

Kootenay Wildlife Habitat Advisory Committee – Meeting 4
Minutes – August 24, 2008

1. Garth pointed out that travel costs to the meetings is covered and that each member should email Kelly Lode to get a copy of the travel form. He thinks you can put several travel events on a single form.
2. AP and JT and others suggest we should look at previously proposed regulation changes to see why they have dropped off the table, are still up for discussion, or are awaiting decision. Garth will go back and look at previous proposals and respond. Note that elk reg changes will largely need to wait till we re-visit the management plan next year and, any reg changes around agricultural areas will wait until we get the new ag zone biologist at about Christmas. PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED PAGE BELOW.
3. AP – lengthen the sheep season by 5 days to have the same season across region. Note this refers to the two MU where sheep close on the 20th, make closure date the 25th for all MUs.
4. Lynx bobcat – GM to summarize potential season changes as previously proposed by EKTHA, SGO and in the management plans and present BCTA views on this issue. Invite EKTA to discuss any potential reg changes.
 - For lynx, the recommendations in the Draft Mgmt Plan suggest lengthening the hunting season to close on the 15 or 31 of January or, the 15th of February. There is no suggestion in the Draft MP to begin the hunting season on 15th Nov.
 - For bobcat, the recommendations in the MP are to drop the quota of 2 for each trapper.
 - SGO and EKTHA have both proposed opening the lynx hunting season on Nov. 15.
5. AP – Victoria is developing a moose harvest procedure. Why is Tara writing a Regional strategy? Discuss this with Tara and make sure she is taking note of the provincial procedure .

SL – What about an any bull GOS late in year after the elk and sheep season? But what about movement of hunters among Regions? Would it be province-wide?-probably not given the political issues around moose in R5 and the modest number of moose in R3 and 8. It would mean convincing regional staff in R3 and 8 to adopt the same season.
6. Cougar – problem with SGO proposal is there is no lever to control harvest. SL would like EK to go to 20 females.
Vote: all in favour to increase the maximum kill from the previous 10 in 2008/09 to 15 females in the EK (but BCTA member was not present).
7. Elk – JT would like to see kill levels from Jn/Sn GOS. KP – can we open the cow season to all hunters? Ask Tara this question based on results of the 2 GOS cow hunts.
JT - UBBC have previously submitted a proposal for archery "any elk" to continue in Ag lands, while the Jr/Sr antlerless hunt is on. A GOS for cows is a risky proposal.
AP – we need to reduce population size, not just Trench population because winter ranges are

in BAD shape. Currently we are taking action on the animals that are believed to cause the greatest negative impact on the winter forage supply, i.e., the trench animals that reside year-round in these areas. Migratory elk presumably only utilize these habitats in winter, so the need to reduce them is lower.

Tara – are we reducing Trench population by the current cow kill levels?

FJ – we can be certain that a cow GOS for all ages will reduce elk population size in the Trench; it has worked before. Tara is working on a population review of elk during this fiscal year and plans to revise the elk mgmt plan in 2009. The new plan will address these issues.

8. Goat Opportunity:

AP and JT wants a review of resident goat use to see if residents really do not want to hunt goats?

i. AP and JT want a process to allow residents to kill their allocation.

ii. AP suggests slowly phasing out regional averages in order to implement what we need in 2012.

iii. JT – goat tags are too expensive. **SEND THIS TO VICTORIA.**

iv) Note that Ron Milton from Passmore proposed opening a goat season in the south portion of 4-17 which includes the transplant area at Passmore. Goat numbers seen on the Passmore winter ranges have exceeded 30 in the last few years and he feels there are many more than that between Passmore and Lemon Creek, between 60-100. GM FORGOT TO BRING THIS UP SO COULD THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PLEASE TAKE THIS BACK TO THEIR CLUBS?

Dave and Garth promised AP and JT that we will consider the recommendations.

- More on GOS units for goats.
- What about a GOS for bow hunters? JT - Bowhunters are not concerned about a GOS for archery. However, if overharvest is a concern in moving to a full GOS, providing an archery GOS (as a first step) might provide some baseline data to clarify if residents really want to hunt goats, while minimizing harvest numbers. (JT)
- Garth will ask Irene to use a 5% min success rate for 2009 but pointed out that Irene is likely to want to reduce the sustainable harvest rate to 3% from 4% because there is some question about the sustainability of this rate. The request to reduce the sustainable harvest rate from 4% to 3% will be based upon advice from HQ.

Moose: Garth recapped their intention to re-submit the reg change for a spike/fork moose GOS for 2009. SGO members re-iterated their concern on the impacts to their quotas. Garth could not guarantee there would be no impact but felt the impact of the allocation policy in 2011 was going to be much large than any foreseeable impact from the GOS season. He pointed out that the only thing he thought MOE could do to help the SGO's understand or predict the impacts of the hunt on mature moose numbers is a population modelling exercise. Garth also pointed out that Compulsory Inspection and a monitoring plan is in place in R4 for 2008.

Tara will recalculate tag and quota number for 2009 because we have several new population estimates across the region.

SHEEP

1. Philips Creek is on LEH because the sheep move in there in November after the GOS season.
2. Mt. Assiniboine is on LEH because of concerns by BC Parks staff. Dave will try to see if we can move this area to GOS or increase the tag numbers. Recommendation to ignore Parks staff and manage sheep accordingly.
3. Salmo is on LEH because the herd is small and isolated.
4. Syringa – RG would like to see a season on sheep there. Not a GOS because the herd is small.
5. GM will ask Irene to use a 5% min success rate for all sheep LEH areas and, open and LEH opportunity at Syringa.

WTD

There was plenty of discussion around the provincial proposal from BCWF to open a GOS season for WTD for any sex or age with a bag limit of 2 for the Kootenays. GM asked members to take this proposal back to their clubs and prepare for discussion next meeting. Bowhunters support the concept. With concerns. Note: Bowhunters in the EK can already take two does. Each region must be assessed on it's own. Is there a potential to harmonize seasons with this move? IE simply the WK and EK disparity. Season length and timing is a primary concern. JT has talked to resident farmers, I would suggest talking to Lloyd Bell.

- Send Jesse's doc to committee – confirm with Jesse.
- Send ALL Jesse's info to JT, including Gerry's talk. Thank you

MD

- GM asked members to take back minutes from MD Strategy to their clubs.
- KP – can we begin proposing reg changes for MD before the strategy is done?
- GM – yes, as long as the change does not undermine the strategy.
- One suggestion in the strategy is to separate bag limits for WTD and MD which seemed to have support around the table.

Access Management

- DD presented each member with a table that showed the overview of all access areas in MOE control in R4 and pointed out that the closures highlighted in yellow were those where we planned to make changes for the 2009 season.
- KP – EKWA would like to be consulted via George Wilson.
- DD – will send the info out via email; Guy's comments have been incorporated and DD will send these out to all

- Darkwoods: we discussed how the property will be managed. GM has since talked to Pat Field who is working for Darkwoods to manage the property. He said there are no plans to allow hunting or fishing this year and that they will get advertisements in local newspapers as soon as possible.

West Kootenay Ecosystem Restoration

Garth asked for input to the ER plan for the West Kootenay. Specifically we would like input on potential areas for mule deer restoration outside of the NDT4 zone, and potential areas for restoration for mountain goats. Table 4 below lists the MU’s where we are considering ER for mule deer (the will be ER in other MU’s but not just focused on mule deer). Table 5 lists the potential areas where we may do ER for goats. Any input on potential treatment sites within these units would be appreciated.

Table 4. Treatment priorities for mule habitat restoration in wildlife management units in the West Kootenay.

MU	Mule deer	Priority for treatment
4-14	moderate	5
4-16	moderate	2
4-17	moderate	3
4-18	moderate	4
4-19	few	1
4-27	few	nil
4-28	few	nil
4-29	few	10
4-30	few	8
4-31	few	7
4-32	moderate	6
4-33	few	9
4-38	very few	nil
4-39	very few	nil

Table 5. Treatment priorities for mountain goat habitat restoration in wildlife management units in the West Kootenay. Potential viewing sites were solicited from Nelson area biologists and were only acceptable if they were on main roads such that many people could view the animals each year. Hunting demand is based on the number of hunters who apply for tags to hunt goats in each WMU.

MU	Mtn goat estimate in 2005	Hunting demand	Goat viewing opportunities	Viewing location	Population decline?	Ranking
4-06	45	high	yes	Skimmerhorn	yes	

4-07	20	closed			
4-08	20	closed	yes	Trail	yes
4-09	100	closed			
4-14	30	moderate			
4-15	20	closed			
4-16	140	moderate			
4-17	100	moderate	yes	Passmore Wilson Lake	no yes
4-18	45	moderate			
4-19	130	low			
4-27	300	low			
4-28	80	low			
4-29	60	low			
4-30	50	moderate	yes	Meadow Creek	yes
4-31	90	low			
4-32	50	moderate			
4-33	100	moderate			
4-38	467	low			
4-39	120	low			

Previously suggested Regulation Changes

I looked through my previous documents to catch various suggestions I had missed and mention them here. Suggestions that are not in this list are discussed earlier.

EKTA

1. Delay the cougar hunting season till 15 November. Rejected by MOE because this negates non-hound hunters the opportunity to hunt cougar.
2. Carry over female kills in excess of kill limits to the following year.
3. Open lynx season Nov. 15 as for bobcats. This support will be noted and we will discuss this reg change next meeting.

EKWA

1. Create a 5pt elk GOS in the EK. MOE: prefer to wait till we re-open the Mgmt Plan to address elk reg changes.
2. Adjust X-zone boundaries for elk in EK. MOE: ask new ag zone ungulate biologist to address this after arriving.
3. Increase the deer bag limit to 3 for the EK. MOE prefer to use the Southern Interior Mule Strategy proposal and separate bag limits for deer.
4. Increase antlerless WTD hunting opportunity in the EK. MOE: asked clubs to comment on the proposed WTD GOS for any sex or age animal.
5. Allow youth to take any MD buck. MOE: rather let the MD strategy unfold and follow recommendations in that if they are suitable.
6. Lengthen the sheep season by 5 days and make it the same throughout the Region. MOE: GM forgot to address this so we have to discuss this with the Wildlife Branch first.
7. Increase wolf bag limit. MOE: hunting usually has little impact on ungulates but this measure has been instituted in the caribou recovery areas in other Regions and we plan to follow suite. No plans to change bag limit elsewhere given the year long season in the EK.
8. Increase black bear bag limit. MOE: rather this be a provincial issue because the bag limit is consistent across the province right and two seems quite liberal already.
9. Increase moose harvest rate to 20% which would be the same as other nearby Regions. MOE: in the new moose GOS we have kept the LEH harvest rate at 15%. We do not know how many bulls will be killed in the GOS but it is quite possible that the harvest rate will go up to 20% with the GOS and, bull ratios following several years of GOS.
10. MD archery season from Nov 16-25th. GM will take this suggestion to the next MD strategy meeting to see if other regions might entertain a MD bow season of some sort.
11. Make black bear tag applicable to spring or fall. MOE: this is a Victoria issue and Garth will refer this to PHRACC.
- 12.

WKO

-based on letter date March 12, 2008 they would like to see an elk management plan for the West Kootenay. MOE will add the WK to the current EK elk plan and revise the entire plan in 2009.

Bowhunters

Elk: we are waiting for the arrival of the new Ag undulate biologist to address changes in ag areas and the revision of the Elk Mgmt Plan for other elk reg changes.

Mule Deer: again we plan to make reg changes for deer based on advice from the MD Mgmt Strategy. I will take the idea of a late MD bow season to the committee to see if there is any appetite for this in other Regions.

Turkey: we have just opened further fall opportunity for turkeys and this may help reduce problems. Actual number of problems for turkeys is very few.

These clubs presented several ideas to increase hunter recruitment and I will refer these to PHRAC as they should be province-wide initiatives if they are going to happen.