

MEETING NOTES
WDFW Master Hunter Advisory Group
Meeting Number 3
June 26, 2008
Ellensburg

The meeting was called to order by Mike Estes, Chair, at 9:00 AM. The attached agenda was followed in order.

Attending were:

Ray Boone	George Coulbourn
Mike Estes	Mike Parris
Dustin Albright	Mike Britton
Bill Madison	

Bobbie Thorniley, GMAC Chair
Mike Kuttel *
John Wisner *
Sean Carrell *
Tracy Loveless *
Off. Mike Hobbs *
Off. Steve Rogers *
Anthony Novack*

* WDFW Staff

Absent: Francis Benjamin
Bob Holtfreter
Brian Davern
Bill Vincent

1. Call to order and Announcements

MHAG Chair Estes provided the Group with an update regarding ALEA grant funds and procedures.

2. Approval of Notes from Meeting of May 15, 2008

The Notes were approved as distributed.

3. Reports on Action Items

Action Items from the prior meeting (attached) were reviewed. Action Items 1, 2 & 3 involving the forwarding of data were accomplished.

Action Item 4: A Study Guide was developed in lieu of test questions. After discussion, this approach was approved.

Action Item 5: Continuing.

Action Item 6: Accomplished, discussion under 3911 status below.

Action Item 7: Accomplished. Mr Estes is MHAG lead representative.

Action Item 8: The first and second patch designs were quoted by the vendor. The costs were sufficiently similar to support adoption of the first. Next step is to examine the vendor prototype. If the prototype is acceptable, 10,000 patches will be ordered by the Department.

Action Item 9: Accomplished.

Action Item No. 1: Mr Estes will prepare a letter of commendation from the MHAG recognizing the outstanding work by WDFW staff in preparing the MH web site.

Action Item No. 2: Mr Kuttel is preparing materials to be included in the mailing of new patches to Master Hunters. A draft was provided. Review and comment by all MHAG members was requested.

4. Status reports from Committee & Initiative Chairs

a. Applicant Orientation Meetings: No activity required. Mr. Coulbourn noted that three meetings are planned for next year, to be held during the application period.

b. Information & Outreach Meetings: Mr Albright reported on the first in the series of I&O Meetings, which was held in Spokane on June 14. The meeting was attended by 24 Master Hunters and well supported by Region 1 WDFW personnel. There was strong support for the new directions undertaken for the Program. Survey questions were compiled. Means of achieving greater attendance were discussed. It was agreed to wait until after all three I&O meetings were held to consolidate and publish actions to be taken as a result of the meetings.

Action Item No. 3: Mr Albright will provide a summary of the Meeting to be published on the web site.

Additional I&O meetings will be held this summer in Wenatchee on August 23 and in Western WA at a time and place tbd.

c. Special Hunt Coordination Meetings: Mr Boone advised that the 3911 Special Hunt meeting will be held in Ellensburg on Tuesday evening, July 29. The meeting will be jointly sponsored by the BGRT, the MHAG and the WDFW. The timing for such meetings, sponsorship, target audience, and content were discussed.

Action Item No. 4: Mr Boone will provide Mr Kuttel with an announcement for posting on the web side and distribution to news media.

d. Ways & Means Committee: Funds remain adequate for the Group's current needs.

5. Test Development and Proctoring

Mr. Wisner reported that early results of testing indicated a high rate of failure. 30 of 93 applicants have passed, and these numbers include some who have re-taken the test. Hence the failure rate is of the order of 70%. This issue was discussed in detail. Other approaches to ensure that applicants thoroughly study the materials and demonstrate their knowledge were discussed. It was agreed that the Study Guide recently developed should aid applicants in preparing for this portion of the qualification process.

Test proctoring opportunities and early results were discussed. Statewide coverage is now adequate for most areas. It was recognized that less than 10% of applicants have taken the test so far and that additional needs may arise later in the year.

Action Item No. 5: Mr Kuttel will publish the Study Guide on the web site.

Action Item No. 6: Mr Boone will contact Mr Ray to arrange for Wenatchee area test proctoring.

6. Database status

Mr Loveless provided an overview of the Master Hunter database and ongoing actions to validate the entries. Uses for the data include management and quality control of the certification process, demographics analysis and assessment of project work.

Mr Kuttel led a discussion of priorities for project work. This discussion produced a ranking as follows:

- 1 Game Damage Control
- 2 Master Hunter Program Administrative Support
- 3 Cooperative Road Management
- 4 Lands/Habitat Management
- 5 Hunting Access
- 6 Hunter Education
- 7 Mentoring (hunting related)
- 8 Other (wildlife surveys, etc)

7. Semi-Annual Report

Mr Kuttel and Mr Estes summarized the content of the first MHAG Report to the director. The report has previously been distributed to the MHAG and published on the web site. Highlights included the accomplishments of the MHAG, project work by Master Hunters, status of the WAC and related authority, and the concept of “giving back”.

8. Update on Elk Area 3911

Mr Novack led a discussion of recent progress in elk management in Region 3. Work has been done on boundary accuracy and identification. New boundary adjustments and potential closures were discussed. Because of the extent of the area, it is not practical to provide and maintain signs throughout, so Master Hunters will have to rely on maps and descriptions.

In a recent survey of landowners approximately 2/3 responding noted improvement, 1/3 noted no change, and none stated that conditions had worsened. Additionally, the number of complaints has dropped, leading Region 3 to conclude that the Program is reasonably effective.

A new survey, which includes questions about Master Hunters, will be conducted early in August. The landowner survey will provide information about the current MH program and solicit responses to questions. The completed surveys will provide input from landowners.

In addition to the Special Hunt Meeting (above) information will be distributed to local news media and posted on the web site, including a Parke Creek Map (east end of 3911) with helpful hints and reminders.

9. Recruitment of new MHAG members

The MHAG currently has 11 members, some of whom have experienced difficulty in participating fully. Up to 15 members are authorized.

Mr Kuttel provided a draft recruitment document that would call for interested Master Hunters to apply, and outline the selection process to be followed. The concept involves the receipt of expressions of interest, and interviews of selected candidates by the MHAG, probably in October.

Approaches to creating staggered terms of service were discussed. This is needed to ensure continuity.

Mr Kuttel asked current members to notify him if their circumstances might prohibit them from fully participating in the future. This would constrain the number of new members to be added.

It was agreed that in order for new MHAG officers to assume office in March 2009, elections should be held no later than January. New members also would join the Group during this period.

Action Item No. 7: All members are to provide comments on the MHAG recruitment process.

10. MHAG Liaison Report

Mr. Kuttel, the MHAG Liaison, provided the following information:

The WAC does not currently exclude people from applying if they have been convicted of serious crimes other than those related to game violations. This matter was discussed. There was unanimity that such people should be excluded from the Program, if possible, both because of the desire for the highest standards of conduct and as further assurance to landowners of the quality of the Corps of Master Hunters. It was recognized that the Department may not have the statutory authority to do so.

There is a need for more consistency in the roles and responsibilities for Hunt Masters. This should be a future topic for discussion.

Prior work to stimulate projects for Master Hunters is now producing a wide range of needs and opportunities. The WDFW will continue to post project opportunities on the web site.

A restricted e-mail account will be created to allow broadcast of information to all Master Hunters with e-mail access.

A list of expiring Master Hunter certifications will be posted on the web site. This is a courtesy only, since it is the responsibility of the individual to know his expiration date and take action.

Action Item No. 8: Mr. Kuttel will provide the MHAG with the lists of both current Master Hunters and Applicants.

11. Presentations by others

Ms Thorniley noted that not all hunters and Master Hunters have internet access. She urged the Group consider all means of communication.

There were no other presentations.

12. Other Topics

Mr Boone reported on conservation projects conducted by the Department of Conservation of New Zealand.

Mr Coulbourn suggested that the Group begin thinking about the management structure needed below the level of the MHAG in order to be able to mobilize and deploy the Corps of Master Hunters within the Regions and across the State. Some concepts were discussed briefly.

Upcoming meetings:

Meeting No. 4: Thursday, August 28, Ellensburg Quality Inn: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm.

Meeting No. 5: Thursday, October 23, Ellensburg Quality Inn: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
George Coulbourn

Attachments:

Action Items, Meeting No 2

Action Items, Meeting No 3

Agenda for June 26, 2008

MHAG Action Items Meeting No 2

Action Item No. 1: Mr. Estes will adapt the questionnaire he developed for the Orientation Meeting to the I&O Meeting.

Action Item No. 2: Mr. Kuttel will prepare a statewide news release for the June 14 I&O Meeting and arrange for Enforcement Program and Wildlife Program staff from Region One to attend and participate.

Action Item No. 3: Mr. Wisner will provide Mr. Davern with copies of all Hunter Education tests produced to date. This information may have useful examples for some of the test categories.

Action Item No. 4: Mr. Davern will develop practice questions for the current two Master Hunter tests for posting on the web site in the future.

Action Item No. 5: Mr. Davern will work with Mr. Holtfreter on the development of two new tests for use in 2009.

Action Item No. 6: Mr. Kuttel and Mr. Estes will meet with Region Three staff to pursue the development of a free east-end map for distribution to Master Hunters hunting in Elk Area 3911.

Action Item No. 7: Mr. Estes will appoint a member to lead the effort in evaluation of the 3911 Master Hunter elk season per approved Roles and Responsibilities, bullet #15. This report should be completed by the end of November, 2008.

Action Item No. 8: Mr. Wisner will conduct a cost analysis and gather quotes for the new patch/logo.

Action Item No 9: Mr. Kuttel will work with Mr. Novak to add a link to the Master Hunter web site for "Special Hunt Updates", and will unplug the BLOG from the old Master Hunter web site.

MHAG Action Items Meeting No 3

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Agenda for MHAG Meeting #3

Ellensburg Quality Inn, Fireside room

June 26, 2008

9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Procedural Business

1. Call to order and announcements
2. Approval of Notes from Meeting of May 15, 2008

Old Business

3. Reports on Action Items
4. Status reports from Committee & Initiative Chairs
 - Applicant Orientation Meetings (Coulbourn)
 - Information & Outreach Meetings (Albright)
 - Special Hunt Coordination (Boone)
 - Ways & Means Committee (Holtfreter)
5. Update on test development, study guide, proctoring, and scheduling (Davern/Kuttel)

New Business

6. Database Status (Loveless)
7. Semi-annual Master Hunter progress report to the Director/Commission. (Estes/Kuttel)
8. Update on Elk Area 3911 Evaluation (Estes/Kuttel)
9. Recruitment process for new MHAG members. (Kuttel)
10. Update by Liaison (Kuttel)
11. Presentations by others
12. Other Topics (as time permits)
 - Discussion about Hunt Master protocols in contacting hunters.
 - Master Hunter fulfillment process for clothing and other items.
 - Strategic planning for mission, goals, and objectives for the future.
 - Role of MHAG in management and coordination of major volunteer projects.
 - Scheduling of special presenters to pursue partnerships.
 - Strategy for getting involved in mentoring.

Conclusion

13. Action Items

14. Next meeting