

**Governor's Fish and Wildlife Taskforce
May 13-14, 2015 Meeting Notes - Casper, Wyoming**

Day 1 – May 13, 2015 Attendance	Day 2 – May 14, 2015 Attendance
<p>Task Force Members: Chris Brown Tom Burman Aaron Clark Stan Cooper Dale Critchfield Dennis Ellis Kim Floyd Matt Fry Richard Garret Steve Kilpatrick Ryan Lance Jim Magagna Bob Model 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 Keith Culver, Wyoming G & F Commission Scott Edberg, Wyoming G & F John Kennedy, Wyoming G & F Renny McKay, Wyoming G & F Dirk Miller, Wyoming G & F Meredith Wood, Wyoming G & F</p> <p>Public Sign-In Sheet: Chris Colligan, Greater Yellowstone Coalition Eric Maichak, WY Chapter Wildlife Society Penelope Maldonado, Cougar Fund Janet Marschner, Wyoming Wildlife Federation Jolene Martinez, Platte River Revival Reg Rothwell, Wyoming Wildlife Federation Dick Sadler Cheri Steinmetz, State Representative Andy Treharne, Congressional Sportsmen's Found. Bob Wharff, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife</p>	<p>Task Force Members: Chris Brown Tom Burman Aaron Clark Stan Cooper Dale Critchfield Dennis Ellis Kim Floyd Richard Garret Steve Kilpatrick Ryan Lance Jim Magagna Bob Model 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 Keith Culver, Wyoming G & F Commission John Kennedy, Wyoming G & F Renny McKay, Wyoming G & F Meredith Wood, Wyoming G & F</p> <p>Public Sign-In Sheet: Kerry Drake Jolene Martinez, Platte River Revival Jeff Muratore Kathy Russell Bob Wharff, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife</p>

Day 1 – May 13, 2015

8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

After introductions, Ryan Lance, Task Force Chair, reviewed the purpose of the Task Force.

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

Wyoming Game and Fish Informational Presentation

John Kennedy, Deputy Director, Meredith Wood, Chief Fiscal Officer, and Renny MacKay, Communications Director, presented information and answered questions. Task Force members asked for the following additional information from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department before the next meeting.

- Spreadsheets – Revenue and Expense (electronic version)
- All Power Point slides
- Power Point slides with modifications
 - 3% Inflation slide
 - Revenue stream flat or based on past 10 years
 - Cost allocations (full amount) starting 2017
 - Salary and benefit increases based on historic increases
 - Legislature funded programs
 - Add dollar amounts for each of the five legislatively funding programs
- Game and Fish Programs that were cut as part of budget reductions along with corresponding financial figures
- What happened to revenues (data behind projections)
- Strategic Plan for Game and Fish
- From Budget/Structure Slide - Where the Wildlife budget (37%) goes
- Feedback received from public regarding programs that were cut

Information to be provided by Governor’s Office

Task Force members requested information from the Governor’s Office on other state agencies whose paid cost allocation is not coming out of the general fund. They also requested that the Governor’s Office look into creating a website page so that summaries from Task Force meetings and other information could be posted for the public.

Day 2 – May 14, 2015

8:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Facilitated Discussion

Task Force Members were asked to respond to this question: “**What were the key points you noted from yesterday’s information?**” Their responses follow. (*Note: this is a complete listing of responses by each individual task force member. Individual responses should not necessarily be assumed to reflect consensus of the entire task force, at this time.*)

- Game and Fish and WGFC doing good job
 - Use as basis for moving forward
 - Less focus Game and Fish – move to Fish and Wildlife
- Seeing breakdown between general fund and commission fees
- No matter when growing problem/gap
 - Kicking can down road
- Being able to contact thanks to Game and Fish staff
- Unpredictable income and expenditures
 - Need clear visual to address wedge gap
- Application for cultural value of wildlife game/non-game to large numbers of Wyomingites
- Intense interest and Game and Fish operations
- Income and expense – information helped me look for predict and sustain
- Budgeting
- Finding out how unpredictable revenue and expense (e.g. climate and things beyond Game and Fish control)
- How we are going to delve into this
 - Not our job to tell Game and Fish to cut and where
- How we take it to public and Legislature
- WGFC – allow to do what they do
- User asked to pay for more than (s)he getting back
 - Non-consumptive have free ride
 - Find ways to made “predictable” money happen
 - WGFC appointed by Executive; money appropriated by Legislature
 - Manage so next generation have opportunities
- Most “unpredictable” piece is the legislative appropriation process
 - Too much politics – no consideration of resources
 - Commission supposed to be apolitical
- Renewed appreciation for members of task force
 - Professionalism of Department
 - Uncertainty future obligations – include what this task force will craft
- Need assurance that legislature has considered line item
- Can individual task force contact Game and Fish? (*Note: the consensus is that requests from task force members to G & F should go through Matt Fry*)
- Hunters and anglers do get value for fees

- Glad to be included
- Mindful and Game and Fish statutory duties
 - Not step on legislators toes
- Need to build narrative
- Keep open mind that not all solutions need to go through legislature
 - Look for lots other options
- How much the funding falls on licensees
- Huge class of people don't pay any of the bill
- Outdoor council "appreciates" minerals
- Incoherent process to setting fees
 - No market analysis
 - Who should be making those
- Demonstrate creativity
- We didn't talk about economic development
- #2 is hunting, angling, recreation, tourism – renewable
- Game and Fish budget process in comprehensive
- Needs maneuverability
- There are two separate agencies
 - Program for consumptive and non which needs to be adequately funded
 - Evolving mandates – Federal and State – a lot of which not being funded by general fund money
 - Public expectation – Government mandates
- Funding goes up and down
 - Demand is there
- Improve funding process – not necessarily licensees
 - More money – need to react quicker
- We should be cautious about phrases like "free ride"
- No Band-Aids – need entirely different approach – at risk of "\$15 mm shortfall with \$52mm in bank"--reactions
- Legislature will want to be involved at some level
- Money spent on outreach is so limited

Critical Components

Task Force Members were asked the following question: **What do you believe are the critical components that this task force should include in its strategy for managing fish and wildlife resources?**

They developed a list of responses individually and then discussed responses in small groups. Each group submitted responses that were then posted on the wall for everyone to see. The Task Force members then grouped like ideas together and gave these groups titles. The titles and corresponding ideas follow. *(Note: this is a complete listing of ideas generated in discussion groups and should not necessarily be assumed to reflect consensus of the entire task force, at this time.)*

Comprehensive Variety of Funding Sources

- Breadth of revenue sources
- Non-traditional funding
- Fairness and equity

Political Strategy

- Achievable (i.e. passable in legislature)
- Defining decision making authority
- Governor executive action
- Plan of implementation
- Look at commission makeup/size
- Commission long-term goals
- Metrics to measure performance

Sportsmen vs. Mandated Initiatives

- Maneuverability
- “Maneuverability” of WGFD Commission – i.e. license fees
- Remove legislative oversight on license fees
- Funding must be sustainable and predictable – i.e. sales tax
- Commission sets license costs
- Bifurcate budget – Commission vs. General Fund

Build Coalition

- Develop more external partnerships
- Stakeholder support – all must be supportive

Communication Strategy

- Define the objectives
- Market the value of wildlife opportunity – reflective of the quality
- Educate public (WWTF partner)
- Focus on wildlife, not WYG&F
- What’s at risk?
- Recruitment
- Create and tell a story resonates that with all
- Effectively communicating objectives
- Plan for communication (of task force plan)

Two responses were removed from the wall: Commission budget control and cut the Game & Fish budget. It was the consensus of the Task Force that these options fall outside the mission of the group.

Variety of Funding Sources – Ideas

The Task Force then decided to generate ideas for: **Comprehensive Variety of Funding Sources**. The broke into small groups again and developed ideas that were then posted on the wall. The Task Force Members then grouped like ideas together and titled the groups. The titles and corresponding ideas are below. *(Note: this is a complete listing of ideas generated in discussion groups and should not necessarily be assumed to reflect consensus of the entire task force, at this time.)*

Tax

- Sales tax
- Divert tax on outdoor gear
- Natural resource tax .5% - wildlife, WWNRT, state lands, conservative, state parks/tourism
- Coffee tax
- Lodging tax (turtle fee)
- Raise sales tax .05%
- Sporting goods fuel tax
- Formula funding on sales tax
- Sales tax

Mill Levy

Trust

- Mineral trust
- General fund appropriation for non-consumption wildlife
- Divert mineral trust tax

Park Fees

- National park sales tax
- National park fee dedicated to resources
- Park sales tax (10%)

License Fees

- License fee adjustments
- License fee increase
- License index
- Establish license req. for draw
- Outfitter fee
- License applicant donation of fees
- Conservation stamp for non-consumptive
- Sub charge on licensees

Donors \$\$

- Voluntary contributions
- Wildlife foundation
- Private donations – foundation
- Wildlife and Nat. Trust fund endowment
- Raise \$\$ via social media
- Voluntary non-consumptive user fee

Parking Lot

These were ideas that were considered but put aside for now due to roadblocks and/or estimated low revenue source.

- Beer tax increase (est.: \$269,000.00)
- Real estate transfer
- Impact fee
- Roundup program
- Merchandising licensing
- Access fee on state lands for non-consumptive user
- Set aside landowner licenses to sell
- Res Hunter – Pref. Points
- Landowner license – transfer for a fee
- Vanity license plates
- Gasoline tax
- Lottery
- Indian gaming compact

The Task Force identified questions to be answered

- How much is needed for sustainability?
- Where does it go, –i.e. what entity is the recipient?)
- What's it for?
- Need to know how much generated by:
 - Authority
 - Sales
 - Mill Levy
 - Perm Mineral Trust

Other Information of Interest

Task Force members brought forth ideas for additional information that may be helpful.

- Overview of funding sources from other states (possibly Wildlife Management Institute present information)
- Report on the Nationwide Blue Ribbon Panel
- Sensitive species – Doug Gnaff, University of Wyoming
- Law Review/Leadership Wyoming Report – David Wilms
- Direction of the Game and Fish – Director Talbot
- Overview of the process for evaluating Game and Fish programs
- Compilation of information collected by Dale Critchfield (distributed at this meeting)
- Public Opinion on Natural Resource Conservation in Wyoming, October 2014 (distributed at meeting)

Public Comments

Time was set aside each day of the meeting for public comments.