CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGION 7 – MILES CITY
MEETING NOTES
July 20, 2011

CAC Attendance: Greg Mohr, George Luther, Bob Hagedorn, Art Hayes III, Bill Kesinger, Brett Hoagland, Dan R. Fox
Absent CAC Members: Chris Pileski, Warren Broeder, Julie Jordan, Rob Reukauf

FWP Staff Attendance: Dwayne Andrews, Cathy Stewart, Mike Moore, Mike Backes, John Little, Erin O'Connor

Public Present: None.

Fishing Access Site Update/12 Mile FAS Tour
The meeting began with members touring the 12 Mile Fishing Access Site (FAS) south of Miles City on the Tongue River. Twelve Mile was one of the many sites in Region 7 that suffered damage due to flooding resulting from run-off and above-average precipitation this spring. In summary, the vast majority of Region 7's FAS's on both the Tongue and Yellowstone Rivers suffered minor to extensive damage to property and infrastructure. Cathy gave a summary of the region's FAS's and the damage they sustained. Damage ranged from downed trees, bank erosion, heavily silted boat ramps, road wash-outs and flooded latrines. Dwayne, Cathy and Travis Muscha, regional FAS maintenance supervisor, have been monitoring sites and preparing status reports on a regular basis. Maintenance crews have slowly but surely been working on clean-up and repairs where possible. Several sites have been opened to the public for day use only, while a few sites remain closed until repair work can be completed.

2011 Legislative Session Review
Dwayne gave a brief report on the finalization of the legislative session. He asked for the Council's reactions, questions or comments regarding the session. There was little discussion, but comments were that this seemed to be a very "vindictive" session and members had not seen one like this before. Some felt that some legislative members seemed to have very specific personal agendas. While some of the members watched bills relating to FWP, others said they did not pay much attention. Members asked which bills impacted the department the most. Dwayne responded that right now in terms of our regular day-to-day, nothing has.

Fisheries Update
Mike Backes reported that fisheries work has been a struggle this year due to all the high water. The large pallid sturgeon crew on the Missouri River had been diverted to other projects for the time being. Mike said a big question has always been what velocities of water can pallid sturgeon navigate. The way the Intake Diversion has been built now does not allow for pallid sturgeon passage. Shovelnose sturgeon are often used a substitute species for study, but

they're a different fish so we must actually study the fish that is in question. A USGS person and Jason Rhoten, Glendive fisheries biologist, have been working cooperatively on studying velocities and pallid sturgeon as they approach possibly getting passage at Intake. They had 40 pallids with radios already installed. Intentions are to take blood and tissue samples now until freeze-up and complete blood analysis looking at hormone levels and they will know if particular fish are going to spawn the following year. Jason and the USGS gentleman have been doing some studies into river velocities and swimming abilities of the pallids in relation to passage work. The fish seem to enjoy high flows.
Mike further explained how the radios that have been implanted into pallids work in relation to tracking their movement. The high turbid water experienced this spring caused difficulty hearing the radio signals.
Mike discussed some of the issues faced by the crew working on the Intake construction. High water caused degradation of their coffer dams and other problems. The construction has resumed work now that the water level has started to decrease. Funding is going to become an issue with headgate work later on in this construction.

Mike continued by discussing the recent oil spill near Laurel. Mike and several members of the Fisheries crew spent extensive time on the river and covered large distances post-spill. With the large amount of water at the time, there was a large dilution factor. They did not find evidence of any oil or spill-related damage. Mike contacted the Miles City and Glendive water treatment plants who reported they also had not seen or found anything. In this case, the high water helped to lead to a best-case scenario with this spill as the flooded debris and vegetation served as a filter for the oil. Fisheries crews in Billings will be dealing with this spill, though, for some time yet.

Mike also reported that there was recently a natural gas line rupture near the Seven Sisters FAS. Fortunately, the gas dissipates quickly in water and there was no impact to the river. Discussion ensued on how pipelines were placed under these large bodies of water. The high water has likely led to larger bedloads being pushed down the river more so than usual, which may have contributed to pipes being scoured.

Greg said officials are expecting these large river flows to continue through the summer. Are pipelines going to be inspected? George said he expects companies to have to make some changes to their pipes. He further discussed hydraulic force and bedloads in relation to potential pipe damage. Pipeline officials are taking notice.

Mike M. said nobody knows how many other pipelines we have. George said there is a map available showing major lines. Because of homeland security, there is discussion about this right now though.

General Discussion

Greg discussed the changes to the archery-only either-sex elk licenses and how they evolved into the limited status they have now. Greg was previously on the elk working group, and Art has been selected to be part of it now.

Bob asked how the process works for applying for these tags. Art and Greg said you have to apply for your particular district. Art further explained the process of applying for these special permits.

Bob asked Art what his purpose is now. Art stated the goal is to bridge the gaps between bow hunters and related groups.

Discussion ensued on any items we would like Art to address on our behalf to the working group.

Next meeting: December 7th.