



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

600 S Walnut / P.O. Box 25
Boise, Idaho 83707

Brad Little / Governor
Jim Fredericks / Director

Hunting and Advanced Technology (HAT) Working Group MEETING MINUTES

November 2, 2024

Wendy Green Lowe, Facilitator with P2 Solutions, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. mountain time.

Ellary Tucker Williams, Legislative and Community Engagement Coordinator, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Members attending in-person included: Alex Mártn, Bryce Oldemeyer, Chelsea Merriman, Derick Attebury, Dillon Halvorsen, Doug Talbot, Dustin Webster, Halli Hemingway, Jason Carr, Jason Topp, Jeff Choules, Jeff Shinn, Jeremiah Mani, Ken Crane, Kevin Rogers, Kimberly Johnson, Larry Hatter, Matt Borg, Nathan Guy, Rob Thornberry, Tal Sampson, and Tim Frost.

Members attending virtually included: Nicole Swafford.

IDFG staff in attendance included: Director Jim Fredericks, Ellary Tucker Williams, Greg Wooten, Meghan Roos, Toby Boudreau, LaBerta Jones, Chris Robison, and Elizabeth Page.

Guest speakers and presenters included: Gordon R. Batchellar, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and Scott Lavin, Arizona Game and Fish Department.

In compliance with open meeting law, members of the public had the opportunity to attend in-person at an Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Headquarters Building, or virtually, through a Zoom meeting link.

Director Jim Fredericks gave opening comments.

Welcome and Orientation

Director Jim Fredericks and Ellary Tucker Williams

Wendy Lowe shared the objectives for the November 2nd, 2024, meeting, and proposed ground rules.

Objectives:

- Welcome all and provide an overall orientation to the working group's charge
- Provide the opportunity for everyone to begin to get to know each other

- Receive presentations about Idaho and other entities consideration of the issue under consideration
- Discuss working group members' initial reflections on the information provided
- Agree on how the working group should work together to accomplish its charge
- Identify next steps to continue moving forward.

Ground Rules:

- Participate with Intention
- Appreciate the Diversity of Perspectives
- Treat Others with Respect

The Working Group's Charter and the Proposed Approach to be Taken to Accomplish the Working Group's Charge

Wendy Lowe

Wendy reviewed key portions of the working group's Charter. Members finalized and signed the Charter.

Introductions to the Working Group Members – Why did you want to be included in this Working Group?

All

The Working Group members expressed a wide range of perspectives on hunting and technology. Some members emphasized the importance of preserving traditional hunting skills and ethical practices, while others highlighted the potential benefits of technology in enhancing the hunting experience.

There was a consensus that finding a balance between technological advancements and fair chase principles is crucial. Many members expressed concern about the impact of technology on wildlife populations and the need for sustainable hunting practices. The group also discussed the importance of public land access, mentorship, and education in ensuring the future of hunting in Idaho.

Practical Matters – Idaho Open Meetings Law, How to Seek Reimbursement, etc.

Ellary Tucker Williams

Ellary Tucker Williams informed the working group on Idaho's Open Meeting Laws, which requires advanced publication of agendas and prohibits informal discussions of agenda items outside of scheduled meetings.

LaBerta Jones, Financial Manager, Bureau of Administration, explained the procedure for submitting travel expenses for reimbursement.

Presentation: Idaho Fish and Game – Current Status of Rules Related to Use of Technology for Big Game Hunting in Idaho and Emerging Trends

Greg Wooten, Bureau Chief of Enforcement

Meghan Roos, Senior Conservation Officer

Greg Wooten, Chief of Enforcement, and Officer Megan Roos shared information regarding how Idaho currently regulates the use of technology for hunting big game, for the working group's consideration of how the fair chase ethic intersects with advanced technology.

Presentation: Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Gordon R. Batcheller, AFWA Legal Strategies Advisory Council

Gordon Batchellor, a member of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Legal Strategies Advisory Council, discussed the impact of advanced technology on hunting. The Boone and Crockett Club has been exploring this topic, focusing on fair chase principles. They hosted a discussion in March 2024 to address questions about technology's role in fair chase, such as its impact on public acceptance and the balance between embracing technology and preserving traditional hunting skills.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has also engaged in discussions on the specific technologies that might affect fair chase and their potential implications for policy. Batchellor categorized technology into three types: those that assist in accessing hunting areas, those used to find game, and those that improve hunting success. By understanding these categories, it's possible to assess the potential impact of technology on fair chase principles and develop appropriate strategies to address these challenges.

Presentation: Arizona Game and Fish Department Approach

Scott Lavin, R3 Branch Chief, Arizona Game and Fish Department

Arizona Game and Fish has established a committee to monitor and evaluate emerging technologies and practices in hunting and fishing. The committee aims to promote fair chase principles and educate the public on ethical hunting and fishing practices.

The committee identifies and reviews technologies and practices that may give hunters or anglers an unfair advantage. They consider factors like whether the technology requires skill, physical presence, or allows for certain capture. Technologies like wireless trail cameras, smart rifles, and drones have been identified as violating fair chase principles and have been regulated.

The Department also runs an annual education campaign to promote fair chase and has learned the importance of an open process, taking time for careful evaluation, and using data to make recommendations.

Presentation: Utah Division of Wildlife Services Approach

Sgt. Gabe Patterson, Utah Division of Wildlife

Sgt. Gabe Patterson was unable to attend the meeting but provided a written statement. The statement outlines the work of a Utah Division of Wildlife Resources committee tasked with reviewing the use of technology in hunting. The committee has been summarizing its findings, and a document detailing these findings was attached to Sgt. Patterson's statement.

Small Group Discussions – Round One: What is Special about the Hunting in Idaho?

All/Wendy

The working group engaged in a small group discussion about what makes hunting in Idaho special. Participants were divided into small groups and asked to record their thoughts. The responses were then categorized and shared with the entire group.

Key themes that emerged from the discussion included:

- *Accessibility*: Idaho offers ample opportunities for hunting on public lands, including remote, wilderness areas.
- *Opportunity*: The state provides various hunting opportunities, such as general hunts, over-the-counter tags, and controlled hunts.
- *Diversity*: Idaho boasts a diverse range of species and landscapes, offering a variety of hunting experiences.
- *Hunting Rights*: The state's strong tradition of hunting, fishing, and trapping is valued by residents.
- *Lower Population Density*: Idaho's relatively low population density contributes to its unique hunting experience.
- *Predator Management*: Idaho's Fish and Game department prioritizes hunting in its predator management strategies.

Small Group Discussions – Round Two: How can we Best Use Our Shared Voice to Sustain the Experience of Hunting in Idaho?

All/Wendy

The Working Group then shifted their focus to a second question: "How can we best use our shared voice to sustain the experience of hunting in Idaho?" Participants again divided into small groups and recorded their ideas.

Key themes that emerged from this discussion included:

- *Transparency and Communication*: Promoting public involvement, sharing experiences, and educating the public about fair chase principles were seen as crucial.
- *Preserving Opportunity*: Maintaining hunting opportunities for Idaho residents, including through compromise and trade-offs, is essential.
- *Conservation and Science*: Emphasizing science-based conservation practices and responsible hunting ethics can help sustain hunting.
- *Mentorship and Education*: Mentoring future generations of hunters and educating the public about hunting's value are vital.
- *Technology and Access*: While technology can be a tool, it's important to balance its use with traditional hunting skills and protect public land access.
- *Accountability*: Ensuring fair and transparent allocation of controlled tags and outfitter designations is crucial.
- *Prioritizing Idaho Hunters*: Management decisions should prioritize the access and opportunity of Idaho residents.

Meeting Close: Evaluation and Next Steps

Wendy Lowe shared the dates, locations, and focus of future working group meetings.

Meeting	Location	Focus
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November 11, 2024	Online	Hunting Technologies
December 2, 2024	Online	Fair Chase Ethic
January 4, 2025	In-Person	Hunting Technology and Fair Chase Survey Results
January 27, 2025	Online	Possible Working Group Suggestions
February 17, 2025	Online	Continued Work on Suggestions
March 10, 2025	Online	Moving Towards Finalization of Working Group's Suggestions

In-person meetings will be from 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. MT, and take place at the IDFG Headquarters Building, located at 600 S. Walnut Street in Boise, Idaho. Virtual meetings will be held from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. MT, at the following zoom link:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85605146179>.

Adjourn 4:00 p.m.