

# Region 5 Citizen Advisory Council Meeting Agenda

09/21/2010 5:30 PM to 9:30 PM Fish, Wildlife & Parks 2300 Lake Elmo Drive Billings, MT 59105

Meeting called by: Gary Hammond

Type of meeting: CAC Council Meeting

**Location: Region 5 Headquarters** 

**Facilitator: Bob Gibson** 

Attendees: Bob Gibson, Gary Hammond, Ken Frazer, Ray Mule', Doug Habermann, Harold Guse, Dianne Stiff, Daniel Aadland, David Charles, Doug Dreeszen, Greg Keller,

Shawn Todd, Bob Willems, Dale Vermillion, Carol Endicott

Absent: Mike Whittington, Doug Haacke, Dan Dutton, Jed Evjene

# **Agenda Topics**

Welcome, Dinner & Conversation	Gary Hammond
Issues of Concern	CAC Members
Native Cutthroat Restoration Projects	Carol Endicott
Parks Annual Fee Rule	Doug Habermann
New Models for Hunter Access	Gary Hammond
FWP Initiatives for the 2011 Legislature	Bob Gibson
CAC Succession Planning, Administrative	Bob Gibson
	Issues of Concern Native Cutthroat Restoration Projects Parks Annual Fee Rule New Models for Hunter Access FWP Initiatives for the 2011 Legislature

Welcome, Dinner & Conversation

Gary Hammond

Issues of Concern CAC Members

#### Discussion:

• **David Charles** – Talked to bird hunters who said numbers seem to be higher this year. People are unhappy with wolves. Still hear grumbling about the Yellowstone River WMA/State Park project. People like it the way it is. Had a fellow ask why can we only shoot one hen pheasant?

- Doug Dreeszen Folks who hunt antelope north of here asked why so many tags issued, and understand that the blue tongue three years ago has been an impact. Ray said that is based on population estimates as far as number of licenses issued. Doug said with no fawn recruitment, the population will be down for a number of years. Ray said they cut down on the number of either sex tags and got rid of all the doe/fawn tags, so the harvest rate will be a lot lower than it's been. With what antelope they did see there were quite a few mature bucks. There were more fawns on south end than unit north of Lavina, but nothing north near Flatwillow creek. People are wondering if this should be closed. Ray would have to look at the data and see what the population estimate is for that area. Domestic goats and sheep have an adverse affect on wild sheep populations. Doug read an article in the paper about goats on Red Lodge Mountain, but there are some sheep that have wintered on the Palisades Rocks in that location. A concern in the Wild Sheep Foundation that more people are bringing goats and sheep especially in the western part of the state into wild bighorn sheep areas. With the die offs this year there no doubt is some bearing on it. The Wild Sheep Foundation is working with Helena to get something going with regard to education on the use of domestic sheep and goats, keeping them away from wild sheep.
- Robert Willems Antelope numbers are down in the Harlowton area too. The fishing access site in Harlowton is getting a lot of use by fishermen, but the road is in need of gravel. FWP needs to come up with a better program of advertising. He's had several calls wanting him to e-mail the permission slips. Still a few people abusing the program signing up for too many permission slips. Asks for hunters to keep him informed especially if they turn out to not hunt for the days they signed up for, but no one calls him back. The upland bird population in the area is way down. There a plenty of sandhill cranes and geese.
- Greg Keller A few people up bow hunting for deer and elk but hasn't heard of anything taken yet.
- Shawn Todd Really haven't had any hunters yet, but have folks lined up for deer and turkey hunting. There are good numbers of both in the Roundup area. Shawn and his daughter have taken up fly fishing this summer. There is a program with the Magic City Flyfishers to get the kids out into the irrigation canals before they dry up, to do some fly fishing. This is to be modeled after Wyoming and sounds like a good program. Ken said the first thing that is going to happen is to get permission from the ditch company. FWP will work with Magic City Flyfishers to provide a tank and gear to move the fish. The only problem is with the big ditch, it is unknown as to where the fish concentrate and will take research to know where they are located. Hoping to relocate these fish into Lake Elmo.
- Dan Aadland Had a bowhunter ask with bear season beginning does he need to wear hunter orange? Harold will get back to Dan on this. He's noticed that the turkeys have tiny off spring and seen whitetail with tiny fawns too.
- Dale Vermillion A number of people have asked about shooting collared doves? Bird populations within Sweet Grass are way down, with the exception of good turkey numbers. On the Yellowstone River in the Pelican FAS area is it possible to regulate jet skis and air boats within that stretch of the Yellowstone? Attended the meeting on restoration of cutthroat on Deer Creek. At the Fireman's Point FAS is it possible to put in a raft ramp into this site? Answer the existing platform was designed for rafts. Need to do something to protect the Greycliff Bridge on the Yellowstone River. Jeremiah Wood and Jim Darling have looked at this recently. Chronic wasting disease in deer? Where do people get them checked? Ray will find out the collection locations for this fall.

Action items: Bear season – bowhunter hunter orange requirements;	Person responsible: Harold	Deadline:
Yellowstone River - jet skis and air boats near Pelican FAS area;	Guse; Gary Hammond; Ray	ASAP
CWD collection sites.	Mule'	

## Native Cutthroat Restoration Projects

Carol Endicott

#### Discussion:

- 1. Status of the range wide distribution of Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout (YCT).
- 2. Current & Historic Distribution of YCT in Streams and current distribution in lakes.
- 3. Causes of decline and threats habitat, passage barriers, disease, dewatering and diversions.
- 4. Conservation Strategy protect, restore and monitor.

- 5. Partners landowners, conservation districts, watershed groups, conservation groups, state agencies, federal agencies, Crow Tribe.
- 6. Types of conservation projects riparian fencing, water leases, screens, ladders, build barriers, fish removal, and reintroductions.
- 7. Specific projects -
  - Soda Butte Creek mechanical removal of brook trout been done for 14 years. Lots of brook trout removed, but we still miss fish, removal is very costly, rainbow trout pose a more immediate threat than brook trout and need to explore barrier option.
  - Willow Creek going into design phrase history pre-1988 fires, supported impressive spawning run, fires contributed fine sediment from hill slopes, undersized and improperly place culverts, highway work resulted in trench, fish still spawn, but at low numbers. Solutions construct a "natural" channel through the wetland; import high quality spawning gravel; replace culverts; habitat restoration/enhancement through residential areas.
  - East Fork Duck Creek 1980's YCT dominant species; 2007 15/1 browns to YCT; genetics considering pure YCT; moved YCT eggs above waterfall.
  - Kickabuck Spring Creek constructed a "natural" channel through wetland; imported high quality spawning gravel.
  - Four Mile Creek Drainage background there's been cutthroat planted in the stream and rainbow trout in the lakes within this drainage located in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. Most of the fish within the stream are pure YCT, so will be keeping this population as pure of a population as possible. Project objectives protect Meatrack Creek population of YCT from hybridization of rainbow; replace existing rainbow trout fishery with YCT. Phase 1 is fish removal in the lakes; Phase 2 will be removal from the stream.
  - Lower Deer Creek fishery with cutthroat and browns for a long time (60 years). Phase 1 Secure Lower Deer creek fish; Phase 2 Construct a barrier; Phase 3 Reclaim for YCT. Salvage YCT and hold in pens; apply piscicide; return the YCT.
  - Goose Creek Headwaters of Stillwater River; Goose Lake is the YCT brood source for the Yellowstone River Fish Hatchery in Big Timber and all YCT are then stocked in Beartooth's; brook trout dominate lakes and 6 miles of creek were treated with piscicide. The lakes were treated in 2007 and 2008; treated Goose Creek in 2007, 2008 and 2009; treatments were successful and it took an extra year to remove brook trout. Restocking YCT for three years and this project is a success.
  - Sage Creek YCT Reintroduction treated with piscicide September 2010; will restock this month with catchable YCT; will survey to see if another treatment is needed. There's 30 miles of stream which involved numerous people including the Crow Tribe. This will be an YCT population and a recreational fishery with a standard limit.
  - Piney Creek –only stream left in the Shoshone River watershed with YCT with one mile of habitat; irrigation system captures all flow; replacing irrigation diversion with pond and screened outlets; fencing, off-channel water, and habitat enhancement.
  - Crooked Creek barrier built in 2006 and then treated with piscicide above it for brown trout. Sampling in two years since the treatment, the YCT are above the barrier and brown trout remain below the barrier.

Action items: Keep CAC Informed on Projects	Person responsible: Ken Frazer	Deadline: Ongoing
Parks Annual Fee Rule	Doug Habermann	

#### Discussion:

- There are 54 State Parks.
- Region 5 State Parks include Lake Elmo, Cooney, Chief Plenty Coups, Pictograph Caves, Greycliff Prairie Dog Town and Yellowstone River State Park.
- Mission Statement conserve a representative diversity of natural, cultural and recreational resources; provide education and interpretation; and help economically.
- Four programs priorities with our mission include provide a safe place, provide high quality service, and provide stewardship of natural, cultural and recreational resources and have that sustainable over a long period of time.
- A press release and the draft Parks Fee Rule were sent out to all of the Region 5 CAC members. Public

comments are welcome.

- \$6,540,594 budgeted for operations in 54 parks; major funding sources are own earned revenue, coal tax interest, bed tax, motorboat fuel tax.
- 92.18 FTE with 63 full time employees and 125-150 seasonal employees.
- New parks include the Yellowstone River State Park, a site on Flathead, a piece of property on Fish Creek off of the Clarks Fork River, and the Marias.
- Travelers Rest SP officially acquired this site.
- Looking at how we are doing compared to other states in preparation for the upcoming legislature.
- The comparison includes Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana. As far as the number of parks, Montana is right in the middle. Many state parks systems are struggling and faced with cuts backs on staff. Montana is in the running with the least amount of permanent employees like North Dakota. Our operations budget is efficient, lean and the lowest. Montana is in the middle with regards to the population per state.
- Comparisons were done with non state parks like the Bighorn Battlefield or the Bighorn Recreation Area. We are low as far as the number of full time employees working in our state parks.
- Last year visitation at our state parks went over two million and is on the increase.
- A water based survey was done at Cooney SP comparing user's visitation experience to five years ago. The outcome was a resounding better experience. Surveys are coming back with positive satisfaction.
- We work closely with the game wardens with regards to illegal activity.
- There are seven National Historic Landmarks and ten National Register sites.
- We try to complete accessibility for users within our sites.
- We have a good neighbor programs that include weed programs, a place for our kids to get outdoors, fencing programs, etc.
- Economic Vitality there was a survey completed in 2002 and we just finished the update this summer and will be updating that document soon.
- Providing additional amenities, like selling ice through our enterprise account, and electrical sites is well received by the users.
- Education an important part of our State Parks program and locally we are continuing to do this through our new visitor center at Pictograph Caves.
- State Parks Biennial Fee Rule if anyone would like to make comments, it can be done on the website, or writing to Helena.

Action items: CAC Comments on Biennial Fee Rule	Person responsible: CAC Members	Deadline: 9/24/2010
Some New Models for Hunter Access	Gary Hammond	

#### Discussion:

- When looking at the amount of deer, elk, antelope and bird harvest in the state, private land is key. We have a relevant block management program, but the operating environment always changes. Our block management coordinator, Alan Charles, commissioned a survey and found out that around 60% of landowners allow some amount of hunting free of charge. We have hunters looking for more places to go, small rural communities that are economically challenged, and landowners who don't want to outfit or go into block management. Our Director has told us that Garfield County is the pilot for the CHAPS program. We have met and will be meeting the Garfield County Commissioners in the near future to keep this conversation going with them.
- Access to Public Land we have a project in Region 5 to purchase an easement into Haymaker WMA.

Hammond None	Action items: Informational Per	Person responsible: Gary	Deadline:
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**Bob Gibson** 

## FWP Initiatives for the 2011 Legislature

Discussion:

The Department is only bringing forward four pieces of legislation in the draft stages right now –

State Parks Enhancement Act

Fish Management Bounty Act

Primitive Parks Improvement Act

Free Fishing Day

Action items: Informational	Person responsible: Bob Gibson	Deadline: None	
CAC Succession Planning, Administrative Housekeeping & Adjourn Bob Gibson			
Next Meeting: January 12, 2011 Topics will include legislature and proposed legislation. Other topic ideas get into Bob.  We are revisiting the membership. All members are to drop Bob a note with their thoughts on whether they would like to continue participating, or if they'd like someone else to take their place. Sometime between now and the next meeting we'll be looking at restructuring and adding new members to the Region 5 CAC.	Person responsible: CAC Members	Deadline: Topic Ideas - 12/15/2010 Membership - 11/30/2010	