MINUTES Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks UGBEPAC Meeting Hampton Inn Helena, MT

June 20, 2011 (Meeting 11)

Advisory Council members present: Joe Perry (Acting Chair), Terry Comstock, Bernie Hart, Gordon Haugen, Bill Howell, , Mike Jensen, Representative Bill McChesney, Craig Roberts, Senator Jim Shockley, and Dale Tribby.

Other staff: Ashley Beyer, Debbie Hohler, Pete Husby, Jeff Herbert, Quentin Kujala, and Rick Northrup.

Guests: Ron Marcoux

Monday, June 20.

- **1. Opening.** Joe Perry called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.
 - Bill Howell moved to approve the minutes from February 15, 2011, Gordon Haugen seconded. All approved *motion carried*.
 - On behalf of the Council, Joe Perry welcomed Representative Bill McChesney, Miles City, to his first UGBEP Advisory Council meeting. Representative McChesney will participate on the Council as the democratic legislator. Joe also welcomed Pete Husby, NRCS State Biologist, who will provide the Council with technical support and insight with NRCS the other conservation activities.
 - Meeting overview. Joe gave insight to this meeting's agenda and discussions: 100-acre project size (in statute); MOUs; private lands/public lands; public comments. Public comments on strategic plan were informative and useful.
 - Joe has directed that the Council is to be notified of any negative, published articles about the Council.
- **2. Mechanism from FWP regarding public comments.** Dale feels it's important to have a process in place. Quentin said that typically the comment summary is posted online for the Commission. FWP is open to recommendations from

Council. For example, a reference on the Council web page could guide people to the public comment summary.

3. Review of public comment.

- **Public comment summary report**: Appended to the minutes is the updated public comment summary report that includes the Council's responses.
- Joe offered a recap of the comments from the public meetings and comments received. There is an a sentiment that Region 6 receives a disproportionate share of UGBEP release funding, compared to other regions. Joe explained to the commenter that this is how it works, but it is not by design. Heard a lot of antipheasant releases and feeding.

• Discussion on project definition and cap.

- Senator Shockley offered this definition for "Project."
 Activities over a specified period of time that enhances or conserves UGB habitat or populations.
- Dale offered this definition for "Maintenance," which would not be part of the project cost: Actions initiated in order to ensure project functionality including but not limited to weed control, seeding of annual food plots, or ..."[tape recorder malfunction.... couldn't capture remaining of sentence]. FWP staff will present Council with the latest definition of Habitat Maintenance and examples in the very near future (before Commission meeting).
- The existing 2 Habitat Forever MOUs executed in September 2008 (expire December 2012) will <u>not</u> maintain status quo given the recommended definition of "project." However, the Council will revisit MOU language in the near future as the MOU relates to UGBHEP implementation on public lands and conservation easements.

4. Clarifying Council's refinements on the plan after the public comment period.

- Joe will be attending the Commission meeting on behalf of the Council.
- There is procedural room for the Council to offer refinements to the Commission before the July 14 Commission meeting:
 - A letter from the Council to the Director and Commission with Council's final recommendations/refinements (to be sent to Commission by July 7).
- Possible outcomes with the Commission:
 - After reviewing Council's and other public comments, the Commission may "hold" on their initial adoption. If this is the case, the public comment period is considered "closed" that day of the Commission meeting. If this is the

- outcome, ARM Rule changes may be initiated through the established process.
- After reviewing the comments from the public and Council, the Commission may propose changes to their initial adoption, and the podium will be open to public comment at the Commission meeting. Upon hearing comment, the Commission may adopt a final rule with ARM rule changes initiated thru the established process.
- **5. Motion.** The Council will send a letter to the FWP director requesting that he appoint Joe Perry as Chair of the UGBEP Citizens' Advisory Council. Terry Comstock seconded. All approved *motion carried*.
- **6. Discussion on ARM and minimum 100 contiguous project acres.** Council recommends that FWP consider project sizes less than 100 contiguous acres if access is adjacent and >100 acres.
- **8. Appreciation ceremony.** On behalf of FWP, Director Maurier read letters of appreciation and thanks to Council members, who were also presented with plaques commemorating 2 years of hard work. Rich Kirchner, Photographer, was also acknowledged for his sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse photographs there were presented on the plaques.

7. Update from biologists and Helena staff

- Status of pheasant release applications. Several applications from 1 pheasant raiser were ineligible (incorrect boundary maps, wrong landowner, etc.) and were not considered. A letter was sent to the pheasant raiser to alert him as soon as possible.
- Tables with information:

Table 1. Pheasant Release applications received: 2010 and 2011 (includes ALL applications – ineligible and eligible – before bios reviewed sites)

Regions	2010	2011	% Change	
R3	0	1	0	
R4	13	37	185%	
R5	1	1	0%	
R6	138	145	5%	
R7	10	8	-20%	
TOTAL	162	192	19%	

Table 2. 2011 Pheasant summary report from biologists - all
regions reporting after site evaluations.

2011	# pheasants	TOTAL Bird cost (@ \$8.65 per bird)	Mileage \$ (estimate)	TOTAL (Birds and mileage)	Program Target (Birds + Mileage) 87% of 15% set aside
Capacity	10,300	\$89,095	\$2,133.84	\$91,229	
Demand	13,470	\$116,516	\$2,133.84	\$118,650	\$91,090
Exceeded	3,170	\$27,421		\$27,421	

- **CRP seed cost-share program.** Received 11 applications. The biologists have submitted evaluations, there will be some funding towards this effort.
- **Open Fields grant.** Successful! FWP will receive ~\$400,000 towards expanding access to lands not currently enrolled in UGBEP or Block Management.
- **Pheasants prices and ARM.** Council recommended that FWP explore other avenues on how to establish prices.
- Discussion on ARM and "random drawing" when pheasant demand exceeds capacity. Some Council members preferred an across the board reduction, and suggested new language in ARM reflect this option.
- **DNRC/FWP MOU:** the current draft includes input from Tom Pick. FWP will next meet with the legal unit to ensure compliancy then will update Council.
- **UGBEP Database**. Debbie reported that 90% of the active habitat contracts have been updated in the database to reflect consistency with access acres, project acres, county, project location, and obligated costs.
- Region 7 has turned the clock back in Prairie County because of extreme winter weather conditions. The Council concurred with this decision.
- Council holds their position on pheasant release funding allocations.
- **8. Council discussed staggering terms.** Council felt it was important to maintain continuity for the review of the plan in December. All Council members will remain in force through this year so that participation in the ARM Rule changes and input after 1 year of strategic plan implementation and evaluation. Topic will be revisited in another year in 2012 after 1 year of oversight. As guidance, may look for a rate of 50:50 to stay or remain or can consider 60:40. Julie French will remain as a consultant to the Council.
- **9. Photos in plaques.** Craig Roberts moved that the Chair write a letter of appreciation to the photographer for donating his photographs for the plaque. Mike Jensen seconded. All approved *motion carried*.

10. Russian olive letter. The Council's letter for the State Department of Ag. will also be copied to the Montana State Legislators who are on the house and senate ag committees as per Senator Shockley's recommendation.

Adjourned. Joe Perry adjourned the meeting at 3:15 PM

Next Council Meeting: December 5, 2011, in Helena (more details to follow)