

Washington

Department of Fish and Wildlife

ADA Advisory Committee Activities and Actions

Ronald "Z" Zubrick

ADA AC At-Large Representative and Chair.





Access and Opportunity for Washington Residents with Disabilities

- *With the intent of having a representative from each of the 6 regions and an At-Large member, The ADA Advisory Committee Works to gain Access and Opportunity for all Sportsmen/Women with Disabilities*

The Advisory Committee represents the interests of disabled hunters, anglers, and wildlife viewers on matters pertaining to barriers to recreational access to public lands, WDFW managed lands and hunting and fishing opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion

- **How does the State and WDFW's Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion programs fit into the ADA Advisory Committee?**



The Disability Dilemma

- **Facts About Disability in the U.S. Population**

- Population Distribution
51.2 million Number of people who have some level of disability. They represent 18 percent of the population. 32.5 million

- **Number of people with a severe disability. ...**

- Using or Needing Assistance 10.7 million ...
- Specific Disabilities 1.8 million ...
- On the Job 11.8 million ...
- Perceived Health Status 33% ...
- Income and Poverty \$22,000 ...
- Living Arrangements 60% ...
- Education 33% ...



The Link with WDFW

- **As one of the largest minority groups, persons with disabilities are also one of the least served. Unfortunately, changes are making opportunities for persons with disabilities even more sparse.**

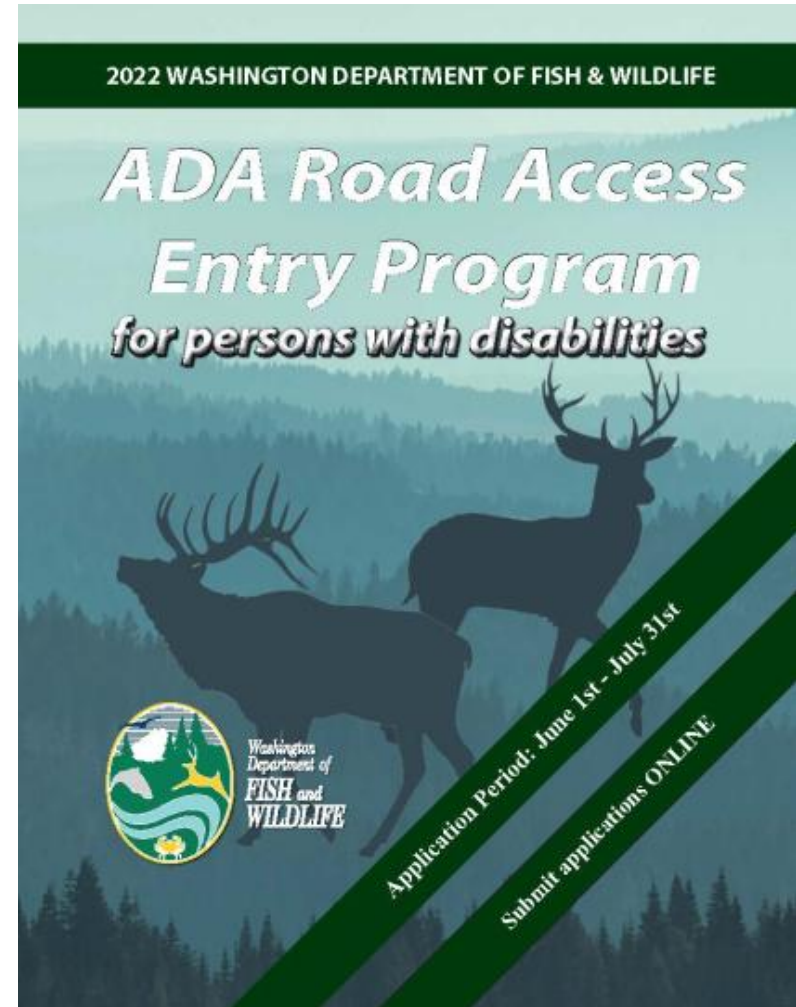


A Diverse Terrain



Road Access

Disparity in the system.



Concerns

Variations from standards

As a Certified Chief WDFW Hunter Education Instructor

We teach students the importance of ethical kills. The first things we teach are that practice with the method you hunt with is most important.

However, we talk about the importance of knowing the land you will be hunting. Knowing the animal density for that area and where best to find animals is critical.

This entails scouting areas to know hazards, boundaries, and one's own personal limitations.



Difficulties

- Able Bodies Hunters have access and are allowed to scout most government lands long before the hunting season begins.

Almost ALL Road Access Hunt locations do not allow pre-season scouting by hunters with disabilities.



The Point System

- Able Bodied Hunters accumulate points when they aren't drawn for a special permit hunt.
- Hunters with Disabilities do not accumulate points if they are not drawn for road access hunts.

Even worse... If there are hunts left unfilled, there is no system currently in place to allow a hunter with a disability to switch method to be able to take an unfilled road access hunt.



Use it or risk losing it



Many Road Access Hunts are on private lands, usually owned by large corporations.

As with Government Budgets, I fear that if hunts on these lands aren't utilized, the owners may feel there isn't a need to continue to offer their property for this purpose.



Recommendations

- If there are unfilled Road Access Hunts, allow hunters with disabilities that were not drawn for their hunt to switch the method they will hunt with, to be able to accept an alternative hunt.
- i.e. If I have a Modern Elk tag, I'm not drawn for a Road Access Modern elk hunt, but there are Archery Road Access elk hunts left to be filled, allow me to switch to archery to fill that opening.



Additional issues

- Additionally, Road Access Hunt areas are not only for hunters with disabilities.
- The Hunter with a disability only has the permission to drive into the area. However, which hunter has a better opportunity to harvest an animal... The hunter who quietly has walked into that area, or the one who is driving a vehicle with a motor?
- 3 years ago, after following elk tracks for almost 3 miles, we heard the sound of dirt bikes coming toward us. The game officer we spoke with told us that we were in a unit that did not prohibit dirt bikes from using that area during hunting season.
- That isn't counting the 2 other hunters who were walking the road we had to drive on.



Depredation Tags

- Washington's Master Hunter Program
- Allows for additional seasons for hunters who have demonstrated expertise in the field and through testing. However, this program also allows these hunters to harvest animals under the depredation program.



Difficult Climbs

- These Depredation tag opportunities are usually in a farmer's field... flat open land, easy access.
- These are optimal conditions for a person with mobility impairments to be able to harvest their own animal.
- Hunters with disabilities no longer have extra days to hunt before the regular season opens. So, they are already competing with able bodied hunters for the same targets.



Recommendation

- Depredation tags that Master Hunters have been issued are issued to hunters with disabilities. Allow a Master Hunter to serve as the companion hunter to count toward the Master Hunter's service hours.



What have we been doing?

Each of the current regional representatives and myself as the At-Large representative have been providing information to our regional office staff, outside organizations, and persons looking for answers.

These answers are most often a matter of providing the requirements for a special use permit, the link to apply for disability status with WDFW, and even connecting persons with disabilities with agencies, organizations, or places where they can access the outdoors.



- We also provide a resource for the regional offices. Region 1 has contacted us and put persons with disabilities in touch with us, to help answer questions from people that understand living with disabilities.



More from around the State

- In recent years, there have been fully accessible aircraft grade aluminum blinds set up in a couple regions. Region 1 has one that we are waiting for the snow to melt before we place it in an appropriate location.





- Region 1 already has several wheelchair hunting platforms in various locations. We have also included scouts looking to earn their Eagle Scout by taking the lead in assembling and placing wheelchair platforms.
- Additionally, Greg has informed us that he has been in touch with a group of high school student that want to build and place a platform in region 5, to be their school volunteer project.



Community Training

- In April, Ken and I will be hosting the 3rd ADA open house. It is an event that brings together persons with disabilities, organizations that work to help persons with disabilities to get out into the outdoors, equipment demonstrations and examples, and various agencies, all to provide a network of assistance and collaboration. We have guest speakers, adaptive equipment, and demonstrations.



Forms of adaptive equipment



- I was supposed to hold an ADA open house in region 2 in January. However, the organization that was going to host the event had to cancel their event because of too many people still struggling after the pandemic.



What do we need?

- We are currently without representatives in a couple of regions. Part of the problem is that the way the current charter is worded, at the end of a representative's term there is no standard on how to keep that position filled. Over the last few years, we lost a couple of representatives, when they were informed that their terms had expired, and they were sent on their way. Since it can be so very difficult to fill such positions, if it were adopted so that when a representative's term expires, if they wish they can re-apply, or can stay on until a replacement is found



- Now that the restrictions from the pandemic are not keeping us from being active, we need to be able to present to the commission more often. In the past we have been able to discuss plans, ideas, and needs that have in turn provide the committee funds that were used to build adaptive opportunities for persons with disabilities.



What's Next?

- In region 1, Ken has put together a program of boat owners who have signed up to host anglers with disabilities on their boats. As the weather warms and lakes open, there is a growing group that will be taking people fishing.



This weekend, Ken is working at a sportsman's/outdoor show, The Big Horn Show in Spokane. He is manning a booth on Disabled Access.

We have other scouts asking about Eagle Scout project opportunities.

We will again be working with land managers to take volunteers into the woods to clear deadfall from gated roads, used for persons with disabilities.



Region 2

- In region 2, I will be working with the regional office there to set up a different location and date for a multipurpose event. I will be holding an ADA Open House that we will also try to utilize as a recruiting opportunity to try to find potential candidates to apply for the region 2 ADA AC representative.



Region 3

- In region 3, Alberto has been meeting and talking with the region 3 staff. He and I met with them last summer. We are looking to put together an ADA open house around there.



Region 4

- In region 4, Greg has been reaching out to organizations and the regional office. He will be working with me to help coordinate the project with the high school. Greg has also been doing research on the existing aluminum grade blinds, to be able to help us create a set of working plans.



Region 5

- Region 5 is also vacant. I have talked with the regional staff there, to try to start planning a recruiting event to find applicants for the committee representative position there.



Region 6

- In region 6, Jayson has been digging deep into researching different ways to help the cause. Since he let us know he was going to be here, I wanted to let him share what he has been busy doing.







Questions?

