

# Utah Wildlife Board Meeting

April 26, 2018, DNR Auditorium

1594 West North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah

The Board Meeting will stream live at <https://youtu.be/wDRjFDZK054>

## AGENDA

**Thursday, April 26, 2018, 9:00 A.M.**

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Approval of Agenda<br>– Kirk Woodward, Chairman  | <b>ACTION</b>        |
| 2. Approval of Minutes<br>– Kirk Woodward, Chairman   | <b>ACTION</b>        |
| 3. Old Business/Action Log<br>– Byron Bateman, Vice-Chair<br>Baiting of Big Game – Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator<br>COR – Power Scopes on Crossbows – Phil Gray, Licensing Coordinator | <b>CONTINGENT</b>    |
| 4. DWR Update<br>– Mike Fowlks, DWR Director  | <b>INFORMATIONAL</b> |
| 5. Use of Airbows<br>– Marvin Carlston, President of ShootingEdge   | <b>INFORMATIONAL</b> |
| 6. Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2018<br>– Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator and<br>– Regional Wildlife Manager  | <b>ACTION</b>        |
| 7. Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2018<br>– Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator and<br>– Regional Wildlife Manager  | <b>ACTION</b>        |
| 8. 2018 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations<br>– Mike Wardle, Private Lands/Public Wildlife Coordinator  | <b>ACTION</b>        |
| 9. Poaching Reward Permit Program Changes<br>– Jay Shirley, Law Enforcement Captain   | <b>ACTION</b>        |
| 10. COR Approval for Nuisance Bat Removal<br>– Kim Hersey, Nongame Mammals Coordinator  | <b>ACTION</b>        |
| 11. Other Business<br>– Kirk Woodward, Chairman   | <b>CONTINGENT</b>    |

Details of the specific recommendations can be found at [www.wildlife.utah.gov](http://www.wildlife.utah.gov)

*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act - Persons needing special accommodations (including auxiliary communicative aids and services) for this meeting, should contact Staci Coons at 801-538-4718, giving her at least five working days notice.*

**Wildlife Board Motions**

Following is a summary of Wildlife Board motions directing the Division to take action and the response to date:

**Fall 2017 - Target Date – Antlerless Public Hunt Ending Dates**

**MOTION: I move that we add to the action log a request to have the Division look at ending all Antlerless public hunts by December 31.**

Motion made by: Byron Bateman  
Assigned to: Justin Shannon  
Action: To be addressed April 26, 2018  
Status: Update September 28, 2017  
Placed on Action Log: April 27, 2017

**Spring 2018 - Target Date – Big Game Baiting Issues**

**MOTION: I move that we add to the action log item a report in spring 2018 from DWR's big game coordinator on the review of big game baiting issues.**

Motion made by: Kirk Woodward  
Assigned to: Justin Shannon  
Action: To be addressed April 26, 2018  
Status: Scheduled for the April/May 2018 RAC and Board Tour  
Placed on Action Log: August 31, 2017

**Spring 2018 - Target Date – Conservation Permit Program Audit**

**MOTION: I move that we add to the action log item a review of the conservation permit audit process that could include a rule change.**

Motion made by: Karl Hirst  
Assigned to: Greg Hansen/Kenny Johnson  
Action: Under Study  
Status: Scheduled for the May/June 2018 RAC and Board Tour  
Placed on Action Log: September 28, 2017

**Spring 2018 - Target Date – Certificate of Registration – Power Scopes on Crossbows**

**MOTION: I move that we add to the action log that the Division review eliminating a second COR request for powered scopes on crossbows when obtaining an initial COR for use of a crossbow during the archery hunt. The Division will report its findings at the April 2018 Wildlife Board meeting.**

Motion made by: Byron Bateman  
Assigned to: Phil Gray  
Action: To be addressed April 26, 2018  
Status: Scheduled for the April 2018 Board Meeting  
Placed on Action Log: January 11, 2018

**Fall 2018 - Target Date – Archery Season Dates for Elk**

**MOTION: I move that we put on the action log a review of the season date change for archery elk hunting and add a survey concerning this issue prior to the next revision of the statewide deer management plan in 2022. The Division will report back next year to look at how season date changes would look with the requested change**

Motion made by: Calvin Crandall

Assigned to: Covy Jones

Action: Under Study

Status: Scheduled for the November 2018 RAC and Board Tour

Placed on Action Log: September 28, 2017

# Utah Wildlife Board Meeting

March 7, 2018, DNR Auditorium

1594 West North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah

The Board Meeting will stream live at <https://youtu.be/v9LSISJBrdM>

## AGENDA

Thursday, March 7, 2018, Board Meeting 1:00 pm

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|--|--------------------|
| 1. Approval of Agenda<br>– Kirk Woodward, Chairman   | <b>ACTION</b>      |
| 2. Approval of Minutes<br>– Kirk Woodward, Chairman  | <b>ACTION</b>      |
| 3. Old Business/Action Log<br>– Byron Bateman, Vice-Chair  | <b>CONTINGENT</b>  |
| 4. DWR Update<br>– Mike Fowlks, DWR Director   | <b>INFORMATION</b> |
| 5. 2017 Book Cliffs – Wildlife Horse Bench Nine Mile Bison Hunt<br>– Dax Mangus, Regional Wildlife Program Manager | <b>ACTION</b>      |
| 6. Other Business<br>- Kirk Woodward, Chairman   | <b>CONTINGENT</b>  |

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**Utah Wildlife Board Meeting**  
March 7, 2018, DNR Auditorium  
1594 West North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah

**Summary of Motions**

1) Approval of Agenda (**Action**)

The following motion was made by Calvin Crandall, seconded by Kevin Albrecht and passed unanimously.

**MOTION: I move that we approve the agenda.**

2) Approval of Minutes (**Action**)

The following motion was made by Kevin Albrecht, seconded by Calvin Crandall and passed unanimously.

**MOTION: I move that we approve the minutes of the January 11, 2018 Wildlife Board Meeting.**

3) 2017 Book Cliffs – Wild Horse Bench Nine Mile Bison Hunt (**Action**)

The following motion was made by Karl Hirst, seconded by Donnie Hunter and passed unanimously.

**MOTION: I move that we accept the Division's proposal as presented to extend the hunt season for the affected 18 hunters and solve the permit numbers in the April board meeting.**

**Utah Wildlife Board Meeting**  
March 7, 2018, DNR Auditorium  
1594 West North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah  
Attendance

**Wildlife Board**

Kirk Woodward – Chair  
Byron Bateman – Vice-Chair  
Mike Fowlks – Exec Sec  
Kevin Albrecht  
Calvin Crandall  
Donnie Hunter  
Karl Hirst  
Steve Dalton

**Division Personnel**

Mike Canning  
Rory Reynolds  
Bill Bates  
Justin Shannon  
Mike Christensen  
Paul Gedge  
Staci Coons  
Thu Vo-Wood  
Greg Hansen  
Martin Bushman  
Boyde Blackwell  
Bryan Christensen  
Justin Dolling  
Chris Wood  
Guy Wallace  
Dax Mangus  
Covy Jones  
Kenny Johnson  
Lindy Varney  
Phil Gray  
Chris Wood  
Brad Crompton  
Ben Nadolski  
Scott White  
Mike Wardle  
Darren DeBlois

**Public Present**

Tim Hunt  
Tonya Hunt  
Stan Jones  
Frank Parry  
Juli Parry  
Sarah Marchant  
Rob Hunt  
Ray Zeeman  
Ashton

**Utah Wildlife Board Meeting**  
March 7, 2018, DNR Auditorium  
1594 West North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah  
<https://youtu.be/v9LSISJBrdM>

- 00:00:24** Chairman Woodward called the meeting to order.
- 00:02:19** **1) Approval of Agenda (Action)**  
The following motion was made by Calvin Crandall, seconded by Kevin Albrecht and passed unanimously.  
**MOTION: I move that we approve the agenda as presented.**
- 00:02:52** **2) Approval of Minutes (Action)**  
The following motion was made by Kevin Albrecht, seconded by Calvin Crandall and passed unanimously.  
**MOTION: I move that we approve the minutes of the January 11, 2018 Wildlife Board Meeting.**
- 00:03:16** **3) Old Business/Action Log (Contingent)**  
No items to discuss.
- 00:03:37** **4) DWR Update (Informational)**  
Mike Fowlks talked about the helicopter incident at one of the transplant and capture projects, legislative issues, and the big game application period.
- 00:09:10** **5) 2017 Book Cliffs – Wild Horse Bench Nine Mile Bison Hunt (Action)**  
Dax Mangus presented the bison hunt issue.
- 00:18:44** **Board Questions**  
The Board asked for clarification about the hunter who did not submit a report. They also asked about adjustment to permit numbers, hunt boundary changes, bison movements, and application numbers.
- 00:27:12** **Public Questions**  
Public questions were accepted at this time.
- 00:32:54** **Public Comments**  
Public comments were accepted at this time.
- 00:39:51** **Board Discussion**

Chairman Woodward summarized the matter. The Board continued to discuss the effects of extending the hunt season for a handful of hunters, considered factors that lead to this point and options to address the matter.

The following motion was made by Karl Hirst, seconded by Donnie Hunter and passed unanimously.

**MOTION: I move that we accept the Division's proposal as presented to extend the hunt season for the affected 18 hunters and solve the permit numbers in the April board meeting.**

**00:56:30**     **6) Other Business (Contingent)**

None.

**00:57:24**     Meeting adjourned.

DRAFT

**Regional Advisory Council Meeting  
Summary of Motions  
March/April 2018**

**Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2018**

**NRO: Motion** – Recommend the Wildlife Board reduce the permits for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep at the Central Mountains/Nebo/Wasatch Mountains unit from three to one.  
**Motion Passes** - 11 in Favor, 1 Opposed

**Motion** – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Division’s proposal for deer permits with the exception to decrease the Central Mountains/Manti/San Rafael proposal by 200, as well as keeping the Pine Valley unit the same as last year rather than increasing it.

**Motion Fails** - 2 in Favor, 10 Opposed

**Motion** – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Division’s proposal for deer permits with the exception to decrease the Central Mountains/Manti/San Rafael proposal by 200.

**Motion Passes** - 11 in Favor, 1 Opposed

**Motion** – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Division’s proposal for elk permits as presented with the exception to keep the Manti/Fish Lake/Monroe units the same as they were last year.

**Motion Fails** - 2 in Favor, 10 Opposed

**Motion** – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Division’s proposal for elk permits as presented.

**Motion Passes** - Unanimous

**Motion** – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Division’s proposal for pronghorn permits as presented.

**Motion Passes** - Unanimous

**Motion** – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Division’s proposal for OIAL permits and the remainder as presented.

**Motion Passes** - Unanimous

**CRO: Motion:** To reduce deer permit recommendation for the Chalk Creek/East Canyon/Morgan-South Rich Unit from 9,000 to 8,000 (1,000 permit reduction).

**Motion Passes** – 6 to 4

**Motion:** To reduce deer permit recommendation for the Central Mountain, Manti/San Rafael Unit from 8,800 to 8,600 (200 permit reduction).

**Motion Passes** – 6 to 4

**Motion:** To reduce elk permit recommendation for the Plateau, Fish Lake/Thousand Lakes Unit from 201 to 192 (9 permit reduction).

**Motion Passes** – 5 to 4 with the chairman voting to break the tie

**Motion:** To reduce Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep permit recommendation for the Central Mountains, Nebo/Wasatch Mountain Units from 3 to 2 (1 permit reduction).

**Motion Fails** – 1 to 9

**Motion:** To accept the remainder of the Division's proposals as presented.

**Motion Passes** - Unanimous

**SRO: Motion for Deer:** Accept the DWR recommendations for deer with the exception of Pine Valley - monitor the new hunt for 1 year before increasing tags

◦**Motion to amend** the original motion to include the reduction of 250 permits on the Manti

◦**Amendment passes** 10-0

**Original Motion Passes:** Amended motion passes 8-2

**Motion for Elk:** Approve elk recommendations with the exception of keeping the Monroe bull tags at 37

◦Attempt to Amend motion to also keep tags the same as last year on the Fish Lake and the Manti - fails for lack of 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Motion Passes:** Motion passes 7-3

**Motion for OIAL:** Accept the balance except reduce sheep tags on the Wasatch units from 3 to 2

**Motion Passes:** Passes 9-1

**SER: Motion:** To leave the number of Book Cliffs deer permit unchanged from 2017

**Motion Passes** unanimously

**Motion:**To reduce the number of general season buck deer permits on the Manti Unit by 250

**Motion Passes** unanimously

**Motion:**To leave the number of deer permits for the Pine Valley Unit unchanged from 2017

**Motion Passes** 9-3

**Motion:**To leave the number of limited-entry elk permits on the Manti Unit unchanged from 2017

**Motion Passes** 11-0 (1 abstention)

**Motion:**To leave the number of bighorn sheep permits for the Wasatch, Nebo and Central Mountain units unchanged from 2017

**Motion Passes** unanimously

**Motion:**To accept the remaining Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2018 as presented

**Motion Passes** 11-0 (1 abstention)

**NER: Motion** to decrease Big Horn Sheep tags on the Wasatch Nebo unit from three to two.

**Motion Passes** unanimously

**Motion** to decrease South Manistiquette Deer Permits by 200.  
**Motion Passes** nine in favor and one abstained

**Motion** to lower Monroe Elk Permits recommended by the Division and keep permit numbers the same as 2017.  
**Motion Passes** five in favor, four opposed and one abstained

**Motion** to reduce Book Cliffs Bitter Creek Elk permits by 13.  
**Motion Fails – with the chairman breaking the tie.**

**Motion** to accept the remainder of the Divisions proposals.  
**Motion Passes** nine in favor and one opposed

### **Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2018**

#### **NRO, CRO, SER, NER:**

**Motion** – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Division’s proposal as presented.  
**Motion Passes** - Unanimous

**SRO: Motion:** Motion to ask the wildlife Board to look into the impacts that muzzle-loader deer hunters that also have cow tags are having on trophy bull hunters  
**Motion Passes:** Passed 7-3

**Motion:** To accept the recommendations as presented  
**Motion Passes:** Unanimous 10-0

### **2018 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations**

#### **NRO, CRO, NER:**

**Motion** – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Division’s proposal as presented.  
**Motion Passes** - Unanimous

**SRO: Motion** – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Division’s proposal as presented.  
**Motion Passes** – Unanimous 9-0 with 1 Abstention

**SER: Motion** – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Division’s proposal as presented.  
**Motion Passes** - Unanimous 11-0 with 1 Abstention

### **Poaching Reported Reward Permit Program Changes**

#### **ALL REGIONS:**

**Motion** – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Division’s proposal as presented.  
**Motion Passes** - Unanimous

**Northern Regional Advisory Council  
March 28, 2018  
Brigham City Community Center  
Brigham City, Utah**

**Draft Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Begins: 6:02 p.m.**

**RAC Present**

John Blazzard- Agric.  
Paul Chase- Forest Service  
Christopher Hoagstrom- Noncon.  
Randy Hutchison- At Large  
Aaron Johnson- Sportsman  
Matt Klar- At Large  
Mike Laughter- Sportsman  
Kevin McLeod- At Large  
Justin Oliver- At Large  
Darren Parry-Shoshone Nation  
Kristin Purdy- Noncon.  
Bryce Thurgood- At Large  
Mellissa Wood-BLM

**DWR Present**

Jodie Anderson  
Nicaela Haig  
Justin Dolling  
Covy Jones  
Randy Wood  
Rick Olson  
Dave Beveridge  
Kent Hersey  
Dave Rich  
Scott Walker  
Mike Wardle  
Jace Taylor  
Chad Wilson  
Devin Christensen  
Eric Anderson

**Wildlife Board**

Byron Bateman

**RAC Excused**

**RAC Unexcused**

David Earl- Agric.  
Chad Jensen- Elected

**Agenda:**

Welcome, RAC Introductions and RAC Procedure  
Approval of Agenda and December 6, 2017 Minutes  
Wildlife Board Meeting Update  
Regional Update  
Use of Air bows  
Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2018  
Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2018  
2018 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations  
Poaching Reported Reward Permit Program Changes

### **Item 1. Approval of Agenda**

-Bryce Thurgood, Chair

Agenda Approved

### **Item 2. Approval of Dec 6, 2017 Minutes**

-Bryce Thurgood, Chair

Minutes approved as circulated.

### **Item 3. Wildlife Board Meeting Update**

- Bryce Thurgood, RAC Chair

Bryce Thurgood: December 11th meeting. First motion was to add action log for division to review eliminating a second COR request on powered scopes on crossbows when obtaining a COR for a use of a crossbow during archery hunt. The division will report findings at the April 2018 wildlife board meeting. That passed unanimously. The first item of business that was related to us was that they accept the 2018 black bear recommendations and rule amendments as presented by the division including the proposal by the Utah Houndsman Association on the La Sal and San Juan units for Fall season dates of August 6-November 16th with hound hunting restrictions from August 18-24, September 8-25 and October. Any weapon general season elk and deer hunts. That motion was made and passed unanimously. There was a motion that the Bookcliffs be included in the original motion which passed 5-1. They brought up a few other points that related to whole bear agenda. Basically, it all got repealed. There was a motion that they negate the previous 2 motions but accept divisions recommendation amendments as presented. That is what passed 5-1. They had a few things to work out before making changes they wanted to so it got passed as presented. There was a motion to accept the CWMU advisory committee which passed unanimously.

### **Item 4. Regional Update**

- Justin Dolling Regional Supervisor

Wildlife- Biologists out conducting sharptail and sage grouse lek counts. Spring deer classifications. Working with the habitat section to do some spring range assessments in April. Spring pronghorn flights completed last week. Rich county counts are slightly below population objective.

Aquatics- Working on spawning walleye at Willard as an effort to collect and fertilize eggs and put into our hatchery system. Tiger muskie statewide is good.

Great Salt Lake Program- Record harvest year for brine shrimp, 35 million pounds. biologists conducting bird and brine shrimp surveys. Waterfowl crew conducting waterfowl summit April 4th in Salt Lake office. Working with contractors to roll phragmites as an alternate to burning. Successful carp treatment at Farmington Bay.

Habitat- Working with mule deer foundation on project at Middlefork WMA planting 3,000 seedlings. Funding meetings for WRI projects coming up.

Outreach- Community fisheries programs getting ready to kick off with ongoing training for communities. Turkey clinic this Saturday at Hardware Ranch.

Law Enforcement- Trust pass issues on WMA's.

### **Item 5. Use of Airbows**

- Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator; Steve Rowell, Shooting Edge

#### **See RAC Packet**

Bryce Thurgood: The reason why you are here is because it doesn't fall into one of the rules technically that the division has for the any weapon?

Martin Carlston: It is not defined. There is nothing that says it can't be but nothing defined. We are trying to take the uncertainty out of the use of this air gun and make sure it is well defined as a big game hunting tool. We are proposing it be classified as a legal weapon with the description of what it is.

Mellissa Wood: In the presentation, it said it was a primitive weapon. It looks pretty high tech to me so what does that mean to you?

Martin Carlston: What is really means is that you have the muzzleloader which we consider a primitive weapon. it is merged into new technology but is still classified as a primitive weapon. This gun was actually originally invented in the

1580's. It is as old as the flint lock. It was used before gun powder was perfected. That is why it is classified in the primitive weapon. It has limited capabilities. It is not a high powered rifle and does not have the ability to shoot 500 yards like modern day muzzleloaders do. Similar to early model muzzleloaders.

Mellissa Wood: Thank you.

Mike Laughter: What is the effective range?

Martin Carlston: 0-100 yards is pretty effective. We do not recommend anything past that. You are getting a lot of drop out of it.

Justin Oliver: Are you looking to have this weapon used during the muzzleloader season or the any weapon season?

Martin Carlston: Right now, we are proposing an any weapon season. In the future, we would propose for use during the muzzleloader season.

Bryce Thurgood: Justify taking big game animal during any weapon season.

Matt Klar: I am assuming this is commercially available now?

Martin Carlston: Yes. All the major air gun manufacturers are designing their guns to shoot these air bolts. We have had a lot of good public input on it. There are videos that have gone viral. We are over 9 million views right now.

Matt Klar: Has this been classified in other states?

Martin Carlston: Yes, Texas was the last state to allow it. There are 9 other states it is already allowed. Some of the other states are just classified as a primitive weapon to be used in a primitive weapon season. We are having great success in the field with it and public likes it.

Matt Klar: Are these mostly whitetail states?

Martin Carlston: Mostly whitetail states.

Randy Hutchinson: How many states have actually approved it?

Martin Carlston: I believe it is 12 now. Texas came on in the last few weeks. I can't quite name all of them.

Randy Hutchinson: I'm not certain what niche you are going for to fulfill.

Martin Carlston: It is for young hunters. Hunters that have been injured and cannot shoot high powered rifles or bows. It adds another option for them. Typically, they are low energy guns. Low energy projectiles wound animals but don't take them down. With a use of an arrow, it makes it capable to take any large game.

Brian Jones: I have shot archery and muzzleloader for the last 35 years. Looking to add into the muzzleloader world because it is an assisted fire method of an arrow so it does not fit into the archery world but is an archery projectile. I would think you would also have the archery requirements for broadhead size and all of that to make sure your wound is sufficient. You would need to merge those two if you were to go with putting it into the any weapon or muzzleloader world. You need to make sure you keep those rules, otherwise you are going to have problems.

Bryce Thurgood: Sure.

John Blazzard: wondering about the Pittman Robertson tags on firearms. Would this apply?

Martin Carlston: Yes, it actually does. We missed it on the slide but there was some concerns about that. The arrow being an arrow, does pay the tax. The broadhead being part of that also pays a tax. The gun is currently not taxed. We are working on adding that to the Pittman Robertson Act on 35 calibers and larger that would be used for big game hunting. If you look at revenue generated from the use of a muzzleloader, there is a onetime tax on that at the lowest wholesale price of 11%. On arrows, it is a recurring tax.

John Blazzard: I wasn't worried about revenue, I was just worried about fairness.

Martin Carlston: I think it is being covered in the fairness side of it.

John Blazzard: I'm sure a lot of people like the revenue, right?

Martin Carlston: Yeah.

John Blazzard: Right. Okay.

Justin Oliver: If someone were to have this rifle and wanted to hunt the state of Utah, would it be considered illegal?

Covy Jones: No, it's not illegal weapon right now. The division wanted public input. We are really neutral on this right now. Before we took a stance, we wanted to hear what everyone thought.

Matt Klar: Are you in the process of conducting any type of survey?

Covy Jones: We thought we would take it through the public process first and see where it went from there. If there is no desire to do it, there is no need to put in a survey.

Kristin Purdy: 12 states have approved use of this weapon, wouldn't it be appropriate to request survey results from those states if they have surveyed current archery and muzzleloader hunters to see what they think of it.

Covy Jones: I can understand that. This is really a social issue about Utah people. A lot of the eastern states use crossbows in their archery season but Utah hunters don't like that.

Bryce Thurgood: I agree, this will never hit the archery season. This would be strictly any weapon. If someone wants to go out and try a gun that is 50-60 yards and you are competing against someone with an 800 yard rifle, knock yourself out. There is no advantage. We can pass onto the division we are open to exploring this.

## **Item 6. Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2018**

- Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator and Regional Wildlife Manager

### **See RAC Packet**

### **Public Questions**

Troy Justinson: What did we do for bighorn sheep as far as the Wasatch and Nebo in combining those?

Covy Jones: Wasatch and Nebo were always hunted together. We were concerned about alternating and it can be problematic. In order to avoid that and create more fairness, we lumped that unit in and create a very large unit to allow more opportunity to harvest sheep.

Troy Justinson: How many permits are you recommending for that?

Covy Jones: 3 permits.

Troy Justinson: With the potential of the sportsman tag, we also have to issue a tribal tag correct?

Covy Jones: Correct.

Troy Justinson: There is a potential of 6 rams being killed on any one unit correct?

Covy Jones: That is correct.

### **RAC Questions**

Bryce Thurgood: Do you see that as a problem that we take possible 6 off of one unit and one unit is going to get targeted and hurt that unit in particular?

Covy Jones: There are portions that are easier to hunt than others. If all 6 sheep are taken out of Rock Canyon, I can see that as a problem. That is worse case scenario. I don't know if that would happen. After the larger sheep are harvested, I think hunters would try harder on the more difficult areas. That is just me assuming. Could it handle 6 sheep harvest year after year, probably not. Keep in mind, the sportsman's permit and the statewide conservation permit, they can hunt any rock unit across the state and probably would not hunt here if they didn't have the potential to harvest a larger animal.

Bryce Thurgood: Do you think, going back to the deer, the bulk of the increase on the whole deer is putting on the Morgan/South Rich correct?

Covy Jones: It is 1,700 permits.

Bryce Thurgood: Which is the bulk. 2,300 across the whole unit. Do you think that is going to create a crowding problem? In turn, create a huge problem with hunter satisfaction on that unit particularly.

Covy Jones: I would like the region to answer this question.

Randy Wood: That is actually 3 units. The reason we run those together is because of the makeup of private land. Most of it is private land. An actual general season rifle hunt, there is going to be a decrease in permits there. We are recommending adding an early 5 day season during the elk hunt which will pull more of those hunters into there. In the general season hunt, we are looking at a decrease of 700 plus permits. That should decrease the crowding there. It is mostly private lands.

Bryce Thurgood: 1,700 people for the most part, would be going on public lands. Private lands are not going to change their numbers on the people they allow. Will those people target the public land?

Randy Wood: I don't know that. Do we know what the percentage is?

Covy Jones: I don't know. That early season hunt, deer move on all units. The timing of this hunt is different and you are going to catch bucks in different places. The opportunity is there.

Randy Wood: If you look at the 1,700 and just think of it over 3 units, it is an increase of 570 per unit. We manage that way but that is maybe a little different way to look at it.

Bryce Thurgood: There are 3 units in that line. So, 570 on average per unit. Overall, it is 1,700.

Justin Oliver: When is the deer management plan up?

Covy Jones: Next year.

Justin Oliver: Would the division consider taking the Morgan, South Rich, Chalk Creek, East Canyon Unit and look at it different than buck to doe ratio. I feel you are getting false data with that unit. There is so much private ground, the public ground is being hammered because the buck to doe ratio is so high on those units. Is that something the division might consider?

Covy Jones: We have talked about some ideas on this. We would definitely be open to looking at other strategies to get harvest to manage for what we have agreed to manage to.

Justin Oliver: I understand what you are up against.

Covy Jones: Let's look at some new ideas.

Justin Oliver: Have you been able to see the data on these limited entry late season tags?

Covy Jones: That is all in. I have not looked at it or separated it out. We ended up with 470,000 applications for big game but have not seen it split out as to what individuals applied for. I have just seen the net.

Justin Oliver: Same with mid-season. Is there interest in the early two season deer tags as opposed to the regular yet?

Covy Jones: I haven't seen it yet. I have just seen the lump. We can get you that information.

Bryce Thurgood: Are you asking if people with a lot of points are putting in for the muzzleloader hunts?

Justin Oliver: I asked 2 questions.

Covy Jones: We already know that from previous years. They are spending a lot of points on the late muzzleloader hunts. At least 15 that hunters spent on late season muzzleloader hunts. Satisfaction has been high.

Justin Oliver: Just as far as the 2 part season, I am just curious if we have noticed what people were trying to get in the first season ?

Covy Jones: We are planning on allocating 20% of permits to that season. Before, our normal breakdown was 20/20/60. We are going to 20/20/20/40.

Mike Laughter: On the Cache, was there any consideration in reducing tags. Is it because it was the 15 that falls into the management plan that kept it from seeing a reduction?

Covy Jones: That is not the only reason. The same thing this year we did on the San Juan, we did last year on the Cache. Because of that cut, we came in right where we needed to. We have good survival this year.

Mike Laughter: Ok.

Aaron Johnson: Is the Box Elder in predator management?

Covy Jones: That is a regional question.

Randy Wood: No, it's not.

Randy Hutchinson: You said that you reduced the Cache County last year. Do you recall what the reduction was? What they are harvesting this year, it would have carried over from last year.

Covy Jones: There were not many fawns harvested. We went from 7,100 to 6,600 last year as we saw that fawn mortality go down.

Randy Hutchinson: That was my concern and I was surprised there was not another cut. Is that enough of a cut?

Covy Jones: I understand the concern. What is fawn survival on the Cache this year Kent?

Kent Hersey: Mid-60s.

Covy Jones: We have good fawn survival. We feel like it will handle the harvest at this number of permits.

Bryce Thurgood: The division is doing a study up there just recently.

Covy Jones: Yes.

Bryce Thurgood: Could you comment on that? That relates to the Cache.

Covy Jones: I think I will let Kent comment on that.

Kent Hersey: We have been monitoring survival on adults and fawns from 6 months to 1 1/2 years since 2007. We have been using GPS collars since 2015. Along with that, when we met with some sportsman, there was concern over what is going on with our population and lack of growth. We don't know what is happening with newborn fawns and why fawn to doe ratios are in the 60's some years and have been in the 80's or up to 100. We started a study to look at fawn survival. We have put vaginal implant transmitters in 25doe this past March. That will help us locate the fawns shortly after they are born in June and figure out what is going on. It will help us manage and increase fawn production.

Covy Jones: In addition to that, I should thank Jim Christensen. When we took body condition scores on the Cache this year, they were the fattest deer. That is a good thing.

Bryce Thurgood: I think a lot of credit goes to sportsman in Logan and the division. This is pretty cool.

Covy Jones: Absolutely.

Bryce Thurgood: New projects that have not been done before.

Mellissa Wood: For pronghorn, Justin presented that the Cache, Morgan, South Rich, Ogden unit surveys for population were underneath where the management plan has us at, yet we have increases in all hunts for that.

Covy Jones: This is a statewide perspective. The breakdown of those. Do you have those numbers Randy?

Mellissa Wood: I have them if you want them? Do you want me to tell you what they are?

Covy Jones: Sure, let's make sure we don't tie buck harvest to populations.

Bryce Thurgood: Because we are changing the way we manage plans.

Covy Jones: Yes, again adult survival of pronghorn. Pronghorn max in horn growth at about 3. They are 90% there at 2. They have 25% mortality every year after that. You take 2 years and lose all of that opportunity.

Randy Wood: I didn't find it but I remember when they got done flying, they had a ruling increase in buck numbers. So, they wanted to increase those to bring that down. It also goes back to what Covy talked about. We changed how we managed pronghorn from a ratio to an age class.

Covy Jones: For the population, that is the doe harvest.

## Public Comments

Darwin Bingham: You have done well in managing the deer, elk, pronghorn and all but there is a part you are not managing and that is your losses. You are not paying attention to what is causing your losses. When you lose fawns, pronghorns and elk, why are you not doing a study and check the bellies of your coyotes and cats? We have private property. Could we work something where the division goes in and works with the private property people and maybe get some value out of that and let you come in a hunt if you work the coyote problem. It is predator control and if you had an objective on those, you would never come close to it. Anything I can do to help, I would be glad.

Brian Jones: I agree with Darwin on the lions. When you see your population numbers, buck to doe ratio go down, one way to help level that is increase your lion permits. They like to take 1-2 per week. Your 3 year average, you ought to weight those. Your numbers 3 years ago tells you something but it is your trend that tells you more about what is going on with your herd. I am ready to go out and spend the time and money to go and do a OIAL and have put in for moose and have tried to buy points on a goat but was told I can't. I can only choose one. Seems like you could increase revenue if you would let me buy points. Seems like residents should have the same opportunity to put in for more than just one per year.

Troy Justinson (SFW): Let me tell you how we came up with our recommendations. When we have something like this come along, we invite the division to speak to our group. This is not something that I come up with, this is input from these people that live in those regions. We support the divisions recommendations with the following exceptions. Our concern is the Wasatch is going to hit hard and over harvested. We would recommend that only one permit be given, 2 at the most. We are also concerned with Pine Valley, recommend to keep permit numbers the same as last year. By having early rifle hunt, will cause deer to move and it will increase harvest on later hunt. Keep status quo for one more year to see the effect of early rifle season. We would like to see 250 permits cut from Manti even though we fall in that buck to doe ratio. That herd is below objective. We have an issue on the south Manti. Ask that the bull permits stay the same for elk on the Manti, Fish Lake and Monroe.

## RAC Comments

Kevin McLeod: I recognize and have become concerned about youth opportunity in Utah. There are some programs that have helped that. The deer seem to be kind of left out of that. We have lowered the age limit to hunt deer and big game. I would like to propose, and have the committee at least look at, that the division do a study based on the concept that youth of hunting age up to 17 that they can buy a deer permit over the counter. We all recognize that our future is our youth. We want to keep it going and that is an important part of my life and I want it to be an important part of my grandkids. The thought of allowing youth to purchase a permit over the counter is a pretty big deal. How does it affect the overall permit numbers and the harvest and all those kinds of things. That is why I ask if we could forward a recommendation or proposal to the Wildlife Board to approve or request a study from the division, to look at it, I think there are a number of ways that permits could be changed and allocated differently to allow that kind of thing to happen. Even if it is every other year or other things that can be looked at. If youth gets a permit to hunt deer, dad is going. It is a family thing again.

Bryce Thurgood: On the general deer hunt, how many kids from 12-17 draw vs. don't draw? We could maybe send that to the deer committee and have them look at it further. I can see some units getting abused but I agree for the most part.

Kevin McLeod: I would hope it would be worth a study.

Bryce Thurgood: Yes.

Melissa Wood: The numbers and packet that was presented for the RAC to look at, it would be really helpful for every single category to have objective for specific animals on specific units.

John Blazzard: I agree with Kevin about the youth hunting. I don't think it would make a whole lot of difference in the harvest but give them more chance to get out and hunt with the family. I agree with the concept of buying points for OIAL. We allow non-residents to put in every year for every species. I don't see what that would hurt.

Bryce Thurgood: My own personal answer to that question is if I am putting in for desert sheep and I have 15 or 16 points and I am applying to get that tag, say somebody else finally draws their moose tag and all of a sudden they get dumped in and have 15 or 16 points, it makes others odds worse of drawing that OIAL tag. If we keep it to that one species, then it increases my chances of drawing that OIAL. I can't speak for non-residents.

John Blazzard: The only chance you have to draw out is when you put in right?

Bryce Thurgood: Yes, so you have to put in?

John Blazzard: The numbers would go up in every species that is desirable, true?

Bryce Thurgood: But the odds would get incredibly worse.

John Blazzard: I don't think the odds would change if you are only selling one moose permit in Kamas if someone has 3,000 points. They still only have once chance to get that permit. That is something I kind of agree with. I also agree with the predator issue on fawn survival. A bobcat killed a deer right on the highway in front of the Kamas hatchery a while back. I think we definitely have a predator problem. This last winter should show a difference in survival rate but I don't know if it is going to show too much of a difference.

Bryce Thurgood: I hunt coyote in Idaho and there is no bounty. In Utah, there is a bounty to encourage people to go do it. I think people take advantage of that and it helps. These guys doing studies why they are losing them will help us know.

Covy Jones: We don't present everything here but I put some extra slides in antlerless because predation falls more on population. For all the deer we collar, the second there is a mortality it comes back to us. We get cause specific mortality on every animal. We have some unidentified but that allows us to not throw money at things that are not the cause.

John Blazzard: Utah is paying bounty for a lot of Nevada coyotes.

Bryce Thurgood: If they get caught with that, there is possible fines and jail time.

Covy Jones: We caught several last year and it is a felony of misappropriation of funds.

Aaron Johnson: I respect the work the DWR does and I generally side with the science 90% of the time and I side with it today. I am concerned about Box Elder unit. It seems like the trend is going down and they increased it by 400. Our last RAC, they said the Northern Regions 84% private property includes Box Elder. Some of the concerns you had, a large increase like that might develop some negative social issues. Bookcliffs is in predator management, yet they increased the tags by 35 which is not a lot but is a premium hunt. You fit within the buck to doe ratio but I think you are well below the objective level of the total number. I have a concern increasing that a little bit.

Justin Oliver: I have kids finishing hunter safety now and as you look at trends of Utah and our population, it said to be 5 million within 50 years. Unfortunately, there is no way around that we will not have enough resource to accommodate every kid that wants to do that. I am entering my kids in Utah but doing everything I can to hunt other states. There is only so much resource we can deal with. We have to preserve it and I think as we give too many tags, it doesn't matter if it is youth or not, we could damage our resource. It is a difficult and will continue in the future. I applaud the division and I'm sure they are looking into the future. If we want to continue to hunt and have our children hunt, we will have to evolve with the resource available. The way things are going right now with firearms and everything, we may all be hunting with bolts if we don't have firearms.

Darren Parry: I wish we were a little more friendly to the archery people. This is just observations over the years. You should be able to buy an archery tag over the counter any time. Success rate is so low that I cannot imagine we would put a dent on any populations. There are states around us that use the archery hunt for elk that ends before the rut begins. The rut is in the any weapon. It seems like we are doing our archery people a disservice.

Kevin McLeod: We cater to and look at a lot of special interest. The division has to do that and we do that as a society. Our youth ought to be our number one special interest because that is our future. As far as the points and draws, I think we all realize that a management permit is a OIAL anymore. I understand the complexity and how we need to manage the resource but I think we ought to manage the resource with the highest level of harvest we can. We can give youth the opportunity to get out and do that.

Bryce Thurgood: Percentages of permits that get issued?

Covy Jones: It is still more permit numbers.

Bryce Thurgood: When we come to issue so many tags, lets issue this percentage to the kids. At that time, not particular permit numbers.

Covy Jones: Everyone is aware that youth can buy an archery tag for deer over the counter right? They get 20% of the draw off the top and get put back in the draw and get a chance to draw again. Just wanted to make sure everyone understand.

Kevin McLeod: There is a mentor program.

Bryce Thurgood: Sheep are a pretty fragile resource and I would hate to see one area get targeted and hit bad. It is visible and accessible. I hope someone would take that into consideration on that Wasatch hunt. The division has done a great job building the deer herd back up. We don't want to put a lot of people and set them up for a crappy camping trip.

Justin Oliver: As far as this sheep unit where we have combined them, is that looked at that you could go back to 3 separate units?

Covy Jones: Not right now. We don't intent to split that out right now.

Bryce Thurgood: The only thing we can do is adjust numbers.

Justin Oliver: I'm in a hard place to make a motion because of that one thing.

John Blazzard: I'd be glad to try. I would make a motion to commend the division for their study and efforts.

Recommendation to approve the bucks, bulls and OIAL as presented with the caveat that they take a look at the combination of those sheep hunts and analyze which is the best way to go as far as splitting those out.

Bryce Thurgood: In relation to this particular meeting, to address it, the only thing you could do is say to decrease numbers. We can't look at breaking up seasons until next fall.

John Blazzard: If you say we go back to the year before number which is one less, right?

Bryce Thurgood: We can't go back to the year before because it was not combined the year before. The division is recommending 3. The only thing we can do is recommend either 1,2 or 3.

Aaron Johnson: We are talking about Rocky Mountain big horn sheep Central Mountains/ Nebo/ Wasatch Mountains unit.

Bryce Thurgood: since he has a motion, either we have to address his or we have to have him withdraw.

John Blazzard: I would be glad to have him add that language to my motion.

Bryce Thurgood: You can either amend his motion or withdraw and let him state it.

Aaron Johnson: I have a new motion unless he wants to amend his own.

Bryce Thurgood: Are you good with that?

John Blazzard: I'm glad to have him amend it, yes. My motion is we approve the buck, bulls and OIAL with the exception of the rocky mountain big horn sheep Central Mountain/ Nebo/ Wasatch Mountain. We have experts that say we should sell 3 permits there. Obviously there is heartburn.

Bryce Thurgood: We have a motion on the table but do we have a second.

Matt Klar: I'll second.

Bryce Thurgood: Now we can discuss the motion.

Aaron Johnson: I wanted to propose a different motion. Maybe we do that after unless this carries. My motion is specific to that Central Mountains/ Nebo/ Wasatch Mountain big horn sheep unit that we reduce number of permits to 1 instead of 3. We can address other issues if we need to. If the Wildlife Board voted and then re-voted and voted again, what can we do here?

Bryce Thurgood: We are seeing if we can vote on the amendment first and then go back to the original motion.

John Blazzard: I would be glad to put that into my language which I had not finished on that subject.

Justin Oliver: He needs to withdraw his motion.

Matt Klar: Withdraws his second.

John Blazzard: Withdraws his original motion.

**Motion** – Aaron Johnson – Recommend the Wildlife Board reduce the permits for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep at the Central Mountains/Nebo/Wasatch Mountains unit from three to one.

Bryce Thurgood: Accept the balance that the division is recommending?

Matt Klar: No, there are other things I want to bring up that we can discuss.

Bryce Thurgood: For that motion, to respect him on that motion, ok. Right now we have a motion to accept as presented with the exception that we reduce the sheep permits on the Wasatch from 3 to 1.

Aaron Johnson: I would second that, if we are able to?

Matt Klar: Do you have other things you wanted to add to that?

Aaron Johnson: Not to this motion. I want that to be voted on.

Bryce Thurgood: If this is the balance.

Aaron Johnson: This has nothing to do with the balance, just that particular unit.

Bryce Thurgood: We are going to chunk this out then. Right now, his motion, we are not accepting the divisions recommendations on the whole presentation. We are only talking about the sheep on the Wasatch/Nebo, reducing it from 3 to 1. That is all we have on the table right now.

John Blazzard: My motions states we accept the rest of the buck, bulls and other.

Bryce Thurgood: You withdrew so we can go back..

John Blazzard: Did I withdraw?

Bryce Thurgood: Yes.

John Blazzard: I thought we were discussing that, Okay. I guess I will withdraw.

Bryce Thurgood: You can come back. Do we have a second?

**Second** – Matt Klar

Bryce Thurgood: This is only regarding the sheep, reducing it from 3 to 1.

Aaron Johnson: The reason I made that motion is because I would rather error on the side of caution. Where they are making this a larger unit and see what happens. If they need to adjust next year, we can easily do that.

Matt Klar: The three other tags are still able to hunt there right?

Aaron Johnson: Potentially.

Bryce Thurgood: Lets vote on this one item.

**Motion Passes** – 11 in favor, 1 opposed

Aaron Johnson: Before we make another motion, I would like to address some of the things the SFW brought up. I would like to discuss some of the recommendations they made and if the division wants to chime in or other RAC members. I do recognize the local interest groups or sportsman that come up and put forth an effort to get involved. I think that is the case here. We have received input from local outdoorsman that would like some of these units to stay the same or be decreased. To me, that has a lot of importance. I intend to make some motions following some of the SFW's recommendations. My proposal would be to do it species specific.

Bryce Thurgood: I would agree. I would like to chunk it out. I don't think there are any more OIAL. Let's move to deer and then elk. Then, to antelope.

Mellissa Wood: Do we want to give Darren a chance to talk about his opposition to the motion?

Bryce Thurgood: Sorry, you're right.

Darren Parry: I oppose the last motion is because the division made this recommendation and they are smart. I am just giving them the benefit of the doubt that they have done their homework and feel like that was an acceptable number. That was the only reason I go with it. I am not an expert in sheep and most of you are not either. I go with the recommendation the professionals gave. I would assume if the harvest objective was detrimental to that herd, it would change.

**Motion** – Aaron Johnson – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the DWR's proposal for 2018 deer permits with the exception of Central Mountains/Manti/San Rafael proposed unit numbers decrease that by 200 and Pine Valley unit stay the same as last year rather than increase.

**Second** – Justin Oliver

Kevin McLeod: Was the division made aware of these concerns from the sportsman group prior to making these decisions?

Covy Jones: I knew there were concerns on some of these units. The Pine Valley has been perennially over objective. There is good data out of Colorado. There is pretty solid data that says you start to impact populations, especially in a drier area. If we are managing our general season units, that is my concern. Most of this is social, not biological.

Kevin McLeod: I don't want anybody to get the impression that I think someone tried to sneak something in either. I agree with what has been said. You guys work on your data and you make decisions. I just wanted to see if you had that look at in the equation.

Randy Hutchinson: This should be driven by the science and that type of thing. It appears the objection is from one private organization. That is not what should be driving it. My concern with the recommendation is that it is being driven by an organization.

Bryce Thurgood: This is a large group that is very passionate about what they do. Another thing is 80% of the things we fight about here are social, not science.

Aaron Johnson: I don't want to debate, I respect that. Just so you know, I disagree with SFW most of the time. I am not trying to show favoritism, just trying to represent sportsman.

Bryce Thurgood: His motion to reiterate, Manti was decreased 200 permits from 8,800 to 8,600. Pine Valley is to have no increase and leave permits the same as last year.

Aaron Johnson: I know people who hunt Pine Valley from out of state and it is a great unit. I would like to see it stay the same.

Mellissa Wood: I feel like the first unit we were talking about, Central Mountains/Manti, I feel like the numbers and science would justify that unit specifically decreasing those numbers. The 2017 buck to doe ratio is 13.3 when the objective is 15-17. We are definitely on a down swing there. As far as the Pine Valley, we are over and our trend for that one is we are going down. The 3 year average is 24.6 when we are suppose to be managing 18-20. I could support one but not the other, Pine Valley.

**Motion Fails** – 2 in favor, 10 opposed

**Motion** – Mellissa Wood – Central Mountains/Manti/San Rafael unit reduce recommended number by 200 permits and accept the rest of the DWR's recommendations for deer permits as presented

**Second** – Aaron Johnson

**Motion Passes** – 11 in favor, 1 opposed

Kevin McLeod: I think just for obvious reasons. The division has done their research. I think Covy explained it and they have the best information and that is why I opposed.

**Motion** – Aaron Johnson – Recommend the Wildlife Board accept the Division's proposal for elk permits as presented with the exception to keep the Manti/Fish Lake/Monroe units the same as they were last year.

**Second** – Justin Oliver

Randy Hutchinson: What was the reduction?

Mike Laughter: Can you clarify what the same means?

Mike Laughter: Was it recommended for an increase?

Covy Jones: Yes, the three units. Which were they?

Bryce Thurgood: 13 on one. Fish Lake is 9 and Monroe is 3. A total of 25 permits.

**Motion Fails** – 2 in favor, 10 opposed

**Motion** – John Blazzard – Accept elk permit recommendations as presented by the division.

**Second** – Aaron Johnson

**Motion Passes** – Unanimous

**Motion** – Aaron Johnson – Accept DWR pronghorn permits as presented.

**Second** – John Blazzard

**Motion Passes** – Unanimous

**Motion** - John Blazzard – Accept OIAL and remainder as presented.

**Second** – Justin Oliver

**Motion Passes** – Unanimous

**Item 7. Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2018**

- Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator and Regional Wildlife Manager

**See RAC Packet**

**Public Questions**

No public questions.

**RAC Questions**

No RAC questions.

**Public Comments**

Troy Justinsen (SFW): Do you base all your decisions on science?

Covy Jones: No. The way I see our job is there is a million right ways to manage wildlife. As a biologist, there are a lot of right ways but also some wrong ways. A lot of right ways are social.

Troy Justinsen: Is the division ever wrong?

Covy Jones: The whole division or me?

Troy Justinsen: Has the division ever been wrong?

Covy Jones: Of course, we are human. We make errors.

Troy Justinsen: SFW supports the divisions recommendation. I would advise the RAC not to label sportsman as a special interest group. The whole purpose for us is for this process. This group of sportsman sat down and watched this same

presentation 2 weeks before you did and talked about it. They take in the science and the social and come up with recommendations. The reason hunters attach themselves to a group, is to strengthen their voice and make sure they are heard. Please take into consideration what they go through. The purpose of the RAC is to listen to the divisions proposal and educate the best you can, make a decision and give sportsman and residents of Utah the opportunity to voice their concerns.

## **RAC Comments**

John Blazzard: As far as depredation from elk, even though this winter did not exist, they were not a problem because they stayed up high. I believe one of the reasons they did was because they were turned around and headed back several times by these cow elk hunts that happened at opportune times last fall. The purpose for reducing depredation definitely was successful. I commend them for trying different things to see what works. If we have a really bad winter, I imagine they will be down in our back yard again. There should be more elk this year because of the mild winter.

**Motion** – Aaron Johnson – Accept the DWR’s proposal as presented.

**Second** – Kevin McLeod

**Motion Passes** – Unanimous

## **Item 8. 2018 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations**

- Mike Wardle, Private Lands/Public Wildlife Coordinator

**See RAC Packet**

## **Public Questions**

Larry Whitaker: Mike, can you pull up that graph on Meadow Creek, please? You are recommending a decrease on antlerless tags.

Bryce Thurgood: By the way, his name’s Larry.

Larry Whitaker: When I look back on that, Twin Lakes is now Meadow Creek but that is a land swap deal and the land involved in what was the permits were on last year is now different than the land you are allowing permits on this year that you are decreasing. How do you justify that?

Mike Wardle: As the land is changing, it make sense to make a change in our permits as well. That is part of the reason for the decrease in 2 permits there.

Larry Whitaker: The ground that you exchanged was what they call Simplot ranches that have been closed for years and years. Now the ground you have included into Meadow Creek, is now 10,000 or so acres of public accessible ground that has now been placed in a CWMU. Reducing tags to it does not jive.

Mike Wardle: I looked up their application this year. When there is public land included in a CWMU, part of the rule is they have to have compensation that helps even out that with the public. We have added more permits to the public draw on the CWMU and there is also over 6,000 private acres open to public access because of the public land included in their CWMU.

Larry Whitaker: Okay, thank you.

## **RAC Questions**

Bryce Thurgood: Out of that 10,000 acres in this particular CWMU, traditionally we have only allowed landlocked public land to go into a CWMU. Is there a lot of that 10,000 acres that is completely accessible public land that we have included in there and why?

Mike Wardle: Chad can probably speak better about this. In the rule, it allows for public land if it is landlocked like you mentioned. If it is necessary to have an enforceable boundary and necessary to achieve management goals.

Chad Wilson: This would be to help us reach our management objectives. There is public land that is accessible out there. It was done quite a few years ago and was grandfathered in.

Justin Oliver: Did that take away public opportunity by doing that?

Chad Wilson: Yes, I would say that it did just because there is public land that is accessible.

Bryce Thurgood: That number 3 thing you mentioned, that can be used and abused in a lot of places in the state. I don't even like that rule.

Mellissa Wood: Deseret pronghorn has a decrease of 32. I don't think that reflects on the RAC packet you gave us. We increased permits on pronghorn for the antler. Can you talk about the decrease.

Randy Wood: We changed the way we are hunting them which led to an increase in permits for bucks. Then, when we look at controlling population and depredation, we then go to the antlerless. There was a decrease across the board for doe fawn permits for pronghorn. Does that cover it?

Mellissa Wood: I just need to do more research myself before I ask more questions, thank you.

Bryce Thurgood: We are only talking about antlerless right?

Mike Wardle: Yes, just antlerless permits.

Bryce Thurgood: When did we set those?

Mike Wardle: Buck and bull permits were set in the fall when we looked at renewal of the COR.

Bryce Thurgood: All these decreases should have effect on their buck and bull numbers correct? That percentage is tied to what they get, buck and bull wise, to what they give out antlerless wise.

Mike Wardle: The splits are tied. The percentage of private vs. public, those are tied together. The number of permits that is allotted to the CWMU is not necessarily tied to it. There are a lot of CWMU's where we give buck deer tags but not antlerless deer tags due to population objectives.

Bryce Thurgood: If it is going to go down on Deseret by 32 on antlerless, is it going to go down on their buck?

Mike Wardle: No, not necessarily.

Bryce Thurgood: If you are going 90/10, how does it not?

Randy Wood: We manage the 2 different. Buck and bulls are done on rotation age a year and then the antlerless are to address problems with depredation and overall herd size. That would bring it down. Most of your units, of the buck to doe criteria, the CWMU's are meeting and units are over for the buck to bulls. There is probably opportunity than they do. When we have a depredation issue, we can go to the CWMU and they come out and count and haze for us. Some CWMU's have expanded and taken in agricultural ground so we don't have depredation or counts. We manage the 2 differently. Does that help?

Bryce Thurgood: Yes. We go off percentage.

Mike Wardle: These percentages are strictly talking about the split. If we give a CWMU 10 buck and bull permits, that means that 9 permits would be private and 1 would go to the public draw. But if we give 20 antlerless permits, 100% are to the public draw. Whether that 20 or 10 goes up, it does not affect the other. It is the split that is directly connected.

Justin Oliver: As far as hunter satisfaction for cow hunts on CWMU's, how are they?

Mike Wardle: Pretty good. We had 128 CWMU's and we only had 3 official complaints turned in this year.

Justin Oliver: I just heard that 3 complained so I was curious what the other ones were. That is good to know.

## **Public Comments**

No comments from the public.

## **RAC Comments**

**Motion** – Justin Oliver – Accept the Division's proposal as presented.

**Second** – Matt Klar

**Motion Passes** – Unanimous

## **Item 9. Poaching Reported Reward Permit Program Changes**

- Rick Olson, Law Enforcement Chief

## **See RAC Packet**

## **Public Questions**

No public questions.

## **RAC Questions**

Justin Oliver: What was the purpose of the waiting period on the OIAL?

Rick Olson: That's according our attorneys. OIAL is OIAL for a permit given by the state and we could not vary from that.

Justin Oliver: If someone had max points, basically they turned it in if they took the permit they are 5 years behind and probably won't get it?

Rick Olson: Yes, if you had max points, I would probably choose a monetary reward for that. If you chose the permit, you get it.

Justin Oliver: So, instead of a 5 year period, you could choose either this permit and this would be your OIAL permit?

Rick Olson: Yeah.

John Blizzard: What would happen if you had already drawn that permit?

Rick Olson: If you have already drawn that permit and turned in a moose poacher, then you would go to those options. You would be qualified to get a permit for another OIAL species closest to that unit. For moose, it is probably going to be goat.

Justin Oliver: You could choose that. If I had max points and caught a poacher, I could say that I would rather have a goat.

### **Public Comments**

No comments from the public.

### **RAC Comments**

Mike Laughter: Commend the division for this program. It encourages people to go the extra mile to help catch and prosecute people.

Rick Olson: The real reason we came up with this program was to incentivize to turn in friends and family. It's not too hard to turn in a stranger but harder to turn in your relatives. If you get one of these permits, you don't have to take it the very next year. Some people choose to take it in 5 years.

Bryce Thurgood: Has anyone ever turned in a spouse?

Rick Olson: Oh, yeah.

Justin Oliver: Right before the divorce.

Rick Olson: Right before they are an ex. We really should look at divorce records in a proactive manner.

**Motion** – Mike Laughter – Accept the Division's proposal as presented.

**Second** – Justin Oliver

**Motion Passes** – Unanimous

**Motion to adjourn**

**Meeting Ends- 9:05 p.m.**

Central Region Advisory Council  
Springville Junior High School  
189 South 1470 East, Springville  
March 27, 2018 @ 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

Brock McMillian, Sportsmen  
AJ Mower, Agriculture  
Mike Gates, BLM  
George Garcia, Forest Service  
Joshua Lenart, Sportsmen  
Ben Lowder, At Large  
Kristofer Marble, Chair  
Mike Christensen, At-Large  
Danny Potts, Non-consumptive  
Jacob Steele, Native American  
Kenneth Strong, Sportsmen

Member Absent

Christine Schmidt, Non-consumptive (excused)  
Al White, Agriculture

Others Present

Jason Vernon, CRO Reg Supervisor

- 
- 1) **Approval of the Agenda and Minutes (Action)**  
**Kris Marble, RAC Chair**

**VOTING**

Motion was made by Ken Strong to approve the agenda and minutes as written  
Seconded by Danny Potts  
Passed unanimously

- 2) **Approval of the Minutes (Action)**  
**Kris Marble, RAC Chair**

**VOTING**

Motion was made by Ken Strong to approve the agenda and minutes as written  
Seconded by Danny Potts  
Passed unanimously

- 3) **Wildlife Board Meeting Update (Information)**  
**Kris Marble, RAC Chair**

- 4) **Regional Update (Information)**  
**Jason Vernon, Central Regional Supervisor**

Wildlife

- District biologist wrapped up bear den visits over the last few weeks and are now preparing for sage grouse for lek counts throughout the region.
- The winter has been pretty busy for trapping nuisance turkeys and relocating them to bolster other wild populations.
- With the mild winter, depredation issues have been slow throughout the region.

### Habitat

- Habitat personnel are beginning to install guzzlers this spring in the West Desert, Drum Mountains as part of a project funded last year. These are primarily for upland game, but the guzzlers will also provide water for antelope, mule deer and other wildlife.
- Several sagebrush seedling planting projects are taking place this spring in the Central region.
- CRO habitat personnel are beginning to ramp up to begin spraying noxious weeds on WMAs.
- A few Watershed Restoration Initiative projects are ongoing in the region with 30 new projects proposed for FY-19.

### Aquatics

- Over the past two weeks we've had extensive efforts underway to collect northern pike eggs at Yuba Reservoir. The eggs will be used to create Tiger Muskie's for stocking statewide. We collected approximately 2 million eggs and approximately 30 females to add to the brood at the Lee Kay Center.
- Stocking has begun at many community ponds.
- Kokanee (240,000) will be stocked into the Provo River just upstream of Jordanelle Reservoir by Rock Cliff (Jordanelle State Park) in the coming weeks.
- White bass are starting to get active on Utah Lake tributaries and the fishing will likely to pick up with a couple of warmer days.

### Law Enforcement

- Officers are in the process of finishing up cases from the winter - trapping cases and carcasses called in.
- Starting to receive calls for head calls from individuals wanting to keep the antlers now that folks are looking for shed antlers.

5) **Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2018**  
**Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator and Regional Wildlife Manager**

**Questions from the RAC**

Ken Strong – We have 500 youth permits, in a recent study that just completed nationwide we're down to 4.9 % of our youth for getting involved in hunting and fishing. We are even lower than that in Utah. Would there ever be a possibility of moving some of these antlerless permits to youth? I mean I know people complain all the time that we are doing too much for the youth, but according to this survey that they did, if we don't keep the retention going by 2050 there will be no hunting or fishing in the country and there won't be any money. It's kind of a long story but it is a big concern to me. Covy – First of all Ken, I hope to live and hunt and fish until 2050 maybe longer. I understand that; it's a delicate balance. It's a delicate balance of offering up youth only opportunity which we do here and still youth have the ability to put into the regular draw and hunt there as well. For general season deer there is a portion of those permits that are set aside just for youth that are taken right off the top. I struggle with this same thing Ken; I don't have a great answer. Honestly, I don't have a great answer. I have a son who didn't draw a tag last year. He drew an archery tag which you can buy over the counter for general season deer but I am in that same boat. I don't have a good answer. There are only so much opportunity and a lot of applicants and only so much space. I think the concern about providing more in the early youth elk permits are pretty highly concentrated. There are not a lot of areas and we have chosen a different system in Utah. The majority of our units in Utah are limited entry for elk so there are not a lot of areas that are any bull and the areas that are typically have lower elk densities. So adding additional permits onto those probably would impact what we could offer otherwise.

Brock – You started by saying that we have the ability to provide more opportunity we try and do that. Covy - Agreed. Brock – Then you said on Thousand Lakes 300 permits is about all we can do. What does that mean? Why? Its way over objective, what does that mean that is all we can do? Covy – Brock, I wish I could speak to the dynamics of that unit a little better and I will do my best here but it's really small and because of that the buck doe ratios really bounce. Some years it exceeds and other years it comes in close to where it should. Because of the size the sentiment is that 300 feel over crowded. If they could they would like a reduction and we pushed to have that 300. I get the concern there. When you see the overall three year average being so high it doesn't make a lot of sense. I personally don't have a lot of knowledge of that unit, but I would love to get back with you. Brock – You made a similar comment for one of the limited entry hunts, North Slope Summit, that mountain is way over objective too. No objective and nothing is in there but you cut permits by half so what was the reasoning there to? Covy – On that limited entry permit? Brock - Yes. Covy - They were undersubscribed. That is one of the reasons because it went under subscribed. It was a limited entry opportunity that individuals didn't want. A lot of the individuals that got the permit turned them back in, which creates more chaos and actually less opportunity because of the way the licensing system works. What we are trying to do is match the demand there with what it is. Brock – When you put the late season hunts you put Monroe as five and then you said this is for units managed for 18-20 that are over objective in the last year, but Monroe was 13.6 last year so I am trying to understand why it's still getting late seasons? Covy - That is a great question. The recommendation this fall will be to remove that Brock because it goes off the previous years. So it is actually two years because

when we recommend hunts in the fall all we have is the 2016 classification. I hope that clarifies things.

Joshua Lenart – Regarding the deer, how much do you find the bucks out compete the does and fawns for brows? Not talking about the deer and other species, but you talk about the cash being that hard winter and there was the fawn mortality, 7% drop for fawns because they didn't the full monsoon. I guess my question is; does it make sense to kill more bucks on this and fewer does so that now so that three years from now 7% fawn survival rate is stronger and higher? Covy – I understand what you are saying and when you completely biologically increase of buck/doe ratios can have a negative impact on the population. I can say that. There is definitely literature that says that. There are studies from Colorado. I don't know how to quantify that. Josh – Yeah, thanks.

Ben Lowder – I am looking at Wasatch Mountains elk permit numbers, we are still over objective, especially the three year but we saw a drop in the average age last year from 6.7 to 6.4, which is probably the biggest drop I have seen on the Wasatch. On that unit it's chronically over objective, I get that, but with that drop in considering and we take into account trends, is this still appropriate to have that increase on that unit? Covy – Ben, I think that is a good question. Short answer is yes. We're still significantly above; half a year above what we are managing for and we can be anywhere from 5.5 to 6 so when you look at it we can be almost a year above what we are managing for. I don't have a good answer on the Wasatch, but I love that it can provide this kind of opportunity. Ben – Absolutely! So, what are we, three years into the collar study? Covy - No, four years into the elk collar study up there. Ben – Have we learned anything up there yet? I mean the Wasatch is kind of its own deal, right? Covy - We have learned really cool things. Ben - You look at that Wasatch compared to the Manti which is the biggest herd in the State and the tag numbers, it just doesn't add up, right, it's just weird?! Covy - Right. Ben - What are we learning with that collar study? Have we learned anything to help us understand why this is? Covy – So Kent will be the first to tell you that I am not very good with numbers. What I can tell you that it appears there is probably some immigration; bulls coming from the South Slope tribal lands up onto the Wasatch. I don't feel like we have that completely nailed down but it feels like there is probably a surplus. Maybe they will look at that Strawberry Valley and think that looks good and head up there. That population in that area, the tribe doesn't do a lot of population control. They don't harvest many cows or a lot of elk. So they have to go somewhere. We did collar a few spikes in that area and they did come up on the Wasatch. We're getting elk from that unit but it doesn't appear like there is many elk coming from the Nebo, Manti or East Canyon area. It feels like those are pretty solid barriers. Elk don't like to cross six much. It happens, but not many of our collared animals do. Ben – So the elk that you are talking about that are migrating on to the unit from the reservation and the South Slope is because they are at capacity in their range there and needing a place to go, is that what I am hearing you say? Or is it seasonal? Covy – It appears that way, I mean probably is what I would say. I think we all were trying to figure out what was going on with the Wasatch. How can this sustain this, how can it do this and still look like it does and still provide. I hear sometimes well we are losing quality and I just personally haven't seen it yet. There are a lot of good bulls still coming off the Wasatch and we are exceeding that age objective. Ben – How is our hunter satisfaction doing on the Wasatch, is it still pretty good? Covy - Kent, do you have that right there? Covy – Dale, do you have that memorized? What is the hunter satisfaction on the

Wasatch for elk? One more thing Ben, while they are looking that up is we did put that mid season hunt on the Wasatch so not all of these are an increase in that earlier rifle hunt. Some of these will go into that. Ben – I noticed we are increasing tags on the October season, I think I noticed on the Wasatch and on the Manti. Covy – Yes, the Manti as well. Ben – I read into that hunt must be going well; we are getting good feedback, is that true? Covy – We haven't got a lot of bad feedback. It appears people are putting in for it. Ben – Cool.

Dale – For the most of the hunts it's anywhere for three to four. Covy – Three to four, relatively happy. Ben – Sure and are we seeing a good return of teeth for figuring out our age on that unit?

Covy – On these larger units that's not really a problem at all. I don't know what the exact number is of teeth that we age there but there is quite of people in this room that would know that. Covy – Randy, what is the exact number of teeth we aged on the Wasatch? Randy –

Several hundred. The return rate on elk is lower across the State than it has been in the past years but still several hundred elk aged on the Wasatch. Ben – Okay, thanks.

George – On the limited entry deer permits, it looks like the three year average for West Desert/Vernon Unit was similar to some of the other units; yet the West Desert/Vernon Unit got a 13 permit increase and the other units stayed the same. Can you explain that a little bit?

Covy - Yes, so in some of this we only show one year previous. South Slope/Diamond Mountain had an increase two years ago and so they are seeing what that does. San Juan-Elk Ridge again that area of the State (that general area of the State) was hit by some drought. So there are unit by unit reasons. West Desert/Vernon came in really good this last year. It's exceeding on the overall three year average, but then this last year when we went out and did the classification after harvest, there were a lot of bucks out there. So there is a lot of opportunity still on the landscape. George – Does that have anything to do with the public land projects that are happening out there between the BLM and the Forest Service? Covy - I would sure hope so, keep it up!

Mike Christensen – I was looking at the Morgan/Cache South Rich, general deer units... Covy- You're talking about the Northern region? Mike – Yes, and you have a 1,700 permit increase yet the buck to doe ratio since 2015 has fallen by 13 bucks per hundred does. The population has fallen from around 18,000 over all estimated 14,000 on the Morgan/South Rich Unit. I know that is a private lands unit and so I just worry that the 1,700 permit increase will put most of that pressure on that limited public lands in that area. Is that a normal increase in permits when the herd drops by 4,000 animals out of 18,000? Covy – I think that is a valid concern. Again, it's hard for me to speak to specific units exactly when it is not my unit. I will try and answer it the best I can. A lot of that drop was the hard winter last year. This year we have had a really good fawn survival. We will have a great buck crop coming into that and it's a general season opportunity unit and I think we are hoping to take advantage a lot of that. Another thing is, I would agree with you and for years and years we haven't increased permits on that unit because it is primary private lands. I think the hope is and the recommendation is to put 20% of the permits overall permits into that early season rifle. So instead of being 20-20-60 it will be 20-20-20 -40. We're hoping to catch some of those deer when they are in different places at different times of the year. Is it a regular increase, I don't know the answer to that Mike. Mike - I appreciate that answer. And just for the record I am all about getting kids out and have the opportunity as long as it's not at the expense of what we are trying to manage. Covy – Absolutely! I think one of the great things about this, you're right there is a drop there. I think I

look at it differently though I look at it as we're still 25 buck per 100 does last year and we are still way over. Mike - The concern is and this is one of the only units that I got public input on. People were concerned about this unit and you have a large escapement there with the mound of private lands. Covy - Yes, you are right. Mike - And so if the public land herd is down in the 12's but the private land herd is up in the 30's then when we count we get an average of 24 and then we're going to put all that pressure on the public lands so that was the concern. Covy - That is a valid concern.

Ken - On the Central Mountains Manti /San Rafael on the deer in 2015 we had 23.4 and it dropped down by eight and in 2016 it dropped down again. In 2017 we still have an average of 17.4. But next year we will lose that 23.4 which depending on if we have a fantastic year or not. This year it is going to drop the buck/doe average below our objective. Is that a concern at all? Covy - Yes, Ken it is. We talked about this one a lot. What do we want to do with this, where do we want to go? Last year coming in lower we took in account of other things as well. We did look at the fawn survival on this unit especially does were fat and good fawn survival. We'll have a great yearling crop and also we did cut permits here last year. So we recommended a decrease in permits here last year. So we said okay, we recommended a decrease last year and we have good fawn survival this year, let's see what happens. That is where we went with this one.

Jacob - I see you're raising the bull elk permits on the reservation, Deep Creek by 20, what is the purpose of that? Did I see that correctly or did I read that wrong? Covy - We were at 25 last year Jacob and we are recommending a decrease in 2020. We're at a five permit decrease. Jacob - You're increasing or decreasing? Covy - Decreasing. Jacob - Just wanted to clarify that. Covy - One of the reasons when we rewrote this statewide plan I remember meeting with the tribe and we were managing for two different things there on the same population. What we decided is we wanted to work collaboratively with the tribe to manage that and so we're trying to come into the the same age objective or that you would manage for, so we are recommending another decrease there.

Mike - So within the mule deer management plans what is the level of increase of a limited entry unit can see? Is it up to 10% increase or is there not a cap on that? Covy - I can't remember if there is a cap on that? No cap on that. Mike - So on the West Desert Unit, a lot of bucks are out there. The deer herd is doing well we are well above our 25-35. Is 194 enough or could it handle more?

Tom - Yes, I think it can handle more. That is the short answer. This RAC has approved the increases the last few years I have added it, but it doesn't seem to carry through to the Board. So there has been different public showing up at the Board meetings and expressing their concerns and it doesn't pass. We're trying to do it in small increments just to get the ball rolling and hopefully we'll get it where it should be. Mike - I appreciate that Tom and I am very supportive of your efforts and .....Tom - I want the RAC to know that I surely appreciate it, but there is other publics out there that don't come to this RAC that inadvertently and some of the other RAC's didn't pass it last year and that carried through to the Board and so they acted according to what they saw. Mike - So that means that I won't recommend even more than you have. Tom - Well the thing that kind of shook it up a little bit this years is when I was looking at the

muzzleloader success rate. It kind of dropped it a little bit so I increased it more but to stay within some perimeters. I had to look at all of the success rates and they were a little bit different this year than they usually were. So it is one of those years like we had two years ago the muzzleloaders didn't do very well but everybody else did for some reason and so that was taken into account. Mike -Thanks Tom.

### **Questions from the Public**

None

### **Comments from the Public**

Chris Carling /SFW – Just a quick and brief background SFW represents between 6,800-7,500 members throughout the State of Utah. There are 17 chapters spread throughout counties and regions of the State. We meet regularly with the leaders of those chapters and what we discuss is these vary things. It is very important to us where we are passionate like the rest of you are and the leaders of our chapters are among the most active outdoorsman that I know of and we take their comments and actions very seriously and so in general the SFW supports the recommendations as presented by the Division with two exceptions. One of them on the Manti deer permits we see that as one unit and we know it is managed that way but the south end of that unit as far as deer goes it is a drastically different operation in a way. I know that the biologists have heard this but our guys are seeing loaded numbers and poor quality deer and they are just asking that 250 fewer deer tags on the Manti be issued than being recommended. It's hard because we know that is a unit that in the north they have a lot success and deer numbers and in the south it is just not the same situation. I don't know if in the future it might be managed as two separate units, it might be worth considering but the recommendation there is that you do consider reducing the tags on that unit by 250 in order to help that southern portion of the deer herd. In addition, we also recommend that on the Pine Valley deer, the Southwest Desert deer, Fish Lake elk, Monroe elk and the Manti elk that those permit numbers remain the same this year as they were last year. Our membership feels strongly that those herds' cannot sustain those types of increases so again just reverting back to the same numbers on those units as last year.

Greg Bird /Utah Wild Sheep – We do agree with the Division's recommendations for all bighorn hunts except for the Wasatch Rocky Mountain Bighorn hunt. We would recommend there would be no tag increases due to the fear that there could be with these combined units some undo pressure; particularly on this Wasatch face. Sheep get really vulnerable in November and the Avintaquin area has been proven be a fairly difficult hunt as recent. This whole sheep herd complex is still struggling and in the rebuilding program from the disease die off. So with the three proposed permits plus the one tribal permit plus the possibility of a sportsman and state wide tag hunter possibly hunting this unit, there are just not that many mature rams on this unit to warrant this increase. So we would recommend no increase on this unit and stay with the last year recommendations to ensure that this particular part of the Wasatch doesn't get over harvested in one possible year.

### **RAC Discussion**

Ben – Covy, SFW is asking for 250 less permits on the Manti Deer Unit, as I look at those numbers there is a very steep down trend in buck to doe ratio. I am curious in why we are not taking this into account and recommending a decrease in tags. Covy - Yes. Ben – We are still in

the three year objective we are still slightly over but man as I look at the trend on the three year we went from 23 to 13. I am surprised we are not taking that trend into account. Covy – I understand that Ben, but I think probably can answer this question but I think Rusty probably better versed to answer that. Is that okay if Rusty answers that? Covy – While he is coming up I mentioned that managing the units as two separate units. We actually sent out a survey on that to hunters and I don't have the results here but I do remember the results and it was overwhelmingly no. We do not want you to manage that unit as two separate units. So we did ask hunters what they wanted on that. The truth is when we captured on the south all the does are pregnant. This isn't a two few bucks issue, there are fewer deer and bucks on the south unit of the unit that's true.

Rusty – That is a great question Ben. With the steep down trend we have to rely on our classification numbers, that's just how it is. Seems like the Manti specifically this year was really hard to classify to put into perspective one of the main areas I survey I went at the end of November during the rut when we usually survey and counted 50 deer. I went back in January and there are 320 and so it was a hard year to get bucks during the rut because everything was still up on the mountain at high elevation. With that being said, we have to rely on those numbers and I get that. The other thing I will say is our survival rates are exceptional this year as far as a yearling crop bucks coming in our fawn survival is currently at 86% over the whole Manti/Wasatch complex and we haven't had a single fawn mortality on the south Manti. I would expect a lot of folkies to come into the harvest pool this fall and hopefully whatever issues we are having that will help to make up for that. Ben – Given the difficulty in classifying this past fall what's the potential that this low buck to doe ratios anomaly. Rusty – I think there is a strong potential that it is an anomaly. Ben – for 2016 it was a little higher it was 15.6 did we have similar difficulties in classifying? Rusty – Last year? Ben – No, the previous year. Rusty – By anomaly I mean it was just harder to find bucks when I think they were actually there if that makes sense. Ben – Okay, thanks.

Mike – So when I look at the recommendations by SFW on the Pine Valley deer and the Southwest Desert deer I could not support the recommendation by them. Both of those are over by 25% where there buck to doe ratio and the other one is over 12-14% over its buck to doe ratio and the biologists are only asking for a 5% increase which seems very negligible so in fact almost probably almost too low of an increase for the number of bucks on that unit so I don't think there is a reason to address that in my mind.

Brock - I would agree with that. Mike - I have problems with that East Canyon Unit still. I probably recommend an increase of only about 700 rather than 1,700, where that unit has lost 25% of its deer herd overall and then see how these hunts play out and kind of go from there. That would be my kind of reaction on that.

Danny – Are you basing that on the crowding of hunters or biologically? Mike – Both, in my mind and the way it has been explained to me which Covy did a great job with. I think that putting 1,700 more hunters in an area that has limited access can be a difficult problem. But when I looked at the overall population has gone down from 18,000 to 14,000, that's a heavy decrease and then couple that with a decrease that with the buck to doe ratio. I don't know if that

buck to doe ratio might be anomaly like they see on the Manti because of the whole state was kind of in that same situation.

Brock - Personally, I am against that Mike. We don't manage to population size, we manage to buck to doe ratio and I think there is a lot of lost opportunity in that unit. We know that when bucks start getting older we are losing 20% a year to mortality so we are just squandering opportunity if we don't take advantage of those males.

Danny – One comment before we vote. I agree with Mike because I hunt that unit but primarily just because of the private property issues we just can't seem to control this thing. We need to control the reproductive end and not the buck end.

Brock – So Covy can you answer these new permits a lot of them are at a different time of year, is that correct? So it's not going to be hunters on top of each other, it's going to be when the animals move onto winter range or closer to winter range. Covy – It will actually be an earlier hunt Brock, but yes it will be earlier in October and at a different time. Around that time in October deer are moving kind of all over. I don't know what the answer is here. I understand both sides. Great discussion!

Mike - This is where I agree with Brock, I think he feels that the biologist that the deer are there and he feels there is a reason to maintain that permit level and if we are worried about our kids hunting that's 200 tags that have gone away from them. I would be against that proposal.

Ben – The reason that I support that I am just looking at these numbers and this down trend scares the heck out of me. From 2015 to 2017 we went from 23.4 to 15.6 and then to 13.3 and the three year average; yet we are still at the top end of the objective but that trend scares me and I would like to see it cut there just to try and curve that trend before we get ourselves into trouble in that unit. It is very possible that those deer are there and if so great, we'll see that in the numbers likely next year but I'd rather be cautious on this one.

Ken – I am more worried about an over kill.

Dale – What we did this year is we combined the Wasatch with the Avintaquin. We wanted to make it so that these sheep continue down the road so that we can have a hunt. We don't want to eliminate them all in one year. Our aerial flights have shown us that we can probably maintain this. I would recommend if you do want to cut the permits back from 3 to 1, you might want to go to two since we did add the Avintaquin Unit, which was a separate unit last year. Those sheep hunters know where the big rams are and they target those big rams so they are going to be moving around on that whole unit taking advantage of those sheep so I don't think that all of them are going to be taken right off the Wasatch Front. Ben – So if I understand the historical context then, we merge two units the Wasatch and the Avintaquin. Dale – Right. Ben – Does this also include the Nebo? Dale – The Nebo and the Wasatch are all combined in one unit. Ben – So how many permits did they have? Dale – We combined the Wasatch and the Nebo a couple of years ago and we just had one permit available. We probably could increase one and then add Avintaquin onto that and they said that they could take one to two so we kind of split it instead of going to four we managed it at three. Ben – Did the Avintaquin Unit have a hunt last

year? Dale – Yes, they had a hunt there last year. Ben – With one tag last year, correct? Dale – Yes, one tag.

Mike – Two tags on the Avintaquin? Dale – Yes. I don't manage that unit. Ben – With that historical context I don't know that I necessarily see an increase here and I think I would be inclined to support the DWR's proposal on this. Dale – We're a little conservative when it comes to sheep. Mike – Do you know if the sheep that are on the Avintaquin are they transplanted out off the North Slope or are they California's or are they Rockies'? Dale – They are not California's, they are Rockies'.

### **VOTING**

Motion was made by Mike Christensen to reduce deer permit recommendation for the Chalk Creek/East Canyon/Morgan-South Rich Unit from 9,000 to 8,000 (1,000 permit reduction).

Seconded by Ken Strong

In favor: Danny, George, Mike C., Joshua, Ken, AJ

Opposed: Mike G., Jacob, Ben, Brock

Motion Passed 6 to 4

Motion was made by Ken Strong to reduce deer permit recommendation for the Central Mountains, Manti/San Rafael Unit from 8,800 to 8,600 (200 permit reduction).

Seconded by Ben Lowder

In favor: Danny, Ben, Joshua, Brock, Ken, AJ

Opposed: Mike C., Mike G., George, Jacob

Motion passed 6 to 4

Motion was made by Ben Lowder to reduce elk permit recommendation for the Plateau, Fish Lake/Thousand Lake Unit from 201 to 192 (9 permit reduction).

Seconded by Joshua Lenart

In Favor: Ben, AJ, Ken, Joshua, Kris

Opposed: George, Mike C., Mike G., Brock

Motion passed 5 to 4 (Danny and Jacob abstain and Kris votes in favor for tie breaker)

Motion made by Joshua Lenart to reduce Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep permit recommendation for the Central Mountains, Nebo/Wasatch Mountain Unit from 3 to 2 (1 permit reduction).

Seconded by Ken Strong

In Favor: Joshua

Opposed: Mike C., Ben, George, Danny, Ken, Brock, Mike G., AJ, Jacob

Motion failed 1 to 9

Motion was made by Mike Christensen to accept the remainder of the proposals as presented

Seconded by Danny Potts

Motion passed unanimously

6) **Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2018**  
**Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator and Regional Wildlife Manager**

**Questions from the RAC**

George - I asked Covy about the maps for some of those new antlerless deer units.

Covy – I have them George. George – Oh, you do? Covy – I just put them at the end of the presentation because I don't know that everybody is interested in seeing everyone of them so if there are specific units that you are interested in or would like to see... George – Yeah, the Wasatch West Unit, if we could take a look at that one. So that is just a general boundary on that one. That one goes west of Sheep Creek Road up to Pete Mountain and then back down to one of our trail systems back to HWY 6, right, is that kind of the general location on that one?

Covy - Yes, Dale, do have anything else to say on that boundary. George – I just want some orientation on that one.

Dale – To put the boundary together was kind of difficult. We wanted to target lower Sheep Creek for this doe hunt. For the last two years in our study plots that we go out in the spring, we look at the brows, mostly sage brush. Our sage brush is good and extremely hedged; which means utilized with maximum by deer. Also this last summer we lost 1,500 acres of sage brush in a fire, which we have re-seeded but to kind of help the brows in that area we would like to try and reduce does for a few years and see if we did re-growth with our sage brush. Basically we are going from east going up Dry Fork and hit the main road and follow that to Unicorn Ridge and follow it out to the T Mountain Road and then there is a trail over it that goes from T Mountain Road to the south and that will take you back to HWY 6. Most of the hunting is going to be taken down in lower Sheep Creek. To the west is mostly thick cedars and so I don't think the hunters are going to get there but that's what I am trying to do.

Josh - You mentioned about using an increase in antlerless elk as a tool on private lands to help push some of those elk back onto public lands that the public have access to it. I don't have a problem with that increase at all actually because I think it is a useful and important tool, but what is the Division's efforts to increase block management and walk in access on private so public onto private is opposed to always going through a CMU program? Is this down the line or in the works because there are a lot of no trespassing signs out there; but with GPS technology, with Onx maps, you can get a hold of a landowner and some of the landowners want to sell a tag. Some of them say, "You want to go hunt that piece of ground, have at it!" Let's use the tool but let's also give public a chance to get some of it because you talked about hunter satisfaction, who's the hunters that are satisfied with these private land hunts? Covy – That is a really good point! They are not for everybody. But I think you mentioned some of the best things that you can do with them and that is again with Onx maps and GPS technology and if you have some landowner that is having some problems, call them up and ask them. The landowners a lot of times have investigated and called themselves. I know there are some landowners out west when we implemented this out west were just letting anybody on. "You want and come hunt an elk, come hunt an elk, I don't want them on my property, and I don't need them on my range." I know it's not that way everywhere. Other landowners have looked at this as a way to benefit financially; which again can be good when elk are looked at as a positive thing instead of a detriment all the time. They say, "Yeah, you can come and hunt" it's so much money, whatever that is. Yet we do work on walk-in access, we do work on these things. The truth is the amount of money we can offer is often far less that what a hunter can offer for that access. CMU's

shouldn't be the only tool but they are still a great tool where we get a large percentage of those antlerless permits.

### **Questions from the Public**

None

### **Comments from the Public**

Chris Carly/ SFW- To accept the Division's recommendations as presented.

### **RAC Discussion**

Danny – I am not going to make a motion but I am going to make a statement that these landowner's permits are going to work out. Of course, this last year those critters were too high and didn't come down, especially the elk, so that really hurt us, but we just need to be patient. I think it will really pay big dividends in the long run.

George – Just to be on the record in the terms of the Forest Service, we are concerned with the elk population on the Nebo. We want to avoid any future livestock elk issues up there, so as quickly as we can get the population objectives for us, the better.

Brock – I didn't ask a question but Covy, I have a question. Is there any evidence that some of these deer herds are reaching capacity? Is the condition declining in any of these herds where we could be harvesting females that are going to die anyway, lower survival rates, kind of thing?

Covy – Good question Brock, Yes we have seen declining body conditions and populations have increased. Antlerless deer harvest, the truth, frankly, the antlerless deer harvest is a hard sale to our public. We look at surrounding states; Colorado harvests a lot of antlerless deer. Other states harvest a lot of antlerless deer. In Utah, we kind of have the scared doe philosophy. We are working to target areas where we feel like we can do better. But yeah Brock, yeah, we definitely see areas where we have declining body conditions scores which we know is density dependant. We probably have more animals on the landscape than we should and there are places and times where we will lose those to Mother Nature instead of providing that hunter opportunity. We are working hard to get some education out on that and work through that and say "Hey as we start to see these declining trends, let's harvest these animals before we have a poor doe survival." I think its working and it's becoming more accepted. I think as we continue to research it will even get better. I appreciate it Brock you asking that question. We can definitely be harvesting more antlerless deer than we are.

Kris – Sometimes carrying capacity in population objective is not the same thing; and can cause some conflict in management.

Brock - I am thinking of the youth. I would love if a youth could harvest a male or female on their tag.

Kris – Absolutely! I know that we talked about that during the Mule Deer Committee setting population objectives and how that correlated to a carrying capacity. It's really a tough juggling act. Sometimes we might see smaller areas especially Panguitch where we got smaller areas where there are a lot of deer causing a lot of problems with brows and their habitat; but not

necessarily over population objective in the bigger units. I think the Division has done a good job of looking some of that and what we can do.

Mike – Maybe I don't want to get us too far off track here, and stop me if I am, so with a cow elk tag, if you have an archery tag in the same unit area, you can shoot that cow during your archery hunt. Is that same with doe deer? Covy – No. Mike – Okay, not the same?!

### **VOTING**

Motion was made by Ken Strong to accept the Division's recommendations as presented.

Seconded by Ben Lowder

Motion passed unanimously

### **7) 2018 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations Mike Wardle, Private Lands/Public Wildlife Coordinator**

#### **Questions from the RAC**

Brock – Some of these units you are recommending a decrease of like 50%. One of them you are going from 18 to 0, is there a corresponding decrease in the number of bulls tags going to these units? Mike - Some of them, yes, others it has more to do with animal distribution. We have a handful of CWMU's where either the hunt is migratory; where they wait for the cows to come on during November and December and that is when that's opportunity is there. They haven't been able especially like this year so we're going to have a lot of low harvest rates. Because of the easy winter we had, but for the most part, yeah. Do you have specific questions? Brock – So you're going from 18 cows to 0, are they going to 0 bull tags too? Mike – No. Some of those could be too we are looking at the population objective overall so like Rabbit creek CWMU for example to pronghorn, they are below objective and we are pulling the antlerless permits from them.

#### **Questions from the Public**

None

#### **Comments from the Public**

None

#### **RAC Discussion**

None

### **VOTING**

Motion was made by Ben Lowder to accept the Division's recommendations as presented

Seconded by Ken Strong

Motion passed unanimously

### **8) Poaching Reported Reward Permit Program Changes Rick Olsen, Chief, Law Enforcement**

#### **Questions from the RAC**

Mike – They did a news story a year or two ago about a guy turning in a poacher and the Division offered him money and not a permit, does that happen at time? Rick – Once in a while. You have to go back to that slide I had with the qualifying charges. This individual, I think we actually have one of the officers involved in that here. But he turned in an elk poacher that truly had made just a mistake and so he was issued a citation but wasn't charged for the more serious one, destruction. So he didn't qualify for the permit at that time. We did offer him a monetary reward, a pretty substantial one, but he didn't want that. Now once in a while we will also on most of serious cases we gather the facts and we take to a county attorney who reviews and they decide on what charges. Every once in a while a county attorney will differ from our recommendation and not go with the more serious charge. In that case the individual would not qualify for a permit at that point. Now, if the county attorney does prosecute for the more serious charge but if we lose, he still gets his permit as long as he cooperates through the whole process.

**Questions from the Public**

None

**Comments from the Public**

None

**RAC Discussion**

None

**VOTING**

Motion was made by Ken Strong to accept the Division's recommendations as presented.

Seconded by Brock McMillan

Motion Passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm

In attendance: 30 (12 RAC Members, 12 DWR employees, 14 public)

Next Board meeting: Thursday, April 26, 2018, DNR boardroom, Salt Lake

Next RAC meeting: Tuesday, May 1, 2018 @ 6:30 pm, Springville Civic Center  
110 South Main Street, Springville

**Southeast Regional Advisory Council**

**John Wesley Powell River History Museum  
1765 E. Main  
Green River, Utah**

**April 4, 2018 @ 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 2018**

**MOTION: To leave the number of Book Cliffs deer permit unchanged from 2017  
Passed unanimously**

**MOTION: To reduce the number of general season buck deer permits on the  
Manti Unit by 250  
Passed unanimously**

**MOTION: To leave the number of deer permits for the Pine Valley Unit  
unchanged from 2017  
Passed 9-3**

**MOTION: To leave the number of limited-entry elk permits on the Manti Unit  
unchanged from 2017  
Passed 11-0 (1 abstention)**

**MOTION: To leave the number of bighorn sheep permits for the Wasatch, Nebo  
and Central Mountain units unchanged from 2017  
Passed unanimously**

**MOTION: To accept the remaining Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit  
Recommendations for 2018 as presented  
Passed 11-0 (1 abstention)**

**Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2018**

**MOTION: To accept the Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2018 as  
presented**

**Passed unanimously**

**2018 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations**

**MOTION: To accept the 2018 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2018 as presented**

**Passed 11-0 (1 abstention)**

**Poaching Reported Reward Permit Program Changes**

**MOTION: To accept the Poaching Reported Reward Permit Program Changes as presented**

**Passed unanimously**

**Southeast Regional Advisory Council**

**John Wesley Powell River History Museum  
1765 E. Main  
Green River, Utah**

**April 4, 2018 @ 6:30 p.m.**

***Members Present***

***Members Absent***

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Trisha Hedin, Chairwoman · Sportsmen  
Kent Johnson, Vice Chairman · Public at large  
Sue Bellagamba · Non-consumptive  
Lynn Siterud · Elected official  
Jeff Christensen · Agriculture  
Jace Guymon · Public at large  
Eric Luke · Sportsmen  
Darrel Mecham · Sportsmen  
Darren Olsen · USFS  
Kirk Player · Public at large  
Helene Taylor · Agriculture  
Todd Thorne · Public at large  
Dana Truman · BLM

Gerrish Willis · Non-consumptive

Chris Wood, DWR Regional Supervisor

**Total public attendance**

10

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**1) Welcome, RAC Introductions and RAC Procedure**

- Trisha Hedin, RAC chairwoman

Trisha Hedin: Welcome to the Southeastern Regional RAC. If you've not come before, thank you for coming. The RAC procedure is such that when we get into motion items, we will ask questions of the RAC and will then ask questions of the audience. Comments from the audience, there are comment cards on the back table so if you want to make a comment, please fill those out and hand them to Morgan or Chris and we will bring you up at the appropriate time. But thanks for coming. So we will begin.

**2) Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

Trisha Hedin: The first agenda item is the approval of the agenda and minutes. Do I have a motion on that?

Kirk Player: I would move that we approve the minutes.

Trisha Hedin: So we have a motion by Kirk Player to approve the minutes. Do we have a second?

Eric Luke: I'll second it.

Trisha Hedin: OK, and a second by Eric Luke. All in favor. One more time. All in favor. Unanimous.

## **VOTING**

**Kirk Player made a motion to approve the agenda and minutes as written**

**Seconded by Eric Luke**

**Motion passed unanimously**

### **3) Wildlife Board Update** - Kent Johnson, RAC Vice Chairman

Trisha Hedin: Next we have the Wildlife Board meeting update.

Kent Johnson: If I get anything wrong, let me know. The big takeaway was the bear hunts. Initially what the Wildlife Board did is after the presentation they went with the Southeast RAC's recommendations on leaving out the hounds on the deer and elk general season rifle hunts in October. Later on in the meeting, they got discussing it some more and there was some concern they had over the Book Cliffs. There was some confusion and they decided to go back and rescinded the original motion and approval that they made and went with the Division's recommendations, basically, at the end of all of it being said and done. I left just before that happened and then Chris filled me in on it and he did send out an e-mail. I remember reading the email about it. If you dig back through your e-mails from Chris, you'll find one there that's fairly detailed about what happened. That covers it, doesn't it, Chris?

Chris Wood: Basically, they struggled really hard like you guys did finding the balance of increasing the opportunities to hunt bear and keeping a quality deer and elk hunt. They struggled with it for hours like you guys did, and then they realized that it probably couldn't be solved in that meeting, so they ended up rescinding their original vote and approved the Division's recommendation and asked the Division to come back in a year with studying the options and the season dates and coming back with a recommendation that they could possibly look at increasing bear opportunities without impacting too many hunts. That meeting was in January.

We also had a board meeting in February, I believe, that wasn't planned. The reason we

had another board meeting was to address a bison issue. There's a bison unit, the Range Creek/Nine Mile Unit. It's targeted to remove bison that come off of the tribal lands. If you remember, we talked about bison quite a bit and Range Creek bison quite a bit in this RAC and at the board level. One of the strategies to reduce and remove bison from the area — we don't want any bison in this area — is to have targeted hunts and we've been doing that in December. Another strategy we use is that we ask the tribe to herd the bison out of Range Creek with helicopters. They did that twice this past season and because they herded bison across the river and back on the tribal lands, it impacted other people's hunts that had put in for the Range Creek and Nine Mile units and the success rate for that hunt was about 50 percent. We had hunters who put in for this once-in-a-lifetime hunt where the success rate is usually really high, and because we rounded up bison and pushed them back on tribal lands to respond to a public request and demand, and it was really important for us to do that, we impacted their success of that hunt. The Board really struggled with this, how to remedy that situation, and they ended up approving the Division's recommendation which was to allow those hunters in that unit, who did not harvest a bison, to extend their hunt season date for another year. Those hunters who were not able to harvest this year will be able to harvest next year. That passed unanimously after some discussion. Any questions on either of those two board meetings?

Trisha Hedin: At this junction we'll have a regional update from Chris Wood.

**4) Regional Update**

- Chris Wood, Regional Supervisor

Chris Wood: We have a few people coming in late; there was an accident between here and Price. It took Morgan four hours to get here this afternoon. I know a few people are going to be a little bit late. We have a quorum, so we'll keep going.

Some pictures from our gill netting survey. This is from Huntington North State Park. They did that last week. You can see in our nets, we caught some really nice sized rainbows. Those are some super-catchable rainbows that we stocked in the reservoir in January, and they should provide some great opportunity for fishermen this summer and spring. They also caught some bass, so Huntington North should be a really good, productive water this upcoming year. Our Aquatics guys have also been busy helping with the walleye spawn at Willard Bay. We have more gill net surveys planned for April and May, if you are interested in attending any of those. They usually last a few hours and it's a good opportunity to see what's growing and the composition of each reservoir that we have. Let me know, and we'll get you the dates if you are interested.

Our Habitat Section has been busy as well. They have been transplanting beavers to Gordon Creek. We had some beavers that were causing some trouble up on Nine Mile on a county road, and rather than remove those beavers lethally, our Habitat Section got involved and had a great place for them. I think we transplanted a total of six beavers in a

10-day period of time. We caught the entire family of beavers and moved them to Gordon Creek. It was a fun, rewarding opportunity for them. We have a tree and shrub planting day at the Huntington Game Farm in Emery County later this month if you are interested in planting several hundred trees and shrubs, let me know and we can get you involved with that. Later on this month we'll be working with our Wildlife Section and we'll be looking at what we call spring utilization surveys. We'll be looking at the winter ranges and assessing the brush and the amount of browsing pressure these shrubs are receiving. We'll be looking at utilization and looking at range conditions and looking at winter kill for big game.

Our Law Enforcement has been busy as well. This picture here is from a few weeks ago. This time of year birds are migrating, golden eagles are nesting in the Carbon and Emery county areas. This is a bald eagle; it was coming through and was hit by a car or truck. There have been a few cases that we've responded to of injured eagles. We had them over to a bird rehab facility in Carbon County. If the eagle is dead, we freeze it and FedEx it to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They have an eagle repository center and they take data on the bird and send the feathers to some of the Native American tribes to be used for ceremonial purposes. Beautiful bird. It's a sad incident but really a beautiful bird to examine and admire. They also had some training in St. George and they had a spring hunter education seminar that took place here in Green River a few weeks ago. They are gearing up for the upcoming aquatic invasive species, the AIS season. They will have a heavy presence at Lake Powell and other reservoirs throughout the season, trying to prevent quagga mussels from spreading past Lake Powell and into other waters throughout the state. We're hiring a bunch of seasonal's for that effort.

Our Outreach has been very busy as well. This is a picture from our predator clinic in Blanding. I believe we had 60 people attend, it was a great turnout. We had kids, adults, families that all came and saw Walt and a few others gave a presentation on how to effectively hunt predators such as coyotes, foxes and other critters. They also did a turkey clinic in Blanding. We've had these clinics in Price the last few years and decided to go south and it's been well received. I think we had 30 people at our turkey hunting clinic. We have a few more clinics going on for the rest of the month. We have an owl night tomorrow. We'll start at Desert Lake and then head up to Huntington Canyon. We'll be calling for owls and hopefully they'll be calling back. We should be able to hear a few different species of owls. We also have our Emma Park sage-grouse watch this Saturday. We'll wake up really early in the morning and head to Emma Park which is, I don't know, 15 miles north of Price. We'll look at sage-grouse strutting on their leks. If you're interested in any of these events, let me know. They are reservations only but we may be able to hook you up and squeeze you in.

Our Wildlife Section, they have been doing spring deer classifications and counting sage-grouse on the leks the last few weeks and been going to trainings as well. With that, I'll take any questions and if I can't answer them, my guy's back there can. We have one more item of business, and I'll turn the time over to Walt Maldonado for a few minutes.

Walt Maldonado: Thanks for giving me a few minutes here. As you know the Division

runs and operates a lot of different programs and some of these programs we utilize volunteers. The dedicated hunter program is one of them. The community fishery program is one of them. The recreation program is another one where we utilize a lot of volunteers. But the most important program we have, period, in my mind, is the hunter education program. That's because without recruiting new people and youth, all the resources we use to go and do these things for wildlife are going to null and void. The hunter education program is the key factor to get these new people and youth involved and get them taught the correct way and ethical way to go about the hunting program. At this point in the Southeast Region we're doing OK on volunteers, we could use a few more. We could use a few furbearer instructors. That's what we're really looking for. The instructors that we do have in the Southeast Region are quality people. They are really good. I think it's been three years now, we did some wholesale changes on the hunter education program and a lot of the older instructors did not like the direction we were going. They bowed out gracefully and we had to scramble to find some new instructors. We did find some new instructors and some good ones. One instructor, that is the instructor of the year for the Southeast Region is involved. I've talked to their students after they have taken the class and they loved it. They loved the way it was presented. They felt that the instructor really cared. This instructor is involved in other wildlife organizations and volunteers the time to make these things happen. I wanted to present tonight, that Trish is the hunter education instructor of the year of the Southeast Region. She wasn't able to attend our seminar which we were really mad about so we made a cardboard cutout of her but it was pretty sad looking. Trish, will you come up here? You've done a great job. Thank You.

Chris Wood: I forgot to mention in my update that Kevin Albrecht is not here tonight. He couldn't make the meeting but he was at the meeting last night in the Southern Region and he wanted me to let you know that he plans on reading the minutes and going over all of your questions and concerns and motions as understanding your point of view before the board meeting.

5) **Use of Airbows**

- Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator, and Steve Roll, ShootingEdge

**Questions from the RAC**

Trisha Hedin: Let's start with questions from the RAC.

Eric Luke: What does this setup cost?

Steve Roll: Right now, retail, for everything, including a tank to pump it up, the air bolt's about \$900.

Kent Johnson: Does it use an external air tank?

Steve Roll: To pump it up, yes. In fact, when we test it, we actually hook it up to a scuba tank so we can keep shooting it while testing broad heads and accuracy, etc. But you don't want to drag a scuba tank around. It'll shoot up to 20 rounds, 20 air bolts with accuracy above 400 feet per second. In the 450-480 feet per second range, after that, the energy curve drops off sufficiently to where you wouldn't want to try to shoot anything large with it. You'd just irritate them, then.

Kirk Player: Are you paying the same Pittman-Robertson tax as you would with just a center fire?

Steve Roll: Right now, the rifle itself is not subject to an excise tax but we're working on that so that it becomes more palatable, but the air bolt itself combine tax is about \$1.05 in excise taxes. There was a question a while back about that and somebody said, "Well, you don't pay excise tax." We do. Also, if any member of the RAC has a question following this, I also work as a consultant with Jakes Archery. They were the only cards I had, there's some Jakes Archery cards back there with my name and number on the back.

Trisha Hedin: I don't think we have any comments from the audience so we'll take comments from the RAC. My comment is, don't take offense at this, but what's the point? Meaning, if it's an any weapon why not just use what's effective, which is a rifle? I just worry about, you have an item that doesn't have a super long range, I'm assuming.

Steve Roll: It's a primitive weapon, it's meant for more the muzzleloader.

Trisha Hedin: Right, but you're wanting just an any weapon designation.

Steve Roll: That's what the attorney asked for. I'm the sales guy. If it's allowed for that, it'll end up in the muzzleloader because it is a muzzleloader. The idea is because there's so little recoil and it makes that sound of about what a .22 does, it allows those with injured shoulders or sore shoulders or kids as a starter weapon in muzzleloading to use it as a tool to harvest. That's the idea. It broadens the range of hunters that may otherwise not go out.

Trisha Hedin: I'm always concerned as you move into primitive weapon range that we're wounding more animals. In an any weapon season, there's really no need for that if you can use a firearm.

Steve Roll: It's true. The idea is you do have to spot and stalk and get up close, just like you would with a crossbow or a bow. It's easier to use than a crossbow or a bow.

Kirk Player: The only comment I have is I think the actual rifle not being subject to the excise tax. That's something that I as a sportsman kind of have pride in. That I am putting a lot of money into conservation through that excise tax, the Pittman-Robertson money. \$1.50 and arrow is nothing compared to what you'd spend on a \$1,000 rifle.

Steve Roll: That's correct, and that is being addressed.

Darrell Mecham: Maybe I'm wrong but I don't think muzzleloader is primitive weapon. Is it Chris? We've got into this before over muzzleloaders and scopes and shooting 300 yards. My concern here is if you put this with a primitive weapon designation on it, then we start drifting back to wanting to shoot it during the archery hunt or someone that has issues doing the archery hunt. That's where my concern is. If it's going to be any weapon I think you need to stay away from primitive weapon.

Chris Wood: So a muzzleloader is considered a primitive weapon.

Steve Roll: If I may madam chair, the man who invented the air bolt for this created that Sabot slug that gets up to 1,800 feet per second out of black powder rifle. So those are much more effective at a longer range, this would still, with 3,000 pounds of pressure, you're still not going to be accurate much past 100 yards no matter what you do with this particular combo.

Trisha Hedin: My other concern is at what point do these individuals that are using these want their own season. It just becomes cumbersome.

Steve: We're not looking for that.

Trisha Hedin: So, what exactly are you looking for?

Steve Roll: To have it designated under any legal weapon or muzzleloader.

Eric Luke: Clarify that for me because any legal weapon means anything. Archery, pistol, muzzleloader is a muzzleloader. So what are you looking for this to be designated as?

Steve Roll: The attorney has specified in the presentation here that he wants it under any legal weapon because then we know it will settle in as muzzleloader.

Chris: Are you referring to the Division of Wildlife's attorney?

Steve: No, the attorney that prepared this presentation.

Darrell Mecham: Does this have the capability of 20 repeated shots? I understand you can shoot this 20 times?

Steve Roll: You can shoot it 20 times, but you have to load it every time as well.

Chris Wood: Just to clarify, I think what the Division is doing is we're taking comments from the public from the RACs and then we'll take all those comments from the five RACs and come up with a proposal, if any. Whether we want to move forward with proposing this as either a muzzleloader or an any legal weapon. Then it will come back through the RACs and propose that if we decide to propose anything at all.

Kent Johnson: I think if the Division moves at all it should be in the any legal weapon category. We've tried opening a can of worms before with archery. This, as opposed to a crossbow, might actually give someone a little bit of an advantage in the archery hunt. I don't think it should ever be considered there. In the any legal weapon category, as far as someone wanting to use it, there are all kinds of people that hunt and shoot that like to play with this new gadget. It may be something that catches on. It may be something that just flops and falls on its face because nobody is interested. As far as using it, probably its biggest benefit would be in more settled areas where noise becomes a problem. We don't have the problem in Utah yet. It's coming, but we don't have it yet. I think that that would be my comment, if you do it at all. I would say go ahead and consider it and look into it deeper. Obviously we can't vet the thing in this meeting but that would be my encouragement to the Division, to vet it thoroughly and then consider it only under the rules of an any legal weapon hunt.

Trisha Hedin: This is a question, sorry. What was the effective range on it?

Steve Roll: 100 yards, and that's if you've practiced with it.

Darren Olsen: What kind of head was that? Was it .46 or .5?

Steve Roll: I'm sorry?

Darren Olsen: What type of field point or whatever your broad head is?

Steve: It's a 430-grain bolt. We're looking at 475 feet per second with 240 foot pounds of energy. We're not recommending any particular broad head at this point. We're still perfecting the drafting point that would go on the broad head.

Darren Olsen: Can the points be interchangeable?

Steve Roll: Those are just field tips. What we have on display tonight are just field tips. I'm just clumsy enough, I don't want to bring any broadheads in right now.

Darren Olsen: OK.

Trisha Hedin: If there are no more comments, I think we have some good information to take.

Steve Roll: Thank you very much.

- 6) **Bucks, Bulls, and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2018**  
- Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator

## **Questions from the RAC**

Darrel Mecham: I was looking at your numbers on your limited-entry deer permits and your buck:doe ratios and the Book Cliffs is the only one you're jacking tags up to 35 and you're not above the ratio. So, what I want you to do is explain to me, does this mean you're going to pull the unit out of predator management? You're raising deer tags, have you achieved that? Where are you going with this because any of the others here that are above it, you're not raising any permits in those. But you're raising the Book Cliffs and they are not above the buck:doe ratio.

Covy Jones: The Book Cliffs has been right at the top there. They don't always have to be exceeding the objective. If you'd like a little bit more on that too, Brad's here and when it's a unit-specific issue I really like the biologist to come up and comment.

Brad Crompton: Kind of like Covy said, as far as a very modest increase in buck permit numbers really tie into being on the high end of the buck:doe ratio. It doesn't tie into predator management at all. That's really other factors, not buck:doe ratio.

Darrel Mecham: Your numbers don't? If you're offering more buck tags, is your population up? How does it tie together? You need to explain this.

Brad Crompton: Our predator management is related to adult survival and fawn survival on our radio collar studies. It's a separate issue than our buck numbers obviously. We tie buck permits strictly to buck:doe ratios where we can.

Darrel Mecham: What's the difference between Book Cliffs and these others below it here? On your limited-entry permits and data trends? You've got your San Juan/Elk Ridge is 38.8 and it's staying the same. Why aren't you increasing opportunity there?

Brad Crompton: I don't know.

Darrel Mecham: That's not a great answer.

Chris Wood: Brad's not the biologist over that area, so we'll have Guy answer that question.

Guy Wallace: The reason why is because the unit has extremely low fawn production and low survival this year. That's why we maintain predator management there and no increases in the permits.

Eric Luke: What's the fawn survival on the Book Cliffs?

Brad Crompton: So far this winter, I think we've only lost two. It's off the top of my head but we haven't lost very many this winter. We lost one or two yesterday I think but it's still fairly high survival rate this winter. This is the first year we've put collars on fawns.

It's been does the last several years.

Covy Jones: I think the take home there is that not all units are the same and biologist manage them individually. Where we have the ability to offer an increase we do and still manage to what we've agreed to. Not every unit's the same. Like Guy said, San Juan, you're right, we have it there but we have a poor fawn crop this year. Whereas the Book Cliffs, we have a good fawn crop this year and we'll be recruiting more bucks into the population as well.

Trisha Hedin: Covy, I'm just going to concentrate on a few of our units. So the La Sals now has the reputation of lowest buck-to-doe ratio in the state, which I'm not very happy about, but it is what it is. I just look at the percent of decrease even from 15.1 percent, the three-year average, down to what happened last year and you did decrease permits. But to me it's not statistically, they're not cohesive. I'm just wondering where you come up with a number. So to me, if your buck-to-doe ratio drops by 27 percent, why not drops those tags by 27 percent? I'm just asking, where do you come up with numbers?

Covy Jones: It doesn't work exactly like that. You have to account for success ratios and everything. I think the other thing to keep in mind is that we will work towards lowering that. We're not at a point where we're hitting a biological threshold. We lower tags and look back and see the effect and say are we trending up or down? What's our three year average? At 11, you're still fertilizing every doe and that's the main concern. So, if conditions are right, every doe would have the ability to throw a fawn next year. Remember, keep buck harvest separate. The majority of the time bucks don't drive populations.

Trisha Hedin: Right, I understand that. In that same realm, Central Mountains made a big drop and yet there's no drop in permits whatsoever.

Covy Jones: I'll let Brad speak to his recommendation.

Brad Crompton: It was significant. We cut 500 permits the previous year. The permit level we're at, we recommended 8,800 permits. At that level, our buck:doe ratio was climbing pretty rapidly a number of years ago so we think it's where our stable permit numbers will be. Our buck:doe ratio probably declined for a couple years. We had really poor fawn survival for two years in a row. Once again this winter not happening, our fawn survival is super high so we had to recruit a lot of yearling bucks into the population this fall.

Kent Johnson: what is your hunter success on the La Sal Mountains?

Guy Wallace: 30-35 percent.

Kent Johnson: It's that good?

Trisha Hedin: Well you can drive everywhere.

Kirk Player: I have a question, and you kind of briefly mentioned it. I'm kind of comparing what's going on in the Henry Mountains. It's way over what the objective is as far as age class to what's going on for deer to what's going on the San Juan for elk. Where it's actually trending down, it's still within objective and we're keeping everything the same there even though it's a little bit trending down and then on the Henrys it's way over and we're not increasing tags at all. You mentioned that it's in the plan, that it's a set number. Is there any reason it's a set number on these units that are kind of made to be the envy of the West, or the envy of the whole world, like Henry and Paunsagunt, but then our elk units that used to be the envy of the whole world, we're definitely fluctuating with those. A lot of them, the age class has continued to go down.

Covy Jones: I think there are a couple reasons there. One, on the Henrys, when we set these in the plan we realized that we came several times—are we missing opportunity on the Henrys? Yes. We're definitely missing opportunity on the Henrys. During the last plan, we came in recommending increases several times. Every time, it turned into a three-hour fight with no increase. We realized we're wasting time. We're going to have bucks dying of old age on the mountain. Good bucks. But that's what the public wants. They want a surplus of bucks. So on two units for deer that we manage differently for elk we said, OK. On elk, we manage to that age class and we've looked at it nationwide and I'll tell you a lot of other state are looking at Utah saying, we tried bull:cow ratios, we've tried this, we've tried that and none of it works. They're going to age class. It's a better, more consistent way to manage elk. As you look at antler growth and why they're not as big and this and that, there's a lot that goes into that. Part of it is, you're growing an elk population they always reach a climax as you have available forage and habitat and then as they hit stability it always comes back down a little bit. But as I look through the expo this fall I saw several San Juan bulls on the south end of that expo that were pushing 400 inches, high 370s-380s. It's still a great unit.

Trisha Hedin: That was one of my questions, biological question. Book Cliffs, La Sals and San Juan DH classes all dropping but do you feel like it's reached that plateau and that's why it's starting to drop?

Covy Jones: Are we talking about age class or quality or what?

Trisha Hedin: Age class, I mean on all those units, the age is dropping. Bitter Creek dropped to 6.2. All of those dropped. It's just a biological question.

Covy Jones: As it drops, you cut permits and as it increases you raise permits and offer the opportunity.

Trisha Hedin: I'm asking, do you know why it's dropping. Is it a permitting or is it—

Covy Jones: Because on the San Juan, I should probably let Guy speak to this, but we stockpiled a lot of bulls there for a long time. And as we ate away at that we'll get into it and it'll drop and then we'll back off. We try to manage wildlife populations up to the

peak and keep them at the peak and the truth is it's more of a wave.

Trisha Hedin: Sure.

Eric Luke: I have a question, couple of them. When you're addressing the Pine Valley unit, you said something to the effect that Colorado found that having too many bucks per 100 does can be detrimental to the herd.

Covy Jones: It can have a negative impact on the population, absolutely.

Eric Luke: When I look at the Henrys, it has far higher number than numbers you were representing for Colorado, the Henrys has one of the highest fawn survival rates in the state. Colorado is saying that it doesn't seem to fit with Paunsagaunt and the Henrys.

Covy Jones: So, there's part of that, that I said and it's density dependent. So, when we look at the Henrys, and when I say density dependent, I mean if you are reaching carrying capacity and you're running high buck:doe ratios with those two factors, that's where it comes into play most of all. On the Henrys where we've opened up a lot of that habitat, sure we'll have great fawn survival for several years. As we look at that long term, probably. Again, we don't manage the Henrys to maximize fawns and we shouldn't. It's OK to have a few of those great quality trophy units. But when we manage a unit like the Pine Valley that we can definitely see and we go out and do body condition that those animals, we're pushing it. You know, we're running those closer to carrying capacity than we are on a unit like the Henrys then that's when it starts to have a negative impact on your population. That's what Colorado found.

Eric Luke: Second question, on the elk and deer, I saw somewhere you had 11 percent success rate, was that general season is that—

Covy Jones: That's spike bull.

Eric Luke: That's spike. How is that on the Manti compared to years previous?

Covy Jones: Kent, do you have that data for the Manti? We'll get that for you.

Eric Luke: Also, same thing with the deer success rate.

Covy Jones: For general season deer and spike bull? Can we get both of those?

Guy Wallace: We were actually down quite a bit on spike bull on the Manti last year. We typically are around 400 spike bulls on the Manti. We were down to 300 last year. On the Manti, it looks like we've been averaging around 2,200 deer harvest and we were at 2,140 last year.

Trisha Hedin: I just have one quick question. I'm not attacking. The huge reduction in bison tags on Wild Horse Bench, can you just reiterate what that's for because it went

from 42 to 4? People are going to be bummed.

Covy Jones: Yes, there are a couple reasons for that. First of all, we cut the unit in half. We were asked by this RAC to remove a portion of the unit on the Range Creek and we did that. We'll deal with bison that come into that area differently. The other reason and I'm sure everyone remembers the discussion we had, the rationale there was if we've got an active hunt there, it appears that we want bison there and we keep saying we don't want them there. And we don't. So, we'll handle them separately. The other reason was the Wildlife Board, because of the suggestions that we came up with as a RAC, the Wildlife Board and the Division authorized herding off of that unit, authorizes the reservation to herd back onto them. When they did that, the hunters that had those permits, several of them, just under half were never able to harvest. The Wildlife Board extended their season into next year but they only get to hunt what the unit is now. So, that's half of what it was before. So that's the rationale behind the reduction.

Eric Luke: Or that's carryover from last year.

Covy Jones: Yes. We have 18 people that are carryover in addition to those 4 permits so the unit was cut in half so we cut the permits in half from 44 to 22 but only 4 of those are new permits.

Trisha Hedin: And that was clear during the draw process?

Chris Wood: No, that decision was made after the draw was over.

Covy Jones: I think that's part of the confusion. It did come after the draw was over.

Trisha Hedin: Any more questions from the RAC?

Darren Olsen: I'm looking a few of these deer hunts, it looks like we've added an early season. We've basically taken 10 percent off the archery and muzzleloader. So from 30 percent archery, 40 percent any weapon, 30 percent muzzleloader, we've decreased archery and muzzleloader 10 percent to make up that 20 percent. Any discussion or comment on that?

Covy Jones: Typically our hunts are 20 percent archery, 20 percent muzzleloader, and 60 percent any weapon. There are some, where in the past those ratios have been different. There are a few that are outlined in the presentation. On the new ones, it just took 20 percent of that general rifle season and created that new season.

Darren Olsen: OK, so the typical hunt is 20, 60, 20?

Covy Jones: Yeah, we could say 20, 60, 20, I think of it in the order that they go. We start with archer, 20. Muzzleloader, 20. And then rifle, 60.

Trisha Hedin: Can you go back to the any bull permit slide? I want to pose a hypothetical.

If we bumped up the youth any bull, can we pull them from the any bull?

Covy Jones: No, because those permits are set in the plan as long as we're meeting the criteria. The youth any bull permits are not set in the plan.

Trisha Hedin: OK. I know we've discussed this before.

Covy Jones: We've discussed it in other RACs and the truth is that I love that we offer this opportunity for the youth and several opportunities for the youth. They get the opportunity to get 20 percent of the deer tags right off the top then after that they get put back into the draw. They can still buy an archery permit over the counter for any unit in the state. There's some concern that this is about the right number and if we increase it there are crowding issues and reducing opportunity for other hunters.

Trisha Hedin: I was just thinking we could move them, taking them out of the any bull allotment and putting them into youth. That was my hope.

Darern Olsen: Can I ask a question here, I know we talked about the dedicated elk program, how does that play into this?

Covy Jones: It's a multi-season elk permit. It's similar to the dedicated hunter program in that you can hunt all three seasons, but you don't have to do any hours, you just buy a permit.

Darren Olsen: That's part of these numbers?

Covy Jones: Yes, that is part of these numbers. So when you go in to buy a permit this fall, you'll be able to select if you want a rifle, archery, muzzleloader permit or a multi-season permit. Whichever you select will be deducted from the quota, except for archery. Archery is not deducted from the quota here. Either multi-season, rifle or muzzleloader would be deducted from the quota. When you select that, you will select either a spike or any bull unit. It follows how we do it now so for archery, you'd be able to hunt both units. If you selected a spike permit, when the rifle season started you'd go into your lane and you would only be able to hunt spike units. If you selected an any bull unit, you'd be able to hunt both for archery and then when rifle season began you'd go into your lane and only be able to hunt the any bull units.

Kirk Player: Was the La Sal goat on the application?

Covy Jones: Yes. We brought that hunt for approval in the fall.

Trisha Hedin: At this point, let's take questions from the audience.

### **Questions from the Public**

No questions.

### **Comments from the Public**

Troy Justensen: I appreciate you being here tonight. As a representative for Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, my name is Troy Justensen. We agree with the Divisions recommendations with the following exceptions. I'll first start on the bighorn sheep. In one of the bighorns, one of the recommendations is they have combined three units: the Anthro, Nebo and the Wasatch. Giving the individuals who draw that the opportunity to hunt all three units. Our fear is, is the recommendation is three permits but you throw the tribal tag in there, then you throw the possibility of having the statewide tag holder, the sportsman's tag there's a potential of 6 rams coming off of that and we believe it would be detrimental to some of these units. The main one we're concerned about is the Wasatch. The Nebo and the Anthro are extremely difficult to find sheep, quality sheep, where the Wasatch is not. They pull down that face above the temple to winter. As these hunters struggle in these other units, we believe they are going to migrate to there. We recommend cutting that permit number from three down to two. We'd feel more comfortable with that.

As far as the deer recommendations go for the general season, we'd ask the RAC to vote on reducing the Manti 250 permits. We understand that the north Manti has bounced back and populations are doing good and buck-to-doe ratios are doing good. The south Manti, that is not the case. So we'd ask the Division to decrease deer permits by 250. On the Pine Valley, we'd ask the RAC to vote on keeping the permit numbers the same as last year. On the Pine Valley they just introduced the new early rifle, and there's a lot of concern from our membership down there that that herd is, even though we understand they're on the top end of that buck-to-doe ratio and fit in that scale, their fear is with this early rifle is the deer migrate when they start to receive pressure and it's going to push the majority of these deer down low. We're going to have a higher than normal harvest on that later rifle. What they would like to do is hold steady for one year, see what effect that early rifle has and then adjust it next year.

On our elk, we'd recommend that the Monroe, Fish Lake and Manti be kept at 2017 numbers versus the increases that have been proposed by the Division.

On the bison we feel comfortable with what the Division has recommended. We understand there is a drought there. We are permit holders on that mountain, we have a working relationship with the other permittees there. We're confident with what the Division has proposed and the ability to come back and issue more tags if we don't receive any moisture to keep that herd in check. We support the Division's recommendations. Thank You.

Shayne Thompson: Shayne Thompson. I'm with the local Carbon/Emery chapter for SFW. I'd just like to support Troy's recommendations with a couple comments on the reason we're concerned with the deer herd on the Manti. There's less harvest and we feel

like it's going to take more of a plummet so if we start decreasing the tags on there now the age objective is going to drop substantially. If you look on the chart you've got a really high buck-to-doe ratio three years ago and the last two years it's 15 and 13 so I think there's going to be a real big dive. I want to adjust for that a little bit.

On the elk, there's a lot of concern on the lack of spikes and bulls that were not harvested this year. We had a lot of guys that put a lot of time and effort on that mountain and figured our bulls are really struggling. The age objective is down below so we want to keep that number the same to see before we have to take another big cut.

The cut on the deer, we raised it three years ago to 9,350 and then dropped it back down to 8,800, I don't think that gave us enough of a decrease there. The south Manti is in bad, bad shape. If all of those 8,800 tags end up going to the north, we're going to have a problem on the north again and just overshoot it too. We just want to throw a concern out there on maybe starting to adjust some tag numbers and get our deer herd back up there. I do want to appreciate. These guys go through a lot of work and put up with us a lot. We spend a lot of time with these guys. They work hard to get these numbers and trying to figure out what's going on in the south end. We put in a lot of effort transplanting deer. They're doing a lot of studies and working their butts off to figure what's going on so I think as hunters we need to take the time to lessen harvest for a little while and get our herd back. Thanks for your time.

Reed Pendleton: I'm a local sportsman. I'd like to support the SFW's recommendations and along those lines reiterate the Manti situation. I've gone over the number for all the units and it seems that all the units that are trending down over the last three years, like the Fish Lake and the Monroe and La Sals are all getting those permit cuts whereas the Manti is not. They've had that significant drop in buck-to-doe ratio so it only seems logical to me that they should have the 250 tag drop to kind of predict what's going to happen this year. I think if they kept it at 8,800 and we dropped this last year with those 8,800 permits it could potentially drop it even worse this next year. That's all I've got to say. Thanks.

Guy Webster: I'm here for myself and also the Utah Houndsmen Association. The biggest concern is the Book Cliffs. We discussed it a little bit. We're still within the parameters on buck-to-doe. We're at less than half on overall herd objective, there's absolutely no reason to increase those tags. We've got plenty of habitat. We talk about if we've got too many bucks it can decrease fawns. That is if we are over objective on what the overall population is. We are at half objective, we shouldn't be increasing buck tags on any unit if we're under objective on overall herds. Saying that it's detrimental to the fawns, it's not. I'd just ask you to look at it and say, if we're well under objective on overall herd numbers and we're still close to the parameters on the buck-to-doe we don't increase any tags. Especially if we're also under a predator management plan for lions and trying to annihilate every lion to try to increase deer and yet we're giving out more buck tags. It just doesn't make any sense.

Greg Bird: I'm with Utah Wild Sheep Foundation. We agree with all the

recommendations that the Division has presented tonight with the exception with the Wasatch, Nebo, Avintaquin bighorn sheep unit. We would recommend that there be no increase. This is a sheep herd that has struggled historically with disease. We're really struggling to get our mature rams back into these populations. With the possibility to having the sportsman's tag and the governor's tag being six permits on this unit, we feel there could be really detrimental to that Provo face where these rams will show up above the Provo Temple and get really susceptible. We do agree that there can be rams taken off of different parts of these unit and the numbers really aren't over what they should be but we would recommend in the future that these units go back to being managed separately so the rams could be harvested where they need to be and won't be over harvesting one particular area. Thank You.

### **RAC Discussion**

Trisha Hedin: Let's take comments from the RAC. I'll let you make comments, but I can reiterate some of the comments from the audience. It seems like we have some big concerns about the Manti and concerns about the sheep combination of the units of the Wasatch and the Nebo, and the increase in buck permits in the Book Cliffs. These are the main concerns but we may have others.

Kent Johnson: That would be my comments mainly. With the Book Cliffs deer that was the one that stuck out the most to me. I think that that should be left alone. It looks like it's been stable over several years on the buck-to-doe ratio. If you wanted an increase saying it's stable and you want to increase some opportunity then maybe reduce point creep and stuff with people and maybe go up 5 or 6 but 35 permits, that's over the top. It's scary and could be detrimental to that hunt on the Book Cliffs. It's actually starting to come back a little bit and look at little decent.

Trisha Hedin: What was the proposed increase?

Kent Johnson: Thirty-five permit increase. I understand that the Division has to manage the social side of it and try to keep people happy with opportunities as well. Maybe where you've got a buck-to-doe ratio that's been stable over several years and is staying that way, you might be able to take a couple more bucks out of the unit, maybe four or five more, but not 35 more. I think 35 more is just way out of line and could be a serious problem.

Trisha Hedin: Any other comments?

Eric Luke: Go back to the Manti. The thing that sticks out to me is the trend in the buck-to-doe ratio. We've got that one year that we're going to lose next year if we have another year like this year we're going to drop all of a sudden below our objective or to the very bottom of the objective. I think the recommendation to cut a few tags this year is a good step. If we don't do that and we have another bad year on our buck-to-doe ratio next year we could be asking for a very large decrease and that's never a good thing.

With the elk on the Manti as well, we're only 6.1. You look at those averages and they're pretty much right there in line with the upper end of our management objective. One or two bulls of a different age could easily trend that back down. I think we kind of stayed at a level, we increased it 13 tags last year by adding that mid-season hunt. I just don't see that there's a need to increase that any more this year. I think we need to leave it alone for one more year and see what that age does. Then with the Book Cliffs, I realize the state has to manage for opportunity, and I get that, but at some point I think we have to manage for the resources that are there as well. That big of an increase on the Book Cliffs seems very excessive in my mind.

Trisha Hedin: Any more comments?

Kent Johnson: Yeah, with where the discussion is going, there's a suggestion I'd like to make for when we do get to a motion. It might be a good idea to split this up into deer, then elk and then the remainder of the recommendations.

Trisha Hedin: I agree.

Kirk Player: One comment I have is going back to the Henrys. It just kind of seems—I understand they have to deal with it more than I do—but all these other units we're actually able to fluctuate up and down and have these discussions on. But that one which is wildly over, it's untouchable. It just seems like at some point and maybe it's the public's perception and not the Division but I think we should be treating them the same. You know treating them to the objective. Whether that be over or under.

Lynn Sitterud: I would like to support the hunting groups on protecting those bighorn sheep on that Wasatch. I think we should hold those numbers down to protect them. I'm not sure that somewhere along the line that unit shouldn't be protected from the sportsman tag the statewide tags and only draw number control that unit.

Jeff Christensen: Could you do a quota deal there? Say kill three sheep and you're done?

Lynn Sitterud: They've already shown that they haven't been able to control the hunts on that three-unit area. There's been sheep killed that shouldn't have been. I'm not sure how well a quota would work. It's better than nothing but those sheep on that face ought to be protected.

Eric Luke: I think that would be very difficult to do on a quota because people are putting in for a once-in-a-lifetime hunt and if they draw that permit, if they don't kill before someone else does they are basically being shut out.

Jeff Christensen: I was just wondering if you could just lump them all together and then when you hit your quota it shuffles them over to the other two units. I don't know anything about it; it's just something I thought of.

Kent Johnson: I think the comment that was made about splitting them back up into three

separate units is probably going to be the best solution.

Lynn Sitterud: I agree with that.

Kirk Player: I agree with that as well. To manage them separately.

Lynn Sitterud: I'd like to see them split back up.

Trisha Hedin: At this point I think what we'll do is, I'll address and if someone wants to make a motion on various line items. Let's talk about Book Cliffs deer. Do I have a motion on that?

Darrel Mecham: I make a motion to leave it as it was, no increase.

Trisha Hedin: So we have a motion by Darrel Mecham to leave the Book Cliffs deer permit numbers at the 2017 level. And seconded by Kent. Shall we vote on this? All in favor of that motion. It's unanimous.

Next, talk about Manti deer then elk separately. Do I have a motion on Manti deer?

Eric Luke: I make a motion that, as far as the remainder of deer permits, we go with recommendation by the sportsmen group, to lower the numbers 250 tags on the Manti, and keep Pine Valley the same.

Trisha Hedin: Let's just talk about the Manti right now.

Eric Luke: So, we'll go with the recommendation for a 250 tag decrease on the Manti for general season deer permits.

Trisha Hedin: I have a motion by Eric to decrease permits on the Manti by 250 tags, and that is seconded by Lynn Sitterud. All in favor. It is unanimous.

Do you want to talk about Pine Valley now?

Eric Luke: I'll make a motion that we ask the board to keep the Pine Valley unit the same as last year's permits for one more year because of the introduction of the additional hunt. See how that impacts it.

Trisha Hedin: So I have a motion by Eric Luke to keep permit numbers on Pine Valley consistent with 2017 numbers. Do I have a second on that? Seconded by Lynn. All in favor. Nine in favor. Opposed? Looks like three opposed [Kirk Player, Dana Truman, Jace Guymon].

Do we have a motion on elk on the Manti, or was it just more concerns?

Eric Luke: I'll make a motion that we ask the board to keep the limited-entry elk permits

the same on the Manti as last year.

Trisha Hedin: We have a motion by Eric Luke to keep permit numbers on the Manti, as far as elk, consistent with 2017, and that's seconded by Kent. All in favor. It's unanimous. No?

Darren Olsen: I was just going to abstain from either vote.

Trisha Hedin: So we have Darren abstaining from a vote on that. I believe that the last issue before the remainder of the recommendations is the sheep on the Wasatch unit. Do I have a motion on that? And I know it's a combination on that.

Covy Jones: Before we have a motion, can I speak to that and why we lumped those and what we're trying to achieve there? I think that Troy brings up a real concern in the fact that if you look at the three permits and there is a tribal permit there, the sportsman's permit and the governor's permit, you could have a possibility of six sheep harvested there. Can the unit handle six sheep? Sure. Could the Provo face handle six sheep? No, probably not. On that unit we can stay within the plan and be at either two or three permits and honestly the Division would feel comfortable with two permits there. As far as splitting it back out, I think that raises my concerns even worse because if we split it back out for next year, and this is speaking to the fall, we wouldn't do this now, then we would recommend one permit on every one of those units. On the Avintaquin we'd have the possibility of harvesting four. On the Wasatch we'd have the possibility of harvesting three and on the Nebo we'd have the possibility of harvesting three. It actually increases the possibility of harvest. Combining the units is probably a good thing. It gives us more sheep to hunt. We know that the hunt has been open since 2014, on the Wasatch at least, and since then the sportsman's tag has harvested once there. The governor's tag or the conservation permit has been harvested once. They harvested on different portions of the unit. Again, we would be fine with a reduction in permits there from three to two, but we'd be outside of the plan on bighorn sheep to go to one and would prefer not to go there.

Trisha Hedin: Do I have a motion?

Lynn Sitterud: I like to make the motion that we leave the sheep numbers at last year's numbers.

Trisha Hedin: So I have a motion by Lynn Sitterud to keep sheep permits, and I know it's Wasatch, Nebo, at 2017 permit numbers. Do I have a second on that? Seconded by Eric Luke. All in favor. I believe it's unanimous.

And then finally, do we have a motion on the remainder of the recommendations by the Division?

Kent Johnson: I'll make a motion to approve the remainder of the big game permit numbers as presented by the Division.

Trisha Hedin: Do I have a second on that? Seconded by Eric. All in favor. All opposed. Kirk is going to abstain from voting.

## **VOTING**

**Darrel Mecham made a motion to leave the Book Cliffs deer permit numbers unchanged from 2017**

**Seconded by Kent Johnson**

**Passed unanimously**

**Eric Luke made a motion to reduce the number of general season buck deer permits on the Manti Unit by 250**

**Seconded by Lynn Sitterud**

**Passed unanimously**

**Eric Luke made a motion to leave the number of deer permits for the Pine Valley Unit unchanged from 2017**

**Seconded by Lynn Sitterud**

**Passed 9-3 (opposed: Kirk Player, Dana Truman, Jace Guymon)**

**Eric Luke made a motion to leave the number of limited-entry elk permits on the Manti Unit unchanged from 2017**

**Seconded by Kent Johnson**

**Passed 11-0 (abstention: Darren Olsen)**

**Lynn Sitterud made a motion to leave the number of bighorn sheep permits for the Wasatch, Nebo and Central Mountain units unchanged from 2017**

**Seconded by Eric Luke**

**Passed unanimously**

**Kent Johnson made a motion to accept the remaining Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2018 as presented**

**Seconded by Eric Luke**

**Passed 11-0 (abstention: Kirk Player)**

## **7) Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2018**

**- Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator, and Guy Wallace, Regional Wildlife Manager**

## **Questions from the RAC**

Kent Johnson: I have a couple. With the increases in deer antlerless permits brings to

mind a question: how did the transplant work? Was that an effective tool to transplant deer to places where there was a very low population? I know it was tried some to Ferron Mountain. How did that work?

Covy Jones: To simplify it, it looks like about half of them survive. I think it's absolutely an effective tool at times. Antlerless permits are still a great way to offer hunter opportunity. Right now we focus those efforts on more of our urban areas in Salt Lake and Utah counties where we have some problems up there. We have municipalities willing to help with that and help fund that and make that possible. We'll keep doing it for now. Yes, at times it works well. Other times, in depredation situations, it's a tool; it's probably not the best tool for every situation. We'll continue using it where it works well.

Kent Johnson: OK, I was just wondering about that. There are places that can benefit from deer being put in and survive.

Covy Jones: I agree. I don't see us moving away from that. We'll keep doing that.

Kent Johnson: One other question, go back to the Northern Region antlerless elk. The permit numbers you were looking at there. If you look at that, you are advocating an increase on the Cache and you're right at about objective so that's probably OK, but you're way over objective on the Ogden but you're not recommending any increase there. Why is that?

Covy Jones: Northern region is a little different. A lot of these units are primarily private land. Piling a bunch of hunters into the small public land that is there wouldn't increase harvest. It would just end up with more frustrated hunters. When we harvest on these you can look at that but you have to look at that in addition to the private lands only permits that we offer for those units and the CWMU permits for those units. This only tells part of the story there. It only tells what we're offering on, you know, the East Canyon, Chalk Creek, a lot of those are highly private lands. That's the reason.

Trisha Hedin: So I'm just going to concentrate on our units. The Book Cliffs, I understand it's still under objective, but the population was better last year than the year before and you dropped permits from 120 to 105. I'm wondering why if it's just purely that you're under objective?

Covy Jones: When we go with unit-specific questions, I'll turn that over to Brad.

Trisha Hedin: I know Brad has told me we can't grow elk in the Book Cliffs. I know what he's going to say.

Brad Crompton: This is specific to south Book Cliffs, that San Arroyo unit. Forever we've had that group of elk living out there that have kind of left the country. There's no sense issuing tags for elk that aren't there.

Trisha Hedin: OK, that's a great comment. The next one's for the San Juan so maybe

have Guy answer. The San Juan objective is 1,300. You went from antlerless permits of 50 to 130. That's a huge jump.

Guy Wallace: On our public lands hunts, we went to zero last year. We surveyed that this year and we're at objective so we felt we needed to add some permits to try and stabilize that population and keep it at objective.

Trisha Hedin: OK.

Kirk Player: Can you expound on that a little bit more? What are these 50 that are listed on the paper if we were at zero?

Guy Wallace: We did have a hunt that was designed around a Forest Service project that they were doing on Elk Ridge, and we maintained that because they're still working on that project. But we had the early- and the late-season hunts that we went to zero on. We just kept that one hunt. What we've done this year is we've expanded that to all of Elk Ridge. We've kept it at 50 permits but now it's all of Elk Ridge instead of just the north end.

Kirk Player: So will there be zero again on the Abajos?

Guy Wallace: No, we'll have I think 100 permits on the Abajos on an early hunt. Maybe it was 80. Yeah, it was 80 permits.

Jeff Christensen: I have a question for Brad. On your antelope, you've got this new proposed unit, this Mounds Unit, you come down by Highway 6 by the railroad tracks. Is there a reason you stopped that at the Good Water Road?

Brad Crompton: We found our highest concentrations of pronghorn from there north to Wellington, so we are just targeting where we had a high density of pronghorn.

Jeff Christensen: It would be nice if you extend that all the way to where the tracks hit the highway there.

Brad Crompton: It's pretty close to that, isn't it?

Jeff Christensen: You still have quite a bit of country there, and there's plenty of goats there.

Brad Crompton: We're not opposed to that. Our initial attack was where we have very high densities and where they are close to agriculture we want to focus hunters there where we can remove pronghorn doing damage.

Jeff Christensen: So you're taking 100 head out of the San Rafael North, correct?

Brad Crompton: Yes, 150 total, I think.

Jeff Christensen: So you have the north that says Cleveland and then the north Mounds. You're not saying 100 out of just this unit right here are you? Are we crossing over to Highway 6 and taking anything on the other side?

Brad Crompton None of it's east of Highway 6. It's all west of Highway 6. We flew that unit the previous year so we don't have this year's data on that. If we're seeing increases where we're over objective there we'd tackle it over there as well.

Jeff Christensen: So are you still on the same unit or when you cross Highway 6 is that a different unit?

Brad Crompton That's the Nine Mile there. There's no doe tags this year. Just mitigation permits in Coal Creek and things like that.

Trisha Hedin: Any other questions from the RAC?

Dana Truman: I want to understand antlerless permits. On the second slide, in 2010 we had a bunch of permits and then it dropped dramatically.

Covy Jones: Is this what you're looking at? Was it for deer or elk?

Dana Truman: For deer. I was just curious what happened in 2010 to 2011 since we're approaching same number of permits now.

Covy Jones: We've really just focused on what target areas and what we can offer the public as an agency. I don't think it's fair to expect the private landowner to do all the work. That's what is responsible for the increase. We are saying, here are our problem areas, here's where we need to have harvest. One more thing too I will mention is that with body condition scores and the data that we take on deer now, we have more data to say where do we need to address herd health and population health with these.

### **Questions from the Public**

No questions.

### **Comments from the Public**

Troy Justensen: Troy Justensen, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife. We support the Division's recommendations on the antlerless numbers.

### **RAC Discussion**

Trisha Hedin: If we don't have comments, do we have any specific motions? If not, we'll go to an overall motion.

Kent Johnson: I make a motion to accept the Division's recommendations on antlerless permit recommendations.

Trisha Hedin: We have a motion by Kent to accept the recommendations by the Division as presented. Do we have a second?

Todd Thorne: I'll second it.

Trisha Hedin: We have a second by Todd. All in favor. It looks unanimous.

### **VOTING**

**Kent Johnson made a motion to accept the Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2018 as presented**

**Seconded by Todd Thorne**

**Passed unanimously**

- 8) **2018 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations**  
- Mike Wardle, Private Lands/Public Wildlife Coordinator

### **Questions from the RAC**

Todd Thorne: On Jump Creek in the Southeastern Region, wasn't it recommended to not renew their application, or is that another one I'm thinking of?

Mike Wardle: When their renewal application came through, Jump Creek was under acreage and we recommended to the Board to deny that application. They showed up and the board did grant them the COR with the contingency that they receive a variance from the advisory committee. The minimum acreage standard for elk is 10,000 acres. If we have a CWMU that is below that acreage and still wants to be an elk CWMU there is a process where they can get a variance to that rule through the CWMU advisory committee. The issue is that Jump Creek hadn't gone and done that prior to the renewal application so what the board did was approve their COR for one year and the following two years being contingent upon that variance. They were granted the variance from the advisory committee.

### **Questions from the Public**

No questions.

## **Comments from the Public**

No questions.

## **RAC Discussion**

Trisha Hedin: Let's entertain a motion.

Todd Thorne: I make a motion to approve recommendations as presented.

Trisha Hedin: So we have a motion by Todd Thorne to take the recommendations by the Division as presented. Do we have a second?

Jeff Christensen: I'll second it.

Trisha Hedin: And seconded by Jeff. All in favor. I believe it's unanimous.

Sue Bellagamba: I need to abstain.

Trisha Hedin: Sue is going to abstain. Sorry, Sue.

## **VOTING**

**Todd Thorne made a motion to accept the 2018 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations as presented**

**Seconded by Jeff Christensen**

**Passed 11-0 (abstention: Sue Bellagamba)**

## **9) Poaching Reported Reward Permit Program Changes**

- Justin Shirley, Law Enforcement Captain

## **Questions from the RAC**

Trisha Hedin: Do I have any questions from the RAC?

Eric Luke: I noticed there's no sheep permits, reward permits. Obviously probably because there are few if any units that have more than 10 permits. Have there been any sheep poaching reported?

Justin Shirley: Permits issued? It is an option, it's not excluded on here as the species. You would have an option, sheep is included.

Eric Luke: But there are very few units that have 10 permits, so what would be the option there? If you've turned in a sheep poaching?

Justin Shirley: Which unit would be what determines it. If it was on Timp, your option would probably be a mountain goat if we give 10 mountain goat permits.

Eric Luke: Say it's San Rafael North.

Justin Shirley: You're probably going to get a bison tag then on the Henrys would be my guess. So, you're going to have to have 10 permits or we're not going to do it. Again, we'd go through all the sheep units before that and if there were any of those sheep units available but then we're going to come back to that unit and say, OK, we'll give you a permit for the next closest once-in-a-lifetime species. If it was San Rafael, you're probably looking at bison. I guess we haven't GPSed which unit would be closest, whether it would be Book Cliffs or Henrys. That's probably pretty close. It is available for all species but again you look at moose permits numbers, sheep numbers, you're probably not going to have it.

Trisha Hedin: Any other questions from the RAC?

Todd Thorne: I've got one. So, you said you can only have one tag per antlered animal. If it was successful prosecution and you were awarded a tag and then you happen to draw a tag that particular year, can you delay your poacher reward tag?

Justin Shirley: Yeah, we'd let you pick which one you wanted to do. If you were lucky in that draw and you wanted to take that permit we would let you wait and give you the permit the next year. We've done that in the past.

### **Questions from the Public**

Reed Pendleton: Reed Pendleton, local sportsman. I'm just trying to wrap my head around the general season ones. If someone shoots a two-point buck or a spike bull and they get a citation or get prosecuted, I have the option of picking a limited-entry bull tag or a late season muzzleloader deer tag for that unit if it's available?

Justin Shirley: Only if there was a limited-entry option on that unit to begin with. If it is a spike unit and there's mature bull tags on there. We don't care if it's during that general season, if the poached a bull we would offer you the limited-entry permit. If we're talking about the Manti and there's not a late season muzzleloader hunt on there and it's deer, your option would only be a general season deer tag on the Manti. Or we could offer you a monetary reward if you would rather. If it was an elk and it was a spike bull on the Manti and you turned the poacher in, we would give you the choice, you could pick a spike bull tag if you wanted or a mature bull tag.

### **Comments from the Public**

No comments.

### **RAC Discussion**

Trisha Hedin: If there are no comments can we entertain a motion?

Todd Thorne: I'll make the a motion to approve poacher reward as outlined.

Trisha Hedin: OK, great. I have a motion from Todd to take the Division's recommendations as outlined. A second?

Kent Johnson: I'll do it.

Trisha Hedin: A second by Kent. All in favor. I believe it is unanimous. We're adjourned. Thank you so much for coming.

### **VOTING**

**Todd Thorne made a motion to accept the Poaching Reported Reward Permit Program Changes as presented**

**Seconded by Kent Johnson**

**Passed unanimously**

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

The next Wildlife Board meeting will take place on April 26, 2018, at 9 a.m. in the Department of Natural Resources Board Room, 1594 W. North Temple, in Salt Lake City.

The next Southeast RAC meeting will take place on May 9, 2018, at 6:30 p.m. at the John Wesley Powell River History Museum, 1765 E. Main, in Green River.

## **NORTHEASTERN RAC MEETING**

Utah Wildlife Resources Office, 318 N Vernal Avenue, Vernal  
April 5, 2018

### **NER RAC MEMBERS PRESENT**

Natasha Hadden, BLM  
Randy Dearth, NER RAC Chair  
Joe Arnold, Public At-Large  
Dan Abeyta, Forest Service  
Ritchie Anderson, Agriculture  
Daniel Davis, Sportsman  
Rebekah Jones, Non-consumptive  
Boyde Blackwell, NER Regional Supervisor  
Tim Ignacio, Ute Tribe  
Brad Horrocks, Agriculture  
Andrea Merrill, Non-consumptive  
Brad Horrocks, Agriculture

### **NERO MEMBERS EXCUSED**

Brett Prevedel, Public At-Large

### **UDWR PERSONNEL PRESENT**

Clint Sampson, NER Wildlife Biologist  
Amy Vande Voort, NER Wildlife Biologist  
Brandon White, NER Law Enforcement  
Dax Mangus, NER Wildlife Manager  
Derrick Ewell, NER Wildlife Biologist  
Torrey Christophersen, NER Lieutenant  
Randall Thacker, NER Wildlife Biologist  
Brandon White, NER Law Enforcement  
Justin Shirley, Law Enforcement Captain  
Tonya Kieffer, NER Outreach Manager  
Jace Taylor, Big Horn Sheep and Mt Goat Bio  
Amber Stuart, NER Office Specialist  
Rori Shafer, NER Office Manager  
Derrick Ewell, NER Wildlife Biologist  
Sean Davis, NER Investigator  
Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator  
Eric Miller, NER Law Enforcement  
Kent Hersey, Big Game Proj. Coordinator  
Dallon Christensen, Land Owner Assistant Mgr  
Shay Farnsworth, Land Owner Assistant Tech  
Mike Wardle, Public Wildlife/Private Lands Coor.

## **NORTHEASTERN RAC MEETING SUMMARY OF MOTIONS**

Utah Wildlife Resources Office, 318 N Vernal Avenue, Vernal

March 5, 2018

Welcome and Intro Appreciation

- **WELCOME, RAC INTRODUCTIONS AND RAC PROCEDURES** – Randy Dearth
- **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**  
**MOTION to approve the agenda as presented.**

**Brad Horrocks**

**Dan Abeyta, second**

**Passed unanimously**

**MOTION to approve the minutes from the last RAC meeting.**

**Dan Abeyta**

**Brad Horrocks, second**

**Passed unanimously**

- **WILDLIFE BOARD MEETING UPDATE** – **Boyde Blackwell**

There was just one action item which was the black bear recommendations and rule amendment. There was a lot of discussion on it and some motions were made and passed that were then reversed. So in other words they made a motion and passed it and noticed that there were some problems in how they were going to be enforced statewide because they didn't have the time to take some of these things that they had passed around to the RACs and have any discussion regarding from law enforcement and from other regions regarding on how they were going to enforce these. They reversed those and instructed the Division to take at the things that were passed so they can address them the next time they meet to talk about bears. The bottom line was accepting the Divisions recommendations as proposed. There was a modification that was proposed from the Utah Houndsmen Association to change the dates on the La Sals, San Juan, and Book Cliffs; this is the motion that initially passed through the board. Then they discussed it and decided that there were other ramifications in other areas and other rules that played an effect on that, so they reversed it and went back to the Divisions recommendations as proposed.

- **REGIONAL UPDATE** – **Boyde Blackwell**

First off I want to welcome the two new RAC members; Rebekah Jones who is the shy one, we'll get her up here and her hand will be waiving. She is representing non-consumptive. If you'll remember Melissa Wardell moved out of the area so we looked and looked and looked and found another really good person. Welcome Rebekah. The next new person that you see up here and anybody who is from the area knows Natasha. Natasha is BLM representative. They

decided that they were going to make a change in their wildlife representation and I don't know if they drew straws or what, but Natasha drew the short straw. We're happy to have them and before I get into overall regional updates I would be remiss if we didn't wish Troy Justinson a happy birthday. Happy birthday Troy! That young man back there drives around to all these RACs and really shows a passion for wildlife. Especially to be here on his birthday, I'm going to have Dax stand in for me when it's my birthday and I have to be here so good to see you Troy. Let me get into some of the updates, it's been a long time since we've gotten together and it's amazing to me how busy my folks get this time of year; they are busy all year but this time of year they are exceptionally busy getting things going and getting things out there. First of all in our aquatics section they are working out in Meadow Creek right now working on some fish habitats and bank stabilization. We've had some issues with the banks being knocked back and they did some work back there that ended up being trampled. He's out there again working on that, planting trees and reinforcements of banks. Natalie is doing some recon work out at Starvation right now looking for spawning walleye. From angler reports it sounds like they're waking up, the walleye are starting to move around a little bit. I was out there yesterday and did some netting with Natalie and we netted some huge, huge walleye. They're just not quite ripe and ready to go yet but they're just on the verge. The males are, as you can imagine, ripe and ready to go and just waiting on the females to come near the beds and to get ready. What they want to do is use this as backup in case we have issues collecting eggs out at Willard Bay. We find when we collect the eggs and we go through the process and put them out as fry they have a better chance of living. We've got some work going out at Stewart Lake. Some of you locally here might have noticed some smoke coming out from Stewart Lake that was intentional from burning cattails out there. We're going to do another burn here soon, as soon as conditions are conducive to a burn. Our habitat section is busy putting in food plots out on Kevin Conway WMA, so we continue to work through that project. We've started building guzzlers and aprons and getting them ready to go. We'll start putting those out this fall out in the Book Cliffs. Our law enforcement has been really busy this time of year. They get really busy when they are trying to get their cases taken care of and get all of that information out. Some of them have been really big. I've got a couple of cases I just want to give you a little bit of information on. On one case they killed nine elk and five deer; it was three folks and two of the elk were trophies. Duchesne County found them guilty as well as Uintah County. They received felonies, and they were sentenced to 75 days in jail and a \$15,000.00 fine, as well as 36 months probation. In Uintah County they were also found guilty of two Class A misdemeanors and they were sentenced to 10 days and \$1,100.00 and that went to help stop poaching. So this case was really big and it took a lot of time and a lot of effort and I certainly applaud the C.O.s for working hard at this. There's another case that was two people. They were found guilty in Duchesne County; there was a \$16,000.00 fine that went to help stop poaching fund. They killed three trophy bull elk on the Wasatch Front Limited Entry unit and three deer in the Book Cliffs. So the guys are working hard and these are just two, but they were big cases and I just wanted you to know that they're working.

Torrey Christophersen: These were only a couple of individuals and these were two of the biggest cases that we've seen in this region in many, many years. These were actually a lot bigger than what we're telling you about here. These guys actually got charged with wildlife crimes, but what we're seeing more and more of is drugs and theft in counties. A couple of these guys were stealing backhoes and snowmobiles and all kinds of equipment, trailers, and camp trailers. Lots of agencies put in lots and lots of hours on this not wildlife alone.

Eric Miller: I think we were at 12 search warrants just on one individual trying to track him down. He was jumping all over the place; he knew law enforcement was trying to find him. He had multiple storage units in one county and he lived in a couple of different places and kept bouncing around.

Torrey Christophersen: Anyway, these were really big cases, lots and lots of hours. And again you're only talking two individuals on the one case and a couple of individuals on the other so two very big cases out here in the basin.

Boyd Blackwell: We'll go to wildlife now; they are starting their sage grouse LEC counts and if any of you are interested in going on a sage grouse LEC count you're welcome to go. Just get a hold of Brian Maxfield or get a hold of my office or Dax and get Maxfield's number. He'll line you up to get a look at a sage grouse count but you've got to get up really early in the morning. We have a number of GPS collars out in the region on deer and elk to get movements and migration patterns on these animals so we can manage them better. I believe that I've talked a little bit about that in past RAC meetings. We're also going to be doing our spring range rides and for those of you who don't know, we go out on horseback and take a look at the range and see what the condition is on the range. If you want to go out with a biologist on one of those get in touch with them and set up a time to go out, they are going to be starting their spring range rides right away soon. And deer classifications, that's the same thing, if you're interested in going out and doing some deer classification it's the same thing; you go out in the morning with a biologist and he shows you what he does or she does and you get to learn just what it is they do.

Tonya Kieffer: We have a turkey clinic coming up on Saturday from 9-1 and it's just a basic turkey clinic. We geared it towards children 17 and under and I had an 80 year old man call me today who is very interested in learning how to turkey hunt so it ranges from all ages. It should be fun. He didn't have a computer so we had to register him the old fashion way. We have the National NASP tournament for all Western states coming to Salt Lake next weekend. State staff has been asked to go assist in Salt Lake if we can, so some of us National Archery in Schools certified will be at the Western National Tournament next weekend. We have a loon watch scheduled at Steinaker next Saturday. Every Saturday this month there is something going on. From 9-12 the loons have already started showing up on reservoirs, and this is one of our watchable wildlife events that we try to get the public to go to. Then we have a bass salvage scheduled with aquatics out at Steinaker so if you would like to come and earn dedicated hunter

hours, or if you want to just come and assist us before they drain Steinaker this fall we could use all the help we can get with the bass salvage as well as that same weekend we will be hosting the state youth hunter education challenge in Salt Lake so a lot of us will be split in places. Then we have an Ouray open house coming up at the Wildlife Refuge that we usually assist with that same day. If you want to come and attend a fun event, call me, we have a lot going on. Free fishing day is also coming up on June 9<sup>th</sup> so keep that in mind. We will be doing a blue gill salvage that weekend at Steinaker so lots of fun things to get involved in if you want to.

Randy Dearth: Where are you putting the salvaged fish? Are you taking those to Red Fleet?

Tonya Keiffer: It depends. So the bass are going to go to Red Fleet and a reminder to the public, we are the ones who transplant the fish, not anyone else, only Division of Wildlife employees are certified to do that. So the bass are going to Red Fleet and some salvage ponds that we have set aside so when we refill Steinaker we will be able to tap back into that pool of fish and restock it. And the blue gill we are aiming for 14,000 fish to go into our salvage ponds, and then 4,000 are going out to the Wasatch Front to fill the community fishing ponds.

Boyde Blackwell: And last week she was busy doing goat watches.

Tonya Keiffer: Goat watches, Home and Garden Show.

Boyde Blackwell: With that I'll turn the time back to you Mr. Chairman.

Randy Dearth: I appreciate that Boyde, thank you. I failed to recognize David Gordon. David is a past RAC board member also he just got off and we appreciate him being here and joining us tonight also all the time and service he put in. I'm not sure exactly how much time but I know I've been here about five years and you were here before me. Thank you. I'm now going to turn the time over to Covy for a presentation on Air Bows.

Covy Jones: Actually I won't be giving this presentation, but I want to announce from a Division perspective why we are having this presentation. And rational is that we don't have a position on this, airbows are weapons that you may have seen on YouTube. We don't have a stance on airbows but what we'd like to do is get some public input. We have a company that this is their product and we approached the Division and said we'd like for this to be considered as a hunting weapon in Utah and we said we'd really like to know what our public thinks about that. So for the RAC meeting they have up to 15 minutes for the presentation and then questions and comments. Not an action item though just information.

- **Use of Airbows** – Steve Roll

See slideshow

**Questions from the public:**

Tyrell Abeaglen: With the airbolt are you saying you're going to try to open it up to everybody or just those that can't pull back a regular bow?

Steve Roll: We are looking for it to be approved during the any legal weapon, so anyone could use it.

### **Questions from the RAC:**

Dan Abeyta: Just curious about other states, have they legalized this airbolt?

Steve Roll: I can't tell you which states those are right now, the attorney didn't give me all of the information but there are 10 states right now that have approved this.

Dan Abeyta: One other question how has this gone over in the other regions?

Steve Roll: We haven't had anyone jump up and down and say no. We've had a lot of interesting questions. There was some concern that it might cannibalize archery, it's not meant to cannibalize archery. Marvin Carlston, the guy who invented all this stuff, loves arrows so he thought there's an air gun maybe I can shoot arrows out of it and make that work. He's proven that model so we are just here for information now and maybe the next go around we can get a positive vote. Again we have gotten six million views on this particular video and videos like it that represent this combo there's a lot of interest across the country. We've shown this at some of the hunting shows in Salt Lake we got a lot of positive input there. This is where we're looking for the final word. As Covy said the DWR is neutral. I can tell you I invited Mike Styler to come shoot it at Jakes Archery and he sure enjoyed it but he's left it up to the process which is appropriate.

Randy Dearth: It looks to me that it would be a lot of fun. It's kind of exciting I think. My gut is telling me it doesn't belong in the archery world, but as far as in the hunting world I think it probably has its place.

Steve Roll: That's what we are hoping to hear from everybody. No one's said no, everyone's either been appropriately quiet or supportive. Cause it's something different.

Randy Dearth: When I first heard it I heard the airbow and I just thought there is no way that's a bow, it just didn't have a string, show me that string.

Steve Roll: That's another company with the airbow, we just call this the airbolt.

Dan Abeyta: What is the maximum effective range for a deer or an elk.

Steve Roll: The maximum effective range is 100 yards. With practice you might get it out to 120 but most folks are going to be between 50-100. It's still going to require a hunter to hunt and stalk.

Torrey Christophersen: At 500 feet per second, is that what the video said?

Steve Roll: 500 feet per second is the max that we've had. The range was from 500 down to just below 460 feet per second.

Torrey Christophersen: You shot a white tail, what about penetration on something as big as an elk?

Steve Roll: It will punch through an elk, with the right broad head on it, it will punch through an elk.

Crystal Friedli: You said 10 other states approved it, is it restricted in any way?

Steve Roll: As far as I know it's for general season, any legal weapon.

Randy Dearth: Thank you Steve we appreciate you coming and sharing that with us.

- **BUCKS, BULLS AND OIAL PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2018** – Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator

See Slideshow

### **Questions from the Public:**

Randy Dearth: That slide that talked about your mountain goat archery, what was the success rate last year?

Covy Jones: Not great, Randy.

Randy Dearth: That's what I was thinking but my memory isn't very good.

Covy Jones: If that success rate continues we can probably offer a lot of opportunity there. Neither hunter harvested.

Ken Evans: I was born in Vernal, raised in Neola, live in Jensen now. I've worked in the Book Cliffs the past 12 years. My first question is you're saying buck to doe ratio. I've spent the last six years as a dedicated hunter on the Yellowstone unit. I'm not seeing 100 does a day. That's the problem I have is there is not the quantity of animals there. I have a hard time getting my kids, nephews, and nieces to hunt because there is no quality. How are we going to bring our quantity up so there is more opportunity if we just keep giving out all these permits on these general season units? Also on the Yellowstone or North Eastern Region on open bull units we offer all these units, but we feel like we have 10,000 of the 15,000 permits here in the basin. Is there some way we can limit the amount of permits in the North Eastern Region that are in fluxing on these open bull units?

Covy Jones: Let's separate those out. Your first question, what unit was that specific to?

Ken Evans: The Yellowstone unit is where I hunt deer and I've been a dedicated hunter the last six years. I'm on horseback, I'm riding daylight to dark and I'm having a hard time finding 100 head of deer.

Covy Jones: And the reason I ask isn't to be combative, it's to understand. Are you talking about deer populations or..

Ken Evans: Yes, deer populations. I'm seeing the bucks, spikes and two points. People don't wait 2, 3, 4 years to shoot a spike and a two point. My kids, I can't even get them to hunt anymore. That's very disheartening to me.

Covy Jones: Randall do you want to talk about the deer population in there, and what we've done to work on that?

Randall Thacker: Just off the top of my head, the Yellowstone population is under objective and has been. It actually was doing really well until last winter when we had a really hard winter over there and we had 18% of our fawns survive the winter which really impacted what we had there this last fall. As far as the total number of deer we also had a really high mortality of deer, not this winter of course last winter. This winter has been great. The winter before last when we had extreme snow conditions we had about 76 or 78% survival is all on our adult does. That represents the adults of the population which is quite a few deer. Normally that should be at 90% at least. So we did see a pretty significant lose last winter. Again not the winter we are just finishing the winter before. So we are down a little bit on the deer population from where we were. Two years ago we were at the high of that population that it's been in 20 years. I too have been out here quite a while now and have watched this population. It goes through cycles and struggles when we have our winters that hit us over there. We seem to average a winter like that once every four or five years. And it does take a toll on that population. It has been up and it still is up compared to where we were four or five years ago over there on that population. I'm talking about the population numbers as far as the number of deer that are out there, that is the quantity. The quality there is a different issue, and we are at a unit by unit ability to change tags each year. The buck ratio has gone up there too which is going to address some of the quality issues as far as the size and the maturity, the age structure even that is out there on those bucks. We do have the two different issues of course; one is the age and quality of the bucks that are out there. It can be driven by how many tags we cut or increase each year we can change that. Population number, the total number of deer out there is not driven hardly at all by buck harvest; very very little in any way. Really on the Yellowstone it's driven by weather patterns and it's really that simple on the Yellowstone. Some units it's not that way. In this region we definitely see it driven by the types of winters we get over there. There's a lot of areas on the Yellowstone that have more deer, the agricultural areas below the tribe have more deer than most. I live right there and most of my neighbors, even the 80-90 year olds are saying this is the most deer they've

ever seen that live down in the lower elevations. There are areas that are booming with deer on the Yellowstone it just depends on what area you're hunting in. The population is up from where it was before.

Ken Evans: So on the Yellowstone unit itself, is it not half tribal, correct?

Randall Thacker: A lot of it is. Not half, but a lot.

Ken Evans: When we're issuing these numbers we should consider that only half the deer or elk are on state ground for the public to hunt. I'll guarantee you when the first shot is fired they are on tribal ground and the tribal members have access. Tim can acknowledge this, I've seen Tim there we ride on each side of the fence we know each other. It's not opportunity for the public. You've got half of it on tribal, but you're counting it all together. You need to split it up and half those numbers need to be tribal and half need to be state allocated tags is my comment, not all one unit.

Randy Dearth: So your question is, can we do that?

Ken Evans: Yeah.

Randall Thacker: I would just like to explain how we do do it. We don't base our permits on the total population that is out there because there are a large share of deer that move on and off the tribe, we totally 100% agree that is correct. We've got radio collar data for years to show that and prove that. How the permit numbers are set and this is only for bucks, not the total population of what's out there, we set that based on the buck to doe ratio that is out there. The number of bucks we see from the previous year's what we see out there, we're basing it off of what harvest we can have of the population that exists there and still maintain the buck to doe ratio after that. We've been doing it for a lot of years, that buck doe ratio has been quite stable until last year when we did have a hard winter; we lost deer, so it did go down. That's where we come in and look at it. That's why we didn't increase. Actually looking at our management plan the three years we would have increased buck tags over there this year. Last year we had to actually cut the tags in this meeting because we knew we had a hard winter, so we anticipated that. Cut the number of tags last year to address that big loss we had because of the winter mortality and this year we recommend maintaining that. Because we manage on the buck to doe ratio that's out there, the number of bucks out there is what we manage it by. We aren't managing it on the total number of deer in the area. What matters in hunting is the bucks not the does.

Randy Dearth: Randall is there any way to count the buck to doe ratios on the tribe compared to non tribal land?

Randall Thacker: The animals enter move between the boundaries so much that during the rut the same bucks that breed on the forest breed below the forest and breed on the tribe as they go

through that, they travel through all of it. Neither side is fenced, well it's fenced for cattle, it doesn't stop deer at all. Deer come and go, and it's actually the breeding population there that we want to make sure we maintain.

Covy Jones: Mr. Chair may I suggest we may be looking at this incorrectly. We don't go and try to manage the wildlife for Colorado that crosses over the border or anything like that and I view this as a very similar issue. What I can say is I'm sure Randall knows what the harvest success rates are for the unit, what the hunter satisfaction is. Not doing anything biologically damaging. We would all love more deer, but we can't change that with buck harvest. Populations aren't driven by bucks. What we can do is work on habitat and improve things for the deer there; create more space, more habitat and hopefully the deer will continue to grow. Those are the things we can affect. So I think if we are going to focus our efforts as a wildlife agency, that's where we will focus our efforts.

Ken Evans: If we want to get more people involved we need to get our quality up and we have to figure out how that is. And that's my question, how are we going to do that? Our youth don't want to get involved because there is no quality.

Covy Jones: I guess I disagree with that completely. A great buck is different for different people. I've met several gentlemen who go out and harvest a two point and they're ecstatic, and that doesn't hurt a deer population. I think a lot of us in this room have dreams of chasing that 200 inch buck and getting the harvest, I know I do. That gets me excited too, but we try to manage for both. I'd dare say in the state of Utah right now we have some of the best quality that we've had in the history of the state. We're bringing 200 inch bucks off of almost every unit, and it's great. We had this idea that there are certain units even on the Henry's it's hard to kill a 200 inch buck. It's just not like that. I guess that's perspective.

Tyrell Abeaglen: My question is, where does it end? I mean I've hunted the nine mile unit for a little over 20 years now and I've slowly watched it decline not only in the deer but in the elk. It used to be one of the best units in the state. Overcrowding has been an issue state wide for a number of years now; well over two decades. Every time we end up coming up with something, they implement a new hunt whether it's the late season muzzleloader, the extended archery hoping people move over to archery, or this mid season riffle hunt now. So we implement it and then spent the next few years slowly increasing on the tags and wonder why we have an overcrowding issue still. So my issue is watching the populations go down and the number of hunters going up. I know everybody wants to have a tag in their pocket every year, myself included. I know over 100 people that would be completely satisfied to wait two or three years even for a general season tag to go out there and see the deer we did 15-20 years ago; and not be fighting 300 people for the same herd. Where does it end?

Covy Jones: I don't understand exactly how to answer that question. When we put together state wide management plans we pull a diverse group of people. We ask our sportsmen what they

want, we send out surveys; then we manage to a plan that they recommend. As long as we aren't doing things that are biologically damaging. The majority of sportsmen in the state of Utah have told us they want a unit managed differently.

Randy Dearth: Is the deer and the elk both on five year plans?

Covy Jones: Deer is on five year, elk is on seven year. And when they come up we go through all of these issues. We strive to go back and forth with all of this. Do we want more units that are managed for quality do we want more units that are managed for opportunity? How do we want this to look? It's tough. We're always saying that wildlife management, there are several things that are social, there's this and here, which anything past this point is biological and the Division comes back and we say don't do this, this is biologically damaging. And then there's an end over here that if you do anything over here past this it's biologically damaging. But everything in between here, it's the public's wildlife we can really manage it the way we want to. As long as were steering it in a direction we can we're very open as an agency. The truth is most of us in this room that have on brown shirts are huntsmen and sportsmen too. We care about these animals enough that we made a life out of it. Not because we're getting rich. But none of us want to be remembered as the biologist that did something biologically damaging. We have struggles, but I can tell you we have more deer in the state right now than we had 20 years ago. We have a lot more elk in the state than we had 20 years ago.

Randy Dearth: The way the Division does that, when they put a plan together, they have probably around 20-30 public people on that. They usually have about half dozen agriculture folks and half dozen sportsmen and half dozen other representatives from all the other different agencies just like we are up here. I happened to be on one several years ago for mule deer. They create side boards and talk about issues and talk about every area of the state and how we're doing. I was really pleased with how the groups come together because after the first half a dozen there are some pretty good battles; and eventually they smooth out the rough edges and come to a smooth spot. So where it ends I think they have to work within those side boards. Then the next time the plan comes together make sure the representatives that are in those sideboards come together to represent your interest or they are noted so they can bring it up and make sure that we don't do something in that area.

### **Questions by the RAC:**

Tim Ignacio: You guys are coming up with these numbers. Ok we also do a head count. Our numbers are dead man. And for these individuals to come in and say ok you have 15,000 spike bull tags, ok 10,000 of those people end up in the Book Cliffs. It's killing us on both sides. I said it last time. It's hurting us. We did a head count back in December, 299 head of elk on the Reservation, on the south unit and 128 deer, 224 buffalo. How many buffalo you guys have on the Book Cliffs? Anybody got an answer for that?

Clint Sampson: That's a great question, Tim, how many we have. Our numbers fluctuate depending on time of year and we put out 21 additional GPS collars on our bison this last winter which is just incredible the amount of data we are getting off them. We have five left from the initial 20 we did a few years ago and it's showing really good use in the road less area; which is pronominal for me because that is all state owned land. Either Division land or school trust land. So we don't have any depredation issues in there. We are showing high use in there, we have about 200 head or so in there right now. Then it shows that they leave about June and go to that Bear Trap Knoll. They'll spend some time up there then come back in the fall. Then other groups we had very low numbers come off on Wild Horse Bench this year compared to last year. Then we had those ones you know about in Range Creek; I think it was around 200 head or so and you guys pushed those back and everything. As far as what stays on the Book Cliffs year round were probably looking at about 270 adults that we count as our population objective. Is that helpful?

Tim Ignacio: Yeah. I know we gave you guys a few when you were first starting out. We gave you 15 head. And then we turned around and gave you guys some more, besides the ones you guys brought in from Antelope Island.

Clint Sampson: So I know those original 15.

Tim Ignacio: I know your guy's tags are already red and our tags are various colors.

Clint Sampson: Oh as far as ear tags.

Tim Ignacio: To me, why we killing more? Why are we killing more of these animals when these numbers aren't even there?

Clint Sampson: Our bull to cow ratio on..

Tim Ignacio: I know the man back there he works on tribal side, he can vouch for that. He can vouch for that and he's not a tribal member.

Clint Sampson: I talk to Kenny quite a bit..

Tim Ignacio: You know you guys need to talk to your public more, instead of just 30 individuals. You need to call a big meeting and say hey how do you guys feel about this? I'm gonna tell you 99% of your people are gonna say, hey we need to cut back. And for me you're giving 15,000 bull spike tags and 10,000 of them show up here. It's taking a big chunk out of our herds.

Covy Jones: We probably ought to get that number correct because we keep throwing out 10,000. Do we have that number? If we're going to throw out a number we should throw out the right number.

Dax Mangus: 938 spike hunters in the Book Cliffs, they harvested 224 spikes.

Covy Jones: So of the 15,000 state wide spike hunters, 900 of them hunted the Book Cliffs.

Dax Mangus: It was 7.5% of those 15,000 that hunted the Book Cliffs.

Daniel Davis: What was that success rate again?

Dax Mangus: I didn't get the success rate, but the success rate was 24% Book Cliffs.

Brad Horrocks: How much for the any bull side? How many hunters do you think?

Boyde Blackwell: Let's stay on task.

Randy Dearth: Yeah let's stay where we're at. We're working with the buffalo right now. Tim any other questions on the buffalo?

Tim Ignacio: No, I'm good.

Brad Horrocks: Am I reading this right? On Antelope Island we went from seven tags down to two. Is something going there? Are we just transplanting more, or?

Covy Jones: That's a really good question. And that herd is managed a little bit differently. We manage it in conjunction with state parks. They have several old bulls out there that they would like to cull, but when we offer a tag through the public draw, we can't tell them which animal they have to take. So the plan there is they still want to offer two tags through the public draw, but the manager there through the state parks will probably go to what they call the alternate draw list. So anyone who put in for an Antelope Island tag and didn't draw, and ask them, would you like to harvest a bull? We have some older bulls that we would like culled from this population. If you're willing to harvest one of those bulls, come on out. Then they would do it that way. So we'll probably end up with the same number, with seven or close to there. But they'll come from the alternate draw list.

Daniel Davis: Could you go back to your drought map that you had presented to us and showed us what it looked like?

Covy Jones: So most severe is south eastern. It's not the worst year in the last 20 years if you look at it, and yet there are areas that are being highly affected. The Henry's again is an area for concern.

Dan Abeyta: Could you go over the rationale for the increase of deer tags in the Book Cliffs?

Covy Jones: I could but I really like it when the region speaks to their recommendations.

Dan Abeyta: That would be good; I think it's about an 8% increase in tags.

Clint Sampson: Yeah, we've been pretty steady on that top end buck to doe ratio out there in the Book Cliffs. We've had increasingly great success, especially on that south side since we've split that rifle hunt to north and south. We've had great success on that southern end and pretty good satisfaction for the most part from the hunters. They are pretty happy killing the average bucks

24 inch four points. So we're consistently on that top end, able to provide more opportunity, more people to get out there like Covy mentioned as far as point creep and stuff like that. We decided a slight increase probably won't bring down the buck to doe ratio all that much.

Dan Abeyta: Well we're still a long way from the population objective, is that correct?

Clint Sampson: Yes. Current population objective, we're hovering right around that 7,000 mark and our objective is 15,000. As Covy mentioned harvesting bucks doesn't really affect your population growth that much. But as far as the overall population we're still trying the best we can to do our habitat improvements, increase water. We were able to collar 100 deer this last fall; we had some help from the Mule Deer Foundation and a few other people in making that happen. So that's helping us. We also in the future have a plan to collar fawns right when they're born. And also we're going to collar bears and mountain lions to track their movements to see if we can figure out how to grow some more deer out there. It's definitely on the front of my mind.

Dan Abeyta: The other question I have is on big horn sheep. There is like an eight tag increase state wide. That is attributed to the two new hunts. I guess my question is that the big horn sheep population is on a downward trend state wide, is that a true statement?

Covy Jones: State wide that is an accurate statement. I think that is an accurate statement state wide. But when you're managing different populations you have to look and see where you have opportunity and where you don't.

Dan Abeyta: So these new hunts, where did these animals come from? Are these supplemental animals from other states, or?

Covy Jones: The Oak Creeks is a new population that we started that we've never hunted before; that's a new population that started five years ago. So there will be two permits there. Then the other majority of the increase comes from the Newfoundland Mountains. And that's a population that is doing really well. When we went out and caught there we noticed two things. One, our ram to ewe ratio, we had a lot of rams; and we pulled a lot of ewes off to restart the Stansbury population. So to get the ram to ewe population back to where they need to be to have it so the rams don't wander in November, we're recommending that. And also when we went out there and caught we noticed that the sheep are probably running up against a carrying capacity; body condition wasn't great. So removing some of those rams will help that population.

Joe Arnold: A question for Clint for the Book Cliffs. As the trend starts going up on the buck to doe ratio; and I don't know if we take in the average adult size as well. Once it gets to 30 or 35 can we not raise the objective to that higher level so the quality of the deer is better? And again I'm speaking from a non biologist term if that helps the quality of the deer. And the reason I ask is because our hunt surveys, I hunt a place in Colorado that they are managing and they send me a survey for 45 buck to doe ratio and that seems that's where their managing. Some of our units are all around 18-20 and is that where the carrying capacity of the field is, or is that trying to

provide more opportunities? Once it reaches a level where it seems like everyone is killing a 24 inch four point, can we not raise the objective to carry a few more bucks in that area rather than bring it back down to 18-20, can we then move it to 30-35 bucks to doe ratio in the Book Cliffs? Just a question.

Clint Sampson: So the side boards that manage the buck in the Book Cliffs are set by mule deer plans that are set in place. The Book Cliffs are set to go 25-35 bucks to 100 does. So those are our side boards that's where we live. We all love it at the top end. It's great to go out and see big bucks. So to get it above that 35, to get it into that 35-45 range somewhere in there, we'd have to wait for the plan to come up again and then go through the whole public process. It would have to get approved through the plan then through the whole RAC and Board process that way. As far as managing, we just try to stay within those side boards and provide opportunity where there's opportunity. Dax always jokes about it like shrimp. He's like grilled shrimp only last so long so you've gotta take advantage of them while they're there. And that's how we kinda feel about it this year with the Book Cliffs deer herd. We're on that top end; we've been up there for the last few years. I mean it's not a huge increase, we're not opening the flood gates by any means by increasing 35 tags; and who knows maybe you or maybe one of your family members might draw.

Randy Dearth: If we raised them up would that put them into a premium unit?

Clint Sampson: I believe so.

Covy Jones: Yes if that were the desire when the statewide plan came around you could look at that. And to do that it's not cut one tag or one more buck; to get to those top tier buck doe ratios you end up really cutting opportunity. So instead of it being a 13-14 year draw, if you started putting in for the Henry's today and you're 18 you might draw when you're 70.

Joe Arnold: So what is the plan to try to get the 7,000 to 15,000? The buck to doe ratio doesn't affect the overall population is what I've heard a couple of times; so is it the range, the summer range, the habitat, what are the efforts there?

Clint Sampson: Yes all those things that you mentioned before. We are on the cutting edge of deer management in Utah; we have GPS collars, those collars are sending us signals every two hours.

Covy Jones: Can I give a statewide perspective on that one Clint? Is that ok? Because I think that's a really good question. From a statewide perspective when we look at our collar data our biologists go in on these mortalities within a couple of hours. Every time we have a deer die they go in there they look at the deer they crack a bone they look at the marrow they have cause specific mortality. So when you say what is the plan, right now we are going out and seeing this unit has poor fawn survival the cause here is predators. Or this unit has poor fawn survival and the cause is highway mortality. So then when we come back we can look at fawn and adult

survival and if we want this herd unit to increase, which on the Book Cliffs we do, here are the things we have to address. And here are the things we can address, and that's what we're doing we're doing a lot. You know the South Manti comes to mind and on that unit we can look at that and know we defiantly have a predator problem there, a lot of the deer there are being taken by mountain lions; where as we have the same survival on another unit and not one of them has been taken by a mountain lion. In the antlerless presentation if you want me to I can go over some of the units where I can show you that cause specific mortality and we can address it; if the RAC wants to see that in the antlerless presentation.

Tim Ignacio: I have a question on the deer. On the deer in the Book Cliff area the only ones that are killing any good bucks down there is off the land owners. These tags are very, very expensive to even get one of those tags and if you do be lucky to get a tag you still have to pay the man a trespass. How does the public get in on that?

Clint Sampson: are you talking about that private property that borders the tribe?

Tim Ignacio: The two pieces.

Clint Sampson: Owned by Mustang Fuels; in Willow Creek?

Tim Ignacio: Mr. Mark Hills place. Yes.

Clint Sampson: There is a new cooperative management unit out in the Book Cliffs, we've been hunting it for two years now and it's been a great success. We give the CWMU I think 10 permits, three of those go to the public draw, and seven of those are up to the landowner and what he decides to do with those tags. In the limited entry unit in the Book Cliffs the buck to doe ratio is managed the same. It does restrict the limited entry guys that are out there hunting, they can't hunt it. It's basically two limited entry areas on the same unit. The LOA tags are issued out of a percentage of private land that is on the unit that falls into the habitat for that animal; so they receive permits for deer, elk, and pronghorn. And those permits are basically given to them to compensate for damage on their property to basically encourage them to appreciate wildlife and have a value for them. So that's why we issue those permits. Sometimes they do donate a tag to auction to certain non government agencies. But as far as the quality being any different throughout the rest of the Book Cliffs it's all managed the same. As far as that CWMU they are able to hunt a little later in the year than the general season so that might provide a little bit better quality. As far as getting those tags or receiving those tags or saying those tags are better than the other limited entry tags its probably debatable.

Randy Dearth: I have a question for you. We were talking about those Mustang tags. What did Mustang Oil do last year? Didn't they donate two tags to some organization and let them auction them off, and the money stayed in that organization? It was a nonprofit organization.

Brad Horrocks: I know they did one; I was involved in one of them that was a silent auction. I can't remember the organization the money went to.

Daniel Davis: Sergeant Daniel Gurr Foundation. Mr. Calder participated in one of those hunts and it was the Daniel Gurr Foundation.

Brad Horrocks: And I think they did do two, Daniel do you remember?

Daniel Davis: I don't remember the second one.

Randy Dearth: I thought that was really good of them to do that. Just to donate it to a good organization.

Clint Sampson: Absolutely I remember that too. Brandon McDonald a past RAC member was heavily involved in that hunt too.

Daniel Davis: I've got a couple. My question is we go through and look at our deer populations across the state per unit. Roughly about 14 of those units are on a three year trend down. So it seems in the more recent years we've been offering more opportunity to be in the field, increasing permits. The elk population doesn't, they are a lot more hardier they're tough they're not sissy deer right. Anyways noticing these declines is there a situation on what the impact is especially with what the drought map is and where we finished off 2017 and the winter conditions. Cause we start the first of August and go until the 31<sup>st</sup> of January.

Covy Jones: Some of the opportunity that we didn't talk about as much today is, when we show permits, what we show is 2017 permits and 2018 recommendations. What we don't show, for example, the Northern region is we were monitoring survival there and made a huge cut last year when we saw our fawn survival was 10%, that our adult survival is going to come in at 74% we jumped ahead of that, made a big cut. So the post season for 2017 came in at 15 and we can stay at 15. This year we've had a great fawn survival, great adult survival, I mean slightly better than average and we can withstand that again this year. I hope that answers your question. We are always concerned about what the effects of hunting and how to maintain that as we move into the future. And I wish sometimes we'd show maybe one more year of the permits when we did the power points so we could say, look at this, and there are some concerns in Cache specifically; they were hit really hard last year. When you're talking 10% fawn survival and you drop down to 75% adult survival. For deer that's pretty bad. The fact that we came in at 15 bucks to 100 does post season really showed that the cut was appropriate. So we have to take into account that too, Daniel. One more Daniel just to illustrate that point, if we go to the Southeastern region and look at the San Juan there, clearly above. 24, 22, 23 and we're supposed to be managing that unit for 15-17; why wouldn't we recommend an increase? I didn't say this at this RAC because It's in the Southeastern region but again the reason why is, again we're monitoring survival on them. Our fawn survival right now, we're learning that this unit is very dependent on moisture. Our fawn survival on this unit is 13%. So with the light winter we've had, you would assume that we

hadn't lost anything. But when we caught those fawns this fall on average they were 10 lbs lighter than the year before. They were coming in at 50 lbs instead of 60. And the survival has been very poor. They didn't get that moisture. And that system isn't driven the way it is in northern Utah by deep snows and those rough winters. It's driven by those July, August and September monsoons. So we do take into account survival and what's going on when we make these recommendations.

Daniel Davis: We talked about the deer population five years ago, can you tell me what that was?

Kent Hersey: We kind of hit our bottom around 2011-2012 with about 270,000. Since that time we've had really mild winters for like four years in a row. We've had 89-90% adult survival and we've had about 70% fawn survival cause of the light winters. So we grew a lot of deer. These past two years we've had an average winter where we had fawn survival drop into the 50-60 range which is kind of normal; then we had a severe winter where Cache had dropped down to 10% and state wide it was like 30 something. So that dropped the population the last couple years. We had tremendous growth there for a while. And I think we saw that with the growth of the buck doe ratio.

Covy Jones: And we saw it with the growth and harvest, hunters picked it up. Depending on what unit you hunted this last year they didn't have yearlings in the Cache. But we still had great buck doe ratio carry over in some older bucks. It was around 270 then it got up to a high of 380,000; which in that short of a period is incredible growth. When you have them, harvest them. And harvest them at a rate that's not going to be biologically damaging; but offer that opportunity, because if you don't, one day you might not have them. Mother Nature will take them.

### **Comments from the public:**

Ken Evans: I work in the Book Cliffs, and lived in this area my whole life. I've got to agree with Clint, he's got the deer population up in the Book Cliffs. This winter I saw four four points, the rest were three points and spikes. And that's all winter long. I also lion hunt on my days off in the Book Cliffs. We've got the quantity in the Book Cliffs; we need to have maybe a management hunt like the Paunsagunt or the Henry's to harvest three points or something; cause I'm seeing 35 inch three points I can see them every day. Your average hunter is not going to shoot a three point. He's got the buffalo up, I've seen the buffalo, but I don't think his numbers are as low as he says. This winter out there lion hunting I've seen more buffalo than you can shake a stick at. And quality of them, he's done good there too. And the road less, I spend two weeks a year in the road less, the buffalo quality is good out there, the deer and elk are in the tank. I think we need to have an unlimited predator hunt in road less. I've been out there since 1984 and the road less is the worst I've ever seen it as far as animals go. But one thing we've got to do is get our youth involved. I asked 20 people to come to this RAC meeting tonight, and they told me it doesn't do no good, we're not gonna go. That's the way the public feels. Just like Tim

says, you talk to 100 people in the public; you ask Clint I've worked with him for 8-9 years I've talked to him turned in stuff whatever I can to help. I've done dedicated hunter projects whatever I could to help. I'm not educated to be a biologist like them but I'm on horseback your numbers are not adding up to what you're posting. And that's all I've got to say.

Greg Bird: Utah Wild Sheep Foundation. We agree with all the sheep recommendations that the Division is recommending for the sheep populations with the exception of the Wasatch, Nebo, Avintaquin combined unit this year. We would recommend there be no increase of tags and keep it to two. Our fear is the Wasatch units themselves being the Nebo, Timp, and the Provo face has had disease issues for several years now. The population is still rebuilding and with the increased tags there would be the possibility of six rams coming off of any one unit. We feel it would be detrimental to the struggling sheep population. So our recommendation is to keep it to two tags because that Provo face can be really susceptible if they are really struggling to find sheep on the tougher parts of this unit all these sheep will show up above the Provo temple and it could really get over harvested and really hurt our sheep program on that face right there.

Troy Justinson: Sportsmen Fish and Wildlife. I appreciate you all being here tonight and the public and the input. It's been an interesting discussion. The Division being in this situation, it's a balancing act and we appreciate all that you do. As far as Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife go we support the Divisions recommendations with the following exceptions. One of which is we agree with the Wild Sheep Foundation that we ask the Division issue two tags on those units vs. three. Just for the simple possibility that there could be six rams taken off that unit. It's unlikely, but there is that potential. And we'd rather be cautious and just issue the two permits there. As far as general season deer permits go we'd ask that because the South Manti is struggling we ask that we cut 250 permits off the Manti general deer. Pertaining to the Pine Valley which is in the southern region this is a unit where it actually warrants what the division is recommending; our only concern is this is a unit where they are instituting this new early riffle. That deer herd migrates upon pressure. Our local chapter members are a little concerned about this new riffle being the first year that it can force the majority of those deer down low and the harvest can be extremely high. What they'd like to do is wait one year and see the effects of this early riffle hunt before they go ahead and issue the additional tags next year. Pertaining to elk we would ask that the permit numbers stay the same on the Manti, the Fish Lake, and the Monroe; and not go with the recommended increase that the division is recommending. Once again this is pertaining to quality. The numbers show that the numbers the division recommends are adequate and justified but based upon our membership they would like to see those numbers held back to see if they could bring up some of that quality. Pertaining to some of the discussion tonight it's really the Division can manage the wildlife based on what we want, I think we need to be careful what we want. You brought up making a change in the Book Cliffs from 30-35. I've been an outfitter for 30-35 years, I've seen a lot of big stuff hit the dirt; I have 22 points for deer. When we cut tags and manage for super quality, you're not going to hunt. Is that what we want? That's something we need to really think about ourselves. I have twin boys that are 16 in May, I took them on their

first deer hunt last year, the first time they drew a tag. He passed a couple of two points and I left the choice to him. I trophy hunt, I'll admit that. I said if you want to shoot them go ahead, and he said Dad I want to look for a bigger deer. The day came to go home and he was in tears saying Dad I should have shot him. First deer. I think too much in the society today, and I'm as guilty as anybody in the profession I am; success is based upon a steel tape. We gotta get out and hunt, make memories with our families. I understand wanting to kill big stuff, whatever type deal. I remember as a kid going out just the thrill of a two point type deal there's nothing wrong with that. So I think we need to be careful what we want. The key thing is we get out and enjoy it with our families and we have the opportunity to harvest; just think about it. I appreciate you all being here.

### **Comments from the RAC:**

Randy Dearth: Covy can we address some of these things that I've written down. What about the Wasatch, Nebo sheep; what are the chances that all six of those get killed out of that same area?

Covy Jones: So what I can say is we're still within the plan at two and we can support that.

Randy Dearth: What's the other RACs done with the idea of the South Manti, to cut a couple hundred tags out of that?

Covy Jones: I can also see the concern there. The buck doe ratio came in lower this year, even though we're within the guidelines there is a downward trend. I believe all RACs have voted to reduce permit numbers on the Manti. Some by 200 and some by 250.

Randy Dearth: The other item I heard was the Manti, Fish Lake and Monroe elk to keep the numbers the same. What's the Divisions opinion of that?

Covy Jones: I don't think we could support that. Those are good recommendations, the increase there is justified. Again, if you're waiting to draw a limited entry elk permit we have to provide the opportunity where we can and still manage to manage where we've agreed to with our public. It continually takes more points every year to draw those permits. And if we don't offer more opportunity when we can, where we can, it's just going to continue to increase.

Ritchie Anderson: I have just one comment on the Book Cliffs bison tags. I appreciate the Divisions recognition of the situation out there right now the drought and other pressures on the range out there that we're trying to resolve so I appreciate what they did on those numbers.

Randy Dearth: Covy what did the other regions do with the idea of the Manti, Fish Lake and Monroe elk and keeping those number the same?

Covy Jones: Oh you're asking a lot Mr. Chair, I don't remember exactly what every RAC did. Some I think they took into consideration more than the others. I think if you're on the southern region RAC obviously the Monroe and the Fish Lake were of concern, it just depended on the

RAC and what their concerns were. What happened in the southern region? Mike would you like to step up and read that?

Mike Wardell: In the southern region for elk they made a recommendation to not increase Monroe elk tags but they didn't do anything on the Fish Lake.

Covy Jones: So it just varied by RAC. Again what I can tell you is we have the ability to offer the opportunity.

Randy Dearth: I think if we are going to make a motion on the Wasatch, Nebo sheep, let's discuss that item first.

**MOTION** to decrease Big Horn Sheep tags on the Wasatch Nebo unit from three to two.

**Brad Horrocks**

**Ritchie Anderson, second**

**Passed unanimously**

Randy Dearth: The next thing we'll talk about is on the South Manti to cut tags by 200 is what the proposal was by for the SFW. The general season only.

**MOTION** to decrease South Manti Deer Permits by 200.

**Dan Abeyta**

**Brad Horrocks, second**

**Passed nine in favor and one abstained**

Randy Dearth: Ok let's talk about the Manti, Fish Lake, Monroe units. Does anybody have any heartburn there about doing anything with any one of those three units as far as the elk? The proposal from SFW was to keep the numbers the same. Sounds like some of the RACs at least the southeast region they choose to keep at least on the Monroe region to keep the numbers. Southern said 250. Does anyone have any heartburn to do anything with that one?

Brad Horrocks: Could you go over the numbers again on that one?

Covy Jones: Yeah we can go over that right now. The Monroe, we're still at an average of 7.3 years old. This is one of the units that we decreased in age objective in the last plan. We know we had a slight drop in the last year but you have to look at the average in elk sometimes because we're still well above, we know we have an increase of bulls there. We know as we come into a lower age objective that we were at a higher age objective we have the ability to offer some opportunity there. On the Central Mountains, Manti we have been at the very top. There was some concern of putting the majority of those in the regular riffle so we reallocated the tags in this recommendation and the majority of these tags will go into that new mid season. It's not as

high of success and they often don't kill as many of the older age class bulls. On the Plateau Fish Lake, again we manage these for 5 ½ to 6 and we have come in at the top of that year after year after year and have the ability to offer that opportunity.

Randy Dearth: Looking at that what gives me the heartburn I guess is looking at the Monroe.

Brad Horrocks: What have the other RACs done on those?

Covy Jones: They were all over the place, some stayed the same as last year, some went with the increase.

Randy Dearth: The southern region stayed at 37 for Monroe.

Boyde Blackwell: The Southern region stayed with Fish Lake and Manti. There was a recommendation for an increase but it lacked a second so it failed. A motion passed to go with the Divisions recommendations. Then they passed the rest of the recommendations as presented.

Randy Dearth: If we want to keep the Divisions recommendation we need to drop it, if we want to change it we need to make a motion. If we want to go with the Divisions recommendations it will just fall in with the rest of it.

Daniel Davis: I can see their concern on the Monroe, it sounds like three tags, but you're talking about a thousand head of elk. So three tags in that population is, can be, right.

Joe Arnold: And most of that is because last year went from 7.5 to 6.4, is that most of the reason for that?

Covy Jones: And sometimes with elk we see that.

Randy Dearth: And that's harvest data, right?

Covy Jones: That's aged teeth from harvest. All the teeth that were turned in.

Joe Arnold: You take everything that was harvested and average that out. And they are mandatory to turn in, correct? Should be, I've hunted those units before and I've always had to turn my teeth in.

Covy Jones: We don't get them all returned but we age all the ones we get back.

Joe Arnold: And they get their hand slapped for not turning in teeth?

Boyde Blackwell: You don't get to put in next year.

Brad Horrocks: You have to wait five years anyway.

**MOTION** to lower Monroe Elk Permits recommended by the Division and keep permit numbers the same as 2017.

**Brad Horrocks**

**Joe Batty, second**

**Passed five in favor, four opposed and one abstained**

Daniel Davis: I have one thing I'd like to discuss if that's alright. I should have brought this up earlier. The Book Cliffs, a lot of feedback down there is the age class has dropped. It's dropped, one of the most significant between all the units it's compared to. Yet we are kind of looking over that because there is no recommendation to increase. Several fellow hunters, sportsmen, hunted that area last year and I'm out there with the rest of them too; and everyone feels like we're seeing the effects of the spike hunt, the increased success of that. Driving that age objective a little bit lower than to actually see the data for 2017 to actually quantify that worries me a little bit.

Randy Dearth: Now the spike teeth aren't including in this, this is just the limited entry folk in this, correct?

Covy Jones: Yes with the spike you're obviously harvesting a yearling bull.

Randy Dearth: So this is just the limited entry folks that in this case shot some younger bulls in comparison to the last few years.

Covy Jones: The age definitely went down on aged bulls.

Daniel Davis: In the stance I'm in, I don't want to take away opportunity either, but the backyard that everybody desires in this area, I think it's necessary.

How far are we under objective on our elk herd out there?

Covy Jones: When was the last flight on the Book Cliffs?

Clint Sampson: The last flight was in 2016 and basically we are hovering right around that 6,000 head mark as far as population estimate. Our objective is 7,500 head of elk for that. When we

flew in 2016 we estimated population around 5,600 elk and then this year with our computer models we estimated about 6,000.

Randy Dearth: The objective was 7,500.

Clint Sampson: Yes, we're below that. We issue, coming up with the antlerless all together with the landowner tags, and the public draw permits for the road less and the Bitter Creek permits we're probably killing a total of about 100 maybe 120 cow elk. Some of those hunts are set up for deer winter range to try and move those elk across the landscape and just try to help our deer herd out a little bit. Then we do issue landowner tags to try to compensate for damage.

Joe Arnold: Clint that was my question, it's only 13 tags but how do you feel the elk effect the deer herd if we are 1,500 under objective on population but we're 7,000 under on deer. I know it's only 13 tags but it seems like they compete a little bit.

Clint Sampson: Taking 13 tags away. No, it doesn't. I don't think it's too alarming. Like I say it's just getting harder and harder to draw tags out there; better than most. The big dip I think in the age come down to, if you look at hunt by hunt, you break down that late season the November riffle bull elk tag last year, that's where we took the hit. On age, it was tough; a tough year, extremely dry I've never seen it that dry before I think that made it really difficult for hunters, elk. Usually that time of year you find bachelor herds of bulls and I don't think they were doing that. I talked to a lot of guys that were killing bulls that were still in with cows. I think the elk overall are changing, there's more and more elk living down on the deserts too and I don't think a lot of people look there. So I think that late season hunt is what drove that down. If you look at the year before 2016 it was almost eight year old bulls killed out there on average. If we were going to see huge impacts from the spike hunt, we would have seen it back in 2015. It did decline, that's why we didn't recommend an increase but I think you can go 13 tags either way and still be ok.

Ritchie Anderson: I've got just a comment Randy. I think I would support it if the trend was going the wrong way as far as elk population if it was decreasing rather than increasing. I think that I could support it. But with drought conditions and range conditions, the outside pressure we have on the range right now. Like I said if the population, if the numbers was going the opposite way, I think I could support that. But the population count is trending the right direction and until we can get some off the pressures off, the range taken care of, I would not support it right now.

Joe Batty: I was going to say the same that Mr. Anderson has, until there's some improvements in the range conditions and some of these other factors he's talking about. I'd just assume the hunters kill the elk than they're killed by depredation.

**MOTION** to reduce Book Cliffs Bitter Creek Elk permits by 13.

**Daniel Davis**

**Brad Horrocks, second**

**The vote was tied, Chairman broke the deadlock to support the Divisions recommendations, the motion failed five in favor and six opposed.**

**MOTION** to accept the remainder of the Divisions proposals.

**Dan Abeyta**

**Rebekah Jones, second**

**Passed nine in favor and one opposed**

- **Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2018** – Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator

See Slideshow

Randy Dearth: Covy help me understand that 10. They had really poor body conditions, they were over grazing the habitat is that what you're thinking?

Covy Jones: What that means is they are starting to show some density dependence. It means the numbers are probably too high for what that area can sustain. Our concern is always trying to stay ahead of the game and our concern is that we're late. When you have a year when you have a really open year, a lot of soil contact, and next year if we have a lot of snow, we could end up with, moose get winter tick disease. I don't know if any of you are familiar with that. You see a moose laying down and it stands up and the bed it's been laying in looks like it's been shot with a shot gun. It's just covered in blood from all the ticks that are on it. And that's just one of the diseases they get. I mean they aren't big horn sheep, but they are close. They get a lot of diseases. When you have really poor body condition and couple that with a light winter, light winters aren't always good for moose; a light winter followed by a moderate to heavy winter can have a pretty good die off. So what we try to do is reduce densities and manage more flat. Instead of letting Mother Nature do that for us, we try to not lose them all to Mother Nature. When we caught they were in poor body condition and we are concerned about that area. I know before that I mentioned I would show more of the cause specific mortality, I don't know if it would be appropriate to do that now Randy, or if you'd like to see more of that later.

Randy Dearth: Later, maybe.

### **Questions by the RAC:**

Dan Abeyta: I've got a couple questions, could you go to your first slide Covy? I think it was state wide deer population estimate slide. That graph goes back to 1993, 25 years ago; a population objective of 453,000 deer. I'm just curious if the Division has ever considered

bringing that population objective down? Is that a realistic population objective going into the future?

Covy Jones: Yeah that is actually a really good question. That number is not what it has always been. Every time we redo unit plans we take a look at that and think is this really an appropriate number for this unit. How could we grow more, how would we grow more, what would we do, what are the factors? Is it obtainable? I would hope so, one day. We fight a pretty good fight on habitat and other things. Are there areas in the state where we could improve on habitat and do more? Sure. We do evaluate that every time we write a herd unit plan which is every five years.

Dan Abeyta: So that's been evaluated like five times, just curious why it's still that high, and I just wonder if it's really achievable. It's just a question I had, I don't know if somebody here in the region would like to address that question.

Randall Thacker: As Covy said we do change these and we have unit plans and the total is an accumulation of all the unit plans across the state. Each unit plan as we go through those on a five year basis. In our region we did our plans just a year and a half ago. We updated our plans and actually increased our objectives based on a number of our units around here. At the time, it was right before that hard winter, we had five really nice winters in a row and we had produced a lot of deer. You can see the growth going up and up with the population growth and a number of our units were hitting the population objective and if you're going to manage to an objective that would mean we would have to start having unit wide type of doe hunts to remove does. We felt that the habitat was there to support them if we continued to have mild winters. When we get our really bad winters that we do get here every once in a while like we did last year, nature controls that real east on deer. Nature drives deer population. So part of that increase why it is where it is, is from our region. You were here at those RAC meeting when we increased them, so we didn't have to start limiting deer on the mountain and that type of thing because of a population objective was set low. So there is potential when we get away from these hard winters our population definitely increases, we see it consistently and having mild winters is beneficial to us. I can't say for state wide, I can only speak to our region and one bad winter brought us down a lot farther from where we were.

Dan Abeyta: And then the other question I had, and one point I know this region had a doe pronghorn hunt up on the Lucern Peninsula, what happened to that hunt? Why has that kind of gone away? And when did it go away?

Amy Vande Voort: I stopped doing that hunt two years ago. When we were having that hunt it was more to get rid of some of the does in that area and the last couple of years when we had it, the does weren't there anymore. They were just being pushed down where they can't be hunted around the camp ground. And there is very few does during that hunt.

**Questions by the public:**

Tyrell Abeglean: You were saying something about showing the map for Green River, Nine Mile. So with these 40 permits they're only going to be able to hunt in that unit and the other one, 20/20?

Covy Jones: 20 in each that's correct.

Tyrell Abeglean: And my other question was on the antlerless elk, on the Nine Mile Anthro, and the Nine Mile Range Creek, why is there such a difference in the population objective? 700 on one and 1,800 on the other one, when they are that close?

Derrick Ewell: To answer your question, we do look at the two units; you have the Anthro and the Range Creek. The Range Creek is larger and it has far more acres of summer range, it's got a lot more aspen, it has higher elevation stuff. Whereas on the Anthro it's pretty narrow on the summer range. So that's the difference in the population objectives. On those when we set those population objectives it goes through the big process, kind of like the state wide plan. We have all of the interested parties there in a meeting and several meetings that go on for months, and in the Anthro's case, for years. That's the number we came up with that we could settle on with the grazing, private land owner, and sportsmen, that's the number we could come up with. And on Range Creek, when they had their meetings they came up with similar numbers. That's why there is the difference in the two.

Ken Evans: Is the tribe's number in the Yellowstone unit for cow elk is a third less than what yours is. On the Yellowstone unit, I know on the west side that they have all the depredation permits and they have problems. My dad lives in Neola, he's a cattleman for 20 years, he hasn't seen an elk on his place in 20 years. He hunts right above Neola, and he gets a bull once every five years. He gets a cow permit every year, last year was the first year he's filled a cow permit in ten years cause we are just not seeing numbers. And I agree to give the landowners these permits, but the numbers just aren't jiving what I'm hearing on both sides. I mean I spent 90 days on a horse in that unit last year from Farm Creek to the Yellowstone River, and yes the elk were on the Indian ground, but I'm still not even seeing them numbers. The tribe does not have the cow tags because they feel like there is not enough elk.

Randall Thacker: I'm not sure it's because they feel that there is not enough elk, but they aren't interested in antlerless harvest up there for sure. They've decided not to have cow permits on the units up there. The tribe does not manage for a population objective, they don't have a number of elk they are trying to manage for. They manage from what they hear from individuals or whatever it is and decide what number they want to manage for. They aren't legally obligated to, we in the State of Utah are. We're required by law to have a population objective for each unit; so we do try to manage to a population objective. The tribe used to harvest 400 cows a year on the unit up there they did away with that six, eight years ago, Tim? And it's a matter of opinion within the tribe. Some folks would like to see cow harvest up there, some folks don't. So what they've decided up there is their game board has decided not to have cow tags. The number of

cow tags they have has no number of input of the number of cow tags we have. We are legally obligated to manage towards a population objective that we have that was set through a legal process. We are trying to manage towards our population objective up there so we have antlerless elk harvest across the unit and try to push as much as we can without totally training those elk to stay on the tribe year round because that's what happens when they get hunting pressure they move to the tribe. That's why we've gone and been very successful and pushed so hard for this private lands only permit. So we can remove some of those that are causing depredation and damage on the unit. That surprises me that you'd say that about Neola about not having elk on there. We have several hundred elk up there right now causing problems, coming off of the tribe. We had to remove some last week as a matter of fact up there. They are year round residents now that come off the tribe and into Neola and are raiding agricultural crops. So the thought that there aren't any elk up there in Neola really surprises me because we've had a lot of evidence to dispute that. The unit the tribe does count the population of elk up there, we had a meeting with them just this morning, and went over their counts and what they have this winter, even on a very mild winter and they were commenting on how many additional elk they saw on the forest. Their counts jive with our population estimates which is 2,000 elk over objective from what we have set.

Tim Ignacio: Let me add to that. We are in the process of building some corrals to round up some horses and also the cows that are coming onto the tribal lands. I know there are four corrals they are talking about building. We are going to start trapping some of those elk and taking them to Hill Creek. So I do know that's in the plans. I think they have pretty close to a million dollars they have put to the side that they are going to start using for those corrals.

Randall Thacker: Some of the wildlife groups, just for your information, have helped contribute money to the tribe to help remove some of those wild feral horses. They have a couple hundred of them up there. We have raised some money for the helicopter round up that was done up there to try to remove some. They removed 114 horses that year. They are still trying to remove some now.

#### **Comments from the public:**

Troy Justinson: As far as our stances on the Divisions recommendations, we support the Division on the antlerless. Thank you.

#### **Comments from the RAC:**

Daniel Davis: I need to ask one question real quick. On the North Slope moose, how many of those CWMU's are issued cow moose permits?

Covy Jones: Currently there are none. But as we move forward we'll start to look for their assistance as well. I don't want to go too much on a limb here but when we got these animal and got them on hand last year, we might of should have started harvesting some of these antlerless

animals several years ago. And we're concerned that.. we're going to do our best to get ahead of it, but it's not great body condition.

Joe Batty: As a RAC member I wanted to express appreciation for the Division of Wildlife Recourses. They walk a pretty tight rope; trying to keep the public happy, and the private land owners happy. So I take my hat off to you and express appreciation for you.

**MOTION** to accept 2018 antlerless permits as presented.

**Joe Batty**

**Brad Horrocks**

**Passed unanimously**

- **2018 CWMU ANTLERLESS PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS** – Mike Wardell, Public Wildlife/Private Lands Coordinator

See Slideshow

Randy Dearth: Mike on that last slide, they are qualified for more tags, so there are more public ones available?

Mike Wardell: With Junction Valley specifically it's a depredation situation. They have some alfalfa fields within their CWMU that creates a lot of depredation problems. They wanted some doe permits to help take the burden off of that landowner. They have a 90/10 split, so back to that table that means that all of the antlerless permits we issue for that CWMU are going to the public.

**MOTION** to accept 2018 CWMU antlerless permit recommendations as presented.

**Brad Horrocks**

**Natasha Hadden, second**

**Passed unanimously**

- **2018 POACHING REPORTED REWARD PERMIT PROGRAM CHANGES** – Justin Shirley, Law Enforcement Captain

See Slideshow

Randy Dearth: Sounds like a good deal to me.

### **Questions from the RAC:**

Dan Abeyta: How is the monetary reward determined?

Justin Shirley: That's a great question. We have a guideline we follow on the monetary rewards, we break it up by species. Right now it goes up to \$1,000.00 on some of those then there is also the discretion of the chief to go above that based on certain cases. Again a lot of these cases we

get a lot of restitution to our help stop poaching account; and it's great to be able to give that back to the sportsmen who are helping us out. It can vary based on the species. I think on the rule elk is \$700.00, and that doesn't mean that's always where it's going to be, a lot of it is based on a guy making a phone call saying I don't know if it should be happening or not, but maybe you should look into it; and we look into it and end up finding. That's when we make determinations with the individual on where we should be, what was the extent they were helping us and things like that.

Dan Abeyta: So it's really case by case.

Justin Shirley: It can be, yes.

**Comments from the RAC:**

Brad Horrocks: I think it's a great program; I really do. I think since it's been incorporated, it might be a little hard on some family relations over the years but it's a great program. As long as the cranes aren't included.

Justin Shirley: You bring up a valid point there though, there are some other species that we will probably look into bringing into this program down the road. That's swans, cranes. Some of those species have different parts that we look at like swans, the number of permits is actually not set by us, its set by the Federal Government; so if we were to issue swan poaching reported reward permits, they would have to come from that public allocation. So we would have to cross that bridge and see if that was an option.

**MOTION** to accept the poaching reported reward permit program changes as presented.

**Dan Abeyta**

**Rebekah Jones, second**

**Passed unanimously**

**MOTION to adjourn at 10:10 pm.**

