

MEETING NOTES
WDFW Master Hunter Advisory Group
Meeting Number 8
July 9, 2009
Ellensburg

The meeting was called to order by Bill Vincent, Chair, at 9:00 AM. The attached agenda was followed.

Attending were:

Ray Boone	Jim Reinbold
Ron Poppe	Mike Estes
Dustin Albright	Mike Britton
Bill Madison	Richard Mathisen
Bill Vincent	Mike Parris
Brian Davern	Harold Costa
George Coulbourn	Bob Cromwell

Absent: Bob Holtfreter

Rick Holland, EITW/CORT
Mike Kuttel *
Capt Rich Mann *
Sgt Eric Anderson *
Anthony Novack*

* WDFW Staff

1. Call to order and Announcements

After call to order, MHAG Chair Vincent reviewed the day's agenda and discussed administrative matters related to the Meeting.

Mr Kuttel introduced Sgt Anderson, future MHAG Department Liaison

2. Approval of Notes from Meeting No. 7, March 5, 2009

The Notes were approved as distributed.

3. Reports on Action Items

Action Items from the prior Meeting (attached) were reviewed, as summarized below:

Action Item No 1: Certification start date clarification. Completed by Mr Kuttel.

Action Item No. 2: Orientation Meeting effectiveness. Ongoing activity pending completion of testing.

Action Item No. 3: Information and Outreach meeting effectiveness. Agenda item below.

Action Item No. 4: Prepare to discuss MHAG Focus. Agenda item below.

Action Item No. 5: Hunt Master Protocols. Agenda item below.

4. ALEA Grant Status

Mr Britton reported that the MHAG Annual Report had been approved. (ALEA Grant fiscal years run from July 1 until June 30.) Funds expended from the previous grant were approximately \$1,500 short of the \$19.6K Grant. The Grant for this biennium is \$25,890 (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2011)

Mr Britton led an explanation of the rules and restrictions for use of ALEA Grant funds and reporting.

5. Quinault Special Hunt (Elk Area 6064) Lead Needed

Mr Kuttel advised that the MHAG should establish a local Lead for the Elk Area 6064 Project. Mr Costa agreed to fill the function pending identification of a replacement.

We have a commitment under the ALEA Grant to improve the signage and posting in the area. Mr Holland reported that EITW is also working on this project, and will be a partner with the MHAG in the effort.

Action Item No. 1: Mr Costa will coordinate with EITW and the prior Lead in developing and implementing plans for the Elk Area 6064 posting project. Mr. Kuttel will forward a list of current Master Hunters from Clallam, Jefferson, and Grays Harbor counties.

6. MHAG Status and Future Directions

Applicant Enrollment Period: Mr Kuttel led this discussion. He is in the process of collecting all administrative changes to the Program for a one-time web-site update. He discussed several recent decisions (see Att 1), and noted that the applicant enrollment period would be 6 weeks beginning next period and that the application fee would be \$50.

Optimum Number of Master Hunters: The question of the optimum number of Master Hunters was discussed. There are numerous criteria that might be applied in determining this number, such as the number of depredation hunts, conservation work needs and role of the Master Hunter Corps in enhancing the image of hunting and the hunter. The Wildlife Program has suggested a future need for as many as 5000 Master Hunters based on their forecast of the growth in special hunts, as human development continues to encroach on wildlife habitat.

Mr Cromwell summarized a study that he had conducted regarding increasing the number of Master Hunters without degrading the quality. His conclusion was that it would take many years to reach such a target, if achievable at all. Mr Kuttel noted that the current number of Master Hunters appeared to be sufficient for existing special hunt needs. He also noted that in order for significantly more Master Hunters to be used effectively, other WDFW Programs besides Enforcement would have to engage them in projects.

Letter to Master Hunters: Mr Kuttel provided a draft letter to be sent from the Chief and the MHAG Chair to all Master Hunters regarding Program Changes. This letter will accompany each Master Hunter's new (yellow) Permit Card. Mr Kuttel noted that by changing to "permits" vs. simply "certification", Master Hunter privileges can now be suspended immediately upon citation rather than after conviction. This had been a request from Enforcement since there had been a few instances where Master Hunters had intentionally prolonged the judicial process in order to be able to continue hunting.

Action Item No. 2: All MHAG members are to review the draft letter to Master Hunters and to provide comments to Mr Kuttel by July 24.

Conviction defined: Mr Kuttel provided a definition of Conviction and other information from Statutes (see Att 2). He noted that forfeiture of bail has the same consequences regarding Master Hunter status and suspension of privileges as a formal conviction.

WAC Markup: Mr Kuttel again provided a draft of WAC revisions (see Att 3). Some revisions since the previous draft were discussed.

MHAG Progress Report: Mr Kuttel noted that the Progress Report had been widely distributed, and posted on the website. Copies were provided. Numerous items in the report were discussed as summarized below:

- a) **e-mail Account:** Mr Kuttel expressed a desire to have an e-mail account that included all Master Hunters. Mr Holland noted that he had most Master Hunter (and Applicant) e-mail addresses from CORT records.

Action Item No.3: Mr Holland will provide email addresses to Mr Loveless of WDFW.

b) Peer Review: Mr Kuttel noted that in spite of legal hurdles remaining, this important function should be a subject of continuing consideration by the MHAG. Some of the past issues were reviewed and discussed.

Action Item No.4: Mr Kuttel will forward the Peer Review/Ethics Matrix to the MHAG to support future discussion.

c) Second Applicant test: A second test has been completed. It will be available next year. It was judged inappropriate to introduce it midway through the current testing period.

d) Reciprocal attendance: The benefit of reciprocal attendance at meetings of EITW, GMAC and the Enforcement Advisory Committee was recognized. By virtue of other obligations, this coverage exists informally. However it was decided to attempt to formalize reciprocity.

Action Item No.5: Mr Vincent will attempt to arrange formal reciprocal attendance at meetings of EITW, GMAC, the Enforcement AC and the MHAG.

e) Raffle and Auction programs: The MHAG has a continuing concern regarding the perception of these hunts, particularly as they relate to “fair chase”. This concern was discussed, but no specific actions assigned.

f) Mentoring: Progress in mentoring of disabled hunters, returning service personnel and youth was reviewed. While some activities have been initiated, there is much more that can be done.

g) License designation: Mr Kuttel advised that he has received assurance that beginning with the 2010 license year, hunting licenses will show the Master Hunter designator (MH) and anniversary date for all currently certified Master Hunters. This has been a long process and it warrants continued oversight to ensure that it actually happens.

h) CORT content: Mr Estes suggested that the CORT training sessions might be more effective with the introduction of more scenarios. There was general agreement on this suggestion.

Action Item No.6: Mr Poppe was designated MHAG Liaison to EITW, and requested to pursue this interest, with the assistance of Mr. Estes.

Recruitment for MHAG membership: Mr Kuttel provided copies of a draft announcement planned for release July 20. Letters of interest will be solicited until September 30. The selection process was discussed. It was decided to use the same process as before (review of letters of interest, short list development, telephone interviews and selection). MHAG members were asked to comment on the draft news release by July 17th.

Election of MHAG Officers: All (3) positions will be open in 2010. Mr Kuttel asked the members to give some thought to their interest and to the process to be used. This will be finalized at the next Meeting.

“Stewards of the Hunt”: If the MHAG is going to make broad use of this term that was developed within the Group, consideration should be given to copyright or trademark protection in order to avoid future conflict.

Action Item No.7: Mr Mathisen will examine the process and suitability of seeking copyright or trademark protection for “Stewards of the Hunt”.

Administrative Requirements: Mr Kuttel led a discussion of administrative changes under consideration as follows:

- a) **Firearm qualification:** Mr Coulbourn had developed a revised qualification requirements section and related announcement prior to the meeting. These revisions were made necessary by the introduction of two new firearms: crossbow and slug gun.

Discussion during the meeting involved a wide-ranging set of topics related to firearms and their use, such as assurance to the landowner, possible protection to the hunter and the WDFW in the event of incidents, how challenging qualification should be, the importance of qualification with the type of firearm to be used in a special hunt, differences among firearms within a category, and the purpose and need for qualification in the first place.

Action Item No.8: Mr Kuttel will make such revisions to the draft firearm qualification documents as appropriate and make modifications to the Shooting Proficiency Requirements/Certification sections of the website.

- b) **Certification & Re-certification:** Several of the MHAG members have served as test Proctors. It was their consensus that an hour was not quite enough time for many Applicants to complete the test. It was decided to extend the test period by 10 minutes, up to 70 minutes, beginning in 2010.

The project hour requirements were discussed. These were reconfirmed as being appropriate at 20 hours for applicants and 40 hours for recertification every five years.

Motion: The MHAG moved to credit certified Master Hunters with 5 hours of project time for attendance at an I&O meeting, such credit to be given only once each 5 year certification period. Approved unanimously.

Action Item No.9: Mr Kuttel will post this new Conservation hour credit opportunity on the web-site and include it in the Chief's letter.

c) **On-line Hunter Ed test:** The MHAG decided not to make this a re-certification requirement at this time.

8. Region 3 update: Mr Novack reviewed the status of planning for the coming 3911/3912 special elk hunts. There will be an open meeting of landowners, hunters and other interested parties on 3911 in Ellensburg on Saturday, July 18.

Mr Novack provided an update of 3911 boundaries. Significant changes were made to the eastern area to eliminate a controversial portion. Elk were being taken unnecessarily here, since they were not a threat to farm lands or other interests. Mr. Kuttel will post a special note on the "Special Hunt Update" page of the website denoting that new boundaries are in place for 2009.

An update on the Colockum herd was provided in BGMR publications, made available to the MHAG.

A Grant is available to fund a study by CWU on hunter ethics. This study will likely differentiate between Master Hunters and the general hunting population. Mr Novack will provide guidance and participation in the study. Opinions from the MHAG were solicited.

Action Item No.10: Mr Vincent will provide Mr Novack with input from the MHAG by July 18. Members desiring further discussion should correspond with Mr Vincent in the interim.

Mr Novack noted that Colockum herd special hunt harvest was trending down and that the herd population was trending up. The 3911 program is clearly a success story.

9. Hunt Master Protocols: Mr Cromwell reported on work led by him to develop guidelines for Hunt Masters. Draft guidelines are now in review. Feedback from Enforcement has been received and incorporated, but none from the Wildlife Program.

Mr Kuttel noted that a significant need for additional Hunt Masters was forecasted.

Motion: Adopt the draft Hunt Master Guidelines if no significant changes are appropriate following Wildlife Program responses. Approved unanimously.

Action Item No.11: Mr Vincent will attempt to stimulate responses from the Wildlife Program on the draft Hunt Master Guidelines.

10. I&O Meeting summary: Mr Albright reviewed the previously distributed results from the 2009 I&O meetings in Longview and Tri-cities.

11. 3911 Management plan: discussed above.

12. Public Communications Plan: It was confirmed that the MHAG will again conduct two I &O public meetings in 2010, one on the Eastside and one on the Westside. Applicant Orientation public meetings have been well attended and will likely also be continued.

13. GPS Mapping/other WDFW web-site information: Mr Cromwell discussed the availability of electronic mapping information from the WDFW web-site and demonstrated his conversion of the information to his personal GPS receiver. This is a utility of significant potential value to sportsmen. Mr Cromwell is considering how best to make his work available to others.

Mr Cromwell discussed other information available from the WDFW. He reviewed Master Hunter special hunt success by hunt and by permit or open hunt. He noted that some permit hunts are under-filled. Members noted that some permits do not result in hunting opportunities.

14. Chief Instructor recognition as Master Hunters: For some time the MHAG has debated expediting the attainment of Master Hunter status by Chief Instructors. The MHAG decided to drop this topic from further consideration because: 1) it was considered inappropriate to waive shooting requirements, 2) Chief Instructors already have sufficient accumulated project hours by virtue of classroom instruction, and 3) they should be able to pass the test by virtue of their knowledge of the study materials. It was noted that the majority of current MHAG members are certified Hunter Education Instructors. By way of closing out this topic, it was decided to remind all Instructors of the requirements for becoming a Master Hunter.

Action Item No.12: Mr Mathisen will draft a notice for a future edition of "Instructor Talk" discussing the program requirements and encouraging Instructors to consider becoming Master Hunters.

15. Radio Tracking Ethics: Mr Holland led a discussion on the ethics of participating in elk radio tracking studies and then hunting in the same area. Although the study participation might not actually provide an advantage, given the nature of movement of elk, the perception is bad. The general consensus of the MHAG was that this practice would be unethical.

16. Liaison Update: Mr Kuttel covered most of his topics under other Agenda Items above. He reported that there had been 1288 Applicants in 2009 and that the program had garnered \$29,300 in revenue, which helps to defray some expenses.

Sergeant Eric Anderson was again recognized as Mr Kuttel's appointed replacement as WDFW Liaison to the MHAG, effective immediately following the September 3, 2009 meeting.

Mr Kuttel requested “proof-readers” for up-coming changes to the website..

Action Item No.13: Messers Albright, Coulbourn, Cromwell and Estes agreed to “proof-read” the draft web-site postings on an expedited basis as soon as they are available.

Next meeting: Meeting No. 9: Thursday, September 3, Ellensburg: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50PM, all agenda items having been addressed.

Respectfully Submitted,
George Coulbourn

Attachments:

Action Items, Meeting No 7

Action Items, Meeting No 8

Agenda

Attachments (3)

MHAG Action Items Meeting No 7

Action Item No. 1: In response to questions during these meetings, Mr Kuttel will clarify the start date for the 9 month completion period and publish the clarification on the web site.

Action Item No. 2: Mr Estes will lead an activity to evaluate the effectiveness of these meetings as they relate to candidate success. Specifically, does attendance at the Orientation meeting enhance the likelihood of the candidate actually becoming a Master Hunter?

Action Item No. 3: Mr Albright will lead an assessment of the value of the I&O meetings based on lessons learned this year and last.

Action Item No. 4: Allocate time for discussion of MHAG focus at upcoming meetings. All members come prepared to participate.

Action Item No. 5: Mr Albright will lead an initiative to address Hunt Master Protocols. Messers Mathisen, Holtfreter, Poppe, Reinbold, Madison and Cromwell will serve with him. Mr Novack of Region 3 will be asked to participate.

MHAG Action Items Meeting No 8

Action Item No. 1: Mr Costa will coordinate with EITW and the prior Lead in developing and implementing plans for the Elk Area 6064 posting project. Mr. Kuttel will forward a complete list of current Master Hunters from Clallam, Jefferson, and Grays Harbor counties.

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Mtg # 7 Continuing Action Item No. 2: Mr Estes will lead an activity to evaluate the effectiveness of these meetings as they relate to candidate success. Specifically, does attendance at the Orientation meeting enhance the likelihood of the candidate actually becoming a Master Hunter?



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

Agenda for MHAG Meeting #8
Ellensburg Quality Inn, Fireside Room
July 9 2009
9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

Procedural Business

- 1) Call to order and announcements (Vincent) (10)
 - Introduce guests
- 2) Approval of official notes from January 22, 2009 meeting (10)

Old Business

- 3) Status report on Action Items (Vincent/Albright) (10)
- 4) Status reports form Committee & Initiative Chairs (1)
 - Ways and Means Committee (unspent balance on grant, Holtfreter)
 - ALEA Grant application for 09-10 (Britton)

5) New Business

ALEA Grant Updates (Holtfreter/Britton) (5 minutes)

- Final Report due July 15, 2009 to Josh (ending balance?)
- Quarterly Reports for the new 09-11 Grant are required by the MHAG (\$25,890)
- Quarterly Reports for the new 09-11 Grant are required by the Department
- Review of process for approval of room rental fees under the Grant
- Need a Lead for the Quinault Valley, Elk Area 6064 boundary posting project in the Grant

6) Future Directions of the Master Hunter Program/Work Plan priorities (Kuttel et. al.) (120 minutes).

- Guidance from Chief Bjork (open enrollment period; fees)
- RCW Review (changes reflected already)

- WAC Review (changes reflected already)
- June 2009 Master Hunter Progress Report (discuss work plan section)
- Recruitment Planning for MHAG
- Planning for Upcoming Elections of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary
- Marketing of Stewards of the Hunt Image (trade mark?)
- Discussion of Administrative Requirements:
 - Hunting implements/qualification standards (George Coulbourn)
 - Certification requirements
 - Recertification requirements
 - Conservation hour credit for attending at least one I&O meeting
 - Acceptable Conservation Project types
 - On-line Hunter Education testing every 10 years
 - Review of Draft #1 White Paper on Administrative Requirements
 - Implementation schedule for recommended changes
 - Other

7) Lunch

8) Region Three WDFW staff Update/Ethics Survey (20)

- Elk area 3911 maps and posting

9) Hunt Master Guideline Subcommittee report and feedback (Cromwell) (15 minutes)

- RWPM request for current guidelines
- RWPM request for HM names
- Eventual posting of hunt descriptions/requirements (Dungeness)
- 2010 Implementation

10) Information and Outreach meeting summary (Estes/Albright) (10 minutes)

11) Status of 2009 Special Hunt Management meeting for Elk Area 3911 (Holtfreter) (5minutes)

12) Evaluation of MHAG Public Communications Plan (Albright) (30 minutes)

13) GPS mapping project/Harvest Estimates/Posting of Season Information (Cromwell) (10 minutes)

14) Chief Instructor Master Hunter Recognition (Vincent 10 minutes)

15) Radio Tracking Ethics (Rick Holland (5 minutes)

16) WDFW Liaison update (Kuttel) (10 minutes)

- a. 1,288 applicants/\$29,300.00 income
- b. April 09-May 2010 expiration schedule updated and remains in place
- c. Position status update (Sergeant Anderson will be new MHAG Liaison)
- d. Accommodation for Persons of Disability
- e. Moose season protocols

- f. New Master Hunter Permit draft (array of colors selected from)
- g. Status of MH/expiration date license designator for 2009

Conclusion

- 17) Recap Action Items (George Coulbourn) (5)
- 18) Next meeting date (September3, 2009)
- 19) Good of the Order
- 20) Adjourn

Attachment No 1: Recent Program Decisions

From: Kuttel, Mike P (DFW)
Sent: Tuesday, June 02, 2009 11:23 AM
To: badavern@yahoo.com; madisonsmb@msn.com; 'Bill Vincent'; Bob Cromwell (bobcrom@gmail.com); dzane@dzane.com; George Coulbourn; Harold Costa (hcosta1945@wmconnect.com); holtfret@cwu.EDU; James Reinbold (JMRein4061@aol.com); Estes, Michael L; 'Mike Britton'; 'Mike Parris'; 'Ray Boone'; Richard Mathisen (goiamo@comcast.net); Ron Poppe
Cc: Crown, Steven L (DFW); Loveless, Tracy A (DFW); Wisner, John L (DFW); Carrell, Sean O (DFW); Mikitik, Mik (DFW); Bjork, Bruce J (DFW); Ware, David A (DFW); 'rickh@eyesinthewoods.org'; 'kylewinton@comcast.net'; 'wellstony@hotmail.com'; 'bobbiemiket@yahoo.com'
Subject: Future Direction of Master Hunter Program

Master Hunter Advisory Group Members:

Chief Bjork has provided the following guidance as a result of a briefing yesterday afternoon. The open enrollment period for 2010 will be January 1 thru February 15, and the new application fee will be \$50.00. He has opted not to pursue a numerical cap at this time due to the associated stigma and potential administrative issues.

The direction provided by the Chief will make our discussions about possible changes in Administrative Requirements much more productive at the next MHAG meeting on July 9, 2009.

As you all know there has been almost exponential growth in interest in the Master Hunter program since the 2008 retooling process. Between July 1, 2006-December 31, 2007, 447 hunters applied to be AHE members, while during the 2009 three month open enrollment period, 1, 288 individuals applied to join the new Master Hunter program. The intent of the shortened registration period and fee increase is to decrease the number of applicants while maintaining the momentum we have collectively been able to achieve. Time will tell, but the desired outcome would be around 500 applicants per year which would lead to a sustained level of Certified Master Hunters (around 1,800) given expected rates of annual attrition, and certification/completion rates of applicants (around 20%).

Chief Bjork wanted me to reinforce with you and others the following points:

- The Master Hunter Permit Program is a legislatively mandated program that isn't going away any time soon. SHB 1778, Title 77 RCW, Section 15 in part states: "In order to effectively manage wildlife in areas or at times when a higher proficiency and demonstrated skill level are needed for resource protection or public safety, the department establishes the master hunter permit program. The master hunter permit program emphasizes safe, ethical, responsible, and lawful hunting practices. Program goals include improving the public's perception of hunting and perpetuating the highest hunting standards."
- Master Hunter seasons are not considered to be recreational opportunities, but game damage situations that present special challenges to the agency. The focus of the new Master Hunter program is "giving back" and hunters are routinely discouraged from applying if their main reason for doing so is harvest related. The apparent "resource allocation" issues associated with the Master Hunter Permit Program should be addressed by the Wildlife Program and Game Management Advisory Group within the context of Population Management objectives.

Attachment Number 2: Conviction definition and other Statutes.

The new definition of “conviction,” effective July 26, 2009:

RCW 77.15.050 and 1998 c 190 s 6 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, as used in this chapter, "conviction" means:

- (a) A final conviction in a state or municipal court;
- (b) A failure to appear at a hearing to contest an infraction or criminal citation; or
- (c) An un-vacated forfeiture of bail paid as a final disposition for an offense.

(2) A plea of guilty, or a finding of guilt for a violation of this title or rule of the commission or director constitutes a conviction regardless of whether the imposition of sentence is deferred or the penalty is suspended.

The new Master Hunter statutes, effective July 26, 2009:

A new section is added to chapter 77.32 RCW to read as follows:

(1) In order to effectively manage wildlife in areas or at times when a higher proficiency and demonstrated skill level are needed for resource protection or public safety, the department establishes the master hunter permit program. The master hunter permit program emphasizes safe, ethical, responsible, and lawful hunting practices. Program goals include improving the public's perception of hunting and perpetuating the highest hunting standards.

(2) A master hunter permit is required to participate in controlled hunts to eliminate problem animals that damage property or threaten public safety. The commission may establish by rule the requirements an applicant must comply with when applying for or renewing a master hunter permit, including but not limited to a criminal background check. The director may establish an advisory group to assist the department with administering the master hunter program.

(3) The fee for an initial master hunter permit may not exceed fifty dollars, and the cost of renewing a master hunter permit may not exceed twenty-five dollars. Funds generated under this section must be deposited into the fish and wildlife enforcement reward account established in RCW 77.15.425, and the funds must be used exclusively to administer the master hunter program.

A new section is added to chapter 77.15 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department may suspend a person's master hunter permit for the following reasons and corresponding lengths of time:

- (a) If the person pays the required fine or is found to have committed an infraction under this chapter or the department's rules, the department shall suspend the person's master hunter permit for two years;
- (b) If the person pays the required fine or is convicted of a misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, or felony under this chapter, the department shall suspend the person's master hunter permit for life;
- (c) If the person pays the required fine or is convicted of trespass, reckless endangerment, criminal conspiracy, or making a false statement to law enforcement while hunting, fishing, or engaging in any activity regulated by the department, the department shall suspend the person's master hunter permit for life;
- (d) If the person pays the required fine or is convicted of a felony prohibiting the possession of firearms, unless firearm possession is reinstated, the department shall suspend the person's master hunter permit for life;
- (e) If the person has a hunting or fishing license revoked or has hunting or fishing license privileges suspended in another state, the department shall suspend the person's master hunter permit for life;
- (f) If the person is cited, or charged by complaint, for an offense under this chapter; or for trespass, reckless endangerment, criminal conspiracy, or making a false statement to law enforcement while hunting, fishing, or engaging in any activity regulated by the department, the department may immediately suspend the person's master hunter permit until the offense has been adjudicated; or
- (g) If the person submits fraudulent information to the department, the department shall suspend the person's master hunter permit for life.

(2) Any master hunter who is notified of an intended suspension may request an appeal hearing under chapter 34.05 RCW.

Attachment Number 3: Draft WAC Revisions

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 08-03-088, filed 1/16/08, effective 2/16/08)

WAC 232-12-073 Master hunter permit program. (1) In order to effectively manage wildlife in areas or at times when a higher proficiency and demonstrated skill level are needed for resource protection or public safety, the department establishes the master hunter permit program.

(2) The master hunter permit program emphasizes safe, lawful, and ethical hunting practices. ~~((Two of the program's))~~ Program goals ~~((are to improve))~~ include improving the public's perception of hunting and ~~((to perpetuate))~~ perpetuating the highest hunting standards. A master hunter~~((s actively))~~ permit is required to participate in controlled hunts to eliminate problem animals that damage property ~~((and/))~~ or threaten public safety.

(a) The cost of initially applying for ~~((the))~~ a master hunter ~~((program is twenty))~~ permit shall be fifty dollars. The ~~((department will determine the program's prerequisites and curriculum. The department may establish an advisory group to assist agency staff in developing the prerequisites and curriculum))~~ cost of renewing a master hunter permit shall be twenty-five dollars.

(b) ~~((Master hunter candidates who successfully complete the master hunter program will receive a~~

~~certificate, a master hunter patch, and a master hunter identification card. The master hunter identification card is valid for five consecutive years from the date of issuance. The card will be renewed for an additional five years if, during the period of validity, the master hunter completes forty hours of additional master hunter program requirements as determined by the department.))~~ The department shall determine the program's requirements and curriculum. The director shall establish an advisory group to assist agency staff in developing and managing the program.

(3) Master hunters are held to the highest ethical standards because these hunters are ambassadors for the department and are role models and mentors for the hunting community and for the public at large. ~~((As such, current advanced hunters must apply to be master hunters. Applicants must submit to a criminal background check. Applicants who have prior wildlife or trespassing while hunting convictions within the last ten years, or prior felonies prohibiting the possession of firearms (unless firearm possession is reinstated), or who have a current hunting license suspension in another state, cannot apply for the master hunter program.~~

~~(a) Individuals who successfully complete the master hunter program must obey all laws and regulations.))~~ Initial master hunter permit applicants must submit to a criminal background check. The department shall deny entry

into the master hunter permit program to those applicants who have:

(a) Paid the required fine or been convicted within the last ten years of a chapter 77.15 RCW offense;

(b) Paid the required fine or been convicted within the last ten years of trespassing, reckless endangerment, criminal conspiracy, or making a false statement to law enforcement, while hunting, fishing, or engaging in any activity regulated by the department;

(c) Prior felonies prohibiting the possession of firearms, unless firearm possession is reinstated; or

(d) A current hunting or fishing license revocation or a current suspension of hunting or fishing license privileges in another state.

(4) Master hunter((s)) permit applicants will be required to sign and abide by a hunter code of ethics ((in addition to all department laws and regulations.

~~(b) Persons who successfully pass the master hunter program and maintain the requirements set forth in this section are entitled to participate in special hunts. These hunters must possess a valid master hunter identification card while participating in the hunts. Master hunters who are convicted of wildlife misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors, or felonies; trespassing while hunting; or reckless endangerment involving hunting weapons, will be removed from the master hunter program for life. Master~~

~~hunters who commit wildlife infractions may be removed from the master hunter program for up to a five-year period.~~

~~(c) The department's master hunter coordinator will maintain open communications with landowners and the community to investigate complaints about master hunters or the master hunter program. If a master hunter is charged with a wildlife or trespassing violation that does not result in a conviction, or an ethical violation that does not rise to a criminal law or regulation violation, a master hunter peer review committee, selected by the advisory group, will evaluate the behavior to decide whether it was egregious. If the committee deems the behavior egregious, the department may suspend the violator's master hunter privileges for any amount of time, up to and including life.~~

~~(d) Any person who has his or her master hunter privileges suspended under this subsection)) and pass a comprehensive examination based upon study materials provided by the department. An initial master hunter permit applicant found to have submitted fraudulent information to the department or to have cheated on the master hunter examination will be excluded from the master hunter permit program for life.~~

~~(5) Initial master hunter permit applicants who successfully complete the master hunter permit program will receive a master hunter patch and a master hunter permit. The initial master hunter permit is valid for five~~

consecutive years from the date of issuance. The permit may be renewed for additional five-year increments if, during each five-year period of validity, the master hunter fulfills the renewal requirements established by the department.

(6) Master hunters renewing their permit shall authorize the department to conduct a criminal background check each time they renew. The criminal background check will go back five years from the master hunter's anniversary date or back to the date this rule amendment was adopted, whichever period of time is shorter. The department's approval will be determined by compliance with this section.

(7) Persons who successfully complete the master hunter permit program and maintain the requirements developed by the department are entitled to participate in special hunts. These master hunters must possess a valid master hunter permit while participating in the hunts.

(8) The department shall suspend a master hunter's permit for life if the master hunter:

(a) Pays the required fine or is convicted of a chapter 77.15 RCW misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, or felony;

(b) Pays the required fine or is convicted of trespassing, reckless endangerment, criminal conspiracy, or making a false statement to law enforcement, while hunting,

fishing, or engaging in any activity regulated by the department;

(c) Pays the required fine or is convicted of a felony prohibiting the possession of firearms, unless firearm possession is reinstated;

(d) Has his or her hunting or fishing license revoked, or hunting or fishing license privileges suspended, in another state; or

(e) Submitted fraudulent information to the department.

(9) A master hunter who pays the required fine or is found to have committed a chapter 77.15 RCW infraction shall have his or her master hunter permit suspended for a period of two years.

(10) If a master hunter is cited, or charged by complaint, for a chapter 77.15 RCW offense; or for trespass, reckless endangerment, criminal conspiracy, or making a false statement to law enforcement, while hunting, fishing, or engaging in any activity regulated by the department, the department may immediately suspend the person's master hunter permit until the offense has been adjudicated.

(11) The department's master hunter coordinator will maintain open communications with landowners and the community. The department will investigate written accusations about master hunters and determine whether such complaints have merit and warrant enforcement action.

(12) Except under subsection (10) of this section, if a master hunter has his or her initial or renewal master hunter permit suspended for less than life, and the person wants to become a master hunter again, he or she must repeat the entire master hunter permit application process once the suspension period is over.

(13) Any person who has been denied initial admission into the master hunter permit program, renewal of his or her master hunter permit, or has had his or her master hunter permit suspended, has the right to an administrative hearing to contest the agency action. Such hearing will be held pursuant to chapter 34.05 RCW, the Administrative Procedure Act. Initial master hunter permit applicants who fail to submit the application fee or who submit an incomplete application will have their application returned. Denial of admission on these grounds does not trigger the right to an administrative hearing.

~~((e))~~ (14) "Conviction," as used in this section, is defined in RCW 77.15.050.

~~((4))~~ (15) It is unlawful for any person to ~~((participate))~~ hunt or actively assist in a hunt restricted to master hunters if such person has not successfully ~~((passed))~~ been admitted into the master hunter ~~((course))~~ permit program and maintained the requirements set forth in this section, or if the person's master hunter ~~((privileges—have))~~ permit has been suspended. Master hunters need a valid master hunter

permit and a valid hunting license and tag to hunt in master hunter restricted hunts. "To hunt," as used in this section, is defined as "an effort to kill, injure, capture, or harass a wild animal or wild bird," pursuant to RCW 77.08.010(53). Violation of this subsection shall be enforced under RCW 77.15.400 for wild birds, RCW 77.15.410 for big game, and RCW 77.15.430 for wild animals other than big game.

(16) Only Washington residents, as defined in RCW 77.08.010(39), may apply for an initial master hunter permit.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 77.12.047. 08-03-088, § 232-12-073, filed 1/16/08, effective 2/16/08; 03-01-077 (Order 02-298), § 232-12-073, filed 12/13/02, effective 1/13/03.]