

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville Civic Center
110 S Main Street, Springville
August 3, 2010 @ 6:30 p.m.

Motion Summary

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

MOTION: To accept agenda and minutes as presented
Passed unanimously

Cougar Guidebook and Rule R657-10

MOTION: To accept the Division's recommendations as presented
Passed unanimously

R657-24 Compensation for Lion and Bear Damage

MOTION: To accept the rule as presented
Passed unanimously

Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04

MOTION: To accept recommendations as outlined
Passed unanimously

Furbearer Guidebook and Rule R657-11

MOTION: To approve the Division's recommendations
Passed unanimously

Otter Management Plan Revision

MOTION: To accept the revisions to the otter management plan as presented
Passed unanimously

Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09

MOTION: To accept the guidebook and rule as presented
Passed unanimously

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville Civic Center
110 S Main Street, Springville
August 3, 2010 ⌚ 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

John Bair, Sportsmen
Matt Clark, Sportsmen
Larry Fitzgerald, Agriculture
Byron Gunderson, At Large
Richard Hansen, At Large
George Holmes, Agriculture
Fred Oswald, Non-consumptive, Chair
Jay Price, Elected
Duane Smith, Non-consumptive

Members Absent

Gary Nielson, Sportsmen, Vice Chair
Allan Stevens, At Large
Larry Velarde, Forest Service

Others Present

Rick Woodard, Wildlife Board Chair

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

VOTING

Motion was made by Duane Smith to accept the agenda as written

Seconded by Matt Clark

Motion passed unanimously

2) **Approval of the May 18, 2010 minutes (Action)**

VOTING

Motion was made by Richard Hansen to accept the minutes as transcribed

Seconded by Duane Smith

Motion passed unanimously

3) **Regional Update (Information)**

- **John Fairchild, Central Regional Supervisor**

4) **Cougar Guidebook and Rule R657-10 (Action)**

- **Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator**

Questions from the RAC

Matt Clark – How do you come up with 25 percent of females and do most hunters target females?

Kevin Bunnell – The research comes out of Wyoming where they studied two units. One with a very light harvest strategy versus an aggressive harvest strategy and after several years swapped the units and looked at the composition of the harvest on those units. What they found was that essentially the most vulnerable portion of the population is adult males. That is what the hunters are selecting for. They also move longer distances and are more likely to cross the road so for several reasons they are the first portion of the population that is targeted. That is then followed by sub-adult males and sub-adult

females. They usually don't have an established home range, are moving longer distances, are more likely to cross the road and more likely to be detected by someone who is hunting. The least vulnerable portion of the population is the adult females. They have smaller home range sizes and established home ranges. If they have kittens they are not moving very often so they are less likely to be detected or leaving tracks in areas where someone will find them. That is the last part of the population hunters start biting into and so when that portion of the harvest starts to increase that is a good indication that the population is in a decreasing trend.

Questions from the Public

Chad Coburn – When you have a harvest objective unit that the quota is not met on how do you come up with your numbers for your targets such as the number of females in the harvest?

Without enough harvest on these units how do you know if you need to increase or decrease?

Kevin Bunnell – We set the numbers based on the entire eco-region. Then the regional biologists look at the number of tags available and determine which units to put them on.

Chad Coburn – There are a lot of units you will never get to 25 percent because of they never close.

Kevin Bunnell – We are not managing based just on one individual unit.

Chad Coburn – So it is based on a region not unit. On snares, we haven't wanted to use houndsmen to haze bears. Why do we want to let individual landowners use snares? Do you have written criteria as to when you allow a private landowner to use a snare?

Kevin Bunnell – This has been in the bear rule for several years and has been used once or twice in the last ten years. It is not something that will be used very often but it does give an opportunity to let someone who lives in a very remote area take care of a problem if wildlife services can't be very responsive and take care of the problem.

Chad Coburn – So it is the areas managers' decision to say if the landowner can do that?

Kevin Bunnell – The authorization to do that would come from the Director.

Jason Binder – What is the doe to fawn survival ratio on the Nebo?

Dennis Southerland – I don't have that right here.

Dave Woodhouse – In 2008 it was 39 fawns per 100 does.

Jason Binder – What about the doe survival rate?

Kevin Bunnell – Without collars that would be hard to tell.

Jason Binder – Do we have any data on the two manti units in this region?

Craig Clyde – We don't have the adult survival but we do have the classification data.

Dennis Southerland – The does that we have collared have 100 percent survival.

Craig Clyde – For deer we do not have the adult survival but we do have what the objective is for the unit and what the herd is now in relation to that. It is low on both of those units and that is why we are under a predator management plan.

Jason Binder – What is the status of the sheep here on the Timpanogos and Cascade range?

Craig Clyde – It is declining on the Cascade mountain herd. We had disease hit that herd two years ago and it is still down. The Timpanogos population is stable.

James Gilson – With prey and predator management, how do they relate? We have had several questions about deer populations because predator management goes hand in hand with deer so my question is why is the deer data not available? Why don't we give these guys the deer data to help them make decisions about predator management? In 2008 the central mountains, Manti unit was at 52 percent of objective and have had very low fawn survival this year.

Kevin Bunnell – I think we do have that information available and can get it here shortly.

James Gilson – I understand but why is it not presented? With the low numbers of fawn survival on the east Manti wouldn't the herd be declining?

Craig Clyde – Whenever you get fawn survival below 40 you are decreasing in population.

John Childs – Because our lion population is below saturation why not include the sub-adult females in the number harvested? They are not going to drift out of areas.

Kevin Bunnell – Even if they are not leaving the range they are still more mobile than a female that has an established home range especially if she has kittens.

John Childs – How do you determine they are less mobile?

Kevin Bunnell – Several radio collar studies have shown that.

Comments from the Public

Brady Halladay – I support the Utah Houndsmen Association’s recommendation for lions. After hunting the Wasatch Timpanogos and Cascade units and only cutting one cat in two seasons I would say that has been over harvested. I am also concerned about the Manti unit being over harvested this last season. It is a split unit and after the limited entry season closed the quota was one and in one weekend it was over harvested by six lions. I think that takes away from the guy who has put in for years to draw that tag.

Jason Walker – I support the Houndsmen Association recommendations. My main concern is unit 16a on the Nebo unit going to a predator management plan. I have hunted that unit for quite a few years and have never seen an over abundance of lions. I have noticed a decrease in lions there in the last four or five years. In 2009 to the best of my knowledge the average age of a lion harvested was 2.7 years old. This is under three which is what the Division considers a mature lion. I have a hard time seeing the justification to put that unit under a predator management plan.

Robert Olson – I support the Utah Houndsmen Association recommendations and their data that they have gathered. I think it is the most precise data that there is out there. The houndsmen are out there in the field catching and observing the lions. I don’t see how else you can collect data. I am seeing a decreased in the population. I don’t see the split hunts working very well at all. It was terrible to see six lions be over harvested on the Manti. I hunt that and it is hard to find a cat on that unit. The lion population is not very good anyway and to see six more cats taken is a terrible mistake. That is poor management in my opinion. I disagree with the split on the limited entry units.

Earl Hansen – I want to take a minute to talk about what I observed on the Nebo unit as well as the northeast Manti unit. Later in spring the amount of coyotes taking deer was very high. I think that is why our fawn survival is down. In one night coyotes took an adult doe. Nothing was left after one night. We observed that as well on the Nebo unit. I think the lions are taking the hit for a lot of coyote problems. I want to say I also support the Houndsmen Association recommendations. As a hunter you put in for these tags for many years. I have had two tags and have taken one cat. Turning units into harvest objective units defeats the purpose of trying to draw out for some of these permits.

James Gilson – Carbon County chapter of SFW – I want to start with a quote. “There are some things that can only be achieved by a deliberate leap in the opposite direction”. I would like to share a paragraph out of the deer study that is ongoing right now.

Adult female survival has been shown to be the most sensitive parameter when monitoring populations. In other words a slight change in adult female survival,

the key word is slight change, can dramatically affect the results and such obtaining a precise estimate of adult female survival is critical. Fawn survival also has major impacts on population. Considerable ... values and a precise annual estimate of this parameter must also be obtained because population growth rate is primarily driven by the female segment of the population. Monitoring natural mortality of bucks and such is not as critical.

I also have some figures here I would like a thumbs up or down on if we are close on some estimates.

Currently we have about 310,000 deer

John Fairchild – Plus or minus.

James Gilson – Our statewide average is 60 fawns per 100 does.

Craig Clyde – On average.

James Gilson – Lions kill and estimated 30 to 45 deer a year.

Craig Clyde – That is about right.

James Gilson – There are an estimated 15 to 20,000 deer killed on highways.

John Fairchild – That is a guesstimate.

James Gilson – Hunters kill about 30,000 deer. So we are starting out with 310,000 deer and about 180,000 of those would be does and with our fawn data we know that we add about 108,000 deer a year. That is a good close estimate. If we kill 15,000 on the highways and hunters take 30,000 excluding predators we lose about 5,000 to natural mortality so that is 50,000 deer. If we have 19,000 lions and they average 30 deer a year they will eat 57,000 deer. Those two numbers add up to what we put into the checking account every year. The houndsmen get upset because we have been under predator management plans for so long and it hasn't worked because when lion populations get low we back off when everyone screams about no lions. What we are asking for is for you to support a 50 percent increase in the tags on the Manti. You can look at these numbers. The deer herd can't grow with the amount of lions we have right now. We are below objective in all areas in the state. The deer herd can't grow. We haven't even talked about coyotes and bears. We have to fix these deer herds then we can have large lion populations. We are asking that you increase the Manti by 50 percent. It is at 50 percent of objective, it had 30 fawns this year, we are going backwards. The only things we can manage are predators. If you don't fix the deer herd we are never going to have lions.

Dave Woodhouse – Utah County chapter SFW – I would like to address the Nebo and Manti units and the predator management program. Last year I presented to this RAC the same data. Last year I had the 2008 data at this meeting and this year I was unable to get the 2009 data from Anis so I am still going off of 2008 but from everything I gather the 2009 data is not an improvement over 2008. The Manti is at 52 percent of herd objective. It is the largest deer herd in the state with an objective of 38,000 deer. It is currently at 19,800 animals. The southeast part of Manti is getting about 30 fawns per 100 does surviving. To me that is unacceptable. Fred has asked me before, if you are a sportsman why are you always asking to take deer tags out of the draw. The reason is we don't have the deer to support the number of deer tags we have at this time. We put the Manti under predator management plan last year. The southern part had an over harvest and the northern part didn't reach harvest objective. I had a tag myself and never went out. Probably none of these guys would have taken me out, for various reasons. The year

before I did kill a monster on that unit. The Nebo needs to go into predator management. As far as tag numbers I trust the Division knows where the tags need to go. One thing about predator management plans is it not only affects the cougars but it allows the Division to focus efforts on coyote harvest with the government trappers. I do know through SFW, the trappers and the Division many coyotes were taken this year on Manti. I talked to some of the trappers and they say you have to hit them for three years hard to make a difference. I have no doubt that probably has the biggest affect on our deer population outside of the highways and hunters. As far as tag numbers I support the Division's recommendations. I know that I will be back here this winter at the bucks and bulls meeting asking you on the same units to reduce deer permit numbers. We need to do what we can to get the deer herd back and I think this RAC can send a message.

Jason Binder – Utah Houndsmen Association – We would like to see the Division incorporate the sub-adult females into the recommendation process for setting tag numbers. Without those numbers you can't show exactly how many lions we are killing. If you look at our handout you can see the total number of females harvested compared to the number of adult females. On a lot of the units the adult female harvest is more than the male harvest in the whole unit. Our second recommendation is that all harvest objective and split units not under predator management plan return to limited entry. Once they come off predator management plan they are supposed to go back to limited entry and be managed under the limited entry plan. On the Wasatch mountain Timpanogos unit 17a1 and Cascade 17a2 we feel that those should be taken off harvest objective and moved to split units because they have been harvested really hard for the last 13 years. We feel lions are being harvested off of limited entry units and turned in for those units. There are not that many cats up there and limited access. The four Manti units; 16b1, 16c1, 16b2, and 16c2 should return to limited entry. The lions are not eating the fawns. They are being killed by coyotes or cars. A unit can be on predator management plan for coyotes, foxes and anything else. We would like to see the Nebo unit 16a stay limited entry. There is not enough data showing that we need to over harvest the lions on this unit. Next we would like to see more training for the Division of Wildlife Resources personnel checking in lions so we get a more accurate gender ratio. We are not trying to pick on anybody who is checking in a lion but we feel that if a hunter says it is a tom they just write it down and they are not actually checking it. We would like to see the tag numbers stay the same as last year with no increase this year. Thank you for your time.

Chad Coburn – I agree with these guys, I think we need more deer. But in the deer study we are finding out we are losing the fawns but we don't know what we are losing the fawns to. My question is this and my statement is truth. For thirteen years we have been aggressively harvesting lions but the deer herds have gone down. If we are not getting any deer back on these units that are under predator management plans my question is where are all the lions. 95 percent of our club said the lion hunting is poor to very poor. 55 percent of the Division's questionnaire said the same thing. Houndsmen are saying the lions are gone. There are more people hunting lions right now then when I started hunting them 11 years ago. Where are the lions and how are they affecting the deer herd? One of the four Manti units was over harvested by six. That is alarming. We need to address that and come up with a plan to help with reporting. Why are we changing the Nebo unit when the deer herd is not responding. We know lions are harvested on limited

entry units and checked in on harvest objective units. We have caught people doing this. The lions are not there. We are not closing units like we did in the late 1990s. One of the corner stones of this whole management plan is accuracy in harvest reporting. My recommendation is five members in each region check in lions so there is no margin for error. You can't check in a lion and just ask what it is. You need to verify it. Some of these guides and outfitters know if you get your female harvest out of line it will start reducing tags. You need to have accuracy. Bottom line is it is not the lions killing the fawns. I have never ran a lion off a fawn kill.

RAC Discussion

Matt Clark – Who is killing the mountain lions if you are not? You represent an organization that is probably the strongest in the state but you are not seeing them, who is killing them?

Jason Binder – There were 300 lions harvested but there are 1,000 tags issued.

Duane Smith – If no one could find a lion on the Manti how was it over harvested by six the day it opens to harvest objective.

Chad Coburn – That is being in the right place at the right time. Our objection is that six were over harvested because of a reporting error. There needs to a better program so we can stay within our guidelines.

Duane Smith – How can that many lions be harvested if the lion numbers are low?

Chad Coburn – That unit has been on limited entry for a number of years so it has not been on the really aggressive management program.

Earl Hansen – This year I had a limited entry tag and when I called to get it checked in I didn't get it into him for three days because it was a Friday night and it was Monday before I checked that in.

John Bair – I see one side of the equation, there ain't no deer. You have to control what you can control that affects the deer. You can't control the roads or the weather and I think our deer herds in real trouble. On the other hand I have dogs and I know what these guys are saying. If I were to draw a line down the middle I would probably come up with what the Division has come up with. I don't like to see six more lions killed than what the quota is. I do think we need to come up with some way to prevent over harvest. The Nebo is in sad shape when it comes to the deer. The Manti is in sad shape. If we don't fix the deer herd we are never going to have a lot of lions. I know the lions aren't the main cause. I think the coyotes have a lot more affect on the actual population. We hammer the coyotes every chance we get. I think you have to keep some pressure on all the predators; lions, coyotes and the hunters. When it comes around to time to divide up the deer tags again this year with our deer herd at 50 percent, our deer tags ought to be at 50 percent until we grow some deer. I think you have to address everything. I think Kevin has done a good job with this. I am not sure I like the eco regions. I am not sure I like Spanish Fork canyon and St. George having an effect on each others lion numbers but other than that I think they have done a good job.

VOTING

Motion was made by John Bair to accept the Division's recommendations as presented

Seconded by Jay Price

Richard Hansen – I like the idea of Nebo going to predator management plan because it will put pressure on the coyotes. Bears were not there until ten years ago. That is one more predator. Bears are proficient at killing fawns. You can't control the weather and

the highways. The only thing you can do is limit hunters and predators if you want deer herds to grow.

John Bair – I would like to clarify the reason I think we need to keep pressure on the predators even though I don't think that it is the ultimate cause of the decline in deer. I think you need to keep the pressure on everything that affects the deer herd. Not to the point that you get rid of lions but I think you have to affect the things you can affect and hopefully as the deer start to come back we can start to relieve some of the pressure on some of these units and grow the lion population back with the deer herd.

In Favor: ALL

Jay Price, George Holmes, John Bair, Matt Clark, Richard Hansen, Larry Fitzgerald, Duane Smith, Byron Gunderson

Motion passed unanimously

5) R657-24 Compensation for Lion and Bear Damage – 5 yr review (Action)

- Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

George Holmes – How do they confirm an eagle loss?

Kevin Bunnell – Usually it is very easy if the animal is there because the eagle is there feeding on it.

George Holmes – Don't they take them away?

Kevin Bunnell – It has to be a newborn lamb before they carry them off. For clarification, eagle damage is only paid if there is money left over after bear, cougar and wolf damage is paid. That is a restriction from the legislature.

John Bair – How many confirmed wolf depredation losses have there been so far this year?

Kevin Bunnell – That is changing day by day because we had five that we thought were confirmed to a wolf that we found out was a hybrid. We have at least three calves and four or five ewes. Some of those are in the delisted area and we took a wolf in response to that. Some were in the area that is still listed and so the Fish and Wildlife Service is responding to those.

John Bair – No hound dog predation from wolves yet?

Kevin Bunnell – Not yet.

Byron Gunderson – Is there any breakdown by type of predator? For example cougar and bear.

Kevin Bunnell – We do break it down every year by species. If you look at it over a five year average bear and cougar seem to level out. Bear may be slightly higher than lion.

Questions from the Public

Chad Coburn – Has there been any consideration for hound compensation?

Kevin Bunnell – Livestock as defined by the legislature does not include dogs. One of the things that limit that definition of livestock is the animals that require a head tax be paid. Part of the money that pays this compensation is raised by that head tax. Species that there is no head tax on would not qualify.

Fred Oswald – Is there a head tax on llamas or goats?

Kevin Bunnell – I don't believe so. They are not included in the definition of livestock at this time.

VOTING

**Motion was made by Byron Gunderson to accept the rule as presented
Seconded by Duane Smith
In Favor: All
Motion passed unanimously**

- 6) **Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04 (Action)**
- **Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator**

Questions from the RAC

Fred Oswald – Is this policy on a three year cycle?

Kevin Bunnell – This policy just comes out when we are making changes to it. It is not on a cycle.

Fred Oswald – Are Wildlife Services federal employees?

Kevin Bunnell – Not always. Wildlife Services is a hybrid organization and they have some state employees and some federal employees. Their director is a federal employee but it is a cooperative agency between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Utah State Department of Agriculture.

Fred Oswald – Is it possible for Wildlife Services to do coyote control and the regional biologist not even know about it?

Kevin Bunnell – They may do coyote control for livestock protection. According to our MOU with Wildlife Services if there is confirmed depredation from a cougar or bear they have to inform us that they are taking action but they are not asking permission.

Fred Oswald – They tell you I took a bear or I am trying to take a bear?

Kevin Bunnell – I am taking a bear and then afterwards I either took a bear or I stopped trying because the sheep have moved or whatever.

Larry Fitzgerald – I am afraid sage grouse are going to get listed. You don't address the crow population in this policy.

Kevin Bunnell – We do. There are several of our predator management plans that address avian predators.

Larry Fitzgerald – They need to be addressed. Hopefully you are doing everything you can do to keep grouse off the list.

Kevin Bunnell – We are trying.

Fred Oswald – There are some species that would be difficult to manage if they were on the threatened or endangered list.

Kevin Bunnell – A prime example would be wolves.

VOTING

**Motion was made by Duane Smith to accept recommendations as outlined
Seconded by John Bair
In Favor: All
Motion passed unanimously**

- 7) **Furbearer Guidebook and Rule R657-11 (Action)**
- **Justin Dolling, Game Mammals Coordinator**

Questions from the RAC

Fred Oswald – There are four variables from the baseline that require the action you are recommending. If you are still after another season not meeting those variables do you further reduce?

Justin Dolling – Yes.

Fred Oswald – You are confident that you are getting good enough data to make good decisions?

Justin Dolling – Essentially we have been collecting that information since 1983. That normal range was generated by generating a mean and then developing a 95 percent confidence around that mean. It is the best information we have to define what normal would be in a bobcat harvest program here in Utah.

Fred Oswald – Do you think there is a direct correlation between falling out of baseline and the price of pelts? It seems to me that bobcats are in a unique situation because the number of them that are taken every year pretty much depends on the price of the pelt. If the prices go down the trappers don't want to bother to take them. When prices go up trappers want to take a lot of them. If trappers ended up taking a lot of them because the prices go up then don't you see the baseline go out of wack?

Justin Dolling – That is a long term average or a mean on a data set that has had fluctuating pelt prices all over since that data set was collected. There probably are some variables like set days per bobcat that could be tied to the amount of effort put forth but as far as the proportion of juveniles and adult survival and the adult females I don't see those being influenced by pelt price at all.

Matt Clark – Are there a lot of muskrat trappers in the state?

Justin Dolling – We get about 12 to 15 applications per year to trap on our management areas. Our superintendents use it as a tool to minimize damage to dikes.

VOTING

Motion was made by Jay Price to approve the Division's recommendations

Seconded by Richard Hansen

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

8) Otter Management Plan Revision (Action)

- Justin Dolling, Game Mammals Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

John Bair – Is there any concern with Otters on the Provo River eating your June suckers?

John Fairchild – No. There has been concern from anglers about them eating too many trout.

Matt Clark – Of those 12 that were transplanted on the Provo River how many of those were females?

Justin Dolling – Of the 12 we transplanted nine are still alive. Two died shortly after transplant the third was hit by a vehicle. Of the nine I believe three or four are females.

Matt Clark – On an average year they have two to four pups per female. Did they have pups last year?

Justin Dolling – They each have a transmitter and two of the females were exhibiting behavior that would suggest they were denning up but we could never confirm reproduction.

Byron Gunderson – What about the populations on the Strawberry and the Duchesne River?

Justin Dolling – In general on the Green River and tributaries they seem to be doing well but we don't have hardly any survey information to demonstrate that. Our local biologist would guess about 300 otters exists in that system.

Richard Hansen – Are there plans to transplant to any others areas?

Justin Dolling – The two sites the plan called out were the Weber River and Straight Canyon which didn't make it all the way through the process but the southeastern region is recommending that that be put back on the transplant list. Currently those two sites will probably take us through the life of the plan.

Richard Hansen – What kind of water do they need?

Justin Dolling – Not necessarily clear water but they need water that that is not polluted and is high quality water as far as contaminants go.

Richard Hansen – Have you considered the Sevier River?

Justin Dolling – The Server River is definitely a site we would look at. Again we would have to evaluate the riparian habitat associated with the river. If the Sevier River was targeted we would bring that back through the public process and to the wildlife board.

Questions from the Public

Roby Serar – Any implications as to why they are moving from Colorado to Utah?

Justin Dolling – Otters are known for moving long distances so it is probably a natural dispersal.

RAC Discussion

Fred Oswald – Byron, because you work with fisherman on a daily basis can you tell us what sense you get from the fishermen concerning introducing otters.

Byron Gunderson – There has been some concern about them from anglers. I think the anglers are waiting to see. There have been some suggestions that there are too many small brown trout and the otters may actually help fish populations in areas. I think the anglers feel that otters could be controlled if they need to be in the future.

Fred Oswald – Does it concern you that they are going to a ten year plan?

Byron Gunderson – If they started to have an effect on the fisheries there are provisions in plan to deal with that.

VOTING

Motion was made by Matt Clark to accept the revisions to the otter management plan as presented

Seconded by Duane Smith

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

9) Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09 (Action)

- Tom Aldrich, Wildlife Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Matt Clark – This is great news, another liberal season. I know in past years you have been concerned that they may move to a more moderate season. The ducks are doing well. Is it trending toward the future staying a liberal season?

Tom Aldrich – If I had to guess you will never see anything but a liberal season in the pacific flyway and the reason for that is that we just recently, last year, changed to being driven by the western mallards and not mid-continent mallards. Mid-continent is very droughty and I think those areas will likely see moderate seasons at some point. Western mallards are very stable because we have Alaska and they don't go droughty. California and Oregon are the same way. Our seasons are now driven by those populations. When we get the thousand year simulations virtually we will never go to a moderate season unless climate change has some huge impact on the western birds that we aren't anticipating. I think you will always see a liberal season here with some fluctuations in species limits. Because of that next year we are going to try to go to a three year guide book.

Matt Clark – This is great news. I would like to offer an invitation to any RAC members this fall to come out on a waterfowl hunt. This is a wonderful opportunity. We have a 107 day season with liberal bag limits. What Tom hasn't told you is that the Division is undergoing a very aggressive phragmites attack and the waterfowl management areas in the state are doing wonderful.

VOTING

Motion was made by Matt Clark to accept the guidebook and rule as presented

Seconded by John Bair

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

35 in attendance

Next board meeting August 19th, 9:00 a.m. at the DNR Boardroom, 1594 W North Temple, Salt Lake

Next RAC meeting September 14th, 6:30 p.m. at Springville Junior High, 165 South 700 East, Springville

Northern Regional Advisory Council

Aug 4, 2010,

6:00 P.M.

Place: Brigham City Community Center

RAC Present

Robert Bynes –At Large
John Cavitt- Noncon.
Paul Cowley-Forest Service
Joel Ferry- Agric
Russ Lawrence- At Large
Jon Leonard-Sportsman
Ann Neville- Noncon.
Bret Selman-Agric
Brad Slater- Chair
Craig Van Tassell- Sportsman
John Wall- At Large

DWR Present

Jodie Anderson
Justin Dolling
Randy Wood
Tom Aldrich
Kevin Bunnell
Darren Johnson
Randy Berger
Nathan Long
Darren Debloois
Mitch Lane
Kirt Enright
Masako Wright
Cory Inglet

Wildlife Board

Ernie Perkins
Bill Fenimore

RAC Excused Absence

James Gaskill- At Large

RAC Absent

Michael Gates- BLM
Shawn Groll- At Large

Meeting Begins: 6:00 p.m.

Number of Pages: 14

Introduction: Brad Slater-chair

Agenda:

Review of Agenda

Review of May 19, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Wildlife Board Meeting Update

Regional Update

Cougar Guidebook and Rule R657-10

R657- 24 Compensation for Lion and Bear Damage (5-yr)

Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04

Furbearer Guidebook and Rule R657-11

Otter Management Plan Revision

Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09

CHA Variance Requests

Item 1. Review and Acceptance of Agenda

Motion: Neville- So moved. (Approved at the same time)

Second: Wall

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Item 2. Review and Acceptance of May 19, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Neville- So moved with the acceptance of the agenda.

Second: Wall

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Item 3. Wildlife Board Update

No questions or comments.

Item 4. Regional Update

Ron Hodson, Regional Supervisor

Nothing to report this month. Ron Hodson is out of town.

Item 5. Cougar Guidebook and Rule R657-10

-Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator

See Handout

Public Questions

Bret Henry- In the bear rules, I think they limit it to 12 pounds in a chase. I was wondering if they are going to limit the amount of hounds you can run in a lion chase.

Bunnell- We have not made any recommendations. Actually, it is eight in bear and that is only in the summer pursuit season. We are not seeing the same issues with cougars so we are not making any recommendations.

Ken Duncan- You say .25 or .35 cougars cree per day?

Bunnell- Correct.

Ken Duncan- And how many hunters did you survey?

Bunnell- 385.

Ken Duncan- There are 385 hunters out there and you cree ¼ of a lion a day?

Bunnell- That is what the data indicated.

Ken Duncan- That is about what ours is or worse. That means there is just no lion left.

RAC Questions

Lawrence- In that survey, there were 5% that thought the cougars were increasing?

Bunnell- Correct.

Lawrence- Are they spread throughout units or was there one particular unit that people thought was increasing?

Bunnell- No, we require that our contractor get a broad distribution and they cannot have over a certain percentage from any particular area. That is kind of a statewide perspective.

Cowley- Cougars per day and Houndsmen Association numbers generated. They actually had 8.25 days to cree one cougar. That is one cougar every 4 days. That is a fairly large margin between those.

Bunnell- Their survey was based on a questionnaire they handed out at their banquet.

Understanding where it came from, it is a different approach.

Cowley- I understand, it just seems like that is a fairly large discrepancy. As we talk snares, are you looking at having Wildlife Service put those out or the permittees themselves?

Bunnell- Wildlife Services already use snares regularly. This has been in the bear rule for several years and it is very rarely used but it does allow us to help someone solve their own problem in a unique circumstance. It would be the producer that we would be authorizing to use snares.

Cowley- Would there be limits?

Bunnell- Very specific limits. Geographic limits, limit on the number of snares, limit on the number of days they can have them out, limit if there is one or two animals they are trying to target. We would be very specific in the letter of authorization.

Cowley- I am just concerned about the non-target individuals as we start making up some of these other species.

Bunnell- That is always a risk anytime you have a trap out. I don't know if it is any greater a risk under this circumstance than what is already out there.

Public Comment

Ernie Millgate- I was on the cougar management committee. A lot of thought went into it. They took some tactics used by other states that had pretty good success including Wyoming. It has helped their cougar population. I was a little shocked by areas that got increased. I support the program and think we ought to give it a try. Concerns with houndmen checking lions in. Concerns with outfitters closing. Would like hotline numbers updated so they match with what is on the computer.

Slater- Clarification on standardization of hotline numbers.

Ernie Millgate- Wonder if there is a certain number we could call and they could dispatch the different areas of the state to let them know somebody has got one. Byron had an idea about starting on a Monday which I think would eliminate this problem.

Randy Long- Stop cougar hunt altogether. Never seen one cougar my whole life, I don't think there are that many of them. Change to something similar to the bison or moose hunt.

Ken Duncan- Northern Utah Big Game – Ran survey last year which was worse as far as the statistics go. It makes it not worth buying a chase permit anymore. If you have to hunt 8 days to find a lion or a lion track and you are a weekend hunter, your season is just about shot before you can catch one lion. I have seen one lion track in the last 2 years. Lions are easy to catch. Utah Houndsmen Association survey reported 1,254 days in the field and only 152 lions creed. Lion hunting rated in Utah was almost unanimously very poor. Would like to see all areas in Northern Utah be limited entry. Too many kittens killed.

Slater- Do you have a sense of how many lion hunters are members of the association.

Ken Duncan- Ours is just over 100 members and there are 6-8 clubs across Utah.

Slater- So there are 6-8 clubs and about 100 or so members.

RAC Comment

Selman- Sat on cougar management committee. My eyes were opened with what the state is trying to do with these cougars. Everyone felt good about the plan. It is a rock solid plan and I think we need to let it run its course over the next 3 years and make necessary changes.

Approve of snare program.

Byrnes- Last year's proclamation says that the phone line and website will be updated each day by noon. Updates become effective the following day, 30 minutes before official sunrise. Do we need to change that for the weekends?

Bunnell- No. We try our hardest to do that and are successful most of the time. There are times when we are later than we should be. I would love suggestions on how to fix that. As far as being able to have lions checked while we are closed, it is in the proclamation that you can call the county dispatch and they will contact our law enforcement officers who will check the cats during times when the offices are not open.

Byrnes- As long as someone has made an attempt.

Bunnell- There is never a ticket issue if someone can document that they have made an attempt. That is all recorded by dispatch so there is a record of it.

Van Tassell- Pursuit license. In the limited entry units, you can currently pursue basically from November to the end of May but in the harvest objective areas you can pursue all year. I would propose that we set up pursuits year round.

Slater- Need clarification.

Van Tassell- If you have a pursuit license in the split and limited entry areas, you can pursue from November to the end of May. But in the harvest objective areas which are basically year round, you can hunt pursuit year round. I would like to have Kevin comment on maybe having those pursuit be year round in all the areas.

Bunnell- I don't think you would accomplish much by doing that primarily because 99% of pursuit takes place when there is snow on the ground and that time period from November to May captures the time when we have snow on the ground. Is anyone taking advantage of pursuit during the snow free portions of the year? Where it is happening, we are having some problems where areas that are closed to pursuit for bear, guys are going out chasing bears but claiming that they are chasing lion. We have had some enforcement issues with that.

Ernie Millgate- If you give houndsmen opportunity, they will take advantage of it and ruin it for you. We have lost some areas because of what Kevin said. I would like to see more year round areas but at the same time, we have conflicts with campers and fisherman. We would have to look at it unit by unit to see what areas it would work in. There is quite an interest that would like to pursue during the summer.

Van Tassell- I agree with that and think that there are some areas that should be closed but there are some areas where houndsmen could train their dogs and not just have their dogs do nothing for 6 months. It would be good to have more areas year round.

Motion

Motion: Selman- Accept the plan as presented.

Second: Ferry

Motion Passes: 8 For, 2 Against

Item 6. R657- 24 Compensation for Lion and Bear Damage (5-yr)

-Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator

See Handout

RAC Questions

Neville- How much does the Division pay for depredation total?

Bunnell- We are limited to pay what the legislature allocates us. Right now they are giving us up to \$140,000 dollars.

Neville- That is total for the entire state?

Bunnell- Yes. For bear, cougar and wolf damage there is a whole different pot of money that is for agricultural damage from deer, elk and that sort of thing. This is just from predators.

Byrnes- Amount of claims vs. what was allocated. Some years, you did have more money available that you did not pay out?

Bunnell- Yes, there have been some years that we had more money available than we had claims for.

Byrnes- It just looked a little strange that some years you were exactly the same.

Bunnell- It is the amount paid.

Cowley- What is the current head tax is that the livestock producer pays?

Bunnell- Bret could probably answer that better than me. I don't know exactly what the head tax is.

Selman- It went up this last year; we are up to 75 cents per sheep. I cannot remember on the cattle.

Wall- Are certain areas in the state getting more money because of predator problems?

Bunnell- We do not separate the money by geographic area. Are you asking if some areas are more prone to predation?

Wall- Yes.

Bunnell- Certainly. A lot of that depends on the lay of the land.

Motion

Motion: Byrnes- Move to approve R657-24 Compensation for Lion and Bear Damage as presented.

Second: Cowley

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Item 7. Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04

-Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator

See Handout

Public Questions

Kirk Robinson- Director Western Wildlife Conservancy- Curious about change on bighorn sheep. We did not talk about that in the group 1 ½ years ago. I would like to know more about it.

Bunnell- That is something that came out of a meeting with our managers. They were uncomfortable with removing predator management. They wanted to get closer to objective with bighorn sheep because you are talking about such a small population to begin with.

Kirk Robinson- Could you give an example where that situation exists or has existed?

Bunnell- Bear Top Mountain in the Northeastern Region is an area where there is only room for so many bighorn sheep so we have a fairly low population objective. We wanted to keep that population as close to objective as we could.

Kirk Robinson- What is the population of that?

Bunnell- I don't know.

Kirk Robinson- Is it currently in trouble that way?

Bunnell- It is currently below objective.

Kirk Robinson- Below 75 or below 90?

Bunnell- Below 90.

Kirk Robinson- Is it conceivable to you that you would instigate predator control against cougars indefinitely if the population does not rise about 90% or would other factors kick in?

Bunnell- In all of our predator management plans there is 3 criteria for when it would stop and it could stop based on any one of those three.

Kirk Robinson- So those still hold.

Bunnell- Yes.

RAC Questions

Byrnes- In your presentation when you got to predator management plans you said that predator management plans must consider options other than lethal removal.

Bunnell- Correct.

Byrnes- In our handout, “must” is struck out and it is underlined as “should”.

Bunnell- That may be. I would have to go back and look at it. So that would be a change. It really comes down to recommendations that we get from our representative from the Attorney General’s Office. He likes to have that room if it comes down to things in court.

Byrnes- Other than legal guidance, you are not aware of a reason why it was changed.

Bunnell- That is the reason it was changed.

Cowley- Criteria to initiate the consideration of a unit predator management plan. Big game populations below viable levels, do we use that same criteria in shutting off hunting in those areas?

Bunnell- You may have a few rams in the population that are up to the appropriate age class. You are not affecting the population by removing rams to begin with and that is all we hunt with bighorn sheep.

Cavitt- Question regarding appendix 1. It says “for consideration of a unit”. Is this for all predator management plans or just those that are in a big game unit?

Bunnell- All predator management plans are specific to our management units. They are not included in a management plan; it is a separate plan so it is not within the deer unit plan. It is a separate plan that is just for predators.

Cavitt- The reason for my question is that I do not see where we would trigger a predator management plan for a waterfowl management unit, for example. With these specific criteria listed.

Bunnell- Let me ask Justin or Randy to address that. They are more familiar with that. They do have a predator management plan.

Dolling- Kevin is exactly right. We have a statewide predator management plan that sets out specific triggers when predator management can occur on waterfowl management areas.

Cavitt- So that would just be on waterfowl management areas. Are there any other species that may benefit from predator management? They would have to fall under item 1 or item 7.

Bunnell- We are not talking a specific designation on the state sensitive species list. Any non-game population that may be considered sensitive could fall under number 7.

Cavitt- Fox are not regulated with USDA?

Dolling- Fox fall under our jurisdiction but they are essentially unprotected by state law.

Bunnell- To my knowledge, we do not have any non-game predator management plans in place. Typically, we do not direct a lot of activity outside of the lands that we administer or manage.

Dolling- We do have some of our predator management plans for Utah Prairie Dogs in the Southern part of the state. They are included in a broader unit plan.

Public Comment

Kirk Robinson- Western Wildlife Conservancy- Bothered by that addition because there is already that provision about viability of the sheep herd. I would urge against that.

Bunnell- When you are talking about a population of 200 animals, the removal of 20 animals represents a 10% reduction. A removal of 20 animals when you are talking about a population of several thousand, does not even register in terms of it is still going to be at the same percentage of objective. A higher threshold of protection seemed appropriate.

Kirk Robinson- Most of these bighorn sheep populations will not be very large.

Bunnell- That is correct. That is limited by a lot of different things. Our largest may be 400-500.

Kirk Robinson- Where is that one?

Bunnell- Our biggest bighorn sheep population is along Desolation Canyon.

Kirk Robinson- That is pretty reasonable, I will withdraw my objection.

Motion

Motion: Byrnes- Move to approve the Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04 as presented with one change, on predator management plans option, that we reinstate must instead of should.

Second: Van Tassell

Motion Passes: 9 For, 1 Against

* With the approval of all RAC members, the CHA Variance Requests were moved up on the agenda.

Item 8. CHA Variance Requests

- Randy Wood, Wildlife Manager

See Handout

RAC Questions

Neville- What is the overlap of the pheasant and waterfowl?

Wood- The overlap of the seasons?

Neville- Yes.

Wood- The seasons for CHA start September 1st and go through the end of April.

Selman- Do "Let the good times fly" release chukars now?

Wood- They have done in the past and that is ok. We are just concerned about the hunt.

Selman- What is the difference? I am just curious.

Wood- They are two different species.

Selman- Why one and not the other?

Wood- Because the hunt in that area, we are worried about the wild population of hunts and the number of birds that are in the proximity of that area that cross back and forth that are going to be hunted from September 1st until the end of April. And not worried about the chukars in that area.

Selman- Because?

Kirt Enright- Our issues are not with population stability, you wouldn't be impacting the population by hunting them for 7 months.

Selman- That is a good reason.

Cowley- Which area of the state are we talking about?

Wood- It is in Box Elder County.

Cowley- What is that by?

Wood- Over by Honeyville.

Kirt Enright- It is on the west side of White's Valley. Northwest of Tremonton.

Wood- We have one of the operators. I don't know if he wants to address anything? I guess not.

Cowley- Why are we having one of the three operators ban pheasants and the other two not?

Wood- It is because of the area and where they are releasing them. There are wild pheasants in there and they want to see how many pheasants are harvested on the CHA that are wild birds and how many leave the CHA that are CHA birds.

Cowley- You have the same situation happening in the trout outfitters don't you?

Wood- No. The biologist and the waterfowl management person of that area is not interested in that.

Motion

Motion: Leonard- Accept the Divisions CHA Variances as presented.

Second: Lawrence

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Item 9. Furbearer Guidebook and Rule R657-11

- Justin Dolling, Game Mammals Coordinator

See Handout

RAC Questions

Cavitt- What is the pelt price for bobcats?

Dolling- The most recent?

Cavitt- Yes.

Dolling- For the 2009-2010 season, the average pelt price was \$223 dollars.

Cavitt- You were talking about the four variables in deciding the numbers. How is adult survival measured? Is that through life table?

Dolling- Yes, we collect a tooth from each animal then create a life table and it generates a survival estimate.

Neville- Is distribution of bobcats around the state disproportionate. It sounds like this is for the entire state, not per unit right?

Dolling- This is a statewide recommendation.

Neville- You said there was like 4,600 permits.

Dolling- As part of that management system, we sold 5,700 permits last year under an unlimited structure. We took 80% of the 5,700 and essentially capped it at 4,600.

Neville- Is there a difference in the trapping pressure in certain areas of the state as opposed to other areas of the state? Are you potentially disproportionately taking more cats out of one area than another?

Dolling- That could possibly happen. I would have to look into our survey. I have our harvest book here and I could show you what the trapping effort is per county and that is about as fine as we track it. There could be some opportunity where an area could get a bit more pressure but those animals will move back and forth.

Cowley- I am looking at the areas that are opening up for beaver harvest and I am wondering why we are picking up the north slope of the Uintahs south of the north slope road. Can you help me understand the justification there?

Dolling- That was based on regional recommendations so I would defer to our regional folks as to why they wanted to have that opened.

Randy Wood- We did not have any historical person that could tell us why we closed it off. With what we are seeing with beaver trapping, we probably wouldn't have much interest there in the winter time trapping beaver. So we removed it off of the "do not trap" list.

Cowley- On our survey in that area, we are seeing a lot more historic evidence of what was there than what currently exists there. We would probably like to see that remain closed especially as we are going through some vegetation changes that are happening with beetle kill.

Wood- We could accept that.

Public Comment

Kirk Robinson- Need to preserve as many beaver as we can. Go light on trapping beavers everywhere.

RAC Comment

Neville- What was the reasoning for all these different areas to be reopened to trapping? Was it management?

Dolling- Part of it is because there is not a lot of interest in beaver trapping at this point. They felt a little harvest in those areas was not going to hurt anything. They have been closed for such a long time; no one was quite sure what was trying to be accomplished.

Neville- So, it was just opportunity for trappers.

Dolling- For those who have been placed on the list, are areas where the region is targeting translocations. They are going to be moving live trapping and moving beaver into those drainages and they would like to see some protection.

Motion

Motion: Cowley- Accept the proposal as presented with the exception of removing number 4 from the beaver trapping closure list.

Second: Neville

Discussion on the Motion

Cavitt- Can you repeat which one you are excluding from the list.

Cowley- Number 4. If you look at potential conflict with farmers downstream, there is quite a bit of distance between the north slope road and any farming grounds so it is really an area that does not have a lot of problem beavers. This will help kick start the system over there a little faster.

Slater- I think Randy stated that the Division would accept that.

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Item 10. Otter Management Plan Revision

- Justin Dolling, Game Mammals Coordinator

See Handout

Public Questions

Kirk Robinson- Western Wildlife Conservancy- Is there any biology on otters eating trout or other species of fish?

Dolling- I don't. I do not understand the competition that may occur between carp and trout. We are partnered with BYU and are doing the same food habit analysis on the Provo which will be very interesting to see what they come up with.

Kirk Robinson- What other rivers are you thinking about as possible restoration sites?

Dolling- Assuming Straight Canyon is recovered and placed back on the list; I think the Weber River and Straight Canyon will keep us fairly busy. I know there has been some interest in the Sevier. I don't know anything on the Bear, although the Bear may be a logical choice.

RAC Questions

Neville- When you were looking at your strategies for opportunities for trapping, did you also look at the joining states that are doing releases and trying to do reintroductions?

Dolling- We have not specifically looked at that. Across the Midwest, the reintroduction efforts have done quite well and there are a lot of states that are looking at allowing for limited harvest.

Neville- Do you think the Division would do that? I don't know if that needs to officially be part of your strategies but would that be a normal event that would happen cooperating with other states?

Dolling- Especially in those tributaries that we share.

Van Tassell- How much do reservoirs impede them from moving?

Dolling- I was really shocked. I thought a reservoir would impede movement and become a confining barrier but what we found was within about 2 ½ months of the release, we had otters that were already above into Jordanelle. We have otters now that have moved up into Woodland. We can tell because we have transmitters implanted into their abdomen. Those reservoirs are not a barrier to their movement.

Van Tassell- What section of the Weber River?

Dolling- The section we identified in our plan would be the Smith & Morehouse Reservoir downstream to where the Weber River intersects the Davis County line.

Lawrence- That is a big area you just identified. Where would be the initial site?

Dolling- I have not thought that far forward but my guess is that we would go somewhere mid-way. So, probably from Morgan up.

Lawrence- Do you think those otter will go to the Weber automatically or naturally through that diversion that connects the Weber and the Provo?

Dolling- Yes, there are conveyance systems that would be fairly easy for them to travel. Also, those two head waters are close enough to do an overland movement to the Weber.

Byrnes- In your plan, you are not really promoting watchable wildlife on otters as far as an objective. Could you use your otter sighting data to promote a program like that?

Dolling- I think there is some strategy that talks about watchable wildlife. I would have to go back through and read the plan.

Byrnes- I have not seen it there.

Dolling- It is definitely a watchable wildlife species.

Public Comment

Kirk Robinson- Pleased with this reintroduction effort. Congratulate the Division.

RAC Comment

Byrnes- Since the plan is a 10 year plan; I would definitely encourage you to maybe promote nonconsumptive opportunities with otters. You could identify some very good locations through your otter sighting database over time so you could direct the public to those locations.

Public Comment

Kirk Robinson- Encourage consideration of some of the Uintah north slope streams as possible.

Motion

Motion: Cowley- Move to accept the River Otter Management Plan.

Second: Lawrence

Slater- Took a group of young men and women down the Green and they really enjoyed watching the otters.

Motion Carries: Unanimous

Slater- Go back to item 9. Comment card that I did not recognize by Mr. Duncan about the furbearer rule.

Comment for Item number 9.

Ken Duncan- Houndsmen enjoy running bobcats. Recommend dropping to 2 tags to put more protection on the bobcats. Shortening the season did not accomplish anything.

Slater- There were approximately 5,700 permits last year and the recommendation is to drop it to 4,600.

Dolling- Cap it at 4,600. No more than.

Slater- Does that have a net effect along the same lines or same kind of effort that Mr. Duncan is referring to.

Ken Duncan- How are you going to cap that? First come, first serve or how are you going to limit it?

Dolling- It will be first come, first serve. It will be an internet based system we will be able to monitor as permits are purchased how closely it is getting to the 4,600. When it hits 4,600 it shuts down and no more permits will be sold.

Slater- Is that a different way to reach the same objective that Mr. Duncan is referencing a need for?

Dolling- I think it is but the plan does allow for either a one or two permit reduction. I think given the cap and at one permit reduction. That is a pretty good step at reducing harvest.

Slater- Coupled with about a thousand permit reduction; does that come in to where your concerns are addressed?

Ken Duncan- I thought the main objective was to allow as much opportunity as possible to do this. If you put a cap on it, there is going to be some people upset and will get no opportunity at all. If you drop the permits, everyone will get the opportunity because you would not go over your cap.

Slater- Good point. That was the input we missed on that deliberation several minutes ago on item 9. I think it is an important consideration. I can make sure those comments are passed on at the Wildlife Board meeting.

Selman- After sitting on the lion board, the same process happened with the bobcats. It is a 3 year plan. If we go tweaking it around then what good is it? Let's see what the 3 year plan does and play with it a little.

* RAC members voted informally and unanimously to not revote on the Furbearer Guidebook and Rule R657-11 after the Public Comment from Ken Duncan. Comments will be taken to the Wildlife Board meeting.

Item 11. Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09

- Tom Aldrich, Wildlife Coordinator

See Handout

RAC Questions

Cavitt- Waterfowl nested fairly late this year. Wondering how that would bode for your brood count estimates. Do you have any data?

Aldrich- We don't do brood counts on ducks anymore. Saw the best goose production year we have ever seen this year.

Motion

Motion: Accept the Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09 as presented.

Second: Cavitt

Motion Carries: Unanimously

Meeting Ends: 8:43 p.m.

**NORTHEASTERN RAC MEETING SUMMARY-MOTIONS PASSED
UBATC, Vernal/May 13, 2010**

5. COUGAR GUIDEBOOK AND RULE R657-10

MOTION: In accordance with the Predator Management Plan, that we move back to a harvest objective in the Three Corners and West Daggett hunts.

Motion passed unanimously

6. COMPENSATION FOR LION AND BEAR DAMAGE (5 YR) R657-24

MOTION: to approve as presented

Motion passed unanimously

7. MANAGING PREDATORY WILDLIFE SPECIES POLICY W1AG-04

MOTION: to approve the proposal as presented by the Division

Motion passed unanimously

8. FURBEARER GUIDEBOOK AND RULE R657-11

MOTION: to approve as presented by DWR

Favor: Kirk Woodward, Floyd Briggs, Mitch Hacking, Brandon McDonald, Curtis Dastrup

Opposed: Rod Morrison (I approve the plan other than the majority of the trappers I talked to wanted to leave the traps and the season length the same as last year)

Motion Passed 5 to 1

9. OTTER MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION

MOTION: to accept the proposal as presented by DWR

Motion passed unanimously

10. WATERFOWL GUIDEBOOK AND RULE R657-09

MOTION: to accept the presentation as proposed

Motion passed unanimously

NORTHEASTERN REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY
Utah Basin Applied Technology College (UBATC), Vernal
July 29, 2010
Started at 6:35 pm; Adjourned at 8:35 pm

RAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brandon McDonald-BLM
Mitch Hacking-Agriculture
Floyd Briggs-At Large
Rod Morrison-Sportsmen
Kirk Woodward-Sportsmen
Kevin Christopherson-NER Supervisor
Bob Christensen-RAC Chair
Curtis Dastrup-Agriculture

RAC MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Beth Hamann-Non Consumptive
Ron Winterton-Elected Official

RAC MEMBERS UNEXCUSED:

Carlos Reed-Ute Tribe
Beth Hamann-Non Consumptive
Loran Hills-Non Consumptive

UDWR PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Dan Barnhurst-NER L.E. Sergeant
Brian Maxfield-NER Wildlife Biologist
Derrick Ewell-NER Wildlife Biologist
Lowell Marthe-NER Wildlife Biologist
Michelle Davis-Office Specialist
Gayle Allred-Administrative Aide
Ron Stewart-Conservation Outreach
Kevin Bunnell-SLO Mammals Coordinator
Justin Dolling-SLO Game Mammals Coord.
Tom Aldrich-SLO Wildlife Coordinator

WILDLIFE BOARD MEMBERS:

Del Brady

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES: Bob Christensen

MOTION by Mitch Hacking to approve minutes and agenda, and to reschedule a RAC social date at the end of the meeting.

Second by Brandon McDonald

Passed unanimously

3. WILDLIFE BOARD MEETING UPDATE: Bob Christensen

The section that stated permits could be allocated the following year, proposed to be eliminated and was voted unanimously to eliminate.

Permits have a process to reallocate permits to the next person on the list and that option is still on there.

Aquatic Invasive Species: Sand Hollow tested positive for the finding of quagga. It will be listed in an amendment to list as a water that has invasive species.

Everything else was the same as what our NER RAC passed.

4. REGIONAL UPDATE: Kevin Christopherson

Personnel changes:

Michelle Davis is our new Office Specialist.

Roger Schneidervin, our former aquatics manager, has been replaced by Trina Hedrick, our endangered fish person. She worked for Arizona, Salt Lake and here.

Matt McKell from the Northern region, who also came from Arizona and Ogden, will be taking Ryan Mosley's former position as the biologist at Flaming Gorge.

Conservation Officer in Roosevelt will be announced soon. We have a group going through POST training now.

Willow Creek Fence Project:

We now have a welded pipe fence which has been installed at Willow Creek to address trespass cattle problems.

Meeting with BOR and WAPA:

A meeting was held regarding double peaking concerns below the dam as well as the impact to Daggett County fishing and guides. We had a productive meeting and we're making progress. They have agreed to pay for a fish stranding study.

Ranch watershed initiative projects:

We have had a group from BYU doing sage grouse studies on Diamond Mountain.

Bears:

It's been a good season for bears compared to last year. We have only had half a dozen reports. We had one break into our cabin on the Book Cliffs, it went in through the roof.

Weather:

The crazy weather is affecting the wildlife. Our cutthroat spawning trap was way down, probably because the water temperatures have been cooler.

5. COUGAR GUIDEBOOK AND RULE R657-10: Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator

See handout

Questions from RAC:

Floyd Briggs: Do you set your objective numbers different in areas that have mountain sheep introduced?

Kevin Bunnell: They're under a predator management plan which equates to a higher amount of tags.

Rod Morrison: I understand they didn't take many on Goslin.

Kevin Bunnell: Went to split strategy which gets a higher take. When split units reopen you get increased activity in those areas. On that unit they killed one lion extra. In general we have a higher percent success under a split strategy.

Rod Morrison: Sounds like there haven't been very many taken.

Kevin Bunnell: Part of that may be snow conditions or other factors.

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

Brad Horrocks (Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife). We have a recommendation for North Slope West Daggett and Three-Corners. We'd like to have the harvest objective season opened up January 15. If it's opened up Feb 28, it doesn't give the people fresh snow to go on. Where they are in bighorn sheep units, the people who draw a tag don't want to just kill a lion, they want to kill a big lion. This is hurting our sheep herd.

Josh Horrocks (Hunting Guide): In the North Slope Three-Corners where sheep have been killed this year and West Daggett (Bear Top and Sheep Creek) from 2003-2009 were harvest objective units; hunters averaged killing five lions a year. Last year it was made a split unit; the hunters killed zero lion in that unit.

The Three-Corners unit from 2003-2009 averaged three lions a year. When it turned to a split unit, they killed zero lion in that unit. These units are tough for split units in March. The snow melts quicker. Without the snow it's hard to get lion. The same goes for Brown's Park. The later the season gets, the snow melts quicker. If they leave it the way it is, you're going to see a really big population of lion. I have DWR's records right here. I proposed that we put those two units into a harvest objective. If we're going to spend all that money on sheep, we might as well put it to a good objective.

Boyd Pallesen: I recommend changing to January 15 in these two units to give us a chance. Non-residents just want a cougar. I've worked with DWR in the past and last year, later, to harvest cats that should have been harvested earlier by hunters. If we change the dates, we have a chance so other people can harvest cats and do it right. There is no other limited entry tag that you get that you can hunt 3 ½ months. If you give guys two months and then turn it to harvest objective you're going to improve harvest. I recommend changing the dates.

Comments and discussion RAC:

Kirk Woodward: Why not a recommendation to go back to harvest objective?

Kevin Bunnell: Both units are under Predator Management Plans. Charlie changed it to split because we were getting higher take that way. Maybe it didn't pan out here. We can go back to the harvest objective with no problem.

Kirk Woodward: If we want to meet your goal, looks like we could go back to a harvest objective. According to the data, three times as many lions were treed but they were not killing them.

Brad Horrocks: We were told we couldn't change it so we were trying to split the difference but we would prefer to change to harvest objective if that's a possibility. I think it's best for the unit.

Clay Hamann: Last year we didn't get sow until after Christmas. If you close the hunt January 15th there would be no time for limited entry hunters to hunt.

Kirk Woodward: We had a tough time up there with sheep. We've got a lot of predators.

Kevin Bunnell: We're usually pretty aggressive on cougars in a predator management unit.

Kevin Christopherson: I worry we don't have enough data to know for sure. You can't look at a couple years and say it didn't work.

Brad Horrocks: I talked pretty intensively with Charlie today and he didn't have a problem.

Floyd Briggs: We've been focusing on sheep but we've also dealt with declining numbers on deer herds, and cougars are as hard on deer as on sheep. Since we had a hunter poll and cougars are increasing, if you're counting elk or deer, when the condition is best is when you get your best counts, so if the cougar hunters are having to wait until the objective they wouldn't see the best conditions to know if there are man cats there. I like the harvest objective.

Kevin Bunnell: That's the only unit that was under the Predator Management Plan that wasn't under harvest objective to begin with.

Curtis Dastrup: Is there any information as to the number of cats that are there? Have we increased in numbers? Do we know that or do we not know that?

Kevin Bunnell: We have to look at the composition of the harvest. The best indication a harvest is decreasing or increasing is the proportion of adult females. We're trying on these units to increase the population.

Curtis Dastrup: Is there any indication as to the age classes?

Kevin Bunnell: I have that data at the office.

Floyd Briggs: On the management of that unit, is this an individual unit within the eco region, so if we wanted to make changes, we'd make it on the units within the region?

Kevin Bunnell: It is an eco region that shares with the Northern region so they would make a motion on that.

MOTION by Kirk Woodward: In accordance with the Predator Management Plan, that we move back to a harvest objective in the Three Corners and West Daggett hunts.

Bob Christensen: Do you want the rest of the rule approved?

Kirk Woodward: Yes
Second by Rod Morrison

Passed unanimously

6. COMPENSATION FOR LION AND BEAR DAMAGE (5-YR) R657-24: Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator

See handout

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: How come coyotes aren't included?

Kevin Bunnell: They are covered from the Dept. of Agriculture and there isn't any compensation that's paid on coyote losses.

Mitch Hacking: Why not coyotes? That's the only trouble I've ever had.

Kevin Bunnell: That is under the Department of Agriculture, not under UDWR> There is no compensation from Agriculture for coyote loss.

Brandon McDonald: Why aren't payments for both damage claims made for these areas outside the delisted zones?

Kevin Bunnell: First, there is a private organization that will pay compensation for wolves. They won't pay in areas where they're de-listed. There was already a program in place. The Legislature is trying to help us get leverage in getting wolves delisted in the rest of the state.

Rod Morrison: Who verifies that it's killed by wolves?

Kevin Bunnell: It has to be confirmed by Wildlife Services or one of our employees before they can receive compensation.

Floyd Briggs: Who compensates for tearing up your tent?

Kevin Bunnell: You'll be buying a new tent.

Kevin Christopherson: Unless you have a cow in there with you.

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

None

Comments and discussion from RAC:

MOTION by Floyd Briggs: to approve as presented

Second by Kirk Woodward

Passed unanimously

7. MANAGING PREDATORY WILDLIFE SPECIES POLICY W1AG-04: Kevin Bunnell

See handout

(Usually policies are not brought to the RAC because it is internal. This has more public interest so it is being brought to the RAC)

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: On Diamond Mountain BYU is doing sage grouse study so we'll see where we are as far as habitat and conditions?

Kevin Bunnell: Most of them, we are trying to remove coyotes from the area as well.

Mitch Hacking: Where do crows and eagles fit in?

Kevin Bunnell: Eagles are tough because they're federally protected. Even eagles that are killing sheep are caught and removed from the area but sometimes they beat the truck back to the field. There are not a lot of options when it comes to eagles. Crows can be eliminated.

Rod Morrison: Were you feeding the sheep on Stansbury Island garlic?

Kevin Bunnell: Not every lion's the same. Some live among them for a long time and never use them as a source of food, others do. A female will raise her kittens the same way. They'll prey on what mom taught them to prey on.

Lowell Marthe: To answer an earlier question, sage grouse is under the Predator Management Plan.

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

None

Comments and discussion from RAC:

MOTION by Mitch Hacking: to approve the proposal as presented by the Division
Second by Rod Morrison

Passed unanimously

8. FURBEARER BUDEBOOK AND RULE R657-11: Justin Dolling

See handout

Questions from RAC:

Rod Morrison: How do they pay for these licenses?

Justin Dolling: You now have to buy a furbearer license, and a temporary bobcat tag is \$5. There's no proposal to increase the price for a temporary tag.

Brandon McDonald: By adding Willow Creek to the closure list, will that have a negative impact on cutthroat trout?

Justin Dolling: Beaver and cutthroat trout evolved together for numerous years. Cutthroat are spring spawners, beaver dams overtop in springs, so in my conversations they say there are no conflicts.

Lowell Marthe: Want to bring beavers back in to build ponds. There's not enough willow to support beaver now anyway, so it's mainly an idea for the future.

Brandon McDonald: I would think Bitter Creek would be in the same shape as Willow.

Aaron Webber (Trapper): I'm glad that Echo Creek came out. There are so few, I don't think it would make a difference.

Justin Dolling: Areas proposed to be closed in Uintah County are Willow Creek, Bitter Creek and Sweetwater drainages.

Kevin Bunnell: Bitter Creek was on the list before and is just staying.

Rod Morrison: Aaron, how do trappers feel about lowering the bobcat tags by one?

Justin Dolling: The official position of the Utah trappers is that they support it.

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

Aaron Webber (Trapper): I have been trapping for 14 years now. I have two master's degrees in wildlife and recreation and am a member of several trapping associations. I'm upset about the decrease in the tags and the decrease in the season limit. One, I'm a passionate trapper and don't want less than what I've had in the past. I don't believe any of these are based on biology. The four variables the Division of Wildlife goes off of are:

Proportion of Juveniles in the Harvest: Last year I was able to have four bobcats. The difference between a small and a big pelt was \$100 to \$900. I'm obviously going to want to catch larger bobcats. That trend does not necessarily tell you anything about the population. The adult survival, we don't know how many bobcats are in Utah. We don't know if there's 5000 or 500,000. The DWR does not have a population estimate to be able to base this on.

Proportion of Females: I can release females in the traps. I'm going to try to catch the larger bobcats. So that variable is questionable in my opinion.

Set days: Every year the surveys that come in ask how many traps you had per day divided by how many traps you have out. When I go set up traps, I just set them all over and watch for snares. That variable is going to be questionable. The person who called last year, I don't know if they spoke English as a first language. Nobody really knows what they're supposed to say. My traps are used for more than just bobcats, I trap other animals as well.

I don't agree with buying the furbearer license first before putting in for the bobcat tags. There are a lot of people who might not buy tags because of that.

Capping the amount of tags: I don't know what arbitrary number this 80% is. Last year a lot of people didn't buy a lot of tags, so this year I'm being told I cannot get the same amount of tags based on what people bought last year. We're the only state in the west that has a quota for tags. I have friends in other states and they make a lot of money. I'd like to have the opportunity to do the same thing. Other states have no problem giving

out unlimited amounts of tags. I'm upset knowing that this is what it's based on. It's trying to be conservative when I don't think it necessarily needs to be conservative.

Comments and discussion from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: I have a question for Aaron. The Utah Trappers Association supports this. Have you approached them with your concerns?

Aaron Webber: I talked with Stan, the president, he's a great guy. I would love to have been involved in the working group but couldn't do it before.

Mitch Hacking: To me, you're pretty much fighting an uphill battle if the Utah Trappers Association supports it. My recommendation would be that you get with them and coordinate your response.

Justin Dolling: The long-term data set was derived since 1983. If guys are releasing juveniles, that's been tracked all the way through.

Kevin Bunnell: Unless the bias has changed, the data's still valid.

Justin Dolling: Adult survival, what we collect of each bobcat is the tooth aged, with the Chapman Robinson formula to create a survival estimate based on our long-term data set. The female survival is based on long-term data set.

Aaron Webber: You can't do a population estimate every year with the funding you have but what's the deal with the capping? If you're capping and you know that is the limit, why not give the trapper a liberal season to catch his three bobcats?

Justin Dolling: The 80% is probably arbitrary, but with a 1% reduction each person can still participate. Second, I talked with the Utah Trappers Association, and they believe that early in the season the likelihood of trapping females and kittens is much more likely, so to reduce the season from the beginning you will cut down on the amount of females in the harvest.

MOTION by Floyd Briggs: to approve as presented by DWR

Second by Mitch Hacking

Favor: Kirk Woodward, Floyd Briggs, Mitch Hacking, Brandon McDonald, Curtis Dastrup

Opposed: Rod Morrison (I approve the plan other than the majority of the trappers I talked to wanted to leave the traps and the season length the same as last year)

Motion Passed 5 to 1

9. OTTER MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION: Justin Dolling, Game Mammals Coordinator

See handout

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: An otter is a water wolf. Just below Red Fleet Reservoir on Brush Creek. Those otters have taken it all out of there.

Justin Dolling: Otters and trout are kind of the equivalent of cougar and deer.

Questions from Public:

None

Comments from Public:

Aaron Webber: Please keep it so I can trap beaver. If you have to do anything please make it so you can use restrictive traps.

Justin Dolling: We have not closed any tributaries to trapping, we have just had them use modified sets.

Comments and discussion from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: Looks like they may do recreational trapping in the future. I'm glad to see that.

MOTION by Mitch Hacking to accept the proposal as presented by DWR

Second by Kirk Woodward

Passed unanimously

10. WATERFOWL GUIDEBOOK AND RULE R657-09: Tom Aldrich, Wildlife Coordinator

See handout

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: Where do the cranes fit in?

Tom Aldrich: Sandhill cranes are found in the Upland Game proclamation, mourning doves as well.

Lowell Marthe: If they change the shooting time to 7:30, won't it be like speeding? They still go over the speed limit.

Tom Aldrich: Maybe, but if you come to one of our state WMAs, it'll be a half hour less of that situation being tempted to shoot, then someone shoots early and everybody else joins in.

No Public Remaining to ask for Questions or Comments

MOTION by Kirk Woodward to accept the presentation as proposed

Second by Rod Morrison

Passed unanimously

Miscellaneous:

Mitch Hacking: Now that Amy's gone, when can you put in nominations for her "At-Large" position?

Kevin Christopherson: This month. It will come out in next week's paper.

Date for RAC Social:

August 17 at Del Brady's home

Kevin Christopherson: Would you like to hear a presentation at the RAC Social concerning the law enforcement case recently completed?

Kirk Woodward: I'm always interested in wolf cases as well, like the one that came through your back yard.

Next RAC Meeting: September 9, 2010

Meeting Adjourned 8:35 pm.

**Southern Regional Advisory Council Meeting
Beaver High School
Beaver, UT
July 27, 2010
7:00 p.m.**

REVIEW & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

MOTION: To accept minutes and agenda as submitted.

VOTE: Unanimous.

COUGAR GUIDEBOOK AND RULE R657-10

MOTION: To accept with the exception that permits be increased by 7 permits on the Dutton and Monroe units and the permit numbers on the Paunsaugunt and Henry Mountains remain the same as last year.

VOTE: Unanimous

COMPENSATION FOR LION AND BEAR DAMAGE (5-YR) R657-24

MOTION: To accept as presented.

VOTE: 6 in favor, 3 opposed.

MANAGING PREDATORY WILDLIFE SPECIES POLICY W1AG-04

MOTION: To accept as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

FURBEARER GUIDEBOOK AND RULE R657-11

MOTION: To accept as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

OTTER MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION

MOTION: To accept as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

WATERFOWL GUIDEBOOK AND RULE R657-09

MOTION: To accept as presented with the stipulation that we try to work with Delta community to figure out a plan for the Snow Goose hunt.

VOTE: Unanimous

**Southern Regional Advisory Council Meeting
 Beaver High School
 Beaver, UT
 July 27, 2010
 7:00 p.m.**

RAC Members Present	DWR Personnel Present	Wildlife Board Present	RAC Members Not Present
Chairman Steve Flinders Rex Stanworth Paul Briggs Cordell Pearson Clair Woodbury Layne Torgerson Dell LeFevre Mack Morrell Sam Carpenter Dale Bagley	Doug Messerly Lynn Chamberlain Brent Farnsworth Giani Julander Stephanie Rainey Lynn Zubeck Richard Hepworth Kevin Bunnell Chris Schulze Dustin Schaible Tom Aldridge Keith Fullenkamp Teresa Bonzo Justin Dolling Tom Aldrich Paul Washburn Jason Nicholes	Jake Albrecht	Steve Dalton

Steve Flinders called the meeting to order at 7 pm. There were approximately 13 interested parties in attendance in addition to RAC members, Wildlife Board members and DWR employees.

Steve Flinders: Let's get things started tonight. I've got 7 o'clock up here. I'm Steve Flinders. I represent the Fish Lake and Dixie National Forests as a chairman. I'd like to recognize Jake Albrecht, from the Wildlife Board, out in the audience. Let's start by introducing the RAC, and let's go from the right down here with Layne.

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

Mack Morrell: Mack Morrell, agriculture, from Bicknell.

Dell LeFevre: Dell LeFevre, agriculture, Boulder.

Rex Stanworth: Rex Stanworth from Delta. I represent at-large.

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

Douglas Messerly: I'm Doug Messerly, regional supervisor for the Division of Wildlife Resources in the southern region. My staff and myself act as executive secretary to this committee but we don't vote.

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

Paul Briggs: Paul Briggs, I represent the BLM in the southern region.

Cordell Pearson: I'm Cordell Pearson from Circleville, representing at-large.

Sam Carpenter: I'm Sam Carpenter from Kanab. I represent the sportsman.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. I appreciate everybody being here tonight. In a way of organization of this meeting you'll hear presentations from the Division of Wildlife. If you would please be respectful and hold your questions and things, and comments until they're done. We'll then proceed to questions from the RAC and then to questions from the public. And we ask that those be questions. If you want to make comments, and we welcome your comments, please fill out a comment card and pass it up here. Comment cards you'll see out ---- hold some up, there you go. Brent's got some in the back. We'll then after public comment we'll proceed to comments from the RAC; and then on to motions and voting.

Review and Acceptance of Agenda and Minutes (action)

Steve Flinders: With that I'll ask somebody to approve tonight's agenda and last meeting's minutes. Is that agenda all right with everybody?

Cordell Pearson: I'll make a motion to approve.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Cordell.

Dale Bagley: Second.

Steve Flinders: Seconded by Dale. All in favor? Unanimous.

Cordell Pearson made the motion to accept agenda and minutes. Seconded by Dale Bagley. Vote is unanimous.

Wildlife Board Update: -Steve Flinders, Chairman

Steve Flinders: In the way of Wildlife Board update from the May meeting. If you recall we passed everything unanimously. After some discussion at the Board meeting everything passed up there, as it was presented to us, as I recall. I glanced back through the notes. Doug, what do you have in the way of a regional update?

Regional Update:
-Douglas Messerly, Regional Supervisor

Douglas Messerly: Before we do that, the last motion, was it the minutes and the agenda?

Steve Flinders: Yeah.

Douglas Messerly: Okay. Thanks Mr. Chairman; just a few items.

- I believe since our last meeting we've discovered a Quagga mussel at Sand Hollow Reservoir, and I'll give you an update on that. On May 21st, one adult mussel was discovered in Sand Hollow. Since then we've been conducting an operation down there to decontaminate boats, or educate the boaters that leave Sand Hollow on what they need to do before they can launch at any other water in the state of Utah. As of this week we've contacted over 5,000 boaters leaving Sand Hollow. Of those we've professionally decontaminated about half of them, so about 2,500 boats. As you can imagine it's a pretty extensive operation and we've been able to pull it together and be able to decontaminate those boats. What the future holds for Sand Hollow we don't know. We need to go three years, at least, without detecting any further mussel activity in the lake. We've done extensive monitoring since then, and we will continue to do that, looking for more evidence of a mussel infestation; but to date we haven't found any more. So that's been the big operation for the southern region crew. And I've been pretty proud of how we've responded to that; and it's gone pretty well in my estimation.
- The Leigh Hill fishing pond in Cedar City has opened. For those of you that aren't familiar with where that is, it's a little bit north and west of Wal-Mart in Cedar City, if you're ever out that way take a minute and run up on the hill. It's been pretty amazing the response to that. There are just people coming and going all day long. And during these summer months just a lot of people around there, some of them swimming, but in the evenings it's pretty gratifying to see all the people around there fishing. We've stocked it with bass and catfish and some rainbow trout. And a pretty good indication is if you go into Wal-Mart you'll see that their fishing department is just wiped out. You can't hardly buy a fishhook in Wal-Mart. So that's been pretty good. I think it surprised the city officials. I think it surprised us, the popularity. But the community fishery program is one that the Division of Wildlife's dedicated to. And the whole idea in a nutshell is to provide a place where kids can ride their bicycles to and go fishing, and give them the opportunity to become interested in and start loving that hobby. I think what we've seen in Cedar City is pretty indicative of what would happen everywhere if we were able to do this everywhere.
- The general season elk tags are on sale, as we speak. Received an e-mail this morning, there's about 6,000 general season spike tags available. I anticipate those will sell out quite soon. If anyone's interested in getting one they ought to get online or get to a license agent and get it done. There's also about 6,000 any-bull tags remaining also. We have a few remaining antlerless elk

permits on the Zion unit, as of today. We don't have exact numbers, what we were told is a handful of permits. But as of the time we left the office they were still available for sale. So if anyone's interested in an antlerless elk permit on the Zion they may still be available.

Douglas Messerly: Unless there are any questions, Mr. Chairman, that's what I have for a regional update.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Doug. Any questions for Doug? All right. Let's dive into this agenda. First off is item number 5, Cougar Guidebook and Rule 657-10. Kevin Bunnell, PHD.

Cougar Guidebook and Rule R657-10 (action) 7:11 to 17:16 of 2:30:43

-Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator

(See Attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the RAC? Go ahead Layne.

Layne Torgerson: Kevin, I know that the predator management plans are generally set up on deer or elk units that are determined to be below objective. Is there a possibility of getting a predator management plan on the Monroe unit since it is below objective on our deer herd?

Kevin Bunnell: Let me defer that one to Teresa, she's probably more familiar with the situation on the Monroe.

Teresa Bonzo: Yeah, currently we are only doing predator management on the Monroe to protect Sage Grouse. We did think about it for deer because we know that the buck to doe ration issues are of great concern, causing the unit to be reduced number of days to hunt, but the deer population is above the 75 percent that will kick it into a predator management plan; and that's why it's not. We're sitting at about 80 percent of the population objective. Does that address it?

Layne Torgerson: And, I don't mean to change shoes here, but I don't know where they're getting their numbers that says the Monroe is at 80 percent of carrying capacity, because if you drive across that mountain any day and see ten, ten or twelve head of deer you're doing really well. And we're, there's several of us that are up there all the time. And you know I've talked with Vance and some of the guys there and the deer just aren't there.

Teresa Bonzo: I spoke with Vance, he and Jim were not able to come today, they're on a different assignment that I thought their time would be better spent doing that today. But I did talk to them specifically about this, and Vance does acknowledge that our modeling does show that we're at 80 percent. We do have that radio collar study on the does and female fawns right now, and we had some winter loss. You know what kind of winter we had. We've lost a little bit over 50 percent of the collared fawns, and we have lost four out of the 30 does. That will probably make an adjustment to the population and it may, next year, put us below the 75 percent when we model the population. Deer are so difficult to, we can't count them, getting a grasp on our population numbers is difficult. But we do acknowledge, and some of our units this last winter many have pushed our population down a little bit

to the point where it may push it towards going back under a predator management plan.

Layne Torgerson: Well I guess that is my question; we're looking at a three-year cougar plan here. Within this three-year cougar plan is it possible to, if that deer population, if your model does drop below 75 percent, can that be done? Can we put, can the Monroe be put into a predator management plan?

Kevin Bunnell: Certainly, anything can happen. We are trying to keep things consistent for a three-year period. One thing I would point out is you know, based on . . . if it's a cougar issue you're losing adults, and the adult doe survival seems fairly high still. So it's not indicating that there's potentially a problem with cougar predation. The fact that you're losing a bunch of fawns points more to coyotes or just a hard winter. But certain anything can be done but we're hoping to keep things consistent over a three-year period.

Steve Flinders: Cordell, do you have a question?

Cordell Pearson: Yeah, I want you to clarify something for me if you will. When you say that is this the cattelman or the sheepman, they'll be able to use the snares if there's a problem, or will it be an officer from the Fish and Game?

Kevin Bunnell: No, this will be . . . and it will be . . . probably not used very frequently but it will be the producer that will be authorized to use snares in certain situations.

Steve Flinders: Sure Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Hi Kevin. I guess my question is concerning the premium hunting areas and the Zion units are all showing cuts. What criteria and what justification have we got to cut those tags?

Kevin Bunnell: Um those that aren't under predator management plans, the deer herds are above the level. And we just implemented the plan that we put in last year. And the plan calls for a certain level of adult females in the harvest and if you're above that you reduce tags by a certain amount, if you're below it you increase them. So the plan calls for them to be between 17 and 20 percent of adult females in the harvest and we were at 23 percent. And so according to the plan that would mean a 10 percent reduction; and so that's what we did. And in total it's seven tags, over what the average was for the three previous years. So it's not a large reduction.

Sam Carpenter: Yeah you're correct. It's not a large reduction. You said something around 10 percent, the Paunsagaunt we're actually taking 20 percent on that one.

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah that's if you even them out. What the plans does is it gives you a total number of tags to then be distributed throughout the eco-region. And the biologist in the region then looked at the data and where are we harvesting cats and where aren't we, and distributed those tags where they thought they were most needed. So it may be a larger increase or decrease in specific areas.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, well in talking to the guides and different people that I deal with or dealt with, and have responded to e-mails that I have sent out, they're seeing a lot of lions. And a lot of the guides are saying that their clients, when they get them in there, it's not that they're not able to tree cats or see

them, they just want big toms, or the weather can be a factor. The general public out there right now thinks we've got plenty of cats in both of these units. Isn't anything like that considered? You're just going to go by the numbers as far as the females and?

Kevin Bunnell: Well we . . . I mean it becomes difficult to manage based on opinion, because I could bring five houndsman up here that would tell you that they haven't seen a track in five years and what not. And so you hear both sides of it. And so we tend to fall back to what the data's telling us. Certainly, I mean that's why we have a public process is to balance those things out. But I would point out Sam that the Paunsagaunt's also at 118 percent of objective and we have doe tags on that unit, so . . .

Sam Carpenter: I understand that and it's a presumed population. I don't think you'll find a lot of public that will go along with it being over populated. But I'm not here to argue that point. Thank you for your time.

Kevin Bunnell: And neither am I.

Steve Flinders: There is a question in there I'm sure. Any other questions guys? Sure Dale.

Dale Bagley: Going back to Monroe. On the average from 2007 to 2010 you're showing eight permits a year for three years for a total of 24. But in 2007 you issued four, in '08 issued six, in '09 you issued nine, which averages about six tags a year. So you're off some numbers there. I think . . .

Kevin Bunnell: What comes in there is we have to factor in conservation tags which aren't included in the numbers that go into the proclamation, and convention tags, is probably what the discrepancy is there. Do you want to respond to that Teresa? Teresa is indicating that in 2010 there were 10 permits there.

Dale Bagley: 2010, okay. So we had one conservation tag in that three-year period. So I mean it really doesn't change, we're still below the average of the eight per year.

Kevin Bunnell: I could double-check that looking at the recommendation.

Dale Bagley: No it's all right. My point is, I guess, I think, I mean going off what Layne says and uh, I think there's some room to add some tags in there and I'd hate to go into the three-year plan and not be able to up those tags on the Monroe. That's all I had.

Kevin Bunnell: Okay

Steve Flinders: Kevin is that study still ongoing on Monroe?

Kevin Bunnell: It is.

Steve Flinders: Can you give us a snapshot and update on that, a quick version of where we're? Still have radio collars out?

Kevin Bunnell: We still have radio collars primarily on, well I think exclusively on females on that mountain. There may be a couple on toms. Showing that the population is starting to stabilize. Well

actually had, from where it had been, now there's a few lions that are dispersing off that mountain. We saw that start to happen about three years ago when we had the kind of four and six tags. That's why we started to bump it up to around ten. And what we're trying to find now is where's that spot where the population will stabilize. And that's kind of the direction that that study is headed in right now. We harvested it very aggressively and took the population way down, then we backed off and wanted to see okay how long does it take for them to come back. And then they actually came back to the point where they were before we got real aggressive. And now the idea is can we bring them down to a level somewhere below where they were but then stabilize it instead of this kind of pendulum swing of things going way up and way down.

Steve Flinders: And to clarify, you're looking for a three-year guidebook so we won't have this meeting next year.

Kevin Bunnell: We won't.

Steve Flinders: Or the next year.

Kevin Bunnell: Or the next year. There are safety valves built into the plan, that if, you know if certain things start to happen we'll call a meeting. And those have to deal with deer populations and such. So . .

Steve Flinders: It won't even deal with permit numbers.

Kevin Bunnell: Nope.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions from RAC members? Sure.

Dale Bagley: On those collared females up there, what percentage, okay, what's the total estimated population of females and what's the estimation of how many of that population you have collared, percentage wise?

Kevin Bunnell: You know Dale I would have to go back and look at the report from USU. I don't have that off the top of my head. I could find it on my computer and let you know but I can't keep that information to pull up at a moments notice. So I apologize.

Dale Bagley: All right.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions from the RAC?

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the public? We've got a number of comment cards but this is for questions. If you've got questions for Kevin or Teresa in the region come on up to the mic and please give us your question. Give us your name if you would.

Garrett Gleave: I'm Garrett Gleave. And I'd just like to go with Layne there on the Monroe or any of

that. We've been up there putting a pipeline in and I don't know where their deer are. There are no deer on that mountain. It's been raining. We've come off there at night, seven or eight at night when you should see deer all over there and they're, we haven't seen a deer in 20 days coming off of there. There's no deer on that mountain. Or, and the Dutton's just almost the same, there are not deer.

Steve Flinders: Is there a question in there?

Garrett Gleave: Yeah, that's it, there's no deer.

Steve Flinders: Where's the deer?

Garrett Gleave: Yeah, where's the deer at on there?

Steve Flinders: Either of you want to field that question? Otherwise we'll move on to comments.

Comments from the public:

Steve Flinders: Jason Binder, followed by Stanton Gleave. You have five minutes Jason.

Jason Binder: (See Attachment 2). Okay, thanks. My name's Jason Binder. I'm the president of the Utah Houndsman Association, it's formally known as the Utah Federation of Houndsman. We had a little name change this year. We've worked really hard with Kevin and Justin on these lion recommendations. And we appreciate the things they do for the looking at both sides of where we should be at with lions. And I understand that concern with deer because it's all over the state and I don't know what we do about it but it can't just be blamed on the lions. I watched two coyotes take down a fawn this morning on the jobsite I'm working on. You know there are a lot of coyotes around anymore. There's a lot of deer and elk and everything gets hit on the highway. There are a couple of recommendations we've made; we'd like to incorporate sub-adult females into the recommendation process for setting tag numbers. You can see on page 3 that I gave you, everything highlighted in there is pink, which is all females. And in a lot of units that's a lot higher than the adult females. And we'd like to see that the Division counts all females because the yearling females are the future of our lion in the state. There's a 15 harvest objectives units and split units that are not currently on predator management plan, we would like to see those returned to the limited entry because what's happening after these split units go to harvest objective we're seeing lions taken off there above the quota. A couple of units, one unit had six extra lion taken off of it in the first couple of days, and two more units had an additional lion taken above the quota. So we'd like to see the units that aren't on predator management back to limited entry. We'd also like to ask for extra training for Division officers and biologists that are checking in the lions because we feel that sometimes a hunter will come in and say, oh it's a tom when it actually was a female. We feel there's a definite need for some clarification and some extra training on Division employees. In our last houndsman banquet we did a study and we had 46 surveys filled out. Out of that survey there's 1,254 days a field with 152 lions treed. This equals out to 1 lion treed every 8.25 days. When we asked how you rate the lion hunting in Utah, two people said good, twenty-three people said poor, twenty said very poor. So somehow we've got to change our perception on the lions and see what's a better route to go and look and see whether it's coyotes, cars, coyotes, a highway, drought or hunting pressure. On the cougar harvest summary report, the adult female harvest is at 20 percent over the last three years. But if you add in the sub-adults that I talked

about earlier it brings it up to 37 percent harvest of our females. In '97 when the quota was introduced there were 580 lions harvested. In 2000 to 2004 there was 450 lions harvested. 2005 to 2010 it's been around 300 lions per year. And there's also, if you look at the total amount of tags sold in the state, counting harvest objective, there's been over thousands of tags sold every year but yet we're only killing 300 lions. So we can't justify that we continue to have increases and over harvesting on lion on certain units. Thank you for your time.

Steve Flinders: Jason I've got a question for you. Did you guys have a seat at the table during the drafting of the new cougar management plan?

Jason Binder: We did, but at the time we weren't able to put numbers, actual harvest numbers with the criteria of the plan. And I'm also sitting on the bear plan and right now we're putting actual numbers with where we're going on the bear.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. Sure Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Jason, can you define a houndsman for me? Exactly what does that entail when you say a houndsman? Do you raise them what, what do you mean by a houndsman?

Jason Binder: A houndsman is a lot different than a deer hunter. Being a houndsman is a way of life. I mean I raise 12 dogs year round all the time. It's not just like you go out one weekend a year to hunt. It's actually a lifestyle. I mean your family is raised around it. I mean a lot of guys lose their wives over it. It's a total different way of life. It's not; it's a whole different breed of sportsman. And in past, you know, a houndsman has kind of been viewed as an outlaw but there's a lot of houndsman in the state that are really concerned on the direction that we're going with our lion hunting.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, now would you, as a houndsman are you a guide? I mean isn't that kind of the reason to have the hounds, or do you buy and sell hounds? Do you breed them?

Jason Binder: No. I breed and hunt my own. I don't guide and there's very few guides that are actually members of our club because we don't see eye to eye.

Sam Carpenter: Okay. And I'm trying to get to where I can understand that. So one of the things that is really of value to you is you train these dogs and sell them to guides? Is that what happens?

Jason Binder: No I train mine and hunt them myself. I don't sell a dog to anybody here in Utah.

Sam Carpenter: But you don't guide, so you just pursue?

Jason Binder: No. Just pursue and take pictures.

Sam Carpenter: So you're just looking at them.

Jason Binder: Yeah.

Sam Carpenter: So it really is to a houndsman an advantage to have a lot of lions out there then, I mean it makes your job an awful lot easier to go out and train your dogs and do what you want to do if the

population's on the increase and we have a lot of them.

Sam Carpenter: do you ever go to the

Jason Binder: Well the population doesn't have to necessarily be on the increase; it has to be at a balance. You know if I get in my truck and drive a hundred and fifty miles and don't cut a lion track it's the same as the deer hunters coming off the mountain everyday and not seeing any deer. I hunt deer and I hunt elk. I hunt everything.

Sam Carpenter: Do you ever go to the Kanab area, Paunsagaunt, Zion to do any of this?

Jason Binder: No because usually I'm laid off in the winter and I can't afford to drive down here.

Sam Carpenter: Well you need to go down because we got plenty. Thank you.

Jason Binder: Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Sam will show you around. Thanks Jason. Stanton Gleave.

Stanton Gleave: I imagine most of you know me, Stanton Gleave. I run livestock. You know what I'm here for, I'm just opposite of this last guy. And I respect his view too there; I've hunted a lot of cougars and raised, and had hounds. The truth of the matter is, well from, we run cattle from Manning Creek on the Monroe Mountain to Kingston Canyon and then we run sheep clear across on Mt. Dutton. And I'm here to tell you that that deer herd is gone. In four days riding out there on Manning Creek I saw one doe deer. And the reason she was alive, somebody put a bell on her. I don't know who had hung a sheep bell on her but that's the only reason that one doe deer was alive. And I'll tell you what, it's just ridiculous is what it is. As far as cutting the cougar track, you can come get me any day and I'll go cut a cougar track with ya if you're having any trouble finding a cougar track. You might have to get on a horse but I can find you a cougar track on either one of those mountains every day. But as far as these deer winter killing there's no such a thing as deer winter killing in Utah. Those sheep don't winter kill and those cattle. A few cattle will winter kill. But if there's sagebrush and bitterbrush there's no such a thing as a sheep winter killing or a deer. Those deer you find dead have been chased by coyotes. And if you look they're always in the bottom of a hollow. They run them until they go right down to the lowest place and that's where you'll find them dead. But that's the only winterkill is from coyotes chasing those deer. When you get them on even that much snow right there the deer breaking through it and the coyote running on top of it. Uh, the other thing is is the, you're saying these cougar numbers are down. I was wondering, they are down from the '90's. But in the '90's you had, still had tens of thousands of deer was left over from the '60's when you controlled these predators; you had tens of thousands of deer still here in the '90's. Today you're down to I'd say in the hundreds of the deer. And on them two mountains I'm talking about I don't think the Monroe Mountain's got a hundred of deer on it. So you've either got to control that herd of cougars completely and put them down until your deer come back or I can guarantee you those deer won't come back. And it's not just cougars, it's coyotes too; in fact coyotes are probably worse than cougars. But there's two animals you've got to control. In my situation if you'd control the predators it would make my life lots easier. And it's not just that sheep herd they're working on now, them cows, I'll tell you what these dry cows, people that don't live out with them cattle like we do sheep. These dry cows that's going to be coming in this fall, I'll tell you what, you're going to be lost the calves. And you won't see them; they'll just kill em and drag em in the

trees. Them young calves and people just think something . . . they don't know what happened to the cow. But I've seen plenty of them killed too. Them cougars have got to eat. And I'll tell you what; you got a serious situation on your hands. One other thing you don't have this year you don't even have any rabbits for them to eat. So they're just living right on that sheep herd right around it. It's just a battle day and night to keep them alive up there and it shouldn't have to be that way. There's nothing wrong with having some cougars but you've got to have something to feed them. Some way you've got to get a deer herd back. And I'll tell you what, you just as well, if any one of you want to come go with me we'll saddle up and I'll guarantee, well if you can point out ten deer in all day riding on that Monroe Mountain I'll swallow my words. But I'll just tell you what, I don't think any one of you can do that; that's how bad that situation is. And Mt. Dutton's right there right close. But anyway what I wanted to get at mainly was they said that we had a right to set snares to protect our livestock. I don't know if that's us they're talking about or who they're talking about there. But I've talked to the sheriff over there in Garfield County and he tells me I've the right to protect my livestock. So I don't know, I don't know if I have to go out and be run down and become a felon for protecting my livestock or not but I'm going to protect my livestock. I'm not going to, we fed cougars for twenty years and it just keeps getting worse. And I don't think we're gonna get out of the business; I think we're gonna, our old grandfather's the one that got out of the business and I don't think we should have to. I guess, and uh, Doug here said he had some, a plan. I don't know, it sounded like it's starting to make sense that maybe we could go out and set some snares around our sheep to protect if there's a cougar there. And he's depredating, he calls it, if there's a cougar there he's depredating; I can tell you that. He didn't come to just visit there and have dinner with the dogs; he's there eating sheep.

Steve Flinders: If you could wrap it up Stanton.

Stanton Gleave: All right. Well that's all I had to say there anyway.

Steve Flinders: Thanks for coming. Appreciate your comments. Those are all the comment cards I have. Did we miss anybody?

Dwyatt Gleave: I'm Dwyatt Gleave and I've been riding with him out on Manning Creek and in that four or five days and we've seen these two deer. We've seen three that's been killed by cougars right there in the trees, all in one pile. So that there's where your deer have went. There's proof where they've went, so . . . We've seen two alive and three dead. So there's where your deer have went and there's where our calves and our lambs are going. So that's what I'm adding to it that he forgot.

Steve Flinders: Thanks.

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: Well the comments are up here now. Who wants to start? Dale.

Dale Bagley: The basis of my comment is, on the Monroe and Dutton both, I mean you've got the cougars treed per day in your eco-region; they're both way above the other, the other smaller units in that eco-region. So I mean, to me it stands to reason that there are more cougars there, I mean your treed per days are up on them units. And Monroe if we ever are going to get to that point where you're going to bring them down to the manageable level, you're not going to do it with eight permits a year. I mean you've got, I don't know how many collared females, but most of them females are going to be

having two kittens with them at a time. I can guarantee you there's fifteen, twenty at least females, probably more than that; so if they've all got one or two kittens you're never going to get that down to a manageable level. So my opinion is you need to up those numbers on that, especially if we're going to go into this for three years.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Dale. I knew we were going to have trouble with Dell and Dale on the same table.

Dell LeFevre: Uh, your coyotes is a big problem. I run cows right out of Escalante and all the way to Page, but this spring when the snow broke we was losing probably one to three calves a week right out of Escalante there. We got two old bitches and the government got one. There's no rabbits. And I probably have, I'm not lying when I say I've got twenty-five head of bob-tailed calves this year. Usually we get three or four of them. And now your cougars, you sportsman, are down the river, the Escalante River, they're cleaning your sheep up. They've cleaned them up in the Last Chance now. And so I think you're really getting a problem over run with cougars and coyotes.

Steve Flinders: Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Okay. I've got several e-mails here and I've spoke to quite a few different people about this. I got the word out early when we received our information on the packet. I talked to several of the landowners, that they're actually seeing cougars during the day on the Paunsagaunt, two different landowners. They're losing cattle, just like you're talking about, calves. There's not been a big complaint but this morning when I went in for a haircut the first thing I heard about was two sheep killed right there in Kanab by a cougar last night. Friends of the Paunsagaunt responded, or I wrote to them, I heard back from them. They are definitely against any cuts on the Paunsagaunt or the Henrys. These are premium deer units. I know that the models are saying we have an awful lot of deer there but I'm hearing the same kind of comments from people down south that I am from you on the Monroe; that there are deer there, yes we do see deer but the numbers, in their opinion, are down from four or five years ago. And I don't know, and maybe Dustin could comment on this, that whether we had much winterkill. I didn't have an opportunity this year to get out on Buckskin where most of them wintered. But uh, I guess in closing up I really understand what Mr. Gleave and these people are talking about. And I don't know if you guys are seeing lions during the day but that usually is a pretty good indication that the population is alive and well out there when you start seeing them during daylight hours.

Steve Flinders: Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: I'd just kind of like to reiterate the fact, and I live there where Stanton and these guys had their sheep herds or cattle herds on the Monroe and the Dutton. I've been up there. And I don't know how this model works, I mean I've tried to figure it out, because there is no deer left on the Monroe, period. What deer there is is right down in the fields and we kill them, we slaughter them with the depredation tags. The Dutton is almost as bad as the Monroe is. I think the biggest thing that we can do here tonight is these people that have sheep and cattle, I think we need to give them permission when they have a problem I don't think it should be carte blanche. I think we should give them permission to use snares or traps or whatever they want to do when they have a problem. I mean, we're, you know. I know that the Fish and Game, or DNR can't have guy up there every day. There's not that many government trappers left to do it. I mean they're overwhelmed with this. This is a problem. I mean, what was it a month ago we had a cougar come right down into the town of Monroe? And what did we

do? We caught him and take him back and put it back on the mountain again. You know? I just, I just have to, like I said, reiterate what, I know what these guys are going through. When Marty Gleave was my deputy I went up there with him one morning, twenty-five head of dead lambs. Cougars had just bit their heads and walked off. Didn't eat them, didn't do nothing. Cougar tracks all over. I've chased cougars my whole life; I know what cougars are. And I don't know where this is coming up where there's not any cougars any more. I'll tell you what I think it is, I think it's guides wanting to make a lot of money. They want to kill a big tom cougar. They do not want to kill a female because we get into that little status quo thing, we can't kill females. Okay, and we've got a major problem out there and we need to do something about it before we have no deer left. I'm done.

Steve Flinders: Doug would you give us quick review or summary of depredation, the (unintelligible) policy for livestock owners.

Douglas Messerly: I will. The rules that are in place now for cougars that are taking livestock have been pretty static for several years; and they're pretty liberal. A livestock owner, or his family, or his regular full-time employees whenever they see a cougar taking, harassing, killing their livestock they are free to shoot it. And they're also free to shoot it if they've done so within the last 72 hours. So it's not a matter of them not being able to protect their livestock. The problem comes in the methods that they can use to do that. And snares and traps heretofore have been against the law. The rule change that we're proposing tonight does is exactly what you asked for Marty, and exactly what Mr. Gleave asked for; and that is when we have confirmed kills . . . Remember Wildlife Services is in this too. Wildlife Services is a professional organization of people who go out and take animals that are depredating on livestock. That's their full-time job. And the guys that are working on the Dutton, I know are working really hard to help Mr. Gleave, but they have big areas to cover also. So what we thought we would do is, and this is a statewide recommendation, it is not just on the Dutton, but where we have chronic livestock depredation problems such as what we have on Dutton, that it would be possible once a cougar kill is confirmed for the livestockmen to be authorized by a letter of authorization to set his own snares around his own sheep and help himself. Now there will be stipulations on that. There will be a time frame, there will be an area, there will be requirements that the snares be marked and that they be checked; and that they be removed when the time frame is over. But, nonetheless what we want to do is solve the problem as much as the livestock operator does. And this gives the livestock operator a chance to help himself in a way that they haven't been able to before because they can now legally use snares to catch, to target a depredating cougar. So that's, I know there's a lot of legalese that gets tied up in the rules of the law but that's what it is. If we have confirmed kills the director can authorize that person, and we'll make that a short turnaround process, we understand that there's some urgency to these matters, that we can authorize the livestock operator or his regular full-time employees to set snares to catch cougars within the stipulations of the authorization.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Doug. Anybody care to make a motion? I'll remind folks again about the comments we've heard tonight. The houndsman association's information that's been handed out, some of that's up north but don't let that shy you away from wanting to act on some of it; Kevin's here to respond to questions about some of that I'm sure. Rex, you've been awful quite tonight. Not to put you on the spot but we haven't heard from you.

Rex Stanworth: Well, cougars are not my forte but I don't have a real love for them. But I understand the houndsman and their need to want to want to pursue and see something to look at. On the other hand I went to Mt Dutton last year to pursue and hunt a deer and I'm just telling ya I saw six head of deer in

three days of hard hunting. That wasn't just up and down the road; I mean that was through the hills and through the dells. There just, there is no deer there. I guess one of the questions that came to my mind, you know, being here on the RAC for a number of years we implemented a killing of quite a number of cougars; and I guess the question I have is have we made an impact on the deer herd? And I don't know that we've really, if anybody's ever said, well yeah, as a matter of fact, you know, where we had these kills we've seen an increase in our deer herd by 25 percent. Because most of the time what I'm hearing from folks is while we've had these massive kill offs of cougars we still haven't seen any increase in deer per say. So personally I believe that if we've got a problem on Monroe and Dutton with deer, and we've obviously talked to the guys that are out there everyday, and we've heard from the folks that live on the backdoor, it looks like to me we should open up a few more cougar permits for Dutton and Monroe; those are two that are specifically addressed. As far as making some changes for the upper units, I get a little queasy wanting to make recommendations on the Nebo, which is in the central, and in the Wasatch, because quite honestly I don't know what their situation is there. So I get queasy wanting to make recommendations up there, and hopes that they in retrospect would respect us when we say we got a problem in the south and we need to take two units and increase the number of cougar permits. And I guess my recommendation to make a motion is that I would say that I would recommend to make the motion that we increase the cougar permits by, I don't know, I don't know what's appropriate, but increase them by say five on each unit so we kill at least three to five more cougars. And then in regards to these units on the north end my recommendation is we don't make a recommendation on those and let those different RACs make their own recommendation and accept Kevin's program as outlined.

Steve Flinders: To restate your motion, it's to add five permits to Monroe and Mt. Dutton and pass everything else as, that's your motion?

Rex Stanworth: Well yeah.

Steve Flinders: Restate your motion.

Rex Stanworth: My motion would be to increase the permits by, Dell says seven, okay, we'll go seven permits on each unit and not make a recommendation pertaining to the central and northern part of the state, let those RACs make their decisions based on what they have, and then accept Kevin's recommendation on Rule 657-10 as presented.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Rex. Seconded by Dale. Do you think you've got it captured down there?

Sam Carpenter: Can I make a comment to that?

Steve Flinders: Comment on the motion.

Sam Carpenter: Or an addendum to it. I don't know how to put it. But I would like to protect our premium entry units, the Henrys and the Paunsagaunt, and recommend they remain the same, that we take no cuts there.

Steve Flinders: Rex, do you want to amend your motion?

Rex Stanworth: Yes. Yes I'll amend my motion to make the Paunsagaunt and the Henry Mountains remain the same on numbers and not a decrease in those numbers.

Steve Flinders: The 2009 permit level?

Rex Stanworth: Yes, yes, no cuts and hunt with new recommendation.

Steve Flinders: Okay, current levels. Dale do you?

Dale Bagley: I'll second it.

Steve Flinders: Dale wants to; he'll second the new motion. So let's restate that motion.

MOTION IS RESTATED OFF MIC.

Steve Flinders: Monroe and Mt. Dutton. And on the Henrys and the Paunsaugant no changes. Is that clear to everyone? We have a motion and a second. Any more discussion or questions? Clair?

Clair Woodbury: One comment. I've been sitting here listening about the Monroe and the Dutton. It seems to me like, and I appreciate what Kevin is saying on a three-year plan we need that stability, but it seems like we have an emergency problem. And I'd like to see this plan be able to handle these emergencies without having to wait three years to address it. And I don't know how we would do that, or maybe Rex could add something in.

Rex Stanworth: Well I guess what I heard from Kevin is if there is an issue on a specific unit within the next two years they would call, we would have the ability as well as the region would be able to have the ability to call a special meeting and say we've got a problem and they would take care of that problem during that calendar year.

Steve Flinders: Kevin, what's the Wildlife Board's direction on this multi-year guidebook?

Kevin Bunnell: Realizing that, the Board has asked us, you know, is in favor of multi-year guidebooks but realizing that there was going to be some uneasiness especially with a recommendation on a predator population. The plan has some safety valves built into it. But if we had a severe winter and the deer population, you know, went into an emergency situation there are some safety valves built into the plan that would direct us to then break in prior to the end of the three-year period and make some adjustments.

Clair Woodbury: Is that the 75 percent that Teresa was talking about?

Kevin Bunnell: No, that's referring to 75 percent of the objective. And that's where it kicks into a predator management plan. We didn't really define that; we kind of left it to the discretion of, you know because there's a lot of different scenarios that can be imagined. But if it, if there's a problem, if we had a real severe winter or if something else happened the plan has some safety valves built into it that not only would allow us to come in and make a change prior to the end of the three years it would direct that we do so.

Clair Woodbury: All right. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: We've got a motion and a second. I'd like to get back to that and call for a vote. Those in favor please? All against? That looked unanimous to me.

Rex Stanworth made the motion to accept R657-10 with the exception that permits be increased by 7 permits on the Dutton and Monroe units and the permit numbers on the Paunsaugunt and Henry Mountains remain the same as last year. Dale Bagley seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: I think that finished agenda item number 5. Let's move on to number 6, Compensation for Lion and Bear Damage, R-657-24. This is a five-year revision. Kevin Bunnell again.

**Compensation for Lion and Bear Damage (5-yr) R657-24 (action) 1:01:30 to 1:05:29 of 2:30:43
-Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator
(See Attachment 1)**

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: From the RAC for Kevin; go ahead Rex.

Rex Stanworth: In regards to this issue about wolf, I realize we've had one of our first experiences up there in the northern part of the state with wolf, but I was under the impression that some of these dogooders were willing to pay for compensation to livestock people in the event that these wolves started to take livestock. Is that funding not available?

Kevin Bunnell: That's still the case. But they won't pay, and that's why the legislature did what they did. Defenders of Wildlife will pay for wolf damage in areas where wolves are listed under the endangered species act. They won't pay in areas where they are delisted. So what the legislature did is made state funds available for the areas where they're delisted and then compensation can be claimed through Defenders of Wildlife in the areas where wolves are still listed. But that's not a program that we operate.

Steve Flinders: Dell.

Dell LeFevre: What areas did they delist?

Kevin Bunnell: It's an area essential East of I-84. So if you take I-84 there by Snowville and come down to where it meets I-15, down to where I-84 then again leaves I-15 and goes up Weber Canyon to I-80, and then from I-80 up to Evanston. So essentially Rich County, Cache County, part of the Box Elder County, and parts of Weber, Davis and Morgan Counties.

Dell LeFevre: So if I get them down here they're endangered.

Kevin Bunnell: They're protected. And I'll tell you Dell we've made lots and lots of effort to try to get them delisted statewide and we're continuing to do so but so far it's kind of falling on deaf ears.

Dell LeFevre: You know we've got them coming both ways. I run cows in Arizona and we've got those

grey wolves coming that way, we got these others coming down.

Kevin Bunnell: From the Mexican reintroduction.

Dell LeFevre: It's just a matter of time until we've got them coming.

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah. And we'll continue, we feel very strongly that the state ought to have management authority over wolves and so their wolf plan can be implemented. We're continuing to try and we'll continue to do so.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions? Mack.

Mack Morrell: The payment on fair market value of the livestock, who set it?

Kevin Bunnell: No, it's fair market value and we receive those from the Department of Agriculture. They give us an average market value for the previous, I can't remember what time period, and then we base the payments based on the fair market that they give us.

Steve Flinders: Other questions from the RAC?

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the public? Sure Stanton, come on up.

Stanton Gleave: This compensation program you've got is all right on bear and it will probably even be all right on wolves because those animals kill everything, you see what they kill. The state don't have enough money to pay the damage them cougars do, if everybody knowed what they, could see what they killed. You never see where cougars killed a deer out in the flat or in an opening or the sheep because they kill plenty of them there but they drag them off, or not drag em off they carry them off. Full grown ewes they'll carry off. And I guess what I'm saying is I know how many head of sheep I lose on that mountain. Last year it was \$80,000, 540 lambs, over 100 yearling ewes, and over 100 ewes. Of them I seen very few of them; and I'll tell you what, I'm out there riding. And when you do find them they're clear off up in the ledges someplace buried, you know. And this compensation on cougars is ridiculous because we don't even get paid a tenth, or not even a fiftieth of what they kill. And there again, the same thing on cattle, all you see's a dry cow come home in the fall. Something ought to be changed on your cougar, on your cougar deal. Thank you.

Steve Flinders: I think there's a question there somewhere. Thanks Stanton.

Kevin Bunnell: I guess the only response I can give is most of that is dictated by state code and so we have to play within the rules that the legislature gives us; and so that's where a change would have to take place.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Kevin.

Comments from the public:

None

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: Any other comments from the RAC now? I don't have any comment cards from the public. Go ahead Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: How do you determine, unless there's snow on the ground, okay, and you can see a cougar track, how do you determine if a cougar has killed anything?

Kevin Bunnell: Sometimes it's difficult, as Mr. Gleave has indicated. It's primarily done by the Wildlife Services agents that are there. They're trained and be able to identify, you know, the difference between a coyote kill versus a bear kill, versus a cougar kill. But what, the first thing you have to do is be able to find it to be able to confirm what killed it and that's where sometimes things fall short.

Cordell Pearson: I have one more question. So if you find a lamb, a ewe sheep up in a tree that's three months old can they call you people and will you come in and say yes this was killed by a cougar?

Kevin Bunnell: Absolutely.

Cordell Pearson: So it doesn't matter how old the carcass is.

Kevin Bunnell: If they can confirm that it was killed by the animal, and it depends on, and sometimes if it's melted down on the ground and it's been 100 degrees and it's been there for three weeks it's pretty difficult. But if there's evidence to put it down to a specific predator they will.

Cordell Pearson: Right I understand what you're saying, but my question is if these guys are up there riding and they see their sheep, which cougars usually take a lot of animals to trees, we all know that, if there's a sheep in that tree and they call in you people and one of your investigators come up are they going to get compensated for that sheep? I mean three months after it's been dead, if the bones and the head is still there?

Kevin Bunnell: You know Cordell I guess I don't know how to answer that because it's actually not our agency that's normally doing it; it's Wildlife Services which is a separate agency under the Department of Ag. And I'd, he'd have to ask one of those guys what the rules or the sideboards that they have in place for determining or confirming what predator had killed something.

Cordell Pearson: Okay, my next question is, do you think maybe we could get one of them to come to the RAC meeting when we have these meetings like this so we can get an answer?

Kevin Bunnell: Certainly we could.

Cordell Pearson: I mean we're not going to do it now for three years though.

Kevin Bunnell: I can get you an answer, Mike Lanell the state director would be glad to respond to an e-mail to the RAC members or whatever way we can get the information to you.

Cordell Pearson: I'm not trying to put you on the spot.

Kevin Bunnell: No I understand that. But we can get you an answer. I can get you an answer to that question, it just probably won't be tonight.

Cordell Pearson: Okay, thank you.

Steve Flinders: Cordell, Kevin don't, are any of those forms signed by Division personnel any more or all exclusive Wildlife Services?

Kevin Bunnell: Uh, very few. I mean we do have the authority to do it but we don't have a lot of that expertise within our agency. So we could do it but in 98 percent of the cases it's the Wildlife Services, the government trappers that are doing it.

Steve Flinders: And Cordell's right, the judgment call between, I've been on the (unintelligible) with a livestock operator looking at a carcass. And did a coyote kill it? Because if a coyote killed it there's no compensation. Or did a cougar or bear kill it? Well how do we know for sure? And there's a few things that they go by but if your point is it's not always black and white you're right. Do you have a question or comment Paul?

Paul Briggs: Maybe a question, maybe a comment, but I was going to follow up on that Cordell asked about having the information from Wildlife Services, and maybe we could add that to the future meeting whether we're discussion cougar or not, maybe just an informational item would be a good presentation.

Steve Flinders: Doug wants to pipe in.

Douglas Messerly: With regard to the specific question about a time frame, what I can tell you, and I've talked with Kevin Dustin who's a supervisor over the government trappers that serve the Mt. Dutton area about this particular unit. It's been quite a topic of discussion for us for a couple of months trying to figure out a way to resolve this. They're pretty liberal about what they call when they're able to find it. And you have to understand that Mr. Gleave's sheep are a long way off the road, but they're there and they've been there a lot this summer, in particular trying to kill cougars and document these things. Nobody's trying to squirt out of anything here. Everybody's trying to get as much compensation as we can and that's evidenced by the fact that we over ran the budget statewide this year and that's another consideration in this. I'd be glad to ask Kevin or if Mr. Lanell could come that would be great. But I guess I need to know from the RAC what is it you want to hear? I mean do you want to understand how they determine whether, they actually have a presentation to show you how they determine what kills what. And they've got it down to a science and they're very good at it. And I've learned a lot from it. I've seen that presentation a couple of times. Is that the presentation you want or do you want to know how they work, what their agency does? I think we can certainly arrange that but I need to know what I'm trying to do here.

Kevin Bunnell: I would say that Kevin Dustin's probably the more appropriate because he's familiar with the areas and the people down here.

Douglas Messerly: Well he actually has been to these meetings before but now with many of these particular members. But in any event, so I guess that's what I would ask you Mr. Chairman, what is it

you're trying to address? And I'll be glad to arrange it.

Steve Flinders: Go ahead Paul.

Paul Briggs: Doug, I guess that's exactly what I was asking for when we asked, where I mentioned that informational item. Maybe, we work with those folks, some of us that work with the other, with the agencies we work with those folks and we've seen the presentations and we maybe know more of what they do. But I think it might be valuable, I don't know if everybody on the RAC has seen that presentation, if he's done that since these members have been here. It might go a long ways to adding a little credibility.

Steve Flinders: Sure Sam.

Sam Carpenter: My comment on that would be that we've brought them up several times during the meeting. And I think a lot of the stuff that has been commented on by the public and the RAC members we could address them, you know, with the same kind of questions that we're asking Kevin. I understand that, you know, they're federal, is that correct?

Steve Flinders: No, they're federal and state. Most of them are actually state.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, but I just think they would be really valuable if they're in the conversation and a part of this plan to have a representative here for any question we may have that they could address. And the presentation I think would be very helpful.

Steve Flinders: Thanks. We'll put that on a docket for things to do at future meetings. Go ahead Dell.

Dell LeFevre: I can pretty well answer your question; if it's a direct kill they're good. If it's a week old and it's rained a little bit it's pretty hard to prove. And my problem is my winter allotments, 290,000 acres, I go from Escalante to Page, it's just awful hard. And it's like Stanton was saying you find the dry cows. This spring we've had a tremendous bunch of dry cows. And I knew they was having calves; we couldn't get them home quick enough. But it is a tough call on both sides because these guys, I use Roger Mower out of Panguitch, he's good, but he is covering such a big area sometimes it's a week to ten days before he can get there.

Steve Flinders: Yeah, Rex.

Rex Stanworth: Kevin, you mentioned that there is only \$140,000 or \$185,000 dollar budget for?

Kevin Bunnell: This year it's \$140,000. And it's something that comes up through the legislature every year and lately it's been changing on a fairly regular basis.

Rex Stanworth: Well it seems to me, quite honestly, I mean it's nice to know how the service works, but what I hear from the livestockmen they're don't, I mean they're getting the service that way, the question they've got is how can they get compensated when the fund runs lose? It seems to me that the bigger issue that I hear is how do we get the parties together to increase that funding? Because once it ends it doesn't matter if they come and tell ya, oh yeah that's a cougar or a bear, but you're out of money and there's no compensation. So I guess the question that I would pose, it seems to me that some

sort of a group with state legislature people and livestockmen and whatever coming up with a program to better fund that is a more appropriate meeting.

Kevin Bunnell: And that's happening every year. The Farm Bureau very aggressively is pushing that repeatedly. It's just come down to lately with the state of the budget, it's the general funds that they're giving us and general funds have been hard to come by.

Rex Stanworth: I guess one question, and I asked this several years ago, you know, if you're a business person and you have a, and you sell a widget, a black widget and it doesn't sell well and you've got it on the bench you probably don't order any more black widgets because you're not making any money. If yellow widgets are selling you stock a lot of yellow widgets to sell them and make a little profit. But for what we've got for cougars, for the permits, versus what is being expended it looks like to me this is an issue where you come back and say, it's nice to be able to call it a big game animal and it's nice to be able to call it a trophy but in reality to hunters and livestock people it's the biggest damn pest in the world and it's not paying its way. I guess from the Division's standpoint, is there any way to increase the cost of a cougar permit and put that into a fund to help offset, to I guess to increase that \$140,000 or whatever the funding may be?

Kevin Bunnell: That's a question that has to be answered at a pay grade way above mine Rex. You know there are some, currently the \$140,000 dollars that we're authorized by the legislature to spend is made up of \$90,000 general fund, and \$50,000 of restricted dollars. And the restricted dollars are our license dollars. And that's what's making up there \$140,000 currently. There are certain rules that we come up against in terms of how much of our license dollars we can spend because based on the federal dollars that we get coming back in. To be honest I don't understand that and I really don't want to. I'm a biologist. If, maybe we can have our financial people come and answer those questions but it's not one that I want to try to tackle.

Rex Stanworth: I guess what it seems to me that for this financial pool of money that the cougar hunter, the houndsman, those people that want to continue to have those animals are going to have to come, it's like owning a boat, you know, you have to pay fees to get into launch it. Every time you go to launch it you have to pay a fee to get in there. It seems to me if they want to keep this band of cougars and pursue them and take them they're going to have to step to the well a little bit and chip in a few more dollars to help compensate for keeping those higher cougars because it's a, to me it looks like to me it's a lost, it's a lost cause for money. You're expending more than you're getting.

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah and I don't know what the balance out is in terms of the money we raise in permits versus . . . and we sell an awful lot of harvest objective tags at X amount of dollars. But I don't know what the balance is. All I can say is we can bring the point up with those farther up the chain.

Steve Flinders: Sure Dell.

Dell LeFevre: Is your elk damage and your deer damage coming out of that same pool?

Kevin Bunnell: No.

Dell LeFevre: It's a different pool. How much is that pool? It's only like, about the same amount.

Kevin Bunnell: Doug, are you aware what that number is?

Douglas Messerly: It's half a million Dell.

Dell LeFevre: It's a half, okay. So it's a lot better than the. . . .

Douglas Messerly: Yep, and we still run out of it too. We can't seem to come up with enough compensation it seems.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions or comments from the RAC? We're at the point of looking at a motion for this. It's the renewal of a rule that's been around for quite a while.

Paul Briggs: Well Steve, if there's no more discussion I'll make the motion that we accept and approve the updated rule.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Paul.

Cordell Pearson: Second.

Steve Flinders: Who seconded that? Seconded by Cordell. Everybody hear that? Motion to pass the rule as presented. Those in favor? Those against? Let's do in favor again. Everybody in favor? And those against? Motion passes.

Paul Briggs made the motion to accept R657-24 as presented. Cordell Pearson seconded. Motion carried 6:3, Mack Morrell, Dell LeFevre, Rex Stanworth opposed.

Steve Flinders: Agenda item number seven, Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy. We're on a roll with these Kev.

**Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04 (action) 1:24:27 to 1:32:00 of 2:30:43
-Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator
(See Attachment 1)**

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Help us understand that \$400,000 dollars; what the funding is behind that. Is that, what percent of that's general fund?

Kevin Bunnell: You know, I believe that is all general fund, isn't it Doug? It's a mix of . . . I don't know exactly where it comes from but it's money that's appropriated directly from the legislature. I'm not exactly sure which color of money, if it's general fund or restricted or a combination of both. But we have to have their approval to spend it in that way; and currently it's at \$400,000 dollars.

Steve Flinders: Are the county bounties coming out of that pot of money or a separate pot?

Kevin Bunnell: Yes, they come out of that pot.

Steve Flinders: That pot of money. Most of that funding go to the counties and the Wildlife Services for coyote control?

Kevin Bunnell: Most of it goes to Wildlife Services for coyote control and some goes to the county bounty. It comes through our budget and then it get's transferred to the Department of Ag. It's appropriated to us and then given to the Department of Ag.

Steve Flinders: \$400,000 every year.

Kevin Bunnell: \$400,000 a year.

Steve Flinders: How many coyotes does that kill? What does that equate to? Do we want to know?

Kevin Bunnell: This year, depends on the year, um, this year between 1,500 and 2,000 coyotes. And it's very expensive because it's primarily done from a helicopter.

Steve Flinders: I'd have to give another speech (unintelligible) it isn't paying its way. Any other questions from the RAC? Sure Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Do you know if SFW is still contributing to coyote control in the state?

Kevin Bunnell: They are helping to fund some of the county bounties. And no that doesn't come through us, that's a separate transaction between SFW and some of the counties.

Sam Carpenter: But that is still in action.

Kevin Bunnell: I believe that is taking place in some places, yeah.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? What's that? Go ahead you guys. Layne.

Layne Torgerson: Well that was my exact question because being a member of SFW I get all of the propaganda and I know that in years past there's been upwards of \$500,000 that was appropriated from SFW for predator control.

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah, that's a completely separate thing that happens outside of the Division.

Sam Carpenter: Isn't the money appropriated through their convention? Is that where this comes from?

Kevin Bunnell: I don't believe it's conservation permit dollars that are being used, that's primarily used
...

Sam Carpenter: (Unintelligible) local chapters.

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah, that's probably money that's raised through the local chapters, by other means. I don't know if it's dues or what they're using.

Paul Briggs: So is that money that is provided to the counties in the form of bounties to private

individuals or is that money leveraged with the state money for the (unintelligible) gunning of those predators?

Steve Flinders: It is that same money.

Douglas Messerly: The history of this essentially is that the legislature, and I believe it was 2003, appropriated \$500,000 dollars of license dollars to put towards predator control. And it was to be distributed to the Department of Agriculture for application by Wildlife Services to both control livestock depredation and to control predators in situations where we ask for. Those are two parallel programs. We meet with Wildlife Services every year and point out the places by predator management plan where we need their help; but in addition to that some of the money goes towards controlling, and some of the predators that they take go towards controlling livestock depredation. In addition to that it was suggested that that money should be distributed to the counties, the same pot of money, to be distributed to the counties to use for a bounty program. Now once a year I meet with the county commissioners in all the counties in the southern region and I kind of over the years ask them how that program is working. And frankly most of them haven't been able to spend their money. Maybe Dale could let us know how it works in Piute County but they haven't, it hasn't been hugely popular. Gas is expensive and it's hard for people to go out and recreationally kill a coyote. Most of the bounties are \$20, \$25. bucks a head. And I think most of them end up sending it back or not spending it, or directing it to other predator control activities. You know it's news to me and entirely possible that SFW is still contributing in some counties, but I don't think any of them are down here. So, usually it is SFW members that end administering the program for the counties. And since that time the legislature has obviously decreased the appropriation and it's an appropriation, at the time it was created anyway it was an appropriation of restricted money. Restricted money is license dollars; that is fishing licenses, deer hunting licenses, elk hunting licenses are what's paying for this program. And you know I don't know how many hundreds of hours we're paying for for Wildlife Services to fly predators but it's pretty significant and it's very expensive. 2,000 coyotes for \$400,000 dollars is a very expensive proposition.

Kevin Bunnell: And I just add to that that you know not all, not all dead coyotes are equal in terms of the benefits to wildlife. Timing is very important. Wildlife Services the work they do from the aircraft they try to time that to do it in . . . There's two times where it can be effective, either just prior to the reproductive cycle of the predators so you're breaking up pair bonds. If you can break up a paired male and female coyote and you can remove one of those then you'll eliminate that litter for the year. So that's a time where it can be effective by reducing the number of predators. The other time it can be effective is just prior to when the prey populations are having their young. Because it's a short-term effect, removing coyotes is like trying to empty the Great Salt Lake with a spoon. So the timing is very important.

Steve Flinders: While it's raining.

Kevin Bunnell: While it's raining, probably. So a coyote killed in September probably has very little benefit to wildlife. A coyote killed the end of February, the end of March that's paired up, you may see a benefit there. Or one that's killed in the end of June, or the excuse me, the end of May or the first part of June you'll see a benefit.

Steve Flinders: Dale do you want to address Doug's question?

Dale Bagley: Yeah I was going to say that in Piute County we had \$4,000 dollars in the bounty program. On coyotes turned in we had 67, I believe it was, for the fiscal year. So I mean that's \$1,340 dollars but we did donate, or they don't say donate, but we took some of that bounty money and put it toward a helicopter for last year. I never did hear a count on the helicopter but I'm sure, I mean as far as money spent the helicopter probably killed a lot more coyotes than the actual public bounty program.

Steve Flinders: Mack, did you have a question or comment?

Mack Morrell: Yeah the Division doesn't have management authority over coyotes, who does?

Kevin Bunnell: The Department of Agriculture. Coyotes, jackrabbits and a few other species come under the Department of Agriculture.

Mack Morrell: I know in Wayne County the county clerk says you better bring your ears in real quick because they're running out of money last year, from getting coyotes. And we've had quite a problem the last two years at wintertime with the sage grouse with coyotes and eagles taking them. So we do appreciate that helicopter, I know that. That helps the population immensely.

Steve Flinders: Rex, do you have a question?

Rex Stanworth: I want to make a motion.

Steve Flinders: Let me to go the public real quick and see if they have any questions. I don't have any comment cards. Does anybody have any questions about this policy for Kevin?

Questions from the public:

None

Comments from the public:

None

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: I think we're ready for your motion.

Rex Stanworth: I will make a motion that we accept the Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG04 as presented.

Dell LeFevre: I'll second it.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Rex, seconded by Dell LeFevre. Motion to approve. Those in favor please vote. Those against. That looks unanimous.

Rex Stanworth made the motion to accept rule R657-24 as presented. Dell LeFevre seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Kevin. Do we need a break or do you guys want to forge ahead? Forge ahead. Number eight, Furbearer Guidebook and Rule, Justin Dolling.

Steve Flinders: Already I have a question Justin. Is this one year, 2013, three years?

Justin Dolling: Actually our furbearer rule is a three year rule, but not for bobcats.

Steve Flinders: What are we going to do with next years meeting?

Justin Dolling: You may not have it, yeah.

Furbearer Guidebook and Rule R657-11 (action) 1:41:49 to 1:50:13 of 2:30:43
-Justin Dolling, Game Mammals Coordinator
(See Attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Thanks Justin. Any questions from the RAC? I see one from Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Just one, what the heck is a set day? I mean you're saying a set day for bobcat 481. That just doesn't seem to make any sense to me.

Justin Dolling: yeah, if you go out and trap and you have ten traps and you leave them out for one day that's ten set days. So a set day represents one trap in the ground. If you run 100 traps for ten days that's 1,000 set days.

Sam Carpenter: Thank you'

Steve Flinders: Other questions?

Dale Bagley: On the set days variable, I had a couple trappers approach me about it. They said last year you cut a week from the season and this year it looks like we're going to cut another week. But on the set day variable how much difference does that make? They had no problem with the number of tags; they didn't mind taking the cuts there. But they said they basically got their best pelts earlier in the fall. So their concern was of keep getting those days cut from the season. Where the tags are at a set number how much difference is that set days really matter in these variables?

Justin Dolling: Well to answer your question, a set day is essentially a metric we get from trappers when we do our phone survey. So essentially the information they give us on how many traps they run, how many days they let those traps set is where we generate that number. As far as season length the management system calls our, because all four variables are in the negative direction, it calls out a reduction in the number of permits per trapper, a season length reduction, that can either come at the front or at the end, and a cap on permits. That's what the management system calls out.

Dale Bagley: Is there any way to get the people that wrote the bobcat plan to do a management plan for deer then, with those type variables?

Justin Dolling: I am just working on bobcats right now.

Kevin Bunnell: Sorry, just to point out, last year we reduced the season length and we worked with the trappers association when we did that, and they actually requested that we take those days off the front of the season because their feeling was that they catch more females earlier in the season and so to protect the females they wanted to take days off the front and not off the back end.

Dale Bagley: Okay, I was just kind of, I told them I would ask their question and get back with them. So I understand where you're going with it.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions from the RAC?

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the public for Justin?

None

Comments from the public:

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

None

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: So we're ready for a discussion or a motion guys.

Rex Stanworth: I'll make a motion that we accept Furbearers Guidebook and Rule R657-11.

Dell LeFevre: I'll second it.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Rex, seconded by Dell. Those in favor? Unanimous.

Rex Stanworth made a motion to accept rule R657-11 as presented. Dell LeFevre seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: Next agenda item, Otter Management Plan.

Otter Management Plan Revision (action) 1:54:10 to 2:04:50 of 2:30:43
-Justin Dolling, Game Mammals Coordinator
(See Attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Thanks Justin. Any questions from the RAC? How are otters doing in Escalante?

Justin Dolling: I don't know. I'd turn that over to Teresa.

Teresa Bonzo: We don't have a lot of monitoring methods. They didn't have radio implants in them. We do get some sporadic reports. We just had a sighting up near Bull Frog; actually a few of our conservation officers were out working on Lake Powell and saw a family of them. We've had them at the Silver Falls there on the Escalante. We've had them reported in Calf Creek. We actually had one, a road kill one a couple of miles away from the bridge on the Escalante on Highway 12. Hopefully when we move some more into the river we can have some radio implants so we can monitor a little bit better. It's kind of a needle in a haystack after we put them in there and learn.

Steve Flinders: Wow that's neat. It sounds like they're still there.

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Any questions from the public?

None

Comments from the public:

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

None

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: Does anybody care to offer a motion? Comments?

Rex Stanworth: I make a motion we accept the Otter Management Plan revision as presented tonight.

Dell LeFevre: I'll second it.

Steve Flinders: Rex and Dell again. Thank you. Those in favor please vote. It looks unanimous.

Rex Stanworth made the motion to accept the Otter Management Plan as presented. Dell LeFevre seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: It's two hours, do we want to take a break or do you want to jump into waterfowl?
Otters eat waterfowl Tom; I saw it on a slide.

Tom Aldrich: I know there are at least two people, Steve and Paul Neimeyer that showed up just for this.

Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09 (action) 2:07:14 to 2:17:09 of 2:30:43
-Tom Aldrich, Wildlife Program Coordinator

(See Attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Thanks Tom. Questions? Rex.

Rex Stanworth: Tom, I was one of those guys that was so excited about that white goose hunt that I couldn't hardly stand it. And I think Lynn and I, if we were to take you in the back room and tell you what went on at the snow goose hunt last year in Delta you would probably throw up like we were in the field. It was a disaster. I don't know what it is but I've never seen more selfish, self-centered people in my life than the guys that came down to hunt those white species goose. And I guess my thoughts are, is I wish we had enough time that we could sit down maybe and come up with, formulate a plan just like the Snow Goose festival does but some sort of a plan to put out the word on what's expected when those folks come down to the area; whether or not we submit out that there will be places where people can pay a trespass fee and go in. Accommodate whatever it may be but some sort of a plan because last year there were a lot of the farmers who were grateful to have that hunt come, last year said I'm done; there's nobody going to hunt on my place anymore. It quite honestly it was just a disaster. I would really suggest that we come up with a, we have some sort of a head pooling and see if we can't come up with some ideas to try to eliminate that. Those snow geese, without exception Lynn wouldn't you say that probably 90 percent of the hunting is done on private land. And these guys they think it's a god given right to come down. And there were several farmers that they had committed to people that they could go hunt. These guys would pull in and expect to go out and place their decoys and when they didn't get, well sure go out and do it they'd flip the guys the bird or leave in a swearing fashion. I mean it was just ugly. And so that's my comment. I mean I'm excited to have it there and I'm excited that people could come down and take advantage of it; but I don't want them taking advantage of the landholders who at this point in time have been giving permission to those people who will contact them in advance and say sure come down and hunt. So that would be my comment to you to see if we can't . . . Lynn would be a great person to put there because he's been one of those guys sitting out in the field with me that knows exactly what kind of frustrations have gone on; and he's heard it right from the mouth of the landowners their words. I would suggest that we do that and the sooner the better, and see if we can't get some sort of an idea maybe from the chamber of commerce, uh, local landowners and that, see what their suggestions are.

Tom Aldrich: Okay, we'll give it a try.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions? Layne's got one.

Layne Torgerson: Tom, on that bag limit on Canadian geese, it's recommended in here that it's three, which it has been for as long as I can remember. My question is, isn't some of the surrounding states, it's it at four? I mean do we follow federal guidelines on bag limits on Canadian geese?

Tom Aldrich: Yeah, and there are different federal bag limits for different states depending on the status of their local populations. And you're right; I believe it's in Montana and parts of Idaho that's four a day. But in other areas, Colorado, Arizona, Southern California which is a region where our geese sort of go, and we sort of share a breeding population with those states, it's all three. And right now that's governed by federal rule. We cannot go to three under federal rules. Or cannot go to four, excuse me.

Steve Flinders: Good question, any others?

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the public? Sure come on up. Give us your name in the mic.

Richard Rouleau: My name is Richard Rouleau. And I was considering, I live down in Washington County; and there's not real many duck hunters down there; there's a few. But we would like to see the scaup season down there maybe change for us because we don't really see the birds until December down there on some of the reservoirs we do get to hunt down there. Maybe, you know, open up a couple of weeks later for us in Washington County, for scaup, the blue bill, because we don't see the numbers until after Thanksgiving down there.

Steve Flinders: Do you want to field that question Tom?

Tom Aldrich: currently you can't just zone counties. Currently we have two zones; we have a northern Utah zone and a southern Utah zone. The dates are identical in those two zones; that's why you don't see it in the proclamation. We would have to create a third zone, a Washington County zone to do that. When you do a third zone, the rules get complicated. When you go to a third zone then you cannot split your duck season. Even if the duck season goes back to 60 days, which it has been in the past, we were able to split the season to accommodate some early hunting and some late hunting. If that ever would return and we created a third zone in Washington County then the seasons would all have to be straight seasons. And right now, at least from my point of view, maintaining the ability to split seasons should the duck season become shorter is a more important thing to have, a more important tool to have in your toolbox than necessarily to create a single zone in one county that has, quite frankly, pretty limited waterfowl hunting opportunities.

Steve Flinders: Does that answer your question Richard? I see that on your comment card. Is that probably what you wanted to comment?

Richard Rouleau: I just want to know why the Snow goose season opens up October 30th instead of on the regular season in the state. They got, where white geese opens up on October 30th and don't open up the same day as Canadians.

Steve Flinders: Tom can answer that.

Tom Aldrich: Yeah I can answer that. We're limited to 107 days so you can't open, you know, if we opened the same day we opened the Canada goose season it would turn, and still maintained our extended Snow goose hunt it would exceed the 107 day maximum allowed by federal rules.

Steve Flinders: Thanks.

Comments from the public:

Steve Flinders: That's the only comment card I had.

None

RAC discussion and vote:

Steve Flinders: Any further questions or comments from the RAC? We're ready for a motion. Thanks Tom.

Rex Stanworth: I'll make a motion that we accept the Water Fowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09 with the stipulation that we try to work with the local Delta community on trying to figure out a plan for that Snow goose hunt.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Rex. Seconded by Dale. Does everybody understand the motion? Those in favor? Any against? It looks unanimous.

Rex Stanworth made a motion to accept rule R657-09 with the stipulation that we try to work with Delta community to figure out a plan for the Snow Goose hunt. Dale Bagley seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Other Business (contingent)

-Steve Flinders, Chairman

Steve Flinders: I have a couple of quick items of other business. If you guys would bear with me, Giani and I sent an e-mail about an upland game meeting that Dave Olsen's having, I think on August 3rd. I didn't hear anything from anybody. I'm guessing that lack of interest (unintelligible). All right, I'll follow up with you Clair. Also, we don't have to deal with this exactly tonight except give me some feedback on we talked about the possibility of Wildlife Services, Kevin Dustin or others doing a presentation about livestock loss confirmation process and maybe removal methods. There are some other things that we could talk about; some RACs have had some discussions about deer modeling. These two are, seem to keep coming up over and over again. What's your interest and how, what would be the best venue? Do you want to meet here early? Go ahead Rex, what are your ideas?

Rex Stanworth: Well I was just going to say if we're going to have that situation with the federal services on that depredation problem I would sure say that we send out a formal letter to like Utah Farm Bureau and any other way of getting the word out and let ranchers know that we're going to have that here because it would benefit them as well as us, I would assume.

Steve Flinders: I might have been something really nice to have on tonight's agenda but let's talk about that some more. We might really stir something up if we are not careful about how we do it. I mean it's sort of a, I see it as something where we educate ourselves as much or more than we may educate some public (unintelligible) sure to be an open public meeting. Thoughts Layne?

Layne Torgerson: Well on the same line, would it be possible, I heard somebody make a comment, not on the mic, of possibly (unintelligible) other RAC meeting if the RAC and, as Rex said, invited personnel was to meet here an hour earlier and watch the presentation and then maybe have it on the agenda as an informational item, or not. I mean but I wouldn't be opposed to coming an hour early to enlighten myself.

Douglas Messerly: Under that scenario Layne would you invite the public or not invite the public, to see the same presentation?

Layne Torgerson: I think if the public is interested open it up to the public.

Douglas Messerly: Then it's open to the public. Then we just extend the agenda is what we do. That's what we have to do.

Layne Torgerson: Yeah.

Steve Flinders: Call it informational (inaudible).

Douglas Messerly: Yeah. Here's the issue I'd like to point out a couple of things: September, October and November are all jam packed with big game stuff; and those are our next three meetings. February is typically the meeting where we have a little latitude, although last year it was jam packed too. And that's the issue you run up against. The second issue, this presentation on how to determine the cause of death in livestock will have some pictures that will be offensive to some people, and you need to be aware of that ahead of time. But we could arrange it. But my speculation is this is probably going to be February before we, unless you want to do it on the December meeting which, you know frankly isn't very well attended by RAC members. But in any event those are my thoughts on it. If you're really interested in doing it do you want to bump something on the big game agenda in order to make it happen and if not when would you like to do it? Kevin Dustin would be glad to come do it any time I'm sure; just let us know. On deer modeling, that's a complicated topic; an hour and a half to two hours probably.

Steve Flinders: Are there some comments down here or something?

Paul Briggs: I was just going to suggest on the predation kill determination thing, if we're not going to look at cougar plan theoretically again for another three years it wouldn't have to be something we'd have to do in the next three months; it could be preferably so it's still somewhat fresh on our minds before we look at that plan again.

Steve Flinders: Okay. Any more discussion? We can keep you here all night. Motion to adjourn?

Clair Woodbury: I move to adjourn.

Rex Stanworth: Second.

Steve Flinders: So moved. Thanks again.

Meeting adjourned at 9:32 pm.

**Southeast Region Advisory Council
John Wesley Powell Museum
1765 E. Main, Green River
July 28, 2010 ↻ 6:30 p.m.**

Motion Summary

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: To accept the agenda as amended
Passed unanimously

Approval of May 12, 2010 minutes

MOTION: To accept the minutes of April 27, 2010 as written
Passed unanimously

Cougar Guidebook and Rule R657-10

MOTION: To accept R657-10 Cougar Guidebook and Rule as presented, except that the number of cougar permits on the Manti unit be increased by 50%. The motion was amended to recommend that the division review harvest and prey recruitment data on the Manti unit and adjust its permit recommendations as necessary.

Passed with two opposing votes

Compensation for Lion and Bear Damage R657-24 (5-year)

MOTION: To accept Compensation for Lion and Bear damage R657-24 as presented

Passed unanimously

Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04

MOTION: To accept the Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04 as presented.

Passed unanimously

Furbearer Guidebook and Rule R657-11

MOTION: To accept the Furbearer Guidebook and Rule R657-11 as presented
Passed unanimously

Otter Management Plan Revision

MOTION: To accept the Otter Management Plan Revision as presented and to approve Straight Canyon as a release site.

Passed unanimously

Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09

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

**Southeast Region Advisory Council
John Wesley Powell Museum
1765 E. Main, Green River
July 28, 2010 ↻ 6:30 p.m.**

Members Present

Bill Bates, Regional Supervisor
Jeff Horrocks, Elected Official
Todd Huntington, At Large
Derris Jones, Sportsmen
Laura Kamala, Non-Consumptive
Darrel Mecham, sportsmen
Pam Riddle, BLM
Terry Sanslow, Chairman

Members Absent

Kevin Albrecht, USFS
Blair Eastman, Agriculture
Wayne Hoskisson, Non-consumptive
Kenneth Maryboy, Navajo Rep.
Christine Micoz, At Large
Travis Pehrson, Sportsmen
Charlie Tracy, Agriculture

Others Present

1) **Welcome, RAC introductions and RAC Procedure**
-Terry Sanslow, Chairman

2) **Approval of the Agenda and Minutes (Action)**
-Terry Sanslow, Chairman

Terry Sanslow - On the agenda, we have a request from Tom Aldrich to move his presentation from the #10 spot to the #5 spot. He is not going to be staying; he would

like to get out of town as quickly as possible. If we all agree, we will have a motion on that.

VOTING

Motion was made by Jeff Horrocks to change the line up of agenda items, which would allow item # 9 to be presented first.

Seconded by Pam Riddle

Motion passed unanimously

VOTING

Motion was made by Todd Huntington to approve the minutes as written.

Seconded by Laura Kamala

Motion passed unanimously

3) Wildlife Board Meeting Update

-Terry Sanslow, Chairman

Terry Sanslow - The Wildlife Board voted and approved everything that we did in our May 12th meeting. One of the things they said was that there were 900 fewer Turkey permits sold this year then last year. The whitetail prairie dog is no longer protected and will be removed from the threatened list. One of the questions that we had with Miles Moretti was to check with Boone and Crocket. It does recognize the hunts on Antelope Island for buffalo, deer, and sheep. On the aquatic invasive species, the only thing that was changed there was that Pine Valley and the Sand Hollow Reservoir were added to the list that we saw.

Bill Bates - I would like to clarify something about the whitetail prairie dog. It was petitioned to be listed as a threatened or endangered species, but the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ruled against it.

Terry Sanslow - Unless there is any question about the board meeting, we will move to the regional update with Bill Bates.

Questions from the RAC

Questions from the Public

Comments from the Public

RAC Discussion

4) Regional Update

-Bill Bates, Regional Supervisor

Aquatics: Sponsored multiple fishing events: 1) On 6/9, partnered with USFS on fishing day for persons with disabilities, 2) On 6/12, worked w/ KUSA, Carbon Co. Rec. & Kiwanis for kids' fishing day, and 3) On 8/13. will provide personnel for fishing pond at the Carbon Co. Fair.

Summer projects: Duck Fork Res. spawn collection, gill-netting at Scofield and Joes Valley Res., non-native mussel sampling at Electric L.

Conservation Outreach: Sunnyside Bighorn Sheep watch on 6/19.

Dedicated hunter service projects in full swing

On-going summer camp programs for scout and youth groups

Price International Days exhibit on 7/30-31.

Emery and Carbon fairs on 8/6-7 and 8/13.

Habitat: Spring browse/ deer mortality field trip on 6/7 at Porphyry Bench.

UPCD tour of Shea Mesa on June 8.

Projects: Wildcat Knolls, LaSal Cabin, Cold Springs, Henry Mtns.

Range Creek administration change

Mud Creek Restoration project to begin 8/1

Law Enforcement:

New conservation officers:

Dennis Shumway in San Juan District

Ben Stearns in Emery District.

Prosecution of wildlife violations:

Brett Butler—His wife killed a bear in Coal Creek, after baiting it illegally. Charged with 3rd degree felony with plea in abeyance, which means it will be erased from his record after 6 months to a year. Revocation for 7 years being sought. \$1,000 fine and possible \$1,000 in restitution

Terrell Jansen shot three deer in Montezuma Creek. Class A misdemeanor. \$1,200 in restitution. Firearm confiscated.

Wildlife: Spring deer classifications are completed

Concern about sage-grouse status and habitat

Bear being collared; bear study in progress across Utah

Elk classifications on all units, occurring in July

Pronghorn classifications to begin in August

Questions from the RAC

5) R657-10 Cougar Guidebook and Rule (Action)

-Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Terry- Any questions from the RAC?

Derris Jones -If you were to incorporate sub-adult females into the percentage of the female harvest, how would that increase the percentage? To stabilize the population like you said, we're at 17 to 25. How would that percentage go to if you did throw in sub adults?

Kevin Bunnell - I don't know off the top of my head, but let me explain why we went to the existing adult females. It's based on research that was done in Wyoming and then followed up in some other cases. What they have found is that there are cougars with different stages of vulnerability, based on the age and their sex. The first animal that would be taken out of the cougar population is obviously adult males because that is what people are selecting for, followed by sub-adult males and sub-adult females come at about equal proportions after that. The least vulnerable portion of the population is the adult female primarily because their home ranges are smaller. They're moving less and they have smaller home ranges, so that is the last segment of the population that they start to carve into when you are hunting.

Derris Jones - If sub-adults were added in, would the percentage also rise?

Kevin Bunnell - Certainly, because there's more sub-adults.

Derris Jones - So it wouldn't change anything as far as the number of females harvested?

Kevin Bunnell - I don't think so. It would just give us less confidence in our recommendation.

Derris Jones - My last question. Is it professional biologists that check in cougars at regional offices or is it sometimes clerical people?

Kevin Bunnell -It is clerical people at times and one of the things that we actually identified in the cougar plan is that we will do a better job at training the people that do that. That is an issue that has been raised, and we are in the process of trying to pull something together. We need a couple of days to do that.

Derris Jones- Two calendar days or two business days?

Kevin Bunnell- Two business days, depending on if we have enough time to collect the data for the regions, get it analyzed and get it posted and on-line, just so that people know what the quota will be.

Derris Jones- How will you get the word out?

Kevin Bunnell- Through news releases and the web site.

Terry Sanslow - Any more questions from the RAC?

Questions from the Public

Terry Sanslow-Questions from the audience? Come up to the mic and state your name.

Lloyd Nielson- I would like to know what the division's thoughts are about the Elk Ridge Deer herd.

Terry Sanslow - This is on cougar management right now.

Lloyd Nielson – Cougars are predators.

Terry Sanslow - I know but we would like to keep it to the thing at hand right now. If you're going to weave it in, let us know.

Lloyd Nielson - The deer on Elk Ridge go down to the San Juan River every year above the Mexican Hat. Where do you think those lions go?

Kevin Bunnell - They obviously go where there is pray available.

Lloyd Nielson - Can you explain the numbers? This number you have up there is a 3 year time period, but it only changed to split season last year. There were 4 Toms, if I'm correct here on Elk Ridge.

Kevin Bunnell -I will be glad to show you that. This is the data I have for the whole Eco-region. It's not just any individual unit.

Lloyd Nielson - So you don't have any individual unit broken down?

Kevin Bunnell - We do, certainly. According to the cougar plan we are not making recommendations based on our individual units. We are making recommendations based on the performance of the entire Eco-region.

Lloyd Nielson - O.K., I see that. According to every unit that you have a predator management plan, are you going to lower the cougar numbers?

Kevin Bunnell - Again, we have to follow the plan making that recommendation.

Justin Shannon- So your question is: "How many cougars were harvested on the San Juan, Abajo last year?" We had a total mortality of 9 and the permit quota was 10.

Lloyd Nielson - There were 2 females and the rest were toms?

Justin Shannon- Correct.

Lloyd Nielson - One of the females was killed in the split season and the other female was killed in the harvest objective.

Justin Shannon- I don't have the stats in front of me but I will take your word for it.

Lloyd Nielson - O.K., can either one of you tell me what benefit the San Juan split season did for wildlife?

Guy Wallace- It benefited the hunt.

Lloyd Nielson- Yes it benefited the hunt.

Guy Wallace- I can't talk about specifics, but with a split season you have that limited entry portion. You have only 10 guys on that mountain for the first part of the season and certainly they're going to benefit from that by being more selective and hunting with fewer people on the mountain. That is the benefit.

Bob Peterson- Why are you keeping the Manti Northeast on split season when there is not habitat up there?

Kevin Bunnell - The Manti is under a predator management plan and according to the cougar plan there are two options. There are two hunting strategies you can use when you are under predator management--either a split strategy or a harvest objective strategy. So given those two options the region chose the split.

Bob Peterson- So what is our fawn survival rate up there right now? There are no calves, and we've got coyotes everywhere. I hunted 10 days up there straight from Consumers to Watts, and I had only one female and two kittens.

Kevin Bunnell - Your question?

Bob Peterson- What's the fawn to doe ratio?

Kevin Bunnell - How many fawns are being killed?

Bob Peterson- Yes, how much survival do we have?

Justin Shannon - 60 to 65 fawns per 100 does. That's the classification.

James Gilson- In this plan, what would allow a change in the numbers during the breeding period?

Kevin Bunnell - The plan has a couple of different safety things built into it--if we have an emergency situation, for example or if we have a heavy winter and we thought we had a heavy deer loss, or if we had a disease issue or something like that. Things can change drastically during that three year period that would allow us to make changes.

James Gilson-What an eco-region? Let's take the southern mountains. If the condition of the deer herd is such that we hammer cougars for awhile, how does that calculate when you are trying to manage by this eco-region and you're taking a lot of extra cougars under the harvest objective? Does it inhibit you from maintaining the cougar harvest in the rest of the eco-region? So, let's say that 50% of the lions are coming off the Manti because of predator management. What happens to the tags for the rest of the eco-region?

Kevin Bunnell – Well, we completely separate all the units that are under the predator management plan and eco-region together and we analyze that data, and then separately analyze the data for the units that aren't under a predator management plan, so it's completely separated. There is no cross-over between units that are and aren't under a predator management plan, so they're completely independent of each other.

James Gilson- So one data doesn't impact the other?

Kevin Bunnell - No, not on the units that are and aren't under predator management.

James Gilson- I asked how many cougars we had. What's your best guess? 2,000 or 4,000? Or is it 3,000?

Kevin Bunnell - Honestly James, I don't know. If I did, I would give you an answer. Probably somewhere between 1,500 and 3,000 would be my best guess.

James Gilson- In the Deseret News you were quoted "Keeping the hunting rule and permit numbers consistent will give our efforts to manage cougars more time to work," said Kevin Bunnell. "That will result in future recommendations that will be best for the cougars and for the animals they prey on". So what is this plan? How does it coincide? We had this discussion last year but there are some things here that don't appear to coincide with the number recommendation.

Kevin Bunnell - I'm not sure I understand the question.

James Gilson- I can't comment here. I have some other stuff. The best I can do in a question form is, if you're recommending tag numbers for three years, even in predator management, I don't think the recommendation is high enough in one of the worst deer populations in the area, which is the Manti. If we looked at the

numbers that you have now, then we still don't see success in the deer herd. Did you not get all the tags out?

Kevin Bunnell - Not on the whole unit, because the Manti is split into four sub-units. Justin Shannon- The southeast portion.

Kevin Bunnell - Jim, can I ask you a question?

James Gilson- Yes.

Kevin Bunnell - What are you basing your opinion on, that we don't have enough cougar tags up there to improve the deer population?

James Gilson- If you take the total number of deer in the state, it is about 310,000 deer, and you subtract which number of them are bucks and which are does, and how many fawns are being born, and natural deaths or diseases, that comes out to 50,000 and I don't know if you want me to go into this. I have it prepared for the next section.

Chris Grundvig- I represent myself and my hunting buddies. On these permit numbers; does it have anything to do with the total cougar population?

Kevin Bunnell - We can't count cougars like we can with deer or elk. We just can't do that, so we have to use information we get from the % of females in the harvest and the age of the harvest and other information to try to get a sense of whether the population is going up or down. We use the data that gives us an indication of a trend, because we can't get a number. Believe me we all wish we could. We use the best information we have indicating what trend that population is in. If it is stable, or if it's increasing or if it's decreasing, and then use that data to make recommendation.

Chris Grundvig- In my experience, I have hunted for fifty years, and I can remember when I was young and there used to be a lot of deer. Anymore, everyone knows there are not that many deer and I have commented for years that it's probably because of cougar numbers. What will a cougar take? A deer a week?

Kevin Bunnell -Probably one every 8 or 9 days, on the average.

Chris Grundvig-I have heard estimates of anywhere from 3 to 7 thousand cougars in the state. How many deer does that equate to? Do we need that many cougars? I'm sure the cougar hunters would like to see more of them. I have never purposely hunted cougar but I have shot a few of them, because I was involved in a sheep business. When we had cougars after the sheep, we shot them or at least shot at them. In fact, one night out on the Stansbury mountains, we moved some sheep into a temporary range out there and then one evening we shot nine cougars. Nine cougars we shot at alright. Around where I live, I see cougars regularly. I might sound a little cynical because of the difference that I have seen over the years in the deer and elk population.

Terry Sanslow - Excuse me sir, if you don't have a question, come back during the comment period. Right now, we are at the question part.

If you have a question please ask it.

Chris Grundvig- Is the state trying to maintain its current cougar population, or are they trying to decrease it, or are they trying to increase it? What is the situation?

Kevin Bunnell - It just depends on the individual unit. On the units that are under predator management, we are actively trying to decrease cougars. The Manti is currently is under a predator management plan. Justin, what is the number on deer survival?

Justin- Brad do you have those numbers? The survival on the Manti? The adult doe survival?

Brad Crompton- The adult doe survival is 85%

Kevin Bunnell - Cougars primarily prey on adult animals and so if adult survival was way down that would give us an indication we have a cougar problem. When we are at 85%, the adult survival is pretty good.

Chris Grundvig-What numbers are you comparing them to? Back in 1965 I remember a lot of deer. Compared with today, there are hardly any around.

Kevin Bunnell - We're looking at the studies that have been done. That percentage indicates that adult survival is stable or growing. Anything above 80% survival is considered pretty good. If it was at 60%, then that would be a good indication that we had a predator problem and particularly with cougars. If fawns were on the low side, then that would point more towards an issue with coyotes, and so we look at the different data to determine how we are going to manage, and what steps we're going to take.

Chris Grundvig- I can get many people to agree with me that there are way too many cougars in the state over all. I think that is why our deer population is down.

Jason Binder- So if we're at 85% adult survival rate on the Manti, and we have 65 fawns per 100 does, that's obviously showing a coyote problem. Not the lions on the Manti.

Kevin Bunnell - The board has instructed us work to under a predator management plan.

Justin Shannon- The survival rate data might be a little bit preliminary. We have only had these collars on for about six months so we have a very short window of survival on these deer right know. We'll know more in the next couple of years.

Terry Sanslow- Any more questions from the audience? If not, we will move to the comment period.

Comments from the Public

Bob Peterson comment- I would like to suggest that the Northeast Manti be put back to predator management.

Bill Bates clarifying- Bob, are you sure you meant to put it back on?

Bob Peterson- Yes, take it off limited entry and go back to predator management.

Chris Grundvig comment- I have probably commented more than my share. When we hold these meetings, do your comments really get back to anyone that matters? Maybe there are a lot of people here that matter as far as the DWR is concerned, but I am kind of cynical, I will admit that. I probably need to get knocked a loop or two. I have always been of the opinion that the board comes and tells us what they have already decided and our comments mean absolutely nothing.

Terry Sanslow- I would like to make a little comment on that. With the new process we have, everything is recorded. There are complete minutes of all the meetings. The board members really take the minutes into consideration and look at them and they also look at why this RAC makes the decisions we make. It is a lot better than it used to be, and they do listen and they do care. Maybe that will make you feel a little better.

Lloyd Nielson comment- I make my living on lions. Everybody knows that. I'm the last person that wants lions wiped out. The worst thing we can do for the lion population is make the deer hunters mad, in my opinion. We have a whole eco- unit

that is under predator management, except one little area. Elk Ridge is a joke for the division in terms of what has happened down there. There are very few deer down there. They have 25 to 50 hunters on that unit per year. Last year, we hammered out a cougar plan and have talked about it quite a bit tonight. Last year, there was one RAC member that voted against it and I don't know why he is not here tonight, but one board member voted against it. So we either need to amend that plan, throw it out or live with it. The first two options are not viable right now, so we need to live with the plan. The only way we can restore deer herds in San Juan County is to go back and put San Juan back together with Elk Ridge. We need to put those two back together and then you can help that one little eco-system. I realize last year that was voted down, but I think that we need to give it another try. Terry Sanslow - It's to put the San Juan and what?

Lloyd Nielson- It's to put the San Juan and Elk Ridge back together in the harvest objective.

Derris Jones- Bill would it be possible for the RAC to have Guy tell us his feelings on keeping San Juan together or separated?

Bill Bates- If Terry asks them to do it.

Terry Sanslow - We can do that when it comes to our discussion period.

James Gilson- The first thing that I would like to talk about is the harvest summary. One of the fellows was talking about deer at the cougar meeting. There used to be a Wildlife Board and a Big Game Board and the Big Game Board would go and ask to work on the deer herd and the Wildlife Board had already made the recommendations for year. We were always trying to get the two boards together. Just a little history for the ladies and gents that didn't know that. When we come here to the cougar meeting, some of us are here because of the deer. The cougar and deer go hand in hand. First I am going to start out with the Manti harvest summary. If this is a three year summary we have only exceeded female harvest in one area and if I understand the chart right it is 30 %. That's on the northeast Manti. The southwest is at 5% female. Then I would like to pass out an e-mail. I would like to spend most of my time on this. There are currently about 310,000 mule deer. The state wide average is about 60 fawns per hundred does. If 60 fawns per 100 does actually make it to an adult in the spring after the first year-- that would be the best case scenario. That would mean an estimated minimum of thirty deer a year with a range of 30-45. An estimated 20,000 deer are killed by cars a year. 5,000 deer die of natural causes. 30,000 deer are killed by hunters. There are a lot of complex things that determine the numbers but the math is really simple. If you balance your checkbook, we start with 310,000 deer and 50,000 of them are bucks. There are 80,000 yearlings surviving, 180,000 breeding does, and the number of fawns each year is 108,000, so that's what we operate with. If there are more than 108,000 that die each year, the base population is reduced from this 310,000 which is already below the state goal of the amount of deer we are trying to achieve. We have printed out the mortality, so the total mortality is 50,000. If you will turn the page with me, you will see that we estimate that lions are killing 57,000 deer. If one lion is killing 40 deer a year, then there is only food available 1,450 lions. That's why I ask how many lions we have. If the lion population is 1,500 that's one thing, but if you add another 1,500 hundred, these numbers are significant on a deer herd that is already struggling. On the Manti, we are at 50% objective. Exactly a year ago, the division talked about the deer study a little bit. I would like to highlight something I shared

last year and again keep in mind we are focusing on the Manti and any other area that is in harvest objective. Adult female survival has been known to be the most sensitive indicator of lion predation. In other words, changing adult female survival can dramatically affect the results. Fawn survival also has major impacts on population growth rates although it's not as sensitive as adult doe survival. Fawn survival shows considerable potential. We're at 50% on the Manti. Any loss is dramatic. Was there an increase on the Manti last year? I don't see last year's numbers. If we are at 50% of our herd on the Manti, we should have a 50% increase on lion tags. A 50% loss in fawn survival or 50% population objective deer herd should require 50% reduction in cougars. So I am asking for a 50% increase in tags on the Manti.

Terry Sanslow - Your recommendation is to increase Manti tags by 50% percent above what the division has recommended.

Jason Binder comment- My name is Jason Binder. I 'm the president of the Utah Hounds Association. We were formally known as the Utah Federation of Houndsmen and then we changed our name. We have a few recommendations we would like to make. We would like see the incorporation of the sub-adult female in your recommendation process. If you take into consideration the full female harvest, the numbers double, just considering the females. So what that does is definitely make an impact on the future of our lions because we are losing all our sub-adults. They're never going to get three year-old or older. We would like to see that set in place. As of right now, there are 15 harvest objective units and split units not on the predator management plan. We would like to see those units return to limited entry. We are over-harvesting by 6 lions. Those lions are gone now. There are two other units that were over harvested by one lion, so in all actuality the Manti unit tags should have been lowered by another 60%, because they were over- harvested last year. Also, on the fourth Manti unit, we would like to see that move back to limited entry. It's been stated here today that we have a problem that there are no deer there, but it has also been stated that we have 65 fawns per 100 does. Kevin should explain to everybody that when you have a low fawn crop it's due to coyotes. If you compare the number of coyotes on the Manti compared to the number of lions, that would explain where all are deer have gone. At our last banquet, 46 surveys were filled out by houndsmen. They reported 1,254 days in the field with only 152 lions treed, which equals one lion every 25 days. We asked them to rate their hunt and 23 said poor and 5 said very poor. I'll agree that there are no deer, but we can't put all the blame on the lions. I drove from Wallsburg, which is up by Provo, and there were 8 dead deer on the highway. The cougar harvest sub- report says the adult female harvest has been 20% over the last three years. If you add in the sub-adults it comes out to be 37%, so we are actually harvesting way more females than we should, if you count all the females. In 1997 we went from harvesting 580 lions. In the last three years we harvested 300. If you look at the total picture, there are over 1,000 lion tags sold a year counting harvest objective and split units. If we are only harvesting a third of the lions, that should be a good indication that the lions aren't there. There are 22 units on the predator management plan but there are 37 on harvest objective. We don't feel that there should be as many units on harvest objective as split season. Over the last thirteen years we have decreased the lions statewide and the deer aren't coming back anywhere, so the problem is somewhere else--like highways, coyotes, drought or excessive hunting pressure.

Shayne Thompson comment- Hi, I am Shayne Thompson. I'm pretty much representing myself. I support James Gilson on what he was saying. There is an abundance of lions on the Manti right now. I get out quite a bit and the deer herd is way down. I don't want to blame the lions totally because there are other problems but I think they are a big part of the recovery of the deer herd. I am out there a lot and I see a lot of sign. They're there and I am a deer hunter and I am very passionate about it so I would like to see them increase the lion tags until the deer herd stabilizes a little, and we need to keep on the coyotes.

Terry Sanslow - We don't have any more comment cards from the audience so we will close it to the audience.

RAC Discussion

Terry Sanslow-Any questions from the RAC? Do we need to call Guy?

Derris Jones- I would like to hear the pros and cons from the division's standpoint. Should we be combining Elk Ridge with the Abajo or should they be kept separate.

Guy Wallace-In the past, we had separated them with separate objectives to try to focus pressure onto Elk Ridge, because if it's a combined unit, we have more lions and hunting pressure on the Abajo unit. The two units, even though there is quite a bit of mixing, there is a big difference in production between the two units. The Abajo is a lot more productive, because those deer are on the east side of the mountain. They get on those winter wheat fields in the fall and the spring and so they get more of a boost of nutrition that relates to higher fawn production. Elk Ridge is a lot dryer. It's a high plateau with not as much drinking water. We see typically low production and in drought years we see record lows. Historically, it has been that way, so we have tried to target the pressure on predators on that unit to get the deer to recover from the long term lows. We have a variety of methods. The Abajos has recovered a lot faster. Elk Ridge has not. If we combine those two, then the total number would put the whole thing in the 80% bracket, and throw the whole thing out of predator management. You would have split season or limited entry, if we combine the two units, because the numbers on the Abajo are high enough that it brings both units up. As far as the coyotes, we have targeted Elk Ridge and we have had Wildlife Services do winter control with helicopters killing coyotes. Some years they do pretty well and so we have been doing everything we can to try and bring up Elk Ridge, but because of low productivity it doesn't recover as fast as the Abajos. With the system we have in place, once it reaches 75% of the herd objective, then that takes it out of predator management.

Darrel Mecham- What kind of impact do bears have on your fawns?

Guy Wallace- There was a study done on the Lasals in the late 70's and they didn't specifically say numbers but they did indicate that bears were a significant predator, same as coyotes. Elk Ridge has always had lower production than the Abajos. In one year, we saw less than 20 fawns per 100 does on that unit. It's hard to recover your deer herd when you have production that low.

Derris Jones- So if we were to combine Elk Ridge with the Abajos, that would take it out of the criteria for predator management and would make it limited entry for the whole San Juan.

Todd Huntington- Can I ask James a question? James, on your harvest recommendations on the Manti for the northwest and the southwest, you have

proposed to increase permits from 10 to 13 and from 5 to 8. That is close to 50% more on one of the sub-units.

James Gilson- On the first hand, let's talk about fawn survival. We get 50% fawn survival according to this. There is only room for 550 statewide according to all the mortalities that we talked about. The harvest data doesn't show that we are having an impact on the female population except in one area. The deer herd can't improve based on this data. I don't want to wipe out lions but there is room to have an increase on the Manti because of the data.

Todd Huntington- A couple of those were increased and I just wanted to make sure.

Terry Sanslow- Any more questions? Or comments? What I have so far is to put the Manti back into limited entry or split season, and then to put the San Juan and the Abajo back together, which would make it limited entry and recommend 50% more permits than the DWR recommendation on the Manti. That was all the comment recommendations that I had written down here.

Todd Huntington- I move that we accept the Division's proposal with one exception, that we increase the tags on the Manti by 50% above the recommendations.

Terry Sanslow- A motion by Todd Huntington to accept the cougar management plan as presented with the addition of 50% above DWR recommendations on the Manti. Do we have a second?

Jeff Horrocks- I would like to make an amendment to those recommendations that we request that the DWR revisit the cougar numbers and cougar tags, not just the cougar numbers but the deer numbers too.

Bill Bates- Can I ask for a clarification? Jeff, what you're asking is for the division to go back and revisit the number of tags on the Manti?

Jeff Horrocks- Yes.

Terry Sanslow- So the motion is to accept the cougar guidebook and rule as presented and ask that the division look at the Manti deer and cougar numbers and increase the tags if needed. Are there any questions?

Derris Jones- That amendment is removing the 50% that Todd requested, and changing it to having the division just take a look at it. We'll let the division come up with the number instead of a hard 50%.

Terry Sanslow- Do we have a second on that?

Derris Jones- I'll second.

Terry Sanslow- Second by Derris. Any Questions?

VOTING

Motion was made by Todd Huntington to accept R657-10 Cougar Guidebook and Rule as presented, except that the number of cougar permits on the Manti unit be increased by 50%. This motion was amended by Jeff Horrocks to recommend that the division review harvest and prey recruitment data on the Manti unit and adjust its cougar permit recommendations as necessary.

Seconded by Derris Jones

Motion passed with opposing votes cast by Laura Kamala and Darrel Mecham

6) **R657-24 Compensation for Lion and Bear Damage (5-year) (Action)**
-Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Terry Sanslow- On a map, what is the wolf protected area. Isn't it the Idaho border?

Kevin Bunnell- I can explain, It follows I -84 where it comes down from Idaho over there by Snowville. It comes down I-84 to where I-84 meets I-15, then follows I-15 to I-84 then leaves and goes up Weber canyon, then I-84 to I-80, then up to Evanston. Everything that is East of I-84 and North of I-80 is going to be listed. It's Rich County, Cache County, parts of Box Elder and part of Weber, Davis and Morgan.

Terry Sanslow- Are there any questions from the RAC?

Derris Jones- Kevin, What's the reason for not covering damage statewide verses on a delisted area?

Kevin Bunnell- I think it's because there is a way for them to claim compensation in the area where they are listed. It means everybody's covered, that's my interpretation.

Questions from the Public

Terry Sanslow- Questions from the audience? I don't have any comment cards. We will close it to the audience. Are there any questions or comments from the RAC?

Comments from the Public

RAC Discussion

VOTING

Motion was made by Derris Jones to accept R657-24 Compensation for Lion and Bear Damage (5-year) as presented.

Seconded by Jeff Horrocks

Motion passed unanimously

7) **Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04 (Action)**
-Kevin Bunnell, Mammals Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Laura Kamala-do you ever do any relocation?

Kevin Bunnell- Rarely, but occasionally we'll have a young animal that is dispersing from one area to another and it will end up in someone's backyard up a tree. We may just move it onto another range. That's really the only time we relocate lions, usually they are young animals that are just dispersing and end up in a bad spot.

Terry Sanslow – Any more questions from the RAC?

Questions from the Public

Terry Sanslow-Any question's from the audience?

James Gilson- Bill, do you know the number of dollars that we spent with ADC on what they did this winter on the Manti?

Bill Bates- I don't know, typically around 30,000 to 40,000 dollars.

James Gilson-Did we get sage grouse funding? Did we apply that to ADC stuff or are we doing enough sage grouse work on the Manti?

Kevin Bunnell-I believe the sage grouse are already identified in the predator management plan.

James Gilson- OK, so do you know what is on the Manti?

Kevin Bunnell- What happens is that the regional personnel get together with Wildlife Services and they identify a certain area where they think the work needs to occur, some of that may be fawning areas and some of that may be sage grouse so that's where they will focus their gunning . Some of that was on areas identified specifically for sage grouse.

Comments from the Public

Terry Sanslow- Any more questions from the audience? I don't have any comment cards. Do we have comments or motions?

RAC Discussion

Derris Jones- I would like to make a request. The division did wildlife 101 training a while back. Maybe if we had another one for predator and prey and also included the deer collaring study, it would help us make decisions about these issues.

Terry Sanslow- Any more comments? Do we have a motion?

VOTING

Motion was made by Derris Jones to accept the Managing Predatory Wildlife Species Policy W1AG-04 as presented.

Seconded by Pam Riddle

Motion passed unanimously

8) Furbearer Guidebook and Rule R657-11 (Action)

-Justin Dolling, Game Mammals Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Terry Sanslow- I have a question on the beaver management plan that's in effect now. Can some of these beavers that have been removed from the list be trapped and moved to these areas so that transplants can take place?

Justin Dolling- The plan has an approved list and so we have to stay within that approved list.

Terry Sanslow- That's what I mean. Can some of these be moved? I know some of them are quite a distance away, but the Muddy drainage was on the list. There are a lot of beaver, and I was looking at them last night and there are a lot of dams up there. I just wondered if that was a policy.

Justin Dolling- If we are going to move beaver, we need to move them to areas approved on the list.

Derris Jones-I noticed that bobcat handlers have to have a furbearer license. Has the Division considered making that standardized with cougar and bear commercial operations?

Justin Dolling- That's a good question Derris, and no. We haven't even considered that.

Questions from the Public

Terry Sanslow-Questions from the audience?

Comments from the Public

Terry Sanslow-I do have a comment card from Kevin Peacock.

Kevin Peacock- I am the president of the Utah Trappers Association. We always oppose any cuts or added restrictions except this time. We are going to support the division's recommendations. Anybody with any sense can see that the cuts are needed. Thanks.

Terry Sanslow- No more comment cards so we will close it to the audience, and go to the RAC for discussion.

RAC Discussion

Terry Sanslow- Anymore questions from the RAC? Anyone care to make a motion?

VOTING

Motion was made by Jeff Horrocks to accept the Furbearer Guidebook and Rule R657-11 as presented.

Seconded by Laura Kamala

Motion passed unanimously

9) Otter Management Plan Revision (Action)

-Justin Dolling, Game Mammals Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Terry Sanslow- Straight Canyon in Emery County, is that going to be on the otter transplant list?

Justin Dolling- I initially thought it was approved through the Wildlife Board process. After digging into the details, it wasn't, so we have two options. The RAC can approve that tonight or we could add it to the list, which might be 1-3 years down the road.

Terry Sanslow- I thought they were working on the transplant anyway. We could put that in motion and hopefully get it done this year.

Justin Dolling- Correct me if I am wrong, but I think you have the latitude to recommend it, if you feel that all the bugs are worked out in the Straight Canyon site and if everyone feels comfortable. That is a good place for otters and I don't see any reason why you couldn't approve their introduction.

Terry Sanslow – What constitutes a nuisance otter?

Justin Dolling- It's usually those otters that get into private fisheries. They get in there and get into a mode of killing faster than they can consume, and so they can really raise havoc on private fish ponds. That is essentially the only case that an otter would become a nuisance.

Jeff Horrocks-I went to the county commission a couple of times to address this. The water district had some concerns. They were worried that special water management would be required if otters were released. Bill came and addressed the concerns with the conservancy districts and the commission. They were able to address all of our concerns.

Bill Bates- Rick Larson and Tony Wright met with Emery County water users in Huntington, Cleveland and Cottonwood Creek. They were concerned that we would ask for water management regulations to be put in effect that would benefit otters. We signed a cooperative agreement with them that we assured them that we would not ask for any involuntary water to be set aside for otters. We wouldn't ask for any water management out of Joe's Valley, or any of those kinds of things. We came to an agreement that was signed by them, and ourselves and the Bureau of Reclamation. I really don't think that there would have been anything that we would have asked for anyway. I think that we are good to go and the county commission was supportive yesterday when I met with them. I think as far as Emery County, we have covered our bases.

Jeff Horrocks- I appreciate all you have done, Bill.

Terry Sanslow- Anymore questions from the RAC?

Darrell Mecham-Do you know if they have talked about this in any other places like the Provo River? For example, if there is a conflict with fishermen or land owners. Do you have a written agreement or anything in there to manage otters if they start decimating the resource? Do you have anything like that? I don't see that, I see nuisance otters and private ponds and all that. What do we fall back on when sportsmen groups come apart or when people get upset?

Justin Dolling- Otters and trout are kind of the aquatic equivalent of deer. The plan talks about harvest, it talks about live trapping. For example, on the Provo River, we have a graduate student that is looking at otter distribution, food habit analysis and their characteristics. If there's an impact, we have the ability to come in and move some of those otters whether it be with live traps or lethal means.

Derris Jones- Justin, do you have any triggers in place for the otter population when they get to certain levels or a certain number of waters that you might start harvesting for sport trapping? Or is that the next phase or round of management plans?

Justin Dolling- Essentially we have done very little monitoring, if any monitoring of the otter population, so we need to get up to speed on how we monitor the otter population and how we detect the increase or decrease in the otter population. We are exploring some different survey protocols that are being conducted in some of the Midwestern states.

Questions from the Public

Terry Sanslow- Questions from the audience? I don't have any comment cards so we'll close it to the audience.

Comments from the Public

RAC Discussion

Terry Sanslow- Do we want to add Straight Canyon to the deal or not?

Derris Jones- I feel if all the bases are covered with the RDCC and the county and all that kind of stuff, it would speed things up by three years. My guess is if you are not going to revisit this for another three years, it might be that long before we can do a transplant anyway just in case we get a surplus of otters.

Terry Sanslow- Would you like to make that a motion?

VOTING

Motion was made by Derris Jones to accept the Otter Management Plan Revision as presented and to approve Straight Canyon as a release site.

Seconded by Laura Kamala

Motion passed unanimously

10) Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09 (Action)

-Tom Aldrich, Wildlife Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Terry Sanslow - Thanks Tom. Any questions from the RAC?

Derris Jones - Who sets the dates for the Snow Goose festival? Is that a DWR function?

Tom Aldrich - Some of the local community come to a compromise.

Derris Jones - Are they trying to disrupt the goose hunt or did it just happen that way?

Tom Aldrich - I don't believe that it is an intentional disruption. Two years ago it was later. They actually moved it earlier this last year and what they found was snow geese weren't there in large numbers, so they moved it back a week.

Derris Jones - Is March 10th the latest you can go?

Tom Aldrich - Yes! March 10th is the ending day by 3:00 p.m., so we can't go beyond that.

Terry Sanslow - Any more questions from the RAC? Any comments from the audience?

Questions from the Public

Terry Sanslow-Questions from the audience? If you would like to make a comment we need you to fill out a comment card and bring them up here to Bill if there is something that you want to comment on.

Comments from the Public

RAC Discussion

Terry Sanslow-Discussion by the RAC?

VOTING

Motion was made by Jeff Horrocks to accept the Waterfowl Guidebook and Rule R657-09 as presented.

Seconded by Pam Riddle

Motion passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

15 public in attendance

The next Wildlife Board meeting will take place on August 19 at 10 a.m. at the DNR Board Room at 1594 W. North Temple, SLC

The next southeast regional RAC meeting will take place on September 8 at 6:30 p.m. at the John Wesley Powell Museum in Green River

