

Critics, Nev. Wildlife Commission still at odds over mule deer

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

The war of will between wildlife biologists and the Nevada Wildlife Commission over management of the state's mule deer continues, with the panel appointed by Republican former Gov. Jim Gibbons poised to adopt policy critics insist lacks scientific support.

Commissioners are pursuing changes Chairman Scott Raine of Eureka said are needed after years of inaction to boost mule deer numbers across Nevada.

But critics, including Ken Mayer, acting director of the Nevada Department of Wildlife, say that proposed policies to be considered by commissioners later this month encourage livestock grazing and widespread killing of predators such as mountain lions and coyotes with little proven benefit to mule deer.

"They've been at this for some time. This is kind of the culmination of things," said Mayer, who was fired by Gibbons as wildlife director in November 2010 and subsequently rehired on an acting basis by newly elected Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval.

Mayer and some members of the nine-member commission have been at odds over deer and predator management, with that disagreement showing little sign of dissipating.

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