

ACTION ITEMS from Meeting of the

Kootenay RAWC - Regional Agriculture Wildlife Committee

DATE: Thursday, 12th Nov, 2009

TIME: 9:30 am to 3:30 pm

Steeple Room at MOE - 205 Industrial Road G, Cranbrook, BC

Participants

Greg Tegart – MAL – with KLEP since start
Jeff Morgan – MOE – KLEP coordinator, PAZWP A/Manager
Tara Szkorupa – MOE – Wildlife Biologist and Elk guru
Darrell Smith – MAL – Crop insurance
Olin Albertson – BCWF AgWildlife conflicts
Richard Daloise - BCWF AgWildlife conflicts
Angela Hoover – CVWMA and hunt coordinator
Faye Street – KLA
Robert McKeeman – Disabled hunter
Andy Pezderic – EK Wildlife Association
Marc Andre Beaucher – CVWMA manager
Cam MacDonald – Waldo Stockbreeders Association, Grasmere area
Donna Thornton - MOE-PAZWP

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Agenda

09:30 – 10:00 - Introductions
10:00 – 10:30 - History of compensation programs
10:30 – 11:00 - History of KLEP pilot
11:00 – 11:30 - Outdoor Passports
11:30 – 12:00 - RAWC proposal
LUNCH (thanks!)
12:30 – 13:00 - Elk management
13:00 – 13:30 - Deer management
13:30 – 15:00 - Regulation changes
15:00 – 15:30 - Closing remarks, next meeting

NEXT MEETING? Early March 2010, TBA **PLEASE SEND your comments to Regulations website by December 1st, 2009**
RSVP to Donna if unable to attend, thanks! (250-354-6353 or donna.thornton@gov.bc.ca)

Notes

1. Introductions around table – Need funding for participants to attend meetings, volunteers need support, possible to hold on weekends for those who work. Recommend application to be made to appropriate funding sources to be able to offer 'honoraria' in future.
2. Wildlife Damage Compensation, Mitigation and Prevention – report highlights included: 2001 pilot for 3, then 5 years – funding for fences to try to keep elk out – mitigation didn't really work but the other programs were used – compensation to max of \$25,000, did not really help land owners with large tracts of land. Corridors for migratory wildlife movements must be left, wildlife friendly fences allayed some hunters fears, also need gates with cattle guards to be built.
 - 94.9 km's smooth wire (good for elk not deer), \$1.5 million spent on exclusion fences
 - 181 km's of woven wire worked well for all ungulates
 - now have ~12,000 sq ha's fenced or 11,144 ac's (~12% agriculture in RMT valley)
 - was a financial burden to ranchers for fencing but with subsequent BSE outbreaks did help the industry out – federal agency no longer supports, but would like this compensation program to continue with some tweaking, as saves money overall to the taxpayers. Several members really want this program to continue, as elk numbers are currently high and crops may not provide enough revenue for farms and ranches to survive.MAL provided \$ compensation graph with statistics, problems with changes over time in field

production and tonnage, cultural practices need to adapt and change, 40% province and 60% federal support and in year 2 of 5 year program (Growing for It-could end 2012?). Suggested to have a Crop Insurance program for wildlife damage. Not sure folks can afford to pay into it. People do want to protect their property, some would prefer to receive the posts and fencing and do on their own. Lure crops to be tried, but don't want to increase ungulate reproduction. Was 'semi-successful' but no one producer can afford on the scale needed to reduce the wildlife crop (and other) damage problems.

3. KLEP pilot history – provided report, started due to ~30% decrease in alfalfa yields from elk/deer depredation – compensation payments for crop loss and wildlife fencing in past, now want to use hunting as a wildlife damage mitigation tool. KLEP started 2006, Landowner Agreements in place, 'Dial-a-Hunter' program and two hunt coordinators hired. Results – 9, 8, 9, 4 landowners signed up over the years - had good hunter success rates, GOS in place for juniors and Seniors. Land owners received \$2/ac 'hunter opportunity payment' for unimproved fields to keep land owners engaged (up to 2009 season). Limited landowner acceptance seen, was the program not attractive enough for the land owners? The crop loss per acre was not reduced enough to see real measurable success either in crop compensation payments or changes in resident elk behaviour from hunting pressure.
4. "Outdoor Passport" concept from Region 3 discussed, area has a wide diversity of agriculture and broad range of ag/wildlife issues, got \$ from BCAC for pilot project. Passport would be a mini log book with room for local endorsements after each hunt. Passports owned by the BCWF so provides liability insurance, also would support ethical hunter behaviour, add the vehicle description, renewed annually. Gary Glinz working on project, will provide talk to RAWC, needs to consult with landowners as well as hunters. Faye will send invitation to present to KLA AGM.
5. Powerpoint presentation provided from development of PAZWP program, gave background of support and rationale for creation. PPT to go out with minutes.
6. Kootenay elk management discussed, have a new report on website for input and feedback. Provided 'Southern Trench Elk Monitoring' presentation with results from adult cow elk collars, indicates that non-migratory behaviour is increasing. Purcell's topography not well defined between low and high country, drew an artificial line on map to indicate when 'migrate' out to the high country. RMT may be acting as a 'sink' of animals - even though some are removed each year, appears to attract more each year. In May elk move to mountains, October move to lowlands, now are spending longer time in farmers fields. Map of distribution displayed from 1800's to present, estimate winter population of 5,000 in West and 19,000 in East Kootenay. Fewer complaints from landowners at levels of about 8,000 elk, which was only seen after the harsh winter of 1996/7. Fewer catastrophic fires in last decade plus downturn in logging has created less early seral forest across landbase. Please see <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/kootenay/emp/emp.htm> for the elk management plan. PPT to go out with minutes.
7. Garth Mowat's and Gerry Kuzyk's 2009 research on mule deer and white tail deer presented, gave overview, here is link on website to research document: <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/siwe/details.do?id=4571>
8. Discussed hunting regulation changes proposed for the ag zones. Please see proposed changes at: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/kootenay/wld/Proposed_reg_changes.html
Cow/calf Elk –The major agreement here was the creation of a 9 day GOS season for Zone X antlerless elk that was to occur after the Jr/Sr GOS for antlerless elk in Zone X and before the LEH hunts. LEH hunts to go later in the winter.
Expand ag zone in Creston to include more of the adjacent Crown Land.
There was support for two ag zones in the East Kootenay Trench, one for north and one for south.
There was support for an expanded Elk Valley ag zone. See the Addendum to the Proposed Regulation Changes for details on these latter two proposals (see link above).
Bull Elk –Committee thought that spike bull season from Sept 1-9 would be effective, this was

agreed to for the ag zone.

Mule Deer – new antlerless LEH (separate bag limit). White-tailed Deer – these will recover quickly (2 deer, one female and one male bag limit), change antlerless LEH to GOS.

Action Items

Item #1 Donna

Action Item - Donna to check on funding sources for travel assistance for committee volunteers, try HCTF, CBT?

Item #2 Jeff

Action Item - Jeff to check the **5 and out** ‘guideline’ from ICBC for ungulate MVA’s.

Item #6 Donna

Action Item – Promote the ‘Dial-a-Hunter’ system to maintain pressure to move elk herds off ag lands. Donna to work with Tara on research into monitoring nocturnal elk behaviour.

Item #4 Andy to ask Gary Glinz?

Action Item – **BCWF Outdoor Passport** - Discussion included: How to regulate hunters and encourage ethical behaviour on private land? Landowners can charge an access fee for hunters, also can provide services (bunkhouse/cabin/tent spaces, cooler rental, etc). Possibly could charge a ‘damage deposit’ for broken fences, squished irrigation pipes, opened gates, etc? Pilot project from Region 3 to be reviewed and request a report on progress the passport makes.

Item #8 Tara

Action Item – Look at other licensing options: separate LEH tags for disabled hunters? Add disabled hunters to Jr/Sr hunts? Take a percentage of the hunts for disabled as eligible for sundry permits?

BF Action (Brought Forward Action Items from any previous meetings)

1. First KRAWC meeting...

FUTURE DISCUSSION TOPICS:

2. Alternate hunting tactics for agriculture areas demonstrating high elk impacts (e.g.: special controlled group hunts?)?
3. Separate ‘Ag tags’ to be developed for the agriculture zones?