

**Region 4 CAC Meeting
Minutes
September 21, 2010
Lewistown Area Office
Lewistown MT**

FWP Staff – Gary Bertellotti, Fred Schultz, Matt Marcinek, Tom Stivers, Cris Luby-Brown and George Liknes

CAC Members – Doug Deffe', Karl Gies, Lisa Flowers, Joe Rapkoch, Robert Facklam, Bryan Thies and Judie Suden

Public/Guests – ; Dale Pfau, Lewistown; John Tognetti, Lewistown; Ron Moody, FWP Commissioner, Lewistown

Started the meeting off with a tour of the Central Montana Shooting Complex given by Dale Pfau. Very evident that a lot of work has been put into the complex and it is an outstanding facility. A great credit to the volunteers and the town of Lewistown. Still an ongoing process.

Gary opened the meeting and since we had our three new members at their first meeting we went around the room and had everyone introduce themselves and give a short background on themselves.

CAC Member Discussion Items:

Went around the room for CAC discussion items and comments.

Karl Gies – Access is a major concern in my area, Lewistown. An access issue with a rancher in the Roy area over a road closure is still an item. Access Fergus County may go to court over this. Heard a rumor that another legislator is going after FWP funds to be put in the general fund. This is a diversion of funding and this process has been brought up in the past. Folks in the Lewistown area like what FWP is doing. Lot of interest in my area about I-161. Karl asked John Tognetti for a comment or two. John added that there are some concerns in the Lewistown area about FWP purchasing land. Need more info out on this – does FWP pay taxes? Access issues with these purchases, etc. I own a sporting goods store and I get a lot of appreciative comments from nonresidents about what we have in Montana. Ron Moody added that another complaint we hear is that we don't maintain the land. When FWP purchases land they do a maintenance plan. By law 20% of the purchase price must go into maintenance of the property.

Judi Sudan – Since we have new members could we receive a new listing of addresses, email addresses, etc of the CAC membership. Fred will take care of that. How did the antler hunt on the Sun River game range go this year? Ron Moody was there for the Sun River and Beartooth WMA's opener on May 15. He stated it was pretty interesting – lots of folks. Twenty minutes after the gate opened on the Sun River WMA all the participants were dispersed throughout the game range. He saw nothing to complain about. One of the big concerns in the past was elk being present when this event happened but this year the elk were gone. And that was a good thing.

Doug Deffe' – After hunting permits come out there seems to be a lot of discussion about the permit system. Folks don't seem to understand it – some folks say why did Joe get his second choice and I didn't my first choice in the same area. Maybe need more publicity about how it all works. Fred added that we get complaints all the time and you are right some folks don't understand how it works. All permit applications are kept on micro-fiche or on the computer so if a person thinks there is a problem with their application they can call Helena Licensing to see what the real story is on their application. Asked about why when putting in for archery for 410/417 they are grouped together and you just can't put in for 417? Had a short discussion on how that works.

Bryan Thies - With the recent conservation easements in the Cascade area, Riverdale and Dugas properties, how does the process work? How do they come about? Gary stated that he would cover that topic later in the meeting when he will discuss conservation easements.

Joe Rapkoch – Shelby area. A lot of buzz about taxes not being paid on FWP properties that they acquire like the Lincoln property, Marias River State Park/WMA. From discussions we had today apparently FWP does pay taxes. Folks need to be educated. Bird hunting has been spotty. Need more birds. Deer and antelope numbers are really up. Landowners and some sportsmen are happy that the deer season in his area stayed a 3 week rather than 5 week season. Lots of folks don't like to deal with a lot of hunters. Appreciate block management program. Waterfowl in the area is up due to plenty of water in prairie ponds. FWP is viewed positively in the area. Discussed floating the Marias River. Folks don't realize it is a two day float from Sullivan Bridge to takeout area. Had a few questions about Sullivan Bridge access. Also as to what is happening with Wonken access on east side of WMA. FWP is still working with Mr. Wonken. Gary added a note about warning folks about grizzly bears on or around the Marias River. They seem to be traveling farther away from the front and earlier too.

Lisa Flowers – I have heard some great compliments on Russ Talmo who is replacing Mike Madel, our bear specialist, who is working on his doctorate. Mike will be around normally from April to August, either wise he will be at school for the next three years. Need to get the word out that Russ has more or less replaced Mike for now. Mike is still in the picture though. Had a few comments from folks on the early elk hunt in the Teton area. Letters came out rather late and some complaints on how it was handled.

Bob Facklam – Was curious why there is no moose archery season. There are archery seasons for bighorn sheep and goats but not moose. When it came up for commission action moose just wasn't included. A number of Backcountry Horsemen put a hitching rail by the west side parking area on the Marias River State Park/WMA. They are also willing to participate in a cleanup day on the Marias River State Park/WMA but don't want to do it on their own. We need to establish a bear-safe campground on the WMA. Having a lot of bear problems in the Choteau area. Mostly 2 year olds, sows and cubs, younger bears. Need to make folks aware of what they are dealing with.

General Discussion Items:

Matt Marcinek – Parks Manager – Passed out the new Fishing Access Guide. Discussed the new Biennial Fee Rule. He sent out a note to all CAC members looking for comments. We are trying to get the word out more on such things like fees, new reservation system, etc. We are trying to clean up the wording in the proposal on such things as, for example, what is a camping site defined as. Discussed the FAS's in the Lewistown area. We have eight of them in the area. Met with the county weed district on the new Mountain Acres FAS, which is proposed for acquisition as part of the Big Spring Creek re-meandering effort. The 6 acre site is not to be developed with parking or latrine, just to allow for the stream project at this time. Water level at Ackley Lake has really been good this summer and fall. As long as the water levels are up we will keep the dock in.

George Liknes – Fisheries Manager – Described habitat projects on Big Spring Creek in the Lewistown area. Trout Unlimited in the community and nationwide hope to contribute \$100,000 for the Machler property project on the north end of town where Big Spring Creek was straightened in the early 1960's. FWP and partners propose to change it to a meandering channel. Updated the group on the Missouri River Management Plan. The Plan, which covers the area on the Missouri River from Toston to Holter Dam, was approved at the May 2010 Commission meeting. Fishing Regulation changes identified in the plan include walleye limits in Canyon Ferry Reservoir, Hauser Reservoir and Holter Reservoir. Walleye limits are the most controversial part of the plan. Currently, one of the big issues is the walleye limit from the Holter Dam to Cascade Bridge. The limit for walleye will increase from the current 5 fish. The FWP Commission directed staff to protect the trout fishery below Holter. The tentative regulation, adopted by the Commission, is "no limit" on walleyes from Holter Dam to Black Eagle Dam. We recommend a 20 fish limit. This will be discussed at the October FWP Commission Meeting. The Commission approved "no limit" from Holter Dam to Cascade Bridge and a 20 fish limit from Cascade Bridge to Black Eagle Dam.

Gary Bertellotti – Regional Supervisor - Presently we are collecting data for the next two years to delist grizzly bears. Numbers of grizzlies is very good at present and we are seeing a 2-3 % increase in population annually. Wolves have been listed again but the Department is pursuing avenues to be able to hunt them again as a management tool.

Approximately 120-130 wolves are killed annually due to livestock predation. By listing the wolf again it removes most management tools available to the State. Hunters are concerned about predation on wildlife populations. Gave a briefing on the conservation easement process. Landowners need to be willing to do a Conservation Easement and normally come to FWP or other Conservation group, then evaluation is done to identify worthiness based on habitat, access, and other criteria. In Region 4 at the present time we are working on three easements – Moline, Riverdale and Dugas properties. The property is appraised and then dismissed value is evaluated – what it would cost the landowner to subdivide, grazing reduction, etc. – Than FWP is limited to pay 40% of the appraised property value. We are concerned about riparian, intermountain, grasslands and sage brush properties as our top priorities. Final approval is our Commission and the State Land Board.

NEXT MEETING: Looking early December after the general hunting season. We will poll members and staff for a date most likely in November. Committee should be thinking about electing a Chairperson at our next meeting.