

Meeting Notes

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, January 11, 2006
LOCATION: FWP Region 2 Headquarters, Missoula
TIME: 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

IN ATTENDANCE

Council Members- Tim Aldrich, Chad Bauer, Louie Bouma, Ed Greef, Edward Hebbe III, Rich Lane, John Manley, Chris Marchion, Margaret Moddison, Pat O'Herren, Jim Olson, Jack Reneau, Ray Rugg, Stephanie Strickland, Jaala Wickman

Staff- Mack Long, Lee Bastian, Vivaca Crowser, Ginny Schmautz, Dianne Schmautz, Derek Schott

Guests- Thomas Baumeister, Rusty Wickman

The meeting convened at 7:00 PM.

Opening Remarks:

Mack opened the meeting by welcoming CAC members, Thomas Baumeister Education Bureau Chief in Helena and Rusty Wickman, Missoula Police Chief. He also gave a brief synopsis of the agenda for the evening. Thomas Baumeister and Jack Reneau will be presenting programs on Montana's hunting heritage. The list of topics developed at the last meeting was reviewed:

- Access At Bridges
- Urban Wildlife Issues
 - A meeting with the Missoula Mayor and City Council Conservation Committee is scheduled for February 8, 2006.
- Montana Hunting Heritage (addressed tonight)
- Parks Issues/Recreation in General

Round Table:

License Legibility -

Ed Hebbe III mentioned that the licenses were extremely difficult to read. Ginny responded and said that FWP had heard a bit about that and that a letter had been sent to the license agents asking them to change out their printer ribbons and paper in a more timely fashion.

Tentative Regulations-

Mike Thompson brought it to the Council's attention that there are 11 public meetings scheduled around the region on the tentative regulations. Comments will be accepted until January 27, 2006. It was extended from the 21st to the 27th. The Commission

will

make a final decision on February 21, 2006. The email address for the submission of comments is in the handout provided. Mike also explained that at a statewide level, the extended seasons were not providing the results needed in managing deer and elk populations. It was proposed that FWP would pull back to the normal 5-week season, but liberalize it to try and reach management objectives. An example is that all hunting districts in the Bitterroot will be either sex beginning on a Monday for the last 3 weeks of the season.

- Rifle season start date is determined by counting back 5 weekends from Thanksgiving.
- Archery season is 6 weeks with one week in between archery and rifle season. Game Damage laws state that if public access is allowed, we can assist the landowner with game damage problems.

Goat Hunting -

Chad Bauer asked why FWP closed HD 270 to goat hunting as he had seen 13 last year. Chris Marchion made the observation that the goat population had crashed at Lost Creek. He used to see 60 to 70 animals. Mike Thompson explained that it takes 40 goats to sustain a permit and when the population begins a serious decline, then hunting must be restricted. Jim Olsen commented that it was time we closed it down in order to bring the goat population back.

Game Damage-

Mike Thompson and Jaala Wyckman discussed the relationship of harboring to game damage on neighboring properties. Chris Marchion suggested that if the bull ratio is up, then make a percentage of the game damage permits for bulls as well. This would prevent the commercialization of bulls.

Seasons & Permits-

Chris Marchion - Asked if it is possible to move opening day to a Saturday to help youth and other people? Mike Thompson explained that it is on a Monday to prevent what happened in the Bitterroot this year. Louie Bouma: Promoted discussion of development of a trigger mechanism for game damage and the migratory herd from HD 280 that travels into Region 4. Jaala Wyckman commented on the Bitterroot MD tag. The permits doubled and doubled again. That makes it not such a special tag and worries that the increased opportunity will be negative on the buck/doe ratio and the age will drop to less than 6 year olds. Jim Olson is in favor of permits for lions while Ray Rugg disagrees fully and prefers option 2 where there is a mix of permits and licenses.

Tonight's Program -

Mack introduced Jack Reneau of Boone and Crockett and Thomas Baumeister of FWP Communication and Education in Helena and spoke about youth hunting in Montana. For a few years, youth license sales have declined with competition from soccer, video games,

and other youth opportunities. Many single Moms don't know what to do or have an interest in hunting. Lately there has been a big interest surge in hunting by youth of both sexes.

Jack stated that his interest in lowering the age of youth hunting stems from the fact that while he was in Virginia, his two elder sons started hunting at age 9. After he moved to Montana, his younger son had to wait until he was 12 to start hunting. If a youth starts at a younger age they tend to stick with the sport. There are some states that do not allow hunting until the ages of 14 or 16. In Pennsylvania there is no hunting on Sunday.

- 30 States - hunting starts younger than 12
- 20 States - hunting starts older than 12
- Montana is 37 in the nation for hunter replacement ratios

He gave two short presentations on youth hunting, primarily in other states.

Thomas Baumeister gave a presentation on the status of youth hunting in Montana and proposed questions that need to be answered regarding youth hunter recruitment. He also played an audio clip from Frank DeFourd. Deer numbers are increasing and hunter numbers are decreasing. Some interesting Montana hunting facts:

- In Montana, 24% of the population hunts
- Montana has between 1700 and 1800 volunteer instructors
- Last year, state wide, there were 6,500 participants in educational programs
- In 1957 hunter education became mandatory

The next CAC meeting will be March 8, 2006.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM