

MEETING NOTES
WDFW Master Hunter Advisory Group
Meeting Number 4
August 28, 2008
Ellensburg

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

Attending were:

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

Absent: Bob Holtfreter

Mike Kuttel *
Sean Carrell *
Sgt Mike Sprechter *

* WDFW Staff

Ron Poppe, Visitor

1. Call to order and Announcements

MHAG Chair Estes reviewed the day's agenda and discussed administrative matters related to the Meeting.

2. Approval of Notes from Meeting of June 26, 2008

The Notes were approved as distributed.

3. Reports on Action Items

Action Items from the prior meeting (attached) were reviewed. All Action Items were completed.

4. Status reports from Committee & Initiative Chairs

a. Information & Outreach Meetings: Mr Albright reported on the series of I&O Meetings, which were held in Spokane in June, and Bothell and Wenatchee during August. A detailed discussion of the Meetings followed. On the positive side, the MHAG was successful in preparing and conducting a set of comprehensive information meetings and receiving feedback from Master Hunters throughout the State. And, the meetings were enthusiastically supported by Regional staff, both Law Enforcement and game management specialists. On the other hand, all three meetings were sparsely attended.

Attendance: The Group discussed means of increasing attendance as well as the specific items of feedback from attendees and participants. It was not known whether the sparse attendance was a result of timing of the meetings (Saturday afternoons during the summer months), ineffective notification, or simply lack of interest on the part of the Master Hunters. The original plan to hold three additional I&O Meetings in 2009 was discussed and consideration will be given to holding only two next year. Consideration will be given both to calendar placement (early in the year vs summer) and schedule (week night vs weekend). 2009 Meetings will be held in Regions 3 and 5, and if a third is held, perhaps Region 6 as well.

Feedback: Questionnaires were collected at all three meetings to supplement verbal exchanges during the discussion. A composite will be posted on the website. Some highlights: there was strong support for the new direction taken for the Master Hunter Program, for mentoring both new and disabled hunters, for increasing the service requirement to more than the current 40 hours, requiring Master Hunters to be qualified with all implements prior to use, and restricting the Master Hunter Program to Washington State residents only. Also, there was unanimous agreement that the meetings were worthwhile and helpful.

Suggestions for improvement included partnering with various conservation and hunting related organizations, additional information on the website, additional hunt masters or coordinators, specific suggestions for projects and other activities, and additional hunts.

Concern was expressed among some attendees regarding the possibility of losing certification because of a relatively minor offence, such as failing to display a parking permit at a designated area. It was noted that Master Hunters have several avenues available to retain certification in such instances; however the concern was shared by a few members of the Group.

Action Item No. 1: Mr Albright will provide a composite summary of the three Information and Outreach Meetings for posting on the web site.

b. Special Hunt Coordination Meetings: Mr Boone discussed the 3911 Special Hunt meeting held in Ellensburg on Tuesday evening, July 29. The meeting was jointly sponsored by the BGMR, the MHAG and the WDFW. Attendance was estimated to be around 125 and included Master Hunters and Applicants from all over the State. Presentations were made by the Region 3 Deer and Elk Conflict Specialist, Law Enforcement, the Big Game Management Roundtable, a Hunt Master and landowners.

It was noted that the website now includes a link for current information on 3911 elk damage status, and that this might be expanded to include other damage areas.

Action Item No. 2: Mr Estes will prepare an e-mail memo to the management of the Regions 1, 2, 3 and 4 expressing appreciation for their strong support of the various meetings.

c. Ways & Means Committee: Funds appear to be adequate for the Group's current needs. Approximately \$8.6K remains from the initial grant of approximately \$19K. It is time to begin processing a request for funds for the next two year period.

Action Item No. 3: Mr Britton will begin the application process for an ALEA grant to continue funding the Group's activities. Submission is required by March, 2009.

5. Update on Master Hunter Patch order

Mr. Kuttel reported the new patch approved by WDFW features two colors (bright gold and green), similar to the older patch. Sample patches with gold on green and green on gold were ordered and will be compared before committing to a large order.

6. Recruitment

Mr Kuttel provided copies of the recruitment announcement for new MHAG members (attached). Members were requested to distribute the announcement as broadly as possible. Applications are already being received. The process is for applications to be screened by the Executive Committee. A short list of 5 applicants will be selected for interview during the next (October) meeting. The consensus was to strongly encourage applicants to appear in person. The Executive Committee will develop additional details.

It was noted that new MHAG members will be appointed for a three year term, while current Group members will be reappointed for either a one or two year term. This will create staggered terms of service. The intent is to make all new appointments effective January 1, 2009.

Action Item No. 4: All MHAG members were requested to distribute the recruitment announcement as broadly as possible within their areas.

7. Update on Elk Area 3911 Partnership

Mr Estes and Mr Kuttel reported on the recent Big Game Management Roundtable meeting. The Parke Creek elk research project is now scheduled to begin in September. A landowner survey is under way. Work on downloadable 3911 maps is in progress. Minor, but important boundary changes are under consideration. Puget Power reported no issues with hunter access to date.

The potential need for a damage hunt in the North Bend area was discussed. This situation is particularly challenging since there is no suitable escapement habitat and much of the area is densely populated. Various approaches are being considered.

Old Action Item No 7 from meeting No 2 was discussed and tabled. This involved a request for a report on 3911 to the Department. At this point, success to date both with conduct of the program and its effectiveness is encouraging, and no further action on this item is needed.

8. Progress on development of a new validated MH test

Mr Davern confirmed that the new test will be available early next year. The template developed during Meeting No 2 will serve as the guide.

9. WDFW Lands and Access Programs – Volunteer opportunities

Mr Kuttel reported that a meeting will likely be held in December with all Managers in the Department's Lands Division to discuss increased use of Master Hunters. Informal discussions have indicated a reluctance to use volunteers because of the requirements for training, supervision and reporting.

10. WAC 232-12-073 Amendments and Expedited Approval Process.

Mr Kuttel provided the Group with red-lined copies of the proposed wording. It was noted that this version had been reviewed and modified with advice from Regional Law Enforcement.

A detailed review and further mark-up ensued. Significant changes under consideration include: requiring Master Hunters to be qualified with every hunting implement prior to its use, requiring new Applicants to have passed a Washington Hunter Education course regardless of age, penalties for criminal conspiracy or issuing false statements while hunting, administrative suspensions pending court action, MHAG Peer Review Committee processes, authority for the Department to add, delete or modify Master Hunter certification requirements, and restricting the Master Hunter certification to Washington State residents.

Mr Kuttel will review the markup with the AG in the near future and report back to the MHAG. Once the final draft is developed, it will undergo public review before consideration by the Commission.

11. Pilot electronic registration process for herding, hazing and fencing

A new pilot website page is planned to allow hunters and others to register to be called to herd or haze animals, and to participate in fence construction and reconstruction. This will be open to the public, and such activities would earn project hours for Master Hunters.

Mr Kuttel noted that the information on the electronic form would be available to the Regions only, and that calls for assistance would come from them.

12. MHAG Liaison Report

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

Currently only 143 of the 1034 Applicants have taken the test. First time passing rate has been around 25%, and better than 80% have passed on the second try. This conforms to historical trends. But, why have so few Applicants taken the test to date? Possibilities include procrastination and drop-out. If the former, then a surge in the need for test proctoring may occur. However current experience indicates reduced requests for test proctoring rather than what was expected. According to Mr Poppe, EIW has had similar experience with CORT training. The Department will continue to monitor this area. Test cut-off depends on individual application date, but the last day anyone would be eligible is January 15, 2009.

A restricted e-mail account is being created to allow broadcast of information to all Master Hunters with e-mail access. This will be a no-response activity.

Mr Kuttel reported a inquiry through channels requesting that non-Master Hunters be allowed to apply for a special Master Hunter hunt and then if drawn, be provided an expedited process for earning Master Hunter certification. The MHAG unanimously rejected this concept since the process for becoming a Master Hunter is well established and available to all on an equal basis.

13. Presentations by others

There were none.

14. Other Topics

There was no time for other topics.

Upcoming meetings:

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 4
Action Items, Meeting No 3
Agenda for August 28, 2008
MHAG Recruitment Announcement

MHAG Action Items Meeting No 4

Action Item No. 1: Mr Albright will provide a composite summary of the three Information and Outreach Meetings for posting on the web site.

Action Item No. 2: Mr Estes will prepare an e-mail memo to the management of the Regions 1, 2, 3 and 4 expressing appreciation for their strong support of the various meetings.

Action Item No. 3: Mr Britton will begin the application process for an ALEA grant to continue funding the Group's activities. Submission is required by March, 2009.

Action Item No. 4: All MHAG members were requested to distribute the recruitment announcement as broadly as possible within their areas.

MHAG Action Items Meeting No 3

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.

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

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

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.

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

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



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

Agenda for MHAG Meeting #4
Ellensburg Holiday Inn, Board Room
August 28, 2008
9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Procedural Business

1. Call to order and announcements
2. Approval of Notes from Meeting of June 26, 2008

Old Business

3. Reports on Action Items
4. Status reports from Committee & Initiative Chairs
 - Information & Outreach Meetings (Albright)
 - Special Hunt Coordination- 3911 Meeting Report (Boone and Holtfreter)
 - Ways & Means Committee (Holtfreter)
5. Update on Master Hunter patch order (Wisner)
6. Recruitment process for new MHAG members. (Kuttel)
7. Update of Elk Area 3911 Partnership (Kuttel/Novack/Estes)
8. Progress on development of new validated MH test (Davern)

New Business

9. WDFW Lands and Access Programs – Volunteer opportunities (Kuttel)
10. WAC 232-12-073 Amendments and Expedited Approval Process. (Kuttel)

11. Pilot electronic registration process for herding, hazing, and fencing. (Kuttel)
12. Update by Liaison (Kuttel)
13. Presentations by others
14. Other Topics (as time permits)
 - Discussion about consistent Hunt Master protocols.
 - Role of MHAG in promotion, management, and coordination of major, selected volunteer projects. (Mentoring of first-time hunters and/or military persons of disability, as an example.)
 - Master Hunter fulfillment process for clothing and other items.
 - Strategic planning for mission, goals, and objectives for the future.
 - Scheduling of special presenters to pursue partnerships.
 - Improving the image of Master Hunters.

Conclusion

15. Recap Action Items (Coulbourn)
16. Next meeting: October 23, Ellensburg Quality Inn, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

NEWS RELEASE

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, Washington 98501-1091

Internet Address: <http://wdfw.wa.gov>

July 30, 2008

Contact: Mike Kuttel, (360) 902 8413

Members sought for Master Hunter Advisory Group

OLYMPIA – The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is accepting letters of interest through Sept. 30 for membership on the department's Master Hunter Advisory Group.

The group, which represents master hunters statewide, advises WDFW on issues and opportunities affecting master hunters and the Master Hunter program.

The director will make formal appointments by March 2009.

Five volunteer positions are currently open on the 15-member group. Members must be certified master hunters and will serve three-year terms. At least two members must reside within each of WDFW's six administrative regions. Letters of interest will be accepted for one member residing in:

- Region One (Pend Oreille, Spokane, Lincoln, Stevens, Whitman, Ferry, Garfield, Columbia, Walla Walla and Asotin counties)
- Region Two (Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Adams counties).
- Region Five (Lewis, Cowlitz, Clark, Skamania, Klickitat, and Wahkiakum counties).
- Region Six (Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, Mason, Thurston, Pierce, Pacific, and Kitsap counties).
- Any county in the state.

The responsibility of the advisory group is to communicate with other master hunters, solicit their input, share their views with other advisory group members and WDFW, and keep them informed of meeting outcomes and progress on the Master Hunter program.

Letters of interest must be received by Sept. 30. Those applying must answer three key questions in their letter, said Mike Kuttel, Master Hunter policy lead.

“They must tell us why they want to be a member, what qualifies them to be a member, and how they can help achieve the advisory group’s vision,” he said.

After the letters are reviewed, applicants selected for an interview will be required to attend the Oct. 23 meeting of the Master Hunter Advisory Group, either in person or on the phone to answer follow-up questions, Kuttel said. The meeting will be held at the Quality Inn in Ellensburg, Wash., beginning at 9:00 a.m. Mileage expenses will be covered.

The advisory group meets at least four times a year. Members serve as volunteers and do not receive direct compensation for their work, but travel reimbursement is available. Active members can expect to donate up to 200 hours of their time each year and will participate in master hunter orientation, information and outreach, and special hunt management meetings held near their area of residence.

The application process is open to all certified master hunters with no ongoing legal proceedings or convictions in the last 10 years under the state’s fish and wildlife enforcement code (RCW 77.15), Kuttel said. Finalists also must authorize a criminal background check conducted by WDFW, but at no cost to them.

Kuttel advises interested individuals to thoroughly review the Master Hunter web site (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/masterhunter/>), paying particular attention to the bylaws, roles and responsibilities, vision statement, and meeting summaries found under the “Advisory Group” section, and to Policy C-6005, WAC 232-12-073, and the Progress Report found under the “Master Hunter Policies and Procedures” section.

Master hunters should send a letter of interest to Mike Kuttel at kuttempk@dfw.wa.gov or Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Enforcement Program, Attn: Mike Kuttel, Hunter Education Division; 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

For more information, call Mike Kuttel at (360) 902-8413.