



New Mexico State Wildlife Commission
New Mexico Department of Wildlife

MINUTES AND TRANSCRIPTS
NEW MEXICO STATE WILDLIFE COMMISSION

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Friday, Aug. 21, 2026

New Mexico Highlands University
Student Union Building
[800 National Ave.](#)
[Las Vegas, NM 87701](#)

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/NSe8EaQ4-aE>

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Meeting Called to Order

09:01:49 a.m. (00:00:00)

Called to order by Chairman Richard Stump.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Roll Call

09:02:36 a.m. (00:00:47)

Present in person: Chairman Stump, Vice-chairman Clemente, Commissioner Harwood, Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Witt.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Introduction of Guests

09:02:54 a.m. (00:01:05)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Approval of Agenda (Action Item)

09:07:20 a.m. (00:05:31)

Motion: To approve the agenda for the Aug. 21, 2026, meeting as written.

Motion by: Vice-chairman Clemente.

Seconded by: Commissioner Witt.

Approved: Chairman Stump, Vice-chairman Clemente, Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Witt.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Approval of the Minutes from the June 25, 2026, Meeting in Portales (Action Item)

09:07:47 a.m. (00:05:58)

Motion: To approve the minutes from the June 25, 2026, Commission meeting as presented by the Department.

Motion by: Commissioner Witt.

Seconded by: Vice-chairman Clemente.

Approved: Unanimous - Chairman Stump, Vice-chairman Clemente, Commissioner Harwood, Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Witt.

Abstained: Commissioner Harwood.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Approval of Hunting and Fishing Privileges Revocations (Action Item)

09:08:37 a.m. (00:06:48)

The Department notified the Commission of the revocations or suspensions carried out pursuant to the Parental Responsibility Act, those who have failed to pay a penalty assessment citation within 30 days, those who have entered into a civil agreement or have a civil judgment, and pursuant to the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact.

- 246 individuals certified by the Human Services Department as being out of compliance with the Parental Responsibility Act (40-5A-1 NMSA 1978) were suspended until in compliance.
- 386 individuals who failed to pay a penalty assessment citation within 30 days of the violation were suspended until they are in compliance.
- 1 individual who has entered into a civil agreement or has a civil judgment.

The Department presented the 2 individuals who meet established criteria for the revocation or suspension of their hunting, fishing, trapping, guiding and outfitting privileges or other privileges or authorities granted by an agreement, license or permit issued by the Department.

- 2 individuals accrued 20 or more points in a three-year period. They were mailed a notice of contemplated action and did not request a hearing, and Department agreements were reached.

Motion: To accept the revocation recommendations as submitted by the Department.

Motion by: Commissioner Harwood.

Seconded by: Vice-chairman Clemente.

Approved: Unanimous - Chairman Stump, Vice-chairman Clemente, Commissioner Harwood, Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Witt.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: General Public Comment

09:09:07 a.m. (00:07:18)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Rule Hearing: Deer Rule 19.31.13 NMAC (Action Item)

09:16:37 a.m. (00:14:48)

The Department presented proposed changes to the Deer Rule (19.31.13 NMAC) based on survey information, management goals and public comment. The Department has analyzed and evaluated data to help inform the rule development process. The Department proposed the following changes to the 2027-2030 deer rule:

Region Specific Proposed Changes

Northwest

- 1) Based on input received during the current rule cycle, the Department recommends moving GMU 2B to a Quality Hunt unit. Moving GMU 2B to a Quality Hunt unit requires a reduction of 885 deer licenses across public and private land.
- 2) Create new rifle hunt code in GMU 51A to spread out pressure. The overall license numbers will remain the same.
- 3) Create a public muzzleloader deer hunt on Wildlife Management Areas in GMU 4 to coincide with the private land hunt (10 licenses).

Southwest

- 1) Change the January hunt on White Sands Missile Range (GMU 19 WSMR only) to a youth hunt.
- 2) Create a December rifle hunt for Coues white-tailed deer in GMUs 16 and 22 (20 licenses in each GMU) to be consistent with Coues white-tailed deer hunts in the southwest.
- 3) Create a separate hunt code for the Silver City Management Area antlerless archery hunt (50 public and 20 private licenses). With this hunt code, archery hunters that hold a license in GMU 23 and 24 who do not harvest a deer during their archery hunt will not be permitted to hunt the Silver City Management Area antlerless hunt.
- 4) Change youth rifle hunts in GMUs 13 and 17 to youth muzzleloader hunts to match elk weapon type for the same time and increase licenses for muzzleloader hunts in these units.
- 5) No longer include Fort Bayard as a special management area. Hunters drawing a tag for GMU 24 can hunt any legally accessible land in GMU 24, including Fort Bayard management area.
- 6) Create a public rifle hunt for Mimbres River WMA in GMU 24 (5 licenses).

Southeast

- 1) Remove the REG antlerless hunt in GMU 32 Roswell and Fort Sumner Hunt Areas. Keep Youth Only antlerless hunt (15 public and 20 private licenses).
- 2) Remove the antlerless hunt on the Huey WMA; change the ES hunt to FAD bag limit.
- 3) Significantly reduce licenses in GMUs 29 (-120), 30 (-525), and 34 (-100).

Northeast

- 1) Adjust license numbers to meet management strategies and reflect changes in deer herd dynamics.

General Statewide Proposed Changes

- 1) Adjust license numbers to meet management strategies and reflect changes in deer herd dynamics.
- 2) Adjust season dates where necessary.
 - a. Adjust season dates to ensure harvest is biologically sustainable.
 - b. Shift start dates to maintain hunts beginning on Saturday or adjusting to maintain consistent hunt structure.
 - c. When possible, adjust season dates for hunt structure consistency across the state.
 - d. Adjust season dates to avoid overlapping hunts with mixed-weapon types.
- 3) Designate the premium statewide deer hunt as a Quality Hunt.
- 4) Require the purchase of a license at least a day prior to the start of the hunt. For hunts where published season dates are less than 6 days, hunters will no longer be able to buy a license once the hunt starts.
- 5) Require a "ranch registration" process for OTC private-land deer licenses, similar to the current registration process used for private land elk hunting in Secondary Management Zones.
- 6) Caps on private-land licenses OTC licenses for deer.

Motion: To repeal and replace 19.31.13 NMAC as presented by the Department and allow the Department to make minor corrections to comply with filing this rule with State Records and

Archives.

Motion by: Vice-chairman Clemente.

Seconded by: Commissioner Witt.

Approved: Unanimous - Chairman Stump, Vice-chairman Clemente, Commissioner Harwood, Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Witt.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: Rule Hearing: Elk Rule 19.31.14 NMAC

10:03:11 a.m. (01:01:22)

The Department presented biological data and proposed changes to the Elk Rule (19.31.14 NMAC) based on public feedback, biological information and management goals.

The Department proposed the following changes to the 2027-2030 elk rule:

General Statewide proposed changes

- Adjust season dates where necessary
- Shifting start dates to maintain hunts beginning on Saturday or adjusting to calendar day starts for consistency.
- Adjust some hunts to minimize overlap of weapons used for species hunted.
- Designate the premium statewide elk hunt (currently ELK-1-700) as a Quality hunt.
- Require the purchase of a license at least one day prior to hunting. For hunts where published season dates are less than 6 days, hunters will no longer be able to buy a license once the hunt starts.
- Assessed public/private land split in Primary Management Zones due to landownership changes over the last 4 years. No changes occurred.

Specific proposed changes

Northwest Region

- Increase antlerless ('A') licenses within GMU 2 December Youth Only (YO) and December 2C only rifle hunts. Licenses shall increase from 75 to 100 for each hunt.
- Change early October Mature Bull ('MB') licenses from any legal weapon to muzzleloader hunts in GMU 5A (10 licenses) to align with new muzzleloader hunts within other PMZ units.

North Central Region

- Create a new muzzleloader hunt within the Sargent WMA to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB/A', 10 licenses.
- Create a new muzzleloader hunt within the Humphries/Rio Chama WMAs to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB/A', 10 licenses.
- Create a new muzzleloader hunt within GMU 5B to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB', 56 licenses. Redistribute 37 December 'MB' rifle licenses to the muzzleloader hunt in GMU 5B. Muzzleloader hunts typically have lower success rates; thus, these licenses are redistributed at a higher ratio to increase hunt opportunity.
- Create a new muzzleloader hunt within GMU 50 to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB', 65 licenses. Redistribute 45 late October and early

November 'MB' rifle licenses to new muzzleloader hunt in GMU 50 at a higher ratio to increase hunt opportunity.

- Create a new muzzleloader hunt within GMU 51 to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be Either-Sex ('ES'), 145 licenses. All licenses for this hunt were redistributed from the existing December muzzleloader hunt in GMU 51.
- Increase 'A' licenses within GMU 51 for both mid and late November hunts from 251 to 265 licenses.

Southwest Region

- Create a new muzzleloader hunt within GMU 12 to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB', 35 licenses.
- Create a new muzzleloader hunt within GMUs 16A, 16B/22, 16C, and 16D to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB', 35 licenses for each GMU. Redistribute 15 'MB' rifle licenses from GMU 16A to new muzzleloader hunt at a 1:1.5 ratio. Although overall 'MB' licenses will increase slightly within the Greater Gila elk herd, anticipated harvest should be stable or slightly decrease as muzzleloader hunters, on average, have lower success rates. Additionally, pushing rifle 'MB' hunts later in the season will decrease bull susceptibility to harvest during rut. Similar redistributions of rifle hunt licenses shall occur in GMUs 16B/22, 16C, and 16D.
- Reduce 'A' rifle licenses within GMU 16A, 16C, 16D, and 16E by 27-30% and shift cow hunts earlier in the season to reduce adult female mortality in the Greater Gila elk herd unit. Elevated adult female mortality and low calf recruitment within the Greater Gila elk herd, combined with persistent drought conditions, have contributed to declining population performance in this region.
- Create a new muzzleloader hunt within GMU 21A to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB', 15 licenses.

Southeast Region

- Increase 'A' licenses within both late season (Jan/Feb) cow hunts within GMU 34 from 200 to 230 licenses to increase harvest on adult females.

Northeast Region

- Create a new muzzleloader hunt within GMU 49 to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB', 20 licenses. A total of 13 October 'MB' rifle licenses shall be redistributed to new muzzleloader hunt in GMU 49 at a higher ratio to increase hunt opportunity.

Secondary Management Zones

- Create new 'A' late-season rifle hunt in GMUs 29/30 to address increased population within these units (20 licenses).
- Create two new 'ES' rifle hunts within GMU 32 as elk have moved into this region and become more resident than seasonal (30 licenses total).
- Create 2 new 'ES' bow hunts with 20 licenses each in GMU 38 as this elk population is becoming more established.

Youth Encouragement

- Eliminate all Youth Encouragement hunts within the Greater Gila elk herd unit (GMUs 15, 16A, 16C, 16D, 16E) to reduce harvest pressure on adult females. Population indices suggest these elk herds are declining as a result of low calf recruitment and high adult female mortality, further intensified by drought conditions. A portion of these licenses will be redistributed to other Youth Encouragement hunts throughout the state.
- Create two new Youth Encouragement hunts of 75 licenses each within GMU 2 to increase harvest pressure on adult females and increase youth opportunity.
- Increase Youth Encouragement hunt licenses within GMUs 34 and 36 to increase harvest pressure on adult females.
- Increase Youth Encouragement hunt licenses within GMU 51.

Motion: To repeal and replace 19.31.14 NMAC as presented by the Department and allow the Department to make minor corrections to comply with filing this rule with State Records and Archives.

Motion by: Vice-chairman Clemente.

Seconded by: Commissioner Witt.

Approved: Unanimous - Chairman Stump, Vice-chairman Clemente, Commissioner Harwood, Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Witt.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10: Rule Hearing: Pronghorn Rule 19.31.15 NMAC (Action Item)

10:21:42 a.m. (01:19:53)

The Department presented proposed changes to the Pronghorn Rule (19.31.15 NMAC) based on survey information, management goals and public comment. The Department held two hybrid in-person/virtual public meetings and also received public comments on the rule.

The Department proposed the following changes to 19.31.15 NMAC:

- Require purchase of a license a day prior to the start of a hunt.
- Implement a ranch registration process for purchase of private land OTC pronghorn licenses, similar to the current registration process used for private land elk hunting in Secondary management zones.
- Implement a cap on private land OTC licenses.
- Shift GMU 4/50/52 rifle hunt to muzzleloader hunt.
- Adjust season dates where necessary. For example, shifting start dates to maintain hunts beginning on Saturday or adjusting calendar day starts for consistency.
- Adjust license numbers to meet management strategies and reflect changes in pronghorn herd dynamics.
- Shift season dates in SW later to address a later breeding and fawning period. Include F-IM hunts that have "up to" license numbers (it is possible that the Department may draw zero licenses for certain hunts)
- Decrease licenses on McGregor from 7 licenses over 2 hunt periods to 2 licenses over 2 hunt periods.

Motion: To repeal and replace 19.31.15 NMAC as presented by the Department, except changing the dates of the first rifle pronghorn hunt in 2027 from 8/28-8/31 to 8/28-8/30 and allow the Department to make minor corrections to comply with filing this rule with State Records and Archives.

Motion by: Commissioner Harwood.

Seconded by: Vice-chairman Clemente.

Approved: Unanimous - Chairman Stump, Vice-chairman Clemente, Commissioner Harwood, Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Witt.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11: Rule Hearing: Bighorn Sheep Rule 19.31.17 NMAC Action Item)

11:01:38 a.m. (01:59:49)

The Department presented proposed changes to the Bighorn Sheep Rule (19.31.17 NMAC) based on survey information, management goals and public comment. The Department held two hybrid in-person/virtual public meetings and also received comments regarding the Bighorn Sheep Rule.

The Department proposed the following changes to 19.31.17 NMAC:

Rocky Mountain Bighorn:

- Opening the Manzanos (Game Management Units (GMUs) 14 & 18) for ram hunting under both public and private sections of the rule.
- Establishing two hunt periods for the Manzanos: October 1-15 and October 16-30
- Increasing the bag limit for private Rocky Mountain bighorn ram licenses from 6 to 10 to accommodate a new herd being opened for hunting (Manzanos)

Desert Bighorn:

- Opening the Sacramentos (GMU 34) for ram hunting under (Dec. 1-15 hunt period)
- Shifting the hunt periods for both the Little Hatchets (GMU 26, west of NM 81) and Big Hatchets (GMU 26, east of NM 81) from September 15-30 and October 1-15 to December 1-15 and December 16-30

General

- Adjusting season dates where necessary. For example, shifting start dates to maintain hunts beginning on Saturday or adjusting to calendar day starts for consistency

Motion: To repeal and replace 19.31.17 NMAC as presented by the Department and allow the Department to make minor corrections to comply with filing this rule with State Records and Archives.

Motion by: Vice-chairman Clemente.

Seconded by: Commissioner Harwood.

Approved: Unanimous - Chairman Stump, Vice-chairman Clemente, Commissioner Harwood, Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Witt.

The Commission took a break at 11:09:53 a.m. (02:08:04) and returned at 11:31:42 a.m. (02:29:53/02:08:05 on video).

AGENDA ITEM NO. 12: Approval of the FY28 Budget Proposal (Action Item)

11:31:42 a.m. (02:29:53/02:08:05 on video)

The Department presented and discussed the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2028 Operating Budget Request for Commission review, approval and certification. The Department must seek final approval from the Commission for submission by the statutory deadline of Sept. 1, 2026.

Motion: To approve the Department's Fiscal Year 2028 Operating Budget and allow Department staff to make technical adjustments and changes necessary to incorporate assessment rate

changes provided to the Department and other executive agencies after the meeting and prior to the statutory deadline.

Motion by: Commissioner Harwood.

Seconded by: Vice-chairman Clemente.

Approved: Unanimous - Chairman Stump, Vice-chairman Clemente, Commissioner Harwood, Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Witt.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13: Approval of the FY27 Disposal List (Action Item)

11:43:11 a.m. (02:41:22/02:19:34)

The Department requested Commission approval to dispose of capital assets and other Department items that are worn out, obsolete or have reached the end of their service life. State statutes §13-6-1 and 13-6-2 NMSA 1978 require an agency's governing body to approve the disposal of state property prior to disposing of the items. These items will either be sold at public auction or otherwise disposed of in accordance with state law.

Motion: To approve the Department to dispose of the list of capital assets for fiscal year 2027. Capital assets to be disposed of are either worn out, obsolete or have reached the end of their service life. Assets will be disposed of either by sale at public auction, or otherwise in accordance with state law.

Motion by: Vice-chairman Clemente.

Seconded by: Commissioner Harwood.

Approved: Unanimous - Chairman Stump, Vice-chairman Clemente, Commissioner Harwood, Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Witt.

AGENDA ITEM NO.14: Opening of Comment Period for the Director's Draft of the Biennial Review (Action Item)

11:44:52 a.m. (02:43:03/02:21:15)

The Department requested that the Commission approve the Draft 2026 Biennial Review of state-listed threatened or endangered species and open a 14-day public comment period pursuant to the Wildlife Conservation Act (17-2-40 NMSA 1978).

Motion: To authorize the Department to initiate the opening of a 14-day public comment period on the Director's Draft of the 2026 Biennial Review of state-listed threatened or endangered species.

Motion by: Commissioner Harwood.

Seconded by: Commissioner Witt.

Approved: Unanimous - Chairman Stump, Vice-chairman Clemente, Commissioner Harwood, Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Witt.

AGENDA ITEM NO.15: General Public Comment

11:51:45 a.m. (02:49:56/02:28:08)

AGENDA ITEM NO.16: Commissioner Comments

12:04:02 p.m. (03:02:13/02:40:25)

AGENDA ITEM NO.17: Adjourn

12:09:27 p.m. (03:07:38/02:45:50)

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