

Minutes of the Telephonic Meeting of the
Arizona Game and Fish Commission
Friday, July 8, 2011 – 1:00 p.m.
Arizona Game and Fish Department
5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, Arizona 85086

PRESENT: (Commission)

(Director's Staff)

In person:
Commissioner Robert E. Mansell

In person:
Deputy Director Gary R. Hovatter

Via telephone:
Chairman Robert R. Woodhouse
Vice Chair Norman W. Freeman
Commissioner Jack F. Husted
Commissioner John W. Harris

Via telephone:
Director Larry D. Voyles
Assistant Attorney General Linda Pollock

Chairman Woodhouse called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Deputy Director Hovatter conducted roll call and confirmed that all Commissioners were present. Several Department staff members and several members of the public were present. This meeting followed an agenda dated July 7, 2011.

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1. Consideration of Amendment to Commission Order 5 for Fall 2011 Hunting Seasons.

Presenter: Brian F. Wakeling, Game Branch Chief

Mr. Wakeling briefed the Commission on the Department's recommendation to amend permit numbers for fall 2011 turkey hunt numbers 4501 (in Unit 1 from 675 to 200) and 4518 (in Unit 27 from 900 to 300) due to biological responses in turkey population recruitment after the Wallow Fire.

The Wallow Fire started on May 29, 2011 and burned an estimated 538,049 acres in Units 1 and 27. At this time, the fire is about 95% contained, and the fire is estimated to have influenced about 49% of Unit 1 and 29% of Unit 27. Although this is Arizona's largest fire, 356,710 acres (almost 2/3) suffered low to extremely low fire severity. Another 102,681 acres (19%) burned at moderate intensity, leaving 47,565 acres (about 9%) as high intensity. While these percentages and acreages continue to be revised, the influence of the fire seems to have been a mosaic of intensities, with most of the area receiving some level of fire.

Most wildlife species, based on post-fire reconnaissance by Regional and Forest Service personnel, seem to have avoided direct mortality. Pronghorn recruitment appears healthy (several twins observed), elk are commonly observed with calves, and the deer had yet to fawn at the time of the fire. Turkeys were likely in the late nesting or early brood rearing at the time of the fire, and while only a single dead hen has been discovered, very few young have been observed. Based on reports from Regional personnel, only 12 toms, 58 hens, and 10 poult have

been observed. In comparison, observations compiled from August generally run 2 poults for every hen during normal years.

Because observed turkey recruitment is substantially below normally expected recruitment in Units 1 and 27 and because young turkeys comprise the bulk of the harvest during the fall hunt, a reduction in the number of permits issued may be warranted to avoid adverse influence to the turkey population.

Limited Weapon-Shotgun Shooting Shot Season:

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Open Areas	Legal Wildlife	Permits
4501	Sep 30–Oct 6, 2011	1	Any turkey	200
4518	Sep 30–Oct 6, 2011	27	Any turkey	300

This proposed reduction of 1,075 permits will result in an approximate reduction of \$20,000 in state revenue, dependent on the proportion of nonresident applicants that get drawn for these turkey tags.

Public Comment

Brian Zingg, representing himself, asked if the fire would have any impact on the fall juniors over-the-counter tags in those units.

Mr. Wakeling stated that at this point the Department is not making any recommendations to alter either the juniors or the archery-only turkey hunts within Units 1 and 27. The reasons are that participation rates are expected to decrease this year in these units because of the fire, and there is already a public document with the season dates prescribed in them and to change those would likely result in some confusion.

Jon Cooley, Regional Supervisor in Pinetop, briefed the Commission on what the expectation is regarding access for the fall season. No formal/published decisions have been made by the Forest Service regarding access, but in meetings over the past week the Forest Service is looking at allowing hunting access for anyone who holds a valid big game tag. Vehicular access into the burn area will be limited to a set of roads that the Forest Service will identify as being open. But a hunter with a valid tag can essentially access any part of the forest that they wish on foot to conduct their hunting activities.

Motion: Freeman moved and Harris seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO AMEND COMMISSION ORDER 5, AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Unanimous

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2. Call to the Public

There were no requests to speak to the Commission.

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Motion: Mansell moved and Husted seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADJOURN THIS MEETING.

Vote: Unanimous

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Meeting adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

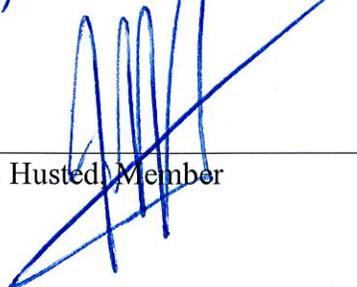
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Robert R. Woodhouse, Chairman



Norman W. Freeman, Vice Chair



Jack F. Husted, Member

John W. Harris, Member



Robert E. Mansell, Member

ATTEST



Gary R. Hovatter, Deputy Director
Acting Secretary and Director