

Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)  
Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)  
**GAME MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING #15**  
Virtual Meeting -ZOOM  
August 17, 2020

**ROLL CALL**

PRESENT:

Commission: **Stanley Ruidas, Lanai (Chair); Nancy Timko, Oahu (Vice Chair); Ryan Kohatsu, East Hawaii; Josiah Jury, Oahu; Kalani Nakoa, Maui; Robert Masuda, Representative of the Chair of DLNR;**

DOFAW Staff: **Jason Omick; John Medeiros, Shane DeMattos**

**ITEM 1. CALL TO ORDER – DLNR Zoom Call**

(5:46) Comm. Ruidas called the meeting of the Game Management Advisory Commission to order. Two individuals will arrive later in meeting so it is recommended that the agenda be changed and move-ups requested as follows: Item #2 be moved after Item #7, and to start the Commission meeting with Item 3. All present in agreement with change.

**ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Action Required:** Approval of minutes from the January 23, 2020 GMAC meeting.

() Comm. Ruidas made a motion to approve the minutes from January 23, 2020, but this was not accomplished as quorum could not be met.

**ITEM 3. COVID-19 IMPACTS ON DOFAW HUNTING PROGRAM**

(6:49) Jason Omick explains the status and impact of COVID-19 on the Hunting Program since January 2020. Issues are being faced regarding generation of revenue due to cancellation of the Lanai Mouflon Hunt and Axis Deer Hunt. The cancellation of the two hunts resulted in a loss of approximately \$125,000 in revenues for the year to the Revolving Wildlife Fund. These hunts will continue to be rescheduled and a small portion of the lost revenues have been replaced by collection of hunting application fees.

There will be a loss in funds within the Revolving Wildlife Fund, and there is currently a positive balance of \$9,000 to handle meetings and the ongoing operation, but by year end we will be faced with a deficit.

There has been no dramatic change in hunting license sales, and only approximately 20 license fees were refunded this year so far. Primarily the refunds were for out of state residents coming specifically for the cancelled hunts, and our ten percent application processing fee was retained.

Currently we do have trail closures but hunting is still an allowable activity. No guidance has been provided otherwise. Hunters are allowed on trails with their gear and not impacted by trail closures. (10:17) Robert Masuda is in agreement that hunters are allowed on trails and the city has not requested that trails be closed to hunters that are utilizing trails for hunting purposes.

(12:38) Jason Omick reports the DOFAW Hunting Program has been impacted by a budget restriction on all funding, General Fund and associated spending. As of now there has been a 10% reduction in spending and there might be further reductions in the future. They are not aware of any furloughs being enacted at this time.

(13:21) Robert Masuda reports that currently we have a \$2.3 billion dollar shortfall within the Wildlife Division. There will be additional impact unless there is significant change in November and they experience more funds being designated to them from the Federal Government. There has been lobbying done within the Administration for 2-day furloughs to be enacted if needed, versus layoffs. The division does not want to be forced to do layoffs or eliminate jobs, therefore, they are lobbying to keep the positions, but will not fill the positions, and the funding received can be used to cover the shortfall. The goal is to protect the Department during the recovery process and protect the positions designated to the department.

(14:30) Jason Omick reports that at DOFAW there has been a hiring freeze within the department. The Wildlife Program Manager position has been frozen along with an Assistant to Hunting Program and Planner positions. It is their objective moving forward to fill those positions or obtain exemptions to fill those positions, with the priority on filling the Wildlife Program Manager position first. They will be looking for funding opportunities that will allow them to do so. R. Masuda states, "If the funding is not in general funds or bonds, then if it can be found in Special Funds, and you are more likely to obtain an exemption."

(17:29) Jason Omick states there was a decrease in hunting license sales between January 2020 to March 2020. From 2019 to 2020 during the same quarter, there was a decrease in sales of 664 licenses. Despite that decrease overall for the year they have only seen an overall decrease of 124 hunting license sales due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

(18:05) Robert Masuda shares that within the Administration they have been promoting hunting as a sustainable food source for our local communities to combat the unemployment and layoffs caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. This message is being heard and accepted within the community.

(19:44) Stanley Ruidas states that hunting is allowed in Lanai. They just opened up Pulama Wildlife Control permit for hunting. Between Friday and Saturday, the first two days, they had a total of 42 hunters obtain 32 deer.

(22:12) Nancy Timko reports that the 2020 event, “Becoming an Outdoors Woman,” was cancelled in East Hawaii due to COVID-19. This event will most likely be rescheduled for the second, or third weekend of September 2021, based on participant preference.

**(23:44) Action Item: Comm. Timko to coordinate obtaining county permit with Jason for this event. Permit will be needed for cabins and bunkhouses with kitchens as well as for auditorium use (entire camp). Event to be held at Gilbert Kahele Recreation Center.**

### **Legislative Review of Bill S. 183D**

(26:21) Jason Omick discusses and presents a Power Point reviewing a bill for an Act .183D 4.5 that established the Game Management Advisory Commission. This is a review for new members of the commission.

**Purpose of the Act:** (a) to establish a game management advisory commission to serve in an advisory capacity to the board of land and natural resources. The game management advisory commission shall consist of nine members to be appointed by the governor in the manner provided in section 23-34.

(b) the game management advisory commission shall select its own chairperson from among its members. The members shall receive no compensation for their services on the game management advisory commission but shall be entitled to reimbursement – for necessary expenses, including travel, while attending meetings while in the discharge of their duties.

**(31:59) Action Item: (Jason Omick)- will provide all commission members with a document that details allowable expenses for travel that each member can be reimbursed. Most travel arrangements will be made by DOFAW directly and only minimal out of pocket expenses should be accrued by members such as for taxis or hotel stays, that will be reimbursed.**

(c) The game management advisory commission may recommend policies and criteria regarding the management, protection, and promotion of public hunting in Hawaii and may recommend amendments to existing department policies and procedures relating to hunting, particularly regarding this chapter and chapters 122, 123 and 124 of Title 13, Hawaii Administrative Rules.

(d) The game management advisory commission shall: (1) consult and advise the board on any matter affecting hunting, including proposed rules and regulations;

(2) Assist in the evaluation and development of game management plans as appropriate or required and any changes to those plans as necessary;

(3) Assist in the establishment of criteria to be used in determining whether an area is suitable for hunting;

(4) Advise on studies of areas for sustainable yield game production or enhancement;

(5) Recommend to the board the areas that are suitable for game production or enhancement;

(6) Recommend policies and criteria regarding the management, protection, and permitted uses of areas that are used for hunting;

(7) Assist the department in developing ways and means to extend and strengthen game management areas, other designated hunting areas, and mixed-use areas within the State;

(8) In carrying out its duties, consult the most comprehensive up-to-date compilation of scientific data;

(9) Make recommendations relating to the process of hunting rules modification;

(10) Collaborate with agencies and other persons who gather information and implement hunting programs and data;

(11) Take testimony and acquire information as it desires and communicate its findings and recommendations to the board; and

(12) Assist the department on policies, plans and procedures related to the control of game mammals, including aerial shooting activities by the department and its contractors.

(e) The game management advisory commission shall submit a report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2017, and each regular commission thereafter, on its efforts to comply with this section, including a summary of its activities during the year preceding the regular session for which the report was prepared.

(36:15) Jason Omick reports The goal of the review is to define the role of each commission member and to help each individual understand why they are here serving on this commission

***(37:40) Action Item: Jason Omick will provide all members of GMAC a summary of what bills relating to hunting are being brought before the Legislature and provide a procedural document that will dictate how commissioners are to bring testimony to the Chairperson.***

(40:18) Robert Masuda reports all upcoming hunting legislative bills should be placed on the GMAC Commission agendas moving forward for review and voted upon by the entire commission so that testimony can be given as to the commission being in favor or not in favor of the bill. This is not to be construed as a limitation on any commissioners' ability to give personal testimony at a legislative session.

#### ITEM 4. MANAGEMENT PLANS, STEERING DOCUMENTS & PROJECT UPDATES

(43:47) Jason Omick reports the following are updates regarding ongoing DOFAW projects:

1. **(43:49) Lanai Steering Document:** DOFAW hired HT Harvey & Associates to work on this document. The reason for this project is that DOFAW wishes to continue the cooperative agreement it has for managing 30,000 acres of private land on the island of Lana'i for public hunting, (LCGMA). DOFAW wishes to continue provided economic benefits to the landowner and recreational benefits to public hunters on Lana'i and statewide. This document will provide a comprehensive overview of the management and research needs of all the natural resources within LCGMA, and present the direction and intent of DOFAW for the management and stewardship of the lands to support the issuance of a continued long-term cooperative agreement. This document will be the foundation utilized in DOFAW's preparation of a strategic management plan for LCGMA to ensure the plan is in alignment with conservation and game management practices of the landowner, Lana'i Resorts, LLC. DOFAW has addressed first round of comments on the document and has a goal of a finished product by September 2020. DOFAW will share the completed steering document with the GMAC Commission upon request of individual commission members.
2. **(49:10) Kanaio Forestry and Wildlife Area Management Plan:** The goal of this plan is for DOFAW to establish the Kanaio FWA as a mixed-use public hunting area. The area will provide quality hunting opportunities and recreational use for the growing population of Maui. (Visual map overview is provided by Jason Omick, outlining hunter checkpoints and entrances, as well as areas designated for conservation.) An initial draft management plan has been commented upon, and biological assessment for the area has been conducted. DOFAW is waiting on the draft environmental assessment so they can continue the completion of this process. DOFAW wishes to protect this area from further damage by humans and ungulates. KFWA will expand opportunities for public hunting and curtail further damage from activities such as illegal off-road vehicles and unauthorized cattle grazing. KFWA will construct firebreaks, roads, signage, fencing and other infrastructure. The project is approximately one month behind due to issues with the contractor, but this is being worked through to finish the final document.
3. **(57:00) DOFAW's Official Recreational Mobile Application:** This program is currently now "live" and the APP can be now downloaded. A full launch of this APP for Hawaii, will be done shortly. This APP will be DOFAW's official recreational mobile APP. OuterSpatial

is the developer of the APP. This APP allows an individual to view and navigate all trails throughout the state, all forest reserves, hunting areas, wildlife sanctuaries and natural air reserves are contained within the APP. A user will be able to see length of trails, and what is contained on the trail as well to view their personal location upon the trail. Users will also be able to view all attributes of the trail. Additionally, the APP will also allow hunters to check in and out of hunting units electronically and report their harvests electronically from a remote location, as well as communicate with other hunters, and to view all safety zones and hazards. Rules and regulations will be contained within the APP for hunters. It will be available on IOS and Android. Please advise Jason Omick of any questions that you have.

4. **(1:00:32) Ungulate Distribution Project Kauai:** This pig research study is being done on Kauai and Maui, and was already completed on Oahu, to look at the distribution of ungulates on the different islands. The map generated by the study is shared with Commissioners that shows where camera traps are being placed to detect absence or presence of animals. The outcome of this study will allow DOFAW to utilize this information for the improvement of management of game mammals for both recreational hunting and conservation perspectives. This is a new, first-time study, and the project is still being completed. DOFAW hopes to have the study finalized by year end. Once all the islands have a game management plan it is the hopes of DOFAW that they can begin conducting these studies on private lands to assist landowners with both game management and conservation plans.

*(1:07:02)* Josiah Jury comments that the information revealed in this report shows that many ungulates are not in the areas where they are preparing to build more fences. The information from the report needs to be considered in management plans for additional fencing on O'ahu, to ensure that fencing is being instituted in the appropriate areas.

5. *(1:17:05)* The Game Program was awarded the Pitman Robertson Grant for 2021. This grant will provide approximately \$1.7 million with the State of HI matching \$593,000. This will leave an operations budget of \$600,000 for the entire state, which is significantly less than previous years, but this funding will allow, the DOFAW department to operate as needed, minimizing any new expenses.
6. *(1:18:45)* We currently still have two Commission vacancies- Kauai and West Hawaii. We did have two applications submitted for Kauai and we are expecting a Governor decision.
7. *(1:19:46)* Legislative Report: Draft legislative report has been completed and will be provided to all Commissioners for review as final must be published by October 2020.

8. (1:21:00) Survey: Additional questions still have not been defined that need to be contained within GMAC surveys moving forward. This is an outstanding issue from January's GMAC meeting.

*(1:13:02) Action item 1: Jason would like to see a list from each Commissioner on all hunting and wildlife issues for each island that includes priorities and or changes each Commissioner would like to see. These lists will ensure Commissioner objectives are met.*

*(1:15) Action item 2: Each Commissioner within the GMAC Commission needs to ensure they have attended the State Law Ethics Training and Sunshine Law (OIP) training. Much of this training is now being done online versus in person. Please contact Jason if you need assistance in signing up for these sessions.*

*(1:20:20) Action item 3: Jason Omick will be getting with each Commissioner to address what specific questions they would like contained within surveys moving forward in order to further refine the results obtained from them.*

## ITEM 5. COMMISSIONER ISLAND REPORTS

- 7-I **EAST HAWAII.** (1:28:00) Comm. Kohatsu stated he has not seen any of the DOFAW staff due to Covid-19 issues. Aerial shooting will start tomorrow and last until Thursday. There are no other game management plans moving forward. All meat salvaged from aerial shooting will be open for the public to obtain via acquired permits. Jason Omick comments that DLNR website contains announcements to the public regarding how to obtain salvaged meat from these operations.
- 7-II **LANAI.** (1:46:42) Comm. **Ruidas** stated, "We do not have a quorum so we can not address item #2." Jason Omick confirmed. Ruidas further states that they have been trying to open the deer hunt and Mouflon combination hunt but were not able to open the hunts due to Covid-19 and opposition from the community of 200 plus hunters gathering for events, so the season was closed. Due to season closure Pulama Lanai obtained a wildlife control permit that would help control deer population by allowing only the shooting of deer. This started, and it is limited to 30 hunters per day. Community participation has been good. This also involved the extension of a one-year lease for Pulama Lanai. It is our goal to obtain a 10-year lease from Palama Lanai.

- 7-III **OAHU.** (1:36:39) Comm. Timko stated that she requested an update report from DOFAW staff on the island but have not requested an in person meet. They have reported they are working on the online APP for applications for hunters for O’ahu permitted hunts. Comm. Timko is working with the Board of Water Supply **for Wildlife Control funds**. DOFAW is working on instituting new hunter access points for new hunting areas. The Game Bird Program was not able to order any birds to populate for the Game Bird hunting season due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. This will impact the number of birds available for the bird hunting season.
- 7-IV **O’AHU-** (1:45:43) Josiah Jury stated he will be looking for a replacement for his commissioner slot as well. No additional comments.

## **ITEM 6. FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE & AGENDA ITEMS**

(1:49:56) Stanley Ruidas introduces Item 6.

(1:50:03) Jason Omick states he will work with all Commissioners to schedule next meeting, date has not been decided. Robert Masuda comments that next meeting should be scheduled via Zoom for October.

**Action Item 6: Determine what times the next GMAC meetings will work for Commissioners.**

## **ITEM 7. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(1:53:05) No announcements

## **ITEM 8. ADJOURNMENT**

(1:53:28) Comm. Ruidas adjourned the Game Management Advisory Commission Meeting at 4:58 p.m.