



**Region 6 Citizens Advisory Council**

**DATE: Thursday, April 13, 2023**

**TIME: 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

**PLACE: Cottonwood Inn, Glasgow, MT**

**Region 6 CAC members present** - Lars Anderson, Scott Azure, Jim Bennett, Jay Crandall, Ken Forbregd, Ron Garwood, Perri Jacobs, Todd Young,

Miles Hutton, Alycia Nathe, Jessica Stiffarm (via Zoom)

**Region 6 CAC members not present** – Don Kaveshan, Fred Perry, Pam Wilson

**FWP Regional Staff** - Steve Dalbey, Heather Dulaney, Dave Fuller, LaWana Grewe, Drew Henry, Marc Kloker, Tim Potter, Shane Reno, Scott Thompson, Todd Tryan

**FWP Helena Staff** – Stephanie Brown, Sam Hoggatt (via Zoom)

**Public Guests** – Brooke MacDonald, James Page, DJ Sargeant, Norman Dick and Robert Weber (From Glasgow PD)

**Welcome by Marc Kloker**

**Grounding question by Drew.**

- 1) What type of firearm do you like to shoot?
- 2) What would you like to shoot that you never have?

**Legislative session update by Drew:**

Drew showed how to access the Montana legislature bills online and how to track the progress. He went over some that pertain to FWP.

- SB 280 Introduced by Senator Mike Lang – This bill would revise bird dog training laws in the state. Anyone who wants to train must purchase a license, which allows the commission to set a season.
  - *Alycia*: Testified in Helena along with about seven guys who are bird dog trainers, from Montana. She is working with them to come up with the information for the bill. They support Daniels County in what they are trying to do. If bill passes it will go to the commission. Resident bird dog trainers are worried it will limit them going forward where they can train but are supportive.
- HB 521: Revises language around when a conservation license on DNRC land is needed.
  - Shane: This was a civil penalty issues for enforcement. The bill makes it cleaner for enforcement to help with violations on land and make it more enforceable.
- SB 281: Introduced by Senator Pat Flowers – Regarding the issuance of non-resident deer b licenses. It would limit how many deer b licenses can be purchased by a non-resident. If one holds a combination, they can only purchase 2 deer b. If no combination is held, then only 1 deer b can be purchased.

- SB 76: Removes the requirement for a paper license to be physically attached to the animal.
- SB 58: The bill would increase the block management payment amount from \$25,000 to \$50,000 for certain landowners who have been in the program for so many years; increases the cap per cooperative. We have three in Region 6 and 20-23 cooperators statewide who will benefit from this. Two of the Region 6 BM cooperators are the American Prairie Reserve and the other is Page/Whitham.
- HB 217: Increases the fee for the non-resident migratory license from \$50 to \$150 and decrease a resident license by \$1.
- HB74: Removing the requirement that the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program must fund bird releases.
- SB533: Revising laws related to non-resident hunting by establishing a 14-day limit for deer, elk and antelope. It would also eliminate discounted licenses for non-resident college students.
- SB298: Revise laws pertaining to disabled persons to hunt with a crossbow during archery season and establishing requirements.
- Joint resolution: Opposing the introduction of bison to the CMR. This does not need signature approval from the governor.
- HB372: Establishes rights of Montana residents to hunt, fish, trap and harvest wild fish and wildlife.

Marc discussed HB243: This bill would require hunter and bowhunter safety and education, to complete a field day.

- There is a request put in for more FTE for an assistant to help Com-Ed. The initial request was for 8 FTE. One quarter of Marc's time is dedicated to the education program.
- Change in age range for requirements for bowhunter? January 1, 2000.
- Hunter/bowhunter/trapper education workshop is this Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. Wayde Cooperrider is going to be here to explain it to the instructors and go over what the new changes would be.

*Alycia*: Brought up HB600: Which changes the requirement from 640 acres to 160 acres for elk b in a region where Paradise Valley is.

#### **Fisheries Update by Steve:**

- Fort Peck walleye spawn: Crews are waiting for ice conditions to change in order to get nets in the water. April 22nd was the latest date in record that nets were set. Generally, the later we get on, the less eggs are collected. Staff will focus on fingerling production. Fry production will be low and potentially zero. We are having volunteers again this year. It's going to be a very compressed season. Opportunities will be limited.

*Todd Y*: Encouraged CAC members to take part in the spawn to get the overall experience. "It is mind-blowing" what you will come across.

- Fort Peck Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan to be released to the public for comment in the Spring.

- Test Flows will not be implemented in 2023 due to low reservoir elevations.
- EA to remove goldfish in a pond south of Big Sandy. Using rotenone to remove the invasive species
- Upper Missouri paddlefish opens May 1<sup>st</sup>. Launching a pilot study to look at angling related snag and release mortality. Inflow to Fort Peck is at 13,000 cfs and 4,800 cfs is being released.
- Corp of Engineers April 1 forecast is top 2250 feet and base 2246 feet.

### **Season setting 2024-25, Scott Thompson:**

Hunting season setting process is:

- Adjust quotas based on population surveys and harvest survey results annually.
  - Elk permit April 7 and Elk b June 6 for adjustments
- Changes for 2024 and 2025 regulations- referred to as biennial season setting
  - Change season dates
  - Boundary Changes
  - Add/remove licenses/permit types
- Process timeframe is May-December 2023

Right now we are in the scoping phase. Looking for suggestions for ideas and issues.

Breaks elk working group, mule deer meeting to visit with the public about management.

“Brainstorming phase”

Questions:

*Ken:* Change in the pheasant season? Extension to Jan 1<sup>st</sup> years ago. Suggestion was to end of January but it did not go through.

*Scott:* The proposal to extend the pheasant season beyond January 1 did not pass.

*Jay:* “Earn a buck” Program; have to shoot a doe before a buck. Rotating years so it only happens every other year. Small scale area by county or district.

- *Scott:* Hard to verify hunters have shot a doe, would require staff to verify. Must factor in roadkill and other things. If we don’t pursue an idea, we will give a reason as to why.

*Ron:* He had extra deer in stacks. Grateful for the snow fence. Regular old 4ft snow fence to keep the deer off. Now that the snow is gone, there is a lot of dead deer laying out there.

- *Scott:* Good to plan ahead to prevent deer into stacks. Cost effective to the department but also effective for the landowner. Planning is done with surveys to take winter kill into account.

*Alycia:* Suggested issuing deer tags by hunting districts. Spoke to Ryan Linder and he said you never know what kind of disease will come through and possibly take out a population of deer in a HD. Limit the number of general deer licenses that are issued for a district or region, to help with out of area pressure.

- Scott: It has been suggested about limiting deer licenses by region for non-resident hunters and residents.

*Perry:* Hunter etiquette so that they need to take an online test online before being able to purchase any sort of license. Could be annually or every 5 years.

- Scott: PLPW has been working on this.

*Miles:* When on committee they had something put in the regulation booklet, but it hasn't been in there in years. Include hunter ethics "Welcome to our Ranch" Rules.

*Todd Y:* Late shoulder cow elk season; is there any talk about changing it?

- Scott: Elk numbers are below objectives. Different factors (drought, calf numbers not being as high) affecting the numbers. Possibly removing the season. Success rate has been about 10%. Pressure on elk. Re-writing the elk plan.

*Jay:* Are antelope numbers getting better?

- Scott: Fawn production for last year was about average. Seen impacts from the drought, in some counties but better in the northeast portion of R6. Seeing pretty good numbers of antelope in that area.

**Stephanie Brown and Sam Hoggatt (Shooting Range Development Program Manager: connecting people to recreation opportunities)**

Trail Stewardship Program- providing grant funding to develop and maintain trails

Motorized trail pass

Access program; BM

Newest program is shooting range development program: Community shooting range grant program to help

Expand access for shooting ranges Pittman-Robertson helps with funding. States to develop facilities for those who engage in shooting activities. Concerns about the use of public lands. Mitigate waste, leaving garbage. Educating people on the use of a shooting range. Ranges used for public use, shooting competitions, education.

Premier shooting facility attraction.

Statewide management plan on procedures of building new shooting ranges and programs.

- Statewide shooting master plan – send out form just for CAC members to get feedback.
- Statewide public interest scoping survey, can't limit who takes it.
- Mapping survey – working to build it to get a visual of where ranges are, existing and what condition they are in

Several projects:

- Archery course expansion project at Big Arm State Park
- Makoshika, archery course updates
- Missoula – Working on a range and how to upgrade it, which is located on FWP land.

*Ken:* What kind of property can these be built on?

*A:* Shooting ranges are to be built on FWP property.

*Sam:* Sharing Arizona's model of a premier shooting facility. Ran by their fish and game department. Make it more of an official area to shoot and open to the public.

*Steve:* What is the process for archery range improvements and expansions? Is it a separate path than a shooting range?

*Stephanie:* It is all encompassing.

*Ron:* Could it be on DNRC lands?

*Sam:* Yes, possibly.

*Jim:* Where is the flagship facility going to be?

*Sam:* Not sure yet. Still looking for an area for it. Surprised by the lack of official shooting ranges around the state.

Community shooting range grant program: 50/50 match, annual application, provides opportunity for funding. Almost everyone has been funded that has applied in the past. Goal of the bureau is to increase access around the state. 4 experts who can help with funding.

Drew and Marc going over Examples of ranges in Glasgow area:

- Unregulated public range "Redneck Range"
- Enforcement range- owned by Glasgow PD, used for trainings by several agencies. Lacks: general maintenance, new berms, backings and metal targets.  
Drew "Really good example of a lot of opportunity."
- Trap club – Mike Lackner was unavailable. Utilized for a kid's youth UGB opener for them to practice shooting. The trap club offer public shooting nights every week.
- Volunteer run archery range- used for archery education field day
- Rifle and pistol club- membership only and nicest range. Hunter education class has field day here.
- US Army COE range- located in Fort Peck

Trail Stewardship Grant program (state funded): Awarded almost 1 mil in funding last year - 10% match

- Enhance existing trails
- Build new trails

Sullivan Park – asphalt around Home Run Pond is deteriorating (Not ADA compliant) and city is requesting to resurface, looking at putting down asphalt on the walking trail.

*Stephanie:* Should encourage the city to apply for phase 2 for funding.

Application in Havre to expand a trail by the college campus. Extend it to connect to other parks

Fort Peck Tribes – cultural interpretive trail system for the buffalo pasture – about 7 miles.

(RTP) Recreational Trails program (federally funded) 20% match

OHV grant program- provides funding for trail maintenance

Funding for the next cycle opens at the end of November and closes at the end of January 2024

Tom Lang

Seth McArther

Stephanie Adams

### **Round Table:**

**Miles Hutton** – This winter there was a big turn of events around Turner. Busted out grain bins with mold which attracted white tail deer, between 400-700. No game damage due to the landowner not being concerned with the number of deer. Now the snow is all melted and there's standing water everywhere. Should be a revamping of what tools are available for game damage, it was a mess and a lot of people hit deer with their cars. Age class of mule deer was down. Noticed less white tail does. Has seen a lot of coyotes and skunks.

Drew: Statute clearly defines what is acceptable terms for game damage. What can we do in the future to help better?

Probably should have tried a kill permit early before they got bad to see if that would have dispersed them. Lots of them ended up starving because of all the snow. It was a mess!

**Alycia Nathe** – Treading water up north, real deep, cold and long. Protecting haystacks. Concerns of deer urine and feces on cattle hay. Hoping for warmer temps in the next few days. Daniels County citizen's eager and nervous, only a few months until feeling pressure of bird dog trainers. Met with county commissioners, one lost a pasture lease to someone from out of state to train bird dogs. Another has received lots of requests for Dry Prairie Rural water, to add lines to areas that are old shelter belt house sites. Not sure what that means! How can they work with commission to see what they can create.

1<sup>st</sup> person conversations: Directly related to man with connections to Four 6's ranch in Texas about leasing land for dog training.

Daniels County code of ethics handout to be spread out among the communities up north. Early July they will start seeing trailers roll in with bird dogs.

**Lars Anderson** – Every ? full of ? Seeing more antelope than expected. Water came back and so did the ducks. The geese don't care but the ducks do.

**Perry Jacobs** – Seeing a nice amount of antelope. Coyote issues, hire private to kill. Lots of numbers of eagles. Drought and nutrition related to dwarf size of calves this spring. It is a countywide issue. Water everywhere – it is great to see all the full reservoirs.

**Scott Azure** – Two weeks ago went to Poplar River to drill a hole and it was more than 48 inches thick. Looking forward to fishing as the River now broke up. Mule deer populations are crazy high. Hardly any whitetail seen.

**Jay Crandell** - Having small calves too. Most likely due to the drought. Deer everywhere, mule and whitetail. Lots of snow and full reservoirs. Seen a lot of upland birds and predators. Biggest issue in their county is bird dog training. Neighbor sold part of his land to a NR to build a hunting lodge on.

**Ron Garwood** – Started having to feed cows sooner than normal because of the weather. Then the white tail deer started moving in. Was able to get some fencing in but a little too late. May try to do it sooner next season. Very happy with hunters on his block management. Muddy last fall and some tore up county roads. Happy with bow hunting opportunity. Glad winter is over and not living next to the Milk River. Happy for green grass this spring.

**Ken Forbregd** – Jared did an excellent job at the fisheries public meeting in Plentywood. Very impressed! Zane Panasuk (landowner) called Ken about a bunch of coyotes. 130 coyotes were taken by wildlife services in a 5-mile radius

River flow app and uses all the USGS sites and uses it. Wildlife is doing well except white tail which was wiped out by EHD. Good year for wildlife to bounce back.

**Todd Young** – Wildlife seems to have done well considering the amount of snow we've received. Birds done extremely well. Hun population looks to be good. The number of moose in Valley County is more than what has been seen in a long time. Fishing reports seem to be decent for the winter. Didn't do much ice fishing. Peterson Point on the Fort Peck Reservation – need to have the tribe's permission to use their land to launch. Can be accessed by water.

**Jim Bennett** – Seen a lot of antelope. Saw a wolverine on the south side of the highway outside of Malta. Lots of coyotes. Ice fishing was good in the Bears Paw. They were able to go skiing at Bears Paw in January. Hearing Fresno is coming up fast. Fresno fisheries meeting heard it went well. Town (Havre) deer population is out of control. Frustrated with the city for not doing more about it. Excited for spring to go hiking in the Bears Paw, thanks to good relationship with Rocky Boy Tribes

Scott: WMA will not be closed so can access the Milk River below Fresno from there.

Logistics for next CAC: Ideas for what month and where

- August or September and pool the group