Region 4 CAC Meeting Minutes June 5, 2008

FWP Staff – Gary Bertellotti, Fred Schultz, Roger Semler, Ken Farthing, George Liknes, Graham Taylor and Mike Martin

CAC Members – Joe Schaffer, Judie Suden, Mike Labriola, , Jodie Butler, Charles Bocock, Robert Facklum, Jim Elings, Fred Davison and Deanna Robbins

Public/Guests – Bryan Thies, Cascade; Erik Dubbe, Cut Bank; and Robert Sherer, Elk Archery Advisory Committee Member for Region 4 area.

Gary opened the meeting and went over the agenda and asked if there were any additions to the agenda. No additions were noted.

Introduced Erik Dubbe, Cut Bank who was recommended by Jim Elings as a possible new CAC member to replace himself in the Cut Bank area.

Region 4 CAC Charter Discussion:

Joe Schaffer, Chairman, passed out a draft of the proposed Region CAC Charter. Everything is complete except we need determine what the term limits will be for members. Looking at two plans – three-year term limit –, which means we would have to replace members two years in a row and than have one year with no recruitment or four year term limits in which we would recruit every other year. If we went to four year term that present members would be on it for the next two years with the exception of two present members, Jim Elings of Cut Bank and Doug Caltrider of White Sulphur Springs who are resigning now.

Mike L. commented that we need to be concerned about credibility if members are on too long. Thus maybe shorter terms are better. Question is – what does FWP want to get from the committee?

Jodie B. doesn't see a lot of folks doing than one term if the limit is too long. She prefers the four- year option.

Deanna R. asked if the option would be with no renewal? If we had the four-year term you would have to reapply – no automatic renewal.

Gary B. stated that we (FWP) would prefer the four-year term based on workload and having to get new members on a yearly basis.

Charles B. stated it takes four years to really get involved in projects you like.

Members of the CAC voted and it was decided on four-year term. That means every two years half the committee will be replaced.

Fred briefed the committee on how many applicants we received to replace members that wished off the committee by July 1. We advertised and accepted applications throughout the month of May. We only had five people apply. I emailed or sent applications to all people that had contacted me and even for a couple that indicated earlier, when we weren't advertising, that were interested in being on the committee. 42 folks applied when we initially started the committee two years ago. Don't know why the lack of interest.

Questions came up as to why the little turnout – gas prices, we pay mileage; should we continue to recruit?; do we need to advertise more in the newspapers, TV, canvassing by our CAC members??; should we send letters out to those that applied the first time but were not selected?

Bottom line is we have to replace two members before the next meeting. With four-year terms being approved half of the committee will get off the committee in two years, July 2010 and the other half will serve until July 2012.

Joe S. We need to identify by next meeting who wants to serve 2 more years or 4 more years. White Sulphur Springs is a key area but no one put in from that area. If we can't get someone from that area and an important issue comes up from that area we could invite folks in that area to attend our meeting. We as a committee including FWP staff need to be more proactive in recruiting especially in key areas where we need representation.

It was decided with so few a number of applicants that we extend application period until July 1, 2008. We definitely need more geographic representation. If anyone has any advise or ideas about recruits or recruitment please contact Gary.

Action Item: By next meeting, probably late August or early September, present members need to let Joe know if they want to be on for two (2) more years or four (4) more years.

As a note during this discussion all members who had indicated they wanted off by July 1, 2008 agreed to stay for two more years except Jim Elings and Doug Caltrider.

Action Item: Rocky Harber was not at this meeting and Joe S. agreed to contact Rocky to see if still wants to get off on July 1 or serve another two or four years.

Action Item: It was requested that when Bruce Auchly sends out a news release that Fred forward that to CAC members also.

All members signed the charter and Fred will forward the charter to members who didn't make this meeting. Once the charter is signed, copies will be sent to all members and Fred will file the original in the CAC file.

General Topics for Discussion

Mike Martin, Warden Captain, briefed the committee on antler theft on Region 4 game ranges. Market value of antlers runs about 7 to 14 dollars a pound. Elk lose their antlers in March but our game ranges aren't open until May 15. It takes a lot of dollars to police and management for antler theft. Based on costs and personnel how much time and money should we spend to stop the stealing of these antlers and keep people off game ranges when it is critical for elk? This year we had 300 to 400 folks looking for antlers on May 15 at the Sun River WMA.

CAC comments – What are the biological concerns for the elk? The game range (Sun River WMA) winters about 26-2700 elk. The idea is to have them winter on the game range. When folks trespass this puts stress on the elk. There are about 300 brow tined bulls in this area also. We have not experienced a hard winter the last few years. This is also a social issue – people in Augusta feel an ownership of the Sun River WMA.

Mike also put in a pitch for the upcoming NAWEOA conference to be held in Great Falls, July 13-20. So far nearly 700 folks have signed up to attend the conference.

- ➤ Discussed the Lincoln property and the bidding process. FWP has last right of refusal. 7500 deeded acres. This is a very unique property with 14 miles of Marias River front.
- ➤ Mike L. brought up the Belt Creek development. The County is involved and we (FWP) made comments on water issues.
- ➤ Robert F. wondered if the Lewis and Clark Center Foundation purchased the property across the river from Giant Springs State Park. The intention is to file for an easement.
- > Charles B. brought up the topic on septic systems on Holter Lake properties.
- ➤ Mike L. asked about Ackley Lake repairs on the dam. Those repairs are due later this year.
- For Graham Taylor gave an update on the wolf delisting process and wolf activity in Region 4. Most recent event was a White Sulphur Springs rancher shot and killed a wolf harassing his livestock yesterday. It was a legal kill. The state (FWP) is very evident in their involvement with issues such as this where a few months ago the Feds would have handled situations like this. The Monitor Mountain Pass pack got involved in livestock predation again so two animals were disposed of.

We are protecting the female and pups in this pack. We are increasingly seeing more wolves on the Rocky Mountain Front. Last Thursday FWP and other groups went in front of a judge to obtain an injunction for delisting of wolves. Several private groups want to stop the delisting process. We feel we have a reasonable management plan for wolves. We are waiting for the judges finding any day now.

- ➤ Roger Semler briefed the group on the Smith River State Park Management Plan. We are updating the 1996 plan. This is a river recreation management plan not fisheries, wildlife or resource plan. There are eight citizens on the committee. Some issues that we have and will cover are: river issues floater opportunity; boat camp selection; river capacity; social conditions; pet policy; human waste management (which has been the most controversial issue so far); user fees. If you have any questions about issues on the Smith River or the management plan itself please call myself (454-5859) or Colin Maas, our Smith River Manager (454-5857). Time line we are hoping to have a draft of the plan out this summer and looking at the autumn season to get this draft out to the public for comment. We had a record number of folks apply this year for a permit to float the Smith R. 5800.
- ➤ We are still seeking a new state park on the Rocky Mountain Front. It is a high priority for the department. Looking for a unique, special area. We have 54 parks in the state and none offer overnight accommodations, meals, etc. We are looking for a large landscape.
- ➤ Discussed the new "Outdoor Ethic Award". This is a new award we are trying to establish and reward folks for good deeds and good stewardship of public land. The award consists of a medallion and thank you card. We want to record the names of folks doing good deeds and publish this list if they allow us to use their name. We always seem to concentrate on folks doing bad deeds but we would like to put our emphasis on those that do good deeds. Region 4 is sort of the pilot region for the state. The governor is behind it too.
- ➤ Had a discussion on elk quota numbers and rational in HD 417. Deanna R. is concerned, and said her neighboring ranchers are also, that there are more permits issued than there are elk in the district. By issuing these permits to hunters there will be a lot of hunters for landowners to deal with. Deanna wanted to know if elk are on property where they can't be hunted due to access are they counted for the total district for management objectives? There is not a lot of access in the hunting district and it is a concern for landowners with the number of hunters in the area. Landowners feel it is more of a social problem than biological problem. Whole permit package that is available now, cow permits, bull permits and youth season − has landowners concerned. Graham gave the following information on the hunting district. He gave out a handout about population objectives in the Elk Management Plan and how quotas operate and change. Objective for HD 417 is 350-400 elk. There is over 600 elk in the district and we count all elk in the total

district and not just elk on land that hunters can get to. From our discussions with landowners they only want 400 elk in the district. The trick for FWP is how to get elk killed to meet plan objectives. Gary B. stated that the department could meet with landowners/CAC members in HD 417 to discuss elk issues to look at solutions. We are always open to discussions on matters like this.

- ➤ Bob Sherer who was selected to be member of the Elk Archery Advisory Committee briefed us on their first official meeting that took place this week. The committee is taking a very structured approach. The committee is comprised of a very interesting diverse group of people. The committee is trying to keep emotions out of this process. They want to take an intellectual approach what are the facts. The group wants to come up with 100% agreement for the decisions they will make. They have been tasked with focusing at the 23 hunting districts aside from the hunting districts in the breaks area that were affected by the new archery rules. Anything the group comes up with will not affect the 2008 archery season but could take affect in the 2009 season and beyond. Next meeting is scheduled for July in Bozeman. Planning on having 4 to 5 meetings total. Bill McKinley, Conrad, landowner/hunter, is the other member on the committee from the Region 4 area.
- ➤ George Liknes, Fisheries, briefed the group on fishery issues in the region. This spring we have been blessed with a fair amount of water. Hatchery production has been good. We planted 110,000 rainbows in Nilan Reservoir and 105, rainbow in Willow Creek Reservoir. Tunnel Lake has been rehabilitated. We plan to plant catch-able cutthroats in that lake. We also planted 40,000 − 8 inch rainbows in Pishkun Reservoir to get around predation of northern pike. Mike L. asked about seagulls getting to planted fish and asked if they could be planted at night to avoid this. George said this has been done in the past. Flows have peaked this past weekend on the Missouri River at 16,000 cfs. This seems like it is pretty high but we had peak flows on the Missouri in 1997 that were 22,000 cfs. Bean Lake water levels have increased but not enough to improve raising of fish.

CAC Member Reports:

Jim Eling – Been pretty quiet. Most folks just waiting for permits to be drawn. He has had a lot of folks come in that are new to the area and they seem to complain a lot about our regs being too complicated.

Charles Bocock – He would like to see more of an enforcement presence on Holter Lake to check spot light boats. Feels too many over-limits of fish taken at night.

Fred Davidson – Fishing has been real good on Highwood Creek. Number of fishermen seemed to have increased.

Robert Facklum – Concerned about fires last year – where will the elk go due to fire damage?

Jodie Butler – Not much has been done on Thane Creek Campground and road. But there has been some work done in that area.

Mike Labriola – Thanks to George as he answered a lot of my questions. Everyone is happy about water in the rivers. He asked about boat ramp at Nilan. Funding was committed but was used for other projects. Dollars are committed to that project and we need to do an EA also.

NEXT MEETING: Looking at late August or early September. Fred will poll members in July. Plan to have it in Lewistown, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. We can offer a ride to those in the local area from Great Falls to Lewistown.