

## Summary

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**Meeting dates:** April 12-13, 2013

**Agenda item 7:** Transfer of Hunter Education Division and Certain Wildlife Management Responsibilities from the Law Enforcement Program to the Wildlife Program -**Briefing**

**Presenter(s):** Bruce Bjork, Chief, Law Enforcement Program  
Nate Pamplin, Assistant Director, Wildlife Program

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### **Background summary:**

Department staff will brief the Commission on an organizational and operational change the Director approved in January 2013 between the Law Enforcement and Wildlife Program. The change involves two functional areas: 1) the hunter education division and 2) the primary responsibility for addressing problem wildlife conflicts.

Currently, the Hunter Education Division resides within the Law Enforcement Program. The Division administers the hunter education program and Master Hunter Permit Program. Over 13,000 students are taught hunter education by 900 volunteer hunter education instructors.

The transfer is moving the Hunter Education Division from the Law Enforcement Program to the Wildlife Program. This better aligns agency functions within a single Program, strengthening the link between (1) training and recruiting the next generation of hunters and (2) providing hunting and other wildlife-related recreational opportunities to our public.

The involvement of Fish and Wildlife Police Officers in hunter education training is still considered an integral aspect of the process and this proposal retains the expectation of, and funding for Officer participation in classes moving forward. However, transferring the management of the division to the Wildlife Program better positions the Law Enforcement Program to focus on its primary mission of protecting our natural resources and the public they serve.

Currently, the responsibility for managing problem wildlife is a shared responsibility between the Law Enforcement Program and Wildlife Program. This proposal transfers the majority of wildlife conflict management duties currently conducted within the Law Enforcement Program to the Wildlife Program. The transfer better aligns agency functions within a single Program and improves the department's ability to meet the needs of our stakeholders.

Fish and Wildlife Police Officer response to wildlife situations where a threat to public safety may exist is still considered a primary responsibility of the Law Enforcement Program and this proposal includes the continued expectation of, and funding for, Officer involvement in dangerous wildlife incident response and mitigation. However, by transferring the majority of the management for the state's wildlife to the Wildlife Program, the agency can provide greater focus and expertise on developing long-term solutions regarding wildlife conflict, while again, better positioning the Law Enforcement Program to carry out its primary mission.

The briefing will review the implementation and timeline of the transfer, with the majority of the transfer going into effect on July 1, 2013, at the start of the 13-15BN.

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**Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:**

N/A- Briefing Only

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**Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

N/A- Briefing Only

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**Action requested:**

N/A Briefing Only

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**Draft motion language:**

N/A Briefing Only

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**Justification for Commission action:**

N/A Briefing Only

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**Communications Plan:**

A briefing on the transfer has been provided to the Master Hunters Advisory Group, Game Management Advisory Council, the Hunter Education Instructor Advisory Council, and Wildlife and Law Enforcement Program staff.

Letters will be sent to enrolled Master Hunters and Hunter Education Instructors later this spring.