

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

**155 N. Taylor St., Fallon, NV 89406
January 24, 2024**

Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife was called to order at 7:02 PM on January 24, 2024.

PRESENT:

Member Peggy A. Hughes
Member Jim Curran
Member Jason Sibley
Member Andrew Howells
Pamela D. Moore Deputy Clerk to the Board
Julianne Ikonen Deputy Clerk
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 to the Board, that the Agenda for this meeting was posted on the 12th day of January, 2024, between the hours of 11:00 AM and 1:00 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 Jason Sibley made a motion to approve the Agenda as submitted. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

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

A- November 1, 2023.

The Minutes of the meeting held on November 1, 2023 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 Jim Curran made a motion to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on November 1, 2023 as presented. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Consideration and possible action re: Review of Correspondence:

A- Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners' letter to the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners requesting encouragement of participation in their meetings by the County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife members.

The Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners provides a letter to the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners requesting encouragement of participation in their meetings by the County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife (CABMW) members. The 2024 schedule of meetings is provided with the letter.

Wildlife Commission meetings provide a direct channel for local perspectives and insights, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities that directly impact our state's wildlife and its habitats. Additionally, it promotes dialogue and cooperation among diverse stakeholders, contributing to well-informed decision-making processes. The board requests that the Board of County Commissioners ensure that Churchill County's CABMW members actively participate in the Wildlife Commission meetings by sending a representative. By having the CABMW members present, it will ensure that the decisions made reflect the collective wisdom of our communities and lead to sustainable outcomes that align with the interests of both our citizens and our environment.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: None; Informational Only

Member Sibley said I think we should make an effort to attend some of these meetings and I could probably attend the meetings being held in Reno on May 3rd and 4th and the June meetings in Lovelock. Member Curran agreed. Chair Hughes said the board has money to reimburse members for their travel expenses.

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

Appointments:

A- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Policy 24 - Hunting Opportunities Among Various Weapon and Hunter Groups, Third Reading.

The Department made changes requested by the Commission. The Commission may make any necessary changes and may decide to repeal, revise, or adopt the policy.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Chair Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none. Member Sibley said it appears the change involves the addition of Moose. Member Curran said they are going to a fixed allocation instead of success in allocating tags. It looks like more tags for archery and muzzleloader because the demand is there. Mr. Salisbury said that is correct. Your demand is going to be a fixed demand. Before, different biologists would sometimes increase their demand just to throw a few extra tags to different weapon groups. It was kind of all over the place. The fixed demand in some places for the archery hunt and the success being so low, a lot of things were modified because the success for archery would be so low and it would generate lots and lots of archery tags in some units. We didn't have the appetite to have that many archery tags in some of those units. They are trying to keep a fixed demand straight across instead of monkeying with it every year on the demand success formula. That will reduce some tags in the rifle and then it sprinkles the tags in between muzzleloader and archery. Member Sibley said is that for Moose specifically or that is what they are adjusting for everything? Mr. Salisbury said that will be for everything. It will be fixed with the deer.

Member Curran said another thing I noticed in there has to do with the junior tags. They can apply for five years and they can get a tag for five years. They have dropped the three year. Member Sibley said we discussed that at the last meeting. Member Curran said it looks like the allocation is fairly substantial. Member Sibley said all I can see is Moose.

Member Howells said to Mr. Salisbury that he said there is a fixed demand for the tags, so is that something that will be adjusted for five years or ten years or is that just going to be the fixed number? Mr. Salisbury said they sent it out to us to look at last year's quotas and what it did. For example, maybe last year you had 150 rifle tags and 30 muzzleloader or something like that. It showed it having 120 rifle tags and 40 muzzleloader tags. There are only so many bucks to be killed and the success rate as a three year average. It is just sprinkling in amongst the weapon groups instead of messing around with having a low demand and then having super low success. On the archery and muzzleloader, it went all over the place all the time. Some of them were pretty standard. Pershing County would increase demand artificially just to have a few extra muzzleloader tags in there and other biologists did that too. A lot of it had to do with reduced amounts of archery tags because the success rate was 2-3%. A unit like 035 would generate 100+ archery tags.

Mr. Salisbury said they have eliminated some hunts this year in sheep and some antelope doe hunts. They have a few different things with the junior hunts in some select units where they are going to separate the junior hunts to an archery, muzzleloader, and a rifle. They want to try this in some of these units that had a higher buck ratio and then the rest will be pretty standard where they can hunt all three weapon classes.

Member Sibley said how will that be impacted by all of the tag deferrals this year? Mr. Salisbury said on the junior hunt? Member Sibley said, no, on the fixed. I understand it is a substantial number of deferrals this year. Mr. Salisbury said I am not sure on what that number is. I don't think it takes away from this year's quota but I am not positive. Mr. Sibley said, if it does, you will have some areas where you are expecting five elk tags but that number might be

two. Mr. Salisbury said I am not positive on that if that referral goes into the next year if it is already allotted out of the model or how that works because there is not a killed elk or killed deer.

Member Jim Curran made a motion to approve Commission Policy 24 as presented.

Member Jason Sibley seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

B- Consideration and possible action re: Draft Fiscal Year 2025 Predation Management Plan.

The Draft Fiscal Year 2025 Predation Management Plan will be presented to the Commission for initial review. Following this review, the draft plan will be updated and shared with the State Predatory Animal and Rodent Committee (PARC). All comments from the PARC, County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife (CABMW), and any other interested entity will be compiled and shared with the Wildlife Damage Management Committee (WDMC) for their consideration at their March 2024 meeting. The Commission will receive an update at the March 2024 meeting from the Wildlife Damage Management Committee and may provide additional direction at that time.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Sibley said I would once again like to request that the department show what the results of this Predation Management Plan are. We just continue to be asked to approve this budget but we have no idea what their success is. It seems like ravens have been on for four years now and it is an ongoing large amount of money that is going to control ravens. I think some of that money should be allocated better to lion control in some areas. Chair Hughes said she will include that in her notes to the state commission. Member Curran said, in my opinion, it is not the amount going to control ravens but the continual studies of distribution of ravens. Project 41, I believe, bothers me every year but the actual control of ravens is probably doing some good for sage-grouse but the continual study of finding out where the ravens are concentrated at is what bothers me. Member Sibley said that involves another \$240,000 being used for this project. Member Curran said I do agree with Member Sibley that the counties do not ever see a summary of any of these studies, so it is hard to recommend this without any justification. We have made that request in writing but have not received anything. We should see some progress reports or final reports or whatever they do. They are not provided to the public. You probably can make a request. Mr. Salisbury said we don't even see it as an agency. Somebody knows the data. We can dig in and ask what was removed but a lot of these projects go yearly and they are some of the same projects that keep going forward but there is no evaluation for why we continue a project or why we should cease the project. Member Curran said I would assume there is a progress report on any federal agency that Pat has to submit. Mr. Salisbury said they are pretty general. Member Sibley said even the ones that are not federal. This includes \$100,000 for coyote control. How many coyotes did they take out of that area? If they took 8 coyotes, it probably does not justify \$100,000 being spent. What is really being done with these things? Member Curran said that is where it is really important to actually go to

a meeting and request that the Commission provide that. The only project I have heartburn about is Project 41. It appears to me that I have seen this on the list at least three or four years in a row and I would like to know the data behind it. Member Sibley said yes, if we have seen it four years in a row at \$240,000, that is a million dollars to watch ravens. I invited Pat Jackson to our meeting to discuss this but that didn't go anywhere. Without any kind of result data, we are just writing a blank check for this and it doesn't sit well with me. Member Curran said I believe we had this item on our Agenda for four different meetings and they kept putting it off. I do not feel good about making a motion or recommendation at this stage. The Commission will change or modify this plan, as they do every time they meet. Member Sibley said I am good with taking no action.

Chair Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none. The board took no action on this item. Chair Hughes said I will send a letter asking for us to see a progress or final report on these. Member Sibley said maybe I will get a chance to talk to Pat at the Reno meeting.

C- Consideration and possible action re: Biennial Big Game Release Plan for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025.

The Commission will review and may taken action to approve the Department's proposed biennial bighorn sheep and mountain goat release plan for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Sibley said they are reintroducing sheep into the Cortez? Member Howells said it is 20-25 sheep in Unit 141. Mr. Salisbury said I don't think anything is approved on the Cortez. They must have just put this on there. It was talked about years ago. As far as the Stillwaters and that, we are trying to bolster the herd after the die-off. We need to keep moving sheep around to keep our sheep alive. We need numbers to keep them going with the constant lion pressure that we have in a lot of the mountain ranges east of Fallon. Member Curran said was that die-off in the Stillwaters recent? Mr. Salisbury said the Stillwater die-off has been two or three years ago. Member Curran said it wasn't that extensive, was it? Mr. Salisbury said it was extensive enough to add additional sheep in there. The issue that I had when we took sixty to seventy sheep and gave them to Utah when I was feeling pretty good about the population but, at the same time, that disease was coming from the south and working its way up north. The sheep we gave to Utah were not infected, so that combination of reducing some of those numbers, plus the die-off moving through there, plus the amount of lions that are in the Stillwaters warranted augmentation. We are just going to have to move sheep around like we used to if we want to keep sheep. Member Curran said you haven't cut the quotas, have you? Mr. Salisbury said they will be cut and they were cut last year.

Member Sibley said do you think you have the illness under control? Mr. Salisbury said it will have to be evaluated prior to that release. We do not want active PCR-positive individuals, so there would have to be a screening on that, but I think, if we move forward in the future, if

individuals are Elisa-positive, showing that they have had past exposure, I think we are fine with putting sheep in there to help bolster the herd. We have healthy sheep in the Muddy Mountains and a lot of other places but we need to move around the state to keep our sheep from continuing to decline. We will see if it happens or it doesn't. We have been in a lull with moving sheep for the last twelve years.

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

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve the Biennial Big Game Release Plan FY24 and FY25 as presented. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

D- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 514 - Moose.

The Commission will hold a workshop to consider amending Chapters 502 and 503 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) to provide for definitions, fees, and regulations concerning moose. This proposed regulation change is necessary to establish definitions for antlered and antlerless moose, eligibility requirements for a moose tag, fees for both resident and non-resident altered and antlerless moose hunts, and to establish requirements for maintaining physical characteristics of the harvested moose.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Curran said I have no problem with what has been submitted. Member Sibley said what do you think the current population is for Moose? Is it seventy? Mr. Salisbury said it is over one hundred. I don't know what they have as a model because you are spread out between the Ruby Mountains, Jarbidge, Bruno, Montello. It is all included as far as the hunts. I don't know if they even have a model developed with that broad of unit groups. Member Curran said they do have a biologist tagging and tracking them. Mr. Salisbury said there are quite a few collars out. When they did the survey last year, I think they encountered thirty to forty Moose, even using the collars but they couldn't find some of the collared Moose. We have even had them in 051 for a long time.

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

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve Commission Regulation 514 as presented. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

E- Consideration and possible action re: Commission General Regulation 512, Fishing Regulations.

The Commission will hold an adoption hearing to consider amending Chapters 488 and 503 of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). This regulation would change vessel motor restrictions, amend tackle restrictions, and reclassify protected species classifications.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Kris Urquhart, Fish Biologist, said this is the second workshop for the regulations that were proposed and voted on in September. As far as I know, I spoke to some of our staff earlier, nothing has changed since that reading and vote. You guys are aware of the process for a Commission Regulation. A lot of them can go through with only one reading and one vote but these involve changes to NAC, so they have to go through a two workshop process. This is the second of those. If you remember, there were some motor restriction changes to things like Knott Creek Reservoir, as well as the season there. There was a status of some species that had changed also and, because those are laws, they have to be changed through NAC. It is a little bit different process than a season setting or allocation process. I wanted to let you know that nothing has changed since that happened in August or September. September is our normal timeframe for those changes on a biennial process.

As far as I know, we don't have any changes coming up this summer for the interim. Some of the other regions might but our western region is set on regulations now for the next two years.

If you guys want something changed since the last we went through these, we can discuss that and make those recommendations to the Commission.

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

Member Andrew Howells made a motion to approve Commission General Regulation 512 as presented. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

F- Consideration and possible action re: Commission General Regulation 513, Executive Order Regulations.

The Commission will hold an adoption hearing to amend Chapters 488, 501, 502, 503, and 504 of the Nevada Administrative code (NAC) pursuant to Executive Order 2023-003.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Curran said this is in response to the Governor's directive to drop or modify regulations and this appears to be mostly housekeeping.

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

Member Jim Curran made a motion to approve Commission General Regulation 513 as presented. Member Jason Sibley seconded the motion, which carried by majority vote, with Member Howells being out of the room at the time of the vote.

G- Consideration and possible action re: Commission General Regulation 514, Moose.

The Commission will hold a workshop to consider amending Chapters 502 and 503 of the Nevada Administrative code (NAC) to provide for definitions, fees, and regulations concerning moose. This proposed regulation change is necessary to establish definitions for antlered and antlerless moose, eligibility requirements for a moose tag, fees for both resident and non-resident antlered and antlerless moose hunts, and to establish requirements for maintaining physical characteristics of the harvested moose.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Chair Hughes said this is a duplicate of an item discussed earlier so no discussion or action was had.

H- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 23-04 (Amendment 2) for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 Big Game Seasons.

The Commission will consider and may take action to approve an amendment to the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 hunting seasons and dates for mule deer, pronghorn antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain goat and moose, including limits, hunting hours, special hunt eligibility, animal sex, physical characteristics, and hunt boundary restrictions.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Sibley said is your area impacted here by these changes, Jason? Mr. Salisbury said no. The only thing I had was 202 where we had an overlap with archery and the rifle season, so we changed that a little bit. There is impact from past disease events, plus lions but that will be adjusted in the quotas. Member Sibley said it looks like there are quite a few areas having die-off or disease events. Mr. Salisbury said Areas 016, 212, 252, Stonewall have been going downhill for the last twelve years. Member Sibley said do you have an idea what is causing that in 252? Mr. Salisbury said it is disease event related and lion mortality related. In my opinion, it also involves having too low of a population to not be able to sustain that. There are some springs that are choked in there and they were pretty good magnets for a lot of increased lion mortality in places because of the thicker trees. There are NTTR strains out there and it would come in and out of that Stonewall Mountain but you have to maintain a pretty decent size population of sheep to withstand disease and lions. With any of these herds, if you keep trickling down and trickling down, even with high lamb recruitment, if you have decent lion mortality, it is hard to get over that hump. In 212, it was a combination of the same disease that hit around here that we call the Fairview strain that went from 205 into 213 and into 212. Those sheep might have been more naïve to disease but then there are different strain types. Sometimes, we say they are worse than others but it is hard to tell what is worse in relation to

environmental conditions. In some places up north, we have more perennial water and green grass, resulting in better nutrition, so you are just kind of guessing on a lot of it with different strain types. In 212 and 213, it was always the White Mountain strain out of the White Mountains, which still allowed for lamb recruitment and things. The Fairview strain showed up there, the same stuff that affected all of these herds around here and then it also tested positive for the Mojave strain, which is even farther south. It was in the Spring Mountains and Last Chance Range. There are three different strain types circulating in 212. When you do testing, you are basically just testing for the one that is the most prevalent, so whatever shows up. All three of those strains were found in 212. I think they did two surveys in there and I think the highest number that they got this year was about thirty something sheep, maybe thirty five sheep. That season is definitely closed.

Member Sibley said is that similar to what is going on in 161? Mr. Salisbury said that had the same thing with an outbreak. If you look at 212, you are looking at that west side of the range and it seems like anytime you have these sheep populations that are really conjugated together, they are spread up on that but it is easy for them to interchange. It is nice when you get the disease to go through quickly but it doesn't give you any time for individuals to die and not spread it and move it around, too. When you have these populations that are like that, just like Area 016 on top, everything is so close knit that, when something hits, it can wipe them out pretty good versus the Stillwaters where you go from the Stillwaters all the way up on the east range and you are looking at 110 miles. The disease is traveling there but it just takes its time to eventually affect it. Maybe, if you have individuals that stay and get sick and don't move, it might help it where more individuals are able to survive. It is hard to say.

Member Curran said, with antlerless mule deer, they are eliminating all of any weapon hunts up in Elko County. I wonder if people with preference points, such as three, four, and five preference points, since there is not a hunt and there may not be for several years, what the department is going to do. Mr. Salisbury said they will do just like they did with the nonresident goat for some of the Rockies where they basically just froze their points indefinitely. Member Curran said there is a regulation that, if you miss two years, you lose your bonus points. Mr. Salisbury said that has changed. As far as I know, as long as you buy a license, your points are kept. If you don't buy a license, you can lose your points but, if you buy a license every year, your points stay. Member Curran said I am not aware of that. Member Sibley said even if you don't apply? Mr. Salisbury said yes. Member Curran said I don't remember seeing that change. Mr. Salisbury said that is what Kyle told me. He hadn't applied for wild turkeys for like six years and he had eleven points. Member Curran said I think we better check on that. Mr. Salisbury said Kyle's points stayed at eleven and he had never even put in for turkeys for like six years. It was his understanding that, as long as you are buying a hunting license every year, you do not have to apply. Member Curran said somewhere along the line they must have changed that regulation then. Mr. Salisbury said it used to be I think but, if Kyle is correct, if you buy a hunting license, your points stay, with or without putting in for individual species.

Member Curran said I have no problem with any of these recommended season date changes.

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

Member Jim Curran made a motion to approve Commission Regulation 23-04 as presented. Member Jason Sibley seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

I- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 23-10 (Amendment 2) for 2024 Heritage Tag Seasons and Quota.

The Commission will consider amending the regulation for the 2024 Heritage Tag species, seasons, and quota regulation to add a mandatory call-in number for all Specialty Bighorn Sheep tag holders to verify which units are closed to hunting.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

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

Member Jim Curran made a motion to approve Commission Regulation 23-10 as presented. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by majority vote, with Member Sibley out of the room at the time of the vote.

J- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 24-01 - 2024 Big Game Application Deadlines.

The Commission will consider adopting a regulation to set the 2024 Big Game Tag Application deadlines and related information.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

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

Member Jim Curran made a motion to approve Commission Regulation 24-01 as presented. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by majority vote, with Member Sibley out of the room at the time of this vote.

K- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 24-02 - 2024 Big Game Tag Application Eligibility and Tag Limits.

The Commission will consider adopting a regulation to set the 2024 Big Game Tag Application eligibility, tag limits, and related information.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

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

Member Jim Curran made a motion to approve Commission Regulation 24-02 as presented. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

L- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 24-03 - 2024 Dream Tag.
The Commission will consider adopting a regulation to set the 2024 Dream Tag species, seasons, and quota.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

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

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve Commission Regulation 24-03 as presented. Member Andrew Howells seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

M- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 24-04 - 2024 Partnership in Wildlife Tags.

The Commission will consider adopting a regulation to set the 2024 Partnership in Wildlife tag hunt species.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

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

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve Commission Regulation 24-04 as presented. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

N- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 24-05 - 2025 Heritage Tag Species, Seasons, and Quota.

The Commission will consider adopting a regulation to set the 2025 Heritage Tag species, seasons, and quota.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

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

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve Commission Regulation 24-05 as presented. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

O- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 24-06 - 2024 Silver State Tags species, seasons, and quota.

The Commission will consider adopting a regulation to set the 2024 Silver State Tag species, seasons, and quota.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

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

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve Commission Regulation 24-06 as presented. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

P- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 24-07 - 2024 Black Bear Seasons.

The Commission will consider and may take action to approve the 2024 hunting season dates, open management units, hunting hours, special regulations, animal sex, legal weapon requirements, hunt boundary restrictions, and dates and times for indoctrination courses for black bear.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

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

Member Andrew Howells made a motion to approve Commission Regulation 24-07 as presented. Member Jason Sibley seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Q- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 24-08 - 2024 Mountain Lion Season and Harvest Limits.

The Commission will consider and may take action to approve the 2024-2025 hunting season, open units, harvest limits by unit group, hunting hours, and special regulations for Mountain Lion.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Sibley said has that number ever been hit? Mr. Salisbury said not since they went to 247. It was hit before when we were based on individual units in actual eastern and western and southern. It might have been hit before on the eastern side of the state. Now, with the 247, as far as sport harvest, it has not. Member Sibley said it seems like an arbitrary number. It is a very specific number.

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

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve Commission Regulation 24-08 as presented. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

R- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 24-09 - 2024-2025 Restricted Non-resident Guided Mule Deer Seasons, Quotas and Hunt Boundary Restrictions.

The Commission will consider and may take action to approve the 2024-2025 hunting season and quotas for restricted non-resident guided mule deer, including hunt boundary restrictions.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Sibley said I have a question for the biologists on this, which is just for my own information. It seems strange to me that Area 006 has a bigger quota than Area 010. It seems like Area 010 has the highest quota in every other scenario, except for this one. Do you have any insight on why that is? Mr. Salisbury said I am not really sure. Area 006 might be more sought after but I don't know how that plays into it versus Area 010.

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

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve Commission Regulation 24-09 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' Revised Agenda for January 26 and 27, 2024,

Should the board want to discuss Items listed on the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners' Revised Agenda for January 26 and 27, 2024, which is attached as Exhibit "A".

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: None; Informational Only

There was no further discussion of items.

Consider Future Agenda Items:

Member Sibley said he knows that Deputy Clerk Moore is still waiting for him and Member Howells to prepare a letter to send to the other CABs about salvaging wildlife killed on the roadways.

Deputy Clerk Moore asked the board to calendar the next meeting for March 6th.

Public Comment:

Chair Hughes asked if there was any public comment. Kris Urquhart said we are trying to get the word out regarding our fishery at Hinkson's Slough. The opener for the Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area is the second Saturday in February. We had some issues that began with the flooding that happened out there last year. It brought some extra stuff from the nearby dairies and ranches into some of those ponds and just flooded them out. We had some fish kill related to some of the constituents that were in those waters that came into the slough. It also did a lot of damage to some of the roads and structures on a lot of those ponds in Mason Valley. We have been replacing the structures and fixing the roads, as well as putting in new culverts to fix a lot of that problem. One thing that we were not able to get done in time was to fix the outlet structure at Hinkson. It was also rusting and very old anyway. We drained that particular pond down as low as we could over the fall this year and we were hoping to have it drained so that we could get our equipment in there and fix that outlet structure and refill it before the opener in a couple of weeks from now but that did not happen. There are some leaking outlet structures on other ponds that are flowing into Hinkson, so it hasn't dried out enough for them to get the equipment in and fix that structure yet. We are still working on a solution to fix the structures that are leaking that are causing too much water to remain in Hinkson for us to fix that. Long story short, Hinkson will be drained for the opener. However, we are going to be increasing our stocking effort over the next couple of weeks for North Pond and Ft. Churchill Cooling Pond, which are nearby. Our angler education folks usually do some kind of event where they hand out fishing poles to kids and stuff like that. They are going to do it over at the Cooling Pond this year instead of at Hinkson. We are trying to get the word out about that because there are a lot of people who show up for that opener. It is a pretty popular event. Unfortunately, we do not have a fishery at that particular pond.

I am meeting with the hatchery and management area guys tomorrow afternoon to see if there is a way that we can either adjust the water management in our ponds at the hatchery, which feed Kuenzli, which is the one that is leaking into Hinkson or if we need to just try to fix that structure that is leaking so that it doesn't leak anymore. We have tried to put some tarps and different things on it but it hasn't worked. We might need to put a cofferdam around it or something like that to dry out that pond. I wanted this board to hear this. If there are any other specific fisheries that you want to know about, let me know.

We put in an order for Walleye Fry for Lahontan again this week. We will be getting another million little Walleye Fry for that spot. Things should be better than last year. However, we

didn't get a really good spawn in Lahontan last year, in spite of all of the water that we had because of the emergency management of the reservoir in the spring, like March and April. If you remember, TCID dumped it really fast in anticipation of that runoff that we eventually did get. That is also when a lot of those fish species were trying to spawn, so they spawn mostly in the shallow areas that are around there and, when they dopped it, a lot of that stuff went dry. I don't anticipate that we actually had a lot of reproduction in Lahontan this last year but we still have fairly good numbers of fish because, previous to that, it didn't go down to the 4,000 acre feet. It stayed up around 8,000 and, around that level, we do not see a lot of die-off of the species. This last year, through our commercial operator and some of our own netting operations, we were able to at least verify that most of the species are represented in the lake. Some are at higher numbers than others. We haven't seen the White Bass, which everybody loves, bounce back quite yet. Next year, if we maintain these water levels and they do not drop it really fast like they did last year, the White Bass and Crappies should benefit from that and we should see a higher population of those.

We are looking to do some experimental stuff at our hatchery with our Wipers, which you might be interested in because there are two or three spots in the state where we even stock those fish. They are becoming almost cost prohibitive for us to buy and stock. They are very expensive to get at a catchable size. They get fairly reasonable to buy if you can get them smaller, like two inch size. We are going to plumb in an extra tank at our hatchery at Mason Valley and try to buy the smaller fish and see if we can grow them out ourselves bigger before we stock them. Hopefully, this will save money. Member Sibley said those are all in southern Nevada? Mr. Urquhart said no. They are at Lahontan and Rye Patch. We used to put them in Wild Horse and South Fork. I don't know if we will put them into Chimney again. We have been experimenting with putting them in there but we are not seeing a lot of return. For the cost of them, if we do not see the return, we are not going to continue to invest in that. The ones that we are going to try to raise at Mason Valley will probably go to Rye Patch this first round just because I still want to stock the bigger ones in Lahontan if we can get them. If that program works, it will save us money and we might even be able to get more fish for a cheaper price. Member Sibley said did they not spawn in Lahontan. Mr. Urquhart said they are a sterile hybrid, which helps us in our management because we know how many we put in there, so we can control those populations pretty strictly just by stocking. That is also why we had that special regulation in place because they are an expense and they do have the trophy potential, so we have that size limit and harvest restriction for that particular fish.

Member Curran said, in regards to public notification dealing with Mason Valley and the Cooling Ponds, I haven't seen anything on the department's website. Also, on Fish Nevada, that Facebook page had several questions this week on how the roads were. People are anticipating the opening. Mr. Urquhart said that will be put on the website on Friday. Our social media and public outlet people who do that in Reno wanted to wait until after tomorrow when I meet with the management guys out there to have an idea of when we might be able to have it stocked. Inevitably, if we tell people it is dry and we will not have any fish, the first question they will ask is when will there be fish there. We do not know right now. We do not know how difficult or what the process would entail to get that drained down enough to be able to fix the structure and get it refilled. I talked with our Public Information Officer just a couple of hours ago when I

was leaving Reno and she said that she will be ready for that on Friday. I have talked to the fishing clubs that typically go out there and let them know to spread the word. I have received lots and lots of phone calls from people who have heard what is going on and went out there to look and saw it was dry. You are correct. We need to get that information out prior to the opener and it will be done soon. Let me know if you don't see that information from our department show up on those things, as I can hit them up to try to get the information out a different way.

Member Howells said is the Truckee Canal dry again this year? Mr. Urquhart said it will be until they finish the concrete project. Member Sibley said do they have a finish date on that yet? Chair Hughes said I have not heard. They were supposed to be done so that there was an irrigation season in Fernley this year. Mr. Urquhart said, thankfully, I don't think we will need it. Member Curran said they are more concerned about flooding than they are bringing water off the Truckee. There are still forty five more days before the irrigation season starts and it is going up 500 acre feet per day. I think it is near 280,000. Chair Hughes said my grandson went by there yesterday and said the reservoir is full and looks really good. Mr. Urquhart said it is up. The last time I looked, which was a couple of weeks ago, it was over 200,000. I haven't looked in a couple of weeks. Mr. Salisbury said the Carson is pretty full coming into it. Mr. Urquhart said this storm system we are having now is going to put us closer to normal. We were in the red across the west for a little while in our precipitation but I think we have been catching up a little bit over the last couple of weeks. Member Curran said the Humboldt and Carson rivers are better off than the Truckee right now, as far as snowpack is concerned. Mr. Urquhart said most of these storms having been coming in from the south over Walker and Carson instead of from the north on the Truckee.

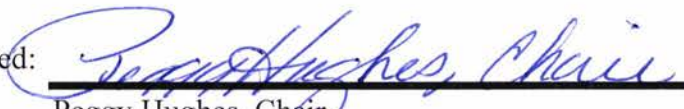
Member Sibley said how much longer do you think before you put fish in Walker? Mr. Urquhart said the models say that, if we can get 74 cfs constant flow into Walker Lake from the river, it will stop the desiccation of the lake. I think that is the number they are at right now. For example, the total dissolved solids (TDS) parts per million in Walker Lake last year was the highest it has ever been, which was over 27,000. For instance, Pyramid is under 3,000 and it is the salt pond, right, but it is Walker Lake that is the salt pond. It went from 27,300 I believe it was to 19,800 this last year with all of those floods that came in. It dropped a good 6,000 parts per million on that but it has to get down to about 12,000 before we will start stocking fish back in there. That is when we can start doing acclimation with some of the Cutthroat. It has to get down to around 10,000 where we can stock and not do the acclimation process. We need like four years in a row like last year before it would come up enough where we could start stocking Tui Chub fish, which would be the first fish. Once we can establish a forage base population, although there are some bugs they could eat in there too, we would begin with the Tui Chub, as they are more salt tolerant than the Cutthroat are and then we could start putting Cutthroat back in there. So, you tell me how long it is going to be. Member Curran said it is not going to happen. Mr. Urquhart said we got about one third of the way there with 300% precipitation. It will probably be a while, unless we can get into a normal precipitation pattern with our rivers and that acquisition program is able to acquire more water. Right now, they have enough for about 50 cfs but it takes 75 cfs I think. They haven't purchased enough water to make that work, yet, although they are still working on it. Every time they make a water purchase, they

end up in court over the allocation. Member Curran said they have to come up with a way to get it through the Indian reservation. Mr. Urquhart said they have started to deliver water to the lake through that program for the past two years but I think it has been small. It has been token amounts just to see that the process works, at 3 cfs per year or something like that. Now that the precedent is set and all of the gears are in place to make that happen, they can do it and there will be more water getting delivered to the lake. They still do not have enough to make it work, yet. That program is going back to Congress, I believe, to ask for some more money to try to finish out what they need. The problem that they are running into now is that they are almost out of willing sellers. Everybody that wanted to sell water to the program pretty much has, so that is slowing down. Recently, they got approved to start purchasing and leasing ground water rights in Mason Valley and Smith Valley, which they hadn't been able to do before so they can retire ground water wells in there. They can buy the water rights for the fields that are being irrigated from ground water, which we do not do in this valley but they do a lot of it over there. That will raise their water table and then they can change those to instream flows, hopefully. That is the plan and then they can have more water in the river coming down instead of pumping it out of the ground from the ground water. There are some things that are still going on that will help in the long run. That is also a very long answer to your short question. Member Sibley said it is being looked at, so it is not a lost cause. Mr. Urquhart said it is not a lost cause but it will take a lot more work and it will take some luck. We need precipitation. If we do not have any water coming down the system, it doesn't matter. It doesn't get there. There is still enough agriculture that runs off of that river in those valleys that, if we do not have at least a normal amount of flow, it still probably will not get there.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Approved:


Peggy Hughes, Chair

Approved:


Jim Curran, Vice-Chair

Approved:


Jason Sibley, Member

Approved:


Aubry Burgess, Member

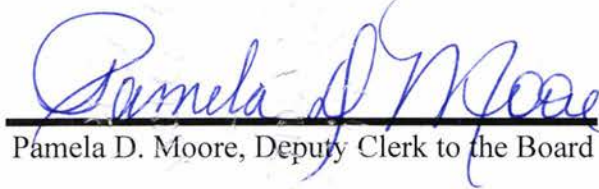
Approved:



Andrew Howells, Member

ATTEST:

Linda Rothery, Clerk/Treasurer



Pamela D. Moore, Deputy Clerk to the Board