

MINUTES
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission Meeting
Montana Wild Center - Helena, MT
MAY 10, 2012

Commission Members Present: Bob Ream, Chairman; Dan Vermillion, Vice-Chairman; Ron Moody; A.T. Stafne.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Staff Present: Joe Maurier, Director, and FWP Staff.

Guests: See May 10, 2012 Commission file folder for sign-in sheet.

Topics of Discussion:

1. **Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance**
2. **Approval of Minutes of April 12, 2012 Commission Meeting**
3. **Approval of Commission Expenses through April, 2012**
4. **Commission Reports**
5. **Director's Report**
6. **Moose, Sheep, Goat, Deer and Elk License Auction Administrative Rule – Proposed**
7. **Non-Resident Deer Licenses Separated from Big Game Combination Licenses Annual and Administrative Rule – Proposed**
8. **Classification of Exotic Wildlife Administrative Rule – Tilapia - Proposed**
9. **Big Spring Creek FAS Acquisition – Endorsement**
10. **2012/2013 Wolf Seasons, Quotas and HD Boundaries – Proposed**
11. **Nongame Check-off Work Plan – Proposed**
12. **2012 HB454 Hunting Access Agreement – Proposed**
13. **2012 Fall Upland Game Bird Quotas and Limits – Proposed**
14. **Harvest Prescriptions for Archery-Elk Bundle HDs - Proposed**
15. **Mount Haggin WMA Timber Harvest - Final**
16. **West Kootenai WMA Timber Harvest - Proposed**
17. **Spotted Dog Mineral Rights Acquisition – Endorsement**
18. **Milk River Ranch – Endorsement**
19. **Open Microphone – Public Opportunity to Address Additional FWP Issues**

1. **Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance.** Chairman Ream called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Approval of the Commission Meeting Minutes of April 12, 2012.**

Action: Moody moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the April 12, 2012 minutes. Motion carried.

3. **Approval of the April Commission Expense Report.**

Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion to approve the expense report as presented. Motion carried.

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Commissioner Ream began the meeting by announcing that with so many people wishing to address the Commission today, public comments will be limited to 3 minutes per person, which will provide sufficient time to make their point. Any written comments today shall be provided to Regena Peterson, Commission Secretary. He instructed the audience, both in Helena and in the regions, to keep comments civil and to not criticize others for their point of view, as each and every person has a sincere interest and belief. He continued to say that no person will speak a second time.

4. Commission Reports.

Vermillion reported that he has received several calls regarding the wolf season. Also, there are concerns regarding the upcoming water levels in rivers; spring weather has already been very warm. He reported that there is also considerable distress about the establishment of a tire pit near Emigrant that was approved due to the lack of zoning regulations.

Moody reported that bison and wolves have generated a lot of correspondence. He attended the CMR Working Group meeting which primarily focused on bison relocation. He also attended the Region 6 Elk Working Group at Malta where much discussion was related to the Missouri Breaks being over objective in some areas. Additionally, he attended the Sun River Working Group in Augusta where discussion focused mostly on the grizzly bear.

Stafne stated that Montana is looking good again, that the game and the birds are making a comeback. Such a difference the last year has made. Montana is beautiful, and it recharges him to see the state in such good condition.

5. Director's Report. Director Maurier announced that Art Noonan, Deputy Director, has left FWP to accept a new position with Northwestern Energy. The position has already been advertised in hopes that it will be filled the first part of June. He reported that the quarantined bison are now permanent residents at the Fort Peck Reservation. The judge said a statewide plan is not necessary to move bison. The Commission will be kept briefed on the preliminary injunction.

6. Moose, Sheep, Goat, Deer and Elk License Auction Administrative Rule – Proposed. The Commission has the authority to establish criteria to issue one male Shiras moose license and one male mountain sheep license through a competitive auction process, and one goat license, one mule deer and one elk license through an auction/lottery process. Interested organizations submit proposals for participation in this process, after which the Commission selects which organization gets which license. Hank Worsch, FWP License Bureau Chief, explained that FWP recommends establishing administrative rules for the auction/lottery licenses as opposed to annual rules, where FWP would solicit interested organizations and the Commission would still retain authority to choose which organization gets which license.

Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion to propose administrative rules for the auction/lottery of moose, sheep, goat, mule deer and elk licenses. Motion carried.

7. Non-Resident Deer Licenses Separated from Big Game Combination Licenses Annual and Administrative Rule – Proposed. Hank Worsch, FWP License Bureau Chief explained that the 1997 Legislature provided the Commission the authority to separate a Class B-7 license from a Class B-10 license. These licenses may then be sold as a B-11 nonresident deer combination license. With the passage of I-161, the requirement for the Commission to set the fee for the variable priced outfitter sponsored nonresident big game or deer combination licenses was removed and the annual rule was no longer warranted. Since the annual rule is no longer required, rules are required to sell the separated deer licenses. FWP recommends the commission propose annual and administrative rules for the nonresident deer licenses separated from big game combination licenses.

Action: Moody moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to propose annual and administrative rules for the nonresident deer licenses separated from big game combination licenses. Motion carried.

8. Classification of Exotic Wildlife Administrative Rule – Tilapia – Proposed. Exotic wildlife must be classified by the Commission to be legally imported or possessed in Montana. Classification categories are non-controlled, controlled, and prohibited. Non-controlled species may be possessed, sold, purchased or exchanged in the state without a permit. Controlled species can only be possessed with a Controlled Species Permit and must meet the requirements on the permit. Prohibited species are not permitted for possession or transportation within the State. Recommendations are based on environmental, ecological, and economic impacts upon release or escape, health and public safety to the public, wildlife and agriculture, and control and containment of the species. Eileen Ryce, FWP Hatchery Section Chief, explained that the Classification Review Committee is recommending that the Commission adopt a rule classifying Tilapia as a Controlled Species, with control measures similar to those of Coho Salmon.

Action: Vermillion moved and it was seconded to approve the proposed rules for the classification of exotic species as recommended by the Classification Review Committee. Motion carried. (3 in favor and 1 opposed – Moody opposed).

9. Big Spring Creek FAS Acquisition – Endorsement. Bruce Rich, FWP Fisheries Bureau Chief, briefed the Commission on the possibility of acquiring a nearly 3-acre parcel for a much needed access site on Big Spring Creek. This property contains an inactive private fish hatchery and raceway, and a cabin and an outbuilding, all of which are contaminated with PCB's from the Big Spring Creek Hatchery. The Department already intends to remove the contaminated material from the hatchery, however, if the property is acquired by FWP, the Department would fill in the raceways and remove the buildings once the contaminated material has been removed.

It is anticipated that the acquisition and clean-up effort would be less expensive than not acquiring the property and restoring the raceways and buildings to a functional condition. If the Commission approves this proposal to begin negotiations, FWP will also investigate the acquisition of an adjacent .2-acre property that would enhance the overall access value. The funding for these acquisitions would come from the Fishing Access Site Acquisition Account. If this request is denied by the Commission, the Department will still clean up the contaminated raceways as planned.

Action: Moody moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to endorse the Department's request for an endorsement to pursue acquisition of this property for use as a fishing access site. Motion carried.

10. 2012/2013 Wolf Seasons, Quotas and HD Boundaries – Proposed. Quentin Kujala, FWP Wildlife Bureau, narrated a power point presentation on the proposed wolf season and objectives. He noted that the public comment period will begin immediately following this meeting, and one public hearing will be held in each of the FWP Regions 1 through 5.

FWP proposes the following changes from the 2011 wolf season framework:

- The 2012 wolf season proposal includes several adjustments to the 2011 Wolf Management Units (WMUs). The proposal incorporates all of the Bitterroot into WMU 250 and removes that portion from WMU 210. The proposal also removes that portion of old WMU 210 that is east of the Continental Divide (the Big Hole/Tendoy) and defines that area as new WMU 330. Finally, Deer/Elk HDs 280 and 316 would become separate WMUs 280 and 316, with those areas removed as subunits within WMUs 290 and 390.
- The proposal replaces posted quotas in most WMU's with a statewide general season. The exceptions include retaining quotas in WMU 110 (quota = 2) and WMU 316 (quota = 3). Mandatory harvest reporting would remain. This large management scale is consistent with wolf biology and the current population size.
- The Commission would authorize FWP to initiate season closures at any time. Closures may be implemented if FWP deems monitored harvest levels excessive in any area. Reported harvest shall be assessed in light of species biology and objectives (see Measurable Objectives below). Any such closure would necessarily include an appropriate timeline and public notice and that may include press releases and posted signs. Anticipated rate of harvest allows this approach. In this manner, the core functionality represented by pre-posted quotas as a means to close a harvest season if biologically necessary would remain in place.
- Extend the general season closing date from December 31 to February 28. Hunter orange would not be required to hunt wolves after November 25, 2012. Add a trapping season along with mandatory trapper education. The trapping season would run from December 15 to February 28. Adjust mandatory reporting period to 24 hours.
- The proposed bag limit would be one wolf per hunter/trapper in any combination of hunting or trapping harvest (see next bullets below).
- Electronic calling for taking wolves must be consistent with relevant statute (see next bullet below).
- If relevant statutes are adjusted during any part of the 2012-13 wolf season relative to bag limit, electronic calling and waste of game, FWP proposes here that the bag limit be increased at that time to three wolves per hunter/trapper in any combination of hunting and/or trapping harvest. Similarly, electronic calling for taking wolves is proposed to be available at that time if consistent with relevant statute.
- Hunter/trapper retrieval of harvested wolf parts must be consistent with relevant statute.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

1. *Maintain a viable and connected wolf population in Montana.*
2. *Gain and maintain authority for State of Montana to manage wolves.*
3. *Maintain positive and effective working relationships with livestock producers, hunters, and other stakeholders.*
 - 4a. *Reduce wolf impacts on livestock.*
 - 4b. *Reduce wolf impacts on big game populations.*
 - 4c. *Maintain sustainable hunter opportunity for wolves.*
 - 4d. *Maintain sustainable hunter opportunity for ungulates.*
5. *Increase broad public acceptance of sustainable harvest and hunter opportunity as part of wolf conservation.*
6. *Enhance open and effective communication to better inform decisions*
7. *Learn and improve as we go.*

Harvest quotas would be 2 in WMU 110 and 3 in WMU 316. These quotas would be retained to continue to address concerns over potentially high harvests near the boundaries of Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks. FWP proposes replacing all other quotas with a general season and to maintain the daily tracking of harvest among WMU's. All wolf harvests would be required to be reported within 24 hours to ensure harvest monitoring capacity.

Proposed wolf season dates would remain similar to the 2011-12 framework, with a later closing date. The wolf archery season would extend from September 1 through the close of the archery elk season. In most WMU's, the general wolf season would run from October 15 through February 28. In WMU's 150 and 316, along with subunit 280 of WMU 290, the general wolf season would open earlier on September 15 to coincide with the early opening of the backcountry elk season.

FWP proposes a trapping season during 2012-13. FWP proposes the following trapping framework and rules:

Statewide Trapping Season: December 15, 2012 - February 28, 2013

Wolf Trapper Orientation – A person must attend a wolf trapping orientation class before setting any trap for a wolf. A certifying letter or validated license will be awarded to those completing trapping orientation session. This certification must be in possession of any person setting wolf traps and/or harvesting a wolf by trap.

Checking and Placing Traps – Traps are required to be visually checked at least once every 48 hours. Failure to pick up traps at the end of the trapping season or attending them in a manner that wastes animals constitutes a misdemeanor per Montana law.

Trap Identification – Metal identification tags must be fastened to all traps. Metal tags must bear the name and address of the trapper OR a personal identification number, which is the trapper's date of birth and ALS number. Tags should be attached to the end of the chain or other anchoring material at the end farthest from the portion of the device which holds the animal. Landowners who trap on their own lands and irrigation right-of-way contiguous to their land do not need to tag traps.

Trapping Equipment Requirements – Foot-hold traps are legal methods during the wolf trapping season. The inside jaw spread of foothold traps must not exceed nine inches. Conibears or snares may not be used to take wolves.

Legal Hours – Trappers will be allowed to dispatch trapped wolves during all hours including night time. A trapper must immediately dispatch any wolf captured while the trapper holds a valid license authorizing harvest of a wolf.

Landowner Permission – Trappers must obtain permission of the landowner, lessee or their agent before trapping on private land.

Exposed Carcass or Bait – No trap may be set within 30 feet of an exposed carcass or bait that is visible from above. Exposed carcass or bait is defined as the meat or viscera of a mammal, bird or fish, or any part thereof more than one pound in weight. Bleached bones are excluded.

Public Land Roads and Trails – A 50-foot setback is required for foothold traps along open roads and hiking trails on federal and state lands that are designated by administrative signs or numbers.

Public Land Trailheads – On public land, foothold traps are prohibited within 300 feet of a designated or marked trailhead (accessible by highway vehicle).

Public Land Campground – On public land, foothold traps are prohibited within 1000 feet of a designated campground or fishing access site (accessible by highway vehicle).

Occupied Dwellings – Foothold traps are prohibited within 1,000 feet of an occupied dwelling without written notification of the occupant.

Waste of Game – Wolf is excluded from being considered as "suitable for food" under big game regulations. A hunter or trapper that legally harvests a wolf and wishes to retain possession of the hide and skull is required to personally present the hide and skull of a legally taken wolf to a designated FWP employee within ten (10) days after harvest. Evidence of sex must be naturally attached for inspection and tagging purposes. If not released, the hide and skull of incidentally captured wolves must be personally presented to a designated FWP employee within ten (10) days after harvest (see Incidental Take below). The carcass of any wolf taken may be taken in possession or left in the field. Retrieval of harvested wolf parts must be consistent with relevant statute.

Incidental Take – Trappers may not set traps to capture wolves unless they possess a valid license authorizing wolf harvest and have proof of a completed Montana wolf trapper orientation. Wolf traps must be removed within 24 hours of validating a wolf license on an individual trapper's last legally harvested wolf. A trapper must immediately dispatch and validate the wolf license for the first wolf captured while in possession of an unused and valid wolf license. If a wolf trapper incidentally catches a wolf beyond the legal limit and the wolf is uninjured the trapper must contact FWP within 12 hours to potentially have the wolf fitted with a radio collar and released to assist FWP in management efforts. Depending upon circumstances that may include history of livestock depredations in the area and other radio collars already in place, FWP may prescribe these wolves be lethally removed. All incidentally captured wolves that are injured must be dispatched by the trapper immediately. All incidentally captured wolves that are dispatched must be reported within 24 hours with the skull and pelt presented to FWP within 10 days. It is unlawful for any person to retain possession of an incidentally taken wolf as per Montana law.

Disturbing Traps or Trapped Animals – It is unlawful to destroy, disturb or remove any trap or trapped wildlife belonging to a trapper without permission of the owner of the trap per Montana law.

Procedures to Follow Upon Harvesting a Wolf

- Immediately after killing a wolf, a hunter or trapper must cut out the proper month and date of the kill from the appropriate license and attach it to the hide in a secure and visible manner. This is "validating" the license. All legally taken wolves must have a validated license affixed in this manner.
- To properly validate a license, locate the appropriate month and date the animal was killed and completely cut away (notch out) the month and the first and second digits of the date designations. Removing more than one month or one date designation invalidates the license.
- Evidence of sex must remain naturally intact on the hide.
- A hunter or trapper must personally report any and all wolf kills within 24 hours by calling the Wolf Reporting Number at 1-877-FWP-WILD or 1-877-397-9453 so that FWP can monitor harvest levels. This includes incidental captures that are dispatched. Hunters or trappers are required to provide: name, telephone number, ALS number, species, date of harvest, WMU, deer/elk HD, specific location (legal description), and sex when reporting a wolf harvest. When reporting a wolf harvest, it is unlawful to subscribe to or make any statement that is materially false.
- Upon discovering a wolf in a trap they have set, trappers are required to immediately dispatch any wolf that will not be released.
- A trapper or hunter is required to personally present the hide and skull of an incidentally trapped wolf and any legally harvest wolf for which they wish to retain possession of the skull and/or hide to a designated FWP employee within ten (10) days after harvest.

A hunter or trapper that legally harvests a wolf and wishes to retain possession of the hide and skull or incidentally captures a wolf that must be dispatched is required to personally present the hide and skull to a designated FWP employee within ten (10) days after harvest for the purpose of:

- Inspection and registration of kill to include harvest location and other details,
- Verify evidence of sex,
- Tagging the hide. The hide tag must thereafter remain attached to the hide until tanned or after export.
- Any hide and skull not presented or registered to FWP personnel within ten (10) days of harvest are subject to confiscation.
- It is unlawful for anyone to possess, ship, transport, sell or purchase any wolf, or part thereof, unless the animal has been tagged as prescribed.

A hunter or trapper that legally harvests a wolf and does not wish to retain possession of the hide and skull if allowed by statute is required to personally present the above harvest information to a designated FWP employee within ten (10) days after harvest. Retrieval of wolf parts must be consistent with relevant statute. FWP will rigorously track wolf harvest through the mandatory harvest reporting system and provide updates to the FWP Commission. Under this proposal, the Commission would authorize FWP to initiate closures in any geographic area at any time if FWP deems harvest excessive in light of species biology and management objectives.

Some elements of the previous wolf season structure assured safety nets were incorporated so that regulated public hunting would not jeopardize wolf population long term viability. The proposed 2012 season structure retains many fundamental features from earlier season structures listed below.

1. Mandatory reporting of successful harvest within 24 hours (formerly 12 hours) so FWP can closely monitor hunter success and harvest levels while addressing backcountry logistics.
2. Harvest monitoring by WMU (includes deer/elk HD within those WMUs).
3. The Commission would authorize FWP to initiate season closures at any time. Closures would be implemented if FWP deems harvest levels excessive in any area.
4. Mandatory pelt/skull inspection within 10 days.
5. Definite season-ending closure date.
6. Baits, scents and dogs may not be used to hunt wolves. Electronic calls may not be used unless authorized by legislation.
7. Adopt season structure annually to better adapt and respond. This proposed season structure is for the 2012 wolf season. Any proposed season for 2013 will be developed, proposed, publicly reviewed and adopted after the 2012 season has concluded.

Other elements proposed include:

1. A hunting season beginning with the start of the general archery season and running through February 28, 2013.
2. The trapping season would run from December 15 through February 28 in all WMU's.
3. The wolf archery season would be concurrent with the elk archery season in each WMU or subunit.
4. The wolf rifle season would begin concurrently with the beginning of the rifle elk season in each WMU. This includes the September 15 start for rifle seasons in backcountry areas of WMUs 150, 280 and 316. The rifle season would close in all WMU's not later than February 28, 2013.
5. Licenses proposed to remain over-the-counter general sale to residents and nonresidents.
6. Any licensed hunter or trapper may take only one wolf in this proposed hunting season unless modified via legislation. If allowed by adjusted legislation, a licensed hunter or trapper could take up to three wolves in any combination of hunting or trapping.

All other season elements not specifically noted are proposed to be unchanged from 2011.

Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion to adopt the proposed 2012 wolf season as presented by FWP to include later adjustments to bag limit (3 wolves) and electronic calling if possible statutory adjustments allow.

Vermillion asked if a trapping license is necessary for trapping wolves, to which Kujala replied they do not need a trapping license – just a hunting license. Wolves are not included in the trapping statute for furbearers.

Vermillion stated that the reputation of trappers may be jeopardized by unskilled people using traps.

Jonathan Matthews, Montana Sierra Club, said he represents 2,000 members who care deeply about wolves. All these changes are proposed only one year after delisting. Trapping is not fair chase hunting; they are opposed to several parts of proposal – particularly trapping. Trapping is cruel, indiscriminate, and inhumane.

Randy Newberg, Headwaters Sportsmen's Association, said this is not an endangered species. Trapping was an expected solution to wolf management. Trapping is part of the plan. Drop the 425 quota minimum.

Mac Minard, MOGA, said they have developed a Large Predator Management Policy. Manage wolves as any other animal in Montana is managed. Liberalization of hunting techniques makes perfect sense to them. Consider a 5-day waiting period. He cautioned against making closures without clear criteria.

Mark Cooke said Montana must be prepared for negative reflection. Not everyone hunts, there are also wildlife watchers. FWP's responsibility is to protect and enhance. Wolves have so many positive benefits that it doesn't make sense to hunt them. Funding of FWP management needs to change. Anglers and hunter numbers are declining. Remove HB42 that sets ungulate population objectives below set levels so wolves can grow.

A woman in the audience said trapping is barbaric and not fair chase. Collateral damage is large. Electronic collars are not fair chase. No scientific data was included in the data. FWP has no idea of how many wolves reside in Montana. FWP is using fabricated numbers. Money is behind this. Use science - not money and special interest groups.

Michele (unknown) said wolves have as much right to be here as the rest of us. Hearings like these are arrogance. There is a reckoning coming. Decisions made on wolves are not valid.

Luke (unknown) is opposed to trapping wolves and liberalizing hunting practices. Hunting wolves is mindless entertainment.

Ilona Popper, Gardiner, Bear Creek Council, questioned why Montana is trying to decrease wolf numbers. Wolves are not entirely responsible for the decline in ungulates. Other species are part of the problem. Wolf tourism is a major part of income in Montana. Do not allow more than one tag per hunter, combine areas, do not allow trapping.

Alan Schallenberger, said to take a look at wolves moving elk off of areas, such as the Robb Ledford. It has an effect on brucellosis due to elk moving into ranches after being with bison herds. Wolves carry diseases.

Tom Robak said he is a professional photographer. There used to be large herds of elk and moose. Moose are gone now. The mountain lion count is the same as it was back then. They have complained about the numbers of calves killed by wolves for years. Some people rely on wild game to feed their families. Professional trappers are needed. He suggested people carrying digital cameras for the count – take a photo with permit lying on top of dead wolf.

Richard Mitchell, said he is retired from the USFWS Endangered Species section in Washington DC, and when the six wolves were originally relocated, it was illegal because the Rocky Mountain timber wolf was already there, which was in violation of 10j of the ES Act. It was illegal to plant Yukon wolves in with Rocky Mountain timber wolves, therefore all these wolves should be removed from Montana.

Keith Kabista said he is glad FWP is becoming more aggressive in controlling the wolf population. Thanks for looking at Idaho's practice. Not including snaring is unrealistic.

John (unknown) said he supports the proposal, and feels trapping is fair chase.

Rick Hawk said he supports the proposals.

David Pierce asked that FWP disregard comments from out of state. Trapping is the best way to control wolves.

David Pemble supports the proposals. It is important to have a mandatory trapping course.

Dave Wallace supports the proposal for trapping. He wants snaring too.

Toby Walrath supports trapping and snaring by certified trappers. He offered to put on a trapper education class.

Kirsty Peake encouraged looking at wider implications. She has brought groups to Montana from the United Kingdom to see the wildlife. That brings in money for motels, restaurants, etc. They contribute a great amount of money to the USA and to Montana. If it is not broken, do not fix it.

Mike Leahy, Defenders of Wildlife, represents 4,500 members. They ask FWP to manage wildlife ethically, and similarly to other species. They appreciate FWP's commitment to managing wolves, but feel the current proposal deviates from the plan. There are too many recommended changes, and they are overly aggressive. Elk should be managed by local quotas.

Representative Champ Edmunds encouraged a more aggressive approach than this proposal.

Representative Ted Washburn said trapping is necessary.

Chris (unknown) believes in managing populations, but is against trapping. It is inhumane and cruel. The people outside Montana like to see wolves in the wild, which brings money into Montana. The general population believes trapping is inhumane.

Veto Quatrero, Sportsmen's Alliance, would like to see a quota of 277. They want to see the dates changed. Encouraged Commission to act now and not wait, as it may hit the legislature and we do not know what it will look like when they are done with it. They may violate the plan as they are not all familiar with it. Be aggressive. Include multiple tags.

James St. Goddard, Blackfoot Tribe, said trapping is against everything they are about. There is a responsibility to see to his sacred side, and to protect the sacred animal. The wolf has been a protector of Blackfoot people for many years and now some want to kill him. We are all immigrants. The wolf is his brother. Every federal land is protected as sacred sites. St. Goddard is also a rancher.

Jim Strong, a hunter and trapper, sympathizes with those affected by wolf packs. Have to have enforcement.

Paul Rossignol said to be more aggressive. Need snaring. Season length is too short. Need more than 3 quota. Baiting is critical. Proper trapping is good.

Chris Colligan, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, is concerned that the proposal is a departure of fair chase. The quotas were met last year. Montana would be the only state that allows trapping around the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park.

Kurt Alt has been watching the wolf discussions from Germany, as have many people from other countries. This has relevance to Norway, Germany and other countries who are watching Montana. They have noticed the professionalism of Montana. Science goes into the wolf proposals. Separate hunting and trapping.

Mike Caplain said Montana is politically driven. Proposals are scientific and ethical. This proposal is pushed by the Idaho model, which is a big mistake. The push is driven now by hysteria. Do not allow trapping. The threats in Ravalli County are imaginary. He has had dogs caught in traps. Wolf trapping will cause conflicts with people who recreate. One year is not enough time to make such recommendations. If trapping is allowed, it will be difficult to undo.

Peggy Duezabou has sheep. She has seen bears, foxes, coyotes and wolves usually in the middle of the night. She has big protection dogs and trapping would be dangerous to dogs, but she feels trapping is a management tool.

Robert Wood, Ravalli F&W, supports these proposals, but feels they should be more aggressive. Take additional steps by opening the season December 1 instead of December 15, extend until March 31, allow B tags and allow A & B tags for trappers, with 3 more for trappers, cut nonresident tags to \$150.

Unidentified woman said she is delighted the wolf is in the Rockies. She accepts that the wolf may hurt your pets and livestock. She accepts the responsibility. Cannot selectively eliminate a species because it is inconvenient. Cannot play God by eradicating a species. The wolf does not belong to any select groups. Wolves are doing what wolves do. We do not need furs. Trapping is a ridiculous notion for any species.

Steve Wilson, Ravalli County F&W, feels FWP has gone a long way but wants the changes that Robert Wood suggested.

Rob Keisik said he has no love or hate of the wolf, but management objectives reflect of reality on the ground. Ungulate populations are on the rise. Wolves are only 1% of livestock depredation. Radio collaring wolves is not fair chase. Manage from science.

Charlie Johnson said trapping is an integral part of the heritage and it is a positive step in wolf management.

Steve Wilson, Ravalli County F&W, said to clean bone yards so predators don't gather. That will relieve predation. He is concerned about just anybody laying out traps. He does not support trapping. Dispersing packs and killing adult wolves forces the young ones to fend for themselves, which can involve livestock.

Rod Triepke, RMEF, supports the proposals.

Kurt Knudsen supports trapping and snaring.

Pam Rodman supports trapping.

Burt Lister said there is a management problem with the wolf. Reintroduction created problems. A lot of money comes from out of state to view wildlife, but the wolf is reducing the elk. He wants aggressive management.

Scott Blackman asked to extend the comment period. He supports trapping.

Jim Ball supports trapping and electronic collaring.

Marshall Johnson, Mule Deer Foundation, supports the proposal.

Anja Heister, Footloose Montana, said they gathered signatures against trapping for a ballot initiative. They have the support of 31,000 people, 22,000 of which are registered voters. Trapping is cruel, animals suffer immensely, and if they don't die on their own, they will be stomped or strangled cruelly, but not shot because it may damage the pelt. The distance the traps are placed from paths is not far enough. Too many dogs and cats and collateral animals are hurt or killed. Do not use public lands for trapping. Trapping is not a management tool. How will traps be monitored for the 48 hours? How will the trappers be monitored for education?

John Hughes said he operates a fur buying business and is a member of the trappers association. He supports the proposals but also wants to include baiting, multiple tags, and snaring.

Leonard Wortman, Jefferson County Commissioner, wonders how many wolf supporters want to write a check to cover depredation. Wolves cause livestock to be nervous and they don't eat and won't breed, costing ranchers money and livelihoods. Wolves killing other animals is cruel too. He supports the proposals.

Claudia Narcisco objects to the proposals. It is a radical departure. Need to use science. She wants to see a broad acceptance, and not base decisions on hysteria based on anger.

Michael Sherrard said Montana's hunting heritage is alive and well. Need traps and snares. Bears and lions are blamed for wolf kills.

J.W. Weston, Laurel Rod and Gun, feels the wolf is a valued trophy animal. Keep the fees set at those of a valued trophy animal. Keep fair chase. He supports trapping by educated trappers. House Bill 42 needs changed.

Rory Copeland said he is tired of hearing the notion that elk herds are increasing and wolves are not the problem. Where wolves are, the ungulate populations are going down. Look at the ratio between prey and predators rather than at quotas. Look at all predators.

Dan Happel, Madison County Commissioner, supports an increase in quotas and supports trapping. He said to work with the county commissioners throughout Montana who are experiencing problems.

Bob Fanning complained that he had not gotten information he had requested several years ago, and asked how binding the decisions are on the next administration and how many of them "are they stuck with".

Steve Kamps, MBA, said this is an incremental approach. He advocates a quota of 5 rather than 3, and supports trapping.

Clifford Eckert approves of the proposal. He supports trapping and said it is up to pet owners to learn how to release their pets from traps.

John Borgreen, Russell County Sportsmen, supports the proposal. He asked for an extension on the comment deadline.

Tim Aldrich supports the proposal.

Bob Sheppard supports trapping and education program.

Barbara O'Grady said she has a wildlife guiding business and takes tourist into YNP. It is a priority is to see a wolf. These folks are tourists and they spend money in Gardiner and Yellowstone park. She would like to see a specific quota set and would like to see 1 tag per hunter. She would like to see WMU313 back into the proposal for protection. She wants the season to end earlier as wolves are often pregnant at the time proposed.

Ralph Mannix, Powell County Commissioner, said it is not entirely the wolf that is doing depredation, but they are putting it over the edge. He supports the proposal and supports trapping them.

Dan Thompson supports this proposal, but wants more tags.

Jennifer Ness said if this passes it will affect tourism. Vegetation grows back when elk are no longer there. She wants to know how the 48-hour check will be enforced.

Action on Motion: Moody moved to amend the motion to reflect the extension of the comment period by one week. Vermillion accepted the amendment to his motion to extend the comment period by one week to June 25. Motion carried.

Moody said he is observing two different moral philosophies, but there can only be one wolf management system.

11. Nongame Check-off Work Plan – Proposed. 87-5-122, MCA, stipulates that "the FWP Commission shall review and annually approve the nongame wildlife program's projects recommended by the department for funding from the nongame wildlife account". George Pauley, Wildlife Section Supervisor, stated that tax check-off funding is used in conjunction with State Wildlife Grants to address high priority habitat, survey and inventory, and species conservation needs. The average total of donation since 2004 has been approximately \$27,000 per year. Based on that figure, FWP is proposing to spend \$15,000 to prioritize habitat for conservation by identifying the most critical habitat needs for nongame, threatened or endangered species, and identifying and monitoring threats to these critical habitats, \$15,000 to conduct monitoring and conservation work on inventoried species of concern (including bald eagles, common loons, bats, and amphibians) and \$5,000 for a competitive student stipend for nongame research.

Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion to approve the proposed Nongame Tax Check-Off work for Fiscal Year 2013.

12. 2012 HB454 Hunting Access Agreement – Proposed. 87-2-513 MCA, provides FWP the authority to issue either-sex or antlerless elk permits to landowners for management purposes. The landowner must offer free public elk hunting, meet the various conditions of the statute, and enter a contractual public elk hunting access agreement with FWP. The contract defines the areas open to public elk hunting, the number of elk hunting days that will be allowed on the property, and other details that FWP and the landowner consider necessary. George Pauley, Wildlife Section Supervisor, explained that FWP has only one agreement, which is with the Swanz Ranch, and that agreement specifically states that in return for allowing access to elk hunters, Mr. Swanz, or a family member, would receive one 411-21 either-sex permit. In return, FWP would issue four additional 411-21 permits from the already randomized list of unsuccessful applicants for that license permit type, and those successful applicants could only hunt on the Swanz deeded property. The Swanz agreement began in 2002 and has consistently received positive feedback.

Action: Moody moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to adopt the proposed Hunting Access Agreements for the 2012 general hunting season as proposed by FWP. Motion carried.

13. 2012 Fall Upland Game Bird Quotas and Limits – Proposed. George Pauley, Wildlife Section Supervisor, noted that the upland game bird season dates for 2012 were finalized in February 2012. FWP recommends maintaining the 2011 bag and possession limits and permit quotas for all upland game birds for 2012. This is consistent with known biology, management history, and survey efforts to date.

Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion to adopt the proposed 2012 upland game bird bag and possession limits and permit quotas as presented by FWP. Motion carried.

14. Harvest Prescriptions for Archery-Elk Bundle HDs – Proposed. Quentin Kujala, FWP Wildlife Bureau, presented the proposals.

BREAKS

HDs 410/417 – 300 antlerless elk (HD 410), 85 antlerless elk (HD 417)

HDs 620/621/622 – 400 antlerless elk

HD 700 – 205 antlerless elk

OUTSIDE BREAKS

HDs 401/403/450 – 50 antlerless elk (HD 401), 50 antlerless elk (HD 450)

HDs 411/412/426/511/530 – 375 antlerless elk (HDs 411/511/530), 150 antlerless elk (HD 412), 25 antlerless elk (HD 426)

HD 447 – 300 antlerless elk

HDs 500/570 – 45 antlerless elk

HDs 502/510 (west of Hwy 310)/520 (south and east of West Fork of Rock Creek)/575 – 15 antlerless elk

(HD 502/510 portion), 35 antlerless elk (HD 520 portion), 25 antlerless elk (HD 575 east of Stillwater River), 80 antlerless elk (west of Stillwater River)

HD 580 (south of Sweetgrass Creek) – 110 antlerless elk

HD 590 and portion of HD 701 north of the Yellowstone River, south of Hwy 12 and west of Sumatra-Myers Rd. – 225 antlerless elk (Bull Mtns), 45 antlerless elk (Pine Ridge)

HDs 702/704/705 – 50 antlerless elk (HD 702), 115 antlerless elk (HD 704), 45 antlerless elk (HD 705)

Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion to adopt the proposed 2012 elk harvest prescriptions as presented by FWP.

Mac Minard, MOGA, said these opportunities exist and make sense. Response on nonresident level has been large. Mechanisms need revisited at some point. Their intention is to press ahead.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

15. Mount Haggin WMA Timber Harvest – Final. Quentin Kujala, FWP Wildlife Bureau, explained that FWP proposes to remove standing dead and green beetle-infested lodgepole pine from areas on Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area to reduce hazardous trees. Merchantable timber will be removed from certain areas to cover costs of the project, and any funds that are generated in excess of project costs will be applied to maintenance and habitat projects on the WMA. A licensed forester will be contracted by FWP to assist in administering the project.

Action: Moody moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to grant final approval of the Mount Haggin Forest Management Project presented by FWP. Motion carried.

16. West Kootenai WMA Timber Harvest – Endorsement. Quentin Kujala, FWP Wildlife Bureau, explained that the 917-acre West Kootenai WMA is heavily forested with dense stands of Douglas-fir. A 2011 Management Plan identified treatments needed to improve forest health, maintain habitat diversity for wildlife, and reduce the risk of wildfire. FWP proposes to implement that plan through timber management on 240 acres within the WMA. To complete these management activities, approximately 300 yards of new road construction will be necessary along the narrow access strip on the south end of the WMA. Although proceeds derived from thinning are expected to offset the cost of this project, it will still cost approximately \$85,000. FWP is anticipating a \$48,000 grant administered by DNRC to assist in the completion of this work. A licensed forester will be contracted by FWP to assist in administering the project.

Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion to endorse FWP proceeding with development of an Environmental Analysis that will address forest management activities within the West Kootenai WMA. Motion carried.

17. Spotted Dog Mineral Rights Acquisition – Endorsement. Paul Sihler, FWP Special Projects Manager, explained that when FWP acquired the 27,600-acre Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area in 2011, the Department acquired all of the seller's mineral rights (13,500 acres), but previous owners, the Pauley family, still retained a 50% mineral interest on about 14,100 acres. The Pauley family has now expressed interest in selling their mineral rights to FWP, which would give FWP all of the mineral rights on the northeastern half of the WMA, except for limited DNRC oil, gas and coal rights on 3,059 acres. Habitat Montana funds will be utilized.

Action: Moody moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to endorse the Department's efforts to pursue the acquisition of outstanding mineral rights for the Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area. Motion carried.

18. Milk River Ranch – Endorsement. Paul Sihler, FWP Special Projects Manager, explained that the owners of the 4,500-acre Milk River Ranch near Havre have expressed interest in selling their property to agencies that will maintain its open space, agricultural, and historic values. The ranch lies along the Milk River and is comprised of native grassland and prairie breaks. It supports a multitude of wildlife species and provides fishing opportunities. FWP proposes to acquire 2,800 acres of river bottom and associated breaks habitat. DNRC has already been approved for the purchase of 1,700 acres of grazing and dry crop land and 80 acres of irrigated hay meadow, which will mesh with their existing ownership of 4,000 additional acres around the ranch. Between the two agencies, an expanse of about 14 square miles would be available for habitat and public recreational access. An appraisal will still need to be conducted, with Pittman Robertson funds anticipated as the funding source.

Action: Moody moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to endorse the Department's efforts to pursue the acquisition of 2,800 acres of the Milk River Ranch in Hill County. Motion carried.

19. Open Microphone.

Rod Bullis asked for clarification on non-resident mountain lion hunting regulations in Region 2, which Kujala provided.

Dan Peterson said the lion regulations were a problem in Region 1 and will be in Region 2 as well. Cats will be killed that should not be, and there will be an overrun of quotas. Allocate non-residents 10 percent.

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*Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

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Bob Ream, Chairman

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Joe Maurier, Director