## 2009-01-21 CAC Notes

**Present**: John Fraley (Facilitator), Martha Abbrescia, Richard Peterson, Kristy Personett, Alan Wood, Lee Anderson, Jerry Sawyer, Jim Williams, Jim Vashro, Chuck Hunt, Michael Feldmann, Dan Savage, Darrell Coverdell, Mark Sheets, Don Bothwell, Tammi Fisher, Brent Mitchell, Tony Anderson, Jon Dahlberg, Don Clark, Jim Morey, Tim Engleson, Jerry Smalley and 5 members of the public.

## Housekeeping:

Reiterate that board members that are due to term out (December, 2008) are being asked to stay on until May 2009.

Reviewed of the purpose of the CAC for the public that is present.

## Agenda:

- 1. Wolf Delisting status and the ESA Ben Conard, USFWS, Creston
  - a. Ben gave an overview of his experience and the gist of his job, which is working on ways to design projects to be compatible with wildlife.
  - b. The wolf was actually first on the list to delist last February. From a biological standpoint, the wolf is recovered. The wolf is now in a legal realm over technicalities.
  - c. The decision was handed back to the USFWS. The new administration (yesterday) has put a hold on EVERYTHING that is in the rule making process. Don't expect that the wolf will be delisted in a month, but hopefully won't be hung up too long.
    - i. QUESTION: Consensus is that the wolf is recovered...do you anticipate or have a sense that the de-listing will actually happen this year or will there just be a line of challenges? -It's already been wildly spoken that there will be challenges.
    - ii. Question: Would expect an injunction in the next round of litigation? - Some segment of the population is so opposed to the thought of hunting wolves.
    - iii. QUESTION: Do you people have a feeling for how much longer the average person in Montana will be able to tolerate outsiders telling us to continue to put up with wolves? -USFWS understands the frustration of the public. CAC is afraid that the issue will explode before the issues get resolved through the proper channels. – There are some areas of the ESA that could be made more efficient.
    - iv. QUESTION: Have the criterion placed on us by the judge (injunction) been met?

- v. What avenue does the average sportsman or sports group have in order to file their own litigation against the "Lovers of Furry Wolves" group.
- vi. Yes, there are other states involved besides Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. Could something happen in some of these more distant states that could disrupt what is happening in Montana?
- vii. What does the agency (USFWS) anticipate will be the next curve ball in the delisting process?
- viii. When the lawsuit comes, how active is the USFWS in defending their side of the issue?
- ix. What does protection of an endangered species really mean? It's just to prevent extinction, return the species to a sustainable level and keep it there.
- x. PUBLIC: At what point in time is the state of Montana going to tell the USFWS that we really don't need their point of view. Why are we mandated to have the depredation that we experienced this year? - What you're asking is for the Governor to get involved with federal counterparts.
- xi. Chuck Hunt: Defenders of Wildlife lawsuit talked about the genetics. Has this point been dropped from the lawsuit?
- xii. Keep hearing about the groups that keep petitioning the judge whose actions keeps these wolves on the ESA. Why doesn't the sportsman come together and formally oppose the groups and start fighting back? It's time.
- 2. Predators, impacts on deer and elk; proposed hunting season changes, getting the word out to the public on management and populations Jim Williams and Alan Wood.
  - **a.** First run of information POWERPOINT to all present to critique the information and where we need to tweak the information to get the true word out to the masses.
  - b. Need to use the entire impact array that takes on the deer populations. The only concern is that the WTD is the EASY answer. What's happening to the Elk? (Need elk answers in your back pocket.
  - c. How confident are you on the wolf numbers in our region? Last month when we talked about the Hog Heaven pack, the number increased form 12 or 13 wolves and instead FWP killed 27. This sent a red flag out how was the count missed by 100%.
  - d. Better explain the WTD deaths by "Other" how were the 8% determined?
  - e. If this presentation is offered to general public in general presentation, shorten it, take out the + or 20 percentage. Reduce some squiggly lined graphs. Get the "bottom line" faster. Use Average figures; expand to mule deer and elk, etc.

- f. Stick the percentages into the pie chart. Also, some of this would be very helpful for a handout. Put a date on the chart if you're afraid of the numbers being associated to incorrect years of data.
- g. Pie charts are real good. The simple math is real good also.
- h. Put some dollar figures in the presentation. Example: The wolf page with the info cost \$500,000.00
- i. Make sure that people understand that you are not trying to make a case for NOT de-listing the wolf.
- j. Will there be press releases? More simplified information needs to be out there before the hunting seasons are just reduced. All folks need to understand the factors that play a part in the process.
- k. Needs a simple graph that shows the ages classes and how that goes through the population. Keep this graph as simple as you can make it. Display recruitment on graph in a <u>very simple</u> manner.
- I. Show the high numbers as well, not just the averages.
- m. PUBLIC: How many wolves in a litter? How many litters does these wolves have in a year. Show the recruitment on wolves as well. Add this information into the graphs in VERY SIMPLE manner. What's the next 20 years look like?
- n. Map of the packs as they exist and the status of those packs. Quite a few of them were being decimated by mange, distemper, etc.
- 3. Legislative Update Cancelled for tonight due to the interest in this topic.

## Round Table -

- Darrell Coverdell FAS plowing is doing a good job. Jerry Sawyer gave overview of priorities.
- Dan Savage wolfs are of paramount issue.
- Mark Sheets cutting down the doe permits...is there a way to target the private landowners to consider opening up their lands for block mgmt?
   The places where the greatest amount of depredation is taking place.
- Don Bothwell a coyote harvest contest is in progress. (There are more predators out there in addition to wolves and lions). There are people out there willing to make an issue out of any harvest. Update on trapper bill HB 62, mandatory Trapper Ed bill looks like it will go thru. HB 63 is an attempt to give FWP authority to revoke a fur dealer's license.
- Tammi Fisher Wolves seem to be the sexy propaganda for this year in the hunting season, I think when we meet the overly simplistic view of this "why I didn't harvest a deer"...I wonder if instead of doing news releases that contain a lot of really high detail and science...maybe FWP would be better served if FWP did really simplistic news releases. I.e., 3 word sentences.
- Brent Mitchell If anyone reloads and you try to get components, you
  might as well go singing in the trees. I checked Midway last night and
  everything is out of stock on many things.

- There will be gun safety classes (NRA certified) starting at the end of Feb.
- Tony Anderson Tonight was a good time, time well spent. But, where do
  we go from here. We need to unite Montanans. I think unity in numbers
  speak louder than money. (Like the wolf lovers groups have.)
  - When will the new director be confirmed? Will his email address be made public so that public can send him ideas or concerns?
    - His email is already public, it is <u>imaurier@mt.gov</u>
- Jon Dahlberg McGregor Lake –what's going on out there now in terms
  of the trespass (home construction) on the old county right of way?
  Flathead County Commissioners sent a letter to vacate the ROW but have
  made a decision not to move forward on it until forced to in court.
  - Avalanche danger is really high this year. Be careful out there.
- Don Clark letter to Jim Williams from Libby Rod & Gun club. Voted unanimously in support of limiting the whitetail doe harvest for the next hunting season.
  - Rec'd a letter from Gallatin Rod & Gun club regarding transferring the mgmt of bison from Dept of Livestock back to FWP. Libby Rod & Gun Club supports this.
    - One thing that is hidden in this bill is all the costs of testing for brucellosis is buried in there. Is this really where hunters want their hunting dollars to go? There is a huge fiscal note involved in this bill. It's being presented to the committee tomorrow.
    - Do we have a mountain lion mgmt plan in place for Montana?
- Jim Morey Thanks to Jim Williams for the presentation tonight.

Our next meeting will be Thursday, March 19, 2009