

FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
REGION ONE
CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY
MARCH 14, 2007

Jim Satterfield started this meeting with introductions all the way around. Our new members were present tonight and all enjoyed welcoming the newest members of the oldest CAC.

Awards: Terry Comstock received his 20-year award for Bow Hunter Education and Robert Friedman received his CAC Recognition award for the completion of his term.

Legislature: To check the latest status of any bills that you're watching, go to the following website: [http://laws.leg.mt.gov/pls/laws07/law0203w\\$.startup](http://laws.leg.mt.gov/pls/laws07/law0203w$.startup)

Cutthroat Conservation Project Sub-committee Report:

5/03/07: Public meeting will be held at the Red Lion in Kalispell at the Center Mall. This will be the first of several annual meetings to update all concerned publics on the status of this project.

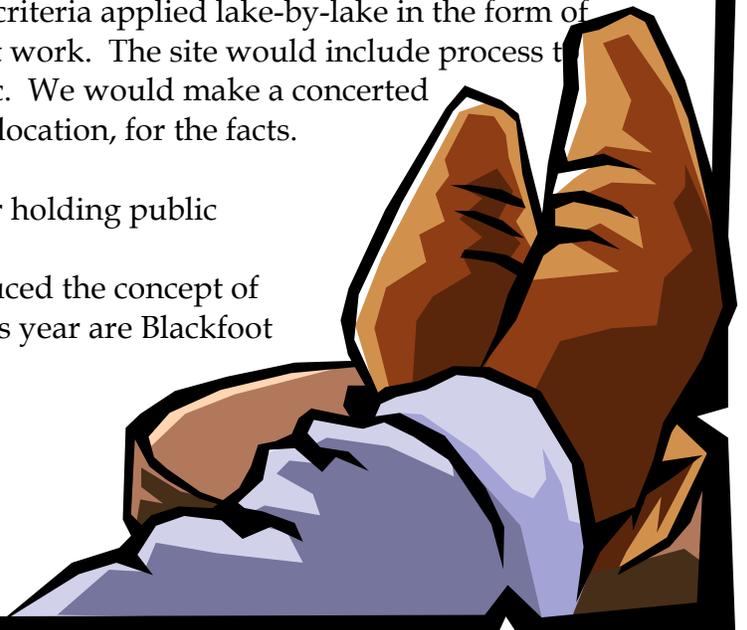
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| 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. | Open house with various information displays in the foyer outside the meeting room; we will have a fact sheet and a Q&A to distribute to all attendees. |
| 7:10 to 7:30 p.m. | Project Overview |
| 7:30 to 8:00 p.m. | Lake treatment plan for October 2007 |
| 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. | Public discussion and questions |
| 9:00 p.m. | Adjourn |

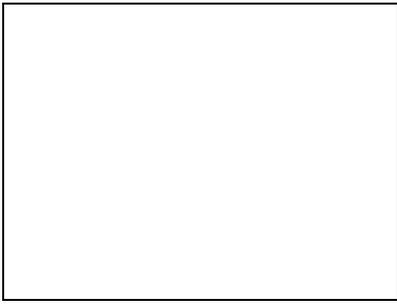
ACTION ITEM: Prior to 5/03/07 Public Meeting: Establish a location on our Region One Website specifically for the Cutthroat Conservation Project. The site would include a link to the EIS, information on the schedule of the lakes to be addressed each year including photos of the lakes, general information on lake rehabilitation, the M012 westslope cutthroat brood stock, and other pertinent information. The site would provide updated stocking and sampling data summaries for all treated lakes. It would also provide evaluation criteria applied lake-by-lake in the form of matrix and be updated to document current project work. The site would include process to provide comments and suggestions from the public. We would make a concerted effort to advertise the opportunity to access this website location, for the facts.

Sub-Committee gave overview of CAC function for holding public Informational meeting.

Joel Tohtz gave overview of the project and introduced the concept of "swamping". Looks like the lakes to be treated this year are Blackfoot Lake and Black Lake.

- Break -





Kent Laudon, FWP Wolf Specialist

Websites of interest:

<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/wolf/>

http://www.fws.gov/species/species_accounts/bio_gwol.html

<http://fwp.mt.gov/tmc/vignettes/wolf.html>

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

Excerpts from the Power Point Presentation

Gray wolf extinct in Montana ~ 1936

Endangered Species Act - 1974

Recolonization from Canada - late 1970s

First documented reproduction - 1986

Reintroduction into Yellowstone & Idaho - 1995 & 1996

Recovery Goal - 30 breeding pairs for 3 successive years.

First step in delisting = 3 state management plans approved by the USFWS. All three states are tied together for a Northern Rockies delisting.

- Montana and Idaho plans are approved
- Wyoming's proposed dual classification not accepted
- Wyoming sues
- Wyoming loses
- Appeal?

State of Montana is beginning to implement its plan to the extent possible within the constraints of the ESA while still federally listed. My position (FWP Wolf Specialist) is an example of that.

A Wolf or Citizen Advisory Council in part developed the plan. The council was made up of citizens representing a broad cross section of economic and social interests. The council had several meetings through 2000 and formulated the guiding principles and general direction of the Environmental Impact Analysis.

The management plan relies upon adaptive management:

< 15 breeding pairs management is more conservative

> 15 more liberal

>15 breeding pairs may provide for more liberal on private land, and relatively conservative on public land.

Ed Bangs, USFWS Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Leader, puts it well. How society perceives wolves has nothing to do with reality and everything to do with symbols.

Part of the plan provides for some wolf harvest opportunity. From the example of lions and bears, populations were in jeopardy due to conflicts with European settlement, and a belief that predators were vermin to be extinguished, hunting was unregulated, bounties existed, government trapping, and poisoning campaigns. Broader conservation minded people of the time protected the species by classifying as a game animal and began to regulate hunting. Populations today are stable, increasing in some places, and distribution has expanded.

Values were not changed with the classification change to big game. Time and opportunity did that. Today, probably the strongest advocates for lions and bears are the lion and bear hunters themselves. This is our hope with the future of wolf conservation.

Probably most significant is the overlap of winter range, private land, and calving season. Otherwise healthy prey populations are thought to alleviate depredation pressures on livestock. Lethal tools alleviate depredations slows or stops depredations that year, and possibly subsequent years with alpha removals. But, typically, other wolves reoccupy area sooner than later and problem cycles.

Ungulate Populations

- Manage predators & prey together, ecologically
- Proactive; consider status of both
- Adaptive management of both
- Adjust seasons for ungulates & carnivores as needed
- Improve/protect habitat

Ongoing Montana Research

- Multi-agency and universities
- Private landowners, too
- Compare elk herds subjected to wolf predation but no hunting
- Herds affected by both wolf predation and hunting
- Herds affected by hunting and little or no predation
- Summary and comparison

Improve knowledge of interactions within multi predator/prey species and in bigger system.

What is being measured?

- Survival: adult, young
- Natality
- Recruitment
- Habitat use
- Weather parameters
- Multiple species
- Population trend
- Hunter harvest; success

Bottom Line?

- Impacts possible - YES!
- Degree quite variable and changes through time
- Localized; plays out differently in space and time

- Total predator density is important!
- Decreased hunter opportunity in some places

Weather and habitat are important

- Winters, drought, land development
- Wolf control for livestock may buffer impacts to big game
- Ungulates may use habitats differently now

What are we doing about it?

- Increased monitoring efforts for both wolves and ungulates
- Ongoing research - wolf, elk, black bear, grizzly bear, lion, deer
- Adjusting opportunity where necessary
- Focus on delisting

Future Challenges for MT Wolf Management

- Significant use of private lands
- Lower elevations
- Ungulate habitat, too
- Livestock present

Wolf ecology itself

- Large home ranges
- No core of "ideal" habitats big enough
- Disease

Need improved understanding

- Wolf-prey
- Wolf-livestock
- Subdivision - *Loss of Big Game Habitat*
- "Turbulence"

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Don Clark – Suggests permit system for wolves (similar to lions) to decrease chaos and remove abuses.

Mark Sheets – Storyboards on Hwy 200 were a real good idea! ...Regarding sheep trapping and relocating, is this action dropping our quotas?

Frank Danner – Pike Study – Requested more information on report. Jim Satterfield indicated that the report was final and had been completed by independent author. People may or may not agree with the report however this report is only one of many pieces of information that will be used for future fisheries management.

Jon Dahlberg – Church Slough & Abandonment of Wagner Lane – In the last 3 to 4 weeks, Flathead Wildlife went to the Flathead County Planning Board for a larger area and ramp and for

old Wagner Lane to be used for biking trail. What they got was 150' of Church Slough frontage and access on new Wagner Lane from the Developer.

Tammi Fisher - Applauds the efforts that have been made regarding Church Slough. Developers should have to develop it all. Currently the county is not enforcing impact fees.

Tony Anderson - Education changes opinion, i.e., electro-fishing - what an eye-opener!
FYI - 1053 entries in ice-fishing derby on McGregor Lake - Good job to Mike Feldmann!

Brent Mitchell - FWP needs to "get at it"! Example: Why is Flathead Wildlife carrying the load in the Church Slough saga? Shouldn't it be FWP (guarding the public's access)? Another example: FWP gets involved in block management, why not more involved in this sort of access?

Adjourned: 9:00 p.m.

Next CAC Meeting is scheduled for
April 11, 2007
6 - 9:00 p.m.
FWP R1 Public Meeting Room