

**New Mexico State Game Commission New Mexico**  
**Department of Game and Fish**  
**Virtual Meeting Notes**  
**December 3, 2020**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Meeting Called to Order** 09:03:20 AM (00:01:11)

Called to order by Chairwoman Salazar Hickey

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Roll Call** 09:03:41 AM (00:01:32)

All present: Chairwoman Salazar Hickey, Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Cramer, Commissioner Lopez, Commissioner Soules and Commissioner Vesbach.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Approval of Agenda (Action Item)** 09:04:14 AM (00:02:05)

**Motion by:** Commissioner Cramer

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Vesbach

**Approved:** Roll call vote – Approved Unanimously: Chairwoman Salazar Hickey, Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Cramer, Commissioner Lopez, Commissioner Soules and Commissioner Vesbach.

**AGENDA ITEM No. 4: General Public Comment** 09:07:46 AM (00:05:37)

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Closed Executive Session** 09:28:17 AM (00:26:08)

**Motion:** The State Game Commission voted to adjourn into Executive Session closed to the public; pursuant to 10-15-1(H)(2) NMSA 1978, to discuss limited personnel matters relating to complaints and discipline; pursuant to Section 10-15-1(H)(8) NMSA 1978, to discuss property acquisition; and pursuant to Section 10-15-1(H)(7) NMSA 1978, to discuss matters subject to attorney-client privilege relating to threatened or pending litigation.

**Motion by:** Chairwoman Salazar Hickey

**Seconded by:** Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry

**Approved:** Roll call vote – Approved Unanimously: Chairwoman Salazar Hickey, Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Cramer, Commissioner Lopez, Commissioner Soules and Commissioner Vesbach.

**Return from Executive Session** 11:00:34 AM (00:28:29)

**Motion:** Move to authorize the Department to negotiate the purchase of property in DeBaca and Roosevelt counties, further to authorize the Chair to sign documents necessary to complete the purchase.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Vesbach

**Seconded by:** Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry

**Approved:** Roll call vote – Approved Unanimously: Chairwoman Salazar Hickey, Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Cramer, Commissioner Lopez, Commissioner Soules and Commissioner Vesbach.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Consent Agenda (Action Item)** 11:02:57 AM (00:30:52)

**A. Approval of Minutes of October 15, 2020, Virtual meeting** 11:04:49 AM (00:32:44)

**Motion:** Move to approve Consent Agenda Item A

**Motion by:** Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Bates

**Approved:** Roll call vote – Approved Unanimously: Chairwoman Salazar Hickey, Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Cramer, Commissioner Lopez, Commissioner Soules and Commissioner Vesbach.

**B. Approval of License Revocations** 11:06:32 AM (00:34:27)

**Motion:** Move to approve Consent Agenda Item B as presented by the Department except for one individual, moving him from a one-year revocation to a three-year revocation.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Vesbach

**Seconded by:** Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry

**Approved:** Roll call vote – Approve Unanimously: Chairwoman Salazar Hickey, Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Cramer, Commissioner Lopez, Commissioner Soules and Commissioner Vesbach.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: Director's Report (Discussion)** 11:11:30 AM (00:39:25)

Director Michael Sloane presented on the Department's accomplishments that included:

- LFC report - Since the last meeting, the Department received the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) program evaluation report. Essentially, it contained three findings. 1) While recognizing that the Department does collaborate with many other state agencies and NGOs, the LFC encouraged additional collaboration with other agencies, including State Forestry, State Parks, the Environment Department, among others. The Department will continue those efforts and make it more public that we are doing that. 2) Work with LFC and DFA to identify performance measures that better represent how the Department performs. Current performance measures were developed when the Government Accountability Act was first passed, and have remained static. The Department is open to sitting down with LFC and DFA to discuss whether the current metrics are appropriate or whether we should do something different. 3) The LFC touched on a number of policy-related issues related to Commission Rule and those sorts of things that the Commission may want to look at.
- Wildlife corridors – In 2019, the NM DOT hired a contractor to collect and analyze data and solicit public input. They have had the first round of public input meetings around the state, the first of the meetings were in person and several were held via digital platforms. The second round of meetings will be held after the 2021 draft is produced. Thus far, the data has included 15 years of vehicle/wildlife collision accident reports and GPS data collected by the Department on large game animals. 25 locations have been identified and prioritized based on that data. The draft and final report will contain mitigation recommendations for those locations. Concurrent with this, ecological modeling is ongoing to identify potential corridors for use by large game animals for which we have data.
- Massive bird die-off – Final pathology reports are back from the lab. Findings show that the birds were severely undernourished and had no food in storage. There is no evidence of viral or bacterial disease. Conclusive findings are not possible. The best that we can say is that the timing with the cold front, smoke and high winds coinciding with their migration resulted in the die-off as birds came through New Mexico.
- Habitat Stamp Proposal - The Department did not receive significant controversy to the habitat stamp proposal. After the last Commission Meeting, the Department held a virtual public meeting. Two issues arose. 1) Concern over fee increase being tied into the CPI. To address that concern, the Department altered the language to allow the Commission not to increase based on the CPI with a motion and a vote at a public meeting. 2) Concern of direct appointment by Commissioners. The Department altered the language so that the Department would accept applications, filter the applications and make recommendations to the Commission. The recommendation would follow the representation lines that are spelled out for

Commissioners in Statute.

- Trapper education – The Commission passed a rule in 2019, requiring anyone who sets traps to take the course. As of November 20, 576 individuals have taken the full New Mexico Trapper Education Course and 1,070 have taken the hunt only portion of the course (which allows for hunting and not trapping). The Department has issued 899 resident licenses, 31 junior licenses and 23 non-resident licenses. Licenses are only available to those that have passed the online course or completed a class offered by a Department-approved entity. The Department encourages anyone that has an issue to contact the Department for a proper investigation. There is guidance listed in the Trapper Rules and Information Booklet that addresses how to get an animal out of a trap.
- New Mexico Wildlife podcast is now on the Department's webpage and you can access the first three episodes through SoundCloud.
- It has been a hectic hunting season. We appreciate the work of all of the field staff during the busy season.
- Upcoming legislative session update – The Department doesn't have any specific legislation; however, the Department has heard about several bills that will be put forward, including a bill that mirrors a 2019 bill about trapping on public lands, an environmental database that would require some of the environmental agencies to consolidate their GIS information and have it housed at UNM through the Natural Heritage Program. There are rumors about other possible legislation, but at this time, the Department is not aware of anything that has been formally announced.
- The Department will give an update on the Rabbit Hemorrhaging Disease (RHD) at the January Commission Meeting and a presentation on the Migration Corridor project at a future Commission Meeting when the time is appropriate.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Committee Reports** 11:51:59 AM (01:19:54)

### **A. Finance and Hunt Structure Committees**

**Finance:** The committee met in November and reviewed the cash balance statements for all of the funds, including all of the restricted funds, and the revenue expense report. The committee also asked ASD Chief Varela to prepare some comparison reports to look at trends between revenue and cash balance. With what they can see right now, the revenue and the expenses are falling in line with what we would expect for the first quarter of the year and we do not see any real strain on the Department's finances due to COVID. There is an increase in cash balance moving forward from the year before and we seem to be following last year's trends. The committee attended an audit exit conference with the state-required annual audit. They issued a draft report, which the committee reviewed. A full report on the audit will be given at the January Commission meeting.

**Hunt Structure:** This committee is well ahead of most of the big game rules that will open in 2022. They are looking at how we distribute our hunting licenses in New Mexico. The committee is looking at resident hunting opportunities. The committee is looking at comparing New Mexico with other states and different species in New Mexico. The previous Commission gave a 6% increase in the sale of resident antelope licenses. Programs like Open Gate have helped open up resident opportunities.

### **B. Customer Feedback Committee**

The committee has spent some time defining who our customers and stakeholders are and looking at how the Department engages our customers and stakeholders. The committee identified several things the Department was doing, including social media, mass emails, direct mail, e-surveys, news releases, monthly newsletters, New Mexico Wildlife magazine, the Department's website, customer service desk and the officers who are the face of the agency. The committee sent a survey to every western state fish and wildlife agency, some mid-west and some eastern state agencies. They received responses from New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona and Oregon. The other states are doing a lot of the same things that we are. The only novel idea was from Arizona; they do trend surveys. Another idea is from Oregon, where they

use a flow sheet to identify a route that shows how issues are received and where they go. Lastly, the committee looked at the Department's mission, vision and value statements.

Commissioners Vesbach and Cramer will join Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry and will be working on a deep-dive review and developing an analysis of the EPLUS system.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: Rule Making Hearing on Amending the Hunter Education Rule (Action Item, C)** 12:46:10 PM (01:56:17)

**A. Rule Hearing Comments**

Lance Cherry presented the Department's proposed changes to the Hunter Education Rule 19.36.3 NMAC to allow first-time youth hunters, eight years of age and under ten years of age, the ability to hunt small game and allow first-time youth hunters, ten years of age and under 18 years of age, the ability to hunt small game, turkey, javelina, deer and pronghorn antelope for two license years in the Department's Mentored-Youth Hunting (MY) Program. The proposed age rollback would more effectively align with the minimum age requirement of 10 for online hunter education certification. It would also add a requirement for mentors to complete a hunter training course comprised of written lessons, testing and current registration in the Department's mentored-youth program or proof of a New Mexico hunter training course or a hunter training course of another state which is approved by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish; and change the rule from permanent to four-year cycle, January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2024.

**B. Discussion**

**C. Action**

**Motion:** Move to amend 19.36.3 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-chairwoman Salazar-Henry

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Lopez

**Approved:** Roll call vote – Approve: Chairwoman Salazar Hickey, Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry, Commissioner Bates and Commissioner Lopez. Disapprove: Commissioner Cramer, Commissioner Soules and Commissioner Vesbach.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 10: Rule Making Hearing on Amending the Hunting and Fishing Licenses and Application Rule** 01:32:04 PM (02:42:10)

**A. Rule Hearing Comments**

Chad Nelson presented the Department's final rule changes to the Commission to define eligibility for returning Iraq/Afghanistan veteran oryx draw licenses and change the Mobility Impaired Certification eligibility requirements.

**B. Discussion**

**C. Action**

**Motion:** Move to adopt the proposed changes to 19.31.3 NMAC, as presented by the Department, with an effective date of January 1, 2021, and allow the Department to make minor corrections to comply with filing this rule with State Records and Archives.

**Motion by:** Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Bates

**Approved:** Roll call vote – Approved Unanimously: Chairwoman Salazar Hickey, Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Cramer, Commissioner Lopez, Commissioner Soules and Commissioner Vesbach.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 11: Update on Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery Efforts (Discussion)** 01:45:19 PM (02:55:25)

Stewart Liley presented an update on the Mexican gray wolf recovery program's status in the United States and Mexico. Additionally, the Department discussed the efforts and roles it has played in assisting the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) in the recovery of Mexican wolves since last year. The Department also presented the Service's draft translocation and initial release plan for the 2021 season.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 12: Overview of the Department's Hatchery System Operations (Discussion)** 02:24:14 PM (03:34:21)

Kirk Patten presented an overview of the hatchery system and the need for future capital improvements.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 13: Overview of the Department's Conservation Information System (Discussion)** 03:00:35 PM (04:10:41)

Ginny Seamster presented an overview of the six Department run programs, tools and datasets included in the Conservation Information System for New Mexico, including Share with Wildlife, Biota Information System of New Mexico (BISON-M), New Mexico Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool, New Mexico Environmental Review Tool, State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) and New Mexico Riparian Habitat Map.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 14: General Public Comments** 03:52:59 PM (05:03:05)

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 16: Adjourn at** 04:03:54 PM (05:14:01)

**Motion by:** Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Bates

**Approved:** Roll call vote – Approve: Chairwoman Salazar Hickey, Vice-chairwoman Salazar-Henry, Commissioner Bates, Commissioner Cramer, Commissioner Soules and Commissioner Vesbach. Absent: Commissioner Lopez

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES  
NEW MEXICO STATE GAME COMMISSION

December 3, 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING LOCATION  
<http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/webcast/>

**Michael B. Sloane** Digitally signed by Michael B. Sloane  
Date: 2021.05.19 10:09:30 -06'00'

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael B. Sloane

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Sharon Salazar Hickey*  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sharon Salazar Hickey, Chair

New Mexico State Game Commission

05/18/2021

Date

Final Copy