

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

**155 N. Taylor St., Fallon, NV 89406
June 11, 2025**

Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife was called to order at 7:03 PM on June 11, 2025.

PRESENT:

Member Jim Curran
Member Jason Sibley
Member Andrew Howells
Deputy Clerk Crystal Muschetto

ABSENT:

Member Peggy A. Hughes
Member Aubry Burgess
Pamela D Moore, Deputy Clerk to the Board

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 Crystal Muschetto, Deputy Clerk, that the Agenda for this meeting was posted on the 5th day of June, 2025, between the hours of 3:00 and 5:00 PM 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 Andrew Howells made a motion to approve the Agenda as submitted. Member Jason Sibley seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Appointments:

A- Consideration and possible action re: Trail cameras and thermal imaging regulation discussion.

The Commission will hear an outline of proposed regulations that were formed from the Emerging Technology Committee for trail cameras and thermal imaging. The presentation may contain prohibited dates of use and/or possession and an increase of penalties associated with violating the regulations.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

During the discussion, Member Sibley explained that the proposal would prohibit the use of thermal imaging devices from July 1 through December 31 for hunting any type of wildlife. He noted that this restriction would mean coyotes could not be killed during that period and asked if coyotes are considered wildlife. Member Curran confirmed that they are, clarifying that anything not normally domesticated falls under that definition. He assumed this was only a first reading of the proposal and mentioned that he had seen considerable online discussion, particularly on a big game hunting website, where people commented on coyote-calling contests, the use of night scopes, and even hog hunting. Member Curran added that the justification for the restriction, such as preventing poaching, seemed relatively minor.

Member Sibley emphasized that, under the proposal, no game mammals or game birds could be taken at any time with thermal devices. Member Curran clarified that the restriction would apply strictly to predator hunting. Member Howells added that the restriction applied to any time during the period beginning July 1 and ending December 31. Member Sibley confirmed this meant anytime during that period for anything. Mr. Howells clarified that the language specifies a person cannot possess or use the equipment during that period while hunting or taking game, but it doesn't directly prohibit taking an animal. Member Sibley noted that game mammals are not legally taken with thermal devices anyway, which led Member Howells to question the need for the regulation.

Member Sibley responded that the regulation seems unnecessary and is strictly targeting predators. He expressed concern that simply having a thermal device in a truck while hunting could result in a 12-demerit violation and he does not see a clear purpose for the rule. He voiced opposition to both the thermal device restrictions and the proposed changes to trail camera dates, noting a lack of justification.

Member Curran described the trail camera issue as an ethics question, pointing out that the department may not have a solid basis to dictate ethical behavior, as such regulations often have little impact on wildlife. Member Sibley explained that the original trail camera dates made sense because they coincided with hunting seasons, preventing people from checking or moving cameras during active hunts. However, he expressed concern that expanding these restrictions could lead to eventual bans, again without supporting data or justification.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to oppose thermal imaging regulations as submitted. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

B- Consideration and possible action re: Elk Management Plan and Sub-plan Direction.

The Department will discuss the revision of the statewide Elk Management Plan, elk population objectives, and present options for the Wildlife Commission and County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife to consider with the intent to provide the Department with direction for reviewing population objectives and future elk management in Nevada.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Curran said that elk herds in the state were originally managed with individual plans, each one setting specific population objectives. Over time, as conditions changed across the state, there has been a push for the department to update and revise all of those plans. He explained that much of the material seems to be background information, but the original management plans had been designed to appease ranchers, resulting in very restrictive population goals. In 2016, those restrictions even led to significant reductions in certain herds. Member Curran said he supports revisiting elk management plans statewide, noting that the potential for herd numbers could nearly double under some of the proposed maximums.

Member Jim Curran made a motion to support the statewide Elk Management Plan as submitted. Member Jason Sibley seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

C- Consideration and possible action re: Heritage Project extension requests.

The Commission will review recommendations and may approve extension requests from projects approved in previous fiscal years. A total funding amount of \$883,193.97 may be approved for extension.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Curran said the projects under discussion were originally approved back in 2021 or 2022. For one reason or another, they are now either being extended or justified in a way that allows another year for completion. He said he has reviewed them and confirmed that these are already approved projects, and they should be finished.

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

D- Consideration and possible action re: Heritage funding reallocation.

The Commission will review Heritage Committee recommendations and may approve reallocation of any unused Heritage funds from previously approved projects to other previously approved projects from the same fiscal year. A total funding amount of \$0 may be approved for reallocation.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Sibley said the next item listed a total amount of zero dollars that could be approved for reallocation, and he questioned why they would be voting on it. Member Curran asked which item that was. Member Sibley clarified that it was item 6D. Member Howells then suggested they take no action on that item.

Member Jim Curran made a motion to take no action on the Heritage funding

reallocation as submitted. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

E- Consideration and possible action re: Fiscal Year 2026 Heritage Project Proposals.

The Commission will hear recommendations from the Heritage Committee and may take action to approve up to \$2,199,756.70 for projects submitted for Fiscal Year 2026 from the annual year project funds. In addition, the Commission may take action to approve up to \$278,440.38 for projects submitted for Fiscal Year 2026 from the principal balance, for a total of \$2,478,197. Funding requests are listed below and may be approved by the Commission.

- FY26 Area 7 Mule Deer Winter Range Restoration (\$180,000).
- FY26 Sheet Creek Range Restoration, Phase 2 - Facilitating Succession for Mule Deer Survival (\$220,000).
- FY26 Nevada Spring Protection and Enhancement Project (\$150,000).
- FY26 Wildfire-Related Restoration and Seed Purchase (\$250,000).
- FY26 Management Area 10 Fence Modification and Removal in Mule Deer Migration Corridors (\$200,000).
- FY26 North Pequop & Murdock Mountain Sagebrush Habitat Conifer Removal (\$200,000).
- FY26 Wildlife Health (\$40,000).
- FY26 Bighorn Sheep & Mountain Goat Restoration and Management (\$125,000).
- FY26 Mule Deer Capture and Antelope Translocations for Up to 150 Animals (\$75,000).
- FY26 Abel Creek YY Brook Trout Project (\$45,000).
- FY26 Elk Monitoring in Central Nevada: Identifying Seasonal Habitats, Movement Corridors, and Opportunities for Habitat Enhancement (\$47,000).
- FY26 Eastern Nevada Pronghorn Antelope Collaring (\$200,000).
- FY26 State-Owned Lands Improvement Project (\$150,000).
- FY26 Warmwater Fisheries Enhancement (\$80,000).
- FY26 Wall Canyon Sportfish Protection Project (\$100,000).
- Little Fish Lake and Monitor Valley Sage-Grouse Habitat Improvement Project (\$100,000).
- Truckee River Trout Habitat Enhancement Project (\$16,500).
- Habitat Suitability and Movement Pathways for Black Bears in Nevada (\$36,000).
- Tonkin Reservoir Wildlife Heritage Account Project (\$147,788).
- How Changes in Snow Accumulation & Water Retention Alter Ecosystems Health in Sagebrush Steppe Habitats Impacted by Pinyon-Juniper Encroachment (\$115,906.08).

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Curran said the evolvment was submitted either by the department or by individual organizations, and the projects had already gone through the Heritage Committee review. Member Sibley noted that Conifers, Pequops, and Murdocks have been removed. Member Curran added that on the north side, somewhere along the cracks, the work had likely been recommended by a biologist in Wells, Nevada. He said the only concern that stood out to him was that it seemed like a big waste of money, though he acknowledged the projects had already been through a thorough review process.

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

F- Consideration and possible action re: Fiscal Year 2026 Habitat, Research and Management Project Proposals.

The Commission will hear recommendations from the Heritage Committee and make take action to approve up to \$373,111 for projects submitted for Fiscal Year 2026. Funding requests are listed below and may be approved by the Commission:

- FY26 Integrating Big Game Harvest and Nevada Record Book Data to Guide Habitat Management for Ungulate Species in Nevada (\$50,000).
- Strategic Mapping and Prioritization of Mule Deer Habitats in Nevada (\$100,000).
- Raven Management in Nevada: Assessing the Impact of Spatially Variable Ecological thresholds on Sage-Grouse Conservation Efforts (\$100,000).
- Statewide Mule Deer Faw Survival Study (\$123,111).

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Sibley said they are still researching ravens. Member Curran noted there appears to be four proposals, including work on record books, strategic mapping and prioritization of mule deer habitat, and raven management to assess impacts. He added that one of the proposals seemed to be coming from a university.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to take no action on the FY 2026 Habitat, Research and Management Project Proposals as submitted. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

G- Consideration and possible action re: Duck Stamp Requests.

The Commission will review and make take action to approve up to \$98,000 for projects submitted for Fiscal Year 2026 funding from the Duck Stamp Account. The specific Duck Stamp projects that may be approved are listed below:

- FY26 Carson Lake WMA Improvement Project (\$31,000).
- FY26 Carson Lake WMA Grazing Management (\$25,000).
- FY26 Eastern Complex WMA Improvement Project (\$20,000).

- FY26 Full Lifecycle Conservation of International Migratory Waterfowl and Other Avian Species (\$2,000).

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Sibley said it appeared the noxious weed treatment at Carson Lake had not been used, and that the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) was requesting a new airboat. Member Curran said he was not certain if the request applied to that area or another region of the state but he assumed it was for Carson Lake. He noted there were two different proposals, including one for the Eastern Complex development. He added that the \$52,000 listed was an annual allocation provided to Nationwide Waterfowl Management.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support the Duck Stamp requests as proposed. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

H- Consideration and possible action re: Upland Game Bird Stamp Requests.

The Commission will review and may take action to approve up to \$332,855 for projects submitted for Fiscal Year 2026 funding from the Upland Game Bird Stamp Account. The specific Upland Game Bird Stamp projects that may be approved are listed below:

- FY26 Upland Game Water Development Maintenance and Upgrades (\$60,000).
- FY26 Carson Valley Conservation District - Carson River Bank Stabilization (\$20,000).
- FY26 Mason/Smith Valley Conservation District - Weed Management (\$15,000).
- FY26 Eastern Complex WMA Improvement Project (\$20,000).
- FY26 Mineral Development Effects on Great Sage-Grouse (\$60,000).
- FY25 Bi-State Sage-Grouse Monitoring (\$30,000).
- FY26 Greater Sage-Grouse Monitoring (\$46,330).
- FY26 Upland Game Translocation and Monitoring (\$24,400).
- FY26 Raven Monitoring and Removal (\$57,125).

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Curran said there was a proposal to introduce Hungarian Partridge in the Desatoyas. Member Sibley asked if they thought the birds would survive. Member Curran added that there were three or four proposals related to relocating Valley Quail from capture projects in downtown Reno. Member Sibley then asked about the status of turkeys. Member Howells said 49 had been trapped in Paradise. Member Sibley asked where they had been moved. Member Curran said he did not believe turkeys would be attempted again in the valley because of high

farm-related mortality. Member Sibley mentioned that someone had suggested trying them in Dixie Valley, which he thought would be a good idea. Member Curran said he imagined the Clan Alpines would also be suitable, noting that turkeys seem to do well anywhere there are pinyon pines.

Member Andrew Howells made a motion to support the Upland Game Bird Stamp requests as submitted. Member Jason Sibley seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

I- Consideration and possible action re: Biennial Small Game Release Plan for Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027.

The Commission will review and may take action to approve the 2026 and 2027 Biennial Small Game Release Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Sibley said he found it interesting that, under the table of contents, Rio Grande Turkeys were listed in the Lahontan Recreation Area, the Walker River Pine Nut Range, and Mason Valley. Member Curran noted that this might reflect the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) designation in the Lahontan Area. Member Sibley asked if that would fall under Churchill County. Member Curran added that there was also a plan to release beavers. Member Sibley expressed surprise. Member Curran explained that this was part of the Cutthroat Rehab program up in the Quinn River, noting that back at Riser Creek, area 31, the state had paid to remove beavers 15 years ago. Member Sibley commented that now they wanted them back.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support the Biennial Small Game Release Plan for FY26 and FY27 as presented. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

J- Consideration and possible action re: Commission General Regulation 525 - Coyote Hunting Contest Regulations.

The Commission will hold a workshop to consider amending Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 525 to provide for season and licensing requirements for participants of coyote hunting contests.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Curran said this was the proposal they had opposed last month. He said he personally saw no justification for it, though it had been reviewed and modified since their last discussion. He explained that the original requirement mandated that a sponsor have a permit, and even the hunters needed a permit. The modification removed the sponsor requirement, but hunters would

still need a hunting or trapping license, something not required elsewhere for coyotes. Member Curran noted that this actually added a restriction and predicted that some form of the regulation would likely pass, despite applying pressure without accomplishing much. Member Sibley said the regulation would achieve its intended effect of trying to stop the activity. Member Curran countered that there was no restriction that gave justification to stop it. Member Sibley pointed out that the dates were being changed to September 1 through March 31, pushing contests into Big Game Season. Member Curran noted that this timing coincides with when most contests already occur. Member Sibley added that one contest in Battle Mountain runs in August or September. Member Curran concluded by stating his opposition to the regulation.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to oppose Commission General Regulation 525 as presented. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

K- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 24-13 Amendment #1 - 2025-2026 Upland Game and Furbearer Seasons and Bag Limits.

The Commission may vote to amend regulations for upland game birds and mammals, as well as furbearers for the 2025-2026 season.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Curran said they were recommending a reopening for a one-day Sage Grouse Hunt. He noted that it had been closed last year to allow modifications to a couple of turkey seasons. He added that the only furbearer change involved dates on the ceiling, and there was no opposition to those changes.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support Commission Regulation 24-13 and Commission Regulation 25-01 as presented. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

L- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 25-01 Amendment #1 - 2025 Application Deadlines, Draw Result Dates, and 2026 Spring Turkey Application Deadlines and Draw Result Dates.

The Commission will review and may approve the proposed addition of the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge Special Sage-Grouse Hunt Application deadline and draw date.

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 25-01 as presented. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

M- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 25-04 Amendment #1 - 2026 Heritage Tag Vendors.

The Commission will review the Wildlife Heritage Committee's recommendations regarding Heritage Tag Vendor Proposals and Wild Turkey Quota for 2026 and may take action on the proposals.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Curran introduced the action item. There was no discussion and the item was put to a vote.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support Commission Regulation 25-04 as submitted. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

N- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 25-14 for 2026 Silver State Turkey Tag.

The Commission will consider and may take action to approve the 2026 Silver State Wild Turkey Tag season and quota.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Curran introduced the action item. There was no discussion and the item was put to a vote.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support Commission Regulation 25-14 as submitted. 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 June 13 and 14, 2025.

Should the board want to discuss Items listed on the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners' Agenda for June 13 and 14, 2025, which is provided for the board's consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Other

No further discussion was taken on this item.

Establishment of Next Meeting Date of August 13, 2025 at 7:00 PM:

The next meeting was scheduled for August 13, 2025 at 7:00 PM in Conference Room #102 again.

Consider Future Agenda Items:

There were no future Agenda items suggested.

Public Comment:

Member Curran asked if there was any public comment but there was none. Member Sibley said he was curious how the upcoming weekend meeting would address range finders. Member Curran replied that he did not see the item on their Agenda. Member Sibley said it appeared on the website Agenda but not on the written version. He said he would be watching it carefully, as he expected it would lead to another unnecessary regulation.

Member Curran asked if the proposal dealt strictly with archery. Member Sibley said he had heard archery triggered part of the discussion, but the focus was on setups where a range finder automatically links to a scope and provides holdover. He said there was concern this could interfere with fair chase. He also noted that some range finders can drop pins on phone apps, raising further issues. Member Sibley said it seemed that at nearly every meeting new regulations were being proposed, and he questioned why that direction was being taken. He believed it was an attempt to appease outside groups. He said he had a heated conversation earlier in the day, pointing out that many of the regulations being proposed come from people who do not financially support conservation, while those most affected are hunters who do.

Member Sibley said he knew it was unlikely but suggested that anyone who wished to present regulatory ideas should first be required to support wildlife by holding a Nevada hunting license for five years. Otherwise, he said, these ideas only harm the people who fund conservation. He said, at some point, the Department of Wildlife needed to push back and find a way to regulate the constant stream of new regulations. He called it excessive, citing that a 12-demerit citation for having a trail camera after July 1 leads to an automatic one-year license suspension, and the same penalty applies for simply having thermal equipment in a truck during deer season. He said these rules made it seem like the department was just finding reasons to cite hunters.

Member Curran said the real issue was the composition of the Commission, which is set by the Governor. He pointed to Washington State as an example, where the Governor appointed Commissioners opposed to hunting, resulting in the closure of bear season and other restrictions. He said the biggest threat was the Commission makeup, though Nevada currently has a Governor supportive of sportsmen.

Member Sibley said he was concerned that continued regulation would discourage future generations, leaving children unable to hunt due to excessive red tape and penalties. Member Curran said that, after 50 years of being a strong supporter of sportsmen, he felt that support was now slowly disappearing. Member Sibley said it seemed that every meeting they were

defending against proposals from non-hunters, and he believed those raising the range finder concerns were not hunters. Member Curran added that some proposals came from within the agency itself, with new enforcement staff focusing more on ethics management.

Member Sibley said ethics could not be regulated, comparing it to punishing someone for only thinking about committing a crime. Member Curran said there was positive news, explaining that the Governor had signed what he called the Sibley Bill, which he believed they had helped influence. He said when letters were sent to counties, most placed the matter on their Agendas. In Lyon County, State Senator Robin Titus, who regularly attends local meetings, took the idea forward. She introduced legislation to allow salvaging wildlife killed on highways, secured a bipartisan cosponsor, and carried the bill through the Senate and Assembly, where it passed 42–0. Member Curran noted that, despite being known for vetoes, the Governor signed the bill. The legislation directed the department to create regulations and was amended to cover all wildlife, not just big game, meaning animals such as bobcats could also be legally salvaged.

Member Howells said their original proposal had been limited to deer and antelope and did not include elk, sheep, or other species.

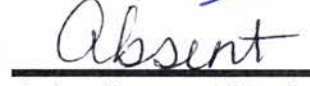
Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 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
Pamela D. Moore, Deputy Clerk of the Board