1. REVIEW & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

MOTION: To accept the minutes and agenda as written.

VOTE: Unanimous.

2. BUCKS, BULLS AND OIAL PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2016

MOTION: To accept the Division’s recommendations on the deer as presented with four exceptions. On the Beaver unit: increase permits by 75 instead of 150. On the Pinevalley and Zion units: accept the increase but split additional tags in half between archery and muzzleloader with no increase to rifle permits. On the Southwest Desert reduce tags by 50.

VOTE: 9 in favor, 2 opposed

MOTION: To accept the elk recommendations as planned with the exception of increasing permits on the Mt Dutton from the recommended 75 tag to 90 and on the Panguitch Lake from the recommended 55 tags to 70 tags.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: To add 300 additional youth any bull tags.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: 9 in favor, 2 abstained

VOTE ON AMENDMENED MOTION: 9 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstained

MOTION: To pass the antelope and once in a lifetime recommendations as presented.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: To increase pronghorn permits on the San Rafael unit from 9 to 12.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: Unanimous

VOTE ON AMENDMENED MOTION: Unanimous

MOTION: That the DWR come and report on what they’ve done regarding elk on henry mountains.

VOTE: 8 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstained

3. ANTLERLESS PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2016
MOTION: To accept the Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016 as presented

VOTE: 10 in favor, 1 opposed

4. 2016 CWMU ANTHERLESS PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION: To accept the 2016 CWMU Antlerless permit recommendations as presented.

VOTE: 9 in favor, 1 abstained, 1 member not present for vote

5. 2016 CWMU ANTHERLESS VARIANCE REQUESTS

MOTION: To accept the 2016 CWMU Antlerless variance requests as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous

6. R657-23 HUNTER EDUCATION RULE AMENDMENTS

MOTION: To accept the Hunter Education Rule Amendments as presented.

VOTE: Unanimous
Dave Black called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. There were approximately 59 interested parties in attendance in addition to RAC members, members of the Wildlife Board, and Division employees. Dave Black introduced himself and asked RAC members to introduce themselves.

Dave Black: I guess we’d like to get started, we have a full agenda tonight. First of all I’d like to welcome you all out to the Southern Region RAC meeting. My name is Dave Black I’m the chairman of the Southern Utah RAC. I’m from St George. I represent the public at large. Before we introduce the rest of the RAC members, I’d like to introduce two of the board members we have here with us. We have Steve Dalton in the audience and Donnie Hunter. I don’t know where Donnie went, he’s probably in the back but I’d like to recognize them. Also, I’d like to excuse Kevin Bunnell tonight. In his place we have Richard Hepworth who’s the Southern Region Aquatic Program Manager. So he’s sitting here on my left. I’ll go ahead and let the RAC introduce themselves. Let’s start down on my far left with Rusty.
Wildlife Board Update and Regional Update:
-Kevin Bunnell, Regional Supervisor

Dave Black: Thank you. Normally at this point I would talk about the meeting order and the way we do the questions and comments but I think I’ll wait just a few minutes and do that after we have the Wildlife Board update and the regional update. The last time we met together as a RAC was in December. We were talking about, find my notes, we were talking about the 2016 black bear recommendations and rule amendments. Just a summary of the way the board ruled on that is, let’s see, they stayed with bait hunting, stayed with the baiting two weeks prior to the summer season. Keep the permit numbers the same on the Beaver unit and that was with the liberal harvest strategy. The San Juan unit was to allow hounds on that unit except during the limited entry elk hunt. And then we had another item which was the Sheeprock Mountains Greater Grouse Translocation. That passed as presented. That’s pretty much the notes that I had as far as that wildlife board meeting. So now I’ll turn time over to Richard Hepworth and he can give a regional update.

Richard Hepworth: I only have a couple quick things here and then I’m gonna turn the time over to Bill for a few minutes to give us some other updates. Touch on the aquatic section first. One of the things we’ve got going on over the next couple weeks is restocking Gunlock Reservoir. We’ll be collecting fish from Sandhollow and moving them over. And we’re still looking for volunteers, people with boats, fishermen who would like to come help with that. So if you’re interested, come talk to me during the break or afterwards and I can give you the information. Our habitat section just recently went through some of their funding things for projects this next year. Through conservation permit funding, our region received about $660,000 for projects in the next year. So that’s a really good thing we’ll be able to put a lot of money on the ground and get some good work done. In the outreach section, they had a turkey clinic last week. Had great participations, had over 80 students show up for that. It was a really good thing. One other thing I need to mention. There will be no RAC meeting in May. That has been cancelled. That corresponds also with the June Wildlife Board meeting. With that, I’m going to turn the time over to Bill for just a couple quick updates that we thought might be of interest to everybody here.

Bill Bates: Good evening everybody. Bill Bates, Wildlife section chief from Salt Lake. I was asked to come and give an update of the activities of the grazing issues resolution committee that’s been put together through the office of planning and budget from in the governor’s office. They’re also known as PLPCO. I think it was about last December members of PLPCO Tony Rampton and Redge Johnson came down and met with some grazers, some livestock operators down in the Southern Region and
became aware of some very contentious issues down here dealing with land management agencies. And of course, we know how that’s kind of spilled over into the, all the activities going on with the waterfowl refuge up in Oregon and some other things going on over in Nevada. You know, contention was high, emotions were high and the Governor’s office and members of PLPCO, Kathleen Clarke in particular felt it was really important we start addressing some of these issues to help resolve things and to make things better. I was invited to a meeting, Greg Sheehan, our director, and I went to a meeting up at the capitol and met with Redge and Kathleen Clarke and Tony Rampton and Carmen Bailey, also Randy Parker from the Farm Bureau, Sterling Brown and Troy Forest from Department of Agriculture are also on this committee. And we started talking about some of the issues and we quickly decided the best way to work through this process would be to meet with operators and to try to deal with individual situations so we could deal with specifics to try to resolve some things. And so we had a meeting in January, we had six county commissioners from Southern Utah and also a state representative, Mike Noel was there. We met with members of the Forest Service, Mel Bolling and Angie Bulletts, Forest Supervisors down in this part of the state and myself. We talked to, you know, that they express their concerns to us. And that’s where we kind of started and since that time you’re probably aware we held the meeting over in Richfield that was sponsored by the Farm Bureau and PLPCO and Utah Cattlemen’s Association where we had some training on the issues and then, since that time, we’ve also been meeting with the federal agencies, both Forest Service and BLM. And two weeks ago we had a tour where we came through Southern Utah, where we had meetings in Richfield and Panguitch and Bicknell and, I’m missing the other place right now, Beaver, where we talked about these issues with grazers in the evening and the next morning we met with the federal agencies. We’ve had some progress so far, it’s, you know, things aren’t happening quite as quickly as we’d like. One of the things the Division has been proposing is that, in areas where we’ve done watershed treatments and improved the range and there’s actual forage available, we should be looking at trying to reallocate some of those AUMs where forage is available. The Forest Service and the BLM were willing to look at that but they have to go through their NEPA process. And we’re trying to work through that. Other issues, we’ve had some depredation issues that the Division is work with individuals on. And that’s kind of the plan we intend to keep following is to meet with producers and find out their concerns. And the other thing is, I’d like to mention is, I think it, the other thing I’m really trying to do is to build an alliance between sportsmen and the livestock operators so that, the grazing community, we stand a lot to gain from working with each other. We can do more together than if we, you know, fight with each other. We have some common enemies, and, you know, that we are facing and I think that by joining forces we can make things better. What the important thing is that we ask what is it that each of us really need and address it from that angle and try to help everybody get what they need to get by. So. Any questions or whatever, I’d be happy to try to answer them.

Dave Black: If there’s no questions we’ll move on. Thank you. I was also in attendance at a meeting in Cedar City. And I thought the meeting went really well. And the sentiment, I think, as we left that meeting is: we do need to work together and, and find some common ground and work, as you said, our enemies, fight our enemies together. And we could get a lot more accomplished. And so I felt real good after that meeting.

**Review and Acceptance of Agenda and Minutes (action)**

Dave Black: The first action item that we need to do is, review and accept the agenda and the minutes. And so I’ll entertain a motion to accept the, those. Rusty.
Rusty Aiken: I’ll make a motion, Dave, to accept the minutes and the agenda.

Dave Black: K, do we have a second?

Brayden Richmond: I’ll second it.

Dave Black: K. So we have a motion and a second to accept the minutes and the agenda. Is there any comment? All those in favor? K, that’s unanimous.

Rusty Aiken made the motion to accept the agenda and minutes as presented. Brayden Richmond seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Dave: K then, before we move on to our next action item, which is item number 5 on the agenda, I just want to go through the meeting procedure. I’m sure that many of you have been to a RAC meeting before. We do have a portion following each presentation where you can come up and make comments. We also have a time that you can come up and ask questions. And so, the way this will go, as we go through each agenda item, we’ll have a presentation, following the presentation, we’ll entertain any questions from the RAC and then we’ll entertain any questions from the public. And if you have a question, please come to the microphone and state your name and then ask your question for clarification purposes. At this time we’d ask you not to make any comments. But if you do have a question please come forward so we can get that question answered. In order to come to the mic with a comment, we’d ask you to fill out comment cards. Do we have somebody that’s passing those around? So we have some in the back, they’re the yellow cards. Please fill those out and when we get to the comment section then, we will allow public comments for 3 minutes each. If you’re here with an organized group, we’ll allow one spokesman from that group to take up to 5 minutes. And if you’re an individual within that group, we would allow you 2 minutes. And so, um, in order to move this meeting along, that’s pretty standard what we’ve done in the past at the RAC meetings. So, five minutes per group, two minutes per individuals in the group, and three minutes for public comments. And then following that, we’d have comments from the RAC and then we’d go into a RAC motion and discussion and a vote. And we’ll do that after each agenda item. So our first presentation then is the bucks bulls and once in a lifetime permit recommendations and that will be Justin Shannon.

(Wade Heaton arrived during first presentation.)

**Bucks, Bulls and OIAL Permit Recommendations for 2016 (action)**
-Justin Shannon, Big Game Coordinator and
-Teresa Griffin, Wildlife Program Manager
(see attachment 1)

**Questions from the RAC:**

Dave Black: Thank you Justin. Before I turn time over to the rest of the RAC I have two quick questions. One of them was on the Zion unit. It seems like in the past, and I might be mistaken, that you’ve indicated that there’s so much private property there that if we add more tags to that unit, we’re just putting more pressure in localized areas and so, it seemed a little surprising that we would increase that but I was just curious on the reasoning behind that. And then the other question that I had was on the Southwest Desert, it looked like we’re seeing some big decreases in buck to doe ratio. And I was
wondering if maybe a decrease in tags would be justified on that unit.

Justin Shannon: Sure, I’ll probably let the biologist speak to the Zion on the private lands issue. I’m not familiar with it enough. And then we can answer your second question after that.

Dustin Schaible: We’ve had an increasing trend on that buck ratio where it’s like up into the mid-twenties at this point. And so our trend has been kind of increasing tags for the last several years by about 100 tags and so this year is the first year we bumped it up even more because our trend continues to increase. So, with increasing permit numbers, hopefully there’s more people that will have access to those private lands as well. But there’s still a lot of public land, down on that winter range particularly, that we feel that it can handle the increase in hunters.

Dave Black: Okay, thank you.

Justin Shannon: As far as your next question, I’ll pull up the data on the Southwest Desert. If I can get there. I think it’s childproof, we’ve got to get this thing going, or not. This is taking way too long to get between slides. But, ya, on the buck to doe ratio on the Southwest Desert, it certainly was decreasing. One challenge that we have on that unit in the past has been getting an accurate sample size for enough does classified to really make sense of that buck to doe ratio. In the Central Region on their West Desert populations, they don’t even try because we shoot for 400 does in a representative sub-sample area and it’s tough, it’s challenging to get there all the time. So I don’t know if that was a function this year or not. I think we were over 300 on our doe classification. You’re certainly right though, on the Southwest Desert going from 29, 25 to 19. The three-year average is still 24 but it is trending down that way, Dave, certainly.

Dave Black: So if this goes through we probably want to look at it pretty close next year then?

Justin Shannon: I would think so, ya,

Dave Black: So if we have to get ahead of something. But it looks like you got a downward trend there. It seems like a red flag.

Justin Shannon: Ya, I would say out of all our buck to Doe ratios… It’s really interesting because, if you look at the rest of the units, we have units that are doing that same thing but the other way and so the Southwest Desert is really trending that way, whereas the others are increasing. I don’t know, Jason, do you want to speak to this any at all or am I off on this? Do you have any other additional thoughts?

Jason Nicholes: All that Justin said is accurate, the only thing that I would add is that we had an unusually high harvest last year. Usually we harvest about 150 bucks every year on the Southwest Desert, last year was 250. The reason why, I don’t know, conditions were just right. But that contributed to the reduction. But the ten-year average before that’s 150 bucks per year being harvested on the unit.

Dave Black: I’ll turn time to the rest of the RAC then for their questions. Let’s start on my right and we can come down this way. I imagine everybody’s gonna have questions.

Dale Bagley: Kind of a follow up to what they was asking on Zion and I also had some comment on Pinevalley and Panguitch. Crowding seems to be a perception in those areas so with these units that the
increase, would doing a split differently on these units be a better way to go so we can kind of address
the crowding issue that’s being brought up? Whether it be the split like you did on Thousand Lakes or
something a little different I don’t know. But I did get quite a few comments and crowding was an issue
on those units.

Justin Shannon: I don’t know if I’m familiar enough to know, with those units in particular, to know
what the crowding issues are like on that. I do know this year, as we’ve got the data back from the
harvest. Jason was right, Southwest Desert was up. It seems like every unit was up. If you looked at our
success rates on general season units, it was 42%, something like that. Years ago, success rates were
about 30% on our rifle hunts. So, I know crowding can be an issue, but it seems like when harvest is
going well, that tends to be, people tend to tolerate more as success rates go up. I don’t know on those
units specifically but, if you guys want to tackle weapon splits and do some of that, certainly that’s the
prerogative of the RAC. Do any biologists have any perspective on crowding on these units? Okay, if
not, I think we’re good.

Wade Heaton: Justin, just a couple, it was my understanding that the season splits, the 20: 20: 60 that
we’ve lived with for two centuries, I understood that that was a legislative item and that it couldn’t be
changed. Obviously we’ve made some changes here. Walk me through that.

Justin Shannon: It wasn’t legislatively changed, or legislatively mandated. It’s essentially part of the
mule deer planning process is what it was. And the mule deer plan, it says that things will be set at a 60:
20: 20 split unless there’s a management need that we’re trying to address. If you look at the Thousand
Lakes is a great example where I think everybody in the room can say, “Ya, that’s a management need
where that split makes sense.” But the mule deer committee, as we worked through that, we tried really
hard to give some flexibility to things but without making it a free for all. So 60: 20: 20 is the standard.
But certainly you can vary if you have a great justification for it.

Wade Heaton: That is good news, I think that’s a great tool for some of these units. That is great. Sorry,
I’ll be fast. Maybe I was wrong, on the general season buck to doe ratio objectives, I understood there
were 3 different categories, are there only 2?

Justin Shannon: Ya, so there’s 2. There’s 15 to 17 and then there’s 18 to 20.

Wade Heaton: Just last one. What was our reason for changing the Southwest Deep Creek, what was our
reason for changing the objective on the elk?

Justin Shannon: So, for, initially in, was it 2008? that the elk plan was initiated or maybe it’s 2009, the
Deep Creek was slated to be a higher one. And then, there was a lot of discussion that we had too many
high age objective units, so that one got pushed way down. Well, that unit’s interesting because on the
south-end there’s a lot of tribal ground and they’re managing their bulls for a nine year-old bull. And so
we just, we had a lack of alignment on what we were trying to do with elk and what they were. So as we
went through the revision process, we got some tribal input and said that one just makes sense where we
can have a little more quality.

Gene Boardman: First of all, your accuracy on your deer counts and your buck to doe ratios. There’s got
to be a plus or minus on that, what is it?
Justin Shannon: I’m not sure. What we try to do is once you hit over 400 does on your classification, as you’re hitting representative winter ranges, confidence goes up that you’re doing really well. There’s not much difference between classifying 400, to 500, to 600, at that point it gets really marginalized. That’s kind of the cut off that western states are using to say, “Ya, this is a really good representative of what’s there.” Kent, do you have anything to add on that? Kent might know the stuff better than I do. Is that a fair assessment?

Kent Hersey: I guess, from a statistics standpoint, once you hit a sample size of 400 that’s kind of the magic statistical number where, as long as it’s random across the unit, you have a good representation of what’s on that unit. The other part with buck to doe ratios, because of the way bucks and does differ, bucks stay higher on that mountain longer, our classifications are actually under-estimates of what’s truly out there. But they’re done same after same, we use it as a trend to see where that population’s going and don’t look at it as a standalone, here’s what’s in the population. We’re more interested in the trend of that. If that makes sense.

Gene Boardman: Okay. There’s some units that are taking quite a bit of cut on the elk, limited entry. Is there a same cut on expo tags, conservation tags, and landowner tags and every other kind of tag when this happens?

Justin Shannon: There are two different sets of criteria we’re dealing with. The last two years, our limited entry elk permits had pretty substantial increases. And we let them be separate. We set our public draw permits we’re gonna manage by age objective. There’s other guidelines and rules in place for those other permits. They’re really, they don’t overlap, they’re not connected that way.

Gene Boardman: So those permits are going to be probably issued at 100 percent of what they were last year. And the cuts are going to be, to the draw people, are going to be 25 and 31%?

Justin Shannon: Are you talking on the, which units specific is 25 and 31%?

Gene Boardman: Mt Dutton, the draw tags, your recommendation is to cut them 25%. Panguitch Lake, your recommendation is to cut them 31%. What I want to know is on all these other extra tags out there, are they being cut at all?

Justin Shannon: What we’re really trying to do is, we set the age objective, and there was some movement last year, certainly. What we’re trying to do is make recommendations that move us in the direction of reaching those objectives. And so, it’s really not tied to expo permits or anything like that. So, again, they’re independent, but on this, as we’re making these cuts, we’re just trying to say, “Given the data we have, the harvest, the trends, what cut do we need to get there? What increase do we need to make to get there as we?.” And it’s just trying to do our best to make progress toward that objective.

Gene Boardman: At the risk of making a comment, the draw tag people are taking all the damage and the tags that go to expos and conservation and so forth aren’t taking any damage.

Justin Shannon: I’d say it probably depends the unit, certainly, you’re right, we have units where we are cutting and we’re being as transparent with that as we can that we’re recommending. But, there’s also some pretty big increases being proposed tonight. And it’s, again, it’s a unit specific thing that we’re really trying to manage to.
Gene Boardman: Thank you.

Nick Jorgensen: You already answered my question you know on the West Desert Deep Creek elk. That’s the one thing that was confusing to me. So, thanks for clarifying that.

Sean Kelly: I’ve got to relay most of these to the rest of the Forest Service in Southern Utah so I’ve been visiting with the Division for a while now so all my questions have all been answered.

Dave Black: Okay, let’s start on my left. Craig.

Craig Laub: My question has to do with the late muzzleloader deer hunt. The success rate on that and do you have any idea the size of the deer that were taken?

Justin Shannon: Ya, I’ve got the success, I can pull that up. It will take me a month to scroll up but we’ve got it here. Here we go. For the Morgan, 7 of the 9 hunters were successful; Kamas, 2 out of 4; Pine Valley 7 out of 8; Ninemile, 7 out of 9; (Southeast Desert, that’s funny) Southwest Desert, (who’s proofreading these things?) 2 out of 3; and then the Zion was 10 out of 10. So that kind of gives you a feel for the six units that we had the success rates fairly high. And then, I’m sorry, what was the second part of that question?

Craig Laub: The success rate and what size they were.

Justin Shannon: Oh, the size. I reviewed the harvest I don’t remember specifically saying, “Did they kill a 4 by 4 or 4 by 5? What was the width.” What I was more interested in and what we told the RACs we would report on is, kind of the overall satisfaction of it. Satisfaction rates were really high. We had hunters using double digit points to draw these general season permits. And what was interesting, the feedback was really good. The one thing that they said was we wish we could hunt later into the rut. And I, if I had that tag, I’d probably share that same feeling but, by design, it was supposed to be that first of November. The feedback was great. I can get you those data, I just don’t have them at the top of my head.

Craig Laub: I was just curious. Cause anybody I knew didn’t take home a forked horn I can guarantee you.

Justin Shannon: Ya. That’s probably why the feedback was so good I’d imagine.

Dave Black: Brian do you have anything?

Brian Johnson: Not yet.

Dave Black: okay. Harry.

Harry Barber: Just quickly, I didn’t see where the antelope decreases were coming.

Justin Shannon: Oh. Let me look real quick. I think the Morgan unit had a decrease and I think the Parker had a decrease. Let me double check that real quick. I would say this though, a lot of the
pronghorn units in the state, areas like Southeast Utah, we’ve seen some pretty good population increases in the pronghorn. So, I mean, this is just a summation of everything combined. Let me find this for you real quick. Ya, the Plateau Parker Mountain and the Cache Morgan South Rich is driving the bulk of that decrease. However, lots of these smaller units with single digit permits had some pretty good increases. So, kind of a summary.

Brayden Richmond: Just one question. Going back to that Deep Creek, is the weapon split allocation, did that get changed with these decreases or is it still the same split?

Justin Shannon: For elk?

Brayden Richmond: Ya.

Justin Shannon: Are you talking about where in the last plan we had it be the 30: 50: 20 or whatever that was? No, what we did was, in this last plan, we didn’t break it up to where if you have a late hunt or an early hunt, they would have different weapon splits. Because, before, in the last elk plan, if you didn’t have a late hunt, you had a set of criteria, if you did then you had a different set of criteria and there was always conversation: “Which allocation should we use?” With this new plan, we didn’t do that. We say that the weapon splits are gonna be 60% any weapon, 25% archery, 15% muzzleloader. The only exception that we had on this was on the Wasatch, where that weapon split was retained simply because, the 30: 50: 20. But that’s mostly because we have 800 permits on that unit so we needed to spread some of that out. Does that help?

Brayden Richmond: Yes. Just to clarify, I think you said it, but it’s the 60: 25: 15 on West Desert Deep Creek for elk.

Justin Shannon: Correct. Yes.

Brian Johnson: I lied, I have a question. On the Southwest Desert I noticed on the late season, it looks like we’re adding two tags and we’re in kind of a downward trend. Where’s the biologist? There you are. I’m just wondering what the thought process was behind that, where we’re on a downward trend. I know the overall average is up on that but on the late season we’re adding to more. And they’re gonna specifically kill some monster deer. Maybe, fill me in on that.

Justin Shannon: Could I make one comment before he goes to that? As we went through the RAC process last year, you can still speak too, Jason, I just want to give some feedback real quick. As we went through the RAC process last year, we said, “Well, we’ll start slow.” And people said, “That’s it? Those are your sideboards? What does that mean?” Slow is so relative and so as we went back, and that was, you know we said, some of the RACs were struggling on what slow meant, what low permit numbers meant. What we did is we got with the wildlife managers afterwards and said, “Can we put some sideboards and direction on these limited entry permits?” And one thing we did was we said, “On these units, we should have a minimum of five that way we can have a non-resident come in.” And where you’re exceeding 20 bucks per 100 does, harvesting five additional isn’t tipping the scales one way or the other. So we said that or 1% of the total permits for the unit, or a maximum of 20. So we’re essentially saying, between 5 and 20 or up to 1%. So if you look at, like, the Wasatch, they have 35. But that’s because they have 60, 100 permits or whatever that number is. So the managers sort of set some sideboards on what that would look like. And Jason, if you want to add to that. So, in Jason’s defense, he
was keeping that as low as the sideboards would allow that we were trying to put in place.

Dave Black: Okay, do we have any more questions from the RAC? Before we turn time over to the public, we’d ask you to come to the microphone on my right or your left over here. You can just come up in an orderly fashion, we won’t call your names. Please, state your name in the microphone for the record and we’d ask you at this time, just to keep, not your comment cause we don’t want comments, but if you have questions. And then we do have a time period for comments. But if you do have questions please come forward and use this mic.

Questions from the Public:

Dennis Blackburn: Dennis Blackburn, Wayne County Commissioner. I just have a question on the pronghorn. How many are you hunting on the, out by the Robbers Roost area? I don’t know which one that is.

Justin Shannon: I think that’s San Rafael Desert.

Dennis Blackburn: It says San Rafael North. How big is that boundary?

Justin Shannon: The San Rafael North is I-70, highway 10, highway 6. And so I think it would be San Rafael Desert.

Dennis Blackburn: Is that on here?

Justin Shannon: Ya. It looks like we have, last year had, for the rifle we had six permits, this year increasing it to nine. So that’s what it’d be, going from six permits to nine permits on that unit.

Dennis Blackburn: We can only ask questions now?

Dave Black: Yes. If you can form a question out of it.

Dennis Blackburn: We’ve spent a lot of time out there working on roads and stuff lately. There’s at least 100 head of antelope out there. Is six permits enough to control the unit?

Justin Shannon: Yes. If we want to do unit control, like if there were too many pronghorn, we’d probably do that with doe harvest. If you’re questioning and what you’re getting at is: “Can we have more buck permits?” I do know that as they did the surveys this year, these are some of the areas that were up and that’s why as I was making the comments earlier, some of these single-digit units did increase pretty good. But, you know, if you feel six to nine isn’t a good enough increase, certainly make that comment when you come up. If you think we’re going to slow on that.

Dave Black: Thank you Dennis. I did fail to recognize county commissioners here, if we do have any others, we welcome you here and are glad to see you. Okay, go ahead, please state your name.

David Brinkerhoff: David Brinkerhoff, Henry Mountain Grazers. I have a question on the Bullfrog, down there. I don’t see any hunt going on. We’re not supposed to have any antelopes there. I know there’s antelope in that area because I’ve seen them this winter. I don’t see anything going on there.
What’s going on there? Are we going to eliminate those on a unit that’s not supposed to have any? We need to do something besides let them increase.

Justin Shannon: Sure, great question. What we did a couple years ago was we sat down and talked about that south end of the Henries. We called a hunt for that and hunters hunted for weeks and weeks and weeks, nobody harvested. We heard it, when they came back. And I think we even had discussions about do we give them their points back. So what we did is, the unit that’s to the north of that, that San Rafael Desert, we did a boundary change to simply include the Henries, so now anybody that’s hunting on that unit can now go down and hunt the Henries. So it’s a way to get harvest, have the ability to target those pronghorn without forcing people in there. Its part of that bigger boundary so if they’re there, hunters can go pursue them. And I think that change was made a couple of years ago.

David Brinkerhoff: I have another question there. There’s so much roadless area in there, those hunters, I can see why they can’t find them. Because you can’t get to them, and their outfits can’t run fast enough to catch up to them anyways. When you get there, you’ve got to shoot a bullet twice to catch those antelopes. I don’t know, I think we need to look at that situation a little different than we’re looking at it and try to eliminate them before they get out of control.

Justin Shannon: Ya, we can certainly talk with Wade and put our heads together. I know when we tried it and we wrote a tight boundary to target the areas that you were talking about, boy we heard it, because, nobody saw an antelope and they let us know that they were disappointed. But to be fair, that’s why we tried to include it to the boundary to the north to say, if we’re seeing an influx of pronghorn, we can direct hunters to those canyons and those areas. So that was the approach that we took.

David Brinkerhoff: Okay, thank you.

Dave Black: Do you have a question? Please come forward.

Paul Niemeyer: I’m Paul Niemeyer. Can you guys clarify on these buck doe ratios, are you keeping the fawns out of the count or are you counting the fawns as antlerless deer when you classify them?

Justin Shannon: When we classify, the classification is a buck, a doe, and a fawn. That’s how we get our fawn to doe ratio as well. So to simply call a fawn an antlerless buck, we wouldn’t be able to get that other ratio. So, buck, doe, fawn.

Paul Niemeyer: Okay, that’s what I thought.

Dave Black: Okay, we’ll move to the comment section. It looks like then we have Lynn Kitchen followed by Don Sprecher.

Comments from the Public:

Lynn Kitchen (see attachment 2): I have 2 comments, one for the deer and one for the elk and I don’t know if you want me to do them both at the same time or not. Maybe, while I give the one for deer, I’ll hand you this and you can pass it down because I want to refer to this on the elk one. On the deer… It’s Lynn Kitchen I represent myself. And I just want to give support in the Division of Wildlife Resources recommendations for the general deer tag numbers for the state. I don’t see any biological or any other
reason, field data that I’ve seen or information that would deviate from that. And that’s all on the deer. On the elk, there’s a chart there. The top line on the chart, the blue line, and this is in reference to the limited entry elk on the Beaver unit only. This is an observation. Mason LeFevre did this chart. So that top blue line is the total number of limited entry permits that have been issued by year from 2003 to last year, 2015. The next line down, the gray one, is the number of animals that were harvested on those hunts. And then the bottom line, that orange one, is the age of the bull data, from the tooth data, that came from those hunts. So my comments are maybe general, more specific to this year but hopefully maybe something larger and long run. As I look at that in 2010, there were 76 permits that were given and you can see the numbers there, the age class and that. But that age class has been relatively flat, hasn’t jumped a whole lot up or down, has been fairly stable. And, the last several years, we’ve had many less bull tags issued with not a whole lot of age difference. I would suggest that maybe this unit, maybe other units as well, have other issues going on, that the age class determination of how many permits is not a very good way to determine how many permit should be there. I would suggest, my recommendations are on the back page, that we increase, for this year, 60 permits overall and I broke them out, I think it’s the proportion of what’s supposed to be there, by the unit, for this year. And as a larger questions, I think this fall is when those elk recommendations will be discussed, the plans, maybe looking at some additional information of how to determine numbers of permits. Any questions?

Thanks.

Dave Black: Thank you. So, Don followed by Ben Lowder.

Don Sprecher: My name’s Don Sprecher from Kanab. I want to bring up the Zion unit. I’ve hunted that unit, Pinevalley unit for over 30 years, 20 of them as a non-resident. Moved back to Southern Utah and Kanab about 12 years ago. I generally get a tag for that unit every other year, I really enjoy hunting it. I have seen the quality of the bucks come up, especially last year. But, in years past, what we’ve seen is, an increase of hunters in that unit and less quality deer. You go back 25, 30 years ago and we had better quality deer and less hunters. I know the population’s gone up. But when you look at the Zion unit on your maps, it looks like a very large unit. But, when you take into account all the private land, Zion National Park, the new wilderness area on Canaan Mountain, and areas that don’t hold deer period, it really has made the Zion unit a very small unit. And those deer, I feel it’s a unique unit because they’re a migratory herd. And when they start getting pressure from the muzzleloading hunts and then you get all the increase on the hunters in there, it really becomes a warzone down on what we call the Sands, and that’s an area south of highway 9 that’s bordered on the west by Zion National Park and the new wilderness area on the Washington county line on Canaan Mountain and then of course highway 89 down through to the Paunsaugunt. And just north of there, where there’s been some improvements on habitat when the railed areas north of highway 9, Muddy Mineral area, it’s turned into a war zone because those deer just get funneled in there. Below highway 14, access is limited from private land and the natural topography, you’ve got the cliffs and everything. There’s a pocket of public land but there’s no access to it. Hard to access it through North Fork, hard to access it from the east side on highway 9. So when you hunt those units, all of the hunters are concentrated in the Sands and up against Red Knoll.

I don’t know too much about the Cedar City area, that northwest corner of the unit, but I think an increase in tags on the Zion unit is really gonna make it unsafe and more crowded. We go into an area on the Mineral where it was like a war zone, people are shooting across each other and they’re shooting at small deer. Sir?

Dave Black: I was just giving you a time warning. You’ve got one minute.
Don Sprecher: Anyway, my main comment is, if we, you know, let’s not increase to 200. I think Southern Utah deserves quality deer herds. Let’s bring them back to where they were 25 years ago and then the next plan and the next five years I think we can really improve these. But maybe throw a youth hunt in there and give these younger kids an opportunity to get into some quality deer hunting rather than, I like that 25 to 100 buck to doe ratio instead of lowering it. Let’s have some quality deer hunting on that Zion unit. Goes for Pinevalley, Beaver, and the Panguitch unit too.

Dave Black: Thanks Don.

Don Sprecher: Thank you.

Dave Black: Okay, next we’ll hear from Ben, and then he’ll be followed by Verland King.

Ben Lowder: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Ben Lowder representing the Utah Bowman’s Association, thanks for the opportunity to speak tonight as well. Thanks to all of you RAC members for your service and being willing to serve on this council here. We’re super excited about the status of our deer herds. It wasn’t too long ago when our deer herds were struggling. We had to take action to cut some tags, at the time, that was not a very popular option, but it had to be done to help recover our herds. Fortunately now we’re in a position where our herds are doing fantastic, we’re excited about that. And we’re in a position where the plan allows for us the opportunity to bring back some of those tags and provide some additional opportunity and we support the Division’s recommendations in doing so. And, in addition, we support the rest of the Division’s recommendations as presented. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thank you. Verland will be followed by Travis Rigby.

Verland King: Verland King, Wayne County Grazers Association. A lot of our ranchers, our members, graze on the Henry Mountains, so that’s what I want to talk about. Several years ago, we had problems with the bison. Through working with the DWR and pressure from the permittees we were able to get the bison numbers from extremely high to a lower number. As David asked that question about the antelope, I felt that the answer was not good enough, because, just because they opened it up, doesn’t mean anyone is going to hunt them, and the same thing with the elk on the Henries, those antelope, those elk, aren’t supposed to be there. You cannot control them by issuing a hunt. I would like to hear a recommendation of controlling them some other way to get it done. Those antelope, if they’re not controlled are going to keep growing and we’re going to be in the same situation we were with the buffalo before. Luckily the buffalo, you can hunt them, but it seems the antelope and the elk, you can’t control them with hunting so I would like to see the DWR step up and take some other means of controlling those animals before they get out of hand. Thank you.

Dave Black: Verland, let me ask you a question. You’re on a committee, the buffalo committee?

Verland King: Yes

Dave Black: Is there a way, through that committee, you can put more pressure, as far as removing those antelope?

Verland King: We’ve tried, and basically DWR has tried, but their hands are tied probably, just to issue more permits. And, as Dave said, the hunters are not willing to get off the road and go kill them, and I
wouldn’t for an antelope anyway. That’s the problem, is that the bison committee can’t put any more pressure on them, we put pressure, I didn’t get to the last meeting but every time I’ve been there, we’ve put pressure on them about antelope and elk so they know of the problem. We need to think outside the box and get it done so that we don’t have a problem in the future with antelope and elk.

Dave Black: Okay, thank you.

Bill Bates: I would just say that that comment has been heard and noted and we’ll look into it. I don’t think we need to worry about taking it to committee. I think the people who need to hear it heard it. So thank you.

Dave Black: Travis will be followed by Jon Larson.

Travis Rigby: Travis Rigby, representing myself, family, I’ve got five kids. Even the seven year-old, eight year-old I should say, just passed hunter safety. I just want to make some comments on the Pinevalley unit. My family has hunted that unit for 75 plus years. Grandfather ran the college farm for 40 years, a lot of deer taken off those areas, we’re very familiar with it. First I want to thank the proper management because we’ve seen, in past years, deer quality, populations, diminished. I’m focusing a little bit more on the general season because my youth are, obviously, they’re involved with sports and everything else. It’s a little bit harder to get a deer on those other hunts. But, couple things I want to address is the crowding. 2013 we had 3800 hunters, now we’ve got 3900 last couple years. Long story short, it’s a big issue. I appreciate the gentleman’s comment on Zion. You know, I’ve spent probably 100, 150 plus miles on the Pinevalley unit during the hunts, hiking around doing, scouting’s a great thing, you’re all alone. But it’s pretty frustrating taking youth up there and encounter hunters and, obviously, makes the hunt a little bit more challenging. We do go farther than most people and usually harvest something but sometimes it’s hard when you’ve got to get back to school and other things. But basically, it’s pretty frustrating taking youth up there and encounter hunters and, obviously, makes the hunt a little bit more challenging. We do go farther than most people and usually harvest something but sometimes it’s hard when you’ve got to get back to school and other things. I also question the numbers of 2015 just from being in the field a whole bunch, 2013, 2014 were right around objective at 20 bucks per 100 does. From my experience in the field, I didn’t see a big increase of 20 to 26. That 2015 numbers, is truly that you’re increasing, recommending to increase to 200 permits. And I also wonder, I should have stood up in the questioning part, I wonder the harvest success rate was about 51% on Pinevalley. We just heard that in late muzzleloader it was 7 out of 8. My question is, do those higher harvest rates, are they factored in to the upcoming, the proposal here to increase numbers? In other words, if more bucks are taken off, is that considered in the variable, or is it a variable in recommending increased numbers? Probably on the last part, I want to make a recommendation, that if we are to increase numbers even more to battle the crowding issue, my suggestion is split the nine day hunt into four or five day hunts, two separate ones. Allow the youth hunters to hunt all nine, ten days. Obviously giving them their opportunity to get in the field. But basically, it makes a lot of sense to me, to say, give everyone a chance to hunt, if we’re going to keep the numbers there, opportunities are not going to be lost so much. But bottom line, we could allow the youth hunters to have their success and, frankly, the adults, maybe, in the past we’ve had a fice day hunt, and I’m sure you all heard complaints. But you know what? It changed things around with the Pinevalley unit went to that five day hunt. And I saw that that’s when the management took place and we started to see what I witnessed in the mountains with my grandpa in the early 80’s etcetera. Thank you.


Jon Larson: Thank you, Jon Larson, it’s good to be with you tonight. I’m with Sportsmen for Fish and
Wildlife. I first would like to thank Justin and the entire team over there for their efforts. They do a great job, it’s a great presentation. I want to talk about last year’s deer hunt for just a minute. Really it was a great deer hunt across the state. Looking at the state in its totality, it really was. I mean, to see, as Ben said, to see the numbers come back, we’re extremely pleased with that. To see the rise in permits, it just calls for opportunity and that’s a great thing any time you can do that. There’s kids that get out there, there’s adults that can hunt maybe if they haven’t for three years. That’s a great thing. That being said, if you look at the state in its totality I think it was a great season. But we still feel that there’s areas where we need to take a look at and maybe be a little more conscious of those increases. So as an organization we support the Division’s recommendations with just a couple exceptions and I’ll share those with you. First, the San Juan Abajo Mountain: we’d like to see those permits stay the status quo, the same. And, even more importantly would be the Manti unit: that’s the largest unit in the state, obviously, and because of that, it calls for opportunity and you’ve got to pay attention to that, you can’t have the largest state and not have that opportunity. There’s a lot of deer on that unit, and for all of us that are in this room, and maybe even for those that live in the north part of the state, if you draw a tag on the Manti, that’s a great thing. But for those that live there, the sportsmen that live there and hunt there and struggle with seeing numbers, it’s a different thing. And maybe that’s because there’s an emotional tie. If that’s your backyard, you know, we’ve heard reference to “this neck of the woods” in Southern Utah here tonight. On that Manti, for that very reason, the sportsmen just aren’t seeing the numbers there. So we’d like to see those numbers stay the same, that’s a hard discussion to have, when on one hand you’re applauding the permit increase and you’re wanting to see opportunity at the same time. You just need to be surgical about that and make sure that it’s going in the right area. So we’re all about opportunity where it makes sense and when it makes sense. So, again, we’d like to see those two units, San Juan Abajo Mountains, and the Manti unit remain the same. And then lastly, we certainly support the any bull elk permit increase up to 15000, we think that’s a great idea. In addition to that, we’d actually like to see an increase of 300 any bull permits go directly to the youth. We talk a lot about youth and that’s the next generation, they’re the up and comers, they’re what keep us going. If we can continue with that opportunity we think it’s a great move. Justin had mentioned earlier on in his presentation that when they, last year they raised that from 300 to 500, I believe, and the feedback they got was great, it was positive. We’d like to see that trend keep going. Thank you.

Dave Black: Okay. Steve followed by Mason LeFevre.

Steve Monk: My name’s Steve Monk from Kanab Utah, my comments can be in regards to the increase on the Pinevalley unit. I would like to mention one thing, it’s been discussed that there was a substantially higher success rate on the rifle hunt last year. I think we need to consider that there was a substantial storm for the first three or four days throughout the whole Southern Utah and any time you have that, the deer get down, they get moving, and more of them get harvested on the winter range so keep that in mind. I would like to see the permits on the Pinevalley unit stay the same as is. And then lastly, we certainly support the any bull elk permit increase up to 15000, we think that’s a great idea. In addition to that, we’d actually like to see an increased harvest already with the muzzleloader scope recommendation, that will increase the success rate there. And the hunt dates being five days later will increase the success rate there, especially if we get another storm. And so I would like to see that remain the same, I think we’ve been going in the right direction, doing a lot of good things with the predator control, the habitat improvements, the previous tag reductions, the light winters have been a big part of these big increases in numbers in bucks. I think we’re going in the right direction I’d like to keep that going and remain the same with those permit numbers. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thank you. We’ll have Mason followed by Tim Tebbs.
Mason LeFevre: Ya, I just wanted to make the comment, I support the deer increase, as to the crowding issue, I’ve hunted Pangtuitch lake for a lot of years, there are some areas that are crowded but there’s areas where you can get away from it. I don’t, it wasn’t a unit where permits were increased this year, but, I mean, there’s gonna be crowding in certain areas on every unit just due to ease of access and numbers of deer. I don’t see it as a huge safety issue as long as we’re doing what we should. I also wanted to comment on Beaver elk unit. Like Lynn said, we looked at that chart. I’m not gonna say that you can increase tags a bunch and still kill huge bulls but if we’re managing off an age objective that seems to say that you can increase tags and kill, and decrease and it’s pretty much staying the same, I think a lot of that is a issue of access on the Beaver unit and people see a high success rate and think they’re automatically gonna go kill a eight, nine year-old 370, 380 bull. But the reality of the unit is there are some areas where bulls are getting big and they’re very difficult to access. I think you see a lot of people who apply for those units with max points not prepared for the reality of what it will take to kill a bull that age or that size. And then, I know this might be a controversial topic but I think another reason we’re starting to see some of these age objectives and a lack of quality is we’ve been killing a lot of bulls in the middle of the rut with rifles for a long time. And I think we’re starting to see some results of that. I know it’s hard to justify and say that you can have a genetic impact on an elk herd but I think the way we hunt elk in the rut with rifles, I think we’re starting to see that, I think that some of the quality issue we’re seeing, and it’s not specific to the Beaver unit. That’s my comment.

Dave Black: Thank you. We have Tim followed by Bill Christensen.

Tim Tebbs: I really didn’t have much on the bulls but cows. But I do think we’re doing a pretty good job at keeping those management sizes for the bulls especially being involved with the landowners. It helps them recover their losses, crop, fence, etcetera. Panguitch Lake has a good program, probably more on the cow management is what I’d prefer to talk about.

Dave Black: Okay, we’ll put you back in for that. Thank you, Tim. Bill followed by Paul Niemeyer.

Bill Christensen: Hello, my name’s Bill Christensen, I’m the regional director for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. I want to thank you gentlemen for allowing me to speak today. I also appreciate Justin and the Division staff for a great presentation. What a great thing to have so many more deer. When I was a kid we were pushing 200,000 deer. When Mike Leavitt was governor I was honored to stand on the steps of the capitol and actually speak to the group of hunters and ask the governor to reduce the number of permits. That was a great day and it’s nice to see the deer come back. It helps to have some mild winters too. That helps quite a bit. You know, it’s nice also to find out that we can have lots of elk and still have lots of deer. I got tired of that argument so it’s nice to hear that. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation supports the recommendations the Division presented for bucks and bulls. And I think I’d echo what Jon Larson, my old friend Jon Larson, said. I think it would be nice to have another 300 any bull tags for the youth as well. They’re our future, we need to get more folks involved and young people involved. I want again, to thank the RAC and thank the folks at the Division of Wildlife. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thank you. It will be Paul followed by Nolan Gardner.

Paul Niemeyer: Paul Niemeyer representing the Wayne and Sevier chapter of SFW. First, you know we appreciate the effort that you guys have put into this and then the little town meetings you’ve had. Our, I can I have all our guys on speed dial on the internet through e-mail and I polled all of them and went
over the recommendations and told them to get on the website and they were appreciative of the effort and they supported all the bucks and bulls, the antelope part, the elk part. The only thing that they did ask, is that you would go one more year and not increase these deer tags, the buck tags. Now, some places, like in my yard, I live on the Monroe unit, but the snow was over my knees in my yard. And there were deer dropping dead right then in the winter. Now you’re gonna lose more. Some of these shed hunters are finding dead deer in different areas and a lot of the shed hunters are hunting pretty high because they’re looking for elk. And probably most of the deer mortality would be lower than that. We are seeing some better bucks. They’re still not what I would call mature bucks, but they’re better bucks than we’ve had. Somewhere there’s a threshold when you start seeing more of these four to six year-old, five year-old bucks. And I don’t know what that is, I don’t know if that’s 18 bucks per 100 does or 20 or 24 or 25 or what it really is. Right now, we’re not seeing that, we are seeing these little small 4-points starting to show up. If we could wait a year even and see what the thresholds are to get. you know, you obviously can’t manage everything like a Paunsaugunt or a Henry Mountain deer, deer herd, but, on the other hand, we would like to see these deer a little bit, you know, more mature, older bucks in the classification I guess is the way to say it. Anyway, basically, our guys just asked if you’d wait a year, let’s see what the winter does. You know, the spike in these buck showing up is a pretty fast moving deal and I wouldn’t say that I was 100% sure that’s here to stay, that might be a spike that’s been caused by weather and some other factors. You know, we just ask that you wait one more year, leave buck tags the way they are for a year and then let’s look at it again. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thanks Paul. Nolan followed by Mr. Rasmussen.

Nolan Gardner: Nolan Gardner, Dixie Wildlife chapter of SFW. First of all, again, we’d like to thank you guys for all the hard work you go to. We too would like to see on the extra elk tags at least 300 of them go to youth. We think that’d be awesome. And then, our group down there, we hate to see the extra deer tags on the Pinevalley. We understand that’s what the Division has to work with, so that’s probably what we’re stuck with. But we would like to see more deer. And I am also concerned and want to see what this new muzzle hunt, what the effects it’s gonna have on the deer herd as well as the later season I guess we’ll know next year. But anyway, hopefully we’re not shooting ourselves in the foot. Appreciate everything you do and thank you.

Dave Black: Thanks Nolan.

Kreig Rasmussen: Might ask first will this letter suffice for both bucks, bulls and antlerless or do I need to do it then also?

Dave Black: You can do it now.

Kreig Rasmussen: My name’s Kreig Rasmussen I represent the Fishlake Forest. I’m here to read a letter presented by our Forest supervisor Mel Bolling which you all have a copy of. (See Attachment 3.)

Dave Black: Thank you Kreig. The last comment card that I have is Lynn Kitchen.

Lynn Kitchen (speaking from audience): I did mine already.

Dave Black: Okay. Did I miss anyone? Did you want to comment on the deer or the antlerless? Great, come on up. Oh the antlerless? Okay, we have you for that. We’ll put you right on top. Okay, we’ll turn
the time over to comments from the RAC.

**RAC discussion and vote:**

Mack Morrell: I’ve got a question on the buck antelope on the San Rafael. What’s the success rate on that?

Justin Shannon: Give us about one minute to look that up Mack. The San Rafael Desert, the south one?

Mack Morrell: Ya, where Robber’s Roost is.

Justin Shannon: Okay.

Dave Black: Okay, while they’re looking that up, do we have any other comments? Okay, Brayden.

Brayden Richmond: I’ve got a couple of comments. One, I’m glad you asked the question, Wade, about weapon splits. As you guys all know, we were overloaded with e-mails on this buck to doe ratio and suggestions and probably the two units that I got the most comments, specific comments, were hunting pressure in Pinevalley and Zion. To me it appears, I was like you, I thought that we were pretty limited on changing the weapon allocations. But on Zions particularly I think that’s something that gives us a lot of leeway. I would think that if we change the weapon allocation on Zion we’d really take away a lot of that hunting pressure down there, during the rifle hunt. As we discuss, I think that’s something that we should look at. And also, I think that might be an effective tool on the Pinevalley, kind of a different set of problems, but I think that might be an effective tool there also.

Dave Black: Justin.

Justin Shannon: Can I provide an answer for Mack?

Dave Black: Okay.

Justin Shannon: Of the five hunters that went afield last year, all five of them harvested. So 100%

Dave Black: Gene.

Gene Boardman: Back in November when we raised the age objective on the Mt Dutton and the Panguitch Lake, and lowered the objective on the Monroe. We asked about what it would do on the number of permits. I checked the audio of that meeting and the reply was there would probably be a slight reduction but not by much. Now we’ve got a reduction recommended of 25% from 100 to 75 on the Dutton and 31% from 80 to 55 on the Panguitch Lake. There’s plenty of elk out there to keep those numbers up. Not everybody is trying to kill big elk but on the Mt Dutton and Panguitch Lake, if you want a big elk, there are big elk there. I don’t think that, I think this is too large of a decrease in tags. We talk about point creep and now people have to go for years to draw. When we decrease permits by that much it increases point creep and decreases opportunity for hunters. Now we’re taking 50 tags off of those two units, that’s hurting the opportunity for hunters by quite a bit. I’d like to hope that maybe we could go along with the DWR but maybe we could not make that big of a cut at this time and see what happens. I don’t like age object anyway and I wonder if there’s any consideration, I know they used to
ask the question on your harvest report, were you satisfied with the quantity and quality of the animal. But with age objective I don’t think that ever enters in. I think there’s a lot of hunters that are satisfied with both quantity and quality and I think we can sustain the harvest of bull elk on those 2 units without taking these big cuts that are in the recommendation.


Wade Heaton: I’m never short on something to say, matter of fact I’ve got so much I’m probably gonna break it in half cause I’ll wear out. First, though, I really want to thank everybody that’s here. I believe in this process. I think it’s the best process we have, in the west. And the fact that you guys care enough to be here means a lot. And your input really does mean a lot. And so, thank you for coming, all of you that send e-mails, aside from the spam e-mails, we don’t care about those. But the rest of them that have real thoughts behind them, really appreciate it. It really does go a long way to helping us make a decision. You do have input, you do have influence on this committee. So thank you. And I guess the only other thing I wanted to say about that was, we’re talking about permit numbers tonight in this meeting; objectives were already set in November. And so some of you who might not be familiar with this process, understand that, the reason permits are being increased, recommendations for increases and decreases are to meet within that objective. That objective was set in November. So I’d just encourage you, please, if you’re passionate about where we’re at tonight, keep it inside you until next November. I’m not saying that we’re not going to make some changes tonight, but, the time and place for changing objectives is in November. So, please come back, I guess is my plea, stay involved, I really do think it’ll make a big difference. Two quick things, I think, we’ve got some issues, and I guess it’s to the other board members, we’ve got some issues, I think, that are at play here that don’t factor into buck to doe ratios. Let’s keep in mind buck to doe ratios are taken post hunt, pre-winter. All of that classification work is. And I do think that we had some significant winter in some areas, enough to make a difference in those areas. The second thing is, we’re going to have a later rifle hunt, all the hunts are later, but the biggest impact is going to be on that rifle hunt. I think it’s going to make a significant impact on that hunt, the harvest of that hunt. So we’ve got a few things coming into play that are completely irrelevant and independent from the buck to doe ratio but I think they’re things we ought to consider. I’m tired.

Dale Bagley: I too appreciate all the e-mails that we got. I had over 203 e-mails, most of them didn’t have much comment other than they oppose or support, as far as support the objectives I had 14 with comment on that and 18 or so that threw in some comment why they opposed it. Like I said earlier, a lot of those were, they weren’t necessarily against the increased buck numbers, it was more concern about crowding. Those units were Pinevalley and Zion. As far as our buck to doe ratios, I think the Southern RAC has been really good about hearing public comment. It was in May last year we went through our unit plans, we raised every unit to the 18 to 20 buck to doe ratio in hopes that we could keep some quality, better quality. And we were told we’d end up probably cutting tags at that point in time. Now it’s that time and we’re seeing increases still yet. I think the deer are doing good. We’ve got the 30 unit plan, it’s an easy plan, we can correct things if we go a little overboard. But, a thousand and fifty deer increased unit wide is probably not gonna be too detrimental even if we do have some winter kill loss. The only thing I do question is the Southwest Desert like was brought up before. We’re seeing a downward trend, so the thing that we should be doing probably is lower that a few deer. And the same goes that way if we have the same trends next year, if we over raise the bucks then we can do the same thing next year. We’ve got to keep some amount of trust that if we see that downward trend that we’re gonna correct it quickly. But I would be in support of what the Division’s presented with the exception of that Southwest Desert.
Dave Black: Okay, let’s go on the left, Brian.

Brian Johnson: I got a ton of emails and I responded to every one of them. Which I had a lot of fun with it, cause I think that a lot of people get confused on two different topics, as far as population and quality. I know you can’t do the quotation marks, but. And quality’s a funny thing cause I talked to guys who just want to shoot a 2-point. And then I talk to other people that say, “You shouldn’t be allowed to shoot a 2-point if you’ve killed more than one.” And I’m thinking, how is this guy’s adrenaline rush any better cause he killed a big deer than my adrenaline rush if I shoot a little deer and I like it? I think that it’s kind of one of those things that’s, it’s 100% social at this point, what we’re dealing with is 100% social issue. And I sit here and I’ve heard so much feedback and so much stuff. I’ve heard people say, “I don’t believe the Division’s count.” So I straight up ask them, “Do you think they’re lying on their counts?” “Well no.” “Okay then, so they’re not lying on their counts but you don’t believe them so which one is it?” And I hear that a lot, I don’t think that these men go out there and lie on their counts to offer more tags for money. I got that a lot. It’s kind of rubbed me the wrong way that people actually said that in their comments and e-mail. I just wanted to say that publicly, that I don’t think that’s an issue, I don’t think the Division does that. On another note, I think that there’s a lot of room to, like Brayden mentioned, split some of these allocations up, these, let’s not pile the majority of them in the rifle, especially with the later season date coming. I’ve been a proponent of more archery and muzzleloader opportunity anyway all through this process. I think that would be great if we did something like that. I also think that if we don’t increase tags, what credibility do we have with the public at all? We cut ten thousand tags when we went to 30 units to get down to, to get these buck to doe objectives up, I think we owe it, these are general season units. I think that we have to increase some. I would be open to maybe looking at that Beaver thing. And I’ve said this before if we’re not there, maybe we shouldn’t increase numbers. And every time I’ve said that, you guys, as much as you guys don’t like me, you’ve kinda said, “Hey we’re not quite there yet on that 3-year average, I like what that guy’s saying there.” And that’s maybe something we need to look at on the Beaver is we’re not quite there, we’re in an upward trend, but maybe we’re not there yet. Some of these other ones, I’ve never been on a general season deer hunt and I’ve talked to a guy and the first words out of his mouth were: “Man I wish I saw more orange dots. Man, if I could just see 10 more hunters, my hunt would be complete.” So my point with that is we’re gonna have crowding issues because that’s perception. And so, ya, where do we draw the balance. The good old days, I’ve heard that so many times I don’t even know what the good old days are. The good old days everyone could buy a tag. We had how many hunters back in the good old days? What did we have?

Justin Shannon: We had times we were close to 250,000 in some of those years.

Brian Johnson: Deer? Or how many hunters?

Justin Shannon: 250,000

Brian Johnson: Hunters?

Justin Shannon: Yes.

Brian Johnson: Let’s bring the good old days back, I think you’d like it. Do you know what I mean? And that’s what I’m saying, what part of the good old days are we talking about here? We’re at 30 year
population highs, we’re at 50 year buck to doe ratio highs and that’s only because that’s as far back as I could find buck to doe ratios. I sit here and ramble and ramble and ramble because I’ve only had this conversation 784 times. But, my point is, I think that as a committee we really need to look at maybe splitting those up from rifle to archery to other stuff and I’m sure you’ll hear more from me later.

Dave Black: Do we have any other comments? Rusty.

Rusty Aiken: I don’t think we can do that at this meeting. That would be a fall, proclamation, that we change the split.

Justin Shannon: Ya, you can. The splits from 60% rifle, 20% archery, 20% muzzleloader. It can be done at this meeting. Yes, it can be done tonight.

Dave Black: Craig, do you have a comment?

Craig Laub: Mr. Chairman, I’d just like to make a recommendation that when we do go into this that we do the deer, and the elk, and the antelope individually and we’ll just make a motion that we accept what the Division’s recommended and then we can amend each unit, if somebody’s got a pet unit they want to do it.

Dave Black: Okay. I would be in favor of that, it’s no problem. Do we have any other comments? Before we entertain a motion I’d like to at least summarize the comments that we do have. Wade.

Wade Heaton: Are we ready for round two? Alright, I just didn’t want to hog too much mic. Here’s where I’m at, I responded to every one of those e-mails too, Brian. And I got into some pretty good dialogue with some guys that actually cared. And I made a lot of phone calls. I really tried to talk to as many people as I could about this, just to get a feel for what people wanted. The majority of them, the significant majority of them, were pretty serious about, they wanted to see bigger deer on their general season units. I tried to explain to them what that means. We have a three tiered system on our deer, general season, limited entry, premium limited entry. They were discussing moving some buck to doe ratios on some of our general season units that would almost move them into the limited entry category. Because that’s where we’re getting close to, we’re 25 or over 25 bucks per 100 does in some of these units. So I guess, here’s my point, maybe that’s a discussion that needs to happen. Probably not tonight, probably gonna be too much for tonight. But, do we want to add a third tier to our buck to doe ratios in general season? Do we want to combine limited entry and general season tiers as part of our categories? Do we want to have a serious discussion about raising the objectives on our general season units or at least some of them? Because there were a lot of people that that’s the road they were trying to go down. And I explained to them as best I could where that leads, it leads to less opportunity, less permits, and a lot of them, knowing that, still want to go down that road. And so maybe that is a discussion we need to have, or at least put it on an action item for another day, because obviously we’re not gonna do that here. As I mentioned, the objectives were set in November, but probably something we should entertain, as a board and maybe the Division as a whole.

Brian Johnson: One more comment. Just kind of to parrot what Wade said earlier. To all the people that are here, some people, I have no idea how this RAC’s going to vote or how the board’s going to vote. My plea would be to not just get mad and say, “You didn’t listen to me, the RAC system doesn’t work.” blah blah blah, “I’m gonna cry.” Stay involved, stay passionate about it, understand that we listen to
what you guys say and it does influence the conversation, it does make a change, so stay connected, stay passionate about it and please don’t think that it doesn’t work. Because the RAC system, I think, is the best that we can come up with.

Dave Black: Okay, let me make a comment and then I’ll try to summarize and then we’ll see if we can form a motion. I think here at the Southern RAC, we made a lot of progress last year when we looked at the deer management plan, for those that are concerned about quality and quantity. We were able to raise the buck to doe ratio in a number of units and now all of the ones in Southern Utah are 18 to 20. If that’s your goal then I think we’ve accomplished that, at least as far as we can take it right now. I feel really good about what we’ve done there. I think we’d be seeing greater increases in tag numbers in our area if we hadn’t done that last year, we would have been in a 15 to 17 range and seen even more increases. I think we are concerned about quantity and quality. We are also seeing a number of increases this year and promoting opportunity which is good. In my mind, I think over crowding is a real issue and so in the future, not this year, but in the near future we gona have to look at some different schemes, as Wade mentioned, to get opportunity for hunters in the field, but try to avoid the over crowding. I think over crowding is an issue in the Sands, I think over crowding is an issue on Panguitch Lake, I think over crowding’s an issue on portions of Pinevalley. Hopefully we’re gonna raise more deer and keep increasing tags. But we’ll have to look at some different mechanisms to get those hunters in the field. I agree, I don’t think that’s what we can accomplish tonight but I think in the near future we may be looking at that. I’m very happy about what the deer population is doing. I’ve talked to a lot of people. I think that’s why we have all the e-mails. Everybody can agree we have more deer, we have better deer. And the difference is some people don’t want us to make any changes so we can keep that pattern going. I think we still can keep that pattern going with allowing some tags. And that’s my opinion. But I do think that as a Southern RAC we have the obligation to look close at the Sands and at Pinevalley. The other thing that we haven’t talked too much about is the 300 additional tags for the youth elk hunters, that’s a great idea. Let me just summarize some of these comments. Public comments: We have the public here that does support the recommendations as presented. We had comments concerning elk on the Beaver unit, age class may not be a good way to measure tag increases. We had a handout on that. We talked about the Zion unit and the crowding issues and maybe not allowing any additional tags except for the youth. SFW was here to support the recommendations of the DWR. We did have another public comment where they support the recommendations as presented. There’s some concern about antelope on the Henry Mountains, I think that’s been recognized by DWR staff and I think that’s a legitimate concern that will be looked into. There was comments on the Pinevalley unit, crowding is an issue. We need to increase the numbers and to split into multiple hunts. Here’s SFW, they support the recommendations as presented with the exception of the Manti unit and the San Juan unit and they proposed that we raise the youth elk tags by an additional 300 tags. There was comments about keeping the Pinevalley unit the same with no increases. Not sure what the muzzleloader scope will have, how that will affect harvest rates. We had comments in support of the deer increase, crowding not an issue, Beaver age objective may not be a good way to manage those. And some concern that hunting elk with the rifle during the rut is not good genetically, and we may be seeing the effects of that now. Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation supports the DWR’s buck and bull recommendations as presented with the exception that they would also like to see 300 additional tags for youth elk hunters. SFW Sevier would like to not raise the deer tags this year and see what’s happening, wait one more year and then do the increases. Another chapter of SFW supported the additional youth elk hunts. And, not sure about the deer increase, the increase muzzleloader, may have an effect. We received a handout from the Forest Service Fishlake division, we support the plan as presented. Now the RAC comments. I think you guys are probably okay with that so you heard them. Okay, so I’m ready to entertain a motion. And let’s start
with the general season deer.

Brayden Richmond: I’ll take the first stab at this motion. I would support the Division’s recommendations on the deer as presented with four exceptions. On the Beaver unit: I would like to see that increase cut in half to increase by 75 instead of 150 due to the, 2 of the 3 years we were within objective only increasing one year. On the Pinevalley and Cedar Mountain, or Pinevalley and Zion units: I would like to see the increases done with a split between archery and muzzleloader; so we’d go ahead and accept the increase but all of those tags would be split in half between archery and muzzleloader. And then on the Southwest Desert due to a rapid three-year declining trend, I would actually like to cut tags by 50.

Dave Black: By how many?

Brayden Richmond: Fifty tags cut on the Southwest Desert. I you look at that it went from 29 to 19 in three years. That’s a pretty steep decline.

Dave Black: that’s three things right? Or is that four?

Brian Johnson (off microphone)

Dave Black: Southwest Desert, okay. Do we have a second? Okay we have a second from Dale, we also have one from Rusty but. Okay.

Richard Hepworth: Let me make sure the Pinevalley and Zion, what was the (off microphone).

Brayden Richmond: Pinevalley and Zion, we’d accept the increase as proposed, but those tags would be fifty-fifty between archery and muzzleloader with no increase to rifle tags.

Dave Black: okay, discussion on the motion.


Wade Heaton: We’re just taking a deep breath, it wasn’t that anybody didn’t have something to say. So, here’s my thoughts. I like where some of that’s going. I don’t know that I’m prepared to jump right in to shuffling permits within seasons. I don’t know if I’m ready to do that tonight. The people that I talked to and what I’ve seen personally, there are some significant crowding issues on the any weapon hunt for Zion and Pinevalley, that’s a real problem. That’s not perceived, that’s a real problem. I think there’s issues on Zion where there’s so much private land the access, we’ve all heard pretty good descriptions of it tonight. I would love to see, and, in my opinion, not tonight, I would love to see more of a shift. We’re not talking about shuttling, there’s 200 permits on those units. And so we’re gonna funnel 200 permits into some other hunts. I would like to see it go far more than that, to create a real difference on that any weapon hunt. But because of that, I don’t know that I can justify doing an increase tonight. Just because of that later rifle hunt and because of the crowding issues. I don’t know that I want to jump on that just yet. I would rather see Zion and Pinevalley stay the same and then maybe let’s come back and shuffle numbers in between seasons next time.

Brayden Richmond: Wade, just to, if you leave it the same, you’re still gonna have the same amount of
Brian Johnson: This is the concern I have is, we’ve gone through three RACs right now. This is number four right? This is three, the other two don’t even care about the Pinevalley and the Zion, so they just passed it. The next two aren’t gonna care about the Pinevalley and the Zion. If we, I’m looking at this saying okay, tell the board, “Hey we’re open to increases but let’s put them here versus here.” I think we might get a little more traction than just saying, “No increases,” and then have them just shove it down our throat. Cause I really think that’s what’s gonna happen, cause they’re gonna go four out of five. I can, I mean, it doesn’t take the smartest guy in the room to figure that out. I’m the dumbest guy up here and I can figure it out. So, there’s a crowding issue, so maybe let’s take is a step further and take five or ten percent of the existing tags and shuffle them around too. If crowding is that big of an issue on these units, let’s maybe explore that before we jump in and maybe make another amendment. We can make a motion to change whatever allocation we want to change on these units.

Dave Black: Gene, go ahead.

Gene Boardman: Brayden, is your, what you want to do there, to cut down on the crowding for the rifle hunt or to hold it in check a little bit?

Brayden Richmond: Yes, so, like others have said I tried to respond to many of the emails. And the e-mails I got into I felt were really valid and had conversation, were majority dealing with crowding issues on Pinevalley and Zion, so that’s exactly what it is, try to get, and primarily crowding on the rifle hunt. So that would be the reason I’m proposing the way I am is I feel like I’m following the plan, we are honoring the increase, but yet, we’re getting people, we aren’t adding anybody to the rifle hunt where the crowding issue is.

Gene: Thank you. All the comments that I saw talked either of Zion or Pinevalley was that they didn’t want to increase tags there and most of them the crowding or the limited area and chances was what was driving their thoughts. I think they were pretty valid comments. I could go with what you’re proposing there with them if that’s the reason, to limit those problems on that rifle hunt.

Dave Black: K. Wade.

Wade Heaton: I just wanted to address some of that. I know I only mentioned crowding and I apologize, that was only half of my motivation for sharing that idea. The other half was significant number of these people were fairly serious about wanting to maintain the quality of bucks they were seeing, to the point where, I think there’s a movement that’s probably gonna gain some traction that we’ll see this November, that will come in and say, let’s change the objective for Zion. Zion’s a weird unit, I think it’s kind of unique, and I like this concept because it’s why we have 29 units. They’re individuals. Even though we all categorize them as general season, I think we should get serious about the idea of individualizing a package for each one, even though that’s extremely cumbersome up here. I think we should get serious about it. And so, if a group of people come to us in November and say, “Seriously, let’s change the objective on Zion from 18 to 20 to 20 to 25,” whatever it is, I think we need to listen to them. I think Zion is a unique unit that can support something like that. It naturally has a higher buck to doe ratio, always have, because of several issues, but this private land issue is one of them. And to me, I wonder if maybe we do an experiment with Zion and maybe try to do something just to see where it goes
for a few years, with raising that objective. And so I guess the other half of my motivation is, if there’s a
decent chance we’re gonna raise that objective and hope for a higher buck to doe ratio, I’d kind of hate
to go down the increased permit idea. I would rather leave permits the same and shuffle them, because, I
mean, I like your idea, Brian, sure, let’s go into that existing rifle pool and shuffle some of those back
into archery and muzzleloader. If we can do that tonight, sure.

Bryan Johnson: Does he have a comment card?

Bill Bates: He needs one. Just a comment on Wade’s proposal. Changing an age objective would be
something we’d have to take through the mule deer plan. And the mule deer plan has been passed for
five years, I do not anticipate we’re gonna be reopening that this next year. And so we’re probably not
gonna be considering that for another five years.

Sean Kelly: You know, I represent the Forest Service, I try not to get too involved with the bucks, bulls
and once in a lifetime permit recommendation numbers. Just from the outside looking in, we’ve already
gone through the process of writing these plans. We had committees that were involved in it, we were
involved in it, the board’s been involved in it, we all approved those, at each different step. It just seems
sometimes we get to this meeting and we start to deviate enough, it’s almost like we’re trying to rewrite
the plan. I think, it seems like we’re within our lane if we change permit numbers a little bit and we start
talking about changing percentage of tags, dividing them up. You start getting outside my comfort zone
when we start getting too far away from what the plan says. Just my comment.

Mack Morrell: Mr. Chairman, I call for question.

Dave Black: Do you have a question? Oh, he wants a vote? There you go. Okay, we’re ready. Alright,
we’ve had a motion and a second. We’ve had discussion on the motion. Let’s re-read the motion. That’s
that we accept the DWR deer plan as presented with the following exceptions: the Beaver unit reduce the
suggested increase by 50%; Pinevalley and Zion, increases of the proposed would be split between
archery and muzzleloader and no increases on the rifle. And the Southwest Desert, decrease the tags by
50 tags. All those in favor.

Wade Heaton: Mr. Chairman, I’m sorry, can I have an actual question about this vote? So, as much as a
like Mack trying to hurry our process, cause we do need to hurry, I do think there’s some more
discussion that needs to happen. If we voted this motion down, we could continue discussion, could we
not?

Dave Black: Yes. Then we’ll have to, then that motion would be off the table and we’d have to entertain
a new motion.

Brian Johnson: Or we can have amendments to the motion.

Wade Heaton: But, once question’s been called for, can we still amend this motion on the table now?

Dave Black: No, we’re gonna vote on it now, once we vote…

Wade Heaton: So once it’s voted on, then we can’t come back…
Brian Johnson: Back up, what he asked is once question’s been called, can we still amend the motion and yes we can amend the motion.

Dave Black: Before we vote.

Brian Johnson: We have to amend it before we vote. Cause once we vote, then we’re done.

Dave Black: So if you want to make an amendment, we need to make it now.

Brian Johnson: Ya. So if you guys want to make an amendment, you need to make it now.

Wade Heaton: So that’s the question, I think Mack’s bringing up, is once question’s been called for, do we have to vote or can some of us still come back and amend.

Mack Morrell: You’ve got to vote. The amendment should have been made long before.

Brian Johnson: You can make an amendment to that before we vote.

Mack Morrell: Show it to me.


Giani Julander: Do you need the Robert’s Rules? Do you need the book?

Dave Black: Well, I’m the chairman and I make the rules tonight. So we’re gonna vote, if you don’t like the motion the way it’s presented, vote against it and we’ll start over. So we’re gonna vote on the motion that we have, if you’re not in favor of this motion, vote no, and we’ll start with a new motion if it doesn’t pass. If you’re in favor of this motion then vote yes. All those in favor, by the show of hands. Keep your hands up. All those, did you get a number? Those opposed. Motion carries.

Brayden Richmond made the motion to accept the Division’s recommendations on the deer as presented with four exceptions. On the Beaver unit: increase permits by 75 instead of 150. On the Pinevalley and Zion units: accept the increase but split additional tags in half between archery and muzzleloader with no increase to rifle permits. On the Southwest Desert reduce tags by 50. Dale Bagley seconded. Motion carried, 9 in favor, 2 (Wade Heaton & Sean Kelly) opposed.

Dave Black: K. Now, we need to address the other items of the plan. What’s next? The elk.

Gene Boardman: I’d like to make the motion that we accept the elk recommendations as planned except that we increase the Division’s recommendation on the Mt Dutton unit to 90 tags instead of 75 and on the Panguitch Lake to 70 tags instead of 55. That’s giving the division some of what they want and keeping the hunters with an opportunity to hunt.

Dave Black: Okay, do we have a second?

Mack Morrell: Second.
Dave Black: So we have a motion and a second, do we have any discussion?

Brayden Richmond: I want to do an amendment before we have discussion. I’d also like to add the 300 additional youth any bull tags.

Brian Johnson: Second that.

Dave Black: Okay, so we have an amendment and a second. Let’s have any discussion that we have on the amendment.

Wade Heaton: Mr. Chairman, I support the idea of this 300 additional youth tags. Let’s throw it out there, it seems like that’s what some of the public wants. And, it’s probably the route we oughtta go, give youth some more opportunity. On a point of order, I’m no parliamentarian, I kind of think Brian’s right, otherwise whoever calls for question has, it puts everyone else at a significant disadvantage. You’re the boss and we’ll do whatever you want to do. But I do think if question has been called for there’s got to be a way in there where somebody could make an amendment or change to something but I can’t find my book.

Dave Black: Do you have your book?


Dave Black: Let’s take a break and we’ll come back.

(Ten minute recess.)

Dave Black: Okay, Let’s just recap for a minute. As far as the first motion, the second and the vote, that’s gonna stand as is. We’re gonna move on on the deer. We’re moving on to the elk portion of that. We have a motion on the table to approve the recommendations as presented with the following exceptions: the Dutton unit, we’d increase the tags to 90, Panguitch Lake unit we’d increase to 70, and then we had an amendment and that is to increase the youth elk tags by 300. And we need to deal with the amendment first. Did we get a second on the amendment? Okay, so we have an amendment and a second. Is there any discussion on the youth increases? Let’s vote on the amendment. All those in favor. Keep your hands up. All those opposed. Did we have some ..?

Giani Julander: Sean and Nick abstained.

Dave Black: K. and that is um, the Forest Service.

Giani Julander: Forest Service and non-consumptive.

Dave Black: Non-consumptive. Okay, great. Is there any further discussion on the motion? All those in favor of the motion. Keep them up so we get them. Any opposed. Okay, motion carries.

Gene Boardman made the motion to accept the elk recommendations as planned with the exception of increasing permits on the Mt Dutton from the recommended 75 tag to 90 and on the Panguitch Lake from the recommended 55 tags to 70 tags. Mack Morrell seconded. Brayden
Richmond made the amendment to the motion to add 300 additional youth any bull elk permits.
Brian Johnson seconded. Amendment carried, 9 in favor, 2 (Sean Kelly & Nick Jorensen)
abstained. Amended motion carried 9 in favor, 1 (Dale Bagley) opposed, 1 (Sean Kelly) abstained.

Dave Black: So now we need to deal, do you want to just deal with the rest of it? We had antelope and
what else did we have? Once in a lifetime. Any discussion before we entertain a motion?

Brian Johnson: I make a motion that we pass the antelope and once in a lifetime as presented.

Dave Black: Okay, do we have a second?

(Harry Barber seconded.)

Dave Black: Okay, we have a motion and a second. And we’ll entertain any discussion on the motion.
Mack.

Mack Morrell: I’d like to amend the motion to take the San Rafael where Robber’s Roost is and to
increase tags from nine to twelve on bucks.

Dave Black: From nine to twelve. Okay do we have a second on the amendment?

Wade Heaton: I’ll second it.

Dave Black: Okay, so we have a second. Let’s, any discussion on the amendment?

Brayden Richmond: I guess on that, I’d just maybe like to hear from the biologist and hear his input on
that. That’s kind of a new one, we were already increasing by 50%. I don’t know that I’m opposed, I’d
just like to hear his input.

Justin Shannon: We don’t have a biologist here for the San Rafael, South San Rafael unit. But I know, as
they flew those units on the north and the Cisco and some of that, populations were doing really well.
I’m probably ill-prepared to talk about the specifics from, why nine, nine to twelve. But certainly, their
intent was to increase it from six to three. I wish I had a better answer for you. I guess the estimate right
now is 240 total if that helps you make your decisions.

Brian Johnson: Hey Mack, is this because you hate antelope or you want to see more opportunity?

Mack Morrell: More opportunity.

Brian: That is the correct answer.

Dave Black: Okay, let’s vote. All those in favor of the amendment. Is that unanimous? Okay, that passes.
Now, let’s vote on the main motion. All those in favor of the main motion. Motion carries unanimous.

Brian Johnson made the motion to accept the pronghorn and once in a lifetime permit
recommendations as presented. Harry Barber seconded. Mack Morrell made the amendment to
the motion to increase pronghorn permits on the San Rafael from 9 to 12. Wade Heaton seconded.
Amendment carried unanimously. Amended motion carried unanimously.

Mack Morrell: Mr. Chairman, I’d like to make another motion that was discussed earlier about the elk on the Henry Mountains. I’d like to make the motion, Bill came up here and said that they’d work on it. I’d like to make a motion that the DWR come and report on what they’ve done regarding elk on Henry Mountains. They’ve had this objective on the Henry Mountains of zero for a long long time and nothing’s happened. There’s still elk there. They don’t want them there. So why don’t we have a report to do something with them. If they’ve done anything instead of just try to hunt them. Cause it’s pretty hard to hunt.

Dave Black: Do we have a second?

Wade Heaton: I'll second it.

Dave Black: Okay, so we have a motion and a second. Do we have any discussion on the motion?

Craig Laub: I’d just like to ask, isn’t the Pinevalley supposed to be the same way? I’d like to add it to that, to the list. If that’s all right with the seconder and the motion maker.

(Discussion off microphone.)

Brian Johnson: I think we probably ought to leave that off. If it’s different.

Dave Black: All those in favor. Okay. Those opposed.

Giani Julander: Two abstained.

Dave Black: And they were? Forest Service and non-consumptive.

Mack Morrell made the motion to have the DWR report on what they’re done regarding elk on the Henry Mountains. Wade Heaton seconded. Motion carried 8 in favor, 1 (Gene Boardman) opposed, 2 (Nick Jorgensen & Sean Kelly) abstained.

Dave Black: Okay, let’s move on to item number six. Antlerless. And this will be Justin Shannon.

Wade Heaton: Mr. Chairman?

Dave Black: Yes.

Wade Heaton: Would you like a quick, 30 second, parliamentary education? I found it.

Dave Black: Let’s save it for after.

Wade Heaton: Okay.

Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016 (action)
Questions from the RAC:

Dave Black: We’ll open it up to questions from the RAC. Gene.

Gene Boardman: I’d like to have the biologist for the Mt Dutton unit let us know what the results of the control hunt was, the controlled antlerless. And why we’re going to have such a swing in permits on Dutton.

Josh Pollock: We had about 250 of the antlerless control hunters that hunted the Dutton, that reported hunting it. Harvest of those 250 were 60 on that. It didn’t impact enough, that we felt, so I decided that I would just get rid of that and have just a draw of that. And your other question was the dramatic swing?

Gene Boardman: Ya, you had, last year it was open for any spike hunters to get a control permit and I saw a lot more people there during the spike season and, which also has an antlerless draw hunt going on at that time. What did you, how many draw permits did you have last year? 800?

Josh Pollock: Total?

Gene Boardman: Ya.

Josh Pollock: It was about 9 off the top of my head, we had 900, that encompassed the multi-unit as well in that. We do, this year, we have a cow hunt, a draw cow hunt that is going on during that spike hunt that is going on this year. We just did away with the control permit last year.

Gene Boardman: But there was access for anybody that wanted to hunt a cow, if they bought a spike permit, they could go there and hunt a spike and a cow. And there was 800 or 900 draw permits and now you’re cutting it down to 475.

Josh Pollock: From our flight as well, we’ve seen a decrease in the elk numbers on the Dutton that we’ve found. So that substitutes the decrease in the permits overall for the unit. So in, just adjusting that, I didn’t feel the need to have the control permit there anyway. And as well, anyone that draws a cow permit for any of those, currently the 400 that are there, they can hunt during the spike hunt if they have a cow tag and a spike tag as well. So that opportunity is still there to do that.

Gene Boardman: So if they draw a tag for November and they buy a spike tag they can hunt during the spike season for their tag that they drew for November.

Josh Pollock: Yes sir. That’s statewide, that’s on any unit.

Gene Boardman: Thanks.

Dave Black: Mack
Mack Morrell: What’s the success rate on this antlerless elk permits?

Justin Shannon: Generally. On the antlerless elk control permits or antlerless permits in general?

Mack Morrell: Antlerless in general.

Justin Shannon: 45.

Mack Morrell: I thought it was 35?

Justin Shannon: This last year it was 45. It may be up from last year, but this year. That’s one of the points I was trying to make earlier. Even though we’re cutting permits on public draw, we’re trying to get a lot more surgical on where those hunts are at. That’s why you’re seeing so many new ones as well, trying to target where the elk are at, to be smarter about these hunts.

Dave Black: Any other questions?

Brian Johnson: On the Southwest Desert, 600 permits, and there’s 2 units now? I must have blinked when we went over that. Did we split that up?

Justin Shannon: Yes, on the Southwest Desert, there was an additional hunt added on the Southwest Desert itself and then an additional hunt added on the Southwest Desert Northwest part and in total it’s 600 total permits.

Dave Black: Go ahead, Craig.

Craig Laub: On the Boulder, how come that wide swing in numbers there. It don’t make sense. It seems like I’ve watched that, over the years it swings up and down. How come?

Jim Lamb: The Boulder is a unit where elk like to go and live in the winter. If we have too many elk on the Dutton we kill them on the Boulder, if we have too many on the Monroe we kill them on the Boulder, if we have too many on the Fishlake we kill them on the Boulder. So we’ve been killing elk off of all four units on the Boulder and that’s why the tag numbers are so high. We have an objective of 1500 and we’re issuing 950 cow tags. That doesn’t make any sense, unless you put it in the perspective of, I’m wintering four units of elk out there where the Boulder and the Dutton kind of mix all together. When we flew this year and we were under objective on all those units then we busted those tags back. Cause I have the ability on the Boulder in the winter to kill elk from all the units that were under objective.

Dave Black: Mack.

Mack Morrell: One other question on the antelope on the Parker. We’re down 300 permits and I’ve talked to Jim, he says that we’re gonna trap 300. Last year he said he didn’t get to trap 300. Is the trap gonna be on this year?

Justin Shannon: Yes, we’re planning on trapping this year.
Dave Black: Go ahead, Gene.

Gene Boardman: I’ve got another question for the biologist for the Dutton. With what you did on the cow tags last year, the control permits and everything, were you satisfied with the results? Did you get the results that you wanted on that?

Josh Pollock: No, not necessarily, the result, statewide the success of those control permits is around the 20% range and that’s what we saw on the Dutton as well. We actually have some hunts on the Dutton anywhere from 18 to 47% depending on the season, you know, weather conditions, that kind of thing. So it was actually lower than most of the other success rates on the Dutton for our, just draw hunts that we have. Across the board, we’re sitting about 37% success on the Dutton for those hunts. So it was actually lower percent success than the draw hunts so that’s why I felt like it wasn’t a need there.

Gene Boardman: What my question is, is the results of all your antlerless efforts on the Dutton, did you get what you were trying to achieve?

Josh Pollock: We’re getting closer to objective, that’s for sure. But, like Jim was saying, it takes us killing a lot of elk on the Monroe, the Boulder, the Fishlake, the Dutton as well, and we’ve had those permits increased a lot over the years and we’ve killed a significant amount of elk, cows and spikes and bulls and we’ve seen that from our flights this last winter.

Gene Boardman: Do you also have Panguitch Lake?

Josh Pollock: I do not.

Gene Boardman: I have a question on Panguitch Lake, it looks like we’re increasing tags there significantly. Are we going to have a big swing on that, on the Panguitch Lake unit like we’ve had on the Dutton?

Dustin Schaible: Our objective on the Panguitch Lake’s 1100 and we just flew it this year and we estimated 1700 so we’re 600 over. So we definitely had to ramp up our permits and try to get back to objective.

Dave Black: Craig.

Craig Laub: My question is with the, overall we’re dropping the elk draw public draw tags and we’re still over objective. I don’t understand, I guess, those numbers on the private and how they fit in. Overall are we still killing more elk than we have done because we’re still over objective. Where are we at on that?

Justin Shannon: I think with these recommendations that we proposed tonight, the goal with all these units was to make progress towards that population objective. If we’re under and there’s cuts, probably need to raise some, if we’re over in some of these areas the goal is to impact that population and have it decline. I’d say statewide, the intent of everything combined is to make progress towards the population objective.

Craig Laub: So, the public, the private lands numbers, what are they? How many are they?
Justin Shannon: There’s 12,000 total permits between the 15 units and subunits. Some of these areas it’s really gonna be to solve some localized problems. If you’re a private landowner and you have elk on you, we want a lot more tools. As we met with the elk committee last year and passed that plan, there were two big things that we talked about. One was getting to objective and two was helping private landowners and those in the agriculture communities. And so, if you have a bunch of elk on you, more-so than you’re willing to tolerate, we wanted to streamline the ability for those individuals to get permits. Or if you are an everyday hunter and you know a private landowner that would allow access, you could get that permit and get some increased harvest in areas where we need it. We’ve said time and time again we don’t want to grow our elk on the backs of private landowners. This helps alleviate some of those pressures.

Dave Black: Justin, I was just gonna add a comment with that. It appeared, when you look at the presentation, that we have units that are over objective but we’re cutting tags, but in reality you’re throwing more tools at it. And the goal is to bring those elk down. Is that correct?

Justin Shannon: Ya.

Dave Black: I just wanted to make sure everybody understood that, the ultimate goal is when we’re over objective is to be more effective on bringing those numbers down.

Justin Shannon: Ya, if you combine our public draw permits and our over the counter permits, we are increasing permits from last year. Correct. But Craig’s right, there is a decrease in public draw, but overall, our efforts are to harvest more elk.

Dave Black: Okay, any other questions before we turn it over to the public? Mack.

Mack Morrell: I’ve got a question on your objectives. This seems to be the benchmark, whether we’re going up or down or whatever. Tell me how we arrive at the objectives on these different units.

Justin Shannon: You mean on individual unit management plans?

Mack Morrell. Ya.

Justin Shannon: So generally how it works, we pass a statewide plan, the statewide plan that was just passed in November, it doesn’t put a population objective on elk. Like the last plan said, “Get to 80,000 elk.” And this plan, we did away with it and we said, “The sum of all the unit plans will be the summation of the statewide elk population. That will be the statewide population objective.” So really that’s done through the unit planning processes which is gonna occur this summer throughout the state. So these objectives that you have here are part of the, are essentially the population objective that was approved from the last unit management plan. Does that help?

Mack Morrell: But how do we arrive at these objectives? Is that science based or what is it, or pulled out of the air?

Justin Shannon: No, I think its weighing what the ranges can hold with the social pressures that are available on the landscape. And it’s really working through that.
Mack Morrell: So it’s done on social pressure, not on habitat?

Justin Shannon: I think it’s a combination of both. And when I say social pressures I mean, there’s probably units in the state where we can have more elk but because of social constraints, the population objective is set lower than what it can hold.

Mack Morrell: Have you done any resource habitat for summer versus winter range?

Justin Shannon: We do a lot of range trend data and look at these things on a five-year rotation throughout the state. Ya, we collect a lot of information on that.

Mack Morrell: Are these objectives based on summer range or winter range?

Justin Shannon: Probably depends on the individual unit, I would imagine. I mean, we have some units…

Mack Morrell: For instance, Fishlake, Thousand Lake.

Justin Shannon: Jim, do you want to speak to how that objective came about?

Jim Lamb: So, Fishlake and Thousand Lake have, I was trying to remember as I walked up here, it’s roughly 30 range trend sites. A handful of those are read by me every single spring. And then every five years the range trend comes from GBRC [Great Basin Research Center] and reads them all. And they’re all winter range sites, they’re all kinda browse sites. And that’s where we track pressure on the winter range. So, a normal typical winter, we deal with that, we’re okay, we don’t have range problems as we monitor these sites. We have a winter like we had last year, and everything goes whack. The elk are in places we don’t want them, the elk are in places that we don’t expect them to be. And they do have some impacts in those places, probably. Now because they’re in places that they aren’t typically, we don’t have a range trend site where they were standing last winter. So the only measure is to go out where we saw them and walk around and look at what happened there. And we do that. So, Its science based and it is based on the winter range because we can’t raise an animal if we don’t feed them all winter and all summer. Does that answer your question?

Mack Morrell: I, up at the meeting we had in Richfield, a month ago, or six weeks ago, Dell Spencer was talking to Director Sheehan and I was involved in that a little bit. I asked him about objectives on winter range and he just drew a blank stare. So that’s what’s got me concerned, if we’re working on winter range or summer range or what. I think Jim’s a good biologist, Jim and I’s good friends and we work together. We had a lot of problems this winter in our area, you know that as well as anybody. But, I asked Jason Kling over the Fishlake from Richfield about the, what the Fishlake plan was on the elk objective. He wouldn’t give me an answer but what he did say is because of the habitat that work was done on that four or five years ago that they did get the increase of 800 elk. Now my next question is, that habitat work was done on summer range, not on winter range.

Jim Lamb: There’s quite a bit of it on winter range too.

Mack Morrell: Well not according to him. Cause some of that winter range was on BLM and Park. So,
that’s my question, is the winter range, because, some of this winter range can’t tolerate these objective numbers.

Jim Lamb: K, so, on the sites that we monitor, with the range trend data, our browse is still in good shape. And so I think, my opinion, as a biologist, is we’re still in line with objectives that we have. If I noticed that I had some range trend sites that had a continual downhill trend then I would address that in a hunt strategy to try and reduce numbers in that area.

Mack Morrell: Do you have any range trends sites out on the Slocomb allotment?

Jim Lamb: On the Parker?

Mack Morrell: Ya, on the Bicknell winter, Bicknell spring?

Jim Lamb: Yes.

Mack Morrell: Where are they at? Where do they stand?

Jim Lamb: One of them’s in Terza Flat.

Mack Morrell: I understand that.

Jim Lamb: Terza Flat is the worst range trend site in the state of Utah.

Mack Morrell: And guess who has suspended AUMs.

Jim Lamb: Mack Morrell.

Mack Morrell: Ya. Jim and I’s worked to try and fix that. It hasn’t done anything.

Jim Lamb: Well, we do have some seeds out there that you were kind enough to donate a tractor so I could plant. I do have 4 transects out there in Terza Flat of my own on seeds that we’ve planted that I monitor, we’ve actually had some success out there with great basin wild rye. That’s grown pretty good from the exclosure that we planted in 2007, I believe. And so I think it’s doing well. I planted some stuff out there one spring ago, it was a brush and forb mixture and I have two transects on that line that I’ll be reading probably around the first of June if you want to come wander out there with me we can look at them.

Mack Morrell: That would be good.

Jim Lamb: Okay.

Mack Morrell: My next question is: these range plans on the BLM and Forest Service are coming out next year, what they’re gonna be doing. And I did go to the BLM one in Richfield and they had the analysis on grasses and shrubs and browse and all. My question is: are we gonna monitor them every year? Cause, if that browse gets below stubble their height because of elk, there’re gonna be some major problems with permittees.
Jim Lamb: K, now, the BLM and the Forest have some additional range transects that they do on these different allotments. And generally when we have trouble in an allotment, then I get a phone call or Vance gets a call phone call cause we share country up on the Fishlake. And Vance has, I know Vance has a lot of conversations with the Forest about the Monroe and about browse on the Monroe.

Mack Morrell: Ya but I’m, where the sage grouse habitat is, that’s in the valleys and up through that Parker Plateau a lot. And the sage grouse depends on that for winter feed just like the elk does.

Jim Lamb: If we could make a lot of the world look like the upper part of the Parker we’d be in fat city. That’s in great shape. The lower part of the Parker has a lot of issues and we know that. And sometimes those elk go where we don’t want them to go. And three years ago when we counted on the Parker, I had a lot more elk on the Parker than I wanted. That’s one of the reasons that we’ve had 950 permits on the Boulder for the last three years.

Mack Morrell: When you counted this year, you didn’t count as much which is good.

Jim Lamb: By about 100.

Mack Morrell: Ya, that was great. Okay.

Dave Black: Any additional questions from the RAC? Okay, if there’s any public questions, you can come up and use this microphone. Just come up in order, that’s fine. State your name

Questions from the Public:

Paul Niemeyer: Paul Niemeyer. On that triangle hunt last year did we wind up with 350 tags? And then, I think in that Richfield meeting you said that 68% of the harvest, that was harvested came on that, off the Monroe itself. Is that what you said?

Vance Mumford: Yes, so on that hunt that included all the four different units, ya 68% of that antlerless harvest came off the Monroe unit.

Paul Niemeyer: And then you killed 80 on landowner permits in the Sevier Valley?

Vance Mumford: Yes.

Paul Niemeyer: Okay.

Dave Black: Okay, do we have any additional questions?

Sean Limb: Sean Limb, I just have a question with our Beaver elk. I mean, they’re requesting, I agree with the Fish and Game. I mean I know the elk plan, you get a lot of elk, you gotta kill elk. But we’re going from 100 tags to 900 this year. We sit right in the middle of five different limited entry units. I’m thinking you’re getting two or three hundred head of elk, coming on the Beaver when they’re counting. They counted 1500 elk, our objectives a thousand fifty. Beaver’s not in bad shape, they’ve done a lot of these burns and they’ve done a lot of rehab. SFWs cooperated with the Fish and Game and BLM and
everything we’ve put a lot of seed on there. There’s a lot of reseeds, there’s a lot of habitat out there now. I think that’s a big jump, 900.

Dave Black: Is there a question in there? Is that a comment?

Sean Limb: That’s just a comment, sorry, not a question. I would rather see them, I mean, 400, you know cut it in half. I just don’t want to see a Fishlake happen again on the Beaver. Cause this is a three year plan to kill 900 elk, you get 45%, that’s 500 elk a year. You know I understand that’s part of Fish and Game but I just think it’s a little bit too many.

Dave Black: Okay, thank you. There any questions?

David Brinkerhoff: David Brinkerhoff, Bicknell. Question on the elk, we’re having trouble around Lyman and Bicknell with elk numbers ended up in private property and even in feed yards. And I see here we’re cutting back on that problem. We need to keep going on that problem and killing the elk before they get in there. I don’t know why, I guess my question is why are you cutting back on that area? Jim, maybe you can help me understand that a little better.

Jim Lamb: I have no intention to slow down what we’re killing around Lyman and Fremont. We had about 60 depredation permits there this winter and I’ll just keep doing that to try and keep those elk away from town the best I can. The reason we’re cutting elk permits in total is because on the objectives, we’re not at objective, we’re not close to objective. So we’re just reducing tags, let the recruitment come and we’ll work our way back up to our objective. But I’m not gonna slow down on killing elk in the valley, that’s not where I want them.

David Brinkerhoff: I agree with that, we need to kill them. I had an elk herd go through my corals, killed one calf, tromped it to death and that’s right downtown Bicknell. So we need to continue to work on that problem and keep those elk back in the hills. If they’re coming to town, there’s too many elk.

Jim Lamb: I agree.

David Brinkerhoff: My next question is, if we’re trapping 300 head of antelope where are they going? I hope they’re not going to the Henry Mountains.

Justin Shannon: We still haven’t worked through all the exact details. I think the Central Region has some interest, most likely in the West Desert and some of those areas. That’s really about what we’ve decided thus far. So, not the Henries.

(Discussion off microphone.)

Dave Black: Any other questions?

Verland King: Verland King. Every night I go to either check a mare that’s gonna foal or heifer that’s calving, and I can shine a light in my field and there’s at least 100 head of deer, I can count them. I’ve heard through the grapevine that there’s a program that for every 100 acres you can get a buck tag. Is that right?
Justin Shannon: There is, this is about a two year old program now. On agricultural fields, if you have 100 acres of cultivate crop, you could receive a general season buck deer permit.

Verland King: Okay, and that’s cultivated crop? Cause I’ve got that much at least on some reseeding, plus some ranch in Piute county.

Justin Shannon: Oh, okay, I’m sorry, if you have a hundred acres, you get a permit. Not, for every hundred acres. The other thing is, there’s another program where is you have 640 acres then you’re eligible for a general season buck tag as well. I don’t know if that fits your needs or not but that’s another option.

Verland King: So, how do you find out about these programs? Do we need to talk to our biologist or?

Justin Shannon: Verland, we can get in touch with you on that and give you more detail. There’s a rule that was passed, I think two years ago, but we can simplify that and let you know the details. And get you in touch with the biologist on that unit and work through those details.

Verland King: Alright, thanks.

Justin Shannon: Yep.

Mack Morrell: Justin, I’ve got another question concerning those private lands. Where you have pushed it to January 31st, do you have one in, per se, Koosharem Valley down to Johns Valley?

Justin Shannon: Um, let me check. I’ve got the 15 units here. No, it doesn’t look like it.

Mack Morrell: Why not? They have a lot of problems there in the summer time.

Justin Shannon: That’s a great question. Jim.

Jim Lamb: Let me explain to you why I haven’t ever gone this direction Mack. If I have private lands permits in the valley, when the elk jump the fence, you stop shooting. If I issue you a depredation permit, you have a two-mile buffer. That’s why I haven’t gone this direction. Because I want some of those elk dead, I want them to know that’s a dangerous place to be and I don’t want you to have to stop when they jump your fence. Does that answer your question?

Mack Morrell: You know, we appreciate Jim’s effort in issuing those mitigation tags. He does a good job in that. But they seem to run all over in feed lots and everywhere else. I have a picture here I wanted to show to the RAC members. It’s in Fremont, on the cemetery, this is a feedlot, just near the cemetery. You can see the hired hand petting an elk. Rusty I’d like to have that back.

Jim Lamb: I thought that was the boss, isn’t that Shannon?

Mack Morrell: I’d like, Rusty, keep that and let me get it after this meeting.

Jim Lamb: Let me address something that kinda goes along with this right now. We have some issues, David’s coral, those elk went through your coral going about 60 miles an hour cause there were 12
hunters behind them gunning them along highway 24. And so, there’s a proposed boundary change, so that public hunters won’t be able to hunt that section along highway 24 around the Lyman area. We had a, I believe, the guys house was shot by a hunter this winter. We haven’t found the bullet hole in his house but I’m sure it was his house, it wasn’t his fence. Anyway, Mack, you’ll understand this boundary. We come down the Highline Canal starting there where Jordan Crane and Vance Taylor live, we come down the Highline Canal to Bicknell and then we come on 24 back to Big Rocks, we come around Big Rocks into Loa, then we go back up 72 to the Highline Canal. So public hunters won’t be able to run those elk in that area but we’re gonna let depredation hunters still hunt in that area. We ran this by the county commissioners, was it last Monday Dennis? I think you liked it, the idea anyway. So people who have property in there, I can still issue depredation permits to and they can still kill elk in all those fields and it doesn’t apply to them and it doesn’t apply to their buffer. It just eliminates that gauntlet there south of Lyman. So that’s something that we have, the boundary change is proposed on the Fishlake Thousand Lake East and the Boulder West. But we failed to include it on that big unit, the Monroe/Dutton/Plateau unit. That’s something that we need to add in. And I’ve got a map right here and I’ve got a short description on the back. Would you like to look at it or did that explanation do okay? Okay.

Dave Black: Okay, we’re gonna open it up to public comments now. So if you want to comment please bring your cards. Again, if you’re representing an organized group, one person from that group can have five minutes. Just a general individual has three minutes. If you’re part of an organized group and your spokesman has already spoken then you have two minutes. And we’re gonna start with Gib Yardley first and then we’re gonna go to Verland King.

Comments from the Public:

Gib Yardley: I’m Gib Yardley from Beaver. We run, we have winter range on the Southwest Desert and summer range on the Dixie Forest east of Cedar City. These winter ranges are extremely fragile, and if they’re once killed out, you can’t get them reseeded and bring them back. Cause I’ve tried. I’m telling you, we’ve got the wild horses that’s driving a lot of people out of business out on those deserts. And then we’ve got an over population of elk out there on that Southwest Desert. And they’re getting to be about as tough on those ranges as the horses. We just use the ranges in the winter time. The horses and elk are there year round. I’ve got some land that I reseeded up in the Shawnee Hills, west of Milford. We spent over 30,000 of our own money reseeding that. We’ve had horses and elk come in there so bad, some years they grub it off so much, we can’t even put our cattle up there to utilize the grass that we spent our own money planting and growing. We’ve, I appreciated you, we got 600 cow elk taken off that out there last year, but they only said they had a 63% success rate. I think it’d pay to increase it some more so that we’ll get some more of a success rate, because, there’s only supposed to be 975 elk as the objective, and there’s 1550. So when they only cut 400 head off, it don’t bring it down to that objective very fast. I’d recommend that we sell at least 700 tags so that we can get more hunters and get the success rate up just a little higher. I wanted to compliment the DWR on increasing the amount of elk on the Panguitch Lake unit because we have got an awful increase as you can see there. It’s about 700 over objective. I remember very well when they first started these objectives. They wanted to have an upper limit on the number of elk we had in each of these units. So they put an upper limit. Well, they just kept raising the upper limit and raising the upper limit until they’ve got them up to where they are now so that’s why we’ve got to have this objective no higher and get these elk numbers down to that. Because they increase so rapidly that you’ve got to get rid of the increase somehow. In the cattle business, if we don’t sell a bunch of heifer calves we’d be overrun with cattle. So, it’s the same with these elk. I wanted
to talk just a minute about these antelope. I hope that when they trap those antelope in these places, that you don’t bring them and turn them on our ranges, cause I think that’s happening some. What are you gonna do with those things. We don’t want them, we really don’t. I’ve got a field right there northwest of Beaver, I’ve never had antelope in it before. I went out there the other day, 40 head in there. They’re all over that Mineral Range out there. We need to have a hunt on some of them. We’re getting more all the time on the Panguitch Lake unit. So, we need to control them too. So, I want to thank you for your, all your help and hope that you’ll give us some very serious consideration on these things. Thank you.

Dave Black: Okay, Verland. Followed by Pete Yardley.

Verland King: Verland King, Wayne County Grazers Association. I’ve been coming to these RAC meetings for a lot of years now. I remember one time, several years ago, I asked how good they were at counting these elk. And they told me, basically, they can’t count them very good. That’s why I think your sightability’s up there a little higher. It’s pretty hard for us ranchers, farmers, when you tell us what your objective is and how many you counted, to believe in, we trust you but, we really don’t think you count them all. I don’t think your sightability numbers are doing justice to how many’s there. And then you’ll hear probably tonight about how much habitat work they’ve done, we’ve done, somebody’s done on these winter ranges. And there’s been a lot done. But these elk aren’t like a herd of cows or a herd of sheep where you can grab them and put them on that project that you’ve done. Number one, a lot of times there’s no water there to hold them. So if they’re not watering on the snow, they don’t utilize it. It’s just hard to get the animals there. So even though you’ve done a lot of habitat work, it’s not benefitting the wildlife. They end up going on the range like Mack was talking about, Parker Mountain, Bicknell winter, BLM down there, and they’re wintering there and they’re causing problems. They’re causing problems with the ranchers, we can’t go out there. We’ve got suspended AUMs. We can’t utilize that country. We get cut by Forest Service and BLM. We can, our on and off dates are changed. When we graze an allotment to a certain stubble height and I do allotment, in our allotment in Dog Valley, I do a lot of the range work, assessment of the utilization. We’re always under utilization so we’re not meeting what would be called overgrazing or too much grazing. But as soon as we move out of that area, we get a rain storm and that starts coming back and that’s where the elk and antelope are there. That’s where they are in the spring, they follow the snow right up the mountain. So they’re causing problems that way. You need to take it with a grain of salt, the numbers that they count and the numbers that they come up with, because, a lot of times they may not be right. I think we’ve seen it time and again, there’s damage to the habitat based on the elk and the antelope. I don’t see as much, the deer, although I’m getting some damage to my alfalfa habitat right now and that’s based on the greens coming good and those deer are coming down out of the mountains. Hopefully they’ll go back when they get full and when the mountain greens up some more. And part of, most of them will, but there’ll be a certain amount that will live right there in that field. And we appreciate Jim, he’s been able to help us with depredation tags and that. That’s my comment. Thank you for you guys serving on the RAC. I can’t imagine how hard it is. But we appreciate you taking our comments and thinking about it and seeing where we’re coming from. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thank you. Pete followed by Dennis Blackburn

Pete Yardley: My name’s Pete Yardley. I’m a rancher here. Sean, I was talking to him a little here, cause he was pretty alarmed at the 880 head of permits that were given out. But when you calculate that out, your best scenario, you’re gonna get 200 off your 1500. You’re still gonna be over-objective, it’s gonna take two or three years to do it. I think Randy’s done a good job at setting up the plan. Right now, our
problem, we need to get some winter habitat in our valley. Right now we have elk in the fields because it’s the only place that’s green. They’re in our summer pastures. From Beaver to Wildcat there is no winter habitat but private or in them pastures. We need to help disperse them, to get some winter habitat, we need to get some summer. We’ve tried to get some EAs done on the forest, to do some new water projects, cause what we’re getting hammered on our Forest, is our riparians. These cattle have to come to drink and that’s where the water is. We need some help to disperse them. I’d like to see you guys, I mean, think the objectives a good number, but we’d like to be back to objective. We took a ten percent voluntary cut over the last three years. And in that three years, you guys has went up in your objective and we’ve went down. I think it ought to be a win-win for both of us and I think we need to work it to where you guys help us to get some more habitat for your wildlife which means more feed for our cattle also. But we need to work as a team on this instead of working, getting up here and saying, well you were way over your objective. It can’t be you win, us lose. It needs to be everybody wins. I’ve appreciated what Riley has tried to do, he’s tried to get the elk that’s causing us a lot of trouble. He didn’t realize where you haven’t done your count for 3 years, the extent of how much you’ve growd. So I appreciate what he’s done. But it needs to be a three year plan. We need to get to objective. And then let’s get it fixed so we can raise your objective and our objective. And let’s have a working relationship instead of always battling that you’re eating my feed or I’m eating yours. It needs to be a working relationship. And since the 1970s, cattle on our allotment has dropped between 50 and 60 percent of what runs. That’s a lose, that’s about the time they introduced the elk into us. It can’t be a lose and you guys win. Let’s make it a win-win for both. I thank you guys, and I appreciate, appreciate Mack for all he’s done and the rest of you board members. Thank you.

Dave Black: Thank you. We’ll have Dennis followed by Bill Christensen.

Dennis Blackburn: I’m Dennis Blackburn, Wayne County. I have a question Jim, the antelope you went from 600 to 300 on the Parker. Do you plan on trapping 300? I like it when you hunt them. That brings revenue to Wayne County.

Jim Lamb: So is that a question for me?

Dennis Blackburn: That’s a question for you.

Jim Lamb: Okay, ya. We plan on trapping 300, we plan on having 300 permits on the Parker.

Dennis Blackburn: Okay, so these 300 you’re gonna trap, are you gonna coordinate where they’re going with the elected officials in them counties?

Jim Lamb: I, that’s a process that has to happen, yes.

Dennis Blackburn: Thank you.

Dave Black: Okay. Bill. He’ll be followed by John Keeler.

Bill Christensen: Again, thank you very much, gentlemen. I appreciate the chance to be here. I’ve been involved in wildlife stuff since the mid 80’s. To give you some perspective, in those days agriculture and sportsmen didn’t get along at all. They were bad old days, before SITLA, there was other state lands and we were butting heads with them. A lot of improvements have happened. I’ve been concerned lately
though, about some extreme elements that forget about the good hunter conservationists do in this state. I worry about that because, we stood strong in opposition to feral horses and continue to. We have about as much control over the BLM as you ranchers do. We have gotten on our soap box, we’ve gone to congress. These are not native wildlife, they’re pests and they need to be removed. Now, let’s talk about elk. We don’t just want elk, we pay for them. You heard at the beginning of this meeting that almost 700,000 dollars was approved a week ago today for the Southern Region Those monies get an average of a one to five or six match for every dollar. I know, cause I’ve been doing this for 25 years as a staff person, since 1991. And I know the Elk Foundation alone, since 1987, has generated 61 million dollars worth of wildlife and habitat improvement in Utah, impacting well over a million acres. And this is not just for deer or elk, pronghorns, whatever. It’s also for livestock. I’m a native Utahn, I come from ranching family, we still have our ranch in Chalk Creek, we lease it now, it’s summer range for sheep. We’ve had cattle operations in the past when I was young and small. But, I want you to know, folks, that we feel like we took it on the chin a little bit on a couple of these units last year. We didn’t squawk too much, a little bit. But, be aware that we’ll continue to raise money to improve habitat and range for both wildlife and livestock. We approved 11 or 12 water projects alone to get water on dry ranges. Now, folks, if you don’t want a fight on your hands, then let’s sit down and talk about it. Let’s start at local, let’s get these elk committees going. A lot of them have gone down the tubes. Let’s talk about it. But, don’t forget, we like we’re paying our own way and we’ll continue to do so. And we’re not gonna go away, and we want to work with ranchers. But if you choose not to work with us, then we will fight, just like you are. And I’m serious about that because last spring at the wildlife board meeting, I was taken by surprise by some of the things I heard and the physical threats that I’ve received. Well, I don’t think we want to go down that road. And I hope right now, in this Southern RAC meeting, that we can decide, just like folks have said earlier here, that we need to work together, cause we better, by golly. Because, you know, we’re not gonna go away, we care about elk, deer, pronghorn. If they’re on private lands, get rid of them. Issue more depredation tags, shoot them, get rid of them. We don’t want them in people’s fields and their private property. But on the public range, you’re gonna have elk, accept it. Work with us. If we need to reduce them, if there’s a drought, then go to the DWR and ask the director in August to get rid of them. And if you do, we’ll support you, if there’s a drought. But don’t come in the spring saying there may be a drought and tell us that you need to increase the number of antlerless tags and then we don’t end up having that bad of a drought. You know, that’s not fair. So, folks, let’s work together, but know that Utah sportsmen are not gonna go away. We want to work with you, but we’re not gonna back down either. I appreciate the chance and I open my door, my e-mail, my phone, and my office to work with anybody here. And we’ll continue to put our money where our mouth is. Thank you.

Dave Black: We have John Keeler followed by Randy Beckstrand

John Keeler: John Keeler with the Utah Farm Bureau. I too have been coming to these meetings since 1980, board of big game control then. And you can remember those, and true it was pretty bad head-butting. I remember a meeting in Salina that sportsmens tried to get as many people as they could, and landowners as many as they could and there was about 400 people that showed up to the meeting and it lasted until 3:00 in the morning. Thankfully, those days are gone and the system that we have now is much improved. But it’s been interesting, over those year, to watch the debate over, Brian, that you bring up with age class and buck to doe ratio and bull to cow ratio and the youth and all of that. This is nothing new, it’s happened for all these years. And I appreciate the fact that you’re willing to take the phone calls and call them back and do those things that you need to do, cause that’s your job. But, it’s also been interesting to watch the conflict between the sportsmen and the livestockmen, it goes back and forth. And it gets heated then it cools down then it heats back up then it cools down. We just recently
held some meetings with representatives from the state and the PLPCO office and permittees, allotment
owners. And we then had discussions with BLM and Forest Service to try to solve some of the problems
we’ve got. In every one of those meetings, as we had the discussions, elk came up. I’ve also served on
some working groups. I’m currently on one with the Monroe Mountain. This has been fueled by some
groups that are concerned about aspen regeneration. When we got started in that process, some
individuals went and took a look at deer and elk and livestock use, cattle and sheep. After world war two
there were so many AUMs for all of the species out there, cattle, sheep, deer and hardly any elk then.
Then elk were introduced, and since that time, the cattle and sheep numbers have gone like this [motions
downward slope] the deer and elk numbers have gone like this [motions upward slope] with the same
amount of AUMs that were to begin with. It is concerning to these ranchers that they’re able to stay on
the land and that’s why the plea is, from many, many people, that we have to work together. A lot of
money has been put on the ground. It was indicated in this meeting, that WRI money of 144 million
dollars, I think in ten years, was that what I remember? Other monies that have been placed on the
ground, along with the money that the sportsmen contribute, many of these ranchers, through their
grazing associations or through other groups, they’ve put tens of millions of dollars out on the ground as
well. The point is, there’s a bigger picture out there than the debates we have on things here with
management and the conflicts we have with each other on who’s eating what. The bigger picture is the
resource. And I appreciate the Forest Service standing up today and letting you know of one of the
concerns they have, because in the past they haven’t done that too much, nor the BLM. They have
representatives here but they don’t really get into the real picture. The big concern is the resource. There
are groups out there that are watching the resource like a hawk. And the minute it gets eaten,
somebody’s gonna be blamed for it. Unfortunately the cattle and sheep are the only thing that can be
controlled so they go after them first. And I think it’s fair to say that, if these groups are successful in
getting rid of the ranchers, the cattle and the sheep, they’re coming after the hunters next, cause they
don’t like them either. I’m just afraid that if we don’t work together, continue these projects, solve these
problems. that the wolf is gonna be the landowner and the landlord. Because they’ll be worshipped and
you can’t get rid of them just like the horse. So, we’re allies, we need to work together, we need to solve
these problems. It’s imperative. I personally believe, this is my personal opinion, over these years, I
believe we’re at a saturation point for the big game numbers. I really do believe that. But, that’s doesn’t
mean there isn’t room to maneuver here and there. There’s room for all of us out there, but it’s gonna
take much more money than what we’ve been used to putting in. But let’s work together, let’s not have
our differences because there’s a bigger picture out there.

Dave Black: Thank you. We have Randy Beckstrand followed by Nolan Gardner. Is Randy here? Okay,
we’ll go to Nolan and then Tim Tebbs.

Nolan Gardner: Thank you again. I appreciate all you guys do. I do, I appreciate the shape that the
ranchers are in out there and appreciate what the Division, I think the Division are doing a great thing
especially with the private land elk hunts, I think is a great idea. I’d like to address the Dutton herd. I
think the Dutton has been getting the short end of the stick for the last several years. I’ve watched that
herd go way down. And even though you’ve cut the tags, if any way possible, I’d like to see them cut
more on the cow tags. Cause, it’s hurting real bad. Anything you can do there would be appreciated.
Thank you.

Dave Black: Okay, Tim followed by Ben Lowder.

Tim Tebbs: I like what Mr. Keeler had to say, being involved here in the past few months with several
different meetings. I do want to say that the landowner, work close with your biologist, they are helping. Panguitch Lake has been quite aggressive for over 25 years. I am starting to see some agreeance and some togetherness between the biologists, or the DWR, the landowners and the sportsmen. We’re, maybe, kinda moving ground. But, on the same note, permits have been cut over 50% over the last 25, 30 years, I’m old enough to know that. And it is the permittees, which are most of the landowners in those areas, that are suffering. We need to continue to work aggressively with these numbers, I think. As far as the Panguitch Lake, I think the landowners working with the biologists were able to keep things in check. But it’s been over a long period of time that we’ve got that workability. I think, right now we’re starting to see a change where everybody is concerned and everybody is working together. Appreciate your help.

Dave Black: Thanks Tim. Ben Lowder followed by Redge Johnson.

Ben Lowder: Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ben Lowder representing the Utah Bowman’s Association. The Utah Bowman’s Association supports the Division’s recommendations as presented. I’d like to make two additional comments about the elk plan that was passed last year and a few other things. I sat on the statewide elk committee last year. Just this last winter, we passed the current plan. That plan has a lot of new tools in it that I would like to applaud both the elk committee and the DWR for, for thinking outside the box on some of these tools, especially, case in point, we see on the slide right there, the private lands only permits. A lot of new tools that are going to allow us to better manage private lands issues. Which will help some of the public issues as well. There’s been a few comments alluding to the habitat allocation meeting that was held last week. I was in attendance to that meeting. As has been mentioned multiple times, there was several hundred thousand dollars allocated just to the Southern Region. I’d like to point out one more number. We did set a record this year, between all the organizations, in allocating, if I remember correctly, about 2.4 million dollars toward habitat projects that will happen in the state of Utah this year. Those projects range from study projects to water to habitat projects that are going to benefit wildlife as well as livestock. And also as has been mentioned tonight, I think it’s real important that we all realize that livestock, ranchers, sportsmans, none of us are the enemy, we’re all on the same side of the battle here. Sportsmens, I feel for the ranchers and the AUMs that have been cut, but let me point out that sportsmens are not the one that are taking those from you, we are not asking for that, we are not lobbying for that. I believe that we should be working together, sportsmen and ranchers. It doesn’t benefit anybody for those to go away. And again, I’d just like to point out, all the habitat work that is going on and that is being paid for by sportsmens that benefit both wildlife and livestock. Thank you very much.

Dave: Okay. We have Redge followed by Jon Larson.

Redge Johnson: Thank you for your time. My name’s Redge Johnson, I’m representing the Governor’s office today. Just want to thank you for all the good work that you do. I’m not really here to speak to objectives. I know I look like a suit from the city and right now I am a suit from the city but, for those of you that know me, you know I grew up and spent a good portion of my childhood without running water electricity and phone. So I read sign before I read Dick and Jane books. I’ve been a hunter for a long time, I also grew up in a ranching family. I appreciate both sides of this issue. If there’s one thing I can say is I hope that we do continue to work together. I’m a student of Sun Tzu The Art of War, and, if you read that, one of the big things is “Know your adversary.” So I read a lot of Grand Canyon Trust, Natural Resource Defense Council, things like that that are going on. There’s an 800 pound gorilla in the room, folks, and that’s these groups that are looking to control our multiple use in the western state. And so I
hope we’ll continue to work together. We really need to turn the tide of how these federal lands are managed. And I think you’re both doing a great job as stewards of the land and I hope that we can all work together to create successful projects in the future. On that though, we could use the sportsmen’s assistance when it comes to reallocating some of those AUMs, happy to work with you on that. We’re not seeing a lot of those AUMs come back to the production side, most of them seem to be going to the wildlife side. There’s a lot of space out there to do projects, there’s a lot of opportunity to do projects. But we need to work together and make it successful for everybody. I hope I can step in and feel some of that forest. Thank you.

Dave Black: Okay, Jon will be followed by Jesse Hatch and then Riley Roberts and then that’s the last of my cards.

Jon Larson: John Larson with Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife. It’s good to be here with you tonight. Once again, I’d like to thank the Division for their presentation, they did an outstanding job. You can tell they know their business when they stand and they answer these questions. Some of those are hard questions and you can answer them on the spot. I appreciate the due diligence that you do with your work. I’m trying to think what else I can say, to be honest with you. It’s been said tonight. Obviously there’s a strong sportsmen’s voice in the room and a strong cattlemen’s voice in the room. We have to figure out how to meet in the middle. There’s nothing that I can say that’s gonna change what’s been said or even add to it. So I’ll just leave it at that. I will say, we certainly support the Division’s recommendations as they presented them and, again we appreciate the effort there. Thank you.

Jesse Hatch: My name’s Jesse Hatch. I’ve just got to say, I’m pretty impressed with what’s happened tonight. I think it’s been a pretty mellow meeting compared to normal when it comes to this topic. I’m glad that we are looking at working together more. I’d like to see that. I’d just like to add that I approve the recommendations. I do kinda wish that we would look at the Dutton a little more. Them numbers are very low on the Dutton, I believe, from watching them units, the Boulder and the Dutton crossover. For over 15 years, them elk are very low over there. I’d like to see that changed. Other than that, thank you.

Dave Black: Thanks Jesse. Okay we have Riley Roberts next, followed by Will Talbot.

Riley Roberts: I’m Riley Roberts. I’ve been taking notes all night, made a few notes as well. Appreciate you guys being here I know it’s been a long night. I really appreciate Justin. I talk with him quite regularly, as often as we can. I know there was a lot of work that went into the recommendations. Also, really appreciate Bill’s words tonight. I think that there is definitely a breaking point that has been seen on both sides, from those of the permittees as well as those of the sportsmen. I can appreciate that. I think the private land option that’s on there, I think that’s an excellent option. As an avid outdoorsman, if it’s depredation issue, let’s fix it. Let’s fix the problem, if we need to get creative. I know it was stated earlier that there’s some things that maybe we can’t do because it’s a five year plan. In my opinion, which usually gets me in trouble, I think that’s horse crap. I think if we need to change it and fix something, we need to change it and fix something. We can’t wait, we can’t pussyfoot around and wait for it, be reactive. We need to be a little bit more proactive. If that means helping these individuals out, these gentlemen that are having issues on their private lands then, let’s do that, let’s do what we need to do to make that happen. I wanted to address Mack’s question earlier about how those objectives are there. And, again, I’m pretty straightforward and it usually gets me in trouble. Mack, it’s political, it’s all political, that’s how objectives are set. It should be science-based, but it’s political, it’s whoever yells the loudest, it’s whoever causes the biggest grief. That’s how objectives are set on each individual unit.
You’ve got opinions that vary from both sides. You’ve got sportmen that say, “More elk, that’s better for us.” You’ve got the livestock guys that say “More elk, that’s bad for us.” I just want everybody to remember that just because it’s your opinion, that doesn’t make it right. Okay? As has been stated, we’ve got to work together on that. But the truth is that it’s political, and we all know that. I appreciate the Division and trying to answer that earlier, but, I think we all know the real answer to that. The last thing that I wanted to end on was to say, I really appreciate you guys. I appreciate the time that you put in, each of you, and I don’t have to remind you of this, each of you represent a specific sector or group of individuals with the seat that you hold at this time. Each of you have your own personal opinions on the way things should be done. I would urge you to remember that even though you have those personal opinions, don’t push your personal agendas. You’ve got a whole public out here who is giving you different input, giving you different insight. Just remember that again, you’re open to have your own opinions but remember you do represent each of us and we appreciate that. Thank you.

Dave Black: K. Will.

Will Talbot: Will Talbot, Piute County Commission. First of all, I want to thank you guys for serving on boards like this. It takes good people to serve to make a good board. I’m a commissioner, I’m a rancher and I’m a hunter. Love to hunt, nobody loves to hunt more than me. Somewhere there has to be common ground. I see the movement in the last six, eight months of us, maybe, coming to a common ground. We all realize, we all want to be there. I think if we keep working with Redge, with Bill, these are two guys that I think the world of because they have really brought this to a head and into some great conversation. Second, I want to thank Vance. Vance is a wonderful biologist in our area, he’s very helpful, he’s always calling you on the phone if there’s a problem. Other than that, I want to thank you guys and thank everybody else. So, goodnight.

RAC discussion and vote:

Dave Black: Thank you. That’s the end of our comment cards. So I’ll turn the time over to the RAC, if they have any comments. Who wants to go first? Harry.

Harry Barber: Can I just make a general comment? I want to speak towards the BLM lands, what was brought up. I represent the BLM up here. I can’t speak specifically for every office. I would encourage, if you don’t feel like you’re getting what you need to get out of your BLM office, that you make some phone calls. If you don’t know who your range people are, give me a call and I’ll find them for you. Speaking specifically for Kanab field office, we did pretty well in our recent meeting with PLPCO. We don’t have a lot of horse issues, in fact, we don’t have any horse issues. And if I understand correctly, my office, which I manage the Kanab field office, I’m the manager, we are the most aggressive office in the state in terms of BLM, if not the west, for the amount of project work that we’re doing on the ground, hand in hand with permittees. We go out often, and this is in partnership with DWR. So I’m not accepting this crud at all myself. We met recently with our permittees and they seemed satisfied with that project work. We have work taking place from Panguitch clear to Kanab. If you haven’t seen the work that we’re doing, we’ve been pretty aggressive on the work. I met recently with one of our permittees, Hal Hamblin, you can talk to him if you want to, pretty excited about the work we’re doing on his allotment. We’re not doing that specifically to increase his forage, but that’s a byproduct of the work that we’re doing. We’re doing it for several different reasons, wildlife, livestock, among others. I would encourage you to take a look at our projects I would encourage you to talk to some of our permittees down in Kane county and see what they think about the work that we’re doing there. I agree a
hundred percent that we need to communicate a little bit more, that we need to keep that open door policy and talk to each other. But I want you to know that as a BLM representative, that I’m doing my best to increase forage to look out for wildlife and to look out for the livestock guy. In this recent meeting that we had with PLPCO in Panguitch, we were able to point out that we increased AUMs for several of our livestock guys because of the success of our projects. And it’s my commitment to continue to do that where it’s appropriate.

Dave Black: Thank you. Okay, Mack, followed by Wade.

Mack Morrell: In my discussion, I’m not totally against wildlife. We do a lot of work on our range. We clean a lot of ponds, clay a lot of ponds, make ponds, do all the fencing, do all the salt, spend all the time out there. We do a little habitat work. We’re not just sitting there, reaping the benefits. You are right, I agree with you a hundred percent about private land. If you’ve got elk, get them off, that hasn’t been the case. You know why, if you don’t take them off, the cows are training their calves to do the exact same thing they’re doing. That’s why we need to get them off these Yardley’s land. Otherwise, the recruitment takes over and you’ve got a major problem. In the past it’s been a one-way street, we’re coming together. I agree on that. And we need to work together on that. I appreciate Jim, our biologist, working with us. He does a great job. Private land is where a lot of the problems lie with us ranchers in the winter time. Last Sunday, December, I went up to feed my cows, there was nine bull elk laying from me to you from the cows. So there, you know, there’s some problems. I just passed a picture around, showing the same calf elk that’s right there with the cows and the permittee petting it. I agree, we need to come together and do it. Because it’s been a one-way street in the past. We’ve went this way, and just the opposite direction from wildlife. We’re working our end too. We agree that we got to work in partnership on this thing. I agree with Keeler, I think these elk numbers are saturated, if not over saturated, particularly on the winter range, cause that’s where they’re coming in our fields and our land and our stack yards. Just this last year, DWR gave me the money and I fenced the deer out of my stack yard, now my neighbors complaining cause they’re eating his. We still have a lot of problems we need to work out because it’s the same with the deer, the does are training their fawns to do the same thing, coming in, coming in. Anyways, just a comment.

Wade Heaton: For what I’m about to say, I’m glad I don’t have my name on the side of my vehicle outside. Probably wouldn’t be driving it home. We’ve talked a lot about two different sides. We’ve talked a lot more about that than we have any kind of numbers or objectives or anything else. So I want in. All I do is hear this discussion. We act like we’re on two different sides of an argument. And the truth of it is, I believe Redge and some of these guys are right, we better be on the same team. We act like we want to get along. Let’s get along, let’s work together. I want to call a bunch of you out and say “This isn’t the place for it.” The RAC meeting, we’re not gonna decide, we’re not gonna solve that problem here tonight. Why don’t we set up a meeting. Why doesn’t the Farm Bureau and RMEF and Henry Mountain Grazers and SFW and all these public land grazers, why don’t we actually get together and sit down? We talk a lot about it but then every one of us is gonna do nothing until next November, and we’re gonna come back here and say the exact same things over again. Let’s do something about it. We do need to get on the same team. I really think we can make some headway. I really believe that together, let’s throw the crazies out. Let’s be honest, there’s crazies on both sides of this thing. Let’s shut them out. And those of you that are here tonight, I appreciate how respectful you were to the other side. Let’s sit down, talk about it, and solve this problem. I really think we can make some headway on this thing. I want to make a differentiation, I want to disagree a little bit on this private lands issue. Private land, the private land in
this state makes up a significant portion of the good habitat in the state. We can’t discount the private land. Let’s figure out a way to encourage private landowners to keep this wildlife on their property. But what I want to differentiate is, let’s segregate the public land grazers from the private property. Those are two, even though it’s the same guy in some cases, they’re two different issues. And so, let’s treat them as two different issues. Coming back to what we’re actually here to talk about tonight, I want to take my hat off to the DWR. Antlerless elk, to call it a nightmare really doesn’t paint the picture as difficult as it is. And, hat’s off to these guys and that team over there. They have thought outside the box. They’ve come up with some recommendations that really make a lot of sense, that are going to solve some of the problems, so thank you to you guys for all your work on this thing. And my final comment is, I second Mr. Yardley’s motion to kill all the wild horses. I think we’re headed down the right road there.

(Applause.)

Dave Black: I just want to make a quick comment. I have an email that you guys may not have been privileged to but it’s a little bit of background on Redge Johnson that came from the Governor’s office. And what it said was that he’s been assigned by the Governor and, over the last six months, he’s been holding a plethora, several I guess, meetings with ranchers, farmers, agencies, sportsmen, DWR, etcetera, to help find ways to fix these conflicts. And, I know that the director, Greg Sheehan, is committed to this as well. He’s called several meetings. I just, along with Wade, encourage everybody to participate and stay participating in these meetings, cause we do need to work together. What I see with the proposal tonight is, I see the that DWR is committed to working in areas where we are over objective and, now that we passed the elk management plan last year, we have a number of tools to accomplish those things. I believe that the proposal as presented is in the right direction to accomplish those. Me personally, I would hope that we wouldn’t consider any reduction in tags, to control those. And we support their plan. And that we do those things that, everything possible to get the over objective areas back into objective and the only way that, in my opinion, that we would be able to see our objectives go higher is if the objectives for the cattle could also go higher as well. And that we work together to bring those up together and not try to do one without the other. I’ll take any more comments from you guys. Or I’m ready to entertain a motion as well.

Mack Morrell: I’ve got a comment. I think that on some of these allotments or some of these objectives, we’re hardly taking off the recruitment coming in on some of these numbers. That’s what we need to look at. Like for instance, on Southwest Desert, they’ve got fifteen hundred and fifty, and taking off six hundred, that’s hardly the recruitment, plus it’s over five hundred and seventy five on the objective. I think we need to look at that. I think you need to look at, and Dutton is over two hundred. So, we’re not even taking off any, half of the, well maybe about half of the recruitment coming in. We need to look at taking some numbers off, we’ve got to look at what’s gonna happen during the summer and the calves coming on the ground, and will be there for the next year.

Wade Heaton: Can I ask just a quick question on that. I had the same question about Southwest Desert. Obviously, we’re not issuing as many permits, even going to kill the over objective and the recruitment, obviously you know that. What’s our motivation for being at 600 there and not eight or nine?

Jason Nicholes: We’re introducing some new hunt strategies on the Southwest Desert. With the same number of permits we had last year. Last year we had 65% success, I’m expecting, with these new hunt strategies, later, January hunts, that we will have a higher success. Another consideration is, when we surveyed the unit this year, 650 of the elk that we counted on the unit this year were within 5 miles of the
state line. Nevada surveyed their elk this year also, last year they surveyed and counted 575 elk, this year they surveyed and counted 230 elk. We wintered some of Nevada’s elk this year. And that’s, that along with the different hunt strategies is why we’re not being quite as aggressive. I am expecting to harvest around 700 elk this year, will take us probably down to around 1100 elk. So we’re not gonna get there in one year but we’re moving towards objective and we will be there in the next two years.

Dave Black: If you’re concerned about a unit let’s have the biologist come up and, cause I think there’s probably some reasoning behind there that we don’t see. And it’s really hard tell, at least for me, where we have these different hunt strategies, what we’re gonna, if you just look at like the number of permits that are public, it doesn’t make sense at all and maybe we need a little more specific information with the hunt strategies on a unit if you’re concerned with one. So if you have some others, Mack, that you’re specifically concerned with, let’s see what their strategy is on it.

Mack Morrell: Panguitch Lake is one. You’re 600 over objective, but I can’t hardly read with this color here about what they’re taking off. Looks like what 225 or 725? But see, there’s still recruitment coming in. Is your strategy to get down to objective in…

Dustin Schaible: We’ve historically had maybe like 200 or less permits there and they’ve all had anywhere from 50 to 80% success. So we anticipate having a lot of pretty high success on these hunts and a lot of times that will just redistribute elk into where they’re wintering. So we kind of want to try being aggressive this first year and kinda adjust, and kind of, just what Jason said, just kind of be there on a two or three-year plan.

Brian Johnson: I think it’s good to remember that just because you throw tags at it, doesn’t mean we’re gonna kill elk. The problem with elk is we throw tags at it and the damn things move. And then they’re on private property then we can’t kill them and then. So, I think it’s probably wise to go at it in a three-year or a two, you know two to three years, to try get there a little bit slower because they’re kind of hard to shoot sometimes and I suck at it so I need all the help I can get. They used to call me box and a half when I was little, and I was really never really little.

Dave Black: Do we have any other comments?

Brian Johnson: Are you ready for a motion?

Dave Black: Brayden’s...

Brayden Richmond: I was gonna say, I’m on a roll tonight, let me try again. Let me make a quick comment first though. I talked to Riley quite a bit about this. Part of our discussion is we did want to be aggressive. We wanted to have real numbers on here that would help bring in alignment with the objectives. And, this is probably the first time, I’ve been coming to these meetings a long time too, this is probably the first time I’ve looked at the antlerless numbers and really couldn’t get, see any glaring errors. So I’m pretty comfortable and I’m gonna make a motion that we pass as is.

Dave Black: Do we have a second?

(Brian Johnson seconded.)
Dave Black: Do we have any discussion on the motion? All those in favor. All those opposed. Okay, motion carries, thank you.

**Brayden Richmond made the motion to accept the antlerless permit recommendations as presented. Brian Johnson seconded. Motion carried, 10 in favor, 1 (Mack Morrell) opposed.**

Dave Black: Do we need another break or do you want to keep going? Okay we’ll keep going. Item number seven is the 2016 CWMU Antlerless permit recommendations, Covy Jones.

Brian Johnson: Really guys? Really? Well, it was good to have you, enjoyed the company. See you guys at Wendy’s later.

Dave Black: Covy, wait just a minute. Hold on just a minute until they kind of clear out and then we’ll start.

(Pause while most of the public leaves.)

**2016 CWMU Antlerless Permit Recommendations (action)**
-Covy Jones, Private Lands/ Public Wildlife Coordinator

(see attachment 1)

**Questions from the RAC:**

Dave Black: Do we have any questions from the RAC? Any questions from the public? We don’t have any comment cards from the public. Any comments from the RAC?

**RAC discussion and vote:**

Wade Heaton: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just two, real quick. One is with antlerless elk harvest on the CWMUs, I think it’s important that the board members know, that’s a significant part, responsibility that CWMUs have. And so, when you have a split, basically the Division recommends one thing and the CWMU recommends another, they’re almost going against their COR doing that. And so, Jacob’s Creek and Hard Scrabble, I would hope that we would go with the Division’s recommendation. It’s pretty important that we do that and it’s pretty important that they harvest. If they don’t meet their harvest goals, they can actually come up for review and probation and ultimately be kicked out of the program. So, I’d encourage you to support the Division’s recommendation on that. And the second thing, Mr. Chairman, is obviously I’ll have to recuse myself from voting as I’m an operator.


Mack Morrell: I make a motion that we approve what’s been presented on the CWMUs by the Division, on the numbers.

Dave Black: Do we have a second? Okay, we have a number of seconds, we’ll go with Rusty. Any comments? All in favor. Looks like unanimous, except for Wade right? One abstention. Okay, thank you.
Mack Morrell made the motion to approve the Antlerless CWMU recommendations as presented. Seconded by Rusty Aiken. Motion carried 9 in favor, 1 (Wade Heaton) abstained (Brian Johnson was not present for vote).

Dave Black: Now we’ll go to the next agenda item which is CWMU Antlerless Variance Requests.

2016 CWMU Antlerless Variance Requests (action)
-Covy Jones, Private Lands/Public Wildlife Coordinator
(see attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Dave Black: Thank you. Do we have any questions from the RAC? Do you have one Mack? Are you chomping to make a motion? You want us to go home. Any questions from the public? No comment cards. Any comments from the RAC? I’m gonna hurry and make one comment.

RAC discussion and vote:

Dave Black: This is an unofficial, what do you call it, variance request. If there was a way, and I’ve talked to Wade about this, that we could come up with a way that the minimum number of public permits on the CWMUs is 2. Then that way the bonus points would work. If you don’t have two, then the bonus system doesn’t work. We’ve been putting in for the same CWMU for fifteen years and there’s not a bonus point level. So, just an idea.

Covy Jones: I can see how that would be beneficial in a lot of instances. I don’t know that it would work for all species, moose is one that came to mind. I don’t know that the resource is there to do something like that with moose but I’m sure that’s something we could look at.

Brian Johnson: It’s Southern Utah, we only care about deer down here.

Dave Black: And elk.

Covy Jones: Fair enough.

Brian Johnson: And a little bit of elk, only if we’re killing them.

Dave Black: Wade.

Wade Heaton: Just, real quick, I also sit on this CWMU advisory committee. We had about a five hour meeting coming up with those recommendations and you don’t want to sit here for five hours to flesh through everything. But, some pretty good, sound minds sit on that committee and I feel like we’ve probably come up with the recommendations that work. I’d encourage you to support those recommendations as presented.

Dave Black: Okay, Mack.

Mack Morrell: My turn again?
Mack Morrell: I make a motion we approve the 2016 CWMU antlerless variance requests as presented.

Mack Morrell made the motion to accept the CWMU antlerless variance requests as presented. Brian Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Dave Black: Last agenda item is Hunter Education rule amendments. Kirk Smith.

R657-23 Hunter Education Rule Amendments (action)
-Kirk Smith, Hunter Education Program Coordinator
(see attachment 1)

Questions from the RAC:

Dave Black: Thank you. Any questions from the RAC? Questions from the public? Okay.

Rusty Aiken: So on the firing part of the, will they fire at a target or just fire at dirt? What are they shooting at?

Kirk Smith: They’ll have the same course of fire that we currently do. They’ll have a target. Part of what we’re looking at, this being a basic hunter education course, that we’ve had instructors out test driving this, about six and a half, seven hours long. What we want to offer is an extended course that may include, how to turkey hunt. We partnership up with the Wild Turkey Federation, they come in to our hunter ed class, and maybe that live fire component is shooting a shotgun, patterning it for turkey hunting and getting familiar with it. So there’s gonna be some flexibility on the shooting component, cause what we’re testing for is “Can they handle that firearm safely?”

Rusty Aiken: So, it just won’t be a pass or fail if they don’t hit the target?

Kirk Smith: Correct. Looking at the hunting incidents, marksmanship is not a contributing factor to hunting incidents. It’s other behaviors that are the contributing factor.

Dave Black: Any other questions? Do you have a question?

Questions from the Public:

Redge Johnson: So can I ask a question, not as somebody from the Governor’s office but just from the public? I took my jacket off so I’m officially…

Kirk Smith: Loosen the tie up a little bit.
Redge Johnson: Undo the top button, there. So, just a question on the hours that were required, that you’re not going to require. Wonder if you could put some kind of a proficiency, or some kind of standard there. Because I can just see some anti-NRA folks saying, “Utah’s dumbing down the standards for hunting, hunter safety stuff.” Just a thought.

Kirk Smith: I appreciate that completely. One of the trends that we’re seeing nationally in hunter education is the online only system, or delivery method, to where students can actually take hunter education 100% online and never meet face to face with an instructor. There’s currently 15 states offering it. We currently have Utah residents taking hunter education online through Texas, so they can put in for our hunts, so they can apply. And so, we want to be proactive and keep some meat in our program, before the governor’s office, before the legislature says, “Hey, we’re seeing what other states are doing, this is how Utah should be doing it.” So we want to flex a little bit before they push us into a corner. And so, throughout hunter education, throughout the course, the students do have a written exam at the end and they also have an attitude test that they’re taking throughout the class. So if they’re misbehaving and so forth, they can actually be failed on behavior. Did that answer your question?

RAC discussion and vote:

Dale Bagley: So are all these reciprocal of other states? Even though some of them are really dumbing theirs down, does Utah accept any states’ hunter safety?

Kirk Smith: Currently, the situation is such that these online courses that are offered, each one of these are private vendors, they’re private companies, they sat on the committee that helped establish the minimum standards. So they’re mainstream involved to ensure that their online courses meet the minimum standards. So, at this point, yes, we do honor all the hunter education certifications that are issued by a state.

Dave Black: Okay, any other questions? Comments? I’ll entertain a motion.

Rusty Aiken: I’d like to make a motion to accept the recommendations of the R657-23.

Dave Black: Okay, do we have a second? Wade. Any comments? All those in favor. Looks like it passed unanimous. Okay.

Rusty Aiken made the motion to accept the Hunter Education Rule Amendments as presented. Wade Heaton seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Kirk Smith: I just have to add, in the Northern Region, I went three minutes total, you guys pushed it just a little far, five minutes. Thanks.

Other Business
-Dave Black, Chairman

Dave Black: Okay, item number ten, other business. The only thing I can think of is remember we have no more RAC meetings until August. And the next meeting that we do meet on will be the cougar hunt tables and permit numbers. So, thank you. And, I’ll call this meeting adjourned.
Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.
Beaver Elk Permit Numbers and Estimated Elk Winter Population

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Dave Black  
Southern Region RAC Chair  
2074 Princeton Circle  
St. George, UT  84790  

Dear Mr. Black:  

Thank you for giving the Fishlake National Forest an opportunity to provide comments. We appreciate and value the ongoing coordination with the Southern Utah Resource Advisory Committee and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.  

We continue to remain concerned about aspen habitat on Monroe Mountain. Thank you for the aggressive antlerless elk hunts that have been provided the last couple of years. We believe aspen habitat on Monroe Mountain is and will continue to greatly benefit from the reduced elk population size. We look forward to receiving the aspen monitoring results from Dr. Sam St. Clair’s aspen research occurring on Monroe Mountain. With completion of the Monroe Mountain Aspen Ecosystems Restoration Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and with implementation beginning during the spring of this year, we believe the reduced elk population size will result in less browse pressure on aspen and increase the ability of new aspen regeneration following treatments to successfully recruit. We request that you continue to maintain your short-term aggressive antlerless elk hunts on Monroe Mountain to keep the population at a reduced level during this critical time while large landscape scale treatments are occurring. This approach will be of great benefit as we work to restore aspen habitat on Monroe Mountain for continued and sustainable future use.  

Livestock producers continue to express concerns to us about high elk numbers on units across the Forest, including the Beaver unit. Our mission and desire is to continue to provide sustainable habitat that will balance the needs of both domestic and wild ungulates. We support present objective numbers in individual elk plans that are within our Forest Boundary. We also support the 2016 proposed harvest objectives on big game units within our Forest Boundary.  

Once again, thank you for your willingness to work with us to restore habitat across the Fishlake National Forest. As habitat is improved, wildlife will greatly benefit. Thank you.  

Sincerely,  

MEL BOLLING  
Forest Supervisor  

cc: Ron Rodriguez, Jason Kling, Kurt Robins, Kathleen Johnson, Doug Robison