

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –
January 22, 2024 minutes

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

Members in Attendance

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

Others in Attendance

1. John Ewanyk, NDOW
2. Cooper Munson, NDOW
3. Travis Hawks, NDOW
4. Sean Espinosa, NDOW
5. Teddy Elwell
6. Mel Belding
7. Sean Shae
8. Mitch Bailey

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

Sean Shae asked the CAB about the Governor and Silver State tags. Mr. Shae also hoped one of the CAB members could bring up some concerns at the upcoming Tag meeting, specifically tags being transferred from residents to non-residents in ways that may not be permissible.

4. **Approval October 30, 2023 minutes**-[For possible action]

Member Rhea motioned for approval of the October 30, 2023 CAB minutes.
Member Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Chair Row asked who would be able to attend the Commission meeting in Reno. Board members noted they would be able to attend the upcoming Commission meeting.

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

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –
January 22, 2024 minutes

Chair Rowe asked if there was any correspondence or updates from the board and noted the CAB had received a letter from a County Commissioner ensuring CAB members would be in attendance at Commission meetings.

7. Draft Fiscal Year 2025 Predation Management Plan— [For Possible Action]

Chair Rowe opened the item to the draft fiscal year 2025 Predation Management Plan. Member Robinson asked NDOW about procedures regarding predation management. John Ewanyk, NDOW, said that there would be some reallocation of projects within existing projects and focuses would be in Unit 013. Member Melarkey asked about fund distribution for existing projects, and Mr. Ewanyk gave the CAB information regarding money spent. Sean Espinosa, NDOW, added that expenditures were not fully spent in certain projects for the past fiscal year, which had left money leftover to spend on current projects. Members of the CAB and NDOW continued to discuss fees estimate distributions for projects.

During public comment Judy Caron asked about donation distribution and where donation dollars were being allocated. Mel Belding asked if the board was referring to fees or donations.

No motion was made, and the board moved to the next item.

8. Biennial Big Game Release Plan for Fiscal Years— [For Possible Action]

Chair Rowe opened the item to review and discuss the Department's proposed biennial bighorn sheep and mountain goat release plan for fiscal years 2024 and 2025. Chair Melarkey noted the plan for unit 031. Mr. Ewanyk discussed the release plan in the Montana Mountains. The bighorn herd experienced a severe die-off in late 2014 and early 2015 and the few remaining survivors were lethally removed to prevent the spread of disease to adjacent healthy bighorn herds. Member Robinson asked NDOW about the Desert Sheep in the Unit 182. Mr. Espinosa explained that the source stock was cleanest in the Muddy Mountains and noted the timelines for release were still not finalized, but it would likely be in the March timeframe in the Montana Mountains. There was no public comment.

Member Melarkey moved to accept Biennial Big Game Release Plan as written. Member Rhea seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Commission General Regulations— [For Possible Action]

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –
January 22, 2024 minutes

A. Commission General Regulation 512, Fishing Regulations

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider amending Chapter 488 and 503 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). There was no board comment or public comment.

Member Melarkey moved to accept Commission General Regulation 512, Fishing Regulations as written. Member Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Commission General Regulation 513, Executive Order Regulations

There was no discussion by the board or public comment.

Member Melarkey moved to accept Commission Regulation 513, Executive Order Regulations as written. Member Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Commission General Regulation 514, Moose

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider amending Chapters 502 and 503 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) to provide for definitions, fees, and regulations concerning moose. Member Robinson asked about the units and NDOW provided clarification on the units. Chair Rowe said he hoped to see some reevaluation of the tags based on what he had seen in other states. Member Melarkey asked when the tags would be open to non-residents and if that would occur no earlier than ten tags being released which NDOW confirmed. There was no public comment.

Member Melarkey moved to accept Commission Regulation 514 as written. Member Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Commission Regulations [For Possible Action]

A. Commission Regulation 23-04, (Amendment 2) - 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 Big Game Seasons

Chair Rowe opened the item to approve an amendment to the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 hunting seasons and dates for mule deer, pronghorn antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain goat and moose, including limits, hunting hours, special hunt eligibility, animal sex,

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –
January 22, 2024 minutes

physical characteristics and hunt boundary restrictions. Member Melarkey asked for clarification from NDOW regarding closures for the Bighorn Sheep. Mr. Ewanyk explained that Unit 212 had seen a decrease in the population based on two surveys which may have been caused by disease. In Unit 252, there had also a decrease in population as well which is most likely caused by disease. In Unit 282, there had been more positive survey results had more sheep had been seen moving into the area. In Unit 161, there was a disease event after September where sheep encountered domestic sheep. Member Robinson asked about what was found in surveys of 012 and 014. Mr. Ewanyk said there were 30 sheep on survey in Unit 014, and in Unit 012 he said there were 88 total sheep on survey which was the highest he had seen during his surveys. Member Robinson said he hoped the ewe hunt would be closed for the season due to losses that occurred during the last winter. The board continued discussion with representatives of NDOW regarding weapon classes and hunts.

During public comment, Mr. Belding discussed policy regarding the tag allocations for the units. He said he felt it would be best to close Unit 014 because it did not have a population that could sustain a hunt. Sean Shae asked about the sheep in Unit 033 and he said he also would like to see an archery hunter safety for youths. Mitch Bailey added that he agreed going to Unit 014 would not be the best strategy for hunting a ram. He explained why some hunters may hunt in units that would not be considered successful areas and noted that those units should be closed because hunters would hunt those areas even if it was not advisable. Teddy Elwell added that his archery group would be more than happy to host hunter safety for youths.

Chair Rowe moved to accept Commission Regulation 23-04, (Amendment 2) with the following changes: to close unit 012 and 014, and open only Unit 012; to close Unit 268. Member Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**B. Commission Regulation 23-10, (Amendment 2) - 2024
Heritage Tag Seasons and Quota**

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider amending the regulation for the 2024 Heritage Tag species, seasons, and quota regulation to add a mandatory call-in number for all Specialty Bighorn Sheep tag holders to verify which units are closed to hunting. Member Rhea asked if there was an online option to verify units. Mr. Espinosa said the Department had looked into a number of options, but found the call-in option was the best available solution to ensure hunters could access information regarding unit closures. Member Robinson asked for clarification regarding the ram that had caused the issue being

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –
January 22, 2024 minutes

addressed. Mr. Espinosa said the ram was initially confiscated but returned due to a lack of clarity with the regulations. Members of the CAB all agreed they liked to see the onus back on the hunter to confirm unit opening and closings.

During public comment, Mr. Belding said that he recommended implementing the notification regulations closer to how the mountain lion hunt was run. Sean Shae added that he felt that the use of trail cameras was unfair because it allowed hunters an unfair advantage early in the hunt.

Member Rhea moved to accept Commission Regulation 23-10, (Amendment 2) as written. Member Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Commission Regulation 24-01, 2024 Big Game Application Deadlines

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider adopting a regulation to set the 2024 big game tag application deadlines and related information. There was not comment by the board or public comment.

Chair Rowe moved to accept Commission Regulation 24-01, as written. Member Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Commission Regulation 24-02, 2024 Big Game Tag Application Eligibility and Tag Limits

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider adopting a regulation to set the 2024 big game tag application eligibility and tag limits and related information. There was no discussion by the board or public comment.

Member Melarkey moved to accept Commission Regulation 24-02, as written. Member Rhea seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Commission Regulation 24-03, 2024 Dream Tag

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider adopting a regulation to set the 2024 Dream Tag species, seasons, and quota. There was no board discussion or public comment.

Member Rhea moved to accept Commission Regulation 24-03, as written. Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –
January 22, 2024 minutes

F. Commission Regulation 24-04, 2024 Partnership in Wildlife (PIW) Tags

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider adopting a regulation to set the 2024 Partnership in Wildlife (PIW) tags hunt species. There was no comment from the board or public comment.

Member Melarkey moved to accept Commission Regulation 24-04, as written. Vice Chair Browne seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

G. Commission Regulation 24-05, 2025 Heritage Tag Seasons and Quota

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider adopting a regulation to set the 2025 Heritage Tag species, seasons, and quota. During public comment, Mr. Belding said he did not believe that hunters should have the opportunity to hunt in July using trail cams because it was unfair to the animals. The board discussed possibly changing the start date to later in the year for the Heritage Tag.

Chair Rowe moved to accept Commission Regulation 24-05, with the following change: to Change the Nelson Bighorn Sheep season to August 1 2025 – December 31, 2025. Member Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

H. Commission Regulation 24-06, 2024 Silver State Tags

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider adopting a regulation to set the 2024 Silver State tag species, seasons, and quota. Member Robinson asked if the board would consider moving the Silver State tag to August 1 as well. During public comment, Mr. Shea said he thought that all of the tags should start on August 1. Mr. Belding asked about the tag availability for the state.

Member Melarkey moved to accept Commission Regulation 24-06, with the following changes: all seasons for all Silver State Tags begin August 1. Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

I. Commission Regulation 24-07, 2024 Black Bear Seasons

Chair Rowe opened the item to approve the 2024 hunting season

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –
January 22, 2024 minutes

dates, open management units, hunting hours, special regulations, animal sex, legal weapon requirements, hunt boundary restrictions, and dates and times for indoctrination courses for black bear. Chair Rowe asked if there was an option to add a spring season for a bear hunt. Mr. Espinosa said that from a biological standpoint, there probably would not have an effect, however a spring season would most likely have females targeted which would lead to issues with members of the public. Mr. Espinosa added that the past season had a few units meet the female harvest quota which caused the units to close. Member Robinson said he felt the decisions regarding last year's bear hunt were not handled correctly and led to issues during the hunts. Member Rhea said the Commission speaks about opportunity for other species but when discussing bears, opportunity does not appear to be a priority. Member Robinson noted that he still believes that all edible meat be taken which would dissuade the public from calling the bear hunt a trophy hunt. Since bears are classified as predators, all edible portions of meat are not needed to be taken from the hunt, which is unique to Nevada.

During public comment, Mr. Bailey noted that he expects individuals who are opposed to bear hunts to speak in opposition at the Commission meeting. He said that recommending the addition of a spring hunt would lead to greater issues than it would solve. He said he had people reach out to him regarding the bear hunts and to express opposition. He said the bear hunt is a hot topic hunt and how it currently is implemented does not have the same goals to manage wildlife like other hunts. Mr. Belding said he agreed with Mr. Bailey and said for a true change to the hunt, it would need to be changed in NAC or NRS. Mr. Shae added that he agrees with the addition to require edible portions of meat needed to be taken after the hunt because it would show those in opposition to the hunt that this hunt is more than just a trophy kill.

Member Robinson moved to accept Commission Regulation 24-07, with the following addition: that all sportsman be required to remove all edible portions of meat after the hunt. Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

J. Commission Regulation 24-08, 2024 Mountain Lion Season and Harvest Limits

Chair Rowe opened the item to approve the 2024-2025 hunting season open units, harvest limits by unit group, hunting hours and special regulations. Member Robinson said he felt that mountain lion should be classified similarly to other hunts and edible meat

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –
January 22, 2024 minutes

should be removed and change the limit to two, but he did recognize changing the limit would require changes to NRS.

Member Robinson moved to accept Commission Regulation 24-08, with the following addition: that all sportsman be required to remove all edible portions of meat after the hunt. Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

K. Commission Regulation 24-09, 2024-2025 Restricted Nonresident Guided Mule Deer Seasons and Quotas

Chair Rowe opened the item to approve the 2024-2025 hunting season and quotas for restricted non-resident guided mule deer including hunt boundary restrictions. Members of the CAB discussed the math used to determine the quotas and clarified the formulas used. There was no public comment.

Member Melarkey moved to accept Commission Regulation 24-09, as written. Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

11. Future Meeting Agenda Items – Informational only- Public Comment Allowed

No comment from board or public.

12. Public Comment [Non-action item]

Mr. Shae asked the board to have a presentation on drone use for wild life surveys and said he could ask an individual he knows to give the presentation.

13. Adjournment [Non-action item]

Chair Rowe adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.