



MASTER HUNTER ADVISORY GROUP

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Notes for MHAG Meeting #48

December 13, 2019 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Skype Meeting at Region 1, 2, 4, and 5 offices and the Natural Resource Building

MHAG Members		WDFW Staff	Guests
Region 1	Marji Bobiak	Dave Whipple Hunter Education Division Manager Kris Thorson Hunter Education Division Specialist Aaron Garcia Region 3 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Steve Dazey Region 4 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Amy Elliott Region 5 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Bill Montgomery Region 6 Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator	Dean Thornberry Region 5 Master Hunter Dan McGrew Region 5 hunter Jerry Pfeifer Region 4 Master Hunter
	Shawn Woodard (Absent)		
Region 2	Carissa Craghead, Secretary		
	Jim Hope		
Region 3	Kyle Smith (Excused)		
	Tom Conrads (Excused)		
	Jonathan Barr		
Region 4	David Floyd		
	Jeff Larsen, Vice Chair (Excused)		
	John McAuliffe, Chair		
	Ian Stewart		
Region 5	George Dennis		
	Keith Pfeifer		
Region 6	Jim Gleiter		
	Thomas Woodruff		

Procedural Business

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

Old Business

- **Budget News/Update (*David Whipple, 30 minutes*)**
 - Dave gave a high-level recap of the current fiscal situation for fiscal year '20, the 2nd year of the biennium.
 - Last year, the legislature provided a significant level of funding, but most of that funding was for only the first year of the biennium; a one-time patch.
 - The legislature and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) recognized this, and fully expect a significant supplemental budget request during the upcoming legislative session, which is typically used for addressing emergent needs, etc.
 - WDFW is requesting \$26 million in the Supplemental Budget.
 - For information about the supplemental budget please see <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/administration/budget/update>.
 - The governor's budget is due out next week and is the starting point for the house and senate budget discussions.
 - In addition to the state budget challenges, Pittman-Robertson funding will be reduced again this coming year, adding to last year's decline, and will compound the state budget issues.
 - Question from George – Is there any other state agencies in a do or die situation like WDFW?
 - It's not known if other states are in a similar situation, but it is certainly possible. The department has never really recovered from the great recession in 2008. In addition, all wildlife agencies are dependent on Pittman-Robertson funds, which will be much lower again this year.
- **Legislative Update**
 - WDFW is not advocating for the license fee bill from 2019's session.
 - There are possible hunter education statute changes if the fee bill gets legs:
 - Eliminating the hunter education deferral accompanying hunter 3-year license requirement
 - Updating the hunter education requirement "Born after Jan. 1, 1972" to "Born on or after Jan. 1, 1972"
 - Modifying the field skills evaluation exemption to include federal law enforcement officers.
 - The department also has an agency request legislation for the Enforcement Civil Authority Bill. This bill would:
 - Allow some lower level fish and wildlife misdemeanors to be charged as an infraction. This could increase the number of MHs suspended for 2 years due to current misdemeanors resulting in a deferred sentence & dropped charges.

- Changes the definition of conviction to allow the Department to maintain possession of seized fish and wildlife for an increased number of case dispositions;
 - Requires notice to WDFW of citation disposition by the courts; and
 - It also aligns WDFW's officer recruitment requirements with other enforcement agencies to allow "lawful permanent residents" apply for our officer positions.
- **Standard Meeting Dates (*Kris Thorson, 5 minutes*)**
 - MHAG discussed the possibility of setting standing meeting dates for future meetings.
 - WDFW staff came up with a set schedule to make planning in the future easier.
 - The calendar date will fluctuate but the meetings will take place on:
 - Second Friday in March
 - Second Friday in June
 - Third Friday in August
 - Second Friday in December
 - 2020 dates are:
 - March 13
 - June 12
 - August 21
 - December 11

New Business

- **WDFW Reports and Updates (*Kris Thorson, 30 minutes*)**
 - MHPP Participation update
 - The 2019 open application period for the Master Hunter Permit Program (MHPP) started on Jul. 1 and closed on Aug. 15.
 - The 2018 application period had about 300 applicants.
 - In 2019 we have 110 applicants.
 - Currently we have 1459 Master Hunters.
 - Twelve applicants or 11 percent of applicants have taken the exam so far.
 - Two of the 12 passed on their first attempt or 17 percent.
 - Five of the 10 who did not pass the first test retook the exam and all passed.
 - We have two new Master Hunters in 2019 to date.
 - Bill Montgomery – Region 6
 - Bill held a mentored pheasant clinic and hunt on November 2.
 - There have been very little elk problems in region 6.
 - He had a seeding project but it only involved a couple Master Hunters.
 - Aaron Garcia – Region 1 south, region 2 south, and region 3
 - Aaron has been doing a lot of turkey mentoring and pheasant mentoring.

- He and Rich Mann mentored 12 people turkey hunting this fall. Ten of the mentees harvested birds.
 - He also had a pheasant clinic and hunt in St John at the Rock Lake Sporting Clays LLC.
 - He has another clinic scheduled for tomorrow in Ephrata and one on December 27 in Mabton.
 - Aaron has a project coming up in the Teanaway.
 - Steve Dazey – Region 1 north, region 2 north, and region 4
 - Steve is helping the Puget Sound anglers by recruiting Master Hunters to volunteer at the trout pond at the Seattle boat show.
 - Amy Elliott – Region 5
 - Amy helped at a shotgun clinic with Washington Outdoor Women (WOW) in June.
 - She is working on a WOW shotgun clinic and WDFW online fields skills evaluation in March.
 - Amy had a Master Hunter in Spokane taxidermy a cougar for WDFW Enforcement activities.
 - She attended the Lake Merrill dedication in region 5.
 - Region 5 has a new wildlife conflict specialist and been working with him on possible projects and damage issues.
 - Kris Thorson – Program specialist
 - Kris has been answering Master Hunter Permit Program questions and emails.
 - He is tracking exam scores and which questions are missed.
 - He completes all renewals and new certifications.
- **Break (15 minutes)**
- **MHAG Member Updates (John McAuliffe, 60 minutes)**
 - Marji Bobiak
 - Marji did not do much volunteering since the last meeting.
 - John McAuliffe
 - John harvested on a pumice plains permit this year.
 - He is the treasurer for his gun club and has been very busy with those activities.
 - Carissa Craghead
 - Carissa completed one field skills evaluation and had a couple youth harvest this fall.
 - She had discussions with the region 2 enforcement captain on hunting issues in Colockum.
 - Jon Barr
 - John mentored his kids this fall.
 - He also experienced some issues in Colockum this fall.
 - Jim Hope

- Jim had a couple hunter education classes this year.
 - He took his granddaughter hunting.
 - He also took a veteran hunting.
 - He is lining up spring turkey hunting mentoring opportunities.
 - David Floyd
 - David has proctored one Master Hunter exam so far.
 - He has three more proctoring sessions scheduled.
 - Ian Stewart
 - Ian instructed at two online classes in September.
 - He also helped at two online classes in November.
 - Keith Pfeifer
 - Keith talked to the region 5 conflict staff on damage hunts.
 - He also talked to Master Hunters to encourage them to attend the MHAG meeting.
 - George Dennis
 - George did not make the last meeting because he was volunteering for the mountain goat relocation project.
 - He mentored his son and his son's friend on a deer hunt in Spokane. Both harvested.
 - George had a landowner contact him about posting his property with no hunting without permission. George was granted permission to hunt on the property and mentored the landowner's grandson hunting elk on the property.
 - Thom Woodruff
 - Thom is working on new management plan with the scatter creek wildlife area management group.
 - He also serves on the Port of Olympia citizen advisory meeting.
 - Jim Gleiter
 - Jim has his 2020 hunter education classes planned.
 - He contacted the regional wildlife conflict staff and region 6 conflicts are not an issue at this point.
- **NHFD Recap (*Bill Montgomery, 15 minutes*)**
 - WDFW held its fifth annual celebration of National Hunting and Fishing Day at Tacoma Sportsmen's Club in Puyallup on Sept 28.
 - We had some challenges with registration so we did not get a good count of youth participants.
 - However, 488 youth had signed in at registration.
 - The average age of participants was 8.7 years old.
 - One hundred and sixty eight (168) had shot a firearm or bow before.
 - Twenty-five (25) had taken hunter education before.
 - Traditional non-government organizations were on site to provide great activities and give-aways but we also had non-traditional organizations like the Dutch Oven Society, Washington State Department of Agriculture, and Operation Lifesaver.
 - There were two active trout ponds for youth to catch and keep a trout.

- Participants learned how to clean a fish from WDFW staff and volunteers.
- A mother of one participant emailed WDFW after the event thanking WDFW because our event was so engagingly helpful, very informative and fun. She said it was a great way for her son to slow down and really connect with the people and what he wanted to do.
- **Member input on MHPP Future Efforts (*Kris Thorson, 60 minutes*)**
 - In August, WDFW asked members to review the Strategic plan and Roles/Responsibilities documents for possible changes.
 - WDFW reviewed these documents as well.
 - Some suggestions from WDFW for the strategic plan are:
 - Invite the Wildlife Conflict Section Manager or the Game Division Manager to MHAG meetings where members are discussing opportunities and permits identified in the strategic plan.
 - Remove information about the HR3AG as it is no longer in existence (although WDFW will invite partners to help address hunter recruitment, retention, and reactivation issues).
 - Update the plan based on current R3 research.
 - Change the focus from mentoring youth hunters to novice hunters, to be consistent with updated national R3 knowledge and strategies.
 - Develop Novice Hunter Permits for people who have not hunted deer or elk before.
 - Direct prospective mentors to First Hunt Foundation or another similar NGO.
 - Add into plan the continuation of NHFD celebrations and MHPP support of those efforts
 - Assist in developing the hunting mentor handbook
 - Remove section on developing or delivering info to outdoor writers. This should be completed within the department.
 - Kris asked what other ideas MHAG members were able to come up with for the strategic plan.
 - George suggested removing the antlered bullet on page 5 because we have eliminated most of the antlered opportunity.
 - George also suggested changes to the MH ranked list bullet to review the list as needed.
 - Keith suggested adding mentoring for new master hunter damage hunt hunters.
 - Some suggestions from WDFW for the purpose, roles, and operating procedures are:
 - Remove the section in long range advisory group roles regarding the Master Hunter special hunt management meetings.
 - Remove the section in long range advisory group roles regarding conducting evaluations of Master Hunter general seasons.

- Update the second bullet in expectations of MHAG members as regional representatives to read “Help identify meaningful volunteer opportunities for Master Hunters.”
 - Kris asked what other ideas MHAG members were able to come up with for the purpose, roles, and operating procedures document.
 - George suggested an update the second bullet in long range advisory group roles to read participate instead of conduct.
 - Keith suggested WDFW allow MHAG members to sign off on volunteer hours if staff are unable to meet the need.
 - There was a suggestion to remove progress from preparing the annual MHPP progress report for submittal to the director and commission since the document is always labeled the Master Hunter Permit Program Annual Report.
 - John suggested WDFW add facilitating two-way communication from conflict staff and landowners regarding Master Hunters.
 - Kris will update these documents and send them to MHAG members for approval.
- **MHAG Input on Skype Locations and Effectiveness (*David Whipple, 15 minutes*)**
 - Marji was happy about having the meeting location close to home.
 - John was glad that there were a number of members at the region 2 office.
 - John saw some side conversations that pulled attention from the meeting that could impact future meetings. He would recommend most meetings be face to face in Ellensburg.
 - Jim Hope thinks the large group meetings in Ellensburg is beneficial and the Skype could be used in winter months.
 - Dave Floyd thinks the December meeting would be a good time to use Skype and keep the other meetings as group meetings in Ellensburg.
 - Ian and Dave Floyd discussed maybe having two westside skype locations to avoid the Seattle traffic.
 - Keith thinks that Skype could be used during winter months and when agendas are light.
 - George feels that the winter months would be good for Skype but still like the large group meeting setting.
 - Suggestion from George as having two large group skypes instead of six.
 - Thom agreed with the meeting in winter months but like to have the large group meetings.
 - Jim Gleiter likes the winter months having a Skype.
- **Public Comments**
 - Dan thought the meeting was a good learning opportunity and thought it would be good for Master Hunters to attend a meeting.
 - Dean asked what ability we might have to stream an Ellensburg meeting.

- This is difficult since the facility we use does not have video conferencing equipment.
- Gerry thought Skype was ok but feels a large meeting would be beneficial.

Conclusion

- **Recap Action Items (*Secretary Craghead, 5 minutes*)**
 - Kris will send the updated purpose, roles and operating procedures and the strategic plan for members to review.

- **Agenda Topics for Next Meeting (*John McAuliffe, 5 minutes*)**
 - NHFD Update
 - Landowner/Wildlife conflict staff feedback survey
 - Presentations on wildlife etc.
 - Mentoring handbook
 - Budget and legislative update
 - Test questions and possible test issues.

- **Good of the Order (*All; General discussion items by MHAG, 5 minutes*)**
 - Keith brought up an article about landowners harvesting more elk causing damage than in previous years in northwest Washington.
 - Kris talked about the landowner permit and that landowners can charge for access and select a specific hunter to hunt.

- **Adjourn**