. We want youth to be able to hunt with families.

Comments from RAC:

Brandon McDonald: I like DWR's proposal. It might be at the upper end, but I think any more than what's proposed now will just get social. I think they took the guesswork out of this. I think we should accept what's proposed and sit on it for a few years and see what happens.

Carrie Mair: This isn't biological. Is there a detriment to only having 10 bucks per 100 does?

Anis Aoude: Most of the research shows you have to get down to 5-6 bucks/10 does before it hinders reproduction. In the Arroyo Mountain we did a study to look at fawn recruitment. We just captured does and fitted them with vaginal implants to see when they drop their fawns. No difference. None of the data or research says that if you have higher buck/doe ratios, you produce more.

Carrie Mair: Also, recruitment is at an all time low. Is that correct?

Anis Aoude: Yes. Hunters are not being recruited into the hunter pool.

Carrie Mair: This is not biological. This has nothing to do with the population. If we want to improve our deer herds we need to add five dollars to the tag to help habitat. My recommendation is that we look at the units that have been recommended by the Division from the stance of where they're at and increased population.

Kirk Woodward: I disagree a little bit. I don't think it has zero to do with biology because if we killed 18,000 to 20,000 last year on a low year, it does have some biology, some bearing on our overall deer numbers. And I agree that this is social. This is our hunting heritage. When I started to get emails, hours' worth, every day in my office I talk to hunters and sportsmen. Since this cycle, I started asking about hunter recruitment. Why are the kids not hunting? My number one answer was we don't see enough bucks to keep them interested. If this is social and not biological then we need more bucks to keep our hunters interested. If it's clearly that, then the

same argument that Carrie just made is to increase bucks to keep interest alive. Hunters want to see their 14-year old see bucks when they go hunting.

Bob Christensen: I can see Kirk and Carrie's point. Since I've been on the RAC there's always this same issue going back and forth between opportunity and trophy. A little bit of history. For this region, allotted under the old plan, 14,000 deer tags were issued under the 97,000 cap statewide.

Anis Aoude: That was just rifle and muzzleloader. The archery is included now.

Bob Christensen: The 16,000 archery was additional. We had a hunting season in 2005 where the weather had a great impact, so it was recommended to reduce 1000 tags and it has pretty much stayed that way in the Northeastern region. Last year the Division recommended a 2000 tag cut and the RAC last year voted to double that to 4000. So 14,000, then 13,000 went down to 9,000 last year. This year, with the tags that are proposed for this year, I think it was mentioned 11,600 but that's also taking into account archery tags along with that. Also, there are the dedicated hunters in there.

Anis Aoude: Also North Slope and Nine mile across regional boundaries.

Bob Christensen: Right, so 11,600 is archery hunters plus the southeastern side of Nine Mile and Northern side of North Slope. So I think we're probably staying right close to that 9000 we had last year and if you look at that, that's a 4000 tag cut. Statewide last year was a 7000 tag hunt statewide but 4000 were out of this region. I understand the trophy side of it. Myself, I'd like to see more bucks, bigger bucks. I'd wait three or four years to draw a tag and have a unit where I'll be able to see more bucks and more mature bucks. But there are a lot of people who don't agree with that. I also look at my boys. It's hard to see them having to lose the opportunity to be able to hunt. Their percentage numbers go down to draw. I hunt every year in the general season and I talk to guys who don't see any bucks. We know our unit well and we put our time in. Just in the last year, my 14-year old boy had a chance at a 26-inch buck. He missed but he had the chance. On the muzzleloader, we see them out there. They're there. There are not as many nice bucks out there as there were in the past but they're there. I always hate to change a plan before we've given it a chance but having some units have a lower buck/doe issue and others have a higher buck/doe ratio seems to make more sense than having statewide higher ratio.

Mitch Hacking: Diamond Mountain used to be general season. If you looked hard you could find a buck but the resource was hurting. The last deer I shot up there was a 4-point. You wouldn't even look at him on Diamond Mountain now. Once we went limited entry it didn't take that long to turn it around. I'm definitely for 18-20.

Andrea Merrell: I read through my emails and I started to tabulate the recommendations. On the buck/doe ratios, the majority were along the lines of DWR's recommendations. Even the one from the Utah Wildlife Cooperative used the same ratios. What would vary would be what units they wanted them in. It seems the DWR's recommendation hits the middle ground. Trying to have the opportunity but also reduce numbers of tags to keep that buck/doe ratio up.

Brandon McDonald: I put a different definition on biology/social perspective as long as we all understand the buck/doe ratios and what we're looking at tonight. Looking at emails, we've got public; it was kind of nice to show the passion people have. We've got people emailing us talking about 5 bucks/100 does, and one email talking 100 bucks per 100 does.

Floyd Briggs: I've heard statewide plans talked about and I like the unit-by-unit because we can have more influence on how we manage our own areas. One of the comments made was, "let's not kill it before we get a chance to try it. We've been working on this plan for over a year now. We should give it a chance.

Rod Morrison: I think the hunters want to see more deer. I would like to recommend 18-20 bucks/100 does post season. I don't feel this is a solution but it's a start. We need to work on habitat and highway mortality. We've got to cut tags to do this. There are just not enough bucks out there for everyone who wants to shoot a buck. We need to limit tags and look at 18-20.

Bob Christensen: Is that including Vernal South Slope?

Rod Morrison: Statewide.

Mitch Hacking: A lot of people are dying just to see deer.

Rod Morrison: They did not cut that many tags from 18-25. It was not a drastic cut, so I would like to keep the original proposal.

Bob Christensen: With the 18-25, that's 6000 less. If you look at what was cut last year that's 13000. From years earlier, it's down 17000. That's a pretty good cut already.

MOTION by Kirk Woodward; for the DWR to manage for a buck doe ratio of 18-20 statewide. I don't mind going to 18-20, it keeps us on the current management plan that we've been on.

Second by Mitch Hacking

Bob Christensen: So if that's statewide, then that would have to be increased to 18-20 bucks statewide.

Favor: Kirk Woodward, Brandon McDonald, Mitch Hacking, Rod Morrison, Wayne McAllister

Opposed Carrie Mair, Andrea Merrell, Bob Christensen

Andrea Merrell: Just from emails and presentation, I keep thinking from a public's standpoint they are more in favor of the 15-17 and 18-20.

Carrie Mair: I found the same information from the public. On top of that there's also the data. For example the Vernal Unit, if we raise the objective to 18 bucks, the chance of ever adding more tags on that unit is slim to none.

Bob Christensen: I think there needs to be some units that are at the lower ratio. In South Slope Vernal, I would stay lower and go with the higher on the other units. I would rather not go statewide.

Motion passed.

6. BUCKS, BULLS AND OIAL PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS AND RULE AMENDMENTS FOR 2012 – Anis Aoude

Questions from RAC:

Rod Morrison: Regarding the increase in limited-entry bull permits. How much was the increase statewide?

Anis Aoude: It decreased from 2989 to 2956.

Ken Powell: You're showing the Book Cliffs elk, the age group, you've lowered the tags from 69 to 57. Why is it decreasing? Is it because of the spike hunt?

Anis Aoude: A lot of these units did not have as high of an objective in the past. Now that we've raised the objective we have to cut permits to get back to objective. The spike hunting has nothing to do with that. These ages are 7 and older. Until we've been hunting for five to six years you shouldn't see any effect. And the decrease is 12, not 3.

Greg Gilroy (NE Utah Wildlife Coalition): I see you have management hunts in Paunsaugunt and Henry Mountain areas only. Why hasn't it been considered in some other limited entry areas like Book Cliffs where we're seeing a lot of deer which have a management-type antler where it

would give hunter opportunity? But make that a somewhat better trophy area as well as maintain hunter opportunity?

Anis Aoude: On Premium limited entry and not the other. The reason we do them on premium areas, but does go above 50. Other areas are already below 50 bucks/100 does. The only reason we do it is to reduce the bucks to does without killing too many 4-points or better. It was brought up in this RAC to do it in other areas and will be considered when the statewide plan is up for renewal, although it wouldn't fit as well because buck/doe ratios are not above 50. It's going to be a little more complex where we already have the buck/doe ratios where we want.

Mitch Hacking: Would that affect genetics at all?

Anis Aoude: No. You don't harvest enough 3-points to have an effect. Genetics do affect how many you see but harvesting them at a light rate would not reduce the genetics of that. Half of the genetics come from the doe.

Questions from Public:

Joe Hadlock: Who determines if you expand or reduce size of a limited entry area?

Anis Aoude: We make recommendations on boundaries if it's warranted.

Joe Hadlock: What would warrant a limited entry change?

Anis Aoude: Large public outcry.

Joe Hadlock: Have they ever discussed expanding the Diamond Mountain areas? I'm making the recommendation and wondering what the public thinks? Expanding to 191; I would like to address that to RAC.

Boyde Blackwell: Visit with the area wildlife biologist about it and work with him before you bring it to the RAC. Sometimes they'll recommend it for you if they feel it's warranted.

Ken Powell: Question. We're talking about opportunities. This is for the antelope. We only have one muzzleloader hunt for antelope. Why can't they start a general season statewide for antelope?

Anis Aoude: What limits pronghorn is not weapon type; it's the number of permits available because there are so few pronghorn in the area. They were finding crowding in the rifle and archery season so they added a muzzleloader season to add to that. If they added in other areas,

it would take away from rifle and muzzleloader and there has not been a large demand for muzzleloader on antelope; mostly a long range animal or sitting on water animal. The biologist did that a couple years ago to try to spread crowding issue.

Louis Hanes: I'm confused on bull elk numbers. I see a shift cutting in resident and addition in non-resident category.

Anis Aoude: In the past there was always a discrepancy and 10% for non-resident but not done statewide. The way we do our split is 10% but we round up, so if there are five permits, four would be resident, one would be non-resident. You can have up to nine permits and have one non-resident. It basically is giving them a little more opportunity. We're one of the most restrictive agencies.

Comments from Public:

Don Peay (Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife): We need to fence between highways in the Salt Lake area. We need to get after the coyotes. There are 27 elk units. We agree with 23. One we want to look at is the Book Cliffs roaded area in the Northeastern region. We recommend between 100 and 110 permits.

Carrie Mair: What is the five-year or ten-year trend?

Anis Aoude: You can't look at long term trends because the objectives have changed in the last two years. On some of the others we do look at more long term. Last year did dip a little bit but the biologist didn't feel it warranted that much of a change, but you could.

Carrie Mair: Judging on the three-year trend, but the graph looks scary.

Don Peay: I did it mathematically.

Carrie Mair: I think it's accurate in showing what the decrease is. My concern is if we start making radical changes every year that there's steep changes that's going to be unnerving. Maybe we do need to consider a larger cut but a third of the tags seems radical to me.

Don Peay: I looked at eight units. It takes 30 to 40%. We want as much opportunity as we can, but the super quality units should be held to management objectives.

Ken Powell (Mule Deer Foundation): On the Book Cliffs management hunt; we've cut 150 tags in the Book Cliffs. My suggestion is to put 50 tags for youth and get rid of 50 elk that are inferior. Also, we need to address Blue Mountain. Also, with the spike hunt there's a lot of stuff with the Book Cliffs spike that we need to cut out. You can say all you want. I've seen a decline

ever since we've had that spike elk hunt. It's hurting the overall numbers of the elk. You're scaring them all to Ouray. I know you've had to slaughter a bunch of them at Ouray because of the problems down there.

Thad Beal: Regarding limited entry applications. Why can't we put in for an elk, deer and antelope in the same year?

Secondly, dealing with baby boomers. With preference points in the state, there are two times maybe three you can hunt in limited entry in their lifetime. Let us draw three permits every year and the preference/bonus point system takes out more hunters than you bring in. Old guys never draw out again.

John Snow: I recommend closing some of areas because there are no deer. Using Green River, Hwy 40, Colorado line and Dinosaur National Monument, I recommend closing the area for three to five years until we can get some deer in there.

Anis Aoude: That could fall under Emergency Closure and it could be addressed by the Board.

Floyd Briggs: This is blindsiding us. It would do more good to go to the deer committees and make your presentation. If the RAC goes to the Wildlife Board with a 50/50 split, the Board is probably not going to listen to us.

Boyde Blackwell: It's a good idea to address your issues with the wildlife biologists and managers. Then it could be placed on the RAC agenda and discussed in November when we address hunt dates, boundaries and strategies while we work through species management plans.

John Snow: Who is the biologist who studies that area along the Colorado border? Has a study been done?

Charlie Greenwood: Classification work has been done but no specific study. I've never seen a lot of numbers on Blue Mountain. I would suggest we start working with you guys in the region and discuss it with the biologist; and next November when we talk about the boundaries more specifically, we'll have a little more information and work on it that way.

Floyd Briggs: These aren't things that will be fixed this year or next year. A good example is Diamond Mtn. It took a couple years but it's working now.

John Snow: We want to do that before we lose them all together.

Floyd Briggs: When we have it as an agenda item, then we can deal with it.

Greg Gilroy: We're in support of what Don Peay has brought up. Not only can you see that trend developing but it's amazing how quickly it has dropped off. It's time to step up and take care of the resources. If you have management youth tags, we still get 541 tags in the Book Cliffs for bucks. Regarding the genetic base out there, I disagree with Anis that it doesn't make a difference. There are some ways to not cut hunter opportunity but still make that a better unit without creaming the top. We would like to see a 50 tag reduction until management work can be done. Last year we asked for 100 but got 50.

There's a problem with the elk herd in Randlett and Ouray. Landowners are saying it wasn't such a problem until the Book Cliffs general season spike hunt. Elk are following the corridors and come on Tribe and Refuge and private landowners so they are in a safe haven. There are close to 200-300 problem elk out there now. The Willow Creek elk are not there now. They've moved onto private lands. If all landowners turned in for reimbursement they would probably exceed the whole depredation budget. I also support Don Peay's comments to stop the downward spiral.

Comments from RAC:

Bob Christensen: Question. With the Book Cliffs, Dax, when you're recommending numbers for 2012, with that three year decline. I understand there are ups and downs so the three-year trend might not necessarily tell you everything you need to know. But what do you recommend there?

Dax Mangus: It's only declined the last two years, and this year only slightly. So, is this a trend or did we just have full moons and warm weather. My decision was to give it one more year and see what happens. I was on the fence. In the road less area, we need to back off but on the Bitter Creek south portion, maybe it was a trend, maybe it was a fluke. On the long term trend it's gradually going up.

Floyd Briggs: Have you got any comparatives in other units?

Anis Aoude: We ask our biologists to look at these and if they're trending down to look at it closely. A lot of times when you back off you see ages coming back up. Maybe a larger reduction is warranted but I'm not sure 110 is warranted as is SFW's recommendation.

Carri Mair: Do we have 100% age data from that unit?

Anis Aoude: 70%

Brad Horrocks: How many elk are tested for age?

Anis Aoude: Roughly 74%. A lot of concern is that those that harvest a smaller bull are not submitting their teeth because they don't care. Harvest reporting is mandatory so every harvest

is mandatory to give antler measurements. We compare the antler measurements of those who submit teeth with antler measurements of those that don't submit teeth. The difference is not significantly large, so we are getting a good representation.

Mitch Hacking: Regarding the Book Cliffs road hunt. I know Don Peay's a man who does his homework. Since the biologist is on the fence, I would support that.

Carrie Mair: I don't think he stated it warranted a third of the tags.

Mitch Hacking: Just the fact that he was on the fence, I think it's warranted. I would support the 50 tag cut. As far as the agriculture, if you eliminate the damage in Ouray I'd have to support it.

Bob Christensen: I don't know that that warrants down 110 tags in the Book Cliffs, so I'd be hesitant to take off that many tags when it takes it down so drastically and next year the trend may go back up.

Charlie Greenwood: As far as Ouray goes, we have put radio collars on those elk and all of that data has shown that that's a resident herd on the landowners, tribe and refuge. One cow elk moved north to Tridell but there was no movement to the Book Cliffs.

Floyd Briggs: We cannot deal with a spike unit that's in the proclamation at this time. We can only go with deer numbers and elk numbers. Spike is a separate thing for November and December's RAC.

Wayne McAllister: I support the biologist in not reducing numbers yet until we have more of a trend.

*MOTION by Rod Morrison to go with the recommendations of the Division with a couple of exceptions: Book Cliff bull elk reduction to 110 tags and 50 buck deer tag reduction.
Second by Kirk Woodward*

Discussion:

Bob Christensen: Last year they did a 50 tag cut, so it's the same as last year with that 50 tag cut.

Rod Morrison: Would you be willing to raise it to 75?

Bob Christensen: No. On the elk instead of 110 would you be willing to go with 140?

Rod Morrison: Original numbers were 153? Let's go 125.

Floyd Briggs: It's not that I disagree with it but if we stray too far from the recommendations and are not unanimous, don't think it will be addressed nearly as pertinent as if we are somewhere close. Do you want to amend your elk numbers?

Carrie Mair: We have paid professionals.

Floyd Briggs: Motion to amend your motion?

Rod Morrison: Kirk, would you go with a motion to amend the motion?

Kirk Woodward: Maybe. First of all, if we go drastic it's difficult to get a majority vote, but I also listened to the biologist say there could have been a decrease but decided to ride it out. I've spent a lot of time in the Book Cliffs and seen the decrease and I don't want to make a small enough change that it doesn't change the data. Their data which is just three years would suggest that we're going to have to make a pretty big change in order to make a quick difference in order to rebound. If we want to rebound quickly I think a drastic change is in order and that's why I supported Rod's initial view. I would like to see that age objective rebound quickly.

Rod Morrison: I state the original motion to be voted on.

Floyd Briggs: Any further comments?

Carrie Mair: If we get really knee jerky about making these cuts over only a three year average, there's not enough data to substantiate that. This is drastic. I understand that you're putting the bottom in before it falls out. I don't know where the research is but based on the biologist who is paid to do his homework he says we need to give it another year to get the information.

Mitch Hacking: I have seen times when they didn't do it quick enough and it was a hard road back.

Carrie Mair: I just don't think you guys would be as horrified if this was a 10-year trend. So let's go with this with a scalpel. I'm willing to admit that there could be a trend. I'm also aware that 26% did not turn in their teeth and could have changed the age harvest. We're kind of guessing here. To take a cleaver to something that has a deviation of 26% is harsh.

Don Peay: I looked at 10 units, several of which are under-objective. I looked at the decline rates. Then I looked at the percentage of cuts the Division had recommended to stabilize and rebound. It was 30-40% to stop the decline rate. My recommendation would be to either try to fix it or not mess at all and wait another year.

Favor: Rod Morrison, Kirk Woodward, Andrea Merrell, Mitch Hacking
Oppose: Carrie Mair, Bob Christensen, Brandon McDonald, Wayne McAllister.
Tied

Floyd Briggs: I agree with the motion and with the sportsmen's group but I honestly believe if we go to the Wildlife Board with the drastic numbers we're trying to cut, we won't get anything at all. I've raised cattle all my life. I like the long range idea. With that said I want to vote against it.

Motion dies.

MOTION by Carrie Mair to accept Division's as presented including rule changes
Wayne McAllister second

Comment:

Bob Christensen: Don makes a good point but we need to look at it next year.

Mitch Hacking: You can get stuff done at the Wildlife Board even if it is drastic. Don't be afraid. That's what we're here for.

Floyd Briggs: I would rather have everybody walking out of here feeling like they accomplished something.

Kirk Woodward: If we did deer separately and elk separately, would it have changed your votes? Because I didn't hear any argument about deer reduction. I'd rather at least see us gain something if we separate those two motions.

Anis Aoude: We're above objective.

Kirk Woodward: But we're not above objective total numbers.

Bob Christensen: Are there any concerns about the dog thing?

Favor: Carrie Mair, Andrea Merrell, Brandon McDonald, Wayne McAllister
Opposed: Rod Morrison, Kirk Woodward, Bob Christensen, Mitch Hacking
Floyd Briggs: Opposed.
Motion failed

Bob Christensen: I have my reservation about the use of dogs, that's why I opposed it. If I'm out there hunting I'd rather not see dogs.

Anis Aoude: It's a dog on a leash with a handle. You shouldn't see them unless you see the hunter. Our law enforcement looked at it and the other states that do it. They also looked at Boone and Crocket to see if things harvested in that manner qualify and they do.

Kirk Woodward: Part of the testing for drop hairs is tracking. It's a leashed dog. It's not hunting the dog, it's after wounding the animal and their ability to recover that game has been substantially increased. The same person recovers that animal rather than not recovering that animal and going on to another animal.

MOTION by Rod Morrison to go with Division's recommendation and to go with a reduction on Book Cliff deer by 50 tags and reduction on Book Cliffs elk to 130.

Second by Kirk Woodward

Discussion:

Carrie Mair: Why are we reducing the buck permits in the Book Cliffs?

Rod Morrison: Because of dissatisfied hunters. I know of many that did not fill their tags because of the low quality. It took eight to nine years to draw and they want a better quality.

Carrie Mair: I think we're cutting off our nose to spite our face. We're at objective.

Floyd Briggs: Doesn't that go in line with splitting the state in units?

Carrie Mair: I don't know why we're splitting it in units if we're managing the whole state the same anyway.

Approve: Rod Morrison, Kirk Woodward, Andrea Merrell, Mitch Hacking, Wayne McAllister

Opposed Carrie Mair, Bob Christensen, Brandon McDonald

Motion passed 5-3.

7. ANTLERLESS PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2012 – Anis Aoude

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: On the doe tags, can you sell them pretty easily?

Anis Aoude: Yes. We have more people wanting to kill things than we have things to kill.

Floyd Briggs: What is the percentage of kill on the cow elk?

Anis Aoude: 40 – 50%

Mitch Hacking: One of the best hunts I ever had was on a cow elk hunt with my kids.

Questions from Public:

Ken Powell (Mule Deer): You have five units. Do you get a count on how much elk are killed on Tribal land?

Randall Thacker: Yes. When the Tribal member harvest antlerless they don't tell us but we get information back from non-residents.

Scott Sowards: They said there are 450 elk between Ouray and Dinosaur National Monument.

Charlie Greenwood: No. We're just talking Ouray. Some years 200 head but now we feel it's as high as 300-400.

Scott Sowards: I think we saw four bulls on Tribal ground. They took 59 or 60 down there was that either sex?

Charlie Greenwood: Landowner permits. Those were all antlerless.

Scott Sowards: And the refuge offered five any bull?

Charlie Greenwood: And a few antlerless hunts. Not very much success.

Scott Sowards: They're going to have to do something different.

Charlie Greenwood: The antlerless recommendations tonight include that area.

Anis Aoude: These are all draw permits that any hunter can put in. The stuff with depredation doesn't fall under this scenario. Sometimes they can put a hunter or two in this to deal with it.

Comments from Public:

Greg Gilroy: On the extended archery units, it is possible still to harvest does. Is that correct?

Charlie Greenwood: Yes.

Greg Gilroy: Then I need to make a proposal. I realize there are issues under depredation. It needs to be handled on an individual basis. I don't think we ought to allow does to be harvested by any other means. I would like to do away with the archery extended hunt.

Ken Powell (Mule deer): My recommendation for the archery hunts is that they shut down after October and not go into November because that's getting into the breeding season for the fawn population.

Scott Sowards: We have a way to monitor how many people harvest does in the population?

Anis Aoude: 27

Carrie Mair: These are resident does, correct?

Anis Aoude: In a lot of instances they're causing depredation.

Kirk Woodward: 27 seems unbelievably low to me. How is that data collected?

Anis Aoude: Like all data, through a random questionnaire.

Charlie Greenwood: Last November we talked about this hunt extensively.

Bob Christensen: We talked about that last November when we changed that boundary for that reason.

Mitch Hacking: We can't take all the tools from Division of Wildlife. A depredation hunt is a tool.

MOTION by Bob Christensen to accept antlerless permit numbers as presented by Division

Carrie Mair: Second

Discussion:

Favor: Rod Morrison, Andrea Merrell, Carrie Mair, Bob Christensen, Brandon McDonald

Mitch Hacking, Wayne McAllister

Opposed: Kirk Woodward It's purely personal. I think that it totally goes against our elk management plan to increase elk numbers and so I don't like to see the increase in cow elk permit numbers.

Motion passed 7 - 1

8. ANTLERLESS CWMU PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2012 - Charlie Greenwood

Questions from RAC:

Rod Morrison: Do landowners support increase in permits?

Randall Thacker: Yes, they do.

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

None

Comments from RAC:

None

**MOTION Kirk Woodward to accept Charlie's proposal
Brandon McDonald second
Passed unanimously**

9. BONUS POINT RULE AMENDMENTS – R657-62-9 – Bryan Christensen

Questions from RAC:

Brandon McDonald: Is this just for big game? It wasn't for bear or lion?

Bryan Christensen: It was just for limited entry big game bonus points, not for general season deer or cougar or bear, etc.

Mitch Hacking: So can you lose bear bonus points?

Bryan Christensen: This didn't have any bearing on anything except antlerless moose. It was never anything for those other species.

Wayne McAllister: So if I had bonus points and didn't apply for four years, I would have lost my bonus points?

Bryan Christensen: If we rescind the rule, everybody will keep what they've got no matter how long they wait.

Questions from Public:

Scott Sowards: What do you do if somebody dies?

Bryan Christensen: We have a status for that person that says "deceased" then they can't apply but the points still sit there.

Bob Christensen: You guys estimated how many people started applying and stopped?

Comments from Audience:

Joe Hadlock: So no one lost their points?

Bryan Christensen: If this doesn't get rescinded, 95,000 people will lose their points after the antlerless application. Nobody's lost points yet (it would include antlerless moose points)

**MOTION to Carrie Mair to approve
Brandon McDonald second
Passed unanimously**

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm

Next meeting: May 10 2012, 6:30 p.m. Bingham Center

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville Public Library
45 S Main Street, Springville
April 17, 2012 @ 6:30 p.m.

Motion Summary

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

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

Deer Management Plan Amendment and General Season Deer Permit Recommendations for 2012

MOTION: To approve the Division's recommendations as presented
Passed 7 to 3

Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations and Rule Amendments for 2012

MOTION: To keep the permit numbers on the Manti at the 2011 level
Passed 6 to 4

MOITON: To keep number of permits on the Wasatch at the 2011 level
Failed 4 to 6

Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2012

MOTION: To accept the DWR recommendations as presented
Passed unanimously

Antlerless CWMU Permit Recommendations for 2012

MOTION: To accept the recommendations as presented
Passed 9 to 1

Bonus Point Rule Amendments R657-62-9

MOTION: To accept the recommendations as presented
Passed unanimously

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville Public Library
45 S Main Street, Springville
April 17, 2012 @ 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

Matt Clark, Sportsmen
Timothy Fehr, At large
Larry Fitzgerald, Agriculture
Sarah Flinders, Forest Service
Karl Hirst, Sportsmen
Richard Hansen, At large
George Holmes, Agriculture
Kristofer Marble, At large
Fred Oswald, Non-consumptive, Chair
Jay Price, Elected
Duane Smith, Non-consumptive

Members Absent

Michael Gates, BLM
Gary Nielson, Sportsmen, Vice Chair

Others Present

Alan Clark, Assistant Director
Ernie Perkins, Wildlife Board
Bill Fenimore, Wildlife Board
John Bair, Wildlife Board

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

VOTING

Motion was made by Duane Smith to accept the agenda as written
Seconded by Kristofer Marble
Motion passed unanimously

- 2) **Wildlife Board Meeting Update (Information)**
- Fred Oswald, RAC Chair

- 3) **Regional Update (Information)**
- John Fairchild, Central Regional Supervisor

Wildlife

- Range rides scheduled for this spring (check with Craig Clyde for details)
- Range trend studies to be done in conjunction with range rides (browse utilization and pellet group transects)
- Spring deer classification continues
- Sage-grouse lek counts continue
- Deer management plans submitted for one-year extension (will be updated next year after range trend data is available for the Central Region)
- Pronghorn flight surveys to be conducted later this month on West Desert units
- Wolf or wolf hybrid observed along Sheep Creek road in Spanish Fork Canyon by DWR biologist first week of March. Follow-up by Wildlife Services to trap the animal has not been successful, and it hasn't been observed since. That sighting followed one by Wildlife Services in February while gunning coyotes from a helicopter in the Diamond

Fork area where four wolves/wolf hybrids were observed at close range. Attempts to relocate animals and capture them with a net gun was unsuccessful (no animals located). Monitoring of the area continues on a regular basis by Division biologists. If captured, we will take blood for DNA analysis, attach a radio collar and release the animal. If not related to Yellowstone wolves, the animal and any that are with it will be considered a wolf hybrid and attempts will be made to euthanize the animal(s).

Habitat

- Range trend studies to be carried out in the Central Region this year
- 3400 bitterbrush seedlings planted near Stockton last weekend (MDF sponsored project)

Aquatics

- Community Fishing waters now stocked weekly
- Spring gillnet survey scheduled for Deer Creek and Jordanelle week of May 7-11
- Cabelas' tagged fish contests at Utah Lake and Grantsville Res. (May 5-July 8)
 - 17 tagged fish for Utah Lake (white bass and catfish)
 - 7 tagged fish for Grantsville (rainbows)
- Tagged fish contest planned another sponsor at Strawberry (300 rainbows)
- Utah Lake Field Day planned for elementary school kids in April and May (three days)
- Columbia spotted frog surveys in West Desert wetlands show highest number of egg masses than ever recorded by DWR biologists
- Tiger musky program success story – first stocking taking place this spring out of the Lee Kay hatchery in Salt Lake (infertile hybrid between N. pike and muskellunge)

Conservation Outreach

- Mtn. Goat Viewing Day – mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon this Saturday
- Utah Lake Access Guide available at DWR office
- Kids Fishing Day at Salem Pond May 8th

Law Enforcement

- CR officers will participate in I-15 roadblock at port-of-entry at Bloomington. Experience will help with running a similar roadblock on I-80 in Wendover later this spring
- Antler sale May 8th at the Lee Kay Center in Salt Lake
- Some hunt unit violations on the Manti. Boundary between SE and C hunt units is the Skyline Drive (not former deer hunt boundary).

4) Deer Management Plan Amendment and General Season Deer Permit Recommendations for 2012 (Action)

- **Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator**

Questions from the RAC

Duane Smith – You commented that the archery and muzzleloader have less opportunity to be successful but wasn't the muzzleloader harvest just as high as rifle harvest this year?

Anis Aoude – It can be as high but it is usually two to five percent lower. On a statewide basis it washes out but when you look at unit by unit it is almost equal.

Duane Smith – It keeps going up and up and I am concerned that we continue to give them priority in terms of hunting opportunity.

Anis Aoude – We thought about that as well but the way we thought about it was we are taking away from rifle hunters, if you put it in muzzleloader you aren't going to shoot more bucks but there is a chance we could shoot less. It gives those rifle hunters that may not be archers an opportunity to hunt a similar weapon type.

Duane Smith – If they switched to muzzleloader. I've never had so many complaints as I did last year from rifle hunters. When they saw the percentages were equal that didn't help.

Anis Aoude – There was not a split in the past. They came out of the same pool. Last year's number was what was actually sold.

Duane Smith – But you are going to increase that number and decrease the rifle numbers.
Anis Aoude – Correct.

Richard Hansen – When you decided how many permits for each unit did you use the data from the phone harvest survey? If a hunter hunted on multiple units does that count as a hunter on each unit?

Anis Aoude – As I mentioned we don't trust that information as much as the harvest. What we took were how many bucks were harvested on each unit, applied success rate and that is how we got the permit numbers. We did not take the number as you mentioned it knowing full well that over estimates the number of hunters because they can hunt multiple units.

Richard Hansen – When you made that determination of tags did you take into consideration the size of unit and crowding?

Anis Aoude – On some units we did. On public land units for general season hunters usually avoid crowding. Also on units that are primarily private land we actually didn't increase permits on those units at all knowing access would be issue.

Richard Hansen – On the unit I am familiar with there are a lot of permits on that unit. I bet that is 20 percent higher than has been on that unit.

Anis Aoude – I would disagree with you. If we took a long term average it would have been a higher number. It was lower because the last three years we have been cutting permits. I feel it is a conservative number.

Richard Hansen – The hunters are going to go where the deer are and there will be crowding.

Anis Aoude – If that is the case we can change numbers from year to year. We will watch it.

Timothy Fehr – You put a lot of work into generating all the numbers. Have you seen anything on the survivability or other things that are going on that would in your mind question any of the numbers you have out there?

Anis Aoude – No because all the numbers here are based on harvest information so if anything, survival this year is higher and hopefully in the next few years we will be able to issue more permits once we get the buck to doe ratios up. Buck to doe ratios post hunt really track the population well. If anything we are on the conservative side because we set permits on the populations when they were fairly low.

Karl Hirst – With all the different factors you have to figure in for the 15-17 and 18-20 do you have a guess on how many permits would change if you move a unit from one objective to another?

Anis Aoude – Yes, we have done all those calculations and I think there is a list in your packet. It is not a set percentage. It creates a slope because as you increase the objective success rates go up so you harvest more so it's not a linear thing and not a straight percentage and each unit is a little different. It depends on how many permits you already have and where you need to get to.

Fred Oswald – There is a sheet in the revised packet on the back of page two.

Karl Hirst – Which objective would grow the herd the fastest?

Anis Aoude – To be honest I would manage for the lowest because you want to remove as many bucks as possible while having enough to breed the does. That is not what we are doing. We are managing for how many bucks hunters want to see in the field. Both will grow the herd at probably an equal rate but the more bucks you carry the more there will be interaction between bucks and does when they get to the stressful periods.

Kristofer Marble – Where did the 60/20/20 split come from?

Anis Aoude – Basically it optimizes the number of permits you can have. Really if you want to do that even more you would put 25 or 30 percent into archery. We looked at how many apply and made it so most people would feel they got an opportunity to get a tag and we can issue as many permits as possible.

Kristofer Marble – So the only way to reduce the muzzleloader numbers is to reduce the total number of tags, right?

Anis Aoude – Or move them into rifle. Either way you are going to kill about the same number of bucks.

Kristofer Marble – So you are not set on a 60/20/20 split?

Anis Aoude – That is our preferred way to go because we have done a lot of calculations and that would be the best. If we do change it we do want it to stay statewide because of the way they do the drawing they can't draw different units at different percentages.

Richard Hansen – On some units the herd objective is only 50 percent. Assuming that the objective is realistic habitat wise, does it really hurt to have a high number of bucks compared to the does? Are the deer really competing with each other and the fawns in that situation?

Anis Aoude – Your assumption is that resources are never limiting which is never the case for any wildlife species. They are always limited on some portion of their range. We don't set our objectives based on habitat limitations. It was set back when on harvest. I feel most units are limited in one way or another. Otherwise those populations would be growing at a high rate.

Richard Hansen – I know we are trying to manage for more bucks but ultimately it isn't detrimental to the growth of the herds if the habitat can withstand the growth.

Anis Aoude – Right.

Richard Hansen – That has to be a really big part of this. If the objective is really low I don't see how the bucks could be detrimental to the survival of the fawns or does in a normal winter.

Anis Aoude – You are correct; it doesn't harm anything in most winters. What it does change is the number of hunters you can put on that unit so you have to cut permits. In a normal winter you can carry 30 bucks per 100 does. There have been studies that show if you get above 40 bucks per 100 does you do start seeing a decline in fawn doe ratios. I am assuming that is due to competition. These are studies that were done in Colorado on units where they have 40 plus bucks per 100 does. You want to manage between 10 and 40. Anywhere in between there will work depending on how many hunters you want to put on the unit. If you want to maximize the number of hunters obviously you want to manage toward the lower end of that and if you want to maximize the big bucks you want to manage to the higher end of that.

Richard Hansen – So on some units if the objective that the unit can realistically carry is below the objective a higher buck to doe ratio wouldn't hurt it until that herd begins to grow and there are too many. Then could you drop the buck to doe ratio down after a few years and help take some of those bucks so they are not competing.

Anis Aoude – I see what you are getting at. So if a population is not growing, resources are limited. You have to make that assumption. No matter what the objective, the objective could be way off. If the population is not growing there is a reason they are not producing young or more apt to get predated upon and it usually leads back to the resource. Is there cover, habitat, is there enough forage. On almost all of our units we are not growing so we don't need more bucks. We have 36 bucks per 100 does on the book cliffs yet we are at 30 fawns per 100 does. Having more bucks doesn't grow your fawns but we know having fewer bucks will release that much habitat for does to reproduce. There are very few units in this state where we are not limited by habitat. Please understand that these objectives are fairly arbitrary. They are not based on carrying capacity.

Richard Hansen – So really what you are saying is we are at our max in this state.

Anis Aoude – Some years we will be at our max. Some years when we get a little more precipitation we actually grow more forage we will increase but on the average we are. If you look at how the populations have been for the last 15 years they have been right around that 300,000 mark. Unless we can improve habitat and continue to improve habitat I don't think we can't grow more deer.

Richard Hansen – Basically we are throwing millions of dollars away?

Anis Aoude – No, we are throwing millions of dollars into habitat to improve it.

Richard Hansen – By taking predators we can't expect one or two percent out of that?

Anis Aoude – Predator control will help but it can only help to a certain degree if your resources are limited. I think you need to try all the tools in the tool box to make sure that is what is going on. We are not saying this blindly. There have been lots of studies done in the west looking at predator control, habitat and every other aspect of mortality. It always comes back to habitat. Having good habitat could actually reduce predation because cover is there, the fawns can hide for the first couple of weeks. There are a lot of different aspects to habitat that can mitigate predation. If you do predator control you could boost the population slightly but in the long run you have to have better habitat.

Sarah Flinders – Why are we not basing the recommendations on carrying capacity?

Anis Aoude – Because carrying capacity is almost impossible to measure. It varies widely from year to year. There is no such thing as an average year. We use buck to doe ratios because it tracks population so closely. It is the best measure of a population without actually knowing how many you have.

Sarah Flinders – On the chart that showed the units that were going to be 15 to 17 I noticed there were several units in there that were actually at 13 and even below. So they are not even at 15, why are those units in the 15 to 17 ratio, why not bump them up to the 18 to 20 until they actually meet objective and then drop them down.

Anis Aoude – These units are units that lend themselves to high harvest, that's why their buck to doe ratios is low. Once you start managing for a higher buck to doe ratio than then have you cut permits that much more to get to 15 to 17. You don't need to move them to 18 and then bring them back down. Just by setting the permits on those units to get to 16 automatically you will get to 16. We are reducing the numbers of permits on those units. Even though they were 13 doesn't mean we have the same number of permits. We have cut permits by 'x' percent to get to 16 bucks per 100 does. On some units we have cut 25 percent of the tags to get from 13 to 16. To get to 18 you have to cut that many more and really those units do not lend themselves to low harvest because the deer are more susceptible to harvest. By cutting permits you are able to get to 16 where those units should be because you are trying to maximize opportunity.

Questions from the Public

Tye Boulter – If we move to an 18 -25 ratio statewide what would we expect as far as population adjustments?

Anis Aoude – Likely it would be fairly similar. You would add the few bucks that survive so maybe 5,000 bucks that wouldn't be harvested.

Tye Boulter – So we don't have an issue with deer density and does getting bred?

Anis Aoude – No, you can get down to five or six bucks per 100 does and still have 98 percent pregnancy rates. A good example of that is the Monroe unit. It is at 11 bucks per 100 does and we recently did a capture to do a fawn study and out of 69 does captured 68 were pregnant.

Tye Boulter – What do fawn recruitment and fawn to doe ratios look like on units with high buck to doe ratios compared to units with low buck to doe ratios.

Anis Aoude – It varies. I mentioned you can have the range anywhere. We have units with 11 bucks per 100 does yet they produce maybe 60 fawns per 100 and we have units with 30 to 36 bucks per 100 does and are producing 30 fawns. The number of bucks doesn't seem to be directly tied to reproduction unless you fall below 10 or are above 40.

Comments from the Public

Ben Lowder – Utah Bowman's Association (UBA) – First of all I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be here to comment and for the service you are providing here tonight. I would like to applaud the Division on this recommendation. Over the last year or so one thing I have noticed as we have been discussing whether or not to go to the 30 units is the public is really split about 50/50 on whether they want a low or high buck to doe ratio, more opportunity versus more

quality. I really feel that what the Division has come up with here with 14 in one objective and 16 in the other we are about at that 50 percent ratio to really appease both sides of the public opinion. Utah Bowman's Association supports the Division's recommendations as presented, thank you for your time.

Mike Christensen – I just want to give the RAC a brief overview of how we came to the 15 to 25 buck to doe ratio that we currently have. I sat as a member on the mule deer committee in 2008 when we rewrote the management plan. There was a lot of discussion on whether to maintain regional hunting or go to unit by unit management. What we ended up doing was recommending that we maintain regional management but to do that we bumped the buck to doe from 15 to 20 to 25. What the essentially did was alleviated any concerns about units within a region that may have some exponential growth that those units with high buck to doe ratios couldn't pull the whole region buck to doe ratio above 20 which would then increase permits. The only way we could reach 25 is if our deer herd was just exploding and then that would put smiles on everybody's face. So now that we have gone to unit by unit there is no reason to have the 25 number. I would encourage the RAC to keep all units somewhere between 15 and 20. To maintain a unit as 20 to 25 which has been talked about in some RACs would essentially make the unit a limited entry hunt. To maintain that high of a number you have to cut hunters back extremely. There has been talk about moving a unit in central to the higher buck to doe ratio which wouldn't be a horrible thing but that is for you to work out. I support the Division's recommendations and just wanted to give you a brief overview of how that 25 number came to be and why it is too high.

Kim Hansen – Utah Wildlife Alliance – I would like to say thank you for letting us be here and express our thoughts an opinions. That is why this thing works so well, we do appreciate that. Thank you for your service. One of the things I thought once we decided to allow the units is it gives us a chance to do some serious research and find out why the deer numbers have dwindled. Let's make a few units deer only and a few elk only a few absolutely no predators and see what happens. Otherwise this thing is just to divide it up into smaller units and a bigger hassle to keep tabs on. We need to look at the predator numbers and how they damage the deer herds. Back in the 1800s there were hardly any deer around and predators were very high. In the 1900s they started putting a bounty on predators and you can see how the numbers of deer came back. I think we could do the same now. I know we have a lot of effort going towards the coyotes but I really think the cats are doing great damage to the deer population. No one knows how many cougars we have but the numbers I have heard are somewhere between 2,000 and 6,000. If we use the lower number, say there are 2,000 cougars in the state at 52 deer a year, one a week; we are losing a lot of deer. That is 104,000 deer every year. If we took 1,000 cougars off the range we would save 52,000 deer. If you sold tags for those 52,000 deer at 45 dollars each we would generate 4.8 million dollars just by bringing those deer back. In the 1960s the state harvested around 130 to 150,000 deer and had several hundred thousand hunters out. It was a hay day. Now we harvest around 20,000 deer and it is appalling that is where we are at. If you look at San Juan Elk Ridge back in the hay day of deer hunting that area alone harvested approximately 25,000 deer just on that unit. Now after it was closed for five years in 1980, no new roads, no new Wal-Marts, no new subdivisions, nothing any different except the predators it is a premium unit and we only have 43 tags on that whole unit. We need to look seriously at the cats. There was a study in Arizona where they fenced off one square mile and had no predators inside. The number of deer inside was much greater than outside. In 2002 they had the worst drought they have had and inside the enclosure there were 100 fawns per 100 does and outside there were 18 fawns per 100 does. The only difference is predators. I would like to see on some of these units we let the hunters get rid of some predators. Let someone take a cougar, bear or deer with their tag just like Idaho does. I think the value of a deer is way higher than the value of a cougar. I appreciate your time and thank you for letting me say a few words.

Craig Bonham – I started hunting when I was five with my dad. I have hunted 55 years and I have seen a lot of change happen. The whole state was like the Henry Mountains are today. I guess I long for the good old days. Pretty soon there started to be so many people out hunting it reminded me of Little Sahara on a holiday weekend. I am encouraged by the recent changes. I see improvement with the management but there is a lot more that needs to happen. I question the margin of error on surveying. I am all for higher buck to doe ratios and fewer permits and higher tag costs. I think you will find that the people that really appreciate the resource are willing to pay more and will take better care of the environment. I think we need to be more creative in how we structure our permits. For example Wyoming has a special tag that costs about 600 dollars and a regular tag that is 300 dollars. That gives someone who it means more to better odds at drawing a tag if they want to spend more money to do that. I am concerned with our deer herds. We have 23 premium limited entry elk units and only three premium deer units and one of those is Antelope Island which really doesn't count. I am for higher buck to doe ratios even if there are fewer permits and higher tag costs. There is nothing like going out backpacking and getting out in the woods and in a week maybe seeing only one or two other people. I am finding that in Colorado and Nevada. I was finding that in Wyoming but they are finding some challenges like Utah did in the 70s and I hope Wyoming gets it right. That is my perception of the management plan.

Michael Anderson – United Wildlife Cooperative – I was also a member of the mule deer committee in 2008. We worked long and hard to put together the mule deer management plan. I never had any clue that here in 2012 we would still be formulating the mule deer plan. We better hurry because we only have one more year before it expires. Since then we have decided to go with units and this is a different way of thinking here in Utah. Given that reality it is doubtful that we will get things perfect the first time around. We do want to applaud the extraordinary efforts made by the Division of Wildlife in getting public input and putting together sound scientific data and coming up with a reasonable formula to come up with our first round of unit permit recommendations. It is really quite impressive. As Utah Wildlife Cooperative has looked at this process and taken a keen interest in this we generated our own numbers prior to the release of the DWR recommendations and came up with something very similar to what the DWR proposes. One major concern we have is deer. We have witnessed the tension between hunters as if they were different religions or races; bow hunters, rifle hunters and muzzleloader hunters. I want to remind the RAC we are talking about tools of management not classes of people. If we are going to manage wildlife then it only behooves us to use the proper tools and not get confused between the tools and the people who use that tool. A hunter is a hunter; he is not defined by the weapon he chooses to use on a particular hunt. With that said, we of the United Wildlife Cooperative want to totally accept the Division of Wildlife Resources recommendations as they are and show our gratitude for their extraordinary work in putting these recommendations together.

Dave Woodhouse – Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife (SFW) – I would like to thank you for taking your time to come here and listen to everybody. As I look through and we discussed the different ratios, like Mike said, 25 is a supper high number and will be hard to reach and hard to manage. 18 to 20 and 15 to 17 are much better to handle and manage the number of hunters on. I noticed in the central region there is not one unit to be 18 to 20 in the Division's recommendation. If you look at the Manti I believe the southeast RAC voted for that to go to 18 to 20. If you moved the Manti to 18 to 20 that would cut 600 tags. If you changed the Oquirrh, Stansburry you would lose about 300 tags. The Wasatch West would be a cut of 800 tags. One thing about the Wasatch unit is it's at 19 so you wouldn't have to make adjustments to that unit. If we could put that one in the higher class it is there and it would work. Is see no reason why West Desert, West couldn't go to 18 to 20. We really don't know how many bucks are out there

right now. Even West Desert Tintic would only cut 200 tags. I would like for the RAC to address those and let's see an 18 to 20 unit here in the central region. The Wasatch West is already there. I have pushed for tag cuts in the past but with the amount of habitat work SFW has done and is doing there is a lot of habitat that is not being used in the state. Now we are making a strong push on predators. We know on the Monroe 68 out of 69 does were all bred. One thing we do know is come fall there will only be about 30 fawns with those does. Half of those does are probably carrying twins. They are being cleaned up by the predators. Come springtime there are even less of them left. That is why our deer herds are going down. We have the habitat. Let's use the tools we do have and have some quality along with the opportunity. I haven't had one person say they need a tag every year. All I hear is I took my kids out and they didn't see deer not just bucks but deer. We have a deer problem; we don't have a buck problem. On the Nebo you don't see deer. The deer are not there. We have a lot of work to do to get these deer herds where they need to be. We are going to do it. I know the Division is excited with some of the programs we have coming online with predator control. We appreciate what you are doing because you are a big part of this. Please do look at these units in the central region and let's try to get one or two to the 18 to 20. It is not that big of a tag cut. Thanks for your time.

Steve Jones – West Jordan – I have been told that you want to hear from guys like me. I represent myself. The part that frustrates me more than anything is I am in my 50s and I know what it's like to hunt in Utah in the hay day but I also have watched the trend. I hunt one of the highest pressured units in the state. I don't complain about the number of bucks I see. I am overweight and am not hiking 50 miles into someplace. I am taking my family and having a good time. Some of these comments about pushing our limits up don't make sense to me. In 1995 we cut over 100,000 hunters from the state of Utah. That has been over 20 years and this is the best we got. The buck numbers are not the problem. The problem is fawns and does. The DWR alludes to it and talks about our habitat but yet we keep coming back and thinking out miracle solution is cutting people out of hunting for bucks. There are big bucks on the mountain we just have to work a little harder, so what, its hunting. Right now I can swallow the bitter pill with what we have decided to do including the unit by unit hunting but I strongly recommend we follow what the DWR has put together. They have put together a phenomenal package and I think we should commend them for that. We should give it a chance to work instead of moaning and groaning and seeing how we can shove groups from 15 to 17 to 20 to 25 if it really doesn't make that big of a difference. Let's follow the recommendations and see where it goes in three years then slowly start making a change. I thank you for your time and for the DWR's effort.

Tye Boulter – I agree with Steve and Dave, we don't have a buck problem we have a deer problem. Let's grow more deer because with that comes more bucks. Through all of this I watch the public come up, some are very gracious and some are not so nice. I just want to express my gratitude to the Division for the job they do, they are the ultimate stewards of our wildlife. They know what is going on out there and they know what we need to do to grow more deer and I think we should listen to them. Appreciate your time.

Dennis Winch – I have hunted all my life and I spent most my time in southern Utah. We don't have a habitat problem in southern Utah. I would be willing to take any of the biologists down and show them any mountain in southern Utah. If you take a horse right now they would stumble in bitter brush it is so thick. I remember with my father we would go out and see 30 to 40 four-point bucks and in those areas now you don't see anything, not even a track. I could take you into 20 or 30 areas I used to hunt when I was a kid and the habitat is still there. The deer are gone, they are dead, and they are in the spirit world. The biggest problem is predators but habitat is always where we seem to be. You can plant a garden with the best seed and fertilizer but if you have 1,400 pheasants waiting to feed on it as soon as you put it out there it won't last. The fawns are the same way. Until we take care of the predators we won't have deer. You can always

control predators and certain amount of things like the number of hunters and how many days they hunt and where they hunt and you can control predators. But you can't control the fences and roads. You need to address the things you can. If you want to get the buck to doe ratio up you need more deer. Each doe will have two fawns and chances are 50 percent of those will be bucks. We need to hunt the predators.

RAC Discussion

Fred Oswald – We are going to deal with the management plan amendment and the deer permit recommendations for 2012.

VOTING

**Motion was made by Jay Price to approve the Division's recommendations as presented
Seconded by George Holmes**

**In Favor: Larry Fitzgerald, Kristofer Marble, Jay Price, Matt Clark, Karl Hirst,
George Holmes, Timothy Fehr**

Opposed: Sarah Flinders, Duane Smith, Richard Hansen

Motion passed 7 to 3

5) Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations and Rule Amendments for 2012 (Action)

- **Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator**

Questions from the RAC

Jay Price – Both the moose and the goat permits went down but the non-resident went up, why is that?

Anis Aoude – The way we do our rounding on limited entry is ten percent so when they reach five there is one non-resident. It could go all the way up to nine and still have one non-resident. Even though we cut the permits some units could still have more non-resident permits. Different units have different numbers. If a unit had nine resident and one non-resident last year this year that unit may have five resident and still one non-resident. It is because how we round the numbers.

Duane Smith – The elk age classification on the Deep Creeks looked like you were well above objective yet you reduced the number of permits.

Anis Aoude – The majority of the elk on that unit reside on the tribe and we kind of get their slop over. We have tried to increase permits incrementally to get the age down but it hasn't happened. What has happened is our hunter satisfaction rate has gone down. They are starting to see hunter crowding issues. It doesn't matter how many permits we put out there we aren't going to get that age down so we are going to try to make sure our satisfaction doesn't keep declining.

Duane Smith – You talked about a big increase with bison because of what was happening on the tribe.

Anis Aoude – No, the big increase is on the Henrys mostly. We were in growth mode and now we have reached where we need to be so we need to issue more permits to hold them there.

Duane Smith – It seems to me a couple years ago we had a big debate in regards to bison numbers and SFW weighed in about all the habitat work they had done and that you were still bound by the number you agree to with BLM and whoever was there. What is the situation there?

Anis Aoude – The old objective was 275 the new objective is 325. What happened is before we could start going toward 325 we needed to get to the original objective of 275. That was the agreement we made with them. We got to 275 and over the last few years we have been increasing the number of bison, reducing permits, now we have reached where we need to be and to maintain that we need to increase permits to take into consideration the production that is happening. We could carry more but there were concessions made on all sides.

Duane Smith – 20 to 60 is a big jump.

Anis Aoude – It was a phenomenal calf production year last year and we take all that into consideration. Mortality is virtually nil and last years production was very high. Once they get to a year old they are basically indestructible unless a bullet hits them.

Duane Smith – But a drought year would hurt productivity.

Anis Aoude – Yes.

Richard Hansen – Since we went to the statewide spike elk hunt has that affected the age classification of the animals harvested in a unit?

Anis Aoude – The short answer is no. The lowest unit we manage for is four and a half to five year old so we haven't had the program in place four years yet to see those spikes become four year olds. I don't expect we will see it on the units that we manage for the lowest age class until we are four years into the program and on the units we manage for the highest until we are seven years into the program.

Richard Hansen – I hear a lot of complaints about the Monroe. Quite frankly there are a lot fewer elk down there. We have a cabin. Eight years ago it was incredible and now you are lucky to see three or four.

Anis Aoude – That unit is unique because it is well roaded and has a lot of access. Elk are very sensitive to that so when you are not harvesting spikes they are going to be more visible but when you are harvesting spikes they are going to be less visible. We do harvest quite a few spikes on that unit but that should not yet be affecting the older age classes. We may see it a few years down the road. That is one unit where we are probably getting more spike harvest that we counted on but still it's not above what can be sustained. We will keep watching it.

Karl Hirst – Recently we issued some tags and then pulled back those tags on the plateau antelope. Can you comment on that herd? We are recommending and increase here and it has only been about a year since we pulled those tags back.

Anis Aoude – That herd is a very productive herd but we did actually have some winter mortality. We see that rarely out there but it was a more severe winter then we have ever seen in that country. We did see the majority of the fawns die and a few adults. The following year there was very low production because pronghorn tend to reabsorb their fetuses when they are stressed. Also when they do get down to those low numbers they are quick to rebound. They can have triplets. The habitat there is such that it can increase. When they flew it a couple weeks ago they actually were at objective which is 1,500 animals and if we don't put permits on it could get away from us pretty quick. There is talk to try to get a committee together down there to increase the objective because I think we can carry more pronghorn on that unit. It is one of those things that has to be worked out with all the parties.

Questions from the Public

Tye Boulter – The limited entry elk age objectives were raised a couple years ago. What can we anticipate in the next few years as we get closer to those age objective and start to get into maintenance mode? Do we end up losing tags?

Anis Aoude – From all the calculations we have done a leveling off point is around 2,500 tags statewide and we have about 3,000 now. Right now on a lot of the units and especially the biggest units we are still trying to kill more elk to get to objective. On some of the higher objective units we are cutting tags but those units tend to have fewer elk so it doesn't play into the tag reduction as much.

Tye Boulter – I was browsing through tag allocations a few months back and I noticed that this years tag recommendations for all the different species for conservation tags we are grossly over the five percent rule that is in place. We gave out 30 percent of moose tags to conservation and convention last year. Are you looking at rectifying that and if so are you going to change the rule or are you going to actually rectify that with the conservation tag allocation number?

Anis Aoude – We are going to change the rule to deal with that and the reason for that is we had a lot more moose permits when the three year permits were set. When we reduce permits it ends up being a higher percentage. We have put a provision in rule to deal with that. It is not finalized yet but it would allow us to adjust if we see something out of the ordinary. I think the rule is coming out this next RAC.

Phil Dunn – I noticed that there is a lot of hunting going on in November and December. It seems like when things were a little better the late hunt seasons weren't going on and I wonder if that affects some of the animals. We hunt our animals from the middle of August until about the end of December. There is no rest for the animals to recoup during that time.

Anis Aoude – Most of our buck deer hunting ends by the end of October. We do hunt some elk after that and we do hunt quite a few antlerless that go into December but not on a statewide basis. We have a hunt going at any given time but there is not complete pressure on any unit from September to November. The reason for that is antlerless animals, especially elk, are hard to kill any other season but the late season. That is where we find our highest success rates and on units where we are over objective on elk and we need to harvest these animals it makes sense to put those permits where we can get the harvest. We are moving more and more permits into the general season but we see a much lower success rate. We try to minimize that but sometimes it's not something we can get around if we need to get the harvest.

Brad Baxter – I heard you say that San Juan, Elk Ridge has poor fawn production and did you say it was because of summer habitat?

Anis Aoude – The Elk Ridge portion is summer range limited, yes.

Brad Baxter – Five out of the last ten years I have been hunting there during the archery hunt with family. Sometimes you can hear coyotes from four different directions at night. That is where your fawns are going. It is not habitat; there is plenty of habitat there. There is hardly any deer scattered anywhere but yet at night you hear packs of coyotes.

Dave Woodhouse – Why is there about 170 more limited entry elk tags on the Wasatch than the Manti when you have twice the elk herd on the Manti?

Anis Aoude – Basically we manage for ages in the harvest. The ages in the harvest continue to go up on both units. Our population estimates are winter estimates so there actually could be more elk summering on the Wasatch than on the Manti but where they winter is different. It's hard to say why but as long as ages continue to go up we can add more permits.

Dave Woodhouse – The ages are going down on both units.

Anis Aoude – But they are still above objective.

Comments from the Public

Ben Lowder – Utah Bowman's Association supports the Division's recommendation as presented tonight.

Tye Boulter – As the president of the Utah Wildlife Cooperative I would like to support the Division's recommendations.

Dave Woodhouse – SFW – On the Wasatch Mountains unit we would ask that the RAC address the limited entry elk tag numbers and instead of the increase roll it back to the 2009 levels. We are seeing a decline in the age class. We are just four tenths above the objective and with another increase we expect that will go down and then we will be in a cut mode again. If you do a parallel with the Beaver or the Pahvant units that dropped below you see that you have to make significant cuts and it takes a longer time. We are getting close to the level we want so we would ask the RAC to address that at this time. Rather than increase the permits on the Wasatch and the Manti look at a holding pattern of where we were last year in tag numbers or even back to the

2009 levels in order to avoid a steep decline in the age class objective. We still may hit objective keeping permits the same as last year. Other than that we support the recommendations of the DWR. I would like to see a little debate. I was surprised to see you cut that last one so short.

Kim Hansen – I agree with Dave’s comments and would like to see those numbers rolled back as well.

RAC Discussion

Fred Oswald – Anis, would you like to comment on those last two recommendations?

Anis Aoude – Basically the concern they have is we have seen a reduction from one year to the next in the age class but the three year age average is still above objective. We are recommending an eight percent increase on the Wasatch which is not a huge increase but because it has so many permits it ends up being a lot of permits. We would not recommend a decrease especially a 220 permit decrease if we were to go back to the 2009 numbers. What we have seen in the past on these units is even when we have held status quo we saw the age jump back up. I can’t say where we will level off. There will come a point where we will have to cut permits. I do agree that we can’t sustain this kind of harvest forever. If we want to get to objective we need to issue more permits.

Richard Hansen – I had a guy call me on the phone and he is concerned about the number of antlerless permits for a portion of the Wasatch.

Fred Oswald – We will address that next.

Kristofer Marble – Looking at the Manti numbers from 2010 to 2011 we went down three tenths of a point. I understand that you are looking at the three year average but it would seem like a little safer number maybe to go with 2011 permit numbers.

Anis Aoude – Certainly that would be the safer number but it may not get you to objective. As I mentioned on the Manti specifically we saw this same trend three or four years ago and they did do status quo and we saw a bump in age. Biological systems can surprise you. We are not saying we know all there is to know but based on the information we have we would make a slight increase in permits. If we do go status quo we can see what happens. What I would hope is that if we do go status quo and we see a bump next year that we don’t go status quo again.

Kristofer Marble – I understand we use a three year average but looking at the trend it seems like it is trending down quite sharply on the Manti.

Anis Aoude – It is trending down I agree but even the last number the trend is still above objective.

Kristofer Marble – If you kept the 2011 permit numbers what number would you expect to see next year as far as the average age of harvest?

Anis Aoude – It may be about the same as this year or it could bump up. It is a guess. There are so many bulls on the mountain and we are getting a good sample size because we are harvesting a lot of animals. So you are getting a representative sample of what is out there.

Kristofer Marble – The reason I ask that is because in 2011 we issued 452 permits and after that harvest it looked like we went down three points in the average age of harvest. From a laymen’s perspective you would expect if you issue the same amount of permits that after 2012 you would see a similar reduction.

Anis Aoude – And you may.

Larry Fitzgerald – What was the success rate on the Wasatch?

Craig Clyde – 80 percent over all weapon types.

Larry Fitzgerald – What is the average?

Anis Aoude – I’m sure rifle is higher and archery is lower.

Larry Fitzgerald – Compared to past years?

Craig Clyde – It has dropped down but normally we manage that for close to 100 percent.
Larry Fitzgerald – The people I talk to don't harvest because they are looking for a bigger bull.
Craig Clyde – And that happens a lot. Hunter satisfaction is up, 71 percent or satisfied or neutral.
Larry Fitzgerald – Are we still above our elk objective?
Craig Clyde – Yes, well over it. In fact that and the Manti in the 20 years that we have been hunting it as a limited entry unit we have never been at objective, it has always been over.

VOTING

Motion was made by Kristofer Marble to keep the permit numbers on the Manti at the 2011 level (30 fewer than the recommendation)

Seconded by Richard Hansen

In Favor: Sarah Flinders, Duane Smith, Richard Hansen, Kristofer Marble, Jay Price, Matt Clark

Opposed: Larry Fitzgerald, Karl Hirst, George Holmes, Timothy Fehr

Motion passed 6 to 4

Motion was made by Jay Price to keep number of permits on the Wasatch at the 2011 level (49 fewer than the recommendation)

Seconded by Richard Hansen

Kristofer Marble – I want to clarify why I didn't include that in my motion. When I look at the Wasatch unit it looks like we are well above the objective. We are trending down but it looks like we have some work to do before we get to objective.

Jay Price – But they are killing the bigger bulls and that is bringing the age objective up. When you make that increase your age will go way down.

Motion failed 4 to 6

Motion was made by Timothy Fehr to accept the remainder of the recommendations as presented

Seconded by Kristofer Marble

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

6) Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2012 (Action)

- Anis Aoude, Big Game Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Richard Hansen – A guy called me about the Wasatch unit and said there is a part of that unit where there aren't very many elk there and yet you look on the population numbers for that and they are huge. I guess the problem is that most of those elk are on non huntable lands. They guys that draw that tag are not hunting 100 percent of those elk.

Anis Aoude – Usually we try to put boundaries to target where we think we have over populations but I will let the region answer that.

Craig Clyde – I know a lot about that unit. I managed it myself for years and have been in this region my entire career. It does have private property issues but they are very small compared to the unit as a whole. The elk are there. We had a different year this year. The spring produced phenomenal vegetation. Elk were summering in areas where they don't normally summer therefore moving out of areas where people would be scouting or hunting. Then we had an open winter and the elk wintered higher and once the gates were closed that shut down the access to the elk so hunter success was down. Hunters were complaining about not finding elk but our flight did show that they were there. Did you have a specific area?

Richard Hansen – I know this particular person was an outfitter out of Heber. They said they know it well. They said they have seen a decline in the last several years and they were concerned with the number of antlerless permits being proposed.

Craig Clyde – I have heard the same concerns over some of the antlerless permit numbers however when we flew that the winter before last and we were 900 head over objective just on our portion of the Wasatch West. Based on the success rate the year before which was 61 percent we based our recommendation on that to give enough permits to bring that number down as well as the production that would be produced that year. When we had this open winter and we never received the harvest we were planning on, the success rate was only 32.3 and therefore the only thing we really did is we took care of that production but we did not reduce the 900 number down to where it would be within objective. What we need to do is have the same number of tags this next season and hopefully our success rates will be back up to where they normally are between 50 and 60 percent overall.

Richard Hansen – Is there an inordinate amount of elk on those private lands compared to the rest of the unit?

Craig Clyde – There are two CWMUs up there and for the most part those elk don't come on until later in the season. There's also Wolf Creek Ranches which is a large parcel of about 15,000 acres that the elk move into and we have been working with those guys to try to turn that into a CWMU. A lot of those people are out of state homeowners and they do not want hunting there. We were able to get them to take a few permits this year. We will continue to work with them and try to get more hunters into that area. The rest of it should be open to hunting.

Jay Price – One of the CWMUs also increased their antlerless tags.

Craig Clyde – Yes we have worked with the CWMU operators. They work with us really well. Just about anything we ask they will bend over backwards.

Kristofer Marble – Is there more opportunity to get some of those tags moved over to CWMUs and see if we can't take some animals off CWMUs rather than put so much pressure on public portion.

Craig Clyde – We have looked at that and done exactly that. The problem with a CWMU is that the minimum is 10,000 acres that they can have. Most of them will be between 10,000 and 15,000 acres. That seems like a lot until you start putting quite a few hunters on there. You can push elk off of it really easily. Whenever we try to increase permits on a CWMU to try to reduce the population, which we need to, we also at the same time have to try to increase permits surrounding the CWMU so if they go off they are still hunted.

Kristofer Marble – Do you see a situation on the Wasatch where maybe we ought to look at that for antlerless?

Craig Clyde – If we reduce the size it makes it easier to run elk off of it. If we want the landowner to be more involved in creating habitat for wildlife, protecting wildlife and growing a herd that will spill over for the general public we want big enough units that will contain a population more year round than just seasonally.

Kristofer Marble – Some of these animals are seeking refuge on parcels that are smaller than 10,000 so unless the landowner draws a tag or gets a mitigation tag they don't get hunted.

Craig Clyde – Most of those lands are usually open to the public even if they are private.

Kristofer Marble – So you don't see opportunity there to get more people on private property hunting?

Craig Clyde – We have eliminated at least one of the hunts and we have moved some permits to the general hunt where we have lower success so we have had to increase permits to compensate for that. We are trying creative ways to not have them on the late hunt so much that we are disturbing deer but at the same time have a success rate high enough that we can control the population and address depredation problems especially around the Heber valley.

Matt Clark – Are the 290 doe tags all because of nuisance?

Anis Aoude – 140 are to deal with deer that are in crops during the summer. The 150 permits are on the Parawan front to deal directly with habitat damage that we are seeing on the habitat there. There are actually too many deer wintering for the habitat. They have a very restricted range there so we need to remove some animals there so the sage brush and the bitter brush don't die.

Matt Clark – The cars aren't doing it?

Anis Aoude – It's all fenced so they can't migrate across. They used to cross and winter on the other side and we are working with UDOT to get some structures put into that stretch of highway but it is really hard after the highway has been built to do that.

George Holmes – What criteria is necessary to be listed as an area where due to private land hunting access may not be allowed?

Anis Aoude – Usually what fits under that is it is primarily private land. If there are only a few parcels of public land that would be the kind of situation where we wouldn't increase permits knowing if even if we had increased permits hunters wouldn't have a place to go. I assume you are talking about...

George Holmes – I am talking about my field in the east Heber area.

Anis Aoude – No that would not be.

Questions from the Public

Dave Woodhouse – Craig, what was the success rate on the limited entry bull on the Wasatch?

Craig Clyde – Close to 80 percent.

Dave Woodhouse – Do we know what the spike was?

Anis Aoude – Around 13 percent statewide.

Dave Woodhouse – What is the cow success rate on Wasatch?

Anis Aoude – It was 32 percent.

Dave Woodhouse – Which is low. Could it be because the cows just aren't there?

Craig Clyde – The elk were there. When we fly that we fly a grid pattern up and down every ridge on the winter range. We never do a double count and so if anything we are going to be low on our count.

Dave Woodhouse – If I remember last year your counts in the Spanish Fork drainage were lower than the north end.

Craig Clyde – I would have to look at the data on that, I don't remember.

Dave Woodhouse – I was wondering if we could lower those cow tags on the Diamond Fork unit.

Craig Clyde – I don't think we are having as many tags on the Diamond Fork unit. What we really want to do is reduce the elk around the Heber valley because we receive a lot of depredation but we still have the objective of the herd so if we reduce in one area we would have to increase in another. Some of those permits on the Diamond Fork and Springville units we moved during the general season which covers the whole unit and not just one specific area.

Mike Christensen – Have we given private land only doe tags?

Anis Aoude – I'm not sure exactly. There are some areas we outline that are primarily private land but the landowners don't have the tags the public does.

Mike Christensen – Do you think it would behoove us to make to make some private land only cow elk tags in the areas on the Wasatch that the public perception is that the public lands elk are getting hammered and the private lands elk are not?

Anis Aoude – It's a little different situation because the private land deer tags we tend to issue are associated with agriculture and elk issues are usually rangeland. I think they have shaped the hunt such that it encompasses mostly the private land.

Comments from the Public

Tye Boulter – United Wildlife Cooperative – I received calls from outfitters in Heber and a lot of other people who consider the Wasatch their home myself included. I think a lot of people initially when we issued so many cow tags last year were shocked. I know you flew last year and your sight ability was great. I spent a lot of time talking to people and showing them the data. This year it is a shock when you look at the population estimate and see the number of permits and it looks like we are killing half our elk. I think we should figure out ways to pinpoint them a little better. The conclusion people are coming to is we have a lot of elk on private property and they are not getting killed so we have population objectives that need to come down. Can maybe we look at flying this unit again just as a matter of due diligence to make sure we got done what we needed to get done and weren't detrimental to the elk population.

John Fairchild – We're backed up. We didn't fly some units this winter because we knew the counts wouldn't tell us anything. I guess what you are really asking is how certain are we that we only took the number of animals we did. That is based on a survey and we got good numbers on what percentage of those who had permits harvested a cow elk. That is pretty solid stuff.

Tye Boulter – Do we know where those elk are going. I guess that is my concern. I have talked to Craig about that and I know you guys have a pretty good idea of what is going on there. Do we know where those animals we are killing in Diamond Fork and above Springville are going?

Craig Clyde – We did a study in the 90s where we put radio collars on elk and then also later Randal Thacker in the northeastern region put collars on toward the Current Creek unit and those are elk that are around the Heber area. We got a pretty good handle of where the elk go.

Basically when the first bullets fire the elk start to move to their winter range and anything that is on this of strawberry ridge go to Diamond Fork, Wallsburg, above Springville and back towards strawberry ridge. Elk that are east of strawberry ridge migrate to the east and split. Some of them go towards Emma Park towards Price and the rest go to the Avintaquin. Of that herd about 25 percent of them head to the east and there are elk that travel from strawberry ridge to Desolation Canyon on the Green River which is 75 air miles and then return to the exact same place to have their calves the next year.

Tye Boulter – Is that an anomaly or do we have crossover? Are we killing a bunch of Manti elk on the Wasatch?

Craig Clyde – Of the collars we had on we had one elk that crossed highway 40. We had no elk that crossed on to the Manti. Randall had one elk that crossed highway 40 and wintered one year on the Wallsburg management area.

Mike Christensen – The Wasatch is three subunits combined into one, avintaquin, west and current creek. What if we took 20 percent of the antlerless tags from each of those units and made them a private land only tag? We have done it in the past where it says private land must obtain permission before you apply. I think that would put pressure on these animals. That would be 800 tags divided between those three units. If they were private land only tags with a liberal season you would kill those elk that aren't accessible to the general public and you would alleviate some of the pressure off the public lands.

Mike Anderson – UWC – There is one antlerless hunt that didn't get included in the presentation that I think would be a good idea to think about and that has to do with the Wasatch extended archery deer hunt which includes the possibility of harvesting a doe. Since harvesting does is giving so many people such heartburn these days and given that it really isn't a substantial loss to anyone I think to take away those last two weeks of the doe hunt would make a lot of people happy.

Anis Aoude – The harvest is so miniscule. It is an opportunity for a bow hunter. I think the most we have ever harvested is around 50 does and the average is 17. It's not a population control measure. More does get hit by vehicles than are harvested. To me I would rather keep the hunt because it gives archers an opportunity to harvest a doe and take some meat home. Especially for

some young archer that is just out there to harvest his first animal it is a good opportunity. It doesn't make that much of a difference. Not that many does get killed.

?- I would like to address the cow problem, you have so many cows and you can't harvest them quick enough in a lot of areas. I own quite a bit of private ground in southern Utah. I stood up in RAC meeting 20 years ago and went over this same thing because you had the same problem 20 years ago. The problem is you have to make it more convenient for the hunter not for the elk. You have to make it convenient to pack one of these elk out. Give them four months to kill that elk. Let them kill it on the deer hunt instead of on January first when there is four feet of snow on the road. Let them kill one when they can.

Anis Aoude – We do have that type of permit on some units not on the Wasatch. You would likely kill too many or move animals. We are trying to strike a balance. It would look like you killed all the elk on a unit but you could have moved them off the unit. We have long seasons but people usually wait until it snows to harvest. We have tried these things and we know what works. Elk are over objective in some areas. Some of that is because success varies from year to year.

John Fairchild – I was surprised at the number of people who came through the check stations who didn't know if you had a buck tag and a cow tag for the same area you could take their cow during the deer hunt or spike elk hunt. This is relatively new and I think that is one of the things you were requesting us to consider which is already in place.

RAC Discussion

Kristofer Marble – Mike mentioned the private lands only Wasatch cow elk hunt, could you give us your thoughts on that?

Anis Aoude – Unless we get the buy in from private landowners it would do no good to have those permits. We have places where it is even harder to kill elk than the Wasatch. If you have the right conditions you will kill elk. We have units that are primarily private land where we cannot get anyone on private land. We have worked with the private landowners, they have permit and you can buy permits over the counter and all these other things. There are a lot of mechanisms out there. We have some private lands only hunts but if you can't get access to private land more permits won't help. Most private landowners when they have elk on them that are using it as a refuge usually it's because they are not allowing hunters on there. The tags are there. If they wanted the elk gone they could just say come hunt on my place. That is not the case. It would take a lot of coordination to make sure we get the right people involved and they are willing to accept the public hunter on there. Nine Mile is an example of a unit with primarily private land. We issue a lot of tags and some go over the counter. It is something we have struggled with but we would have to get landowners to be willing to let hunters on.

Kristofer Marble – On the Wasatch front extended right now you can hunt either sex from middle of August to November 30th. What was the purpose of the extra two weeks doe only hunt?

Anis Aoude – It was to try to harvest a few does to keep them from getting hit by vehicles but we didn't find that to be very useful to be honest. It is not reducing the number of does. We decided not to take it out because it is an opportunity to harvest a doe. I hasn't been a limiting factor

Larry Fitzgerald – Why does one of the biggest herds of antelope not have a hunt?

Craig Clyde – That is included in a unit, it's just not huntable because of city limits.

Tom Becker – Saratoga springs will be a challenge. Both Eagle Mountain and Saratoga Springs have annexed surrounding land that is not developed into their city limits that we used to be able to hunt. They have cut off all hunting in city limits, even bow hunting. We have had a few guys get arrested for hunting in those areas they used to hunt in. In the middle of Saratoga Springs we have an island and the antelope have found that.

Larry Fitzgerald – Can you hunt them before they get there?

Tom Becker – They don't leave the area. We are going to fly actually on Thursday to find out where they are at as part of our antelope flights. If they are outside the housing I would like to try to spook them into areas we can hunt them.

Larry Fitzgerald – They started in Rush Valley and they just keep going until they get to the city. You had ten doe tags in Rush Valley. Can you give more doe antelope tags?

Tom Becker – Outside the city limits we are holding steady if not declining. If you have a doe hunt you are going to kill the animals that are ok and are not causing any problems. It's the group that is in the city limits that we can't access right now. A hunt may even push more into the city. We're into a challenge we hope we can catch them at the right place and the right time.

Larry Fitzgerald – Years ago I know we had issues in the Cedar Valley area.

Tom Becker – Some of the problems we had during the drought that have moved antelope. We had some fires in Rush Valley. There are some guzzlers that we have to do some repair work on. All in all we have more ATV recreation and trails going through the antelope habitat and I think some of that disturbance has caused some of that shift from Rush Valley into Cedar Valley. To control permit numbers instead of opening up a public antlerless hunt because it is mostly private ground we have been giving landowners mitigation permits do deal with antelope on alfalfa fields and sod farms. We have been controlling population numbers satisfactory talking to those landowners. We let them control the population within that private land sector. We do give landowners in Cedar Valley depredation tags and it has controlled the numbers fairly well. But we can't do that now in Saratoga Springs and Eagle Mountain. We are going to try to work with those cities for some way to have an archery or some way to deal with those.

Larry Fitzgerald – They give deer tags in city limits but not antelope?

Tom Becker – I have been giving mitigation tags for antelope but not in city limits because they will get arrested.

Larry Fitzgerald – I think we should control them more outside the city limits because they are going to move to Rush Valley where there is better habitat.

Tom Becker – And they have.

Larry Fitzgerald - They are getting hit on the roads. It is a safety hazard also.

Tom Becker – Absolutely. If we were to try to move those animals because and they cross the highway and get hit then we've got issues.

George Holmes – Are there time limits on depredation and mitigation permits? What time of the year can you have pronghorn permits?

Tom Becker – We try to do it when there is damage occurring.

George Holmes – How about now?

Tom Becker – The permits can only be from August to December. If there was damage happening now we could probably pay you until July first and then in August if they are in there we will deal with them.

George Holmes – I know it sounds like a good idea to give private landowners permits but a lot of the landowners in Heber valley don't want people hunting there. The elk don't stay there, they move. I also probably agree that the count on the elk is off but I think it's off the other way. I think there are more elk. It was estimated that you count 85 percent but if you really only saw 70 percent the number is that much higher.

VOTING

Motion was made by George Holmes to accept the DWR recommendations as presented

Seconded by Timothy Fehr

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

7) **Antlerless CWMU Permit Recommendations for 2012 (Action)**

- **Craig Clyde, Regional Wildlife Manager**

VOTING

**Motion was made by Larry Fitzgerald to accept the recommendations as presented
Seconded by Kristofer Marble**

**In Favor: Sarah Flinders, Duane Smith, Larry Fitzgerald, Richard Hansen,
Kristofer Marble, Matt Clark, Karl Hirst, George Holmes, Timothy Fehr**

Opposed: Jay Price (should not give 90/10 change to 80/20)

Motion passed 9 to 1

8) Bonus Point Rule Amendments R657-62-9

- Alan Clark, Assistant Director

Questions from the RAC

Steve Jones – Of that 95,000 that are not putting in how many points do they have?

Alan Clark – We have people all the way up to 18 that haven't applied for three years. Why they are not, we don't know all the reasons. Most have one or two.

Steve Jones – The people with one or two are not going to affect anything if they come back in but if there are 10,000 with four or five points if they come back all together they are going to jump in front of the people that have been applying.

Alan Clark – They won't jump in front of you if you have been doing it for a few years. Probably two thirds of the people you will never hear from again for various reasons. Some individuals have died or they have moved. There are a lot of reasons, life changes. There are a third of them who are still there and the question is if you take their points away when they paid the same application fees and bought the same hunting license that the rest of us do, do they have some kink of right to those points. Do we have a right to take them away? That is the legal implication.

Steve Jones – I struggle with that because they have been given notice way up front that this is the way they system is going to work. This is not rocket science. Even a slow person can understand that. I have been putting in year after year. If I draw and then start over and then one of them may come back in front of me. Has he paid his dues, in some ways yes, in some ways no.

Alan Clark – I understand what you are saying.

Richard Hansen – What about letting people buy points from other people?

Alan Clark – That was actually one of the proposals that we brought out. We took all kinds of ideas and in the end most of them were just ideas. We have a pretty good system. I defend our system because the way our system works the first time you apply you have a chance. In a lot of states you don't have chance until you have applied for years. That is a reward for a kid. If I told a kid that there is no way you are ever going to draw. You are just doing this to earn some future opportunity that would be discouraging. Yet we still give the people that have been in line the longest have the best chance. It's a pretty neat system in my mind that balances those two things.

VOTING

**Motion was made by Sarah Flinders to accept the recommendations as presented
Seconded by George Holmes**

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

50 in attendance

Next board meeting May 3rd at the DNR boardroom, Salt Lake

Next RAC meeting May 15th at Springville Library

Northern Regional Advisory Council

April 18, 2012

6:00 P.M.

Place: Brigham City Community Center

RAC Present

Robert Byrnes At Large
John Cavitt Noncon.
Paul Cowley Forest Service
James Gaskill- At Large
R. Jefre Hicks- At Large
Russ Lawrence- At Large
Ann Neville-Noncon.
Bryce Thurgood- At Large
Craig Van Tassell- Sportsman
John Wall- At Large

DWR Present

Jodie Anderson
Anis Aoude
Justin Dolling
Darren Debloois
Randy Wood
Scott Davis
Dave Rich
Scott McFarlane
Phil Douglass
Marty Bushman
Kevin Bunnell
Alan Clarke
Staci Coons
Jim Christensen
Scott Walker
Mitch Lane
Greg Sheehan
Keith Fullenkamp
Wendy Christensen

Wildlife Board

Ernie Perkins

RAC Excused

John Blazzard Agric.
Jon Leonard- Sportsman
G. Lynn Nelson- Elected
Jill Silvey- BLM

RAC Absent

Joel Ferry- Agric.

Meeting Begins: 6:03 p.m.

Number of Pages: 15

Introduction: Robert Byrnes-Chair

Agenda:

Review of Agenda and Dec 14, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Wildlife Board Meeting Update

Regional Update

Deer Management Plan Amendment & General Season Deer Permit Recommendations for 2012.

Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations & Rule Amendments for 2012.

Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2012

Antlerless CWMU Permit Recommendations for 2012

Bonus Point Rule Amendments – R657-62-9

*Poll Rifle Deer Hunting Closure Proposal * Addition to the agenda.

Item 1. Welcome and Introductions

Introduction of RAC Members

Item 2. Review and Acceptance of Agenda and Dec 14, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Neville- So moved.

Second: Cowley

Discussion

Gaskill- Like to be educated on how the agenda is formulated and who does it. I do not want to develop a trend and have only certain items presented to a particular region. I understand that can happen and has happened in the past on occasion. I know there are a couple of RAC members, not in this region, who have expressed their feeling that only the RAC that is affected by a proposal should vote on it. I strongly disagree with that and would not like to see that trend expanded. If I am elected as a representative, I think that I am entitled and obligated to research and find out what that proposal is about and should be able to vote. Just because I don't live in the Southern region does not mean I don't know anything about it.

Byrnes- I saw the same email and I think it was pretty much universally contradicted by the chairs that management of certain units is definitely of interest to everyone within the state. I believe there was a moose management plan that was on the Southeast Regions agenda that is not on ours. Sometimes I do see specific agenda items like that. Maybe we should see that and maybe we do have some interest in that moose management plan.

Gaskill- I am not so sure about that. It could be but I do not understand how the agenda gets set up in the first place. Maybe that is one of my problems.

Byrnes- Staci sets up the agenda and it goes out with the packet. There is a certain time where to get things on the agenda have to be available to get them out on the agenda.

Gaskill- Lets say a member of this RAC wanted something on the agenda. Could we do that and if so how?

Byrnes- If it was an action item, we would have to make sure that we get the proper public notice.

Gaskill- I would not ask it to be an action item until it had been discussed. I am just talking about getting it on the agenda for and informational item.

Byrnes- If it was and informational item, I think we can add that without a lot of advance notice. Just as long as we can get it on the agenda for the meeting. It is 24 hours in advance. If it is an informational item. If we are not going to vote or pass a recommendation that is binding. There is a large schedule of how things come around through the process and they try to work them in to the meetings that we are having.

Gaskill- I'm familiar with that.

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Byrnes- Any amendments to the December 14th, 2011 minutes?

Motion: Gaskill- Move to accept as corrected.

Cowley- The one correction that we had was getting Justin's position corrected. We had him listed as an active instead of a Regional Supervisor which he was at that time. I think that was the only correction.

Second: Cowley

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Item 3. Wildlife Board Update

Email sent to RAC Members.

Item 4. Regional Update

-Justin Dolling, Regional Supervisor

New Employees- Riley Peck Sensitive Species Biologist, Phil Tuttle replaced Candace Hutchinson AIS Biologist.

Law Enforcement- Finishing up in-service training. Updating data management system. An individual by the name of Joe Murray had mountain goat permit on Willard Peak. He shot more than one mountain goat. He pled guilty and paid restitution of \$12,000 dollars and lost his big game hunting privileges for 20 years.

Habitat- Shrub plantings-looking for help. Power and wind farm proposals and wildlife impact. Looking to thin out Pinion and Juniper to enhance mule deer habitat. Expanding fishing access on Weber River extended by about a mile. Maintenance crew will start WMA maintenance.

Wildlife- Leek counts, finishing up deer classifications, winter range assessments and mortality. Sharptail Grouse transplants from Box Elder County to Antelope Island. Nursery Herd.

Aquatics- Fish study, Least Chub introduction at Locomotive Springs, Yellowstone Cut throat on Johnson Creek, Fishing is really good on the Ogden River, Lost Creek, Willard and Pineview. AIS is getting ready to start up.

Outreach- Putting final touches to Hardware Ranch Management Plan. Subscribe to free weekly fishing reports. New state record wiper caught at Willard Bay State Park, 10 lbs., 2 oz.

Item 5. Deer Management Plan Amendment & General Season Deer Permit Recommendations for 2012.

- Anis Aoude & Randy Wood

See Handout

RAC Questions

James Gaskill- As a review for some of us, when do you take those fawn counts?

Anis Aoude- They are done post hunt season. So, usually it is in November.

Gaskill- By then the fawns are how old?

Aoude- About 6 months old.

Gaskill- They are still subject to a lot of predation by coyotes.

Aoude- Not really until winter hits.

Gaskill- Are the buck to doe and fawn to doe counts taken on private land or public land?

Aoude- They are taken on both. When we were managing on a region basis, we only used the public land classifications to set objectives on any region. Now, it is on a unit by unit basis. It does not really matter because that unit encompasses that private land. Most counts are done on public land but there are units that are predominantly private land. You can't avoid having some classifications on private land.

Gaskill- I was not quite understanding why you limited the number of increases but not the number of decreases. It seems like it would go both ways.

Aoude- We were trying not to be on the conservative side as far as getting buck to doe ratios but not drop them too quickly either. We wanted to get to objective so buck to doe ratios would rise quickly. On a lot of units where we might be slightly above, we just limited ourselves to 10 percent to see if we can bring it down slowly. That mainly comes from our limited entry units which we do the same thing so it is not a market increase.

Gaskill- If I have an archery tag and it rolls over or the remaining archery tags that are rolled over become muzzleloader tags, they still have to abide by all of the muzzleloader dates are rules right?

Aoude- They have to hunt during the muzzleloader season.

Gaskill- In the applicable unit?

Aoude- Exactly.

Gaskill- Once again, if you would explain to me whether buck to doe ratios increasing or decreasing them is a substantial benefit to the overall deer herd?

Aoude- No, obviously all of these things are only going to affect the buck hunt. As far as populations are concerned, having a few more or less bucks is not going to affect population growth.

John Cavitt- 10 year average is about 13-15% of permits go unused. Does that mean they are not successful or does that mean they never get in the field?

Aoude- They never hunt.

Cavitt- Do you expect that percentage to decline as we reduce these number of permits?

Aoude- It may decline slightly but basically we had 87,000 permits last year and it was about that. So, it shouldn't change a whole lot. I think a lot of people just get busy.

Bryce Thurgood- Has it taken a lot more staff or time to go out and count unit by unit?

Aoude- No. It sounds like we are going unit by unit and it is a great big thing. We've always managed on a unit basis we just hunt on a regional basis. The data collection is exactly the same as in the past. The only difference is that the harvest data will be a little bit more accurate because now we do not have to ask people where they hunted. We already know so we just asked if they harvested or not. That is the only difference and it does not require our staff to do anything different.

Craig Van Tassell- Explain the resident vs. non-resident. It was my understanding at one time that for every 5 resident permits, there was a non-resident permit offered.

Aoude- The rule is 10%, that is how we try to do it. It does round up so if you are limited to 5 then you are 4 and 1. If you have 10, it would be 9 and 1. So it is a 10% rule but we round up when it is 5.

Paul Cowley- When we do the counts on bucks per doe, what is the margin of error on those counts. How accurate are they?

Aoude- It varies a lot from unit to unit depending on how many sample units you get. On some units, you may get a big group. There is large variance on that. If you get a good representative of the unit, it can be plus or minus 2 bucks per hundred doe. It is usually error on the higher end.

Public Comment

Jerry Hill- United Wildlife Cooperative- As you consider buck to doe ratio objectives and their consequences, we ask that you keep a few things in mind. Hunter retention and recruitment is lower than it has ever been in Utah. Urge you to be cautious in adopting a management strategy that further reduces hunting participation. Reducing tags to increase buck to doe ratios only does a disservice to this group and undermines its long term viability. Overall, deer numbers have not improved. Dissatisfied hunters. Keep general units as opportunity friendly as possible.

Dan Wilhelm- Why won't the state give some assistance to Ron to get some habitat projects done? Elk hunting is also going downhill. Moose hunting is going downhill. What are we going to hunt, down the road, if there is nothing to hunt?

Justin Dolling- Unfortunately, Ron did suffer some health issues. Since then, we have sat down with Scott Walker and his immediate supervisor to try and revamp the way we are prioritizing projects here in the region. I want to reaffirm that Ron is back in good health, he is online and my desire is that we will start to see good projects come out of the Northern Region. Particularly on your property and other public and private lands throughout the region.

Cole Knighton- Providing more deer related projects for dedicated hunters. Give us some habitat projects. Control coyotes. What is being done about habitat?

Zeke Marshall- Utah Bowman's Association- Buck to doe ratio objectives. Utah Bowman's Association supports the DWR recommendations as presented.

Mike Schultz- I believe a person should have to choose either to put in for the general deer tag or a limited entry unit. You should not be able to choose both.

Robert Byrnes- We have already adopted for this year the rules for the application process. That will come around again next year and we can try and keep that in mind.

RAC Comment

Gaskill- Want to comment on a comment which was according to the Bowman's organization, the hunters are evenly split as to opportunity vs. increased buck to doe ratios. In the information I have, the emails and communications I have had with hunters, that is not even close. I tabulated about 40 emails, 3 of which wanted increase buck to doe ratios. All the rest of them mentioned family hunts and increased opportunity. The rules allow me to request that something be entered into the official minutes. I am requesting that this email which I received from a young lady be put into the minutes. I will provide you with a written copy of it.

Email from Kayla- Hi my name is Kayla I am 14 years old. I just got my hunter safety last year and my dad bought me a new bow for Christmas and I am very excited for this year's deer hunt! My dad told me though that it may be harder for me to get a tag this year because some changes were made that will make it so there are some bigger bucks. I don't exactly understand the changes but I am not worried about the bigger bucks I would rather be able to get a tag and hunt with my dad and grandpa. He told me that because I felt so strongly about this I should write an email to you telling you how I feel. My dad told me that you are talking about changes this year that would mean there are more tags and give me a better chance to get one and hunt with him. They way I understand what my dad told me I just want to hunt sooo bad and I don't care if there are a few more bucks as long as I get a tag. I'm hoping that you don't cut tags this year and I have been practicing shooting and almost every day after school because I am so excited to deer hunt this year. I hope I get to shoot a big buck one day but that's not as important to me as hunting with my family. My dad says there are special hunts so that people can put in for one of those so until get one those I just want to go hunt deer and I don't care if there lots of big bucks as long as I get to hunt.

Thank you for reading my email to you today.
Sincerely,

Kayla

Motion

Motion- Gaskill- Move to have a state wide 15 to 17 buck to doe ratio.

Motion Fails- Due to lack of a second.

Cowley- My concern is that we start taking from one group of hunters and applying tags to a second group of hunters or two other hunters. In this case, we are actually dropping the rifle tags which, I suspect, are a lot of the younger hunters to the tune of 6,100 permits and then jumping the muzzleloader tags and archery tags. I am just a little concerns as we start making those shifts. It seems to me like it would be better off having everyone take a bit of that cut. Gaskill- I agree with Paul. The rifle hunt is the bread and butter. Even though I switched to muzzleloader, I think that they are the ones that take the hits most of the time. Archery and muzzleloader guys seem to get more preferential treatment.

Thurgood- Thank the division for trying to accommodate and change the system so we don't lose permits like was proposed.

Motion- Thurgood- Approve Deer Management Plan Amendment and General Season Deer Permit Recommendations for 2012 as presented.

Second- Gaskill

Motion Passes- For: 8, Opposed: 1

Item 6. Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations & Rule Amendments for 2012

- Anis Aoude & Randy Wood

See Handout

Public Question

Dallin Swainston- On the antlerless permits, you have two different seasons. So, if you were not successful on your cow tag the first season, the later season you could use both tags. Is that correct?

Aoude- Correct. Or, you could harvest them both early if you want.

Dallin Swainston- I understood the early part but I was wondering if it still applied during the later season.

Aoude- It does.

Mike Schultz- Numbers dropped on the moose for the residents but increased for the non-residents.

Aoude- I get that question at almost every RAC. The reason for that is similar to the question that was asked earlier. Basically, you can reduce total permits but the number of non-residents stay the same because even if you are at 10 permits on the one unit, you cannot issue 9 and 1. If you drop to 5, you can still issue 4 and 1. The non-residents does not drop as quickly as the residents because we round.

Mike Schultz- But it actually increased.

Aoude- It might have been some units that changed. Maybe they had only 4 last year and now they have 5. Some units have decreased.

Mike Schultz- On those units where the resident numbers increased as well.

Aoude- There have been some inconsistencies in the past where they have not been. We often have to set whether we are going to have a non-resident or not prior to when we set our permits. If they thought they were going to have a non-resident, it was already in the drawing so we had to commit to that one. There are some of those issues as well.

RAC Questions

Robert Byrnes- So, you have not been applying the rounding rule very consistently in the past on moose?

Aoude- Correct, on anything. This year, we have made a great effort to make sure everybody is doing it right.

Byrnes- Where you committed in advance to have a tag for non-residents, even though maybe it did not fit the criteria, are you going to balance that out in future years?

Aoude- Once you have committed to it, no matter how many permits you end up having, you have to have one non-resident. There is not a whole lot else you can do in future years. Total of moose killed are not above what is allowed. It is just a proportion of resident and non-resident.

Byrnes- Say we only had 4 permits but we committed to have one for a non-resident, so it is 4 and 1 total?

Aoude- It would be 3 and 1.

Byrnes- If you know now that it is going to be that again next year, you could take that one out of the application process in the future.

Aoude- Yes, we do that. They have to set whether there is going to be a resident or non-resident in November. We are setting permits now. Once they have the data, they realize ages dropped quite a bit. It is one of those anomalies that happen rarely.

Byrnes- If you see that this year, you could take that non-resident tag out for next year in advance.

Aoude- That is exactly the way we will do it.

Byrnes- You said there was an increase on the rattlesnake tags. In the handout, it just shows 6 straight across.

Aoude- Range Creek.

Byrnes- O.k.

Aoude- Those units are right across the river from each other. I always get them confused.

John Cavitt- What is going on with the declines in the moose population?

Aoude- We are not exactly sure to be honest. We are initiating a research project to look at some of that. It could be a lot of different things. We have some ideas but we cannot pinpoint one of them. We have parasites that almost 70% of moose have. We have selenium deficiency going on. There are all kinds of different things that could be affecting moose. It could be that we may have carried moose over their carrying capacity for too long and now they are crashing. We want to investigate all of those and see what it is. We are initiating a study to look at that.

Thurgood- On the Desert sheep, is it the dirty devil that is having problems or are their other units?

Aoude- It is both north and south and dirty devil as well. They reduced one or two permits on the dirty devil. I am not sure.

Thurgood- Is it an alarming problem?

Aoude- It certainly is and we are investigating it. We have a new research project going on. Often time, when you see those kinds of things, it could be just because they live in arid environments and their production did not reach potential. It could also be disease issues. You have to investigate further to find out.

Byrnes- If we have any moose trapping that is required during the winter, are we going to transplant those within the state or continue to trade them out?

Aoude- We have no plans to take moose outside of the state. The southeast region did just approve a new moose unit on the 9 mile so they are looking for moose. We have not had really any problems with moose for the last couple of year because population is at a low level. I do not anticipate moving a lot of moose but if we do it will be within the state.

Cavitt- What is the reason we have to establish non-resident permits before residents?

Aoude- The drawing happens before we set permits. There has to be a way for them to know if they can put in for a hunt or not. Usually, it requires an educated guess on the biologist's part. Sometimes they are right on and occasionally they are off.

Public Comment

Byron Bateman- Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife- Concern with limited entry elk tags on some premium units. Would like to see tags reduced from the current number, down to 120 on the Bookcliffs. Mt. Dutton number of tags reduced to 110. Would like to see the Wasatch left the same as last year at 603. Manti go back to 360. South Cache stay the same as 2011 at 111 tags.

Byrnes- Is the Manti higher than 360 or lower than 360 right now?

Bateman- It is significantly higher than that right now.

Byrnes- So you want a reduction to 360?

Bateman- Correct. Right now, they are asking for 482 tags on the Manti.

Jerry Hill- How are conservation permits are allocated?

Aoude- There is a rule that governs the permits that go into the conservation permit program. It is either 5% or a total of 8 on any given unit on most species. Those are set for 3 years so you could actually have 5% and then within those 3 years go above it. That rule is going to be up for review this coming RAC. There will be some changes made to deal with some of those inconsistencies.

Byrnes- In the past, the conservation permit numbers were moved to the wildlife board. We don't even really see those numbers.

Aoude- So, they just go straight from the board?

Byrnes- Yes. Could you respond to some of the age classifications from Byron's comments?

Aoude- All the numbers he quoted were one year and we go on 3 year averages. We do consider trends so if we see a one year drop, we realize that is probably getting a bit close to where we need to cut permits. Our biologists are aware of all the things he mentioned. All of our recommendations are based on that 3 year average. I think our recommendations are sound. Whenever you raise permits, there is always a slight chance you are going to over harvest but that has not been the trend thus far. The only time we have fallen behind was when the objective was raised and we were managing for a lower objective. None of these units apply to that scenario.

RAC Questions

Ann Neville- With the age classes, what is the margin of error that you have around each one of those?

Aoude- It is fairly low. We don't really have a margin of error. We get about 75-80% returns so the margin of error is really small. We feel very comfortable with the data being accurate.

Neville- Is the difference between 6.1 and 6.2 could just be a wash?

Aoude- Yes, it could be. That is why we go with the 3 year average.

Neville- Correct.

Aoude- It levels out a lot of the data.

Neville- Have you ever done anything like a 5 year average or do you have that much data?

Aoude- Yes, we have that much data. We have been higher so we would actually be recommending more if we had a 5 year average. That is why we go with a 3 year, because it is closer to reality. The farther back you go, the more permits you could actually issue.

Neville- O.k. Thank You.

Aoude- I don't disagree that we are getting close on a lot of these units.

Paul Cowley- Byron, if you guys are getting numbers we are not seeing, when you present some of your material, it makes it really hard for us to track.

Aoude- You have all the numbers he is talking about.

Cowley- I was not tracking it well through that discussion.

RAC Comment

Craig Van Tassell- I think if we are going to error, I think we should error on the side that does not reduce the age. I think that there are people out there that want a chance at a trophy elk. I don't want us to start a trend the other way.

Motion

Motion- Gaskill- Move to accept Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations and Rule Amendments for 2012 as presented.

Second- John Wall

Motion Carries- Unanimous

Item 7, Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2012

- Anis Aoude & Randy Wood

See Handout

RAC Questions

James Gaskill- Do you have an estimate of how many antlerless animals are killed by landowners based on depredation tags?

Anis Aoude- We do have estimates. They are a small proportion, depending on the unit. They can be substantial. Do you have one in mind?

Gaskill- No, I am just wondering is that greater or less than the number?

Aoude- It is much less.

Gaskill- Much less than what you are recommending?

Aoude- Correct. It is not included in this so it is above and beyond that. Some could be higher if we have a bad winter. Usually, it never exceeds the number of permits.

Gaskill- It certainly could be in areas where there are not lots of other animals?

Aoude- Yes.

Paul Cowley- With some of the antlerless elk, in the 5 units, where if someone already has a permit then they can go ahead and purchase a cow permit. I am wondering why we wouldn't open the cow permits to anyone to purchase outright vs. already giving some who has that opportunity to hunt.

Aoude- The reason for that is, you would end up with so many permits out there that you may overharvest because you don't want an unlimited number of cow tags out there. We already know how many people are hunting these areas by giving them a potential tag when we know how many we have a potential to harvest. When we open it up, we don't know what the

potential for harvest is. Thus, it is way overharvest one year and we are left scratching our heads.

Cowley- If they have a bow permit and they are able to pick up a cow permit, do they shoot one or the other?

Aoude- They can harvest both because they have two valid permits.

Cowley- I guess I don't understand then. You could regulate the number of permits that you could sell for antlerless and still keep in our control.

Aoude- The reason we can't harvest enough is because of private land issues. We could issue all the permits in the world and if they can't get access, they are not going to harvest. So, we offer these over the counter and these are folks who already have a place to hunt because they have both tags. If they see a cow, they can harvest it. We have issued a lot of permits on these units in the past and they have gone undersold. Or, they are unable to find a place to hunt.

Cowley- So they are in CWMU's?

Aoude- They are in areas where they are predominantly private land or tribal lands. There are 5 units in the state. We are looking at other things as well to try and deal with that. On one unit, we may issue enough permits that we would ensure that there will be over the counter tags for those folks who may be able to get access. This is just one step to get us closer.

Cowley- I know the south Yellowstone is on part of our forest. There is quite a bit of public land on that portion of it.

Aoude- As you know, a lot of it is wilderness and then the elk seek refuge on the tribal when you start hunting.

Byrnes- On the San Juan, you have it as the "any bull" unit.

Aoude- Right.

Byrnes- In the past, that has overlapped onto the spike unit in the north.

Aoude- This is the portion that does not overlap.

Byrnes- Have you changed the boundary?

Aoude- Yes, there is not any bull unit designation. The spike unit is only on the west side of the highway. On the east side and south side of 491 is the any bull unit.

Byrnes- In the past, the control permits were for the east of 491 and it was on the any bull unit and the spike bull unit and that area east of 491.

Aoude- I don't believe that was the intent. People were hunting it that way.

Byrnes- I am wondering if you have changed the unit boundary or not?

Aoude- I do believe the boundary is correct because it is that "any bull" portion only. That portion is in the guidebook as the part south of 491.

Byrnes- Because in the past it was bull. So, you have changed it. You will want to check that because you do have a big problem in both sections. That is why it was designed that way originally.

Aoude- We only want zero elk on the one portion.

Byrnes- Except for the farmer's one. You want zero on the north too.

Aoude- They have a CWMU there as well.

Byrnes- Just check your boundary because this is where we are adopting the rules too right?

Aoude- Right.

Byrnes- Basically, we are adopting the guidebook for the hunting part.

Aoude- The boundaries have already gone through and I believe it is correct but I will double check to make sure.

Byrnes- Thank you.

Public Comment

Byron Bateman- Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife- There are two units we have an issue with. The Manti and Wasatch. Recommend keeping Manti and Wasatch the same as they were last year.

Byrnes- What I am seeing on the Wasatch, it looks like the 2011 population is about 7,600.

Bateman- Yes, but I am looking at actual objective for the unit itself.

Byrnes- So, the population is actually over the objective on those three units.

Bateman- But still, that is an awfully large number.

Jerry Hill- United Wildlife Cooperative- Ask that you pass the recommendation as presented.

RAC Questions

Byrnes- Could you respond to the number of elk on the Wasatch and the Manti.

Aoude- That unit was flown not this year but that last winter and it was over objective by over 2,000. It was almost 50% over objective. They issued permits this last year to try and kill enough to start bringing it down. With such a light winter, success rates on those units were really low. That population is still 6 over objective. Basically, my quick calculations say that we need to kill about 2,800 elk to even start bringing it near objective. Success rate is usually between 40-60% success, you will not touch that number. That is how we set our antlerless permits to try and get us to objective based on a certain success rate. I agree that it looks like a lot of permits but not every hunter that gets a permit will not harvest. Last year, it was actually 32% success on that unit. It does require that many permits to get this unit to objective. The Manti is finally above objective and it always takes more permits to bring populations back than it is to maintain. That is a population of 12,000. Production is probably more than 2,000 and they are issuing roughly 2,000. They won't even keep up with production with the number they are recommending. They wanted to start on a conservative side so not to overshoot. The Manti is a conservative number of permits. The Wasatch is right on. By law, we are mandated to recommend permits to get us to objective.

Byrnes- Flying and counting, it was a bad year to count?

Aoude- This year we did not fly. It was flown last year and it was an excellent year to count last year. They got a really good count.

Byrnes- How often do you fly?

Aoude- We try to fly every 3 years. We model forward until we fly again.

RAC Comments

Bryce Thurgood- My only concern is bumping the permits that much. I remember about 6-7 years ago, they were over objective and they issued a large number of permits, got record snowfall and had an absolute slaughter. You are jamming a lot of people into a season and it could be a little bit too much.

Aoude- There is a potential for high harvest but even in years where we have had exceptional conditions, success rates have never risen above 60%.

Thurgood- 60% is the max?

Aoude- Yes.

Thurgood- What was it last year?

Aoude- Most of the permits are not late season. A lot of them are general October time period.

Thurgood- Most of those increases are earlier season?

Aoude- Yes, a lot of the permits are in the early season. That is why they increased them so much because success rate in that October time frame is actually lower. It is usually in the 30% range. We are looking at a lot more data than the casual observer.

Motion

Motion- Gaskill- Move to accept Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2012 as presented.

Second- Neville

Motion Carries- Unanimous

Item 8. Antlerless CWMU Permit Recommendations for 2012

- Randy Wood, Regional Manager

See Handout

RAC Questions

Craig Van Tassell- On the vouchers that are issued, are people using those vouchers and getting permits?

Randy Wood- Do they redeem all their vouchers? For antlerless, pretty well. For bucks and bulls, not all the time. It is up to them if they want to redeem the vouchers or not.

Van Tassell- So, they can hold them if they don't want to redeem them?

Wood- Yes, but they are required, under the contract of COR, to achieve certain harvest levels. It is to their benefit to achieve those harvest levels.

Bryce Thurgood- We just got through hearing the elk objectives are over objective in most places. According to this number, it has gone down.

Wood- The elk total.

Thurgood- Public Permits.

Wood- The reason the public permit went down is we seen some shifts in CWMU's going from the 90/10 split down to the 85/15 or some of the other splits. Where that shifts some of the other permits to the CWMU. Does that make sense?

Thurgood- So you are going to say that there is going to be more of a shift in both buck deer.

Wood- We are talking antlerless.

Thurgood- I know, but you said they shifted from 90/10 to 85/15 so we are going to see the return.

Wood- That is right. They would give up buck and bull permits.

Thurgood- Would go up?

Wood- For the public. Down for the private. In turn, you will see the public antlerless go down slightly and the CWMU go up a little.

Public Comment

John Pratt- Are you approving renewals on your CWMU's?

Randy Wood- Yes.

John Pratt- Not the permits but you have 48 that need new 3 year COR's.

Wood- They are now in new 3 year COR's that came in last September. The buck and bulls have been approved through that process. Now, what we are doing is bringing the antlerless permits that are in those forward.

John Pratt- I would question the acceptance or renewal of specifically 3 CWMU's in Box Elder County. If you look at your sheet and it was on your website but not in the packets in the back, across the state almost every CWMU is either zero or less than 10% public ground. One old woman in the southern regions has 16% and you have 3 in this region that have 40 plus with one being 67% public ground. That is a red flag to me. I don't ask you to change it, I ask you to look at it. There are some reasons why public ground can be put into a CWMU. 3 specifics in the rule. Examine at least one of those 67% CWMU and look at it to see if it matches and have the right criteria to become a CWMU with 2/3 of it being public ground. I have a problem having to ask a landowner to hunt public ground or being restricted from hunting public ground from someone other than the wildlife board.

Robert Byrnes- Can you respond in the exchange?

Wood- As far as the specific CWMU?

Byrnes- I just know that we do have some exchange for including those public lands.

Wood- Yes, in order to put them in, they have to lose permits. So, if it is a 67% public land, right off the top 67% of the total permits go to the public. Then you take the leftover and you do the 90/10 split on it. Then, from the leftover, the public gets 10% of that. In addition, some CWMU's have other land that is private that they just open up to hunting. So there can be an exchange. The biologists look at it to make sure it is an equal thing. There are several things that go into issuing a COR.

Byrnes- Do you identify exchanged lands on your web page?

Wood- They are identified. Justin may know where they are located. They use to be located with walk-in access. You would get in the walk-in access properties and then it would show you the exchanged lands for CWMU's. We have redone servers and I am not sure where that is now. It is available on the web.

RAC Comment

Paul Cowley- In looking at those 3 CWMU's, all of those permits are public permits. There are not any private permits which is interesting.

Motion

Motion- Cowley- Move to accept the Antlerless CWMU Permit Recommendations for 2012 as presented.

Neville- Abstain from voting due to conflict of interest.

Second- Cavitt

Motion Passes- For: 8, Abstain: 1

Item 9. Bonus Point Rule Amendments – R657-62-9

- Greg Sheehan, Administrative Services Section Chief

See Handout

RAC Questions

Russ Lawrence- I agree with you. I think it is a good move on the division's part. There is really no way to know how many people there may have died already.

Greg Sheehan- Yes, absolutely. We mail postcards as reminders for these different draws. We get a fair number of people who contact us to let us know someone is deceased and we do take those out of the system when we are aware of those. The people who are deceased or maybe someone applied and then moved far away and will never do it again. They are not hurting anything, we leave them on there. It is not costing anything to have them in our database.

RAC Comment

Gaskill- Hooray....that is my comment. It is about time. This is one of the craziest things we ever did. I objected to it and fought it and did not win. I win one even though it is belated.

Motion

Motion- Gaskill- Approve Bonus Rule Amendments- R657-62-9 as presented.

Second- Cowley

Motion Carries- Unanimous

Item 10. Poll Rifle Deer Hunt Closing Proposal

- Scott Davis, Lieutenant

Byrnes- The Poll's were proposing to have their property closed to rifle deer hunting. They are not here to make their proposal and I would just like to table the agenda item. Scott was presenting the division's position.

Motion

Motion- Gaskill- Table the Poll Rifle Deer Hunt Closing Proposal.

Second- Van Tassell

Motion Carries- Unanimous

RAC Question

Gaskill- Will this come up at the Wildlife Board? If so, what will our tabling accomplish?

Byrnes- My understanding is that they would be here to present their proposal. Without that happening, I don't think it will be on the Wildlife Board's agenda.

Meeting Ends: 8:45 p.m.