

MEETING NOTES
WDFW Master Hunter Advisory Group
Meeting Number 10
December 3, 2009
Ellensburg

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

Attending were:

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

Capt Rich Mann *
Sgt Eric Anderson *
Anthony Novack (part time) *

*WDFW

Absent: Brian Davern
Bob Holtfreter

1. Call to order and Announcements

After call to order, MHAG Chair Vincent reviewed the day's agenda (attached) and discussed administrative matters related to the Meeting. Expense and service forms were collected by Mr Britton.

2. Approval of Notes from Meeting No. 9 September 3, 2009

The Notes were approved as distributed.

3. Update on 3911 hunt

Mr Novack reviewed recent 3911 hunt results and lessons learned. He advised that 1) early pressure (August or sooner) was a continuing requirement, 2) damage hunting

during the general (rifle) season was counterproductive, and 3) limited specific pressure from December on was needed.

The issue during the general season is that usually elk are seeking refuge within the 3911 area, rather than damaging crops by feeding. Accordingly damage hunting during this period appears to be removing cows unnecessarily.

Options for conforming the program to the natural behavior of the elk as it has currently evolved were provided for discussion (attached). MHAG advice was requested. Input from the Big Game Roundtable and the Kittitas Fish and Stream Club also will be considered.

After discussion, the MHAG consensus was in favor of Option C:

Master Hunter General season August 1st through October 29th
Master Hunter General season November 13th - December 1st
Master Hunter by Permit only December 1st – February 28th

The Group also favored limiting each Master Hunter to one cow per season in 3911. Mr Novack was asked whether a “one cow per season” limitation would apply to permit hunters; could the hunter harvest an elk during the early part of the 3911 season and also utilize a 3911 permit? Mr Novack said that the question will be considered.

Mr Novack will advise the group regarding the input from the other organizations.

4. Election of Officers for 2010

Following are the election results as conducted by secret ballot:

Chair: Dustin Albright
Vice Chair: Bob Cromwell
Secretary: Jim Reinbold *

* MHAG Secretary serves for 2 years. Other officer’s terms are for 1 year.

5. Steering the Course

Sgt Anderson, WDFW Liaison, presented Chair Vincent with a lensatic compass, symbolic of the office of MHAG Chair, and representing the importance of steering the course of the Master Hunter Advisory Group. At the close of this meeting, Chair Vincent, now past Chair, presented the MHAG Compass to new Chair Albright.

6. MHAG Mission and direction

Sgt Anderson led a discussion of the MHAG mission and immediate needs. He noted that as an Advisory Group, a priority mission element is advice to the Director regarding

the Master Hunter Program. He also noted that in the past 2 years, a considerable amount of organizational work had been done, and procedural decisions made, but not fully documented. The need for a Policy Manual was recognized (next item).

A wide ranging discussion followed. It was noted that the Vision of the MHAG and the WAC go beyond advice to the Director, and embrace Stewardship of the Hunt. Continuing concerns regarding the image of hunting and of Master Hunters were voiced. Feedback from Program applicants during test proctoring indicates that we still have people applying because of a perception that Master Hunters have an easier chance to harvest an elk than do recreational hunters. Some members feel that it is too easy to become a Master Hunter and to re-certify.

Capt Mann reported on 2008 and 2009 violations during the 3911 hunt. He noted that there had been a drop in violations since the new program had been in place. Common violations include: failing to tag, hunting outside the boundary, trespass and failing to wear hunter orange. There also continue to be instances of poor judgment in shot selection and related ethics that don't rise to the level of violation but are inconsistent with the Master Hunter ideal.

Means of removing such people from the Program and keeping them from applying in the first place were discussed. This has been a continuing item of concern. While there has been significant progress, it was the consensus that more effort is needed. The upcoming Orientation Meetings for potential applicants will provide a forum for reaching a portion of this population. It is hoped that having the Master Hunter designator on our hunting licenses will facilitate removal of unethical Master Hunters from the Program. It is expected that Wildlife Officers who encounter a Master Hunter in a potential violation will not be inclined to be lenient.

Capt Mann reported that as part of the recent "failure to tag" violation (above), the Wildlife officer impounded the Master Hunter's Permit Card. This effectively removes the cited hunter from the Program immediately.

7. Policy Working Group

The elements of a draft MHAG policy manual were discussed. Much work has already been documented and will be included. Sgt Anderson noted that the Director or designee will approve the Policy Manual. He provided current copies of the following:

- WAC 323-12-073 Master Hunter Permit Program
- WDFW Commission Policy Decision: Master Hunter program
- Bylaws
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Vision, Motto and Code of Ethics
- Test Proctor Procedures

It was noted that Protocols for Hunt Masters have previously been approved by the MHAG and can be included.

The new member selection process is in place (see below, next) but not formally documented. This task is part of the effort.

Additional work on testing is needed. The MHAG discussed whether to limit the number of re-tests and how to conduct them. Assistance to disabled hunters was discussed. At some point the curriculum should be critically re-examined. It was agreed that a second test should be developed.

Action Item No. 1: A Policy Working Group is formed: Mr Cromwell, leader, Messers Reinbold, Albright, Estes and Madison, working members and Mr Mathisen, of council.

Action Item No. 2: Mr Vincent will provide the Disability Certification Form to the Policy Working Group.

Action Item No. 3: The Policy Working Group will re-evaluate the test process and provide recommendations to the MHAG at the next Meeting.

8. New member selection process: The status of the selection process for the next round of (up to) 5 new MHAG members was discussed. The MHAG Executive Committee has reviewed all applications and narrowed the list of applicants to 5 based on their letters of interest, knowledge of the individual and geographic distribution. The MHAG accepted the recommendations of the Executive Committee by unanimous consent.

It was decided that the Chair would contact the candidates and advise them of their status. Mr Albright and Sgt Anderson will select a day for the phone interviews. The interview location would most likely be at the Olympia WDFW headquarters. The interviews will be open to any members of the MHAG who wanted to be present or participate by telephone conference call.

The MHAG adopted Mr Cromwell's draft set of questions as modified.

Action Item No.4: Sgt. Anderson and Mr Albright will work together to make arrangements for the telephone interviews.

9. Reports on Action Items from Meeting No. 9:

All Action Items were completed except as discussed below.

2010 Orientation Meetings for new applicants: Mr Madison reported on arrangements for the Eastside Meeting. It will be held beginning at 9AM on Saturday, January 9 in Yakima. He provided a draft news release. Mr Madison will be assisted by Messers Reinbold, Estes and Boone, Capt Mann and Sgt Sprecher.

Sgt Anderson expressed concern regarding the status of the PowerPoint presentation. He agreed to review it and make secure a room for the Westside Meeting, to be held in Olympia (target date: January 16).

Action Item No.5: Sgt Anderson will review the Orientation Meeting charts, secure a Westside meeting room, prepare news releases and post to the website.

Action Item No.6: Mr Coulbourn, leader, Messers Albright and Cromwell, and Sgt Anderson will conduct the Westside meeting.

2010 Information and Outreach Meetings: After considerable discussion led by Mr Albright, it was agreed to put the 2010 I&O Meetings on “hold” pending further discussion and evaluation of content for effectiveness. The concept for this meeting remains unresolved. The consensus is that some sort of periodic meeting aimed at currently certified Master Hunters is needed to exchange information and to reinforce the importance of improving the image of hunting and the hunter, among other things.

During the MHAG Meeting No 9, it had tentatively been agreed to continue with the 2 meeting concept for 2010. Consideration was to be given to inviting Jim Posewitz, the renowned advocate for Hunter Ethics, to make presentations at one of these sessions. Means of funding both Mr Posewitz and videotaping were discussed. It was decided to pursue an ALEA grant to support this initiative and not to proceed with it until funding was secured.

Action Item No. 7: Mr Albright and Sgt Anderson will re-evaluate the I&O Meeting concept and report back to the MHAG at our next meeting.

Evaluation of effectiveness of Orientation Meetings (Continuing Action Item): Mr Estes provided an update. Conclusions should be available at our next meeting. It has been necessary to wait until the window for testing passed and all results were in.

Illegal Behaviour Study MOU: Mr Estes reported that a draft MOU is being reviewed by CWU, the WDFW and MHAG. Copies of the draft MOU were distributed. The signatory parties are amenable to the concept. No report from Mr Holtfreter was available.

“Wall of Shame”: This is a continuing initiative involving the publishing of information on the web-site about Master Hunters who have violated laws and regulations, and hence been suspended from the Program. Sgt Anderson reported that the necessary database and filing system are being developed. Per discussion at this meeting, the concept is to publish general descriptions of the violations without names, but with sufficient detail to allow an interested party to connect the report to known violations from the News Media or from local knowledge. The incident report published by Hunter Ed may be a useful model.

10. Hot Spot hunts: Capt Mann discussed the Hot Spot tool. Region Captains have the authority to designate the hunters to respond to depredation problems. There are several types of permits:

Landowner Preference Permit: No open tag needed; landowner and family hunts; damage claim is waived.

Landowner Access Permit: Landowner may charge hunters for access to their property; open tag required.

Kill Permit: Any (game or non-game) animal; carcass returned to State.

Hot Spot Permit: Open tag; scheduled hunt; excessive work to arrange.

11. GPS locator: Mr Cromwell updated the MHAG on the status of his ongoing project to load a GPS device with GMU boundaries from WDFW on line information. He has a 4 month on-the-ground test program with around 30 participants underway. The possibilities for error include the validity of the Department's data and conversion errors. Field tests to date generally show excellent correlation to actual position, however some significant errors have been found.

12. ALEA Grant status: Mr Britton provided a summary explanation of reporting requirements. MHAG members should record and report all time spent on MHAG activities. Some members do not currently comply and hence we are under-reporting volunteer hours. Members were urged to do better.

Mr Britton is preparing a second ALEA Grant request.

13. WHEIA MHAG Account: Mr Costa noted that WHEIA manages an account for MHAG funds as an accommodation to the WDFW. The account collects fees for applications and other transactions, and disburses funds for related expenses. With the change in WDFW Liaison to Sgt Anderson, signature authority and oversight changes are required.

Action Item No. 8: Messers Costa and Albright, and Sgt Anderson will review the status of the WHEIA MHAG account, make the necessary changes in signature authority and report back to the MHAG at our next meeting.

Next meeting: Meeting No. 11: Thursday, February 18, 2010 in Ellensburg: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 3 PM, all agenda items having been addressed.

Respectfully Submitted,
George Coulbourn

Attachments:

Action Items, Meeting No 9

Action Items, Meeting No 10

Agenda

Attachment

MHAG Action Items Meeting No 9

Action Item No. 1: Mr Davern will discuss possibilities with Mr Pesowitz.

Action Item No 2: Mr Albright will lead the planning for the 2010 I&O meetings. Messers Davern, Coulbourn, Mathisen and Estes will assist.

Action Item No. 3: Mr Madison will lead the planning for the 2010 Orientation Meetings. Mr Coulbourn will assist. The Eastside location must be identified, speakers selected and the PowerPoint presentation reviewed for currency.

Action Item No 4: Mr Estes will draft an MOU among CWU, WDFW and the MHAG regarding the Illegal Behavior study.

Action Item No 5: Mr Holtfreter will look into CWU support for an MOU and for the follow-on study.

Action Item No. 6: Sgt Anderson will develop a model for the web-site.

Action Item No. 7: Mr Davern will draft a preface to the "Wall of Shame". Mr Coulbourn will assist.

Action Item No. 8: Messers Costa and Albright, and Sgt Anderson will review the status of the WHEIA MHAG account, make the necessary changes in signature authority and report back to the MHAG at our next meeting.

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?

MHAG Action Items Meeting No 10

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Mtg # 10 Continuing Action Item No 5: Mr Holtfreter will look into CWU support for an MOU and for the follow-on study.

Mtg # 10 Continuing Action Item No. 6: Sgt Anderson will develop a model for the web-site “Wall of Shame” posting.

Agenda for MHAG Meeting #10
Ellensburg Quality Inn, Fireside Room
December 3, 2009
9:00 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.

9:00 – 9:10: Call to order, Announcements & Approval of meeting notes from September 3 business meeting #9

9:10 – 9:30: Update on 3911 hunt (Anthony Novack)

9:30 – 9:40: Elections - **Executive Committee Officers**

Chair

– Mr. Albright

Vice Chair

- Mr. Cromwell
- Mr. Poppe

Secretary

- Mr. Mathisen
- Mr. Reinbold

9:40 – 11:00: Discussion on Where the Master Hunter Program and Advisory group goes.

- Liaison address view on current issues and program needs
- Discussion on “Mission Drift”
- Establish additional goals
- Need for additional meetings

✓ **Policy manual**

- Need for and why (some topics that need to be addressed)

✓ **Test issues**

- Proctor Certification
- Time limit (when taking vs. # on ?’s)
- Limit on # of times you can take?
- Test security & rotation
- Need for new (additional) test questions
- Evaluation of curriculum
- ADA accommodations (application need)

✓ **Hunt Masters**

- Define what this is & protocols needed
- Review current documents

✓ **Information & Orientation Meetings**

- Why do we do this (pick of what is important to cover)
- Draft procedures to follow
- # of meetings per year
- Location of meetings
- Establishing committee coordination and duties

✓ **MHAG appointment process**

- Protocols/procedures to follow
- Application review process
- Approved interview questions
- Time line to follow
- Letter to applicants

11:00-11:10: Break

(Executive session- Current MHAG members & WDFW Liaison only)

11:10-12:00: New MHAG Applicant Appointments

- Approval and adoption of MHAG appointment process
- Review of applicants
- Voting to accept
- Discussion and adoption of interview questions
- Set-up telephone interview

12:00 – 1:00 Working lunch (action Items from last meeting)

- Action item #1 - Mr. Posewitz presenting at the I&O meetings (Mr. Davern)
- Action item #2 - Planning update for 2010 I&O meetings (Mr. Davern)
- Action Item #3- Planning update for 2010 Orientation meetings (Mr. Madison)
- Action item #4- Draft MOU update for illegal behavior study (Mr. Estes)
- Action item#5- Status on CWU support for MOU and needed follow-up study (Mr. Holfreter)
- Action Item #6- Model for “wall of shame” on website (Sgt. Anderson)
- Action Item #7- Draft preface for “wall of shame” (Mr. Davern)
- Any unfinished Action items from meeting #8

1:00-1:10: Chief Messages/Updates ***(if any)***

1:10 – 2:00: Planning Discussion I&O meeting standardization (Mr. Albright)

- Creation of planning team
- Selection of locations
- Selection of dates
- Discussion on agendas and meeting contents (review past I&O agendas)

2:00 – 2:05: Progress on Quinault Valley Signage Project (Costa and Holland)

2:05 – 2:15: Liaison Update (Sgt. Anderson).

- Use of Master Hunters as part of the Hot Spot damage control concept.
- Posting of GPS Boundary project (Mr. Cromwell).
- Discussion of funding of Jim Posewitz via WHEIA Account &Feb I/O meeting
- Master Hunter license designator
- “Wall of Shame” update

2:15 – 2:30 ***(due to weather concerns)***

- Good of the Order
- Adjournment

3911 Improvement Options

- 1) *Shorten the 3911 general season for Master hunters by a few months and eliminate its overlap with the elk modern firearm season. Allow Master hunters by permit after the cutoff date*
 - Option A – No changes to current season
 - Option B – Master Hunter General season August 1st through Oct 29th (i.e. day before Elk modern firearm):
Master Hunter by Permit only from November 13th – February 28th
 - Option C - Master Hunter General season August 1st through October 29th
Master Hunter General season November 13th - December 1st
Master Hunter by Permit only December 1st – February 28th

- 2) *Allow only one cow to be harvested in 3911 per hunter per season.* Rationale: This action would eliminate double dippers and may save approximately 24 elk cows per year.

Further Discussion item: A) How many permittees is enough? B) Should Late season permits be on call and only utilized when an elk problem occurs or, should permittees be free to hunt on their own time?

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