



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**REGION 3
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE
INITIAL MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2006
FWP LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM
BOZEMAN, MT**

Greetings - Welcome & introductions of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks employees.

Pat Flowers explained travel expenses. Kari Janikula explained how to fill out volunteer agreements and compensation for travel expenses. Members of CAC get reimbursed for expenses for total amount of miles traveled to and from. Car pooling – the one driving fills out the voucher and is reimbursed.

Discussion ensued regarding term period for CAC. Generally the term is two years, but since this is first year of committee, we are asking half the group to serve four-year terms. At the next meeting Pat will ask for volunteers to serve four-year terms.

There was a lot of interest in being a member of the committee, who got on the committee, when it meets, etc. Pat explained that it is a public role. Names, addresses, phone numbers after this first meeting will be available to the public.

Notebooks with pertinent CAC information were distributed to members. Members were encouraged to bring notebooks to future meetings for additional information. We will add pertinent information to the notebooks over time.

Reviewed agenda.

Introductions. Each member introduced him or herself, gave brief history, and shared their interest in the committee's work.

Larry Peterman, FWP Chief of Field Operations in Helena, discussed Philosophy, Roles and Responsibilities of the Citizen's Advisory Committee. Larry briefly reviewed the following issues that brought about the establishment of CACs across the state:

Many resource management issues, we need good communication to solve issues
Contentious issues, sportsmen's & other groups

Complex world & society

Need good public input

People busy, complex lives that don't lend to public meetings & input

CAC organization in each region now, with the exception of R4

Traditional sportsmen's groups changing – becoming more specialized; dealing with only one group you get narrower perspective, don't want to miss any portion of the public interest

Want CAC in Region 3 to accomplish the following:

- Broaden public input

- Bring different interests and various walks of life to table

- Improve dialogue and input from local community members

- Want people with interest in resources

- Sounding board for presentation of initiatives or interests that we have

- Want your ideas

- Good communication and decision-making process, which is a continual and ongoing process

We do not have a CAC in Great Falls, but hopefully will within next four or five months
Kalispell has had one for 10-12 years (115 groups there that have interest in what FWP does)

Better than crisis-initiated communication

All other regional CACs are modeled after Region 1 CAC

Your responsibility is to put in time to understand the issues, so I encourage you to be involved in your local community. You may see issues that we are not tracking or you may see something coming up in the future.

Pat Flowers: Having been on various advisory boards, disillusionment can come because you are advisory; remember that we may be unanimous on a recommendation for an issue and when it goes out to the public or FWP Commission they may not agree. That said, your involvement will influence decisions we make. As long as your opinions have been presented and fairly evaluated and received, that is what's important. We need everyone's involvement.

Question: Are there examples of decisions made by the FWP Commission that were influenced by Region 1 CAC input?

Larry: Yes. Access to lakes, state lands not maintained well, CAC put together a program for better management. Echo Lake FAS, looked at access and growth issues, game populations, ways to handle wildlife conflict situations (bears/lions in town). Discussion started at the CAC. Very worthwhile. No-wake discussion on Flathead Lake. Established over 4-5 years, they got through the commission a no-wake rule for perimeters of lakes. Started in R1 with the CAC committee.

Bob Gibson: I assume you, Pat, will be the chairman.

Pat: Yes. Melissa will also be involved with managing meetings. All program managers won't be at every meeting.

Tom Barnes: Meeting once a quarter or how much?

Pat: We'll leave that to you.

Larry: Other CACs meet about once a quarter. If there is a need for more we can discuss. For example, you may want to consider meeting before or during legislative session.

Meg: Move around to different towns?

Pat: Yes, that will be a valuable experience—different communities and different interests, there's a lot to be gained by moving around.

Tom: When does the Commission meet? In terms of our meetings?

Pat: Monthly schedule, some months optional with teleconferencing at times.

Pat: We'll get you a copy of the schedule so you can have it. (Copies of the 2006 commission meeting dates were distributed that night to the committee)

Bob: Can we invite guests? If we as a committee want to discuss private land ownership, would it be appropriate to ask landowners to come and hear another perspective?

Pat: Certainly. That is one of our toughest issues and invited guests would be very valuable.

Cynthia: We are advising you and you take it and go where? To the Commission? I don't understand the structure.

Pat: I'll give you an overview—regional, Helena HQ, FWP Commission, etc. Issues you discuss could be specific on-the-ground activities, statewide policies, legislative, issues that go beyond region, whatever they are, I'll carry to the appropriate entity. I'll funnel the issue depending on subject and area defined.

Audience Comments

Ken (member of public): Prioritizing issues, I'll share: 1) Stream access – angler concerns contentious issues about access. How can you better educate fishermen and landowners; FWP signage clarified and better signed; specifically bridge access to streams; 2) Find ways to research and support the impact of brucellosis not only in bison but in other ungulates, elk, holding area in Gardiner do you want to proactively support? Find ways to help reduce impact on elk and cattle. CDC hold on brucellosis vaccine. Find ways to address brucellosis issues. Accurate education; 3) Ways to look at educating public on degradation by wolves on elk and deer. See FWP being proponent on degradation of protected species; 4) Modest fee increase: how much? Make recommendations. What period of time? Build pool of money for other

worthwhile programs; 5) Increased quick publication of hunter success rate. Takes awhile to put stats together and hunters can't plan their hunts early. Hunter success rates, degradation rates, number of permits put out leads to better hunter planning; 6) Provisions for less restrictive access for disabled, work with FS for more lenient access for elderly and disabled. Utilize ATV for retrieval. Gallatin access with ATV is more limited. Horse or hunt on foot close to own vehicle. My proposal is something to work out with FS and BLM partial access to set up camp. Hunt on foot and use ATV for retrieval. I see FS restricting access in Gallatin and probably other areas. Good background on biologist issues. Access and multiple uses in forests, better communication between FS, BLM and FWP. FWP not strong enough, protective of game restrictions. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks needs a proactive response on commenting on FS plans.

Bob: With the list he gave, is it being recorded?

Yes. Pat, Mel & Shirley are taking notes.

Bob: Access for degradation hunts, late season cow tags. A lot of people would like to shoot cows and don't feel they have much opportunity. Ranchers complain about elk, hunters need elk. Communication problems with degradation hunts. More information on how someone can obtain a cow elk.

Ken (member of public): That is a comment I had. Announcement of late cow hunt. One day and then phone in list. I was out of town and 3 days later the hunt was already in place. Recommend that CAC meetings be published a week in advance. Announce meetings ahead of time.

Kurt: Next year we will revamp system and have rosters for game damage hunts. They will be administered next year and set up ahead of time. This committee will be a great resource for the discussion and implementation of the game damage list.

Pat: Other comments/questions?

Jim Wisman (member of public): Bighorn sheep, want to reintroduce to more places. We believe we can start herds in additional places in the state. Bison also, making room for bison.

Dennis Flath (member of public): Agreed with other issues presented and added: elk hunting access, some number of elk hunting districts, we are packing majority of hunters in only 20% of land. Bighorn sheep I agree with Jim's comments. Bison also.

COMMITTEE TOOK A BREAK AT 7:20 p.m. AND RESUMED AT 7:30 p.m.

Pat went over the notebook with everyone.

Rick Arnold: Question on FWP Foundation and funds and where the money goes. If someone offered the Foundation money and then wanted people to stay off his/her land, would FWP take the money?

Pat: Foundation is designed to fund projects or FWP activities needing additional funding.

R3 Program Managers presented Overviews of Programs

Sam Sheppard, R3 Warden Captain: Explained his role, background, and involvement in R3. Interested in knowing and learning public perceptions of his staff—good/bad/indifferent. Fifteen wardens in Region Three with 3 warden sergeants. Approximately 9,000 anglers checks a year, 800 park contacts, 3,000 boat checks, and 2,200 snowmobile checks. Other issues: urban wildlife, block management, trapper contacts, hunter/bowhunter education, tribal relations, late hunts, river recreation trespass, etc.—involved in every program in FWP.

Rick: Do you have any jurisdiction with outfitters?

Sam: Yes. We can check licensed and unlicensed.

Rick: Let's say there is a group of people with licenses and they say they are with an outfitter, can you ask for the outfitter's license?

Sam: Yes. They usually have the license, if not they can fax it or bring it in. If their answer is no, I'm just their "buddy," we can investigate.

Craig: How many complaints of trespass?

Sam: Statewide over 1,000. Significant here, but not as significant as in the eastern portion of the state. We serve as a liaison between landowner and county attorney. Try to mitigate for honest mistakes. Landowners can file criminal trespass.

Leroy: Harassment by private landowners?

Sam: Not that many. New law. Haven't had to use it. Coming in the area of fishing access/angler harassment; we will prosecute, but need evidence and research. We try to be fair impartial.

Neil Anderson, Wildlife Lab Supervisor: Born in Minnesota, grew up in South Dakota, attended South Dakota State then on to MSU for Masters. I worked in the Lab as a work-study student while in school. Our Wildlife Lab is housed in Region 3, but we have statewide responsibilities. There is a veterinarian on staff that has been here little over one year, since last December. We have a full-time technician. Involvement in a wide variety of issues, including disease surveillance and research. CWD and brucellosis main issues. No CWD in wild elk and deer in Montana. Surveyed 9,000 deer since 1998. Brucellosis in park—we have kiosks in Emigrant area, encouraging hunters to give blood samples. Physiology of wolverine reproduction, involvement with wardens, a bit of forensic work (for example, on wolves and grizzly bears). Majority of work is collecting samples, use network of labs for specialties to test samples, those facilities are not on hand here locally. Network of labs report back to us. Offer technical services to wardens and biologists. Furbearer skulls collected, teeth collected for aging. Wildlife immobilization program, darting bears and other animals with drugs (controlled substances). Training on drugs and proper handling of animals. We are also involved in sheep

transplants. We deal with detection and removal of animals in the event of a problem. Most time in lab, but occasional fieldwork. Neil shared more about Mark, our vet originally from Zimbabwe, and how lucky we are to have him working in the lab.

Kurt Alt, R3 Wildlife Manager: Outlined facts in wildlife program. Issues: 5-week hunting season. 2 years ago eliminated customized hunts in R3. Season tentatives will be adopted Feb 21. Game damage discussion—effective management and what criteria should be used. Bison hunt and management. Bison hunt and EA preparation was 1 ½ year process. Bison quarantine facility—statewide issue. Neil and wildlife vet are heavily involved with that. Restore wildlife where appropriate and involve landowners, hunters, all interests. Important issue. Grizzly bear delisting very important issue. Wolves—Wolf Management Plan adopted by the state, it is regarded as one of the best plans. There are three wolf management specialists working for us in R3. There is also one in R1 and one in R5. Documenting wolf packs, wolf sightings, sheep killed by wolves or other animals. This is a tough, complex, emotional issue.

Researcher Ken Hamlin is working on elk and wolves. This is the 5th year for wolf-ungulate project: mortality rates, physiological effects on elk, calf/elk marking, predation rates, and understanding of impacts of wolves on elk. High quality information. Elk/livestock project in Madison. There were 40 elk radio collars out, Craig (wildlife biologist) & Ken were involved in this. 30 radio collars collecting readings on elk movement blew off recently for us to retrieve and download data. Successfully retrieved all but one collar. They document the paths elk take in spring, summer, and fall.

Bighorn sheep is a big issue. Four major herds had catastrophic die-offs. Subdivisions are a huge issue in the regions. All biologists are involved with development issues. Black bear harvest strategies—gather data from dead bears, sex, and harvest information. State started black bear DNA study (wire traps with rotten meat/bear hair snares) to determine percentage of populations harvested.

Bruce Rich, R3 Fisheries Manager: Buckeye by birth, Montanan by choice. 14 years in Idaho and Ohio fisheries management. Tremendous amount of fishing in Region 3. 2003 data—30% of fishing in Montana is here in R3, 32% resident angling and 45% nonresident angling. Rivers, heart of program, wild trout in rivers/streams. We are currently working on our native fishery. There are basically five components: monitoring fish populations, setting regulations, stocking fish, working with anglers, and creel survey. Habitat management, enhance habitat, fishing access—obtaining new access and disposing of sites we don't need or utilize. Stream accesses, public waters, technical assistance, all are management issues. Forest Plan revisions involvement. A lot of subdivision, land development. Aquatic education – help 7th graders dissect fish, kids fishing days, talked to Rick's group joint TU meeting. We have four fisheries biologists—Townsend, Butte, Dillon, and Bozeman. We have specialized project biologists who focus on specific issues and maintaining/enhancing. Drought, aquatic habitat, fishing access sites, stream access, aquatic nuisance species, native species restoration, arctic grayling, Westslope/Yellowstone cutthroats.

Rick: Stream/river jurisdiction over body of water between FWP and FS?

Bruce: FS manages the land, we manage resource. Most effective when we co-manage on and off forest.

Rick: So, if a person wanted to widen or narrow a stream and your agency says no, what happens?

Bruce: Stream Protection Act covers any actions, if any government agency wants to put in a culvert, sediment trapping, etc. they need a permit from us. We can deny permit, but we try to work together with all agencies. 310 permit is private application of the Stream Protection Act.

Jerry Walker, R3 Parks Manager: (Provided all committee members with state park hats!) Blessed to have some of the most magnificent state parks located here in Region 3, Lewis & Clark Caverns, Headwaters, Spring Meadow Lake, just to name three. Fact sheets in notebooks about State Parks and fishing access sites. Charged to provide recreation opportunities to the public. Second mission to protect/preserve resources, including outstanding recreation resources, cultural, and natural. We facilitate economic development through the tourism industry. Funding source on vehicle licensing, godsend to state parks system, a source we never had before. In the past we charged a great many fees, including entry fees. Now you have an optional \$4 fee. 70% of Montanans opt to fund. Marketing Plan for state parks. We compete with city, national parks, BLM and must establish niche or brand for what we're known for and offer. Marketing plan a first for the agency. Lewis & Clark Bicentennial last year was big for marketing. Some activity planned for next summer, with focus in eastern portion of state. Partnership with communities in Montana. Parks are an asset for local communities. Very involved in tourism community. Fishing access sites touch a lot of people. Visitation last calendar year was 1.3 million at FASs in Region 3. Residential development is an issue. Maintaining good relations with neighbors is very important. Issues on rivers, recreation, user conflicts. Demand to acquire new sites, difficulty taking care of new sites, keeping up with maintenance, weeds, and neighbor relations, and need resources to take care of needs. Trails. 12 snowmobile clubs. Grants for trails programs.

Craig: What is commercial use rule process?

Jerry: Embarking on commercial use rule making process, recently held public scoping meetings to develop ideas and parameters, evaluation of commercial use, department lands and waters, state parks, FASs, wildlife management areas. We are already dealing with commercial use at FASs with outfitters, shuttle services, tour guide services, bird watching, and ecological tours, etc. We plan to bring something to the Commission within a year's time.

Bob: Maintenance of parks. Son lives in Utah, program of volunteers who participate and cleans things. There are some rivers around here that I think could use such a program. Incentive could be preference points for big game licenses.

Jerry: We have a program in place called Adopt a Fishing Access Site. 40 different sponsors, no incentives such as you are talking about. Most of the incentive with ours is to keep on top of maintenance; the incentive for involvement is publicity for the group.

Leroy: Fees, on top of what you're getting for license fees, are there additional fees charged?

Jerry: Yes, we still have camping, concession fees.

Kari Janikula, R3 Office Manager: Native of Montana. I supervise the Bozeman office with three other support staff and one maintenance person; the Butte office, which is open part-time in the afternoon's 12:30-4:30; and the Helena Area Office, the staff there works from 8:00-5:00 M-F. We are full service license agents in all three offices. Certify and sell licenses. We are known as the "glue that holds the agency together"! We deal with special applications for sandhill crane, swan, turkey, etc.; all license applications can come through our office.

Mike Korn, R3 Helena Area Office Resource Program Manager: HARO is a part of Region 3 as a field office. We sell licenses, deal with law enforcement, have wildlife and fisheries biologists, and a support staff. We deal with local issues for field services.

Mel Frost, R3 Information Officer: I work across all divisions in Region Three and have my hands in most every pot. In my work, I need to know at least a little something about every issue we work on and at times a lot about some specific issues. I'm in constant contact with the public and media. My work involves general public education and outreach to individuals and interest groups, with a lot of calls coming in and many press releases going out. I'm responsible for all media relations. I'm on the phone a lot with media requests and outgoing public information. Bowhunter/Education—I supervise almost 200 volunteers in the R3 hunter and bowhunter education programs and implement our hunter/bowhunter education activities. We are seeing a lot of older hunter education students now, which sometimes requires an alternative delivery. Piloting a home study program, which includes a field exercise with local instructor. There are many public meetings in Region Three, sometimes several times a week we may have evening meetings that we're expected to attend. Public presentations to college students, civic groups, and school groups. Educational trunks loan program (heads and hides) to local teachers in classrooms, a lot of coordinating with state and federal agencies within and outside Montana. Major issues: Bison management and Interagency Bison Management Plan, bison hunt, brucellosis in elk and bison, wolf and grizzly management and delisting, Arctic grayling recovery, Citizens' Advisory Committee, FAS vandalism. A primary focus is communications—both internal and external—and I'm asking you for help to provide clarification on issues and improve our communications.

Pat: Introduced the booklet in notebooks, *Now You Know*. Provides factual information about FWP and he encouraged the committee to read. Also, Pat emphasized landowner guide and CD *Owning Eden*.

Kurt: Someone asked a question about WMAs. We have 11 of them in Region 3. We have 9 separate grazing leases in collaboration with private producers and on federal lands. Nationally recognized grazing systems. Habitat program. Grazing involves several approaches. Fees part of system. Mount Haggin fees generated at current rates for private pastures. Those fees go back to state trust account and we have to apply and request those fees back to a WMA.

Pat: We received a citizen comment in the mail that Mel said she would make sure was read at this meeting. The comment is from a gentleman by the name of Daniel Lorenzetti. Pat proceeded to read his statement. (The letter is reprinted at the end of these meeting notes.)

Discussion and Brainstorming

List of potential issues for upcoming meetings. (#)= votes

1. Wildlife (elk) populations (3)
2. Extended bison habitat and hunt; bison issues (4)
3. Commercial use rules (4)
4. Stream access and hunting access (12)
5. Hunting and fishing ethics (2)
6. Elk brucellosis (0)
7. Standardizing county planning to consider wildlife—effects of development on wildlife (12)
8. Coordination between state and federal agencies (1)
9. Urban wildlife issues (no votes because combined with #7 during voting)
10. Fencing issues in wildlife corridors (2)
11. Overcrowding on rivers (5)
12. 5 week season and late hunts; public access on private property (0)
13. Block management (0)
14. Water quality impacts from development (0)
15. License costs (0)
16. Living with wildlife—growth, feeding, urban, education (0)
17. Universal retrieval of game (0)
18. Wolf management (1)
19. Grizzly bear management (1)
20. Bighorn sheep management (0)
21. Agency collaboration—access/transportation planning, active participation roles for FWP (0)
22. State wildlife conservation strategy (0)
23. FWP funding (1)

Group combined several issues:

#s 4, 5, 12, and 13

#s 7, 9, 14, 16

Top votes:

1. Stream and hunting access, hunting and fishing ethics, 5 week season and late hunts, and block management (combined issues #s 4, 5, 12, and 13)
2. Effects of development on wildlife, urban wildlife issues, water quality impacts from development, and living with wildlife (combined issues 7, 9, 14 and 16)

NEXT MEETING: The topic of discussion will be stream and hunting access.

Pat: We'll take on access issues at the next meeting. Staff will put together an agenda and send to you. We'll prepare briefing sheets on issues and resource sheets for more information. Will send copy of current legislation on public access.

2006 Meeting Schedule

Spring meeting: Wednesday, May 3, 2006 in Dillon. Site TBA.

Summer meeting: Wednesday, August 9, 2006 in Ennis. Site TBA.

Fall meeting: Thursday, November 9, 2006 in Helena. Site TBA.

Craig: Montana Challenge would be an outstanding program for this group to see.

Pat: Email communications? Do we have email addresses for everyone? Leroy doesn't have email.

Rick: Why don't we ask other regions what their priority issues are?

Cynthia: When are other regions CAC meetings?

Pat: Will get that information to you.

Pat: How was the length of this meeting, too long, short, okay?

Everyone thought ok.

Pat: Do you want to have a field trip to Wall Creek WMA at August Ennis meeting?

Yes was the consensus.

MEETING ADJOURNED.

LETTER FROM DANIEL LORENZETTI

My name is Daniel Lorenzetti. I represent a group of citizens known as The Madison River Alliance. We are a group of property owners along the Madison River in the Three Forks area. As a group, we have worked with Fish Wildlife & Parks on issues ranging from the closure of fishing accesses in our area to control of the New Zealand Mud Snail.

As Montanans, and now members of this Citizen's Advisory Committee, I am sure you are aware of the recent crisis in State education. The whole school-funding issue springs from a State Supreme Court opinion declaring the existing system inadequate to meet the Montana Constitution's educational guarantees.

The State Legislature, in its creation of the Department of Fish Wildlife & parks, and in public access programs like Fishing Access Sites, has made similar guarantees to the public and to Montana landowners.

It may be just a matter of time before the public, including sportsmen and women and landowners, have to resort to legal means to get the State to properly fund Fish Wildlife & Parks so that it can carry out the mission the Legislature has set forth.

By anyone's measure, including staff members of the agency, Fish Wildlife and Parks is woefully underfunded and has been for many years. Warden staffing is at the same level it was fifty years ago. Vandalism is rampant as fishing access sites. Citizens whose property adjoins access sites also suffer vandalism, trespass and noxious weed incursions to their property at an ever-increasing rate. Recently, FWP has been forced to limit nighttime access to an important fishing access site in our area due to out-of-control vandalism. At the same time, the warden for our area has just retired and, due to budgetary constraints, a replacement will not be hired until June 2006.

These problems, as well as many others, are acute and will get worse unless there is decisive action taken by this Committee. I have served on many of these types of committees. They are noble and necessary undertakings. However, it is not long before one realizes that the sacrifice of time you contribute to identify issues and recommend solutions can be undermined by a departmental budget that cannot even keep up with its current mandate.

I am not present in person to deliver these comments because I learned of this meeting 72 hours before it was to take place. That is when a press release was sent to the media. The public will have even less time to respond or make plans to attend. There is not a single member of our Alliance that knew of this meeting or the formation of the Citizen's Advisory Committee until very recently. Again, this lack of comprehensive public notice and communication is the result of the understaffing and underfunding of FWP.

In my opinion, the top priority of the Citizen's Advisory Committee should not be the specific interest of our constituency or of any other special interest group but rather the long-established underfunding of FWP. If you do not address that issue by educating and lobbying State legislators and by communicating that problem to the press, your efforts will be much appreciated but ineffective.

If you choose not to address this core issue, the result will be more mandates without funding, more vandalism, less public access, less enforcement of FWP rules and, probably, more citizen and landowner lawsuits. As citizens, we constantly complain about the quantity of litigation in our society. Here is your chance to address the situation before frustrated citizens take action in the same manner as they took to assure quality education for our children.

If you wish to communicate with me on these matters, please see Melissa Frost who has graciously agreed to read this statement to the members of this Advisory Committee and into the record. She can provide my contact information.

Thank you for your time and your service.

Daniel Lorenzetti

February 1, 2006