

Minutes of the Work Session Meeting of the
Arizona Game and Fish Commission
Friday, November 7, 2014
Marble Canyon Lodge
Highway 89A
Marble Canyon, Arizona 86036

PRESENT: (Commission)

(Director's Staff)

Chairman Robert E. Mansell
Commissioner Edward P. Madden
Commissioner James R. Ammons
Commissioner John W. Harris

Director Larry D. Voyles
Deputy Director Ty E. Gray
Assistant Attorney General Linda Pollock

Chairman Mansell called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. This meeting followed an agenda revision #1 dated November 5, 2014. Commissioner Davis was not present. This meeting was an informal roundtable setting for discussion and informational purposes only. The Commission took no action at this meeting.

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1. Stakeholder Discussion of Sport Fisheries Management at Lees Ferry.

Fisheries Branch Chief Chris Cantrell led an informal discussion with the Commission, Department staff and Sportsmen on sport fish management at Lee's Ferry. Discussion included information about stakeholder engagement and a long term experimental management plan.

Lee's Ferry has been a world class fisheries since Glen Canyon Dam, but it is cyclical with good and bad times. One of the Department's priorities is management planning. The Comprehensive Fish Management Plan developed by the National Park Service gives the Department a safety net with fish stocking during the bad times, but it does not proactively manage for where the Department would like to be. The Department is working toward a management plan process that is angler driven. The Department has been working cooperatively with anglers and it has been developing into a high quality process, but it is still in the infancy stage.

John Jordan, with Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program, briefed the Commission on a range of issues and considerations that may or may not have a positive impact on the fisheries. They are interacting and working with the Department, organizations and agencies on a range of programs that they are supporting.

John Hamill with Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership addressed the Commission and thanked them for coming to Lee's Ferry and for focusing on the issues surrounding this particular fisheries. Discussion included the fisheries' food base and water temperatures, as well as several goals, including the creation of a blue ribbon trout fisheries and support of the local community businesses.

Mr. Hamill recommended that the Commission send a letter to the Assistant Director of Water and Science with U.S. Department of Interior to inform and support the work that is being done.

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2. Update on Camp Navajo Fall 2014 hunts.

Flagstaff Regional Supervisor Craig McMullen led discussion about the fall hunting seasons at Camp Navajo and possible revisions for the 2015 fall hunting season. Topics discussed included harvest rates, hunt prescriptions, and permit levels for 2014 and 2015 hunting seasons.

Discussion included moving the Purple Heart from Wounded Warrior to be combined with the Disabled Veteran applicant pool because some Purple Heart recipients were mistakenly under the impression that unless they received their Purple Heart after 9/11/2001 they were not eligible to apply. By combining Purple Heart with DAV, this confusion should go away. Representatives of veterans' organizations participated in discussions with the Department and Camp Navajo prior to the Commission workshop to discuss improvements for the 2015 elk season offerings. The discussion also included a summary of the application pressure for the fall 2014 hunts, and ideas for adjustments for hunt recommendations for the fall 2015 hunting season, which will be presented to the Commission at the December Commission meeting.

Pete Tosi, Garrison Deputy with Camp Navajo, was present and participated in discussion stating that overall success was very good this year. There are some things to work out with the Department, such as Camp Navajo may have to move half of the limited area into the buffer area within the next 3-5 or 5-10 years, which may require adjusting some of the archery and rifle tags

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3. Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery Update.

Fisheries Branch Chief Chris Cantrell provided an update on the Department's efforts to repair Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery. The Department has been working with the USFWS and 21,000 trout were stocked this fall below Davis Dam. Another short term fix may be necessary, but in the meantime, the Director of USFWS confirmed with Senator McCain that they are committed to repairing the hatchery. They have half the funding this fiscal year if they partner with the Department or all the funding in the next fiscal year. In discussions between Director Voyles and the Director of USFWS, it was discussed that if the Department comes up with half the funding, the Department would be asking for a long term agreement for triple A trout eggs. Three meetings have been held so far to discuss negotiations. The Department is hopeful to bring this agreement to the Commission by January 2015.

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4. Department Priorities Discussion.

Deputy Director Gray facilitated discussion on several topics assisted by additional presenters.

FY17 Budget Priorities

Chief Financial Officer Lizette Morgan led discussion on what the Commission might want to see as Commission priorities for the Fiscal Year 2017 budget build and provided the following list of Commission priorities from the November 2013 Commission Workshop:

- Protecting State's Authorities
- Access/Landowner Relations
- Comprehensive Game Management
- Customer Service/Technology Improvements
- Employee Related Costs
- Habitat Improvements
- Increase Law Enforcement Presence
- Facility Maintenance and Improvements
- Public Information
- Research and Development
- Hunter and Angler Recruitment and Retention
- Shooting Ranges
- Sport fishing Opportunities
- Support Costs

Discussion included developments and improvements already made toward sportfishing and the need for continued future developments and improvements. The Commission did not want to remove any of the items from the list and further discussed the importance of each of these items, in particular, public information and outreach, recruitment and retention, and technology. The Shooting Ranges item will be changed to Shooting Sports.

The Department will provide the Commission with an update in February or March 2015 on its progress towards accomplishing these priorities. An in depth briefing is not necessary, but rather an Executive Summary with a list of accomplishments under each priority and possibly a short briefing at the Commission meeting. The timing of future reports will be decided after the February/March update, including a potential full year report in December, which would line up with the Director's performance review.

Mr. Gray invited each Commissioner to sit in on one of the quarterly reviews of the Departmental operational goals, with only two Commissioners attending at a time.

Fund Balance Targets

Ms. Morgan discussed with the Commission and Department staff how the Department was establishing cash balances for operations, and the targets that the Department tries to maintain and reserve as previously directed by the Commission. Discussion included what the absolute minimum is and the target for the ideal amount to have in reserves. The Department is maintaining three to four months of operating cash, which is standard good business practice. A discussion on potential strategies for maintaining these balances followed. The Department will look into a Commission policy that directs the Department to look at the fund balances and bring back a recommendation to the Commission along with the budget. Ms. Morgan recommended a target reserve somewhere between \$8 million and \$21 million and that those funds be held in the Game and Fish and Wildlife Conservation Funds.

Portal Development, On-line Draw System and Website

Information Systems Branch Chief Doug Cummings provided an update on the portal development, on-line draw system and website. Handouts were provided.

Discussion included events that led up to the October draw system issues resulting in an extended deadline and what the Department is doing to improve the process. These include improving the payment processing software, so it can handle a greater load in time for the upcoming elk and antelope draw, and more than doubling the hardware capacity at ADOA. The Department is also looking into eventually moving the draw system from ADOA over to another hosting solution such as Cybertrails Amazon. Other helpful administrative actions to consider are to extend the draw deadline to midnight and to consider some kind of incentive for early application submissions. The Commission discussed and agreed that a midnight deadline would be helpful as well as an incentive for early application submission. The Commission would like to see the paper application eventually go away completely.

Mr. Cummings provided a status update on the development of the Customer Portal. The Department is continuing on track for a January completion. It's a very tight schedule, but still on target. The Portal will be ready by January 31, but the Department proposes that it not be released until the close of the elk/antelope draw in order to avoid customer confusion. After the close of the elk/antelope draw, the Department will advertise and encourage the public to set up their accounts to get their draw results. The Commission discussed and agreed that this was a good idea.

Bonus Point Processes and Big Game Tag Surrender Options

Mr. Gray led discussion on tag surrender options, including the current rule and the proposed rule. The proposed rule is that if a person surrenders their tag to the Department for any reason, or surrenders to a 501c3 for a youth with a life threatening illness or for a disabled veteran, they keep their bonus points.

Chairman Mansell clarified with the Commission and the Department how he sees tag surrender as being three separate entities as follows:

1. Tag surrender: If a person is not going to use their tag and surrenders it back to the Department, that person gets their bonus points back
2. Tag transfer: If a person transfers their tag to a son, daughter, grandson, etc., that person does not get their bonus points back
3. Tag donation: If a person donates their tag to a 501c3 organization of their choice, that person does not get their bonus point back; if a person turns over to the Department the choice of which 501c3 organization gets the tag, that person gets their bonus points back.

Discussion included what type of system the Department would need to develop in order for a fair and equitable distribution of tag donations to 501c3 organizations. Potential ideas included that a person who surrenders a tag for a certain species, would not be able to surrender another tag without actually using a tag for that same species, and that a 501c3 would have to submit an application and be approved to be included in the program.

Mr. Gray discussed the team that is working to draft a rule regarding tag surrender options and what they are working on. The draft rule will be presented at the December Commission meeting for consideration and input.

The Commission further discussed recruitment and retention as it relates to bonus points and the potential of creating a random pool and a bonus point pool, so that a new hunter with only one hunter education bonus point has a chance to draw a tag. Wyoming has a system like this and Commissioner Harris will look into it.

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5. Commission Participation at Outreach Events.

Chairman Mansell discussed outreach and involvement opportunities at some the national level events and banquets that he or Commissioner Harris have attended, and encouraged the other Commissioners to consider attending, such the Wild Sheep event in Reno, the Mule Deer Foundation event in Salt Lake, an event by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and the International Sportsman's Expo. Discussion included local events, including tag auction banquets, that Commissioners attend and how it really highlights the event to have a Commissioner attend.

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6. Meet the Commission Banquet.

The Commission discussed and agreed that due to lack of public participation, they will do away with the "Meet the Commission" meeting that traditionally has been held prior to the Commission Awards Banquet. Also, each former Arizona Game and Fish Commissioner will receive an invitation letter with one complimentary banquet ticket. The social hour will begin at 5:00 p.m. with dinner at 6:00 p.m. and the awards process will be streamlined, so that the event ends before 10:00 p.m.

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7. Executive Session.

The Commission voted to meet in Executive Session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03 (A)(3) and (4) for the purpose of discussion and consultation with legal counsel regarding the Commission's position concerning *Holden et al. v. Arizona Game and Fish Commission et al.*, CV 2014-013211.

Motion: Mansell moved and Madden seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION.

Vote: Unanimous

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8. Litigation Report.

This item was not discussed.

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9. Meeting Wrap up and Future Agenda Items.

There was no review or discussion of future agenda items.

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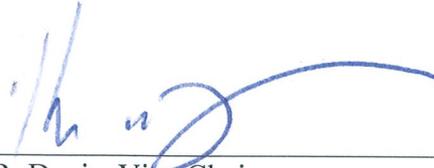
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Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

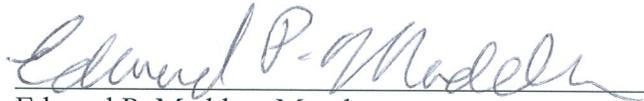
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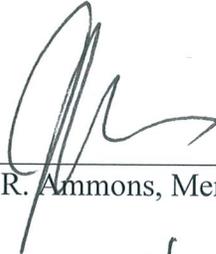
Robert E. Mansell, Chairman



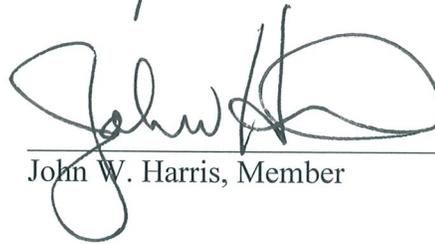
Kurt R. Davis, Vice Chairman



Edward P. Madden, Member

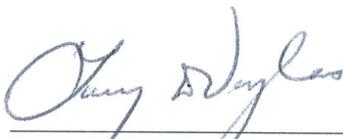


James R. Ammons, Member



John W. Harris, Member

ATTEST:



Larry D. Voyles
Secretary and Director