

**MINUTES OF THE CHURCHILL COUNTY
ADVISORY BOARD TO MANAGE WILDLIFE**

**155 N. Taylor St., Fallon, NV 89406
November 13, 2024**

Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife was called to order at 7:03 PM on November 13, 2024.

PRESENT:

Member Peggy A. Hughes, Chair
Member Jason Sibley
Member Andrew Howells
Deputy Clerk of the Board Pamela D. Moore
Deputy Clerk Crystal Muschetto
Jake Ward, Carson Lake Management Area
Cooper Munson, Nevada Department of
Wildlife
Rick Laffins, Nevada Department of Wildlife
Member Jim Curran
Member Aubry Burgess

ABSENT:

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the board and public.

Public Comment:

Chair Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none.

Verification of the Posting of the Agenda:

It was verified by Pamela D. Moore, Deputy Clerk of the Board, that the Agenda for this meeting was posted on the 6th day of November, 2024, between the hours of 8:00 and 11:00 AM at all of the locations listed on the Agenda, in accordance with NRS 241.

Consideration and possible action re: Approval of Agenda as submitted or revised:

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve the Agenda as submitted. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Consideration and possible action re: Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on:

A- September 25, 2024.

The Minutes of the meeting held on September 25, 2024 are presented for the board's consideration and approval.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on September 25, 2024 as presented. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Appointments:

A- Update on the letter to County Advisory Boards regarding support for a salvage regulation for Churchill County, Nevada.

Deputy Clerk Moore will provide an update on the letter sent to the other County Advisory Boards (CABs) seeking support for a salvage regulation to benefit our communities and the management of wildlife in Nevada.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

None; Informational Only

Deputy Clerk Moore reported that we have received no further responses from any CABs. Member Sibley said he did not have the chance to contact Idaho. It was agreed that Member Sibley would reach out to Idaho to find out the steps they took and report at the next meeting.

B- Discussion with Jake Ward from the Nevada Department of Wildlife about the Carson Lake Pasture Management Plan.

The board will hear an update and have discussion with Jake Ward, from the Nevada Department of Wildlife, concerning the Carson Lake Pasture Management Area.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: None; Informational Only

Jake Ward, Supervisor, Carson Lake Wildlife Management Area, said what questions do you all have for me? Member Jason Sibley said the last time we spoke, you mentioned you were still working on putting together the Management Plan. I am curious, how much progress has been made? Will trapping be allowed out there? Mr. Ward said the Management Plan is still, basically, where it was the last time we spoke. We have had some staff changes, so Mike Soroka is no longer with the Department of Wildlife as he moved to a different agency. We are currently working on replacing the Staff Specialist for Wildlife Management Areas. I am not involved in the hiring process but, once we have someone in that role, finalizing the Management Plan will be a priority. I do know parts of it are being worked on collaboratively by Diversity, Game, and Habitat divisions but we have not seen a solid draft yet.

Member Howells said, from what I recall, even with Jim and the other board members, we have always emphasized that we do not want Carson Lake managed like all other Wildlife Management Areas. Carson Lake is unique and it is one of the oldest duck clubs in Nevada.

There are special circumstances here and we want to make sure that is recognized in the plan. Mr. Ward said absolutely, I understand that concern.

Trapping was approved at Carson Lake during the Commission meeting in March. Member Sibley said trapping is legal this year? Mr. Ward said yes but it is on a first-come, first-served basis. You will need a permit from me. Most management areas require a permit and I will sign off on it. You will also need the Carson Lake permit and a \$60 daily permit. We hope to get some Muskrat traps. Member Sibley said are they getting thick out there? Mr. Ward said what happens, as you are driving down the road, the road begins to collapse along with ditches. Member Sibley said is that going to be limited to muskrats or will coyote trapping be included too? Member Howells said I spoke with Isaac, the Wildlife Management Supervisor for the region. Isaac said coyote trapping will not be allowed—we will work with Wildlife Services on that, especially during hunting season, to avoid conflicts with Quail and Dove hunters. However, you can shoot coyotes in the designated rifle area.

Member Sibley said is steel shot required for hunting? Mr. Ward said steel shot is required for shotguns but not for rifles, as far as I know. Member Howells said there is still a designated rifle area, correct? Mr. Ward said yes, though that could change based on future assessments.

Member Sibley said has the management area recovered from the last two big water events? Are they fully operational? Mr. Ward said most of the roads are drivable now, except for a small section in the southeast corner, which remains closed due to severe damage. We have been running dozers, hauling materials and repairing levees. A few large breaks in the levees made it challenging to manage water flow but we have made significant progress. Irrigation season ends on November 15 and we have our full water allocations completed by then. Member Sibley said are all the ponds full? Mr. Ward said yes, the Sprig, Rice, York, and Grimes Ponds are all full. We also have water in the Big Water, the Sump, the Square, A-19, Cameron Pond, and Old Man's Pond.

We conducted a duck count about two weeks ago and found approximately 52,000 ducks at Carson Lake. The numbers are strong. Over the past few weeks, hunters have averaged over four ducks per person. Member Sibley said have there been any major botulism issues this year? Mr. Ward said fortunately, no major outbreaks this year. In 2018, we lost around 15,000 birds to botulism. This year, we did not detect any cases until mid-September. We prepared in advance by building a duck hospital in June but the real difference was in water management. We irrigated pastures up to the lake's edge and then stopped instead of letting water continuously flow in. This allowed us to drop the water levels significantly through evaporation, and it worked well. We lowered the lake by over two feet in just a couple of months. We got it down to a mudflat by September 1st. We started taking water on September 3rd, starting in the Sprig. Once we got the bag fixed, it was holding water. That was the unit where we found the majority of botulism cases. It was unclear whether the birds were getting sick elsewhere and coming to the Sprig for freshwater or if they were getting sick in the Sprig. We ran surveys two to three times a week, which showed 132 sick ducks, 47 dead ducks (found in the pond), 86 shorebirds, 7 dead shorebirds, and 5 birds brought to the hospital that did not survive or went to rehab. We achieved a 96% recovery rate between the hospital and rehab. We

got the water levels down quickly enough that we did not have a big issue. We picked up the dead birds we found, which effectively stopped the maggot cycle. In my eyes, it was definitely a win. Now that we have had the first freeze of the year, botulism is no longer a concern for this season. Klamath had some issues up north and I was concerned. There were definitely a lot of questions about what to do going into the summer but we made the right decision and it worked and we were successful.

Getting to those breaks in the dike was critical to our efforts this year. Being able to separate the pond and avoid having one huge lake, with shallow water spread across it, was very important and it worked. TCID also helped with some repairs. They brought out equipment, moved dirt around, and provided a couple of hundred yards of material to reinforce the dikes. We did not have to pay for that and we are incredibly grateful for their help. All divisions within NDOW, Game, Diversity and Habitat contributed to this effort. They lent us equipment, helped build the Duck Hospital and conducted botulism surveys. It was truly a team effort to achieve success.

Other changes to the WMA: all shotgun shells must now be non-toxic, as approved by the Commission. Previously, if you were hunting quail out there, you did not have to use non-toxic shot but now it is a requirement for everyone. The way I was reading about what changed is the three-shell capacity is only for migratory birds. Now, if you are out there hunting quail, you do not have to have a plug in. I believe that goes for the late snow geese season, as well. I think the verbiage specifically changed; they basically removed it.

Member Sibley said hunting antelope is allowed as long as it is in the right area? Mr. Ward said yes or if you are using a bow.

Looking to the future, we will be replacing all of the infrastructure, which was damaged from the flood, including some degraded structures because of age that need to be replaced. Rebuilding the dikes is part of the reason why we kept Big Water levels down. We can access all the dikes from the inside of Big Water. Once it has dried up, we will use a dozer and start pushing material around. Hopefully, we will do a Salt Cedar treatment next year, as well. It will involve, a large-scale mastication and spray and will cut down the treatment for Salt Cedar. A lot of young growth is starting to come in, from where the water levels were and the seeds planted from the flood.

Does anyone have any questions? Member Howells said do you think that Management Plan can be expected by next season? Mr. Ward said I hope so. I think that is going to be a main priority for the next staff specialist. I do not know if the final draft will be complete by then. The plan, specifically for the area, is going to be a very unique Management Plan because there are so many different aspects. I understand the importance of it and will not cut corners just to get something out there. Member Sibley said that is the problem, when that happens and they copy another Management Plan, then it remains the Management Plan for a long time. I think it is a great idea.

C- Consideration and possible action re: Heritage Committee meeting report and Cave Creek Dam Rehabilitation Heritage Account Principal Proposal for \$1,000,000 to assist in the reconstruction of the dam in White Pine County, Nevada.

The Commission will hear a report from the Heritage Committee and consider the Cave Creek Dam Rehabilitation Heritage Account Principal Project Proposal. The department is seeking Heritage Account Principal Project funding, in the amount of \$1,000,000, to assist in the reconstruction of the Cave Creek Dam in White Pine, County.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

No action was taken on this item.

D- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Policy 67, Wild Horse and Burro Update.

A draft report and presentation will be provided to the Commission on the status of wild horses and burros in Nevada as referenced in Commission Policy 67.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: None; Informational Only

Mr. Munson said, from the division side, we often do insulary counts while we are on game division surveys, while trying to coordinate with BLM on that. They tend to hold their foot to the fire when saying how many horses we observe on an annual basis and try to promote gathers, as well. Member Sibley said they are saying right now we have 51,000 horses in Nevada and our max AML is 14,000? Member Howells said is there anything we can do to help with promoting gathers and relocations? Mr. Munson said, if you want, you can comment on BLM gathers when their scoping notices go out. Commenting and supporting those gathers does help. On the other-side of this, they have people who prefer not to gather the horses, on a very broad base, nation-wide. That voice is often heard a lot more than the local voices, which is an issue we are having a lot of problems with, social issues. Ms. Moore said in my office today, we received a scoping letter regarding a gather coming up. If you would like, I will forward the letter to all of you. It will also be on the agenda for November 20, 2024. Member Sibley said we have got to do something. Having four times the number of horses is an issue. I think any hunter in the last 5 to 7 years has seen the effect the horses are having on our wildlife. Mr. Munson said, from a biological perspective, the recruitment of feral horses is about 25% on average per year. To gather the annual recruitment, you would have to gather over 5,000 horses in this state a year, just to stay consistent.

Member Sibley said what are they doing with them when they are gathered? Do they get relocated or sold? Even selling them has become highly regulated. Mr. Munson said, through the adoption program, it transition into a pay-for-adoption. They had a program where they were actually paying you \$500.00 to adopt a horse. If you held the horse for another year you would be allocated an additional \$500.00. As far as mass selling of those individual horses, I do not know what BLM is doing on that. They are trying to promote more adoption in their holding facilities. They also have long-term holding facilities in the mid-west, where a lot of

those horses are being transported to the big grass-lands. Member Sibley said I heard a conversation a while ago that one specific individual was buying 10,000 or 15,000 horses and then it was later found that the horses were being shipped to Canada. Then BLM started restricting the number of horses you can adopt, which is making all of this so much more difficult. Member Howells said I know that Jason said, at the last meeting or the meeting before, that a gather was just conducted in Stillwater.

Mr. Munson said the Department of Wildlife and Wildlife Services have been working on Predator Management throughout 2018 and 2020. NDOW and Wildlife Services are spread a little thin. I do not want to speak for Wildlife Services but we have an abundant amount of predator removal we are looking at accomplishing, while using our Predator Funds and Wildlife Services to conduct that work.

Wildlife Services is hamstrung by restrictions on working in WSAs (Wilderness Study Areas) or Wilderness Areas, so they cannot conduct predator removal in those areas. As a result, we have had to look for contractors to complete some of that work. Member Sibley asked is that a permanent issue? Mr. Munson replied, right now, it is a contract issue. How our contracts are written limits who can conduct that work. For example, anyone applying to do the work cannot also be a guide. There are several stipulations that do not encourage internal residents to take on that type of work.

This item was presented for informational purposes only and no action was taken.

E- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 24-14, Taking of Raptors for Falconry for 2025-2026.

The Commission will consider and may take action to approve the 2025-2026 season dates, species, quotas, limits, closed areas, application procedures and deadlines, and taking of raptors for falconry.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support Commission Regulation 24-14 as presented. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

F- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 24-15 Non-commercial Collection of Reptiles and Amphibians for 2025-2026.

The Commission will consider and may take action to approve the 2025-2026 season and limits for non-commercial hobby collecting of live, unprotected reptiles and amphibians.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Andrew Howells made a motion to support Commission Regulation 24-15 as presented. Member Jason Sibley seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

G- Consideration and possible action re: Commission General Regulation 522, eTag Regulations.

The Commission will hold an adoption to amend Chapter 502 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). This would update the process related to use of game tags in the field and allow the department to offer game tags in an electronic format.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Sibley said is this the second go-around for this? Member Howells said I am looking for changed language here. Member Sibley said I was in support of it previously. Member Howells said I think the biggest question from before is the service and how to deal with your eTag, if you are not in an area with service. Member Sibley said you can opt in or out of location sharing. How are they handling transportation permits? I see it is crossed out in some places. Have you guys been involved in this, as well? I am curious about their thoughts on transportation permits and taxidermy permits. Mr. Ward said not from the game division side. Law enforcement has been involved and is trying to wade through how they would be able to verify information.

Member Howells said even adding the legislation for the virtual tag or permit, everywhere it says you can still have a paper tag. Do you have to carry the paper tag? If you have service and want to use the electronic tag, can you punch it? Mr. Munson said from my understanding, we currently use a canvassery application that will collect data offline. As soon as you get back to service, it pushes all that data and it is saved on your device. Once you click submit, it is saved and cannot be edited.

Member Sibley said it would provide you with a validation code even when being out of service, which I think was the biggest question. Member Howells said what if you get caught with an animal outside a service area when you do not have cell service? Mr. Munson said you have to opt in to the eTag.

Member Andrew Howells made a motion to support Commission General Regulation 522 as presented. Member Jason Sibley seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

H- Consideration and possible action re: Commission General Regulation 523 Heritage Revisions.

The Commission will hold an adoption to amend Chapter 501 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). This regulation would change Heritage Project Awards from one to two years with the possibility of extension.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support Commission General Regulation 523 as presented. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Informational Items:

A- Consideration and possible action re: Items listed on the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners' Agenda for November 15 and 16, 2024.

Should the board want to discuss Items listed on the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners' Agenda for November 15 and 16, 2024, which is provided for the board's consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Other

There was no further discussion of items on the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners' Agenda.

Consider Future Agenda Items:

The board requested that the salvage regulation be on the next Agenda.

Public Comment:

Chair Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 PM.

Approved:


Peggy Hughes, Chair

Approved:


Jim Curran, Vice-Chair

Approved:


Jason Sibley, Member

Approved:



Aubry Burgess, Member

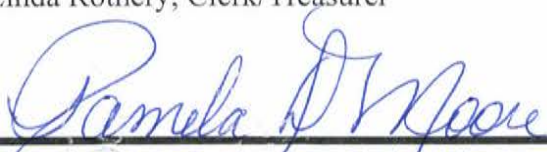
Approved:



Andrew Howells, Member

ATTEST:

Linda Rothery, Clerk/Treasurer



Pamela D. Moore, Deputy Clerk of the Board