

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGION 7 – MILES CITY
MEETING NOTES
MARCH 17, 2010**

CAC ATTENDANCE: Warren Broeder, Dan R. Fox, Robert Hagedorn, Art Hayes III, Brett Hoagland, Julie Jordan, William Kesinger, George Luther, Greg Mohr, Chris Pileski, and Rob Reukauf.

ABSENT CAC MEMBERS: Jim Schaefer

FWP STAFF ATTENDANCE: Brad Schmitz, Dwayne Andrews, Mike Moore, John Little, Vic Riggs, Ginger Omland, Ryan Karren, Matt Hagedorn, Mike Krings, Steve Atwood, and Windy Davis.

Dwayne Andrews began the meeting by asking the CAC members to introduce themselves and give a little information on their background and why they were interested in being a member of the Citizens' Advisory Council. There were four new members selected for the R-7 CAC. Dwayne handed out a chart that showed each members service term lengths and when their service terms to the R7 CAC would expire.

Introduction of Members & Backgrounds

Rob Reukauf is a rancher on Cherry Creek and in Block Management. **Dan Fox**, new to the council, is a Resource Specialist/Project Manager at BLM and his interest is interagency access issues. **Warren Broeder** is avid sportsman and wants his grandchildren to have the opportunity to experience the outdoors as well. **Chris Pileski** is the Area Manager for DNRC and handles the recreation use program and his interest is access and opportunity. **George Luther**, new to the council, is from Miles City and is the principal in Luther Appraisal Services which is a real estate consulting, management company. He deals with access issues during hunting season. He manages about 200,000 acres in Eastern Montana and is involved with grazing management work with BLM. Access issues seem to be an issue he deals with each fall. **Bob Hagedorn** ranches on Pumpkin Creek. He is a member that represents the landowners and sportsmen. **Bill Kesinger**, new council member from Baker, is a welder at Williston Basin Interstate Pipeline and wants to support continued access to hunting and fishing opportunities. **Julie Jordan** owns a ranch north of Miles City and has a home in Miles City and is interested in people's concerns and issues. **Brett Hoagland**, new council member, is the Deputy Sheriff in Glendive and raises draft horses. He is interested in wildlife management and is also cognizant of landowner issues. **Greg Mohr** is in the judicial system in Sidney and is a hunter education instructor as well as an

avid sportsman. **Art Hayes** has a ranch on Tongue River by Birney. He likes hunting and fishing and has a good knowledge of landowner/sportsman relationships.

Dwayne reviewed the Citizen Advisory Council Charter with the members. The “*Need*” has two main functions: 1) to provide the agency with a communication avenue for collecting information, ideas and initiatives from the public and; 2) to provide a collaborative environment for FWP to inform and educate you with the expectation that you will then inform and educate the broader public. The “*Purpose*” is to assist FWP to be more responsive toward identified issues. The “*Outcomes*” are that you will advise FWP on various Region 7 and statewide issues where we can be more effective and recommend actions and priorities. “*Scope of Authority*” means that the group is advisory in nature and will not have authority over any private or public land, personnel issue, state or federal agency or non-governmental organization. FWP staff at the regional and statewide levels will make the ultimate decision on issues. “*Roles and Expectations*” include attending as many of the meetings as possible.

Dwayne mentioned that the past priority was access and asked if the members still thought that was the most important issue or if there were other priorities they would like to discuss.

Discussion on Issues

Rob: Access is still a big issue and it is not going away. Rob said the consensus is that we are losing hunter access on block management areas.

Steve: The overall trend for the last five years puts Block management acres down by at least 350,000 acres.

Rob: The Block Management check was 10% more this year and it was very much appreciated. Rob feels one thing is to try to keep hunting from becoming a “rich man’s game.” Another goal would be to access more of the monies from the western part of the state for our access areas.

Dan agreed with Rob on available funds being used in the western part of the state. Wealthy nonresidents make it hard for residents to gain access that want to take their son or daughter hunting.

Warren brought up Black Bridge and the rifle range in Glendive and the need for monies in those access issues.

Chris said, more importantly, is the loss of acreage in Block Management. He would like to see the committee find ways to encourage folks to participate in Block Management and more and better rewards for people who have participated. Nonresidents and residents are willing to pay high prices for access and this encourages participants to leave the Block Management Program.

George believes that the council needs to look at relationships between FWP, hunters, and landowners. How do you manage the hunters or public? That is where the problem starts. We need to educate the individuals as to what the limits are and to not push the limits. He also

agrees that a lot of monies have been spent on access in western Montana. Be sure there are not any issues or challenges previously when looking to acquire access because it makes it very difficult to secure that access.

Bob thinks that we need to continue to provide all opportunity for young people to join the sportsman ranks whether it is done as a group, a council, or individually. We need to encourage them to take part in hunting and fishing. As far as Block Management is concerned, people in their neighborhood have quit block management because of the money issue. If hunters show up with lots of money, it is hard to justify staying in Block Management. He believes Block Management participants need to have an increase in pay.

William K. said he has seen more people joining Block Management than getting out of it. From a hunter's point of view, he likes going hunting where the landowner can limit the number of people hunting on their land. In a lot of areas, there is only a sign-in box and it seems as though more hunters sign in than what the land allows and he feels that some people are in Block Management for the wrong reason which is more hunters mean more money.

Julie is not in Block Management but does not deny anyone to go hunting. She asked if it was FWP monies used for work at Intake to which Brad replied no, that it was all federal dollars. Julie feels the public has the wrong idea on where the money is coming from. Dwayne responded that those monies are all federal and no state monies involved.

Chris said that being part of the committee, it is our responsibility to get out and change the views of the public.

Brett feels access is a huge issue for him also. He hunts a lot on block management land and appreciates that. As people go out of Block Management, there will be more people forced onto other places. He would like to see more wildlife like elk and big horn sheep in the eastern part of the state.

Greg sees money as a big issue and agrees that more monies need to be spent in Eastern Montana. He feels that forcing the money issue for the Block Management is an issue that the CAC will need to deal with. Be sure everyone has the opportunity to speak up to FWP and CAC members on issues.

Art H. agrees that Block Management is a large program and needs support to be sure no more acreage is lost. He also feels that other landowners that allow public hunting but do not participate in Block Management need to be appreciated also so that they don't shift to outfitters or big money.

Rob suggested a raffle for a pickup to reward those that are not in Block Management but that do allow public hunting.

Art said by end of season neighbors are worn out from hunters knocking on their doors.

Greg said another other issue is not being able to draw for limited permits and suggested a waiting period be instituted for those type of permits. Brad said that a proposal was brought up to commission and it did not succeed but feels that next time it may.

Bob asked what the argument against it was.

Dwayne said that it was for any hunting district where the odds were 10% or less for drawing the permit. The breaks were at 11% last year so they would not have qualified for this proposed waiting period. Maybe it should be 15%. That is why we have a committee like this is to come up with those type of recommendations. Typically, if proposed changes don't get approved the first go around, they may be brought back again during the next biennial tentative process.

Brad agreed. Greg thought that issue should be pushed.

Julie asked about nonresident antelope tags and said tags are hard for them to draw.

Brad said by statute, nonresidents are limited to 10% of quota. Dwayne said more nonresidents are applying than in the past.

Julie said some hunters can't draw in 700 but get drawn in 600.

Mike M. said some pick districts that the odds are better and that is why.

Warren B commented that the Stipek land acquisition has been a major plus and he has not heard any negative comments.

Brad said that when FWP looks into purchasing a piece of ground, they are under scrutiny. Stipek was a great location and opportunity. They are finding that landowners are not always happy to have a public rec site in their backyard. Brad said Intake would be discussed at next meeting.

Vic said in Eastern Montana, we do not think in terms of multi millions but multi thousands of dollars. A big project that comes along like this which involves that much money will capture your attention.

Brad said because of the federal endangered species act the pallid sturgeon requires that something be done at Intake, the irrigation district had to do something with it or they would be in jeopardy of the Endangered Species Act which could shut down their operation.

Dwayne referred back to George's idea that one bad experience a landowner has will stay with that landowner for many years. How do we deal with that? What do the CAC members think as how we as an agency can address the issue of a "bad experience".

Chris said it was previously discussed last year regarding a hunter ethics or training or education.

Dwayne said there is a program on the FWP web site called Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project.

Rob said guys that break rules aren't going to look at it anyway.

Art thought the fines should be increased for violations.

William K. asked if license privileges were lost when hunters were ticketed for illegally taking big game.

Rob said his pet peeve is when hunters drive on roads that are too wet and leave big muddy ruts.

Mike suggested putting up signs saying "road too muddy."

Brett suggested FWP Enforcement do some training with deputies, policemen, and Highway Patrol officers and let them know what to look for and questions to ask there may be more cases built. Mike thought that would be a great idea since he never has enough staff to cover the large areas.

Chris said there has to be education in the process.

Brad asked how do we work on hunter image with landowners to portray that hunting is a positive thing for our community. When you look at the economic turnaround that comes from hunting, it amounts to big dollars. It's needed as a management tool out here as well as far as deer and elk challenges for landowners. However, we do hear from landowners quite frequently that they are very glad when hunting season is over.

Mike said the Landowner/Sportsman program that Alan Charles has set up on internet might be a good start. One of the things is that some sportsmen don't realize the damage they do. He thought it should be a little more difficult to obtain licenses and that hunters should have to go through a program as such.

Dwayne said a big part of hunter education is ethics but they are taught this as 11 or 12 year old students. He thought it would be nice to have the hunters that took the time to take the program to have a special ranch or ranches where you couldn't hunt unless you took that program. The idea behind that was that if they were going to spend the time and effort on their own to take that program, they would appreciate the landowner's land and in turn would reduce the anxiety that landowner may have with hunters and hunter behavior.

Brad said other states such as Utah has a dedicated hunter program. But there has been no decrease in problems.

William suggested it be made a prerequisite that hunters have to take a course and have a card with you to sign into Block Management. If you are caught doing something wrong or right by a landowner, you would receive points on your card.

George said they are dealing with two tiers. Law enforcement covers one with violations. Then there are those that feel they are in the right no matter what the situation. The internet program is a good base but how do you make people accountable? Lessees that George deals with said that their biggest complaint is the locals, not nonresidents. Some do not view it as a privilege to hunt, they view it as a right to hunt.

Chris said that is a problem with state land issues also.

George suggested for FWP or CAC to get on public agendas to speak regarding hunter ethics. They might not all be hunters but at the same time, that message is out.

Art says hunters are more demanding than 30 years ago. They want trophies.

Brad said FWP is seeing a shift in attitude with hunters and isn't sure what to attribute that to. We are also seeing an increase in pressure in Eastern Montana because a lot of the surrounding states don't have access programs like Montana does. The root of what you are talking about is relationship building.

Julie said fall is a busy time for ranchers and hunters do not understand that and they want to visit.

Dwayne said that hunters are taught to build relationships and now Julie is suggesting she may be too busy shipping calves when the hunters come around to ask for permission to sit down and talk.

Brad said as a society, we have shifted away from some of that. As an Agency, we used to spend a lot of time building relationships but there doesn't seem to be that time anymore. If specific needs and issues need to be worked on, we do that.

Dwayne said part of the big difference between Eastern Montana and Western Montana is that Eastern Montana, 73% of the land ownership is private land which is not the case in Western Montana.

Windy thought education of not being afraid to confront another hunter if you see violations would be helpful. If hunters realize that some of the reasons why we are losing access are because of those issues, they would be willing to speak up and police each other.

Dwayne thought that is already happening in some locations in eastern Montana.

Rob said BLM land is a problem in their area. Because it is public land, hunters feel that on BLM land they can do whatever they want because it is public.

Dan said there is no doubt that some people do have that attitude. BLM only has one person to patrol.

Chris said the Tongue River Ranch has not had any issues with that property and 90% of the people read and adhere to the expectations. He thought setting expectations for people is a very helpful tool.

Dwayne thought part of that is that there is an actual road use plan that is clearly marked and most people that are going to get in trouble with the landowner is because they are using their vehicle in the wrong way.

Bob said you can't legislate common sense. He thought it would be nice if the CAC or/and FWP could somehow recognize what the landowners do for sportsman.

Dan F. thought if there was some type of incentive for landowners that aren't in Block Management but still let people hunt could be given a gift certificate of some other token of appreciation. He thought enforcement would be able to identify those people.

Brad thought a radio or news spot after hunting season thanking landowners for allowing hunting would help. Bill McChesney is also pursuing an opportunity for those who allow public hunting but are not in Block Management to receive compensation through the county.

Greg thought public services announcements during hunting season reminding hunters to respect landowner's land, for example, if it is muddy to not drive on their land, etc.

Brett thought to put something on the web when hunters are buying licenses online that would flash saying such as "close the gates" etc.

Mike suggested the CAC members look at the Landowner/Sportsman program online before the next meeting.

Rob thought having a warden's presence helped. Dan said that BLM had a person at Pumpkin Creek which seemed to help.

Steve A. contacted FFA to build gate closures for landowners as a token of appreciation.

Dan thought a letter to those landowners that are not in Block Management but to show them options available.

Dwayne thought a letter combined as a thank you and as another option Block Management just in case they might be interested.

Julie thought even a thank you card would be great.

Brad said the message is clear as far as showing more appreciation to the landowners.

FWP Employees Introduction

Dwayne introduced the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Project Managers and each gave a brief synopsis of their program and what their responsibilities are in those fields.

Vic Riggs, Fisheries Manager; John Little, Parks Manager; John Ensign, Wildlife Manager (Absent); Brad Schmitz, R-7 Regional Supervisor; Dwayne Andrews, Information Officer; Ginger Omland, Office Manager; Windy Davis, Energy Specialist; and Mike Moore, Enforcement.

Brad handed out copies of the first two pages of the Strategic Plan and reviewed FWP's mission and visions for the future. In essence for us, it comes down to a couple of things which are to provide strong populations and resource opportunities to the public and the guests of Montana whether it is Parks, Wildlife or Fisheries, it is the same concept. We are mandated by statute to maintain that public trust for public resources.

As professionals, we feel that we have a good opportunity to lead the charge which is where the CAC fits in by communicating and visiting with neighbors and bringing those thoughts and ideas and information to us.

One of the big issues in our part of the state is access. Contributing factors to this are the average age for ranchers is increasing; a change in philosophy; an attitude shift towards commercialization of wildlife; higher demand from recreationists. We have a variety of tools at this point in time but need more ideas and information. A second issue that is big is land use practices that have direct impacts on wildlife, fisheries and parks. Things like energy developments, water allocation, sagebrush leases, and trying to secure habitats for wildlife. The third issue is wildlife health such as brucellosis, chronic wasting disease, and aquatic nuisance species which are all things that we didn't worry about that much in the past but they are all knocking on the door now. We are seeing a change in philosophy on the national level and state level as far as how wildlife should be managed. As generations continue, we are seeing a lot more conservation type minded things that need to exist just so it can exist. We spend a lot of time on Agency security and liability. Another critical issue is habitat restoration and sustaining of habitats. Statewide, we are definitely facing some changes which has always been the case. On a local level, we have discussed critical issues such as relationship building, interaction, communication and the opportunity to be heard. Fish and wildlife management becomes statewide issues.

General Discussion

Art asked how fishing access sites on Tongue River progressing. Brad said the ones that are by Ashland have come to a halt at this time. The one they would like to pursue is owned by Scott Studiner's relative. Art asked about the one on BLM to which John said it had been signed. Brad said it has been signed but it is not developed. Hopefully, it will be pushed along also.

Brad mentioned the bridge access bill and said plans are to contact some landowners and implement so recreational access points on the Tongue and potentially the Yellowstone Rivers. speak with folks to try and get those put in also.

Mike asked if there was a new development at Terry Bridge. Rob said not to his knowledge.

Public Comment

Keith Hall suggested ideas to show appreciation to the Block Management landowners and also landowners that allow public hunting but are not enrolled in the program. He thought setting up a tag system for people that would want to work 40 hours on a Block Management place and get your name in a tag drawing for tags in the 700 area that are hard to draw. He would also like to see the use of community service people put to work cleaning up fishing access sites. He would also like to see the landowners that allow hunting invited to a dinner to show appreciation for letting people hunt.

NEXT MEETING WILL BE AUGUST 11, 2010 WHICH MAY BE A TOUR SOUTH OF MILES CITY ALONG THE TONGUE RIVER.