

Kootenay Wildlife Harvest Advisory Committee Meeting #5
December 13, 2008 – 10:00 am MT
Conference Call Format
Minutes

Participants on call:

Garth Mowat, MOE	Jim Turner, TBBC
Dave Dunbar, MOE	Kent Petovello, EKWA
Kelly Lode, MOE	Ken Robins, SGOA
Irene Teske, MOE	Richard Green, WKO
Andy Pezderic, EKWA	Don McNamar, BCTA
Brian Huscroft, WKO	Anna Fontana, SGOA

Topics for discussion and voting (when appropriate):

1. Review minutes from last meeting

Minutes from last meeting approved.

Additions to agenda:

- **AF - Moose LEH Bull season dates**
- **JT – bow hunters propose Sep 1 – 9 for sheep (include in #3)**
- **BH – trophy mgmt for all species – discussion**

2. Mountain goats: increasing tag numbers (i.e. move minimum to 5%). Move some units to GOS.

Email sent out prior to meeting from AP. GM – only thing that might make a difference is to reduce minimum success rate from 10% to 5%. AP – not issuing enough permits to reach harvest. IT – would like to see resident harvest up to 3% which would mean a total of 2700 permits to achieve this. Concerned about issuing 3500 permits though (which is the result with minimum success at 5%). Some units have over harvest occurring and some with over harvest of females. Total harvest this year is 205 (residents at 2.3 % and guides at 3%). GM - Policy states 4% max harvest rate and Provincial Mgmt Plan is currently being done and harvest rates will be reviewed. Will not be changing harvest rate policy right now. AP – AAH should match target rate harvest. Some worry that if target harvest is not reached, then that will be taken away from residents. AP suggests changing permit numbers to see if resident harvest goes up – that way we could see if the residents are keen on hunting goat. DM – road closures impact the number of goats being killed. AP suggests adding permits first. AF doesn't feel road closures have anything to do with it. DD – thinks access can influence harvest and tells about the access closure review being done over the next year. IT – Cross River, will suggest closure point be moved to 27km point.

KP – his group's allocation review is going through and wants to see increase in 2009. RG seconds that. GM comfortable with increasing permit numbers and Irene comfortable with 2700 permits which would work out to about 3%.

Action: IT or GM – will send out new spreadsheet next week to group.

3. **Bighorn sheep:** reducing minimum success rates in order to get higher tag numbers for the LEH hunts? BCWF has suggested moving to GOS to Nov 25 for the entire Region. **Correction from KP – should say Oct 25 not Nov 25, followed by 5 day bow hunt.**

IT – discussed spreadsheet. AP – if issuing 2 permits people will not be happy if minimum success rate is 25%. He does not like the 25%; thinks it is overly conservative. IT – Phillips Creek – can issue 4 in total (2 permits per season in addition to GOS). KP wondered if the Americans are still feeding the sheep. Leave GO split as is. GM - right now it is 2 allocated to residents and 1 to GO. Irene will check and see if the American's are hunting the sheep. IT: Montana hunts the Phillips Creek sheep herd; they issue 1 permit annually (any sex); harvest since 2000 = 6 rams (all 3/4+ curl). GM thinks we should use 10% rule for minimum success rate and put 15 permits in that hunt. The full curl regulation protects harvest. KP – one of the 2 available roads into Phillips will be closed (to Miller Ck). IT – said their will be an increase in permits, at least 4.

Information rec'd from Tim Thier – “No, we don't feed the sheep. Nor is this herd foraging at any private residences in Montana. FWP believes strongly in providing good, secure habitat so that wildlife can feed themselves. As a result, we don't feed wildlife anywhere in the state.”

IT - Syringa opening new unit – population estimate is 40. IT - Wanted to use 30% success rate. Same dates – Sep 10 – Oct 25. AP: agreed that 30% success rate for the first year would be acceptable.

Mt. Assiniboine – few permits issued because of Parks. Irene heard a resident harvested one this year. AP said permits need to be 2 and 1, not 1 and 1 between residents and GO's. Because of success rate GO gets permit of 2. AP says you need to double the number of resident permits. IT – issue from Parks – they prefer one hunter using the campsite per session. May suggest reducing to 10 day hunt from 15 days. Maximum would be 4 permits. AP – happy with changing permit numbers and changing to 10 day hunt. DD will talk to Rob MacDonald of Parks about this issue. KP – EKWA sees changing the Mt. Assiniboine hunt as a first step to a major problem – go to 4 permit hunts. He is not happy with the way Parks treats hunting. AP - Minimum success rates need to be looked at with both goats and sheep. **Action:** GM and IT will finalize a table and send out with goat table next week. AP – thinks late bow season would be more appropriate as opposed to JT's proposed early bow hunt (Sept 1-9). Late season would be productive as sheep will be moving down. JT – will talk to his group about the late season vs early season. AF said guides will fight to get off quotas for sheep. GM stated that residents have not achieved their quota and this needs to be corrected. AP – lengthen season to Oct 25 (4-02 and 4-25) and have late 5 day bow season. DD – Perhaps Jim could take bow proposal back to club and will be discussed at next meeting – won't be a changed for 2009 season.

Lengthen season in 4-02 and 4-25. On average residents achieve about 75% of harvest allocation. AF – would like to see season go to the 20th instead of the 25th for the whole region. AP says the reason he wants to extend the season is because residents are under-achieving their harvest. IT- supports extending 4-02 season but would have to think about 4-25. KP – need clarity in synopsis to align seasons and support COS enforcement. GM – doesn't see a conservation issue and will discuss internally and

send out recommendation. **Action: Irene to get a revised LEH spreadsheet to committee members. IT also to respond to the request to extend the sheep season in to OCT. 25 in 4-02 and 4-25.**

4. GOS for spike/fork moose: we plan to submit this regulation change this year. Tara has some new info to share. Monitoring money is NOT in place for this year but we have applied to HCTF for next year and we are hopeful we will get funded this time. Age data are coming in.

Initially we had acquired monitoring money this year, but money was removed 2 months ago. Have applied for monitoring money for next year from HCTF. Moose now on Compulsory Inspection. Nancy Wilkin advised that a Regional Harvest Strategy needed to be done and submitted with regulation change. AF – asked if we'd be going ahead with it even though we don't have the money. GM – sounds like Wayne Stetski (Regional Mgr) is in support of the season with hope of money coming from HCTF. Final approval sits with Wayne. AF – GO's do not support this. Feels it will impact the moose population and adds the season when moose are most vulnerable. KR – talked to COS in Reg 8 where this season is in place. He was told there were many illegal kills during that season. Worried that this will happen here resulting in over-harvest. GM said he gets a different story from Reg 8 and Reg 3 regarding this hunt. This hunt seems better than a 10 pt antler restriction hunt. Only way to offer more opportunity in a GOS. KR – sees moose numbers in Revelstoke area going down. GM – said the wolf numbers are very low there now and assumes there will be a turnaround in moose numbers. KP – fully support hunt and looks forward to new opportunities. AP – this will help in recruitment / retention – in full support.

5. Elk Mgmt Plan: no significant reg changes planned for elk. We plan to do data analysis this year and revise the Mgmt Plan next fiscal and expand the scope of the plan to include the WK.

GM – hoping to begin Plan next fiscal year. Will address all points from clubs in new EMP and will be a Kootenay wide plan. AP – lots of concern around range conditions. Seems to be just as many elk as ever even with LEH and spike hunt. GM – thinks elk population has levelled off in past 3 years. Calf ratios have gone down. High cow mortality. **Action: GM will send out graph of number of cow elk kills in the trench in the last decade.** AP – carrying capacity is a huge concern right now. DD - Range study is being done and are well aware of the range issues. GM – we don't want to be in a position to cause an imbalance in predator/prey. Want it to be a slow decline and that appears to be the way it's going. AF – can't blame elk for all of this...cattle are out there too. AP – potential 3 or 5 pt GOS to harvest from a wider range of age classes – would like to see this initiated. GM – would like to wait till opening up next EMP (2010-2014). This will be funding dependent but it is our full intention to get this done.

6. It seems the Problem Ungulate Specialist position has been axed due to funding constraints in Victoria. There is a small chance the position will be backfilled this year but next fiscal year seems like the earliest we can hope for.

DD - Budget cuts – funding not available. Delaying acting on regulations regarding this issue but Garth and Tara will proceed with regulation changes regarding problem

ungulates. Backfilling might be an option to fill the needs of this position. Discussion on white tail is being done provincially and will be presented to PHRAAC. This table needs to take that information to their members and see if they agree with suggestions from provincial committee. Same will happen with mule deer.

7. The lynx and bobcat Mgmt plans are stalled. I am willing to proceed with regulation changes that are consistent with provincial mgmt direction.

There is a desire to see lynx season open earlier. DM – trappers totally against earlier season. Feels opening early to be hunted goes against everything trappers believe in. Should be a limit of 10 (like cougar); when reached season should be shut down. Trappers aren't allowed to trap cougars so they feel this would be fair. Bobcat quota – doesn't have a problem with current quota of 2. KR – GOs would like it extended so they can get up into that back areas to hunt. **Dave and Garth to discuss conservation risk and decide what the best decision is.** DD - there could be a provincial plan being done on lynx and bobcat and it would be nice to be consistent with that provincial plan. GM – Provincial plan is stalled and doesn't see it getting done soon. Opening lynx season earlier would be consistent with the plan. This issue will be decided by Dave and Garth now since all parties have presented their views. DM – wondered about Lynx going to CI? AF - No objection to that. AP – states that the compulsory reporting system needs to be repaired. **GM - to bring this up with staff in Victoria.** KR – will discuss with his club whatever decision DD & GM come up with. IT – could hunting regulation add “cannot hunt young....” (like cougar regulation)?

8. Any comment regarding ecosystem restoration in the WK?

Send comments to Garth – West Kootenay. Not dependent on budget right now but trying to partner with MOF budget for more money. RG – Plans are to go ahead with two burns.

9. Discuss reg change document that is posted on the web.

The 5 changes have been voted on. AP – has heard feedback from public that they would like to see justifications/explanations for reg changes stated on the website. GM - agreed and will try to do this in the future. The cougar quota of 15 will become effective this year (2008). Number 5 (move some MUs to GOS for goats) will not go forward. Not a lot of support for GOS for mtn goats due to the on-going management plan, delay for at least one year. Maybe move several units to GOS in 2010. Andy suggested units to Irene but there weren't any WK units. Need to look at WK units for GOS – open a bunch at once is Garth's thought. RG – hasn't been discussed in WK yet. If goats go to GOS then guide would not have a quota. Irene and Andy to discuss. AP – feels GO quotas could probably be removed in those territories. RG - to ask WKO how they feel about GOS for goats. 2010 potential changes: GM wants clubs to discuss these proposed changes. JT – wants to ensure the bow season is included in #1 bull moose. **GM - to confirm this is the case with Tara.** Would like to see late deer bow season for 2010 proposals. Reg 4 is the only region that doesn't have an antlerless (mule deer) hunt.

10. LEH Bull Moose season dates

AF – does not support change of dates. Would rather see previous season date or start after elk season. Needed to provide quality hunt. What is the resident harvest rate? GM - up a bit from previous years (6% increase) so there will be a minor reduction in permits. Go back to Oct 21 as a minimum. GO's do oppose the reg change. AF feels these meetings are just to provide information but changes will go ahead despite comments. GM - Policy direction states that first priority is given to the resource, next First Nations, then residents, then non-residents. This is not to gang up on GO's. KR – would like feedback from this group about limiting harvest to moose or elk (not both). AP – would probably oppose going back. Doesn't fit in with recruitment/retention strategy. Residents around here really appreciated the early moose hunting season in the northern MUs and he wants to say thank you. AF – if allocations could be reduced because of over harvest in GOS, it could impact LEH and that could be a problem.

11. Trophy discussion brought forward to next meeting. BH – there is a lot of interest in trophy hunting still and feels it is left out. GM agrees that it needs to be acknowledged and discussed.

12. Access Review of current proposals: DD - these VAHCs were created between 16 and 32 yrs ago. Very liberal seasons were in place at that time so VAHCs were needed to restrict harvest. He feels regulations that old justify a review. There are mixed comments coming in. Many of these do not guarantee a motorized hunt. DD would like to see biologically founded VAHC closures. AP supports access review. Some areas where there is Mountain Pine Beetle, need access review but it is hard to get public buy-in. DD would like to get rid of ones that were meant to be temporary. Highly contentious closures will be deferred for now. JT – okay with WK recommendations and in the EK there are a few that he thinks could be converted to AMAs. It was suggested that Dave contact MOF to see what roads they are deactivating. Send all individual closure comments to DD.

RG – would like to see shared LEH cow elk season added. Appears to be no objection to this.

Next meeting – early spring