

R1 CAC Meeting
10/01/2009
FWP Public meeting Room

Present:

Leo Rosenthal, Nick Scholz, Greg Sherr, Rick Komenda, Greg Foley, Bernie Cassidy, Alan Wood, Amy Grout, Jon Dahlberg, Brent Mitchell, Tony Anderson, Randy Richard, Don Bothwell, Mike Shepard, Tim Engleson, Don Clark, Wally Wilkinson, Ron Hvizdak, Jerry Smalley, Jim Satterfield, John Fraley and Martha Abbrescia

Updates:

Communications Sub-committee Report: Tony Anderson, Mike Shepard, John Fraley and Martha Abbrescia had a meeting with Kellyn Brown, the editor of the Flathead Beacon – we are now posting stories of interest ourselves directly to the Flathead Beacon’s Blog “Mountain Exposure”. Suggestion to also post hunter education information on the Beacon.

Flathead Lake Fisheries: What is the CAC hearing on this? Some commercial fishermen are getting concerned about the tribes’ willingness to net the lake. One thing that has specifically been heard is that the tribes are going to net long before the public even knows they’ve netted. Many folks are saying that they are catching fewer fish yet the Tribes want even more lake trout removed from the lake. The management plan expires in 2010 (15 months). We have implemented a series of management measures to increase the harvest of lake trout. The Tribe is of the mind that we need to do more to reduce the lake trout.

The region’s position related to the DO office & Governor’s office is to proceed with the development of a new management plan and include an EIS for the possibility of netting and other measures. Currently the Tribes and the department have a different interpretation of what the current plan says.

**MEPA & public comment periods / meetings need to also take place at the south end of the lake to clearly see what the other tribal and non-tribal members perspective is. Alert: there will be gillnetting taking place in the lake in early November. This is the same gillnetting that has been taking place for 12 years. This netting is for survey only. There are usually about 400 fish taken at this time. There is always a spring series also. This is not the suppression effort that the tribes are suggesting. The challenge is finding a balance in the lake trout fishery and the native fish survival.

The CAC asks if they can get some of the raw data from that gillnetting at the 12-03-09 meeting. Mark agrees and states that the survey information from the netting that took place earlier this spring is available and will bring to December meeting.

Leo Rosenthal updated the group regarding the Swan Lake and Mountain Lakes projects. The 3-year Swan netting effort will be a good test project to see if lake trout can be

suppressed in a much smaller and simpler system than Flathead Lake. Amy Grout gave an update on the Paul Taylor Memorial Fishing Access Site, and Alan Wood gave the latest information about the wolf hunt including the website address for the up-to-date wolf status: <http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/planahunt/wolfStatus.html>

ROUND TABLE

Randy Richard – Has observed that all the elk seem to be grouped on private lands. Are the wolves pushing the elk to private lands?

Ron Hvizdak – People are struggling to find moose. What are the numbers of rainbows in Lake Koocanusa?

Wally Wilkinson – is keeping his focus on the Flathead Lake situation.

Don Clark – Libby Rod & Gun club had an open house in their new building recently. People are excited about the opportunity to get a wolf. Seems like the recruitment of lambs to ewes is very low. Keeping track of some of the sheep that we transplanted a couple of years ago.

Mike Shepard – Has been in the woods a lot and has seen a lot of animals.

Don Bothwell – Montana is in the spotlight - there is an animal rights group that has us in their sights. Initiative 160 will put a ban on trapping on public lands. Asks for a letter of support from the R1 CAC. He has seen this done from the R6 CAC. Don Clark asks if Don B. has talked to the MT Wildlife Federation? FWP commits to looking into what the other CAC did.

Tony Anderson – What is this “Granny Trout” thing that the CAC endorsed in R3? We are about to lose a precious resource if Plum Creek closes their lands.

Brent Mitchell – Audubon has changed the master plan on the Owen-Sowerwine so that it includes trapping. And, it is open to hunting. Please come and get your whitetail there as they are eating up the bird habitat. If you see a sign that states NO HUNTING, first make sure that you are on the Owen-Sowerwine, then take the sign down and go ahead & hunt.

Jon Dahlberg – Green box sites discussed. The Bison roundup is going on in Moiese. It's a very interesting.

Bernie Cassidy – Hunters are not locating the elk. The elk aren't even bugling. Turkeys seem to be all over the place. What jurisdiction would FWP have about a cell tower that is going up in the vicinity of Middle Thompson?

Darrel Coverdell – The lift of the limits on Clayton & Margaret lakes was a very popular move. Does anyone have the actual numbers? This philosophy will most likely continue on and there doesn't seem to be an enforcement issue.

Greg Foley – Regarding Swan Lake, I think there is general skepticism out there. They have been very aggressive in Yellowstone and I think people are fearful due to what happened at Yellowstone Lake. (Can't compare Yellowstone to Swan lake – Leo explained this). The wolf hunt has improved the morale of all hunters. They are happy about the opportunity to help control the numbers.

Rick Komenda – We have several special use trappers on DNRC lands. Not seeing many moose out on Fisher River. Thank you to FWP for trapping that great big grizzly bear that was near the timber sale I was working on.

Next CAC meeting is set for 12-03-09