

# What we've accomplished so far

**W**hen I was hired as FWP director a year and a half ago, my top priorities were for the agency to improve customer service, increase collaboration with communities and other agencies, become more transparent, and create more internal cohesion among FWP employees, divisions, and regions. The intent has been to build public support for a more agile and resilient agency able to meet current and future challenges.

Here's some of what we've accomplished:

**Customer service:** Our field staff, headquarters staff, and front desk crews provide great service, but they and everyone else in FWP are making an effort to do even more. I've asked that we always try to respond to public concerns with, "How can I help?" Though we can't fulfill every request, we can try—or at least explain why we can't. I have also convened an internal department working group to review all hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations. The goal is to make the regulations easier to understand and use, something FWP has never attempted on such a large scale.

**Collaboration:** Fish, wildlife, and state parks issues increasingly affect communities, nonprofit groups, private citizens, and other state and federal agencies. We've learned that FWP must collaborate even more to ensure that everyone affected by our decisions has a say in how they are made. One example of collaboration is our work with tribes, towns, landowners, and federal agencies to resolve conflicts between bears and people. We've also teamed up with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Blackfoot Tribe, Missoula County, Garfield County Conservation District, Whitefish Lake Institute, Glacier National Park, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, and other groups and agencies to prevent the transport and introduction of aquatic invasive species.

**Transparency:** This director's message you're reading is one example of FWP's commitment to being open about what we do. Another is how, in our daily interactions with local and national media, we quickly and candidly answer questions ranging from budgets to grizzly bears to strange wolflike creatures. Our goal is to be the best source of information about the department and the resources we manage. We've also been putting our finances in order to more precisely show where our revenue comes from and how we spend it.

**Internal cohesion:** To keep Montana a great place to live and visit, all of us who care *about* the outdoors need to team up to care *for* the outdoors. The first step is for everyone in FWP to pull together and ensure we're all working toward the same goals. I've traveled to

FWP offices across Montana to explain how all of us share the same core values (such as embracing the public trust and basing management decisions on sound science) and beliefs (opportunity outside, inclusion, integrity, and balance). I've urged our employees to think and act collectively as they tackle management issues such as the need for more public access.

In April we held an all-staff meeting, something FWP had never



This past spring, FWP held its first-ever all-staff meeting. Nearly 600 employees came together from all corners of Montana to meet and learn from each other and lay the foundation for building a more cohesive and effective public agency.

done before. Nearly 600 employees came together in Helena to embrace the idea of a more unified department based on the recognition that we are all one agency. Employees were introduced to a new FWP tagline—"The Outside Is In Us All"—created as a message that welcomes everyone who wants to connect with Montana's outdoors.

I'm only partway through my four-year term as director, so it may be a bit too early for people to notice the results of these efforts. But you'll soon see more visual consistency in FWP publications and electronic media, reinforcing department cohesiveness and coordination. You'll receive more smiles from our staff, and more offers of help. Citizens and elected officials who work with us regularly will also notice that we're pulling together internally so that FWP can be more effective externally in uniting people to help us protect the integrity of the Montana outdoor experience.

—**Martha Williams**, Director, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks



FWP has produced a short new video that conveys why the department matters to Montana. Search for "The Outside Is In Us All FWP" on YouTube.