

A Historical Perspective of the Nevada Department of Wildlife

In 1947, the Nevada State Legislature created a seventeen member Fish and Game commission composed of individuals elected by the people of each county during general elections.

Under this statute the commission was given full authority over the agency, including the appointment of a State Director.

Long time Elko County resident and past commissioner, Earl Frantzen related:

I served on the Nevada Fish and Game Commission eight years altogether, from 1959 through 1966. It was an elected position at that time. Each commissioner represented the people of his county.

It worked well, I can remember there were times when we were pressured by some of the legislators, but I'd just tell them that I represented the people, the same as they did and that I would answer to them.

At that time the commission had full authority over the agency, which is altogether different than it is today. Every two years the commission would elect five of its members to an executive board. The board met once a month.

It was a lot of work and the only reimbursement we received was for room and travel, but I believe the whole process worked much better then. At least we had good control over the wildlife programs, and wildlife production was good.

Budgets never were a problem, we simply operated on the revenues of the previous year. We had a set policy that there were never to be more than 105 employees and we stuck to it.

Then in 1969 and 1979, the Nevada Legislature, by passing two different bills, created a Wildlife Department that in many respects has become a political entity of its own.

These two bills, Senate Bill 530 and Senate Bill 333, abolished the Nevada State Game Commission, replaced it with a nine member advisory board appointed by the Governor, placed all administrative and budgetary authority under the Department itself, (under the direction of the State Director), and changed the name of the agency to the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

On close inspection, it is clear that this agency, during the last several years, has caused more problems for, and contention between, all the various user group of the Federal lands than any other single thing.