



# MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

## CAC MEETING MINUTES

August 25, 2021

### In Attendance

**Members:** Louie Bouma, Matt Fregerio, Everett Headley, Laurie Johnston, Tracy Manley, Greg Price, Matthew Quinlan, Ron Skinner, Pat Sweeney, and Susan Thraen.

**Staff:** Randy Arnold, Lori Brooks, Vivaca Crowser, Loren Flynn, Alyssa Janicsek, Dori Schiele, Mike Thompson

**Guests:** Former Commissioner and CAC Member-Tim Aldrich, TIP-MONT Coordinator-Brian Shinn

### Welcome, overview & introductions

Vivaca Crowser welcomed all in attendance to the first CAC meeting to be held in the new R2 FWP meeting room.

### Award presentation

Brian Shinn explained the TIP-MONT program.

- They receive 6000 calls per year with 2500-3000 reports that require law enforcement action.
- They give up to \$1000 in rewards (with higher profile cases receiving more).
- Call topics are vast ranging from 911 emergency calls to suicide.
- He awarded the most recent Tip-Mont program award to Tim Aldrich.

### FWP updates

- Dori Schiele introduced Alyssa Janicsek to our FWP family. She started her position with us on June 28th and has been a welcome addition to the staff.
- A public open house with the Director Worsech was held on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 in the new R2 public meeting room. It consisted of an Q&A session, then a “meet and greet” with the public and staff. The next morning, the Director’s Office staff were available to meet with staff.
- Randy Arnold provided an overview of agency reorganization. A lot of the emphasis is on the new parks and recreation division with some other adjustments as well. This will be an ongoing process, and Randy/staff will keep CAC members updated.
  - Existing FTE/Staff-have some modified FTE approved by the last legislative session.
  - Centralized administrative staff-will now take care of regional and state-wide call center. Administrative team will be led by Bureau Chief Lindsay Dodge in Helena.
  - Parks and recreation division will include fishing access sites, river recreation, park sites and state parks. It will also likely include the hunter access program (Block Management).

- ExploreMT new licensing will include optional digital carcass tagging. It will hopefully be in place in 2023 or maybe parts of it sooner.
- CAC and new structure-
  - R2 didn't solicit for any new members this year. We are already full with 19 members. We will be soliciting for new members in June 2022.
  - There is an effort to streamline the CAC statewide so all CACs are more consistent (same terms, etc.)
  - Director wanted to make sure we had help by adding a "Chairperson" to each region. Everett Hadley has been elected as the first R2 CAC chair.
- Personnel update:
  - We are hiring a Bitterroot Bear Conflict Specialist. This is a new position.
  - Law Enforcement is down three wardens: Brad Balis (Drummond) left for a different position, Terry Althaus (Philipsburg) retired and Sydney Young (Seeley Lake) is on medical leave. There are currently 16 vacancies across the state, so enforcement will be a bit shorthanded this hunting season.

### **Hunting season setting process and subcommittee work**

- Mike Thompson discussed upcoming changes and this early start to the 2021-22 season setting process that will focus on how the regulations might be simplified. The CAC subcommittee for season setting will also welcome in members with organized sportsman groups, landowners and others interested in working on the details of this topic.
  - Regulation simplification effort includes looking at how to reduce the number of hunting districts in Region 2. Currently at 30 districts in R2, made it down to 15 in this first round of season setting drafts that will be out for public comment soon. (September 20th-October 20th).
  - Look at all types of licenses/permits-can it be reduced?
  - No antlerless permits-all will be "B" licenses instead.
  - Region 2 will host an online public open house and several other smaller subcommittee discussions.
  - November 1<sup>st</sup>-deliver all proposals to Director Worsech's office, including public comment.

### **Governor's Red Tape Relief Initiative**

- Loren Flynn explained the Initiative which states the directive to all state agencies to review all administrative 661 rules.
  - Appoint committees
  - Make preliminary changes to rules (example: leave rule alone, repeal it or amend the rule)
- Public opinion may become controversial.
- FWP is trying to bring all rules together (example: FAS camping-16 days vs. State Park camping-14 days.)

### **Round-robin**

- Elk management plan
  - Everett Hadley reports there is a 14-member working group that met in December 2020.
  - There is a two-page report that went out for public comment in April 2021.
  - The FWP Commission adopted it at the June 2021 meeting.
- State parks use numbers are up and most of the reservations are Montana residents vs. non-residents.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20pm. Next quarterly meeting TBD.