

FINAL – Teton County Wildlife Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – August 4, 2022

Members in Attendance: Michael Whitfield, Jeff Klausmann, Mike Lein, Tamara Sperber, Allison Michalski, Kathy O’Neil, Linda Unland

Michael Whitfield opened the Zoom meeting at 10:00 am. We all began by introducing ourselves.

1. The Scope of the Committee

Michael described this committee as a self-governing body, and no longer an Ad Hoc committee, as in the past year. As this is a county committee, Michael will be the elected official with oversight. At the last Board of County Commissioners meeting, a resolution for the committee was approved, and 11 members were confirmed. **Action.** Michael W will be sending to Committee members a copy of this Resolution.

Briefly, the Committee has committed representation from the US Forest Service, BLM, Idaho Fish and Game, Teton County Natural Resources Commission, JH Wildlife Foundation, the Farm Bureau. In addition, representatives from FTR, TRLT, GYE, Intermountain Aquatics and community members.

The resolution describes the powers, duties and responsibilities of these above members as “advisory” to the BOCC – to recommend guidelines, practices, goals and policies, while recommending procedures to protect wildlife. The Committee will also address contracting for technical expertise, conduct interpretive programs and develop programs for the community pertaining to wildlife awareness.

The Committee will have no authority over regulations.

2. Committee Officers

Jeff Klausmann offered to be the Chair; Kathy O’Neil, Vice Chair; and Linda Unland, Secretary. This slate was unanimously approved by the members present on Zoom.

Action: Monthly meetings will be scheduled, and a poll for preferred days/time will be sent to Commission members by Michael W.

3. Past and Present Project Ideas

- a. Land Development Code: Michael W. indicated that the new Land Development Code infers a Natural Resource Overlay development policy not yet written. The County intentions are to create a group of vetted resource specialists to be utilized by developers for assessment of possible impacts of development proposed within areas identified on Natural Resource Overlay maps . These resource specialists would be paid for by the developer and would represent the resource. The committee will assist in developing this policy.
- b. Bio Blasts for County: Recruit citizen volunteers; spend full day at a specified site with experts documenting wildlife and representing the diversity in a given habitat(ie. FTR - river habitat; TRLT - riparian birds; Jeff Klausmann - wetland birds; BLM - public lands). This would provide a way to engage a broader group within the Teton Valley community and an excellent opportunity to pair up lay people with experts.
- c. Follow Up Workshops (Michael indicated that we have great experts for the workshops)
- d. A Large Advertising Effort
- e. Additional comments: Kathy suggested incorporating this work with Citizen Science. Tamara indicated that she believes there to be grants to support Bio Blasts. **Action:** Tamara will track down information on these possible grants.

4. Rules pertaining to Wildlife Committee

Michael W. explained that this is a formal county committee. As such, we need to follow open meeting laws. Notice of our meetings with an agenda must be posted on the county website and will be open to anyone to attend either in person or by Zoom. A reminder that we are not decision makers; nor are our meetings public hearings. If the agenda and notice of meeting is posted 48 hours prior, this will meet the laws governing such a committee(BUT, we should try to post earlier!). **Action:** Linda to work with Dan Reyes, the County Manager, to post our meetings.

5. Miscellaneous Points of Discussion

- a. Recovering America's Wildlife Act. Kathy asked if this committee should play a role in this and if we should keep an eye on its progression?
- b. Michael W shared that Teton County Wyoming recently created a staff position that has a Natural Resources Head. He pointed out that Natural

Resources and Recreation Management need to figure out new funding sources

- c. Wildlife Crossings. Another important topic. Michael indicated that the Idaho DOT is changing how they are addressing roads and that they are doing the same in Island Park. These changes are not putting wildlife in top priority.
- d. Jeff pointed out that the time-lines of these above issues will be important for us to keep track of so that we stay on top of approaching deadlines for comments.

6. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- a. Bio Blasts and Workshops

Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am