

**Southern Regional Advisory Council Meeting
Richfield High School
Richfield, UT
May 7, 2013
7:00 p.m.**

1. REVIEW & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

MOTION: To accept minutes and agenda as written.

VOTE: Unanimous.

2. UPLAND GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION: To accept the Upland Game Recommendations as presented by the Division.

VOTE: Unanimous

3. BIGHORN SHEEP MANAGEMENT PLAN

MOTION: To accept the Bighorn Sheep Management Plan as presented by the Division.

VOTE: Unanimous

4. GOAT MANAGEMENT PLAN

MOTION: To accept the Goat Management Plan as presented by the Division.

VOTE: Unanimous

5. RAC OFFICER ELECTIONS

MOTION: To elect Dave Black as Southern RAC Chair.

VOTE BY BALLOT: 8:2, 2 abstained

MOTION: To elect Cordell Pearson as Southern RAC Vice-Chair.

VOTE: Unanimous

**Southern Regional Advisory Council Meeting
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 7:00 p.m.**

RAC Members Present	DWR Personnel Present	Wildlife Board Present	RAC Members Not Present
Layne Torgerson Clair Woodbury Rusty Aiken Sam Carpenter Cordell Pearson Steve Flinders Dave Black Mike Worthen Mack Morrell Mike Staheli Dale Bagley Brian Johnson	Lynn Chamberlain Giani Julander Kevin Bunnell Kent Hersey Blair Stringham Brent Kasza Paul Washburn Vance Mumford Dustin Schaible Riley Peck Teresa Griffin		Harry Barber

Steve Flinders called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. There were approximately 2 interested parties in attendance in addition to RAC members, members of the Wildlife Board, and Division employees. Steve Flinders introduced himself and asked RAC members to introduce themselves. Steve Flinders explained RAC meeting procedures.

Review and Acceptance of Agenda and Minutes (action)

Steve Flinders: Kevin’s ready. Seven o’clock? Let’s get this meeting started. Welcome to Southern Region RAC meeting. If I seem a little smiley and celebratory it’s, I don’t mean to be but . . . Uh, let’s first thank our BYU presenters for coming down. Thank you guys; we look forward to your presentations later. I’m Steve Flinders; I represent the Fish Lake and Dixie National Forests. And let’s start on my right and introduce the RAC please.

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

Rusty Aiken: Rusty Aiken from Cedar City, agriculture.

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

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

Kevin Bunnell: Kevin Bunnell. I’m the Regional Supervisor for the Southern Region and I serve as the secretary on the RAC.

Dave Black: Dave Black from St. George, representing the public at large.

Mike Worthen: Mike Worthen from Cedar City, representing public at large.

Mack Morrell: Mack Morrell, Bicknell, representing agriculture.

Mike Staheli: Mike Staheli from Delta, I'm at-large.

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

Brian Johnson: Brian Johnson, Enoch, Utah; and I represent the non-consumptives.

Steve Flinders: I don't see Jake here tonight from the Wildlife Board. I also wanted to

Kevin Bunnell: I just heard from Jake. He didn't get the message and he's in Beaver on his way back.

Steve Flinders: Oh, poor Jake's in Beaver. This meeting was on the Internet. For too long it said Beaver. So somebody's going to owe Jake dinner. I also wanted to say Layne Torgerson is going to be a few minutes late. He's got some business he's got to take care of for fifteen or twenty. I don't see any brand new public of the RAC so I'm going to move through the way this works in an abbreviated version. The division's presentation, question from the public, questions from the RAC, comments. If you want to make a comment, cards . . . somebody hold up a comment card. I think everybody in here's been to a RAC meeting. So I'd like everybody to look at the orange sheet. I'll take a motion on the minutes and the agenda for tonight. Motion by Cordell to approve. Seconded by Mack. Those in favor? It looked unanimous.

Cordell Pearson made the motion to accept the agenda and minutes as presented. Mack Morrell Seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: So, I got buried last week and so Kevin filled in for me at the Board meeting. So we'll turn this over to Kevin and hear about the Wildlife Board update and then the regional update. Kevin, if you would please.

Wildlife Board Update:

-Kevin Bunnell, Southern Regional Supervisor

Kevin Bunnell: Okay, at the Wildlife Board, the Board did take at least in one fashion or another all of the recommendations that came out of the southern RAC. They didn't look exactly the way they came out of the RAC in some cases, but acknowledged that at least the sentiment behind them. So I'll run through these pretty quick.

- On elk, they passed the UBA recommendation on the splits; to have the splits stay . . . What is it Kent, 50 . . . 50/30/20 instead of 60/25/15 when there's a late hunt. So they did and that came out of this RAC and I think most of the RAC's supported that. They did ask the Southern Region specifically to evaluate the spike hunting on the Monroe unit and put that on the action log with a November due date. So Teresa and her staff will be working on that and give a presentation back to the Board with a recommendation on that in

November.

- On deer they passed the general season as recommended. So they didn't support the, or leaving the tags as they were on the units down here. And really the discussion there was, you know, we made a commitment when we passed this if the units were above a certain buck to doe then we needed to increase tags the same way that we're reducing tags when they go below. And so that was kind of the way that went. They did reduce the tags on the Henry Mountain back down to the 2012 levels. And they reduced the tags on the Book Cliffs down to 20 percent. They reduced them by 20 percent instead of 15 percent, which was the recommendation by the Division.
- On pronghorn they passed the Division's recommendation on pronghorn for buck harvest, which was higher than what came out of this body. And then on antlerless on pronghorn, I thought they came to a reasonable compromise. So they passed the 500 permits as recommended by the Division but then they instructed the Division, after our summer classification is done in August that if the fawn crop is what we expect it to be that in addition to the 500 tags we will also translocate additional pronghorn off of the unit. So instead of doing 750 in tags they did 500 in tags plus a transplant on top of that because we do have some places in the state where we can supplement our pronghorn herds. And so I thought that kind of caught the spirit of what came out of this RAC but in a little bit different fashion.

Kevin Bunnell: With that I'd be glad to take any questions before I move on to the regional update.

Sam Carpenter: What about on that Skutumpah cow hunt did?

Kevin Bunnell: Oh yes, they did extend that to January 31st. Thanks for reminding me Sam. I need to have that in my notes, I just passed over it. Any other questions on the Board update?

Regional Update:

-Kevin Bunnell, Southern Regional Supervisor

Kevin Bunnell: Let me hit the regional update real quick.

- So out of our aquatics section, probably the main thing to be aware of there is there will be open houses in three communities in Southern Utah over the next month or so. In Salina on May 16, in Loa on May 22, and in Cedar City on May 30th. That's to get input on the recommendations that will be coming in for the fishing guidebook.
- From Law Enforcement, the port of entry checks coming in from out of Arizona to check boats, primarily coming from Lake Mead, will begin the first or second week in June and those will run five days a week, probably over the weekend and then we're not exactly sure which days, and it may rotate different days each week to make sure we're catching as many boats as we can. And then our law enforcement will also begin doing checkpoints with boats leaving Lake Powell, with the discovery of quagga mussels in Lake Powell.
- From our habitat section we just completed a pretty large land trade. It was a

three-way trade between the Division and UDOT and SITLA. If you're familiar with our Lee Kay hunter education center up in Salt Lake, there's some land that's immediately east of that that was also owned by the Division and that's where the new Mountain View corridor is going to be coming through. And so UDOT needed that land and so we worked a trade between us and SITLA. So SITLA paid UDOT for the land and then we got SITLA . . . Or UDOT, yeah UDOT paid SITLA and then we got SITLA land out of it. In this region we picked up two sections within the Summit wildlife management area. So an additional 1200 acres there. And a section, a full section of land that's adjacent, or within the Fillmore WMA that were SITLA ground that will now be deeded to the Division. There's a second round on that trade that will be coming and we may pick up some additional pieces of SITLA land that are, it will all be either contained within or adjacent to our existing WMAs to expand them. And then lastly out of habitat, the habitat section, the seasonal road closures on the WMAs ended as of April 30th. For particular interest this time of year for people that are out collecting sheds.

- Uh, the wildlife section, reports we're getting from the general season turkey hunts seem to be that people are finding birds. It's probably a little bit spotty but in general they're finding birds. Some of you may be aware we're going to implement a day old pheasant chick program. We have, I don't know, eight or ten people within the southern region that will be raising pheasant chicks that people that sign up and volunteer within our region will get to release those birds as adults within the region. So the more we can get the better we can salt those around the region.
- Just for information, the antlerless draw the application period starts May 29th and goes through June 20th. And then the big game draw results will be posted on or about May 31st.

Kevin Bunnell: And that's all I have for a regional update and again, glad to take any questions.

Mack Morrell: Where's the open houses held? I mean what location?

Kevin Bunnell: Um, let me look. I'm going to have to look that up Mack. I had it. I got it in an e-mail but I didn't write down the exact.

Mack Morrell: Is that going to be posted somewhere or?

Kevin Bunnell: It is. It's on our website but I'll look it up and get it for you before the end of the meeting.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Brian.

Brian Johnson: Who do we talk to about those pheasants, to get more information on that? Okay.

Steve Flinders: Lots of good information tonight. Are we ready to jump into the agenda? Meeting locations.

Kevin Bunnell: Okay, so in Salina it will be at the firehouse on May 16th. In Loa it will be at the Wayne County courthouse on the 22nd. And then on the 30th in Cedar City it will be at our office.

Steve Flinders: Great. Blair, we're ready if you are. Upland game recommendations, floor is yours.

(Layne Torgerson arrived before Upland Game presentation began.)

Upland Game Recommendations (action)
-Blair Stringham, Waterfowl Program Coordinator
(see attachment 1)

11:42 to 20:08 of 2:06:06

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Questions from the RAC? Sure Mike.

Mike Worthen: Knowing that there is no numbers to distribute into the other parts of the state, is there any depredation permits that landowners can get in addition to the hunt numbers that are given by the Fish and Wildlife Service?

Blair Stringham: There aren't currently. We are working with them to try to get an opportunity to issue permits in the spring, which would be used for depredation purposes. The issue we do run into with that is they would come from our total harvest allocation for the year. And so whether we kill them in the spring or the fall, it would still be just a certain number of cranes that we could harvest each year.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Sure Mack.

Mack Morrell: Got a question, on upland game, does that include sage grouse?

Blair Stringham: Not currently in this RAC. We have an upland game coordinator and those recommendations won't be coming until the following RAC next year. So these are specifically just for a few changes we had to make for migratory species.

Mack Morrell: So for the sage grouse there's, you won't, they won't be proposing any RAC meeting for this year?

Blair Stringham: Not this year. It's on a 3-year guidebook cycle, and so this is the third year of the guidebook. So those changes will come about next May at the RAC meeting then.

Steve Flinders: They try to save us meetings and work. I know hard to it's hard to keep up. I think it's a good thing. Other questions?

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the audience?

None.

Comments from the public:

Steve Flinders: I don't have any comment cards. Lots of controversy here.

None.

RAC Discussion and Vote:

Steve Flinders: Clair.

Clair Woodbury: I've been a dove hunter my whole life and it's really good to see that third limit put on it for possession. I think that's fantastic. Good job.

Steve Flinders: Other comments? Motions? There's one.

Dale Bagley: I'll make a motion to accept the upland game recommendations as presented.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Dale, seconded by Brian. Discussion on the motion? Those in favor? Any against? I assume you abstained because you just got here. Okay. Unanimous

Dale Bagley made the motion to accept the upland game recommendations as presented. Brian Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Blair. Moving on, Kent. Big horn sheep management plan. Have you figured out how to triple the limit on Eurasian collared doves? It's almost all I see and people don't realize they can kill them any time anywhere, any means. Tell them to call Blair; he's doing morning doves a favor.

Clair Woodbury: They eat really good too. They're double the size of a regular dove.

Brian Johnson: We call them dovezillas.

Some extraneous conversation about Eurasian collared doves.

Steve Flinders: Sorry Kent.

Kent Hersey: That's all right. Thanks Mr. Chair.

Bighorn Sheep Plan (action)
-Kent Hersey, Big Game Project Leader
(See attachment 1)

24:08 to 26:02 of 2:06:06

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Thanks Kent. Questions from the RAC? Sam.

Sam Carpenter: On your decline for the desert species, have we been able to pinpoint or is there any particular reason that they're on the slide and the rest of them are doing all right?

Kent Hersey: It's a combination of reasons. In some areas cougars certainly have an impact; disease certainly plays a roll. We have a big study effort going on on the North San Rafael right now. Cougars are certainly killing animals but when you look at the disease profile they've also been exposed to a variety of different pneumonia type bacteria. So they're, they've obviously been exposed, have low production, and have low survival. And so unfortunately it's not just one reason. But it seems to be a variety of reasons that we're constantly working to try and fix all of them.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, and on your transplants, have we got any data back on the ones you've transplanted there in Cottonwood on the East Zion? And I see where you're ticket Paunsagaunt for some transplants, where would you release sheep out there?

Kent Hersey: Um, for the Paunsagaunt I'll let Dustin answer specifics. But for Zion, yeah we have. They have survived well. There was one animal that kind of came back to the west quite a bit. Most of them stayed within 5 miles of their release site. And I believe, I have one died. So one out of the twenty died. So they have done pretty well and they are staying where we want them to.

Dustin Schaible: Where sheep exist on the Pauns is over in the Pariah town site, just kind of over there by those ruins. There's some real good vacant habitat up in Hackberry on that side. We've surveyed all the way from there through Johnson all the way back over to Kanab and there's habitat there, it's vacant. We'll have to approach that probably pretty cautiously with the connecting, you know, the Zion herds with the Kaiparowits. So it's not a high priority in the mediate. But there's habitat there and we just wanted to be all-inclusive for the purpose of this plan.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, and did they determine what killed the one at Zion? Or did a predator or did it just, do we know?

Teresa Griffin: Hi Sam. Uh, Jason Nicholes was just able to hike in to that sheep last week; it was really difficult to get into. It was down in the bottom of a ravine. Its leg was broken. He could tell that it had been bleeding out of its nose at the time of death. It had been maybe a month since it died. So I don't know. I'll have to send you some pictures. It is possible that it could have fallen. It was in a pretty precarious place. Normally those sheep are pretty good but it is possible. But it doesn't appear . . . I think it has been fed on since it's death but I don't think that was the cause.

Steve Flinders: Layne, do you still have a question?

Layne Torgerson: Yeah, and Mack might know more about this than anybody, but has that bunch of sheep that was at Sun glow, have they been taken care of, I mean are they still there or are they gone or, do we know, does anybody know that?

Kent Hersey: As far as we know we've pretty much taken care of all of them that we are aware of. But if we get any more reports, we have the ability to take those out. And part of the plan here we may even have the possibility of a ewe hunter too, to have the public have an opportunity at that, because we don't want sheep there.

Layne Torgerson: Well yeah I know they don't want them there. But nobody has seen them for what a year or a couple of years Mack?

Mack Morrell: No, they were there last year. But anyway, according to Jim Lamb if anybody spots any you're supposed to call him and he's supposed to take care of it. And I'm not aware of any recent sightings, of course that doesn't, you know, there's not a lot of people there in the winter time, they use that in the summer time a lot. But I have a question also, is your population include the national park, Capitol Reef National Park herd?

Kent Hersey: No it doesn't. This is all just on DWR managed herds. So park herds, all of the parks are not included in this.

Mack Morrell: Because I think they're doing pretty good. I see them quite a bit when I go through there down to the desert after cows. Especially when there's no snow to get water on they come down to the river.

Kent Hersey: Yeah, we, for the purposes of this plan we just use our numbers because different parks fly on different frequencies and it's just difficult to get all that information and actually have it be the most up to date.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions? Brian.

Brian Johnson: Um, I had a gentleman call me and he was asking about some sheep down by Hall's Crossing and on the east side of Hole In The Rock. And from what he explained to me is there's sheep there and there's no hunt even around, no boundaries that, maybe just explain that to let and me me know.

Dustin Schaible: I'm sorry I didn't quite catch the question there.

Brian Johnson: I was just wondering if there was sheep down by Hall's Crossing on the east side of Hole In The Rock.

Dustin Schaible: There, yeah, I think from what I could gather I think I kind of, I saw that same question but I think it was over in the southeastern region, it might be over on tribal lands. Um, everything on by the Hole In The Rock on this side of the lake, west of the lake, is part of the Kaiparowits whether it's in the Escalante, east or west subunits. So all those sheep on the west side of the lake are available for hunting. Where that setting is, if it's on the east side of the lake it might be on tribal lands. It's in the southeastern region, I wouldn't, I couldn't comment on that.

Brian Johnson: It, yeah, they said it was on the east side. So if it's tribal lands we obviously can't play there. Is there a hunt that borders the tribal land? Is there a boundary that borders that?

Kent Hersey: Yeah, I mean I don't have the specific hunt boundaries in front of me. But, um, yeah, I mean the San Juan unit is what borders the Navajo Nation, and yeah there's hunt all throughout there on the San Juan herds. There are some sheep, I mean if he's down in John's Canyon area and it's part of that, that's a herd that we established in 2008, I believe, and we just added some sheep to that one to try and get it going. So there are some sheep there, not enough to, we kind of want to let it build before we open that to a hunt. Especially the only ones, we didn't move any big rams there so I wouldn't think he would have saw any large rams worth hunting at that point, unless they came over from the Navajo Nation, that's possible too because they're always coming over from there.

Brian Johnson: I just, I just was wondering where this is a 5-year plan if you wanted to include that. If you include that herd then when you get . . . I just don't know how that works if it's a five-year plan if you can put them in if you get a herd big enough or do you have to wait to the end of the five-year plan?

Kent Hersey: This plan doesn't deal with, I mean in terms of a hunt boundary that's going to be an annual thing that we do with the November. This plan is just dealing with populations not hunts.

Brian Johnson: Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Sure Mike.

Mike Worthen: I commend the Division for following the WAFWA lead on working with domestic livestock on these, on sheep because it is a huge problem where in the past, way back in the past, sheep have, domestic sheep have been moved out of an area because of the conflict with bighorns. And we don't want to see that at all. But what I, I guess I, is there a mile buffer or a mileage buffer that domestic and bighorn need to be kept apart?

Kent Hersey: In the past frequently what you'll see is ten miles but unfortunately it's not that simple. Buffers depend on, it's ultimately habitat connectivity. If you have, you know, sheep just up canyon, domestic sheep, you can have 20 miles of canyon separating them but if it's essentially all bighorn habitat it could easily be bypassed especially by a wandering ram. Um, if on the other hand if it's non-habitat, or like salt flats or something like that, it would be you know, we could probably get away with a lesser amount. But, so it's difficult to put an exact distance that we want to buffer anything. But we just try and do our best to keep as much separation as possible to try and minimize the risk between the two. Ten miles is the, generally is what you'll hear sited a lot.

Mike Worthen: Okay. And then uh, on the proposed hunt numbers, the percentage that you've got, is that going to be very similar to what we have now?

Kent Hersey: It is. It's actually a reduction. There's been some conflict in the past. We've had unit plans that used counted populations. And the old statewide plan actually called for 12 percent of the estimated population; um, and so we're actually in conflict with ourselves there on some of those areas. So we actually switched it back to just using counted numbers. That way people feel more comfortable with them. And then instead of just using a hard 12 percent we use 12 to 15 percent to allow for some extra opportunity where biologists and sportsman both thought it could be handled.

Steve Flinders: Good questions; any others?

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the audience?

Lee Tracy: You mentioned California bighorns, I don't know if whether they're a sub-species or what, or not, I understand that Nevada actually has separate hunts for those. How do they fit in with the plan and are they separate hunts or how does that work?

Kent Hersey: Yeah, they, we kind of still keep them a little separate. The research actually shows that there's really no difference between Californias And Rockies, they're all the same; versus Rockies and Deserts are different sub-species. So there isn't even a sub-species difference between Californias and Rockies. That said we still do kind of keep track of them differently in like the Newfoundland, Antelope Island, and Stansberry is where we have, are technically Californias, but they fit under the Rocky Mountain point system and just follow those hunts. So we only have it broken out into the two instead of three.

Steve Flinders: Another question up here Mike. For the record that was, the last question was from Lee Tracy..

Mike Worthen: In the plan one of the goals was to make all suitable habitat, have sheep in all suitable habitat. Do, does the Division have a map of proposed habitat where sheep are not?

Kent Hersey: It's, the map I had up there has some sheep, some of that has empty sheep habitat in it. So yeah, that's kind of the map we're going off of. But there are some other areas not inclusive in that. We're actually in the process of updating our sheep GIS layer so we're working on that. And it's kind of tricky with sheep because pretty much every mountain range in the west desert used to have sheep but because of all the domestic raising out there we don't consider that sheep habitat. So it's kind of, all of those things get factored in when we actually outline our sheep habitat. But we are in the process of updating that layer this year.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions? Go ahead Layne.

Layne Torgerson: On the proposed new sheep areas on the Mineral Mountains and on Oak Creek, do you have any idea, can you tell us when that will go forward or is there any time frame on that as far as getting sheep on those two mountain ranges?

Kent Hersey: Oak Creek we're hoping to do this fall/winter. Uh, in terms of the Mineral Mountains, uh, we still have working with BLM to insure, I think they have to do some NEPA and some other things; so probably a little further out on that one. But we are hoping to do our initial transplant, likely sheep off of Antelope Island, probably in January of this year, this coming year.

Steve Flinders: All good questions, any others?

Comments from the public:

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

None.

RAC Discussion and Vote:

Steve Flinders: It's ours to deal with. Thanks Kent. Anybody want to make a motion? Cordell's got it.

Cordell Pearson: I'll make a motion that we accept DWR's plan as proposed for the 5-year plan for Bighorn sheep.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Cordell; seconded by Clair. Any discussion on that motion? Those in favor then? That looked unanimous,

Cordell Pearson made the motion to accept the Bighorn Sheep Management Plan as presented. Clair Woodbury seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. You're on the next one too. Go.

Goat Management Plan R657-41 (action)
-Kent Hersey, Big Game Project Leader
(See attachment 1)

50:43 to 58:50 of 2:06:06

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Questions for Kent? Goats. Yes sir.

Dale Bagley: On the Beaver in 2011, I believe it way, you have about 300 goats on your count. What's your objective up there?

Kent Hersey: 125? But that's in the core area isn't it? Isn't there a (inaudible) objective? It's 125 in the core area and I believe it's 175 including the outskirts. So yeah, we are quite over objective on that unit and we've been trying to, we've been issuing nanny tags and plan some transplants to try to reduce that population.

Steve Flinders: That's probably part of the reason they're on the Dutton too.

Dale Bagley: Well and then one other question, I mean the population's increasing but the age, it's stable lately, but is that because of the transplants and the increased permits or why has the age dropped on that a year or so over the last ten years?

Kent Hersey: Um, you know age is something that we collect on all these goat units. I don't know if it's necessarily indicative of um, what's out there in the population. Once a goat reaches 4 years old you don't see a whole lot of horn growth. They'll get thicker but they don't really grow any length. So those older goats aren't necessarily being selected for as much. Um, that being said we have had increased harvest on that unit so with the amount of tags we've been putting out there seeing a slight decline in age wouldn't be too surprising. But it's not, age on goats is not necessarily, and that's why we don't have it as a management target in the plan because it's not necessarily indicative of what is available.

Dale Bagley: Okay, thanks.

Steve Flinders: Other questions?

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Questions from the audience? Lee.

Lee Tracy: Lee Tracy. Um, both on the goat and the sheep hunts, has the Division ever considered separate weapon hunts? I probably wouldn't archery hunt myself but I'd imagine there would be some people who would rather archery hunt, and that would also reduce some of the top bonus point owners.

Kent Hersey: Yeah, it is something we have considered a little bit. What we're dealing with is ultimately it's a once in a lifetime species. We allow, people often will hunt with archery equipment, but with a once in a lifetime species having a low success hunt um, it can be a little, when somebody's not successful it can cause some issues there. And because of the low permit numbers we don't really see a ton of crowding but it is something that we have looked into and as part of this plan with using subunits and different hunting seasons it's something we'll continue to look into in certain areas where it can be implemented.

Steve Flinders: Other questions?

Dale Bagley: One more quick one. How many goats do you figure are on Dutton already then?

Dustin Schaible: It's kind of tough to say. We've had observations of up to 7 different individuals at one time, but we've never done an intensive survey for the entire unit.

Steve Flinders: Any more? That's quite the discussion.

Comments from the public:

Steve Flinders: I don't have any comment cards. One letter of support from the three forests for the statewide plan and a request to be included in development of unit plans.

None.

RAC discussion and vote

Kevin Bunnell: Maybe I'll just inform the RAC that Dustin and I went and met with the Garfield County Commission relative to the having the Dutton be part of this plan. Had a good meeting with them. What they would like to see and what we will commit to doing is producing a unit specific plan. They wanted some information that was more specific to the Dutton; there's not a lot of detail to the statewide plan for that unit. So we will, Dustin already actually has a unit plan drafted. We will hold an open house in Panguitch sometime in the next, within the next couple of months to get local comment on that plan and then probably bring that unit plan back here through the RAC in July; so that we have a unit plan done before we do any translocations onto the Dutton. So if you want to make that part of your motion to do that that would be fine but we will plan on doing that regardless.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Kevin. I think we're ready for a motion. Layne.

Layne Torgerson: I'd like to make a motion that we accept the Mountain Goat Plan as presented by the Division.

Steve Flinders: Motion by Layne. Is there a second? Seconded by Rusty. Any discussion on that motion? Those in favor then? That looked unanimous.

Layne Torgerson made the motion to accept the Mountain Goat Management Plan as presented. Rusty Aiken seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Kent. I'll turn the time over to our esteemed academics. Kevin, do you want to introduce these guys?

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah, so last month Steve requested that we invite the folks that are doing the research on the Monroe Mountain, on the fawn survival stuff and the study on the translocation. So we've got Randy Larsen and Brock McMillan, both from BYU; both good friends of mine. Glad that they were able to come down and present this. Give them, you know, ask them the tough questions; they need to be able to answer that kind of stuff. I can throw some to you if you need or we can slip some things under the table here. But glad to have them here and you know, I hope you will take this opportunity to ask questions of the folks that are doing the research on those two studies that I think there's a lot of interest in. So with that I think Randy will be doing the translocation and Brock will be doing the presentation on the Monroe study.

Deer Transplant Research (informational) 1:06:00 to 1:16:31 of 2:06:06
-Dr. Randy Larsen, Brigham Young University

Randy Larsen: Thank you Kevin, chairman Flinders, thank you for inviting me. I'll go ahead and just give you a brief update, we're not very many months into this translocation effort but we've got some interesting information from the beginning. Just as a real brief introduction, we're all worried about mule deer. We all know about this long-term range wide, region wide decline. I think everyone will probably agree that they are suffering sort of a death by a thousand cuts; lots of interrelated factors, insolvency in mule deer populations. Recovery and growth in mule deer herds has been challenging, everyone I think is well aware of that here. More recently in the state of Utah there's been debate over whether translocation would be an effective strategy, something that's worth doing or not. And we've had an issue with whether or not it works. And so some, depending on who you talk to, everybody's got a different opinion. If you go to the literature there's not much out there at all. The three best pieces of information that we have are limited, and so there's a little bit of anecdotal type information from a Utah transplant that was done about a decade ago on the Henry Mountains. There's some information from Arizona back in the 1920's and 30's. There's other sort of anecdotal pieces of information. And then there's one thesis from Texas where they released, moved deer from Texas across the border to northern Mexico and had a student follow that up. But all those in total were, you know people did a good job with what they had but they weren't super well documented. And so there's just a general lack of information. The objectives of this project are to look up the timing of release; whether they survive better if they are released early winter versus late winter. Just a general sense of what happens when you release them. Look at what kills them, why they die; whether they have fawns or not. And it's essentially just to establish what happens when you move deer. To date we've captured 102 deer. There are 50 deer that are serving as our baseline control population. These are 50 resident deer that were captured on the Pahavant unit, early January. We captured 51 deer on the Parowan front, early January, same time frame, moved them north just east of Holden; released them there. And then following up again in March, moved another 51 deer. The important thing here is every single one of these deer is fixed with a radio transmitter and so we will be able to determine what happens to each one. This is a big step forward and a big step above what's been done in the past anywhere in the country with mule deer.

So we're going to get good information there. We thought initially some of the justifications for these two different releases, there was concern about you know, late winter moving deer except for the thought was they might stick better late winter. If they weren't in as good of condition movement potential is reduced and so the likelihood that they would stay where they were at, where they're released might be greater, late winter versus early winter. We also wanted to give just, you know, two different times to evaluate release. Well scroll through some photos, many of you were there. This is a deer being gunned down with a net gun from Dragonfly Aviation. Once the deer were captured they were transported, slung back, that's what they look like under the helicopter blindfolded, hobbled. It's kind of like a deer mash unit. As soon as they're put down on the ground a stretcher goes out, they're brought back to a tent, they're weighed, they're measured, aged via tooth ware. Age was interesting; we did capture and move sort of the prime individuals that you'd want. Lots of the individuals were 2, 3, and 4. That was the January translocation. Here's March, again the bulk of all those deer that were moved were the prime reproductive females, all females no males. Each was assessed via ultrasound to determine whether they were pregnant or not. Almost all, 93 percent of the 102 deer that we transplanted were pregnant. Pregnancy rates are high within the normal range expected. They are put into a trailer. They were, trans located deer received an ear tag. We'll come back to that in a minute, that's to facilitate identification of deer in the field, you know with a spotting scope, binoculars, to see what they're doing, whether they're actually integrating into groups of resident deer or not; and then released. I wasn't there at the release but from what I heard they came out of the chute fairly well. A couple suffered a little bit of a delay from the drugs associated. But from what I heard they came out fairly well. So there they are released. This was the first release, lots more snow in January, deeper snow than observed in March. Release site is just east of Holden, three different release sites. To date, so we're talking about 102 trans located deer, 50 resident deer. We've seen 20 total mortalities; 5 resident deer, 15 trans located deer. 3 of those 15 here were deer that died due to capture related causes. So too high a temperature for example, too much stress. We had one deer get hung up in a fence, got its foot caught a day after it was released. So 3 out of the 15 died that way. Two were poached, interestingly enough, small caliber rifle. One deer, a resident deer, died of cancer. And that was interesting to Leslie McFarland the disease coordinator for the state. And then we've had 14 others that have died from predators, mostly cougars and coyotes. To give you an example, the deer are monitored at least 3 times a week since they've been released. And so we're getting reasonable good information on their fates, what happens to them. This is a typical lion kill, it's been cached and covered, same here. This is a GPS collar off of a poached deer that someone cut with scissors or a knife and then hung it on a fence; and so, interesting information. Survival rates have been higher than I expected to date. I would have expected lower survival, especially from trans located deer. There's really been no difference between trans located deer and resident deer in terms of their actual survival rate, particularly if you remove from the 15 deaths the 2 that were capture related and the 2 that were poached. We're talking then about survival rates that are on top of each other. If you look at how many deer are integrated or with groups of resident deer that's been a positive as well. Almost all of them with the exception of one have been observed, like this deer here, a trans located deer with a resident deer. Same here, a deer with an ear tag, these are resident deer that are unmarked but they've all integrated very quickly into groups of resident deer. Sometimes what you see with some species, particularly sheep, it's almost like they're xenophobic, they're afraid of strangers and they don't want to integrate into groups with existing animals. Not so with mule deer; that's been a positive. Movements have been limited. We have not documented anybody who's tried to go home, back to the Parowan front. We expected there might be some of that but haven't detected any of that. We're starting now to see more movements as the snow recedes. We've had a couple of deer go over the mountain; so they're now on the east side of the mountain, you know, the Pahavant range where they were released. It will be really interesting to see what happens over the next month; whether they make it up, how high with other

deer or not, that will be an interesting part of the next few months. There has been a little bit of a difference in how much they move and so here, these are GPS fixes from a resident deer (in dark blue), this is also a resident deer with a GPS collar (in red). And what you see at least over the first two months, January and February, is a rather tight pattern of locations. The other colors, the yellow, the green, and the light blue are trans located deer. And you see a little bit more dispersion, especially this green one here. Essentially they're sticking or staying where they were released but maybe moving a little bit more, ranging a little bit more widely. One of the goals and one of the things we'll do as this project progresses is try and evaluate at what point do they settle in. Is it a month in? Is it two months in? At what point do these point patterns become similar to the existing resident deer? And so that will be part of the interesting thing, one of the interesting things that come up next. So we're only a few months in, off to a good start. Much remains to be learned. We've had similar survival rates. Deer have stuck to date in the release locations and it looks like all that we've observed have been integrated into groups of resident deer. Many thanks to those involved. I recognize many of you who participated in the transplant. This was an effort that was funded jointly by SFW, the bulk of the funding, and then from the Division of Wildlife Resources. Lee participated, your group. And I just wanted to say thanks to everybody and with that I'll take questions.

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: Any questions? Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: So you noticed some movement going up the foothills this time of year? They should . . .

Randy Larsen: Yeah, in over the last month movements have started to move up. We've had 2 deer go up and over to the east over the mountain. Some have started to move a little bit south as well. But yeah, starting to see that. In general they've stayed closer than I expected. I thought we'd have some stay and maybe some really range widely. Haven't seen that yet but we are now with the spring starting to see them spread out.

Rusty Aiken: Are they still staying with their groups?

Randy Larsen: As far as we can tell, yeah, absolutely.

Steve Flinders: Sam.

Sam Carpenter: So, is this migratory herd, and when I say migratory how far do these deer roam in their winter/summer range habitats?

Randy Larsen: that's a great question. What you see a lot with deer is it just varies. You see everything. You see some deer that don't move much at all; you see other deer that move a long ways. There's a radioed deer on the Monroe Mountain, for example, that summers on the Fish Lake and winters down on the Monroe. And so you see a lot; you just see everything. And what we have here, we don't know, this is the first year and so we have resident deer on the Pahavant that we've captured and radio marked; we'll be able to track them and see what kind of that standard bulk of them actually do on the Pahavant and then we'll be able to see what the trans located deer. Anybody's guess as to what will happen.

Sam Carpenter: They don't normally, isn't there quite a variation? I mean most deer, I know the units

I'm familiar with, you know, they have a huge migratory escape when they move. But don't people that live in this area, or DWR have a pretty good idea what they deer have been doing in the past, resident deer?

Randy Larsen: That's a great question.

Kevin Bunnell: Randy, let me respond to that just a minutes. One of the things when we looked at at this study, Sam, is we tried to find a place to put them that looked as much like where they were coming from as we could. So they're coming off of Cedar Mountain and coming down there on that Parowan Front, so they're migrating from east to west in the winter and from west back to east in the summer. And so the Pahavant, we tried to put them in a place where the migrations were similar, you know, a similar direction and in a place, from our perception, looked like where they were coming from. And so we're hoping that makes a difference. But like I said, it's too early to tell. But that was part of why, why the Pahavant was chosen as the release site because it's, yeah, you're going from east to west and back; it's the same direction from winter to summer. So . . .

Randy Larsen: You got the freeway on the one side, with the deer proof fence. You've got the mountains . . .

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah, Panguitch Lake, sorry. I'll learn.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Sure, Paul.

Paul Niemeyer: Are you doing more deer next year?

Randy Larsen: So we've left that completely open ended. That's going to be a decision that all the partners get together and make kind of based on what happens this first year. It's been left totally open-ended at this point.

Steve Flinders: Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: And predators are the main problem, you'd say is part of the big problem in the ones that we've lost?

Randy Larsen: Uh, certainly the majority that have been lost have been, you know, what you would go back to and look at it looks like a predator kill; mostly cougars and coyotes. That's the value of having this group of resident deer to serve as a control so that we can look at it and say, well the survival rates have not been that much different between the two groups. And so, yeah. You can talk, it gets a little tricky, you know, we have, you can talk about approximate cause of death and then ultimate cause of death. But the majority, certainly that have been, that have died have died from what we would classify as a predator kill.

Rusty Aiken: And didn't they hit that area pretty hard prior to transplant with predator . . .

Randy Larsen: Yeah. So there was predator control that was done at least twice before each transplant. I can't remember the numbers off hand, someone maybe could from the audience, but at least 30 or 40 coyotes were removed on each of those two efforts.

Lee Tracy: There were 50 taken the first time. I don't know about the second one.

Randy Larsen: Yeah. The numbers that stick in my mind are 50ish, like you're saying. Yeah, so maybe close to 50 each time.

Steve Flinders: Do I see a question here? Dave.

Dave Black: At the last RAC meeting we were at there was some dollar amounts thrown around but it seemed like that was quite a disparity in what those were. Do you have an idea what the costs were? And then what's the cost of transplanting plus the cost of all the monitoring and stuff?

Randy Larsen: Yeah, that's a good question. It is, you know when you start talking about helicopter capture, start taking about radios, VHF and GPS radios on 152 deer, the associated monitoring that goes into that so you actually know what happens, yeah the dollars get high. I don't know off the top of my head what the cost might be. Some of the issue here was to see what happened initially and to do that it was going to cost more upfront to get good information as to what happens. It certainly wouldn't cost as much to do, you know, to do a transplant without all this associated monitoring. But yeah, it's expensive; there's no doubt about that.

Steve Flinders: Brian.

Brian Johnson: Somebody with SFW . . . I asked, I asked the question after and I was told it was \$250,000.00 for three years.

Steve Flinders: Kevin's nodding his head.

Randy Larsen: So that sounds pretty good. You're talking, you know, GPS transmitters, couple thousand dollars apiece, VHF transmitters, couple hundred dollars apiece, capture kit, I can't remember we were like \$280.00 a deer? That was a cheap price on the actual capture of each individual. So you multiply that by 152; yeah, costs go way up, absolutely.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Yeah, Sam.

Sam Carpenter: Is there a point in time when these GPS transmitters are going to fall off and will they be reused after that?

Randy Larsen: Absolutely, and they're actually not brand new transmitters; they were used previously at least on the La Sal Mountains for some mule deer disease. They'll come off in 2 years or so and then they can be refurbished for a reasonable price and reused, absolutely.

Sam Carpenter: And that should decrease the price then in the next transplant to be able to reuse them.

Randy Larsen: Yeah, so it could.

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Lee.

Questions from the Public:

Lee Tracy: Are all of those GPS collars still on live deer or have you pulled any off of the dead deer? That's one question. The other one was how close was that one on the west side of the freeway? Could it have possibly been hit by an automobile?

Randy Larsen: So the first question that's been maybe lucky might be the right word, we've only had one of the 15 deer that's died that has had a GPS transmitter on. That was the one that was poached and then hung on a fence. So there are still 26 or so GPS transmitters out. We did have one deer go west and die west of the freeway; just a little bit north of Holden on the west side. Kind of an interesting event, there's several underpasses that maybe it went through. It could have been, it didn't appear to be hit by a car. There was no evidence of trauma associated with a vehicle.

Steve Flinders: Any other questions? Paul did you have another one?

Lynn Chamberlain: This is the first question I've ever asked and I don't think I've missed a RAC meeting. So I was just curious as to whether or not the trans-located deer had a rougher time with predators than the resident deer.

Randy Larsen: That's, certainly you'd expect some of that. We've had 50 resident deer that were captured and we've lost 5. One of those was due to cancer, so 4 out of 50 have died from predators. If you look at the trans-located deer we moved 102, you know, we've lost 15. Three of those 15 were capture related, hot temperature, got stuck in a fence. Two were poached. And so we're really 10 out of that number; and so the survival rate at this point are really similar. One thing that needs, you know, we're early; so far so good. What happens over the next several months, who knows. I'm done predicting. I learned that many years ago not to predict because I was wrong every time. And so I don't know what will happen over the next few years; but at least to this point similar survival rates, similar impact on both groups from predators.

Steve Flinders: Fascinating information. Go ahead Layne.

Layne Torgerson: Were any of the deer that were trans-located from the Parowan Front, did any of those have the implant so that when they fawn you can track that, the fawning date and so forth?

Randy Larsen: We didn't do that with these deer. Brock will talk about that on the Monroe. But these were just wearing regular VHF radios or GPS radios, no vaginal implants. What we will do however is we'll go in June, July and assess how many have fawns with them. And we should be okay because the bias there that we missed those fawns would be a similar bias for resident deer and for trans-located deer, and so we should be all right.

Steve Flinders: Very good questions, any others? Brian.

Brian Johnson: Did you check the resident deer to see what the percentage of at pregnancy?

Randy Larsen: The weather . . .No. The resident deer were not checked. The way that that capture worked due to legal and liability issues, we can't have anybody in the helicopter with the capture company and so they weren't slung back. It was a little cheaper to do it that way and that's, it was a

capture, collar on site, let go.

Steve Flinders: Any others? Sure, Mike.

Mike Worthen: It seems to me like removal of predator before the release skews the actual impacts that predators will have on a deer population. Maybe that's one of the objectives that you were trying to find out. But do you have any idea or any guess what the mortality to predation would be had the coyotes not been removed?

Randy Larsen: Certainly couldn't speak to that, what it might be without removal of coyotes. The goal here, and everyone sort of agreed to, was to try to do this to give these deer the best chance they had to work, to succeed, to be successful as transplanted animals. Kevin talked about finding a site that was similar, in addition the thought was let's do predator control and just make this so it has the best chance to succeed. The thing that saves us, from sort of a scientific perspective, is having the resident deer radio marked. And so that becomes our control group that we compare to. They're in the same area, the same predator control occurred in that area and those predators should, could affect both groups differently or, . . . That's what saves us from a science perspective in terms of information.

Kevin Bunnell: You know Mike, just for policy, you know that's kind of our policy when we do any kind of a transplant. When we do a sheep transplant we go in and do predator removal beforehand just to give, you know, you're spending a lot of money to do it and we want to give them the best, you know, best opportunity that we can to be successful.

Steve Flinders: Other questions?

Kevin Bunnell: Thanks Randy.

Steve Flinders: Thanks Tandy. I want to thank you for coming down. This is an interesting facet of the RAC process. As you all know up here the project kind of grew out of in some part due to opposition at our level in terms of the Division asking for antlerless harvest; and over the course of a few years and other issues around the state; pretty fascinating. Brock.

Monroe Mtn. Fawn Survival Study (informational)

-Dr. Brock McMillan, Brigham Young University

Brock McMillan: Thank you Chairman Flinders. So Randy and I didn't know who was going to go first so we gave kind of a similar introduction so I'll skip most of mine, other than I'll say that we know something about most of the factors that influence survival of deer. We know about road kill, we know about weather, we know especially that severe winters have a large toll on young animals. We know about, some about competition, not a lot. I think that's an area of research; but we know very little, and we know a lot about predation on adults even. I mean this state is doing a great job of monitoring the deer herd throughout the entire state and looking at overall survival rates even though we don't know exact cause specific dynamics of that of those survival rates. We know what survival is of adult individuals. But what we don't know, and there's been very little research on is what happens from the time they hit the ground until the time they're, they become independent of mother, or relatively

independent of mother. And so that's the focus of this study. So we were interested in if we can control predators, and in this case coyotes, can we influence the survival rate of neonate mule deer? A lot of people believe that this is really important and so we want to know how important it is. So this study was done on Monroe. And I'm going to walk up here and talk a little bit because I want to talk a little bit to Rusty's question about migration and give you a little idea of what's going on. Maybe I can just take this. I wasn't planning to do this but I think it's applicable. So we captured fawns in Thompson Basin and Burrville, I mean not fawns; we captured adult does in Thompson Basin, Burrville, down at Angle, and over here at Elbow. And we capture about 65 females a year. And I'll show you what we do to them in just a minute. But let me tell you about some of them. So from Angle we have a lot of them go up onto the Forshee, but several of them went up to Mormon Mountain, a couple went onto Parker Mountain, and a couple went to the Boulder. And from Thompson Basin here in Annabella, we have a lot of them go up onto Hunter Flat, but we have probably 20 or 30 percent go across and go all the way up onto the Fish Lake. And the Angle deer, the Elbow deer down here, most of them go to Durkey Springs but some of them do go over to the Beaver. And so it's all over. Some of them stay very close to where they're wintering and some of them move a long distance to where they're wintering. And so the question is, do they come back to the same winter ground and do they go back to the same fawning grounds each year and we don't know the answer to that for this group anyway. But there is a lot of movement of these deer. Also, while this is up the, so these are our two zones. We have what is called a crossover design. And so there may be inherent differences in the predator densities and the population density of deer, which we know there are for deer, on the northern end and the southern end of the mountains. So for a study design the north end starts out as a predator control. So we remove coyotes from the north end for the last two years and starting next year it will be a crossover. The north end will be released from predator control and the southern end will receive predator control. So if there are inherent differences in densities of coyotes or deer on either end of the mountain we should be able to capture this in the design when we do our analysis in the end. And so we have a buffer zone in between to try to have a buffer between the two populations. And um, I think that's about it from the slide. So I have many of the same pictures that Randy already showed you. But the only difference is one year we used a Hughes helicopter instead of a Robison, but same thing. The big difference is spent a lot more time toward the rear end than Randy did. And so you can see here, Randy showed a little bit of this, but we ultra sound every individual and you can see right here, there's a couple of things we look for. These little sacs right here indicates pregnancy. With deer you can also see the fawn. And if we spent a lot of time we can try to count fawns but it's not really successful. But we can back calculate knowing what our survival was and what Vance's fawn to doe ratios are, and we can estimate what the frequency of twinning is and evidence like that. Here's another one, and you can't see a lot here but let me show ya. So this is a picture, an ultrasound of the rump of a deer. So we can go in and we can measure fat layers. And so if you look right here you can see a slight white line and that is the thickness of the fat. So here we have 2 mm of fat or something like that. On the ultrasound we can bring up a little pointer, just like when you go to get your baby checked, same kind of thing, we pull up a little pointer and we can measure the thickness of the rump fat. And then the next picture is very similar except this is the back strap right here, so this is the loin, and we can measure the thickness of the loin. So if you know the biology of deer, which I'm sure most of you do, they burn their fat first and when they get done burning fat then they convert over to burning protein. And so once the fat off the rump is going they will start burning their back strap to make it through the rest of the winter. So we can get a really good condition score by knowing the thickness of the fat and then also the thickness of the back strap and correct that for age of the deer and we know what kind of condition they are. And these captures were done in March so we're towards the end of winter when these come along and so we can get an idea of how well they fared the winter. Age structure, what you would expect. You can see here the 3 1/2 year old age class

corresponds to a poor winter when they were fawns but everything else looks pretty good. We have a nice even distribution of what you would expect in a normal functioning population with most of the animals being relatively young but a good distribution over all age classes. This is from the first year, the adult does that we captured the first year. Weight, it's in kilograms. The average, or the middleweight is about 140 pounds. So they range from about 120 to 170 pounds and the middle range was around 140. So this is great. What this shows is what we go during the 2012 doe capture and the 2013 doe capture. Roughly the same age distribution, just a little bit older this year. The weight was a little lower this year which corresponds, if you remember, I'm sure you all do, last year the winter was very mild, this winter it hasn't been as mild, there hasn't been as much snow but it's been colder this winter. And so the deer were in poorer condition, the body condition score you can see is slightly lower this year than it was last year. The loin thickness means that they've used their fat and they're starting to burn their loin this year a little more than they did last year. And rates of pregnancy were high both years. So 98- 95 percent, really high rates of pregnancy, definitely well within uh Which is a cool thing because you all know that Monroe has a relatively low buck to doe ratio and so this is a cool piece of information that we've already discovered is even with a relatively low buck to doe ratio it appears that all the females are being serviced. And here in this slide I have a picture of Eric Freeman up in the right, I want to acknowledge him, he's the graduate student working on this project and he spends all summer down here working 18-hour days. On the bottom left that's the vaginal implant transmitter so when we bring them into the tent and we put the collar around the neck we also insert a transmitter into the vagina of these deer. That's about the size of a Chap Stick tube. And the wings are a little over 2 inches wide. And so we have a little tube, we insert it, we pop it out, the wings open up and they hold the transmitter in the vagina of the deer, hopefully until she gives birth. There is a very low frequency of premature expulsion but on our deer it's been very low, lower than the deer in previous studies. And so once it's expelled it cools. Once it cools about 3 or 4 degrees the pulse rate, instead of beating 30 beats per minute it beats 60 beats per minute and we can tell that it's been expelled and it's on the ground within just a few minutes of when it hits the ground. We have to wait 4 to 6 hours so that the pair bonding can occur between the mother and the offspring. Otherwise, if we walk in a hour after it's hit the ground the mother will abandon the fawns and she won't come back. But 4 to 6 hours the pair bonding is established and we can walk in, look for the fawns, find the fawns, put a collar on them and the mother stays pretty close, she'll come right back when we're done. Another concern, and this isn't directly related to the study but I wanted to put this up here because one of the ideas is if we have low buck to doe ratios all the bucks will not be able to service the does in a timely fashion. So even though they might all get serviced you might end up having a very spread out birthing time which makes the fawns more susceptible to predation. And so we just have completed a study comparing Monroe Mountain, which during this year had a buck to doe ratio of 14 bucks per 100 does, to Piceance Basin in Colorado, using the same methods, which had a buck to doe ration of 28 bucks. So other than our premium units in Utah this is the low and upper end of all of our units in Utah. And in the gray bars here you see Monroe Mountain and in the black bars you see Piceance Basin. And so if there was no difference, so statistical difference, but if you were to look for a trend you would say that Piceance Basin where you have more bucks is more spread out in synchrony of parturition, or synchrony of birthing, than Monroe Mountain is. So to the study, we captured 27 on the south end. There are some inherent differences in the ability to capture between the Forshee, or most of the south end, Tibidor and Forshee, and the north end, Hunter Flat, Mormon Mountain and so forth. Very easy to spot and stalk. So not only did we get fawns from the vaginal implant transmitters but we picked them up opportunistically. In the morning we'd sit up on a hill with our spotting scope and we would watch does. And if they have fawns you can tell, they behave differently. You watch them for a half hour or an hour, she'll walk over, the fawn will stand up and eat and the fawn will lay back down. We keep a guy at the spotting scope and

send two people running in and they capture those fawns. Mormon Mountain and Hunter Flat on the north end are relatively easy to do that. But there were days we'd catch 4 or 5 fawns in a morning from uncollared deer on Mormon Mountain. That's tough on Forshee on the south. There's not as many deer on the south. The only place that worked really well on the south end was Durkey Springs, on the west side of the mountain. Otherwise it's pretty hard to get advantage. It worked a little bit in Box Creek as well, if you're familiar with the mountain. So overall there was a little bit different, there was a little different in number of mortalities and I'll get to the percentages in a minute. But you can see 6 of 27 fawns on the south end died to coyotes and 4 of 34 on the north end. So it's roughly 58 percent. So far we've had roughly 58 percent survival on the north end, I think 56, and 49 percent survival on the south end. Those aren't statistically different; they may be biologically different. We don't know yet. We've designed the study to use the least amount of money but collect the data we need over the 4 years. And so our sample sizes are not large enough in a single year to determine whether those numbers are real or not. But by the end of the study the sample size will be big enough to tell whether the numbers are real or not. And so here, the north end is in the black on the top and the south end is in the gray. You can see that there are slightly different survival rates. We don't know if these differences are statistically real, they might be biologically, they might not; we just don't know yet. And with that, I thank everybody. A lot of you have participated in this, especially Vance. I thank Vance and Teresa, and Kent, and all of the funding agencies. And I'll take any questions.

Questions from the RAC:

Steve Flinders: We're trying to figure out a way to get you more help to collar more fawns, sorry. Fascinating work. Thank you. Questions? Sure. None of them moved to the Paunsagaunt yet.

Sam Carpenter: I understand. This is really interesting, I mean fascinating work that you've done and what you've been able to, the information you've been able to obtain. At what age do you consider one of these deer to be getting prime? I mean what's their prime age?

Brock McMillan: So what do you mean by prime? For reproductive output, is that what you mean?

Sam Carpenter: Right, right, right.

Brock McMillan: So for does, usually at 1 ½ they don't reproduce, or they have one fawn, and by 2 ½ they are reproducing at their maximum rate. And does will reproduce their entire lifetime so they have pretty consistent reproduction throughout their entire life until they reach 10 or 11. Males, very different. Probably depends on the population. In Utah I think in this unit we probably have a larger proportion of younger males breeding than in some populations where you have a higher buck to doe ratio. But 4 ½ to 5 ½ to 6 ½ and then they're past their prime.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, what the oldest deer you've come across in your study?

Brock McMillan: So, that's a tricky question. So we age these animals by teeth wear. And it's really, by teeth replacement, so they'll replace their deciduous teeth, the same teeth that you lose, between 1 ½ and 2 ½, so by 2 ½ they have all their permanent teeth and then you look at tooth wear and you try to guess how old they are based on how worn down their teeth are. And it's pretty good. We try to have the same person do it all the time, Kent. And he's really good at it, in fact what did we have this year, 11 recaptures of deer that we used last year and we recaptured them this year and of those 11 8 of them he

moved up one year from last year. And the other 3 he was off by, he either aged them the same or he moved them up 2 years. And so he's really good at it, he didn't have any get younger, which is good. So the question is how old do they get? It's really hard to tell unless we pull an incisor and we count some cementum annuli in the root of that tooth. They add rings on to their roots just like trees do and that's how we age most of the official aging in the state is by cementum annuli. So we're guessing, and by the time they're 9 they're worn all the way down to their gums.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, so from then on you're guessing.

Brock McMillan: So from then on you're saying it's 9 plus.

Sam Carpenter: Okay. Okay, and the, I know the high percentage of the deer were impregnated. The ones that were not were they extremely old or young or was there any consistency in what was going on there?

Brock McMillan: No, not consistency at all. In fact we caught, I think 72 in 2012, 1 was not pregnant. This year we had 3. And so even if they were both old we don't know if that's true, but no they weren't, they were scattered throughout. We had a 4 1/5 year old this year that was 170 pounds that wasn't pregnant.

Sam Carpenter: Okay, and one last question. Do you find any separation between the deer and the elk when you're on the Monroe? I mean the calving areas that the elk use, are they in close proximity to the deer or do they manage to keep a border between them?

Brock McMillan: So they are, yes and no. So there aren't a lot of elk, there aren't a lot of elk on the north end where the fawning is going on. So there aren't a lot of elk on Mormon Mountain and even on Hunter Flat during fawning. But in Box Creek they're right on top of each other. So when you have the high quaking meadows they're right on top of each other and on the Forshee we had a group of 50 or 60 cows with calves that were walking right through the meadows with fawns laying in them.

Sam Carpenter: Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Paul.

Paul Niemeyer: How many coyotes did you kill last year and how many have you killed so far this year?

Brock McMillan: That's a great question. So I'm not the coyote person and so I'm guessing here on the numbers. I believe they killed 56 last year and this year 33.

Paul Niemeyer: (Inaudible not on mic).

Brock McMillan: So we spent 4 personal days this year and we spent two half days last year. What I will tell you is that last year we had 13 coyotes collared on the north end and they killed, I think, I'm trying to remember, I think it was 11 of the 13. So that suggests that they're killing, they killed a large percentage on the study area on the north end; although that's a pretty small number 13 to guess by. many days. I'm trying to remember. Or they collared stupid ones, right. Yep. Yeah Paul.

Steve Flinders: Paul.

Paul Niemeyer: (Off mic).

Steve Flinders: Hey Paul, we can't hear your question or comment. We'd like to hear too.

Paul Niemeyer: I've got a friend that in the last about 3 weeks he's killed 37 coyotes, all on the north end, and there was 2 dens he couldn't dig out. So I guess the question I've got is what percentage of these are we killing from, in the study part?

Brock McMillan: I have the same exact question. We don't know. Peter Mahoney is doing a genetic analysis to look at, to try to estimate the population size on the north end. It's a great question but what I would say Paul is if we use, we're using relatively intense wildlife services practices. So there's not a lot more that you can do without poisons, which we're not allowed to do anymore, than use wildlife services or similar methods to them. And so the question is, really from a management perspective, can we use intensive predator control using the techniques that we have available and make a difference? And so that's kind of what the treatment is on the mountain, we're using relatively intense wildlife services management techniques to see if we can make a difference. And I don't know the proportion of coyotes that are being killed. Hopefully Peter and Julie Young at Utah State will have a good estimate of that by the time this is over.

Mike Worthen: One comment on that, the hunters or trappers or whatever that do take coyotes for bounty are required to give the location, the sex, the whatever the ears and the jaws so they can be aged, and hopefully you can go back into that data base and find out exactly where the coyotes came from. When they were taking . . .

Brock McMillan: Sure, what we do know is this time right now is the best time because most of the research on coyotes shows that within 6 or 8 months they will fill back in behind. And so even if we removed a large percentage last year most of them have filled back in behind. And so this is the time of year if you want to enhance fawn survival this is the time of year to be controlling.

Steve Flinders: Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: Um, the one graph where you had the deaths and stuff, what age is that on the deaths? What time period was that after the birth?

Brock McMillan: This one here? So this is through the first 6 months. So we did intensive monitoring for the first month; we tried to monitor at least every other day. So we're trying to locate all 63 fawns at least every other day. And when a fawn died we would go in immediately, we'd hike in wherever it was, find it and send it to the lab to be necropsied to try and figure out, sometimes it's really evident, the fawns gone and you can see scraps here and there, it's pretty evident it's a coyote. If it's buried under a tree, like Randy showed, it's pretty evident it's a lion. Sometimes, a lot of the fawns if you look um, abandonment, we have 5 fawns that appeared to be abandoned by their mothers. It was a dry year in 2012 and so they were running out of, I don't know, but they might have been running out of water and they just gave up and said I'm holding off and saving for next year. That's pretty common in a lot of animals, it's called be hedging. They give up on this year and save energy for next year rather than giving it all and dying. .

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Very interesting work. Sam's got another one. No such thing as a bad question.

Sam Carpenter: So twinning is the norm for mule deer, is that correct? Twin fawns, is that a norm for mule deer?

Brock McMillan: It is for after they are 2 ½. And so for example, Vance, did you have 70 fawns?

Vance Mumford: 68.

Brock McMillan: 68 fawns per 100 does this year and we have roughly 50 percent survival, so that puts it up at about 130 fawns per 100 does birth, 130 to 140 fawns per 100 does, closer to 140. And so if you take out the 1½ year olds, or the 2½ year olds that had singles, almost all of the adults have to be twinning on Monroe Mountain.

Sam Carpenter: The reason I ask that is we're constantly dealing with doe to fawn ratios in the biological part as well as the deer number part, and to have a perfect year you would be something like 170 fawns per 100 does if everything survives. So when we're down in the 60's that's quite a lot.

Brock McMillan: So you would never expect that many because the youngest age class does not, seldom have twins. And so they have singles and that's the largest percent of the population is that first year class. Does that make sense?

Sam Carpenter: Yeah, yeah it does if you're going to have the majority of the does having singles.

Brock McMillan: And so if you're in perfect habitat there are a lot of white tail that are in ag fields, even that first year class will have twins all the time. But the first year class often does not. Does that make sense?

Steve Flinders: How often do you see triplets Brock?

Brock McMillan: So we didn't capture any this year. It does happen on occasion if you look in the literature it's reported, it's probably about like in humans.

Steve Flinders: Pretty rare.

Brock McMillan: Yeah. I don't know the answer though. We found a lot of sets of twins this year, or this past year.

Questions from the public:

Steve Flinders: Other questions? Lee.

Lee Tracy: Is there any aspect to this study that determines how the fawns survive or when they're born

per the first rut or the second rut?

Brock McMillan: So if you look at this Lee, this graph with the gray bars it shows when they were born. And so if our mean data parturition, when the fawns hit the ground, was June 13th, and you would expect it 25 to 28 days after that if it was the second estrus cycle. And so you would expect it sometime around the 10th of July. And we really had nothing. So what this graph illustrates is that most of the does, if not all of them, are being bred during the first estrus cycle.

Steve Flinders: Good stuff, anything else? Really appreciate you guys coming tonight. Can't tell you enough. Thank you. Spectacular.

RAC Officer Elections

-Steve Flinders, Chairman

Steve Flinders: Do we need a break or do you guys want to jump into elections? Okay, thank you, it's been an honor. I've learned a ton and I hope we made believers out of some in the RAC process. I really enjoyed being your chair. Having said that elections are open if people want to nominate an individual and then we'll take a second. Um, let's do the chair first and then a vice chair. And if we need to we'll do concealed votes if that's okay. Yes sir.

Rusty Aiken: I'd like to nominate Dave Black for chair.

Steve Flinders: Is that seconded? Seconded by Cordell. Mike.

Mike Worthen: I'd like to nominate Clair Woodbury for chair.

Steve Flinders: Seconded? Seconded by Sam.

Kevin Bunnell: Now let me ask, I've already talked to both of these individuals, but so we have it on the record, are you willing to accept that nomination Dave?

Dave Black: Yes.

Kevin Bunnell: And Clair?

Clair Woodbury: Yes.

Kevin Bunnell: Thank you.

Steve Flinders: Perfect. Any others? Somebody want to close nominations?

Rusty Aiken: I move nominations be closed.

Steve Flinders: Is that seconded? Seconded by several. What are folks comfortable with?

Giani Julander: I didn't hear what he said.

Steve Flinders: He moved that nominations be closed. Cordell seconded it. We didn't happen to bring any slips of paper did we?

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah. So let's get really technical here. You all have this pink piece of paper, tear a corner off of it and write a name on it and pass it down. Yeah, and we will have Dave and . . .

Steve Flinders: Fold it in half if you would.

Kevin Bunnell: Yep, fold it in half and pass it down to myself and Steve. And we will ask Clair and Dave to not vote.

Steve Flinders: Yeah, if you will pass to the center. Bear with us. Dave's the new chair, congratulations. Do you want to move into vice chair nominations? Go ahead.

Sam Carpenter: I'd like to nominate Cordell again to be our vice chair, the man with the gravelly voice.

Steve Flinders: Is that seconded? Seconded by Clair. Are you good with that?

Cordell Pearson: Yes.

Steve Flinders: Other names, other nominations?

Rusty Aiken: I move we close nominations.

Steve Flinders: That would make you the vice chair by default. Are you good with that? Anybody object to that?

Cordell Pearson: I can do that but there's one thing new Mr. President, when we do all the bucks and bulls and all that stuff and get in a big fight, you better not break your leg like he did last time.

Steve Flinders: And by the way he goes to the NFR.

Other Business

Steve Flinders: Anything else? Do you want to close this meeting?

Kevin Bunnell: Let me just ask real quick, let me ask real quick, so you know 6 or 8 years ago we used to do a fair number of these research updates on things that were going on around the state. Personally I really enjoyed that tonight. Is this something you'd like to see more of on nights when we have a light agenda? I'd be glad to organize that and . . . okay. So on the meetings where we're, you know we're not going to throw a research update into the big game, either of the big game RACs, but where we have a lighter agenda I'd be glad to, there's lots of research projects going on and I'd be glad to provide some, or ask, invite folks to come and give some updates if you're open to that.

Steve Flinders: Cordell.

Cordell Pearson: Yeah, while you're talking about that can we have the people at Utah State that's doing the coyote study, can we have them come down and tell us what they've got and where the coyotes have been killed? Thank you.

Kevin Bunnell: Yes.

Steve Flinders: Thanks again. Anything else tonight? Layne.

Layne Torgerson: I just have a question for Kevin. I saw on the news, whether it was on the news or in the paper I don't remember, where they've paid bounties on 6,000 coyotes, is that number relatively close?

Kevin Bunnell: Yeah, 6,250 is the last update I got. No, actually we're up to 66 I think on the e-mail that I got from John just yesterday. Um, so that's where we are at. We have money to pay for up to 10,000. Um, probably won't quite get there by the end of June. At the end of June the money, but that money rolls over, we don't lose it and we get another . . .

Layne Torgerson: Another half a million for next year.

Kevin Bunnell: Um, another half a million for it for next year. One thing that is happening on that is we have been giving, so there's two parts to that we also have the ability now that we have a track record with folks to do some targeted contracts and so we have started to put together some contracts for specific locations, specifically some of the more remote areas where we're not getting much harvest. You know it's interesting, our specialist out in Vernal mapped, he's the only one that's had a chance to map all the coyotes that have been turned into him, and it's just a ring around Vernal. And so the closer you are to people is where most of them are being taken.

Mack Morrell: Kevin, is there a time on that open house?

Kevin Bunnell: I believe they are all at 7 o'clock. Is that right Lynn? Yeah.

Steve Flinders: Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: Kevin, is there a, the mule deer management plan is it coming up this year? Is that a five year?

Kevin Bunnell: It will be about a year from now. Is that correct Kent? Mule deer management plan about a year from now?

Kent Hersey: (Off mic).

Kevin Bunnell: So we'll be looking probably early summer next year; so about a year from now.

Kent Hersey: (Off mic).

Kevin Bunnell: Okay, so maybe this coming April.

Steve Flinders: Clair.

Clair Woodbury: I'd just like to on behalf of this whole Southern RAC thank you Steve for a marvelous job well done. We've rally enjoyed you and you've done a fantastic job.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. I really appreciate that.

Kevin Bunnell: You know one last comment, and that's on this Monroe study, any of you that want to be involved in capturing fawns, let me know, we'll take all the volunteers we can get in that. It looks like they're going to be targeting that week of the 13th of June. The 5th through the 20th of June, any day during that time period if you want to get out and get your hands on, you know, become part of the research we can certainly facilitate that.

Steve Flinders: Thank you. Let's call it a night.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm

**Southeast Region Advisory Council
John Wesley Powell Museum
1765 E. Main
Green River, Utah
May 8, 2013**

Motion Summary

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

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

Upland Game Recommendations

**MOTION: To accept the Upland Game Recommendations as presented.
Passed unanimously**

Bighorn Sheep Management Plan

**MOTION: To accept the Bighorn Sheep Management Plan as presented.
Passed with one opposing vote.**

Rocky Mountain Goat Management Plan

MOTION: To accept the Rocky Mountain Goat Management Plan with the following line items:

- 1. Includes a LaSal Mountain unit management plan,**
- 2. Addresses the Mount Peale RMA,**
- 3. Includes population goals and objectives**
- 4. Addresses endemic plant species,**
- 5. Addresses high elevation plant communities, and**
- 6. Acquires a data set for high elevation plant communities,
prior to the introduction of Rocky Mountain goats.**

Passed with two opposing votes cast by Sue Bellagamba and Wayne Hoskisson

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

May 8, 2013 ☞ 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

Kevin Albrecht, USFS

**Bill Bates, Regional Supervisor
Sue Bellagamba, Environmental**

**Wayne Hoskisson, Environmental
Jeff Horrocks, Elected Official**

Derris Jones, Chairman

**Darrel Mecham, Sportsmen
Christine Micoz, At Large**

**Pam Riddle, BLM
Charlie Tracy, Agriculture**

Others Present

Mike King

Members Absent

Seth Allred, At Large

Blair Eastman, Agriculture

Todd Huntington, At Large

Kenneth Maryboy, Navajo Rep.

Travis Pehrson, Sportsmen

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

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

Derris Jones – Motion was made by Jeff Horrocks to accept the agenda and minutes as written seconded by Darrel Mecham.

VOTING

**Motion was made by Jeff Horrocks to accept the agenda and minutes as written
Seconded by Darrel Mecham
Motion passed unanimously**

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

Derris Jones – UBA was at the board meeting just like they were at all of the board meetings. They are fairly adamant about using the one formula for the weapons split, whether there was a late any weapon hunt or not. The DWR said that they could live with the deviation from the elk management plan. That was passed unanimously that there will be just one formula used for the weapons split now. The spike bull permit reduction on units below objective was placed on the action plan for the division to present to the board at a later date, whatever management implications that might have. The split that we had on Manti bull tags the board kind of came up with a compromise of 430 total Manti tags. Is that the total? Bill Bates- That is just on any weapon. They recommended 439 and the RAC recommended 406.

Derris Jones- Central Region, I guess. Their RAC voted to accept the division's recommendations so that the board just kind of split at 430 instead of our RAC's recommendation, and reduced from the division's recommendation, 20% off last year's Book Cliffs numbers was passed unanimously, so there will be a reduction in Book Cliffs buck tags. There will probably be an action of splitting the Book Cliffs North and South. The buck to doe ratio on the South Book Cliffs is still really high and the buck to doe ratio on the North Book Cliffs is declining. It is getting the hunters in the right place issue, so the division is looking at splitting that unit. So you will either draw a South Book Cliffs tag or a North Book Cliffs tag in the future.

Bill Bates- I just recommend that everybody put in for the North. (Laughing)

Justin Shannon- It's not completely that we are going to split it one way or the other. We are putting a committee together to look at how to address this. So splitting it is one option on the North and the South. There are other options, I think. That is a popular one that people are thinking. But it is not a forgone conclusion. So if we come this November with a recommendation that is not a split, it is going to be based on what this committee has to think of. I know we keep saying that we are going to split it, but the reality is that we haven't made that decision yet.

Derris Jones- Ok, I apologize for jumping the gun on that.

Justin Shannon- Well it happened up there as well.

Derris Jones- When do you think that the committee will be put together?

Justin Shannon- Our first meeting is June 5th so here in a month.

Derris Jones- Will there be any members from this RAC asked to join the committee?

Justin Shannon- Yes. Brad is putting it together on the South and I am trying to remember who he chose. Has he contacted you at all? (Muffled and I couldn't hear who responded)

Derris Jones- John Bair made a motion to keep the Henry Mountain tags the same as they were in 2012 which is less than what the recommendation was for 2013. It ended up in a tie vote, which made the chairman have to vote and he voted for the motion. So the Henry Mountains buck tags will remain at the 2013 level. There was a lot of discussion on the plateau antelope. It ended up going with the DWR recommendation which is a lot.

Bill Bates- It was like 750 or something?

Justin Shannon- 750 was the Southern Regions motion.

Bill Bates- Ok

Derris Jones- They passed the remainder of the rule as presented. And CWMU rule passed as presented and the depredation rule amendment passed as recommended. They had a discussion on the Quagga mussel that has recently shown up at Lake Powell. Sounds like it is going to be mandatory decontamination after you come out of the lake instead of before going into the lake as it use to be. Unless there are any questions, that was the board update. We will now go to the regional update.

Questions from the RAC

No questions from the RAC

Questions from the Public

No questions from the public

Comments from the Public

No comments

RAC Discussion

No RAC discussion

4) Regional Update

-Bill Bates, Regional Supervisor

Bill Bates- Glad to have everyone here tonight. Tonight I just want to give you a brief update. Fishing is really good up at Scofield. On the 27th of April you could see that Casey Livingston caught a 28” Tiger trout. We have pulled a lot of big trout out of Scofield the last several years and we talk about that in just a minute. We are going to have an open house to talk about management at Scofield. Derris has already mentioned that there has been adult Quagga Mussels actually all three life stages at Lake Powell. The Wildlife Board now has designated it as infested water. We are working with the Park Service to figure how we are going to decontaminate that many boats coming off there. It looks like that’s the way we are going to go is they are going to have to clean and drain before they leave and they are going to have to dry before they launch again into another water. They are still having some negotiations there. There is probably going to be some major road blocks where we pull boats over and take a look at them too. We are just getting into our gill net season and tomorrow morning at Huntington North, if anybody is interested, you could meet at the boat ramp about 9am and they will be pulling nets there. Last year we caught quite a few wipers. Hope to see some more this year. On the 14th,

they will be pulling nets at Scofield, and then on the 16th up at Joe's Valley, and that is always a good time to go up. At Joe's Valley last year, we were catching 33" Tiger Muskies and it is just neat to see them. We caught a couple of splake One was 12lbs. and another was 11lbs. and it is just really nice to see what's in the water. I mentioned that we are going to have an open house next Tuesday night on the 14th. It is going to be at 6:30 pm at our office in Price. The things that we are going to be discussing there is about reducing the number of rainbow trout we release into Scofield and increasing the amount of cutthroat. It seems like that the cutthroat and the tigers are just doing exceptional and they seem to have better growth than the rainbows, but the rainbows have always been popular for people that want to fish at Scofield. So we are just going to propose that and to see how the public feels. Also we want to release Kokanee at Electric Lake. Hopefully we can do that this year. Other issues we will probably talk about will be the tiger muskies at Joe's Valley and the chubs at Scofield and wipers etc.

Bill Bates- Also, we are working with commissioner Horrocks tonight. We are going to be working with Emery County and the Emery County Water Users about trying to get a fisheries management plan for Adobe Wash Reservoir. We hope that comes to fruition. We are pretty excited about that. There are already some Brown Trout in there and we think that it ought to be a pretty good place for smallmouth bass as well.

Bill Bates- Brent has been hopping. We just recently took on a new initiative to increase participation in shooting sports. Brent is kind of in charge. He had a kid's archery event at the SFW banquet on the 26th of April in Price. We had a lot of kids back there shooting and I think that the parents appreciated it because it seemed to keep the kids occupied. He had the Youth Hunter Education Challenge at the North Springs Gun Range on the 19th and 20th of April. We had about 200 youth from all over the state. We had a lot of good participation in it. It went really well. Brent and Tony did a bird walk at the Matheson Wetlands on May 4th for people interesting in birding and they had about 26 people participating in that.

Brent Stettler- Let me mention that Walt and I are doing a shoot here in Green River this Saturday.

Bill Bates- I was going to mention that. So if you have kids that you want to bring over for a free shoot, it is going to be at the gun range. What time is it going to be?

Brent Stettler- it is going to start at 9:30am.

Bill Bates- You can just call Brent for more details or just catch him later. Habitat is getting ready for their projects this year. They have been planting and preparing ground on the WMAs. Also we hope to do the Cold Springs fire--a prescribed burn within the next month I do believe. I was talking with Justin Needles about that. Do you know anymore about that Kevin?

Kevin Albrecht- They have gone up two different times to get the weather station out to start to gather the data and I guess a good thing is there is still too much snow to even get in there. We have sent them in with our track four wheelers but there is still too much snow to set up the weather station.

Bill Bates- Well, hopefully around the first of June or sometime around then. We will try to get that going.

Also we are working with local grazers to allow them to use part of the Gordon Creek WMA to help allow the area that was burned with the Seeley fire to recover. And that is progressing. We are working with the Forest Service right now on a

joint project to redo the boundary fence up there. Hopefully that comes to fruition as well. We appreciate your help on that.

Bill Bates-Law enforcement-- we have had some major impacts lately. Sean Spencer left for greener pastures. He has done a great job in Bullfrog and has moved on to Hobble Creek. We think he is going to be sorry. TJ has left to work for the Grand County Sheriff's office. We wish him well. He is a great officer and hopefully he will still help us out once in awhile. But you guys really did well on getting him. Dennis Shumway is going to be gone on some military leave. In fact he is gone right now. We also have the vacant district up in Emery County. We hope to have one officer on in June, and will probably put that person in the Emery District. We just did recruitment and then we are going to start interviews next week, I do believe. Hopefully we will be able to hire maybe 10 new officers or something like that. We have 15 vacancies statewide. It seems like we have a hard time getting that many people that can pass all of our tests. I probably would fail. It is pretty tough to pass. We do have excellent officers right now and we will be looking at getting some more. We have J. Shirley that has moved up to Price as the Lt. I think I talked about that last month. To replace him we hired Ben Wolford out of Manila. Ben is just a fantastic trainer. He is a firearms, first-aid, and CPR instructor. He is on the emergency research response team. Just a great guy and we are happy to have him as a new sergeant. Also I would like to mention that our officers did participate in the Fallen Officer trail ride in Moab in April.

Bill Bates- Wildlife section has been mostly busy planning and working on recommendations and those kinds of things right now, but on April 30th we held an open house in Moab to take public input on the possible proposed transplant on the La Sal Mountains for Rocky Mountain Goats. We had 38 people that signed the register. We had basically most of the people supportive; we had about 5 people with questions. And I know that one person left unconvinced for sure. It was a lot of good discussion. We appreciate the Forest Service being there with us. You will hear a summary on that a little bit later. What program we have going right now that we really need help with is raising day-old chicks. On the 23rd we are going to be getting about 4000 of them and we have about 1,000 of them farmed out right now, so to speak. But the commitment you would have is that you would have to take care of them, feed them, buy the feed, and do all of the hard work and then we would allow you to release them on public land or private land where people will let hunters have access . So you would get that choice of whether you want to let them go someplace that you have permission to hunt. So that could be a pretty good deal. So if anyone is interested or you have friends that might be, just let us know.

Bill Bates- Range trend surveys. Spring range is going to start up pretty soon. Still working on radio telemetry of radio-collared does and looking at mortality and survival. And that is it, unless there are any questions.

Questions from the RAC

Jeff Horrocks-With your day-old chicks, do you have anything in writing or do you have a manual. I know you have to have a special set up for the pens.

Bill Bates-Yes, there are some special specifications and I am going to ask Walt, the world's master pheasant raiser.(laughing)

Walt Maldonado- If you have raised domestic poultry in your pens then you can't raise the pheasants. And that has been so far the biggest stumbling block. Lots of people have called and said that they would love to do it, but they had chickens, domestic fowl in their pens. And so the department of Agriculture is not going to let that happen. So we are losing a lot of people and we are looking for people that have some new facilities or people that have raised pheasants in the past. That is what we are trying to find.

Charlie Tracy- Where do I find the specifications for the pens?

Walt Maldonado- They are online now. Or you could e-mail me and I can send them to you. I have the specifications for the pens and you will have to have a little brooding coop to get them started, and then a little bigger coop the next time as they grow, and then a flight pen. There are a few flight pens around in the area. And I am trying to work with these people to let someone who is going to raise these chicks and to get them to that size if we could utilize their flight pens anyways. And that person could come and take care of them there. So we could just change that department of Agriculture rule I think we would have a lot of participation in the program, because even my neighbors have had pheasants and chukars in their pens all of the time. But with that stipulation in there, then that's going to put a little damper on the program. So hopefully next year we can get that changed or fixed.

Derris Jones- There is a guy down in Blanding that raises those all the time. They are the Hughes or the Chamberlains. Have you guys heard of them?

Bill Bates- Ok. We are also going to buy a bunch more pheasants too. Roosters and just let them go out just during the season as well. Are there any other questions?

Derris Jones- I noticed in the paper the other day that the Castle Dale WMA is being surplused or something? What are you guys going to do? Are you guys going to get the money or is the money going to go to the state or how does that work?

Bill Bates- The Castle Dale farm is a federal aid property so that money will go back into the federal aid is my understanding. And I don't know but I think that will just go into our land purchase fund. That is what I have been told. But I really don't know for sure. But we actually tried to make a trade.

Derris Jones- They wouldn't let you do the trade?

Bill Bates- No, they said that the problem is that we were trading a PR "Pittman and Robertson funded property" for a DJ "Dingle Johnson purpose property" so they thought that where the fishing was going to be the main the priority vs. hunting at the other one and so ...

Derris Jones- What if you traded for another PR or we traded for some more big Game winter range?

Bill Bates- We could do that.

Derris Jones- Well at least that way you guys would end up with something, instead of nothing.

Bill Bates- That is a good point. But yes, it is for sale right now. And we are taking bids through the Trust Lands Administration. I think it goes up on the 23rd. and I haven't heard. Or nobody has called up with any questions. So I don't know what to expect.

Questions from the Public

No questions from the public.

Comments from the Public

No comments from the public.

RAC Discussion

No RAC discussion.

Derris Jones- Let's do the first action item, which is Upland Game Recommendations by Blair Stringham, Upland Game Biologist.

Derris Jones- While Blair is bringing up his power point. The process that we are going to use tonight is that we will have the presentation from the DWR. Then it will be questions from the RAC, then questions from the public. And I ask that you refrain from trying to turn a question into a comment. Just try to get some questions to clarify the proposal and the presentation. And after the question period I will open it up to public comment from the public. Due to the size of audience we have tonight, I am not going to limit the number or the amount of time. But I do ask that you fill out one of those orange cards and bring up to me, so that way we have record of the people that had comments tonight. After the public is through commenting, we will close it to the public and open it up to the RAC for discussion and a motion.

- 5) Upland Game Recommendations (Action)
-Blair Stringham, Upland Game Biologist

Presentation not typed

Questions from the RAC

Wayne Hoskisson- How is the Mourning Dove population doing?

Blair Stringham- We conduct a survey for Mourning Doves each year. It is called the call count survey and they are performed throughout the state and throughout the country as well. The general trend for Mourning Doves is fairly stable. We have several issues with the survey and that they don't necessarily detect the population of the doves it really is, just an index of the population. As the Mourning Doves Habitat changes through time, Say, for instant, that you have a shrub step habitat going more to a juniper type of habitat, you tend to get fewer doves. And so we started working on ways to better address that. We are actually going to be implementing a new system to monitor Mourning Doves this next year using band return data. Similar to what we use with waterfowl. The will allow us to get a better idea of harvest is and the overall survival and population. Currently, Mourning Dove populations are stable.

Derris Jones- The exotic pigeon that is showing up now, is it affecting the dove populations at all?

Blair Stringham- you know that is a good question that no one has really addressed. We are seeing them disbursed all across the continent for the most part. They began

in the 80's in the Florida Keys and they have really spread across the continent in the last 30 Years. They pretty much have shown up everywhere in Utah. But there really is known of what kind of impact that they are having on the Mourning Doves. Wayne Hoskisson- Well in Moab they have displaced the Mourning Dove pretty much as far as I can tell.

Derris Jones- Are there any other questions? Ok we will now open up with questions from the audience.

Questions from the Public

Ken Tyss- I am the Utah Coordinator for Backcountry Hunters and Anglers and I wanted to introduce myself to the RAC and visit with you more after the meeting. I have a question that I wanted to ask. Is there are any studies that might be leading to the decline of the Band-tailed Pigeons. And if there is any habitat improvement projects that are proposed to address that?

Blair Stringham- There have been quite a few studies that have tried to study Band-tailed pigeons, but they really had a hard time because band-tailed pigeons are really a hard bird to detect. They live in a lot of the gamble oak, conifer mixed habitat. They migrate from Utah about September and go all the way down to New Mexico and into Mexico actually. So people have tried to do telemetries studies on them. They have tried to band them and have had just a really hard time to get a large enough sample size to get an idea of what the population is doing. Because of these two data sets that I talked about earlier, we're kind of going off of an assumption that the population is most likely declining, but we really don't have any good data to say if it necessarily is or not.

Derris Jones- Any other questions from the audience?

Comments from the Public

No comments from the public

RAC Discussion

Kevin Albrecht- Maybe this is better for questions. Is there any management plan for the collared doves in Utah to try to manage that growth?

Blair Stringham- There is not. There really isn't any state that has tried to address it. Other than announcing that there are no regulations on them, so they can be harvested 365 days a year and in whatever quantity you wish to harvest them in.

Derris Jones- Does anyone want to try for a motion since there isn't a lot of discussion?

Jeff Horrocks- I would like to move that we follow the recommendations that have been presented here tonight and support the department in their recommendation.

Wayne Hoskisson- I second it.

VOTING

Motion was made by Jeff Horrocks to accept Upland Game Recommendations as presented.

Seconded by Wayne Hoskisson

Motion passed unanimously

6) Bighorn Sheep Management Plan

-Kent Hersey, Big Game Project Leader

Questions from the RAC

Darrell Mecham- You talked about your mix from Thompson. You have a serious mix of domestic sheep and your Bighorn population up Thompson.

Kent Hersey- Where is this at?

Darrell Mecham- Thompson Canyon, Thompson, Utah just east. You have a serious mix of domestic sheep and bighorn all the way over to Cottonwood Canyon. I have seen it. I am out there all the time. Craig Bear has his sheep permit across all of that and they are mixing constantly. And how big of danger is that to you if it's starts coming back this way?

Kent Hersey- It is a concern. I wasn't aware that was happening frequently.

Darrell Mecham- I brought it up years ago to other people but...

Justin Shannon- That is part of the Ute hunt thing that we are talking about. If we have sheep that are doing that in the eastern portion of that unit, you can't move them. That's why it's got to be a tool. If you see that in the future, please call Brad or I immediately.

Darrell Mecham- It's not too hard to see them when you get your sheep out there, because your bighorns are mixing with them all the time.

Justin Shannon- Well we know that the bighorns are out there, but until we get these reports we can't do anything. So please contact us.

Darrell Mecham- It is a touchy subject, I know.

Justin Shannon- I guess what we would do is we would eliminate the bighorn sheep. I would rather kill a few bighorns and save the population as a whole. The core that we are worried about is that Green River core. So to kill a few that are potential vectors for disease, we are all for that. So please let us know.

Derris Jones- Any other questions from the RAC?

Chris Micoz- Years ago, they used to have an orientation for hunters--for the once in a life time sheep hunts. Don't they do that anymore? Does that affect the harvesting of older sheep?

Kent Hersey- That was actually a mistake in the guide book. We have orientations for species for female hunts, so we can help orient them--specifically for cow bison and nanny mountain goats. For some reason the guidebook said that we offered an orientation for the sheep. But I am not aware of us ever offering that.

Chris Micoz- Well, they used to years ago.

Kent Hersey- How long ago are we talking?

Bill Bates- At least 5-6 years ago.

Chris Micoz- Well, there are types of sheep that are a whole lot different from hunting deer. And we don't have that any more. It's not mandatory anymore. It was mandatory, wasn't it? ...that they attended an orientation?

Kent Hersey- Most sheep hunters that are avid hunters and are quite passionate about sheep and a lot of them hire guides to help with that. We aren't in the guiding business so that is something that we have discontinued. I am not that familiar with it obviously.

Bill Bates- It actually was a good opportunity to get together with the biologists. People stayed there until 10 or so, and it was a good meeting.

Kent Hersey- Was this a regional thing or a Salt Lake thing?

Bill Bates- We held it here, and did for desert bighorn and the southern region would come over with us.

Kent Hersey- If there is interest in continuing that, we certainly can bring it up.

Chris Micoz- We may have to reinstitute this to maintain the harvest of older rams.

Sue Bellagamba- So you mentioned that one of the objectives was to put sheep in all available and suitable habitat. How do you evaluate suitable habitat and how do you look at that accumulative wildlife in those areas?

Kent Hersey- Suitable habitat for sheep is escape terrain, so cliffs are obviously our first priority. That is also considered on what is going on in with the land use. Just because an area has a cliff or a nice mountain range it doesn't make a good habitat. All of the west desert ranges for example historically have sheep; however the amount of domestic grazing out there doesn't make it a good consideration for us to do it. So it is on the ground evaluation by the biologists. Such as--is there a good cliff there or what other land uses are going on? If there is domestics around? That automatically rules it out. Is there open habitat? Is there a lot of pinion-juniper coming in? Or is there a lot of open grass lands that the sheep prefer? Can the sheep avoid predators? Those are the things that go into consideration.

Wayne Hoskisson- I think habitat is always the big issue. And on the Colorado Plateau, there are changes that are already starting because of climate change. Grass cover is decreasing. The shrub cover particularly black brush is increasing. And I am wondering, what are your thoughts about how you're going to manage this within the next 20-30 years?

Kent Hersey- you know that grass is most important for sheep. That is their primary diet so in that cliff country, there is minimal that we can do in terms of the vegetative treatment. Mechanical treatment is virtually out because it is just way too steep. So it really limits our tools down to virtually fire. That is what we can use to help improve that; and we can progressively reseed those areas and try to make them as productive for sheep as we can. Another big one is if it does get dryer we look at putting water sources in there to help disperse sheep and make sure they have ample access to water. That has proven in several studies to be quite important to where they are, or to what they use in their movement. Those are pretty much our tools. We have a variety of range trend data that we need to just keep monitoring, and if we see signs that it is decreasing quality, or if we see population issues, that is something that we can look into and see if there are things that we can do to improve it.

Wayne Hoskisson- One other question, I was not aware that grass was a particularly big issue with sheep.

Kent Hersey –Forbs is their big one. They are not browsers but they can eat some grasses and stuff, but forbs are obviously big for all species. Forbs are your driver. That has the most nutritional value to it.

Derris Jones-In your recreation goal under strategy “C”, it says recommended hunting season to provide maximum recreational opportunity while not imposing on DWR management needs. Can you explain that?

Kent Hersey- We have been in conflict for several years now with the variety of guides, basically they want the hunt to continue as long as possible. November 10th has been thrown out as a date. Some of our regional folks trying to get their deer classifications combined with getting sheep flights in have had a difficult time extending the hunts to that length of time, and having enough time to what they need from a management agency stand point. So, one of the requests that came out of that summit that was not included in this plan was to put a hard date into the plan. This is something that we have never done in any other of our plans; instead we set those hunting dates in the November RACs. So that is something we wanted to work through or have the regions work through directly with the guides and outfitters and come with a solution to that problem rather than giving a hunting date in the plan.

Derris Jones- Thank you.

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

Questions from the Public

No questions from the public

Comments from the Public

Troy Justensen (Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife)- First off I would like to commend the division for reaching out to sportsmen groups to have the opportunity to have some input in this five-year plan. I was able to attend that summit and found it very helpful and being able to talk and discuss certain concerns and ideas and appreciate the opportunity, and I would like to commend the division for that. Having said that, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife is in support of this plan and we would like to be on record showing support in the division in this recommendation. Having had the opportunity to be in a lot of different sheep units in the state and hunt those, I am convinced that sheep are the only big game animal that actually eat rocks, because there is no vegetation or anything else there. So I am in favor of growing our sheep herds. (Laughing)

Derris Jones - Thanks Troy.

Derris Jones- Is there any other public comment on the bighorn sheep management plan? We will close public comment.

RAC Discussion

Wayne Hoskisson- You know one of the things that always disturbs me about these plans is stretching the authority that federal agency should have. And the Parks Service already has regulations, which I don't think the DWR tries to counter. But the Forest Service has regulations concerning wilderness areas that involve at least tools. My sense is that such thing as aircraft flying overhead as long as it's high enough doesn't counter that, but such things as helicopter landings do general, and

there has been exceptions given over the years. They have unfortunately gotten weaker and the agencies don't enforce these rules the way they should. I am a believer in wilderness. I have spent the last twenty years working on getting wilderness designated in this state. So I would like to say that your plans should always accommodate the idea that there is wilderness now and that there will be more wildernesses in the future. And that needs to be respected as a social value and it is designated that way by Congress. So that is my comment on this and it involves just the section "D" wilderness and park management.

Derris Jones- Is there any other comment from the RAC?

Derris Jones- Kent, I get confused when I read through it, because parts of it say that we need to connect populations for gene flow and in the next section it says that we need to keep separation from populations to prevent disease transmission. What or how do you guys plan to work that one out?

Kent Hersey- That almost sounds like a question. (Laughing)

Kent Hersey- It's really a tough situation, you know the idea of having a grand population from the Lake Canyon herd near Duchesne down to here sounds great in many ways, and it would be a really cool thing if didn't create problems. And as an agency we just need to beware of those risks and make the best decisions that we can at the time. If they are connected and disease gets in one area, it can quickly run through it. So having a natural break in populations can also be a benefit for us. However, having a gene flow across there is also a good thing. So it's really just kind of a contradictory and I will agree with that. In some cases, we know that the same bugs are present from here and there, and then it's probably a good idea to connect them. If we know that they have completely different exposures to things in the past, then we need to work hard to make sure that they're not connected. So it kind of goes back to knowing the history about those herds and knowing the profiles of those herds. But there is benefits to it and people use to think that it was a great thing from genetics, when that started to become a buzz word, but there is also a risk. And as an agency we just need to beware of those risks and make the best decisions that we can at the time.

Derris Jones- Another comment that I had, you mentioned fire as probably being the only opportunity to improve habitat due to wilderness constraints and just the place that sheep live in. Is there any way that the division can cooperate with the federal agencies and identify what burn areas to make sure that there are incorporated into the federal agencies fire plan so that we don't extinguish fires that are going to do a lot of good?

Kent Hersey- I think we can. We can put it in the statewide plan. We can do what we can on that one on the higher up levels, but I think in the unit plans is where we can really identify the needs for fire and help direct those management activities for the local areas that will give us the best benefit. In terms of changing the grand policy of the forest is something that we can accomplish maybe at the higher levels of things. The local levels are where you will really have the most impact for benefiting the units.

Derris Jones- I guess I feel like that there is probably a lot Forest District rangers and stuff that may never read our sheep management plan and I know darn well that they have read their fire management plan . And if the sheep considerations were built into their plan, the chances of having a good project happen would be

greater. But that's me. I am not going to tell you how to right the plan it is just a suggestion.

Kent Hersey- No and I think it is a great idea but it seems like we need to be involved when they write their plan not as much as we can't put stuff in our plan to force their hand as much as if they have in their own plan. So we just need to be involved in that process as much as we can when they are reviewing their plans.

Derris Jones- In the wilderness and park management, it talks about transplants, research projects, and the ability to access and maintain water developments. I have noticed that you left construct water developments out. Is there no hope at all that we will be able to construct new water developments?

Kent Hersey- Certainly it is more difficult.

Bill Bates- I can actually comment a little bit on that. I have been involved with Emery County with their wilderness planning effort, and I know in other situations, where we have had language put into those plans that will allow us to construct water sources that is consistent with recreational use of the area. So there may be opportunity to do that if you work through the enabling in the legislation.

Wayne Hoskisson- The main problem with that of course, is that a wilderness area is an area that is supposed to be untrammelled by man, which basically means uncontrolled and that is the definition as it was written by Congress and so when you start to build water sources where there were not water sources you're creating a somewhat trammelled and unnatural thing and you may indeed be moving animals into areas where it may not be appropriate and especially it may not be appropriate in the coming decades as we get dryer on the Colorado Plateau. There are other parts of the state where that may not be such an issue. We don't know as much as what is going to happen in the Great Basin or in the Rocky Mountains.

Bill Bates- That's a social issue that the federal agencies will have to grapple with.

Derris Jones- Another comment that I have is where we find scabies or contagious diseases on captured sheep that we are going to release. I would just suggest that you treat the captured infected sheep at least for the scabies that should be treated before you release it back.

Kent Hersey- And we can easily treat the captured animals. We just don't want to move that and potentially introduce it to some where it isn't.

Derris Jones- In the recreational goal strategy "D," continue to expand bighorn sheep viewing events for interested publics. There is also a section ahead of this that talks about other recreational activities (inaudible coughing) and displacing sheep do we need to be careful that we're not over-loving the sheep and displacing them by viewing them in organized events?

Kent Hersey- That's when it becomes picking the area. I think picking the area like we have here in Green River is a great solution to where it won't do any harm, but hopefully or typically we want have drive type areas and we don't want to organize ATV tours to try and do these events. Do it in support of the species is a good thing for the most part. Obviously disturbing those to the point that they abandon the area would be a problem.

Derris Jones- I agree with you and everything it's just that telling other recreational users that we really don't want you to ride your bikes out here. This is possibly giving them ammunition to say "Why do you guys get to do your recreational thing and we don't get to do our recreational thing?" Just a suggestion.

Derris Jones- That is all of my comments.

Charlie Tracy- What makes me nervous is anytime that we want to increase a population is that everything is wanted by increase, increase, increase. Where will we increase something that will hurt somebody else or something else? And I realize that there is a huge push for more hunting, more viewing of every species that we have in the state whether it's fish or big game or anything but I think at some point that we have got to tell people "Hey, we only got so much area and we can only do so much." If we can't have hunting of whatever species or of every species in the state of Utah, then it's okay. We are not failures because we don't, we just don't have the resources that some areas do, and I think we need to be careful with all of this "We want more, more thing." It's going to come back and bite us.

Pam Riddle- I just have one comment, maybe not directly at the plan but just in the Moab area, where we have had extensive GPS collars over the past decade and the BLM and division are trying to work together at refining the habitat designations. I think as we move forward to either increase or try to stabilize populations, being able to refine those critical or crucial areas versus those areas that don't need to be managed as extensively is going to become more and more important as we try to figure out where or if we can slow down the human factor and give the sheep a break and vice versa or maybe as those areas aren't as important for the sheep maybe we can allow for human use. I am excited to see if we can establish about 100,000 acres where we will actually not allow new development because of the sheep, and we have freed up probably another 100,000 acres. Through the collar information we've decided that it's not as important. And so we have had some pretty good luck in being very protective in very important areas and maybe having a little bit more leeway and we feel comfortable that the sheep are doing alright and able to accommodate our counties' needs.

Derris Jones- Does anybody have a motion for this management plan?

Pam Riddle- I will make a motion to accept.

Derris Jones- we have a motion from Pam to accept the Statewide Bighorn Sheep Management Plan and seconded by Charlie Tracy.

Derris Jones-all in favor? One opposed. Wayne Hoskisson. Ok.

VOTING

Motion was made by Pam Riddle to accept the Bighorn Sheep Management Plan as presented.

Seconded by Charlie Tracy

Motion passed with one opposing vote cast by Wayne Hoskisson

- 7) Rocky Mountain Goat Management Plan
-Kent Hersey, Big Game Project Coordinator

Questions from the RAC

Derris Jones- Is there any questions from the RAC?

Charlie Tracy- Are you guys going to go ahead and planting goats on the LaSal?

Kent Hersey- It is a site that we're considering and it is in the plan. So, yes.

Charlie Tracy- So you're just considering still? You haven't decided whether to do it or not?

Kent Hersey- Well, if it is passed in this plan, then it would be a viable site and then we will, as goats are available, which we should have some available this fall from the Tushar Mountains. So as long as the region feels that they can do it this year, then we could consider it for this fall. Otherwise it would be a viable site.

Sue Bellagamba-I was glad to hear that you have collaborated and talked to the Forest Service, but I was wondering if you could elaborate a little bit on their position and what type of biological assessment or need for compliance the Forest Service needs to do and especially to protect the two rare plant species--one that is found no place else in the world, except the La Sal Mountains, and to protect the intent of the research natural area that is in the LaSals?

Kent Hersey- I can't comment on what the Forest Service has to do. I will defer to Kevin on that one.

Sue Bellagamba- But you have been collaborating, so I could assume those conversations went on.

Kent Hersey- I will let the region deal with that.

Justin Shannon- We have been working with the Forest Service for over a year now discussing what the issues are, what they're concerns are and how we address those and that is where the unit management plan will tackle a lot of these. I mean for this it is just if it needs to be on the list or not. Your other question. Sorry you had one other one. What was it?

Sue Bellagamba- Well I had a loaded question. But maybe Mike can address this.

Justin Shannon- Oh, what the NEPA process is?

Sue Bellagamba- Yes. What type of biological assessment will be done to ensure where the plants will be protected.

Justin Shannon- I will let Mike speak to that. But the one comment that I do want to make is that this is a state action and it is not a federal action. And so where these federal agencies, where they manage the land and we manage the wildlife, this is a state action.

Wayne Hoskisson- But this is an introduced species so it is a federal action. In that sense you are putting something on the land that does not belong there.

Justin Shannon- Yes but we do that with chukars and pheasants. It's not that it doesn't belong there.

Wayne Hoskisson- Well that is debatable. In fact that is where the problem is with this entire plan is you haven't settled that in any realistic way.

Justin Shannon- I guess I disagree with that. Mike, I will let you answer that question.

Derris Jones- If you don't mind, Justin, what we will do is we will continue the questions to the division and then when Mike gets up. I know he wants to comment in the comment section, we will let the RAC ask Mike questions at that time.

Kent Hersey- You also mentioned something about the Forest Service intent, and I can't speak for the Forest Service here, but in the Southern Region RAC last night they did have a letter of support from the Forest in that region.

Kevin Albrecht- I will address that a little bit. I do have a letter to give the division of support of this statewide plan. In this letter we talk about how the Forest Service

wants to have a lot of input as we go or as we work down to a unit plan on the LaSals and be involved in how that works and have a lot of input on what those triggers and different things are, and the district ranger on the LaSals will speak to that and what those concerns are and how he would like to see that collaboration work. Bill Bates- I would just add that we have no intention of causing any resource damage to the rare plants or the research natural area up there and so that would be a part of the unit plan to make sure that it doesn't happen.

Chris Micoz- I have a question, Are there other mountain ranges that have goats where the habitat over 10,000 feet is a higher percentage? It would be a pretty small percentage over 10,000 feet on the La Sal Mountains. And there is no mountain ranges connected to that. It is just of sort of out there on its own. And that does concern me because the goats do like higher elevations. Is that something that division as looked at?

Kent Hersey- Yes and that would be addressed with the population objective. There are certain densities that we would like to see on that unit, typically four or five goats per square mile or so.

Chris Micoz- So it would be a pretty small population that you're looking at.

Kent Hersey- Absolutely. We would manage the population at a level that is sustainable for the area. We would not want a situation like in the Olympic National Park. Where you see most of their reports of damage caused by goats, it's referring to Olympic National park which is an unmanaged population and they have densities of thirty something animals per square mile--much higher than you see in any managed population here in Utah, so we would just do nanny hunts to make sure that the population is held at objective.

Bill Bates- Chris, we have a map. I don't know if Justin brought any copies. I brought this one. We are actually looking at habitat over 9,000 feet on the La Sal's as being a suitable habitat. Do you want to talk about that, Justin? And maybe talk about what we are thinking about in numbers?

Justin Shannon- There is a habitat model out that is created in the early 2000s and they were showing that you could very actively map the habitat use of mountain goats by doing 33 degree slopes and a 258 meter buffer around those slopes and they were capturing 80 plus percent of all mountain goat sightings in that. So that is what we applied to the La Sal's. I put together some numbers and supposed that a mountain goat never goes under 10,000 feet. We have 36 square miles of available habitat for goats on the La Sal's if we drop that down to 9,500. If you set that minimum evaluation at 9,000 feet we have 60 square miles of goat habitat on the LaSals. So the habitat is there. It's just where you put that elevation drop that is debatable. So even at 10,000 feet if we had 5-6 goats per square mile, that's 200 mountain goats. You want to be above the minimal viable population of 125 like we talked about in the last one, but we don't want to degrade the landscape. If you don't have healthy habitat, you don't have healthy wildlife populations, so that is why we would start out very low.

Bill Bates- It's looking at one end of the mountain rather than the whole mountain for right now even with the available habitat.

Justin Shannon- We probably would start at the north end and see they do on those peaks and keep them there to begin with.

Derris Jones- How do you propose to keep them on the North? (laughing)

Justin Shannon- That is a very fair question. That is where we would release them to begin with. But one thing that we would want to do is, if we have population objective on the La Sal's, but we have all of the Mountain goats on one peak, you can put hunts between Geyser's Pass north and south or however you would like to do that, and distribute those animals a little better. So we would release them on the North end, if they stay there, great, if they don't great, but we would learn from it. But that would be the goal to start up with.

Derris Jones- When the unit management plan comes out, is it going to come to the RACs? Are we going to have input before it's a done deal?

Justin Shannon- Yes

Derris Jones- So basically, tonight there is a transplant proposed into the statewide plan to the La Sal's, but there may be a more opportune time to get real passionate about introduction of goats to the La Sal's other than tonight?

Justin Shannon- Part of Kent's presentation was to have unit plans, either to develop them or update the ones that currently exist. So there will be a unit plan for the La Sal's.

Derris Jones- And that will happen prior to the transplant?

Kent Hersey- I would like to make a comment here. In the southern region, they met with Garfield County in regards to putting goats on Mt. Dutton. They also had some concern there for a little bit different reasons but essentially the same thing. We made that commitment to them that we would not put goats there until we have developed the unit plan and involved them extensively and that we can make that exact same commitment here tonight.

Bill Bates- And I would actually like to make a comment that you can make that as part of the motion tonight that before we do a transplant that we do the unit plan first and I have committed to Mike at the Forest Service that we will use a unit plan as a way to make sure that we address all of the Forest Service issues and those are covered.

Kent Hersey- If there's a unit plan to put mountain goats on the La Sal's, it will be a plan that addresses how many goats we want to have there. It will address habitat concerns and potential monitoring of the habitat and things of that nature.

Bill Bates- I would say that the unit plan would have to be reviewed by the RAC and Board, so it is still open to public input. So I don't think it is a done deal.

Kent Hersey- If we put a plan together, we are going to put it together to have goats on the La Sal's. However, if it doesn't pass, then we would not have goats on that mountain.

Derris Jones- Can the plan have triggers in it that if major concerns are seen that annihilation of the La Sal goat herd is an option?

Kent Hersey- it could. Annihilation is more difficult than others, but it is certainly a possibility.

Derris Jones- Any other questions from the RAC?

Charlie Tracy- I have one. What have any of the private land owners said about any of these on the LaSals? Does anybody have any comments on that or any?

Justin Shannon- There won't be gobs of private land up at that elevation. At the open house, we had one gentlemen come and have a conversation with us about what if goats got into his pasture. What if they were getting into his fences and he had those concerns. At those elevations and at those slopes there is probably less

likelihood of conflict that way. But it is possible. I mean it is a wildlife species and as Derris pointed out they are going to go where they want to go.

Bill Bates- I guess the only place that we would have any problems would be like the private land up in Beaver Basin.

Mike Diem- Well there is some in Geyser pass. On the back side.

Charlie Tracy- There is more private land in Gulch than there is in Deep Creek.

Mike Diem- Yes. And there is private land scattered throughout there.

Wayne Hoskisson- Including clear up on the tailored slopes.

Derris Jones- Any other questions from the RAC?

Derris Jones- Questions from the public?

Questions from the Public

Troy Justensen, SFW- obviously we have goat populations throughout the state mostly in the northern half. My question to the division is have we seen any destruction to sensitive plant species or anything else like that with our current populations of goats? Have we had any problems?

Kevin Hersey- No. We have done extensive monitoring up on the Uintah ever since their introduction and it is to the point now that the Forest Service has very little concern up in those mountains regarding the Uintahs.

Wayne Hoskisson- I would love to respond to that as well because I have hiked Box Elder peak and I have hiked Mt. Olympus, I have hiked Twin Peaks, I have hiked the Uintahs. And the Uintahs is indeed a special range and it is a situation that is different than any of the others in the state of Utah. You talk already about decreasing the population on Leidy Peak and the reason for that is it's in the rain shadow of the mountain range and it is drier on Leidy Peak. Habitat is not as good, true Rocky Mountain goat habitat has a rainfall of 80 to 200 inches a year. So there is hardly any place in Utah that really qualifies. But the damage on Box Elder Peak is very evident. And the damage on Mt. Olympus is also very evident. There are barren soils without plants. So I do know that there is damage and there has been damage. I haven't been there in about ten years but I doubt it's improved because the numbers have gone up.

Kent Hersey- I have to disagree that it would be caused by goats. I mean we have done extensive studies on the Uintahs and we also have extensive monitoring on the Tushar Mountains.

Wayne Hoskisson- Those are all really recent though. You just put the ones in on the Tushars about three or four years ago.

Kent Hersey- No, those have been in since the 80's.

Wayne Hoskisson- Not at the high elevations. Those are new.

Kent Hersey- No, you can look at the plant table and they have been there.

Wayne Hoskisson- I have gone through your records and most of those are winter range deer habitat. And they put in three up on the high elevations and they are not that old.

Bill Bates- You're thinking about vegetation and not the goats.

Wayne Hoskisson- You mean you have a special place where you hide your goat transcripts? I don't know. I looked at your range trend study sites.

Kent Hersey- But we have done those extensively and have seen no impact on the Tushers, which was a big concern prior to that. And we have not seen any issues.

Keith Johnson, High Top Outfitters- Could the division answer one of the concerns of one the RAC members here that was made considering federal power vs. state powers and if possible cite the amendment in the Constitution that the federal government is in charge of animal regulation in the states.

Kent Hersey-The beginning of the plan tells what our regulatory authority with wildlife is and that's how we operate.

Derris Jones- Is there any other questions from the audience? We will go to comments from the audience.

Comments from the Public

Troy Justensen, SFW- We would just like to support the division in their recommendation for the statewide mountain goat plan.

Derris Jones- Thank you, Troy. If I could get you to fill out one of these yellow cards for comment. I would appreciate it.

Mike Diem, USFS,-Well I just wanted to mention a few things and I did hand in a written comment here .Over the last couple of months we have been meeting with the DWR and Bill's staff in regards to the proposal that they are at least looking at incorporating with their statewide plan. And we have spent some time out on the ground looking at some of the issues and have had several meetings in the office to discuss our concerns and then also some of the general "Where do we go from here?" conversations and like Justin was saying is that the DWR did have an open house in Moab just recently about a week and 1/2 ago. And I thought that they did an excellent job as far as providing information to the public and that we attended and we just sort of sat and listened. We didn't participate in it. We just wanted to hear as to what the comments were coming in from people at that point in time. Most of the comments were captured and that I would expect that they will probably be sending us back those specific comments that were given during that session to us. And it is our plan to take those comments from their perspective and to be able to use that when we are moving forward from here. Like what Kevin was mentioning is there was a letter submitted to the southern RAC last night in regards to support from the Dixie Fish Lake and Manti La Sal National Forest for the statewide plan. One of the things that we consider very important with that is that part of that statewide planning effort is that the unit plans are a critical component for us to move forward with this. I assume that probably the La Sal Mountains will be considered for one of those management units that will have to address. At this level we really want to be an active participant and coordinate the actions with southeastern region staff on this. Mainly because I think there are several items that need to be addressed as far as part of that. Some of them have been brought up earlier but you know I wanted to get on record at least a few of those items that I think we will have to address when we start in on the unit plans in order to have an effective plan. The first one is that we need to make sure that we address the potential effects on the mountain's natural research area. This natural area sits in the center of the LaSal Mountains and so there is always going to be that potential as far as there could be impacts there. And the reason that this is important is we have a forest plan direction that talks about man-caused actions that will have an effect on the vegetation in that area for that reason. So that is going to have to be something that we address somehow through that unit plan. I think along with that we need to make sure that we're closely involved with the development of the

population goals and objectives for that area. I know that they have generated a model but like all models that may not necessarily be the most reflective of what we need to see on the ground. We also have several endemic plant species on there and we need to make sure that our actions are addressing those from some respect and making sure that we do not lose those. I think we just want to make sure that we are addressing those potential effects on our higher elevation vegetation plant communities and associated wildlife in that area and so I know that I have received several letters and emails from people that have addressed this as a concern. So I am sure that is something that we will at least look at. One of the challenges to that we have in this area is that we do not have an extensive data base regarding the plant species and the plant communities in this area. So any action or any unit plan that we develop is going to have to take that into consideration. How we gather that information both prior to when or if there is a decision made to move forward with that and whether or not it's going to be a before and after sort of monitoring that will need to happen. The one thing I think we really need to have a lot of dialog with the division on is that we need to have a very clear adaptive strategy that identifies the key issues and monitoring components and actions to be taken by whom based on whatever trigger points are decided upon and I don't want to go into any particulars as far what those are or could be or what. But I think any kind of management plan that we have has got to have those elements in there in order to move forward. You know the LaSal Mountains are a small amount of range that even in just the short time that I have been here. I have only been here 5 years but I have seen a pretty significant change as far as in the number of activities that are occurring in that area and so it has become very popular place for a lot of recreationalists and it has become even more of focal point for research management concerns by many. And it is not only with this proposal but it seems like all of our proposals that we, in relation to the LaSals area, have a lot of public scrutiny and high visibility. So it is what it is. We just have to make sure that we understand that this is going to be a small area that it has a lot of interest of what is going to happen out there. So I wanted to just reiterate that we are listening and we do care about people's concerns regarding what potential impacts are out there. We plan on taking them into consideration as part of our responsibility and development for this unit plan. So I appreciate the opportunity to at least voice some concerns and some of our positions on this and hopefully I look forward to working with the DWR.

Derris Jones- Mike, would you mind taking a question or two, if anybody in the RAC has a question?

Mike Diem- Sure.

Sue Bellagamba- Are you planning on doing some sort of biological assessment?

Mike Diem- Well at this point in time, we are not. This is not an action that we are taking.

Pam Riddle- So ball park figures in light of what you lined out, what type of time-frame before the division could entertain maybe putting goats up there?

Mike Diem- You know actually I would hesitate to give a time line because I think there is enough components that we need to work through and capture on that. I think it is going to be this summer and potentially I don't even think next summer. Because if you're looking at doing the monitoring that we need to have in place prior to that either we are going to have an aggressive plan for this summer and I

am not sure if we are capable of changing gears at this point in time to accommodate in doing that. Because we have got so many other projects that we are working on this year to begin with.

Pam Riddle- Working for the BLM that's kind of our thoughts. It takes a while to do these things. Would a working group facilitate this?

Mike Diem- In what way?

Pam Riddle- Well I know that we have had elk working groups and deer management working groups and the buffalo groups. Do we need to consider or does the RAC need to consider something like that to help make a decision that is suitable for the Forest Service to move forward and the community to be comfortable with?

Bill Bates- I would say that working groups are put together by our director. And the director rather than USFS would make that call.

Sue Bellagamba- Reading the Forest Service manual for an RNA, it says if practical you will remove any exotic plant or animal life in the RNAs. So do you consider mountain goats exotic and are you going to work to remove them from the RNA?

Mike Diem- Well I guess that's one of those things that we would have to discuss as far as whether or not we would do that as a trigger point. If you just went strictly from a technical stand point, then yes. I would think that you probably could. But you know, I guess quite honestly, I would think that there would probably some steps that would probably be taken prior to that. I mean we haven't really discussed that with DWR. We have mentioned that there are some concerns as to what happens if you have mountain goats established in an area that you don't necessarily want them to be established and they don't move. What are you going to do? And so I think that is one thing that will have to try to be thinking about in terms of when we develop our unit plans.

Kevin Albrecht- It is an interesting question in that I looked at all of the other goat units in the state and all of those have RNAs within those goat units. So it is very interesting issue.

Wayne Hoskisson- It's not just the Forest Service. The Park Service designates that mountain goats is an exotic species in Utah and of course it only involves one unit in Utah and it's Timpanogos National Cave, so I don't know if they have a history of removing them. But it is there policy that they are not supposed to be within the Park Service lands.

Derris Jones- Comments from the public? Any other comments from the public? No further comments from the public. We will go to RAC Discussion.

RAC Discussion

Kevin Albrecht- I think there is going to be a lot of discussion. I would just say that when we get ready for a motion that I have a few ideas that I might have or that I would like to capture as part of what Mike has presented.

Pam Riddle- I have a question. When is the pika survey? What is the timeline on that?

Kent Hersey- The pika survey was just done last year and they are a three-year rotation so if they were to go again it would be in two years from now. However, given the results of the pika surveys that we have had, they have been increasing with the highest populations found in the Uintahs. So they are redoing the wildlife

action plan now whether or not that they will be included on that is unknown. From what data that we do have, it would actually suggest that they could be removed however given the political sensitivity of them, they might be included.

Mike Diem- There is another study that the Forest Service is carrying on right now and I don't know if that is the one you're referring to.

Pam Riddle- I just received some comments from the public and that was one thing that they were questioning and it was a Forest Service study.

Kent Hersey- I was talking about the DWR statewide pika survey and monitoring.

Derris Jones- Do you have information on the Forest Service pika survey, Mike?

Mike Diem- We currently are doing some studies on some of our pika habitat and their relationship as far as what the impacts are with the pikas and vegetation in that area. It's going to be an ongoing study this summer you know it is more targeted towards potential effects from plant change and particularly on that species. You know we really haven't looked at it relative to goats or anything like that. It is just an independent study that was looking at the communities that we have in that area.

Derris Jones- Is that an internal study or is it university students or what?

Mike Diem-It's a university project that were sponsoring. We received some external funding from the Canyonlands Natural History Association to undertake that study.

Sue Bellagamba-I was unable to attend the meeting in Moab, which I regret, but 100% of the comments that I received were opposed to this plan. That is public comments that I received.

Pam Riddle- Same Here, but mine were five or six comments.

Sue Bellagamba- I think I probably got a dozen.

Derris Jones- Justin, do you want to give us a brief run-down on what you received at the open house?

Justin Shannon- At the open house we had 38 people attend and we had 12-15ish that were in full support of the idea. After talking with all of the people, there were five that were absolutely against it. And then there were some right in the middle. And there were a lot of good dialogue a lot of good discussion about the native and non-native nature of it, impacts, how these have been received on other parts of the state. But if I had to make an assessment and based on the conversations and everything else, I would say it was more positive than negative.

Bill Bates- I would say that probably what you're seeing is the people that were opposed to it were there and those are the ones that have been sending in the emails.

Pam Riddle- Well it just seemed that whatever we have decided that it is not going to happen rapidly?

Derris Jones- I think that's just a process that is going to have to work through its self. But it sounds like to me that the Forest Service wants to slow things down, while the division is interested in speeding things up. But it's going to take consensus on both parts to make it happen so. I don't think it's going to happen right away. And it certainly isn't going to happen before we have the opportunity to review a unit management plan and have this discussion over what's in the plan.

Wayne Hoskisson- I think in this case that the wisest thing to do would be a little slower. I do believe that there is some damage that happens with these goats. And I think there are some specific problems that will happen within the LaSals if we put them there. One of these is with the Salix species, which I have documented and we

have sent pictures and transects and everything to the Forest Service. The Salix or willow species are on decline. They are not recruiting and they are not maturing. That is a key forage species for Rocky Mountain Goats. Another key species, in fact the one that makes it so that they don't need salt licks is (?). There is Carex on the LaSals, not a whole lot except in very few places, and where they exist are in places that we wouldn't want them like within Gold Basin which is part of the Mt. Peale RNA so I think there are some very special problems about thinking about putting them in the LaSals and I would move that we remove the LaSal Mountains as part of an area for introduction.

Derris Jones- So that is a motion then?

Wayne Hoskisson_ Yes.

Derris Jones- Is there a second to that motion?

Sue Bellagamba- I will second it.

VOTING

Motion was made by Wayne Hoskisson to remove the LaSal Mountains from the Rocky Mountain goat transplant list.

Seconded by Sue Bellagamba

Motion was tied with a 4 to 4 vote.

Chairman Derris Jones broke the tie with a vote to oppose the motion. Motion failed.

In favor of the motion were: Wayne Hoskisson, Sue Bellagamba, Charlie Tracy and Chris Micoz. Opposed to the motion were: Darrel Mecham, Jeff Horrocks, Pam Riddle, Kevin Albrecht

Comment by Derris Jones, when breaking the tie-As a representative of sportsmen on this RAC, I am going to vote against the motion. I think the concerns can be met by the people who voted for the motion through appropriate language in the unit management plan.

Motion was made by Kevin Albrecht to accept the Rocky Mountain goat management plan with the following line items:

1. Includes a LaSal Mountain unit management plan,
2. Addresses the Mount Peale RMA,
3. Includes population goals and objectives
4. Addresses endemic plant species,
5. Addresses high elevation plant communities, and
6. Acquires a data set for high elevation plant communities, prior to the introduction of Rocky Mountain goats.

Seconded by Jeff Horrocks

Motion passed with two opposing votes cast by Wayne Hoskisson and Sue Bellagamba

Other Business

-Bill Bates, Regional Supervisor

Bill Bates- I would like to mention that tonight is Pam's last RAC meeting. She has served faithfully for 8 years. I appreciate all the time ... Excuse me 9 years. But we sure appreciate it and it's also Travis' and Kenneth Maryboy's last night as well. Travis actually withdrew a little bit ago.

Bill Bates- I am going to make recommendations to the director's office this week on replacements and hopefully we will know within the next week.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Public in attendance: 6

The next Wildlife Board meeting will take place on June 4 at 9 a.m. at the DNR Board Room at 1594 W. North Temple, SLC

The next southeast regional RAC meeting will take place on July 31 at 6:30 p.m. at the John Wesley Powell Museum in Green River.

NORTHEASTERN RAC MEETING - MOTIONS PASSED
Division of Wildlife Resources Building, 318 N Vernal Avenue, Vernal
May 9, 2013

5. UPLAND GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION to accept as proposed

Passed unanimously

6. BIGHORN SHEEP MANAGEMENT PLAN

MOTION to pass the bighorn sheep plan as presented

Passed 7 - 2

MOTION to make sure all cooperative agencies including permit holders are included in the decision-making process before drafting the plan in the future for the next revision.

Passed unanimously

7. GOAT MANAGEMENT PLAN

MOTION to accept the statewide goat plan as presented

Passed unanimously

NORTHEASTERN RAC MEETING SUMMARY
Division of Wildlife Resources Building, 318 N Vernal Avenue, Vernal
May 9, 2013

RAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wayne McAllister, At Large
Mitch Hacking, Agriculture
Brandon McDonald, BLM
Beth Hamann, Non-consumptive
Carrie Messerly, At Large
Floyd Briggs, RAC Chair
Boyde Blackwell, NER Supervisor
Kirk Woodward, Sportsmen
Andrea Merrell, Non-consumptive
Bob Christensen, Forest Service
Rod Morrison, Sportsmen

RAC MEMBERS UNEXCUSED:

Ron Winterton

UDWR PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Blair Stringham, Upland Game Biologist
Kent Hersey, Big Game Project Leader
Dax Mangus, NER Wildlife Manager
Brian Maxfield, NER Wildlife Biologist
Randall Thacker, NER Wildlife Biologist
Ron Stewart, NER Conservation Outreach
Gayle Allred, NER Office Manager

RAC MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ute Tribe

WILDLIFE BOARD MEMBERS:

Del Brady

1. WELCOME, RAC INTRODUCTIONS AND RAC PROCEDURE-Floyd Briggs

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES-Floyd Briggs

MOTION:

Beth Hamann: to accept the agenda and minutes as presented

Second: Carrie Messerly

Passed unanimously

3. WILDLIFE BOARD MEETING UPDATE-Floyd Briggs

Thank-you to Del Brady for his input regarding the reduction in Book Cliffs deer permit numbers. We asked for 25% and got 20%. Everything else passed according to what the NER RAC had proposed.

4. REGIONAL UPDATE - Boyde Blackwell

Law Enforcement: Filled our sergeant position with Randy Scheetz, a former conservation officer. He will oversee three conservation officers on the south and west side. Dan Barnhurst will be covering the north and east side.

Habitat: Is finishing aprons on 12 new pronghorn guzzlers. They have planted 100 cottonwood trees at Montez Creek and cottonwood poles at Lake Canyon. Also other trees and shrubs were planted at Kevin Conway WMA

Aquatics:

- Starting kids fishing classes at the Rec. Center. Approximately 30 kids have signed up (between 6 and 11 years old).
- Cutthroat egg take at Lake Canyon will be starting around the 20th.
- Last two weeks of this month bass and bluegill survey taking place at Pelican.

Outreach: Busy with local expos and kids functions. Starting a youth archery in the schools program at the Christian Academy in Vernal. That will be the first one in the Basin. We are hoping to get it into the regular school system as well.

Wildlife:

-Predator incentive program (coyote) bounty program. Data as of end of April, there have been 6,611 coyotes killed. The cost of reimbursement has been \$330,550. We use indicators to tell the health of the system. We could almost use the number of coyotes taken. Out of all coyotes taken, only 6% were taken in NER. I've received several comments from folks who say it takes too much time to sign up and get registered, make appt, etc. The pelts are worth \$50.00. We are working on contracts worth \$10,000 each, for denning coyotes on the Henries and on Pahvahnt.

We are finishing sage grouse surveys. Populations are looking good in our region. I've asked Brian Maxfield, who is our regional expert on sage grouse, to give an update. There is a new conservation plan approved and signed by the governor. This last week the sage grouse conservation plan was approved and signed.

Utah's Conservation Plan for Greater Sage Grouse Presentation - Brian Maxfield
Presentation

- Range-wide declines in population
- USFWS will decide in 2015 whether to list sage grouse under ESA
- Court decision requires decision in 2015. - previous decision was "Warranted but precluded"
- Utah wants to PREVENT listing

Highlights

- Goal is to PROTECT, MAINTAIN, and IMPROVE sage-grouse populations and habitat.

-measurable objectives used

-11 Sage-grouse Management Areas (SGMAs) were identified. Out of the 11, 1 and part of another one are in our region (Uintah and Strawberry).

-Focus is to AVOID, MINIMIZE, and MITIGATE any new disturbance within habitat in SGMAs

Between Uintah and Strawberry there are sage grouse on Tribal land but they have asked not to be included in this plan. They may create their own.

Our Uinta region is north of Hwy 40 and up 191.

Plan Highlights

-Private and SITLA lands are not required to participate but are incentive-based.

-Use conservation covenants, easements, etc. to protect habitat.

-Sage grouse found outside the management areas will not fall under management activities or restrictions.

-Ute Tribal lands NOT included in Utah's plan (at their request).

You can read the complete plan at: <http://go.usa.gov/TX93>.

(End of slide show presentation)

Diamond Mountain numbers are up substantially up for sage grouse numbers. We're pretty much the bright spot, not only in Utah but in the West. Numbers dropped four or five years ago but we're up significantly now (80-90 males in this year's count).

Questions:

Floyd Briggs: Have you done any management that contributed to that or is it just because of the cycle?

Brian Maxfield: Both. We have done projects and this is on the upswing of their population cycle as well.

Mitch Hacking: A lot is said about habitat but not predators. Eagles, crows and ravens are a problem. Will this website address these problems?

Brian Maxfield: Yes. Predator management is targeted in specific areas. It's essentially ravens. Crows don't take the eggs like ravens do.

Mitch Hacking: They're protected though. Ravens and golden eagles.

Brian Maxfield: They're not endangered though. Wildlife Services has placed poison eggs for raven control for years.

Mitch Hacking: Do they pack eggs back to nest?

Brian Maxfield: Yes, or they'll hide them.

Mitch Hacking: Does the poison dissipate?

Brian Maxfield: It takes 72 hours.

Mitch Hacking: How are the nests doing?

Brian Maxfield: Last year they did awesome. The work BYU did up there was about normal but survival was phenomenal for some reason. Anthro Mountain which has typically had the worst survival in the state had survival better than last 10 years.

Mitch Hacking: I think grazing has something to do with it too. If they're listed in Wyoming, will they still be listed in Utah?

Brian Maxfield: It'll be up to the USFS how they do it. The Fish and Wildlife Service has the final say. They used to be selective in where they list and not list, but they have been told to list them everywhere and not be selective.

Del Brady: What are they doing at Strawberry for grouse?

Brian Maxfield: That was the first translocation study showing we can successfully move them. We like it because the big lek in Strawberry is lower and we found two new ones in Fruitland. All of our active leks are doing well in Fruitland since the transplant. Also in Strawberry Valley.

Del Brady: What about predators like ravens and fox?

Brian Maxfield: At first they were showing red fox and ravens, then they did translocation and predator management. Now they've stopped the translocations and supposed to continue predator management for a certain period and then stop and see what's happening. But we've had private ranchers going in and trapping. We've always done the poison eggs in Fruitland.

5. UPLAND GAME RECOMMENDATIONS - Blair Stringham

Upland Game Guidebooks are done on a three-year rotation and will be coming through next year. We just have a couple changes for this year.

(See handout)

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: Who decides the limits?

Blair Stringham: The states, and the Fish and Wildlife Service, and three countries (Canada, United States, Mexico). It is a collaboration of all. They get together and come to an agreement on how we can best agree how to manage.

Mitch Hacking: In the fall in Jensen and Ouray five years ago there weren't that many cranes. Now it's unreal. I was told you couldn't have depredation tags because they were under federal jurisdiction.

Blair Stringham: They fall under the migratory treaty act. We work with them and modify where possible.

Mitch Hacking: If I proposed to double the number from 25 to 50 would I be out of line?

Blair Stringham: We get an allocated amount of permits. If we boosted permits here, we'd have to reduce in other parts of state based on the allotted amount.

Mitch Hacking: How do you manage populations? Our hands are tied.

Blair Stringham: We have three seasons which will keep the pressure on, and will hopefully have them move their migration patterns.

Kirk Woodward: If our hands are tied, who's responsible for the depredation?

Blair Stringham: Wildlife Services, but their funding is limited.

Kirk Woodward: Can you speak to the effect that the Eurasian dove is having?

Blair Stringham: There hasn't been a lot of data. They have displaced doves. It's hard to say if they're having a huge impact on the populations or not. We monitor mourning dove with a call

count survey and the trend is stable. It would indicate they're moving out of urban areas and into rural areas.

Kirk Woodward: How are we going to know?

Blair Stringham: There will probably be more emphasis to figure out if it's a problem. It's a problem all across the nation.

Kirk Woodward: Do we have any idea on mourning harvest data and collared doves?

Blair Stringham: We haven't been collecting any of that. We've just spread the word to shoot as many as you can.

Floyd Briggs: On the three seasons, they have 25 permits in each season. If you had someone in Jensen who was getting hit real hard, could you contact the permit holders and have them help eliminate some of the problem?

Blair Stringham: We are setting up a list for landowners who are willing to have hunters help them. Uintah County has a low success rate. The key would be to have landowners allow hunting on their property.

Questions from Audience:

None

Comments from Public:

None

Comments from RAC:

None

**MOTION by Kirk Woodward to accept as proposed
Second Bob Christiansen**

Passed unanimously

6. BIGHORN SHEEP MANAGEMENT PLAN - Kent Hersey

Five-year plan which is good now through June of 2018

(See handout)

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: Were there any livestock representatives at the summit?

Kent Hersey No we were focusing on hunting and management of sheep. With sheep, since we had just redone the plan we didn't feel a need to put a committee together.

Mitch Hacking: When you set the guidelines did agriculture have any input?

Kent Hersey: That's done by the WAFWA group. It is made up of bighorn sheep managers from across the state. I don't know who all is involved. I don't think agriculture sits on that. They can have input but I don't know the process.

Mitch Hacking: Have you got any ongoing problems with domestic sheep?

Kent Hersey: Wild Horse Bench is a concern for us. Bighorns are going in. We are trying to address that in Desolation Canyon.

Mitch Hacking: On odds, did that include bonus points?

Kent Hersey: No, strictly drawing resident applications and resident permits.

Mitch Hacking: So we really don't know what the odds are then.

Kent Hersey: If you have 14 points, you're more likely to get one than someone with one point.

Kirk Woodward: Any plans for Goslin?

Kent Hersey: We were successful in stopping the disease.

Dax Mangus: The plan talks about disease profile information. We're looking at that right now. There's a likelihood that sheep on Goslin will interact with Bear Top. That's why when sheep got sick in the past, we eliminated them. I don't have complete disease profiling yet. We radio-collared sheep this last winter. We will look at the source herd and see. We're looking at taking

from the Desolation River corridor, Wild Horse Bench. Goslin was one potential transplant site but I'm waiting for a detailed analysis. We don't want an unacceptable risk. We'll have that information pretty soon. Our Salt Lake analyst has done a preliminary analysis. We are still waiting for further information. If we did do that transplant it would be more focused on reducing risk on Desolation. Goslin would be a bonus, if we can have sheep available.

Bob Christensen: Was it ever determined where we had the problem on Goslin?

Dax Mangus: No. There are still unanswered questions. It has happened across the West.

Kirk Woodward: So the population on Bear Top is cut in half in the last three years...

Dax Mangus: There was low lamb production. We did collar last year and will look at the analysis to see if they had exposure to diseases that kill sheep. We're not seeing lambs coughing up there right now. It doesn't look like there's an active disease event on Bear Top. We have put new collars on. They're harder to find without collars

Kent Hersey: Bighorn is a trophy species. There's a concern with overharvesting those animals. Want to make sure when we issue tags we're not overharvesting top-end rams. Counted can ensure tags are set to obtain a harvest we want to get.

Carrie Messerly: What is the deviation?

Kent Hersey: It varies quite a bit. On desert areas it can be 40 to 50%. There is concern we are being too conservative, so that's why we put a range.

Carrie Messerly: We're relying on humans who are not necessarily seeing everything out there. That's a concern when more people can be out there hunting. Are there any other hunts we utilize this same system with?

Kent Hersey: Mountain goats will be. Bison has very high sightability. Moose is done with sightability, but moose is done on average age. We don't do that for sheep because the average age is so high.

Rod Morrison : Are desert sheep more susceptible to disease and predators compared to rockies?

Kent Hersey: They're equally susceptible to disease but lower lamb production and some units have cougar predator issues. When there's low lamb combined with a predators that's when we see the population changes.

Brandon McDonald: Is there any effort as far as mapping to identify occupied habitat vs. potential habitat?

Kent Hersey: We are in the process of updating making a map that will only look at sheep habitat needs, vegetation and percent slope. We have layers of where grazing sheep are. Sometimes you are surprised with private backyard herds that we didn't know existed.

Bob Christensen: I will be running a model in the Avintaquin area where there are two domestic sheep allotments and a bighorn sheep herd. If that's the same model you're talking about, it's a risk assessment of domestic vs. bighorn sheep.

Kent Hersey: Any time you're managing sheep, you're dealing with risk. so you want the best data you can have.

Questions from Audience:

Wade Jensen (Permittee on Wild Horse Bench): This issue gets me big time. I noticed in your writing that you have a penalty issue when domestic sheep wander onto bighorn areas and you talk about a procedure dealing with domestic sheep. What is it?

Kent Hersey: When domestic sheep come into areas where there are wild sheep, we identify the sheep and get them off that unit as quickly as possible. If we can't, we can remove those sheep if removal is deemed necessary and compensate the owner for them.

Mark Hill (south side of Book Cliffs): If you're going to introduce sheep, how are you going to work with landowners and permittees? How are we going to have any say so?

Kent Hersey: When unit plans are put together, domestic issues are addressed. Those unit plans will go through the regional RAC process.

Mark Hill: So we have to talk to the regions.

Kent Hersey: We will not put bighorn sheep on top of domestic sheep.

Kevin Jensen: In Gray's Canyon you mentioned transplanting sheep. You're not putting them on top of domestic sheep, but it's just a hop, skip and a jump away.

Mark Hill: Why would you put them in Gray's Canyon? It's not that far.

Kent Hersey: The specific sites aren't determined yet. We want to get sheep in Trail Canyon, Jack's Creek, and Jack's Creek is the one we're having concerns about.

James Bair (Permittee south of here): I would like to find out how we can be notified from these meetings.

Kent Hersey: It's been on the web site for a long time.

James Bair: It would be greatly appreciated if we could be notified.

Mitch Hacking: You should get hold of the Farm Bureau people. They should be notifying you.

Boyde Blackwell: This meeting was in the papers for two weeks, and on the radio. Wildlife managers could try to notify permittees.

Floyd Briggs: What kind of a buffer zone do you try to establish?

Kent Hersey: It depends on the area. 8 - 10 miles is average but if it's all contiguous habitat that doesn't buy you anything, so in those instances we want as much distance as we can. Another issue is sometimes rams will go 40-50 miles in any direction regardless of habitat type. That's the difficult part to predict. If they did that and picked up some bugs and brought them back before they died, it would be a problem.

Connie Theos (permittees with sheep): I read this document and I'd like to know where these translocations are planned. Do you have something really specific because I'd like to know if we're going to be affected?

Kent Hersey: The unit plans will go into greater detail. These just show potential habitat for sheep.

Boyde Blackwell: Unit plans are developed in the region where the sheep are going to go. For example, if we were talking the South Slope of the Book Cliffs, that is managed out of the Southeast region, Price office, so their field biologists and manager will develop that. And I would hope that when they get around to that, they would go to affected people like landowners and hunters. They'll build a plan and it'll go through a RAC process and then to the Wildlife Board.

Connie Theos: Will BLM be involved?

Boyde Blackwell: Yes. If in this region the wildlife manager said we'd like big horn sheep in this area, I would expect him to make sure people involved in that would be visited with and provide input and build that unit management plan.

Connie Theos: So permit holders could rest assured that if something were to happen out of the Vernal area, we would be contacted out of the Vernal area.

Boyde Blackwell: We would want you to be contacted.

Andrea Merrell: Is there a way to say they must be contacted?

Kirk Woodward: I think that's in the comments.

Wade Jensen: When did the policy change that you contact people? It wasn't done in San Rafael Swell. They were there and we were pressed out.

Floyd Briggs: I think Andrea's onto something to write something into the policy to make a suggestion to address that in the comments.

Bob Christiansen: WAFWA's plan calls for risk assessments like I was talking about earlier. Following completion of the risk assessment, transplants should minimize the association between wild sheep and domestic sheep. Guidelines are listing guidelines to go by.

Floyd Briggs: We would need to be sure it was written into the policy but let's not dwell on the question.

Comments from RAC:

Brandon McDonald: BLM recommends that we hold off on this plan. After a few phone calls today with our state office, there may be some problems with no one working on it. Management here in the Vernal field office has a little bit of concern. Our biggest concern is the mapping. We'd like to get that squared away regarding occupied vs. potential sites. The way we manage it's really difficult to write range environmental assessments (EAs) and implement them to a permittee. If we can make the changes as far as mapping that will set a baseline so we can update our guidance plan from 1987 for bighorn sheep and the cooperative agreement from 1993.

Carrie Messerly: I thought it was contingent that it would not be implemented until we have that in place.

Brandon McDonald: I think that would probably work.

Carrie Messerly: If there's no major qualm with the plan itself as long as there's mapping of the location then it seems like a pretty good idea to me.

Brandon McDonald: Is there a BLM representative on every RAC in the state? What have their RACs voted for?

Kent Hersey : Southern Region voted for it unanimously. Southeastern Region was 8 to1.

Brandon McDonald: Some of the plan looks like it might be in conflict with our plan. I wondered if other BLM representatives have disagreed.

Kent Hersey: They have not brought up any issues.

Mitch Hacking: I have some issues with the plan. There was no livestock representation when it was put together. Just today I found out that there is a lot of livestock people that it's like a bombshell got put on them. I think the livestock people need to be informed before we finalize it. Sounds like BLM has the same situation.

Carrie Messerly: I appreciate the public making the effort to come here. All our phone numbers and contact information is online. We would appreciate you contacting us so you can get more information.

Floyd Briggs: The Wildlife Division recognizes the importance of domestic sheep. As a RAC, what we send to the Wildlife Board is a feel for the Region. Sheep in this region is a pretty important resource. When we make our motion tonight, this is a good time to if we decide to pass the plan unanimously, we could also decide if a little more written into the plan where sheep insurances be addressed more than they are now.

Brandon McDonald: If we did that, what assurances, and when would we get this squared away? I know DWR and BLM has been working closely locally with long-term and short-term goals. Some permittees are going to get pulled into here to get concerns and questions answered. I'm actually still leaning toward holding off on this plan till we get more done with mapping.

Comments from Audience:

James Bair: My brothers and I just bought a sheep outfit and permits. One of the questions I asked the previous owner was if there are any bighorn sheep on there. I don't want to lose the ranch because of the bighorn sheep. From past experience I have a hard time believing that landowners are not pushed off the range. If there's an existing sheep permit and permittees would

like to run sheep, that they wouldn't plant any sheep in that area and that would be good enough, but past evidence shows otherwise. I run in Utah and Colorado. I don't want to be out of business. I'd appreciate it if you'd work with domestic sheep owners. I've been in a lot of DWR offices and haven't seen a lot of data that proves that diseases cause bighorn sheep to die. I'm not opposed to DWR fencing the area to keep domestic sheep out. If there's low lamb production, anybody can tell you to kill more coyotes, cougars, etc. Scott Chew didn't know anything about this meeting tonight and others were the same. I thought it was just a rumor.

Wade Jensen (permittee on Wild Horse Bench allotment south of Ouray): I got run out of Southeastern Region and am now in the Northeastern Region. My herd left the Southeastern Region 10 years ago and then the bighorn sheep died. It wasn't my sheep that killed them. Sheep were there when they brought the bighorn sheep anyway. I've been in BLM court, etc. The Department of Interior judge said there's no proof your sheep will hurt bighorns, but there is some doubt. I talked to a vet hired by USDA and she is charged with trying to find out why the bighorn sheep died. Some might carry bugs from 100 years ago. It's overly simplistic to blame the die-off on domestic sheep. I don't want to deprive hunters from hunting bighorn sheep but I don't want to be deprived of my livelihood.

Ken Jensen: On Sid's Mountain there was a herd of 35 bucks on San Rafael . There's nothing there now. I like the sound of them fighting. I like sheep. In 2002 there were 240,000 ranges left. Wild Horse Bench. Forest Service doesn't want to convert to cattle, so we're here. I started with sheep at 13 years old. It's a culture and a lifestyle. It's not just numbers on a piece of paper.

Connie Theos (Nick Theos' daughter. Angelo Theos was my grandfather): The Theos family started running sheep in Watson and Hells Hole years ago. My Father spent 80 years in Hells Hole Canyon. A few years ago we bought three permits from Lynn Siddoway. He had to sell his sheep because bighorn sheep chased him off his lambing ground. Those are the concerns we had as operators. We intend to stay in the sheep business. My four-year old nephew has some lambs he's getting ready. The idea in the document that says Utah respects the sheep industries, and then the index says no transplants in areas with domestic sheep and goats. It's difficult to put faith in those documents when you see what's happened in surrounding states. ASI has funded a huge research project regarding domestic sheep disease transmitting disease to bighorn sheep. They're trying to develop vaccines. It's the domestic sheep industry trying to develop a vaccine to protect bighorn sheep, not domestic sheep. The way we found out about this meeting was the local BLM who called us. We were appreciative of hearing about the meeting. It's important we be kept in the loop.

Bob Christensen: Idaho's been mentioned a couple times and I understand things are happening in Idaho, and with the Forest Service in Payette. In Utah, we're waiting to see what's going to happen in Idaho. I don't know if a lot of the people in the state of Utah realize how hot an issue

that is in Idaho. The decision that's happened on the Payette has been in and out of court several times. The Forest Service's decision was some sheep allotments should be closed but then they got litigated on. So I understand the issue there and what the domestic livestock operators are saying. I don't think the WAWFA guidelines are meant to try to keep the separation between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep. With those guidelines, also, with the mapping and risk assessment models, I wonder if, we go ahead with the plan, but if we have something specific saying before any reintroduction occurs, that livestock, Farm Bureau, landowners be contacted. Under the population goal that specifically said public livestock operators would be contacted and notified, as well as mapping done before introduction occurs. Just wondered if that would suffice, so these people could be heard before any introduction could occur.

Mitch Hacking: The biggest comment we got was from our BLM rep, saying that this plan isn't ready for it and they work directly with landowners. If we pass this, it's going to be harder for these guys to get done what they need to get done.

Floyd Briggs: With a representative from the Wildlife Board, with my experience, Utah has been on the forefront because of what the state has set up, with the RACs and the Wildlife Boards. I think the method is good, but I'm a hay shaker. I know where you're coming from. I think if we send a message to the Wildlife Board to work with the permittees on public lands, that that will be heard with the Wildlife Board.

Andrea Merrell: We referenced the sage grouse initiative earlier. I've worked with private landowners. A very important component is the work that's being done is by private landowners to benefit sage grouse. Why aren't we bringing the private landowners in on this bighorn sheep management plan? Why have they been left out? It concerned me when on the slide you were working with conservation groups to change grazing allotments from domestic sheep to bighorn sheep. My experience is with stakeholders and from hearing their comments. I am very concerned that they have been left out of it and they are an extremely important component of it.

Kirk Woodward: I took care of Lynn Siddoway and his family. You said Lynn died of a broken heart because he was pushed out. Can I ask for more information?

Floyd Briggs: As a RAC chair, I'd rather not go backwards. As a RAC if we can send a message that we don't want to have something that happened in Idaho and with public landowners.

Wayne McAllister: Lynn was upset because he lost his lambing grounds. He was bought out.

Wade Jensen: There were three sheep outfits on San Rafael Swell, the fourth family had run sheep. The owner died and the land was leased. His son Joe wanted to convert back to sheep. The local BLM said yes, fill out the paperwork. He bought the sheep, went into BLM sheep

office and they said, "You can't because there are bighorn sheep in the area." He brought sheep in anyway and was trespassed on every day. After a lot of veterinary stuff which was inconclusive, they lost the lawsuit. Older brothers who wanted to retire. I was going to be left alone. I had an outfit that worked. We trailed to lambing grounds and didn't truck. Sheep trailed there for 115 years. I was the last herder. The wildlife biologist wanted me out of there. The BLM was pressing me to get out of there. I signed the paper. It was like a gun was held to my head. I negotiated and they let me keep the place to go to cattle. Sheep in another area. I was on my own. I was wiped out. I bought land in this region.

Floyd Briggs: I want to keep the meeting moving forward.

MOTION:

Mitch Hacking: that we table this plan until BLM passes approval and listens to the permittees

Second: Carrie Messerly

Brandon McDonald: Given political issues, we would like to slow it down a little bit and work closer with DWR as far as implementing new GIS layers. If we were to distinguish occupied vs. potential habitat that would help us as far as how we issue permits and will set a baseline for our local guidance plan and cooperative agreement.

Wayne McAllister: I thought this was a rollover plan from the last five years?

Kent Hersey: Brandon, what's different from this plan from the last plan? We worked extensively with Steve Madsen and there are limited changes.

Brandon McDonald: We have a new land use plan from October 2008 and it's a lot more detailed on how we manage range. It set a new precedent on how we manage land for the next 10-20 years.

Bob Christensen: Brandon, so you're saying if they had the mapping done for occupied potential, the BLM would be okay with the plan?

Brandon McDonald: Yes. That was the biggest problem. I brought it to management today and that's the biggest hang-up.

Favor: Mitch Hacking, Carrie Messerly, Brandon McDonald, Andrea Merrell

Opposed: Wayne McAllister, Beth Hamann, Kirk Woodward, Bob Christensen, Rod Morrison

Motion failed

Del Brady: This is part of an ongoing plan, and you as a RAC, and you've seen us do it in the Board. You should make a sidebar recommendation and motion and approve the balance of the plan as presented. You cannot leave the DWR without a plan.

MOTION:

Rod Morrison: that we approve the bighorn sheep plan as presented with a sidebar that before any reintroduction decisions are made that every permittee is notified and involved in the process so they can come up with an agreement.

Second: Kirk Woodward

Carrie Messerly: It's not feasible to say that every permittee will be contacted.

Mitch Hacking: I disagree. They send us letters. We get information.

Floyd Briggs: Brandon, on your issue, what's happening on BLM?

Brandon McDonald: We need to work on occupied vs. potential habitat areas.

Floyd Briggs: It would only address permits on BLM.

Brandon McDonald: BLM is not satisfied with the layers.

DRAFT MOTION:

Rod Morrison: I think we should go with bighorn sheep management plan as presented but before we do any transplants with wild bighorn sheep, be sure the permittees are notified and included in plan.

Carrie Messerly: How about contiguous permittees, people who would be affected by transplanted areas?

Beth Hamann: Isn't that what he said the whole entire time? That before they put bighorn sheep anywhere, they're going to let people know?

Motion failed.**DRAFT MOTION:**

Carrie Messerly: to accept as presented with the contingency that there is an overall agreement of cooperative agencies that the plan is as need be...

...How about to accept as presented granted that cooperative agencies are in agreement and have been notified (BLM, landowners, permittees). That would include BLM's concerns with their land use mapping...

Floyd Briggs: Del, can you help?

Del Brady: I suggest you break it down into two motions. One that no transplant or relocation of wildlife sheep on any area that has domestic sheep. As part of the plan, include BLM. Then have a separate motion to accept the balance of the plan. You're talking about transplanting sheep on top of these guys. These guys are worried about having sheep transplanted on top of them. There's not a wild sheep guy in the world who wants to put wild sheep on domestic sheep.

Mitch Hacking: We're gun shy. It's a different world.

Kirk Woodward: If we make two motions we can meet everybody's needs. I think the notification wording is in the plan but we have evidences that it's not that way, so Carrie could be the motion, with the second motion to accept the rest of the plan. Have Carrie restate her first motion and a second motion to accept the balance of plan.

Carrie Messerly: Mr. Chairman, there was no second, so the motion fails.

No second.

Motion fails.

DRAFT MOTION:

Carrie Messerly: that the plan move forward as per the approval of cooperative agencies and permittees.

Wayne McAllister: Can we simplify that?

Randall Thacker: Before a transplant can be initiated, there is a management plan written which includes notification of all land management agencies and permittees.

Carrie Messerly: BLM has policies that are conflicting with this.

Floyd Briggs: Can we back-up? It's already in the plan, but the committee that's been working on the plan didn't include any permittees on the committee. Maybe we can look at the committee. Maybe it's not the plan that's the problem, maybe it's the committee that's the problem.

Brandon McDonald: The GIS layers seemed like a simple fix, but realistically, BLM and DWR are currently working together; it'll get changed eventually. We just prefer to see them done now as a baseline.

No Second

Motion fails.

Kirk Woodward: In order for us to come up with a recommendation to the Board, we want the Board to hear that it sounds like we're in agreement, that we are very concerned that the plan be followed in that all concerned people are involved any time there's going to be new bighorn sheep transplanted. That's already in the plan. So I would say let's make a motion to accept the plan as stated, with a recommendation from our RAC to make sure that the Wildlife Board mandates that that plan is followed because what we've heard tonight is that in some instances it may not have been followed.

Floyd Briggs: Split that and make a motion on the plan.

Carrie Messerly: It's not the plan that's the problem. The problem is the procedure that happened leading up to these events. We can pass the motion, with a sidebar that these people are included in the decision making process before we get to this point every update, every five years.

MOTION:

Kirk Woodward: to pass the bighorn sheep plan as presented:

Second: Carrie Messerly

Favor: Wayne McAllister, Beth Hamann, Carrie Messerly, Kirk Woodward, Andrea Merrell, Bob Christensen, Rod Morrison

Against: Brandon McDonald, Mitch Hacking

Motion passed 7-2

MOTION:

Carrie Messerly: Make sure all cooperative agencies including permit holders are included in the decision-making process before drafting the plan in the future for the next revision.

Second: Brandon McDonald

Passed unanimously

7. GOAT MANAGEMENT PLAN - Kent Hersey

(See handout)

Questions from RAC:

Mitch Hacking: You don't have trouble with domestic goats?

Kent Hersey: No. They are not nearly as susceptible.

Kirk Woodward: Why is East Side Uintas herd cut in half?

Randall Thacker: 1996 was our peak year. The east half doesn't have low elevation country to go to in winter. On the west side, you can see goats in every major drainage of south slope in the winter. But those goats can come down in elevation and can winter out there a lot better. From Whiterocks over, they drop only to the pines. The other issue is the problem, we hit the carrying capacity, then we exceeded it for a year or two. The radio collared ones would winter on top of just a few limited areas, and maybe we exceeded those patches. There's nothing to prove that for certain, just an educated guess. It depends on the micro-climate. They're not continuing to drop. 1996 was a peak, then the population dropped down and is stable. A lot of populations have a growth spurt and then maintain. Maybe we've had that peak and valley. We are flying them every two years plus a lot of ground classifications to look at production. It ties back to the number of kids.

Kirk Woodward: Are we doing anything as far as new areas in our region?

Randall Thacker: We don't have any areas. You don't want to put them on top of bighorn sheep. So far, anything we can evaluate, we don't have a big enough continuous country of cliffs to put them anywhere else in our region.

Kirk Woodward: They aren't as susceptible to bighorn, so in those areas where we're going to have major conflicts with sheep guys, is this an animal that we could look at in these areas?

Kent Hersey: It is, we've been looking at putting them in instead of sheep.

Del Brady: Sheep and goats don't mix.

Comments from RAC:

MOTION:

Kirk Woodward to accept the statewide goat plan as presented

Second: Carrie Messerly

Passed unanimously

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Boyde Blackwell: We need to elect a new RAC Chair. Is there anybody who cannot be the RAC chair, which includes attending the Wildlife Board meetings in SLC?

-Andrea Merrell

-Beth Hamann

A secret ballot was conducted, excluding Brandon McDonald, Bob Christensen and Floyd Briggs as candidate, they will be leaving.

Final vote:

Chair: Kirk Woodward

Vice Chair: Mitch Hacking

Boyde Blackwell: If Kirk is put on the Wildlife Board, we will re-vote.

People on this RAC still need to come to the next meeting in August for a presentation.

The summer RAC Social date needs to be set.

Meeting adjourned 9:30 pm

Next meeting: August 1, 2013

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville Public Library
45 S. Main St. Springville
May 14, 2013 @ 6:30 p.m.

Motion Summary

Approval of April 16, 2013 Minutes

MOTION: To accept the minutes as written
Passed unanimously

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: To accept the agenda as written
Passed unanimously

Upland Game Recommendations

MOTION: To accept the upland game recommendations as presented
Passed unanimously

Bighorn Sheep Management Plan

MOTION: To accept the bighorn sheep plan as presented
Passed 7 to 1

Goat Management Plan

MOTION: To accept the proposal for the goat management plan as presented
Passed unanimously

Urban Deer – New Rule R657-65

MOTION: To accept the proposed rule as presented
Passed 7 to 1

Central Region Advisory Council
Springville Public Library
45 S. Main St. Springville
May 14, 2013 ☞ 6:30 p.m.

Members Present

Matt Clark, Sportsmen
Timothy Fehr, At large
Larry Fitzgerald, Agriculture
Sarah Flinders, Forest Service
Michael Gates, BLM
Richard Hansen, At large
Gary Nielson, Sportsmen, Vice Chair
Fred Oswald, Non-consumptive, Chair
Duane Smith, Non-consumptive

Members Absent

Karl Hirst, Sportsmen
George Holmes, Agriculture
Kristofer Marble, At large
Jay Price, Elected

Others Present

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

VOTING

Motion was made by Timothy Fehr to accept the minutes as written

Seconded by Sarah Flinders

Motion passed unanimously

Motion was made by Richard Hansen to accept the agenda as written

Seconded by Gary Nielson

Motion passed unanimously

- 2) **Wildlife Board Meeting Update (Information)**
- Fred Oswald, RAC Chair

- 3) **Regional Update (Information)**
- John Fairchild, Central Regional Supervisor

Wildlife

- DWR/City partnerships to address urban deer management issues
- Bear cubs headed to Millville Predator Research Station in Cache Valley
- Spring bear hunt and general season turkey hunt continues through the end of the month, access not as big an issue this year
- Day-Old Chick Program needs cooperators to raise birds
- Range rides showing low fawn and doe mortality, made it through green-up
- Winter range conditions look good

Habitat

- Livestock grazing taking place on WMAs
- Two habitat restoration biologists announced (regional and NRCS biologist positions)
- Strawberry Ranch development impact analysis (interagency review this week)
- Turning on West Desert guzzlers this week

- Noxious weed control crews spraying on WMAs
- Funding committed for 2013 Watershed Restoration Projects (approx. 10,000 ac in CR)

Aquatics

- Yuba Fishery Working Group nearing completion of fish management plan. Will be presented to RAC in September.
- Work underway to revise the fish management plan for Strawberry
- Spring fishing has been very good at Deer Creek and Strawberry
- Jordan Nielsen has taken a position as the AIS coordinator in the SLO

Conservation Outreach

- Free Fishing Day set for June 8. Activities planned for Utah Lake, Wasatch Mountain State Park and Community Pond in Sanpete County.
- Utah Lake Festival to be held June 8 in conjunction with Free Fishing Day
- Salem Pond Fishing Event held today. Very successful as usual.
- Working on a partnership with BSA, Utah National Parks Council, to recruit new hunters by promoting Hunter Education, Shotgun Shooting merit badge and the Hunter Ed Plus program at their Maple Dell Scout Camp.

Law Enforcement

- Jodi Becker retired as the regional lieutenant. Position announcement out and will close May 16.
- Chad Bettridge promoted to sergeant.
- Sean Spencer selected to fill Chad's district. Had been the CO at Bullfrog.
- Officers working some cases involving illegal baiting for bears and turkeys

RAC Business

Christine Schmitz and Danny Potts have been approved to fill the two non-consumptive representative positions on the RAC, replacing Fred Oswald and Duane Smith. Larry Fitzgerald (agriculture rep) and Matt Clark (sportsmen's rep) were approved to serve for a second term.

4) Upland Game Recommendations (Action) - Blair Stringham, Upland Game Biologist

Questions from the RAC

Timothy Fehr – The band-tail pigeon population has taken a 75 percent dip. How much of that is attributed to the hunt verses other natural causes?

Blair Stringham – We really harvest very minimal number of band-tailed pigeons in Utah. It usually averages between 20 and 100 a year. Because it is such a small number we don't know the exact number.

Timothy Fehr – So there is something else causing it.

Blair Stringham – Part of the challenge we have with band-tailed pigeons is that we get such a small sample size both with the breeding bird survey as well as from our hunter harvest data so it's hard to tell to what extent the population has declined. These two surveys are a good estimate of an index of what a population is doing but we don't know how significant the population decline is.

Timothy Fehr – So with so few hunters does reducing the bag limit really make a difference?

Blair Stringham – It depends. If we had better data we could say with more certainty. I guess it's more of an action to error on the side of caution more than anything.

John Fairchild – Aren't these similar regulations going to be in other states?

Blair Stringham – This is for all the states that have the inland population of band-tailed population so it will be us, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona.

Richard Hansen – Are the white wing doves related to the Eurasian collard doves?

Blair Stringham – They are actually a different species. The white wing doves stay primarily in the southern part of the state but they are mostly even farther south in Arizona and New Mexico.

Richard Hansen – So where did the Eurasian doves come from? They are all over around my house.

Blair Stringham – The Eurasian collard doves are not a protected species in Utah. It started out in the Florida Keys in the 80s where it escaped from a captive breeder there and has spread across the whole North American continent.

Richard Hansen – They actually winter by my house. They don't leave like the mourning doves.

Blair Stringham – They are different than the mourning doves. They don't migrate. They have seasonal movements but aren't a migratory specie. Currently we don't have any regulations for them so you can hunt them 365 days a year and take as many as you want.

Larry Fitzgerald – Is this the euro dove?

Blair Stringham – Most likely. It looks a lot like a mourning dove but is bigger and a little lighter and has a different cooing sound.

Larry Fitzgerald – So there is no limit on them?

Blair Stringham – Yes.

Larry Fitzgerald – I'm afraid some people may get confused about that. You can tell the difference if you know. I think it ought to be promoted to eliminate them because last year we had a few and this year we have lots.

Blair Stringham – There are more sportsmen every year that are pursuing collard doves. The problem we have with them is they are isolated where they exist. They are primarily in urban areas so in town you can probably see hundreds of them.

Matt Clark – If you can't start a migratory bird hunt before September first and that falls on a Sunday this year why not add a day on the end of the hunt?

Blair Stringham – We currently are restricted by the regulations in the flyway process to end it on September 30th. It probably wouldn't benefit many hunters. Maybe it would in the St. George area but usually by the end of September most of the doves have moved out of Utah. We could probably look at it in the future if we were really concerned about it.

Matt Clark – Are these the only changes happening in the upland game proclamation this year?

Blair Stringham – Yes. Some of our species have a three year guidebook so we don't have to travel as much and bring stuff to you. Other species like migratory game birds are constantly changing because we do those regulations through the flyway process.

Questions from the Public

Comments from the Public
RAC Discussion

VOTING

**Motion was made by Matt Clark to accept the upland game recommendations as presented
Seconded by Richard Hansen**

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

- 5) **Bighorn Sheep Management Plan (Action)**
- **Kent Hersey, Big Game Project Leader**

Questions from the RAC

Timothy Fehr – On the domestic sheep and goats moving into the bighorn habitat I assume the issue is really the reduction of habitat availability?

Kent Hersey – Basically when bighorns come into contact with domestic sheep, domestic sheep carry a variety of bacteria that they themselves do not die from however when transmitted to bighorn sheep the bighorn sheep often do die and it causes major problems that way. What we want to try to do from a management prospective is create as much separation as possible so we don't cause issues.

Timothy Fehr – When we have elk or deer or moose on private land and causing problems there is essentially a fine from DWR. Do you do the reverse of that for domestic animals that are out of bounds?

Kent Hersey – No we don't have a penalty for that. That is ultimately up to usually the forest because that is whose land they would most likely be trespassing on. We have a policy to deal with it. We try to identify where the sheep came from and notify the owner of those sheep to come get them. If that's not possible we do have the authority to remove those animals and if we can identify where the sheep come from we will compensate the owner if we feel that is necessary to save the sheep.

Fred Oswald – Is the protocol different if the domestic sheep move into wild sheep country verses wild sheep moving into domestic?

Kent Hersey – We are concerned about both of those events. If a wild sheep moves into domestic country and there is no contact we may try to catch the sheep and bring it back. If there is a possibility of contact we will remove that animal so that it cannot contact the domestics and then bring those diseases back into the wild population. If domestic come out into a bighorn area we will do what we can to remove those animals. We want to do what we can to prevent contact between those animals where it can cause major problems for the bighorns.

Matt Clark – I remember about 15 years ago they released 30 or 40 sheep here by rock canyon. Are there any left, how is that population doing?

Kent Hersey – The latest numbers I have are in the plan. We were going to fly this year but due to conditions we weren't able to do that. We want to fly it this next fall. BYU was doing a fairly extensive monitoring study on those sheep and in the rock canyon area in particular they had a die off. We suspect it was caused due to contact with some private backyard herds of sheep. Regardless there was an ammonia die off in that herd which really hurt that population. We had a lot of adults dying. You typically see the adults die and lambs in subsequent years are very susceptible to it. You see some

immunity build up in adults but the lamb production and survival is very minimal. Basically on the southern that is what we have seen. There may be some animals on Timp that did fair a little better but we are seeing low numbers there as well. Our hope is to get a flight in this fall to better assess what is going on. Unfortunately once you have a die off event there is not a whole lot you can do. You have to wait until it runs its course and hopefully they get some immunity built up in the lambs and the herd will grow.

Matt Clark – Is that an area you would like to continue to see development of the bighorns?

Kent Hersey - It is on the potential augmentation list if we feel it can handle it. Our concern is there are so many private landowners along the base of those mountains and we think that is how they got in trouble the first time. As long as those are still there it creates a potential risk for us that may be too high.

Richard Hansen – What are your feelings about Nebo? Are you going to do an augmentation?

Kent Hersey – We want to have it on the list so it's an option for us. Nebo ranks higher than Wasatch. We still do have some issues with sheep in that area but it is an area we are considering both for goats and sheep augmentation.

Richard Hansen – We have been up there and watching the goats. We have seen 20 animals. There were five or six lambs and also separate other groups.

Kent Hersey – If they are having lambs that is encouraging.

Larry Fitzgerald – When you transplant these sheep are they vaccinated for these diseases?

Kent Hersey – Unfortunately there is not a vaccination for it. There is a lot of research going on and that is the ultimate goal because it would solve a lot of our problems but it's not there yet. We try to identify where we have domestic sheep and we try to avoid those areas as best we can. Everyone wants a buffer and a lot of the literature says eight ten miles but unfortunately if there is contiguous habitat that doesn't necessarily always work. Rams can take large 30 or 50 mile walk a-bouts at any time nobody knows why.

Larry Fitzgerald – What is the difference of another wildlife species traveling into sheep country?

Kent Hersey – It's a bacteria that has to be passed by direct contact and these other animals don't pick it up. It is an ammonia type bacteria that lives in the lungs of the animal and it can be passed by coughing or nose to nose contact. It has to be very close proximity to those animals.

Larry Fitzgerald – The sheep industry is having a hard enough time with the domestic sheep as it is so this is just another kick in the butt for them.

Kent Hersey – We are very conscious of the domestic sheep industry in Utah and we don't want to put them out of business. That is the last thing we want to do. We just want to pick areas where domestic sheep are not present where we can augment while avoiding the current domestic sheep areas. There are a few isolated instances where we have had problems and will look for willing conversions from the people but we are not trying to run anyone out of business.

Questions from the Public

Comments from the Public

Troy Justensen – SFW – First I would like to thank the Division for the opportunity we had to participate with them in the wild sheep summit. We appreciate them giving us a chance to express our concerns and our knowledge and our experience with wild sheep and come together as a team. I think it was very helpful. On behalf of Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife we would like to support the Division's recommendations for the statewide sheep program.

Dave Woodhouse – I would like to give my support to the sheep plan. I hope you can get it passed and get sheep everywhere we can.

RAC Discussion

Michael Gates – From the BLM side, on the Deep Creeks you have quite a few domestic sheep permits in the area. Our biologist has talked to the DWR a little bit. We talked a little more about goats on the Deep Creeks than sheep. I worked a little bit with John on the Stansbury introduction and we had some challenges there. This one would be a lot for challenging with the amount of permits that are there. The Oak Creeks are the Forest Service but there are a few bands of sheep on that range too.

VOTING

Motion was made by Matt Clark to accept the bighorn sheep plan as presented

Seconded by Timothy Fehr

In Favor: Matt Clark, Duane Smith, Gary Nielsen, Richard Hansen, Timothy Fehr, Sarah Flinders, Michael Gates

Opposed: Larry Fitzgerald

Motion passed 7 to 1

6) Goat Management Plan (Action)

- Kent Hersey, Big Game Project Leader

Questions from the RAC

Larry Fitzgerald – Do goats have any competition with predators?

Kent Hersey – Very little. Sometimes they can get down in the trees and you can see some issues with cougars but they are at that high elevation area where they are typically not an issue.

Larry Fitzgerald – Back to the bighorn sheep, I would like the RAC members to remember mountain lions and the predation problems we do have with them when the lion meeting comes up and all the lion hunters come in and say we don't have any lions. I do want to have bighorn and I like domestic sheep too.

Richard Hansen – Do goats compete directly with sheep?

Kent Hersey – They occupy similar habitats on a large scale however when you look at it on a fine scale they separate themselves pretty well. They occupy slightly different niches and goats can handle harsher winter conditions and can stay up on those windblown ridges a lot more. They do some separation with what plants they eat.

Richard Hansen – Are the goats affected by the same disease as the sheep?

Kent Hersey – They can have it. In the Ruby Mountains in Nevada they did have a die off with sheep and goats at the same time however we have never seen a die off of goats at all. They are much more resistant to the bacteria than sheep are.

Questions from the Public

Comments from the Public

Troy Justensen – SFW – We would like to support the Division’s recommendations on the statewide goat plan.

Dave Woodhouse – I would like to support the Division on goat transplants and make some comments on what we have seen down here. The goats moved over to Spanish Fork Peak on their own. A few of them made it to Loafer and the Division put 20 more there and they are doing well. All the guys that hike up there are really glad to see them. I would like to see them everywhere we can get them. I would also like to thank the Division for earlier today at the youth with disabilities fishing day at Salem Pond and for the work that was put in. We really appreciate it. Thanks.

John Fairchild – I believe the Forest Service was pretty well represented as well.

RAC Discussion

VOTING

Motion was made by Richard Hansen to accept the proposal for the goat management plan as presented

Seconded by Duane Smith

In Favor: All

Motion passed unanimously

- 7) Urban Deer Control – New Rule R657-65 (Action)
- **Martin Bushman, Attorney**

Questions from the RAC

Matt Clark – So these municipality fill out a COR application and do they specifically say how they are going to deal with the deer? Could they say they have 200 nuisance deer and we are going to wipe them all out? What is the Division’s role in all this?

Martin Bushman – The Division’s role is more of an advisory capacity. There are certain limitations. They have to take the animals within the city. The Division I don’t think is going to try to prescribe whether they use lethal or non lethal control. Cities vary so widely in their unique circumstances. The idea of the rule is to give each city a broad array of tools that might potentially work. The city will design this with consultation from the Division. There will be limitations on times of year that these seasons may take place. Many of the deer populations that come into the cities are coming in during the winter months and they are migrating deer. We want to be careful that we are not necessarily taking all those out. We are looking for the year long residents. There would be some limitations but largely up to the city and how they would choose to do this and if they want to use lethal methods and if so what kind. Also what individuals they would use to do that if they would hire professionals or whether they might choose to qualify archers or hunters to come in and take those animals.

Duane Smith – What would be the timing for this? When would the animals be taken out? There is nothing there. How is that going to be regulated? It seems to me that the city would probably prefer to take them out in the winter when migratory animals would

be there in contrast to summer when they really are dealing with the resident animals that they have. I see nothing in there to help with that.

Martin Bushman – In summarizing the rule some of the fine details were filtered out but there is a provision in the rule that the city will comply with the general overall season that the Division establishes for the taking of the animals.

Duane Smith – Do the Division would be responsible for establishing the timing.

Martin Bushman – You may have a city that has a few deer that move in during the winter months and they might have a longer season through the winter where as one that a good chunk of their population is migratory might have a different season. The Division has the authority as well to set controls on the percentage of bucks to does in the harvest. The overall objective is to reduce the population of the deer in city to a level that it can then be economically maintained year to year.

Duane Smith – And the city will have management and enforcement control over what they do after approval of the plan?

Martin Bushman – Yes.

Richard Hansen – What is the purpose of the million dollar insurance policy? Who does that protect?

Martin Bushman – The Division of Wildlife Resources and the city as well in as much as we are creating this program and giving them a certificate of registration to basically use lethal methods of take within city limits. There are some dangers that come with that and to the extent that the Division is not actively involved in how that takes place or the hunters on the ground and what they do we do want to make sure that we are not assuming liability.

Richard Hansen – So you're saying the cities pay for that?

Martin Bushman – Cities are all insured.

Richard Hansen – We have a solution to this problem. Go catch some cougars and release them in the cities.

Larry Fitzgerald – The rest of the state is complaining that they are no deer. Why aren't the cities happy they have the deer?

Martin Bushman – I can't speak for all the cities but I went to Bountiful city to a public meeting and it was a very divisive group. There were those who wanted every deer in that city killed or moved and they were offering any hunter who wanted to shoot from their deck lemonade. Others don't want any of them killed. They love them and that is where this becomes a real difficult thing.

Larry Fitzgerald – This is a native species of Utah on their native habitat. The cities brought this on themselves. The same thing is happening out west in Eagle Mountain. The cities are annexing all the open ground. Right now in any city limit if you discharge a firearm you are subject to a fine. This is something the city has to work out. The Division put on hunts and season dates. I can see not having discharge of firearms but they have bow hunting. It's not illegal for a guy to target practice with a bow in his backyard.

Martin Bushman – If he is within 600 feet of another house his is without their permission. A dangerous weapon is the restriction not just a firearm. Some cities do have ordinances prohibiting the discharge whether you are within 600 feet or not of a firearm. These cities as they come and want to participate it will be up to them to create that plan and take responsibility for it.

Larry Fitzgerald – Is this a safety issue or just a nuisance issue?

Martin Bushman – Both. Safety in the sense of usually vehicle collision.

Larry Fitzgerald – Then you would have to encompass the entire state. What is the difference between a road up in Highland and a road out in the west desert?

Martin Bushman – Other than you might have a greater concentration of deer in those cities and they don't have any effective way to control them. Probably the bigger reason is property damage that is occurring to shrubs and gardens.

Larry Fitzgerald – I can get a depredation permit out on my ground if I have issues but I cannot take and antlered animal so what is the difference here?

Martin Bushman – The Division will control that, the number of antlered animals and the focus would be on does. But to the extent we've got bucks in there and we can't get them out and they are causing problems then that might mean taking them.

Larry Fitzgerald – It's where the city was put. It's deer habitat. I grew up there and I know that area very well and it used to be very barren. I think if someone chooses to live there then they should have the responsibility to take care of what comes with the land.

Martin Bushman – That is certainly a consideration. The reality that the Division is facing is the legislature stepping in and solving this problem and telling us how to do it. We thought this was a much better approach if create a program that we can administer and work with as opposed to the legislature doing it for us. That's one of the issue that we have received instruction to try to work with the cities on this problem and we are trying to respond.

Larry Fitzgerald – So we are voting to put this into motion to try it out but we really don't know what lethal methods will be used?

Martin Bushman – What types of lethal methods might be used? You have firearms and archery and it would be up to the city to decide could they effectively have a firearm or archery hunt. Could there be even other methods of lethal take. Could you capture them and then euthanize them. All of those things would be potential methods to use. What we don't know is we have never done this before and we don't know how costly it will be or how difficult it will be so this rule is to essentially test it out and let's find out what control methods may work the best and how much do each cost and is it even economically feasible or are we in a position that the cities may just have to buckle down and say nobody can really afford to solve this problem.

Larry Fitzgerald – Well my personal opinion is I don't think it is safety issue because it is the same safety issue across the entire state. I think this is an issue of somebody's shrubs getting eaten.

Martin Bushman – That is the biggest issue, property damage.

Larry Fitzgerald – Then I reflect that it is habitat and some people's shrubs make for good habitat.

Michael Gates – On the section on disposal, obviously if you are talking about one or two you are going to give a tag and they would be responsible for the carcass. If you have a larger amount of carcasses would you interpret they would be taken care of provided by law to say no dumping on public lands? That would be one thing the BLM would be concerned about and I would imagine Forest Service as well.

Martin Bushman – They would have to comply with state and federal laws to dispose of those carcasses.

Matt Clark – This is only for two municipalities right now. I think what is going to happen is this other municipalities will catch on to this. Is there any biological data or a biologist that could comment to the impact this would have on our deer herds? How do we know if the deer in the municipalities migrate in the fall? Are they deer that we could potentially could be hunting?

Martin Bushman – I'm not biologist but I have heard them talk and that is the idea of the seasons to try to focus control efforts at the time of year that the deer we are looking at are the ones that are living there year round which should not have any impact on hunts. Once they come in for winter that is what we want to avoid is taking deer off their winter range.

Kent Hersey – We have a really good idea of when deer migrate and where they migrate to. We can tell if these are yearlong residents or these are migratory deer. We can set season dates accordingly to avoid any migratory deer. That is a big concern from us if we start taking migratory deer out of these cities. That is the last thing we want to do. You can use season dates to target the resident animals.

Richard Hansen – I see a problem with this simply because you are going to have people who like these deer and they don't want them hurt. You will have other people who don't. How are you going to determine whether a hunter you have given a tag to that can legal go out with a bow, whose property can he go on and whose can't he?

Martin Bushman – In Bountiful we tried a program that was more involved with the Division doing it with Bountiful city over the last couple year. Bountiful city had people sign up who were willing to let personnel on to the property to try to remove deer. We will try to be respectful of private property rights and particularly the 600 foot requirement of not discharging a dangerous weapon. That is what become difficult is you start becoming limited with areas that you can actually take deer and meet all the legal requirements. Bountiful city found some problems there. I don't know the geography of Highland city as well. Maybe they have some lager open spaces that deer tend to congregate in that would make it a great place for lethal types of control but going into neighborhoods with bows and arrows is not going to work out real well. Even if you shoot a deer on the property you got permission for but if it goes and dies on somebody else's property it becomes a public relations problem. Again that is why we tried not to define how each city had to do it. Some cities may want to look entirely at non lethal control methods which generally find favor with everyone but we believe they are going to be more expensive. That is what you weigh in the balance.

Gary Nielsen – I think it's a good idea. We can talk a lot about it but the people who live there are the ones that know what is going on and they are very aware of the damage that they are facing and the ins and outs of what is happening. With a little Division expertise and input they can take care of some of the deer that have decided they want to call Highland or Bountiful home. In my mind that is the best way to deal with it.

Fred Oswald – I am assuming that under the status quo it is the responsibility of DWR in these cities to control the wildlife so the new COR is basically taking it out of the responsibility of DWR and giving the responsibility for those wild animals within the city to the city. Am I saying that correctly?

Martin Bushman – Legally the Division doesn't have responsibility to deal with those animals. Nothing in statute or anything that charges you to anymore than it does to say you have to keep gophers off the property or any number of other wildlife. Politically it is a little bit different issue and there are some expectations and the legislature could very easily make it a legal responsibility. Those are things we are concerned about and we are essentially voluntarily trying to work out a program that might help solve the problem and alleviate the need for the legislature to step in and try to solve it.

Questions from the Public

Comments from the Public

Mayor Lynn Ritchie – Highland City Mayor – I have with me Brian Cook here tonight and he I have been working on this for two years and have gone through many of the questions you are asking here. I thought I answered most of these questions on KUTV news a year ago when we passed an ordinance to allow archery hunting in city limits. The news media picked up on that like wildfire. We said not yet. I like the mountain lion suggestion. I suggested that to my wife but she thought it might be a little hazardous to the grandkids. You asked some great questions and first I would like to thank the Division. We have been working with the Division for two years and I've grown to appreciate that sometimes things take a long time but when you have them done they are done right. I appreciate the Division's approach on this in working with us. Eight years ago we had deer come down from the mountains and we had several say we are in their habitat. We are close to American Fork Canyon. The deer came down and they stayed. Then they had their young and they stayed. It has just multiplied from there. It was a real bad winter and they stayed. I get numerous complaints. When citizens found out we were looking at this they said let's start tomorrow. We want to do this now. I have in my city far more wanting to do this immediately than those who are opposed to it. I have those that say don't set foot on my property and I say we won't. You don't want us on your property we won't go. We will get permission from the landowners. Our intent is to get permission and hunt those areas. We have a lot of open space areas. Highland has large lots and open space areas as well. Heavily wooded areas and gullies and areas where the deer travel and stay. They love tulips. They are just destroying the shrubs and plants and trees. The bucks rub their horns on the trees and snap a one inch tree right in half. They are destroying property in Highland. The other thing is we have SR92 and SR74. Two of the largest highways in the city that run right through the middle of our city and we have many accidents and many road kill. We are not out to kill all the deer. We know we can't get rid of all the deer but we need to manage it and remove them down to a more manageable level. We had intended on doing the hunt from August first to October 30 each year. Brian and I had talked about that mainly because we don't want to take the mothers with the fawns and we don't want to take them when they are foraging for food in the winter. Our plan had been to just do it during that period. We bought six cameras and put them in people's yards to track their pattern so we know where they are traveling and where they are. We can bring an archer in there and have them take the animals very efficiently. We had intended to have raised stands so you are not doing a horizontal shot. We have had a lot of concerns about safety and so we have addressed those. Marty has been most helpful and he went through a couple of items. We had opportunity for input and then we got the draft plan. The twenty dollar fee is something we didn't agree with. I suggested fifty dollars at least. The Division is

concerned about us having a hunt where we are trying to making money and we don't want to do that but the twenty dollars doesn't cover the recovery. If the hunter wants to keep the animal the law allows them to do that but if they don't we want a program where they take them to a meat processor and they will clean them and process the food and donate it to the food bank. Twenty dollars does not cover that. We want expert archers out there. We do not want just everybody with a bow and arrow. Brian is an expert archer and has a business in archery and he understands hunting and I have relied on him as the expert in this to certify the hunters so we have only expert hunters out there. But we do need a higher fee to reimburse for some of those costs. The other one is turning in all of the antlers. We may only do an antlerless hunt but if not we suggest rather than turning them all in just turn in those above three point and 22 inches so we are not after a trophy hunt. That is not the intent. Not having to keep track of all these and turning them in we would appreciate some leeway that way. A provision we have asked in here is to get approval from the Division. Brian knows several that hunt with his company that are disabled and disabled vets that could take a buck and keep it greater than three point with Division approval.

Duane Smith – If this is purely a population issue then you ought not to have the prejudice against taking does that are pregnant. The fawn is going to stay there. If you take the doe before she drops the fawn you take two animals out and you get rid of the animals.

Brian Cook – I wouldn't say we are prejudice against that but coming from the cushion part of the general public side. I agree 100 percent with what you just said but there is a lot that goes into it. There is a lot I am listening to and nodding my head. We have created the problem. There is no doubt about it. Two years ago I presented to the mayor that there are hunters feeding the hungry all over this country. Our state is not doing it. I have always been frustrated with the animals that lay along the side of the road that go to waste on a daily basis when there are people that would absolutely love to have that but you can't touch it. I personally was involved in with a five point bull elk on SR6 in Spanish Fork Canyon. It was hit in one hind quarter and laying there and I asked the sheriff if he could put a bullet in its head and he said absolutely not. Why, that is poaching. Really? Finally the animal dies and I ask if I can take the hind quarter or the back strap and he said absolutely not. Two days later I drive by and that animals head is cut off and is lying on the side of the road completely split open. It's frustrating. But yet there are cities in states back east that feed the hungry off those animals. I don't want to see what Michael brought up. We don't want these animals put out in some pit where they are just going to go to waste. I own three archery stores in this state and I didn't want my name involved with this because it could frown very negatively as me as a business owner and what I try to do. My approach to this is to come up with program that shows hunters feeding the hungry, I'm involved and I'll be 100 percent behind to help you. If we are doing something that is going to show hunters negatively and what we are trying to do with removing animals out of our cities then we have a problem. I have an employee who last year had a collision with a deer on I-15 in American Fork. He is lucky to be alive today. Do we have a deer problem, yes we do. Have we moved into their habitat, yes we have but can we control some of the deer that are running around and take down the percentage of people who are having car accidents? Yeah we could but we need to do it in an effective way and a way that the general public sees it as not a frown but a smile. With the bucks I would personally like to see the antler part

removed. I don't want to see antlers. I would rather see does taken and when the does are gone the bucks will leave. We are not going to be able to take all the does so the bucks will probably stick around but they are big and they are pretty and every hunter wants one on his wall. The first hunter that is allowed to take one in the city limits and it is a trophy, every other hunter hates him. The one thing that I can think that would be a good thing for hunters and that puts our smile on our face in the media is when you see a young man that is physically disabled that we could take and put a crossbow in his hand and set him in a situation where he could harvest a trophy buck that is inside our city limits that no other hunter can touch. If we can take this young man that is never going to have that opportunity in his lifetime or a gentleman who has served our country and has lost his limbs and can't do this and we can set him in a situation to where he can have that and we could create that, when that gets put up in the lime light hunters are good people. The program is a good thing but the first time a guy like me takes a 28 inch four point and says I'm in the program and you are not, bad news bear. I am all about controlling the situation. If we can use an elite taskforce and you allow me to pick the guys that I know are very qualified archers I will put my name behind that guy because he will do it in the right situation and when he is supposed to do it and he will ethically take the animal. The first time we allow a general drawing and anybody who wants to be a bow hunter puts their name in the hat and 12 year old kid sticks on through the neck and it walks down to Sally's yard and stands there with the arrow sticking out both sides and she is taking pictures of it with her iphone and it's on you tube that fast and KSL is there and the program just got shot in the dirt.

Mayor Ritchie – Then I get the calls and I don't want those. We will make the program successful. We are committed to do that.

Matt Clark – What is the quota? How many deer are you talking about?

Mayor Ritchie – We believe we have 350 to 400 deer in city that we need to take. We originally looked at 40 and we think that is too low. We need to take out probably 100 a year.

Brian Cook – I would like to see 40 to 80 a year and then asses that.

Duane Smith – Why only 100? Isn't your goal to get rid of the animals?

Brian Cook – But until we know what animals are resident animals and which animals are migratory.

Duane Smith – You address that with the season but I am hearing two things here. I am hearing you talk about running a program to feed the poor and I am hearing you talk about wanting to get rid of the nemesis in terms of depredation in the city limits eliminate damage within the city limits but I am hearing two different things here.

Brian Cook – I think we are shooting for a goal though that is achievable. When Bountiful was implemented they only killed 17 deer the first year and I think that if we shoot for goals we can achieve and get approval for. If we are telling the city we are going to try to remove 300 deer the first year that is going to raise all kinds of red flags and everyone is going to freak out. If you are shooting for 40 or 80 animals this year and we remove 80 animals and say we do it in a three week period you know the program can be successful. We are on a pilot program. This isn't something that is going to be set in stone and everybody is going to be able to say this works.

Duane Smith – I still hear you saying two different programs with two issues.

Mayor Ritchie – We would love to have the deer gone. We don't know if we can manage 300 in one year or fund 300 because this will undoubtedly require some city funds and so I don't know that we can fund the whole thing at once. We definitely would if that could happen. The goal is to manage the herd and reduce the population.

Richard Hansen – Why is it the city's responsibility to worry about the deer and not the residents? They can plant things the deer don't like. They can put fences up that deer can't get over.

Mayor Ritchie – I have a problem in my yard personally. I think the reason we are involved is politically. The residents want us to do something. They want me to go to the DWR and say you do something with your deer in our city. We said we can't just go tell them that. We started to see other options. We are looking for options. How can we solve the problem? The problem is they are destroying yards and they are getting hit on the highway.

Richard Hansen – If a landowner complains about deer in their haystack they give them fences, they don't go out and kill them all.

Fred Oswald – I'm going to move us along here. Thank you Mayor and Brian. Marty, would you mind coming up? I think we need to understand in terms of what is being asked of the RAC tonight. The Mayor showed us some of the things that I think are going to be in his COR but my understanding is that we are not voting on specifics in terms of what is going to be in the COR in terms of the amount of money and what they are going to do with antlers. What you are asking the RAC to do tonight is basically vote on the new rule which includes a COR.

Martin Bushman – What I presented to you is a summary of the rule and the rule is what we are asking you to make a recommendation to the Wildlife Board on. There are two components in that rule that Mayor Ritchie had concerns on. One was the fact that in the rule we limit the amount of money that the city can charge as a fee for those who participate in deer removal to twenty dollars and he would like that increased to fifty dollars. We also in the rule require the city to provide the Division of all the antlers of any male animals that are taken. I can quickly tell you why we are not trying to make this a money maker or a trophy hunt. The purpose of this rule is deer control and we really didn't want to side track that or give the appearance that we are trying to create a trophy hunt within a city by taking big animals with the concerns that were expressed earlier and hunters that become upset at that. It creates more political problems. The other was not to be viewed as a CWMU within the city where the city is making money. You can question the advisability of that but we felt it would give the rule a better chance to make its way through the public process if we stayed true to its purpose. The city did ask leeway on returning antlers to the Division and that was to allow the Division to approve on a city by city basis perhaps keeping a three point or smaller with a 22 inch spread. In certain circumstances for example if we had a disabled hunter or something that may make some perfect sense. I haven't had a chance to talk those two points with the Division but I don't think they will create a whole lot of problems.

Fred Oswald – What we have basically tonight that we are going to take action on is the rule that is presented plus the Mayor's two amendments if we want to act on those.

Sarah Flinders – Is there a timeframe like by 2020 we would like to have all the deer gone? It sounds like a business venture a little bit to some of us. Do we have a timeframe?

Martin Bushman – I have not tried to build into the rule a timeframe to have population control accomplished. The fact that the cities carry the financial burden of funding this program and carrying it out they will have a self interest in trying to do it as quickly as possibly or if the costs exceed the benefits to disengage. If a city wants to begin cautiously they may be charging forty dollars a person but that is not going to fund the cost of the program. It will offset a few things such as if you are going to take an animal to a butcher for donation. I think given that the cities have the responsibility to fund this and carry it out with some support from the Division will give them incentive to move forward.

Fred Oswald – The city talked about adding a disabled hunter element and I know you haven't had a chance to think through that but isn't there a possibility if in fact they want to pursue that they could pursue it through the normal archery hunt?

Martin Bushman – They could do that. Right now the city gets to choose who hunts and if they want to set aside some permits for disabled hunters they could put that in their plan. What they are asking is the restriction on keeping antlers, could it be waived?

Sarah Flinders – Would that be the only exception, just disabled?

Martin Bushman – If we were to make a change in the rule it would probably state the antlers have to be returned to the Division unless otherwise approved by the Division. I don't know that I would try to write out in the rule every circumstance that might arise.

Timothy Fehr – If the city of Highland was actually Highland private ranch and they had a problem with deer depredation could they get a permit to remove animals?

Martin Bushman – If the city were greenbelt agriculture land by state law right now the Division has responsibility to help control deer depredation on agriculture lands not on private lands that occur in residential neighborhoods. There is an obligation there and some of the tools the Division use to help alleviate depredation on agriculture land is the issuance of antlerless permits for landowners also vouchers that a landowners can actually sell to someone else that would then have to buy the license and in very limited circumstances, antlered animals but only if there is a real problem that we can't control any other way.

Byron Bateman – SFW – Fred, congratulations and thank you for all your service. I have seen you at the meeting over the years and you have done a great job. I talked to the Mayor briefly about this. Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife funded a project where we captured 102 does and translocated them 100 miles from where we captured them from. We have a current 90 percent success rate of survivability. We also captured 50 resident deer and that was just under 90 percent as far as their survivability. We lost three deer to capture. We had two deer that were poached and all the other deer mortalities have been predation. The same with the local deer herd. I am here to offer to you and the city – we funded this study because we were told for years and years that you can't transplant deer and we have proved that you can. We have graduate students from BYU working on the ground and we get a weekly report. We captured the first 50 deer on January sixth and we captured the other 52 deer in March because we wanted to see which time of year was

best time to do it. The city is talking about taking out 40 or 50 deer a year. We are not opposed to hunting. We are the number one hunting conservation group in the state but we would rather see these deer translocated somewhere else in the state to help augment populations that are really in serious trouble if you look at our fawn to doe ratio. We are willing to help cities on a COR and help share the expense to capture these deer and let's translocate them somewhere else and help create more opportunity for more people. It creates opportunity for watchable wildlife and huntable wildlife. It is a win win situation for everybody. I'm sure the residents would rather see those deer have a chance to survive somewhere else than somebody try to shoot them in their backyard. All it takes is one bad experience. Everything is instantaneous right now. You can go to the SFW website and you can see the last translocation update was from the graduate students. We are excited about that and the people doing this study are excited about it. A lot of Division people we have talked to are excited about what has gone on so far. The success has been great. Most of the does were pregnant when we caught them and we put radio collars on them. We spent a lot of money on this study. Every deer we captured has a radio collar and two ear tags. We disease tested each deer and pregnancy tested each deer and we also tested them for fat content. We are going to get a lot of great information out of this study. I have a horse trailer and we just need a list where we can move these deer. I will give the Mayor my information. These are options and it is something that is attainable and we would like to make that available.

Fred Oswald – Thank you for that. I think the Mayor will be in touch with you because I think the COR allows that in cooperation with the DWR.

Dave Woodhouse – As I understand the city could open the season up for the disabled during the archery hunt or even the any weapon hunt as it is and let them hunt a trophy deer. I do support translocation. I think it would be a great win win for everybody and it would look good on the news. It would be a good win for those in town who don't want them killed and those who want them gone. We can find the funding to get it done.

RAC Discussion

Fred Oswald – Let me tell you where I think we are with this. We have an action item with regard to a rule. We can vote the rule up or down or amend it. The Mayor has proposed two amendments to the rule. One amendment would change the rule from a twenty dollar fee to a fifty dollar fee. The other amendment is with regard to antlers rather than having to turn in all of the antlers to DWR they would only turn those in with a certain size or point ratio.

Duane Smith – I understand that this is a pilot program and it expires on a certain date. How often would they have to renew their COR under the full rule?

Martin Bushman – As it is stated right now every two years. That could change if rule is made permanent. I don't know that we would want to be doing it every year unless the pilot program says that is advisable.

Duane Smith – Is there a reporting process?

Martin Bushman – No, I think the Division will be working very closely on these two projects to try to help evaluate it so there is nothing in the rule that requires reporting.

Duane Smith – So this rule is a two year pilot program and that is all we are voting on?

Martin Bushman – Correct.

VOTING

**Motion was made by Gary to accept the proposed rule as presented
Seconded by Duane Smith**

Timothy Fehr – Do we have to leave the lethal and non lethal part in there? The part we really don't know is how they are going to administer the aspects of the program.

Richard Hansen – I think that will be something the DWR and the city will discuss. They are not going to do anything to put people in harm's way. They are liable.

In Favor: Matt Clark, Duane Smith, Gary Nielson, Richard Hansen, Larry Fitzgerald, Sarah Flinders, Michael Gates

Opposed: Timothy Fehr

Motion passed 7 to 1

8) Other Business

- **Fred Oswald, RAC Chair**

Fred Oswald – We have one last item and that is election of a Chair and Vice Chair. I will accept nominations for a new Chair and that will require a second. If there is more than one name put into nomination and seconded we will have a vote by ballot. If there is only one person nominated we will forgo the ballot.

Richard Hansen nominates Gary Nielson as Chair
Seconded by Duane Smith

Fred Oswald – Are there further nomination for Chair?

Matt Clark nominates Kris Marble
No second

Fred Oswald – Further nominations?

All in favor of Gary Nielson
Passes unanimously

Fred Oswald – We need a new Vice Chair.

Timothy Fehr nominates Kris Marble
Seconded by Matt Clark

Gary Nielson nominates Richard Hansen
Seconded by Duane Smith

Voting by ballot

Richard Hansen voted as Vice Chair

Fred Oswald – I would like to thank all former and current RAC members for your support not only for wildlife but for supporting me as Chair. I am proud to say that I have never had a moment that I didn't feel that members of the RAC were courteous both to each other as well as to audience members. That is very much appreciated. We have a great RAC and I know that it

will continue. Thank you to all of you. Realizing that I am going to forget somebody there are some people I would like to thank specially. First of all John. John has been a great mentor to me as Chair and Vice Chair and I would like to thank him very much. Amanda thank you for all your good work. Special thanks to Scott. Thank you very much for all of your good work in terms of making sure that we have the finest in facilities and set up. I would also like to thank Anis who is not here but he has also been a mentor of mine. I would like to thank him publicly as well. Finally Craig Clyde who I was able to go out on a number of outings with Craig and he has been a great mentor and support to me. Two other people, Ed Kent, the previous Chair was a great mentor for me and I learned a great deal from Ed and I appreciated that especially the opportunity I had of being able to fill in for him when he wasn't there. Finally I would also like to thank John Bair. John was an early...what is the right word? Let's just say John and I didn't always see eye to eye. We had a difference of opinion about a lot of things having to do with wildlife issue but through all of that John and I became I think good friends and I think we saw each other point of view and I would like to say a public thank you to John Bair as well. I'm sure I've left out people but really it's been a great eight years. I've loved every minute of it – mostly being out in the field more than being here in the room but it's all been good. Thank you very much and carry on.

Duane Smith – I am a person of very few words – It has been rather interesting for me. I have been on the RAC for six and a half years. I've really appreciated the RAC more when the dedicated hunters were here. I feel like we had more meaningful discussions when we heard from the folks out there. I would encourage you to think of some way to get better attendance at the RAC. That is what we are supposed to be doing is representing different groups. I appreciate everyone here that has allowed me to extend my content with wildlife for the past six and a half years.

John Fairchild – We have exclusive access to Clark Bronson prints and anyone who serves on this RAC gets to select one. Fred selected the bear and cubs and porcupine. Thank you very much. Duane Smith requested the cutthroat trout. Enjoy that and let it remind you of the time you spent with us here.

Greg Sheehan – Fred now you have to be on habitat council for eight years and Duane, you can be on our blue ribbon fisheries council for eight years. We have more stuff. Thank you for your service.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

23 in attendance

Next board meeting June 4, 2013 at the DNR boardroom, Salt Lake

Next RAC meeting August 6, 2013 at Springville Public Library

Northern Regional Advisory Council Meeting

May 15, 2013

Brigham City Community Center

Brigham City, Utah

Summary of Motions

Meeting Begins: 6:00 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Motion: Approve agenda as provided.

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Approval of the April 18, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Approve the meeting minutes of the April 18, 2013 Northern Regional Advisory Council meeting.

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Upland Game Recommendations

Motion: Recommend the Wildlife Board approve the Upland Game recommendations as presented.

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Motion: The Northern Regional Advisory Council requests the Wildlife Board create an action log item addressing the request by Mike Christensen for the use of 28 gauge shotgun for turkeys.

Motion Passes: For: 8, Against: 1- John Blazzard, Obstain: 1- James Gaskill

Bighorn Sheep Management Plan

Motion: Recommend the Wildlife Board approve the Bighorn Sheep Management Plan as presented.

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Goat Management Plan

Motion: Recommend the Wildlife Board adopt the Goat Management Plan as presented.

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Urban Deer Rule R657-65

Motion: Recommend the Wildlife Board adopt Rule R657-65 and additionally encourage the DWR to recommend to cities methods to mitigate wildlife damage.

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Deer Management Plans

Motion: Recommend the Wildlife Board approve the Deer Management Plans as presented.

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Move we adjourn.

Motion Carries: Acclamation by RAC Chair

Meeting Ends: 8:45 p.m.

Northern Regional Advisory Council Meeting

May 15, 2013

Brigham City Community Center

Brigham City, Utah

Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Begins: 6:00 p.m.

RAC Present

John Blazzard- Agric
Robert Byrnes- Chair
John Cavitt-Noncon.
Paul Cowley- Forest Service
James Gaskill- At Large
R. Jefre Hicks- At Large
Russ Lawrence- At Large
Jon Leonard- Sportsman
Bryce Thurgood- At Large
Craig Van Tassell- Sportsman
John Wall- At Large

DWR Present

Jodie Anderson
Justin Dolling
Darren Debloois
Kent Hershey
Randy Wood
Blair Stingham
Arlo Wing
Dave Rich
Marty Bushman
Jim Christensen
Scott McFarlane
Scott Walker
Chad Wilson

Wildlife Board

Ernie Perkins
Bill Fenimore

RAC Excused

Ann Neville- Noncon.
G. Lynn Nelson- Elected

RAC Unexcused

Joel Ferry- Agric
Bruce Sillitoe- BLM

Agenda:

Welcome, RAC Introductions and RAC Procedure
Approval of Agenda and April 18, 2013 Meeting Minutes
Wildlife Board Meeting Update
Regional Update
Upland Game Recommendations
Bighorn Sheep Management
Goat Management Plan
Urban Deer-New Rule R657-65
Deer Management Plans

Item 1. Welcome, RAC Introductions and RAC Procedure

Welcome: Robert Byrnes-Chair
Introduction of RAC Members
RAC Procedure: Robert Byrnes-Chair

Item 2. Review and Acceptance of Agenda and April 18, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Motion

Motion: Cowley- **Approve agenda as provided.**

Second- Gaskill

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Motion

Motion: Cowley- **Approve the meeting minutes of April 18, 2013 Northern Regional Advisory Council meeting.**

Second- Lawrence

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Item 3. Wildlife Board Update

Byrnes- Action Log Item - Additional use of crossbows combined with action log item for scopes on muzzleloader rifles. Item is to be brought to the RAC's and Board beginning with the big game recommendations in November. Action log item - preference point presentation. It will have a status change to reflect additional information and a recommendation to be discussed at the May 29, 2013 work session. It is looking at preference points on general deer drawings. Action log item - definition of youth. To be taken around to RAC's as a proposal as each rule and guidebook comes up for revision. It is intended to simplify the definition of youth. Action log item-multi-year guidebooks and rules will have a status change to reflect and update to be given to the board at the May 29, 2013 work session.

Ernie Perkins- That action item has been on the log for a couple of years now, maybe three years. It basically asks the division to move to three year rules and proclamations & guidebooks. We have asked for an update on what the plan is and when we will see them. I would anticipate the last one we will see would be big game.

Byrnes- Bucks and bulls and OIAL permits recommendations and amendments. The first motion was to accept the UBA proposal for the late elk hunt on the Wasatch Mountains, Central Mountains, Nebo and West Desert Deep Creek permit allocations to reflect the 50% any weapon, 30% archery and 20% muzzleloader. That was our recommendation. That passed unanimously. There was a motion to ask the southern regional manager to meet with his staff to look at the Monroe Mountain Unit to see if it requires a different hunting structure. This is to be brought back to the Wildlife Board prior to the November RAC meetings. I believe that was specifically about elk because they are studying interactions of several units around Monroe Mountain and the exchange of animals from summer to winter range and how they count them and account for the animals on those units. That passed unanimously. There was a motion to adjust the number of bull permits on the Manti unit to 430. It passed 4 to 2. There was a motion to accept recommendations from the Northern RAC to reduce the permit numbers on the Cache limited entry elk units to 70 permits on the North Cache and maintain the permits on the South cache at the 2012 level which was 129. That passed unanimously. That was our recommendation. There was a motion to reduce the Book cliffs deer permits by 20% from last year's numbers. That passed unanimously. There

was a motion to keep the permit numbers the same on the Henry Mountain unit as presented in 2012. It passed 4 to 3 with the chairman voting to break the tie. There was a motion to ask the division to prepare a sheet for the board and the northern region RAC that shows the grouping requests and rounding percentages as well as the permits and breakdowns between the OIAL and conservation and so on that occur for each species in each permit group. That was in response to our request for them to look at how they are deriving the permit numbers. We asked for specifically sheep but they included the other species also. That passed unanimously. There was a motion to accept the balance of the recommendations for Bucks, Bulls and OIAL permit numbers as presented which passed unanimously. There was a motion to extend the season dates on the Paunsaugunt Skutumpah antlerless elk hunt to January 31, 2014 which passed unanimously. There was a motion to support northern RAC recommendation to leave the permit numbers on the Cache unit the same as 2012 which passed unanimously. There was a motion to approve accepting the balance of the recommendations for the antlerless permit numbers as presented by the division which passed unanimously. The next topic was antlerless CWMU permit recommendations for 2013. They moved to accept that as presented and passed unanimously. They passed the depredation rule as presented unanimously. There was a topic on Lake Powell and the infestation of Quagga mussels. The motion was to approve the listing of Lake Powell as an infected water body which passed unanimously. The last couple of motions were on stipulations and orders for hunting rights.

Item. 4 Regional Update

- Justin Dolling, Regional Supervisor

Habitat Section- Fish Habitat Structures in Rockport and Willard. Conducting spring range assessments to get a sense of how utilization of winter range was by wildlife.

Law Enforcement- Teaching a Law Enforcement class at Utah State University. Youth hunter education challenge in Price. Because of Quagga Mussels, there will be an intensified effort for boats leaving Lake Powell. There will be a decontamination order for all boats leaving Lake Powell. There will be road blocks in key areas to make sure boats are decontaminated.

Great Salt Lake Bird Festival Starts this Thursday. It is the 15th Annual Bird Festival.

Aquatic- Long term research program on the Weber River looking at cut throat populations. Planning for a spotted frog survey in Beaver Creek in the Uintah's. Ogden and Weber River's fishing really well.

Open house on the 25th in Cache Valley and also the 29th of May in Ogden.

Wildlife Section- Waterfowl areas burn of phragmites. Finished with sharptail grouse to Antelope Island transplant. Antlerless application guidebook available online end of May. Antlerless application period will be from May 29-June 20.

RAC Questions

James Gaskill- where did those rock piles end up and are they going to be able to work around the pipeline burst? Is that going to cause any problem?

Justin Dolling- In Willard?

James Gaskill- Yes.

Justin Dolling- They are beyond that. They have an area that is cordoned off, that you cannot go because of the spill. These new reefs or rock piles will be outside of that zone. I am not quite sure but I believe it is more on the south end of the reservoir.

James Gaskill- I thought they were going to be on the north end.

Justin Dolling- I need to get some clarification. It is my understanding it is the south area. We will tell you where it is so you can go out and fish it.

James Gaskill- I was interested because there was a habitat project I was involved in.

Justin Dolling- I will check on that and get some clarification.

John Cavitt- What was the subject of the open houses?

Justin Dolling- Our aquatic section is using an open house format to gather input into their recommendations that will be coming out to the RAC and Wildlife Board in August. It is a fishing open house.

Item 5. Upland Game Recommendations

- Blair Stringham, Upland Game Biologist

See Handout

RAC Questions

James Gaskill- What were the units on the vertical axis to those two charts?

Blair Stringham- For the breeding bird survey?

James Gaskill- Were there 10 birds or 1,000?

Blair Stringham- It was an index to the population so it does not necessarily reflect to an actual population size. We use this index to gauge. It is not indicative of population size.

James Gaskill- So it is just a trend map?

Blair Stringham- Yes.

John Wall- On the pigeons, are they strictly migratory or do we have resident birds here. How do hunters hunt pigeons?

Blair Stringham- They are a migratory species. They nest primarily down around the four corners area of Utah. They move out of Utah in the middle of September and go down to Mexico south. The majority of pigeon hunters find ways they are traveling back and forth between food sources. They do come into grain piles and stuff like that. We see a few in the northern part of the state. There is a small population in the Olympus Cove but mostly in the Southern areas.

Robert Byrnes- The division is actually doing the population counting?

Blair Stringham- Yes, it is population wide.

Robert Byrnes- You have transects then within the state.

Blair Stringham- Yes, they are not probably the best population sample. It is not a great survey but the best way we have found to manage those.

Robert Byrnes- Where I hunt elk in Grand County it seems like there is more of them lately. We are also seeing them in October.

Blair Stringham- We don't have a real firm grasp on where the population is at.

RAC Comment

Robert Byrnes- The council received an email about hunting turkeys with a 28 gauge. I did not receive it. It looks like they just sent it to the council members on the RAC member list, not the chair. We aren't actually talking about the turkey guidebook now are we?

Blair Stringham- We are just doing a couple of changes. The bulk of the upland game regulations will come through the cycle next year at this time.

Robert Byrnes- We could ask the wildlife board to look at making a change or have an action log item, if one of the council members would like to. Is the turkey guidebook part of this upland game?

Blair Stringham- It is part of the upland game guidebook but currently it is on the third year of a three year cycle. That is why we brought through these couple of changes. They were modifications we had to make to stay in compliance with the federal regulations.

Robert Byrnes- If you would like to discuss it, we could have a separate motion on it. I am not sure any change would happen. It could become an action log item as far as changing the allowable weapons for turkey hunting.

R. Jefre Hicks- I don't know what we ought to do but if this gentleman would like us to consider that on the next round, which is another year. Is it best to have the Wildlife Board discuss it now in order to get it on the list for next time the guidebook comes around?

Blair Stringham- It would probably be in your interest to make it an action item. It would make it so we would have to consider it in our regulations.

Justin Dolling- I would agree. You could either go that way or possibly forward this item on to our upland game coordinator for consideration in next year's turkey cycle. Either way would work.

R. Jefre Hicks- I would like to make a motion for it to be an action item.

Robert Byrnes- After we complete our motions on this agenda topic, if you would make a motion and we will request the wildlife board create an action log item addressing that issue.

James Gaskill- The Wildlife Board is already aware of this proposal. I don't think there is much to be gained by anything that we do at this point. They will consider it in their considerations for the guidebook which we will look at in the fall for the next 3 year cycle. To me, this is a waste of time.

Jon Leonard- I think it is important to suggest how we feel on it. I see no problem with it. It is very close to the 20 gauge and I think that might urge the Board and/or the Division when they put the rule together for the next 3 year cycle to seriously consider it.

Robert Byrnes- It would give the Wildlife Board a favorable opinion from our RAC if you did pass a request to make it an action log item. Otherwise, it is pretty much a neutral feeling from us as far as what we would like to do.

Motion

Motion: Gaskill- Recommend the Wildlife Board approve the Upland Game recommendations as presented.

Second- Leonard

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Motion

Motion: Hicks- The Northern Regional Advisory Council requests the Wildlife Board create an action log item addressing the request by Mike Christensen for the use of 28 gauge shotgun for turkeys.

Second- Leonard

Discussion on the Motion

R. Jefre Hicks- I tend to agree that a 28 gauge in the hands of a knowledgeable shooter is extremely deadly. I know people who use it on geese and ducks frequently. I think it is not a bad thing in the hands of a knowledgeable shooter.

Jon Leonard- I don't think there is any guarantee that we get a super marksman but I think I feel comfortable if someone is going to hunt turkeys with a 28 gauge is probably going to know the limitations and what they have to do.

Motion Passes: For: 8, Against: 1- John Blazzard, Abstain: 1- James Gaskill

Robert Byrnes- John, would you be willing to give your reason for opposition?

Jon Blazzard- I would prefer that we wait until we redo the guidebook. I think that makes more sense.

Robert Byrnes- Jim, would you be willing to give your reason for Abstaining?

James Gaskill- I think it is just a waste of time. I have nothing against 28 gauges.

Item 6. Bighorn Sheep Management Plan

- Kent Hersey, Big Game Project Leader

See Handout

RAC Questions

John Wall- On the sheep we brought in from Montana and put on the Goslin, was that a disease they acquired here or did they bring that with them? About what age does a ram become trophy quality or huntable?

Kent Hersey- Our monitoring and picking up of various diseases has improved over the years. Some people think it may have had something to do with it but they could have easily come in contact with a stray or something we did not know about. We don't know what happened there but there was a disease outbreak and we had to take action to prevent it from spreading. From a trophy standpoint, we try and harvest 8-9 year old rams. We break them into classes. Class 3 or 4 are the top end. A class 3 is when it is 6 ½ years or older.

John Wall- What disease was that they had?

Kent Hersey- It was pneumonia.

Robert Byrnes- On table 1 for Rocky Mountain and California big horn sheep, there is no listing for Pilot Mountain. Are we estimating those sheep or not?

Kent Hersey- We have not done a flight on Pilate Mountains in quite some time. Given the lack of consistent data on that, we did not put anything into this table. Jim, are you planning on flying that in the near future?

Jim Christensen- We should be flying with Nevada this year. We did fly last fall also.

Kent Hersey- Before that it had been quite some time. We kind of got surprised by that population that we were even able to offer tags. As we did offer that tag, we did see evidence of pneumonia and started going through a die off. It is a population that has some disease issues in it. It is not a great place to try and establish a population.

Robert Byrnes- I think we discussed it here at our RAC the problems on the south end and you were experiencing disease issues there.

Kent Hersey- We try and keep track of it as best as we can. At the same time, we don't want to put a ton of resources into it at this time given the likelihood of failure.

Robert Byrnes- In the plan, it says you will fly every 2-3 years but there is at least 4 units there that have not been flown for the past 3 years.

Kent Hersey- The Wasatch units in particular, that is another situation where we had a die off. So, we kind of let the populations struggle along. They did intend to fly it this past year but were unable to get it in our schedule to do it. When we have die offs, it makes things tricky because we try and do what we can to monitor them. Given the cost of helicopter time, we don't want to fly large amounts of area to only find a handful of sheep. It does not do us a lot of good.

Robert Byrnes- The return on your investments is fairly low flying those units right now?

Kent Hersey- Correct.

Paul Cowley- Can you help us understand when we talk about suitable habitat, how do we define that?

Kent Hersey- There are a variety of ways. We can do ground assessments from the biologists. The Forest Service has just come out with a really good model based on the data they have collected on the Payette National Forest. However, that only is going to get the biological side of what big horn sheep need. We then try and incorporate and overlay the areas we know we have active domestic sheep or vacant domestic sheep. We try and pull out those areas. Typically, we will put an 8-10 mile buffer. It is not quite that simple. We have to look at the habitat and possibly put a larger barrier in there. Water is also a key factor we will look at. It is a variety of factors. Once we establish it is good habitat, do they have potential conflicts with big horn. If so, will that be a potential area to avoid those conflicts.

Paul Cowley- On our augmentation sites and introduction sites, are any of those within 15-20 miles of domestic sheep allotments?

Kent Hersey-On the surface maybe. However, they are kind of some that will be flushed out more in the unit plans when you see it. We put some areas in that, if our domestic sheep issues can be resolved in the length of this plan, that could be a site we would consider. If there is active domestic sheep issues there, we will not transplant into those areas.

Public Comment

Byron Bateman- Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife- Commend the division for doing a great job on this management plan. Fully support this management plan.

RAC Comment

John Blazzard- When I got my paperwork; I talked to some of the sheep ranchers that are pretty good sized operators in Northern Utah. Is there any proof that these diseases are being transmitted from domestic sheep to big horn sheep? Is it just an assumption and don't know for sure?

Kent Hersey- It depends who you ask. On agricultural side, most of them will say there is no proof. On the wildlife side, there is quite a few published papers that do point to direct transmission between the two. Ultimately what it comes down to is that some people are looking for exact cause and effect. Often, what you have is highly correlative. It could offer some debate there. Most literature does suggest that transmission occurs.

John Blazzard- I guess being I am the only agricultural rep here today; I need to make a few comments. I know there have been sheep removed from allotments in Idaho. Those permits were cancelled so that they are making room for big horn sheep. There is a big concern in Utah that will happen here too. To our knowledge, there are no empty allotments to speak of that if you decide to move sheep off of an area, there is not an empty place to move those sheep too usually. These areas the ranchers are running their sheep are very critical and an important part of their operation. If we remove their sheep off those parcels, chances are they will have to go out of business. If they do that, there is kind of a slippery slope because if they go out of business and sell private properties for development, some other wildlife species might suffer from loss of winter habitat or loss of private refuge properties they have been using which are a part of that sheep ranchers operation. As we strive to expand the big horn sheep population, we don't want to do it at the expense of farming and ranching in Utah. It has happened in Idaho in a pretty big way.

Bryce Thurgood- I think a lot of times when those sheep allotments, they get sold. I thought they bought sheep allotments so it is not like ranchers have not lost their allotment. They have been compensated for it and got out of the business.

John Blazzard- My argument to that is that it is usually another rancher that buys the permit. Or, if they are just bought out and they go out of business, my point is that their properties which other wildlife is using usually goes up on the subdivision block. It does not help any of the other wildlife.

Paul Cowley- We are certainly concerned as far as the livestock industry. We recognize the associated properties tied to those allotments. Some permits have been willingly released or relinquished or closed. On the north slope, that has occurred. In Idaho there have been some decisions to remove livestock from areas to prevent direct interaction between domestic and wild sheep. It is certainly a concern to us. Part of the forest service mission to provide for viable populations wildlife. Most of that usually takes a lot of time and effort in both the analysis side and the discussion side with the proper entities. That is part of the reason why I asked the earlier question as we talk about suitable habitat and what is brought into that discussion. There is no reason to create a conflict with this. We need to look for opportunities to where, if possible, both parties can maintain their operations and we can maintain viable populations of our important wildlife in the state of Utah.

R. Jefre Hicks- I would have to agree with Byron that it is pretty well thought out. I really like the idea that you have looked into expanding viewing opportunities to the public.

Motion

Motion: Blazzard- **Recommend the Wildlife Board approve the Bighorn Sheep Management Plan as presented.**

Second- Thurgood

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Item 7. Goat Management Plan

- Kent Hersey, Big Game Project Leader

See Handout

RAC Questions

R. Jefre Hicks- On your initial transplants up at Farmington peak, which would be really neat to see, how many do you usually start out with there?

Kent Hersey- If it is an augmentation, it is usually 20 or so. If it is a brand new transplant, we like to go with 40 as a minimal level. Basically, the more you do, the more likely you will be successful.

John Cavitt- Related to that on table 1, it is correct that the Willard peak population was established with just 9 animals? It has over 300 now.

Kent Hersey- That is what it says.

Bryce Thurgood- How soon a timeframe on that Farmington?

Kent Hersey- We have some populations at Willard Peak and Tushar Mountains. We have probably more goats than we want right now. We are looking to transplant those as soon as possible. Potentially as early as this fall. Whether they go to Farmington, I don't know. La Sals will be very unlikely to happen this year. Deep Creek and Farmington could be on for this year as well as Wellsville and Nebo.

Paul Cowley- On the prioritization as far as augmenting or initial transplants, do you see us doing augmenting first?

Kent Hersey- A lot is going to depend on what they see on this June flight. We have not gotten together with the multiple regions to figure out priorities yet. If we are looking at doing a reintroduction this year, that would take up more goats than if we are looking at doing some augmentations. It depends how we want to try and go about that.

Craig Van Tassell- When I was reading about the classification and it talked about the helicopter surveys and ground based classifications. It mentioned fixed wing. What is a fixed wing classification?

Kent Hersey- It is just a fixed wing airplane. Most populations don't try and do it. With the Uintahs, they have enough animals there that they can go out with a fixed wing and see the animals. You can get a sufficient number seen. It is basically to get a production estimate.

John Blazzard- How can you tell the difference between a nanny and a billy unless you are really close?

Kent Hersey- You can get pretty close in a helicopter. It is just seeing a lot of animals and knowing what to look for.

Public Comment

Byron Bateman- Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife- When I was on the RAC in 1993-2001 this was always something I wanted to see done. This is a great management plan to do all these things in the state of Utah. These new transplants, I can hardly wait to see them happen. Commend DWR for what you have done with sheep and goats. Support this 110%.

RAC Comment

Paul Cowley- We really appreciate, at the forest service, the opportunity to comment on the plan and the extra effort it took this year as we had some retirements that occurred.

Motion

Motion: John Wall- **Recommend the Wildlife Board adopt the Goat Management Plan as presented.**

Second- John Cavitt

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Item 8. Urban Deer- New Rule R657-65

- Martin Bushman, Attorney

See Handout

RAC Questions

R. Jefre Hicks- This is written like code. Is it going to be a bill that is going to be introduced in front of the legislative session next time?

Martin Bushman- No, this is an administrative rule. It is written a little bit like code because I wrote it. Rules often do look like code. They are code, they are law. They are just as much law as statutes passed by the legislature. Rules are just created by the executive branch through a process. These are legal requirements just like the Utah code.

James Gaskill- I am interested in what kinds of inputs and limitations the division is allowed to put on them.

Martin Bushman- I did drop a couple of points that are in the rule. I have been asked twice now about it. I should have left it in. The division will dictate the overall season where deer may be taken. We are not targeting migrating deer onto winter range and taking those animals when they are not really the resident deer we are concerned with. There will be an overall season that the division will say the city has to operate within. The division also has the authority to determine how many animals can be taken and gender. Those would be things that would be put into the control plan that the division has the oversight on.

James Gaskill- Will they have oversight on disease issues or just general welfare of the animals?

Martin Bushman- Live capture and relocation, you have to have division approval for that. That is one of the things we want to make sure of. That we are capturing them and taking them to a location that is suitable with disease testing being performed. There are a number of these activities that are authorized by the city but subject to the division approval. We tried to give cities as much latitude as possible and give them the flexibility to meet their individual needs.

James Gaskill- Who is going to be responsible to keep us updated on what is happening to this? I think we would like to get reasonable timely updates as to what is going on.

Martin Bushman- I would think if the RAC wants updates, we could provide those as they occur. I would probably defer to Justin to talk to.

Justin Dolling- Could you clarify what you mean by an update?

James Gaskill- I want to know if you are finding problems or if it is going well and how many animals have been moved and that sort of thing.

Justin Dolling- I think that could be easily incorporated into our big game recommendations that come through once a year. We could give an update on the status of the program and how many animals have been removed.

James Gaskill- That would be fine with me.

John Cavitt- Could you summarize the approval process that is going to happen with the division in terms of these COR's that will be proposed. What is the process within the division?

Martin Bushman- You have two things. One would be the Certificate of Registration. There would be an application that would be filed with the division. We would look at the criteria. Then, if that is met, the COR would be issued and the city would begin developing its plan. The division would be quite involved with that process.

John Cavitt- What I meant is who in the division is responsible for reviewing these?

Martin Bushman- I don't know if we have determined that exactly. I assume it would probably be Scott McFarlane.

Scott McFarlane- Yes.

Martin Bushman- What is your title?

Scott McFarlane- Private Lands/Public Wildlife Coordinator.

Justin Dolling- Suzanne McMullen is our COR point of contact in Salt Lake. The cities would make application to Suzanne and Suzanne would send out that application to the wildlife section in the Salt Lake office and also the region that the city is residing in. We would then make comments and then move it back towards Suzanne who ultimately approves it.

Martin Bushman- After two years, if it looks like this rule is a process that is going to show some promise and a lot of cities start coming on board. You may see some more formalization in the application process. This rule might change over time if we are finding things that are not working.

John Wall- Is most of the damage from people's yards or is it vehicles getting damage?

Martin Bushman- The bulk of the damage is yards and landscaping. There are vehicle collisions and Bountiful City has its fair share of them. The biggest problem and the major complaint is from property damage.

R. Jefe Hicks- I have a question on non-lethal removal as it pertains to how each city drafts their own plan. I see that earlier in the rule that each municipality gets to choose their own plan and develop it with the input from the DWR. A city like Bountiful, who I cannot imagine being able to do lethal removal because of the density of buildings. That has to be really expensive. Is there a way they can come back legally and make the DWR pay for that even though it is their own plan?

Martin Bushman- The rule makes it very clear that the cities fund this whole thing and the division has no obligation to do it. With these first two cities we may voluntarily help but we are not obligated. We may choose to offer assistance. They might be able to sue us but I don't think they would win. The state does not have liability for wild animals. They are wild, we don't own them. They are not capable of ownership. The courts have been pretty clear about that. It is a public resource much like water that the citizens of the state of Utah are the owners, if you will. The division is the trustee that manages that for them. Are we liable? Not under common law or anything else. The legislature could make us legally responsible and that is something we hope to avoid by writing a rule enforcing the legislature to create a plan for us.

Paul Cowley- Is there any emphasis to have the cities consider their zoning? Will that create the problem we are trying to avoid?

Martin Bushman- There is nothing in the rule on that right now. That may be something to look at in the future. It may be self resolving if the cities have to fund the program, they are going to be motivated to minimize the projects and impacts. If we make a free service available to them, every city will want it. When the city is responsible to fund the program and take care of it with the oversight of the division, they will be very conscious of controlling these animals and operating in a way that is economically feasible.

Paul Cowley- It seems like a really important thing to at least encourage them to think about.

Martin Bushman- Good thought.

James Gaskill- I have a dealing with an attorney once in a while.

Martin Bushman- Sorry.

James Gaskill- We all have our crosses to bear. It appears that if they meet those 2 or 3 criteria, it is an automatic COR. Am I right?

Martin Bushman- Right now, that is the case.

James Gaskill- That concerns me a little bit because attorneys write laws and some people think job security. If somebody decides and the division decides there is not really a public safety issue, what then becomes the liability of the division in a lawsuit challenging threats to public safety or whatever?

Martin Bushman- Are you saying if a city applies and the division says they don't think you have a significant public safety threat or damage; we are going to deny you?

James Gaskill- Yes.

Martin Bushman- They could probably challenge that decision as to whether that was made reasonably. I think that is where it would end. Right now, the way the law is written, the legislature has not made DWR or the state of Utah financially or legally responsible for damage caused by big game animals. They could change that and have made the division responsible to an extent for agricultural damage up to \$5,000 dollars a year which the legislature funds. When you look at just common law, the sovereign is generally not responsible for the acts of wild animals.

James Gaskill- I am a little concerned about this whole issue and I want to make sure we monitor it really closely.

Martin Bushman-We will.

Public Comment

Byron Bateman- Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife- Got approval to do a deer capture and translocation. We are not opposed to hunting in certain situations and some situations it might take a lethal means to do it. 3 year contract with the division and BYU. Money funding is SFW money. Glad this is working and there are opportunities to augment populations.

RAC Comment

Russ Lawrence- Appreciate Byron's comments on the transplant. There is a lot of concern about these urban deer. They did not come off the mountain; they live in these valleys and have grown up with that food source. To transplant them to a totally different habitat might prove challenging. Parowan is not a major urban environment compared to Bountiful. I think a transplant would be fun to see what it would do. I think it is valuable but I think history has shown that the urban deer don't transplant very well.

John Blazzard- I would personally like to see another subsection put in here as part of the requirements for a COR that cities come up with something in their development code that should be left for wildlife. They ought to have some kind of plan in their development code to deal with this problem.

R. Jefre Hicks- It is unfortunate that these municipalities keep developing in traditional habitat and then they complain that the original inhabitants won't leave. That being said, our public lands, wildlife and water ways are held in trust by the state for the benefit and use of our citizens. We have a bit of a responsibility for that. I would hope this rule will armor the DWR a little bit against those municipalities coming back on the DWR saying they are responsible for helping. It is not the deer's fault or DWR's fault, it is municipalities that allow developments moving in and then complaining about the ill effects.

Martin Bushman- It is a very good idea of whether we can create open space and try to mitigate some of the harm. There are two concerns with that and one is trying to define how much, where and under what circumstances. It inserts the division into a highly political process that is quite dicey. You start messing with private property rights. That will get the legislature on us immediately. It becomes difficult to define where those areas are. It is a great idea but may be difficult to pull off.

James Gaskill- Maybe we take a shot at it anyways? You are a wordsmith and maybe you can make it sound ok without being upsetting to some of the people in the legislature. Maybe something that is a suggestion to the municipalities.

Martin Bushman- It could certainly be done as a suggestion that they look at ways to try and create open space and plan their development in ways that would reduce conflict with wildlife and citizens of the community. The second is trying to impose it.

John Blazzard- I assume that there is annexation going on as the cities enlarge their boundaries into those areas. Whenever you annex property, you can basically set your own rules as to what you want out there. The least they could do is notify people when they are building these areas that they are going to have this problem. That ought to be a requirement to be put on the deed or plan or something.

James Gaskill- It's probably not something this RAC can do though.

Bryce Thurgood- Like it was originally stated, as soon as you put this all on the cities, they are going to get creative really quick. When you put the whole problem on them to fund it, I think they are going to get creative on their own. We are not going to have to impose on them because they are not going to have anyone paying for it anymore. It will be coming out of their own pockets so hopefully they will fix the solution.

R. Jefre Hicks- I really hate to see the DWR get involved with any kind of city removal of wildlife in any way. It is their problem; they caused it so they should fund it. I'm hoping the DWR can stay out of the mess.

Jon Leonard- I think I would sooner see private property rights protected and ownership not try to force mandates on it. I think we have some excellent conservation easement programs that we need to emphasize and maybe rev up a little bit. That is the best way to do it. Sportsman should have the best of interest in promoting that.

Motion

Motion: Cowley- **Recommend the Wildlife Board adopt Rule R657-65 and additionally encourage the DWR to recommend to cities methods to mitigate wildlife damage.**

Second- Gaskill

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Item 9. Deer Management Plans

- Darren Debloois, Asst. Wildlife Manager

See Handout

RAC Questions

John Blazzard- There were two units you doubled or tripled the objective number of animals.

Darren Debloois- Yes.

John Blazzard- Do anticipate a lot of depredation problems by doing that?

Darren Debloois- No, we felt like the change reflects what is there now. We did take that into account. We did not feel like we had a big problem. It is mainly an effort to reflect reality rather than a real increase.

R. Jefre Hicks- I have a question about juniper.

Darren Debloois- We have our habitat manager here.

R. Jefre Hicks- A lot of these things I see in here is removal of juniper. Has the juniper always been there and you are trying to make better habitat. Or, is it expanding into areas it wasn't before. And if that is the case, what allows it to do that?

Darren Debloois- It depends on the unit. Scott, if you want to jump in feel free. A lot of what we are seeing is encroachment. There was a lot of control from grazers because they wanted a more grassy plain. It used to get treated and now a lot of that ground is not being managed quite as accessibly.

Scott Walker- Juniper is a huge issue for us. It has always been here but has been confined to more pockets. The reason we are seeing a huge expansion is because of controlled wildfires for the most part. We are now seeing reduction in that wildfire control so the juniper is expanding.

Paul Cowley- On the Cache deer herd, we have an objective of 25,000 animals which is the same place we were in 1996. Yet, in those last 17-18 years, we have lost a lot of winter range. I am wondering why that number may not reflect some of that loss of winter range.

Darren Debloois- For the Cache herd, we did have a public process on that because it is such a controversial and a lot of people are interested in that herd. The group wasn't willing yet to give up on that objective. So, our plan is to try and do what we can and see where we are. Clearly, the deer do kind of tell you long term, where they want to be. We need to evaluate that realistically. For now, we will keep it up there and see if we can't get it going. We are slowly growing. It has not flattened out yet.

Public Comment

Byron Bateman- Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife- 5 year range trends throughout the state on winter range. This shows that they are low. We definitely have a habitat problem. Glad to see you putting a lot of habitat projects up there.

RAC Comment

Robert Byrnes- Appreciate projects listed and people in the region that have worked on the plans.

Russ Lawrence- Commend the division for collaborating with different sections and putting together that plan. It is a great product.

Paul Cowley- From the forest service side, we are excited about the opportunity on making a difference with habitat.

John Blazzard- Impressed with the number of projects there are. I have been involved with some aspen clearing projects. It is amazing the amount of deer that flock after you have cleared the aspen and opened it up. As far as the juniper problem, I think you can blame the juniper/cedar problem on steel posts.

Motion

Motion: Cavitt- **Recommend the Wildlife Board approve the Deer Management Plans as presented.**

Second- Hicks

Motion Passes: For: Unanimous

Motion

Motion: Cowley- **Move we adjourn.**

Motion Passes: By acclamation of the chair.

Meeting Ends 8:45 p.m.