

**MINUTES**  
**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission Meeting**  
**Montana Wild Center - Helena, MT**  
**JUNE 14, 2012**

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

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

**Guests:** See June 14, 2012 Commission file folder for sign-in sheet.

**Topics of Discussion:**

1. **Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance**
2. **Award to Don McKee for 55 years Service to Hunter Education Program**
3. **Approval of Minutes of May 10, 2012 Commission Meeting**
4. **Approval of Commission Expenses through May, 2012**
5. **Commission Reports**
6. **Director's Report**
7. **Budget and Legislative Priorities – Final**
8. **2012 Moose, Sheep, Goat, Deer and Elk License Auction Annual Rules – Final**
9. **Flathead River Fisheries Conservation Area – Endorsement**
10. **2012 Deer Quotas Outside the Biennial Quota Range - Proposed**
11. **2012 Elk License Quotas – Informational**
12. **2012 Antelope Quotas Outside the Biennial Quota Range - Proposed**
13. **2012 Mountain Lion Quotas – Final**
14. **Special Mountain Lion License Allocation Adjustment - Final**
15. **2012 Bison Quotas – Proposed**
16. **2012 and 2013 Furbearer Seasons and 2012 Quotas – Proposed**
17. **Madison Valley Trumpeter Swan Release – Final**
18. **Ninepipe Habitat Enhancement – Final**
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 8:30 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Award to Don McKee for 55 years Service to Hunter Education Program.** Director Maurier presented Don McKee with a rifle, a plaque, and a hunter education shirt as tokens of appreciation for his 55 years of service to the FWP hunter education program. McKee has instructed over 500 people over the years, many of whom were multiple generations within the same families. He has invested countless hours in the program, with safety always a priority. FWP thanks Mr. McKee for his dedication and generosity.

3. **Approval of the Commission Meeting Minutes of May 10, 2012.**

*Action: Moody moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the May 10, 2012 minutes. Motion carried.*

4. **Approval of the May Commission Expense Report.**

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

## 5. Commission Reports.

**Vermillion** reported that he had attended bison and wolf scoping meetings, and that Brucellosis discussions have been productive. Potential reintroduction of bighorn sheep in the Bridger Mountains is still under consideration with discussions continuing. The area has been receiving much needed rain, which will help the rivers and stream flows.

**Ream** reported that he had visited with Merle Rognrud at the Waterford last week. Merle, 94 years old, worked at FWP for many years with only a short break while serving in World War II. He said it was interesting to talk with the man regarding the many changes through the years.

**Moody** reported that he had attended a workshop this week, sponsored by the Montana Wild Center and the National Wildlife Federation, to discuss ways to get kids outside more. Five teams will work on separate ideas to bring back to the group for further discussion.

**Colton** reported that with the rains fluctuating the levels of the rivers and streams, oil from last year's spill is appearing in new locations.

**Stafne** reported that the game is rebounding in his district. Things are looking good, and most people are happy, with the exception of those concerned about the imported bison.

**6. Director's Report.** Director Maurier reported that interviews were conducted for the position of Deputy Director. The name of the successful candidate will be announced as soon as possible.

**7. Budget and Legislative Priorities – Final.** Sue Daly, FWP Finance Division Administrator, reported that FWP has been working with the Governor's Office on the legislative and budgetary proposals approved by the Commission at the January meeting. The general license account is not as healthy as was hoped, so no increases in spending are proposed. Without a fee increase, the Department must proceed cautiously for at least five years in order to remain solvent. The legislature passed a fee increase for the Parks Division, so there are a few proposals that would increase operations and maintenance, but there is not enough money to address capitol components of state parks.

Proposals are as follows:

### ***Proposed Legislative Concepts Approved for the 2013 Legislative Session***

**Revise Wolf Hunting Statutes.** *The 2011-12 wolf hunting season ended with a total harvest of 166 wolves, 75 percent of the overall quota. One of the insights from this season is that we clearly need more tools to enable hunters to reduce the wolf population to better manage the impacts on deer and elk populations and landowners. These proposed legislative changes would: (1) allow the use of electronic calls to hunt wolves, (2) allow the commission the authority to issue more than one wolf license, and (3) decrease the price of nonresident wolf licenses.*

**Sport Fish Restoration Assent Language Correction.** *Amend the Dingell-Johnson assent statute (87-1-701,MCA) that enables FWP to receive federal fisheries funding in order to correct changes that were made in the 2009 Legislature that had unintended consequences.*

**Revise the Hunting License Bonus Point System.** *This bill would change the method for administering the hunting license bonus point system, which increases an applicant's odds of successfully drawing a license for some special licenses. The current system allows an applicant for special licenses to improve their drawing odds for as many as three species while only making one bonus point payment.*

**Remove Sunset from Good Neighbor Bill.** *This legislation would make permanent a temporary program scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2013. Enacted in 2009, the "Good Neighbor" statute requires FWP, when purchasing land with most funding sources, to set aside an amount of funding equal to 20% of the purchase price (up to \$300,000) for maintenance of department-owned land.*

**Revise Nonresident Youth Hunting Licenses.** *This is a clean-up bill that allows a nonresident youth to apply for a combination hunting license at the same time as the adult family member who is sponsoring them.*

### ***Proposed Budget Items Approved by FWP Director and Governor's Office***

**Restore Parks O&M Staff.** *Request funding be restored in the base as permanent for maintenance efforts at State Parks.*

**Restore LWCF Program Staff.** *A placeholder for the LWCF program that will request funding be permanently restored in the base.*

**Restore Base Operations.** *This is a placeholder to restore any O&M dollars left on the table.*

**Restore Snowmobile Biennial.** *This is a placeholder to re-establish the biennial appropriation for snowmobile equipment.*

**Parks Boat Safety.** *Establish federal authority in base -- currently in a BA -- for the boat safety program.*

**Parks Reservation System RST.** *The MOU with Idaho expires 12/31/13. This is a request for a placeholder for restricted authority in the event the current MOU is not renewed.*

**Parks Equipment OTO.** *A placeholder for new/upgraded major equipment items for use across the state.*

**Parks O&M.** *A placeholder to increase to O&M budgets for utilities, communications, etc.*

**Game Warden Overtime.** *A placeholder for overtime budget.*

**Funding Switch to DJ.** *Switch \$265k of GLA to federal DJ -- net zero.*

**Funding Switch to PR.** *Switch \$1m of GLA to federal PR -- net zero*

**Aquatic Invasive Species AIS.** This is a placeholder for the AIS program.

**Restore Fishing Land Access OTO.** Continue OTO funding in base for resolving conflict at bridges. (2011 Session -- HB2 amount)

**Restore SWG Operations.** This is a placeholder to restore any dollars left on the table at FYE.

**Restore FAS O&M Staff.** This is a placeholder to request funding be restored in the base as permanent for maintenance efforts at Fishing Access Sites.

**Restore Auction Programs.** Continue OTO funding in base for elk, goat, and sheep auction programs. (2011 Session -- HB2 amount)

**Restore Block Management.** Continue OTO funding in base for Wildlife and Enforcement block management efforts (Fedl PR \$) (2011 Session -- HB2 amount).

**Restore Migratory Bird.** This is a placeholder to continue OTO funding in base for migratory bird program. (2011 Session -- HB2 amount)

**Restore Game Herders.** This is a placeholder to continue OTO funding in base for game herder efforts.

**Wolf Program.** This is a placeholder for the wolf program.

**Habitat Montana O&M.** This is a placeholder to set the Habitat Montana operations and maintenance budget at a level consistent with the increased revenues.

**Moose Research.** Funding for a long-term research project using moose auction and PR \$.

**Sage Grouse Research.** Funding for a long-term research project leveraging \$100k of federal PR \$ with existing GLA \$.

**Legal Unit.** Placeholder for Legal Unit.

**Search and Rescue.** This is a placeholder that will allow us to restore the transfer appropriation to previously authorized levels.

*Action: Vermillion moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve FWP's budget request and legislative proposals. Motion carried.*

**8. 2012 Moose, Sheep, Goat, Deer and Elk License Auction Annual Rules – Final.** Hank Worsech, FWP License Bureau Chief, explained that by changing this Annual Rule to an ARM, FWP would solicit interested organizations, and the Commission would retain authority to choose which organization gets which license.

*Action: Vermillion moved and Colton seconded the motion to adopt the final 2013 auction/lottery rules for the moose, sheep, goat, mule deer and elk licenses as proposed by FWP.*

**9. Flathead River Fisheries Conservation Area – Endorsement.** Bruce Rich, FWP Fisheries Bureau Chief, explained that FWP is seeking endorsement to negotiate the acquisition of four land parcels along the Flathead River. The parcels, totaling approximately 260-acres, provides important riparian habitat for bull trout moving between Flathead Lake and spawning and their rearing tributaries in the North Fork and Middle Fork of the Flathead River, and for westslope cutthroat trout. The four parcels are located along the river as follows:

- Parcels 1 and 2 (“upper river parcels”): Adjacent parcels located along the Flathead River between the Conrad Drive Fisheries Conservation Area and the 442-acre Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.
- Parcel 3 (Conrad Drive FCA): Located along the Flathead River between the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area and the Old Steel Bridge FAS. Acquisition of the three upper-river parcels would complete public ownership and protection of 4.5 km of contiguous river habitat for public use.
- Parcel 4 (“lower river parcel”): These 30-acres are located near the mouth of Flathead River and adjoin the Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area.

As part of negotiations on a separate land transaction involving the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes and Bonneville Power Administration, the Tribe would donate the Conrad Drive FCA (Parcel 3) to FWP at no cost. FWP would use BPA fish mitigation funds to purchase 1, 2, and 4. Future BPA funding would be used for operations and management costs associated with all four parcels.

*Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to endorse FWP's request to conduct due diligence on the acquisition of four parcels adding to the Flathead River FCA. Motion carried.*

**10. 2012 Deer Quotas Outside the Biennial Quota Range – Proposed.**

797-00: Decrease B licenses from 500 to 100

311-00: Increase B licenses from 50 to 100

*Action: Colton moved and Moody seconded the motion to adopt the proposed adjustments to 2012 deer quotas outside the biennial range as proposed by FWP. Vermillion moved to amend the motion to adjust HD300 to 175. Colton accepted the amendment. Motion carried.*

**11. 2012 Elk License Quotas – Informational.** Proposed changes to 2011 elk quotas within biennial ranges are as follows, with all other elk quotas unchanged from 2011 levels.

201-80: Increase antlerless B licenses from 75 to 85  
201-81: Increase antlerless B licenses from 20 to 30  
210-80: Decrease antlerless B licenses from 600 to 250  
211-80: Decrease antlerless B licenses from 300 to 100  
214-80: Decrease antlerless B licenses from 100 to 75  
215-80: Decrease antlerless B licenses from 400 to 300  
215-81: Decrease antlerless B licenses from 400 to 200  
216-80: Decrease antlerless B licenses from 150 to 75  
270-81: Decrease antlerless B licenses from 15 to 5  
291-80: Decrease antlerless B licenses from 400 to 200  
314-80: Increase antlerless B licenses from 200 to 400  
317-80: Decrease antlerless B licenses from 250 to 150  
004-80: Increase antlerless B licenses from 2,200 to 2,800  
410-80: Increase antlerless B licenses from 300 to 600  
412-80: Increase antlerless B licenses from 250 to 300  
416-80: Decrease antlerless B licenses from 150 to 100  
455-80: Increase antlerless B licenses from 100 to 125

**12. 2012 Antelope Quotas Outside the Biennial Quota Range – Proposed.**

Three proposed changes to the 2011 antelope quotas and biennial ranges, and all other antelope quotas will be unchanged from 2011 levels or adjusted within current biennial ranges.

900-00: Decrease Archery Either Sex licenses from 5,600 to 4,700  
700-00: Decrease Either Sex licenses from 6,500 to 3,000  
700-10: Decrease Dow/Fawn licenses from 500 to 100

*Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion that the Commission adopt the proposed adjustments to the 2012 antelope quotas outside the biennial range as proposed by FWP with the exception to leave HD900-00 at 5,600.*

Mary Ellen Schnurr stated that she supports the motion.

Steve Kamps stated that he supports the motion.

*Action on Motion: Motion carried.*

**13. 2012 Mountain Lion Quotas – Final.**

Four changes to the proposals adopted by the Commission in April. Quotas apply to “any legal lion” unless otherwise noted and as influenced by female subquotas.

HD 210 (Upper Clark Fork): increase total special licenses from 4 to 7; adjust from female lion subquota of 2 to male quota of ~~6~~ 7 and female quota of ~~1~~ 0  
HDs 211 & 216 (Upper Clark Fork): decrease total special licenses from 10 to 7; adjust from female lion subquota of 4 to male quota of ~~4~~ 5 and female quota of 2  
HDs 212 & 215 (Upper Clark Fork): increase total special licenses from 4 to 6; adjust from female lion subquota of 1 to male quota of ~~4~~ 6 and female quota of ~~2~~ 0  
HD 317: increase total quota from 3 to ~~6~~ 4; increase female subquota from 1 to 2

*Action: Vermillion moved and Colton seconded the motion to adopt the final 2012 mountain lion quotas and subquotas as presented by FWP.*

Steve Kamps encouraged public participation in decisions.

*Motion carried.*

**14. Special Mountain Lion License Allocation Adjustment – Final.** No change to the proposal for any unsuccessful special lion license applicant to be able to purchase a general lion license valid for any open district statewide during the fall season and also for any open quota areas in Region 2 during the winter season. The final proposal represents no change from the April adoption.

*Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to adopt the final adjustment and correction to the 2012 and 2013 special mountain lion license allocation process as proposed by FWP. Motion carried.*

**15. 2012 Bison Quotas – Proposed.**

No changes proposed to the existing 2011 bison quotas

*Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to adopt the proposed 2012 bison license quotas as presented by FWP. Motion carried.*

**16. 2012 and 2013 Furbearer Seasons and 2012 Quotas – Proposed.** Furbearer season structure is defined every two years, and furbearer quotas are set annually. The proposed season structure for 2012 and 2013, and the proposed annual quotas for 2012 are below. All other season elements and quotas are unchanged from 2011.

- Close furbearer trapping in the Bass Creek Special Recreation Area in Region 2.
- Clarify language regarding snares under **Public Land Trailheads**. Clarify language to prohibit snares within 1000 feet of public land trailheads.
- Replace otter carcass collection with skull collection only. Otter skulls will continue to be collected to provide teeth for aging used in population analysis.
- Remove the **Special Marten Regulation** intended to minimize incidental take of lynx. Retain the special regulation restricting the use of larger body grip traps in the fisher and wolverine regulations. Smaller marten sets do not represent potential for incidental take of lynx.
- Modify bobcat quotas in Regions 2 and 6: Region 2 increase from 100 to 180; Region 6 decrease from 125 to 90.

*Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion to adopt the proposed 2012 and 2013 trapping regulations & furbearer seasons and 2012 quotas as proposed by FWP.*

Bob Sheppard asked the Commission to consider an increase of 100 bobcats in each district.

Toby Walrath said MTA voted unanimously in support of the closure of the Bass Creek area.

Teri Norcross, a Bass Creek recreational user, said the process was enlightening. She attended a trapper education class.

Bert Wustner congratulated FWP for working with the trappers and the public on issues and furbearer management.

*Action on Motion: Motion carried.*

**17. Madison Valley Trumpeter Swan Release – Final.** FWP conducted an EA process to discern any potential impacts of multi-year releases of a small number of trumpeters in the middle Madison, between Ennis and Quake Lakes, to reestablish breeding in areas where extensive habitat restoration began in 2005. This work included funding from FWP, USFWS, Natural Resources Conservation Service, PPL Montana, and others. These efforts have restored and enhanced 544 acres of wetlands that were drained in the early 1950s. Restoration of breeding trumpeters to this area is the goal of this proposal. FWP is one of three state conservation agencies committed to implementing the Trumpeter Swan Implementation Plan developed by the Pacific Flyway Council. Swans for release would be obtained from the Wyoming Wetland Society in Jackson, Wyoming. Most funding will be provided by conservation agencies and groups, and from the private sector.

*Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion to approve the Madison Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction project as proposed in the Final EA. Motion carried.*

**18. Ninepipe Habitat Enhancement – Final.** This proposal is for acquisition of an agricultural haying lease on Ninepipe Wildlife Management Area in Lake County. Haying improves wildlife food and cover. The lessee will hay specific sites to enhance habitat quality, while also providing farming practices in place of a cash lease. Value of this lease will be up to \$24,000, depending on quality and quantity of haying that is completed. It will involve less than 200 acres on the WMA, and will start July 15, 2012 and conclude on or before October 1, 2013.

*Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the Ninepipe WMA haying lease agreement. Motion carried.*

**19. Open Microphone.**

Rod Bullis had questions about Spotted Dog WMA and if there is a grazing plan for 2013. If there is a plan, he wants to be apprised of public involvement in the process.

Mack Long, Region 2 Supervisor, said they are still working on a potential plan, but it is still under consideration. FWP wants to protect the WMA, but also wants to help area residents by allowing cattle grazing for a short time.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

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Bob Ream, Chairman

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Joe Maurier, Director