



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region 3 Citizens' Advisory Committee Region 3 Headquarters June 2, 2010

CAC Attendees: LeRoy Mehring, Ken Sinay, Rick Grady, Joe Cohenour, Mike Myer, Rick Arnold, David Gibson, Cyndy Andrus, Barb Cestero, Robin Cunningham, Tom Milesnick, Gene Budeski

CAC Members Absent: Tom Henderson, Sam Samson, Ross Lingle

FWP Staff Present: Sam Sheppard, Andrea Jones, Jerry Walker, Betsy Gordon, Chris Forrest, Joan Buhl, Julie Cunningham, Justin Gibson, Kurt Alt, Neil Anderson

Guests: JP Pomnichowski, Ron Moody, Richard Lessner

Greetings, introductions, roundtable, public comment:

Roundtable:

Rick Arnold - Riprap on Yellowstone River is being looked at closely on the state level.

Joe Cohenour: PLPW meeting June 17 & 18 – looking at access and individuals with large concentrations on animals on their land. Any ideas/suggestions are welcome.

Ken Sinay - Wolf issue — public meeting tonight, 6/2. What will the structure of the meeting be? What will take place? Madison Recreation Permit program (copies of press releases and editorials associated with permit program handed out by Ken Sinay).

LeRoy Mehring - Wolf decimating wildlife and how farmers and ranchers are coping with them. Experiment is over — time to get rid of them. There are too many wolves in Montana.

Dave Gibson - What is the responsibility/authority of FWP during a natural disaster?

FWP Commissioner Moody: Here to listen and learn.

Robin Cunningham - Why does FWP persist in shocking the Madison River? For what do we need the data? How does shocking impact the fish? Is there a scientific reason for it? My constituents would like to know.

Cyndy Andrus - Would like a discussion on dam in Sourdough Canyon. I-161 – would like to get information from both sides.

Sam Sheppard:

Wolf meeting - Kurt Alt will discuss the format for the wolf open house meeting and give us an update on where we stand in terms of proposed tentatives. Ending date for public comment is June 14.

Natural disaster response – it depends on the disaster as to who responds. Protocols are in place; disaster emergency crews stand ready. FWP assists other agencies with disasters such as fire. FWP assists in an advisory/assistance role.

Madison River fish shocking - Mike Vaughn will discuss Madison River shocking at our September meeting.

I-161 – Department provides fiscal note. Department does not take a stand. We will get information out to CAC members.

CAC member discussion re: I-161:

-Outfitters are tying up land. It's not a good thing for landowners or sportsmen.

-Signatures are still being gathered. More signatures are needed to get initiative on the ballot. Suggested that CAC invite people from both sides, after it's determined whether it will make it on the ballot or not.

-Skyline Sportsmen has had both sides do presentations and that group decided it wasn't worth getting involved in and it wasn't good for anyone (goes against Montana traditions and won't improve anything).

FWP Updates:

Jerry Walker - Improvements at Point of Rocks FAS on Yellowstone River will be completed this fall. Lewis & Clark Caverns Visitor Center completed – grand opening took place on May 15.

Julie Cunningham - Fairly new in my position, open to questions. Working with the DOT on signage for Porcupine WMA, and signs advising motorists to beware of bighorn sheep on the road near Big Sky. Trying to rebuild some of the exclosures throughout the Gallatin.

Neil Anderson – Brucellosis update. 2009 elk brucellosis surveillance report will be out at the end of June. 2008-2009 surveillance of hunter-harvested animals using blood samples. Received 1288 samples and tested 835 (some were contaminated), but a 14.7% participation rate. In 2009-10 there was less participation (397 tested, 8% participation rate).

Within YNP, the seroprevalence in elk is fairly similar to that of Montana. Wyoming has seen an increase.

Concept of vaccinating bison in Yellowstone expects about 50% effectiveness.

Logistically, how do you do this?

Brucellosis in moose – study based on only a few animals. Brucellosis is fatal to moose.

Outdoor Youth Programs (PowerPoint presentation) – **Dr. Bill Mealer**

How can we educate our youth and encourage/promote outdoor activity? In other states, the Salvation Army has camps promoting self-improvement, how to act, and getting out of trouble. Their focus is on promoting hunting trips, shooting sports, getting kids outdoors. They work with Boy Scout organizations for badge requirements. Outdoor activity equals revenue for future conservationists. Some of the activities that the Boys and Girls Club sponsors are: Camp with Predators, Fly Casting, Fly Fishing Basics, Wildlife Trust and Issues, and Bridger Creek Insect Camp. How can we get involved, find sites and sponsors for participation in the outdoors for Montana youth?

Discussion/comments:

-Kids love hunting and families use the meat. It's a win-win.

-Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation takes 60-70 kids to a private ranch near Ennis to hunt and it has been very successful.

-Propose 9-year olds be allowed to hunt with a blood relative and issue doe permits. Kids that get involved in hunting at age 12 or under are still into the sport at age 21. Those who get involved after age 12 are not interested at age 21. What is the opposition to age 9 hunts? (Hunter education instructors afraid that hunter education requirement will not be enforced)

Mentoring program – for cases where dad does not hunt or own a firearm.

Bighorn Sheep in Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (PowerPoint presentation) – Dr. Bill Mealer

There is an absence of bighorn sheep in the Beaverhead NF with the exception of the Greenhorn Mountains. The transplant of 85 sheep is now down to 34. Beaverhead NF is twice the size of our smallest state. Bighorn Peak is a remote historic habitat, but no sheep remain there. Maybe because of over-hunting or disease, the transplant was not successful. Sheep producers are allowed to cull and dictate. Thirty-five transplants were removed; half shot by FWP when they migrated out, some taken by predation, car death or natural death.

Domestic sheep producers need to move their sheep when bighorns appear, allowing the bighorns to migrate naturally. We need to communicate with sheep producers to work out less disease risk for bighorns. We should create a buffer zone (9 miles is desirable, even 10 miles).

Sheep trailing in Dillon, Robb Ledford WMA, contaminates a wide area and depletes natural forage. When domestic sheep contact bighorn sheep, the bighorns die — not the domestic sheep. Bottom line: get domestic sheep producers to help protect the bighorn sheep.

The restricted habitat for bighorn sheep increases parasitic infection. The domino effect: one contact between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep equals the bighorn going back to infect the remaining herd. Bighorn sheep need to be kept away from domestic herds. As long as domestic sheep are in the area, bighorn sheep will not be viable.

Trapping Resolution – I-160

Sam Sheppard read a letter from Tom Barnes regarding I-160. CAC adopted a resolution in the fall of 2008 supporting the continuation of trapping in Montana with mandatory training and education. Mandatory education died in House Committee. No trappers showed up to testify in the support of the bill—the bill was killed. I-160 applies to public state land—does not apply to federal lands.

Comments/concerns:

-Suggest writing consensus statement per number 7 on top 10 future topics list.

-What procedure do we use in making recommendations?

-Need more information to understand issue.

-Need to bring in speakers to help formulate a level of understanding.

-CAC does not set policy—we make recommendations in an advisory role.

Commissioner Moody - FWP Commission sets policy. Commission accepts consensus and encourages such. If regional CAC sent consensus to Commission, that would carry immense weight in terms of influence.

Sam Sheppard - We need to wait on Mr. Barnes request on I-160 until Pat returns.

Top Ten Future Topics List for CAC (handout)

Discussion:

Joe Cohenour – (Regarding the handout listing the CAC’s chosen top ten future topics to address) I move to bring number 7 (“develop consensus on issues”) to number 1.

That motion was seconded.

Joe Cohenour – “Develop consensus” is a procedure rather than a “topic”. What are we truly here for?

Vote: Thumbs up – 7. Thumbs down – 0. “Develop consensus” moved to the top of the list of future topics.

Barb Cestero - How do we become informed on subjects so that we can make a decision (form a consensus)? There would have to be a level of understanding before decision making process.

-CAC does not develop policies – we make recommendations

-CAC needs to bring topics to the department – not the department bringing topics and direction to take.

Cyndy Andrus - Are we talking forming a consensus about every issue?

Joe Cohenour - No — maybe on issues that may be contentious in the future.

Cyndy Andrus - We work through the consensus process to work through issues.

CAC can take a position – it doesn’t have to be in line with FWP. CAC brings a wide variety of opinions.

Robin Cunningham - Numbers 4 (“Legislative Issues”), 8 (“Respect Your Rivers”) and 10 (“Initiative 160 & 161”) are short term. Need consensus before Legislature convenes—time sensitive. If initiatives make it to ballot, then not short term.

Tom Milesnick - We can make recommendations to the Department or Commission. Governor says we can’t go to newspaper as a group, but as individuals we can make a statement.

Robin Cunningham - Move to remove number 10 (“Initiatives 160 & 161”) from the list.

Sam Sheppard - Wait to take any further action until we talk to legal and the Department.

Tom Milesnick - Invite Neil Anderson to present his findings on 2009-10 elk brucellosis surveillance. Have Julie Cunningham give us an update on elk brucellosis status study.

Joe Cohenour - Exempt wells.

Commissioner Moody - Need more help in hunter participation in turning in samples for brucellosis. How can CAC help with this?

LeRoy Mehring - Distribute them out at sportsmen’s groups and show people how to use them.

Mike Myer - Incentive for sportsmen to return them.

Send names of individuals we could have come and talk to us who represent the other side of exempt wells (realtor side, other candidates that could have equal time to present their side). *Send e-mail to Andrea with ideas/names.*

Sam Sheppard – Future CAC topics are a work in progress – we need to look at and review all the time. New ideas are always welcome.

Tom Milesnick - Quarantine facility update from DOL, APHIS—general update on status, what the problem is. Much misunderstanding and not enough information.

Dr. Mealer - Plan needs to be in place, and also a contingency plan in place, as to what will become of the bison after the five year quarantine period.

Barb Cestero - Elk, bison, brucellosis are complicated issues.

Respect Your Rivers – Cyndy Andrus

\$1974 in budget to go forward. PSA's to go out this spring. How do we want to keep moving forward?

Discussion/Suggestions:

Take RYR to other CAC's in the state. Would like to see it adopted in other regions.

Brochure has never been done – brochure would be a good idea.

Ken Sinay volunteered to distribute to commercial sites.

Richard Lesser - Willing to do graphic layout for brochure. CAC would have to come up with printing costs.

Rick Arnold - Move to form a new sub-division of this committee.

Ken Sinay - Second.

Rick Arnold, Robin Cunningham, Barb Cestero, David Gibson, Rick Grady, and Cyndy volunteered.

Conservation districts are a good place to put brochures.

Preview before movies – who would be the best audience? It costs about \$3000 to put in movie theaters.

Put on statewide website (already on state website)

Get PSA's out this spring

Do video conferencing with other CAC's.

Share PSA's at our next CAC meeting.

Caucus:

Joe Cohenour - Move to have our next meeting at Lewis & Clark Caverns.

Rick Arnold - Seconded.

Jerry Walker - Will coordinate with Pat & the Caverns.

Majority.

Kurt Alt - Wolf meeting will be an open house forum. We'll explain what we're doing, why and how. Public testimony will not be taken. Comments are due on June 14. Final adoption of the tentatives will be July 8.

Next meeting – September 22, 2010 at Lewis & Clark Caverns Visitor Center.