

**Governor’s Fish and Wildlife Taskforce
June 10-11, 2015 Meeting Notes – Casper, Wyoming**

Day 1 – June 10, 2015 Attendance	Day 2 – June 11, 2015 Attendance
<p>Task Force Members: Tom Burman Aaron Clark Stan Cooper Dale Critchfield Dennis Ellis Kim Floyd Matt Fry Richard Garrett Steve Kilpatrick Ryan Lance Jim Magagna Bob Model (<i>starting at 1:00 p.m.</i>) Ruth Ann Petroff Mike Porter Jesse Rodenbough Bob Rolston Diane Shober Scott Talbott</p> <p>Facilitators: Phil Van Horn, Align Jody Shields, Align</p> <p>Wyoming Game and Fish: Jean Cole, Wyoming G & F John Kennedy, Wyoming G & F Renny McKay, Wyoming G & F Meredith Wood, Wyoming G & F T. Carrie Little, Wyoming G & F Commission Charles C. Price, Wyoming G & F Commission</p> <p>Public Sign-In Sheet: Eric Barlow, TRW Lew Carpenter, National Wildlife Federation Dennis Cease, Wyoming State Parks Roger Hayden, Wyoming Wildlife Advocates Eric Maichak, WY Chapter Wildlife Society Janet Marschner, Wyoming Wildlife Federation Jolene Martinez Bob Wharff, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife</p>	<p>Task Force Members: Tom Burman Aaron Clark Stan Cooper Dale Critchfield Dennis Ellis Kim Floyd Matt Fry Steve Kilpatrick Ryan Lance Jim Magagna Bob Model Ruth Ann Petroff Mike Porter Bob Rolston Diane Shober Scott Talbott</p> <p>Facilitators: Phil Van Horn, Align Jody Shields, Align</p> <p>Wyoming Game and Fish: John Kennedy, Wyoming G & F T. Carrie Little, Wyoming G & F Commission Charles C. Price, Wyoming G & F Commission</p> <p>Public Sign-In Sheet: Lew Carpenter, National Wildlife Federation Dennis Cease, Wyoming State Parks Roger Hayden, Wyoming Wildlife Advocates Bob Wharff, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife</p>

The purpose of the Task Force is to develop a coherent strategy, including recommendations and measurable actions that the State can implement in order to broaden opportunities to effectively manage Wyoming's fish and wildlife resources.

This document contains flipchart notes from the June 10-11, 2015 meeting. These notes reflect discussion points only, not any formal action taken by committee.

Day 1 - June 10, 2015

8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

After Ryan Lance, Task Force Chair, opened the meeting, Jody Shields, Align Facilitator, reviewed the goal for this meeting which was to finalize funding recommendation(s) and start working on next strategy recommendation. She then provided a brief recap from the last meeting.

Recap from May Meeting

At the May meeting, the Task Force developed a list of critical components that should be included in its recommend strategy for managing fish and wildlife resources.

Critical Components:

- Comprehensive variety of funding sources
- Political Strategy
- Sportsmen vs. Mandated Initiatives
- Build coalition
- Communication Strategy

From this list, the Task Force focused on ideas for funding sources. Those ideas were put into the following groups.

Ideas for Funding Sources:

- Tax
- Mill Levy
- Trust
- Park fees
- License fees
- Donor moneys

Shields then reviewed the list of information and reports that were distributed to Task Force members since the May Meeting.

Information Distributed:

- May 13-14 Meeting Notes
- Wyoming Game and Fish Department information:
 - General Fund appropriations
 - Revenue vs. Expenditures

- Expenditures in detail
- Budget reductions overview
- All slides from May 13 meeting
- Southwick reports
- Link to WGFD Strategic Plan
- Demographics
- Private Lands Public Wildlife Project report
- Public Comments

Wyoming Game and Fish Department Information

John Kennedy, Deputy Director for WGFD, reviewed the additional information and projections that had been requested at the May meeting and sent out to Task Force members prior to this meeting. He answered questions from Task Force members.

Department of Revenue Information

At the May meeting, Task Force Members requested information on funding generated from taxes or a mill levy. Matt Fry, Governor’s Policy Office, provided information from the Department of Revenue.

- Sales tax: an increase of 0.1% would equate to approximately \$13,119,000
- Mill Levy: an increase of 0.1% would equate to approximately \$2,416,447
- Severance tax: an increase of 0.1% would equate to approximately \$14,419,000

Task Force Discussion

The following items were put on the table of possibilities:

- Legislative appropriated funds is not sure solution but look at it for some funding i.e. Endangered Species Act
- Non-consumptive revenue sources (a piece of puzzle)
- License fees: resident & non-resident
- Indexing license fee increases
- Private sources
- Federal \$s
- Wildlife trust should be fully funded
- Clean segregation of budget (bifurcation) – general fund appropriations from license revenue
- 3rd party review of WGFD
- Active recruitment of hunters and anglers
- Game & Fish Commission Authority
 - Responsible for “hook and bullet” portion of budget
 - Possibly include index, sunset, cap, annual report to TRW Committee
- Credit card fees paid by user (currently absorbed by WGFD – approximately \$1 million/year)
- Shift non-game wildlife costs to state legislature funds
- Governor’s ESA budget increased

- Health Insurance for WGFD employees (request to come out of general fund)

From this list, the Task Force focused on the following topics for the remainder of the day.

- Health Insurance – 4.7 Million (*Tabled until day 2*)
- Game and Fish Commission Authority
 - Manage, hook and bullet portion of budget
 - Ability to alter fees with sideboards for increase in fees and with stipulations
- Bifurcation of Budget (= \$3 million for non-game and bears)
 - Move non-game Commission funded expenditures to General Fund Includes listed, candidate or petitioned species
 - Grizzly bears management funded through general fund. If grizzly is de-listed and any license fees are collected for grizzly bears, the allocation from the general fund will be reduced by the amount of the license fees collected.

Align facilitators stated that they would draft recommendations based on the discussion from Day 1 and present it on Day 2.

Day 2 - June 11, 2015

8:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Consensus Points - Task Force Discussion

The Task Force discussed the following possible Consensus Points.

Capital Improvements

- WGFD reported that \$41 Million received in the past 10 years from legislature for capital improvements
- FY13 deferred maintenance budget was \$3 Million
- Put back in \$1.5 Million in Commission budget for deferred maintenance
- This is part of narrative to support Game & Fish Commission authority

Habitat

- Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust Fund is currently \$104 Million
- Would like to see WWNRT fully funded (\$200 Million) through the general fund
- Support Treasurer's Ballot Initiative on investment of WWNRT funds; currently 2% return

Feed Grounds

- Task Force decided that this topic is beyond its scope and off the table

Access

- Support for changing terminology from trespass fee to access fee
- Funding for access falls on license side

Damage

- WGFD spends \$220,000/year for property damage cause by grizzly bears, which isn't recouped from the General Fund.
- Expense for large predator reparations paid by general fund
- Expense for game reparations come paid by WGFD
- Recommend no change except for grizzly bears, which should be funded with general fund dollars

Recruitment, Retention and Reengagement (R3); possibly add "Research" as a fourth component (R4)

- Fund start-up development office dedicated to seeking out donation, recruitment opportunities and ideas for a non-consumptive fee structure.
- If funding for health insurance (\$4.7 Million) comes out of general fund, redirect this budget item to Recruitment/Retention/Reengagement/Research, assuming commission is granted budget authority
- Allow commission to reach into corpus of \$26 Million from WGFD Trust Fund (requires statute change)
- Possibly fund \$10 Million for 10 years

Independent 3rd Party Review

- By end of year, before any bill introduced

Health Insurance – \$4.7 Million

- Department and Commission request money (required by statute)
- If Commission is granted authority on license fees, recommend legislature not fund health insurance through general fund; WGFD fund health insurance

Draft Recommendations from Day 1

Align presented some draft language for recommendations related to the topics of Game and Fish Authority and Bifurcation of Budget. The Task Force discussed and edited. There was initial consensus on the recommendations below. The Task Force will come back to these items to finalize consensus at the July meeting.

- **Game & Fish Commission should have the authority to control and manage its revenues and expenditures for programs directly related to game & fish species.**
- **General fund appropriations should be adjusted to address non-game programs, currently at \$3 Million.**
- **Hunter and angler fees collected should not be used to subsidize non-hunter/angler initiatives or programs.**
- **Increase Governor’s ESA budget to adequately address petitioned, candidate and listed species.**

The Task Force worked on language (below) for a recommendation related to setting license fees. They will work on this again at the July meeting.

- Game & Fish Commission should have sole authority to set license fees that conform to legal parameters. Parameters may include maximum cap and a sunset.
 - Discussion: Set maximum % increase in license fees or figure it as a total maximum % increase.

Public Comments

An opportunity was given for public comments in the morning and afternoon of Day 1 and at the end of the meeting on Day 2.