

FWP R2 CAC Meeting

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, December 2, 2009
LOCATION: FWP Region 2 Headquarters, Missoula
TIME: 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

In Attendance:

Members: Tim Aldrich, Janet Bennett, Louie Bouma, Todd Frank, Edward Hebbe III, Dudley Improta, Charlie Johnson, Rich Lane, Denley Loge, John Manley, Pat O’Herren, Jim Olson, Jack Reneau, Ray Rugg, Stephanie Strickland

Staff: Mack Long, Vivaca Crowser, Mike Hathaway, Ginny Schmautz, Dianne Schmautz, Mike Thompson, and Chris Smith, Sue Daly, and Janet Hess-Herbert of Helena.

Guests: Bob Ream, FWP Commissioner and Noelle Maiden

Absent: Jaala Wickman

Opening Remarks: Mack Long opened the meeting with the introduction of FWP Staff and FWP Commissioner Bob Ream.

Lee Bastion, Parks:

Lee provided an update on the Blackfoot River Planning Process including a brief review of the work accomplished by the RRAFT Committee. CAC members Jim Olson and Tim Aldrich are also on the RRAFT Committee.

Mick Thompson, Wildlife:

Mike provided an update on the pneumonia outbreak in sheep in the East Fork of the Bitterroot. Healthy sheep seem to be separating from sick ones. Sick ones are aggressively being removed from the area in an attempt to minimize the spread of the disease. Domestic sheep and llama’s are in the area.

Check Station Report: mule deer and whitetail harvest are down by nearly half. Outside of depredation deer numbers statewide are in decline. B-tags will be discontinued. Hunter numbers have declined 17% over the 5-year average with hunters not seeing the game they used to see. Weather is a big factor.

Ginny indicated hunters are more often than not purchasing their licenses piece meal rather than for the entire family at one time.

Ed observed that the mule deer harvest in HD291 has been controlled for 25 years and he cannot see where the numbers have improved at all.

Season Setting Meetings: Meetings will be held in R2 for 4 nights a weeks for the first 3 weeks in January.

Wolf Management Discussion on the possible differences between this years “trial run” as opposed to what a fully engaged management plan might look like. Population was at 1650 at the end of 2008 and stands at 2,000 in 2009 even with the hunt. Populations continue to increase. The USFWS will continue with a 5-year monitoring plan and then relinquish management to the State. Chris Smith and Sue Daly are working on long-term funding.

Chris Smith, Special Projects, Helena:

Chris conducted an extremely informative Powerpoint presentation cover the topic of how

FWP is funded and the current outlook.

Fish, Fishing Access Sites, and Wildlife Funding:

1. General License Account
2. Earmarked License dollars (can only be used for specific things)
3. Pitman-Robertson Federal Funds for wildlife
4. Wallop-Breaux Federal Funds for fisheries

Parks Funding:

1. Vehicle registration
2. Earned revenue
3. Coal tax trust revenue
4. Bed tax
5. Motor boat fuel tax (used only in parks with motor boat access)
6. Very occasional lump sum from the general fund.

Outlook for Wildlife:

1. General license account is flat and stable for the next 3-5 years
2. Earmarked funds are stable
3. P-R and W-B funds are up and down. An increase in firearms sales provides increased funding.

Outlook for Parks:

1. Vehicle registration fees are flat and decreasing.
2. Earmarked revenue is up.
3. Coal tax trust revenue is down
4. Bed tax is flat
5. Motor boat fuel tax same.
6. Overall stable with a slight decline of revenue.

Current Situation:

1. Expenditures exceed revenue
2. Currently sustained by savings
3. Funding will be at zero in 2013
4. Fish and wildlife have more time (2015) but demands are increasing
5. Something needs to change.

Chris provided an explanation of what FWP is doing to control expenses and leveraging funds. He explained that an overall evaluation of programs and priorities is taking place.

The CAC was asked to get involved and provide ideas. Suggestions included restructuring the licenses and developing a new revenue stream by issuing tags for what are currently non-game species such as those currently considered varmints.

Discussions covered topics such as (1) when legislative action allows a license increase, when funds are collected and when they become available for use, (2) once de-listing occurs, the state will have to pick up the full cost of wolf management, (3) public satisfaction by new residence is poor, they do not understand that taxes do not support FWP and they want services, (4) bill to eliminate outfitter sponsored guaranteed license, (5) Habitat Montana.

Janet Hess-Herbert, Data Services, Helena

Janet provided an amazing look at the current resource mapping project driven by the Comprehensive Conservation Strategy.

1. Need for comprehensive state-wide values
2. Demand for spatial analysis
3. Crucial areas and corridors identified
4. Montana is in the lead for providing this data critical for making the right decisions.
5. Affects subdivisions, energy development, energy transmission.
6. It is dynamic and regularly updated with new information for fish and wildlife values.

7. Develop values for risk assessment and climate change
8. Use as a tool to provide management recommendations
9. Manage fish and wildlife data for the agency

Crucial Areas Mapping Service

1. Set up a user group including other agencies and counties.
2. BLM and Forest Service are excited about the product and have attended meetings.

Mack Long, Regional Supervisor

Mack provided the current status of the Mitchell Slough Waterfowl Closure Petition by John and Kathy Lewis.

Department needs to revise wolf season status reporting in anticipation of season closure.

Question: is FWP looking at what Stimson is doing on their land sales? They are not currently an REIT at this point.

Compliment:

1. Wardens at the informal check station at 9-Mile were exceptionally polite, humorous and approachable.
2. Handling Mitchell Slough very well.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 10, 2010 at the Missoula FWP HQ.

Minutes approved by:



Mack Long, FWP Regional Supervisor

1/06/2010

Date