



MASTER HUNTER ADVISORY GROUP

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Notes for MHAG Meeting #52
December 11, 2020 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Teams Meeting

MHAG Members		WDFW Staff	Guests
Region 1	Shawn Woodard (Absent)	Dave Whipple, Hunter Education Division Manager	
Region 2	Carissa Craghead, Secretary	Kris Thorson, Hunter Education Division Specialist	
	Jim Hope		
Region 3	Jonathan Barr	Aaron Garcia, Region 3 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	Wes Clogston		
	Kyle Smith		
Region 4	David Floyd	Steve Dazey, Region 4 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	Jeff Larsen, Chair		
	John McAuliffe		
	Ian Stewart, Vice Chair		
Region 5	George Dennis	Bill Montgomery, Region 6 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	
	Keith Pfeifer		
Region 6	Michael Bartoldo	Nate Pamplin Director of Budget and Government affairs	
	Jim Gleiter		
	Thomas Woodruff		

Procedural Business

- **Call to order and announcements (*Jeff Larsen, 5 minutes*)**
- **Introduction of members and guests (*Jeff Larsen, 5 minutes*)**

New Business

- **2021 Budget request and legislative news/update (*Nate Pamplin, 30 minutes*)**
 - Nate started off with a review of the 2020 legislative session and how WDFW's long-term budget challenge was resolved.
 - For the 2021 legislative session, the campus will be closed, and the hearings will be virtual.
 - WDFW's agency request legislation for 2021 will include:
 - Indemnification Authority – The commission may indemnify the United States and its agencies as a condition of securing federal funds for purposes of fish, shellfish, and wildlife projects.
 - Hunting and Fishing Recruitment and Retention – Will align youth age for fishing and hunting, a \$20 license discount for hunting ed graduates, and allow license fee promotions.
 - Technical correction in the wildlife account – Update the way WDFW reports and manages the funds appropriated to the agency.
 - Payment in Lieu of Taxes – Transfer the PILT obligation to the State Treasurers office just like the Washington Department of Natural Resources PILT is paid.
 - Jeff asked if the license sales data has been reviewed currently.
 - Nate gave a quick overview of the COVID situation and then talked about the license sales data.
 - The license sales were down until the governor lifted the stay home stay healthy order when the sales rebounded.
 - Jim Hope suggested adding a senior discount for hunting licenses just like the fishing licenses have.
 - Nate and the licensing staff did some research on the discount and the data showed the license price may not be a barrier for participation.
 - Michael Bartoldo suggested as a veteran to increase veteran offerings for hunting.
 - Dave Floyd suggested a lifetime license for youth like other states have enacted.
 - Nate stated that the licensing division manager and their staff are looking into ideas on how to allow for these kinds of opportunities and possibilities moving forward.
 - In June, the state revenue forecasters identified a possible shortfall for the state of \$9 billion.
 - The state enacted a hiring freeze, spending freeze, and furloughed employees to save funds.
 - The WDFW has submitted an agency budget request to cover routine maintenance costs, a general fund backfill in some accounts that are seeing a

shortfall, and new enhancements WDFW would like to complete in the coming biennium.

- More information about the WDFW's 2021 budget request can be found here: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/administration/budget/update>
- **WDFW reports and updates (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**
 - MHPP Participation statistics
 - As of December 1, 2020, we have 1,319 active Master Hunters.
 - There are 143 Master Hunters whose permits expired in 2020 and have not renewed as of December 1.
 - There are six Master Hunters whose permits expire between December 1 and December 31.
 - As of December 1, 2020, there are currently 277 Master Hunters whose permits may expire in 2021.
 - Field coordinator reports
 - Bill Montgomery
 - Bill picked up some bat boxes west of Port Angeles for a project with Abby Tobin and Alex Biswas.
 - He is also working on a project on martin boxes for the watchable wildlife program.
 - Bill has Master Hunters that have been picking up grouse wings for identification.
 - Amy Elliott
 - Amy has a project she is working on with four Master Hunters.
 - She is also working with the hunter education instructors who are also Master Hunters.
 - Region 5 has employee of the month award and Thayne Aubrey, conflict specialist, won for December.
 - Steve Dazey
 - Steve wanted to congratulate Carissa Craghead for placing in the top three in a national 3-D archery tournament.
 - Steve has been contacted by some Master Hunters whose permits expire past 2021 and they have been asking how to get volunteer hours currently.
 - Aaron Garcia
 - The 3911 Master Hunter elk area hunting season has been interesting this year.
 - There is a change to the Pheasant Lane area of 3911 and the road Master Hunters used in the past to access DNR properties is now private.
 - WDFW is recommending Master Hunters not hunt the DNR parcels off the Pheasant Lane area.
 - He has had several issues in the wedge area of 3911 near the green gate as well.

- Aaron does have a MHPP project coming up to replace burned out fencing projects.
 - Jeff asked about the old 3911 webpages was able to have the information posted there. The page has since not made it to the new webpage.
- **MHAG member updates (*Jeff Larsen, 10 minutes*)**
 - Does anyone have anything to add?
 - David Floyd had conversations about the region 4 damage hunt and he has heard that the elk activity has been down from past years.
 - Kris did not have any information on the number of hunters that had been deployed this year and in the recent pass.
 - David is also ok with holding the Master Hunter exam, but he would need to find a location to hold the test.
 - Kris and the WDFW staff are working on ways to safely hold the exam during the pandemic.
- **MHAG communications with Master Hunters (*Kris Thorson, 10 minutes*)**
 - Has anyone had communications with MHs?
 - Ian Stewart
 - He has had a few Master Hunters contact him about the potential for a Master Hunter limping elk permit etc.
 - Also, he had a conversation with an archery hunter who was shot over in GMU 371 and why they cannot use any hunting equipment in Master Hunter hunts.
 - He had a contact about damage control hunts in region 5 based on historic norms.
 - He also fielded some questions on tag choices for some Master Hunter hunts and Kris will talk to the ungulate section manager about these hunts.
 - Keith reached out to past applicants to the MHAG to inform them that there were seats available.
 - Keith also had a new Master Hunter contact him about elk hunting in Washington.
- **MHPP Lost Opportunities Subgroup Report (*Jeff Larsen, 30 minutes*)**
 - The subcommittee completed a PowerPoint presentation detailing the diminished opportunities for Master Hunters.
 - They solicited feedback from some Master Hunters about the program and opportunities.
 - Wes talked to several Master Hunters in 3911 about the program and most of the contacts are concerned with the drop-in hunting opportunities.
 - The special permit tag opportunities decreased from 26 percent chance of drawing a permit in 2010 to 14 percent chance in 2020 for elk.
 - Ian asked about the number of hunters deployed in years past
 - Kris talked about how the damage season is so subjective and is very difficult to predict.

- **COVID impacts to MHPP (*Kris Thorson, 15 minutes*)**
 - 2019 Applicants
 - Kris has received some emails and calls from applicants about when testing can resume.
 - WDFW is unsure when the tests may resume due to COVID-19 restrictions.
 - Volunteer projects
 - There was a bat box project that Bill was working on.
 - Currently volunteer usage is extremely limited.
 - Renewals
 - Of those Master Hunters whose permits were to expire in 2020, 202 have renewed.
 - There are six Master Hunters whose permits were expiring in 2021 that have renewed already.
 - How long should we allow those Master Hunters whose permits expired during the pandemic to renew once things have returned to some semblance or normal?
 - Michael asked if we shouldn't just set a deadline they have to renew by and call it even.
 - MHAG had a discussion on setting a date and finalizing a time to renew by or your out and WDFW staff will discuss the timeline.
- **Virtual volunteer hour option (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**
 - Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the lack of volunteer projects in 2020, WDFW along with MHAG developed a virtual volunteer option.
 - The option was offered to Master Hunters whose permits were expiring in 2020.
 - Since the end of the year is approaching and the number of volunteer projects in 2021 will also most likely be extremely limited due to COVID-19, WDFW offered the virtual option to those Master Hunters whose permits will expired before the end of March 2021.
 - Most state workers are planning to work from home until at least June 30, 2021.
 - Is there a need to offer the virtual option to all 2021 renewal applicants or should we only offer to those renewal applicants through June 30, 2021?
 - The MHAG consensus was to open the virtual option to those Master Hunters whose permits expire before June 30, 2021.
- **Renewal Notice Review (*Kris Thorson, 15 minutes*)**
 - Kris has drafted an email he will send to Master Hunters whose permits are expiring during the next calendar year.
 - No comments were heard from the MHAG on changing the language proposed.

Conclusion

- **Recap action items (*Carissa Craghead, 5 minutes*)**
- **Agenda topics for next meeting (*Jeff Larsen, 5 minutes*)**
 - Virtual option discussion
 - Predator prey study information/presentation

- Good of the order (*All; General discussion items by MHAG, 5 minutes*)
- Adjourn