



## Colorado Sportsmen's Roundtable

April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Buena Vista Community Center

Buena Vista, Colorado

### SUMMARY

The Colorado Sportsmen's Roundtable met on April 13th, 2019 in Buena Vista, Colorado. Participants included twelve Roundtable members, twelve CPW staff, the Deputy Director of the Department of Natural Resources and two Parks and Wildlife commissioners (see Attachment 1). This document summarizes the group's discussion.

#### Welcome

Jeff Ver Steeg, CPW Acting Director, welcomed the Roundtable members and provided the following updates. CPW hopes to have a new Director by mid-May. With the legislative session still going, CPW is watching a number of bills. It is too early to project new revenues from the passage of the 2018 Future Generations Action. CPW intends to provide a report on the Division's financial health later in 2019. Governor Polis identified several top priorities for his administration including two for CPW to work on -- access for hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation and financial sustainability.

Jody Kennedy, CPW Public Involvement Planning Specialist, recognized outgoing members whose terms are up in July 2019. These members are Andy Treharne, Dan Schwartz, Dan Murphy, Marty Holmes, Roger Tucker, and Tom Kenyon.

#### Big Game Season Structure

Danielle Isenhart, CPW Regulations Manager, provided a status update on the process to develop the 2020-2024 Big Game Season Structure (BGSS). During this process, CPW is considering revisions to length, timing and configuration of seasons. Specific focus areas were developed with staff, public and Parks and Wildlife Commission input. CPW will present outcomes from our public outreach to the Commission in May. Staff will present recommendations to the Commission in June. A Commission decision is expected in July and no later than September.

Jody facilitated a work session to gather input on possible season structure changes. Roundtable members identified their preferred method of take and species to hunt. The majority of members present were rifle hunters with a few small game hunters and anglers, one archery hunter and one archery hunter who hunts limited units.

#### Early Seasons

Jody presented that CPW is hearing that the majority of sportsmen are concerned about hunter crowding during archery seasons based on public comments, meetings and focus

groups. Looking at CPW license sales data, OTC archery licenses have increased fourfold since 1985 and by 25 percent in the last five years.

Members raised several issues, including the growth in non-hunting recreational users and the need to prioritize herd health. Steve Hilde shared results from a survey of Colorado Bowhunters Association (CBA) members. The majority of respondents to the CBA survey do not support limiting archery elk licenses.

### Digital Polling

The Rountable responded to three digital polling questions on early big game seasons. The first asked them to select their top priorities for consideration to improve early seasons. Member's responses were evenly divided between keeping existing season length and reducing crowding as the first choice, followed by keeping existing number of weekend days and separating archery from muzzleloader seasons tied for second. The second question asked them to select their top alternative for improving early seasons. Members slightly favored making no changes with a three-way split for second choice between limiting all archery elk, making archery OTC with caps, and splitting archery into two seasons with each partially overlapping with muzzleloader. The third question asked if archery elk should be moved later into September and if CPW should create an earlier archery deer season that is separate from archery elk. The responses to this question were 55 percent "no" and 45 percent "yes."

### Discussion

Members discussed the trade-offs with separating muzzleloader and archery seasons and with totally limiting archery elk licenses. They discussed changing season timing to be later and how this is impacted by weather and climate change. There was general support for starting archery season on September 2.

### Rifle Seasons

Members shared experiences during rifle season touching on the increase in pressure and changes in animals' movements. They noted that recreation pressure is now year-round with more people and more activities. In response to these challenges, several members discussed the need for longer breaks between seasons. They reviewed a list of proposed alternative management actions and added one that would include four rifle seasons with one longer season and three shorter allowing for longer breaks.

### Digital polling

Members were asked to vote on three questions. The first was to select their top priority for consideration related to deer and elk rifle season structure. The top choice with 50 percent was to keep or expand the breaks between seasons followed by keeping the seasons out of the winter months and then keeping existing season lengths. The second question asked them to select their top alternative management strategy for improving deer and elk rifle seasons. 55 percent selected the new alternative for four seasons, one 7-day and three 5-day with longer breaks. The second choice was four 5-day seasons with longer breaks followed by no

changes. The final question asked if they would support an early bull season in addition to the four regular rifle seasons. The majority (64 percent) voted no.

### Other issues

Members voiced interest in more opportunity to increase bear harvest. CPW staff will be exploring alternatives to address this issue. A member suggested reaching out to federal land managers to learn about what they are seeing on public lands. Information collected at this meeting will be considered along with all the feedback gathered during the BGSS process.

### **Open Roundtable Discussion**

Roger Tucker provided an update on falconry and shared concerns about the difficulty for people from neighboring states to buy a falconry license in Colorado. Falconers coming into Colorado need an import permit and a certificate of health from a licensed vet. In addition, Colorado has banding requirements. These issues are under the jurisdiction of Department of Agriculture; however, Roger appreciates support from CPW and other sportsmen on these matters.

### Regional Caucus Meeting Updates

SE Regional Manager Dan Prenzlów provided an update from the regional caucus meeting. Willie Kalaskie was reappointed and a new member, Larry McCormick was appointed. Participants discussed BGSS, concerns for the new sheep, goat and moose fee and for how some fees were established without much public participation. In addition, there was interest in having non-hunters help pay for wildlife management.

Roundtable member Kevin Alexander provided an update for the SW regional caucus meeting. Participants voiced skepticism with CPW data sharing practices and questioned herd population estimates. They also discussed the increase in recreational activity and increasing pressures to wildlife. Kevin is part of the Gunnison Public Lands Initiative ([Gunnisonpubliclands.org](http://Gunnisonpubliclands.org)) developing a community proposal for balancing recreation and conservation interests in the region.

Member Steve Hilde provided an update for the NE caucus, highlighting BGSS and concern about preference point creep. Hilde raised the issue of selling GPS data for animal locations and whether this qualifies as outfitting. This issue needs to be addressed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Colorado Department of Regulatory Affairs who have management authority.

Member Dale Coombs provide the NW Caucus update highlighting growing non-hunting recreation and increasing uses allowed by the USFS. The region is concerned about herd health, declining cow-calf ratios and the impact of predators on calf survival.

## Bobcats

Member Dan Gates spoke about the bobcat citizen petition that will be considered at the May Commission meeting. Dan requested that members become familiar with the petition and engage on this issue. If anyone has questions, they can contact Dan Gates directly.

## **CPW Updates**

Dan Prenzlou provided updates on restoring the conservation pool at John Martin to protect the fishery and on acquiring an access easement as part of a larger purchase of the Crazy French ranch in Trinidad. He highlighted new areas open under the Bighorn sheep private access program, opening of a new shooting range and efforts to allow deer hunting in Woodland Park, Buena Vista, La Vita, and other towns to help with management. In addition, CPW worked with Manitou Springs to establish a trash ordinance to help mitigate bear conflicts.

NE Regional Manager Mark Leslie highlighted conflicts between wildlife and recreation including the high profile mountain lion attack near Fort Collins. CPW is working to provide hunting opportunities to control wildlife populations around urban centers including 55 elk hunted on Rabbit Mountain. CPW will be testing for CWD on the eastern plains. The NE will lead in establishing a Public Access working group to advance strategies that increase acres accessible for hunting and fishing.

SW Acting Regional Manager Heath Kehm talked about the heavy winter snows and that BLM extended closures along with CPW on SWAs for wildlife who could not reach higher elevations. Regional biologists have been collaring elk to look at calf survival rates and launching projects to restore native cutthroat.

NW Deputy Regional Manager Dean Riggs highlighted a successful women's turkey hunt, efforts to manage lions that pose a threat to urban communities and the high level of moose activity in and around ski towns. The NW had a successful ruffed grouse transplant. The Cameo shooting range is open and CPW is bringing on more staff to run the facility. National championship events are scheduled and Federal agencies are interested in using it. There is some community interest in moving the Basalt range, but CPW has not identified a good alternative location.

Reid DeWalt, Assistant Director of Wildlife and Natural Resources, shared that while fish stocking reports are available to the public, they are sensitive about releasing specific information. A domestic sheep working group, which has been meeting for about 2 years, signed a charter and is holding a science symposium to explore the impacts of disease this spring. CPW is preparing big game license recommendations that will be posted on the Commission May meeting webpage. This year, CPW counted over 85,000 elk from aerial surveys.

Katie Lanter, Policy and Planning Supervisor, shared an update on the Future Generation Act. CPW developed metrics to track progress on the 10 goals outlined in the bill.

Gary Thorson, Assistant Director of Information and Education, shared a packet of outreach and marketing materials and reminded the Roundtable that the Partners Conference is coming up featuring well-known speakers and pertinent session topics.

Jeff Ver Steeg mentioned that legislative session is about to wrap up and that CPW will send a written update after the session ends.

### Looking Ahead

The next Roundtable meeting will be a conference call. Roundtable application process for new members will launch this spring.

### Attachment 1: April 2019 Sportsmen’s Roundtable In-person Meeting Participation List

Roundtable Member	Residence
Dale Coombs	Grand Junction
Dan Gates	Canon City
Dan Schwartz	Meeker
Kara Armano	Hesperus
Kevin Alexander	Gunnison
Larry McCormick	Southeast
Mark Smith	Alamosa
Roger Tucker	Colorado Springs
Roy Karo	Grand Junction
Ryan McSparren	Littleton
Steve Hilde	Loveland
Willie Kalaskie	Colorado Springs
CPW/PWC/DNR	Title
Jeff Ver Steeg	Acting Director
Heath Kehm	Acting Southwest Regional Manager
Katie Lanter	Policy and Planning Supervisor
Dan Prenzlow	Southeast Regional Manager
Mark Leslie	Northeast Regional Manager
Gary Thorson	Assistant Director Information and Education
Andy Holland	Big Game Manager
Reid DeWalt	Assistant Director Wildlife and Natural Resources
Danielle Isenhardt	Regulations Manager
Jody Kennedy	Public Involvement Specialist
Dean Riggs	Deputy NW Regional Manager
Tim Mauck	Deputy Director, Department of Natural Resources
John Howard	Parks and Wildlife Commission
Charles Garcia	Parks and Wildlife Commission