

**Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
Citizen Advisory Committee
Charter**

Need

Montana citizens are vitally interested in their fish, wildlife, parks, and outdoor recreation, and their interests vary greatly across these resources. As FWP works to perpetuate opportunity outside, strives toward balance, focuses on integrity, and brings people together, it has a continuing need to more fully involve citizens and provide a forum for diverse interests to come together. A Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) in each FWP region ideally provides a forum for good communication, sharing of information, mutual respect, and building trust.

Purpose

A CAC comprised of diverse, engaged citizens helps FWP by serving two primary functions: 1) providing FWP with information, ideas, and identifying emerging trends; and 2) providing a means for FWP to better inform the public through CAC members, who in turn are ambassadors to their communities. This exchange of information, ideas, and opinions ideally helps to identify and transparently address opportunities, potential conflicts, management choices, and tradeoffs involving public trust resources.

CACs in each region help FWP to be responsive and transparent public trust managers. Citizen advisors help the department operate efficiently and effectively within the constraints of state law, commission and board rules and regulations, and department rules and policy. FWP employees benefit from having a better understanding of public priorities and expectations, and from having a trusted “sounding board” for programs and initiatives. CAC members and others benefit from a better understanding of FWP programs, priorities, processes, and limitations.

Authorities and Roles

FWP is a public agency of state government under the direction of the governor of Montana, as chief executive of the state. As such, FWP has the public trust responsibility to implement and enforce laws passed by the Montana legislature, including making rules and regulations only as authorized by those laws. Similarly, the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Montana Parks and Recreation Board are assigned their own regulatory and rulemaking responsibilities and authorities under state law.

Because these authorities cannot legally be delegated to others, CACs do not possess decision-making authority, but rather serve in an advisory capacity to FWP. Nonetheless, CACs are encouraged to help build community consensus and make informed recommendations to the department, board, and commission. Individual CAC

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members, like any citizen, may separately choose to communicate their thoughts with commission members, board members, and legislators, although FWP itself takes no role in these individual citizen contacts with other officials.

Membership

CAC candidates may be identified by any interested party, and the net should be cast to a wide variety of interests. Appointments are made by the regional supervisor, including designation of the chair of the CAC, with the concurrence of the FWP director's office. CACs typically consist of no more than 20 members who volunteer to serve terms of 2 years, with memberships staggered to help ensure continuity. Multiple terms are acceptable and encouraged, as are perspectives from new membership. While there are no formal qualifications to serve, members are ideally active in their communities, willing to work collaboratively, have a general understanding of resource issues and public processes, and represent a variety of interests and geographic communities in a region.

Expectations

A CAC typically meets 2-4 times per year, either in person or online as appropriate. Members should make a commitment to attend meetings, offer information and ideas, communicate with others in a respectful manner, and share information about the work of the CAC within their communities.

FWP provides logistical and administrative support to CACs, and gathers pertinent information to present to members. Regional supervisors serve as facilitators for CAC meetings, unless other arrangements are made for facilitation, and collaborate with CAC chairpersons to develop meeting content. FWP also reimburses members for expenses incurred to attend meetings. Finally, like all FWP meetings, CAC meetings are open to the public, and all interested parties are welcome to attend.