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MINUTES  
August 22, 2025

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission met at Mid-plains Community College McCook, NE for the transaction of business, advance public notice having been given through release to news media and official public notice published in the Lincoln Journal Star on August 7, 2025.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 A.M. Chairman Hoggatt advised this meeting was being held in conformance with the State Open Meetings Act and the act was available for review on the table at the back of the room. Members present: Kurt Arganbright, Valentine; Doug Zingula, Sidney; Scott Cassels, Omaha; Kent McNeill, Papillion; Dan Hughes, Venango; Donna Kush, Omaha; Steve Mossman, Lincoln; Lisa Roskens, Omaha; and John Hoggatt, Kearney.

Minutes of the meeting held June 13, 2025, were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Mossman and seconded by Mr. Zingula to approve the meeting minutes. Voting aye: Kush, Cassels, Arganbright, McNeill, Mossman, Zingula, Hughes, and Hoggatt; Roskens and Mossman abstained; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Financial vouchers for June and July were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Cassels, seconded by Ms. Roskens to approve financial vouchers. Voting aye: Cassels, Arganbright, Kush, McNeill, Mossman, Zingula, Hughes, and Hoggatt; abstain-Roskens, voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Director's Report

Director McCoy presented a Prominent Partner Award to Carol Schlegel with the McCook/Red Willow County Visitors Bureau for her exceptional contributions to promoting eco-tourism, outdoor recreation and conservation in southwest Nebraska and supporting Game and Parks mission.

The Director announced that Nebraska Game and Parks biologist Adam Kester was awarded the inaugural Public Lands Hero Award by the Nebraska Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.

He continued with his report to thank the NGPC team for their swift response after the August 2<sup>nd</sup> storms and their efforts at several impacted parks in recovery and clean up.

Director McCoy announced that the Vanderheiden Memorial Run raised \$13,000.00 that was

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donated to the Fort Kearny Trail this year.

With Fall approaching, the Director shared that the 2025-2026 Public Access Guide is now available, reviewed the fall hunting seasons, gave an upland game outlook report and a reminder about the upland slam contest. Director McCoy then went on to share information on upcoming events and awards presented to the Communications Division at the ACI conference.

The October Commission meetings will be held at Niobrara State Park on October 9 and 10.

#### End Director's Report

Because agenda items 4-11 were similar in nature (calling for public hearings at the October meeting), Chairman Hoggatt asked the Commissioners if they were willing to consolidate them and vote on those eight items with one vote. If there were any concerns or objections, then those agenda items would be addressed individually. There were no objections.

4. Staff recommendation to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Title 164 Fisheries Regulations, Chapter 6 Sport Fishing Regulations.
5. Staff recommendation to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Fisheries Commission Order C06 Sport Fishing.
6. Staff recommendation to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Title 166 Wildlife Regulations, Chapter 1 General Regulations Governing Wildlife Species.
7. Staff recommendation to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Title 166 Wildlife Regulations, Chapter 3 Antelope, Deer, Elk.
8. Staff recommendation to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Title 166 Wildlife Regulations, Chapter 5 Game Birds (not including turkey, coots, and migratory waterfowl) Furbearers and Cottontail Rabbit.
9. Staff recommendation to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Title 166 Wildlife Regulations, Chapter 7 Nuisance Birds.
10. Staff recommendation to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Title 166 Wildlife Regulations, Chapter 18, General Regulations Governing the Administration and Use of Property.
11. Staff recommendation to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Title 166 Wildlife Regulations, Chapter 19 Area Specific Regulations.

Motion by Ms. Kush, seconded by Mr. Hughes to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Arganbright, Kush, McNeill, Mossman, Cassels, Hughes, Roskens, and Hoggatt; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Hoggatt opened the public hearing to consider amendments to Title 166, Wildlife Regulations Chapter 20, Mountain Lions to clarify unit boundaries and adjust harvest limits in the Niobrara Management Unit at 8:15 AM. Carnivore and Furbearer Program Manager Sam Wilson shared staff recommendations for the various units. Fifteen public comments had been

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received by the deadline. There were four comments from in-state, one in support and three opposed to staff recommendations. There were eleven comments from non-residents or unknown residency, two were from groups plus eight individuals in opposition, and one was from a group in support of staff recommendations. The letters for the record are attached at the end of these minutes.

There was no public testimony given at the hearing so the public hearing was closed at 8:48 AM.

Motion by Mr. Hughes to approve staff recommendations, seconded by Ms. Kush. Voting aye: Zingula, Kush, McNeill, Mossman, Hughes, Arganbright, Roskens, Cassels and Hoggatt; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Hoggatt opened the public hearing at 8:50AM to consider amendments to Title 163 Chapter 5 Rules relating to fees for licenses and permits and Deployed Military Permits, Section 001, regarding increasing hunting, fishing, combination hunt/fish, turkey, antelope and deer permit fees as well as the antelope and elk application fees and nonresident Aquatic Invasive Species stamp. Budget and Fiscal Division Administrator Kay Mencl reviewed staff recommendations on the various fee increases. There were no public comments given prior to the meeting and no one testified during the hearing, so the hearing was closed at 8:56 AM.

Motion by Mr. McNeill, seconded by Mr. Mossman to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: McNeill, Mossman, Zingula, Hughes, Roskens, Arganbright, Kush, Cassels and Hoggatt. Voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Hoggatt opened the public hearing at 8:59 AM to consider amendments to Wildlife Commission Order C014 Mountain Sheep, regarding the authorization of mountain sheep hunting permits for the 2026 season. Bighorn Sheep Program Manager Todd Nordeen reviewed staff recommendations for one lottery tag and one auction tag for 2026. There was a letter of support from the Sierra Club International. There was no public testimony given so the public hearing was closed at 9:10 AM.

Motion by Mr. Zingula, seconded by Ms. Roskens to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Mossman, Zingula, Hughes, Roskens, Arganbright, Kush, Cassels, McNeill and Hoggatt. Voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chair Hoggatt called for a ten-minute recess.

Commissioner Lisa Roskens was asked to pull the winning lottery tag for the bighorn sheep 2025 season. The winner Brandon Wallace was called during the meeting and informed that he won.

Assistant Parks Division Administrator Justin Bogue reviewed staff recommendations for Commission approval to allow hunting in specific state parks and state historical parks.

Motion by Mr. Arganbright, seconded by Mr. Cassels to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Zingula, Hughes, Roskens, Arganbright,

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Kush, Cassels, McNeill, Mossman and Hoggatt. Voting nay: None.  
Motion carried.

Wildlife Division Administrator Alicia Hardin reviewed staff recommendation for Commission approval to rename the 703-acre Twin Lakes Wildlife Management Area in Rock County the Nick Lyman Wildlife Management Area.

Motion by Ms. Kush, seconded by Ms. Roskens to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Hughes, Roskens, Arganbright, Kush, Cassels, McNeill, Mossman, Zingula and Hoggatt. Voting nay: None.  
Motion carried.

Bighorn Sheep Program Manager Todd Nordeen reviewed staff recommendations for Commission approval of the Bighorn Sheep Restoration Facility Plan pending fundraising and a lease agreement for the restoration facility location.

Motion by Ms. Roskens, seconded by Ms. Kush to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Roskens, Arganbright, Kush, Cassels, McNeill, Mossman, Zingula, Hughes and Hoggatt. Voting nay: None.  
Motion carried.

Natural Heritage Program Manager Jon Soper reviewed staff recommendations for Commission approval of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of the Nebraska Natural Legacy Plan to be submitted to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for review and acceptance.

Motion by Mr. McNeill, seconded by Ms. Roskens to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Roskens, Arganbright, Kush, Cassels, McNeill, Mossman, Zingula, Hughes and Hoggatt. Voting nay: None.  
Motion carried.

Public Comment Period- Paula Brown commented that using a mineral program will help draw mountain sheep to where you want them to go. This may be helpful with the big horn sheep restoration program previously discussed. She also thanked the Commissioners for their action on Mountain lion hunting.

Fisheries Assistant Division Administrator Aaron Blank gave a report on NGPC partnerships and outreach which play key roles in collaborative fisheries management.

Law Enforcement Division Administrator Jeff Clauson introduced the southwest district's law enforcement team.

Trails Manager Alex Duryea gave an update on the Cowboy Trail 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events that are taking place as part of that celebration.

Item 24 the Missouri River Expo report was taken off the agenda.

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There was no call for an executive session.

Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Kush and seconded by Mr. Arganbright to adjourn the meeting at 11:24 AM. Voting aye: Hughes, Roskens, McNeill, Mossman, Cassels, Arganbright, Zingula, Kush, and Hoggatt; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

I hereby certify the foregoing is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission at its meeting held August 22, 2025.



Timothy McCoy, Director

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