Private Land/Public Wildlife Council
Meeting Summary
Guest House Inn & Suites, Miles City, Montana
August 14-15, 2008

Council Members Present: Land Tawney, Chair; Dick Iversen; Lindsay Giem; Kathy Hadley; Brett Todd; Max McDonald; Senator Lane Larson; Representative John Ward; Jame Byrne; Gordon Haugen; Donna McDonald; Mike Penfold; Rick Miller; Doug Schott; **Absent:** Dan Vermillion.

Thursday, August 14, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

I. Trapline Reports on Preliminary Draft Recommendations: Members reported on input they had received from people regarding the preliminary Draft Recommendations. Most members attempted to discuss the recommendations with people representing different stakeholder groups, including landowners, hunters, outfitters, and in some cases, legislators.

II. Facilitated Work Session to discuss and refine Preliminary Draft Recommendations: Committee Chairs reported on work of their committees regarding the preliminary draft recommendations, and then facilitator Brian Kahn helped Council members work to provide input for each recommendation to refine the preliminary draft recommendation into Draft Recommendations to go out for public comment in the coming weeks. The product of this session, and a similar session conducted on the next day to finalize the Draft Recommendations, is reflected in Attachment#1, (5 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS).

III. Block Management Program Update: Alan Charles presented a brief powerpoint that explained 2008 enrollment status, and discussed some of the trends in the program and potential short-term and long-term program questions and actions;

IV. Variable-Priced License Committee: Jeff Hagener briefed the Council on a the committee that annually recommends the price of the outfitter-sponsored licenses to the FWP Commission.

V. Archery Working Group: Jeff Hagener briefed the Council on a recent meeting of the Archery Working Group, noting that the group had not yet developed recommendations, but would need to get any final recommendations developed prior to the November FWP Commission meeting. Jeff thought the group intended to meet again in October, but did not know the date of that meeting.

VI. Bridge Access Discussion: Jeff Hagener discussed the current status of efforts by a group of people representing different stakeholders to develop proposed draft legislation for the 2009 legislative session to address the issue of bridge access. According to Jeff, it appears that groups including Montana Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited, Montana Cattlemans' Association, Farmer's Union, Northern Plains Resource Council, Public Land Access Association, and probably Montana Association of Counties support the current draft of this legislation (see Attachment #2), while the position of the Farm Bureau and Montana Stock Grower's Association is unclear. Jeff said the groups who currently are in agreement with the legislation intend to move forward with it and are currently looking for a legislator to sponsor the legislation.

Council members discussed the issue at length, deciding not to take a vote as a Council on whether or not to support the proposed legislation at this point. Instead, the Council decided to convene a Bridge Access Panel Discussion during their December meeting, with (*** **action item) a working group consisting of Land Tawney, Gordon Hougen, and Lindsay Giem appointed to explore information needs and possible participants for the panel discussion.** Facilitator Brian Kahn will assist the working group in determining how the panel discussion might best be incorporated into the December meeting. Council members also decided that it might be useful to send out a mailing to people on the PL/PW Interested Persons List, explaining the issue through a "layman's version" article and soliciting input and comment from people and organizations on the list. **(*** action item) Alan Charles will work with Land to develop something that can be sent out separate from the Public Comment on Draft Recommendations solicitation.**

VII. Message to Public from PL/PW Council: Rick Miller suggested that the Council considering developing a public outreach message about "How to Make the 2008 Hunting Season a Positive Experience for Everyone," by identifying ways to address the top 10 concerns landowners might have regarding hunters and hunting season. The message could be crafted as an opinion editorial provided to media throughout the state. **(***action item) Rick Miller, Doug Schott, Dick Iversen, and Brett Todd will develop the message content, and Alan Charles will assist the group in disseminating the information to media outlets.**

VIII. Brucellosis Update: Jeff Hagener discussed the current status of efforts in the state to address the issue of brucellosis in Montana, noting that FWP would be increasing efforts to obtain blood samples from elk in areas of greatest concern by working with outfitters, landowners, hunters, and Bureau of Livestock.

IX. Land Banking: Senator Larson asked Jeff if FWP provided comment to Department of Natural Resources and Conservation when parcels of land are proposed for inclusion in land trades and land banking efforts. Jeff said that FWP typically does comment on proposed sales and trades. Senator Larson voiced concerns that some 20,000 acres in Rosebud and Treasure counties were proposed for sale, with no guarantee that the lands exchanged or otherwise bought to replace the land that was sold would be located in the same part of the state.

X. Public Comment: Thee members of the public provided comments to the Council. *Jean Johnson, speaking as a private citizen, endorsed the concept of using citizen's advisory committee for input related to one of the Council's draft recommendations, and said that the concept of "shared access" among outfitted hunters and non-outfitted hunters seemed to have general acceptance and support. Mark Jacobsen, Miles City BLM Office Public Affairs Officer, gave a general briefing on the Miles City BLM Office recreational access prioritization process; Dean Seifert, representing the Miles City Pheasants Forever Chapter, discussed concerns related to the Tongue River Ranch acquisition and recent BLM, DNRC, and private land trades and acquisitions south of Miles City.*

<u>Friday, August 15, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</u>

I. Facilitated Work Session: Council members finalized 5 Draft Recommendations (see attachment #1).

II. Committee Appointments and Work Session: Council members identified 2 major issues upon which to focus in the coming months, resulting in appointment of 2 new committees which will replace the 3 previously-appointed committees. **(*** action item)** **Wildlife Harboring Committee: Co-Chairs Brett Todd and Representative John Ward, Dan Vermillion, Lindsay Giem, Land Tawney, Mike Penfold, and Doug Schott;** This group will work to develop a white paper which will attempt to document problems associated with harboring of wildlife with factual information, in hopes that such information may prove useful to future PL/PW Councils and other groups who may wish to attempt to develop problem solutions. **Variable-Priced License Committee: Co-chairs Jamie Byrne and Kathy Hadley, Donna McDonald, Dick Iversen, Max McDonald, Rick Miller, Senator Lane Larson;** This group will attempt to assemble information which can be used to determine how the variable-priced outfitter-sponsored license currently affects landowners, hunters, and outfitter.

III. Next Meeting: The next PL/PW Meeting will be held December 18-19 in Helena.

Council adjourned.