

Draft Region 6 Citizens Advisory Council Minutes
March 15, 2008
Fort Peck Fish Hatchery, Fort Peck

CAC members present: Bernie Hart, Howard Pippin, John Crohn, Bob Smith, Rich Stuker, Carl Totman, Connie Iversen, Tom Burch, Scott Billingsley, Darlyne Dascher

CAC members absent: Steve Sukut, Nick Siebrasse, Dustin Hill, Dennis Idler, Fran Buell

FWP staff present: Pat Gunderson, Woody Baxter, Bill Wiedenheft, Mike Herman, Harold Wentland, Shawn Briggs, Charlie Bridgham, Hank Worsech, Neil Whitney

Guests: John Carlson, BLM; Aaron Johnson, USFWS; Patricia Gilbert, COE;

Pat welcomed the group, and provided overview of the agenda.

Public Comments: No public comments were given.

Drawing Process Q & A: Hank Worsech and Neil Whitney from Licensing in Helena presented a handout with an outline of the drawing process. Several questions were asked and answered by the CAC and members of the public on everything from the basic drawing process to how peregrine falcons fledglings will be distributed.

John Carlson, BLM presented an update on the Malta Resource Management Plan planning effort. Currently, the BLM is drafting alternatives for their internal teams and cooperators to discuss. Questions included how the BLM manages proposed wilderness areas. BLM plans to have a range of options in the draft RMP for game retrieval, and a decision on which option will occur in about two years. RMP will also address sage grouse, travel management, grassland birds, prairie dogs among others.

Patricia Gilbert, Corps of Engineers presented an update to the planning effort her agency in undertaking. They are working on their Master Plan for management of lands around Fort Peck Reservoir. The reservoir is 44 feet below normal pool. Management above normal pool is the responsibility of USFWS & below is COE.

Aaron Johnson, USFWS discussed the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Planning effort. Questions included how the CMR managers proposed wilderness areas. Aaron said 300,000 of the CMR's 1.5 million acres is included in wilderness study areas.

CAC Roundtable

Fran Buell, Gildford – A memo from Fran was read that discussed the groups Footloose Montana and the Trapping Working Groups that are being developed in each Region of the state. She also reported that the price of furs was very good this past year.

Darlyne Dascher, Fort Peck - Darlyne is hearing fallout from the season-setting process for limited archery elk permits in the Breaks. The discussion is that the limits should have only been on 600 series districts. She feels landowner/sportsmen relations are at a very low level.

John Crohn, Dagmar - John said the deer and birds did very well through the winter. He has interest in working on "No Child Left Inside" issues at a local level. Reported on the Supreme Court actions on "right to bear arms" issues across the US.

Carl Totman, Malta – Carl had several questions on the hatchery issue.

Howard Pippin, Saco – New season regulations are confusing to people in his area.

Bernie Hart, Hinsdale – Bernie has heard that hunters on the south side of the Breaks are seeing a lot of non-resident hunters.

Tom Burch, Fort Peck – FWP should have an educational effort directed at hunting on private land. Tom updated the group on the Fort Peck Hatchery funding committee. Tom said 5 of 7 CACs across Montana support option 2 for the fish hatchery: a) raise general license fee to support the FP hatchery; b) eliminate warm water stamp; c) lift restrictions on species that can be raised at FP hatchery. Tom opened a discussion on Proposed Wilderness Area's in the area and how they are limiting the general public's use on those lands.

Robert Smith, Poplar – There needs to be a general fisherman voice that weighs in on the Fort Peck Hatchery issue.

Connie Iversen, Culbertson – The access issue is very big right now. There are three Constitutional Amendments in the works right now. A lot of landowners will not allow hunting this year due to the seasons and the Constitutional Amendments.

Scott Billingsley, Glasgow – Scott expressed his frustration with feeling that the purpose of the Advisory Council was to clean up others messes. A long discussion ensued on the purpose of the Council.

Rich Stuker, Chinook – Rich stated that there is no talk of limiting access by the Chinook area landowners. He said Block Management worked the best it ever has this past hunting season and the crop of hunters in 2007 was the best he had ever seen in the Havre area. He compliments the local technicians for their work. The Damage Hunt was not as successful as hoped due to lack of interest. He would recommend a change in the sign-up period timing for the game damage roster. He said the coyotes are bad and they are seeing very few birds.

Program Updates were given by Mike Herman, Enforcement; Bill Wiedenheft, Fisheries; Woody Baxter, Parks and Harold Wentland, Wildlife.

Pat discussed other Regional issues and the expiring CAC's terms of office. Members whose terms expire in May include Darlyne Dascher, Fran Buell, Dustin Hill, Howard Pippin and Tom Burch. FWP will initiate recruitment drive and have new members (or incumbents reappointed) in the summer with new terms beginning in September. Scott Billingsley and Rich Stuker agreed to serve on the nominating committee for new CAC members.

Next meeting: It was decided to have a relatively short meeting to focus on the Regional Issues sheet that has been on the agenda the last two meetings. The date was set for Monday June 2, 2008 from 4:00 pm to 7 pm at FWP Headquarters in Glasgow.

Meeting adjourned.