

Region 3 Citizens' Advisory Committee Ennis, MT October 6, 2008

CAC Attendees: Rick Arnold, Bob Gibson, LeRoy Mehring, Joe Cohenour, Ted Coffman, Gene Budeski, Sam Samson, Amy McNamara, Craig Sharpe, Dennis Grundman, DJ Johnson, Tom Milesnick, Tom Henderson, Michael Leach

FWP Staff Present: Pat Flowers, Mel Frost, Jerry Walker, Sam Sheppard, Bruce Rich, Molly Wainwright, Joan Buhl, Chris Hunter

Guests: Robin Cunningham, Glenn Hockett, Clint Henderson, Karrie Taggart, Bill Geer, Bill Orsello

Pat Flowers: Welcome, introductions, review of agenda, updates

Pat Flowers - Madison Valley Elk Management: Sportsmen, landowners, outfitters and FWP are still working toward a solution for elk management on the east side of the valley. Goals are to reduce elk numbers and redistribute elk to foothills, which will allow better management of elk numbers and to address hunter ethics. This will be an ongoing process as the landscape and dynamics change. Ginny Tribe facilitates these meetings. Next meeting will be in November.

Gene Budeski: At a recent judges' fall training conference, several concerns came up regarding when FWP issues a ticket and when a game warden has the right to search a vehicle. Gene read a letter from a judge. (Sam Sheppard will visit with Gene to address concerns).

Joe Cohenour: change meeting time; fur trapper resolution; endorsements process

DJ Johnson: concerns about trapper resolution process

Craig Sharpe: bridge access ruling and legislation (on agenda for caucus period)

Additions to agenda:

- River shuttling services
- Change CAC meeting time
- Endorsements and process of endorsing by CAC

Bison Management Panel & Discussion: Gallatin Wildlife Association, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Montana Stockgrowers Assoc., State Veterinarian, and FWP were invited to discuss their perspectives and answer questions on the bison management issue.

Pat Flowers presented overview of management of the Interagency Bison Management Plan—five agencies (FWP, DOL, USDA APHIS, Gallatin National Forest, and National Park Service). Biggest challenge of this issue is five agencies with their own legal authority and responsibilities—each with their own constituents and own set of politics. Plan has two structured goals: provide for wild, free-ranging bison and prevent the transmission of brucellosis from bison to cattle, there by protecting the economic viability of cattle industry. IBMP is an adaptive plan to respond to changes on the ground and changing science. FWP's perspective—manage through hunters (that can only occur on a broader landscape) including tribal hunters, and manage at a more stable population.

Glenn Hockett – Gallatin Wildlife Association (see handouts). Want a win-win solution – protect/respect private property rights, free ranging bison population year-round, designate FWP as the agency responsible for management of wild bison including fair chase public hunting. Plan isn't working—not accomplishing goals.

Amy McNamara – Greater Yellowstone Coalition. Manage for free ranging herd as wildlife and provide habitat outside of the Park (Hebgen and Gardiner Basins). Immediate need for winter range where there are no cattle. Working toward raising \$1 million to support RTR easement. Brucellosis – need to insure separation of cattle and bison. Plan isn't protecting brucellosis-free status—other wildlife have brucellosis. GYC supports moving away from slaughter and allowing hunting to manage bison. Manage conflicts with landowners that raise cattle (i.e. compensation).

Tom Milesnick – Rancher – Montana Stockgrowers Assoc. Ranchers aren't opposed to bison—they're opposed to the disease. Don't want to have the bison range expanded because of the potential of disease and threat to brucellosis-free status. Vaccine for brucellosis is only 80% effective in cattle. Need dollars to make vaccine 100% effective. Feedgrounds keep perpetuating problem in Jackson Hole.

Fort Peck Hatchery – Chris Hunter (Fisheries Division Administrator) presented background information on the funding of the Fort Peck Hatchery. Legislation passed restricted that only the \$5 fee collected from the sale of the warm water fish stamp would be used for the operation of the hatchery (no use of state dollars) and placed restrictions on species of fish raised. It costs \$500,000 to operate the hatchery, only \$250,000 generated from the \$5 warm water stamp. Wallop-Breaux funds have not been used at Fort Peck and cannot be used for just warm water species.

Alternatives: Raise the warm water fish stamp to \$8.00 or remove the warm water restrictions and increase general fishing license by \$2 allowing all species of fish to be raised at the hatchery. Walleye Unlimited and Trout Unlimited support raising the cost of the warm water fish stamp. Other CACs support removing the warm water fish stamp, support general fee increase on fishing license, and removing restrictions on species of fish raised at the hatchery. Senator Tropila will carry legislation.

A \$2 fee increase on the general fishing license would generate approximately \$600,000 and would take effect in 2011 if passed.

Mapping Sportsmen's Priorities – Bill Geer, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) - Bill has been attending sportsmen's club meetings across the state asking them to identify and map critical hunting and fishing areas. The focus of TRCP is to improve habitat and

access and provide adequate funding for state fish and wildlife. This baseline information, along with wildlife habitat maps, will be given to the Bureau of Land Management and other federal and state agencies and developers. The goal is to help land managers balance responsible development (residential, gas, oil, coalbed methane) with the needs of fish, wildlife and sportsmen.

CAC River Recreation Education Subcommittee Report – Amy and Rick (see handout). Subcommittee would like feedback on what they've put together thus far. Need to identify groups to contact, distribution, and make sure there is representation of all users. Suggestions/Comments:

- Be proactive, put together guidelines on what responsibilities are
- Robin Cunningham would like to be part of the commercial resource training
- Advocate legislation on guide licensing and training rather than just outfitter blessing get training through licensing implement through fish guides
- Focus on etiquette and ethics
- Outreach opportunities (e.g. Ennis fishing festival)
- Preservation of the experience
- At high-use access sites, focus on education (e.g. littering)
- Slide presentations at elementary and high schools
- Develop etiquette test on FWP website
- Posters at license agents, perhaps use cartoon characters
- Add pages to the fishing regs
- Provide incentive to take test on-line
- Use the word tolerance more often than etiquette all the time
- Review Madison River survey

Put on next meeting agenda for further discussion.

Pat reviewed the department's current legislative proposals (this list continues to evolve and may not be what is ultimately proposed).

- -Statutory changes proposed by Private Lands Public Wildlife Council
- -Hunting Access Enhancement Placeholder
- -Mandatory Trapper Education
- -Revise revocation of privileges statutes
- -Authority to revoke fur dealer licenses
- -Authority for archery seasons for mountain lion, wolf, and bear
- -Non-resident antlerless deer license price reduction

Agenda item for next meeting (December 3 in Livingston):

- FWP present legislative proposals. Legislators will be invited to attend December meeting.
- Craig Sharpe will contact Montana Wildlife Federation and Trout Unlimited to present their legislative proposals.

CAC Caucus

Fur Trapping Resolution – Joe Cohenour (see handout)

Ted moved for approval of resolution. Seconded by Leroy. Discussion: In third paragraph Whereas: add "In 2007" Montana's 3,000 licensed... Amended by Rick to add "In 2007". Motion carried unanimously (14-0).

Endorsement Process – Pat Flowers:

What would you like to do with this endorsement (Fur Trapping Resolution)? How do you want to structure decisions?

Tom: I don't think any vote should be unanimous. Should show dissention. At our next meeting, give trapping resolution to legislators. Give to Montana Trapper's Assoc.

Find out what other CAC's do.

Simple majority in attendance. Indicate by vote count.

Amy McNamara: It should be okay to have an open dialogue with disagreement. Be willing to talk to each other about changes that can be made. Strive to get to a point where we all support something unanimously.

Endorsements will be based on simple majority.

Pat Flowers: *Invite Kurt Alt to a future meeting* (2009) *to talk about wolverine season and regulations, studies, etc.*

Joe Cohenour: Asked everyone in group to at least acknowledge receipt of information via email even if you don't have comments or concerns.

Mel Frost: Remember that not all CAC members use or have access to email. Mel prints and mails emails to DJ and LeRoy, making for a longer time frame. The group should figure out how to incorporate them into email discussions.

Joe Cohenour: Would like to start meetings earlier (winter driving, daylight savings time). Starting time of meetings will be left as is.

Bridge Access Legislation – Craig Sharpe

The ruling last week by Judge Loren Tucker in Madison County reaffirmed the public has the right to access rights-of-way to get to a stream (refer to handout).

The proposed legislation (refer to handout) will cover all county bridges.

River Shuttle Services – Gene Budeski

Industry is not being regulated or licensed. There are no insurance requirements. They operate on Forest Service, BLM, and FWP sites.

Pat Flowers: FWP Commission deferred this issue when they adopted commercial use rules. We can extract from previous Commission meeting minutes on their thinking on this issue and send to CAC members. We can invite Charlie Sperry to a meeting to discuss this decision.

Unanimous to send out information from previous Commission meeting minutes. Invite Pobin.

Unanimous to send out information from previous Commission meeting minutes. Invite Robin Cunningham to a meeting to share his thoughts on this issue.

This topic will be placed on the agenda of the first meeting in 2009.

Agenda items for December 3, 2008, meeting in Livingston at the Best Western Motel

- Invite Kurt Alt and Julie Cunningham to speak about elk brucellosis issue
- Legislative proposals, sportsmen's interests, invite SW MT legislators, invite Alan Charles
- River etiquette education subcommittee (caucus period)
- Schedule 2009 meeting dates (please bring your calendars!)

- Terms expiring Dec. 2008—Ted, Bob, Ed, Sam, Craig

Public Comment: None

Follow-up on bison discussion: more education