



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

Notes for MHAG Meeting #17

October 6, 2011 - 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Washington Cattlemen's Association Offices, Ellensburg, WA

Procedural Business

1. Call to order and announcements – The meeting was called to order by Chair Estes at 9:00 a.m. Guests were introduced by the Chair:

Lee Van Patten – visiting Master Hunter

Walt Christensen – GMAC Chair

Jim Gildersleeve – Master Hunter and MH Hunt Coordinator

MHAG Members Present:

Mike Estes, Chair

Mike Britton, Vice Chair

Mike Ward

Dennis Clay

Ron Poppe

Harold Costa

Jim Fitzgerald

Craig Broadhead

Jim Reinbold, Secretary

MHAG Members Absent:

Tani Iwashita

Richard Mathisen

Jim Zimmerman

Ted Wolkenhauer

(Iwashita, Mathisen, and Zimmerman absences are excused. A decision about Wolkenhauer's absence is deferred until after discussion between Wolkenhauer and the MHAG Chair.)

WDFW Staff:

Lt. Eric Anderson – Liaison

Anthony Novack

2. Approval of Meeting #16 Notes from June 16, 2011- Motion for approval by Harold Costa and seconded by Ron Poppe. Passed unanimously.

3. Confirm Election of Vice Chair – Dennis Clay moved to confirm Mike Britton as Vice Chair, seconded by Harold Costa. Passed unanimously.

Old Business

4. Reports from Committee Chairs

- Information & Outreach – Mike Ward presented the questions for the Master Hunter survey. Lt. Anderson relayed concerns that the Chief has with the purpose and rationale of the survey. It was explained that unlike most WDFW surveys that have a single purpose, this survey has multiple purposes including gauging the extent to which Master Hunters will participate, testing the WDFW MH e-mail list to see if the addresses are current, and getting feedback on a variety of MHPP topics that are of interest to MHAG. Lt. Anderson stated he can provide the e-mail list of Master Hunters to MHAG to conduct the survey. He also suggested that only a few questions be put on Survey Monkey which would allow Master Hunters to contact MHAG if they are interested in participating in the full survey which could be sent to those interested. Discussion turned toward timing of the survey and the availability of WDFW staff to support the activity. Discussion moved towards setting up a private e-mail address (e.g. gmail account) for MHAG to use for the survey and other communications with Master Hunters. The address can be noted on the MH website and in the WDFW news release about the survey. Dennis Clay moved to have a single central e-mail address and that it be posted on the website and noted in WDFW news release. Harold Costa seconded the motion. Passed unanimously. Harold Costa moved to have the survey ready to be issued in January or February 2012 with Dennis Clay seconding the motion. Passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEM – 17-1 Chair Mike Estes will contact Bob Cromwell to set up e-mail address account.

There was some further discussion about giving community service time for taking the survey. It was decided to leave that up to Lt. Anderson.

- Ways & Means – Mike Britton reported that the ALEA grant application needs to be in by February 2012. He reported that Joey McCanna is the Game Bird Specialist in Spokane who is also the contact for the landowner program. He stated that the recently received federal USDA grant funding would be primarily targeting payments to property owners. The need for contacting regional biologists to establish property owner relationships would be part of the grant. The ALEA application by MHAG will be ready for review in January. The application will target MH assistance to enhance private property hunter access. Jim Fitzgerald will assist.

5. Reports on Action Items (As shown below)

- ACTION ITEM – 16-1 – Lt Anderson to check about creating a WDFW e-mail address for MHAG. – The idea was determined not to be feasible due to WDFW policies and

procedures pertaining to use of official e-mail accounts. Completed and closed – see agenda item #4 above.

- ACTION ITEM – 16-2 – Lt Anderson to confirm availability of using Survey Monkey for Master Hunter survey. – Completed and closed – see agenda item #4 above.
- ACTION ITEM – 16-3 - Mike Britton will chair a subcommittee to prepare ALEA Grant requests for the next application period (2012). – Completed and closed. See agenda item #4 above.
- ACTION ITEM – 16-4 – Mike Estes will poll the members regarding the date for the next meeting. – Completed and Closed.
- ACTION ITEM – 14-1 – Report to MHAG on grant notification for hunter behavior – Anthony Novack. – Completed and closed. See agenda item 5A.
- ACTION ITEM – 14-5 – CORT Class requirements – Lt. Anderson to confirm requirement revision. – Discussion was held on considering whether to require CORT for initial certification or to modify the requirement to give opportunity for applicants to take the course in a reasonable time frame. Lt. Anderson noted that difficulty in obtaining CORT training due to frequently canceled classes is the biggest issue/complaint that he and Tracy Loveless have to respond to enrollees about. It was decided to rescind the Meeting #16 action and to leave the requirements as currently required. Lt. Anderson will work with Lt. Crown and Eyes In The Woods President Kyle Winton towards training presenters that are not enforcement personnel. Harold Costa moved to rescind the past action on CORT and suggest that Lt. Crown put forth a program to allow CORT trainers be non-enforcement personnel. Jim Fitzgerald seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.
- ACTION ITEM – 13-5 – Hunt Coordinator Program – Mike Estes to follow up with contact with the Department – Nate Pamplin. – Complete and closed. Hunt Coordinator draft guidelines were issued and implemented in September 2011.
- ACTION ITEM – 13-6 – I&O Meetings – to be part of the survey program noted in agenda item 4 above. Closed.
- ACTION ITEM – 13-7 – Master Hunter Application Orientation Meetings – see Action item 16-1. – Orientation meetings for potential applicants to the MHPP are not envisioned for the foreseeable future due to WDFW staff and budget constraints.

5A. Hunt Behavior Study MOU / Elk Area 3911 Partnership - Anthony Novack presented an exercise with envelopes to show the anonymous nature of the survey. The survey questions were issued to Central Washington University and WDFW Enforcement staff for comments. The survey will be mailed out to 200 Master Hunters as a test group. The results will be presented to MHAG before released. Chair Mike Estes signed the memo of understanding between WDFW, CWU and MHAG.

Anthony reported on a BGMR meeting discussion about MH volunteers for fencing projects. BGMR suggested that only Master Hunters who do volunteer work in Elk Area 3911 be allowed to participate in the 3911 elk hunt. The difficulties of implementing such a requirement were discussed. Anthony was reminded that volunteer project opportunities can be advertised on the MH website.

3911 report – There may be hotspot hunt opportunities for antlerless deer for Master Hunters in the area to resolve landowner damage complaints.

New Business

6. Liaison Report – Lt. Anderson reported the MHPP program statistics as of the end of September 2011. There are currently 1923 Master Hunters, there were 708 applicants, 72 have completed all certification requirements, 15 were rejected due to background checks, 217 have tested, 60 passed on the first attempt, 53 passed on the second attempt, 20 failed the test, and 5 Master Hunters have been removed for life due to transgressions.

Lt. Anderson discussed the spring bear damage hunt by Master Hunters on commercial timber properties. A survey was sent to Master Hunters in Lewis, Mason, Thurston and Pacific counties asking whether the hunter was interested in participating in a bear damage control hunt. The survey received a 98% favorable return rate. Timber and property owners were issued 16 bait permits plus a list of Master Hunters in regions 4, 5 and 6. Master Hunters are considered agents of the state for the purpose of the bear hunt. Only two bears were harvested by Master Hunters during the spring pilot program. The new Discovery Pass program was discussed. Volunteer hours for MHPP certification or re-certification do not count towards the Discovery Pass. Only volunteer hours for operation and maintenance of facilities qualifies towards the “free” pass. Steve Sherlock is the WDFW volunteer hour coordinator for the Discovery Pass. There was a question about unspent balance of the MHPP account and any unused MH fees that were previously accounted for by WHEIA. The funds were turned over to WDFW and are being used towards the MHPP program. Lt. Anderson was uncertain as to the amount of funds left.

7. Vacancies and Appointments: Period of Appointment and Number of Members – the MHAG bylaws allow up to 15 members. There are presently 13 members. The terms of 4 current members expire in March 2012. It was suggested that the expiring positions should be advertised but there is no immediate need to advertise to fill the vacant positions.

8. WDFW Use of Volunteers – Chair Estes discussed the Director’s letter dated August 3, 2011, and the Director’s personal commitment to increase the use of volunteers by WDFW. James Chandler is the new WDFW volunteer coordinator. Continuing budget issues may increase opportunities where volunteers may be used to fill areas of need. This issue will be held in abeyance for future reference and discussions with the Director.

9. Permit Numbers for MHPP Hunts – Chair Estes noted that discussions were held with Nate Pamplin, Dave Ware, and Matt Monda (Region 2 Wildlife Biologist) about the number of permits offered for Malaga (2701) and Peshastin (2702) Master Hunter elk hunts. The number of permits is inconsistent with the level of elk damage and opportunity to hunt or harvest an animal. As an example, fewer than 5% of the hunters for the Peshastin unit had an opportunity to hunt last year and only one harvested an animal. WDFW has committed to more closely match the number of permits to anticipated need and opportunity for future hunts.

10. 20th Anniversary Recognition Event Planning – Chair Estes noted that 2012 marks the 20th year of the Master Hunter Permit Program (formerly Advanced Hunter Education Program). Dennis Clay offered to write an article for the website noting the history and accomplishments of the program.

ACTION ITEM 17-2 – Dennis Clay to write article for 20th year anniversary of MHPP.

11. Presentations by others

- Proposal to Allow Crossbow Use During MHPP Hunts - Jim Gildersleeve presented a handout noting a proposal to allow MH use of crossbows in areas where other hunting instruments cannot be used safely. Lt. Anderson stated that it was already allowed and noted that page 73 of the 2011 Big Game hunting pamphlet has that information. There is an apparent misunderstanding or misinterpretation by enforcement officers in Mr. Gildersleeve's area. Lt. Anderson said that he will handle the clarification.

12. Other Topics

- Tweaking of the Master Hunter Examination – It was decided that the exams are okay for the time being due to a recent re-write and multiple versions of the test. Lt. Anderson will be the focal point for any questions. This could be a 2012 project.
- Review Bylaws – No changes are needed at this time but an annual review is always advisable.
- Potential for the MHPP to move from Enforcement to the Wildlife Program – Lt. Anderson said there were cursory discussions several months ago but there have been no recent discussions.
- Development of a Master Hunter Wall of Excellence – Chair Estes suggested that part of the website be designated for posting of projects, questions designed by Dennis Clay which could also be part of the central e-mail program and any positive programs, articles or projects to include photos. It is important to keep the website updated.
- Web page updating and monitoring – A list of persons whose permits expire during current year will not be added to the web because the expiration date is already on each Master Hunter's permit card and hunting license.
- FAQ expansion and updating – Craig Broadhead to review present Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that are posted on the MHPP web page for relevance and additional educational outreach opportunities.
ACTION ITEM 17-3 – Craig to review FAQ's
- Posting of the TIP Brochure – Lt. Anderson reported that the "Turn in a Poacher" material is already posted on the WDFW Enforcement web page.
- GMAC interface – Walt Christensen noted that the next GMAC meeting will be on December 3 at a location yet to be determined. Walt will let MHAG know the location when decided.
- Criteria for Master Hunter hunts – There was a discussion about whether a common and full understanding has developed between MHAG, GMAC, and the WDFW Wildlife Program about the criteria for MH hunts and that Master Hunters should not be considered to be a user group.
- Top Issues – Chair Estes previously requested each MHAG member to identify the top issues that MHAG needs to address during the next six months. The lists were collected and will be discussed at a future meeting.

Conclusion

13. Recap Action Items – Jim Reinbold recapped new action items from this meeting as noted below.

14. Next meeting Date and Location – Discussion took place on dates in January, either the 13th or 27th. It was suggested that Fridays might be a better day for most. It was decided that the Chair will e-mail suggested dates for approval.

Possible issues for next meeting-

Survey

Central e-mail

ALEA application

ACTION ITEMS:

17-1 – Chair Estes contacting Bob Cromwell for central e-mail account

17-2 – Dennis Clay to write 20 year history article for MHPP

17-3 – Craig Broadhead and Chair Estes with Lt. Anderson review FAQ's