

REGION 5 CITIZEN ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING NOVEMBER 29, 2005

Attending: CAC Members - Barb Beck, Douglas Dreeszen, Daniel Dutton, Lee Gustafson, Doug Haacke, Gregory Keller, Aaron Langley, Shawn Todd, Mike Whittington, Robert Willems; Panel – Babette Anderson, Custer National Forest, Jeff Bollman, DNRC, Sandy Brooks, BLM, Alan Charles, FWP; FWP – Larry Peterman, Dale Nixdorf, Doug Habermann, Harold Guse, Jim Darling, Ray Mule’, Dianne Stiff; Guests – Dick Shotlander, Robert Lubbers

Charter Review

Suggestion to add to the Charter that the group identifies opportunities for FWP, and need to note that meetings are open to the public. (Barb Beck)

CAC’s Across the State & Dept. Recruitment Updates

CAC’s will be up and running in all regions across the state within the next two years.

- Region 1 – running for 13 years
- Region 2 – less than a year
- Region 3 – just beginning
- Region 4 – with a new regional supervisor within a year
- Region 5 – just beginning
- Region 6 – just over a year
- Region 7 – beginning the recruitment process

Region 4 and 5 Regional Supervisor Recruitments – the position announcements closed November 14, 2005, with 16 applicants and interviews to be held the third week of December. This will be a joint recruitment. The Region 5 Supervisor will begin mid-January, and Region 4’s mid-March.

Two other recruitments include an Information Services Administrator and Parks Division Administrator in Helena. (Larry Peterman)

Public Involvement

CAC members are encouraged to go to our FWP website, fwp.mt.gov, in order to view recent public notices and make comments. Each manager mentioned current actions that the public may comment on which include the Cooney SP north shore development, pond applications, EA’s on streams, 310’s, and the upcoming 2006 hunting season tentative process. (Doug Habermann, Jim Darling, Ray Mule’)

Meeting Process

The process for CAC meetings will be dinner, review, program and question & answer time. (Doug Habermann)

Would like 5-10 minutes on the agenda for CAC members to give feedback that includes what they’ve heard and what they’d like clarification on. (Doug Haacke & Barb Beck)

There is only funding for quarterly meetings, so may need to provide feedback utilizing e-mail, regular mail or conference calls between meetings. (Larry Peterman)

Greg Keller would rather not use e-mail. (Note - two other members who do not have e-mail are Bob Willems and Doug Dreeszen.)

Next Meeting's Topic and Date

The list of topics from the last meeting was reviewed. The second issue on Increased Diversity Funding and Commercial Use was thoroughly discussed. In addition, members would like to know how FWP is funded and how dollars are spent. One point made is that the topic chosen should be current for FWP and the most relevant or useful, with CAC members provided information in advance so they know what kind of information is being looked for ahead of time. A packet will be provided to members before the next meeting explaining the Department's funding sources, revenue projections and expenditures. Members would like the opportunity to respond to legislative proposals and issues as well. (Doug Habermann, Lee Gustafson, Larry Peterman, Doug Haacke, Doug Dreeszen, Bob Willems, Mike Whittington)

Topic Selected/Date – *Commercial & Non-Sportsman Funding, February 28, 2006*

Panel: Access Opportunities and Issues on Public and Private Lands

Babette Anderson, Custer National Forest

- Working on gaining access from private to public land.
- Two completed this year: Schwind property (Pryor Mtns.) where there has been a locked gate for 25 years, but now Forest Service and still developing the rules; right-of-way through the Plum Creek Corridor (Long Pines).
- Work with County Commissioners to open roads.
- If know of illegal closures (locked gates), let the Forest Service know.
- The new OHV Travel Planning Rule is available covering trails in Montana, North Dakota and part of South Dakota. Beginning on the Beartooth Ranger District travel management plan including replacing the team leader and reviewing 5,000 public comments.

Jeff Bollman, DNRC

- School trust lands traditionally have been sections 16 and 36 within each township. The DNRC managing land board is the decision maker of activities on that land.
- A big challenge is the amount of state land that is land-locked (no access to those lands).
- In 2003, \$2.00 was added to the conservation license for state land access. Those dollars are basically ear-marked for different recreational use purposes including signing to show boundaries, especially on heavily used parcels.
- Dollars help obtain easements to cross state lands to access private land. Sometimes look at reciprocal access in order to get public access to land locked property.
- Pilot Program (expires in 2008) – “Land Banking” – will be selling 100,000 acres of state trust land with the money going into a temporary fund to purchase other land or access to other land. There are 23,000 acres in Treasure, Custer and Choteau counties that are currently being looked at, as these tracts are land locked or low producing lands. Looking to acquire tracts with public access.
- There are 5.2 million acres statewide with 80% grazing acres. There are 380,000 acres locally administered.
- Let Jeff know of lands to acquire. In addition, go to the DNRC website for more information on this program, dnrc.mt.gov.

Sandy Brooks, BLM

- Manages eight county areas with scattered tracts.
- Access programs include signing, public information, maps, permission to use land.
- Includes vehicle, walk-in, and horseback access.
- Special disability access is a case-by-case basis being up to the field manager.
- The Land Use Plan was signed in 1984. Resource size, public demand and size are looked at in this plan.
- Look at exchanges along rivers, i.e., on the Boulder, the Yellowstone, Musselshell, Bighorn and Stillwater Rivers.
- Pompey's Primitive Access – seven miles east of Pompey's Pillar, 5,000 acres, surrounded by private land with river access only.
- Young's Point near Park City – river access only.
- Bad Canyon – walk-in access.
- Sundance Lodge southeast of Laurel – in the Block Management program, walk-in and horseback access.
- Four Dances (Sacrifice Cliff), 800 acres – walk-in access.
- Bridger Triangle, Cub Creek area southeast of Bridger.
- Island just west of Bundy Bridge, 100 acres – working on lease with the county/FWP.
- West Rosebud Drainage one mile from Pine Grove Campground – Back Country Horseman are interested in a trail project.
- Future acquisition: Sundance Lodge/Ah Nei in holding exchanges, Metetzee Spires (Grove Creek area) pursuing private in holdings.
- Block Management has provided access to public land that ordinarily would not be available.
- The BLM plans to revise the land use plan in 2007. Scoping begins one year from now. (Sandy Brooks)

Alan Charles, FWP

- Public Access Problem Identification Form – the public can give specifics like an illegal gate closure, and a copy is given to the appropriate land agency. There have been roads opened and signs removed successfully using this reporting form.
- FWP has hired seasonal staff to assist with signing public lands showing where public land is entered and exited. Most active in Regions 5 and 7.
- 5 Year Memorandum of Understanding (now 2 ½ years old) on access to public land is a priority.
- The Block Management program started in 1985 and is now permanent.
- Need to know access priorities on specific areas from CAC groups.
- Need more collaborative work with other agencies.

Questions/Answers

Region 5 Management should take the lead and organize a working group that could look at access areas. There is a lack of sitting down and working together. (Mike Whittington) Have tried a similar group, the Yellowstone County working group, which within 2 or 3 meetings realized there wasn't enough manpower (staff) to pursue problem areas. (Jim Darling) The Private Land/Public Wildlife Council originally had local groups (subgroups), but then in recent years adopted a statewide smaller focused group. (Alan Charles) Can spin issue specific work groups off the CAC suggestions. There is interest in the Region 5 CAC to create a subgroup, maybe two people, to work on the access issues. (Larry Peterman)

CAC members Mike Whittington, Doug Haacke, Lee Gustafson and Greg Keller would be interested.

Anyone cited for not purchasing a conservation license and using state land? (Doug Haacke)
Unknown. DNRC are informing folks about needing it. Access signage includes the licensing requirements. (Jeff Bollman)

How often are the grazing lease values reassessed, and how much money is generated? (Doug Haacke)
Every 10 years and guessing \$12 million (check the website). (Jeff Bollman)

How much money and manpower would it take to sign all public land in Region 5? Can volunteers help? (Public Lands Access Association perhaps) (Lee Gustafson)
Regions request funding, and the first year Region 7 submitted a request of \$5,000. Volunteers would help, but this needs to be closely coordinated with the agency that manages the land. One idea is to provide the regular maintenance of signage through sportsman's groups adopting an area. (Alan Charles)

The BLM has a Citizen's Watch Group to help their ranger. They keep their eyes on the land, hand out brochures, take down license plate numbers, pick up litter, etc. (Sandy Brooks)
DNRC doesn't have anything in place. (Jeff Bollman)
The Forest Service doesn't have anything formalized, but always needs volunteers. (Babette Anderson)

A person was lost within private land during the hunting season this fall. This individual still argued that the land wasn't posted so they were allowed to hunt. (Shawn Todd)

BLM has a Resource Advisory Council (RAC) that has been active for the past 9-10 years. Montana has 3 and the Dakota's have one. There are 15 members, with 5 members rotating off every year and serving up to 6 years. Approved through the Secretary of the Interior. The Eastern Montana RAC (Billings and Miles City offices) has subgroups that work on various projects such as shooting conflicts (target practice). Run advice through the entire RAC which is useful. This an effective way to bring the public into issues. (Sandy Brooks)