

# FWP R2 CAC Meeting

**MEETING DATE:** Wednesday, February 3, 2009  
**LOCATION:** FWP Region 2 Headquarters, Missoula  
**TIME:** 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

**In Attendance** - Tim Aldrich, Chad Bauer, Louie Bouma, Todd Frank, Edward Hebbe III, Charlie Johnson, Rich Lane, John Manley, Chris Marchion, Margaret Moddison, Pat O'Herren, Jim Olson, Jack Reneau, Ray Rugg, Stephanie Strickland, Jaala Wickman

**Absent** – Chad Bauer, Margaret Moddison, Stephanie Strickland

**Staff** Mack Long, Lee Bastian, Vivaca Crowser, Jeff Darrah, Pat Saffel, Ginny Schmutz, Dianne Schmutz, Mike Thompson, Liz Bradley

**Guests**- Jerry Black, Rob Bullis, Pat Glennon, Dick Haines, Joe Heffner, Jim Lizotte, Janne Minton, Tom Powers, Dan Schurg, Rusty Wickman

## **Opening Remarks:**

Mack opened the meeting with the agenda:

- Legislative Review
- Wolf Status Presentation by Liz Bradley
- Bitterroot Elk Working Group
- Harboring

## **LEGISLATIVE REVIEW**

Eighteen bills were reviewed. Current status of bills affecting the Department was provided. Discussion ensued regarding the affects of these bills on FWP operations.

Q: How do we stay in touch and find out what subcommittees are doing?

A: Once an update has been written, we can look at it on-line.

Q: What is the legislative website address?

A: This recap of bill affecting FWP is on our website. The Legislature home page contains the original language of the bill and updates.

## **WOLF STATUS PRESENTATION BY LIZ BRADLEY:**

- The annual report will be out at the end of February.
- Wolf numbers are down slightly in R2 due to control actions in the Blackfoot and Upper Clark Fork drainages.
- Most of the Bitterroot packs have been identified. There is a lot of travel back and forth across the Idaho border with one pack denning back and forth. The pack is counted in the state where it dens
- Liz provided the names, approximate locations, pack status, and numbers of wolf packs in the Bitterroot, Lower Clark Fork, and Granite County/Philipsburg areas.
- Nine wolves had been collared in the Bitterroot. One of the collared wolves was killed.
- Winter is the best time to count wolves so more flying is done in December and January with a snap shot taken at the end of December.

- Over 500 wolf sightings reports were gathered at the Darby check station and were extremely helpful in that they validated previous assumptions.
- You will see a lot more wolves at the juncture of two territories.
- Delisting – The USFWS proposed leaving out Wyoming and delisting wolves in Montana and Idaho. The comment period ended in November and was set to be published in the Federal Register on January 27<sup>th</sup> but was held up for review by the new Administration. It will go into affect 30 days after being published in the Register. The FWP Commission has approved the Montana management plan. The connectivity issue mainly concerned Wyoming.

CAC member and hunter, Jaala Wickman, provided extensive information about the presence of wolves in Schafer and Houle Creeks. Mike Thompson requested Jaala meet with Liz to document the sightings.

Jaala recommended adding more wolf questions to the Hunter Harvest Survey. At present, all that is asked is, “Did you see a wolf?” She felt that at that point, you open it up to what, where, and when, which is information that is needed for wolf pack identification and management.

CAC member and outfitter, Ray Rugg, provided information about wolves in the Superior area that indicated the possibility of two packs. Liz said it was not uncommon for a large pack to split up and come back together.

Mack explained that weather conditions, climate change, and predator levels including grizzly bears, mountain lions and wolves, are changing the elk behavior. Their movement patterns are different now that they are learning to live with wolves again.

Mike explained that elk levels are declining in some areas, and especially rapidly in Mineral County. Spring recruitment is down. Until the wolves are delisted we are constrained by the ESA and must solidly demonstrate cause and effect before we can do anything.

**BITTERROOT ELK WORKING GROUP:**

CAC member, Charlie Johnson, said that the working group recently met and that they wanted to know what the CAC felt about the Working Group setting in on the Commission Season Setting Meeting.

Mack said it would be fine if they wanted to attend. He also added that FWP values the work and recommendations that the working group puts together. Ultimately, FWP and the Commission have to consider the input from all sources before making a final decision.

**HARBORING**

The group requested a viewing of the harboring effects DVD for later this spring. A date will be set in mid-April for a showing of the Julie Cunningham Powerpoint presentation.

CAC Member reported a complaint of people hazing elk onto their property up the Nine Mile.

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 27, 2009 at the Missoula FWP HQ.

Minutes approved by:

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Mack Long, FWP Regional Supervisor

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Date