

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –  
January 21, 2025 minutes

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** [Non-action item]
2. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** [Non-action item]

*Members in Attendance*

1. Coby Rowe, Chairman
2. Ryan Browne, Vice Chairman
3. Steve Robinson
4. Jim Rhea

*Members Absent*

1. Matt Melarkey

*Others in Attendance*

1. Mel Belding
2. Joel Blakeslee
3. Sean Espinosa, NDOW
4. Cooper Munson, NDOW
5. Teddy Elwell
6. Larry Johnson
7. George Forebush
8. Tina Naphy

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**-[Non-action item]

There was no public comment.

4. **Approval of September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 minutes**-[For possible action]

**Member Rhea motioned for approval of the September 23, 2024 CAB minutes. Vice Chair Browne seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

5. **BOARD MEMBER MEETING ASSIGNMENT**-[Non-action item]

Chair Rowe asked who would be able to attend the upcoming Commission meeting. Board members noted they would be able to be in attendance for the upcoming Commission meeting.

6. **COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND LIAISON UPDATES**-[Non-action items]

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Chair Rowe noted he had received correspondence from Nevada Trappers Association which noted the petition was denied.

**7. Consent Agenda [For Possible Action]**

- A. Petition – Mr. Donald Molde, Mr. Christopher Smith, For Ms. Caron Tayloe, Ms. Catherine Smith and Mr. Will Stolzenburg Mses. Tayloe and Smith and Messrs. Molde, Smith and Stolzenburg**
- B. Legislation Committee Report**
- C. Requirements for Federal Land Permits Non-Resident Guided Deer Hunts**
- D. Contest Committee**
- E. Draft Fiscal Year 2026 Predation Management Plan**

Chair Rowe noted he would like to pull 7a, 7d, and 7e from the consent block.

**Member Rhea moved to approve 7b and 7c as written. Member Robinson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**8. Consent Calendar items pulled for further discussion [For Possible Action]**

- A. Petition – Mr. Donald Molde, Mr. Christopher Smith, For Ms. Caron Tayloe, Ms. Catherine Smith and Mr. Will Stolzenburg Mses. Tayloe and Smith and Messrs. Molde, Smith and Stolzenburg**

Chair Rowe opened the item to discuss the petition of the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners to approve several recommended changes to trapping regulations to reduce the effects of incidental trapping of mountain lions, require trapper education for new licensees, and improve collection of non-target trapping data. Member Robinson said he didn't think the petition addressed the concerns in which is was trying and that he was not in support of the petition. Chair Rowe said he agreed with Member Robinson's observation. Vice Chair Browne said he agreed and it appeared to be an attack on Nevada sportsman. Member Robinson wondered why Nevada does not allow the trapping of lions, but Chair Rowe noted that he believed it would take legislative action. Shawn Espinosa, NDOW, said NDOW was not looking to change the trapping of mountain lions.

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During public comment, Joel Blakeslee said the Trappers Association would ask the Commission to deny the petition. He also noted this item had come up at many previous legislative sessions and that overall, this petition was more of a fundraising opportunity than a serious proposal. Mel Belding added that he believed the CAB should recommend that the petition be denied. He explained his expertise on traps and the way the petition was written did not align with his understanding of traps. George Forebush said that this petition was a plan by groups who were anti-hunting, and those groups are out to eliminate hunting entirely. Larry Johnson said he hoped the CAB would recommend the petition be denied as well. Ash Casselli said he too supported the denial of the petition.

**Vice Chair Browne moved to deny the petition. Member Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**D. Contest Committee**

Chair Rowe opened the item to discuss the issue of Wildlife Contests in Nevada. Member Robinson said he had commented on the item at a recent meeting. He said that there is no longer a petition that was being discussed, and the continued hearing of this item is a waste of time.

During public comment, George Forebush said he would like to see he hoped the CAB would support regulation for contests which he thought may protect against a future ban. Larry Johnson said the Coalition had held meetings throughout the fall on this item and they had discussed potential regulations that may help end this issue moving forward. Joel Blakeslee added that he was in support of the contests and noted that he had some conversations with state assembly members regarding issues they have had with coyotes in Las Vegas. Tina Naphy said that she was concerned with people hunting coyotes in the state without paying to do so. She added that she would like to see the Commission place licenses and fees on killing coyotes because when they are hunted and killed they respond by having more pups.

Member Robinson said he does agree that people should pay fees for hunts in Nevada.

**Member Robinson moved to recommend to the Commission to deny banning coyote calling contests. Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**E. Draft Fiscal Year 2026 Predation Management Plan**

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Chair Rowe opened the item to discuss the draft fiscal year 2026 Predation Management Plan. Member Robinson asked Mr. Espinosa about various projects that were being recommended for predator management. Member Robinsons asked about Project 37 and that it may be underfunded. Mr. Espinosa said that the project is largely aimed at protecting bighorn sheep and it may be underfunded, but overall he did not consider it vastly underfunded. He explained how the funding worked and how money was being directed to the projects. Member Robinsons said that he was not sure that all of the proposed projects were cost effective, and he asked if there is a review of resource allocation. Mr. Espinosa said that was a key reason why the Department included the numbers in the report so it was transparent as to how these projects were being implemented and if there may be better ways to manage the projects. Vice Chair Browne asked about Project 40, and Mr. Espinosa provided an update on the outcomes of that project in specific units.

During public comment, Larry Johnson discussed his support for certain projects, specifically with regard to mule deer. He said he supports continued funding of the projects because he has seen what funding can do to improve various units. Joel Blakeslee said he would like to see more creative solutions like putting protocols on units. He said he would like to see tools outside of the government utilized. Mel Belding asked about the most recent aerial shoot. He said that the money expended on that project was not cost effective and it costs about 8,000 dollars per animal killed. He said he had additional concerns regarding the cost effectiveness of the raven project as well. He added that he hopes that the money is spent more wisely. George Forbush said that the private citizens were more effective in taking coyotes out compared with the resources being sent to the government. He provided details regarding various hunts and the success rate was much higher than the funded projects. Ash Casselli said he thinks some of the funding is not being used in a way that was effective per dollar spent.

Member Rhea said he agreed that he would like to see ways outside of government to manage predators, specifically with coyotes. Member Robinson asked if the Department to work with the contests groups in order to highlight areas that would be good to have a contest. He said if the Department could work with these groups there may be better outcomes for those areas. Mr. Espinosa said that the Department could look into a recommendation like that to work with private vendors which would lessen the costs and allow the Department to be more nimble.

**Vice Chair Browne moved to approve the 2026 Predation Management Plan with the following changes: the modify**

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**Project 40 to include Unit 13 and 14 with emphasis on Unit 13.**  
**Chair Rowe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**9. Commission General Regulation 524- [For Possible Action]**

Chair Rowe opened the item to discuss a workshop to consider a temporary regulation amending Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 502 that would simplify the issuance, use and administrative management of bonus points associated with junior hunt applications. Vice Chair Browne asked about the temporary regulation. Mr. Espinosa said the Department cannot establish a permanent regulation at this time and that is why this regulation was being proposed as a temporary regulation. There was no public comment.

**Member Rhea motioned to approve Commission Regulation 524 as written. Vice Chair Browne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**10. Commission Regulations [For Possible Action]**

**A. Commission Regulation 25-01, 2025 Application Deadlines, Draw Results and 2026 Spring Turkey**

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider adopting regulation to set the 2025 big game tag application deadlines and related information. There was no discussion from the board or public comment,

**Vice Chair Browne moved to approve Commission Regulation 25-01 as written. Member Rhea seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**B. Commission Regulation 25-02, 2025 Game Tag Application Eligibility and Tag Limits**

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider adopting regulation to set the 2025 game tag application eligibility and tag limits and related information. There was no discussion from the board or public comment.

**Member Robinson moved to approve Commission Regulation 25-02 as written. Member Rhea seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**C. Commission Regulation 25-03, 2025 Dream Tag Seasons and**

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**Quotas**

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider adopting a regulation to set the 2025 Dream Tag species, seasons, and quota. There was no discussion from the board or public comment.

**Chair Rowe moved to approve Commission Regulation 25-03 as written. Vice Chair Browne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**D. Commission Regulation 25-04, 2026 Heritage Tag Seasons and Quotas**

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider adopting a regulation to set the 2026 Heritage Tag species, seasons, and quota. There was no discussion from the board or public comment.

**Vice Chair Browne moved to approve Commission Regulation 25-04 as written. Member Robinson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**E. Commission Regulation 25-05, 2025 Partnership in Wildlife Tag Seasons and Quotas**

Chair Rowe opened the item to consider adopting a regulation to set the 2025 Partnership in Wildlife tags hunt species, seasons, and quota. Vice Chair Browne asked about tag allocations and if populations were negatively impacted. Mr. Espinosa said that quota allocations were considered each year for the units and that is included in the quota setting.

**Member Robinson moved to approve Commission Regulation 25-05 as written. Chair Rowe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**F. Commission Regulation 25-06, 2025 Silver State Tag Seasons and Quotas**

Chair Rowe opened the item to discuss adopting a regulation to set the 2025 Silver State tag species, seasons, and quota. There was no

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discussion from the CAB or public comment.

**Chair Rowe moved to approve Commission Regulation 25-06 as written. Member Rhea seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**G. Commission Regulation 25-07 – 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 Big Game Seasons**

Chair Rowe opened the item to discuss the proposed big game seasons for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 hunting seasons and dates for mule deer, antelope, elk, moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat including limits, hunting hours, special hunt eligibility, animal sex, physical characteristics, and hunt boundary restrictions. Sean Espinosa explained some of the changes for Washoe County including the pronghorn muzzleloader season and the California bighorn season to add an additional week to the season to allow the rams to move onto public lands. Member Robinson asked about the archery season will be shortened and Mr. Espinosa said the season would be shorter. Member Robinson asked about the junior antelope hunt and the horns shorter than ears. Mr. Espinosa said it can be difficult to decipher between a doe and a yearling buck and that was why the regulation remains unchanged. Member Robinson said he had heard about people who had been targeting small bucks. He said he would like to see the regulation changed to doe. Mr. Espinosa said they have kept the same requirements to help juniors from making mistakes on their hunts. Member Robinson asked about the status of the desert sheep. Mr. Espinosa said the situation in the south is getting fairly dire. There were 450 animals observed on survey and the Department had to haul water into that area. Southern Nevada vegetation is not in good shape due to a lack of rain. The Department is looking into options in other states because most of the ranges in Nevada are exposed. He also added Nevada will be receiving close to 40 sheep from Oregon in the coming days. Member Robinson asked if the National Guard could do training runs and Mr. Espinosa said that for various reasons it has not been able to be implemented but the Department would reach out to discuss options again. Member Robinson asked if the ewe hunt would be stopped and Mr. Espinosa said there was a chance that may happen. Vice Chair Browne asked what the population should be in Muddy Mountains and Mr. Espinosa said that while there isn't an exact number, the population is lower than it should be. Member Robinson said he was happy to hear the Department was going to begin moving sheep as soon as possible because the situation is so critical. He also added that he would like to reiterate to the Commission that the junior antelope hunt should be doe and not horns shorter than ears.

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During public comment, Teddy Elwell said he would like the CAB to look into the early archery hunt and hopefully they could move the tags from the early season to the late season. He added that there was not a robust migration during the past year and there were more deer on Peavine Mountain than in the Carson Range. Mel Belding said he hoped for an increase in the number of guzzlers and aprons in areas that are experiencing drought. He said he would like to see the ewe hunt eliminated. He said that he agreed with Member Robinson in changing the antelope hunt to doe.

Member Rhea said he would like to see hunters check in if they decide to keep the ewe hunt in place. The members of the CAB discussed proposed changes to the hunts based upon feedback from members of the public and the Department. Member Robinson noted that he is very concerned with the loss of sheep that has occurred in recent years and he believes the ewe hunt continues to add to that loss.

**Chair Rowe moved to approve Commission Regulation 25-07 with the following changes: To cancel Hunt 3181 and 3281, cancel Hunt 1341, 194/196 early and 1342 Non-Resident; to change the description on antelope hunt 2181 2191 from horns shorter than ears to doe antelope. Member Rhea seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**H. Commission Regulation 25-08 – 2025 Black Bear Seasons**

Chair Rowe opened the item to discuss the 2025 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. Member Robinson said he was able to do this hunt, and he was able to take all edible portions of the meat. He said he had also found the bear fat to be very useful in treating eczema as well. Member Robinson asked if the total bears that were hunted this year was down, and Mr. Espinosa said the total was lower. There was no public comment.

**Member Robinson moved to approve Commission Regulation 25-08 as written. Vice Chair Browne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**I. Commission Regulation 25-09 – 2025 Mountain Lion Seasons and Harvest Limits**

Chair Rowe opened the item to discuss the 2025 hunting season

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open units, harvest limits by unit group, hunting hours and special regulations for mountain lion. Chair Rowe asked how close the harvest limit was, and Mr. Espinosa said typically the average is about 185. There was no public comment.

**Chair Rowe moved to approve Commission Regulation 25-09 as written. Member Robinson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**J. Commission Regulation 25-10 – 2025-2026 Restricted Nonresident Guided Mule Deer Seasons and Quotas**

Chair Rowe opened the item to discuss the 2025-2026 hunting season and quotas for restricted non-resident guided mule deer including hunt boundary restrictions. There was no discussion by the CAB or public comment.

**Member Robinson moved to approve Commission Regulation 25-10 as written. Chair Rowe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**11. Future Meeting Agenda Items – Informational only- Public Comment Allowed**

Member Robinson said he would like a representative from the BLM to give a presentation regarding habitat management at the March meeting. During public comment, Mel Belding said he would like to see a presentation from the new predator biologist which would be helpful to sportsman to have a good understanding. Joel Blakeslee said he would like to explore ideas regarding predator management that he had mentioned earlier in the meeting.

**12. Public Comment [Non-action item]**

Mel Belding said that he wanted to recognize the work of the Department and the participation of staff at the CAB meetings. He also added that he had concerns about petitions that were being filed and that it was unfair regarding the ease in which these petitions can be filed. He said that the Department and sportsman should not be the only ones who foot the bill and that he would like to see the petitioners have some skin in the game.

**13. Adjournment [Non-action item]**

Chair Rowe adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.