

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –  
minutes

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** [Non-action item]
2. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** [Non-action item]

*Members in Attendance*

1. Steve Robinson Chairman
2. Arnie Pitts, Vice Chairman
3. Jim Rhea
4. Matt Melarkey
5. Coby Rowe

*Others in Attendance*

1. Jon Ewanyk, Washoe County Wildlife Biologist
2. Rex Flowers, public
3. Ash Caselli
4. Ryan Browne

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**-[Non-action item]

Rex Flowers provided public comment on behalf of the Coalition of Nevada Healthy Lands. Mr. Flowers said Chair Robinson had received an email from Judi Caron and asked that the email be forwarded to the full board. The email has also been attached to the end of these minutes. Mr. Flowers said the state of Nevada has been decimated by wild horses, specifically the riparian areas.

4. **APPROVAL OF June 17, 2021 MINUTES**-[For possible action]

No changes were noted.

**Member Pitts motioned for approval of the June 17, 2021 CAB minutes. Chair Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

5. **BOARD MEMBER MEETING ASSIGNMENT**-[Non-action item]

Members of the CAB had discussion and determined which member(s) would attend the upcoming Nevada Board of Wildlife Commission meeting. Chair Robinson said that it was his intention to attend the meeting and recommended the new board members also try to attend if they were able.

6. **COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND LIAISON UPDATES**-[Non-action items]

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Chair Robinson opened discussion on the agenda item. Chair Robinson said he spoke with Ms. Caron regarding the email she had sent. He is said the email was encouraging the support of the Wild Horse and Burrow act. The email also called for the board to write their own letter that would be sent to the Secretary of the Interior. The correspondence noted the destruction of sage grouse land by wild horses.

Chair Robinson asked if there was any items that needed to be addressed from the August 6 Commission meeting. Member Rhea said he had attended and didn't have much to report. Member Pitts said he found the meeting interesting considering the Coyote Hunting Contest and said the meeting was particularly contentious with regard to that agenda item. Chair Robinson said he was disappointed with the dialogue around the contests and hoped there would be more fact-based discussion in the future. Member Melarkey added that he had two takeaways from the meeting. He noted the opposition to the contests was very well organized and the hunting side was much less organized. He hoped there would be a call to action by sportsman to become more involved in the issue. He also asked what the ramifications were for the Reno City Council's passing of their ban and what that ban would entail.

**7. Commission Regulation 21-15, Fishing Seasons and Regulations for January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2023**–[For Possible Action]

Chair Robinson opened discussion on the recommendation that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify the proposed fishing seasons, bag, and possession limits for the period of January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2023. He said the proposal appeared to only apply to White Pine County. Chair Robinson said he was in full support of the proposed changes. There were no additional comments from the board or members of the public.

**Member Pitts moved to approve Commission Regulation 21-15, Fishing Seasons and Regulations for January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2023 as written. Chair Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**8. Commission General Regulation 488, Landowner Compensation Tags, LCB File No. R083-19**–[For Possible Action]

Chair Robinson opened discussion on the recommendation that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify changes to Chapter 502 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). This regulation would provide direction for allocating landowner deer and antelope compensation tags if owner applicants cumulatively qualify for compensation tags in excess of the statutory limit. This regulation was considered during a workshop in September 2019.

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Member Pitts asked for comment from the Department. John Ewanyk said that last year there were 502 tags available and there were 363 applicants for the deer tags, so there were some left over. Member Melarkey noted there were 87 tags picked for antelope. Member Pitts asked how the tags were treated. Mr. Ewanyk said that everyone is guaranteed their first tag and after that, everyone falls into the .5 multiplier. Member Melarkey noted that by his math the 2.5% on antelope would represent around 108 tags over the 87 that were given this year, and it would be roughly 436 tags for deer, based on what was given out this year. He then asked the department, in their opinion, how long it would take to reach the 2.5% threshold. Mr. Ewanyk said it was tricky due to various reasons and there is no way to tell what will be done with tags in the future. Member Pitts said it appeared there are more deer on ranches than in the past and said that may increase the tags. Member Pitts asked if the ranchers had been approached and what their feelings were, and Mr. Ewanyk said he did not know whether ranchers had been consulted. Chair Robinson said there are some states that have more comprehensive tags for landowners, and hoped that in the future, changes could be made to the program to benefit everyone.

During public comment Ash Caselli said he would like to see more discussion around depredation tags. He said the landowner tags were being used for income and he believed too many were being given out each year. Rex Flowers said this issue had been worked on for a few years and since 2012 mule deer numbers had dropped throughout the state, which has led to less hunting tags. He said many groups were consulted with regard to this issue, and the proposed plan was the best that the group could come to agreement on. He said there is a chance they could go over again, but overall, he supported the work that had been done. He also added that ranchers are not getting back in income what they are losing to wildlife.

Member Rhea asked if ranchers were required to submit crop loss data. Chair Robinson and Member Pitts said no, it was only the number of animals on the land.

**Member Pitts moved to approve Commission General Regulation 488, Landowner Compensation Tags, LCB File No. R083-19 as written. Member Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**9. Commission General Regulation 489, NAC 503.172, Shed Antler Season, R082-19–[For Possible Action]**

Chair Robinson opened discussion on alterations to NAC 501 and NAC 503 to change the demerits for violation of the shed antler closure, increase the demerits for a violation of that regulation and require an online class in order to collect or possess shed antlers in the field. This regulation was brought as a petition by Elko CABMW in August 2019 and was considered during a workshop in September 2019 and August 2021.

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Chair Robinson asked if members of law enforcement would comment on the item. Kristy Knight, Game Warden, said the proposal considered changing the timeframe of the requirement of completion of an online class in order to collect or possess shed antlers in the field and changing the violation for not having taken the class or collecting outside of the timeframe. Member Pitts asked if someone had decided to go fishing in the area, but did not complete the online course, would they be able to go? Ms. Knight said yes, that was her understanding. Member Melarkey added that the online course probably was being used to collect data so officials could understand who was out in the field.

Chair Robinson said the elk season was still ongoing during the timeframe of the closure which he found troubling. Member Pitts said he was supportive of the proposal because it allowed for a better tracking of who was out in the field during the given times, especially in eastern Nevada where it gets chaotic. Member Melarkey said he was also in support because the demerits system does not require loss of license in the first offense, but if you violate it again then you will receive a larger punishment.

Chair Robinson asked if there was public comment. Ash Caselli said he was not in support because it appeared this only affected Nevadans. He also said he would be curious about what additional information the online class would provide that would be more than the basic hunter safety classes that are already offered. Rex Flowers said he felt the regulation still needs a lot of work. He said that he hopes the board votes against the proposed regulation because there was so much uncertainty in the proposed language. He said he also did not like that people can only take the class in a limited time because people don't know when they will be going fishing in Elko County. He wondered why the class wasn't offered in a larger window. He also noted the demerit system was too strong and it did not align with other demerit systems such as poaching crayfish.

Member Melarkey noted that the regulation said "any person" so by his reading the regulation would be for all individuals and not just Nevadans. Ms. Knight agreed with Member Melarkey's interpretation. Member Pitts said they had looked at other punishments, but the demerit system was what they could implement considering state law. Chair Robinson said that while he supportive the closures in the counties, he did not understand the logic of the proposal as written. He said the nine demerits for picking up a shed antler was too steep and should be reconsidered. He said he wished the Department would address the buying and selling of the antlers which is where the real problems exist.

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**Member Pitts moved to deny Commission General Regulation 489, NAC 503.172, Shed Antler Season, R082-19. Member Pitts seconded. The motion carried 4-1 with Member Melarkey voting nay.**

**10. Commission General Regulation 499, Bonus Point Only Application Period –[For Possible Action]**

Chair Robinson opened discussion to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify draft language amending NAC 502 chapters that would decouple the hunt application periods from the 7-day bonus point only application period and create a separate period for bonus point only purchases that would facilitate a more timely draw process and provide increased opportunity for bonus point purchase. The change also defines what “awarded” means to a successful draw applicant.

Chair Robinson asked the Department for comment on the proposed regulation. John Ewanyk said that during the time of the draw it is a lot of work for employees and by separating the bonus point only would help manage the workload. Member Melarkey asked how many only bonus point applications are handled each year. Mr. Ewanyk said it is quite a few but he did not have the exact numbers. Member Melarkey added that it made sense to separate the bonus point only applicants and would help other people.

During public comment, Rex Flowers said he had spoken to individuals regarding the proposed item and explained how he interpreted the proposed regulation. He said the reasons these changes were being made were to allow the main draw to be addressed first and then the bonus points would be considered separately. He said he hoped the board would support the proposal. Ryan Browne said he was against the proposal because he thought the current Nevada system worked well and was the best of all of the states. Ash Caselli commented that he had heard there may be manipulation of the system and he was curious if changing the bonus point system may allow for more manipulation.

Chair Robinson asked if there was further discussion from the board and Member Pitts noted that he did not see a way for further manipulation if the changes were approved.

**Chair Robinson moved to approve Commission General Regulation 499, Bonus Point Only Application Period as writted. Member Pitts seconded.**

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**The motion carried unanimously.**

**11. PUBLIC COMMENTS** –[Non-Action item]

Rex Flowers congratulated the new members on their appointments and thanked them for their service on the board.

**12. ADJOURNMENT** [Non-action item]

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.