

**Kootenay Wildlife Harvest Advisory Committee Meeting #6**  
**May 13, 2009**  
**Conference Call Format**  
**Minutes**

**Participants on call:**

Garth Mowat, MOE	Frank Rad, BCTA
Dave Dunbar, MOE	Wally Kampen, WKO
Kelly Lode, MOE	Jim Turner, TBBC
Andy Pezderic, EKWA	Kent Petovello, BCWF
Anna Fontana, SGOA	Richard Green, WKO
Brian Huscroft, WKO	Larry Hall, Resident Hunters Assoc - observer

\*\* Garth to check with Ken Robins regarding his participation as WK SGOA rep

***EKWA comments on certain agenda items have been added and the end of agenda items in italics.***

**Topics for discussion and voting (when appropriate):**

**1. Review minutes from last meeting - passed**

Some topics from previous meeting have been put on this agenda for further discussion.

**2. Update on Compulsory Reporting/Inspection survey**

We don't have the hunter survey data from last year yet that we normally receive summarized from Victoria. Compulsory reporting (CR) may get dropped and compulsory inspections (CI) will be considered on a species by species basis because of the cost involved. It would be a shame to lose the data stream of wolves from compulsory reporting. As many as 90% or as few as 40% of hunters get surveyed. Low number hunts will have a higher % of surveys. The different types of hunts are not separated out in the surveys, e.g. bow vs rifle.

Kent – still supports the CR and would like more information on it. Jim agrees with this. Dave thinks CR is not consistently reported so it's not accurate. Wolf reporting is better because trappers receive money for the wolves they catch, but the reporting has to be done first. There is no intention to drop CI's. In some regions the CI's are done in-house and that is probably what would happen in our region if budgets don't support the contracting out.

**3. HCTF – have moose and mule deer monitoring money but cut back for grizzly. Funding for sheep telemetry study in coal seam. Funding for elk telemetry study and grazing study.**

The funding is meant to monitor cow to buck ratios for moose and mule deer and compare those findings to other regions. Open areas have been chosen in the West and feel results will be good. Helicopter compassion surveys.

- Areas for moose monitoring: St. Mary valley (4-20), southern Elk Valley (4-23B), Revelstoke (4-38 and 4-39), and South Selkirk (4-07 and 4-08). We will likely count the St. Mary's and South Selkirk's this winter.
- Areas for mule deer monitoring: Kitchener Mountain, Fort Sheppard, Premier Ridge, Pickering Hills, and Wigwam River winter ranges. We will likely count Ft Sheppard, Premier and Pickering this winter.

Andy – concern that buck ratio results could result in regulations change.

Grizzly bear monitoring budget cut back in south Rockies. Review being done.  
Telemetry study being done on sheep in the Mine area – HCTF and Tec support.  
Elk and grazing telemetry study is funded also. This is the last year for the elk study.  
Brian – what's happening with Pat Stent's habitat work? Garth said it is on hold for now until budget is worked out following election.

#### **4. Move moose GOS and LEH seasons back to begin on Oct 21 after elk season closes or, Oct 26 after sheep season closes to minimize multi-hunt pressure on elk and sheep.**

Andy – doesn't see that there is a conservation concern with elk so doesn't see the need to change. Kent agrees.

Wally – resident hunters like overlapping seasons.

Anna – the concern is that there will be more people out hunting different species at the same time, which could be a conservation issue in some areas. For GO's it creates scheduling problems. Doesn't agree with the voting process because the table is not balanced for voting.

Garth – the voting is recorded but that doesn't necessarily mean we go with the vote. It's used to record where groups stand on different issues.

Dave – feels the dialogue is the most important and comments are recorded; voting may not be the best way to go.

Anna – has concerns with the increase in moose harvest even though Garth's records show this didn't occur.

Garth – there was increased harvest in some areas but not all.

Anna – would like to see approved regulation changes come into effect 1 1/2 years after the approval is agreed to so the GO's can capitalize on the change. Ministry should collect reproductive tracts of moose to make sure the season during rut is not going to affect bull to cow ratio.

Garth – we will begin collecting data on post-hunt calf and bull ratios which should answer this question. Moose will remain on CI for now.

Kent – this committee's purpose in regards to regulation changes is to go from year to year, not 1 1/2 years. Check Terms of Reference around voting. The wording around voting is given below:

3) Recommendations from the committee will be recorded in the minutes with a summary of how each group voted on each initiative. Wildlife management decisions are made at the discretion of the Fish and Wildlife Section Head and so the summary of the voting results provides an indication of stakeholder support for each initiative. The simple number of votes for an initiative may be less important than, for example, than

the support by affected an stakeholder. Committee recommendations not supported by MoE will be explained to the committee.

Garth – not all reg changes will require the 1 1/2 year notice. Anna would like to see the longer notice for major hunt changes only – the ones that will impact the guides.

*Post meeting input from Andy P. Agenda Item 4: : I believe the EKWA will be in strong opposition to this proposal. I rec'd a lot pf positive feedback regarding the new earlier season dates, success rates were higher and especially in the northern units north of Golden access and weather did not restrict hunting activity like it used to with the old later dates. We feel incidental harvest of elk and sheep is a non-issue. There certainly is not a conservation concern for elk and resident harvest of sheep falls far short of their allocation. There is very little spatial overlap between sheep and moose. I know this is a quality of hunt and economic viability issue with the outfitters with so many resident hunters in the field in these overlapping dates, but it is also an opportunity for MOE to show and support resident priority.*

#### **5. Have a quota system such that a hunter can kill either one elk or one moose per year?**

Various hunters have approached Garth about having the quota system changed to one elk or one moose per year. Garth would like members to discuss this with their clubs. This would be a regional change, not provincial, so comments should be region specific. If this change were to proceed, it would apply to both the GOS and LEH.

Andy – when this regulation was in place previously there was concern for both these species but that doesn't seem to be the conservation case now. Garth agrees that there isn't a conservation concern. Andy's club has already discussed this issue and they don't agree with it.

Dave – the comment to change this quota system surfaced on the web-based comments and Garth received comments at the BC Federation meeting. This is more of a social issue than a conservation issue.

Garth – not likely that many moose would be harvested if there was a spike fork moose season.. This is more of a social issue than a conservation issue.

Garth – not likely that many moose would be harvested if there was a spike fork moose season.

*Post meeting input from Andy P. Agenda Item 5: When the bag limit of one moose or elk was previously in effect, bull moose were on GOS with a significant conservation concern, bull elk were on a 3pt antler point restriction, and there were a lot more resident hunters in BC. The regulation was useful at that time for those reasons, but we see no need for it under the current conditions of LEH for moose and 6pt antler restrictions for elk. If the spike/fork season is a concern, that can be significantly alleviated by making sure the season dates are the same as in the adjoining regions to discourage the influx of hunters.*

#### **6. Instead of closing the cougar season during the year the max harvest is reached shorted the season the following year or, reduce the max kill level the next year?**

GO's tend to start hunting cougars later than residents and some years the female quota can be reached prior to GO hunts beginning. We need to find a way to guarantee cougar hunts for the guides.

Anna – why are we concerned about this species when we have a grizzly season that can't be closed and we're more concerned about grizzly bears?

Garth – cougars aren't on quota like grizzlies so there's no worry that a resident hunter will kill a grizzly that is part of the GO quota. Garth is confident that grizzly quotas will not be over-hunted, but cougars can be over-hunted.

Wally – prior to the meeting, Wally sent out WKO comments stating they are in favour of raising the bag limit on cougar to two stating predation on caribou and mule deer populations and achieving hunter recruitment & retention as arguments for the increased bag limit. It would also add to consistency with other regions. Wally and Andy both support WKO's proposal. Kent will discuss with his group.

Garth – doesn't see the need for a 2 bag limit because of managing for caribou and also doesn't see why we would like to reduce cougar populations. He will check on the consistency factor.

Kent – finds that a lot of the hunters are just out for the chase/tree of the cougars and often don't kill the cougar. Kent would like to know what the true population is.

Brian – some of the hunters are out for a 'big' cat but with only one tag, they often hold off on the first cat they come across thinking they may see something bigger later.

**Action Item: Dave and Garth to respond to WKO proposal to increase cougar bag limit.**

*Post meeting input from Andy P Agenda Item 6: I realize we voted in favour of this but we were under the assumption that WKO only wanted it for the West Kootenay. Now that I see they want it for the entire region and even for the entire southern interior, I have to say we need to discuss this at the EKWA level before confirming our support.*

## **7. Mountain goats: move some units to GOS or wait for Mgmt Plan?**

Irene Teske has looked at the East Kootenay, but not the West. Garth feels there is more opportunity for a GOS in the WK. Ian was not comfortable with opening any units until a Management Plan was done. Garth asked the group how important is it to move some units to GOS.

Andy – when evaluating kill data in the last 6 years, only 58% has been harvested so he doesn't see why it's on LEH. Access alone limits the hunting. He feels opening the whole region would cause less of a problem than opening just a few units.

Larry – see's a problem when one person gets a goat tag but their partner doesn't and most would not want to go along for the hunt if they don't have a tag. **He recommends looking into a group hunt.**

Frank – agrees with opening a lot of units to GOS instead of just a couple.

Anna – asked if non-residents would be on GOS as well and Garth said they would.

**ACTION: Garth will ask Irene to consider WK units and assemble a list and send out for discussion along with pros and cons of various units. Send an EK list along as well.**

*Post meeting input from Andy P Agenda Item 7: I realize that goats are a very sensitive K-selected density dependent species and very sensitive to management decisions regarding harvest levels. However resident hunters have utilized only 65% of the resident allocation and non-residents only 50% of the non-resident allocation, and that the actual harvest has been well under the calculated AAH (averaged over the last 6 years). There certainly appears to be a question here as to why these animals are still on LEH.*

**8. Elk. Shared cow elk season? Action: EKLEP recommends increasing cow elk LEH permits to put pressure on landowners to let hunters on. Kill level is roughly near target though we are not certain. Kill will likely not change much.**

Tara attended the E.K. Land Enfranchisement Pilot (EKLEP) where it was suggested to increase permits in some areas. The number of cow tags has been increased because landowner reps want to put pressure on other landowners to show they're serious about harvesting the elk and stress the fact that they need to allow more hunters on their property. The elk population seems to be declining with the cow kill higher than the bull kill. Ministry of Agriculture is offering compensation to ranchers for managing elk on their property.

Andy – says he doesn't think ranchers feel we've helped with the problem and they want results.

Garth – all we've done is level out the population, that's why we increased tag numbers. If our goal is to manage due to crop depredation, something more radical will need to be done.

Jim – suggests putting an archery (any elk) season in during the same season – hunter opportunity. Stay away from LEH.

Garth – the Management Plan will direct where we're going next year and that is when one sweeping change will be made. The draft objectives of the Plan have been sent out to members and Garth would like to receive feedback – rank and refine. In the next couple of months, Tara will write a brief management plan. The inquiry about a shared cow-elk season or a shared hunt for any elk might be just as easy to add to the management plan discussion.

Andy – could easily afford to have 10-day, 3point elk season.

**9. Moose in Revelstoke; managing for alternative prey for caribou. Need to discuss the Downie closure as it relates to moose/caribou objectives. Choices are drop it or move it further up the drainage.**

The cow moose hunt is part of the caribou recovery project. It is a pilot project to investigate the management of alternative prey as a method to reduce predation on caribou. This hunt will be used to manage moose at the level that is predicted to minimize predation risk to caribou. In 2003 there were about 1650 moose, by 2007 the estimate was 800 and in 2008 about 620. The number of cows removed by predation was similar in number to those removed by hunters through that period. Hence the moose population in 4-38 and 4-39 has been reduced by wolves and human harvest of cows. Wolf numbers have declined from >60 to <20; human kill was 6-10 in the last 2 years and more collared animals emigrated than were killed. Hence natural reduction in response to low moose numbers is the most likely cause of the wolf decline. The plan is to hold the population at about 500 animals.

Andy – suggests following the model in Region 7.

Kent – never supported the predator/prey situation. How are caribou really doing?

Garth – Caribou are not recovering but they are not going down either and this is due to wolf numbers/predation.

Richard – refers to two letters from the Revelstoke club written to Guy Woods asking to harvest more moose and it wasn't for caribou recovery.

Garth – we are managing the moose population for caribou and the bonus for hunters is a more liberal moose hunting opportunity.

Andy – are you talking about 4-38 and 4-39 to hold moose population to 800? Yes these the two units in question.

Frank – there was a substantial wolf harvest in the spring of 2008 in the caribou recovery area. Garth-5 wolves were killed by trappers but the population has declined by about 40 wolves. Hence human kill has been a small part in the decline. Only 2 or 3 collared wolves were killed while 4 or 5 left the study area.

#### **10. Begin lynx hunting season on Nov 15 instead of Dec 1? Vote and send decision to PHRACC.**

Our lynx season begins later than every other region in the province.

Frank – we shouldn't compare our region to other areas of the province. There has been continuous talk about moving the hunt forward. As a commercial venture for trappers he feels it is important that trappers be able to sustain a viable business with lynx.

Garth – the lynx/bobcat management plan has been stalled, but the plan actually mentioned moving the season back to align with other regions. The word from Victoria is that they have no idea when discussion will surface again. PHRACC is willing to entertain regulation change but not sure what will happen.

Jim – harmonization is a good thing but we do have different MU's that require different management.

Kent – it seems trappers need lynx to survive and hopes a decision is made per unit, not on provincial direction.

Garth – we don't have monitoring tools to measure harvest.

Andy and Kent do not feel comfortable voting on this change without finding out more from the EKTA.

Garth – EKTHA is strongly in favour – EKTA strongly against it. Most agree that they are reluctant to vote and are leaving it to Dave and Garth to make the decision. There is an allocation issue between trappers, cougar hunters, and some GO's. Anna – the original season was proposed because lynx kittens stay with their mothers for quite a while.

Garth – suggests adding “cannot shoot lynx in hunting season when accompanied by another lynx”.

**Action item: Dave and Garth to decide about where to go next with this regulation and get back to the committee.**

#### **11. Sheep full curl archery hunt Oct 26 – Nov 4. Discuss.**

Jim - proposes a sheep archery opportunity.

Irene submitted regulation date change, Sep 10 – Oct 25.

Andy - there was not unanimous support for this season with the EKWA. They don't want to see rams harvested on winter range. Received an email from Dave White stating concerns with MU's around Canal Flats/Windermere, where sheep are in this area and could be vulnerable. Andy supports this proposal but if there is too much kill

on winter range, the season could be shortened. It is a matter of perception seeing people waiting around winter range for sheep to appear.

Richard – which units – EK GOS units?

Garth – LEH opportunity could be discussed as well.

Anna – this is very new to the SGOA.

Groups who have not yet seen this proposal need to discuss with their membership and come back to this table with feed back.

Wally – WKO support full curl archery season with concerns around winter range.

*Post meeting input from Andy P Agenda Item 11: We support the sheep archery season but we would not have a problem with closing low elevation winter range areas for this hunt as was discussed during the meeting, especially those at Radium (Swansea/Stoddard), the East Columbia WMA at Canal Flats and the Wigwam Flats/Mt Broadwood area.*

## **12. Archery season for mule deer; late season 4 pt. Discuss.**

Garth – thinks there is a late season bow season in the policy; the current wording is general and the bow season could begin any time in Nov and run thru Dec. 10. Take Jim's suggestion back to your groups and see if anyone is against it? Bow season Dec 1 – 10 – Or would the season begin directly after the rifle season closes?

Kent – mule deer strategy – have any buck season? Has concerns about 4 pt season in November? Concerned about genetics.

Garth – with the new strategy we will have an any buck season in October like everyone else in the south.

Kent – will we have the power to shorten or lengthen this season?

Garth – Victoria would likely want it to remain as the rest of the province. Easiest way to deal with buck crisis is to shorten November season. November is the time of highest impact on bucks. So if the buck ratios are lower than desired the most likely strategy is to remove some days from the tail end of the season in Nov.

## **13. Southern Interior mule deer strategy has gone to PHRACC, they suggested some changes. Garth will send to this group when done. Note that the goal is to have similar deer regs throughout the south.**

Concerns are going back to PHRACC this week. Regional biologists have had discussions. Every region has different seasons. Agreement reached by lining out seasons. There will be a LEH doe hunt – number of tags hasn't been discussed. How much could the mule deer support? Dates will be determined without our input.

Andy – has to be uniform season date in 4 regions.

Garth – same bow hunting season as we have now - Sep 1 – 9; Rifle = Sep 10 – 30, 4 pt. Oct any buck, Region would set length of 4 pt season in Nov but would try to standardize with adjacent regions. Garth's input was "why do we need a 4 pt season in Sept when most bucks are killed in Nov"?

Sept hunt offers more hunter opportunity.

Andy – is disappointed that nothing about WT deer management is mentioned. Should be a 'Deer' strategy, not just mule deer.

Garth – will bring up Andy's comment about managing WT deer along with mule deer.

Andy – concerned about 20 bucks per 100 doe target.

Garth – has discussed with biologists and it's a target, not a thresh-hold. We will be having a doe season.

Andy – what number will this be based on?

Garth – there are a lot of factors to base number on but committee members should be clear that the regs will mostly come from Victoria but we will have strong input on the number of doe permits.

*Post meeting input from Andy P Agenda Item 13: SIMDS: As stated we do have significant concerns that the 20 bucks/100 does target ratio will eventually lead to LEH for bucks. We also feel that in many areas of the East Kootenay the large numbers of White Tailed Deer might possibly be the most significant limiting factor effecting mule deer. We feel that White Tailed Deer population management must be integrated into this plan and would actually like to see a deer management strategy that encompasses both species.*

#### **14. Update on white-tailed deer GOS proposal by BCWF.**

This is being considered in Victoria right now and we have had informal discussions with regional biologists. Dates are quite liberal, any deer season. Garth thinks it's a 50 day season. Similar to Alberta strategy. Their target harvest is 25% bucks, 10-12% doe and adjust season to reach that.

Andy - feels we could go to a more liberal bag limit. This could probably bring population down to 60% of carrying capacity.

Victoria is looking at it as a BCWF proposal so clubs will not likely have the opportunity to comment. This will be going to PHRACC for comment first.

Wally – these regulations have normally been a regional decision.

Andy - feels it wasn't started as a grass roots discussion because it is a radical change in strategy than what we are used to. This is not intended to be a provincial strategy – just regions with WT deer problems.

Wally – WK agrees with this policy in areas where there is high density WT populations.

Jim – bow hunters have concerns – how flexible is the ability to control the seasons?

Concerns with Sept season.

Garth – doesn't know how much flexibility we will have once it goes through PHRACC.

#### **15. How important is trophy hunting to residents; what is current policy and how do we manage for this objective?**

Leave discussion for now. Current policy seems to suggest that all regulations should consider non-trophy hunters only. Discuss combined hunt – LEH mule deer buck for trophy. Does this fit in our current policy? Garth-I have been told to manage for a range of hunting opportunities.

Dave – may mean that some of the access closures might become more of a priority in order to offer a trophy hunt.

Garth – how does it fit in and how much should trophy goals fit in around other opportunity goals? This will be up for discussion next meeting. Take harvest regime from Garth back to your clubs and come back with ideas on what clubs want between quality/quantity.



**16. Crawford Bay (shotgun area map D8), move to a 'no shooting' area which would allow bow hunters to hunt. Request by residents due to increase in house density.**

**This item will be dealt with through email.** Arnold-what is next move here?

Dave – access review is ongoing. There are not as many closures eliminated. Dave will visit these sites this summer. Are any closures being opened up for bear hunts? Garth feels most VAHC's in WK could be opened up for spring. Dave is receptive opening closures that could be legitimately opened but he needs the support of the Ecosystems branch before doing so.

Meeting adjourned @ 9:15 pm MST.

### Cow elk and Moose permit numbers from Tara:

- Bull elk LEH permits are similar to last year, and we did not change population estimates for 2009 compared to 2008.
- Cow/calf elk LEH permits have gone up substantially in the Trench (double in many areas) compared to 2008. This is largely because we reduced the estimated GOS harvest for 2009. Our radio collar data from 2008 indicate that only about 5% of the cow/calf population was harvested during the GOS, and we assumed the harvest would be similar in 2009. This is lower than the previous estimates based on 2007 hunter harvest data. Since we reduced the estimated GOS harvest, the resident LEH allocation went up significantly. There is a small risk that we will exceed our target harvest with this high number of permits. However the early season end dates will largely focus the harvest on non-migratory animals and there is less concern about exceeding kill targets for non-migratory elk. We will monitor the outcome of the 2009 season, and if we do surpass our target harvest, we will reduce permits in 2010 to compensate.
- Bull moose LEH permits have increased by close to 50 across the region. Population estimates for most MUs have gone up (based on recent surveys), however estimates for a few MUs have gone down (again, based on recent surveys).
- Cow/calf moose LEH permits have increased in 4-38 and 4-39, with the goal of reducing the population to 500 in these MUs (as per caribou management objectives).



2009 Kootenay Elk LEH (Excel 2...  
2009 Kootenay Moose LEH (Excel..