

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. Matt Melarkey, Chairman
2. Coby Rowe, Vice Chairman
3. Steve Robinson

Members Absent

1. Jim Rhea
2. Arnie Pitts

Others in Attendance

1. Jon Ewanyk, Washoe County Wildlife Biologist
2. Cooper Munson, Nevada Department of Wildlife
3. Mike Scott, Nevada Department of Wildlife
4. Mel Belding, public
5. Sean Shea, public
6. Joel Blakeslee, public
7. Steven Keller, public
8. Gerald Len, public
9. Jeff Rogers, public

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

Gerald Lent, spoke about NRS 501.301 and his experience implementing bills as a former chairman of the Nevada Wildlife Commission. He noted that recommendations should be heard and considered by the Commission. He also said he worried that the chair of the rules and regulation committee is not considering recommendations and hoped that there may be a different chair of the committee in the future.

Jeff Rogers, said he had been reading over the recommendations, and he was looking into muzzle loader deer quotas, and was concerned about the quota being dropped down to two for the upcoming year. He also noted the non-resident quota is being recommended at two, and he hoped the non-resident quota would remain the same for non-residents and keep the resident quota as three.

4. **APPROVAL OF March 17, 2022 Minutes**-[For possible action]

Member Robinson motioned for approval of the March 17, 2022 CAB minutes. Vice Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Member Robinson said he would be able to attend some of the May 5th and all of the May 6th Commission meeting.

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

Member Robinson spoke about the mule deer team meeting regarding the non-acceptance of the predator recommendations by the committee. He said he was encouraged that sportsman attended the meeting and had their voices heard. He noted there were concerning comments about how the Department felt that mule deer were at carrying capacity in Unit 014. Member Robinson said that Rex Flowers and John Edwards had written to the board and those comments can be found as attachments to the meeting minutes.

7. CONSENT ITEMS – For Possible Action –[For Possible Action]

7.a - Commission Policy 3 – Appeals – First Reading– For Possible Action

The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 3, Appeals, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

7.b - Commission Policy 4 – Petition Process and Adoption of Regulations

– First Reading –For Possible Action The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 4, Petition Process and Adoption of Regulations, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

7.c - Commission Policy 21 – Game and Furbearer Management Plans –

First Reading –For Possible Action The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 21, Game and Furbearer Management, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

7.d - Commission Policy 22 – Introduction, Transplanting, and Exportation of Wildlife – First Reading – For Possible Action

The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 22, Introduction, Transplanting, and Exportation of Wildlife, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

7.e - Commission Policy 25 – Wildlife Damage Management – First Reading

– For Possible Action The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 25, Wildlife Damage Management, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

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7.f - Commission Policy 26 – Managing Rocky Mountain Elk Population– First Reading – For Possible Action The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 26, Managing Rocky Mountain Elk Populations, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

7.g - Commission Policy 27 – Protection of Wildlife – First Reading –For Possible Action The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 27, Protection of Wildlife, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

7.h - Commission Policy 28 – Transparency on Quota Setting – First Reading – For Possible Action The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 28, Transparency on Quota Setting, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

7.i - Commission Policy 29 – Elk Arbitration – First Reading –For Possible Action The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 29, Elk Arbitration, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

7.j - Commission Policy 40 – Statewide Boating Safety – Second Reading – For Possible Action The Commission will have a second reading of Commission Policy 40, Statewide Boating Safety, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to repeal, revise or adopt the policy.

7.k - Commission Policy 51 – Wayne E. Kirch Conservation Award – First Reading –For Possible Action The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 51, Wayne E. Kirch Conservation Award, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

7.l - Commission Policy 63 – Protecting Wildlife from Toxic Ponds – Third Reading – For Possible Action The Commission will have a third reading of Commission Policy 63, Protecting Wildlife from Toxic Ponds, and may take action to repeal, revise or adopt the policy.

Chair Melarkey asked if there was any discussion or public comment regarding the consent agenda items. Mel Belding had public comment and first spoke about Policy 21 and how it appeared the policy would only be reviewed every 10 years and he suggested that it should be at no more than 10 years. Regarding Policy 22 he said he was concerned about the recommendation, and it should remain as it is currently written. He said if you look at various units, there is no question the limiting factor is mountain lions. He said there should be a removal of predators before sheep transplants. He spoke about Policy 26 and thought the Commission and the Department should actively engage in the expansion of the elk herd. During Mr. Belding's public comment, the three-minute time limit was reached. At the Chair's discretion, Mr. Belding

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was allowed additional time to comment on items of the consent agenda. Mr. Belding noted that Policy 27 that the Department will give an annual report of wild horses on public land and the adverse effects they may be causing, and the Department should actively advocate for appropriate management levels. Mr. Belding said Policy 25 should be left as is but add language regarding predator protection. He said he would like to see every predator project that is brought to the predator biologist be recorded for approval and denial, and if there is a denial, there should be explanation regarding that denial.

Mr. Lent said he had questions regarding Policy 22 and asked why there was no predator screening in units. He also said Policy 28 required all data that is determined by the Department be made publicly available, and committee minutes he had seen recently appeared to contradict that.

Member Robinson asked about Policy 22 and the Department's policy about transplants of certain species. Mike Scott, NDOW, said the practice of the Department right now is they do not want to move certain species due to various factors such as disease. He said he was against transplanting deer into Washoe County due to habitat conditions. Member Robinson asked about Policy 25 and why coyotes would not be considered as predators that needed to be removed. Mr. Scott said he was unaware of why that change was made. Member Robinson asked about Policy 27 and the wolve population in Nevada and if Nevada would allow wolves. Mr. Scott said the position was the Department would manage wolves in Nevada if they showed up in the state. He said they don't currently have the ability to manage wolves under current regulation and this change would allow them to manage the populations in the event they do arrive in Nevada. Mr. Scott said he supported the proposal as written.

Vice Chair Rowe moved to remove Policies 21, 22, and 27 from the consent agenda and hear each individually. Chair Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Rowe moved to approve items 7.a, 7.b, 7.e, 7.f, 7.h, 7.i, 7.j, 7.k, and 7.l as written. Member Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7.c - Commission Policy 21 – Game and Furbearer Management Plans – First Reading –For Possible Action The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 21, Game and Furbearer Management, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

Chair Melarkey asked if there was additional public comment on Policy 21. Mr. Scott said the policy is for management plans and not management policy. He

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said he asked for the language to be added so they were consistent enforcement to reassess the plans.

Vice Chair Rowe moved to approve Policy 21 and amend to add Management plans will be reviewed not more than on a 10-year schedule or as needed by the Commission and departmental personnel. Member Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7.d - Commission Policy 22 – Introduction, Transplanting, and Exportation of Wildlife – First Reading – For Possible Action The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 22, Introduction, Transplanting, and Exportation of Wildlife, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

During public comment Mel Belding said that the reason the Commission was able to transplant these animals was the Department allowed for better habitat management prior to the transplants taking place. Gerald Lent said he hoped there would be more habitat screening during the transplants to identify predators.

During board discussion, Vice Chair Rowe asked Mr. Scott if there was a way to state the recommendation that focused on big game species. Mr. Scott said that would be possible and thought the big game clarification would resolve the issue.

Member Robinson moved to approve Commission Policy 22 but change the first paragraph to give transplanted Big Game animals a better chance of establishment, predator control shall be accomplished by Wildlife Services or another appropriate entity before, and after, a Big Game transplant occurs. Vice Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7.g - Commission Policy 27 – Protection of Wildlife – First Reading – For Possible Action

The Commission will have a first reading of Commission Policy 27, Protection of Wildlife, and may make any necessary changes and may decide to move it to a second reading.

Chair Melarkey reopened public comment on the item. Joel Blakeslee commented that he would like to see the policy state that wolves should be

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managed, but they were opposed overall.

During discussion Member Robinson asked Mr. Scott if having the opposition of the establishment of a wolf population, and management in the event of a population in Nevada, in the policy made sense. Mr. Scott said that he was for adding that amendment to language.

Member Robinson moved to approve Policy 27 with the amendment that it is the policy of the Commission to oppose the establishment of a population of wolves in Nevada. The Commission recognizes wolf sightings will continue in Nevada. Like other predators the Commission supports management of wolves if they are determined to be negatively impacting other wildlife species. Chair Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Final Fiscal Year 2023 Predation Management Plan – For Possible Action

Chair Melarkey opened the item to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify recommendations for the final draft of the Fiscal Year 2023 Draft Predation Management Plan with the Department.

During public comment, Mr. Lent noted that the predator biologist in Nevada had testified that he did not know anything about deer in Nevada. He felt the CAB board would be defeated if the biologist was allowed to continue to work on the project. Mel Belding said he saw a lack of predator management and it was difficult to approve predator projects. He said that at least \$300,000 had been spent on the protection of sage grouse, and that should be discontinued. He felt the money would be better spent on the upland game. Joel Blakeslee added that the \$3 fee was withdrawn from the big game funds that Mr. Belding was referring to.

Member Robinson asked the Department about Project 46 and if it was planned to continue until 2026. Mr. Scott said he was not clear on the exact plan and would recommend keeping the language as is. He also noted that if there were predator problems, the Department would act no matter what Project 46 specified. Member Robinson said the BLM had done a large survey before and he hoped there could be a correlation with those findings with more recent findings. Chair Melarkey said that Project 22 did not contain antelope in certain units. Mr. Scott said they could have been listed, but the purpose of the project was California Bighorn sheep.

Vice Chair Rowe moved to approve the final Fiscal Year 2023 Predation Management Plan as written. Chair Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

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**9. Commission General Regulation 501, NAC 502.385, Tag Transfer –
[For Possible Action]**

Chair Melarkey opened the item regarding a review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify recommendations to consider amending Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 502.385 that would allow the transfer of a game tag to a non-profit organization and determine the status of the tag if the Department is notified of the tag holder's death. Member Robinson said he knew there had been quite a lot of work to get this regulation approved for disabled sportsman. There was no public comment on the item.

Member Robinson moved to approve Commission General Regulation 501, NAC 502.385, Tag Transfer as written. Vice Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Commission General Regulation 505, NAC 502.4215, First Come First Served Prevention of Unfair Advantages – [For Possible Action]

Chair Melarkey opened discussion regarding a review, discussion and possible action to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify recommendations to consider amending NAC 502.4215 that would allow for the suspension of a person from the First Come First Served program for attempting to create an unfair advantage to obtain a big game tag. Member Robinson asked about multiple browsers, or logins, as an unfair advantage and if the issue was being fixed. Chair Melarkey said from what he knew, the system was being changed to real time information and would be refreshed in real time. Vice Chair Rowe said it appeared that people may have been taking advantage of the system with bots and other means.

During public comment Mr. Belding noted some inconsistencies in the system and was concerned about the implementation of the system as it was currently constructed. Jeff Rogers asked if this item addressed non-residents being able to receive resident tags and if not, he would like to see that issue addressed.

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Chair Melarkey motioned to approve Commission General Regulation 501, NAC 502.4215 First Come First Served Prevention of Unfair Advantage with the change returned resident tags will be given to residents of Nevada and returned non-resident tags will be given to non-residents or residents of Nevada. Vice Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**11. Commission General Regulation 507, LCB File No. R045-22 -
Petition Process–[For Possible Action]**

Chair Melarkey opened the item to review and possibly recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify recommendations to consider adopting changes to NAC 501.195 recommended by the Administrative Procedures, Regulations and Policy Committee. The regulation was approved by the Committee at their March meeting and will be considered by the Commission for the first workshop. There was no board discussion or public comment.

Member Robinson moved to approve Commission General Regulation 507, LCB File No. R045-22 - Petition Process as written. Chair Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**12. Commission Regulation 22-11, Big Game Quotas for the 2022-2023
Season–[For Possible Action]**

Chair Melarkey opened the item to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify recommendations to establish regulations for the numbers of tags to be issued for mule deer, pronghorn antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats for the 2022 - 2023 seasons. The board decided to review each animal separately.

Pronghorn

John Ewanyk, NDOW, began with Unit group 011. He noted that the population has had low fawn ratios for the last 3 years and the population estimate has gradually declined across the past 3 years. Although hunter success rates have been stable the past 3 seasons, the percent of 15 inch or greater in the harvest has drastically declined. A moderate reduction in tags should accommodate for the change in population estimate this year.

He then discussed Unit 012-014 and explained the population estimate for Unit Group 012-014 was reduced for this year, and the percentage of 15 inch pronghorn in the harvest has noticeably declined. Much of the habitat in this unit grouping has been impacted by horse numbers over AML, and severe drought. A moderate tag

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reduction in 012-014 for the 2022 season should benefit this population. In Unit 015, Mr. Ewanyk said the population estimate in Unit 015 is lower than the previous year's estimate. Much of this area has been impacted by wildfire, horses over Appropriate Management Levels, and degraded habitat. Any Legal Weapon success rates and percent of 15" horns in the harvest both declined this past season. A tag reduction for this unit should help to get success rates realigned with target objectives.

In Units 021 and 022 success rates and hunter satisfaction remain high in this unit grouping. Although much of the unit grouping has been impacted by fire, this population of pronghorn has remained stable. Hunter success has been high across the past 3 years and the unit grouping could support five more Any Legal Weapon tags. In Unit 033 Mr. Ewanyk noted that this population has experienced stable fawn ratios for the past 2 years, but hunter success and horn length have recently declined. A moderate tag reduction for 033 will help to bring success rates and horn length back up.

Member Robinson asked about the 15-inch or better and if drought conditions had led to worse results. Mr. Ewanyk said there is some research around drought adversely affecting diameter but not length. He said if there was an older age class then you would have longer antler lengths.

During public comment, Jeff Rogers commented on Unit 021 and 022 and how he did not support raising the quota in those units. Mel Belding said that 3, or 4, year-old animals tend to be the biggest animals. He said the measurement should consider mass. He said an antelope is done growing in July, and they drop their sheath in November and once it drops it begins another growth. This is why the winter and spring moisture is so important. Sean Shea said he agreed with Mr. Belding on the mass measurements. He said he would like to see length, and mass, measurements which would allow the genetics to be seen better. He explained how he had seen half of the antelope in certain units this past year and he wondered if some of the antelope had come in from California at other times. He said he would like to see Unit 022 stay the same.

During board discussion, Vice Chair Rowe said he thought 022 should stay at 35 tags. Member Robinsons said 021 and 022 should stay the same, and 015 should be raised this year. He asked the Department about quota levels. Mr. Scott said the success rates tend to be lower with primitive weapons. He said if the board recommends a change, they should consider keeping the archery tags up to 5 and the muzzleloader up to 2. Chair Melarkey asked about the 90 percent/10 percent split the Department uses. Mr. Scott explained that this split is done because Policy 24 notes the Commission strives for a 90/10 split which came about due to a lawsuit some years ago. Chair Melarkey asked about the feasibility of the board adjusting resident and non-resident tags. Mr. Scott said that since seasons had already been set, there would not be an opportunity to adjust those tags at this meeting and would be better handled during the season setting meeting.

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Member Robinson moved to recommend the adoption of the 2022-2023 Season Antelope with the following changes. ALW Hunt 2151 021-022: 35 tags / Resident Muzzleloader Hunt 2171 011: 2 tags 012-014: 5 tags 015: 10 tags 021-022: 2 tags / Archery Hunt 2161 021-022: 5 tags 033: 4 tags Nonresident / Archery Hunt 2261 012-014: 2 tags. Vice Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

California Bighorn Sheep

Mr. Ewanyk provided information on California Bighorn Sheep in Units 011 and 013. He noted that this was the first year with a ram hunt in this unit group since the season was closed following a disease outbreak in 2007. The herd seems to have stabilized since the disease event; however, 2 years of low lamb recruitment may limit the growth of this herd. Due to the interstate movement of this herd, and the amount of effort the hunter put into finding a 5-year old ram the previous season, NDOW recommends being conservative and keeping the quota at 1 for 2022.

In Unit 012 the population model was recalibrated to accommodate for the realized mortality rates of bighorn in the unit. Both ram and ewe survival rates of collared sheep in this unit were low, with 2 ram and 5 ewe mortalities, despite the ongoing lion removal project. This year's survey yielded low lamb recruitment, and it was difficult to locate mature rams on survey. Given the reduction in hunter success, increase in hunter effort, and the declining population, we recommend reducing the quota for 012 in 2022.

For Unit 014 predation continues to limit the growth of this population. Two GPS collared sheep in this unit were killed by lions, and some of the collared ewes migrated out of the unit into the Calicos. With potential for migration into surrounding units, a reduced population estimate, and the low success rates for hunters in this unit, it's recommended to be conservative with tags in 2022.

In Units 021 and 022 the bighorn population in 022 is stable, which has been reflected in the past few years of hunter success. The sheep hunt in this unit grouping is limited by private access issues in the northern end of the Virginia Mountains, where the sheep spend most of their time. Due to hunters having access issues, NDOW recommends keeping the quota at 2 tags for this unit group.

In Unit 033 the sheep population on the Sheldon seems to be producing fewer large rams than in years past. Lamb ratios were low this year, and the number of sheep detected on survey was lower than expected. This year only 1 of 3 hunters harvested, with one of the unsuccessful hunters missing shots on 2 mature rams. Given that the sheep in this unit move back and forth between Oregon, hunter success was low, and less mature rams were observed on survey, tags should be conservative for this unit.

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Chair Melarkey asked about the objective rationales and why predation plays a part for sheep but not for mule deer or antelope. Mr. Ewanyk said the differences came from collared data and the results that were seen throughout the year. The mule deer and antelope that were collared did not show the high mortality data for the year.

During public comment, Mel Belding explained how they had hired attorneys to help write a law that helps clarify tag setting for residents and non-residents. He also said he was very concerned for Units 012 and 014 and the predation that has been seen there. He said he would support lowering the tags in both units. Sean Shea mentioned that he was pleased to see 011 and 013 tags remaining the same. He said there would always be a problem in Unit 014 with the way the sheep trail in that unit. He said he had seen multiple domesticated sheep in that area which continues to be an issue. He also asked about the survey flights in the Sheldon Range. Mr. Ewanyk said they are unable to fly the entire Sheldon based on multiple factors such as fuel for flights.

Member Robinson thanked Mr. Scott for his work in eliminating the ewe hunt.

Member Robinson moved to approve the resident California Bighorn Sheep 8151 and nonresident 8251 as recommended. Vice Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mule Deer

Mr. Ewanyk presented information regarding mule deer. In Unit 011 and 013 hunter success in this unit continues to remain stable, however the population is declining. This unit has been heavily impacted by drought and back to back years of fawn recruitment below maintenance levels. A moderate reduction in tags for the 2022 season will benefit this unit grouping.

For Unit 014 the deer population in Unit 014 continues to decline, with poor fawn recruitment ratios and small samples sizes found on survey. Many of the deer that were GPS collared in this unit are in poor body condition, indicating that forage may be limiting the population. Even with the population decline, buck ratios remain high for Unit 014. Hunter success for this unit continues to be stable after the previous reductions in tags. A slight reduction in tags for the 2022 season should help Unit 014 stay within the target objectives of an alternative hunt unit.

Unit 015 is managed as an non-standard unit, where success should be between 35-45%. The Any Legal Weapon success rates have been below 35% for the last 3 consecutive years. Historically there was a large winter migration of deer from California migrating to winter range within Unit 015; however, the lack of severe winters has reduced the immigration of deer into this unit prior to the hunt season. Recommended tag reductions for this unit should help to get hunter success rates

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within the 35-45% range.

The population model for the Unit 021 interstate deer herd indicates that this population will see a reduction in size for the 2022 season. The Unit 021 deer herd has lost habitat in both summer and winter range with recent fires, which will have a negative impact on this population. A moderate reduction of tags should keep Unit 021 within the hunt success objectives for a non-standard hunt, given the decrease in population size.

The population estimate for Unit 022 has been steadily declining across the past 3 years. Hunters continue to struggle with access issues within this unit. Substantial portions of Unit 022 have been impacted by historic wildfires which converted most of the prime mule deer habitat to invasive annual grasslands. Horses remain an issue for the deer herd in the northern portion of Unit 022. A moderate tag reduction for the 2022 season reflects the decrease in population estimate.

For Unit 033, the Sheldon has shown signs of rebound with stable success rates and percent of 4 point in the harvest; however, with drought conditions heavily impacting this unit, the Department recommends continuing being conservative with the number of tags issued for Unit 033.

Member Robinson asked what information was available on body mass from previous years. Mr. Ewanyk said that data was not available for back fat from previous years. Mr. Ewanyk said he felt that some deer are of poor nutritional value and they may not be at carrying capacity. The habitat is not looking very good, especially in the winter months. Member Robinson asked the Department to clarify what the population goals for mule deer. Mr. Ewanyk said everything is managed through ratios of bucks to does or hunter success.

During public comment, Sean Shea said he agreed with the recommendations. He did note that four point or better measurements were not the best way to measure maturity. He thought a mass and main-beam measurement would be a better way to measure the animals and sportsman would have no problem doing that measurement. Mr. Shea said he did take issue with the youth hunt and not lowering the tag amounts. He said he would like to see the 47 percent decrease for the youth hunt as well.

Jeff Rogers spoke about the muzzle loader tags and the decrease of tags. He said he would like to see all of those tags kept at 5. He also said he was in agreement with Mr. Shea regarding the measurements and the youth tags.

Mel Belding said he too agreed about the four point measurements. He said he would like to see the lower jaws of the deer submitted so the deer could be properly aged. Mr. Belding said he would like to see 014 go to 2 tags for resident and 1 for nonresident. He said he had the same concerns for Units 011 and 013. He would like

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to see the quota lowered to 40. He also explained how the increase in youth tags offset the reduction for other tags and hoped the board would lower the youth tags by 10. Gerald Lent said he agreed with Mr. Belding on his recommendations.

Member Robinson said that after some of the discussion he had heard, he would recommend two tags across the board in Unit 014. Chair Melarkey said he agreed, and was concerned for the deer populations in the area. He said that while this may be tough on hunters, it had to be done to try and keep the populations healthy. Member Robinson asked the Department why youth tags had been increased. Mr. Ewanyk said it came down to demand and success. He said there is a high demand for those tags based on the proximity to Reno. Chair Melarkey said he felt the junior tags were rife with possible abuse. He said he had heard of some adults that have used their children to get tags that they ended up using themselves.

Member Robinson moved to approve recommend adopting the mule deer hunt with the changes: Reduction of tags to reflect the reduction in tags of other mule deer hunts 011-013: 30 tags / 014: 2 tags / 015: 5 tags / 194-196: 8 tags /195: 10 tags. Resident Mule Deer Antlered ALW Hunt 1331 011-013: 50 tags / 014: 2 tags / 015:15 tags / Nonresident Mule Antlered ALW Hunt 1332 014: 1 tag / Resident Mule Deer Antlered Muzzleloader Hunt 1371 All areas in Washoe Co. to stay the same as last year except 014 to allow opportunity and to prevent giving Residents the same number of tags as nonresidents / 014: 2 tags / 015: 5 tags / 021: 5 tags / 022: 5 tags / 033: 5 tags / 194, 196: 5 tags / 195: 5 tags. Nonresident Mule Deer Antlered Muzzleloader Hunt 1372 014: 1 tag / 015: 1 tag. Resident Mule Deer Antlered Archery Hunt 1341 014: 2 tags. Nonresident Mule Deer Antlered Archery Hunt 1342 014: 1 tag. Chair Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Elk

There was no initial discussion from the board. During public comment, Mr. Rogers said he had seen many bulls, but few cows when he scouted. He said that he disagreed with the decrease in bull tags and increase in cow tags based on what he had seen the previous year.

Chair Melarkey said he did notice that resident tags appeared to be decreased at a higher rate than non-resident tags. Mr. Scott explained that some of the decreases were due to main beam length and some of the other decreases were based on population counts in areas.

Chair Melarkey moved to accept the quotas for elk for the State of Nevada as written. Vice Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Bighorn Sheep and Mountain Goat

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Member Robinson asked the Department about one-horned rams. Mr. Scott said he thought the hunters who draw the tags will get in contact with those that hunt in the area. He said the one-horned rams are not as highly desired as two-horned rams, but it would still be a popular hunt. He said the Department would need to wait until they were able to provide survey results before they could relay further information to the public. Chair Melarkey asked what the Department's opinion is on the state of the bighorn sheep population. Mr. Scott said the state is in a tough spot. There are disease issues and water issues that are impacting the bighorn sheep populations. He said overall, the hunt still has quality, but there are many challenges being faced. Member Robinson asked about water management tactics being used. Mr. Scott said he wasn't involved with current plans, so he wasn't sure what those plans would look like moving forward. He said one of the main challenges with water resource management is the precipitation is not happening the way it used to be, and plans were developed when more precipitation was present.

During public comment, Mr. Belding said he was disappointed to see 20 percent of the sheep gone. He explained how the water management system in the south was deployed. He noted that aprons were used to gather water when it rained. He said he hoped to see larger aprons to gather more water to store in the tanks. Sean Shea asked about the sheep in Unit 195. Cooper Munson, Department of Wildlife, said the sheep population in that area had been stagnant. They were currently in the process of working with landowners to come to agreements that would help the Department manage the population in that area.

Member Robinson moved to recommend the Commission accept the bighorn sheep recommendations as proposed. Chair Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mountain Goat

Member Robinson asked the Department about the disease in the Rocky Mountain goat population. Mr. Scott said mountain goats were a bright spot and they had seen improvement in the populations over the last year. The Rocky Mountain sheep in the Ruby's seemed to be doing pretty well too. He said that Unit 102 is being opened this year because there was improvement in the population. He said there had been promise in the cull and remove projects that had been done recently, but there were challenges that remained. He also noted the Department would love to see the billy removed from Unit 121 this year.

During public comment, Mr. Belding asked about the ram that had been euthanized in Dayton. Cooper Munson said the Department took about 9 days to locate the ram and when they spotted it, they chose to euthanize because they knew it had comeingled with domesticated sheep. He said the test results on the ram were still pending.

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Vice Chair Rowe moved to accept the recommendation for hunt 7151 and 9151 as proposed. Member Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

13. Commission Regulation 22-09, Amendment #1, 2022 Black Bear Quotas and Harvest Limits – [For Possible Action]

Chair Melarkey opened the item to recommend that the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners approve, deny or otherwise modify recommendations to consider adopting the 2022 hunting season dates, open management units, hunting hours, quotas, harvest limits, special regulations, animal sex, legal requirements, hunt boundary restrictions, and dates and times for indoctrination courses for black bear. Member Robinson said that while he was talked out of it last year, this year he strongly favored that all usable meat be harvested.

During public comment, Sean Shea said he fully agreed with Member Robinson that all meat should be harvested. He applauded the Department for continuing to support the harvesting all of the meat. Mr. Belding said he too agreed with the full harvesting of the meat.

Chair Melarkey said he supported the bear quotas as recommended and he was in favor of approving.

Member Robinson moved to approve Commission Regulation 22-09 as proposed with the addition that it is unlawful to cause through carelessness, neglect or otherwise any edible portion of the harvested Bear to go to waste. Chair Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

14. Future Meeting Agenda Items–[Information Only]

Member Robinson said he would like to see a population estimate for porcupines in Washoe County. He said he would like to see a presentation from the Small Game Division.

Sean Shea said he hoped to see the Department further research the use of drones to survey areas in Nevada. He said the technology had come a long way recently and would greatly approve the survey capabilities of the Department. Mr. Scott said the Department is not against drones, but the drones' capabilities are still limited and cannot gather the information that biologists in helicopters can gather on those flights.

Chair Melarkey noted he had seen what drones had been able to accomplish in the ranching business and drones being used in that field were able to gather a lot of information for ranchers. Member Robinson agreed with Mr. Shea and said he would work to get a presentation on drone use for the board at a future meeting.

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15. Public Comment

Gerald Lent explained that he was concerned about the board's deer recommendations. He said he was not sure what value the Commission puts into each of the advisory board's recommendations. Steve Kellers asked if the recommendations included doe tags. Chair Melarkey said there are no doe tags in the board's units. Mr. Belding thanked Member Robinson for his time on the board as chair and said the work Member Robinson had done was invaluable to sportsman in Washoe County. Jeff Rogers hoped the Commission took into account the board's recommendations and the time everyone spent was worthwhile.

16. ADJOURNMENT [Non-action item]

Chair Melarkey adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

As I am not available to attend the meeting I have a few thoughts I would like to share with each of you. Please consider these to be my public comment. The Big Game status Book is not currently available for public review so my comments are based on past history and the Quota Recommendation sheets on line. Overall, it is a breath of fresh air as to what I saw-honesty, concern, consideration given to past public comments. There are a number of issues that we are straddled with here in Washoe County that we truly can't control but they are not the only issues to for big game populations declining so dramatically and as members of this CAB I hope you will stay on point and continue to make sure these issues are addressed. My asks on deer and antelope will have my thoughts attached for each hnt unit request. In addition, I would request that on Item #9- Tag Transfer, you will support as presented. Much thought and many committee sessions were spent oh getting to this point and I believe that all issues were well reviewed.

Antelope-

011: Changes- NR Muzzleloader 2 same as last year, R. Any Legal Weapon 30 instead of 35, NR Any Legal Weapon 3 instead of 4; These changes will basically reduce quotas by 33%, due to poor fawn recruitment and decline of 15" horn length. Not sure why but a major question would be there appears to be a major decline in horn quality throughout all units in Washoe County and does the Dept. of any explanation for this anomaly.

012thru014: Changes- R Archery 15 instead of 10, NR Archery 2 instead of 1, R Muzzleloader 5 instead of 2, R Any Legal Weapon 100 down from 120. Population appears stable to slightly declining with stron recruitment. Th negatives in this unit seem to be out of our control. 33% reduction on quotas overall will impact those hunter groups with the highest success rates while offering better opportunity to those with lower success rates.

015: Changes-R Archery 25 instead of 15, NR Archery 2 instead of 1, R Muzzleloader 10 instead of 7 (Same as last year), R Any Legal Weapon 75 instead of 55(Same as last year). Recruitment is strong and I believe last year's population was modeled high - may have been an error. Current population of 900 is stable with prior years. With so many negative impacts that maybe happening in this unit not sure reduction in quota is necessarily the answer.

021,022: Changes- R Muzzleloader 2instead of 1 (Same as last year, R Any Legal Weapon 35 instead of 40 (Same as last year). Agree with most of NDOW's observations except recruitment is down 30% and population is noy showing any growth. I feel we should remain cautious with the quota.

033: Changes- R Archery- 4 instead of 2, NR Muzzleloader 2 instead of 1, NR Any Legal Weapon 2 instead of 1. While the population is down 17% fawn recruitment is good and remains constant. the 4 added tags that I have suggested are minimal and the hunter groups these tags are added to have a low success rate and will have little to no impact on success rates or population numbers.

California Sheep-

012: Retain Resident tags at 3 and eliminate the N.R. tag. I would like to see residents of Washoe County have that opportunity and if a NR tags needs to be issued let it be in another hunt unit.

Black Bear-

No Changes, please support as written.

Deer-

011 thru 013- Changes Juniors 30 instead of 35, R Any Legal Weapon 55 instead of 60, R Muzzleloader 5 instead of 7. Can't support an increase in Junior quotas while the other hunter groups face reductions in opportunity. Fawn recruitment is poor yet Junior hunters harvested 3 antlerless deer this past year. Populations are down 25% over the last 2 years and I would request the the CAB remain consevative this year.

014: Changes- Residents 2 tags each (Juniors, ALW, Muzzleloader, Archery) and Non Residents 1 tag each in each weapon class. There are so many negatives to the future of this herd and zero positive input from NDOW for a path forward to attempt for protect and save the last few remaining members of a once iconic herd. There are some things which could be done to try to improve herd health and numbers i.e. habitat projects, water development, predator control, more intense discussions or legal action surrounding feral horses yet as an agency NDOW would rather sit around and find blame with former biologists who " skewed" population numbers and self appointed current biologists who would lay claim that deer are at carrying capacity in this unit. 1500 to a supposed 250 animals REALLY WE'RE AT CARRYING CAPACITY. Put the idiot in a corner and tape his mouth shut. While we need to retain this unit as an Alternate Unit we can not at this time manage the unit to meet the objectives of that but rather need to manage the herd for a successful future. It is noted about hunter success % and 4pts. in the harvest that both were met but it isn't noted that this is based on 35 hunters reporting not 50 tags issued. 30% of tags issued not reported, why- didn't hunt. or hunted and so disappointed in their observations in the field they felt compelled to not comment.

015: Changes- Juniors 5 instead of 7, R Any Legal Weapon 15 instead of 20, R Muzzleloader 5 instead of 2, Archery 5 instead of 3, N.R. 1 in each weapon class, given 2 tags are currently awarded to N.R. Guided hunters. NDOW observations specific to migration or lack thereof speaks volumes to the fact that 015 doesn't have a population to support higher tag

quotas. Quotas in weapon classes having little to no success should remain intact and those units performing better should have reduced tags. Suggestion that the CAB review requesting NDOW move 015 from a Non-Standard unit to a Standard unit next year.

021: Changes Juniors 10 instead of 15, R Any Legal Weapon 25 instead of 30, Muzzleloader 5 instead of 2 (same as last year). Unit has a good fawn recruitment but overall population is modeled down 20% over the past 2 years. A larger reduction should help offset the population losses as of late. Again, the CAB may want to review Non-Standard vs Standard next season setting. If populations continue down it may be better to have an earlier season before the migration. Non Standard seasons in 015 and 021 a newer additions, in the '60s the seasons were the full month of ct.

022: Changes Juniors 10 instead of 15, R Any Legal Weapon 30 instead of 35, R Muzzleloader 5 instead of 2 (same as last year), R Archery 10 instead of 6 . Larger reductions to ALW and Junior hunter quotas should allow for Muzzleloaders to remain at last year quota and less reduction to Archery. 3 year average success for Muzzleloader is 40%so on 5 tags tahat may increase harvest by 1 animal. Horse issues MUST be addressed. The issue is with Nv. Dept. of Ag and the 3rd party they are contracted with. Press Commission to give direction to NDOW to take action and not let the fact it is another State Agency so their hands are tied.

033: Changes Juniors 5 instead of 6, 5 instead of 4, all NR weapons groups quota of 1 per weapon class. Changes are simple rounding of numbers per Big Game Seasons and Management Objective foe Quota Recommendation and fall in line with the Dept. commitment to make 033 an Alternate Unit. The whole of the quotas will help with possible herd growth and meeting objectives of Alternate Unit expectations.

Sorry I can't be there and the length of this email. Have a great meeting.

Rex

To whom it may concern,

I am a lifelong resident of Nevada and have been hunting here since I was old enough to keep up with my father who showed me the ropes. In the early years, my dad bought his tag at the local sporting goods shop, and we could hunt wherever we wanted in the state. Of course, that changed way back, and we've been applying by unit since. I have hunted deer all over the state from the Spring Mountain Range all the way to the units bordering Utah, Idaho, and Oregon.

I've also hunted antelope, elk, sheep, and every variety of upland game and migratory birds here in Nevada and been fortunate enough to harvest two bull elk, a Desert Ram and a California Bighorn Ram. My best Nevada mule deer buck earned me a listing in the Boone and Crockett All Time Records of North American Big Game.

I list these facts to only to illustrate my experience and historical hunting endeavors in our state. I have seen things change over the course of half a century of hunting experience. I remember days back in the 70's when it was difficult to find *any* buck in the Ruby Mountains. I also remember days in the 80's when I counted 100 bucks in Central Nevada.

These past 20 years or so my deer hunting has been primarily in Northern and Northwestern Nevada. Specifically, I have hunted the Sheldon (Unit 033) several times in the past 15 years. In 2006 I hunted there, and I remember seeing dozens mature bucks each day including some pushing the 30" mark.

I hunted it again in 2006 and things had deteriorated drastically. I had trail cameras spread out over a wide portion of the unit for a month and captured only one photo of a mature mule deer buck. I also captured photos of 5 different mountain lions, several bobcats, and countless coyotes. My hunting partner and I never filled our tags that year. And only saw two mature bucks in 10 days of rigorous hunting.

In 2019 I drew an antelope tag for Unit 022. I scouted 16 full days and covered the entire unit, which is historically known for big muley bucks. I saw only 2 after covering hundreds of square miles with boots and my binoculars. To add insult to injury, although I was able to harvest a fine pronghorn buck, it was not the largest one I saw during my days in the field. The largest one had been killed earlier the morning I found its carcass covered in gravel and grass by the mountain lion that killed it. I placed a trail camera on the kill and captured photos of a female lion and two yearling cubs feeding on the kill later that evening. (See attached photos). I later talked to a lion hunter who told me he treed a

dozen lions within 5 miles of that kill site over the past year. A DOZEN!

It goes without saying that when a hunter sees more lions on his trail cameras than he does mature deer, something is drastically wrong. Finding the biggest antelope in the unit freshly killed by a cat is also indicative of a problem. If there are a dozen lions treed on one mountain in a season, the predator/prey ratio is FUBAR.

For the sake of all the young up and coming hunters in our beautiful state I hope the Commission will take the necessary steps to turn the pendulum back and help our deer herds recover. The situation today and the future is bleak without such action.

Sincerely,
John M. Edwards

