



MASTER HUNTER ADVISORY GROUP

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Meeting Notes for MHAG Meeting #58
June 9, 2023, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Washington Cattleman’s Association, Ellensburg

MHAG Members		WDFW Staff	Guests
Region 2	Monty Pyle	Kris Thorson, Hunter Education Section Specialist	
Region 3	Don Brunssen	Steve Dazey Region 1 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	Wes Clogston		
	John McAuliffe, Vice Chair (excused)		
	Kyle Smith		
Region 4	Jason Armstrong	Aaron Garcia, Region 3 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator (virtual)	
	Jeff Fjelstul		
	Jeff Larsen, Chair		
	Ian Stewart		
Region 5	George Dennis	Jackie McBride, Region 4 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	Keith Pfeifer		
	Dean Thornberry		
Region 6	Michael Bartoldo (excused)	Amy Elliott, Region 5 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	David Ward		
	Gary Tennison		
		Bill Montgomery, Region 6 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator (virtual)	

Procedural Business

- **Call to order and announcements (*Jeff Larsen, 5 minutes*)**
- **Introduction of membership and welcoming of new members (*Jeff Larsen, 15 minutes*)**
 - Kris asked the membership to introduce themselves to the group.
 - Kris handed out the name tags for members that had not gotten their nametags previously.
 - Wes is resigning his seat because he has to move back to Texas for personal reasons.
 - Kris, Jeff, and the rest of the MHAG voiced their well wishes and expressed their disappointment that Wes had to leave the group.
 - Keith asked about backfilling Wes's spot.
 - Kris talked about the precedent of filling a seat pro-tem with the Instructor Advisory Committee but since this is a director appointed group, we will leave the seat open until the next recruitment period.

New Business

- **Officer Elections (*Kris Thorson, 20 minutes*)**
 - Each year the MHAG elects a chair and a vice chair.
 - Every two years the MHAG elects a secretary.
 - Jeff Larsen was the MHAG chair starting in August 2022 and will serve as the chair through this meeting.
 - John McAuliffe served as the MHAG vice chair starting in August 2022.
 - Carissa Craghead was elected secretary in 2022.
 - She decided not to apply for another term on MHAG so we will need to fill the secretary position.
 - Kris opened the floor for nominations for chair.
 - George nominated John McAuliffe for chair.
 - Jeff Larsen seconded the nomination.
 - The group unanimously approved John McAuliffe as chair.
 - Kris opened the floor for nominations for the vice chair.
 - Keith nominated Ian Stewart to be the vice chair.
 - George seconded the nomination.
 - The group unanimously approved Ian as vice chair.
 - Kris opened the floor for nominations for the secretary.
 - George nominated Jeff Larsen to be the secretary.
 - Ian seconded the nomination.
 - The group unanimously approved Jeff as the secretary.
 - The officers will be in their roles at the August 18 meeting.
- **MHAG Strategic Plan Discussion (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**
 - Kris talked about the current plan and when that was adopted.
 - He asked if there were any thoughts on the current thoughts on the draft.
 - Dave ward asked if we should have standing meetings on the strategic plan.
 - Kris to send out the plan to MHAG.

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- **MHAG Workplan Items Discussion (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**
 - Report on Uniform pieces (*Kris Thorson*)
 - At our last meeting the MHAG discussed creating a MHAG uniform.
 - There was some concern that having a uniform like WDFW employees would possibly have the public confuse the MHAG members with WDFW staff.
 - Jeff proposed the idea of doing an MHAG hat.
 - Kris did research into WDFW's uniform policy, and the current uniform policy restricts volunteer hats to blue with the WDFW Volunteer embroidered logo patch.
 - Keith asked for volunteer hats for MHAG members.
 - Report on Face-to-Face contact with conflict specialist's project
 - Kris sent an email to the Wildlife Program Managers in the regions to see if they would be supportive of a meeting with the MHAG at our August meeting.
 - The consensus among those regional program managers was that having regional meetings with the regional MHAG representatives would be a great way to start the conversation.
 - Kris will distribute the conflict staff contact list via email to help the MHAG members connect with their regional conflict staff.
 - Wes determined there were lots of things that Master Hunters could do to help conflict staff with like checking a bear trap near a master hunter's house, so the conflict specialist doesn't have to drive two hours to check the trap.
 - There were discussions on updating the WAC and RCW to help remove the bad actors.
 - Jason suggested asking the Attorney General's office to see if there was a good way to go around the current RCW to remove folks from the program that do not meet the threshold of a suspension.
 - Jeff Larsen talks to the applicants about the program and does a mini orientation when they take the Master Hunter test.
 - There was discussion about removing Master Hunters from the program for not reporting their hunting activity through the RCW or WAC requiring reporting.
 - The group asked what the hunter reporting numbers are for MHs vs the general population across all species.
 - Kris did not have a good handle on this and will investigate.
 - These face-to-face regional meetings are a good first step and the MHAG can determine if these in-person meetings are meeting the need or if a statewide conflict staff and MHAG meeting would be beneficial.
 - Kris asked David Ward to go over what Region 6 has been doing so far.
 - David shared the agenda that they used at the last meeting and talked a bit about the meeting logistics.

- **MHAG member updates and Master Hunter communications (*Jeff Larsen, 10 minutes*)**
 - Does anyone have anything to add?
 - Jeff had two people reach out to him about the wildlife transport project and how slow it has been to get the project going.
 - Kris will check in with Jen Mannas about the program and when it will launch.
 - Kris will also ask Jen to loop in the coordinators to ensure they know about the program.
 - George volunteered on the mudflow project in Region 5 recently and two members of the work party were Master Hunters that indicated to George that we need to get rid of these bad apples in the program.
 - Monty talks to people in his hunter ed classes about the MHPP and they ask him if the program is worth it.
 - He asks what does “worth it” mean.
 - Depending on what their response is he tailors his response.
 - Monty suggested adding in a slide at the end of the teaching PPTs a slide describing the MHPP and what it is.
- **Master Hunter Survey Results (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**
 - Kris passed out the comments that were received in the Master Hunter Survey for the members to take and read since there were a lot of comments.
 - The survey was sent out to the Master Hunters on March 1.
 - Master Hunters had until the end of April to complete the survey.
 - We had 384 complete the survey.
 - Kris had some of the survey results in the May 2023 Master Hunter Newsletter.
 - In addition to the results information that was in the newsletter:
 - Eighty-five percent of respondents identified that WDFW staff are friendly, considerate, and helpful.
 - Seventy three percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend friends and family volunteer with WDFW.
 - However, seven percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with recommending friends and family volunteer with WDFW.
 - Ninety three percent of respondents plan to continue to volunteer with WDFW.
 - Forty-one percent of respondents volunteer less than 10 hours a year with WDFW.
 - Fifty-eight percent of respondents volunteer for WDFW more than their required Master Hunter hours.
 - Forty-seven percent of respondents look for family friendly volunteering opportunities.
 - Fifty-six percent of respondents are willing to drive more than an hour to volunteer and thirty-nine percent more were willing to drive up to an hour.

- The department at the end of the survey asked if the Master Hunters wanted to participate in our demographics survey and most of the information from the demographics survey is in the May Master Hunter Newsletter.
- Ian noticed that 28 percent of the respondents give 11-20 hours a year and asked if it was time to increase the volunteer hours to help alleviate the bad actors and make the juice not worth the squeeze.
- Keith brought up a possibly idea of having a designated volunteer to do the volunteer hours for a MH who cannot do the physical labor.
 - This person would be a new volunteer that would be brought into the fold and the new person's volunteer hours would count towards the MH's renewal.
- **Lunch (60 minutes)**
- **WDFW reports and updates (Kris Thorson, 45 minutes)**
 - MHPP Participation statistics
 - As of June 7, 2023, there are 1,191 certified Master Hunters.
 - In 2022 there were 72 people who applied to the MHPP.
 - Of those 72, twenty-nine have completed all the requirements and been certified as a Master Hunter.
 - Since the MHAG reviewed the test questions in January 2022, there were 69 test attempts.
 - Thirty nine of those 69 passed the test.
 - That is a 57 percent pass rate.
 - A couple applicants had taken the test twice and did not pass the test.
 - Field coordinator reports
 - Steve– Region 1 Field Coordinator
 - Steve assisted Aaron with a pre-service training in Quincy.
 - He visited Rick Hanson's team in Chelan to present service awards with Aaron.
 - Steve also attended the Medical Lake FFA debate prep on wolves and the effect on Agriculture.
 - He had a pre-service training in Harrington with new Chief Instructor at new venue.
 - Steve visited Wanda Christman's team in Okanogan as well as Tommy Howe's team in Colville
 - He conducted a Range Safety Officer training in Cle Elum volunteer John Campanella and Aaron Garcia.
 - He met with Cindy Carpenter of You Outdoor Unlimited in Moses Lake.
 - Steve conducted firearm training for wildlife staff to meet Policy 7011 requirements in Ephrata.
 - He also conducted a pre-service training with Aaron at the Region 2 office.
 - Steve attended the statewide In-Service Training and presented at one of the breakouts.

- He conducted a pre-service training in the town of Garfield at a new venue.
 - Steve also visited Pat Davis's team in Colville.
 - He completed first aid training recently.
 - Steve attended the turkey camp event where he ran the range for patterning.
 - He visited Ed O'Leary's team at the K Diamond K ranch in Republic.
 - Steve previewed the NHFD site with Finn the muscle sniffing dog where he evaluated where they will set up their trailer.
 - He attended the Region 1 safety committee meeting.
 - Steve delivered guns and ammo to a teaching team in Spokane, and he conducted a pre-service training in Spokane Valley.
 - He also completed his annual hearing test.
 - Steve attended the Sky Valley Rec. Users meeting and spoke about the hunter education requirements and promoted the use of DFW volunteers for projects that have a nexus to fish and wildlife.
- Jackie – Region 4 Field Coordinator
 - Jackie helped facilitate the I90 fence project land clearing and installing new fencing.
 - She had a Carnation elk fence project.
 - There was also a enunciate fence project
 - She worked at the Ducks Unlimited day.
 - Jackie helped at Naval Air station Whidbey's Safety Day.
 - She has helped with fishing events for John Pahutski.
 - Jackie has facilitated pheasant pen projects.
 - She is getting a multipurpose game table for Mill Creek.
 - She is working on five master hunter's pre-service trainings to become hunter ed instructors.
 - Amy – Region 5 Field Coordinator
 - Amy met with Greg Malloy (ADA Advisory Committee) on ADA blinds for disabled hunters and having that as a possible Master Hunter project in the future.
 - Greg has a high school willing to build them, but he needs to find places to put the binds.
 - Amy connected him with Monique (private lands bio).
 - She is staying involved as there might be Master Hunter opportunities getting the blinds from school to field or for building more if the school can't produce more.
 - She has been working on Master Hunter projects like pond turtle barriers, Mount St Helens mudflow project, and Cowlitz WLA projects next year.

- She has been talking to the new Regional Director who is interested in partner relationships.
 - Amy hasn't had time to cover MHAG or our potential road salvage project, but she hopes too soon.
 - COVID related updates
 - There are no real updates from the agency at this time.
- **Master Hunter Exam Updates (*Kris Thorson, 60 minutes*)**
 - The commission recently repealed the Master Hunter Permit Program policy which was part of the Master Hunter Handbook.
 - There were two questions on the Master Hunter Permit Program exam that asked about the commission policy.
 - While updating the handbook, there were needed updates to the handbook as well as adding the 25-year strategic plan and the R3 plan.
 - After adding the information to the handbook, Kris created two new test questions.
 - He then also reviewed the questions that were being missed more than 50 percent of the time and has proposed updates to some of those.
 - Kris sent the draft exam to the MHAG for their review.
 - The MHAG discussed the proposed questions and provided input as to how the questions could be posed as well as replacement questions.

Conclusion

- **Recap action items (*Kris Thorson, 5 minutes*)**
 - Kris to send WCS contact information.
 - Kris to send draft of Strategic Plan to MHAG.
 - Send out the cleaned-up test for review.
- **Agenda topics for next meeting (*Jeff Larsen, 5 minutes*)**
 - Face to Face Meeting Reports
 - Introduction of Volunteer Program Manager
- **Good of the order (*All; General discussion items by MHAG, 5 minutes*)**
- **Adjourn**