

Game Management Advisory Council Meeting Notes

August 26, 2017

WCA Boardroom
1301 N Dolarway Road
Ellensburg, WA 98926

Members in Attendance: Jake Weise, Dave Duncan, Jerry Barron, Art Meikel, BJ Thorniley, James Horan, James Stephenson, L, Rob Mccoy, Al Martz, Mark Pidgeon, James Warren, Dave Gimlin

WDFW Employees: Anis Aoude, Ciera Strickland, Stephanie Simek, Jerry Nelson, Kyle Spragens

Observers: An additional individual came to observe the meeting – Peter friend of James Warren

Welcome and Introduction: Rob called the meeting to order and introductions were made all around. Meeting notes from the previous meeting were approved.

Agenda Items:

Note Approval – BJ; try to capture answers to questions that are asked

1. Anis began by going over the Agenda
 - a. Permit Allocation Subcommittee
 - i. Sean, Dave, Jake, Kevin, Wren, Jerry – North Bend historically
 - ii. Anis – what kind of timeframe?
 1. Dave – most of the day
 - iii. Timing? Send out a doodle poll
 1. Accomplish prior to November
 - a. Prefer September
 - iv. Just pulled the data
 - v. Rob – Muzzleloader, not very many muzzleloader opportunities (special permit) for either the west or east side
 - vi. Jake – bowhunters were opposed to the muzzleloader hunters getting better dates for the rut than bow hunters. Legally bow hunters can hunt during that time
 - vii. Dave – did they get sorted out? Does it show the difference between muzzleloader/bow hunter success?
 - viii. Jerry – not going to differentiate between. One question for clarification – are the subcommittee solely focused on special permits? General or both?

- ix. Dave – I think we have done both. We have to try to do it the best we can on a tough issue.
- x. Jerry – reminder – the way we estimate harvest information, when we estimate hunter numbers by weapon type – that is coming from the general season data.
- xi. Jake – The allocation committee came with general recommendations for allocating permits. Muzzleloader was one of those general recommendations. It was more of a generality of the themes to the department (youth, senior, etc). Muzzleloader success was higher than archery. We just gave general themes that we wanted the department to consider.
- xii. Long seasons are based upon the need to remove animals.
- xiii. Jerry – from a historical perspective – people are looking at success rates – success rates are based upon the rates of hunters in each group going into the field, the type of terrain being more tailored to a specific weapon type. Proportion of harvest is also examined.
- xiv. Dave – what are the options?
- xv. Jerry – You all look at what you want and we will see what options we can pursue.
- xvi. Dave – recruitment should be important.
- xvii. Al – we are basically hunting animals for 5 months – that’s a long time.
- xviii. Anis – it is a discussion to see if we can change it.
- xix. BJ – the archers who choose to use a primitive weapon feel they should be allocated the same success rate, unless they do a lot of practicing. Why should they expect to have the same success rate as someone that has a modern firearm? They aren’t being realistic.
- xx. Jerry – many injured or dead animals after archery season
- xxi. Anis – Is this the way we want to allocate things in the future?
- xxii. Dave – lots of pressure on the wildlife.
- xxiii. Anis – After we allocate what we think fits the current way, we decide on the process of how to move forward?
- xxiv. Art – originally one of the goals was to spread the hunters out. Had to open up areas to allow enough room for muzzleloader hunters.
- xxv. Al – the archery group is by far the most vocal and loudest group.
- xxvi. Jake – argument made that the success rate for archers wasn’t as high as muzzleloaders.
- xxvii. Jerry – From our standpoint, I think we are feeling like we are needing to fine-tune the aspects rather than starting from scratch.
- xxviii. Rob – last three-year season – archers wanted the dates to be shifted more towards the rut. Last year archers had a successful run. Muzzleloaders had it rough.
- xxix. Jake – they wanted better dates to improve their rate of “success”.
- xxx. Rob – should be able to look at the data

- xxxi. Al – success on the more mature animals by archers is higher than modern firearm. General Season.
- xxxii. Jerry – I don't have the final say – but doubt the agency wants to tackle that mess again
- xxxiii. Anis – we have to maintain the bigger picture
- xxxiv. BJ – Couple comments on Mule deer and Spring Bear hunts; “a few years back at one of the Commission meetings in Spokane the seasons for Modern Firearm mule deer were proposed and being considered for three point only. The archery representatives there consulted with each other and told the Agency and Commission they would voluntarily agree to the three-point restriction, as long as the restriction was removed when it was no longer necessary. However, the three-point restriction still applies.” “Is there any scientific or any basis to continue statewide the three-point Mule Deer requirement? I have heard a lot of criticism from other states and managers. The second is on spring bear – we have a permit system – most people who have permits do not come over to that area. Rather revert to a quota system – worried about the calf and fawn crop, request from hunters to gather data. Do we really need a permit season; could it instead be an open bear season?
- xxxv. Al – I agree with BJ; we are pushing for an open season.
- xxxvi. Anis – at the previous meeting this was discussed, rather it was decided that we increase permits and try to increase take that way. It was the consensus to not go to the general season.
- xxxvii. Steph – Planning 6-8 months out from the season to better understand the permits for the spring bear season. Allows to more effectively assess the permits and the season and implement the appropriate changes. We just got the 2018 spring bear areas and hunts approved. There is some momentum in assessing the spring bear hunts. I see some areas with permits, where there are minimal bears harvested. Why are we not getting the hunters, and the harvest?
- xxxviii. Al – success rate on bears are quite low – many people who draw tags are not going hunting.
- xxxix. Steph – what are the factors that are preventing hunters from going to hunt bears?
 - xl. Rob – BJ's point is that there are locals that would go hunt the bears rather than those who are going to go try to travel and hunt.
 - xli. Anis – I think as a group (GMAC) decided to let the biologists' decide what is right for their areas for Mule Deer.
 - xlii. Rob – Her question was more directed at not opening it up for archers.
 - xliii. Anis – It makes sense for buck escapement.

2. Dave talked about wolf delisting and what the department's post delisting plan would look like. The Department should produce a document by this Fall that provides an overview and synopsis of information he has received thus far.
 - i. Do GMAC members support a document for post-delisting?
 - ii. The increase of social conflict – this needs to change.
 - iii. A post-delisting document will aid in explaining and educating on management needs
 - iv. Overpopulation is occurring in the NE
 - v. Livestock depredations are increasing
 - vi. Department has taken their eyes off of the ball
 - vii. It is now time to develop a post-delisting document for further management objectives.
 - viii. Economic conflict – concerned on the impacts of wildlife, but also funding sources
 - ix. Impacts to hunting opportunity
 - x. My concerns – can the department effectively and efficiently manage the wolf population?
 - xi. Begin with an adaptive management plan, wolves bring controlled at a level that will allow healthy ungulate populations.
 - xii. This will be a costly endeavor to accomplish
 - xiii. Is it a high priority to start now on a post-delisting management plan? Directed to the department.
 - xiv. Mark – this is something that we need to be 100 percent behind.
 - xv. Al – We see 25% of the moose we used to see in the area I hunt. (GMU 117 West side of mountains.) But I would not be a bit surprised if we have lost 25% of our population in all of the N.E. GMUs . Way too many Predators.
 - xvi. Jake – Not listed as a big game animal?
 - xvii. Dave – It is a protected animal
 - xviii. Anis – Not currently listed as a big game animal
 - xix. Dave – They do not want to have wolves controlled by hunters.
 - xx. James – Is there a high degree of resistance from the department?
 - xxi. Anis – No resistance from the department.
 - xxii. Dave – Just now starting the predator prey study to get a baseline.
 - xxiii. BJ – We need to get this started. Hit the legislature. I bet they would support this, but we need to get people dedicated to getting this done.
 - xxiv. Mark – making a motion that GMAC support a post-delisting management plan. Jake Second – passed unanimously.
 - xxv. BJ – amendment – begin immediately.
 - xxvi. Dave – important to implement the “management” piece of the plan. Words matter – depend on the department to outline and implement the management.
 - xxvii. Al – Where does it go from here?

- xxviii. Anis – there is a process to get this to move forward. Currently working with WAG to see what the next steps are. To be clear, similar process to opening the plan as opposed to making a new plan.
- xxix. Dave – Use the current plan until delisting and start developing a post-delisting plan now.
- xxx. Rob – providing the ammunition that the department needs to move forward.

3. Anis gave a brief funding presentation

- i. Requested at the last meeting
- ii. Split into different divisions
- iii. Wildlife Non-Restricted – Licenses
- iv. Wildlife Restricted – Auction Tags, Raffle
- v. Wildlife Restricted - Other
- vi. PR – Pittman Robertson
- vii. Other Grants – Contracts with USFWS, Federal Grants etc.
- viii. Requested printed version
- ix. Anis gave a breakdown of how the funds are divided among the divisions
 - x. General Fund – not very much. Fisheries receives more.
 - xi. Anis – The management of wolves is placed under game division. After the plan was implemented, wolves were moving into the game division
 - xii. Rob - Why is so much of the WLS Non-restricted in Lands?
 - 1. Used to make sure that those lands have wildlife habitat on them.
 - 2. Rob – seems like science should be getting more
- xiii. Annual Allotments of WLS Funds (\$11,604,646).
 - 1. Dave – struggle with Land Management
 - 2. Anis – we try to keep weeds at bay, agricultural, etc.
 - 3. Mark – What is the percentage of money that comes from sportsmen dollars?
 - 4. Anis – About half (all on slide is from sportsmen)
 - a. Approximately 75 million
 - b. Roughly 40 million from hunters
 - 5. 2% of PR goes towards habitat
 - 6. 98% goes to Wildlife Program
 - 7. ACTION ITEM: Requested to be emailed to everyone
 - 8. Al – How many FW Biologists are in the state?
 - 9. Anis – In game and diversity, roughly 35-40. Conflict specialists and private lands biologists on top of that. Lands division has their own too.
 - 10. Dave – Questioned PR being used for DPCAs

11. Steph – Possibly 4 years ago - Report by Phil Anderson 1385 total for the agency. 52 for hunter related activities. Could be down to 900-1000 currently.
 12. Jake – Leverage best practices from other states, when we do this delisting process are we seeking input from other states. Seeing what worked and what didn't.
 13. Steph – When the Mountain Lion workshop happened in May, we decided to make a smaller working group that works with varying states to see the best management strategies.
 14. BJ – Would we be able to use the special permits and/or WCO system to address wolf management?
 - a. Anis/Steph – when we get to that point, then yes, it is possible.
 15. Steph – We do have the WCO, which allows to use foot hold snares, but they are not allowed to capture wolves, cougars or bears. These trapping efforts are conducted by agency staff only.
 - a. Proposed using WCO for nuisance mammals, but it was met with resistance from many stakeholders.
 16. Dave – We need to determine the goals and objectives of the plan, keep the tools out of it.
4. Anis began by presenting an introduction in to our 3-year season setting process
- a. Reviewed the process
 - b. Where we are now...
 - c. Review of the 3-year season proposals (going through the PPT). See the PPT for more specifics on each slide.
 - i. Issue A; Species Multiple
 1. Trying to accomplish keeping party hunters out of the woods
 2. James – How often does this happen?
 3. Anis – Enforcement states that this happens a lot
 4. Art – This does happen a lot – hard to prove
 5. Anis – This issue may or may not move through to January
 - a. These are just all of the issues that we have presented to the public
 - ii. Issue B; Species Multiple
 1. Duplicate Tags
 2. BJ – Justifying the existence; absolutely nothing “betting a dollar to a dog turd”.
 - iii. Issue A; Bighorn Sheep
 1. Lincoln Cliffs population has grown, individuals of Lincoln are negatively impacted
 2. Dave – Ewe hunt for YOUTH
 3. Darrell – What is the degree of damage? Quantify your damage.

4. Steph – We don't currently have damage compensation for Bighorn Sheep. Currently managing the damage with hunters. Have to have a \$10,000 for commercial. For this instance, it was around 3,000 dollars. Current measures aren't very successful.
 5. Jerry – Concern for young rams
 6. Al – What about translocation?
 7. Anis – Not all populations are compatible due to disease issues
 8. Darrell – Yakima reservation herd could use genetic variation. Will contact the appropriate individuals
- iv. Issue B; ALL Big Game
1. Doesn't currently require a license to enter a once-in-a-lifetime hunt; ghost points
 2. Would weed out a lot of those individuals who are not able to hunt. It would limit the numbers.
- v. Issue A; Black Bear
1. Differentiating between black bear and grizzly
 - a. Creating a test
 - b. Leaving it alone
 2. We have more and more grizzlies coming into the state, currently no reports of grizzlies being shot
 3. Al – Making things more complicated
 4. Steph – seeking information from numerous states
 5. Concern of scaring more hunters away from buying a bear tag
 6. Jake – may not solve the problem
 7. Rob – deploy the test in areas where grizzlies are likely instead of statewide.
- vi. Issue B; Black Bear
1. Rate 20% of tooth submission
 - a. No change
 - b. Change it to require in person mandatory registration
 - c. Require submission, if not receive a penalty/incentive
 2. Anis – similar to what we do for cougar
 3. What kind of penalties/incentives?
 4. Al – Be aware and don't do too many regulations
 5. Rob – Incentivize as much as possible
 6. BJ – Would it be feasible to provide the envelope with the bear tag?
 - a. Envelopes are expensive
 7. Dave – Credit towards your account
 8. Darrell – Give away a cap if they bring samples in for CWD
- vii. Issue A; Bobcat
1. Mistaken identity
 - a. No change

- b. Eliminate night-hunting in lynx management
 - 2. Northern region in Region 2 (lynx recovery management zone)
 - 3. Anis – We do have areas with verified lynx presence
 - 4. Anis – No way to do a test for night vision – not enough light or color variation
 - 5. Anis – We can shut it down to the GMU level
 - 6. Rob – Seems like the best management practice
- viii. Issue B; Bobcat
 - 1. Requirements (dates) for sealing Bobcat hides
 - a. Leave the differences in dates
 - b. Change the bobcat sealing date to be the same
 - 2. Simplifying makes sense
- ix. Issue A; Cougar
 - 1. Hunter Response rate – hunters expressing confusion
 - a. No Change
 - b. Change the late season dates – aligns with the license tag year
 - 2. BJ- Consideration to change the status of the cougar to both furbearer and big game. Reasoning is that we can trap the cougar and we have people who can do that and take advantage of the cougar. The status quo is not taking care of the predator problem. In areas where the quota for cougars is not being met. It is going to be expensive to acquire the equipment to capture cougars legally. It is done in other states. It's not going to happen overnight.
 - a. Jerry – Is a cougar hide valuable?
 - b. BJ – yes and the meat is good.
 - c. Al – Many areas are already meeting their quotas and the opportunity isn't there.
 - d. Rob – This opportunity would be great – never meet the quota on the Westside.
 - e. Dave – As long as it isn't done in areas that are already filling.
 - f. Rob – Opposed to taking the month of April away, just fought for this extension
 - g. Art – Grouped migratory areas of cougars rather than by GMU
 - 1. Anis – currently do that. Trying to distribute the hunters
 - h. Leave the season alone
- x. Issue B; Cougar
 - 1. Cougar hunting with a .22
 - a. No change

- b. Change the caliber
- xi. Issue C; Cougar
 - 1. Remove the Public Safety Cougar Removal Rule
 - a. No change
 - b. Remove the WAC, replace the rule to allow a hound training season – late summer
 - c. Remove the WAC entirely, do not replace since the department already has tools to use
 - 2. BJ – Would the pursuit season be limited to chosen individuals?
 - a. Yes, initially (Anis/Steph)
 - b. Area driven
 - c. Trying to build capacity
 - 3. Al – Have to be some guarantee that the department won't take this away in two years.
 - 4. Rob – General Conclusion?
 - 5. Alternative 2
- xii. Issue A; Game Reserves
 - 1. Specific to the Yakima area
 - a. Byron, Snipes and Sect. 7 of the Yakima River Reserve
 - b. Are they serving their original purpose?
 - i. Keep the Reserve,
 - ii. Eliminate the Reserve and open to controlled access hunting
 - iii. Eliminate the Reserve and open to all access
 - c. Habitat needs more important prior to action
- xiii. Issue A; Goose
 - 1. SW Washington Zone
 - a. Single zone versus multiple areas
 - b. Required test to hunt this zone
 - c. Multiple species occur in this zone
 - i. Exercise extreme caution
 - d. Dusky are being taken, even in these zones
 - e. County level
- xiv. Issue B; Goose
 - 1. Snow goose population – addressing agricultural depredation concerns
 - a. Three different date management options
- xv. Issue A; Deer
 - 1. Recruitment of new hunters; open the opportunity for a more liberal hunting opportunity for youth
 - a. No change
 - b. Youth to kill any white tailed deer in areas where only WT bucks or white bucks with antler restrictions are legal

- c. Allow youth hunters to kill any mule deer buck in areas where only 3 pt min mule deer bucks are legal
 - d. Combo of 1 & 2
 - 2. If you qualify as a youth, you can use your normal deer tag to have a more liberal opportunity during general season
 - 3. Peter – On a youth hunt, would there be any restrictions on the accompanying adult/mentor
 - a. Jerry – haven't looked into that at this point.
 - 4. Al – this would be an opportunity to get rid of some of those "super twos".
 - 5. BJ – White tail were hammered the last couple of years, prefer to look at this during the next three-year pkg. Would like to still restrict this.
 - 6. Jake – If the youth are allowed to hunt in Wash. State, they can hunt for whichever season they apply.
 - 7. Jerry – If District biologists feel like their populations can't handle the added pressure, then they will make the appropriate decision
 - 8. Dave – I like this option
- xvi. Issue B; Deer
 - 1. NE Wash – concerns of low numbers of deer on public lands and high numbers on the private lands (WTD)
 - a. No change
 - b. Create Deer Areas that include Private and exclude public and large ind. Timber. Special permit only if population allows
 - c. Create Deer Areas that include private land but exclude public/timber. Allow WTD by special use permit only for all user groups.
- xvii. Issue C; Deer
 - 1. Manage for a trophy BTM opportunity in 660
 - a. No change
 - b. Ending the Oct. mod. Firearm earlier to coincide with MF WTD and MD seasons
 - c. Implementing 3 pt or better
 - d. Adopting a spike/two point only
 - e. Make the late buck season permit only
 - f. All of the above
 - 2. Rob - Already restricted too much
- xviii. Issue D; Mule Deer
 - 1. Structure Hunting seasons to better manage Columbia Plateau MD
 - 2. GMUs mostly affected; 139, 142, 284 and 381

3. Jerry – Many options and can all be combined as to provide opportunity for everybody.
 4. Healthy and Robust population in these areas, some migrate and some don't
 5. Youth is a possibility
 6. Trying to maintain buck escapement. Many people feel that we should go Special permit only on MD
 7. Three point restriction?
- xix. Issue E; Mule Deer
1. Change the early archery bucks only deer, general archery season in GMU 530 Ryderwood
 - a. No Change
 - b. Change the early archery, bucks only general season to Any Deer
 - c. Is archery going to really address conflict issues?
- xx. Issue A; Elk
1. Expand eastern boundary of Elk Areas 4941
 - a. No Change
 - b. Expand the boundary
 2. Highly politicized area – important for public feedback
 3. Rob – could you increase tag allocation if you increase the area?
- xxi. Issue B; Elk
1. GMU 450 – open any bull elk hunting
 - a. No change
 - b. Open to any bull general season
 2. What is the background? Is it a big ag area?
 - a. Jerry – more forested and higher elevation. They may not be staying in those areas all year round
- xxii. Issue C; Elk
1. Eliminate the 2nd elk tag for the early master Hunter hunt in Elk Area 3911 – ensure enough participation in antlerless hunting in the early period.
 - a. Last hunter, only 5 hunters took advantage of the second tag
 - b. Staff have determined that there isn't a need for the second Elk tag
 2. We don't need it anymore
- xxiii. Issue D; Elk
1. General Season archery for antlerless for the Colockum and Yakima elk herds – both populations below population objectives
 2. Dave – surveys haven't taken into consideration what caused the percentage drop. YTC

3. Jerry – I can't confirm or deny why the Elk moved onto the YTC. We did harvest many animals last year.
 4. Darrell – We had a pretty good Mule Deer population with nice habitat, but the number of Elk have increased
 5. Dave – I think you could control it better under special permit
- xxiv. Issue E; Elk
1. GMU 520 Winston – Mt. St. Helens population – fairly liberal hunting. Hunting season structure needs to be restructured some, want to maintain rather than decrease.
- xxv. Issue F; Elk
1. Willapa Hills – GMU 506, and GMU 530. Feels like a late bull opportunity (3 pt. min bull) can be added to late archery
- xxvi. Issue G; Elk
1. Change the late muzzleloader general season in GMU 578 to better address emerging elk damage issues
 2. Dave – lots of feedback in regards to this issue
- xxvii. Issue H; Elk
1. Modify the Mudflow Elk Area 5099 boundary to include castle lake
 2. We also need to gather buy-in from other individuals and entities prior to implementation.
- xxviii. Issue I; Elk
1. Create an Elk Area and special permit hunts to help address elk damage near Forks
 - a. May not be an area that would allow a disabled hunt
- xxix. Issue J; Elk
1. Add antlerless elk to the legal animal designation for GMU 663 for all general seasons
 2. Black River Unit (USFWS)
 3. Growing population
 4. Try to help with some of the emerging issues
 5. Rob – Is this a herd that you don't want on the landscape, allowing it to be hunting in all general seasons?
 - a. Would like to maintain a few but wouldn't characterize it as "declaring war".
 - b. There will still be the access issues
 - c. Perhaps two years down a road, we make adjustments.
 6. Do management changes need to wait for a three-year package, or can these things be changed as needed?
- xxx. Issue K; Elk
1. Modify the boundary for Elk Area 6054 to better address agricultural damage
- xxxi. Issue L; Elk

1. Reduce antlerless elk hunting opportunity in GMU 175
 2. Survey work has shown a decline
 3. Conflict Issues
 4. Tribal harvest as well
 5. Thinking about changing the hunt opportunity to limited special permits
5. Art gave a brief proposal in regards to Turkey hunting (*See provided handouts*)
- i. Adding 70 days
 - ii. No one wants to hunt hens, they don't taste good, especially when the tag is so expensive
 - iii. Need for a mentored program
 - iv. Destroying nests
 - v. We need action now.
- b. Anis continued with the 3-year season setting topics
- i. Issue A; Turkey
 1. Lengthening the season
 - ii. Issue B; Turkey
 1. Fall season, Increased population of wild turkeys in Klickitat county
 - iii. Issue A; Grouse
 1. Declining Forest Grouse and presumed population decline
 - iv. Issue A; Moose
 1. Status and Trend of Moose population – teeth
 - v. Issue A; Mountain Goat
 1. Mt. St. Helens – opening up hunting for 2 permits
 - vi. Issue B; Mountain Goat
 1. Take either gender for mountain goat permit holders. Educational test – required.
 - vii. Issue A; Pheasant
 1. Removing the restriction for Western Washington pheasant, giving 3 more additional hours of hunting
 - viii. Issue B; Pheasant
 1. Timing and length of Eastern Washington Pheasant season
6. Closing Comments
- a. December 9th – next meeting
 - b. Update from the points sub-committee
 - i. Redefine the problem statement
 - ii. Collect more data
 - c. Three-year plan
 - d. Allocation sub-committee
 - e. Wolf Update? Dependent upon availability – possibly spring
 - f. Legislative Update

7. Future agenda items
 - a. 3-year season setting
 - b. Points sub-committee
 - c. Allocation sub-committee
 - d. Legislative update
8. Adjourn