

Northern Regional Advisory Council
April 6, 2016
Brigham City Senior Center
Brigham City, Utah

Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Begins: 6:01 p.m.

RAC Present

John Blazzard- Agric
Chad Jensen- Elected
Mike Laughter- Sportsman
Russ Lawrence- At Large
Kevin McLeod- At Large
Justin Oliver- At Large
Kristin Purdy- Noncon.
Bryce Thurgood- At Large
Craig VanTassell- Sportsman
John Wall- At Large
Mellissa Wood for Bruce Sillitoe- BLM

DWR Present

Jodie Anderson
Justin Shannon
Justin Dolling
Covy Jones
Kirk Smith
Randy Wood
Darren Debloois
Chad Wilson
Dave Rich
Jim Christensen
Dave Beveridge
Trevor Doman
Kent Hersey
Scott Walker
Rusty Robinson

Wildlife Board

Byron Bateman

RAC Excused

John Cavitt- Chair
Matt Klar- At Large
Robert Sanchez- Forest Service
Bruce Sillitoe- BLM

RAC Unexcused

Joel Ferry- Agric

Agenda:

Approval of Agenda
Approval of Dec 3, 2015 Meeting Minutes
Wildlife Board Update
Regional Update
Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2016
Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016
2016 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations
2016 CWMU Antlerless Variance Requests
R657-23 Hunter Education Rule Amendments

Item 1. Approval of Agenda

-Bryce Thurgood, Vice Chair

Agenda is approved.

Item 2. Approval of Dec 3, 2015 Minutes

-Bryce Thurgood, Vice Chair

Minutes approved as circulated.

Item 3. Wildlife Board Update

-Justin Dolling, Regional Supervisor

Love lobster rule amendments- Rule approved as presented.

Black Bear Recommendations- The 2 week pre-baiting season recommendation that came from the public was accepted into the rule. There will now be a 2 week pre-bait season for bear. That was consistent with what our RAC recommended.

Approve the same start date on La Sal and San Juan units- Restrict the use of hounds on the 9 day limited entry elk hunt.

Keeping the number of Black Bear permits on the Beaver unit the same as last year.

Approve the balance of the Divisions recommendation.

Sage Grouse Translocation- We recommended that be approved by the Wildlife Board which they did approve.

Item 4. Regional Update

- Justin Dolling, Regional Supervisor

Aquatics- Finished collecting 10 million walleye eggs at Willard and transferred to hatcheries. New program coming out called "Cut Slam" which proceeds go back into cutthroat plan management. Fishing is good at Willard for wipers. Most of reservoirs are ice free and fishing is fairly decent on those reservoirs.

Wildlife- Conducting Sage and Sharptail Grouse counts. In the middle of spring deer classifications. Big game animals are dealing with low fat reserves. Minimize your disturbance while out in the foothills to alleviate stress to those animals. Winter survival study on the Cache with collared does and fawns. Adults at 91% survival and fawns at 50% survival. Biologist will be revisiting Elk Unit Management Plans. All units in our region will form a committee to revisit those plans with the exception of Box Elder and North Slope unit.

Administrative Services- Antlerless application will be open May 26th- June 16th. Results for bucks, bulls and OIAL draw will be available May 27th. General season turkey permits are on sale. That season starts May 2nd.

Habitat- Funding groups have been reviewing habitat projects and prioritizing projects. Bull hog projects in west Box Elder. Range trend crew will be in our region this year and reading range trend transects.

Great Salt Lake Program- Waterfowl areas are finishing up small predator trapping season. Had a couple of large carp removal projects to clear up the water and increase the amount of aquatic plant life.

Ecosystem project celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

Outreach- Community Fishery Events are coming up. Funding to finish up the culinary water project at Hardware Ranch this summer. Check our Facebook page which has current events and activities posted.

Law Enforcement- New Investigator. Putting together aggressive patrols for anglers who are snagging walleye on the inlet channel at Willard.

Bryce Thurgood- I failed to mention that I excused Dr. Cavitt and three other members of the RAC who have been excused: Robert Sanchez, Matt Klar and Bruce Sillitoe.

Item 5. Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2016

- Justin Shannon Big Game Coordinator & Regional Wildlife Manager

See RAC Packet

RAC Questions

Russ Lawrence- Information that was sent on deer herd status where antlerless recommendations were made, most units did show an increase. A few dropped a little but one unit, the Fillmore unit, dropped by over one thousand deer which is about 3,000 below objective. What do you think led to that decrease?

Justin Shannon- I'm not sure. The antlerless will be on the next presentation we give where we talk about populations. The Fillmore unit is different. We use to have the Oak Creek and Pahvant. Those were combined into one unit. The Oak Creek limited entry unit was enhanced. there was a lot of structural change to that. Out of all the units, that one had the most change from last year. I could look into it but don't have a good answer right now. You are talking populations right?

Russ Lawrence- Populations in general.

Justin Shannon- I don't know. I could look into it but don't have a good answer right now.

Craig VanTassell- What was the dates on the late season muzzleloader hunt?

Justin Shannon- I think it is November 2-10.

Kristin Purdy- What is behind such a substantial increase on the Bookcliffs? They went from 16 to 27?

Justin Shannon- It is just a growing population. This is one where I think we transplanted bison out there in 2009 and 2010. That herd slowly has been growing. We are just trying to keep up with the growth.

John Wall- On the Stansbury Big Horn permits, they didn't change and I heard there is quite a die off out there. What type of age class of animals died off and if that is going to make an unhappy hunter?

Justin Shannon- You are right, they are experiencing a lot of mortality on that unit. This was a population that was started maybe 9 or 10 years ago. Generally, with these populations, we give them time to grow and mature before getting heavy with our hunts. In 2012, a survey was taken and based on the data from that survey it was decided that 3 permits could be issued. We didn't survey that for 2012 until this last November. When we surveyed it, there were a lot of rams on that unit. That is when we implement our hunts. If the die off had not occurred, you would have seen a substantial increase in permits. Where these mortalities occurring, we have lost about half of the sheep. Hunters are still going to have a great opportunity, just not at the rate it could have been which is unfortunate. We could have been more aggressive and we weren't.

Bryce Thurgood- Was it more disease or predation?

Justin Shannon- More disease. We found micoplasma in the population for the first time this year.

Justin Oliver- General deer permits. As you are trying to meet objectives, is the Division doing anything to take into consideration the CWMU program? How do you meet the buck to doe ratio?

Justin Shannon- Are you asking if we classify bucks on CWMU's?

Justin Oliver- In certain units, how can we ever achieve buck to doe ratio if they are on private ground?

Justin Shannon- If you look at the plan, it says we need to make management recommendations towards the objective. They are not overly aggressive. With these permit recommendations we are not going to get 18-20 bucks per 100 does. We want progress towards that buck to doe objective. There are some units that are harder than others. There are all sorts of dynamics. Every unit has its own challenges. We try to balance that and decide if it is an opportunity unit. Deer have grown on these units and buck to doe ratios have increased on these units.

Justin Oliver- It seems like it will probably never be 18-20, it will be above and I worry if we always add more permits and cause dissatisfaction?

Justin Shannon- That really has not been the history on these units. Our deer populations have done well. In some cases, you have to look at other factors and that are what we are trying to do. These recommendations are made from the region.

Randy Wood- If you look back, we have always been over objective in those three units together. We may never reduce it down to objective. This is kind of conservative. We want to look at hunter satisfaction and crowding problems on public lands. We may not see another increase. To really reduce that 32 buck per hundred does down to 20 would take way more than 500 permits.

Kevin McLeod- Are all of the recommendations consistent with the current management plan?

Justin Shannon- Yes. When recommendations come to me, I make sure that there is alignment there.

Some that are questionable, I try and point out. We are comfortable with the recommendations.

Kristin Purdy- What is behind the decrease in the doe pronghorn permits?

Justin Shannon- That will be part of my next presentation. It is some decreases on the Parker Mountains.

Kristin Purdy- What is the general rifle season success rate across the state?

Justin Shannon- When I first started in 2008-2009, I was looking at that and it was in the high 20's-low 30's. Last year, it was 42% success which is really high. The years we did not get a lot of harvest, it had lower success rates.

Public Comment

Jon Larson- Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife- Looking at 2015, it was a great deer hunt. It's great to see a large permit increase. We still feel like there are a couple of areas we need to take a look at that are problematic. Accept the plan as presented tonight with a couple of exceptions. The San Juan Abajo Mountains and the Manti unit. 550 increase on the Manti and 150 increase on the San Juan. Looking specifically at the Manti, that is the largest unit in the state and provides a lot of opportunity. If you live there, you are going to be emotional about it if you feel like your deer are not recovering or are not around. We feel like listening to our sportsmen in that community. They do not see the recovery or it is a slow recovery. We would like to see those permits not go forward and keep them where they are at. We support the any bull elk permit numbers going up to 15,000. We would like to suggest or propose that you add an additional 300 tags to the youth hunt. It is capped at 500 right now and would like to see that go to 800.

Robert Byrnes- Recommend that you go with the divisions recommendations. We have gone through and reviewed them here and on the Wildlife Board. We have set up criteria for the division to manage those species.

RAC Comment

Bryce Thurgood- Commend Justin and his helpers for putting this together.

Justin Oliver- Thank the northern region and employees of the division. Received many emails on the deer tag increase numbers. Very pleased with response from the Division of Wildlife. Approve the increase in tags. With the units 4,5 and 6, I feel like because of the high number of acres that are on public land and the high number of deer that live on private ground, that increasing tags may cause hunter dissatisfaction. I suggest that we perhaps lower that number to 250 permits and see how the public reaction is.

John Blazzard- I support the plan. My question is on the limited entry elk hunts that were cut pretty drastically on the West Desert. My concern is that we already had the hunt applications put in and people applied for those hunts anticipating the fact that the numbers were going to be about the same as they always have been. Is there some way we can put off the application period until we know what our numbers are going to be? How can we handle that so that these guys who have put in with the anticipation that they have enough points they are about ready to draw out and the numbers are cut in half and their odds are way down.

Bryce Thurgood- Back in November when we had the recommendation, we moved all of these elk in a different age objective. At that point, we knew there was going to be substantial decreases on some of these units. I would think some of them probably educated themselves on looking at that.

Justin Shannon- There was a lot of conversation about movements. The South West Desert did not change age objective. It is a valid point and is a pretty good decrease in permits. Throughout this process, we knew it was a small unit and we have a really high ages. Once we see it doing this, we are going to decrease. If we are going to make a change in recommendations, we try to convey that. There is the public process and we don't know where everything is going to land.

John Blazzard- What would happen if the application deadline was April 1st?

Justin Shannon- You mean changing the entire structure of when you apply?

John Blazzard- Is that just a time problem?

Justin Shannon- Yes. I don't understand at all.

John Blazzard- I don't either.

Justin Shannon- Our licensing folks do and there is an entire process where we have signed contracts with vendors who run our draw. There is a whole timeline associated with it. There would be some real challenges to moving it at this point.

Bryce Thurgood- I don't think they can because after they do ours, they do Nevada's. So it is back to back.

Justin Shannon- Certainly not this year or next year.

John Blazzard- We could trade with Nevada. I just wondered if it was something we are doing because that is how we already done it or if there was a reason? Everyone says it is because we want to keep their money longer.

Justin Shannon- We are not like a lot of states. That is not the reason.

Bryce Thurgood- Can you comment on the increase. I like getting the youth involved. Changing it from 500 to 800 tags on the youth hunt. Would that make much of an impact or would that make you nervous?

Justin Shannon- It would not make me nervous. You are talking on the youth any bull. The proposal from 500 to 800?

Bryce Thurgood- Yes.

Justin Shannon- Our statewide elk plan has a strategy that says something to the effect of seek opportunities to increase youth hunting opportunities. Last year, we went from 300 permits to 500. The feedback was really good. Hunter success increased which does not happen very often. We said we would do the increase and get feedback. The first year was great. I am ok raising it. If we were to increase, 300 might be a little aggressive. The concern we have is not that we don't want to give youth opportunity. A lot of these hunters go up on the Uintah's. We don't want it to where so many bulls are harvested in the September hunt that we start hearing from other bull hunters that their opportunity is being diminished.

John Blazzard-

Bryce Thurgood- If it was half that, you wouldn't lose too much sleep?

Justin Shannon- We probably just would have increased it later rather than sooner. That is what RAC meetings are about.

John Blazzard- You said that you did increase it 200 last year?

Justin Shannon- Yes. So far, it has been positive feedback.

John Blazzard- Are there ways to see how that settles before?

Justin Shannon- It was kind of off our radar. When we did the increase initially, we thought we would get a couple years feedback. Youth hunting opportunity is great so if that is what sportsman want.

Craig VanTassell- Do you know how many youth applications you had for that?

Justin Shannon- We have close to 5,000 youth apply for these permits. The demand is really high.

Kevin McLeod- With the increased opportunity and the number of deer, I would like to suggest that the state look at allowing a youth 17 and under to purchase a deer permit over the counter.

Justin Shannon- We do have a program in place that is very similar to what you are talking about. At the end of hunts, if a youth does not draw, they can go to the general season units and there is a cap, they can get an over the counter permit valid for the archery hunt.

Craig VanTassell- How is the mentor program progressing?

Justin Shannon- Really good feedback.

Kevin McLeod- I passed up the biggest buck of my life because I was mentoring my grandson. It is a great program.

Bryce Thurgood- That is always something we can look at Kevin in the future. We could come up with ways to set aside youth only tags in each unit. Maybe adding to the youth opportunity. If we don't keep youth involved, we are in trouble in the future.

Justin Oliver- On the any bull youth, if they draw the tag once, are they out or can they draw multiple years?

Bryce Thurgood- They are out after they draw once. Is that right?

Justin Shannon- Yes. That is my understanding.

Justin Oliver- There is no point system for that right?

Justin Shannon- The point system is independent of the limited entry points.

Bryce Thurgood- There is a preference point though?

Justin Oliver- Ok.

Bryce Thurgood- For 5 years.

Motion

Motion- Kevin McLeod- Recommend the Wildlife Board accept Bucks, Bulls and Once In A Lifetime Recommendations for 2016 as presented.

Second- John Blazzard

Discussion on the Motion

Motion to Amend -Justin Oliver- Decrease the deer permits for Units 4,5,6 from 500 to 250.

Motion to Amend Fails- Lack of a second.

Original Motion Passes- Unanimous

Item 6. Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016

- Justin Shannon Big Game Coordinator & Regional Wildlife Manager

See RAC Packet

Public Questions

Jason Buckway- Antlerless elk west desert deep creek. We are not at objective and are still killing cows. I know you wanted to raise the age on the bulls as well. It said yes to a control permit on the west desert, is that correct?

Justin Shannon- Yes.

Jason Buckway- Can every spike hunter shoot a cow?

Justin Shannon- Not on the entire west desert. On the Vernon area.

Jason Buckway- Not on deep creek?

Justin Shannon- No. not on the deep creek.

Jason Buckway- It has a "Y" here on the deep creek. It could be a typo.

Justin Shannon- Are you looking at the RAC packet?

Jason Buckway- Yes.

Justin Shannon- On the west desert deep creek unit it has a star by it. It says antlerless control permits are only on a portion of this unit.

Jason Buckway- For every spike hunter?

Justin Shannon- Yes, on the Vernon portion of the west desert but not the others.

Jason Buckway- 350 is the objective?

Justin Shannon- Yes.

Jason Buckway- I am wondering why we are killing cows when we are that far below objective.

Justin Shannon- We are not where we want to be with that population objective. We want to manage for high numbers of elk. If we have elk in areas that are causing problems, this hunt is aimed at targeting problem elk. It is a way to be responsive and harvest those elk. The intent is to grow elk on that unit.

Kurt Wood- Like the private land elk tags. You are talking about the state getting the money for those tags and they are hunting private land?

Justin Shannon- No, the private land only permits?

Kurt Wood- Yes.

Justin Shannon- That would be an over the counter permit. If you have it for say the Wasatch West unit, you can hunt any private land within that unit.

Kurt Wood- That is not turning it into where the landowners are going to have the money.

Justin Shannon- We do not issue it to the landowner. The best way to go about this is to secure permission prior to obtaining the permit if you are a public hunter. It is not going to the landowners. Anyone can go buy one of these.

Kurt Wood- If you secure permission, unlike the CWMU, you can hunt the whole unit? There is motivation for the landowners to let people on their property.

Justin Shannon- It depends on the landowner. It is aimed at trying to focus harvest where we need it.

Kurt Wood- Would there be any way for a private individual to find out? Who to call and get permission before you buy the tags?

Justin Shannon- That is what I would recommend. One criticism is if you are a public hunter and cannot get permission from a private landowner. We increased the number of permits a hunter can obtain. If you find yourself in that boat and can't get permission, we still have lots of other public hunting opportunities for elk hunters in Utah. This is a very specific type of hunt. It may not fit everybody.

Kurt Martin- Has anybody contacted any of the private landowners to give an idea of what is trying to transpire right here?

Justin Shannon- On the Wasatch unit in particular, this has been a major issue. A committee was put together and recognized the division has to make progress toward population objective. You throw more permits and the elk seek refuge on private lands. The public is frustrated. We do surveys on the winter range and say we are over objective. With that committee, which have landowners, that was one of the recommendations that came from that group to the statewide elk committee. This has been very clear with trying to get landowner input from the get go.

Kurt Martin- I use to hunt the Wasatch and the property is surrounded by private property. I didn't want to knock on doors asking if they have heard about this. When you said if private property is on a CWMU unit for elk, you cannot hunt it correct?

Justin Shannon- With the private land only permit, correct.

Kurt Martin- With what I am seeing over there, they have CWMU property and there is a lot of elk there. That area is off limits.

Justin Shannon- The reason we did not include elk CWMU is because we have a mechanism to get harvest on those. We did not want to add another program on top of one that already exists.

Kurt Martin- Most of the time I see a CWMU sign, it does say what species is protected from the public. It might have elk, deer or moose. If this type of hunt came up, it would be inaccessible to the public.

Justin Shannon- Yes.

Kurt Martin-It would save me time hunting down the rancher.

Justin Shannon- If you want to harvest elk on the CWMU, put in for the public draw.

Kurt Martin- They all have one or two.

Justin Shannon- Yes, there are options.

Robert Byrnes- The boundary change on the Snowville pronghorn, didn't we just pass that when we did the guidebook.

Justin Shannon- That was for bucks, bulls and OIAL. This is for antlerless.

Robert Byrnes- You are just mirroring the change we made before?

Justin Shannon- Yes.

Randy Wood- Same unit.

RAC Questions

Mike Laughter- Ogden River Moose. I spend a lot of time on that unit and I am surprised about that going up to 5 tags.

Justin Shannon- It is probably best coming from the biologist.

Darren Debloois- We are seeing a lot of animals in town. We have split the cow to the private side and the public side. The private land side of that unit has a lot of moose on it. We are starting to see some damage. On the other side, we are getting a lot of urban interface.

Mike Laughter- Primarily on the Wasatch Front?

Darren Debloois- Yes. That is where the public land is on that unit primarily. From North Ogden divide south. We think we probably have too many moose on that other side.

Mellissa Wood- For elk herd status antlerless on Ogden the population objective is only 100 and our estimate is 2,300. Do you want to talk about that population. I am not familiar with it. I know there is an increase in permits and private land permits. Can you talk about how we can better meet that objective?

Justin Shannon- Antlerless elk control which is an over the counter where if you have a buck permit or bull permit, you can go. I think there was an increase this year.

Mellissa Wood- Yes, there was.

Justin Shannon- There are other hunting opportunities with private land permits.

Darren Debloois- Historically, we have had a lot of depredation issues on the Ogden unit. We hunted cows pretty heavily on that unit, especially the middle fork area to try and get our damage down from private landowners. That unit was chronically under objective. We actually backed off on cow tags a little bit. We feel like the increase in population is not accounted for by births by natural growth. If you take the pressure off and elk being pressured pile in. The bulk of elk on the Ogden unit are located from Hardware Ranch south along that mountain range to the boundary out of Huntsville. We think we will move some elk with this added pressure. It is primarily on private land so we felt like these different mechanisms working together might give us some harvest. Does that help?

Mellissa Wood- Yes thank you.

Bryce Thurgood- Are the biologists putting more pressure on the CWMU's to increase the permits? Seems like CWMU for antlerless never change much.

Justin Shannon- I think in December there was a new CWMU rule that was taken through the public process. Some of the changes were aimed at addressing some of those. Antlerless elk hunters could have more days on the CWMU's from 2-3. The season started earlier. We gave more of a window to harvest some cow elk. As far as how many permits are appropriate for each one, I don't know.

Bryce Thurgood- Seems like we are trying to add private land permits but a lot of the culprit are the CWMU's where the cows are hanging out. I have noticed in the last couple of years, some of the bigger CWMU's either stay the same or decrease. That has a lot to do with the fact that they don't want to take public hunters.

Justin Shannon- Covy Jones is the private lands public wildlife coordinator.

Covy Jones- We tried to put more flexibility in the rule to allow for that harvest. A lot of the biologists are working to apply more pressure. We have asked them to really help us out with this.

Bryce Thurgood- Did Scott agree?

Covy Jones- I think so.

Bryce Thurgood- Just checking.

Justin Shannon-It has to be part of the equation, no doubt.

Justin Oliver- With the private land tags, I am not real familiar with the Wasatch units. How many acres is there that these tags are going to help? What are the dates again?

Justin Shannon- August 1st-January 31. With any weapon. Part of it is getting the harvest but also you want to disrupt them and have that activity and noise. (presentation slides).

Justin Oliver- My concern is these private land tags turn into landowner tags. You are going to be paying for a trespass.

Justin Shannon- You may in some situations.

Justin Oliver- It is still public.

Justin Shannon- This is what drove the whole decision on private lands only permits. The question came up earlier about who was involved and why. (presentation slide presented to clarify public vs. private lands). On August 10, before hunt starts, you have 54% on public lands and 43% on private. This is the proportion prior to hunts starting. If you look at October 15th, suddenly you have twice as many on private than you do public lands. Elk are seeking areas of refuge. We do flights in February and count a bunch of elk. They are distributed well between public and private. That is where the lack of alignment was.

Randy Wood- It is tough to harvest antlerless elk on private lands. When you go through the public draw, it is a chance on who gets the permit. We hope to put permits in the hands of people who can go on the property and harvest them. I hope that helps a little bit.

Justin Oliver- It does.

John Blazzard- Cow moose. Having a hard time increasing our moose population in a lot of the state. We spend a lot of money transporting does off of Antelope Island. It seems like if we could pull 5 or 6 of the cow moose and put in some of these places that are low in numbers. You are looking at opportunity for hunting also but there are a lot of people who have been putting in for a OIAL moose hunt. If we could move those cows somewhere else? The areas I work all summer in the Chalk Creek unit by Whitney, I will see 3-5 bulls for every cow all summer long. Wondering if the dollars we spend moving doe, we could spend some dollars and scoop up these problem cows along the Ogden River and dump them somewhere and hope they survive.

Justin Shannon- How many moose did we move last year? Any idea?

Randy Wood- 17.

John Blazzard- How about doing 37 this year?

Justin Shannon- I hope we don't have 37 moose in town.

John Blazzard- That is just something that came to my mind when thinking about the loss of opportunity for people.

Randy Wood- The moose are coming into town. When you get them doing that, they are probably over using their habitat. They don't want to be in town. There is enough moose to come in and do that and they are hurting their habitat. We are looking at reducing the numbers of town moose we have to deal with. Everyone we get, we usually transfer to an area that is good moose habitat. We try and get well away from an urban environment so they don't end up coming back. Does that help any?

John Blazzard- Do the urban moose not like it in the wilderness?

Randy Wood- They are not getting what they need. They are eating fruit trees.

John Blazzard- I understand that. Some of the areas we are really hurting for moose, if we could move them?

Randy Wood- The Kamas unit averages about 80 moose on our flights.

Dave Rich- Just under 75.

Randy Wood- It does not increase and we don't harvest cows there. We are probably at carrying capacity in that area. If we dump moose in there, they are going to leave.

John Blazzard- Not necessarily there but there are places in the state they could go.

Randy Wood- We take them to the north slope.

John Blazzard- Just take 20 more.

Randy Wood- We are also concerned there too about the habitat and putting too many on the willows.

John Blazzard- Understand.

Kevin McLeod- In regards to these private landowner elk permits, I know the division, state and taxpayer pays out a lot of money in predation. Is there some pressure being able to be put on some of these landowners that are collecting predation money to allow hunters to hunt that property if they obtain one of these permits?

Justin Shannon- I see the private lands permits as a building block. We need to get everyone use to it and established. It certainly can but built upon. The next step would be some type of incentive program that would encourage public access on private lands. We have the landowner association rule that needs to be revised. Once we have this in place, there is more opportunities down the road.

Kevin McLeod- I think you are moving in the right direction. Those landowners are going to charge for access to their property. Where the taxpayers are already paying for the predation and we are trying to control and manage an elk herd, it has got to be an overall cooperation and plan. Hopefully, we can get those private landowners on board to give some public access.

Chad Jensen- With the private land tags, do the private landowners still get the depredation tags? How will that conflict with the ones you can buy over the counter and try to get permission to hunt someone's property.

Justin Shannon- This will not replace the depredation program where there are permits and programs. This has the potential to reduce that. It is not intended to replace it.

Chad Jensen- Having their own private hunting units. There are some landowners who get several tags and they just give them to family and it basically locks up the entire section of our county with depredation tags. What does that do for these tags you can buy over the counter when they are going to get the depredation tags and keep them within their families?

Justin Shannon- In some scenarios, they might not come and get private lands only permits. Another scenario is if they have more elk than they are willing to tolerate and have gone through their permits and vouchers and want additional elk harvested or pushed. I see private lands only permits being utilized more in those scenarios. Some have never claimed depredation but it would just be an opportunity for them to get a permit. As we went through this in the elk committee, the idea was for elk that can be harvested on private lands, they can be grown on public land on a 1 to 1 ratio. It is all about redistributing and providing tools. It is not perfect and we might have some kinks but I think it is a start.

Chad Jensen- I think it is a great plan. There will be snags that come with it. There will be some disappointed people who don't do their homework first.

Justin Shannon- It is one reason we increased the number of permits from 2 to 3. If that is the case, they can still hunt that year but do it from a different method.

Craig VanTassell- Antlerless elk tag on the Kamas unit. There are 500 antlerless permits but when you look at the description of the hunts that are private property. Why aren't some of these tags private lands permits?

Justin Shannon-

Randy Wood- The units comprise where we are hunting the antlerless elk, do have public lands in it. But, there is a lot of private access to get through there. We want the hunter to apply to be aware there may be some private access getting into those properties. It does include forest.

Dave Rich- Yes.

Craig VanTassell- Most of the elk are on private property that need to be hunted.

Randy Wood- That is why we put that on there that it may be private lands. It has a big majority of private lands.

Dave Rich- We thought about putting it on the Kamas unit to redistribute those elk. We were hesitant to see what was going to happen to put that many people on the Kamas unit. There is more forest and BLM unit on the Kamas unit than other areas. We wanted to see how it would go the first year. We are open to maybe considering it next year.

Craig VanTassell- Ok.

Public Comment

Jon Larson- Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife- Accept the division's plan as presented.

RAC Comment

Craig VanTassell- I think 500 is too many tags for the Kamas unit. I like the dates on these antlerless hunts. It needs to be about 50. We need pressure on these elk to keep them pushed up above where deer are wintering and out of haystacks. I do not think we need to harvest 500 antlerless elk on public lands. If we can harvest them on private, I think that would be a good thing. I think 50 would be plenty for public lands.

Justin Oliver- It is more about reaching objectives and moving elk around. Hopefully some public land hunters get to use these tags. At the end of the day, it is not there to provide as much opportunity as to manage our herds and get elk off of there. We talked about public opportunity but that is not what this is intended for. I hope it works and I commend the division for thinking outside the box.

Bryce Thurgood- I like the idea of this to get rid some of the elk and dispersing them. If there are too many elk, it would hurt the deer a little bit. If they have a public draw permit, the 500 on Kamas, they can hunt private and public. We are targeting both.

Craig VanTassell- I just think 500, most of that hunting will be on public lands and I would like more on private. I think hunting pressure is a good thing. The elk in winter are higher away from where the deer normally winter. I don't think there is that many cow elk to be taken out of there. I think it is too many. Unless they are public land permits, I think we could do that many. I am afraid it is all going to be on public and that is too many tags. I think it should be half or less.

Motion

Motion-John Wall- Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Antlerless Permit Recommendation for 2016.

Second- Justin Oliver

Discussion on the Motion

Bryce Thurgood- Do you accept an amendment to your motion?

John Wall-I really don't know that unit so I am not familiar with where the cows are at on public compared to private. Would like to keep motion.

Motion to Amend- Craig VanTassell-Change the Kamas Antlerless Elk Permit number to 250 instead of 500.

Second- John Blazzard

Motion to Amend Failed- For: 4 Against: 6

Original Motion Passes: For: 7 Against: 3

VanTassell- Would like to see fewer antlerless tags.

Blazzard- My reasons are the same. Would like to see those elk killed on private property rather than public.

Kristin Purdy- Agree with the Kamas concerns.

Item 7. 2016 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations

- Covy Jones, Private Lands/Public Wildlife Coordinator

See RAC Packet

Public Questions

Robert Byrnes- Was that middle ride the pronghorn?

Covy Jones- Yes.

Robert Byrnes- What are you going to do for the bucks? Are you going to help those public hunters out if they drew that tag?

Covy Jones- We were too late in the process to change that for the buck permits this year. Probably pull them out next year. Would the biologist like to speak about that? From what I understand, there are still a few around. Densities are not that great.

Chad Wilson- The bucks and bulls is approved in the fall. It does make it a little bit problematic. There are still some pronghorn. If there are not pronghorn, we would remove that as soon as we can.

Covy Jones- They came into the CWMU advisory committee meeting this year. They probably will not sell any vouchers but have enough to harvest for the public hunters. They said they would be submitting a request to withdraw and the biologist would agree with that for this next year.

RAC Questions

Justin Oliver- On that particular CWMU is there a chance that those who draw the permit can be contacted and informed that there is a chance to return the tag or hunt it?

Covy Jones- I think we could do that. We could let them know densities are really low and give them the option of returning the tag.

Mellissa Wood- With pronghorn, where are we at compared to objective on Deseret.

Covy Jones- When did you fly this?

Chad Wilson- For pronghorn?

Mellissa Wood- Correct.

Chad Wilson- This spring. The counts were quite low at the end of February. It was 250 or so. Since that time, Deseret people have been looking and there is quite a bit of antelope out there. It seems like they are migrating. Last fall, they had 700 with tons of antelope during the hunts. That is what they are expecting and planning on. That is about our objective for that unit.

Covy Jones- When we flew that and saw that many, we got with the operator and recommended a decrease. they got out on the ground and found more. They thought it needed to go back up which is why we did not recommend a decrease.

Chad Wilson- They saw that same pattern last year also. There was a time where the operator came to me and said there was no antelope. By the time hunting season came around, they were back. It is a pattern we are seeing there.

Covy Jones- I believe there are 130 permits? Is that the current recommendation?

Chad Wilson- Yes, I think it is 130.

John Blazzard- The 1,100 cow elk tags are going to be put out to the public on the CWMU's. What is the approximate average cost for the public to be able to hunt those cows on CWMU property?

Covy Jones- I don't know if I understand the question.

John Blazzard- Obviously, they have to buy the tag. Do they have to pay the guide fee or anything else?

Covy Jones- Sometimes CWMU's provide a guide. Sometimes it is free and sometimes there is a cost. There should not be an additional cost to get on. If the public hunter elects to use a guide and there is a cost, they would have to cover that cost. They vary on success.

Justin Oliver- If they draw a CWMU any tag public, they do not have to pay any type of fee?

Covy Jones- No.

John Blazzard- That is why I asked the question.

Covy Jones- The CWMU program is different. Private landowners that are not part of the CWMU, they can charge whatever they want for trespass.

John Blazzard- The CWMU is actually a better deal for the public.

Covy Jones- Sometimes. It offers public opportunity at a cost that most of us can afford.

RAC Comments

Mellissa Wood- I was out on Deseret a couple of weeks ago. Worried about pronghorn on the public lands. I feel like if they have 700 out there, is that too many? Should that number be increased? There are 130 permits and I am wondering if that is too low?

Covy Jones- I would say the time to address the population objective is when we write the plan. If we are showing damage from pronghorn, none of us would want that.

Bryce Thurgood- At least one nice thing is the division flew it and did not see as many as they thought. The landowners say they really are there. We are erroring on the side of the landowners by increasing and not decreasing.

Chad Wilson- Deseret does a really good job at doing exactly that. They try to find a good balance. They bring recommendations to us a lot. They have eyes and ears on the ground and pay attention to that. They don't want too many pronghorn. I feel pretty comfortable with their recommendation because of that.

Mellissa Wood- Thanks.

Bryce Thurgood- My biggest concern is some of these CWMU's that will hunt more bull elk tags but yet contradict themselves and want decreases in the cow elk tags. Especially when their population objective are over objective. I would side with the division and not let them get away with increases in bull elk tags and decreases in cow elk tags. Especially when we have a problem on private lands.

Motion

Motion- Justin Oliver- Recommend the Wildlife Board accept 2016 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendation as presented.

Second- Mike Laughter

Motion Passes: Unanimous

Item 8. 2016 CWMU Antlerless Variance Requests

- Covy Jones, Private Lands/Public Wildlife Coordinator

See RAC Packet

Public Questions

Robert Byrnes- Did they look at doing an exchange for that private land on the Henry's as far as including public land in their boundary over on the boulders?

Covy Jones- The new rule, if you are under acreage, you cannot include public ground.

Robert Byrnes- It won't allow you to do an exchange?

Covy Jones- No, you have to hit the minimum before you can include any public ground. That was a recommendation by the CWMU advisory committee. When you hit your minimum, then you can start to talk about boundaries but not until then. The rule will not allow for that.

RAC Questions

Justin Oliver- The ground that is on private ground they are looking at doing the trade with, is there public access to that ground right now?

Covy Jones- There is access but they sell the hunting rights on it right now.

Justin Oliver- Even on the small sections?

Covy Jones- I believe there are groups that have hunting rights on that right now.

Motion

Motion- Russ Lawrence-Recommend the Wildlife Board accept 2016 CWMU Antlerless Variance Requests as presented.

Second-John Wall

Motion Passes- Unanimous

Item 9. R657-23 Hunter Education Rule Amendments

- Kirk Smith, Hunter Education Program Coordinator

See RAC Packet

RAC Questions

Mike Laughter- Not testing shooting skills. Why would we not want them to be able to hit the target?

Kirk Smith- As we prepared this and studied, what really makes a safe hunter, we went through historical data from 2004-2014 nationally. On hunter education programs that have a live fire component and compared those to those that do not have a live fire component. We compared the incident rates. What we learned is with live fire, the incident per 100,000 is 4.9. Without, it is 4.8 per 100,000. It is kind of hard based on this data to stand in front of the legislature and say live fire is do or die of hunter education.

RAC Comment

Bryce Thurgood- My wife is going to be really mad because she was 8 1/2 months pregnant and made her shoot and do it prone and she was not happy. When I tell her this, she will probably send you an email.

Kirk Smith- Send me the instructors name.

Bryce Thurgood- She was not happy.

Russ Lawrence- I do like the flexibility. Having taught hunter safety in the past, it depends on class size and there are lots of variables there.

Chad Jensen- I have an 11 year old daughter and we are doing the online course which is great. I can spend more time with her than she will get in a class. She will ask questions she might not ask in a group of kids. The online course is great for parents who will take the time and do it right with their kids.

Motion

Motion-Kristin Purdy- Recommend the Wildlife Board accept R657-23 Hunter Education Rule Amendments as presented.

Second- Craig VanTassell

Motion Passes- Unanimous

Motion to adjourn

Meeting Ends- 8:51 p.m.

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville City Civic Center
110 S Main Street, Springville
April 5, 2016 ~ 6:30 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 for 2016

MOTION: To increase deer permits on the Central Mtns, Manti/San Rafael unit to 275 and given as youth permits

Motion withdrawn

MOTION: To reduce deer permits on the Central Mtns, Manti/San Rafael unit to 275 permits
Failed 10 to 2

MOTION: To accept the deer permit recommendations as presented
Passed unanimously

MOTION: To increase the youth any bull elk tags by an additional 150 permits
Passed 11 to 1

MOTION: To accept the OIAL permit recommendations as presented
Passed unanimously

MOTION: To accept the remainder of the recommendations as presented
Passed unanimously

Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016

MOTION: To accept the Antlerless Permit recommendations as presented
Passed unanimously

2016 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations

MOTION: To accept the CWMU Antlerless Permit recommendations as presented
Passed unanimously

2016 CWMU Antlerless Variance Requests

MOTION: To accept the CWMU Antlerless Variance requests as presented
Passed unanimously

R657-23 Hunter Education Rule Amendments

MOTION: To accept Hunter Education Rule Amendments as presented
Passed unanimously

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville City Civic Center
110 S Main Street, Springville
April 5, 2016 ~ 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

Ken Strong, Sportsman
Ben Lowder, At Large
Michael Gates, BLM
Jacob Steele, Native American
Ron Camp, Sportsmen
Kristofer Marble, At Large
Alan White, Agriculture
Larry Fitzgerald, Agriculture
Richard Hansen, At large, RAC Chair
Christine Schmitz, Non-consumptive
Karl Hirst, Sportsmen
Danny Potts, Non-consumptive
Matt Clark, Sportsmen

Others Present

John Bair, Wildlife Board Chairman

Members Absent

George Garcia, Forest Service - excused
Greg McPhie, Elected

Approval of the Agenda and Minutes (Action)

Richard Hansen, RAC Chair

VOTING

Motion was made by Matt Clark to accept the agenda as written

Seconded by Danny Potts

Motion passed unanimously

Motion was made by Ken Strong to accept minutes from our last RAC meeting as transcribed

Seconded by Kristofer Marble

Motion passed unanimously

Wildlife Board Meeting Update (Informational)

Richard Hansen, RAC Chair

Our last Wildlife Board meeting was held December 2015 and they talked about the rule amendment for live lobster presented by Paul Birdsey which passed unanimously. Black bear recommendations and rule amendments were presented by Leslie McFarlane with a motion to extend the spring season two weeks which passed and a motion to allow pre-baiting two weeks prior to the season opener instead of one week which passed unanimously. A motion on the LaSal and San Juan fall bear hunt units to continue in September on the same dates but end on

the same date as the rest of the state but restrict hound pursuit during that time. Sheeprock Mountain greater sage grouse relocation was approved unanimously. Approval of the balance of the recommendations as presented.

Regional Update (Informational)

John Fairchild, Central Regional Supervisor

Aquatics

- Chris Crockett has been selected recently to fill the regional manager position
- Native Aquatics program dealing with vacancies
 - Chris' Native Aquatic Project Leader position will be announced
 - June sucker biologist position still vacant
- Collecting Northern Pike at Utah Lake to help with food chain study. Anglers are asked to bring the fish to the CRO or possibly the State Park.
- Committee nearing completion on the Jordanelle Fishery Management Plan
- 15,000 Kokanee salmon fingerlings were released into the Upper Provo last week. Surviving fish would be expected to return to the river for spawning in three years.
- Ice fishing at Strawberry attracted lots of anglers (plenty of FB posts with large cutthroats)

Wildlife

- Riley Peck, the new wildlife program manager
- 19 sage-grouse moved from West Box Elder to the Sheeprock SGMA (Vernon area), another 20 to be moved from the Parker Mtn this week
- Elk moved into the Heber Valley this winter, received assistance from conservation organization representatives and concerned sportsmen
- Park City – trapped and moved 38 elk from the area near Old Ranch Road to Sheep Creek (Spanish Fork Canyon)
- Sanpete County – scrambled to protect new haystacks during “normal” winter (carryover planned for sale this spring)
- Trapped and relocated 345 turkeys out of nuisance situations. Moved to Deep Creeks, Sheeprocks, Ophir Canyon and Stansbury Mts).
- Elk flights – Oquirrh-Stansbury and Deep Creeks, partial flight for sportsmen on the Wasatch
- Bighorn sheep die-off experienced on the Stansburys (greater than 50%)
- Mountain goat management plan completed for the Deep Creek Mtns (on hold)
- Committee to revise the Wasatch Elk Unit management plan will convene June 7
- Visited five bear dens, documented one cub

Habitat

- HMP planned for Lake Fork, Birdseye, Starvation and Dairy Fork in 2016
- Bullhog projected slated for Santaquin WMA this spring
- Illegal motor vehicle use on Timpanogos WMA, LE to check it out
- LeBaron Point Access project completed (road beyond boat launch area closed with boulders)
- Habitat Council meeting April 20 to draft budget recommendation (approved projects) for Director's Office

- Conservation organizations met today to select the habitat projects they want to fund with conservation permit dollars
- I-80 big game mitigation to be discussed with UDOT as soon as meeting can be scheduled, several moose hit in stretch that has been “fenced off” (cattleguards not functional)

Conservation Outreach

- Hunter Education spring seminars held in February
- Bald Eagle Day event in Fountain Green was successful, plenty of eagles to view, good turnout
- Training for community fishing clinic instructors provided by CO personnel
- Participated in turkey seminar held at Cabela’s

Law Enforcement

- Casey Mickelsen was promoted from South Sanpete CO to Northern Region Investigator
- Lorainne Hardy will start field training this month (structured program to expose new COs to a variety of situations/activities before they are “turned loose” on their own)
- Annual Law Enforcement Section meeting held in St. George in March, guest speaker from Wisconsin discussed the importance of staying relevant as an agency in the face of societal changes

Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2016

Justin Shannon, Big Game Coordinator
Riley Peck, Regional Wildlife Manager

Questions from the RAC

Kris – Could you talk about the general season buck permit increase? Can you talk about how you came to those numbers? Justin – Overall it is conservative to fair and not overall aggressive.

Kris- Would you prefer if you ran the raw calculations would you have come to the same calculations? Were there other considerations? Justin – I am more comfortable taking unit by unit for this discussion. We look at the data, generate the data, the regions take a look and say we are over objective so we need to increase. What we are trying to do is make progress towards these opportunity units. Ten years ago we went from 97K permits down to 95K and then from then we continued to hack away at it until we got to 84K-85K permits. It was always the intention as the permits were decreased and deer populations did better in buck/doe ratio increase we would recommend increases when that day came. On general season, we have had cases over the last several years to increase based on trend but we really haven’t done it until we determine let’s get there and in some cases we did, a trend was overwhelming and we were exceeding, so we increased some permit. There is a lot of opportunity to be had that we didn’t have five or six years ago.

Karl – We have had quite a few elk units change age objectives. Can you talk a little about that and the potential die off on the Nine Mile and Stansbury sheep units?

Justin – Let’s start with elk. In November when we came to the RACS, we proposed the new statewide elk plan which set the age objective for all these units and some of them made a lot

of sense. The West Desert ones were coming from this RAC where we heard in the past let's work better with our neighbors on that unit, so we said they are managing for higher age objective and we decided this makes sense. The South Cache unit took a pretty good cut in permits. One of the things we continually heard was that we don't have a quality elk unit in the state above I-70. Seems you had to go to southern Utah to get in to these 7 ½-8 year old units or 6 ½-7 year old units. Nine Mile bighorn sheep had a lot concerns. We went and met with the sportsmen in November and December and attended the banquet and that is one thing that continually came up. It wasn't the year to fly but the biologists went up and did a spot check in some canyons where they had seen a bunch of bighorns in the past. We lost some lambs which certainly caused some concern. We are going to fly the entire unit this year. We had radio collars on and so the survival rate data didn't indicate major die off. On the Stansbury, the last time we surveyed this area was in 2012. We are real conservative on permits here because when we started this new bighorn population, this one was still a young herd. We didn't have the data for 2012 to current plus we had sheep dying of blue tongue and some other things so we wanted to get good data before we raised permit numbers. We flew this year prior to bighorns dying and the data looked good and would have major increases had we not seen the bighorn sheep dying.

Matt – What do you attribute the increase in buck to doe ratios or overall deer populations in general? Justin – Buck to doe ratios are a surrogate to how a deer herd is doing. If everything is staying stable, if the harvest is the same, your populations aren't increasing or decreasing and everything is stable and you have your permits at the right numbers, you should see the same buck to doe ratio year after year. What we have seen over the last four years, we have grown a lot of deer and when you do, the fawns that are coming up are one to one buck to doe ratio and what that does is gives a boost to your buck population. It gives a good indication that your deer herds are increasing because of this influx of bucks. What is driving this is really favorable winters, precipitation at the right times of year during the growing seasons (spring and fall), habitat projects, highway fencing, predator control etc.. has been a huge investment and is something we are all excited about and fun to see it develop.

Ben – On the Paunsaugunt Management tags we are in the middle of the objective so why the increase? Justin – Several years ago we were about 75 management tags on that unit because that unit is so much larger than the Henry Mountains. That buck to doe ratio was mid to low 40s for quite a while so we cut and cut permits and got them down to 16. We thought we could increase them due to what we were seeing and also the popularity of those permits. When you see this, we have the flexibility to change the permits to nine permits.

Ben – On the Southwest Desert unit the three year average is well above objective with a very hard down trend. I am seeing no change in deer tags. Should we be concerned there?

Justin – We went from 29 to 25 to 19 permits. ON the Southwest Desert it is really hard to get good classification data. We seldom hit 400 does which is really the magical number that we want to get. We should treat the Southwest Desert like we treat some of the units in the region where we look at that and say it's really hard to get a representative sub-sample of tell you what your buck to doe ratio is doing. I think we lost 10 bucks per 100 does down there. I think it more a function of sample size than anything.

Ben – So my real concern from you for needing the decrease there? Justin – Next year we will spend more time out there and if we will it is 25-19 then there is something to be said there. We have been in the 20s for a long time on the buck to doe ratio.

Ben - On the late muzzleloader deer hunts, what has the success rate been? Justin – On the Morgan, 7 of the 9 hunters harvested, Kamas it was 50%, Pine Valley it was 7 out of 8 hunters

harvested, Nine Mile 7 out of 9 hunters harvested, Zion had 10 out of 10 hunters harvested, Southwest Desert had 2 out of 3.

Ben – Do have any indication on the quality of bucks are being taken on those units? I went and read all the comments because there was a total of 46 with really good feedback. The most common thing said was they wish it could be later in the rut, which certainly our plan doesn't allow for nor was there much negative feedback.

Ben – I've been looking at the Nine Mile success rate and the buck/doe ratios are very high but not recommending an increase in tags due to private lands and what is your recommended increase on the late muzzleloader? Justin - Increase was from 10-20. Because we made a commitment when we did these recommendations that we were going to start out slow and we wanted to do what we could to honor that recommendations. Even if we had more than twenty late season muzzleloader hunts on that unit it wouldn't be an issue to us because it's such a difficult unit and all the tops of those unit mountains are private when adding more public hunters may just frustrate people with such limited areas to go hunt.

Ben – On the Oquirrh/Stansbury general deer and some concern over the increase there more so over the private lands issue than the numbers of deer. Tom – The Stansburys is mostly forest service ground (80%) and a few parcels of BLM. The Oquirrhs is mostly private (80%). There are probably fewer hunters now than when we had regional caps. I don't see the crowding issue. The private land has always been that way. Probably fewer people who aren't familiar with the unit

Ben – Based on what you've said, I'm guessing the concerns I have heard were probably on the Oquirrh and some of the comments I have heard are that the herd gets a lot of pressure because it is close to Salt Lake. We have solved some of that with the walk-in access program however that may be an issue in the near future if an easement or the trust takes effect. Better access now than in the past with walk-in access.

Richard – Do you have success rates for each of the units? Justin – Yes, we have them and I will get them for you. Statewide success: Archery 22%, Muzzleloader 34%, Rifle 42% for deer. In the past, in the late 2000's, we have units in the high 20's, but statewide we were probably about 33% for rifle and everything else was lower muzzleloader was in the low 20's and archery was in the low teens. So if we have the same success rates next year, for every 100 permits we are increasing we are really harvesting 36 more bucks.

Jacob – These management tags for elk and deer, what are they? Justin – Three points or less on one side. How do you keep track of that, how many people are honest? Justin – We check them all in. Hunters have two days to bring them in to be checked. We don't have any management bulls, just bucks.

Questions from the Public

Jeremiah Grant – Help me understand the data that has been collected with the plan is and is going forward relative to the antlers elk permits that have been (4000) on Wasatch Mtns. And particular in the White River area where I hunt for the past six years where we spend a lot of time during the week. From what I have seen, they have been decimated over the past six years. Justin – I will address in next item.

Roy Hampton – Do you reach out and try to get 100% return on the tooth return? Does everyone get a tooth envelope? I didn't get one. Justin – Limited entry deer and elk. It is supposed to come with your permit. It is our intent to get back as much information as possible. Roy – What is the tooth return on the Wasatch unit. Justin - 70%.

John Bair – A lot of emails about some of these units. How big of a step do we take towards that objective? Is there a risk in moving fairly conservative if we have a bad winter? What is

your opinion on stockpiling bucks for a rainy day? Can we do that to some degree or if we get a bad winter are we going to lose them all and didn't hunt them while we had them? Are we better off hunting them while we've got them or are we better off carrying a few over hoping the winter doesn't get them and stay above your objectives? Do we run the risk of wasting those deer if we don't hunt them? Justin – I think so. When you look at the spirit of the general season hunt, it's not to stockpile bucks, it's to provide opportunity. So if we have years where we're 23 bucks per 100 does and we get a hard winter, and we will, when we are on these highs it's best to take advantage of those hunting opportunities because we won't always have highs. If we have conditions to provide some of that back at a reasonable rate, I think we should.

John – If we have a bad winter could we cut back from 22 bucks to 16 bucks buck per 100 does in a year? What is the risk we are running by carrying excess deer? Justin – When deer start competing with each other, when we start carrying excess deer and you have a bad winter, yes, you could lose bucks and you can lose hunting opportunity. How far that goes, I'm not sure to speculate on that.

Chuck Hammond – How do you do our game count? I'm on 16A which is the Nebo and want to know if you just go count on the north part? Do you factor in like say, on the North part you find 14 deer per square mile, do you just type that in the system and then that is what it says is on the south part., or how do you guys do your game counts? Justin – It's a deer classification. We are counting but more importantly we are classifying (buck, doe or fawn). If you have a unit, you go out during the time of the rut when deer are concentrated on these winter ranges and that way you get the most accurate buck to doe ratios when deer are congregated during breeding season. If you have a unit the size of this computer you want to hit the winter ranges in subsample areas for representation. We don't cherry pick our sampling and we are consistent year after year which helps us understand trends better. To know if the populations are increasing or decreasing or remaining the same we use radio collars on does and fawns which give us survival estimates.

Chuck – Me and family along with Ken Clegg, biologist for the CWMUs. We did a game count from Levan south which acreage-wise was 43% of 16A unit consisted of one whole year of counting bucks/does/fawns because we are concerned about it. We flew 30 hours out of a private helicopter counting deer because we felt this part is kind of left out. We came up with 1100 deer on 43% of the Nebo unit which is the dry part. There were areas not 10-15 years back where you could go out and see 70 does in one single afternoon and now you go out and you might see five in a whole day on like 600 square miles. I've never seen a single biologist on the area in my entire life there.

Kris – I don't know what the harvest is on the Nebo but maybe I can help out with this. If you look at the equation works, you take into account harvest as well, success rates, so if you had only 1100 deer and only 20% of them are bucks, you are going to have roughly 200 bucks but if you harvested 200 bucks you would hardly have any bucks the next year except for your fawn recruitment. Part of the harvest counts is included in that. Justin – Harvest is a good checker, when we do our population models, harvest is certainly taken into account for those data.

Chuck – My question is more like how many of those bucks are coming off of the north end because hardly any are shot down on the south end and I've talked to tons of people.

Dennis - We manage the whole unit together to get a good sample and don't want to separate sub units. Back in the day you could go from Levan to Gunnison and count was 5,000 deer but now you might get 100 deer. It's a factor of habitat. There are problems with Junipers. Incorporate some habitat projects to bring back the deer as it takes years to be realized.

Chuck – So there have been about 25, 000 acres worth of habitat stuff done in that part and the deer continue to...Dennis – When you do a habitat project, especially for big game, it might take 10-15 years to see good results. You just have to be patient. The unit as a whole is well above the 15-17 buck per 100 does ratio. The three-year average is 19 bucks per 100 does.

Richard – That is where I live and have hunted also and I can tell you the south end of that unit is horrible. It hasn't increased in deer in the last 30 years. The north end deer numbers has increased. We have had a lot of deer killed on the highways in that south end and not sure why they haven't come back. Thirty years ago I went down and planted bitterbrush so whether it is a thing of habitat, I don't know. Some attention needs to be paid to the particular part of the unit because it has historically produced a lot of deer.

Landon Robertson – For reporting, is there a chance with our technology nowadays with our mule deer population and counts, is there a way to feasibly on the computer, before you apply or when you are done hunting, to do a check to see if you were successful or unsuccessful.

Justin– Are you talking about mandatory reporting?

Landon – Yes, to get an accurate account on success rates for deer. Justin – There are some challenges with that. We value randomization right now and we don't sample every hunter but we take representative sub sample and try to get 20-25% of the people who drew and from there we feel we have really good confidence in what that actual harvest was. We spend a lot of time discussing recruitment and retention of hunters and if they don't know or have the information or not willing to give it for some reason, then we are putting an additional barrier in for them for hunting.

Wes Darchay – What age overall on the deer harvest data is any average age statewide?

Justin - We have check station data but we don't pull teeth and age them. Over five years ago, a lot of our harvest data coming through the check stations were yearlings probably between 60-70% were yearling bucks and in the last few years they are more mature bucks. The units I have helped with check stations on have more 2 1/2 year old bucks.

Jeremy Anderson – If there is more opportunity to get more tags and my son draws out, I am all for it. Two items: How much consideration they got for the scopes of muzzleloaders (34%) we assume that will go up and the rough winter we just went through. What consideration did those two items given in raising tag limits? Justin – The winters we were certainly concerned on but if you look at the deer, one reason we went to a three year average was say the muzzleloader success goes through the roof or say we really struggle and lose a lot of fawns the year, what we want to do is build in some real buffers so we weren't doing any knee-jerk reactions and weren't asking biologists to predict the future. With a three year average we are kind of insulated from that. If we are overharvesting, with those scenarios or losing a lot of bucks and the buck to doe ratios decline, we could cut permits.

Comments from the Public

John Larson SFW – We support the Division's plan and recommendations. We do have a couple of recommendations of our own we want to talk about. Last year was a great deer hunting year. We feel areas to watch a little closer are the Manti, San Juan, Abajo Mtns. There are 550 I believe on the Manti, 150 on the San Juan and Abajo Mtns. We would like to see those permits with zero permit increase at all on those units. We support the 15,000 elk permits. And would like to see the youth any bull opportunity increase, so the 500 we have we would to see go to 800.

Roy Hampton – Utah Bowman's Association – We are in favor of the Division's proposals. We didn't see much an increase on the deer where it is spread out and don't think it will be too bad

and we will gain some archery tags. UBA is in favor of the proposal. Personally, I would make a recommendation not to increase the bull tags on the Wasatch unit even though we are at objective. I have been begging for the past four years not to increase these tags. In 1998, we were probably killing the same age of bulls as we are killing 18 years later. I don't know where the top is. We are going to 800 tags on the Wasatch bull tags. That is the most hunted big bull tag in the state. Look at the Manti, for three years there was no increase, they are over objective, not as much as the Wasatch but then you look at Southwest Desert and they drop the tags by 44 and increase the Wasatch to 44. I just think we are overhunting the bulls on the Wasatch. We're going to get to a point where we are killing five year old bulls and what do you have when you have a five year old bull? He's not what we generally want, not what I want. I make a proposal that we don't increase them tags again. Last year, you did vote unanimously not to increase the bull tags. The Wildlife Board ignored your proposal. I believe if a RAC notes unanimously not do so something that the Wildlife Board should pay attention to that RAC and the region. Where is it going to end?

Mike Christensen – On the general season deer tags you have the age objectives for general season deer units for 15-17 and 18-20. Those objectives were discussed how many meetings in a mule deer committee setting with multiple interests (with over 20 men on the committee) and presented through the RACs and everybody could have their say on the objectives. Then it went before the Wildlife Board and had those discussions again and those objectives were adopted into the Mule Deer Management Plan. That plan was given to the Division of Wildlife and then we hold them accountable with their professional biologists to manage within those windows. So for the Manti, for example, the window is 15-17 and it's been 19, 23, 23 averaging 21.6. We are 4.5 bucks per 100 does over the management window for that particular unit. Why would we not raise permits and offer the public the opportunity to utilize that resource? I can sustain cows by giving them hay during a bad winter but we can't do that with deer. I ask that you go with the Division's proposal to manage the units within the objective that was set forth through the public process and if we get below or if we see a bad trend, I will be standing here saying to cut tags if we are below that window.

Landon Robison – representing self – There has been a lot of internet talk of what has happened with past rules that the DWR has set and I hope the DWR will follow the rules they do have. The whole fiasco with the expo, I'll leave that there. There were rules that needed to be followed that were not followed. I hope that this mule deer plan is followed. It's something that was fought over several years ago and they came up with a five year plan. I ask that you follow this plan. For once, let's follow a rule that has been set forth instead of jump to a knee-jerk reaction and jump to conclusion and change what we have already been working on. I support the tag increase along with that and I have heard a lot of complaints about kids not drawing a tag. One thing that can happen is to get rid of points. If you draw a tag whether it is your 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice, and there is a loophole, as it has been commented on before as there are people stockpiling points drawing their 2nd choice because that is what they want to hunt and they can draw that tag every single year. To help kids get tag easier, get rid of all your points when you draw your tag as in the past. I support no increase on the Wasatch elk tags.

Jeremiah Grant– There is a lot of pressure on the Wasatch and I support no increase on the Wasatch elk unit.

RAC Discussion

Richard – We have the Mule Deer and Elk Plans and we can say the public were involved to a certain extent but when they see increases in areas they would like to hunt, that is when they

really become aware. I have seen the problem is when we have an increase in permits. Public opinion matters and we understand that. I personally believe the Mule Deer Plan is a good plan and they worked hard on it. We should be willing to listen to all sides of this and make our determination based on the fact that people get involved who don't usually get involved because they are worried and concerned about past history of where our herds have gone before.

Ron – I got quite a few responses also and we've got to take all that into consideration and that doesn't necessarily mean that just because they were against it that it was the populous of Utah that was against it as well. Lots of hours went into the Mule Deer Plan and we all agree with the plan. Anytime you have more people going into an area to hunt there is a concern but we also had a concern when those permits were cut down to try to bring the hunt back up when less permits were available, so it works both ways. You've got to have a happy medium in there. As far as the Wasatch elk, we manage after five years old due to the population in Salt Lake and how many people have the opportunity since it is closed, and why? Justin – As we were categorizing which units should be managed for quality and which ones for opportunity, some of the common threads were units that were close populations, like the Wasatch front and those who had higher elk populations (Manti 12, Fishlake, Wasatch). What we were really trying to do as a committee was trying the balance quality with opportunity. On the Manti, when we saw we were at 6.2, 6.1, 5.9 he is right, we did back off the permits because we are trending there. The Southwest Desert, we were at 7.6, 7.6 and had a major drop at 6.8 so we are trying to be receptive and we don't want to not provide opportunity because we afraid of hitting the top. If we hit the top let's cut some permits.

Kristopher – When we did the mule deer plan, we didn't survey or ask every hunter in Utah how they felt about it but we did random surveys pools. The Division also conducted five regional workshops in each region and took the pages of input from the workshops and posted them around the room for everyone to see what the public input was on their thoughts about deer hunting in Utah. So we considered all of these and made a very concerted effort to get a cross section of what Utah hunters wanted out of deer hunting. The target windows were carefully crafted to balance out the opportunity to get out and hunt when we had excess deer above those target windows and when we dropped below. Within the management plan we put stipulations in there when to increase tags and when to decrease tags. The tag increases are fairly conservative and should be available to the public to use while we have the deer. When deer numbers drop I will be the first to say we need to follow the plan and decrease the plan.

Ben – SFW asked for a 300 increase for youth any bull tags. Do you see any issues with that?

Justin – If we want to increase 300 youth any bull permits, going back to the statewide elk plan, there is a provision in there where one of the strategies is to provide youth hunting opportunities where available. We did that last year from 300 to 500 and the feedback was positive so that is what we were waiting on. If it was just the Division, I think we would want to wait until next year to gather information but if there are opportunities to increase youth any bull and we have grown more bull elk over the last ten years, we would support that.

Ben – So you would say there is room for? Justin - Yes but not a 300 increase at this time.

Ben – Aren't there November and December dates? Justin – We did away with the November dates so they are all September.

Ben – On the General season deer proposal for the 4400 increase, I was on the statewide deer plan committee and spent a number of hours going over ideas and objectives for general season and limited entry season and the objectives are arranged. On our general season there are two objectives of 15-17 and an 18-20. The intent there is if you remain in the range you maintain status quo, if you fall below of the range you cut opportunity to protect your resource

and to get back into that range and bring our buck to doe ratios up. If you go above the range, that is opportunity to provide additional opportunity to hunters in the field. I feel it is our obligation to manage to that ranges and those objectives. The vast majority of our units are over objective right now and that is a great problem to have right now. Some people would rather wait multiple years and have a better opportunity for a better buck and I say great because that is called limited entry. But general season is meant to provide general opportunity to the population. Right now we are managing to the plan and we have an obligation to manage to the plan. People have come to me saying we need to change/raise the objectives. Now is not the time to do that, the time to do that was when the plan was presented and passed.

Ken – Last week I had the opportunity to talk to a group of hunters from Price who hunt the Manti, San Raphael and also some from San Juan. Both groups were concerned about the San Raphael lack of deer down on that area. I know on the Manti, San Raphael unit there is an increase of 550 tags. I don't think they had a problem with that on the north end but the south end the deer are not there and there are a lot of youth that hunt out there close to town and they don't have the opportunity to see those deer and are getting discouraged. Could we split those permits proposed by SFW? Take the 550 on the Manti and drop that to 275 and the 150 on the San Juan drop to 75. We could divide the increase of 300 youth permit and add 150 for the youth. My biggest concern is we are losing youth.

Matt – Are you saying we are losing youth because they don't see animals?

Ken – Yes, I think some of it is because they sit all day and don't see a deer. We are competing against video games and sports so we have to somehow incorporate youth into hunting or else lose them

Matt – If a kid doesn't have a tag they don't even have a chance of seeing a deer or harvesting a deer. The biggest threat is the lack of opportunity. Once a kid doesn't draw a tag for a couple of years, they're gone. I applaud Justin for what he does. The Division gets a bad rap which is unjustified and I'm glad to see that we are finally at a point where we can increase some opportunity and I support it.

Karl – I side on adding more tags. The only concern I have over the 550 on the Manti is our population objectives of 38,000 is at 25,000 and we are holding pretty steady whereas the San Juan is clicking up 1,000 or so a year and it's get close to objective, it's at 11,900 and 13,000 is the objective so I am pro permits except on the Wasatch where we are 30% below population objective.

Richard – I know kids who have gone out and haven't seen any wildlife and are done. I'm all for opportunity. Give youth more tags.

Matt – Would they still go out with grandpa if they didn't see any wildlife? Richard – Yes. The mentoring program is wonderful and a lot of fun but they need to enjoy success also.

Danny – I support more tags but don't need to harvest any more. The discussion over not having the ability to stockpile buck deer I don't agree with. I think there is a huge difference in size and ability of buck deer to survive winters even coming out of the rut. These catastrophic winters which happen about every ten years or so I have seen does and fawns piled up in the bottom of draws where they were stranded and when I go out the next year I am astounded how many larger bucks are still there. Justin – In hard winters, the most susceptible to loss are fawns because they aren't fully structurally developed yet and are still growing, then the yearlings as they are about 1 ½ years old. Bucks have the prolonged rut just prior to winter. Every deer loses 20-30% of weight prior to winter.

Richard – On stockpiling bucks and when the population objective is way below objective, I assume that is done according to habitat and winter range that sort of thing and what can

survival of a normal winter. Is that right? Justin – It is hard to know because the population objectives were what we thought they could hold stemmed from the 80s and early 90s and have been carried through in many cases. Body condition scores is a better data set. We are more interested in adjusting the population numbers this way. If you look at southern Utah this last year, for many years our objective was 425,000 and I can show you now it is 440,000 due to habitat and body condition scores.

Richard – That is the way it has always been. Does that affect the stockpiling of bucks, is it detrimental, is there more room for growth. Justin – I am glad we have had four very good years and I hope conditions allow for another good year. Nowhere in our mule deer management plan does it say we have to be at that population objective before you can create an increase. We may not be where we want to be but we are trying. I don't think we should wait until we are 27 bucks per 100 does or something even higher before we start chipping away at increasing opportunity.

Richard – On the Nebo, if we increase that by 100 permits, 80 of those hunters are going to be on the north Nebo because they will not go the south end. Maybe we can start some habitat projects down on that end as it really needs it.

Kent – I know the deer have disappeared down on the south end deer on the San Rafael and maybe the unit needs to be divided. I would suggest to change it to 275 permits and give them to the youth to hunt down there.

VOTING

Motion was made by Ken Strong to increase deer permits on the Central Mountains, Manti/San Rafael unit to 275 and given as youth permits. Ken withdrew the proposal

Motion was made by Ken Strong to reduce deer permits on the Central Mountains, Manti/San Rafael to 275 permits

Seconded by Karl Hirst

In Favor: Ken Strong, Ben Lowder, Karl Hirst

Opposed: Michael Gates, Jacob Steele, Ron Camp, Kristofer Marble, Larry Fitzgerald, Christine Schmitz, Danny Potts, Matt Clark, Alan White

Motion fails

VOTING

Motion made by Matt Clark to accept the deer recommendations as presented

Seconded by Alan White

In Favor: Unanimous

Opposed:

Motion passes unanimously

VOTING

Motion made by Ben Lowder to increase the youth any bull elk tags by an additional 150 permit

Seconded by Ken Strong

In Favor: Ken Strong, Ben Lowder, Michael Gates, Jacob Steele, Ron Camp, Kristofer Marble, Alan White, Larry Fitzgerald, Karl Hirst, Danny Potts, Matt Clark

Opposed: Christine Schmidt

Motion passed

VOTING

Motion made by Danny Potts to pass the OIAL permit recommendations as presented

Seconded by Ben Lowder

In Favor: Unanimous

Opposed:

Motion passes unanimously

VOTING

Motion made by Kristofer Marble to accept the remainder of the elk recommendations as presented

Seconded by Ron Camp

In favor: Unanimous

Opposed:

Motion passes unanimously

Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016

Justin Shannon, Big Game Coordinator

Riley Peck, Regional Wildlife Manager

Questions from the RAC

Kristofer – Do you know how many antlerless control permits you sold on the Wasatch last year? Justin – We sold 643 on the Avintaquin unit, 2029 on the Currant Creek unit, and 2088 on the Wasatch, West unit.

Kristofer – So to be clear, last year we sold 320 permits plus 2088 antlerless control permits? So this year, at least on public ground, we're only recommending 160 permits which is a drastic cut? Justin – Yes. I want to be clear about our intentions. We are not catering to private landowners. For those of us who have sat on the Wasatch elk committee, there needs to be an understanding that we are doing this to benefit the public hunter. Opportunity is being reduced on public land but we have applied pressure to these public lands. We've got to find ways to reverse that by only allowing for hunting pressure on the private land and back off of the public land and retrain elk.

Matt – Have you had any feedback from private landowners on this proposal, specifically on the Wasatch? Justin – Yes. When we did the Wasatch elk committee, there is private land representation there and these are some of the ideas that were coming from that initial committee. Private landowners were represented on the Statewide Elk Committee also. What we have chosen to do is let private landowners get permits and attempt to solve their own problems.

Matt – If you go buy one of these tags, do you start looking at a list of private landowners to find landowners to call who are receptive to having you come hunt elk on their property? Do we have a list? Justin – The private lands permits are not for everybody. If it were me, I would probably approach the landowner with an offer to build fence for a couple of days in exchanged for a couple of days to hunt on their land. It's not our role to find landowners for you but the hunter needs to find private landowners and get written permission prior to purchasing the permit in order to eliminate frustration.

Ron – Let's take it one step further with the access questions. Let's say we have a private landowner who doesn't allow any access on his property. He's got 800 elk on there and he

comes to you later complaining the elk are eating his hay/damaging property. Where do we come from now and say whose fault is it that these elk weren't taken care of? Justin – We still need to be respectful of private properties and their rights as private landowner owners. We are hoping to build on this through our landowner incentive programs (landowner association program, walk in access program, CWMUs). Part of the elk management plan says we need to review and potentially modify these programs, if needed.

Ben – While this idea is new to Utah the idea itself is not new. Wyoming has been doing tags similar to this for decades. I have found it is totally up to the hunter to work out those relationships with the private landowners.

Matt – If I own ten acres of alfalfa in Wallsburg and I have elk running through my property, can I shoot an elk on my ten acres and offer that to somebody else who is crossing through? Is that any parameters on property? Justin – There is no buffer zones so it has to be on private grounds but we also don't have any minimum requirements. We want to make this as simple as possible and build upon. This is just this year's recommendation.

Alan – Would these permits be on a draw basis? Justin – We do have our public draw and this is where it gets confusing. This is the over the counter portion where you can come get a permit.

Alan – So a landowner could go to the office and say I want x number of permits for hunting on my property? Justin – Yes, you can have up to two permits.

Alan – Would those permits only be good for that specific land? Justin – Any private land or subunit.

Danny – From the private property owner's perspective, the biggest concern a lot of the times is firearms so archery might be the greatest solution to some of this problem especially on smaller properties. Justin – We went with any weapon because if you have a scenario where the landowner says he isn't comfortable with .270s being shot here and I only want archery equipment being used, so be it. Landowners can allow for any weapon which gives flexibility.

Richard – Can the private landowner charge a trespass fee if he wants? Justin – Yes, we won't regulate that.

Richard – Is there any list to compile a list of private landowners? Justin – Not from the Division's perspective because it brings some many complications with it, we are trying to steer clear of that.

Danny – I really this is really going to work and provide opportunity.

Questions from the Public

Richard Walker – On the antlerless control permit idea, particularly on the Wasatch Mountains unit and how permits will be distributed and how the private land will be managed. If it is like some of the CWMU permit, they actually provide less opportunity and hunters given access to the poorest part of the property unless you buy expensive landowner control permits. What is DWR going to do with the private landowner to facilitate the level of large numbers of hunters who are coming on to their properties and all the potential problems that causes? How is DWR going to ensure there is adequate harvest? Are seasons going to be flexible enough so that the pressure is constant? Rather than having this black and white kind of thing where all the permits go the private property, I think one idea would be to make the seasons more flexible. Elk will move to wherever hunter pressure is the least and they will simply move around based on what hunt is currently on. My suggestion would be to divide permits in half between public land and private property and make some of the seasons a little more flexible. How will private land permits be issued? What is DWR doing to work with private landowners to facilitate the

level of large numbers of hunters coming onto their property? Justin – We have hunts going from August to January on many units for many big game species not to mention upland game species which go even further into the year. This is something we are concerned with and respond to.

Larry – Seeing elk all over a piece of private property and asking the landowner if I could go in and shoot one of those elk and being told sure for \$1000.00. Are you going to help those landowners be more open to receiving hunters on their property? Justin – We are going to introduce the private lands only permit program and from there review incentive programs to see if we can work out additional public access on private lands. We need to build the foundation first. You have to make change at a rate that people can absorb.

Richard – If the public doesn't respond well or support what we do, are we going to change?

Justin – We would have to adapt like we are doing now. This is an out of the box idea.

Richard – The elk go basically wherever the pressure is the least and the most habitat. Is that really going to work if the elk behavior is the same? Justin – That is the goal but for now the goal isn't having equal pressure on both sides. The goal is to have decreased hunting pressure on public land so elk can be redistributed evenly. Show slide from another presentation:

Wasatch unit/elk distribution on August 10th, 55% public land versus 43% private land, October 15th, 31% public versus 60% private, February 1st, 53% public versus 38% private.

Richard – I think there needs to be a lot of homework done before going to this extend and then suggest cutting permits in half. Justin – We already have cut them in half. Look at our public draw permits. We need to make elk feel uncomfortable on private land and more comfortable on public land.

Wes – What are the consequences of a private tag owner shooting elk on a public property if it is a private lands only permit? Justin – It would essentially be shooting an elk outside of the unit.

Calvin Crandall – What happens if I don't give permission or if it's not posted. Is it closed if it is private property? Is it considered posted if it is private land and you don't have permission?

Justin – You must have written permission to hunt private property. Bruce – If you don't have written permission to be there you can be asked to leave. Justin read straight from the 2015 big game guidebook, page 38 under Trespassing. If you have a private lands permit and don't know if you are on private, you're in trouble anyway.

Ben – On a piece of private ground where the hunter knows it is private ground which is not cultivated and not posted according to what Justin just read in the guidebook, it is legal until asked to leave. Is this a valid instance to use this tag?

John – For the sake of the meeting, can we address that at the next RAC. It is a good question but we need to move on. Justin – I will look into this to go along with the private lands only permits.

Wes – Cost of the private landowner tags? Will it be done by each unit and are you going to do first-come, first-serve? Justin – Yes and the permit price will be the same as public draw permit price.

Wes – The facilitation of questions is exactly what this meeting is for.

Danny – The hardest part of this is finding out who owns what.

Comments from the Public

Troy Justinson – I support the Division's recommendations. We have to take the responsibility to find who owns private land and figure out how to push elk from private land onto public land so we can hunt them.

John Larson/SFW – Supports Division's recommendations

Roy Hampton/UBA – Supports Division’s recommendations

RAC Discussion

Kristofer – I think we should resist the urge to rehash all the private lands issues we have hashed out for years.

VOTING

Motion was made by Kristofer Marble to accept the antlerless permit recommendations as presented

Seconded by Larry Fitzgerald

In Favor: Unanimous

Opposed:

Motion passed unanimously

**2016 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations
Covy Jones, Private Lands, Public Wildlife Coordinator**

Questions from the RAC

Questions from the Public

Mike Christensen – On the Wasatch CWMUs that hunt elk, are they receptive to increased antlerless harvests to move those elk around a little bit like you’re trying to do on other private lands? Covy - We have pushed those CWMUs to take more antlerless elk and most of them are pulling their weight with 30 public hunters. Some of them have felt that same pressure as they have applied pressure and just don’t have the animals there anymore. The majority of them have been receptive.

Comments from the Public

RAC Discussion

VOTING

Motion was made by Kristofer Marble to accept the CWMU Antlerless permit recommendations as presented

Seconded by Alan White

In Favor: Unanimous

Opposed:

Motion passed unanimously

**2016 CWMU Antlerless Variance Requests
Covy Jones, Private Lands, Public Wildlife Coordinator**

Questions from the RAC

Larry – On properties under 10,000 acres there are a few properties that are close. You denied the ones that weren’t quite the 10,000 acres correct? Covy – Yes.

Larry – Every acre isn't created equally, some have better habitat on smaller pieces of ground than larger ground. Are you guys going to work with some of those landowners who don't have the 10,000 acres or is this part of this private lands only tags? Covy – The CWMU rule doesn't fit everyone and instead of adapting that rule and that program to fit everyone, there are probably some other programs in the landowner association or some modifications that can be made there to provide those incentives. CWMUs don't just sell vouchers you also provide opportunity to the public and on small acreages at times it becomes very frustrating for guys that burn a lot of points. The variance option needs to be there and it makes sense. If we bend it every time the rule become invalid too. The Board is looking at the Landowner Association rule for revisions.

Questions from the Public
Comments from the Public
RAC Discussion

VOTING

Motion was made by Kristofer Marble to accept the CWMU Antlerless Variance requests as presented

Seconded by Matt Clark

In Favor: unanimous

Opposed:

Motion passed unanimously

R657-23 Hunter Education Rule Amendments
Kirk Smith, Hunter Education Program Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Ben – Where is says continue live fire exercise, what does that consist of? Kirk – We propose to continue with 30 shots, they shoot three positions and would essentially shoot the same course of fire that we have been shooting. We want to implement a basic course that meets the IHEA standards and introduce a new type of course that is called extended hunter education. This would consist of the basic course along with an extended opportunity for a new hunter to get some exposure whether it be shotgun shooting, how to hunt turkeys etc. We want to partner up with some NGOs to develop this pathway once they are out of hunter education to go on out in the field and get some practical application.

Ben – Would this change affect the bowhunter education course or furharvester courses?

Kirk – Currently this would have no effect on either course.

Ken – Minimum classroom time went from twelve hours to no minimum. Can you please explain? Kirk – What was put in the rule is that our minimum basic hunter education course would meet the IHEA standards. We have taken the IHEA standards and taken our student manual and have matched our student manual to those standards. We have taken this course and test driven it and it is 6 ½ hours still? Here is the model we use in the Hunter Education: Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I'll remember. Involve me and I will understand. We have taken this around the state and had 13 banquets and workshops with them already rolling this new course out and rule change.

Matt – How many hunter education certificates are being issued each year? Kirk – We traditionally issue around 10,000 students are being taught each year and it fluctuates a little bit.

Danny – Has the online part have Spanish speaking instructors? Kirk – We offer three online courses that we accept and one of those is translated into Spanish. We are recruiting Spanish speaking instructors to target those communities.

Richard – I had an extensive comment from a concerned instructor from the Southern region about the hands-on thing about the experience for these kids and I'm sure you are aware of this. Kirk – Yes. We are going to implement a mandatory hands-on by every student regardless of whether it is a traditional or online course.

Questions from the Public
Comments from the Public
RAC Discussion

VOTING

Motion was made by Kristofer Marble to accept Hunter Education Rule Amendments as presented

Seconded by Ron Camp

In Favor: unanimous

Opposed:

Motion passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.
43 in attendance

SOUTHERN REGION RAC MEETING
Beaver High School, Beaver, UT
April 12, 2016 5:00 p.m.

1. REVIEW & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

MOTION: To accept the minutes and agenda as written.

VOTE: Unanimous.

2. BUCKS, BULLS AND OIAL PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2016

MOTION: To accept the Division's recommendations on the deer as presented with four exceptions. On the Beaver unit: increase permits by 75 instead of 150. On the Pinevalley and Zion units: accept the increase but split additional tags in half between archery and muzzleloader with no increase to rifle permits. On the Southwest Desert reduce tags by 50.

VOTE: 9 in favor, 2 opposed

MOTION: To accept the elk recommendations as planned with the exception of increasing permits on the Mt Dutton from the recommended 75 tag to 90 and on the Panguitch Lake from the recommended 55 tags to 70 tags.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: To add 300 additional youth any bull tags.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: 9 in favor, 2 abstained

VOTE ON AMENDMENEED MOTION: 9 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstained

MOTION: To pass the antelope and once in a lifetime recommendations as presented.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: To increase pronghorn permits on the San Rafael unit from 9 to 12.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Unanimous

VOTE ON AMENDMENEED MOTION: Unanimous

MOTION: That the DWR come and report on what they've done regarding elk on henry mountains.

VOTE: 8 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstained

3. ANTLERLESS PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2016

MOTION: To accept the Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016 as presented

VOTE: 10 in favor, 1 opposed

4. 2016 CWMU ANTLERLESS PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION: To accept the 2016 CWMU Antlerless permit recommendations as presented.

VOTE: 9 in favor, 1 abstained, 1 member not present for vote

5. 2016 CWMU ANTLERLESS VARIANCE REQUESTS

MOTION: To accept the 2016 CWMU Antlerless variance requests as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

6. R657-23 HUNTER EDUCATION RULE AMENDMENTS

MOTION: To accept the Hunter Education Rule Amendments as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

SOUTHERN REGION RAC MEETING
Beaver City Center, Beaver, UT
April 12, 2016 5:00 p.m.

RAC Members Present	DWR Personnel Present	Wildlife Board Present	RAC Members Not Present
Rusty Aiken Brayden Richmond Harry Barber Brian Johnson Craig Laub Dave Black Sean Kelly Nick Jorgensen Gene Boardman Wade Heaton Mack Morrell Dale Bagley	Richard Hepworth Lynn Chamberlain Blaine Cox Giani Julander Adam Kavalunas Jason Nicholes Jacob Selby Vance Mumford Teresa Griffin Kent Hersey Paul Washburn Dustin Schaible Bill Bates Kirk Smith Justin Shannon Covy Jones Mike Wardel Brandon White Brian Shearer Josh Pollock Jim Lamb Heather Talley	Steve Dalton Donnie Hunter	Layne Torgerson (excused) Mike Worthen

Dave Black called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. There were approximately 59 interested parties in attendance in addition to RAC members, members of the Wildlife Board, and Division employees. Dave Black introduced himself and asked RAC members to introduce themselves.

Dave Black: I guess we'd like to get started, we have a full agenda tonight. First of all I'd like to welcome you all out to the Southern Region RAC meeting. My name is Dave Black I'm the chairman of the Southern Utah RAC. I'm from St George. I represent the public at large. Before we introduce the rest of the RAC members, I'd like to introduce two of the board members we have here with us. We have Steve Dalton in the audience and Donnie Hunter. I don't know where Donnie went, he's probably in the back but I'd like to recognize them. Also, I'd like to excuse Kevin Bunnell tonight. In his place we have Richard Hepworth who's the Southern Region Aquatic Program Manager. So he's sitting here on my left. I'll go ahead and let the RAC introduce themselves. Let's start down on my far left with Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: Thanks Dave, Rusty Aiken, at large, Cedar City Utah.
Brayden Richmond: Brayden Richmond, sportsmen, Beaver Utah.
Harry Barber: Harry Barber, BLM, Kanab.
Brian Johnson: Brian Johnson, Enoch Utah, non-consumptive.
Craig Laub: Craig Laub from Iron County, agriculture.
Richard Hepworth: Again, I'm Richard Hepworth with the Division of Wildlife.
Nick Jorensen: I'm Nick Jorgensen, non-consumptive out of St George.
Gene Boardman: Gene Boardman Hinckley Utah, at large.
Dale Bagley: Dale Bagley, I represented elected official from Marysville.

(Mack Morrell and Sean Kelly came in after RAC members introduced themselves.)

**Wildlife Board Update and Regional Update:
-Kevin Bunnell, Regional Supervisor**

Dave Black: Thank you. Normally at this point I would talk about the meeting order and the way we do the questions and comments but I think I'll wait just a few minutes and do that after we have the Wildlife Board update and the regional update. The last time we met together as a RAC was in December. We were talking about, find my notes, we were talking about the 2016 black bear recommendations and rule amendments. Just a summary of the way the board ruled on that is, let's see, they stayed with bait hunting, stayed with the baiting two weeks prior to the summer season. Keep the permit numbers the same on the Beaver unit and that was with the liberal harvest strategy. The San Juan unit was to allow hounds on that unit except during the limited entry elk hunt. And then we had another item which was the Sheeprack Mountains Greater Grouse Translocation. That passed as presented. That's pretty much the notes that I had as far as that wildlife board meeting. So now I'll turn time over to Richard Hepworth and he can give a regional update.

Richard Hepworth: I only have a couple quick things here and then I'm gonna turn the time over to Bill for a few minutes to give us some other updates. Touch on the aquatic section first. One of the things we've got going on over the next couple weeks is restocking Gunlock Reservoir. We'll be collecting fish from Sandhollow and moving them over. And we're still looking for volunteers, people with boats, fishermen who would like to come help with that. So if you're interested, come talk to me during the break or afterwards and I can give you the information. Our habitat section just recently went through some of their funding things for projects this next year. Through conservation permit funding, our region received about \$660,000 for projects in the next year. So that's a really good thing we'll be able to put a lot of money on the ground and get some good work done. In the outreach section, they had a turkey clinic last week. Had great participations, had over 80 students show up for that. It was a really good thing. One other thing I need to mention. There will be no RAC meeting in May. That has been cancelled. That corresponds also with the June Wildlife Board meeting. With that, I'm going to turn the time over to Bill for just a couple quick updates that we thought might be of interest to everybody here.

Bill Bates: Good evening everybody. Bill Bates, Wildlife section chief from Salt Lake. I was asked to come and give an update of the activities of the grazing issues resolution committee that's been put together through the office of planning and budget from in the governor's office. They're also known as PLPCO. I think it was about last December members of PLPCO Tony Rampton and Redge Johnson came down and met with some grazers, some livestock operators down in the Southern Region and

became aware of some very contentious issues down here dealing with land management agencies. And of course, we know how that's kind of spilled over into the, all the activities going on with the waterfowl refuge up in Oregon and some other things going on over in Nevada. You know, contention was high, emotions were high and the Governor's office and members of PLPCO, Kathleen Clarke in particular felt it was really important we start addressing some of these issues to help resolve things and to make things better. I was invited to a meeting, Greg Sheehan, our director, and I went to a meeting up at the capitol and met with Redge and Kathleen Clarke and Tony Rampton and Carmen Bailey, also Randy Parker from the Farm Bureau, Sterling Brown and Troy Forest from Department of Agriculture are also on this committee. And we started talking about some of the issues and we quickly decided the best way to work through this process would be to meet with operators and to try to deal with individual situations so we could deal with specifics to try to resolve some things. And so we had a meeting in January, we had six county commissioners from Southern Utah and also a state representative, Mike Noel was there. We met with members of the Forest Service, Mel Bolling and Angie Bullets, Forest Supervisors down in this part of the state and myself. We talked to, you know, that they express their concerns to us. And that's where we kind of started and since that time you're probably aware we held the meeting over in Richfield that was sponsored by the Farm Bureau and PLPCO and Utah Cattlemen's Association where we had some training on the issues and then, since that time, we've also been meeting with the federal agencies, both Forest Service and BLM. And two weeks ago we had a tour where we came through Southern Utah, where we had meetings in Richfield and Panguitch and Bicknell and, I'm missing the other place right now, Beaver, where we talked about these issues with grazers in the evening and the next morning we met with the federal agencies. We've had some progress so far, it's, you know, things aren't happening quite as quickly as we'd like. One of the things the Division has been proposing is that, in areas where we've done watershed treatments and improved the range and there's actual forage available, we should be looking at trying to reallocate some of those AUMs where forage is available. The Forest Service and the BLM were willing to look at that but they have to go through their NEPA process. And we're trying to work through that. Other issues, we've had some depredation issues that the Division is work with individuals on. And that's kind of the plan we intend to keep following is to meet with producers and find out their concerns. And the other thing is, I'd like to mention is, I think it, the other thing I'm really trying to do is to build an alliance between sportsmen and the livestock operators so that, the grazing community, we stand a lot to gain from working with each other. We can do more together than if we, you know, fight with each other. We have some common enemies, and, you know, that we are facing and I think that by joining forces we can make things better. What the important thing is that we ask what is it that each of us really need and address it from that angle and try to help everybody get what they need to get by. So. Any questions or whatever, I'd be happy to try to answer them.

Dave Black: If there's no questions we'll move on. Thank you. I was also in attendance at a meeting in Cedar City. And I thought the meeting went really well. And the sentiment, I think, as we left that meeting is: we do need to work together and, and find some common ground and work, as you said, our enemies, fight our enemies together. And we could get a lot more accomplished. And so I felt real good after that meeting.

Review and Acceptance of Agenda and Minutes (action)

Dave Black: The first action item that we need to do is, review and accept the agenda and the minutes. And so I'll entertain a motion to accept the, those. Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: I'll make a motion, Dave, to accept the minutes and the agenda.

Dave Black: K, do we have a second?

Brayden Richmond: I'll second it.

Dave Black: K. So we have a motion and a second to accept the minutes and the agenda. Is there any comment? All those in favor? K, that's unanimous.

Rusty Aiken made the motion to accept the agenda and minutes as presented. Brayden Richmond seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Dave: K then, before we move on to our next action item, which is item number 5 on the agenda, I just want to go through the meeting procedure. I'm sure that many of you have been to a RAC meeting before. We do have a portion following each presentation where you can come up and make comments. We also have a time that you can come up and ask questions. And so, the way this will go, as we go through each agenda item, we'll have a presentation, following the presentation, we'll entertain any questions from the RAC and then we'll entertain any questions from the public. And if you have a question, please come to the microphone and state your name and then ask your question for clarification purposes. At this time we'd ask you not to make any comments. But if you do have a question please come forward so we can get that question answered. In order to come to the mic with a comment, we'd ask you to fill out comment cards. Do we have somebody that's passing those around? So we have some in the back, they're the yellow cards. Please fill those out and when we get to the comment section then, we will allow public comments for 3 minutes each. If you're here with an organized group, we'll allow one spokesman from that group to take up to 5 minutes. And if you're an individual within that group, we would allow you 2 minutes. And so, um, in order to move this meeting along, that's pretty standard what we've done in the past at the RAC meetings. So, five minutes per group, two minutes per individuals in the group, and three minutes for public comments. And then following that, we'd have comments from the RAC and then we'd go into a RAC motion and discussion and a vote. And we'll do that after each agenda item. So our first presentation then is the bucks bulls and once in a lifetime permit recommendations and that will be Justin Shannon.

(Wade Heaton arrived during first presentation.)

Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2016 (action)

-Justin Shannon, Big Game Coordinator and

-Teresa Griffin, Wildlife Program Manager

(see attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Dave Black: Thank you Justin. Before I turn time over to the rest of the RAC I have two quick questions. One of them was on the Zion unit. It seems like in the past, and I might be mistaken, that you've indicated that there's so much private property there that if we add more tags to that unit, we're just putting more pressure in localized areas and so, it seemed a little surprising that we would increase that but I was just curious on the reasoning behind that. And then the other question that I had was on the Southwest Desert, it looked like we're seeing some big decreases in buck to doe ratio. And I was

wondering if maybe a decrease in tags would be justified on that unit.

Justin Shannon: Sure, I'll probably let the biologist speak to the Zion on the private lands issue. I'm not familiar with it enough. And then we can answer your second question after that.

Dustin Schaible: We've had an increasing trend on that buck ratio where it's like up into the mid-twenties at this point. And so our trend has been kind of increasing tags for the last several years by about 100 tags and so this year is the first year we bumped it up even more because our trend continues to increase. So, with increasing permit numbers, hopefully there's more people that will have access to those private lands as well. But there's still a lot of public land, down on that winter range particularly, that we feel that it can handle the increase in hunters.

Dave Black: Okay, thank you.

Justin Shannon: As far as your next question, I'll pull up the data on the Southwest Desert. If I can get there. I think it's childproof, we've got to get this thing going, or not. This is taking way too long to get between slides. But, ya, on the buck to doe ratio on the Southwest Desert, it certainly was decreasing. One challenge that we have on that unit in the past has been getting an accurate sample size for enough does classified to really make sense of that buck to doe ratio. In the Central Region on their West Desert populations, they don't even try because we shoot for 400 does in a representative sub-sample area and it's tough, it's challenging to get there all the time. So I don't know if that was a function this year or not. I think we were over 300 on our doe classification. You're certainly right though, on the Southwest Desert going from 29, 25 to 19. The three-year average is still 24 but it is trending down that way, Dave, certainly.

Dave Black: So if this goes through we probably want to look at it pretty close next year then?

Justin Shannon: I would think so, ya,

Dave Black: So if we have to get ahead of something. But it looks like you got a downward trend there. It seems like a red flag.

Justin Shannon: Ya, I would say out of all our buck to Doe ratios... It's really interesting because, if you look at the rest of the units, we have units that are doing that same thing but the other way and so the Southwest Desert is really trending that way, whereas the others are increasing. I don't know, Jason, do you want to speak to this any at all or am I off on this? Do you have any other additional thoughts?

Jason Nicholes: All that Justin said is accurate, the only thing that I would add is that we had an unusually high harvest last year. Usually we harvest about 150 bucks every year on the Southwest Desert, last year was 250. The reason why, I don't know, conditions were just right. But that contributed to the reduction. But the ten-year average before that's 150 bucks per year being harvested on the unit.

Dave Black: I'll turn time to the rest of the RAC then for their questions. Let's start on my right and we can come down this way. I imagine everybody's gonna have questions.

Dale Bagley: Kind of a follow up to what they was asking on Zion and I also had some comment on Pinevalley and Panguitch. Crowding seems to be a perception in those areas so with these units that the

increase, would doing a split differently on these units be a better way to go so we can kind of address the crowding issue that's being brought up? Whether it be the split like you did on Thousand Lakes or something a little different I don't know. But I did get quite a few comments and crowding was an issue on those units.

Justin Shannon: I don't know if I'm familiar enough to know, with those units in particular, to know what the crowding issues are like on that. I do know this year, as we've got the data back from the harvest. Jason was right, Southwest Desert was up. It seems like every unit was up. If you looked at our success rates on general season units, it was 42%, something like that. Years ago, success rates were about 30% on our rifle hunts. So, I know crowding can be an issue, but it seems like when harvest is going well, that tends to be, people tend to tolerate more as success rates go up. I don't know on those units specifically but, if you guys want to tackle weapon splits and do some of that, certainly that's the prerogative of the RAC. Do any biologists have any perspective on crowding on these units? Okay, if not, I think we're good.

Wade Heaton: Justin, just a couple, it was my understanding that the season splits, the 20: 20: 60 that we've lived with for two centuries, I understood that that was a legislative item and that it couldn't be changed. Obviously we've made some changes here. Walk me through that.

Justin Shannon: It wasn't legislatively changed, or legislatively mandated. It's essentially part of the mule deer planning process is what it was. And the mule deer plan, it says that things will be set at a 60: 20: 20 split unless there's a management need that we're trying to address. If you look at the Thousand Lakes is a great example where I think everybody in the room can say, "Ya, that's a management need where that split makes sense." But the mule deer committee, as we worked through that, we tried really hard to give some flexibility to things but without making it a free for all. So 60: 20: 20 is the standard. But certainly you can vary if you have a great justification for it.

Wade Heaton: That is good news, I think that's a great tool for some of these units. That is great. Sorry, I'll be fast. Maybe I was wrong, on the general season buck to doe ratio objectives, I understood there were 3 different categories, are there only 2?

Justin Shannon: Ya, so there's 2. There's 15 to 17 and then there's 18 to 20.

Wade Heaton: Just last one. What was our reason for changing the Southwest Deep Creek, what was our reason for changing the objective on the elk?

Justin Shannon: So, for, initially in, was it 2008? that the elk plan was initiated or maybe it's 2009, the Deep Creek was slated to be a higher one. And then, there was a lot of discussion that we had too many high age objective units, so that one got pushed way down. Well, that unit's interesting because on the south-end there's a lot of tribal ground and they're managing their bulls for a nine year-old bull. And so we just, we had a lack of alignment on what we were trying to do with elk and what they were. So as we went through the revision process, we got some tribal input and said that one just makes sense where we can have a little more quality.

Gene Boardman: First of all, your accuracy on your deer counts and your buck to doe ratios. There's got to be a plus or minus on that, what is it?

Justin Shannon: I'm not sure. What we try to do is once you hit over 400 does on your classification, as you're hitting representative winter ranges, confidence goes up that you're doing really well. There's not much difference between classifying 400, to 500, to 600, at that point it gets really marginalized. That's kind of the cut off that western states are using to say, "Ya, this is a really good representative of what's there." Kent, do you have anything to add on that? Kent might know the stuff better than I do. Is that a fair assessment?

Kent Hersey: I guess, from a statistics standpoint, once you hit a sample size of 400 that's kind of the magic statistical number where, as long as it's random across the unit, you have a good representation of what's on that unit. The other part with buck to doe ratios, because of the way bucks and does differ, bucks stay higher on that mountain longer, our classifications are actually under-estimates of what's truly out there. But they're done same after same, we use it as a trend to see where that population's going and don't look at it as a standalone, here's what's in the population. We're more interested in the trend of that. If that makes sense.

Gene Boardman: Okay. There's some units that are taking quite a bit of cut on the elk, limited entry. Is there a same cut on expo tags, conservation tags, and landowner tags and every other kind of tag when this happens?

Justin Shannon: There are two different sets of criteria we're dealing with. The last two years, our limited entry elk permits had pretty substantial increases. And we let them be separate. We set our public draw permits we're gonna manage by age objective. There's other guidelines and rules in place for those other permits. They're really, they don't overlap, they're not connected that way.

Gene Boardman: So those permits are going to be probably issued at 100 percent of what they were last year. And the cuts are going to be, to the draw people, are going to be 25 and 31%?

Justin Shannon: Are you talking on the, which units specific is 25 and 31%?

Gene Boardman: Mt Dutton, the draw tags, your recommendation is to cut them 25%. Panguitch Lake, your recommendation is to cut them 31%. What I want to know is on all these other extra tags out there, are they being cut at all?

Justin Shannon: What we're really trying to do is, we set the age objective, and there was some movement last year, certainly. What we're trying to do is make recommendations that move us in the direction of reaching those objectives. And so, it's really not tied to expo permits or anything like that. So, again, they're independent, but on this, as we're making these cuts, we're just trying to say, "Given the data we have, the harvest, the trends, what cut do we need to get there? What increase do we need to make to get there as well?" And it's just trying to do our best to make progress toward that objective.

Gene Boardman: At the risk of making a comment, the draw tag people are taking all the damage and the tags that go to expos and conservation and so forth aren't taking any damage.

Justin Shannon: I'd say it probably depends the unit, certainly, you're right, we have units where we are cutting and we're being as transparent with that as we can that we're recommending. But, there's also some pretty big increases being proposed tonight. And it's, again, it's a unit specific thing that we're really trying to manage to.

Gene Boardman: Thank you.

Nick Jorgensen: You already answered my question you know on the West Desert Deep Creek elk. That's the one thing that was confusing to me. So, thanks for clarifying that.

Sean Kelly: I've got to relay most of these to the rest of the Forest Service in Southern Utah so I've been visiting with the Division for a while now so all my questions have all been answered.

Dave Black: Okay, let's start on my left. Craig.

Craig Laub: My question has to do with the late muzzleloader deer hunt. The success rate on that and do you have any idea the size of the deer that were taken?

Justin Shannon: Ya, I've got the success, I can pull that up. It will take me a month to scroll up but we've got it here. Here we go. For the Morgan, 7 of the 9 hunters were successful; Kamas, 2 out of 4; Pinevalley 7 out of 8; Ninemile, 7 out of 9; (Southeast Desert, that's funny) Southwest Desert, (who's proofreading these things?) 2 out of 3; and then the Zion was 10 out of 10. So that kind of gives you a feel for the six units that we had the success rates fairly high. And then, I'm sorry, what was the second part of that question?

Craig Laub: The success rate and what size they were.

Justin Shannon: Oh, the size. I reviewed the harvest I don't remember specifically saying, "Did they kill a 4 by 4 or 4 by 5? What was the width." What I was more interested in and what we told the RACs we would report on is, kind of the overall satisfaction of it. Satisfaction rates were really high. We had hunters using double digit points to draw these general season permits. And what was interesting, the feedback was really good. The one thing that they said was we wish we could hunt later into the rut. And I, if I had that tag, I'd probably share that same feeling but, by design, it was supposed to be that first of November. The feedback was great. I can get you those data, I just don't have them at the top of my head.

Craig Laub: I was just curious. Cause anybody I knew didn't take home a forked horn I can guarantee you.

Justin Shannon: Ya. That's probably why the feedback was so good I'd imagine.

Dave Black: Brian do you have anything?

Brian Johnson: Not yet.

Dave Black: okay. Harry.

Harry Barber: Just quickly, I didn't see where the antelope decreases were coming.

Justin Shannon: Oh. Let me look real quick. I think the Morgan unit had a decrease and I think the Parker had a decrease. Let me double check that real quick. I would say this though, a lot of the

pronghorn units in the state, areas like Southeast Utah, we've seen some pretty good population increases in the pronghorn. So, I mean, this is just a summation of everything combined. Let me find this for you real quick. Ya, the Plateau Parker Mountain and the Cache Morgan South Rich is driving the bulk of that decrease. However, lots of these smaller units with single digit permits had some pretty good increases. So, kind of a summary.

Brayden Richmond: Just one question. Going back to that Deep Creek, is the weapon split allocation, did that get changed with these decreases or is it still the same split?

Justin Shannon: For elk?

Brayden Richmond: Ya.

Justin Shannon: Are you talking about where in the last plan we had it be the 30: 50: 20 or whatever that was? No, what we did was, in this last plan, we didn't break it up to where if you have a late hunt or an early hunt, they would have different weapon splits. Because, before, in the last elk plan, if you didn't have a late hunt, you had a set of criteria, if you did then you had a different set of criteria and there was always conversation: "Which allocation should we use?" With this new plan, we didn't do that. We say that the weapon splits are gonna be 60% any weapon, 25% archery, 15% muzzleloader. The only exception that we had on this was on the Wasatch, where that weapon split was retained simply because, the 30: 50: 20. But that's mostly because we have 800 permits on that unit so we needed to spread some of that out. Does that help?

Brayden Richmond: Yes. Just to clarify, I think you said it, but it's the 60: 25: 15 on West Desert Deep Creek for elk.

Justin Shannon: Correct. Yes.

Brian Johnson: I lied, I have a question. On the Southwest Desert I noticed on the late season, it looks like we're adding two tags and we're in kind of a downward trend. Where's the biologist? There you are. I'm just wondering what the thought process was behind that, where we're on a downward trend. I know the overall average is up on that but on the late season we're adding to more. And they're gonna specifically kill some monster deer. Maybe, fill me in on that.

Justin Shannon: Could I make one comment before he goes to that? As we went through the RAC process last year, you can still speak too, Jason, I just want to give some feedback real quick. As we went through the RAC process last year, we said, "Well, we'll start slow." And people said, "That's it? Those are your sideboards? What does that mean?" Slow is so relative and so as we went back, and that was, you know we said, some of the RACs were struggling on what slow meant, what low permit numbers meant. What we did is we got with the wildlife managers afterwards and said, "Can we put some sideboards and direction on these limited entry permits?" And one thing we did was we said, "On these units, we should have a minimum of five that way we can have a non-resident come in." And where you're exceeding 20 bucks per 100 does, harvesting five additional isn't tipping the scales one way or the other. So we said that or 1% of the total permits for the unit, or a maximum of 20. So we're essentially saying, between 5 and 20 or up to 1%. So if you look at, like, the Wasatch, they have 35. But that's because they have 60, 100 permits or whatever that number is. So the managers sort of set some sideboards on what that would look like. And Jason, if you want to add to that. So, in Jason's defense, he

was keeping that as low as the sideboards would allow that we were trying to put in place.

Dave Black: Okay, do we have any more questions from the RAC? Before we turn time over to the public, we'd ask you to come to the microphone on my right or your left over here. You can just come up in an orderly fashion, we won't call your names. Please, state your name in the microphone for the record and we'd ask you at this time, just to keep, not your comment cause we don't want comments, but if you have questions. And then we do have a time period for comments. But if you do have questions please come forward and use this mic.

Questions from the Public:

Dennis Blackburn: Dennis Blackburn, Wayne County Commissioner. I just have a question on the pronghorn. How many are you hunting on the, out by the Robbers Roost area? I don't know which one that is.

Justin Shannon: I think that's San Rafael Desert.

Dennis Blackburn: It says San Rafael North. How big is that boundary?

Justin Shannon: The San Rafael North is I-70, highway 10, highway 6. And so I think it would be San Rafael Desert.

Dennis Blackburn: Is that on here?

Justin Shannon: Ya. It looks like we have, last year had, for the rifle we had six permits, this year increasing it to nine. So that's what it'd be, going from six permits to nine permits on that unit.

Dennis Blackburn: We can only ask questions now?

Dave Black: Yes. If you can form a question out of it.

Dennis Blackburn: We've spent a lot of time out there working on roads and stuff lately. There's at least 100 head of antelope out there. Is six permits enough to control the unit?

Justin Shannon: Yes. If we want to do unit control, like if there were too many pronghorn, we'd probably do that with doe harvest. If you're questioning and what you're getting at is: "Can we have more buck permits?" I do know that as they did the surveys this year, these are some of the areas that were up and that's why as I was making the comments earlier, some of these single-digit units did increase pretty good. But, you know, if you feel six to nine isn't a good enough increase, certainly make that comment when you come up. If you think we're going to slow on that.

Dave Black: Thank you Dennis. I did fail to recognize county commissioners here, if we do have any others, we welcome you here and are glad to see you. Okay, go ahead, please state your name.

David Brinkerhoff: David Brinkerhoff, Henry Mountain Grazers. I have a question on the Bullfrog, down there. I don't see any hunt going on. We're not supposed to have any antelopes there. I know there's antelope in that area because I've seen them this winter. I don't see anything going on there.

What's going on there? Are we going to eliminate those on a unit that's not supposed to have any? We need to do something besides let them increase.

Justin Shannon: Sure, great question. What we did a couple years ago was we sat down and talked about that south end of the Henries. We called a hunt for that and hunters hunted for weeks and weeks and weeks, nobody harvested. We heard it, when they came back. And I think we even had discussions about do we give them their points back. So what we did is, the unit that's to the north of that, that San Rafael Desert, we did a boundary change to simply include the Henries, so now anybody that's hunting on that unit can now go down and hunt the Henries. So it's a way to get harvest, have the ability to target those pronghorn without forcing people in there. Its part of that bigger boundary so if they're there, hunters can go pursue them. And I think that change was made a couple of years ago.

David Brinkerhoff: I have another question there. There's so much roadless area in there, those hunters, I can see why they can't find them. Because you can't get to them, and their outfits can't run fast enough to catch up to them anyways. When you get there, you've got to shoot a bullet twice to catch those antelopes. I don't know, I think we need to look at that situation a little different than we're looking at it and try to eliminate them before they get out of control.

Justin Shanon: Ya, we can certainly talk with Wade and put our heads together. I know when we tried it and we wrote a tight boundary to target the areas that you were talking about, boy we heard it, because, nobody saw an antelope and they let us know that they were disappointed. But to be fair, that's why we tried to include it to the boundary to the north to say, if we're seeing an influx of pronghorn, we can direct hunters to those canyons and those areas. So that was the approach that we took.

David Brinkerhoff: Okay, thank you.

Dave Black: Do you have a question? Please come forward.

Paul Niemeyer: I'm Paul Niemeyer. Can you guys clarify on these buck doe ratios, are you keeping the fawns out of the count or are you counting the fawns as antlerless deer when you classify them?

Justin Shannon: When we classify, the classification is a buck, a doe, and a fawn. That's how we get our fawn to doe ratio as well. So to simply call a fawn an antlerless buck, we wouldn't be able to get that other ratio. So, buck, doe, fawn.

Paul Niemeyer: Okay, that's what I thought.

Dave Black: Okay, we'll move to the comment section. It looks like then we have Lynn Kitchen followed by Don Sprecher.

Comments from the Public:

Lynn Kitchen (see attachment 2): I have 2 comments, one for the deer and one for the elk and I don't know if you want me to do them both at the same time or not. Maybe, while I give the one for deer, I'll hand you this and you can pass it down because I want to refer to this on the elk one. On the deer... It's Lynn Kitchen I represent myself. And I just want to give support in the Division of Wildlife Resources recommendations for the general deer tag numbers for the state. I don't see any biological or any other

reason, field data that I've seen or information that would deviate from that. And that's all on the deer. On the elk, there's a chart there. The top line on the chart, the blue line, and this is in reference to the limited entry elk on the Beaver unit only. This is an observation. Mason LeFevre did this chart. So that top blue line is the total number of limited entry permits that have been issued by year from 2003 to last year, 2015. The next line down, the gray one, is the number of animals that were harvested on those hunts. And then the bottom line, that orange one, is the age of the bull data, from the tooth data, that came from those hunts. So my comments are maybe general, more specific to this year but hopefully maybe something larger and long run. As I look at that in 2010, there were 76 permits that were given and you can see the numbers there, the age class and that. But that age class has been relatively flat, hasn't jumped a whole lot up or down, has been fairly stable. And, the last several years, we've had many less bull tags issued with not a whole lot of age difference. I would suggest that maybe this unit, maybe other units as well, have other issues going on, that the age class determination of how many permits is not a very good way to determine how many permit should be there. I would suggest, my recommendations are on the back page, that we increase, for this year, 60 permits overall and I broke them out, I think it's the proportion of what's supposed to be there, by the unit, for this year. And as a larger questions, I think this fall is when those elk recommendations will be discussed, the plans, maybe looking at some additional information of how to determine numbers of permits. Any questions? Thanks.

Dave Black: Thank you. So, Don followed by Ben Lowder.

Don Sprecher: My name's Don Sprecher from Kanab. I want to bring up the Zion unit. I've hunted that unit, Pinevalley unit for over 30 years, 20 of them as a non-resident. Moved back to Southern Utah and Kanab about 12 years ago. I generally get a tag for that unit every other year, I really enjoy hunting it. I have seen the quality of the bucks come up, especially last year. But, in years past, what we've seen is, an increase of hunters in that unit and less quality deer. You go back 25, 30 years ago and we had better quality deer and less hunters. I know the population's gone up. But when you look at the Zion unit on your maps, it looks like a very large unit. But, when you take into account all the private land, Zion National Park, the new wilderness area on Canaan Mountain, and areas that don't hold deer period, it really has made the Zion unit a very small unit. And those deer, I feel it's a unique unit because they're a migratory herd. And when they start getting pressure from the muzzleloading hunts and then you get all the increase on the hunters in there, it really becomes a warzone down on what we call the Sands, and that's an area south of highway 9 that's bordered on the west by Zion National Park and the new wilderness area on the Washington county line on Canaan Mountain and then of course highway 89 down through to the Paunsaugunt. And just north of there, where there's been some improvements on habitat when the railed areas north of highway 9, Muddy Mineral area, it's turned into a war zone because those deer just get funneled in there. Below highway 14, access is limited from private land and the natural topography, you've got the cliffs and everything. There's a pocket of public land but there's no access to it. Hard to access it through North Fork, hard to access it from the east side on highway 9. So when you hunt those units, all of the hunters are concentrated in the Sands and up against Red Knoll. I don't know too much about the Cedar City area, that northwest corner of the unit, but I think an increase in tags on the Zion unit is really gonna make it unsafe and more crowded. We go into an area on the Mineral where it was like a war zone, people are shooting across each other and they're shooting at small deer. Sir?

Dave Black: I was just giving you a time warning. You've got one minute.

Don Sprecher: Anyway, my main comment is, if we, you know, let's not increase to 200. I think Southern Utah deserves quality deer herds. Let's bring them back to where they were 25 years ago and then the next plan and the next five years I think we can really improve these. But maybe throw a youth hunt in there and give these younger kids an opportunity to get into some quality deer hunting rather than, I like that 25 to 100 buck to doe ratio instead of lowering it. Let's have some quality deer hunting on that Zion unit. Goes for Pinevalley, Beaver, and the Panguitch unit too.

Dave Black: Thanks Don.

Don Sprecher: Thank you.

Dave Black: Okay, next we'll hear from Ben, and then he'll be followed by Verland King.

Ben Lowder: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Ben Lowder representing the Utah Bowman's Association, thanks for the opportunity to speak tonight as well. Thanks to all of you RAC members for your service and being willing to serve on this council here. We're super excited about the status of our deer herds. It wasn't too long ago when our deer herds were struggling. We had to take action to cut some tags, at the time, that was not a very popular option, but it had to be done to help recover our herds. Fortunately now we're in a position where our herds are doing fantastic, we're excited about that. And we're in a position where the plan allows for us the opportunity to bring back some of those tags and provide some additional opportunity and we support the Division's recommendations in doing so. And, in addition, we support the rest of the Division's recommendations as presented. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thank you. Verland will be followed by Travis Rigby.

Verland King: Verland King, Wayne County Grazers Association. A lot of our ranchers, our members, graze on the Henry Mountains, so that's what I want to talk about. Several years ago, we had problems with the bison. Through working with the DWR and pressure from the permittees we were able to get the bison numbers from extremely high to a lower number. As David asked that question about the antelope, I felt that the answer was not good enough, because, just because they opened it up, doesn't mean anyone is going to hunt them, and the same thing with the elk on the Henries, those antelope, those elk, aren't supposed to be there. You cannot control them by issuing a hunt. I would like to hear a recommendation of controlling them some other way to get it done. Those antelope, if they're not controlled are going to keep growing and we're going to be in the same situation we were with the buffalo before. Luckily the buffalo, you can hunt them, but it seems the antelope and the elk, you can't control them with hunting so I would like to see the DWR step up and take some other means of controlling those animals before they get out of hand. Thank you.

Dave Black: Verland, let me ask you a question. You're on a committee, the buffalo committee?

Verland King: Yes

Dave Black: Is there a way, through that committee, you can put more pressure, as far as removing those antelope?

Verland King: We've tried, and basically DWR has tried, but their hands are tied probably, just to issue more permits. And, as Dave said, the hunters are not willing to get off the road and go kill them, and I

wouldn't for an antelope anyway. That's the problem, is that the bison committee can't put any more pressure on them, we put pressure, I didn't get to the last meeting but every time I've been there, we've put pressure on them about antelope and elk so they know of the problem. We need to think outside the box and get it done so that we don't have a problem in the future with antelope and elk.

Dave Black: Okay, thank you.

Bill Bates: I would just say that that comment has been heard and noted and we'll look into it. I don't think we need to worry about taking it to committee. I think the people who need to hear it heard it. So thank you.

Dave Black: Travis will be followed by Jon Larson.

Travis Rigby: Travis Rigby, representing myself, family, I've got five kids. Even the seven year-old, eight year-old I should say, just passed hunter safety. I just want to make some comments on the Pinevalley unit. My family has hunted that unit for 75 plus years. Grandfather ran the college farm for 40 years, a lot of deer taken off those areas, we're very familiar with it. First I want to thank the proper management because we've seen, in past years, deer quality, populations, diminished. I'm focusing a little bit more on the general season because my youth are, obviously, they're involved with sports and everything else. It's a little bit harder to get a deer on those other hunts. But, couple things I want to address is the crowding. 2013 we had 3800 hunters, now we've got 3900 last couple years. Long story short, it's a big issue. I appreciate the gentleman's comment on Zion. You know, I've spent probably 100, 150 plus miles on the Pinevalley unit during the hunts, hiking around doing, scouting's a great thing, you're all alone. But it's pretty frustrating taking youth up there and encounter hunters and, obviously, makes the hunt a little bit more challenging. We do go farther than most people and usually harvest something but sometimes it's hard when you've got to get back to school and other things. I also question the numbers of 2015 just from being in the field a whole bunch, 2013, 2014 were right around objective at 20 bucks per 100 does. From my experience in the field, I didn't see a big increase of 20 to 26. That 2015 numbers, is truly that you're increasing, recommending to increase to 200 permits. And I also wonder, I should have stood up in the questioning part, I wonder the harvest success rate was about 51% on Pinevalley. We just heard that in late muzzleloader it was 7 out of 8. My question is, do those higher harvest rates, are they factored in to the upcoming, the proposal here to increase numbers? In other words, if more bucks are taken off, is that considered in the variable, or is it a variable in recommending increased numbers? Probably on the last part, I want to make a recommendation, that if we are to increase numbers even more to battle the crowding issue, my suggestion is split the nine day hunt into four or five day hunts, two separate ones. Allow the youth hunters to hunt all nine, ten days. Obviously giving them their opportunity to get in the field. But basically, it makes a lot of sense to me, to say, give everyone a chance to hunt, if we're going to keep the numbers there, opportunities are not going to be lost so much. But bottom line, we could allow the youth hunters to have their success and, frankly, the adults, maybe, in the past we've had a five day hunt, and I'm sure you all heard complaints. But you know what? It changed things around with the Pinevalley unit went to that five day hunt. And I saw that that's when the management took place and we started to see what I witnessed in the mountains with my grandpa in the early 80's etcetera. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thank you. Jon Larson followed by Steve Monk.

Jon Larson: Thank you, Jon Larson, it's good to be with you tonight. I'm with Sportsmen for Fish and

Wildlife. I first would like to thank Justin and the entire team over there for their efforts. They do a great job, it's a great presentation. I want to talk about last year's deer hunt for just a minute. Really it was a great deer hunt across the state. Looking at the state in its totality, it really was. I mean, to see, as Ben said, to see the numbers come back, we're extremely pleased with that. To see the rise in permits, it just calls for opportunity and that's a great thing any time you can do that. There's kids that get out there, there's adults that can hunt maybe if they haven't for three years. That's a great thing. That being said, if you look at the state in its totality I think it was a great season. But we still feel that there's areas where we need to take a look at and maybe be a little more conscious of those increases. So as an organization we support the Division's recommendations with just a couple exceptions and I'll share those with you. First, the San Juan Abajo Mountain: we'd like to see those permits stay the status quo, the same. And, even more importantly would be the Manti unit: that's the largest unit in the state, obviously, and because of that, it calls for opportunity and you've got to pay attention to that, you can't have the largest state and not have that opportunity. There's a lot of deer on that unit, and for all of us that are in this room, and maybe even for those that live in the north part of the state, if you draw a tag on the Manti, that's a great thing. But for those that live there, the sportsmen that live there and hunt there and struggle with seeing numbers, it's a different thing. And maybe that's because there's an emotional tie. If that's your backyard, you know, we've heard reference to "this neck of the woods" in Southern Utah here tonight. On that Manti, for that very reason, the sportsmen just aren't seeing the numbers there. So we'd like to see those numbers stay the same, that's a hard discussion to have, when on one hand you're applauding the permit increase and you're wanting to see opportunity at the same time. You just need to be surgical about that and make sure that it's going in the right area. So we're all about opportunity where it makes sense and when it makes sense. So, again, we'd like to see those two units, San Juan Abajo Mountains, and the Manti unit remain the same. And then lastly, we certainly support the any bull elk permit increase up to 15000, we think that's a great idea. In addition to that, we'd actually like to see an increase of 300 any bull permits go directly to the youth. We talk a lot about youth and that's the next generation, they're the up and comers, they're what keep us going. If we can continue with that opportunity we think it's a great move. Justin had mentioned earlier on in his presentation that when they, last year they raised that from 300 to 500, I believe, and the feedback they got was great, it was positive. We'd like to see that trend keep going. Thank you.

Dave Black: Okay. Steve followed by Mason LeFevre.

Steve Monk: My name's Steve Monk from Kanab Utah, my comments can be in regards to the increase on the Pinevalley unit. I would like to mention one thing, it's been discussed that there was a substantially higher success rate on the rifle hunt last year. I think we need to consider that there was a substantial storm for the first three or four days throughout the whole Southern Utah and any time you have that, the deer get down, they get moving, and more of them get harvested on the winter range so keep that in mind. I would like to see the permits on the Pinevalley unit stay the same as is. And that's because I think this year we will have an increased harvest already with the muzzleloader scope recommendation, that will increase the success rate there. And the hunt dates being five days later will increase the success rate there, especially if we get another storm. And so I would like to see that remain the same, I think we've been going in the right direction, doing a lot of good things with the predator control, the habitat improvements, the previous tag reductions, the light winters have been a big part of these big increases in numbers in bucks. I think we're going in the right direction I'd like to keep that going and remain the same with those permit numbers. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thank you. We'll have Mason followed by Tim Tebbs.

Mason LeFevre: Ya, I just wanted to make the comment, I support the deer increase, as to the crowding issue, I've hunted Panguitch lake for a lot of years, there are some areas that are crowded but there's areas where you can get away from it. I don't, it wasn't a unit where permits were increased this year, but, I mean, there's gonna be crowding in certain areas on every unit just due to ease of access and numbers of deer. I don't see it as a huge safety issue as long as we're doing what we should. I also wanted to comment on Beaver elk unit. Like Lynn said, we looked at that chart. I'm not gonna say that you can increase tags a bunch and still kill huge bulls but if we're managing off an age objective that seems to say that you can increase tags and kill, and decrease and it's pretty much staying the same, I think a lot of that is a issue of access on the Beaver unit and people see a high success rate and think they're automatically gonna go kill a eight, nine year-old 370, 380 bull. But the reality of the unit is there are some areas where bulls are getting big and they're very difficult to access. I think you see a lot of people who apply for those units with max points not prepared for the reality of what it will take to kill a bull that age or that size. And then, I know this might be a controversial topic but I think another reason we're starting to see some of these age objectives and a lack of quality is we've been killing a lot of bulls in the middle of the rut with rifles for a long time. And I think we're starting to see some results of that. I know it's hard to justify and say that you can have a genetic impact on an elk herd but I think the way we hunt elk in the rut with rifles, I think we're starting to see that, I think that some of the quality issue we're seeing, and it's not specific to the Beaver unit. That's my comment.

Dave Black: Thank you. We have Tim followed by Bill Christensen.

Tim Tebbs: I really didn't have much on the bulls but cows. But I do think we're doing a pretty good job at keeping those management sizes for the bulls especially being involved with the landowners. It helps them recover their losses, crop, fence, etcetera. Panguitch Lake has a good program, probably more on the cow management is what I'd prefer to talk about.

Dave Black: Okay, we'll put you back in for that. Thank you, Tim. Bill followed by Paul Niemeyer.

Bill Christensen: Hello, my name's Bill Christensen, I'm the regional director for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. I want to thank you gentlemen for allowing me to speak today. I also appreciate Justin and the Division staff for a great presentation. What a great thing to have so many more deer. When I was a kid we were pushing 200,000 deer. When Mike Leavitt was governor I was honored to stand on the steps of the capitol and actually speak to the group of hunters and ask the governor to reduce the number of permits. That was a great day and it's nice to see the deer come back. It helps to have some mild winters too. That helps quite a bit. You know, it's nice also to find out that we can have lots of elk and still have lots of deer. I got tired of that argument so it's nice to hear that. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation supports the recommendations the Division presented for bucks and bulls. And I think I'd echo what Jon Larson, my old friend Jon Larson, said. I think it would be nice to have another 300 any bull tags for the youth as well. They're our future, we need to get more folks involved and young people involved. I want again, to thank the RAC and thank the folks at the Division of Wildlife. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thank you. It will be Paul followed by Nolan Gardner.

Paul Niemeyer: Paul Niemeyer representing the Wayne and Sevier chapter of SFW. First, you know we appreciate the effort that you guys have put into this and then the little town meetings you've had. Our, I can I have all our guys on speed dial on the internet through e-mail and I polled all of them and went

over the recommendations and told them to get on the website and they were appreciative of the effort and they supported all the bucks and bulls, the antelope part, the elk part. The only thing that they did ask, is that you would go one more year and not increase these deer tags, the buck tags. Now, some places, like in my yard, I live on the Monroe unit, but the snow was over my knees in my yard. And there were deer dropping dead right then in the winter. Now you're gonna lose more. Some of these shed hunters are finding dead deer in different areas and a lot of the shed hunters are hunting pretty high because they're looking for elk. And probably most of the deer mortality would be lower than that. We are seeing some better bucks. They're still not what I would call mature bucks, but they're better bucks than we've had. Somewhere there's a threshold when you start seeing more of these four to six year-old, five year-old bucks. And I don't know what that is, I don't know if that's 18 bucks per 100 does or 20 or 24 or 25 or what it really is. Right now, we're not seeing that, we are seeing these little small 4-points starting to show up. If we could wait a year even and see what the thresholds are to get. you know, you obviously can't manage everything like a Paunsaugunt or a Henry Mountain deer, deer herd, but, on the other hand, we would like to see these deer a little bit, you know, more mature, older bucks in the classification I guess is the way to say it. Anyway, basically, our guys just asked if you'd wait a year, let's see what the winter does. You know, the spike in these buck showing up is a pretty fast moving deal and I wouldn't say that I was 100% sure that's here to say, that might be a spike that's been caused by weather and some other factors. You know, we just ask that you wait one more year, leave buck tags the way they are for a year and then let's look at it again. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thanks Paul. Nolan followed by Mr. Rasmussen.

Nolan Gardner: Nolan Gardner, Dixie Wildlife chapter of SFW. First of all, again, we'd like to thank you guys for all the hard work you go to. We too would like to see on the extra elk tags at least 300 of them go to youth. We think that'd be awesome. And then, our group down there, we hate to see the extra deer tags on the Pinevalley. We understand that's what the Division has to work with, so that's probably what we're stuck with. But we would like to see more deer. And I am also concerned and want to see what this new muzzle hunt, what the effects it's gonna have on the deer herd as well as the later season I guess we'll know next year. But anyway, hopefully we're not shooting ourself in the foot. Appreciate everything you do and thank you.

Dave Black: Thanks Nolan.

Kreig Rasmussen: Might ask first will this letter suffice for both bucks, bulls and antlerless or do I need to do it then also?

Dave Black: You can do it now.

Kreig Rasmussen: My name's Kreig Rasmussen I represent the Fishlake Forest. I'm here to read a letter presented by our Forest supervisor Mel Bolling which you all have a copy of. (See Attachment 3.)

Dave Black: Thank you Kreig. The last comment card that I have is Lynn Kitchen.

Lynn Kitchen (speaking from audience): I did mine already.

Dave Black: Okay. Did I miss anyone? Did you want to comment on the deer or the antlerless? Great, come on up. Oh the antlerless? Okay, we have you for that. We'll put you right on top. Okay, we'll turn

the time over to comments from the RAC.

RAC discussion and vote:

Mack Morrell: I've got a question on the buck antelope on the San Rafael. What's the success rate on that?

Justin Shannon: Give us about one minute to look that up Mack. The San Rafael Desert, the south one?

Mack Morrell: Ya, where Robber's Roost is.

Justin Shannon: Okay.

Dave Black: Okay, while they're looking that up, do we have any other comments? Okay, Brayden.

Brayden Richmond: I've got a couple of comments. One, I'm glad you asked the question, Wade, about weapon splits. As you guys all know, we were overloaded with e-mails on this buck to doe ratio and suggestions and probably the two units that I got the most comments, specific comments, were hunting pressure in Pinevalley and Zion. To me it appears, I was like you, I thought that we were pretty limited on changing the weapon allocations. But on Zions particularly I think that's something that gives us a lot of leeway. I would think that if we change the weapon allocation on Zion we'd really take away a lot of that hunting pressure down there, during the rifle hunt. As we discuss, I think that's something that we should look at. And also, I think that might be an effective tool on the Pinevalley, kind of a different set of problems, but I think that might be an effective tool there also.

Dave Black: Justin.

Justin Shannon: Can I provide an answer for Mack?

Dave Black: Okay.

Justin Shannon: Of the five hunters that went afield last year, all five of them harvested. So 100%

Dave Black: Gene.

Gene Boardman: Back in November when we raised the age objective on the Mt Dutton and the Panguitch Lake, and lowered the objective on the Monroe. We asked about what it would do on the number of permits. I checked the audio of that meeting and the reply was there would probably be a slight reduction but not by much. Now we've got a reduction recommended of 25% from 100 to 75 on the Dutton and 31% from 80 to 55 on the Panguitch Lake. There's plenty of elk out there to keep those numbers up. Not everybody is trying to kill big elk but on the Mt Dutton and Panguitch Lake, if you want a big elk, there are big elk there. I don't think that, I think this is too large of a decrease in tags. We talk about point creep and now people have to go for years to draw. When we decrease permits by that much it increases point creep and decreases opportunity for hunters. Now we're taking 50 tags off of those two units, that's hurting the opportunity for hunters by quite a bit. I'd like to hope that maybe we could go along with the DWR but maybe we could not make that big of a cut at this time and see what happens. I don't like age object anyway and I wonder if there's any consideration, I know they used to

ask the question on your harvest report, were you satisfied with the quantity and quality of the animal. But with age objective I don't think that ever enters in. I think there's a lot of hunters that are satisfied with both quantity and quality and I think we can sustain the harvest of bull elk on those 2 units without taking these big cuts that are in the recommendation.

Dave Black: Thank you Gene. Any comments down here on the left? Okay. Jump in there Wade.

Wade Heaton: I'm never short on something to say, matter of fact I've got so much I'm probably gonna break it in half cause I'll wear out. First, though, I really want to thank everybody that's here. I believe in this process. I think it's the best process we have, in the west. And the fact that you guys care enough to be here means a lot. And your input really does mean a lot. And so, thank you for coming, all of you that send e-mails, aside from the spam e-mails, we don't care about those. But the rest of them that have real thoughts behind them, really appreciate it. It really does go a long way to helping us make a decision. You do have input, you do have influence on this committee. So thank you. And I guess the only other thing I wanted to say about that was, we're talking about permit numbers tonight in this meeting; objectives were already set in November. And so some of you who might not be familiar with this process, understand that, the reason permits are being increased, recommendations for increases and decreases are to meet within that objective. That objective was set in November. So I'd just encourage you, please, if you're passionate about where we're at tonight, keep it inside you until next November. I'm not saying that we're not going to make some changes tonight, but, the time and place for changing objectives is in November. So, please come back, I guess is my plea, stay involved, I really do think it'll make a big difference. Two quick things, I think, we've got some issues, and I guess it's to the other board members, we've got some issues, I think, that are at play here that don't factor into buck to doe ratios. Let's keep in mind buck to doe ratios are taken post hunt, pre-winter. All of that classification work is. And I do think that we had some significant winter in some areas, enough to make a difference in those areas. The second thing is, we're going to have a later rifle hunt, all the hunts are later, but the biggest impact is going to be on that rifle hunt. I think it's going to make a significant impact on that hunt, the harvest of that hunt. So we've got a few things coming into play that are completely irrelevant and independent from the buck to doe ratio but I think they're things we ought to consider. I'm tired.

Dale Bagley: I too appreciate all the e-mails that we got. I had over 203 e-mails, most of them didn't have much comment other than they oppose or support, as far as support the objectives I had 14 with comment on that and 18 or so that threw in some comment why they opposed it. Like I said earlier, a lot of those were, they weren't necessarily against the increased buck numbers, it was more concern about crowding. Those units were Pinevalley and Zion. As far as our buck to doe ratios, I think the Southern RAC has been really good about hearing public comment. It was in May last year we went through our unit plans, we raised every unit to the 18 to 20 buck to doe ratio in hopes that we could keep some quality, better quality. And we were told we'd end up probably cutting tags at that point in time. Now it's that time and we're seeing increases still yet. I think the deer are doing good. We've got the 30 unit plan, it's an easy plan, we can correct things if we go a little overboard. But, a thousand and fifty deer increased unit wide is probably not gonna be too detrimental even if we do have some winter kill loss. The only thing I do question is the Southwest Desert like was brought up before. We're seeing a downward trend, so the thing that we should be doing probably is lower that a few deer. And the same goes that way if we have the same trends next year, if we over raise the bucks then we can do the same thing next year. We've got to keep some amount of trust that if we see that downward trend that we're gonna correct it quickly. But I would be in support of what the Division's presented with the exception of that Southwest Desert.

Dave Black: Okay, let's go on the left, Brian.

Brian Johnson: I got a ton of emails and I responded to every one of them. Which I had a lot of fun with it, cause I think that a lot of people get confused on two different topics, as far as population and quality. I know you can't do the quotation marks, but. And quality's a funny thing cause I talked to guys who just want to shoot a 2-point. And then I talk to other people that say, "You shouldn't be allowed to shoot a 2-point if you've killed more than one." And I'm thinking, how is this guy's adrenaline rush any better cause he killed a big deer than my adrenaline rush if I shoot a little deer and I like it? I think that it's kind of one of those things that's, it's 100% social at this point, what we're dealing with is 100% social issue. And I sit here and I've heard so much feedback and so much stuff. I've heard people say, "I don't believe the Division's count." So I straight up ask them, "Do you think they're lying on their counts?" "Well no." "Okay then, so they're not lying on their counts but you don't believe them so which one is it?" And I hear that a lot, I don't think that these men go out there and lie on their counts to offer more tags for money. I got that a lot. It's kind of rubbed me the wrong way that people actually said that in their comments and e-mail. I just wanted to say that publicly, that I don't think that's an issue, I don't think the Division does that. On another note, I think that there's a lot of room to, like Brayden mentioned, split some of these allocations up, these, let's not pile the majority of them in the rifle, especially with the later season date coming. I've been a proponent of more archery and muzzleloader opportunity anyway all through this process. I think that would be great if we did something like that. I also think that if we don't increase tags, what credibility do we have with the public at all? We cut ten thousand tags when we went to 30 units to get down to, to get these buck to doe objectives up, I think we owe it, these are general season units. I think that we have to increase some. I would be open to maybe looking at that Beaver thing. And I've said this before if we're not there, maybe we shouldn't increase numbers. And every time I've said that, you guys, as much as you guys don't like me, you've kinda said, "Hey we're not quite there yet on that 3-year average, I like what that guy's saying there." And that's maybe something we need to look at on the Beaver is we're not quite there, we're in an upward trend, but maybe we're not there yet. Some of these other ones, I've never been on a general season deer hunt and I've talked to a guy and the first words out of his mouth were: "Man I wish I saw more orange dots. Man, if I could just see 10 more hunters, my hunt would be complete." So my point with that is we're gonna have crowding issues because that's perception. And so, ya, where do we draw the balance. The good old days, I've heard that so many times I don't even know what the good old days are. The good old days everyone could buy a tag. We had how many hunters back in the good old days? What did we have?

Justin Shannon: We had times we were close to 250,000 in some of those years.

Brian Johnson: Deer? Or how many hunters?

Justin Shannon: 250,000

Brian Johnson: Hunters?

Justin Shannon: Yes.

Brian Johnson: Let's bring the good old days back, I think you'd like it. Do you know what I mean? And that's what I'm saying, what part of the good old days are we talking about here? We're at 30 year

population highs, we're at 50 year buck to doe ratio highs and that's only because that's as far back as I could find buck to doe ratios. I sit here and ramble and ramble and ramble because I've only had this conversation 784 times. But, my point is, I think that as a committee we really need to look at maybe splitting those up from rifle to archery to other stuff and I'm sure you'll hear more from me later.

Dave Black: Do we have any other comments? Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: I don't think we can do that at this meeting. That would be a fall, proclamation, that we change the split.

Justin Shannon: Ya, you can. The splits from 60% rifle, 20% archery, 20% muzzleloader. It can be done at this meeting. Yes, it can be done tonight.

Dave Black: Craig, do you have a comment?

Craig Laub: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to make a recommendation that when we do go into this that we do the deer, and the elk, and the antelope individually and we'll just make a motion that we accept what the Division's recommended and then we can amend each unit, if somebody's got a pet unit they want to do it.

Dave Black: Okay. I would be in favor of that, it's no problem. Do we have any other comments? Before we entertain a motion I'd like to at least summarize the comments that we do have. Wade.

Wade Heaton: Are we ready for round two? Alright, I just didn't want to hog too much mic. Here's where I'm at, I responded to every one of those e-mails too, Brian. And I got into some pretty good dialogue with some guys that actually cared. And I made a lot of phone calls. I really tried to talk to as many people as I could about this, just to get a feel for what people wanted. The majority of them, the significant majority of them, were pretty serious about, they wanted to see bigger deer on their general season units. I tried to explain to them what that means. We have a three tiered system on our deer, general season, limited entry, premium limited entry. They were discussing moving some buck to doe ratios on some of our general season units that would almost move them into the limited entry category. Because that's where we're getting close to, we're 25 or over 25 bucks per 100 does in some of these units. So I guess, here's my point, maybe that's a discussion that needs to happen. Probably not tonight, probably gonna be too much for tonight. But, do we want to add a third tier to our buck to doe ratios in general season? Do we want to combine limited entry and general season tiers as part of our categories? Do we want to have a serious discussion about raising the objectives on our general season units or at least some of them? Because there were a lot of people that that's the road they were trying to go down. And I explained to them as best I could where that leads, it leads to less opportunity, less permits, and a lot of them, knowing that, still want to go down that road. And so maybe that is a discussion we need to have, or at least put it on an action item for another day, because obviously we're not gonna do that here. As I mentioned, the objectives were set in November, but probably something we should entertain, as a board and maybe the Division as a whole.

Brian Johnson: One more comment. Just kind of to parrot what Wade said earlier. To all the people that are here, some people, I have no idea how this RAC's going to vote or how the board's going to vote. My plea would be to not just get mad and say, "You didn't listen to me, the RAC system doesn't work." blah blah blah, "I'm gonna cry." Stay involved, stay passionate about it, understand that we listen to

what you guys say and it does influence the conversation, it does make a change, so stay connected, stay passionate about it and please don't think that it doesn't work. Because the RAC system, I think, is the best that we can come up with.

Dave Black: Okay, let me make a comment and then I'll try to summarize and then we'll see if we can form a motion. I think here at the Southern RAC, we made a lot of progress last year when we looked at the deer management plan, for those that are concerned about quality and quantity. We were able to raise the buck to doe ratio in a number of units and now all of the ones in Southern Utah are 18 to 20. If that's your goal then I think we've accomplished that, at least as far as we can take it right now. I feel really good about what we've done there. I think we'd be seeing greater increases in tag numbers in our area if we hadn't done that last year, we would have been in a 15 to 17 range and seen even more increases. I think we are concerned about quantity and quality. We are also seeing a number of increases this year and promoting opportunity which is good. In my mind, I think overcrowding is a real issue and so in the future, not this year, but in the near future we gonna have to look at some different schemes, as Wade mentioned, to get opportunity for hunters in the field, but try to avoid the overcrowding. I think overcrowding is an issue in the Sands, I think overcrowding is an issue on Panguitch Lake, I think overcrowding's an issue on portions of Pinevalley. Hopefully we're gonna raise more deer and keep increasing tags. But we'll have to look at some different mechanisms to get those hunters in the field. I agree, I don't think that's what we can accomplish tonight but I think in the near future we may be looking at that. I'm very happy about what the deer population is doing. I've talked to a lot of people. I think that's why we have all the e-mails. Everybody can agree we have more deer, we have better deer. And the difference is some people don't want us to make any changes so we can keep that pattern going. I think we still can keep that pattern going with allowing some tags. And that's my opinion. But I do think that as a Southern RAC we have the obligation to look close at the Sands and at Pinevalley. The other thing that we haven't talked too much about is the 300 additional tags for the youth elk hunters, that's a great idea. Let me just summarize some of these comments. Public comments: We have the public here that does support the recommendations as presented. We had comments concerning elk on the Beaver unit, age class may not be a good way to measure tag increases. We had a handout on that. We talked about the Zion unit and the crowding issues and maybe not allowing any additional tags except for the youth. SFW was here to support the recommendations of the DWR. We did have another public comment where they support the recommendations as presented. There's some concern about antelope on the Henry Mountains, I think that's been recognized by DWR staff and I think that's a legitimate concern that will be looked in to. There was comments on the Pinevalley unit, crowding is an issue. We need to increase the numbers and to split into multiple hunts. Here's SFW, they support the recommendations as presented with the exception of the Manti unit and the San Juan unit and they proposed that we raise the youth elk tags by an additional 300 tags. There was comments about keeping the Pinevalley unit the same with no increases. Not sure what the muzzleloader scope will have, how that will affect harvest rates. We had comments in support of the deer increase, crowding not an issue, Beaver age objective may not be a good way to manage those. And some concern that hunting elk with the rifle during the rut is not good genetically, and we may be seeing the effects of that now. Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation supports the DWR's buck and bull recommendations as presented with the exception that they would also like to see 300 additional tags for youth elk hunters. SFW Sevier would like to not raise the deer tags this year and see what's happening, wait one more year and then do the increases. Another chapter of SFW supported the additional youth elk hunts. And, not sure about the deer increase, the increase muzzleloader, may have an effect. We received a handout from the Forest Service Fishlake division, we support the plan as presented. Now the RAC comments. I think you guys are probably okay with that so you heard them. Okay, so I'm ready to entertain a motion. And let's start

with the general season deer.

Brayden Richmond: I'll take the first stab at this motion. I would support the Division's recommendations on the deer as presented with four exceptions. On the Beaver unit: I would like to see that increase cut in half to increase by 75 instead of 150 due to the, 2 of the 3 years we were within objective only increasing one year. On the Pinevalley and Cedar Mountain, or Pinevalley and Zion units: I would like to see the increases done with a split between archery and muzzleloader; so we'd go ahead and accept the increase but all of those tags would be split in half between archery and muzzleloader. And then on the Southwest Desert due to a rapid three-year declining trend, I would actually like to cut tags by 50.

Dave Black: By how many?

Brayden Richmond: Fifty tags cut on the Southwest Desert. If you look at that it went from 29 to 19 in three years. That's a pretty steep decline.

Dave Black: that's three things right? Or is that four?

Brian Johnson (off microphone)

Dave Black: Southwest Desert, okay. Do we have a second? Okay we have a second from Dale, we also have one from Rusty but. Okay.

Richard Hepworth: Let me make sure the Pinevalley and Zion, what was the (off microphone).

Brayden Richmond: Pinevalley and Zion, we'd accept the increase as proposed, but those tags would be fifty-fifty between archery and muzzleloader with no increase to rifle tags.

Dave Black: okay, discussion on the motion.

Brian Johnson: Are we really? Wade, come on. Go ahead Wade.

Wade Heaton: We're just taking a deep breath, it wasn't that anybody didn't have something to say. So, here's my thoughts. I like where some of that's going. I don't know that I'm prepared to jump right in to shuffling permits within seasons. I don't know if I'm ready to do that tonight. The people that I talked to and what I've seen personally, there are some significant crowding issues on the any weapon hunt for Zion and Pinevalley, that's a real problem. That's not perceived, that's a real problem. I think there's issues on Zion where there's so much private land the access, we've all heard pretty good descriptions of it tonight. I would love to see, and, in my opinion, not tonight, I would love to see more of a shift. We're not talking about shuttling, there's 200 permits on those units. And so we're gonna funnel 200 permits into some other hunts. I would like to see it go far more than that, to create a real difference on that any weapon hunt. But because of that, I don't know that I can justify doing an increase tonight. Just because of that later rifle hunt and because of the crowding issues. I don't know that I want to jump on that just yet. I would rather see Zion and Pinevalley stay the same and then maybe let's come back and shuffle numbers in between seasons next time.

Brayden Richmond: Wade, just to, if you leave it the same, you're still gonna have the same amount of

rifle hunters there on the late hunt with those late dates. So leaving it the same I don't see as accomplishing anything.

Brian Johnson: This is the concern I have is, we've gone through three RACs right now. This is number four right? This is three, the other two don't even care about the Pinevalley and the Zion, so they just passed it. The next two aren't gonna care about the Pinevalley and the Zion. If we, I'm looking at this saying okay, tell the board, "Hey we're open to increases but let's put them here versus here." I think we might get a little more traction than just saying, "No increases," and then have them just shove it down our throat. Cause I really think that's what's gonna happen, cause they're gonna go four out of five. I can, I mean, it doesn't take the smartest guy in the room to figure that out. I'm the dumbest guy up here and I can figure it out. So, there's a crowding issue, so maybe let's take is a step further and take five or ten percent of the existing tags and shuffle them around too. If crowding is that big of an issue on these units, let's maybe explore that before we jump in and maybe make another amendment. We can make a motion to change whatever allocation we want to change on these units.

Dave Black: Gene, go ahead.

Gene Boardman: Brayden, is your, what you want to do there, to cut down on the crowding for the rifle hunt or to hold it in check a little bit?

Brayden Richmond: Yes, so, like others have said I tried to respond to many of the emails. And the e-mails I got into I felt were really valid and had conversation, were majority dealing with crowding issues on Pinevalley and Zion, so that's exactly what it is, try to get, and primarily crowding on the rifle hunt. So that would be the reason I'm proposing the way I am is I feel like I'm following the plan, we are honoring the increase, but yet, we're getting people, we aren't adding anybody to the rifle hunt where the crowding issue is.

Gene: Thank you. All the comments that I saw talked either of Zion or Pinevalley was that they didn't want to increase tags there and most of them the crowding or the limited area and chances was what was driving their thoughts. I think they were pretty valid comments. I could go with what you're proposing there with them if that's the reason, to limit those problems on that rifle hunt.

Dave Black: K. Wade.

Wade Heaton: I just wanted to address some of that. I know I only mentioned crowding and I apologize, that was only half of my motivation for sharing that idea. The other half was significant number of these people were fairly serious about wanting to maintain the quality of bucks they were seeing, to the point where, I think there's a movement that's probably gonna gain some traction that we'll see this November, that will come in and say, let's change the objective for Zion. Zion's a weird unit, I think it's kind of unique, and I like this concept because it's why we have 29 units. They're individuals. Even though we all categorize them as general season, I think we should get serious about the idea of individualizing a package for each one, even though that's extremely cumbersome up here. I think we should get serious about it. And so, if a group of people come to us in November and say, "Seriously, let's change the objective on Zion from 18 to 20 to 20 to 25," whatever it is, I think we need to listen to them, I think Zion is a unique unit that can support something like that. It naturally has a higher buck to doe ratio, always have, because of several issues, but this private land issue is one of them. And to me, I wonder if maybe we do an experiment with Zion and maybe try to do something just to see where it goes

for a few years, with raising that objective. And so I guess the other half of my motivation is, if there's a decent chance we're gonna raise that objective and hope for a higher buck to doe ratio, I'd kind of hate to go down the increased permit idea. I would rather leave permits the same and shuffle them, because, I mean, I like your idea, Brian, sure, let's go into that existing rifle pool and shuffle some of those back into archery and muzzleloader. If we can do that tonight, sure.

Bryan Johnson: Does he have a comment card?

Bill Bates: He needs one. Just a comment on Wade's proposal. Changing an age objective would be something we'd have to take through the mule deer plan. And the mule deer plan has been passed for five years, I do not anticipate we're gonna be reopening that this next year. And so we're probably not gonna be considering that for another five years.

Sean Kelly: You know, I represent the Forest Service, I try not to get too involved with the bucks, bulls and once in a lifetime permit recommendation numbers. Just from the outside looking in, we've already gone through the process of writing these plans. We had committees that were involved in it, we were involved in it, the board's been involved in it, we all approved those, at each different step. It just seems sometimes we get to this meeting and we start to deviate enough, it's almost like we're trying to rewrite the plan. I think, it seems like we're within our lane if we change permit numbers a little bit and we start talking about changing percentage of tags, dividing them up. You start getting outside my comfort zone when we start getting too far away from what the plan says. Just my comment.

Mack Morrell: Mr. Chairman, I call for question.

Dave Black: Do you have a question? Oh, he wants a vote? There you go. Okay, we're ready. Alright, we've had a motion and a second. We've had discussion on the motion. Let's re-read the motion. That's that we accept the DWR deer plan as presented with the following exceptions: the Beaver unit reduce the suggested increase by 50%; Pinevalley and Zion, increases of the proposed would be split between archery and muzzleloader and no increases on the rifle. And the Southwest Desert, decrease the tags by 50 tags. All those in favor.

Wade Heaton: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry, can I have an actual question about this vote? So, as much as a like Mack trying to hurry our process, cause we do need to hurry, I do think there's some more discussion that needs to happen. If we voted this motion down, we could continue discussion, could we not?

Dave Black: Yes. Then we'll have to, then that motion would be off the table and we'd have to entertain a new motion.

Brian Johnson: Or we can have amendments to the motion.

Wade Heaton: But, once question's been called for, can we still amend this motion on the table now?

Dave Black: No, we're gonna vote on it now, once we vote...

Wade Heaton: So once it's voted on, then we can't come back...

Brian Johnson: Back up, what he asked is once question's been called, can we still amend the motion and yes we can amend the motion.

Dave Black: Before we vote.

Brian Johnson: We have to amend it before we vote. Cause once we vote, then we're done.

Dave Black: So if you want to make an amendment, we need to make it now.

Brian Johnson: Ya. So if you guys want to make an amendment, you need to make it now.

Wade Heaton: So that's the question, I think Mack's bringing up, is once question's been called for, do we have to vote or can some of us still come back and amend.

Mack Morrell: You've got to vote. The amendment should have been made long before.

Brian Johnson: You can make an amendment to that before we vote.

Mack Morrell: Show it to me.

Dave Black: Okay. Giani.

Giani Julander: Do you need the Robert's Rules? Do you need the book?

Dave Black: Well, I'm the chairman and I make the rules tonight. So we're gonna vote, if you don't like the motion the way it's presented, vote against it and we'll start over. So we're gonna vote on the motion that we have, if you're not in favor of this motion, vote no, and we'll start with a new motion if it doesn't pass. If you're in favor of this motion then vote yes. All those in favor, by the show of hands. Keep your hands up. All those, did you get a number? Those opposed. Motion carries.

Brayden Richmond made the motion to accept the Division's recommendations on the deer as presented with four exceptions. On the Beaver unit: increase permits by 75 instead of 150. On the Pinevalley and Zion units: accept the increase but split additional tags in half between archery and muzzleloader with no increase to rifle permits. On the Southwest Desert reduce tags by 50. Dale Bagley seconded. Motion carried, 9 in favor, 2 (Wade Heaton & Sean Kelly) opposed.

Dave Black: K. Now, we need to address the other items of the plan. What's next? The elk.

Gene Boardman: I'd like to make the motion that we accept the elk recommendations as planned except that we increase the Division's recommendation on the Mt Dutton unit to 90 tags instead of 75 and on the Panguitch Lake to 70 tags instead of 55. That's giving the division some of what they want and keeping the hunters with an opportunity to hunt.

Dave Black: Okay, do we have a second?

Mack Morrell: Second.

Dave Black: So we have a motion and a second, do we have any discussion?

Brayden Richmond: I want to do an amendment before we have discussion. I'd also like to add the 300 additional youth any bull tags.

Brian Johnson: Second that.

Dave Black: Okay, so we have an amendment and a second. Let's have any discussion that we have on the amendment.

Wade Heaton: Mr. Chairman, I support the idea of this 300 additional youth tags. Let's throw it out there, it seems like that's what some of the public wants. And, it's probably the route we oughtta go, give youth some more opportunity. On a point of order, I'm no parliamentarian, I kind of think Brian's right, otherwise whoever calls for question has, it puts everyone else at a significant disadvantage. You're the boss and we'll do whatever you want to do. But I do think if question has been called for there's got to be a way in there where somebody could make an amendment or change to something but I can't find my book.

Dave Black: Do you have your book?

Giani Julander. Ya.

Dave Black: Let's take a break and we'll come back.

(Ten minute recess.)

Dave Black: Okay, Let's just recap for a minute. As far as the first motion, the second and the vote, that's gonna stand as is. We're gonna move on on the deer. We're moving on to the elk portion of that. We have a motion on the table to approve the recommendations as presented with the following exceptions: the Dutton unit, we'd increase the tags to 90, Panguitch Lake unit we'd increase to 70, and then we had an amendment and that is to increase the youth elk tags by 300. And we need to deal with the amendment first. Did we get a second on the amendment? Okay, so we have an amendment and a second. Is there any discussion on the youth increases? Let's vote on the amendment. All those in favor. Keep your hands up. All those opposed. Did we have some ..?

Giani Julander: Sean and Nick abstained.

Dave Black: K. and that is um, the Forest Service.

Giani Julander: Forest Service and non-consumptive.

Dave Black: Non-consumptive. Okay, great. Is there any further discussion on the motion? All those in favor of the motion. Keep them up so we get them. Any opposed. Okay, motion carries.

Gene Boardman made the motion to accept the elk recommendations as planned with the exception of increasing permits on the Mt Dutton from the recommended 75 tag to 90 and on the Panguitch Lake from the recommended 55 tags to 70 tags. Mack Morrell seconded. Brayden

Richmond made the amendment to the motion to add 300 additional youth any bull elk permits. Brian Johnson seconded. Amendment carried, 9 in favor, 2 (Sean Kelly & Nick Jorensen) abstained. Amended motion carried 9 in favor, 1 (Dale Bagley) opposed, 1 (Sean Kelly) abstained.

Dave Black: So now we need to deal, do you want to just deal with the rest of it? We had antelope and what else did we have? Once in a lifetime. Any discussion before we entertain a motion?

Brian Johnson: I make a motion that we pass the antelope and once in a lifetime as presented.

Dave Black: Okay, do we have a second?

(Harry Barber seconded.)

Dave Black: Okay, we have a motion and a second. And we'll entertain any discussion on the motion. Mack.

Mack Morrell: I'd like to amend the motion to take the San Rafael where Robber's Roost is and to increase tags from nine to twelve on bucks.

Dave Black: From nine to twelve. Okay do we have a second on the amendment?

Wade Heaton: I'll second it.

Dave Black: Okay, so we have a second. Let's, any discussion on the amendment?

Brayden Richmond: I guess on that, I'd just maybe like to hear from the biologist and hear his input on that. That's kind of a new one, we were already increasing by 50%. I don't know that I'm opposed, I'd just like to hear his input.

Justin Shannon: We don't have a biologist here for the San Rafael, South San Rafael unit. But I know, as they flew those units on the north and the Cisco and some of that, populations were doing really well. I'm probably ill-prepared to talk about the specifics from, why nine, nine to twelve. But certainly, their intent was to increase it from six to three. I wish I had a better answer for you. I guess the estimate right now is 240 total if that helps you make your decisions.

Brian Johnson: Hey Mack, is this because you hate antelope or you want to see more opportunity?

Mack Morrell: More opportunity.

Brian: That is the correct answer.

Dave Black: Okay, let's vote. All those in favor of the amendment. Is that unanimous? Okay, that passes. Now, let's vote on the main motion. All those in favor of the main motion. Motion carries unanimous.

Brian Johnson made the motion to accept the pronghorn and once in a lifetime permit recommendations as presented. Harry Barber seconded. Mack Morrell made the amendment to the motion to increase pronghorn permits on the San Rafael from 9 to 12. Wade Heaton seconded.

Amendment carried unanimously. Amended motion carried unanimously.

Mack Morrell: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make another motion that was discussed earlier about the elk on the Henry Mountains. I'd like to make the motion, Bill came up here and said that they'd work on it. I'd like to make a motion that the DWR come and report on what they've done regarding elk on Henry Mountains. They've had this objective on the Henry Mountains of zero for a long long time and nothing's happened. There's still elk there. They don't want them there. So why don't we have a report to do something with them. If they've done anything instead of just try to hunt them. Cause it's pretty hard to hunt.

Dave Black: Do we have a second?

Wade Heaton: I'll second it.

Dave Black: Okay, so we have a motion and a second. Do we have any discussion on the motion?

Craig Laub: I'd just like to ask, isn't the Pinevalley supposed to be the same way? I'd like to add it to that, to the list. If that's all right with the seconder and the motion maker.

(Discussion off microphone.)

Brian Johnson: I think we probably ought to leave that off. If it's different.

Dave Black: All those in favor. Okay. Those opposed.

Giani Julander: Two abstained.

Dave Black: And they were? Forest Service and non-consumptive.

Mack Morrell made the motion to have the DWR report on what they're done regarding elk on the Henry Mountains. Wade Heaton seconded. Motion carried 8 in favor, 1 (Gene Boardman) opposed, 2 (Nick Jorgensen & Sean Kelly) abstained.

Dave Black: Okay, let's move on to item number six. Antlerless. And this will be Justin Shannon.

Wade Heaton: Mr. Chairman?

Dave Black: Yes.

Wade Heaton: Would you like a quick, 30 second, parliamentary education? I found it.

Dave Black: Let's save it for after.

Wade Heaton: Okay.

Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016 (action)

-Justin Shannon, Big Game Coordinator
-Teresa Griffin, Regional Wildlife Program Manager
(see attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Dave Black: We'll open it up to questions from the RAC. Gene.

Gene Boardman: I'd like to have the biologist for the Mt Dutton unit let us know what the results of the control hunt was, the controlled antlerless. And why we're going to have such a swing in permits on Dutton.

Josh Pollock: We had about 250 of the antlerless control hunters that hunted the Dutton, that reported hunting it. Harvest of those 250 were 60 on that. It didn't impact enough, that we felt, so I decided that I would just get rid of that and have just a draw of that. And your other question was the dramatic swing?

Gene Boardman: Ya, you had, last year it was open for any spike hunters to get a control permit and I saw a lot more people there during the spike season and, which also has an antlerless draw hunt going on at that time. What did you, how many draw permits did you have last year? 800?

Josh Pollock: Total?

Gene Boardman: Ya.

Josh Pollock: It was about 9 off the top of my head, we had 900, that encompassed the multi-unit as well in that. We do, this year, we have a cow hunt, a draw cow hunt that is going on during that spike hunt that is going on this year. We just did away with the control permit last year.

Gene Boardman: But there was access for anybody that wanted to hunt a cow, if they bought a spike permit, they could go there and hunt a spike and a cow. And there was 800 or 900 draw permits and now you're cutting it down to 475.

Josh Pollock: From our flight as well, we've seen a decrease in the elk numbers on the Dutton that we've found. So that substitutes the decrease in the permits overall for the unit. So in, just adjusting that, I didn't feel the need to have the control permit there anyway. And as well, anyone that draws a cow permit for any of those, currently the 400 that are there, they can hunt during the spike hunt if they have a cow tag and a spike tag as well. So that opportunity is still there to do that.

Gene Boardman: So if they draw a tag for November and they buy a spike tag they can hunt during the spike season for their tag that they drew for November.

Josh Pollock: Yes sir. That's statewide, that's on any unit.

Gene Boardman: Thanks.

Dave Black: Mack

Mack Morrell: What's the success rate on this antlerless elk permits?

Justin Shannon: Generally. On the antlerless elk control permits or antlerless permits in general?

Mack Morrell: Antlerless in general.

Justin Shannon: 45.

Mack Morrell: I thought it was 35?

Justin Shannon: This last year it was 45. It may be up from last year, but this year. That's one of the points I was trying to make earlier. Even though we're cutting permits on public draw, we're trying to get a lot more surgical on where those hunts are at. That's why you're seeing so many new ones as well, trying to target where the elk are at, to be smarter about these hunts.

Dave Black: Any other questions?

Brian Johnson: On the Southwest Desert, 600 permits, and there's 2 units now? I must have blinked when we went over that. Did we split that up?

Justin Shannon: Yes, on the Southwest Desert, there was an additional hunt added on the Southwest Desert itself and then an additional hunt added on the Southwest Desert Northwest part and in total it's 600 total permits.

Dave Black: Go ahead, Craig.

Craig Laub: On the Boulder, how come that wide swing in numbers there. It don't make sense. It seems like I've watched that, over the years it swings up and down. How come?

Jim Lamb: The Boulder is a unit where elk like to go and live in the winter. If we have too many elk on the Dutton we kill them on the Boulder, if we have too many on the Monroe we kill them on the Boulder, if we have too many on the Fishlake we kill them on the Boulder. So we've been killing elk off of all four units on the Boulder and that's why the tag numbers are so high. We have an objective of 1500 and we're issuing 950 cow tags. That doesn't make any sense, unless you put it in the perspective of, I'm wintering four units of elk out there where the Boulder and the Dutton kind of mix all together. When we flew this year and we were under objective on all those units then we busted those tags back. Cause I have the ability on the Boulder in the winter to kill elk from all the units that were under objective.

Dave Black: Mack.

Mack Morrell: One other question on the antelope on the Parker. We're down 300 permits and I've talked to Jim, he says that we're gonna trap 300. Last year he said he didn't get to trap 300. Is the trap gonna be on this year?

Justin Shannon: Yes, we're planning on trapping this year.

Dave Black: Go ahead, Gene.

Gene Boardman: I've got another question for the biologist for the Dutton. With what you did on the cow tags last year, the control permits and everything, were you satisfied with the results? Did you get the results that you wanted on that?

Josh Pollock: No, not necessarily, the result, statewide the success of those control permits is around the 20% range and that's what we saw on the Dutton as well. We actually have some hunts on the Dutton anywhere from 18 to 47% depending on the season, you know, weather conditions, that kind of thing. So it was actually lower than most of the other success rates on the Dutton for our, just draw hunts that we have. Across the board, we're sitting about 37% success on the Dutton for those hunts. So it was actually lower percent success than the draw hunts so that's why I felt like it wasn't a need there.

Gene Boardman: What my question is, is the results of all your antlerless efforts on the Dutton, did you get what you were trying to achieve?

Josh Pollock: We're getting closer to objective, that's for sure. But, like Jim was saying, it takes us killing a lot of elk on the Monroe, the Boulder, the Fishlake, the Dutton as well, and we've had those permits increased a lot over the years and we've killed a significant amount of elk, cows and spikes and bulls and we've seen that from our flights this last winter.

Gene Boardman: Do you also have Panguitch Lake?

Josh Pollock: I do not.

Gene Boardman: I have a question on Panguitch Lake, it looks like we're increasing tags there significantly. Are we going to have a big swing on that, on the Panguitch Lake unit like we've had on the Dutton?

Dustin Schaible: Our objective on the Panguitch Lake's 1100 and we just flew it this year and we estimated 1700 so we're 600 over. So we definitely had to ramp up our permits and try to get back to objective.

Dave Black: Craig.

Craig Laub: My question is with the, overall we're dropping the elk draw public draw tags and we're still over objective. I don't understand, I guess, those numbers on the private and how they fit in. Overall are we still killing more elk than we have done because we're still over objective. Where are we at on that?

Justin Shannon: I think with these recommendations that we proposed tonight, the goal with all these units was to make progress towards that population objective. If we're under and there's cuts, probably need to raise some, if we're over in some of these areas the goal is to impact that population and have it decline. I'd say statewide, the intent of everything combined is to make progress towards the population objective.

Craig Laub: So, the public, the private lands numbers, what are they? How many are they?

Justin Shannon: There's 12,000 total permits between the 15 units and subunits. Some of these areas it's really gonna be to solve some localized problems. If you're a private landowner and you have elk on you, we want a lot more tools. As we met with the elk committee last year and passed that plan, there were two big things that we talked about. One was getting to objective and two was helping private landowners and those in the agriculture communities. And so, if you have a bunch of elk on you, more-so than you're willing to tolerate, we wanted to streamline the ability for those individuals to get permits. Or if you are an everyday hunter and you know a private landowner that would allow access, you could get that permit and get some increased harvest in areas where we need it. We've said time and time again we don't want to grow our elk on the backs of private landowners. This helps alleviate some of those pressures.

Dave Black: Justin, I was just gonna add a comment with that. It appeared, when you look at the presentation, that we have units that are over objective but we're cutting tags, but in reality you're throwing more tools at it. And the goal is to bring those elk down. Is that correct?

Justin Shannon: Ya.

Dave Black: I just wanted to make sure everybody understood that, the ultimate goal is when we're over objective is to be more effective on bringing those numbers down.

Justin Shannon: Ya, if you combine our public draw permits and our over the counter permits, we are increasing permits from last year. Correct. But Craig's right, there is a decrease in public draw, but overall, our efforts are to harvest more elk.

Dave Black: Okay, any other questions before we turn it over to the public? Mack.

Mack Morrell: I've got a question on your objectives. This seems to be the benchmark, whether we're going up or down or whatever. Tell me how we arrive at the objectives on these different units.

Justin Shannon: You mean on individual unit management plans?

Mack Morrell. Ya.

Justin Shannon: So generally how it works, we pass a statewide plan, the statewide plan that was just passed in November, it doesn't put a population objective on elk. Like the last plan said, "Get to 80,000 elk." And this plan, we did away with it and we said, "The sum of all the unit plans will be the summation of the statewide elk population. That will be the statewide population objective." So really that's done through the unit planning processes which is gonna occur this summer throughout the state. So these objectives that you have here are part of the, are essentially the population objective that was approved from the last unit management plan. Does that help?

Mack Morrell: **B**ut how do we arrive at these objectives? Is that science based or what is it, or pulled out of the air?

Justin Shannon: No, I think its weighing what the ranges can hold with the social pressures that are available on the landscape. And it's really working through that.

Mack Morrell: So it's done on social pressure, not on habitat?

Justin Shannon: I think it's a combination of both. And when I say social pressures I mean, there's probably units in the state where we can have more elk but because of social constraints, the population objective is set lower than what it can hold.

Mack Morrell: Have you done any resource habitat for summer versus winter range?

Justin Shannon: We do a lot of range trend data and look at these things on a five-year rotation throughout the state. Ya, we collect a lot of information on that.

Mack Morrell: Are these objectives based on summer range or winter range?

Justin Shannon: Probably depends on the individual unit, I would imagine. I mean, we have some units...

Mack Morrell: For instance, Fishlake, Thousand Lake.

Justin Shannon: Jim, do you want to speak to how that objective came about?

Jim Lamb: So, Fishlake and Thousand Lake have, I was trying to remember as I walked up here, it's roughly 30 range trend sites. A handful of those are read by me every single spring. And then every five years the range trend comes from GBRC [Great Basin Research Center] and reads them all. And they're all winter range sites, they're all kinda browse sites. And that's where we track pressure on the winter range. So, a normal typical winter, we deal with that, we're okay, we don't have range problems as we monitor these sites. We have a winter like we had last year, and everything goes whack. The elk are in places we don't want them, the elk are in places that we don't expect them to be. And they do have some impacts in those places, probably. Now because they're in places that they aren't typically, we don't have a range trend site where they were standing last winter. So the only measure is to go out where we saw them and walk around and look at what happened there. And we do that. So, Its science based and it is based on the winter range because we can't raise an animal if we don't feed them all winter and all summer. Does that answer your question?

Mack Morrell: I, up at the meeting we had in Richfield, a month ago, or six weeks ago, Dell Spencer was talking to Director Sheehan and I was involved in that a little bit. I asked him about objectives on winter range and he just drew a blank stare. So that's what's got me concerned, if we're working on winter range or summer range or what. I think Jim's a good biologist, Jim and I's good friends and we work together. We had a lot of problems this winter in our area, you know that as well as anybody. But, I asked Jason Kling over the Fishlake from Richfield about the, what the Fishlake plan was on the elk objective. He wouldn't give me an answer but what he did say is because of the habitat that work was done on that four or five years ago that they did get the increase of 800 elk. Now my next question is, that habitat work was done on summer range, not on winter range.

Jim Lamb: There's quite a bit of it on winter range too.

Mack Morrell: Well not according to him. Cause some of that winter range was on BLM and Park. So,

that's my question, is the winter range, because, some of this winter range can't tolerate these objective numbers.

Jim Lamb: K, so, on the sites that we monitor, with the range trend data, our browse is still in good shape. And so I think, my opinion, as a biologist, is we're still in line with objectives that we have. If I noticed that I had some range trend sites that had a continual downhill trend then I would address that in a hunt strategy to try and reduce numbers in that area.

Mack Morrell: Do you have any range trends sites out on the Slocomb allotment?

Jim Lamb: On the Parker?

Mack Morrell: Ya, on the Bicknell winter, Bicknell spring?

Jim Lamb: Yes.

Mack Morrell: Where are they at? Where do they stand?

Jim Lamb: One of them's in Terza Flat.

Mack Morrell: I understand that.

Jim Lamb: Terza Flat is the worst range trend site in the state of Utah.

Mack Morrell: And guess who has suspended AUMs.

Jim Lamb: Mack Morrell.

Mack Morrell: Ya. Jim and I's worked to try and fix that. It hasn't done anything.

Jim Lamb: Well, we do have some seeds out there that you were kind enough to donate a tractor so I could plant. I do have 4 transects out there in Terza Flat of my own on seeds that we've planted that I monitor, we've actually had some success out there with great basin wild rye. That's grown pretty good from the exclosure that we planted in 2007, I believe. And so I think it's doing well. I planted some stuff out there one spring ago, it was a brush and forb mixture and I have two transects on that line that I'll be reading probably around the first of June if you want to come wander out there with me we can look at them.

Mack Morrell: That would be good.

Jim Lamb: Okay.

Mack Morrell: My next question is: these range plans on the BLM and Forest Service are coming out next year, what they're gonna be doing. And I did go to the BLM one in Richfield and they had the analysis on grasses and shrubs and browse and all. My question is: are we gonna monitor them every year? Cause, if that browse gets below stubble their height because of elk, there're gonna be some major problems with permittees.

Jim Lamb: K, now, the BLM and the Forest have some additional range transects that they do on these different allotments. And generally when we have trouble in an allotment, then I get a phone call or Vance gets a call phone call cause we share country up on the Fishlake. And Vance has, I know Vance has a lot of conversations with the Forest about the Monroe and about browse on the Monroe.

Mack Morrell: Ya but I'm, where the sage grouse habitat is, that's in the valleys and up through that Parker Plateau a lot. And the sage grouse depends on that for winter feed just like the elk does.

Jim Lamb: If we could make a lot of the world look like the upper part of the Parker we'd be in fat city. That's in great shape. The lower part of the Parker has a lot of issues and we know that. And sometimes those elk go where we don't want them to go. And three years ago when we counted on the Parker, I had a lot more elk on the Parker than I wanted. That's one of the reasons that we've had 950 permits on the Boulder for the last three years.

Mack Morrell: When you counted this year, you didn't count as much which is good.

Jim Lamb: By about 100.

Mack Morrell: Ya, that was great. Okay.

Dave Black: Any additional questions from the RAC? Okay, if there's any public questions, you can come up and use this microphone. Just come up in order, that's fine. State your name

Questions from the Public:

Paul Niemeyer: Paul Niemeyer. On that triangle hunt last year did we wind up with 350 tags? And then, I think in that Richfield meeting you said that 68% of the harvest, that was harvested came on that, off the Monroe itself. Is that what you said?

Vance Mumford: Yes, so on that hunt that included all the four different units, ya 68% of that antlerless harvest came off the Monroe unit.

Paul Niemeyer: And then you killed 80 on landowner permits in the Sevier Valley?

Vance Mumford: Yes.

Paul Niemeyer: Okay.

Dave Black: Okay, do we have any additional questions?

Sean Limb: Sean Limb, I just have a question with our Beaver elk. I mean, they're requesting, I agree with the Fish and Game. I mean I know the elk plan, you get a lot of elk, you gotta kill elk. But we're going from 100 tags to 900 this year. We sit right in the middle of five different limited entry units. I'm thinking you're getting two or three hundred head of elk, coming on the Beaver when they're counting. They counted 1500 elk, our objectives a thousand fifty. Beaver's not in bad shape, they've done a lot of these burns and they've done a lot of rehab. SFWs cooperated with the Fish and Game and BLM and

everything we've put a lot of seed on there. There's a lot of reseed, there's a lot of habitat out there now. I think that's a big jump, 900.

Dave Black: Is there a question in there? Is that a comment?

Sean Limb: That's just a comment, sorry, not a question. I would rather see them, I mean, 400, you know cut it in half. I just don't want to see a Fishlake happen again on the Beaver. Cause this is a three year plan to kill 900 elk, you get 45%, that's 500 elk a year. You know I understand that's part of Fish and Game but I just think it's a little bit too many.

Dave Black: Okay, thank you. There any questions?

David Brinkerhoff: David Brinkerhoff, Bicknell. Question on the elk, we're having trouble around Lyman and Bicknell with elk numbers ended up in private property and even in feed yards. And I see here we're cutting back on that problem. We need to keep going on that problem and killing the elk before they get in there. I don't know why, I guess my question is why are you cutting back on that area? Jim, maybe you can help me understand that a little better.

Jim Lamb: I have no intention to slow down what we're killing around Lyman and Fremont. We had about 60 depredation permits there this winter and I'll just keep doing that to try and keep those elk away from town the best I can. The reason we're cutting elk permits in total is because on the objectives, we're not at objective, we're not close to objective. So we're just reducing tags, let the recruitment come and we'll work our way back up to our objective. But I'm not gonna slow down on killing elk in the valley, that's not where I want them.

David Brinkerhoff: I agree with that, we need to kill them. I had an elk herd go through my corals, killed one calf, tromped it to death and that's right downtown Bicknell. So we need to continue to work on that problem and keep those elk back in the hills. If they're coming to town, there's too many elk.

Jim Lamb: I agree.

David Brinkerhoff: My next question is, if we're trapping 300 head of antelope where are they going? I hope they're not going to the Henry Mountains.

Justin Shannon: We still haven't worked through all the exact details. I think the Central Region has some interest, most likely in the West Desert and some of those areas. That's really about what we've decided thus far. So, not the Henries.

(Discussion off microphone.)

Dave Black: Any other questions?

Verland King: Verland King. Every night I go to either check a mare that's gonna foal or heifer that's calving, and I can shine a light in my field and there's at least 100 head of deer, I can count them. I've heard through the grapevine that there's a program that for every 100 acres you can get a buck tag. Is that right?

Justin Shannon: There is, this is about a two year old program now. On agricultural fields, if you have 100 acres of cultivate crop, you could receive a general season buck deer permit.

Verland King: Okay, and that's cultivated crop? Cause I've got that much at least on some reseeding, plus some ranch in Piute county.

Justin Shannon: Oh, okay, I'm sorry, if you have a hundred acres, you get a permit. Not, for every hundred acres. The other thing is, there's another program where is you have 640 acres then you're eligible for a general season buck tag as well. I don't know if that fits your needs or not but that's another option.

Verland King: So, how do you find out about these programs? Do we need to talk to our biologist or?

Justin Shannon: Verland, we can get in touch with you on that and give you more detail. There's a rule that was passed, I think two years ago, but we can simplify that and let you know the details. And get you in touch with the biologist on that unit and work through those details.

Verland King: Alright, thanks.

Justin Shannon: Yep.

Mack Morrell: Justin, I've got another question concerning those private lands. Where you have pushed it to January 31st, do you have one in, per se, Koosharem Valley down to Johns Valley?

Justin Shannon: Um, let me check. I've got the 15 units here. No, it doesn't look like it.

Mack Morrell: Why not? They have a lot of problems there in the summer time.

Justin Shannon: That's a great question. Jim.

Jim Lamb: Let me explain to you why I haven't ever gone this direction Mack. If I have private lands permits in the valley, when the elk jump the fence, you stop shooting. If I issue you a depredation permit, you have a two-mile buffer. That's why I haven't gone this direction. Because I want some of those elk dead, I want them to know that's a dangerous place to be and I don't want you to have to stop when they jump your fence. Does that answer your question?

Mack Morrell: You know, we appreciate Jim's effort in issuing those mitigation tags. He does a good job in that. But they seem to run all over in feed lots and everywhere else. I have a picture here I wanted to show to the RAC members. It's in Fremont, on the cemetery, this is a feedlot, just near the cemetery. You can see the hired hand petting an elk. Rusty I'd like to have that back.

Jim Lamb: I thought that was the boss, isn't that Shannon?

Mack Morrell: I'd like, Rusty, keep that and let me get it after this meeting.

Jim Lamb: Let me address something that kinda goes along with this right now. We have some issues, David's coral, those elk went through your coral going about 60 miles an hour cause there were 12

hunters behind them gunning them along highway 24. And so, there's a proposed boundary change, so that public hunters won't be able to hunt that section along highway 24 around the Lyman area. We had a, I believe, the guys house was shot by a hunter this winter. We haven't found the bullet hole in his house but I'm sure it was his house, it wasn't his fence. Anyway, Mack, you'll understand this boundary. We come down the Highline Canal starting there where Jordan Crane and Vance Taylor live, we come down the Highline Canal to Bicknell and then we come on 24 back to Big Rocks, we come around Big Rocks into Loa, then we go back up 72 to the Highline Canal. So public hunters won't be able to run those elk in that area but we're gonna let depredation hunters still hunt in that area. We ran this by the county commissioners, was it last Monday Dennis? I think you liked it, the idea anyway. So people who have property in there, I can still issue depredation permits to and they can still kill elk in all those fields and it doesn't apply to them and it doesn't apply to their buffer. It just eliminates that gauntlet there south of Lyman. So that's something that we have, the boundary change is proposed on the Fishlake Thousand Lake East and the Boulder West. But we failed to include it on that big unit, the Monroe/Dutton/Plateau unit. That's something that we need to add in. And I've got a map right here and I've got a short description on the back. Would you like to look at it or did that explanation do okay? Okay.

Dave Black: Okay, we're gonna open it up to public comments now. So if you want to comment please bring your cards. Again, if you're representing a organized group, one person from that group can have five minutes. Just a general individual has three minutes. If you're part of an organized group and your spokesman has already spoken then you have two minutes. And we're gonna start with Gib Yardley first and then we're gonna go to Verland King.

Comments from the Public:

Gib Yardley: I'm Gib Yardley from Beaver. We run, we have winter range on the Southwest Desert and summer range on the Dixie Forest east of Cedar City. These winter ranges are extremely fragile, and if they're once killed out, you can't get them reseeded and bring them back. Cause I've tried. I'm telling you, we've got the wild horses that's driving a lot of people out of business out on those deserts. And then we've got an over population of elk out there on that Southwest Desert. And they're getting to be about as tough on those ranges as the horses. We just use the ranges in the winter time. The horses and elk are there year round. I've got some land that I reseeded up in the Shawnee Hills, west of Milford. We spent over 30,000 of our own money reseeding that. We've had horses and elk come in there so bad, some years they grub it off so much, we can't even put our cattle up there to utilize the grass that we spent our own money planting and growing. We've, I appreciated you, we got 600 cow elk taken off that out there last year, but they only said they had a 63% success rate. I think it'd pay to increase it some more so that we'll get some more of a success rate, because, there's only supposed to be 975 elk as the objective, and there's 1550. So when they only cut 400 head off, it don't bring it down to that objective very fast. I'd recommend that we sell at least 700 tags so that we can get more hunters and get the success rate up just a little higher. I wanted to compliment the DWR on increasing the amount of elk on the Panguitch Lake unit because we have got an awful increase as you can see there. It's about 700 over objective. I remember very well when they first started these objectives. They wanted to have an upper limit on the number of elk we had in each of these units. So they put an upper limit. Well, they just kept raising the upper limit and raising the upper limit until they've got them up to where they are now so that's why we've got to have this objective no higher and get these elk numbers down to that. Because they increase so rapidly that you've got to get rid of the increase somehow. In the cattle business, if we don't sell a bunch of heifer calves we'd be overrun with cattle. So, it's the same with these elk. I wanted

to talk just a minute about these antelope. I hope that when they trap those antelope in these places, that you don't bring them and turn them on our ranges, cause I think that's happening some. What are you gonna do with those things. We don't want them, we really don't. I've got a field right there northwest of Beaver, I've never had antelope in it before. I went out there the other day, 40 head in there. They're all over that Mineral Range out there. We need to have a hunt on some of them. We're getting more all the time on the Panguitch Lake unit. So, we need to control them too. So, I want to thank you for your, all your help and hope that you'll give us some very serious consideration on these things. Thank you.

Dave Black: Okay, Verland. Followed by Pete Yardley.

Verland King: Verland King, Wayne County Grazers Association. I've been coming to these RAC meetings for a lot of years now. I remember one time, several years ago, I asked how good they were at counting these elk. And they told me, basically, they can't count them very good. That's why I think your sightability's up there a little higher. It's pretty hard for us ranchers, farmers, when you tell us what your objective is and how many you counted, to believe in, we trust you but, we really don't think you count them all. I don't think your sightability numbers are doing justice to how many's there. And then you'll hear probably tonight about how much habitat work they've done, we've done, somebody's done on these winter ranges. And there's been a lot done. But these elk aren't like a herd of cows or a herd of sheep where you can grab them and put them on that project that you've done. Number one, a lot of times there's no water there to hold them. So if they're not watering on the snow, they don't utilize it. It's just hard to get the animals there. So even though you've done a lot of habitat work, it's not benefitting the wildlife. They end up going on the range like Mack was talking about, Parker Mountain, Bicknell winter, BLM down there, and they're wintering there and they're causing problems. They're causing problems with the ranchers, we can't go out there. We've got suspended AUMs. We can't utilize that country. We get cut by Forest Service and BLM. We can, our on and off dates are changed. When we graze an allotment to a certain stubble height and I do allotment, in our allotment in Dog Valley, I do a lot of the range work, assessment of the utilization. We're always under utilization so we're not meeting what would be called overgrazing or too much grazing. But as soon as we move out of that area, we get a rain storm and that starts coming back and that's where the elk and antelope are there. That's where they are in the spring, they follow the snow right up the mountain. So they're causing problems that way. You need to take it with a grain of salt, the numbers that they count and the numbers that they come up with, because, a lot of times they may not be right. I think we've seen it time and again, there's damage to the habitat based on the elk and the antelope. I don't see as much, the deer, although I'm getting some damage to my alfalfa habitat right now and that's based on the greens coming good and those deer are coming down out of the mountains. Hopefully they'll go back when they get full and when the mountain greens up some more. And part of, most of them will, but there'll be a certain amount that will live right there in that field. And we appreciate Jim, he's been able to help us with depredation tags and that. That's my comment. Thank you for you guys serving on the RAC. I can't imagine how hard it is. But we appreciate you taking our comments and thinking about it and seeing where we're coming from. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thank you. Pete followed by Dennis Blackburn

Pete Yardley: My name's Pete Yardley. I'm a rancher here. Sean, I was talking to him a little here, cause he was pretty alarmed at the 880 head of permits that were given out. But when you calculate that out, your best scenario, you're gonna get 200 off your 1500. You're still gonna be over-objective, it's gonna take two or three years to do it. I think Randy's done a good job at setting up the plan. Right now, our

problem, we need to get some winter habitat in our valley. Right now we have elk in the fields because it's the only place that's green. They're in our summer pastures. From Beaver to Wildcat there is no winter habitat but private or in them pastures. We need to help disperse them, to get some winter habitat, we need to get some summer. We've tried to get some EAs done on the forest, to do some new water projects, cause what we're getting hammered on our Forest, is our riparians. These cattle have to come to drink and that's where the water is. We need some help to disperse them. I'd like to see you guys, I mean, think the objectives a good number, but we'd like to be back to objective. We took a ten percent voluntary cut over the last three years. And in that three years, you guys has went up in your objective and we've went down. I think it ought to be a win-win for both of us and I think we need to work it to where you guys help us to get some more habitat for your wildlife which means more feed for our cattle also. But we need to work as a team on this instead of working, getting up here and saying, well you were way over your objective. It can't be you win, us lose. It needs to be everybody wins. I've appreciated what Riley has tried to do, he's tried to get the elk that's causing us a lot of trouble. He didn't realize where you haven't done your count for 3 years, the extent of how much you've growd. So I appreciate what he's done. But it needs to be a three year plan. We need to get to objective. And then let's get it fixed so we can raise your objective and our objective. And let's have a working relationship instead of always battling that you're eating my feed or I'm eating yours. It needs to be a working relationship. And since the 1970s, cattle on our allotment has dropped between 50 and 60 percent of what runs. That's a lose, that's about the time they introduced the elk into us. It can't be a lose and you guys win. Let's make it a win-win for both. I thank you guys, and I appreciate, appreciate Mack for all he's done and the rest of you board members. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thank you. We'll have Dennis followed by Bill Christensen.

Dennis Blackburn: I'm Dennis Blackburn, Wayne County. I have a question Jim, the antelope you went from 600 to 300 on the Parker. Do you plan on trapping 300? I like it when you hunt them. That brings revenue to Wayne County.

Jim Lamb: So is that a question for me?

Dennis Blackburn: That's a question for you.

Jim Lamb. Okay, ya. We plan on trapping 300, we plan on having 300 permits on the Parker.

Dennis Blackburn: Okay, so these 300 you're gonna trap, are you gonna coordinate where they're going with the elected officials in them counties?

Jim Lamb: I, that's a process that has to happen, yes.

Dennis Blackburn: Thank you.

Dave Black: Okay. Bill. He'll be followed by John Keeler.

Bill Christensen: Again, thank you very much, gentlemen. I appreciate the chance to be here. I've been involved in wildlife stuff since the mid 80's. To give you some perspective, in those days agriculture and sportsmen didn't get along at all. They were bad old days, before SITLA, there was other state lands and we were butting heads with them. A lot of improvements have happened. I've been concerned lately

though, about some extreme elements that forget about the good hunter conservationists do in this state. I worry about that because, we stood strong in opposition to feral horses and continue to. We have about as much control over the BLM as you ranchers do. We have gotten on our soap box, we've gone to congress. These are not native wildlife, they're pests and they need to be removed. Now, let's talk about elk. We don't just want elk, we pay for them. You heard at the beginning of this meeting that almost 700,000 dollars was approved a week ago today for the Southern Region Those monies get an average of a one to five or six match for every dollar. I know, cause I've been doing this for 25 years as a staff person, since 1991. And I know the Elk Foundation alone, since 1987, has generated 61 million dollars worth of wildlife and habitat improvement in Utah, impacting well over a million acres. And this is not just for deer or elk, pronghorns, whatever. It's also for livestock. I'm a native Utahn, I come from ranching family, we still have our ranch in Chalk Creek, we lease it now, it's summer range for sheep. We've had cattle operations in the past when I was young and small. But, I want you to know, folks, that we feel like we took it on the chin a little bit on a couple of these units last year. We didn't squawk too much, a little bit. But, be aware that we'll continue to raise money to improve habitat and range for both wildlife and livestock. We approved 11 or 12 water projects alone to get water on dry ranges. Now, folks, if you don't want a fight on your hands, then let's sit down and talk about it. Let's start at local, let's get these elk committees going. A lot of them have gone down the tubes. Let's talk about it. But, don't forget, we feel like we're paying our own way and we'll continue to do so. And we're not gonna go away, and we want to work with ranchers. But if you choose not to work with us, then we will fight, just like you are. And I'm serious about that because last spring at the wildlife board meeting, I was taken by surprise by some of the things I heard and the physical threats that I've received. Well, I don't think we want to go down that road. And I hope right now, in this Southern RAC meeting, that we can decide, just like folks have said earlier here, that we need to work together, cause we better, by golly. Because, you know, we're not gonna go away, we care about elk, deer, pronghorn. If they're on private lands, get rid of them. Issue more depredation tags, shoot them, get rid of them. We don't want them in people's fields and their private property. But on the public range, you're gonna have elk, accept it. Work with us. If we need to reduce them, if there's a drought, then go to the DWR and ask the director in August to get rid of them. And if you do, we'll support you, if there's a drought. But don't come in the spring saying there may be a drought and tell us that you need to increase the number of antlerless tags and then we don't end up having that bad of a drought. You know, that's not fair. So, folks, let's work together, but know that Utah sportsmen are not gonna go away. We want to work with you, but we're not gonna back down either. I appreciate the chance and I open my door, my e-mail, my phone, and my office to work with anybody here. And we'll continue to put our money where our mouth is. Thank you.

Dave Black: We have John Keeler followed by Randy Beckstrand

John Keeler: John Keeler with the Utah Farm Bureau. I too have been coming to these meetings since 1980, board of big game control then. And you can remember those, and true it was pretty bad head-butting. I remember a meeting in Salina that sportsmen tried to get as many people as they could, and landowners as many as they could and there was about 400 people that showed up to the meeting and it lasted until 3:00 in the morning. Thankfully, those days are gone and the system that we have now is much improved. But it's been interesting, over those year, to watch the debate over, Brian, that you bring up with age class and buck to doe ratio and bull to cow ratio and the youth and all of that. This is nothing new, it's happened for all these years. And I appreciate the fact that you're willing to take the phone calls and call them back and do those things that you need to do, cause that's your job. But, it's also been interesting to watch the conflict between the sportsmen and the livestockmen, it goes back and forth. And it gets heated then it cools down then it heats back up then it cools down. We just recently

held some meetings with representatives from the state and the PLPCO office and permittees, allotment owners. And we then had discussions with BLM and Forest Service to try to solve some of the problems we've got. In every one of those meetings, as we had the discussions, elk came up. I've also served on some working groups. I'm currently on one with the Monroe Mountain. This has been fueled by some groups that are concerned about aspen regeneration. When we got started in that process, some individuals went and took a look at deer and elk and livestock use, cattle and sheep. After world war two there were so many AUMs for all of the species out there, cattle, sheep, deer and hardly any elk then. Then elk were introduced, and since that time, the cattle and sheep numbers have gone like this [motions downward slope] the deer and elk numbers have gone like this [motions upward slope] with the same amount of AUMs that were to begin with. It is concerning to these ranchers that they're able to stay on the land and that's why the plea is, from many, many people, that we have to work together. A lot of money has been put on the ground. It was indicate in this meeting, that WRI money of 144 million dollars, I think in ten years, was that what I remember? Other monies that have been placed on the ground, along with the money that the sportsmen contribute, many of these ranchers, through their grazing associations or through other groups, they've put tens of millions of dollars out on the ground as well. The point is, there's a bigger picture out there than the debates we have on things here with management and the conflicts we have with each other on who's eating what. The bigger picture is the resource. And I appreciate the Forest Service standing up today and letting you know of one of the concerns they have, because in the past they haven't done that too much, nor the BLM. They have representatives here but they don't really get in to the real picture. The big concern is the resource. There are groups out there that are watching the resource like a hawk. And the minute it gets eaten, somebody's gonna be blamed for it. Unfortunately the cattle and sheep are the only thing that can be controlled so they go after them first. And I think it's fair to say that, if these groups are successful in getting rid of the ranchers, the cattle and the sheep, they're coming after the hunters next, cause they don't like them either. I'm just afraid that if we don't work together, continue these projects, solve these problems. that the wolf is gonna be the landowner and the landlord. Because they'll be worshipped and you can't get rid of them just like the horse. So, we're allies, we need to work together, we need to solve these problems. It's imperative. I personally believe, this is my personal opinion, over these years, I believe we're at a saturation point for the big game numbers. I really do believe that. But, that's doesn't mean there isn't room to maneuver here and there. There's room for all of us out there, but it's gonna take much more money than what we've been used to putting in. But let's work together, let's not have our differences because there's a bigger picture out there.

Dave Black: Thank you. We have Randy Beckstrand followed by Nolan Gardner. Is Randy here? Okay, we'll go to Nolan and then Tim Tebbs.

Nolan Gardner: Thank you again. I appreciate all you guys do. I do, I appreciate the shape that the ranchers are in out there and appreciate what the Division, I think the Division are doing a great thing especially with the private land elk hunts, I think is a great idea. I'd like to address the Dutton herd. I think the Dutton has been getting the short end of the stick for the last several years. I've watched that herd go way down. And even though you've cut the tags, if any way possible, I'd like to see them cut more on the cow tags. Cause, it's hurting real bad. Anything you can do there would be appreciated. Thank you.

Dave Black: Okay, Tim followed by Ben Lowder.

Tim Tebbs: I like what Mr. Keeler had to say, being involved here in the past few months with several

different meetings. I do want to say that the landowner, work close with your biologist, they are helping. Panguitch Lake has been quite aggressive for over 25 years. I am starting to see some agreeance and some togetherness between the biologists, or the DWR, the landowners and the sportsmen. We're, maybe, kinda moving ground. But, on the same note, permits have been cut over 50% over the last 25, 30 years, I'm old enough to know that. And it is the permittees, which are most of the landowners in those areas, that are suffering. We need to continue to work aggressively with these numbers, I think. As far as the Panguitch Lake, I think the landowners working with the biologists were able to keep things in check. But it's been over a long period of time that we've got that workability. I think, right now we're starting to see a change where everybody is concerned and everybody is working together. Appreciate your help.

Dave Black: Thanks Tim. Ben Lowder followed by Redge Johnson.

Ben Lowder: Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ben Lowder representing the Utah Bowman's Association. The Utah Bowman's Association supports the Division's recommendations as presented. I'd like to make two additional comments about the elk plan that was passed last year and a few other things. I sat on the statewide elk committee last year. Just this last winter, we passed the current plan. That plan has a lot of new tools in it that I would like to applaud both the elk committee and the DWR for, for thinking outside the box on some of these tools, especially, case in point, we see on the slide right there, the private lands only permits. A lot of new tools that are going to allow us to better manage private lands issues. Which will help some of the public issues as well. There's been a few comments alluding to the habitat allocation meeting that was held last week. I was in attendance to that meeting. As has been mentioned multiple times, there was several hundred thousand dollars allocated just to the Southern Region. I'd like to point out one more number. We did set a record this year, between all the organizations, in allocating, if I remember correctly, about 2.4 million dollars toward habitat projects that will happen in the state of Utah this year. Those projects range from study projects to water to habitat projects that are going to benefit wildlife as well as livestock. And also as has been mentioned tonight, I think it's real important that we all realize that livestock, ranchers, sportsmen, none of us are the enemy, we're all on the same side of the battle here. Sportsmen, I feel for the ranchers and the AUMs that have been cut, but let me point out that sportsmen are not the one that are taking those from you, we are not asking for that, we are not lobbying for that. I believe that we should be working together, sportsmen and ranchers. It doesn't benefit anybody for those to go away. And again, I'd just like to point out, all the habitat work that is going on and that is being paid for by sportsmen that benefit both wildlife and livestock. Thank you very much.

Dave: Okay. We have Redge followed by Jon Larson.

Redge Johnson: Thank you for your time. My name's Redge Johnson, I'm representing the Governor's office today. Just want to thank you for all the good work that you do. I'm not really here to speak to objectives. I know I look like a suit from the city and right now I am a suit from the city but, for those of you that know me, you know I grew up and spent a good portion of my childhood without running water electricity and phone. So I read sign before I read Dick and Jane books. I've been a hunter for a long time, I also grew up in a ranching family. I appreciate both sides of this issue. If there's one thing I can say is I hope that we do continue to work together. I'm a student of Sun Tzu The Art of War, and, if you read that, one of the big things is "Know your adversary." So I read a lot of Grand Canyon Trust, Natural Resource Defense Council, things like that that are going on. There's an 800 pound gorilla in the room, folks, and that's these groups that are looking to control our multiple use in the western state. And so I

hope we'll continue to work together. We really need to turn the tide of how these federal lands are managed. And I think you're both doing a great job as stewards of the land and I hope that we can all work together to create successful projects in the future. On that though, we could use the sportsmen's assistance when it comes to reallocating some of those AUMs, happy to work with you on that. We're not seeing a lot of those AUMs come back to the production side, most of them seem to be going to the wildlife side. There's a lot of space out there to do projects, there's a lot of opportunity to do projects. But we need to work together and make it successful for everybody. I hope I can step in and feel some of that forest. Thank you.

Dave Black: Okay, Jon will be followed by Jesse Hatch and then Riley Roberts and then that's the last of my cards.

Jon Larson: John Larson with Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife. It's good to be here with you tonight. Once again, I'd like to thank the Division for their presentation, they did an outstanding job. You can tell they know their business when they stand and they answer these questions. Some of those are hard questions and you can answer them on the spot. I appreciate the due diligence that you do with your work. I'm trying to think what else I can say, to be honest with you. It's been said tonight. Obviously there's a strong sportsmen's voice in the room and a strong cattlemen's voice in the room. We have to figure out how to meet in the middle. There's nothing that I can say that's gonna change what's been said or even add to it. So I'll just leave it at that. I will say, we certainly support the Division's recommendations as they presented them and, again we appreciate the effort there. Thank you.

Jesse Hatch: My name's Jesse Hatch. I've just got to say, I'm pretty impressed with what's happened tonight. I think it's been a pretty mellow meeting compared to normal when it comes to this topic. I'm glad that we are looking at working together more. I'd like to see that. I'd just like to add that I approve the recommendations. I do kinda wish that we would look at the Dutton a little more. Them numbers are very low on the Dutton, I believe, from watching them units, the Boulder and the Dutton crossover. For over 15 years, them elk are very low over there. I'd like to see that changed. Other than that, thank you.

Dave Black: Thanks Jesse. Okay we have Riley Roberts next, followed by Will Talbot.

Riley Roberts: I'm Riley Roberts. I've been taking notes all night, made a few notes as well. Appreciate you guys being here I know it's been a long night. I really appreciate Justin. I talk with him quite regularly, as often as we can. I know there was a lot of work that went into the recommendations. Also, really appreciate Bill's words tonight. I think that there is definitely a breaking point that has been seen on both sides, from those of the permittees as well as those of the sportsmen. I can appreciate that. I think the private land option that's on there, I think that's an excellent option. As an avid outdoorsman, if it's depredation issue, let's fix it. Let's fix the problem, if we need to get creative. I know it was stated earlier there's some things that maybe we can't do because it's a five year plan. In my opinion, which usually gets me in trouble, I think that's horse crap. I think if we need to change it and fix something, we need to change it and fix something. We can't wait, we can't pussyfoot around and wait for it, be reactive. We need to be a little bit more proactive. If that means helping these individuals out, these gentlemen that are having issues on their private lands then, let's do that, let's do what we need to do to make that happen. I wanted to address Mack's question earlier about how those objectives are there. And, again, I'm pretty straightforward and it usually gets me in trouble. Mack, it's political, it's all political, that's how objectives are set. It should be science-based, but it's political, it's whoever yells the loudest, it's whoever causes the biggest grief. That's how objectives are set on each individual unit.

You've got opinions that vary from both sides. You've got sportsmen that say, "More elk, that's better for us." You've got the livestock guys that say "More elk, that's bad for us." I just want everybody to remember that just because it's your opinion, that doesn't make it right. Okay? As has been stated, we've got to work together on that. But the truth is that it's political, and we all know that. I appreciate the Division and trying to answer that earlier, but, I think we all know the real answer to that. The last thing that I wanted to end on was to say, I really appreciate you guys. I appreciate the time that you put in, each of you, and I don't have to remind you of this, each of you represent a specific sector or group of individuals with the seat that you hold at this time. Each of you have your own personal opinions on the way things should be done. I would urge you to remember that even though you have those personal opinions, don't push your personal agendas. You've got a whole public out here who is giving you different input, giving you different insight. Just remember that again, you're open to have your own opinions but remember you do represent each of us and we appreciate that. Thank you.

Dave Black: K. Will.

Will Talbot: Will Talbot, Piute County Commission. First of all, I want to thank you guys for serving on boards like this. It takes good people to serve to make a good board. I'm a commissioner, I'm a rancher and I'm a hunter. Love to hunt, nobody loves to hunt more than me. Somewhere there has to be common ground. I see the movement in the last six, eight months of us, maybe, coming to a common ground. We all realize, we all want to be there. I think if we keep working with Redge, with Bill, these are two guys that I think the world of because they have really brought this to a head and into some great conversation. Second, I want to thank Vance. Vance is a wonderful biologist in our area, he's very helpful, he's always calling you on the phone if there's a problem. Other than that, I want to thank you guys and thank everybody else. So, goodnight.

RAC discussion and vote:

Dave Black: Thank you. That's the end of our comment cards. So I'll turn the time over to the RAC, if they have any comments. Who wants to go first? Harry.

Harry Barber: Can I just make a general comment? I want to speak towards the BLM lands, what was brought up. I represent the BLM up here. I can't speak specifically for every office. I would encourage, if you don't feel like you're getting what you need to get out of your BLM office, that you make some phone calls. If you don't know who your range people are, give me a call and I'll find them for you. Speaking specifically for Kanab field office, we did pretty well in our recent meeting with PLPCO. We don't have a lot of horse issues, in fact, we don't have any horse issues. And if I understand correctly, my office, which I manage the Kanab field office, I'm the manager, we are the most aggressive office in the state in terms of BLM, if not the west, for the amount of project work that we're doing on the ground, hand in hand with permittees. We go out often, and this is in partnership with DWR. So I'm not accepting this crud at all myself. We met recently with our permittees and they seemed satisfied with that project work. We have work taking place from Panguitch clear to Kanab. If you haven't seen the work that we're doing, we've been pretty aggressive on the work. I met recently with one of our permittees, Hal Hamblin, you can talk to him if you want to, pretty excited about the work we're doing on his allotment. We're not doing that specifically to increase his forage, but that's a byproduct of the work that we're doing. We're doing it for several different reasons, wildlife, livestock, among others. I would encourage you to take a look at our projects I would encourage you to talk to some of our permittees down in Kane county and see what they think about the work that we're doing there. I agree a

hundred percent that we need to communicate a little bit more, that we need to keep that open door policy and talk to each other. But I want you to know that as a BLM representative, that I'm doing my best to increase forage to look out for wildlife and to look out for the livestock guy. In this recent meeting that we had with PLPCO in Panguitch, we were able to point out that we increased AUMs for several of our livestock guys because of the success of our projects. And it's my commitment to continue to do that where it's appropriate.

Dave Black: Thank you. Okay, Mack, followed by Wade.

Mack Morrell: In my discussion, I'm not totally against wildlife. We do a lot of work on our range. We clean a lot of ponds, clay a lot of ponds, make ponds, do all the fencing, do all the salt, spend all the time out there. We do a little habitat work. We're not just sitting there, reaping the benefits. You are right, I agree with you a hundred percent about private land. If you've got elk, get them off, that hasn't been the case. You know why, if you don't take them off, the cows are training their calves to do the exact same thing they're doing. That's why we need to get them off these Yardley's land. Otherwise, the recruitment takes over and you've got a major problem. In the past it's been a one-way street, we're coming together. I agree on that. And we need to work together on that. I appreciate Jim, our biologist, working with us. He does a great job. Private land is where a lot of the problems lie with us ranchers in the winter time. Last Sunday, December, I went up to feed my cows, there was nine bull elk laying from me to you from the cows. So there, you know, there's some problems. I just passed a picture around, showing the same calf elk that's right there with the cows and the permittee petting it. I agree, we need to come together and do it. Because it's been a one-way street in the past. We've went this way, and just the opposite direction from wildlife. We're working our end too. We agree that we got to work in partnership on this thing. I agree with Keeler, I think these elk numbers are saturated, if not over saturated, particularly on the winter range, cause that's where they're coming in our fields and our land and our stack yards. Just this last year, DWR gave me the money and I fenced the deer out of my stack yard, now my neighbors complaining cause they're eating his. We still have a lot of problems we need to work out because it's the same with the deer, the does are training their fawns to do the same thing, coming in, coming in. Anyways, just a comment.

Wade Heaton: For what I'm about to say, I'm glad I don't have my name on the side of my vehicle outside. Probably wouldn't be driving it home. We've talked a lot about two different sides. We've talked a lot more about that than we have any kind of numbers or objectives or anything else. So I want in. All I do is hear this discussion. We act like we're on two different sides of an argument. And the truth of it is, I believe Redge and some of these guys are right, we better be on the same team. We act like we want to be on the same team. But I hear the same tired sentiment over and over again, we want to get along. Let's get along, let's work together. I want to call a bunch of you out and say "This isn't the place for it." The RAC meeting, we're not gonna decide, we're not gonna solve that problem here tonight. Why don't we set up a meeting. Why doesn't the Farm Bureau and RMEF and Henry Mountain Grazers and SFW and all these public land grazers, why don't we actually get together and sit down? We talk a lot about it but then every one of us is gonna do nothing until next November, and we're gonna come back here and say the exact same things over again. Let's do something about it. We do need to get on the same team. I really think we can make some headway. I really believe that together, let's throw the crazies out. Let's be honest, there's crazies on both sides of this thing. Let's shut them out. And those of you that are here tonight, I appreciate how respectful you were to the other side. Let's sit down, talk about it, and solve this problem. I really think we can make some headway on this thing. I want to make a differentiation, I want to disagree a little bit on this private lands issue. Private land, the private land in

this state makes up a significant portion of the good habitat in the state. We can't discount the private land. Let's figure out a way to encourage private landowners to keep this wildlife on their property. But what I want to differentiate is, let's segregate the public land grazers from the private property. Those are two, even though it's the same guy in some cases, they're two different issues. And so, let's treat them as two different issues. Coming back to what we're actually here to talk about tonight, I want to take my hat off to the DWR. Antlerless elk, to call it a nightmare really doesn't paint the picture as difficult as it is. And, hat's off to these guys and that team over there. They have thought outside the box. They've come up with some recommendations that really make a lot of sense, that are going to solve some of the problems, so thank you to you guys for all your work on this thing. And my final comment is, I second Mr. Yardley's motion to kill all the wild horses. I think we're headed down the right road there.

(Applause.)

Dave Black: I just want to make a quick comment. I have an email that you guys may not have been privileged to but it's a little bit of background on Redge Johnson that came from the Governor's office. And what it said was that he's been assigned by the Governor and, over the last six months, he's been holding a plethora, several I guess, meetings with ranchers, farmers, agencies, sportsmens, DWR, etcetera, to help find ways to fix these conflicts. And, I know that the director, Greg Sheehan, is committed to this as well. He's called several meetings. I just, along with Wade, encourage everybody to participate and stay participating in these meetings, cause we do need to work together. What I see with the proposal tonight is, I see the that DWR is committed to working in areas where we are over objective and, now that we passed the elk management plan last year, we have a number of tools to accomplish those things. I believe that the proposal as presented is in the right direction to accomplish those. Me personally, I would hope that we wouldn't consider any reduction in tags, to control those. And we support their plan. And that we do those things that, everything possible to get the over objective areas back into objective and the only way that, in my opinion, that we would be able to see our objectives go higher is if the objectives for the cattle could also go higher as well. And that we work together to bring those up together and not try to do one without the other. I'll take any more comments from you guys. Or I'm ready to entertain a motion as well.

Mack Morrell: I've got a comment. I think that on some of these allotments or some of these objectives, we're hardly taking off the recruitment coming in on some of these numbers. That's what we need to look at. Like for instance, on Southwest Desert, they've got fifteen hundred and fifty, and taking off six hundred, that's hardly the recruitment, plus it's over five hundred and seventy five on the objective. I think we need to look at that. I think you need to look at, and Dutton is over two hundred. So, we're not even taking off any, half of the, well maybe about half of the recruitment coming in. We need to look at taking some numbers off, we've got to look at what's gonna happen during the summer and the calves coming on the ground, and will be there for the next year.

Wade Heaton: Can I ask just a quick question on that. I had the same question about Southwest Desert. Obviously, we're not issuing as many permits, even going to kill the over objective and the recruitment, obviously you know that. What's our motivation for being at 600 there and not eight or nine?

Jason Nicholes: We're introducing some new hunt strategies on the Southwest Desert. With the same number of permits we had last year. Last year we had 65% success, I'm expecting, with these new hunt strategies, later, January hunts, that we will have a higher success. Another consideration is, when we surveyed the unit this year, 650 of the elk that we counted on the unit this year were within 5 miles of the

state line. Nevada surveyed their elk this year also, last year they surveyed and counted 575 elk, this year they surveyed and counted 230 elk. We wintered some of Nevada's elk this year. And that's, that along with the different hunt strategies is why we're not being quite as aggressive. I am expecting to harvest around 700 elk this year, will take us probably down to around 1100 elk. So we're not gonna get there in one year but we're moving towards objective and we will be there in the next two years.

Dave Black: If you're concerned about a unit let's have the biologist come up and, cause I think there's probably some reasoning behind there that we don't see. And it's really hard tell, at least for me, where we have these different hunt strategies, what we're gonna, if you just look at like the number of permits that are public, it doesn't make sense at all and maybe we need a little more specific information with the hunt strategies on a unit if you're concerned with one. So if you have some others, Mack, that you're specifically concerned with, let's see what their strategy is on it.

Mack Morrell: Panguitch Lake is one. You're 600 over objective, but I can't hardly read with this color here about what they're taking off. Looks like what 225 or 725? But see, there's still recruitment coming in. Is your strategy to get down to objective in...

Dustin Schaible: We've historically had maybe like 200 or less permits there and they've all had anywhere from 50 to 80% success. So we anticipate having a lot of pretty high success on these hunts and a lot of times that will just redistribute elk into where they're wintering. So we kind of want to try being aggressive this first year and kinda adjust, and kind of, just what Jason said, just kind of be there on a two or three-year plan.

Brian Johnson: I think it's good to remember that just because you throw tags at it, doesn't mean we're gonna kill elk. The problem with elk is we throw tags at it and the damn things move. And then they're on private property then we can't kill them and then. So, I think it's probably wise to go at it in a three-year or a two, you know two to three years, to try get there a little bit slower because they're kind of hard to shoot sometimes and I suck at it so I need all the help I can get. They used to call me box and a half when I was little, and I was really never really little.

Dave Black: Do we have any other comments?

Brian Johnson: Are you ready for a motion?

Dave Black: Brayden's...

Brayden Richmond: I was gonna say, I'm on a roll tonight, let me try again. Let me make a quick comment first though. I talked to Riley quite a bit about this. Part of our discussion is we did want to be aggressive. We wanted to have real numbers on here that would help bring in alignment with the objectives. And, this is probably the first time, I've been coming to these meetings a long time too, this is probably the first time I've looked at the antlerless numbers and really couldn't get, see any glaring errors. So I'm pretty comfortable and I'm gonna make a motion that we pass as is.

Dave Black: Do we have a second?

(Brian Johnson seconded.)

Dave Black: Do we have any discussion on the motion? All those in favor. All those opposed. Okay, motion carries, thank you.

Brayden Richmond made the motion to accept the antlerless permit recommendations as presented. Brian Johnson seconded. Motion carried, 10 in favor, 1 (Mack Morrell) opposed.

Dave Black: Do we need another break or do you want to keep going? Okay we'll keep going. Item number seven is the 2016 CWMU Antlerless permit recommendations, Covy Jones.

Brian Johnson: Really guys? Really? Well, it was good to have you, enjoyed the company. See you guys at Wendy's later.

Dave Black: Covy, wait just a minute. Hold on just a minute until they kind of clear out and then we'll start.

(Pause while most of the public leaves.)

2016 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations (action)
-Covy Jones, Private Lands/ Public Wildlife Coordinator
(see attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Dave Black: Do we have any questions from the RAC? Any questions from the public? We don't have any comment cards from the public. Any comments from the RAC?

RAC discussion and vote:

Wade Heaton: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just two, real quick. One is with antlerless elk harvest on the CWMUs, I think it's important that the board members know, that's a significant part, responsibility that CWMUs have. And so, when you have a split, basically the Division recommends one thing and the CWMU recommends another, they're almost going against their COR doing that. And so, Jacob's Creek and Hard Scrabble, I would hope that we would go with the Division's recommendation. It's pretty important that we do that and it's pretty important that they harvest. If they don't meet their harvest goals, they can actually come up for review and probation and ultimately be kicked out of the program. So, I'd encourage you to support the Division's recommendation on that. And the second thing, Mr. Chairman, is obviously I'll have to recuse myself from voting as I'm an operator.

Dave Black: Okay. Thank you. Any other comments? I'll entertain a motion. Go ahead Mack.

Mack Morrell: I make a motion that we approve what's been presented on the CWMUs by the Division, on the numbers.

Dave Black: Do we have a second? Okay, we have a number of seconds, we'll go with Rusty. Any comments? All in favor. Looks like unanimous, except for Wade right? One abstention. Okay, thank you.

Mack Morrell made the motion to approve the Antlerless CWMU recommendations as presented. Seconded by Rusty Aiken. Motion carried 9 in favor, 1 (Wade Heaton) abstained (Brian Johnson was not present for vote).

Dave Black: Now we'll go to the next agenda item which is CWMU Antlerless Variance Requests.

2016 CWMU Antlerless Variance Requests (action)
-Covy Jones, Private Lands/Public Wildlife Coordinator
(see attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Dave Black: Thank you. Do we have any questions from the RAC? Do you have one Mack? Are you chomping to make a motion? You want us to go home. Any questions from the public? No comment cards. Any comments from the RAC? I'm gonna hurry and make one comment.

RAC discussion and vote:

Dave Black: This is an unofficial, what do you call it, variance request. If there was a way, and I've talked to Wade about this, that we could come up with a way that the minimum number of public permits on the CWMUs is 2. Then that way the bonus points would work. If you don't have two, then the bonus system doesn't work. We've been putting in for the same CWMU for fifteen years and there's not a bonus point level. So, just an idea.

Covy Jones: I can see how that would be beneficial in a lot of instances. I don't know that it would work for all species, moose is one that came to mind. I don't know that the resource is there to do something like that with moose but I'm sure that's something we could look at.

Brian Johnson: It's Southern Utah, we only care about deer down here.

Dave Black: And elk.

Covy Jones: Fair enough.

Brian Johnson: And a little bit of elk, only if we're killing them.

Dave Black: Wade.

Wade Heaton: Just, real quick, I also sit on this CWMU advisory committee. We had about a five hour meeting coming up with those recommendations and you don't want to sit here for five hours to flesh through everything. But, some pretty good, sound minds sit on that committee and I feel like we've probably come up with the recommendations that work. I'd encourage you to support those recommendations as presented.

Dave Black: Okay, Mack.

Mack Morrell: My turn again?

Dave Black: Yes.

Mack Morrell: I make a motion we approve the 2016 CWMU antlerless variance requests as presented.

Dave Black: Do we have a second? Couple seconds. Any discussion. All those in favor. Unanimous, except for Wade. Did you withdraw on that one or can you vote?

Mack Morrell made the motion to accept the CWMU antlerless variance requests as presented. Brian Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Dave Black: Last agenda item is Hunter Education rule amendments. Kirk Smith.

R657-23 Hunter Education Rule Amendments (action)
-Kirk Smith, Hunter Education Program Coordinator
(see attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Dave Black: Thank you. Any questions from the RAC? Questions from the public? Okay.

Rusty Aiken: So on the firing part of the, will they fire at a target or just fire at dirt? What are they shooting at?

Kirk Smith: They'll have the same course of fire that we currently do. They'll have a target. Part of what we're looking at, this being a basic hunter education course, that we've had instructors out test driving this, about six and a half, seven hours long. What we want to offer is an extended course that may include, how to turkey hunt. We partnership up with the Wild Turkey Federation, they come in to our hunter ed class, and maybe that live fire component is shooting a shotgun, patterning it for turkey hunting and getting familiar with it. So there's gonna be some flexibility on the shooting component, cause what we're testing for is "Can they handle that firearm safely?"

Rusty Aiken: So, it just won't be a pass or fail if they don't hit the target?

Kirk Smith: Correct. Looking at the hunting incidents, marksmanship is not a contributing factor to hunting incidents. It's other behaviors that are the contributing factor.

Dave Black: Any other questions? Do you have a question?

Questions from the Public:

Redge Johnson: So can I ask a question, not as somebody from the Governor's office but just from the public? I took my jacket off so I'm officially...

Kirk Smith: Loosen the tie up a little bit.

Redge Johnson: Undo the top button, there. So, just a question on the hours that were required, that you're not going to require. Wonder if you could put some kind of a proficiency, or some kind of standard there. Because I can just see some anti- NRA folks saying, "Utah's dumbing down the standards for hunting, hunter safety stuff." Just a thought.

Kirk Smith: I appreciate that completely. One of the trends that we're seeing nationally in hunter education is the online only system, or delivery method, to where students can actually take hunter education 100% online and never meet face to face with an instructor. There's currently 15 states offering it. We currently have Utah residents taking hunter education online through Texas, so they can put in for our hunts, so they can apply. And so, we want to be proactive and keep some meat in our program, before the governor's office, before the legislature says, "Hey, we're seeing what other states are doing, this is how Utah should be doing it." So we want to flex a little bit before they push us into a corner. And so, throughout hunter education, throughout the course, the students do have a written exam at the end and they also have an attitude test that they're taking throughout the class. So if they're misbehaving and so forth, they can actually be failed on behavior. Did that answer your question?

RAC discussion and vote:

Dale Bagley: So are all these reciprocal of other states? Even though some of them are really dumbing theirs down, does Utah accept any states' hunter safety?

Kirk Smith: Currently, the situation is such that these online courses that are offered, each one of these are private vendors, they're private companies, they sat on the committee that helped establish the minimum standards. So they're mainstream involved to ensure that their online courses meet the minimum standards. So, at this point, yes, we do honor all the hunter education certifications that are issued by a state.

Dave Black: Okay, any other questions? Comments? I'll entertain a motion.

Rusty Aiken: I'd like to make a motion to accept the recommendations of the R657-23.

Dave Black: Okay, do we have a second? Wade. Any comments? All those in favor. Looks like it passed unanimous. Okay.

Rusty Aiken made the motion to accept the Hunter Education Rule Amendments as presented. Wade Heaton seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

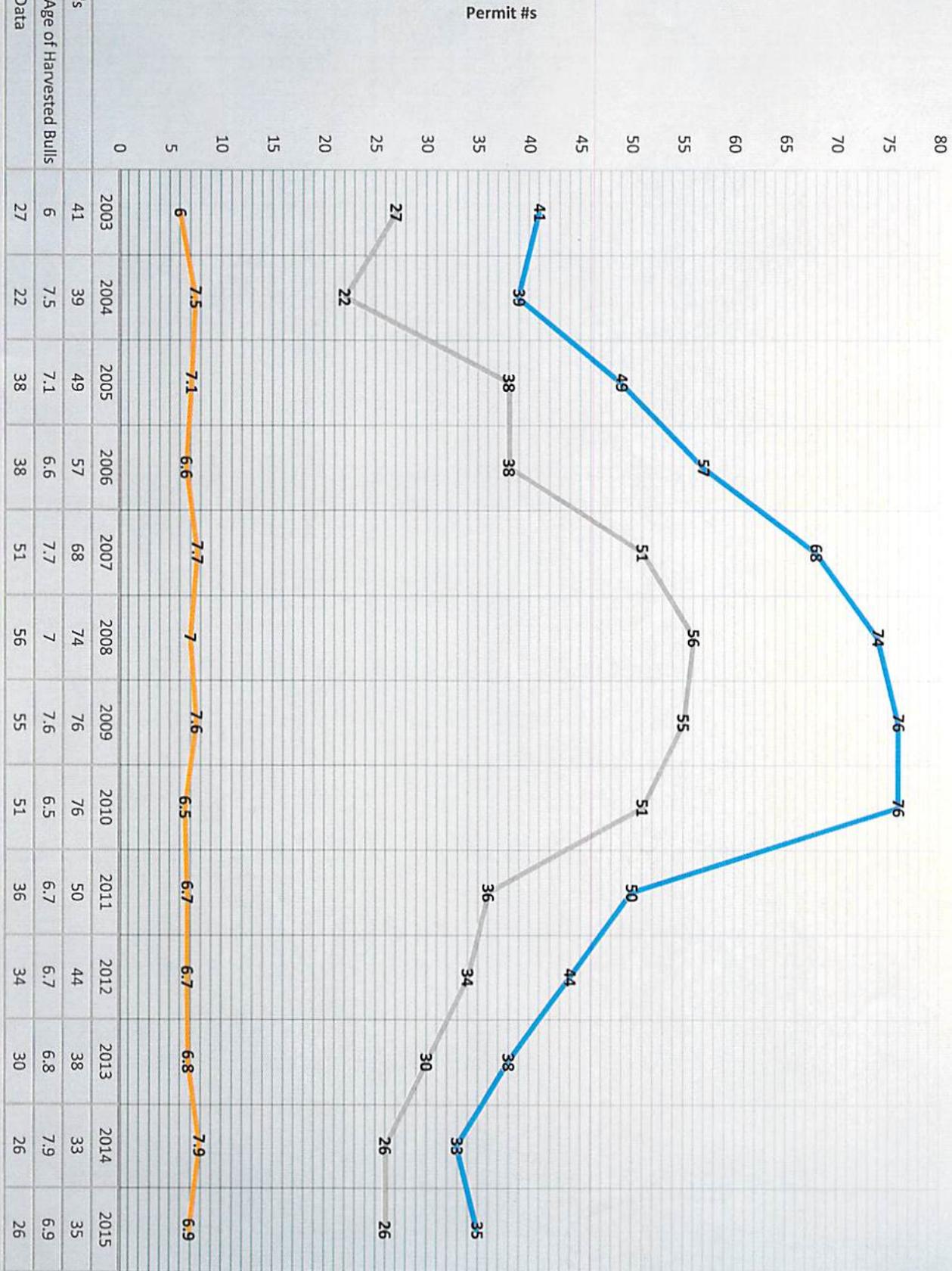
Kirk Smith: I just have to add, in the Northern Region, I went three minutes total, you guys pushed it just a little far, five minutes. Thanks.

Other Business -Dave Black, Chairman

Dave Black: Okay, item number ten, other business. The only thing I can think of is remember we have no more RAC meetings until August. And the next meeting that we do meet on will be the cougar hunt tables and permit numbers. So, thank you. And, I'll call this meeting adjourned.

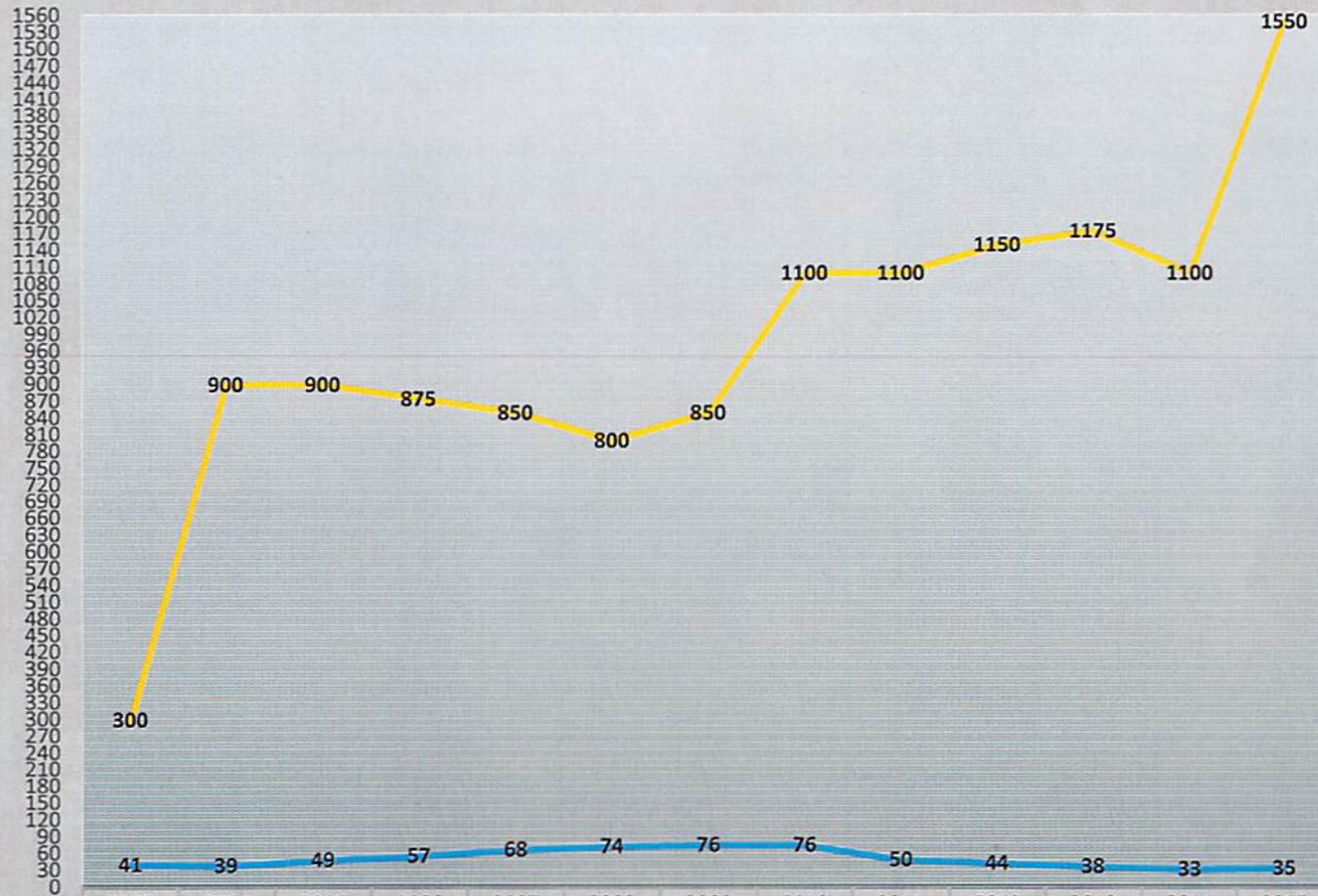
Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Beaver Elk Permit Numbers and Avg Age Class and Harvest Data



Year	Permit #s	Average Age of Harvested Bulls	Harvest Data
2003	41	6	27
2004	39	7.5	22
2005	49	7.1	38
2006	57	6.6	38
2007	68	7.7	51
2008	74	7	56
2009	76	7.6	55
2010	76	6.5	51
2011	50	6.7	36
2012	44	6.7	34
2013	38	6.8	30
2014	33	7.9	26
2015	35	6.9	26

Beaver Elk Permit Numbers and Estimated Elk Winter Population



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Permit #'s	41	39	49	57	68	74	76	76	50	44	38	33	35
Estimated winter population.	300	900	900	875	850	800	850	1100	1100	1150	1175	1100	1550

* Data obtained from big game annual reports
 Population objective: 2003-2008: 950, 2009-Current: 1050

2016 Beaver Hunt Unit

Limited Entry Elk Hunt Numbers Recommendations
by Lynn Kitchen

<u>Hunt Type</u>	<u>Permits Recommended</u>
Archery	15
Early Any Weapon	20
Late Any Weapon	15
Muzzleloader	9
Multi Season	1
total	<hr/> 60



File Code: 2610
Date: April 12, 2016

Dave Black
Southern Region RAC Chair
2074 Princeton Circle
St. George, UT 84790

Dear Mr. Black:

Thank you for giving the Fishlake National Forest an opportunity to provide comments. We appreciate and value the ongoing coordination with the Southern Utah Resource Advisory Committee and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

We continue to remain concerned about aspen habitat on Monroe Mountain. Thank you for the aggressive antlerless elk hunts that have been provided the last couple of years. We believe aspen habitat on Monroe Mountain is and will continue to greatly benefit from the reduced elk population size. We look forward to receiving the aspen monitoring results from Dr. Sam St. Clair's aspen research occurring on Monroe Mountain. With completion of the Monroe Mountain Aspen Ecosystems Restoration Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and with implementation beginning during the spring of this year, we believe the reduced elk population size will result in less browse pressure on aspen and increase the ability of new aspen regeneration following treatments to successfully recruit. We request that you continue to maintain your short-term aggressive antlerless elk hunts on Monroe Mountain to keep the population at a reduced level during this critical time while large landscape scale treatments are occurring. This approach will be of great benefit as we work to restore aspen habitat on Monroe Mountain for continued and sustainable future use.

Livestock producers continue to express concerns to us about high elk numbers on units across the Forest, including the Beaver unit. Our mission and desire is to continue to provide sustainable habitat that will balance the needs of both domestic and wild ungulates. We support present objective numbers in individual elk plans that are within our Forest Boundary. We also support the 2016 proposed harvest objectives on big game units within our Forest Boundary.

Once again, thank you for your willingness to work with us to restore habitat across the Fishlake National Forest. As habitat is improved, wildlife will greatly benefit. Thank you.

Sincerely,

MEL BOLLING
Forest Supervisor

cc: Ron Rodriguez, Jason Kling, Kurt Robins, Kathleen Johnson, Doug Robison



**Southeast Region Advisory Council
John Wesley Powell Museum
1765 E. Main
Green River, Utah
April 13, 2016**

Motion Summary

Approval of today's Agenda and Minutes

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

Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2016 (Action)

MOTION: To approve the elk permit recommendations as presented, except that the Book Cliffs-Little Creek Roadless unit keep the same permit numbers as in 2015, and that youth limited entry elk permit numbers be increased to 800, and that the Board open an action log item with the objective of improving drawing odds for youth hunters so that youth have a high probability of drawing a tag sometime during their youth, and that the number of limited entry elk permits on the Central Mountains-Manti unit be reduced from 453 to 430.

Passed unanimously

MOTION: To accept the Division's mule deer permit recommendations, except that the permit numbers on the Central Mountains-Manti and Abajo units be left at their 2015 levels.

Passed 4-2

MOTION: To accept the remainder of the Division's Bucks, Bulls and Once-in-a-Lifetime permit recommendations as presented.

Passed unanimously

Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016 (Action)

MOTION: To accept the antlerless elk permit recommendations for 2016 as presented.

Passed unanimously

2016 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations (Action)

MOTION: To accept the 2016 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations as presented.

Passed unanimously

2016 CWMU Antlerless Variance Requests (Action)

**MOTION: To accept the 2016 CWMU Variance Requests as presented.
Passed unanimously**

R657-23 Hunter Education Rule Amendments (Action)

MOTION: To accept Hunter Education Rule amendments as presented with the exception that they keep the marksmanship test and open an action log item to update the curriculum with new learning standards and objectives that need to be covered by instructors.

Passed unanimously

**Southeast Region Advisory Council
John Wesley Powell Museum
1765 E. Main
Green River, Utah**

April 13, 2016 @ 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

Members Absent

**Kevin Albrecht, Chairman, USFS
Sue Bellagamba, Environmental
Keith Brady, Elected Official**

Blair Eastman, Agriculture

**Trisha Hedin, Sportsperson
Todd Huntington, At Large**

Karl Ivory, BLM representative

**Kent Johnson, At Large
Derris Jones, Sportsmen**

**Darrel Mecham, Sportsmen
Christine Micoz, At Large
Charlie Tracy, Agriculture
Gerris Willis, Environmental**

Chris Wood, Regional Supervisor

Others Present

Dr. Mike King

1) **Welcome, RAC introductions and RAC Procedure**
-Kevin Albrecht, Chairman

Good evening, I would like to welcome everybody to the RAC tonight. I might have to be retrained since January. Looks like we've got a real good turnout tonight and I want to thank everyone. We value your input. Just want to go a little bit through the RAC process and procedures. The Division will present items as indicated in the agenda. As we go through we will have questions from the RAC and then we will go to questions from the audience and as you come up please come up to the front mic. State your name because we will be recording the minutes and the Division will be at this other mic. And they will do their best to answer your questions. Following that we will go to comments from the audience. And as we do that, there are comment cards in the back, please fill those out with your name and bring them up here to Chris or a Division employee and following that we will go comments from the RAC.

2) **Approval of the Agenda and Minutes**
-Kevin Albrecht, Chairman

Kevin Albrecht – Does anybody have any questions or discussion on the agenda and minutes?

Keith Brady – I would like to make motion to approve the minutes and agenda.

Kent Johnson – Second

Kevin Albrecht – All in favor?

Kevin Albrecht – Passed unanimously

Kevin Albrecht – Motion made by Keith Brady to approve the agenda and the minutes by Keith Brady and seconded by Kent Johnson

VOTING

Motion was made by Keith Brady to approve this meeting's agenda and the minutes of the December meeting as printed.

Seconded by Kent Johnson

Motion passed unanimously

3) **Wildlife Board Meeting Update**
-by Kevin Albrecht, Chairman

It has been quite awhile since we had our January meeting and most of the notes I took from the Wildlife Board Meeting are old. I have a lot of notes about winter and heavy snows in the winter and different things but I think we're passed that. One of the things that pertains to us our RAC is that we had proposed a one-week bear bait season. The

Wildlife Board ended up taking comment and they ended up going with staying the same as last year and that is going with the two week pre-bait. The only other thing that may be a thing of interest is there was the Sheep Rock Sage Grouse translocation from the Parker and Box Elder and that will be a three year study with USU on that translocation. With that, are there any questions from the Wildlife Board meeting? Seeing none we will move to the Regional update given by Chris.

4) **Regional Update**
-Chris Wood, Regional Supervisor

Good evening, before I begin I would like to just mention that Brent is retiring on June 1st. He has worked for us for 25 years. He has done a lot of RAC meetings. So with the cancelation of the May RAC meeting in May, tonight is Brent's last RAC meeting as a Division employee. I am sure that he is going to be very devastated not to attend another RAC meeting in this capacity again.

Chris Wood- We would like to congratulate Brent on his retirement.

Chris Wood- Kathy Jo and Brent take notes at every meeting and they take very detailed notes and they do it for us because we know that we want your input carried over to the board level. And with that in mind they would like to capture your thoughts and they take the best notes I think out of all five RAC's, so the Wildlife Board understands what was presented and talked about here and discussed.

Chris Wood-We had a busy winter and early spring. I will start off with the Aquatic Section first. Our Aquatic Section has been developing two ponds for the round tail chub. And that will be developed later this year. One will be in Cottonwood Creek in Emery County just coming out of the canyon and the other one will be on the lower San Rafael. It is that time of year that we are gearing up for all of our AIS work. AIS is aquatic invasive species (Quagga mussels) specifically. We will have seasonal technicians at a lot of the waters in the mountains and of course we have a pretty strong force and crew working at Lake Powell at the boat ramps. We have received money to increase their efforts and you will see that again this year. They are taking samples of various reservoirs in San Juan County and that will begin this month. They sampled Recapture Reservoir and the pike there and we received a disease-free certification. And that means that we can move them into different waters. We just started this month our Cutthroat Slam Program. So there are four Cutthroat Trout sub-species that are part of that slam. And they are the Colorado, Bear River, Yellowstone and Bonneville. So we get those four in their native streams then you qualify for slam and you get a nice coin. Our Outreach section has been really busy with the help of the other biologists and our law enforcement officers in teaming up and participating in a Teen Shoot in Green River Utah in the month of March. They also have done a Turkey clinic in March as well and that is a newer thing that we have. We did it last year and we've done it this year and we have a great turnout every year. I will give you an example of somebody that benefited from that kind of clinic. My father hunted his entire life and he is 68 years old. He has hunted elk, deer, Oryx and different game species throughout the Western states and he has never

known how to hunt turkeys. So he went to Walt's turkey clinic last month and he shot his first turkey on Monday. He learned how to call them in and learned what kind of equipment to buy and bring and how to do it and how the harvest is first turkey. This is a great event in our attendance is increasing on that clinic each year. And we hold them throughout the state as well. We had a sage grouse lek watch at Emma Park on Saturday. We also do this event every year and coming in May we will have a bird watching event at Desert Lake with the Moab Bird Club. In June we have a statewide Free Fishing Day and our Division event will be at the Knight-Ideal community fishing pond, which is the new fishing pond in Wellington and we will have festivities while working with kids and their families on that day. We were helping them catch fish and have prizes and such. The Habitat section has been very busy as well. They have been finishing up on some habitat projects and also doing some spring habitat projects. They have built some beaver dam structures in the Miller Creek in the Carbon County area out there by Hiawatha. These were put in to trap sediment and to improve pairing in areas where there are no beavers but we need some of those dams or artificial dams to help build up some water flows which will help reduce some of the water flow and prevent erosion. They have been busy doing juniper and pinion mulching projects in Hay Canyon of the South Book Cliffs area. They have been planting a lot of sagebrush seedlings as well. A few weeks ago they were working with the Nature Conservancy just east of Monticello to plant over 10,000 sagebrush seedlings. We have done this before a few years ago as well and are building off of that project and that is for the Gunnison Sage grouse. Last week they were up on Buck Hollow which is up on the foothills of the La Sal Mountains. They planted an additional 10,000 sagebrush seedlings and for both of these projects we have had a lot of volunteers, consisting of hunters and sportsmen including dedicated hunters, MDF, SFW and RMEF. We also had some the non-consumptive groups such as Nature Conservancy and even some of the greener groups that reside in Moab have come up and helped us. We were supposed to do a Beef Basin sagebrush planting this week but the roads are pretty slick and wet and so now that is being postponed. In the next few weeks once it dries out a little bit, we will plant 3,000 sagebrush seedlings at Beef basin. Law enforcement also has been very busy. They are patrolling the winter ranges. They've been patrolling the antlerless hunts in January, checking trap lines and ice fisherman this winter and also doing some saturation patrols throughout the spring. Targeting winter ranges and making sure shed hunters are staying on roads and are in compliance and not damaging the winter range. This May, our officers are teaming up with the Carbon County Sheriff's office and some other local groups and they're having a fishing and shooting event at the Carbon County Fairgrounds. This will be a great event. We have a new lieutenant. Lieutenant J Shirley was promoted and moved to Salt Lake City. Our new lieutenant is Ben Wolford. Ben has lived and worked the last three years in San Juan County and covered and supervised the officers in the San Juan County and the Grand County and including the Henry Mountain area. Eventually Ben will move to Price and be the leader of the law enforcement group for the entire Southeastern Region so we congratulate him and he will be great. The Wildlife section has been busy with turkey transplants from Sanpete County to southeastern Utah area. We have had a very busy bear denning season and we invited a lot of the media groups to tag along with us. We were featured on KSL Outdoors and Hooked on Utah with Gary Winterton. We do bear denning every spring or every February. The bears are in their dens and we have tracking

collars on a few of them. We go in and tranquilize the mother bear while she is in her den, and we take some measurements on her and look at her reproductive success and count how many cubs she has. This is a fun activity that we all enjoy doing. It also gives us a lot of good information and from that data we are able to figure out the population estimates and such. We have been doing pronghorn surveys in March and our surveys showed that pronghorn are doing exceptionally well in southeastern Utah and maybe we'll hear a little bit about that in Justin's presentation tonight. The biologists have been busy doing spring deer counts and also counting sage grouse on the leks. There was no CWD detected on the Abajo's this year. With that I can answer any questions and if I don't know the answer, I have a bunch of great guys behind me that might be able to answer them to. Are there any questions? Okay we will go ahead and move on to the first item on the agenda.

5) **Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2016 (Action)**
- Justin Shannon, Big Game Coordinator,

Questions from the RAC

Keith Brady – I had a lot of concerns that we go back to the general season deer. They basically said keep to the plan. I guess I was wondering if the increases and the decreases are according to that plan. And I assume it is since you are talking about a buck to doe ratio increase.

Justin Shannon – Let me go through that real quick and kind of go through what the plan says because we have heard that in other RACs that the emails they received were to “stick to the plan,” then let's revisit what the plan says. If you pick a unit like the Nine Mile, it's managed for 18 to 20 bucks per 100 does. What we try to do is if we are under that objective we would decrease permits and try to increase that buck to doe ratio. If we are over we would propose increases to bring it down. The Nine Mile isn't a great example that is just a unique unit. On some of these other ones where last year on the Manti there were 23 bucks per 100 does and the three-year average is close to 22.

Keith Brady – On the Nine Mile, you don't have an increase. It is staying the same but then the objective is still staying higher over the three year average. So why isn't that one increasing yet some of them are?

Justin Shannon- We have a statewide plan that kind of says this is how it should be done. But on some of these in the past as we looked at hunter distribution and what historically what has been on that unit, you could throw more hunters at it and I think that the northern region has some of these. Really what happens is you may not necessarily increase harvest per say. You might just lower the success rates because of the limited access on some of these units. So on the Nine Mile unit, the late-season muzzleloader permits were increased and maybe that is an avenue where we can get a little bit more harvest in the future. So as we went through this we did our best to follow the plan and make recommendations that were in the spirit of that plan and made sense.

Todd Huntington – We have seen some increases in the overall statewide population for the past several years. Just to make sure and to clarify these increases in tags aren't tied to

that necessarily, they are more tied to the buck to doe ratio. Is that correct?

Justin Shannon – Yes, this comes up all of the time because it is always “Your buck to doe ratios are independent of your populations.” For the most part as your buck to doe ratio increases that is a good indicator that your population as a whole is increasing. As bucks are coming into the population they are coming in at a 1 to 1 ratio. And that is because does are having a 50% females and 50% males. If everything else stayed the same and you’re seeing the increase and you are stable your buck to doe ratio stays constant. As your population grows and more bucks are being added to the system, so are the does. Often times your buck to doe ratio is a good surrogate that says yes your population is increasing as well. We don’t necessarily say that there is this many deer so this is how many permits we are going to issue. The buck to doe ratio is a better surrogate.

Derris Jones – On the premium limited entry permits on the Henry’s, the buck to doe ratio is a trigger for management bucks?

Justin Shannon – Yes.

Derris Jones- What is the trigger to increase the limited entry regular season?

Justin Shannon – There isn’t one. As we went through the planning process for mule deer on the premium limited entry units, there was a lot of discussion in that committee that said “the intent of these units is to have really, really good quality,” so why do we put a cap on that quality? If you look at the objective that more than 40% of the bucks harvested are 5 years or older, then those permits would stay the same. We can debate whether that was a good move or not a good move, but as we went through the committee process and through the RACs and Board, that was kind of the intent of that unit as really good quality so let’s make sure we preserve that.

Derris Jones- So the number of tags that we have the Henry’s now is what we are always going to have?

Justin Shannon-For now, yes.

Derris Jones- This the maximum number we will ever have?

Justin Shannon – For the life of the five-year plan, yes.

Kevin Albrecht – That is not on the management tags, is that just on the trophy?

Justin Shannon – That is correct.

Kevin Albrecht – Can you address the Thousand Lake and the weapon distribution because it is a unique unit? Can you talk a little bit more about that?

Justin Shannon – The Thousand Lakes was a limited entry unit for years and then it became a general season about five years ago it has been quite a while now. It is a really small unit with a lot of access issues, private land issues. We have been at 200 permits for a long time and if you break that down that is about 120 rifle permits. If you look at the data on the buck to doe ratio, it’s 41. This is one where we see that the bucks are growing and everything is increasing. Can we provide some additional opportunities? The only way we could think to increase the opportunity was in the archery and the muzzleloader hunts. That way we could have 300 permits but relatively keep the same amount of rifle hunters on that unit. Does that help?

Kevin Albrecht – Yes.

Justin Shannon – In regard to the plan, it says that general season units will be managed at a 60, 20, 20 split, unless we are trying to address a management need. So I think that is a great example of where there is truly a management need.

Derris Jones – On the deer herd unit plans, are the buck to doe ratios in those plans decided in the state plan, or are they decided in the herd unit management plan? Where is it decided that the buck to doe ratio is going to be?

Justin Shannon – Mostly it's decided statewide. If you are dealing with a limited entry unit, those sideboards are set in the statewide plan which is the same thing as in premium limited entry. The unit plan for the general season is that we should we manage for 17 bucks per 100 does or 18 to 20.s

Derris Jones- Within the unit management plan?

Justin Shannon – Yes, within the unit.

Derris Jones – And those unit management plans are on some kind of rotation based on the range trend inventory stuff. Is that correct?

Justin Shannon – Yes that is correct. The northeast region range trend was done last year and so you'll be seeing their unit plans be taken through the public process next November or next spring, but those will be next on the docket.

Derris Jones – The reason I am asking is with all of the questions that we have had on the increase in buck tags we are trying to disseminate accurate information back. You know we need to follow the plan and then the next question is how do we get the plan changed? In my mind I'm trying to figure out what to tell people that are really passionate about making some changes in their herd unit management plans. When is the southeast region scheduled? Did they just barely get finished?

Justin Shannon – Their plan was approved last year.

Derris Jones- So we have four more years before we are looking at redoing those?

Justin Shannon – Yes

Derris Jones- Is there some kind of scoping meeting that people can come to for input?

Justin Shannon – What we did prior to the planning process is that we worked with the committee to write a survey and that helped us know what the majority of Utahans wanted for managing deer. There was a lot of specific questions on general season, limited entry and different management options so we took that data and as a committee tried to write goal objectives that met those needs. The other thing that we did as unit plans were being developed was to offer open houses. It was an invitation to have people come in to see what they think one way or the other. Kevin, is there anything that you would like to add to that?

Kevin Albrecht – I think one of the big parts that the committee used was the survey. It went to the committee first. Even though as a committee member you may not get exactly what you want, the committee tried to stay true to what the whole of the public wanted.

Derris Jones – How was that committee selected? Is that your pick or how does that work?

Justin Shannon – The state code says that we will have management plans for deer and elk and consider agriculture and sportsmen. From that perspective, we tried to put together a diverse group. The way it was selected was that we sat down in our director's office and said that we needed this representation and extended some invitations. If a sportsman's group needed to be represented we would either ask the leadership to find us a representative or we picked someone and went to their leadership and said this is who we wanted and asked them to sign off on that. For public at large, we just tried to make it as well-rounded as we could to make sure stakeholders were well represented.

Derris Jones- Was the survey a random survey or did you try to get as many people to

answer the survey as possible. What was your process on that?

Justin Shannon – I can't remember the exact numbers that we wanted. I believe it was well over 10,000 people and it wasn't everybody.

Derris Jones- Was it by invitation only?

Justin Shannon – You had to login to provide your opinion. That was the approach we took because we value randomization when we are trying to get that information. That is why we took that route.

Kevin Albrecht – One additional item that is really important is when they were surveying the archer or the muzzleloader, they wanted to make sure they hit the minimum number for the variations, whether it be archery or muzzleloader, they wanted the minimum sample size.

Justin Shannon – We wanted some representation from archery hunters, muzzleloader hunters, rifle hunters and dedicated hunters as well as limited entry hunters. In that way, the data would make sense of it all, especially if we were asking a question that might impact one party more than the other. We could look at how the answers compared to the overall survey.

Derris Jones – Did you also look at the geographic areas to get representation from all parts of the state?

Justin Shannon-No, I think that is where randomization comes into it. I don't believe we said we are going to select this many from this county and this many from another. I don't think we went to those.

Derris Jones-Randomization is going to be a lot heavier towards the Wasatch front than from rural Utah.

Justin Shannon –It could be but some of those same hunters hunt southern Utah or southeastern Utah. Was it perfect? No, but we tried our best to really get unbiased data.

Derris Jones-Okay.

Kent Johnson – I have one question about that. The limited entry bull elk, I know that the Little Creek isn't in the southeast region but looking at that I am curious about the age of objective. Is it basically right about where you want it? The total permit numbers stayed the same. You took permits from archery and muzzleloader and gave them to the rifle hunters. You're not over the age objective. You're actually slightly under it. Why was that?

Justin Shannon – I think all of these units saw a change in permit distribution as we rewrote the plan. One of the major concerns the November RAC was that there was too much harvest in the rut. So in the past if you had a rifle hunt you could have up to 65% of those permits in the early rifle. As a result it shifted a lot of permits. The other thing if you had a late hunt there is a different permit allocation than if you didn't have a late hunt and it added a lot of confusion. That's why some units look differently.

Kent Johnson- That is exactly why I asked the question. There is no late hunt on the Little Creek unit. The rifle hunt takes place during the rut and those were concerns that were brought out in November. You're guaranteeing more bulls are going to get killed and that is my question.

Justin Shannon-I would have to look at that closer. I'm not sure why we did that. I can take a look at that. The only thing that I can think of is when the new plan came out, we said we are going to have 60,25,15 split and it kind of shifted things more in that way. That is the only thing that I can think of off the top of my head. I'm not sure why those

permits were recommended that way.

Kent Johnson – A lot of people have asked me that question. They are wondering why. And a lot of them are archery hunters as you might expect. And if there is concern over killing too many bulls in the rut, I think you would want to go the other way and not add rifle tags.

Justin Shannon – This is a hard one for me to wrap my head around. On most units it went the opposite. I can explore this, but I don't know off the top of my head why that would happen.

Ken Johnson – If you could get an answer I would be curious to know what it is.

Kevin Albrecht – While you are looking that up or have someone help you to look that up, are there any other questions from the RAC?

Derris Jones – I would like someone to answer the reason for cow elk tags on the Book Cliffs. It is quite a ways below objective and I understand that San Royal is probably private land concerns, but as far as Little Creek and Bitter Creek, what is the justification for cow tags?

Brad Crompton – There are some localized range concerns they are trying to address. This is mostly on the northern part of the Book Cliffs. It has been pretty marginal. I can't remember what our harvest is but it is very little on the Book Cliffs in general. These are very dry units and we are trying to address those issues.

Derris Jones – So, those are range condition issues?

Brad Crompton – Yes.

Justin Shannon – Kent, you are absolutely right, based on what was recommended and what was passed last year and what is being proposed this year. You're right on the Book Cliffs. More of those permits are being put into the rifle allocation as opposed to the archery and muzzleloader. We could call Dax, the northeastern region biologist and ask. I'm just a little unprepared to answer.

Kevin Albrecht – Thank you. With that we will go to questions from the audience.

Questions from the Public

Eric Luke – On your survey that you sent out from the deer committee, you mentioned about 10,000?

Justin Shannon – I can't remember exactly but I think it was over 10,000.

Eric Luke – If I do the math, that is just over 10% of the general season permits that are allocated, but there are a lot more hunters than that. That survey was done on a very small percentage of the people, correct?

Justin Shannon – In fact it was probably less than 10% because we added limited entry hunters as well. Yes, you're right it was low numbers.

Eric Luke – Okay I was just curious.

Justin Shannon – But in fairness, what we valued was randomization. When a presidential candidate is being polled, they don't ask everybody. There are some statistics behind it, so it's not like we're trying to fool anyone.

Eric Luke – I understand. I'm just trying to get an idea. Obviously I don't talk to all of hunters in this area but I've talked to a lot of them and the ones that I talk to didn't take part in that survey. They didn't receive that opportunity and I was just curious about the ratio.

Justin Shannon – My guess is that it was below 10%.

Mark Grace-I am representing myself I would like to go along with what Eric said. There are a lot of hunters in the state that are getting these questions and so you're going off a small minority of people. I don't know if this is where I comment on tag numbers.

Kevin Albrecht-It is just questions at this time.

Mark Grace- Okay I will come back up.

Kevin Albrecht- Thank you.

Kevin Albrecht- Any other question? If you want to make a comment, please bring up a comment card.

Guy Webster – How do you figure permit allocation What percent of those go to dedicated hunters? What percent go to lifetime license holders?

Justin Shannon-Right off the bat, lifetime license holders get first crack at all of the permits and there's not a breakdown or quota on them. Next after that, dedicated hunters get the next allocation. I can't remember exactly what that number is, Walt do you? Is it 10%, 15%?

Walt Maldonado-15%

Justin Shannon – 15% on a given unit. When those permits are pulled out, the next 20% is allocated to the youth. It gets fairly complicated because the permits are put together and pulled out and reallocated.

Guy Webster – Okay thank you.

Kevin Albrecht –Seeing no other questions, we will go to comments.

Comments from the Public

Shayne Thompson-I am representing myself, SFW, coworkers, a lot of friends and family. I appreciate everybody coming down and spending your time. The division has spent an immense amount of time doing this proposal. I do have concerns on some of the tag numbers on the Manti and the Abajo's directly. After speaking with a whole bunch of our local people, discussing success on the mountain, it is poor. I don't want to degrade any of the biologist's counts, I know they're doing their counts and all of that but we are concerned that the majority of them are not in huntable areas. A lot of the counts are in the valleys and private lands. We are already at that 66% of total objective and predator management. We are doing some predator management. We've got some transplants coming in and I'm excited about that. I have been involved with that. I have spent a ton of time with guys that are working on this. We've had some amazing deer growing seasons. Our deer herds should be exploding in that area. I am concerned about fawns and why they may be dying. I don't think it time for an increase on the Manti of 550. I see a lot of frustrated hunters and I hear a lot of other questions. I would like to see the deer herd come back and have a little higher population before we increase the tags there. I'm just concerned that we are actually in predator management and the deer numbers aren't really in the areas where the majority of the people hunt. I would like to have the RAC visit this and not increase the deer tag numbers on the Manti and Abajo's I've got the same report from fellow hunters, friends and family that they're just not seeing the numbers that we need to be seeing to have a good opportunity to kill a good buck.

Eric Luke – I am representing the Carbon/Emery Chapter for SFW. First off I would like to say thank you to the Division. They've worked hard. I am seeing transplants on the Manti, which we are very grateful for. With that being said, Shayne mentioned that we are concerned about the proposal for the increase. We recognize that according to the

management plan the Division is doing exactly what they should be doing because we are over objective. A concern that has been mentioned is that the management plan does not address overall objectives, overall deer numbers--only buck to doe ratio. The Manti is at 66% of overall objective. The north end of the Manti is higher than that. The south end is lower than that. The statistics show now that the last few years with the higher buck to doe ratio that the overall numbers are starting to climb. Troy will come up and make a recommendation here in a minute and we ask you to support that recommendation. We don't want to see an increase in tags. We would like to keep the tags where they are for another year. Hopefully that trend with the overall deer population going upward continues. I agree with a little bit of what Derris said. We do need to change the statewide plan to address a single unit. We ask to keep the numbers down. I would like to ask a question because my guess is not everybody's going to get up and comment. I would just like to ask by a show of hands from the public who are here. Who here is for the increase of deer tags for the southeastern units? It is pretty obvious that the public is not for that. We ask for your support on that.

Mark Grace – I am representing myself and family members. I agree with Shayne and Eric wholeheartedly on the Manti unit. I am a dedicated hunter and I spend every single day of every hunt on the mountain and I'm not seeing where these increases can be made. I am on the mountain and in the Manti area looking at animals probably 300 days a year. I'm just not seeing the numbers they are talking about. The buck to doe ratio may be where they want it, but like they've said, the numbers aren't there. I do appreciate the biologists for going out and making these counts. The citizens and hunters out there are just not seeing it, so my recommendation personally is that we don't increase the tags on the Manti unit.

Keith Brady – Can we go back to the slide they're talking about?

Troy Justensen-I appreciate the opportunity to address the RAC tonight. On behalf of the Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, we would like to accept the Division's recommendations with three changes: 1) Based on our committee meeting and discussing with locals here and the concerns on the Manti, we asked the RAC to stay with last year's numbers on the general season buck permits. The Manti is at 66% of objective and even though there has been a strong push to manage strictly to the plan, there has to be room for common sense and adjust for certain variations and different things you face in different areas, so we would recommend that. 2) We would recommend the same for the Abajo's for the same reasons that we are below objective and our membership there would ask that we stay with one more year of the current permit numbers. 3) The other one that we would like to see is an increase in youth elk permits. As Justin mentioned, they increased from 300 to 500 permits and they wanted to keep the status quo to make sure we kept the quality. We would actually like the RAC to increase those permits to 800. You have 15,000 open bull hunters. I don't think we are going to have a problem with 800 kids spread out in that time. This is a great opportunity to let these kids get out and hunt elk during the rut and enjoy the resources before us grown-ups get out there. So we would ask the RAC to consider that. We appreciate the Division's time and we appreciate your time. Thank you.

Guy Webster – I have two concerns about the Book Cliffs, Little Creek (roadless). Looking at the tag allocations I would ask that they be maintained the same as last year. If you're going to say that the Thousand Lakes unit is a small unit, you need to think that

Range Creek is a small unique unit. The Book Cliffs is small with unique things. I don't know if any of you guys have ever been to the parking lot during the rifle hunt. We don't need any more hunters up there. Let's spread it out and let's have a good opportunity. I request that you guys go with what it was last year. We are under the age objective and it does not make sense to change that. Second, from our management plan under the recreation objective, this is reading it exactly; we are to maintain a hunting program for mule deer that encourages a variety of hunting opportunities while maintaining population objectives. This implies that hunting programs can be maintained if population objectives are met. And then below there is where we go into the buck to doe ratio. If you follow your management plan we are not at the unit objectives for overall populations so buck to doe ratios come secondary. The Manti is well under overall objectives for overall number of deer. So by your plan, you cannot even be looking at the buck to doe ratios until your herd objective is met. If your objective is over 10,000 deer and you are over buck to does and you have 10,000 deer then I support having an increase in tags. We are a long way from it. We are still under a predator management plan. I do not support any increase in deer permits with the state of where the deer are at this point.

Kevin Albrecht-Can you please repeat that motion that you made?

Guy Webster – The Little Creek roadless stays with the tag allocations as they were last year. Let's not move more toward the rifle hunt. Let's leave it split like it was last year.

Kevin Albrecht – And that is the Little Creek roadless?

Guy Webster-The Little Creek roadless. And then do not support any increase in southeastern region deer tags.

Kade Allred – I am Kade Allred and I am speaking in behalf of myself and friends and family. I do not see any reason for an increase in tags on the Manti unit. I am a dedicated hunter and I work up there every day. The deer population is not where it should be. Buck to doe ratios may be okay in certain areas, but I don't think we are anywhere close to where we need to be and if it is buck to doe ratios that we are going from, I think we need to change your plan. I strongly suggest that we do not increase tags on the Manti. Thank you

Kevin Albrecht- That is all of the items. Did we get an answer on the question that you had from the phone?

Justin Shannon-We did and Brad tried to tell me and I couldn't multi-task, so Brad will have to answer.

Brad Crompton-The original intent behind the recommendation was the archery hunt last year was terrible. I think it was 18% success. The idea was to move some permits as a reaction to the archery hunt. It was discussed at length and they thought they had gone back to the recommendations Mr. Webster recommended. There may be a mistake in that table. That is kind of where we are sitting at right now.

Kent Johnson – Okay, well I have a comment about that. The reason for the archery hunt being so low with success last year was just extreme heat.

Brad Crompton – Every year is a little different that way.

Kent Johnson – You're going to have that problem from year-to-year and that is not a reason to have a knee-jerk reaction.

Tricia Hedin-And the archery hunt is supposed to be during the rut.

Kent Johnson – That would help their success a lot.

Keith Brady –I think Guy Webster brings up a good point. If those population objectives aren't being met, then the buck to doe ratio doesn't matter.

Kevin Albrecht – Do you want to address that Justin?

Justin Shannon – I apologize what was the question?

Keith Brady – Just population objectives, we don't have that and I haven't seen it in the package.

Justin Shannon – It is in the packet. It is in the antlerless section which we will talk about next. But to answer your question, there are two things in the plan that we are concerned about. We want to grow populations and we want to provide recreational hunting opportunities. Nowhere in the plan does it say that you have to be at hundred percent of your objective before you increase permits. Nowhere does it say that. I would also like to say that these population objectives aren't necessarily set in stone. Last year if you remember, the southern region redid their unit management plans and in some instances they were 4,000-5000 deer over their population objective. What we did is we went and looked at the deer and their body condition and habitat and did some assessments and said let's raise these objectives to where we need to be. Population objectives are a goal. Where we really are with deer on the mountain is the reality. We don't have doe hunts on these units and we're not doing anything to stop the population growth. We are doing a bunch with habitat restoration and predator control. We want to see healthy robust populations of mule deer and nowhere in that plan does it say that you have to hit 100% of your objective before permits are increased.

RAC Discussion

Trisha Hedin-Troy, you're going to appreciate this. I am going to agree with you tonight. I would like to see an increase of 700 bull permits. I would recommend that a large portion of those go to the youth. Just to stay with that theme, I think we really have to be growing hunters. That is my recommendation. I would recommend that 500 of those go to the youth.

Derris Jones – Can anyone answer the question of what the odds of a youth drawing an any bull tag is? How many unsuccessful youth hunters do we have that apply?

Justin Shannon – Every year we have close to 5,000 applicants that are youth. Troy, correct me if I am wrong, but you are recommending an additional 300 permits, right? Because the 15,000 is part of the elk plan so I think you're recommending adding an additional 300 to the plan. So that would be 5,000 permits in all.

Derris Jones-Is the number of youth coming in pretty stable?

Justin Shannon – It is pretty stable.

Derris Jones-Is there a way to give them enough tags that they get preference points to eventually draw the tag within four years?

Justin Shannon – The youth any bull hunt has its own preference points system because the youth can put in for a limited entry tag for the Book Cliffs and the youth any bull, and the youth any bull has its own set of points associated with it. These are independent of any other point system that we have.

Derris Jones- So roughly how many youth tags would you need to guarantee that 5,000 kids draw within 4 years?

Justin Shannon-The easy answer would be 5,000 or you could say 1,250 or you could be one of those unlucky kids that comes in and all those older kids are getting them and the

kids younger are getting them. I don't know how you could guarantee it unless you had 5,000 a year.

Todd Huntington-Saying "no" to deer increases on the Manti is pretty easy. We've got that from the public. No deer increases on the Manti or in the southeastern region. The one thing that I'm surprised that my good friends from Ferron didn't mention elk tags on the Manti. That age has started to creep down. We are down to 5.9. Our tags went from 430 to 453 to 453. Well we are setting ourselves up for a little bit of crash there. So I would like to see those permits drop back to 430 from 453. And those would be my two comments. This is probably the wrong time for this, but how do we decide pronghorn numbers? Is that a mystery that I'm not allowed to know?

Justin Shannon – On pronghorn, we are managing for 25 to 40 bucks to 100 does. That is the parameter that we use there.

Todd Huntington – I haven't ever heard that, so thank you

Kevin Albrecht – Are there any other comments from the RAC?

Derris Jones-I just want to make sure that before this ever comes to a motion and a vote that everybody realizes that the buck to doe ratios are just an indication of the makeup of the population. It has nothing to do with how many animals are out there or anything else. When some of these units do get to objective the higher your buck to doe ratio the fewer does we are going to be able to have in the population. The fewer does you have, the fewer fawns you're going to have, and so pretty soon you're going to be having less opportunities on your bucks. I am all for giving the sportsmen what the sportsmen want on their units, but we need to go through the plan process to do that. It is a shame that we just barely got through with these unit plans because it would've been a lot better if they were going to be reviewed next year, and then we could make that adjustment quickly. I feel strongly about management plans and following management plans. We just need to make the changes at the right time and at the right meetings if we're going to make changes in them.

Kent Johnson-I will just comment on the correspondence that I got from the public. It was largely about a 50-50 split in favor and against. The ones that were in favor were primarily individuals that were actually looking at things. They were thinking things out and writing their own letter to me. The ones that I got that were opposed were largely a cut-and-paste letter that somebody else had put out, complete with all the misspellings and the bad punctuation and grammar. It was identical. It was just that somebody cut and pasted a statement to do this and there is a lot of that. I did have some emails and I responded to the ones that were lucid and well thought out that were for and against and there are some people on both sides that had a lot of good arguments. Like SFW, they had good arguments about it. Guy Webster brought up some good points and I like that in the correspondence. If you take out the cut-and-paste stuff and just the knee-jerk reactions that somebody else solicited, the overall public response that I got was probably in favor of the management plan.

Todd Huntington – And where are those people tonight?

Kent Johnson – I don't know but they're not here.

Todd Huntington – And they're not.

Kent Johnson – Most of them aren't going to drive all the way here.

Todd Huntington – But the people that are against it did drive here. And they did spend their time to be here. I think that has got to count for something.

Kent Johnson – It does but they're not the only one spending money.

Todd Huntington – I agree. Most of the time, we make decisions with no public here.

Kent Johnson – You're right. It is nice to have them here. I won't discount that. I appreciate the input I got from those that were opposed to the increase, and some of it was well thought out and some of it I deleted. If you're going to lace your emails with vitriol and foul language, it's going to get deleted before I get to the second line.

Kevin Albrecht – We have had a real good discussion and before we get to a motion, I just want to make a couple of comments. I have done my best to write down some of the motions and I would just like to read them, so that way they at least receive discussion. I don't know if we want to break this out.

Todd Huntington-That's what I say. I don't want to take the deer, the elk, the pronghorn together. It's too much to do it that way.

Kevin Albrecht – There are several items, so cleanest way to help Brent to pick it up is to read what and if I've missed anything and not written it down, please let me know. Let's at least allow for a discussion on each item even if it doesn't make a motion.. I have a motion for no increase on the Central Mountains Manti and the Abajo. I have an increase on the youth permits up to 300 which would make the total number at 800. We have a motion on the Book Cliffs/Little Creek roadless to stay the same as the 2015 numbers. We also have a motion on the Central Mountains Manti elk to decrease from 453 to 430. Are there any that I've missed? Is there any discussion on that?

Kevin Albrecht – Maybe we can entertain a motion on any of them?

Kent Johnson- Are we going to go species specific or deal with them separately?

Kevin Albrecht- I really think that there is just the mule deer and elk. We could do that.

Derris Jones- I would like to break out those issues into separate motions and cover the rest of it with the final motion.

VOTING

Motion was made by Kent Johnson to approve the elk management plan as presented, except that the Book Cliffs-Little Creek Roadless unit keep the same permit numbers as in 2015, and that youth limited entry elk permit numbers be increased to 800, and that the Board open an action log item with the objective of improving drawing odds for youth hunters, and that the number of limited entry permits on the Central Mountains-Manti unit be reduced from 453 to 430.

Seconded by Todd Huntington

Motion passed unanimously

VOTING

Motion was made by Todd Huntington to accept the Division's mule deer plan, except that the permit numbers on the Central Mountains-Manti and Abajo units be left at their 2015 levels.

Seconded by Trish Hedin

Motion passed 4-2 with opposing votes by Derris Jones and Kent Johnson

VOTING

Motion was made by Todd Huntington to approve the remainder of the Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2016 as presented.

Seconded by Trish Hedin

Motion passed unanimously

**6) Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016 (Action)
-Justin Shannon, Big Game Coordinator,**

Questions from the RAC

Todd Huntington – Are the permits by draw or distributed by a landowner? How are those permits going to be distributed?

Justin Shannon – I meant to mention that. I apologize that I didn't. These are going to be over-the-counter, so hunters can go in and purchase them at Walmart or at our Division office for these areas. If I wanted to hunt East Canyon and there are only 200 permits for that unit, anybody can obtain those and it is for all private lands within that East Canyon boundary.

Todd Huntington – Just as long as you've got permission from the landowner then?

Justin Shannon – Yes and there are a variety of uses. Hunters can go and if they know of a private landowner that is having a lot of elk on them and their tolerance level is low because of the density of elk, certainly there's opportunities there. Also we see that if you are a private landowner and you're getting an influx of elk, there's something healthy about having the ability to solve your own problems. Elk are smart and they will respond to hunting pressure and there will be some harvest. Admittedly it is outside of the box. I think for a long time we've been asked to think outside the box on these types of issues.

Kevin Albrecht – I have just one question, I was just wondering if you foresee trespassing fees on these private lands that will be an issue?

Justin Shannon – I think it's going to be reality for some landowners. If a private landowner wanted to charge access on his or her property we won't get in the middle of that or regulate that. We also don't see every landowner charging either. I'm not sure but I think that will be up to the individual landowners. Certainly it's going to occur.

Kevin Albrecht – I guess the reason I am asking that is the person that is purchasing these permits really needs to do their homework up front to know if they have access or they may run into not being able to hunt.

Justin Shannon – That was one of the reasons they are over-the-counter general season, because if you drew that permit, it would be a lot more difficult to give up your points and not find access. It really does fall on the public hunter to get permission prior to obtaining one of these permits.

Kent Johnson – I have a couple questions. The first one will stay on the subject of the private landowner permits. Will you maintain database of landowners who are having trouble with elk, so that hunters can come and help remove them?

Kevin Albrecht – We have talked about this very thing. We are not going to set up a database like that and we're not going to be the middleman or broker between public hunters and private landowners and vice versa. These permits are set up to get harvest in

specific areas to deal with some of these problem animals. Almost like a hybrid between the depredation permit system and our public draw permit. Hunters have many opportunities to hunt.. This one is unique. We have talked internally about some of the difficulties doing that and they are pretty challenging when it all adds up.

Kent Johnson – The reason I asked the question is Joe Hunter might know one landowner that has a pretty good sized piece of ground so he buys a permit for the area and the elk aren't on that piece of ground but they have moved 20 miles away or something and now they are on somebody else's ground he may not even know and maybe nobody knows but this guy which is the other landowner might have a problem with the elk. I was just wondering if there is a process in place where the Division could steer him to the guy that spent the money on the tag but the elk moved off the property he was planning to hunt.

Justin Shannon – I think if we knew a hunter that was in that situation and we knew a landowner that would see an influx of elk, we would keep it a secret, but not as far as playing matchmaker.

Kent Johnson –No, I wasn't asking that.

Justin Shannon – I know if I knew a landowner that was getting an influx of elk and needed help, and I knew individuals who had these permits, I would certainly put the two in contact, but on a larger scale, I don't see us doing that.

Kent Johnson – Okay.

Kevin Albrecht – One other question, so does this include all private land within that unit?

Justin Shannon – Yes, and I should've done a better job explaining that. There is no acreage limitations, so if you have 2 acres and a lot of elk or 2000 acres, it doesn't matter.

Derris Jones – So what is a season structure on this?

Justin Shannon – It is August 1 through January 31.

Kent Johnson – I have another question with regard to the permit numbers. As you're going through them for antlerless elk, I noticed some units are right around population objective and the permit numbers went down or went up by a large margin. I also noticed that some that were actually below population objective and the permit numbers went up. Is there a reason for the disparity?

Justin Shannon – I'm glad you caught that. We have units like the Chalk Creek, let me go back. The Chalk Creek is a great example. We are over objective yet were cutting permits and one reason that we are is because they have antlerless elk control permits so hunters that are already hunting deer or elk can obtain a cow permit. That has really gained in popularity and hope to increase the harvest in some of these areas. On the Chalk Creek, they have issued 1,000 private lands-only permits to try and move some of these elk and to get some harvest and to change distribution. So if you're just looking at the public draw, admittedly some of this doesn't add up. But we try to balance the public draw permits with the over-the-counter options to obtain harvest that way. The new proposal will expand general season hunting opportunities.

Kent Johnson – I understand what you're saying now.

Justin Shannon – The southern region is an interesting case. What they have done is combine three units into a mega-unit. Some of those units are small. As you get hunting pressure, they will just move from one unit to the next and it's like playing Ping Pong. You're just bouncing elk from one place to the next.

Kevin Albrecht – Are there any other questions?

Kevin Albrecht – Seeing none, we will go to questions from the public

Questions from the Public

Mark Grace – My question is on those private land-only cow tags, is that going to replace the landowner depredation-type vouchers?

Justin Shannon – No, it is just an additional tool.

Mark Grace – Okay, thanks.

Justin Shannon – I can add a little something to that. We still have depredation stuff in play. You may have some landowners that get private landowner permits and not come into the office. This may reduce some cases but this will still be an option for landowners.

Todd Huntington – Justin, you have a new hunt on the Central Mountains-Ferron Canyon east. Is that like a sub-unit of the Central Mountains Manti? So, are those tags going to come out of that chunk there? Is that how those new hunts are going to work?

Justin Shannon – That is correct. If you look at the RAC packet, there are 10 maybe 12 hunts on the Central Mountains. How it works is that we carve up the Central Mountains unit and just add a new hunt-- the Ferron Mountain-East.

Kevin Albrecht – Are there any other questions from the audience?

Kevin Albrecht – Seeing none, will go to comments and please state your name.

Comments from the Public

Troy Justensen- On behalf of Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife we would like to support the Division recommendation on the antlerless. I have had the opportunity not only to sit on the statewide elk committee but also on the Wasatch and I would just like to commend the Division for thinking out of the box and coming up with some ideas to address some issues that we have had on private lands and to redistribute those permits. So hats off to you guys I appreciate that. We do support the Divisions recommendations, thank you.

RAC Discussion

Todd Huntington- I would like to give the Division credit when credit is due. I think this is a time when that's due for coming up with this private lands-only idea to help with the antlerless numbers, so kudos to them. And with that being said I would move that we accept the proposal as presented.

VOTING

Motion was made by Todd Huntington to accept the antlerless elk recommendations for 2016 as presented.

Second by Kent Johnson

Passed unanimously

7) **2016 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations (Action)**
-Covy Jones, Private Lands/Public Wildlife Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Kevin Albrecht – Let's open it up to questions from the RAC
(No Questions)

Questions from the Public

(No Questions)

Comments from the Public

(No Comments)

RAC Discussion

Kevin Albrecht-One thing I failed to mention. I would like to recognize our Wildlife Board member, Mike King who is here tonight. I appreciate your presence. Thank You.

Kevin Albrecht- We will now go to comments from the RAC or entertain a motion.

Derris Jones- I move that we accept the Divisions recommendations as presented.

Tricia Hedin- Second that.

VOTING

Motion was made by Derris Jones to accept the 2016 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations as presented.

Seconded by Trish Hedin

Motion passed unanimously

8) **2016 CWMU Antlerless Variance Requests (Action)**
- Covy Jones, Private Lands/Public Wildlife Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Derris Jones-The mountain property is less than 5,000. It was like 3,400. If they haven't been grandfathered in, that would've been allowed to be a part of this CWMU. Is that correct or am I wrong on my interpretation?

Covy Jones-No, they were grandfathered in. They were one of the very first PHUs.

Derris Jones-If they were brand new today and just coming in, that mountain property would not be allowed to be part of it?

Covy Jones- They would have to submit a variance request and the factors would be evaluated. That is a hard question.

Derris Jones- He could have just done it, being grandfathered in.

Covy Jones-He could have done it.

Derris Jones-He wanted to do it this way, but is he aware of the implications?

Covy Jones- Yes he is. He felt like the honest way to do it would be to apply for the

variance.

Kevin Albrecht- But the land below the mountain property is how much?

Covy Jones-It's 40,000 contiguous acres.

Kevin Albrecht – Okay.

Derris Jones – He has plenty for a CWMU.

Kevin Albrecht – My question is, is it all the same but just not contiguous?

Covy Jones-The 40,000 is contiguous. It's that cross hatch piece there. Talking with Riley, it works. They made this work because they have clear definable boundaries.

There was a lot we considered when we recommended to continue with this.

Derris Jones-Did both the association and Division concur with this variance?

Covy Jones--Yes

Derris Jones--Okay

Kevin Albrecht – Any other questions from the RAC?

Kevin Albrecht – Questions from the audience?

Questions from the Public

(No Questions)

Comments from the Public

(No Comments)

RAC Discussion

Kevin Albrecht – Any comments from the RAC?

Kevin Albrecht-Entertain a motion?

Todd Huntington – This seems pretty easy where it has already gone through the Division and the committee. I think we should move to approve the proposal as presented.

Kent Johnson –Second

VOTING

Motion was made by Todd Huntington to accept 2016 CWMU Antlerless Variance Requests as presented.

Seconded by Kent Johnson

Motion passed unanimously

9) Hunter Education Rule Amendments (Action)

- Kirk Smith, Hunter Education Program Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Kevin Albrecht – Any questions from the RAC?

Trisha Hedin-I will wait for the comment period to make my comments.

Kevin Albrecht-Questions from the audience?

Questions from the Public

Shayne Thompson- I was just wondering about the test. Are there a lot of failures? Is that why we are trying to get rid of that test?

Kirk Smith –When the Division dropped the minimum hunting age which allowed persons to hunt as long as they have passed Hunter education, we saw that the marksmanship component became a barrier. They may not have been quite a big enough body size or were using the wrong size of gun and they struggled with the actual marksmanship skill, even though they had safe firearm handling skills. We have seen some failure on that. As we put this together we did some research and we looked at all the hunting incidents throughout all of North America or the United States from 2004 through 2014. We looked at the hunting incident rates and put them together according to states that have a live fire component and states that do not have a live fire component. States with a live fire component had an incident rate of 4.9 per 100,000. States without a live fire component had an incident rate of 4.8 per 100,000. So based on statistics and experience in the state, we rolled this all out with hunter education instructors. We went around the state to 13 different meetings with them. We rolled this out and presented this to them. They all had the same concern. At least some of them do.

Shayne Thompson-That is all of my questions. I just have a comment about it.

Kevin Albrecht –Any other questions?

Derris Jones- On that slide there, do all those states without live fire, do they have no minimum age? Are they comparable on age of kids as well as live fire versus none?

Kirk Smith-They are all over the board. You get back in those mid-western states and eastern states and in some of those states a person doesn't have to have hunter education until they are 16. There are 15 states that right now offer 100% online Hunter education. They never even meet face-to-face with an instructor. And we are not seeing a huge increase at all in incident rates one way or the other. So we as hunter education administrators and the Division want to be proactive and make some adjustments before the legislature tells us to make adjustments and do something that we feel is not adequate.

Comments from the Public

Shayne Thompson-I just think that we ought to hold our hunters to a standard and just turning these guys loose because they can safely handle a gun doesn't mean they can effectively take an animal. When I grew up as a kid, we all competed in marksmanship and it was a proud thing to do to pass this. We are getting so soft on our kids and letting things slide. Just in my eyes, I think we need to keep that test and at least make them show some kind of marksmanship before we throw them out in the field and start wounding.

RAC Discussion

Trisha Hedin-So, I am a new instructor and I instructed this winter. This really concerns me and I will agree with Shayne. I think providing that marksmanship test makes them go and practice and it is something that they are proud to earn. We actually had a really hard day. It was cold and windy and some of those little kids were just too little to be handling a gun. But I think most of those kids had practiced long and hard. All over Facebook I saw it was kind of neat that families were out practicing with their kids. I think it

promotes marksmanship and is something that should stay. I had a hard time getting through the curriculum in the book and if you reduce that 12 hour standard, I don't think there is any way that an instructor could effectively get through that information, and when I say effectively, I actually have a big problem with the online learning system. A lot of the instruction involves conversations on ethics, values, etc. Interaction, whether it be with me, the conservation officer or each other is important. I have a hard time bringing that number down. I don't think you can effectively get through that curriculum and if you're going to do that then the state has to be extremely diligent about producing a curriculum. I'm an educator by profession, so this is where I come up with these standards and objectives that you have to meet. You just can't say they have to pass a test because unfortunately what will happen is instructors will start teaching to the test. And that's not what you want to see. I think you really don't want to see hunter education go that way. I recommend against both of these recommendations. It worries me. My online students were generally poorly prepared. I just think we should just hold the course. I think we are doing a good job. I think the standards are set such that the kids that pass are proud, because they earned it. Those are my comments.

Todd Huntington-I am going to give you my perspective. I have an 11-year-old son and we did hunter safety this winter. We did the online course with the field day because time wise these kids are very busy. I couldn't go with him to Emery four nights a week from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. so we did online. I guess to address that a little bit it is something obviously that I'm passionate about so I sat there with him. We talked about it as we went. I felt like that was good. It was a lot. There are a lot of sections. There is a test after every section including a big long test at the end. Then we went to the field day and that was a big long test there. So I felt like it was maybe too much. We spent a lot of the field day taking this test and I would've liked to have done things like crossing a fence, the handling of the gun, etc. To me that makes a lot of sense. The hands-on portion I would've loved to have seen. I have one of those scrawny little kids that you're talking about and we had his grandpa's big heavy 22 rifle from 1950 and so he struggled to start out and the instructor recognized that and the instructor helped us with a smaller gun and then he was able to pass. I like the demonstration and the hands-on part of it. I thought that was great. The class part of it we just couldn't do, because we had just too many things going on. I like the online course. I think that is where our world is going.

Kirk Smith- Mr. Chairman may I provide some more information on the trends in Utah?

Kevin Albrecht-Go ahead, please.

Kirk Smith-This graph shows the traditional instructor-led class in white and in salmon is the interest in the online delivery method. This is what the students are doing. As you can see, since 2003 the online program has outpaced the face-to-face instructor delivery method, so we are responding to that as best as we can.

Trisha Hedin-Well, is that demand or the only opportunity? When I took hunter education, the only opportunity I had was online. There was not a traditional class offered in the southeastern Utah. There is that too. I have a waiting list for my next class. Honestly, people want to come to class I think. I was just wondering if that was driven by demand or opportunity.

Todd Huntington-I think we would've gone to a traditional class but it was Monday through Thursday from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at night in Emery which is half an hour away from my house and there was just no way to do that. I think we would've gone to

class.

Kevin Albrecht – I will add a little bit of comment. I have had two boys take it now and one of my boys was 11 when he took it and we took the online portion and then he went over and took the field day. My next boy was nine and I felt it was important that he go to the traditional class because of his age. I felt that it would benefit him. In doing so, before we went, I actually had him take the online portion and I sat down with him and he struggled a little bit with the reading. I felt like he really got a lot. Then we went to the Emery class and I sat through it every night. I have got to say there are benefits to both. The videos and some of the graphic videos that they see online burn images in their mind that really teach them. I thought those are lessons that will stay with them. One of the benefits of being in the class is the instructor providing answers to questions that each of those individuals have, which is invaluable. I also think that you see some of the weaknesses and can address those in crossing a fence and those things will really address that. I think the Division is seeing that and addressing that. As far as shooting, I think many of those kids did practice before hand and many of those kids didn't have parents that knew how to teach them to shoot and they got that from the class portion. I would recommend that marksmanship stay because they are receiving instructions that they may not get otherwise.

Trisha Hedin-With the traditional classes I could give them assistance before the field day. There is a big part of the community that is willing to help kids learn to shoot. I think that is invaluable.

Derris Jones – The firearm shoot is still part of it but there's just no score involved. Is that correct?

Kirk Smith – That is correct. We will still have the live fire component. We just won't score their targets. That is where we see the failure. They can't get a grouping tight enough, so they walk away crushed, even though they are still demonstrating firearm safety.

Kevin Albrecht – Does the instructor have the opportunity to help if the child isn't holding the firearm correctly?

Kirk Smith – Oh absolutely. We're all about wanting to educate them and having them come out of there as safe hunters and shooters. It is just the marksmanship test component that won't be part of it.

Derris Jones-Do any of the states have an annual short course refresher? In Utah, we take a new refresher to pick up antlers every year, and something as important as hunter education is a one-time deal. Why is that more important than hunter safety?

Kirk Smith-That is a good question. Currently there are no states that have a refresher requirement. We currently have Utah residents taking online courses out of state so they can apply for permits in Utah.

Trisha Hedin-I had to push people to Colorado because there is a reality that there are not enough instructors. We are overloaded. Grand Junction has classes. I pushed people to go to Colorado but I thought their standards were really good. You do six hours online and then six hours of field day. I think a lot of people like that. So they did one day in the field, and then the other was online. I can't fill the need unless I teach once a month, which I can't do. Let me state that none of my students failed. I retested people. Some people stayed during that field day and retested an hour later. Some people retested a week later and I think none of them left crushed. I think they left with the realization that

“I have got to practice.” I think that the people that failed did not practice. It is something that you earn.

Kent Johnson-I agree with Trish. And I agree with others as well. We molly-coddle our kids way too much. Everything is about how somebody feels at the end. With that said I think it is a good idea to keep the marksmanship standard in place and just because everybody jumps off the bridge doesn't mean that we have to go with them. And just because everybody is doing it doesn't mean it's the right thing to do and I can cite examples until tomorrow morning and we don't have to leave and go home if you want me to.

Trisha Hedin-Can I make some recommendations and you can put them into a motion. I am okay with eliminating the minimum number of hours. However, that means that the state needs to be extremely diligent in providing the curriculum that they want the instructors to disseminate, because right now that's not really out there, and in doing so they need to update all of the videos and everything needs to be bumped up a little bit. I would be happy to be on a committee to help with that. I really would. But I think the standards and objectives need to be set. And if it takes an instructor six hours to cover it or if it takes them 14 or whatever, it might be that's fine. I am okay with eliminating the standard number of hours. I am not okay with eliminating the life fire and passing the marksmanship test as a component.

VOTING

Motion was made by Trish Hedin to accept Hunter Education Rule amendments as presented with the exception that they keep the marksmanship test and that the Board open an action log item to have Hunter Education update the curriculum with new learning objectives that need to be covered by instructors.

Seconded by Todd Huntington

Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Public in Attendance: 25

The next Wildlife Board meeting will take place on April 28, 2016 at 9 a.m. in the DNR Board Room at 1594 W. North Temple, SLC.

Our next RAC meeting will take place on August 3, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. at the John Wesley Powell Museum in Green River.

NORTHEASTERN RAC MEETING SUMMARY OF MOTIONS
Utah Wildlife Resources Office, 318 N Vernal Avenue, Vernal
May 14, 2016

5. BUCKS, BULLS, AND OIAL PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2016

MOTION to accept the Division's recommendation as presented

Motion passed 9 in favor with 2 abstentions

Reason: Tim Ignacio: I don't agree with the increase on the elk and I see our deer doing good for one year and we want to go in and kill them. I can't agree with that.

Mitch Hacking: I see different areas that could be handled separately. I'm not a blanket issue kind of guy. There were some good ideas brought up that we should consider.

6. ANTLERLESS PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2016

MOTION that on the private landowner permits to back off the starting date to August 15th.

Motion passed 7 to 4

Reason: Mitch Hacking, Melissa Wardle, David Gordon, Joe Arnold were willing to go with the Division's recommendation

MOTION to accept the antlerless presentation as presented with the exception of the public land tags that have already been voted on.

Motion passed 10 to 1

Reason: Jerry Jorgensen wanted the Division to exclude the moose plan for harvesting cow moose and change it to transplant moose to another area instead.

7. 2016 CWMU ANTALERLESS PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION to accept the Division's recommendations as presented

Motion passed 10 in favor, with 1 abstention

Reason: Mitch Hacking felt he was not qualified to vote about other areas of the state.

8. 2016 CWMU ANTLERLESS VARIANCE REQUESTS

MOTION to approve the recommendations as presented by the DWR for the variances

Motion passed 10 in favor, with 1 abstention

Reason: Mitch Hacking felt he was not qualified to vote.

9. R657-23 HUNTER EDUCATION RULE AMENDMENTS

MOTION to accept as presented

Motion passed unanimously

NORTHEASTERN REGION RAC MEETING SUMMARY
Utah Wildlife Resources Office, 318 N Vernal Ave, Vernal
April 14, 2016

RAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tim Ignacio, Ute Tribe
Mitch Hacking, Agriculture
Bret Prevedel, Public At-Large
Dan Abeyta, Forest Service
Andrea Merrell, Non-consumptive
Randy Dearth, NER RAC Chair
Boyd Blackwell, NER Reg. Supervisor
Jerry Jorgensen, Elected Official
Joe Batty, Agriculture
Daniel Davis, Sportsmen
Melissa Wardle, Non-consumptive
David Gordon, BLM
Joe Arnold, Public At-Large

UDWR PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Justin Shannon, SLO Big Game Coordinator
Covy Jones, SLO Pvt Lands/Public Wdlf Coord
Kirk Smith, SLO Hunter Education Pgm Coord
Dax Mangus, NER Wildlife Manager
Randall Thacker, NER Wildlife Biologist
Derrick Ewell, NER Wildlife Biologist
Clint Sampson, NER Wildlife Biologist
Amy VandeVoort, NER Wildlife Biologist
Dallon Christensen, NER Wildlife Dep.Tech
Gayle Allred, NER Office Manager
Ron Stewart, NER Conservation Outreach
Eric Miller, NER Law Enforcement
Larry Wheatcraft, NER Law Enforcement

WILDLIFE BOARD MEMBERS:

Kirk Woodward
Del Brady, former Board member

1. WELCOME, RAC INTRODUCTIONS AND RAC PROCEDURE - Randy Dearth

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES - Randy Dearth

MOTION to approve agenda

Brett Prevedel
David Gordon

Passed unanimously

MOTION to approve minutes

David Gordon
Dan Abeyta, second

Passed unanimously

3. WILDLIFE BOARD MEETING UPDATE - Dan Abeyta

Dan Abeyta: The Wildlife Board approved the COR for lobster. They also approved the bear guidebook. The NER RAC proposed a two week preseason baiting period for the bear guidebook but the Board voted for a one week preseason baiting period.

Director Sheehan gave an update on highlights: The Fish and Wildlife Service is working on a draft of the Mexican wolf management plan. The wolf will only be managed within its historic range. The Bountiful deer transplant has been going on this winter and the Division is finalizing its management plan. Most deer are being transplanted to Box Elder and Duchesne County. They have had good survival rates. Last year 200 deer were transplanted. This year 80 are planned. The Division is transplanting bighorn sheep and working on a conservation plan near Woodruff. Bison have been coming off the Ute Tribe reservation and crossing the river. They are trying to work that out. Having had a harder winter, there has been supplemental feeding of deer and turkey.

4. REGIONAL UPDATE - Boyde Blackwell

Wildlife biologist Clint Sampson cut his hair.

We're starting to gear up for the summer season and have seasonal employees coming on line.

Outreach and Recreation folks have been busy winter and spring with viewing and educational projects. 88 people attended the turkey hunting seminar with help from the NWTF folks. There has been a lot of interest in turkey hunting. 47 people came to the Loon Watch. In one group there were 75 loons on their way north. We do this yearly and it's pretty cool to watch. We had 115 archers for our first regional NASP competition. That's very exciting, getting kids out, showing them how to shoot archery and competition.

Wildlife is working hard on their sage grouse lek counts, spring deer classifications. All their capture projects are finished. They are busy doing deer classifications and finished up black bear den work this spring. They've done bison surveys and are now starting on pronghorn flights. All the biologists are doing a really good job.

Habitat: is gearing up for summer projects. Meeting with Habitat Council to nail down funding for several projects such as bull hogging, fencing, and guzzlers. Completed report on a project that is finished and written and are just waiting to get it back. We will have a presentation on that project in a future RAC meeting when we've got more time. It is on the Impacts of Paving the Seep Ridge Road on our deer herds. The road goes right through deer winter range. We'll have Ben present that to you in the near future.

Law Enforcement: Just completed an interview process to replace one of our sergeants who recently retired, Dan Barnhurst. They don't have a selection made yet but it will be made in the very near future.

Two more employees will be retiring next month. Both been extremely instrumental in the RAC process. Gayle Allred is our RAC liaison, contacting all RAC members to make sure they're aware of RAC meetings and times. We've always had a quorum and we're excited about that.

Ron Stewart is retiring in May as well. He's been here to set things up and take care of us, set up, and make sure recordings etc. are sent to SLO. Their expertise will be missed. They have shown a lot of enthusiasm for their jobs over the last 30 years.

Aquatics: is getting ramped up. Red Fleet has been treated. Last week we put in 150 crappie, 750,000 sterile walleye fry. This is the first effort that the agency has had where we've had a warm water fish from one of our own hatcheries. In the past they've come from other states, but we were able to get our own, strip our own walleye and raise the fry. We put in 10,000 10" rainbows, 8,000 8" cutthroat and 2,200 6" wipers in November. This month we put in 520 10" wipers, 750,000 fry-sized walleye, and 150 black crappie and 1000 yellow perch in all sizes. Also Aquatics are starting to work on the Pelican Lake Management plan and looking forward to resetting Pelican lake.

5. BUCKS, BULLS, AND OIAL PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2016 - Justin Shannon and Big Game Coordinator and Dax Mangus, Regional Wildlife Manager

See handout

DEER

We're proposing an increase in deer permits from 86,550 to 90,950.

No change on 9 units

Increases on 20 units.

Northeastern Region:

General season:

S Slope Yellowstone recommend increasing from 1,650 to 1,750 permits

Wasatch Mtns East recommending increasing from 4,400 to 4,800

S Slope, Bonanza/Vernal recommend increasing permits from 1,350 to 1,450 permits, with a 30/50/20 weapon split. 30% go to archery, 50% to muzzleloader and 20 to any weapon

Limited Entry Deer:

South Slope, Diamond Mountain recommend increasing permits from 76 to 86 permits

Book Cliffs

North increase from 179 to 196

South reduction from 63 to 45

Recommend an increase in muzzleloader deer permits late season.

Nine Mile, increase from 10 to 20 permits

South Slope, Yellowstone add 10 permits

Wasatch Mtns, East add 35 permits

ELK

Recommend no change in spike permits. 15,000

Recommend any bull permits go from 14,300 to 15,000 because the plan was set for 15,000.

Last year we increased youth any bull from 300 to 500. Feedback was positive. Success rates increased and hunter satisfaction rates were high. We had committed to give an update to the RACs.

Limited entry elk permit recommendations:

Decrease of 142 total limited entry permits 10% decrease because of changes in age objectives from past.

For 6 1/2 to 7 year old units:

Book Cliffs, Bitter Creek increase 139 to 152

South Slope, Diamond Mountain from 47 to 48

Nine Mile Anthro 23 down to 20

Wasatch Mountains 760 to 804

PRONGHORN

Statewide 33 permit decrease (4% decrease)

Moose 65 to 68

Bison 80 to 96

Randy Dearth: The procedure is to use comment cards if you want to make a comment on a particular topic, and get them to us. We'll have questions from RAC, then questions from the audience. Come to the microphone, state your name and if you're with a specific organization, then ask your question.

Questions from RAC:

Slide for limited entry deer in the Northeast region. On South Slope Diamond. Do we have an eyeball on every one of those and saw 49 bucks per average 100 does?

Justin Shannon: Most western states manage to a buck/doe ratio. We'll go to a unit in winter range and find representative sub samples where the deer are congregating. Once you hit 400 does, you have very good confidence in that buck/doe ratio. With the ratios, it allows you to compare where you are this year with years past. The most important part is the trend.

Randy Dearth: We're actually counting deer right?

Justin Shannon: Yes. Every deer we see. When we find the deer, we classify it as a buck, doe or fawn.

Dax Mangus: On our sample size on Diamond, we classified 1,004 deer to come up with this ratio.

Tim Ignacio: How many permits for the Nine Mile are you giving? Is there an increase on that?

Justin Shannon: Decrease of two permits.

Tim Ignacio: On the Book Cliffs, we usually give 100 bull tags on the Hill Creek side. We had to take it down to 50. I don't know how you guys are thinking that the increase. I don't agree with that at all

Dax Mangus: Little Creek permits are staying the same. The Book Cliffs Bitter Creek are a year older than what they should be with the age objectives. When we set the plans, there was a lot of balance. On these units, if we're above, we'll increase permits, if we're below with decrease permits.

Tim Ignacio: We're just across the canyon and we had to take away tags to meet that objective. I don't agree with that.

Brett Prevedel: On the late season muzzleloader deer permits

Justin Shannon: Nine Mile was 7 out of 9 permits success rate. Most of those units are right in line with limited entry hunts we have on these units.

Brett Prevedel: So if there's a dash it's a new hunt?

Justin Shannon: Yes.

Brett Prevedel: So your perception is they're taking quality bucks out of these areas.

Justin Shannon: It was not intended to be in the rut, it's in early November. This program is before the hot and heavy rut's occurring. There were good bucks taken, people were happy, but not trophy. If hunters are using double digit bonus points on these hunts and there are no other hunters out there, there's a reason.

Tim Ignacio: On the Book Cliffs, how many bucks did you think were at that age limit?

Clint Sampson: As far as flight data: count run grids, with helicopter. Age data is based on teeth. As far as overall size, we classify them as either spikes, rag horn bulls, or mature bulls. Out of 411 bulls we saw from the air, 143 we classified as mature bulls. Overall, we just take the age data and run the numbers off there.

Tim Ignacio: I know our count was way down, way, way down. What would you say Jeremy? Jeremy is our guy who does our flights and counts.

Jeremy Kidd: Down.

Justin Shannon: Taking a survey in January is much different than in September. When we survey at this time, bulls and cows are sexually segregated. Bulls select some areas, cows others. Bulls are harder to come up with. We go by teeth and show bulls harvested and age. It's tough to fly five months after the hunts have occurred and say these are the same bulls in the harvest.

Jerry Jorgensen: Open bull elk slide. I see you've raised the any bull from 14,300 to 15,000, up 700. Is it to decrease the herd? And the second part of the question is, do you think you'll even be able to sell those permits?

Justin Shannon: This is designed to provide opportunity. We've grown a lot of elk on these units. 700 is a pretty modest increase compared to the growth we've had on these units. The second part is, on spike and general, we're selling out earlier and earlier and earlier. This 15,000 is a number that is recommended in the plan, similar to spike numbers.

Jerry Jorgensen: It gets crazy on the north side, probably crazier than on the deer hunt. I don't look forward to having more hunters there because they all hunt on the road.

Daniel Davis: Some feedback on Book Cliffs bull hunt. Since we took that to a spike season and opened it up, we're maintaining an age objective but what's happened to the success rate?

Clint Sampson: Archery 46% success, muzzleloader 86% success, rifle 85% , and late season 77%. Satisfaction rates are 4.2 out of 5 from last year's data. The lowest was archery at 46% which is representative statewide. Hunters killed average bulls with roughly 6 points and 40" wide.

Daniel Davis: Second question regarding the decrease on the South Slope general season deer, limited entry deer post season buck to doe ratio declined.

Clint Sampson: We wanted to see that, to harvest bucks on the south side of the Book Cliffs. By forcing their hand to have hunters take those animals on the South Slope, it's what we wanted to see. We reduced those permits this year.

Daniel Davis: How was the success rate?

Clint Sampson: It wasn't as high as the north but I think the season dates play a role in that They hunt the last 3-4 days of the hunt. With those shorter ending dates, it was harder. This year I expect it to be really good.

Dan Abeyta: Management Deer Paunsaugunt. 9 permit increase from 16 to 25. These are managed by buck/doe ratios. Looks like it's right in the objective range. Why the increase?

Justin Shannon: Paunsaugunt is a much larger unit. We used to have 75 buck permits and buck/doe ratio was down as low as 42, so we scaled back until the trend reversed knowing that if it went up, we could give more opportunity. That's a very sought after tag, and even some who are seeking the premium hunts are saying we could give a few more of these. The plan allows for it though.

Questions from Public:

Tyrell Abegglen: Last November at this RAC meeting you said you weren't able to fly every unit every year. How are you able to justify a 4,500 deer increase?

Justin Shannon: We don't fly any of our deer units. How we justify increases is we went through the management plan process. If you're exceeding buck/doe ratios you can increase. We have biologists on every unit who conduct classification on every unit, every year where deer are highly concentrated in the breeding season.

Tyrell Abegglen: Deer on Tribal in January, February. Elk on Nine Mile in January and February, come September are on Strawberry on a completely different unit. It's kind of weird to me how we're trying to average everything out at one time of year.

Randall Thacker: We do deer classification on end of November and December on the ground and classify at least 1000 animals on every unit and see them. We see how many fawns, bucks and does, so we get that ratio. On the Yellowstone you're right, a lot of deer who move to the Tribe and back up. We've done radio collar studies. These are the same animals that move back and forth. But what matters is the breeding population, the numbers of bucks to do the breeding. We also manage by what gets harvested in the fall hunts. As long as we can maintain 17 to 21/100 buck to doe ratio, we're over objective. So we have enough bucks there. A lot of that harvest comes on the Forest. The Tribe has some too and we coordinate that. We don't make huge changes year to year. It's 6% more this year, which doesn't mean 6% more deer will die. With a 50% hunter success, there will be a 3% harvest. We have more right now that we've had in 30 years.

Tyrell Abegglen: Doing it in November, are you planning for winter kill?

Randall Thacker: We have an expectation of what mortality will be every year and calculate that in to extrapolate what the population will be every year. That's why we set the permit numbers now instead of then. We have 145 deer collared and monitor we can also extrapolate that.

Blake Bess (Sportsman): Tell me about the OIAL bison from 80 to 96, 12 permit increase.

Clint Sampson: The bison hunt went from 6 public draw permits to 12. The first hunt we had that's Book Cliffs wide is because yearling bulls from the Henries are now trophy quality. also native bulls are reaching trophy quality. Overall bull/cow ratio was 84 bulls/100 cows. We're looking, year round as far as we can best guess around 250. When we flew it in the winter we have bison that come across the canyon. We counted post season around a little over 350 adults that way. It's a difficult herd to model because we have so much transfer and seasonal migrations anywhere from 100 to 300 head in the winter, so we go by what consistently stays on the unit. We're also having more and more in the road less area itself. I'd say, as far as our bet estimate, year round we have 250 animals.

Blake Bess: And you have included sportsman tags and governors tags?

Clint Sampson: Yes

Jeremy Kidd (Ute Tribe Bison manager): On your increase for your bison permits. How many would that increase for Tribal permits exterior boundary?

Dax Mangus: We'd go on the numbers agreed to in the cooperative agreement. As soon as the numbers are finalized we run our numbers. It's basically 25% of what the State issues, the Tribe gets to offer 25% as well on exterior lands. 25% or at least 1. On the Book Cliffs unit, about 14% is exterior because the stuff down on the south end is not included. But all the numbers are in the cooperative agreement. Once the numbers are finalized we can do the calculations.

Jeremy Kidd: We only get the one permit, so I think we ought to get a few more too.

Dax Mangus: Any fraction below 1 is rounded to one. After that if it's .5 we go to the next number. We'll get with you.

Alli Bywater: Why are the any bull tags set at 15,000 instead of fluctuating like spike tags are?

Justin Shannon: As we discussed it with the committee and public process, my next presentation is going to show. Increases were on the any bull units. The spirit on any bull is to provide opportunity and that's why the decision was made to increase that.

Comments from Public:

Blake Bess (Sportsmen): We have a pretty good thing going on with bison in Book Cliffs. I hate to see them doubling tags, with 12 tags, possibly 14 could hurt us.

Alli Bywater: We were told with new hunts being added, we weren't going to add new tags. Adding a new hunt last year was to lower the number of hunters. How does it make sense to add another 4,400 tags?

Dax Mangus: If the numbers are approved, the Tribe would get two permits. For Wild Horse Bench which is exterior boundary land, would be five permits if the numbers are approved. Two for Unit-wide and five for Wild Horse Bench.

Tim Ignacio: Bison across the river who leave the unit a 50/50 split.

John Larsen (Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife): On the deer hunt, last year was an amazing year. To see the harvest percentage and the year in general, it was the best season in 20 years. We applaud the Division and conservation groups to rebuild the herds and see harvest. I still think you have to be surgical about where you increase and when you increase. We accept the plans as presented except the Manti. It's not in your back yard in this region. It's the largest unit in the state and it's still struggling. We increased it 550. We'd like you take take another look at that. Other hunters might think it's great but if you're from that area, sportsmen are struggling with

that level of increase. That unit is the newest unit and recipient of mule deer program to augment the natural production. It's got a coyote bounty and predator control, we just ask that the numbers stay the same. Increasing any bull to 15,000, SFW supports that. You have to protect that herd but if your herd is growing and doing well, why not increase. We'd like to see the youth any bull tags increased to 800 so there are more opportunity for the youth.

Jerry Slaugh (Utah Bowman's Association): Thank you for your efforts. Bowmen support the recommendations. the Division has made for the permit numbers. This is exactly what, when tags were cut years ago, it was to help the bucks survive so there was a potential to grow them more so they have an opportunity to hunt. Two of the four of my children did not get to hunt last year and I would like to see them have the opportunity and maybe one day they will grow into trophy status and prefer that but this time it was tough on them to miss out on the opportunity to hunt, and the way the preference points were working they might not get one this year. I feel the increase is minimal enough, there may be an extra 1,000 bucks harvested and will show what this did for the objectives.

Tyrell Abegglen: Alli touched on part of what I wanted to say. We added the late season hunt to lower hunters on the mountain. Here we are adding 4,400 more tags. We're going to have the same problem. Mild winters show that less deer killed one year leads to a better season the following year. Higher success rate and higher harvested bucks. We've been told we had to choose that we could have a lot of deer or big deer. I think we ought to leave this alone for another year and see where this goes.

Del Brady: I need to applaud the DWR from Sheehan, to the biologists, to Gayle. Many I've known many years. We had a great hunt last year. It started 6 to 8 years ago and we're now doing sub units. Bios are doing a fantastic job. Local biologists and Dax and Clint can help me. I think their recommendations are carrying a lot more weight than they have in the past, that means the RAC recommendations are going to carry a lot more weight than it has in the past. Diamond Mtn. landowners: handout. I've given you numbers about acres owned. Listed things we need to work on. "The value of private lands to the deer population cannot be overstated. Many crucial deer are on privately owned lands." When I first moved here I could go up to Diamond Mountain and hunt. That ended several years ago and I haven't been there since, except with a few landowner's permission. We've got to recognize private landowners have a big stake in this too and we've got to work with them too. Conclusion; mule deer are the most abundant species in Utah. It is vital section 5 conclusion. that the DWR state agencies, Native Americans... work together to protect and improve mule deer habitat... All that's happened. Diamond Mtn. landowners, because of the buck/doe ratio, the plan says we have to increase the permits. We're going to send more deer hunters up there, Mitch. 10 permits. That means these landowners have to deal with 10 more pickups up there. If it's in the plan I don't know how we can get away with

that but ... we need to work together . The landowners want a good quality hunt. It's a good unit. I would ask the board to consider what the landowners would like. I'm not one of them.

Mitch Hacking: How many of the Diamond mtn. landowners have seen this and support it? This is the first I've seen of it and I'm in livestock.

Michael Bess Sportsmen: I see you're upping the tags on the bull elk. One thing I could advise that the DWR do is put a reserve on the size in the Yellowstone unit to maybe a 4 point or better bull so we could get our breeding stock back. City folks are shooting spikes and little bulls. If you draw a tag from out of town and you get a 4 point or better that's going to make you a little bit more excited. I think it would help with breeding stock and better genes.

Comments from RAC:

Brett Prevedel: Question for Clint. I had no idea there were that many bison out there. I own bison and elk. I know how much bison eat. Are they having an impact on the habitat?

Clint: It wasn't overnight that we decided to put 450 bison in the Boo Cliffs. We have done multiple habitat projects in the Book Cliffs including water developments, guzzlers, springs, bull hog stuff.

Brett Prevedel: When's that herd going to be managed at an population instead of an age

Clint Sampson: Population objective of 450 adults. We are proposing in 2017 to have cow hunts to help manage the herd. We try to monitor it. If you look at the water along a bison can drink up to 50 gallons at one time. We're going our best to monitor that be pro active.

Daniel Davis: Question for Justin: In the Paunsaugunt, we've seen the average age of deer above 5 years decrease pretty drastically. Any info?

Justin Shannon: 53% of the bucks was the outlier. I think we've always been in the 40s, low 50s. that was a spike.

Success rates have been really good. and the quality's been really good. Randy Larsen, professor at BYU, he tells me that some and they do it blindly. He tells me some of the biggest bucks harvested are 4 years old. A lot of these bucks were 4 when they were harvested. Wed set it at 5 to ensure there was quality there, but they're being good at 4.

Daniel Davis: Hoping to see an increase in deer survival because of that fence. Any thoughts why we haven't increased the population? Has it reflected that?

Justin Shannon: When we first put that fence up, the deer were congregating there. That's worked itself out. Estimates having changed much 5200 deer in 2013 and last year we were 5,400, so it's relatively stable.

Dan Abeyta: Del, 10 permit increase and your concern. You mentioned that the landowners were going to have to deal with these extra hunters. Aren't they exempt from allowing the public on their land?

Del Brady: They take public on at their own discretion.

Dave Chivers: The people you allow on your land are not the people who are shooting our cows and breaking into your cabins.

Dan Abeyta: Central Mountains, Manti/San Rafael numbers for recommended general season permits - SER. Our buck/doe ratios went from object 15-17 went up to 23 buck/does. Permits were cut in 2012 and we' want to get the opportunity back.

Randy Dearth: How many permits have we cut since we went to the sub units. 2004 we went from 97 to 95,000 and went there for many years. I think 2010 was when we had some hard winters. We cut permits pretty drastically, and unit by unit cuts also. 84,000 permits a couple years ago for a low. High of 97,000. If you look, there were years when cuts were warranted. We had years when buck/doe ratios were declining and it made sense to make those cuts because if we're below obj. let's cut permits. Last few years we've had an increase so let's give that opportunity back.

Joe Arnold: On the Deer South Slope, Bonanza/Vernal, what is the reason for the 100 increase?

Randall Thacker: It's because most of those are going to archery and ML. The 2013 of 13 pulled the average down. You see now 17 and 18. We've been cutting tags and cutting just as many deer with less and less people. The S Slope Yellowstone is over objective by almost 1 from 18-20 and it's 20.9. All it takes is one hard winter and we lose a lot of these deer. All it takes is one hard year that takes out a lot of these and we lose them. Let's take advantage of these numbers before we have a hard winter and lose them.

Justin Shannon: Didn't we cut a lot of permits in the past?

Randall Thacker: We did a couple years in a row, took off 1,00 off the cap

Randy Dearth: What's the lifespan of a mule deer?

Justin Shannon: Females can be around 10-13, it varies regionally. Bucks can be closer to 10, 11,12. They peak, and have high quality life and then decline on antlers and body size and condition.

Daniel Davis: 2013 is when we changed the vernal south slope from 12 to 13 buck doe ratio.

Justin Shannon: The desired ratio was 15-17 but the ratio was 12-13.

MOTION

Jerry Jorgensen move to accept the Division's recommendation as presented

David Gordon: Second

Favor: 9 for

Abstentions: 2

(Tim Ignacio: I don't agree with the increase on the elk and I see our deer doing good for one year and we want to go in and kill them. I can't agree with that.)

Mitch Hacking: I say different areas that could be handled separate. I'm not a blanket issue kind of guy. There were some good ideas brought up that we should consider.

Motion passed

6. ANTLERLESS PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2016 - Justin Shannon Big Game Coordinator and Dax Mangus Regional Wildlife Manager

ELK NER recommendations

Nine Mile Antho increases from 325 to 400

Yellowstone

Diamond Mountain Vernal

Book Cliffs

Currant Creek decreases

New hunts:

Over the Counter Permits

Recommend discontinuing antlerless on Wasatch Mountains and Mt Dutton units

Private Lands Only Permits (PLO)

S Slope Yellowstone 3,000
S Slope Bonanza/Vernal 300
Nine Mile, Anthro 200
Wasatch Mtns Currant Creek 3,000
Wasatch Mtns Avintaquin 450

Pronghorn:

Moose antlerless
East Canyon, Davis-North Salt Lake 5
East Canyon, Morgan Summit 5
Ogden 5
Ogden, West 5

Questions from RAC:

Randy Dearth: on Board meeting last spring, they approved several hundred antlerless permit in Wayne County, etc. How beneficial or detrimental was that to the herd unit down there?

Justin Shannon: Are you talking Southwest Deer?

Randy Dearth: I don't know but there were county commissioners there and landowners who were afraid of a drought and had several hunted cow tags.

Justin Shannon: I think SW desert was where the bulk of that was occurring. Mt Dutton as well. We had antlerless control put on that as well. We just flew that and it was 1000 over and we saw a major influx of elk. As you map the locations, a heavy location was within 5 miles of the border of Nevada. so we're sticking with the permits we had last year.

Kirk Woodward: How has that gone over in the other RACs?

Justin Shannon: We spent a lot of time with landowners and permittees and it's gone well. We're trying to be as responsible with cow elk as we can.

Daniel Davis: In the Book Cliffs decreasing antlerless permits but still under objective. why would we have permits?

Clint Sampson: We found with collar studies that elk are very responsive to hunting pressure. There is a relatively small unit we focus hunting on. In the road less area we only give out 30

permits. Other is Book Cliffs burn area. Giving out 120 permits isn't driving it down but it's helping us manage the landscape, and hunting pressure is a great tool.

Daniel Davis: How's the trend?

Clint Sampson: It's been climbing. We have more now than we have in the last 8 years. It's not as explosive as Wasatch or other s slope herd but it's steadily growing.

Tim Ignacio: I'll take them.

Randall Thacker: Take them from Arcadia and haul them down there.

Brett Prevedel: Private land hunts slide. Are we headed for a wreck on August 1 when we have calves that are 8 or 9 weeks old?

Justin Shannon: We looked at that when we decided how early cow elk could be harvested. We did a lot of research. Idaho has had private land permits about 7 years ago. If you harvest cows, does that orphan calves? And he said they haven't seen that. Generally, after two months, these calves are 110 pounds, really good size. Peak milk production for cow elk, 50-60 days and it starts to decline. A lot of pre-rut weaning in September. If we're seeing things in Utah that are different than Idaho, we can look at these things.

Brett Prevedel: The younger calves have no chance. You're talking six, seven weeks old. The older ones, mid-May they have a slight chance. There's a big difference who wean right after labor day in calves. I think starting August 15 would achieve the same goal and not have the public relations concerns.

Justin Shannon: Behaviorally elk are herd animals. There is literature out there that says if a mom dies, then the calf can suckle on another cow and vice versa. Many calves are indiscriminate when it comes to nursing.

Brett Prevedel: But they do not thrive.

Justin Shannon: It's a concern for us. One nice thing is that a lot of hunters. .. We've had to remove in early August.

Brett Prevedel: This is a depredation hunt.

Justin Shannon: It's kind of a hybrid. Generally what we've seen, is, there's always elk on private lands. The heavy shift comes in October. Will some elk get harvested in August, absolutely. Our guess is that the bulk will happen when elk are seeking refuge on private lands.

Brett Prevedel: With the exception of south slope, I agree.

Randall Thacker: Because slope is limited to private and landowners are going to limit how many can hunt on them, they're going to regulate that and I would be surprised if we have more than a few hundred. The reason we set that number high is because we wanted to make sure the permits don't sell out, when the herds move in January. The only ones who should ever buy these are people who have written permission from landowners. I don't believe there are several thousand tags that will be sold.

Brett Prevedel: I think the desire to reduce the numbers has exceeded the science.

Daniel Davis: So permits are valid August 1 through January 31?

Yes

Daniel Davis: So are there areas where the state has had to fund landowners because of property damage?

Justin Shannon: Both. Hunters say there's no elk and we survey and yes, the numbers are there, but the elk the hunters expected to see are hung up on refuges and private lands. We've worked with many groups who have come together and we've tried to decide what we can do better what tools can we use. If we can improve upon it in the future we will but we're really trying to get it rolling.

Jerry Jorgensen: These permits are strictly going to be sold to the hunter, not to the landowner.

Justin Shannon: If I'm a landowner I could buy one, but it's not like the vouchers or CWMU, it's about public hunters and private landowners.

Jerry Jorgensen: So if a hunter buys one and wants to hunt in a perspective area, the landowner can charge a trespass fee?

Justin Shannon: Yes. I think there are pockets where that will happen. We wouldn't get in the middle of any of that.

Dan Abeyta: How has this gone over this August date in other regions? Has there been this kind of discussion and concern?

Justin Shannon: It has passed in every other region but it's a great concern. I'm glad it was brought up. Other states haven't had problems that they've documented.

Merrell: Joe Batty

Joe Batty: They are nocturnal, they're not there during the day.

Justin Shannon: Some of the depredation permits have buffer permits.

Daniel Davis: Let's talk about Diamond Mtn. They're issued private landowner permits to the landowner. Are those type of circumstances apply on top of these permits?

Dax Mangus: In the RAC packet there was an asterisk. Diamond mountain is not included in the PLO permits.

Daniel Davis: I know on Diamond, landowners get vouchers. so, does that happen on these other units as well?

Dax Mangus: Yes.

Justin Shannon: This does not replace those, it just adds another tool. In some cases, landowners don't have to prove landownership, they can just get permits but that's still on the table

Dax Mangus: I hope they do streamline the process for depredation vouchers. Instead of having to come and meet with us and do the paperwork. If they can just talk to family or friends and get permits and start hunting instead of waiting to do the paperwork and wait several weeks. If they want to get their free permits, they can still go through the process, but this will give them a quicker tool to address the damage.

Daniel Davis; The vouchers are late season vouchers. Were landowners inputs considered?

Dax Mangus: On Diamond Mountain we haven't had complaints about the way antlerless permits are issued. They can redeem them and go early or go later, it's up to them. There are still some public draw permits too that people can draw on public areas or private.

Mitch Hacking: On diamond we have a management plan. We see how many elk we've got and stick to it. It's been a good plan. Morgan and these guys have done a heck of a job for us in

Ouray. On Diamond, we manage. We count and we manage. When the elk come off Brush Creek, that's where this applies.

Daniel Davis: So they're not worried about this program?

Mitch Hacking: We have a different plan and we manage it. If all the Brush Creek people got together, they might get a management plan, but this is where this applies now. Also, if we give 72-hours notice we can give notice and kill them. We don't want that. So any tools the Fish and Game can give us, we'll appreciate it. It's another tool and it sounds like a good tool. We don't want to use our kill tool.

Questions from Public:

Tyrell Abegglen: With this mgt plan, it's a good idea, I'm just thinking August to January is a little bit much. They're already pushed with antler gathering hunters. Is there any way to not start the shed hunting until after May so there's not so much pressure. With this, there's going to be too much pressure.

Justin Shannon: With the antler gathering, years ago, we swung the pendulum to where we stopped the antler gathering and it is so difficult to enforce. We've done ethics course,. I think people forget, if you're observing this and you're seeing people harass elk, let us know because we have laws on the books and we can do something about it.

Larry Wheatcraft: If we don't get a call there's nothing we can do about it.

Tyrell Abegglen: We've called it in but we haven't heard anything about it.

Justin Shannon: Help us be successful. If you're seeing something, let us know.

Eric Miller: I've personally really been working shed hunters this year. There are people driving across the land and I've noted Wells Draw, both sides to Indian Canyon, Nine Mile canyon. ON a good note, 99 % of the people I've talked to have their certificate. But it only takes a few to make it a bad deal. The people who are doing it illegally are going to do it illegally anyway. The best way is with people who give me a call. With binoculars they let me know license plates and a few details and that's all I need.

Blake Bess: Cow Moose: What's your reasoning on this?

Justin Shannon: Where they're at or exceeding the pop. obj. I've seen on these units and some of our mahogany is getting high lined which isn't good and also coming into town. When you

have many moose who up in spring and winter and even the summer, it's a good indication that populations are expanding and kicked off. In conjunction with survey data, it's a good way to get the hunters involved.

Blake Bess: Have you taken into consideration this area? to transplant the units over objective and taking them to other areas where they're hurting.

Justin Shannon: We have hunters who have bonus points and want to hunt, we give them opportunity. We have done transplanting as well. This is something we do with problem moose and

Blake Bess: Would you waste 20 points to get a cow moose?

Justin Shannon: If I had 20 cow moose points I would.

Tyrell Abegglen: About elk control permits, clarify where they can hunt. I know of a lot who have hunted in the Book Cliffs to take the control permits.

Justin Shannon: I hope we're not too critical of our front office people and law enforcement. We have the information on line.

Comments from Public:

Blake Bess: I spent a lot of time on the San Juan unit hunting. Pretty discouraged. On the graph, the numbers don't match up. They decreased the permits by 10 tags but I don't think that's enough. I think the Division should consider decreasing more. Also about the cow moose permits. I'm not in favor of that. The average hunter doesn't want to kill a cow. If you start killing cows you're going to impact your bull hunts.

John Larsen: Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife: Thank Justin and his team for thinking out of the box on these private land permits. The whole goal is to move those elk off to public ground where we can get them. It's a big win for landowners and sportsmen. We accept the plan as presented.

Jerry Slauch (Utah Bowman's Association): Thank you for addressing the Wasatch Mtn. unit. It should have happened a couple years ago. We accept the recommendations as presented and also, a quick comment. On Southwest Desert and Nevada elk and Utah elk. I would just say that we came up with the Book Cliffs count, I would like to address that before it's an issue. Find out why the Tribe's counts are low and the other side's are high and address that up front before it become more of an issue.

Comments from RAC:

Daniel Davis: On your elk ranch, the general season archery elk hunter starts in middle of august. Would that be deferred long enough to help them survive?

Brett Prevedel: Archery I don't think would see the impact, but every week would help. At six weeks, the late calves would have no chance of survival if the calf was a June 10 calf. The May 20 would have a better chance. There are a fair number who would be in that second batch.

Jerry Jorgensen: Cow moose comments. As Blake mentioned. I would like to challenge the DWR to figure out a better way to manage the moose population than shoot cows. I know that our area in Daggett and the North Slope, that the moose population is down in that area more so than it has been in a number of years from what I'm seeing. I don't know how much effort it takes to transplant moose. It's probably a little bit of a struggle but I hate to see an animal slaughtered when there's so few and far between. Some of it might have to have to happen but I'd like to look at a different way to manage that.

Mitch Hacking: Do you have trouble in august Joe?

Joe Batty: I have elk move into my corn in July.

Mitch Hacking: It's the first part of September when we have our trouble.

Daniel Davis: Does most of the damage occur during the rut?

Mitch Hacking: It starts before the rut. They clean their horns on your corn.

Randall Thaacker: We do have depredation. Tabiona Valley, we have elk in July and into August. There are places in the region that 1st of august is an issue.

Mitch Hacking: in Brush Creek it's not a problem but Ouray's a different set of elk.

Justin Shannon: As we were picking dates, what came up is the growing season. If you're having crop damage, that's what we we're trying to minimize. Landowners wanted the opportunity to solve their problems by themselves. It's trying to balance guys who are experiencing damage. I'm glad it came up, but that's what we were trying to do is help the landowners.

Brett Prevedel: Is the cow moose separate from the bull moose preference points?

Justin Shannon: Yes. We have different points for cow vs. bull.

Brett Prevedel: It's different people. looking for different kinds, bull moose vs. meat.

Justin Shannon: Yes, different reasons for the hunts.

Joe Batty: Even though the hunt begins on August 1 or 15th, the actually kill of cow elk that will be killed will be limited,. It will be the animals that are depreddating. It's not going to have wet cows being killed. The majority of those cows will be killed later in the season.

MOTION

Brett Prevedel motion that on the private landowner permits to back off the starting date to August 15th.

David Gordon: Do you approve everything else? Or just talking about that.

Randy Dearth: No, just that.

Jerry Jorgensen: Does the landowner have the ability to get a depreddation permit in addition to this that he could start shooting whenever?

Justin Shannon: Yes. We can issue depreddation tags that start August 1

Jerry Jorgensen: Second

Mitch Hacking: You better realize if August 1 I get a bunch of elk coming into my place, I will go after depreddation, whether through vouchers or a kill permits. But you'll take away the ability for individuals to get elk. Be careful what you do because you're not going to take away the killing, you're going to take away the opportunity for other people to get the tags.

Daniel Davis: But you'll take away the public eye of lot of sportsmen out there hunting as opposed to a landowner.

Mitch Hacking: I don't know that you're going to have 2000 people out there hunting.

Joe Arnold: The concern is if we take out too many cows then we lose the fawn calf crop. How can we be ahead of that? Can you shut the numbers down if you started to see mortality in the calf crop as soon as the cows are killed?

Justin Shannon: I think likely no. because every week does help, so if you're seeing this, every week does help. Randall is very committed. the=that if this is a problem in the future, we can always set these dates back in the future. When we were with the Wasatch elk committee, etc, the idea was that for every elk harvested and decreasing landowner tolerance, that's an elk that can be drawn in another part of the unit.

Brett Prevedel: I support the concept, I'm worried about the ethical side.

Andrea Merrell: Joe Batty's concern is that they come in after hours. The DWR can come in and get them though?

Randall Thacker: One advantage to these permits compared to the landowner mitigation permits,. Those permits are good only for their property Joe has Tribal lands adjoining him. These permits are still valid on any private property that they move to, they would be vulnerable. If we remove elk after dark there's the same probability that we would have orphaned elk.

Justin Shannon: There's another public perception that has to be talked about. When we get the calls and DWR people take the elk, the public calls and says why don't you let the public take them instead ?

Vote to change the season to August 15

Favor: Tim Ignacio, Brett Prevedel, Dan Abeyta, Andrea Merrell, Jerry Jorgensen, Daniel Davis, Joe Batty

Opposed: Mitch Hacking, Melissa Wardle, David Gordon, Joe Arnold

Motion passed 7 to 4

MOTION

Jerry Jorgensen moved that the Division exclude the moose plan for harvesting cow moose and changes it to transplant them to another area.

Justin Shannon: There are some budgets and logistical things and transplants. Certainly there are options that have to be worked out but it's doable.

Melissa Wardle: Are there people putting in for cow moose tags?

Justin Shannon: Yes. There are people who have called in and said, "You keep selling me preference points and not offering a hunt. Why not?"

Motion failed for lack of a second.

MOTION

David Gordon move to accept the antlerless presentation as presented with the exception of the public land tags that have already been voted on.

Dan Abeyta second.

Favor: 10 Tim Ignacio, Brett Prevedel, Dan Abeyta, Andrea Merrell, Daniel Davis, Joe Batty, Mitch Hacking, Melissa Wardle, David Gordon, Joe Arnold

Opposed: Jerry Jorgensen

Motion passed 10 to 1

Break

7. 2016 CWMU ANTLERLESS PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS - Covy Jones, Private Lands/Public Wildlife Coordinator

Question from RAC:

None

Questions from public:

None

Comments from Public:

None

Comments from RAC:

MOTION

David Gordon move to accept as presented

Brett Prevedel: Second

Favor: Tim Ignacio, Brett Prevedel, Dan Abeyta, Andrea Merrell, Daniel Davis, Joe Batty, Mitch Hacking, Melissa Wardle, David Gordon, Joe Arnold

Abstention: Mitch Hacking. (I'm not qualified to vote.)

Motion passed

8. 2016 CWMU ANTLERLESS VARIANCE REQUESTS - Covy Jones, Private Lands/Public Wildlife

(see handout)

Questions from RAC:

Daniel Davis: The permits on the Missouri Flats, where it's a split property. Can they take all those vouchers and use it on the extended portion, or do they need to disperse them?

Covy Jones: The public hunter would have access to anything

Randy Dearth: The landowner only has to let you on two or three days and.

Covy Jones: They're supposed to work with the public hunters to allow their schedules to line up and get you there when the cows are there 3 days. If it's a buck it's 5 days.

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

None

Comments from RAC:

MOTION

David Gordon move to approve the recommendations as presented by the DWR for the variances

Melissa Wardle: second

Favor: Tim Ignacio, Brett Prevedel, Dan ABeyta, Jerry Jorgensen, Andrea Merrell, Daniel Davis, Joe Batty, Melissa Wardle, David Gordon, Joe Arnold

Abstention: Mitch Hacking (I don't know about the other areas. I'm not qualified to vote).

Motion passed

9. R657-23 HUNTER EDUCATION RULE AMENDMENTS - Kirk Smith, Hunter Education Program Coordinator

Questions from RAC:

Joe Batty: How does taking the marksmanship test out of that keeps them safe? If someone's on my property I want to know that they're proficient.

Kirk Smith: This has been the hot topic of concern. We researched the incident rates to see what effect a live fire test has on the. We are the only state that has a proficiency test. Of those states, the incident rate was 4.9. Without a live fire, the incident rate is 4.8 so statistically it's not there to say even the live fire component is critical. Marksmanship is important. That'll still be part of the course curriculum. What we have seen as part of the no minimum age for hunting is smaller and smaller students and they're struggling because the equipment doesn't fit them properly to pass the test sometimes.

Randy Dearth: I had the opportunity to attend one of the hunter safety classes and see the marksmanship test. You had to qualify on the target and if you didn't qualify, you had another round. Eventually everybody did it, but it may have taken them more times.

Daniel Davis: Are we seeing a reduction in volunteers because of the time consumption involved? Is that a key factor? Have we polled the instructors and this is a concern that they have about taking too much time?

Kirk Smith: Yes. We have a banquet for instructors and showed them this information. We have around 500 instructors. They have had the opportunity to review this and look at the new lesson plan. The majority of them support our proposal of going this direction. This slide shows the trend of what type of hunter education class the students take. Since 2003. The white is the traditional course, the tan is the online. There's just not that much interest in the traditional anymore. They're going towards the online.

David Gordon: have you noticed the ages being older?

Kirk Smith: The older people are going with the online.

The trial program that wed brought around a couple years ago, The average age is 22 years old. So that program is targeting that age group and the online also.

Mitch Hacking: Colorado just implemented a new program that you can test out online to meet their hunter education qualifications.

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

None

Comments from RAC:

MOTION

Andrea Merrell motion to accept as presented

Mitch second

Passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 10:20

Motion to adjourn

David Gordon

Joe Batty second

Next meeting: August 4, 2016

