



MASTER HUNTER ADVISORY GROUP
WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

MEETING NOTES

MHAG Meeting #26

January 10, 2014 - 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Washington Cattlemen's Association Offices, Ellensburg

Call to order by Vice-Chair John McGlenn, 9:00 a.m.

Introduction of Members and Guests

Members present:

Jim Fitzgerald, Chair	John McGlenn, Vice Chair
Jim Reinbold	Jim Sutton
James Slyfield	Tom Conrads
Chris Brong	George Dennis
Roger Hurst	Bill Zachmann
Mike Britton	Craig Broadhead, Secretary

Members excused:

Dennis Clay	Jim Zimmerman
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WDFW Staff present:

Dave Whipple, Hunter Education Division Manager
Sgt. Carl Klein, R6
Captain Rich Mann, R3
Mike Kuttel, Hunter Education Program Specialist
Dave Ware, Game Division Manager
Steven Dazey, R6 Hunter Education Field Coordinator/Volunteer Coordinator

Guests or Presenters:

Shane Briel, EITW	Cheryl Britton
Lon Craghead	Carissa Craghead (new member)
Lance Ostrom (new member)	Dave Berg (new member)
John Glenewinkel (new member)	

Approval of Meeting Notes

Meeting notes from Meeting #25 (September 27, 2013) were approved unanimously by group as posted to MHPP webpage.

OLD BUSINESS

Central Washington University Agreement #9567 – Group Discussion

WDFW and the MHAG decided to terminate the cooperative agreement with Central Washington University (Contract #9567 regarding hunter behavior and compliance), effective December 27, 2013. A letter was sent to CWU from the Chair of the MHAG and WDFW regarding the termination.

Region 6 Pilot Study Regarding use of Master Hunters – Mike Kuttel

Mike Kuttel briefed the group about the implementation of a pilot in Region 6 regarding the more effective use of Master Hunters to address landowner issues resulting from game depredation. The pilot allows for the use of sub-sets of the normal Master Hunter ranked-list in order to provide prompt responses to emergency issues. Mike stated the Region 6 WDFW staff are pleased with Master Hunters, and in fact, the Region 6 Conflict Specialists would like to see more Master Hunters in Pacific County. Conflict Specialist Scott Harris is introducing Master Hunters to landowners, reviewing specific damage and suggesting hunting strategies and herding strategies that would be most effective. His efforts have increased the success rates of Master Hunters and greatly improved the satisfaction of landowners.

NEW BUSINESS

Role of Steve Dazey

Manager Whipple introduced newly hired WDFW employee Steve Dazey. He will be deployed from the Region Four Office in Mill Creek. His responsibilities will include 50% Hunter Education Field Coordination and 50% general volunteer coordination. Steve will routinely be attending MHAG meetings because he will be playing a key role in facilitating Master Hunter efforts in his area of responsibility. At this time his position is the only WDFW field position statewide focusing on the use and management of volunteers.

2014 Master Hunter Advisory Group Strategic Plan – Group Discussion

The group discussed the draft 2014 strategic plan. The key issue is that there are a lot of information and goals outlined in the strategic plan, and prioritization should occur to get group focus. The group agreed priorities must include use of volunteers and volunteerism, recruitment and retention, and use of citizen science.

ACTION ITEM – Dave Whipple, Mike Kuttel, Jim Fitzgerald, and John McGlenn to meet and put together to further refine the MHAG strategic plan and 2014 work plan. Updated versions will be provided to the MHAG for further group review at the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM – Group to review the draft 2014 Strategic Plan and draft 2014 work plan and provide feedback to the Chair and Vice-Chair.

MHAG Operating Procedures – Group Discussion

Group discussed the “Purpose, Roles, and Operating Procedures” draft update document. The response from the group is that the document does a great job of summarizing the MHAG.

ACTION ITEM – Group to review and provide comments to Mike Kuttel ASAP. The goal is to finalize the document at the next MHAG meeting.

ACTION ITEM – Mike Kuttel to add specific duties of MHAG Regional representatives and incorporate any comments from members.

2014 Open Enrollment – Group Discussion

Due to the 2013 hiring freeze, the 2014 enrollment numbers will likely be very high. The group discussed the need to be prepared for above-average contacts from new enrollees. The group felt the 2013 enrollment freeze had many positive benefits for the overall program. The Agency also felt the freeze provided the time to begin the implementation of several refined goals and objectives of the program.

Webpage Updates – Group Discussion

It was discussed that the webpage should be monitored to ensure the best possible use as a tool for all facets of the program. However, it is labor-intensive and should have dedicated MHAG members.

ACTION ITEM – Chair and Vice-Chair to consistently review the webpage, and determine the need for a dedicated individual to track MHPP webpage. Chair to contact former member Bob Cromwell to see if he would assume the lead role of webpage review.

Test Proctor System Update – Group Discussion

The expected increase in enrollment in 2014 will likely lead to the need for more test proctors. There is currently a draft memo from Dave Whipple to potential test proctors requesting interest. Memo will be sent when finalized. EITW/CORT and MHPP are encouraged to continue working together to combine CORT training with MH testing wherever possible

CORT Update – Shane Briel, EITW Representative

Shane Briel discussed the latest from EITW. There is website clean-up underway right now, regarding broken links and training location issues. The group discussed the need for available classes, and the need to ensure attendance so classes can continue to be offered. Issues have occurred with no-shows and cancellations. Master Hunter applicants contribute to this problem by not showing after registering. This is a key issue to stress to new applicants. Shane will continue to attend MHAG meetings as an EITW representative.

Certification/Re-certification Criteria – Group Discussion

The group reviewed the current certification and re-certification criteria. It was decided to postpone making any recommendations regarding amending the criteria until the Agency can enhance the use of volunteers.

2013 MHPP Annual Progress Report – Mike Kuttel

Mike Kuttel discussed the draft progress report. It needs to be completed ASAP, and the group is to provide any feedback to Mike by January 20th.

ACTION ITEM—Members to send comments to Mike Kuttel by January 20th concerning the 2013 MHPP Annual Progress Report.

Pilot Hunter Training Clinics – Dave Whipple

Dave discussed the training clinics that are to be tried at various venues around the state. These clinics include things like life histories of selected game animals, general hunting tips, care of game animals, food preparation, etc. Stand-alone clinics are difficult due to timing and logistics, so an effort is being made to do these hunter clinics at various sportsman's venues – such as the BIGHORN show and Central Washington Sportsman's show. The agency is looking for speakers and help with these clinics.

Liaison Report – Mike Kuttel

- The list of new Regional Wildlife Conflict Specialists was sent to all group members. The MHAG is encouraged to get to know these individuals and learn how the MHPP can help meet their goals. Jim Fitzgerald will be asked to forward this list and contact information to the new MHAG members.
- The decision was made to not post the Master Hunter ranked-lists to the MHPP webpage. It would be too difficult to keep them up to date.
- The group is encouraged to contact Tracy Loveless for a list of Master Hunter's and email addresses in the representative's respective Region. Regions 1 and 5 have been successful at using this list to advance information and opportunities to Master Hunters.
- The MHAG should focus on where the biggest difference can be made. One place is to use the authority provided in RCWs to conduct optional clinics to first-time hunters and their parents after completion of formal Hunter Education training. This "continuing education/finishing school" concept has great potential in helping recruit and retain hunters. This topic will be revisited next meeting.
- Mike shared an idea forwarded by Tracy Loveless. If the main intent of the MHPP applicant examination is to impart knowledge to hunters resulting from the review of study materials provided, why not just post all the study materials and the MHPP applicant examination on the MHPP webpage and allow anyone that is interested in improving their outdoor knowledge and skills to review them? Then those interested in becoming certified Master Hunters can apply to do so during the open enrollment period and follow all the necessary steps. This idea will be further discussed at the next meeting.
- Another topic for discussion is the name of the program – some feel the term "Master" is a misrepresentation of the intent of the group. This will be discussed at future meetings. It was pointed out that a name change would be a long process in that it would involve changes to RCWs, WACs, Fish and Wildlife Commission policies, and WDFW policies.

First-Time Hunter Tips Section for MHPP Website – Group Discussion

An idea the group discussed is to post first-time hunter tips to the MHPP website. This will be a standing agenda item, and discussion should involve logistics such as ideas for tips and quality control and oversight. The concept was originally suggested by former member George Coulbourn.

Region 1 ALEA Pilot Volunteer Program Update – Mike Britton

Mike Britton provided an update to the Volunteer Coordination ALEA Project in Region 1 (Spokane). Mike Britton is currently serving in this role, and will continue for the duration of the pilot project despite his outgoing status as a MHAG representative. The second quarter report was just completed. The program is working well, with good representation from Master Hunters and landowners alike. His volunteer position also serves as the hunt coordinator for Hunt 1802. Mike has found the available manpower for volunteer activities exceeds those opportunities available – which points to the Agency need to define more ways to use volunteers in meaningful projects.

Region 6 Hunter Survey Project – Bill Zachmann

Bill Zachmann discussed the furthering of an idea that he and Anthony Novak discussed regarding the sampling of hunters in Region 6 to help the Agency with the ability to detect violations. Several concepts are being floated right now on how to accomplish this, as it is still early in study design. Bill was advised to contact Captain Murray Schleinker.

ACTION ITEM – Bill Zachmann to coordinate with Anthony and Region 6 enforcement to clearly define the goal of the study, then report to MHAG more detail. If possible, use ALEA process for possible funding.

Review of Time Magazine Article – Group Discussion

The December 9th, 2013 TIME Magazine article “Cull of the Wild” was briefly discussed as pertinent to game management objectives. It is recommended all group members read the article to provide insight.

Review of Proposed Game Regulation Changes – Dave Ware

Dave Ware discussed the recommended changes to the 2014 Game Regulations.. A number of changes are under consideration by the Department regarding Master Hunter fees. The Department is proposing the creation of second Master Hunter deer tags and second Master Hunter elk tags which would cost \$20 each. Such Master Hunter specific tags would lead to much better harvest estimates. The Department is also recommending that special damage control tags be created costing \$20. There may be three elk tags involved with Area 3911 in the future: early Master Hunter designated elk tag, general season elk tag, and special permit Master Hunter designated second elk tag. But only two elk may be harvested in any license year. It is still unclear whether or not a Master Hunter designated elk tag will be required for Area 3911. The Department is recommending that additional Master Hunter special permit hunts will require the purchase of a second Master Hunter designated tag. From a general hunter perspective, the Department is considering reducing the price of a second deer and second elk tag to \$40; and reducing the price of a multi-season deer tag by \$40. All these changes will depend upon public input and approval by the Fish and Wildlife Commission. Dave stated they are investigating the benefit of providing a discount to first-time hunters in anticipation of the \$20 course fee for Hunter Education.

Hunter Recruitment and Retention – Dave Ware

Dave mentioned a focus of the Game Management Advisory Council is recruitment and retention of hunters. From his perspective, this is one the key challenges facing the Agency today. Dave Ware and Dave Whipple will be forming a stakeholder group and are requesting participation from the Master Hunter Advisory Group. The number of representatives for the stakeholder group has not been finalized, but a number of GMAC members have voiced interest, and the idea is to place a few people representing the MHPP on the group as well. The stakeholder group will be tasked with coming up with objectives/strategies to improve hunter recruitment and retention. From the MHAG perspective, this is an issue that former members George Coulbourn and Bob Cromwell were very interested in and have already done significant work. The MHAG recommended asking these 2 individuals to participate on this stakeholder group. In addition, two other representatives will be selected.

ACTION ITEM – Interested group members should send an email documenting their interest in serving on this stakeholder group to Dave Whipple.

Recommended MHAG Position Letter re: Violators – Captain Rich Mann

Captain Mann discussed an issue regarding loopholes where potential violators are pleading to a non-fish and wildlife related violation in order to keep their Master Hunter status. Captain Mann feels, and the group agrees, that any Master Hunter that violates fish and wildlife laws should be held accountable. Captain Mann would like the MHAG to consider as a group sending an open letter to all WA State prosecutors which outlines the Groups’ position on violators. MHAG agreed the letter is a good idea and could help with this issue.

ACTION ITEM – Captain Mann will draft a letter and send to Mike Kuttel for review by the MHAG.

Closing Business

New Officer Elections

Jim Fitzgerald was nominated to be chair and it was unanimously approved that he serve a second term. John McGlenn was nominated to be vice-chair and it was unanimously approved that he serve a second term. Carissa Craghead, new member from Region 2, was nominated for the position of Secretary and she was unanimously approved to serve a two-year term.

Potential Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- Finalize Operating Procedures
- Discuss First-Time hunter tips for webpage
- “Continuing Education Clinic” concept associated with post graduates of Hunter Education
- Discuss “Master” Hunter nomenclature
- Formalize member participation on recruitment and retention stakeholder group
- Finalize MHAG Strategic Plan and 2014 Work Plan
- Finalize MHAG contact spread sheet
- Progress in implementation of Wildlife Program policy on MHPP
- Inclusion of MHPP webpage reference in Hunting Season Regulations for all tables that include Master Hunter hunts
- Discuss concept of posting the MHPP applicant test and study materials on the MHPP webpage
- Opportunities for Master Hunters to participate in WDFW Citizen Science initiatives
- Update by Steve Dazey
- Test proctor system update
- Report by Captain Mann on letter to Prosecuting Attorneys

Action Items

As noted throughout this document in BOLD.

Next Meeting

Washington Cattlemen’s Association, Ellensburg WA from 9 am to 4 pm on April 25th.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.