

CAC Meeting

Region 5 Citizen Advisory Council Meeting

October 15, 2012
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: Mike Whittington, Doug Dreeszen, Daniel Aadland, Doug Haacke, Daniel Dutton, Dale Vermillion, Gary Hammond, Bob Gibson, Randy Arnold, Ken Frazer, Ray Mule', Dianne Stiff

Absent: Doug Habermann, Greg Keller

Topics

5:30-6:30 p.m.	Welcome, Dinner & Conversation	Bob Gibson
6:30-7:15 p.m.	Issues of Concern	CAC
7:15-7:30 p.m.	Wolf Season/Big Lake Acquisition	Members
7:30-8:00 p.m.	Proposed FWP Legislation for 2013 Session	Ray Mule'
8:00-8:15 p.m.	Break	
8:15-9:15 p.m.	FWP Statewide Fisheries Management Plan	Ken Frazer
9:15-9:30 p.m.	Administrative Housekeeping and Adjourn	Bob Gibson
Welcome, Dinner & Conversation		Bob Gibson

Discussion:

- **Dale Vermillion** – In Sweet Grass County it has been a real low water year, and the Pelican FAS was affected as people had to drive way out into the Yellowstone River to launch boats which is working anyways. Noticed two or three dead deer on their property, so wasn't sure if that was EHD. Surprising as they had a heavy frost. Haven't seen many birds and not many hunters.
- **Mike Whittington** – Asked that Gary and others send along a thank you on behalf of Beartooth Alliance, Magic City Flyfishers, and MT Trout Unlimited to Carol Endicott for the work she has done on the Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout spawning stream, Soda Butte, near Silver Gate. All three organizations contributed money toward this habitat restoration project. Been really pleased in recent involvement with Ray's and staff on the pheasant production habitat work that has been done on the three areas within Yellowstone County, Sundance, Pompey's Pillar and particularly the Yellowstone Wildlife Management Area. Been representing the Billings Rod and Gun's Club involvement and were able to provide a modest amount of money to help do some work this year. Suggest that this be a topic for an upcoming meeting. Will be attempting to put around \$4,000 to \$5,000 into the Rod and Gun Club budget for next year to continue our participation. What Mike will need before the third Tuesday in November is a summary of what was accomplished this year and what the plans are for next year. This is a cooperative venture with FWP, BLM, Pheasants Forever, and hopefully the Billings Rod and Gun Club as a junior partner. The Billings Rod and Gun Club provided scoping comments on the statewide bison management plan. That also could be a topic for a future CAC meeting. There is a high level of interest from the Rod and Gun Club on what the state finally decides as far as relocating bison around the state. They are interested in participating in any future opportunities for public input on that, and that will continue to be a fairly high level topic among sportsmen locally.
- **Dan Dutton** – In our area (Belfry) the drought is a big issue this year. We've had just over 3.7 inches this year and the last year we've had was on Memorial Day weekend, and we've had a tenth just about three weeks ago. A good year for us is between 5 and 6 inches, so we don't get a lot anyway. It affected some of the crops, and the rangeland is in pretty poor shape. The fishing access site south of Bridger looks pretty good with the parking area redone, plus a road that goes down to a boat ramp. The BLM has signed and put a nice gate in the fence to provide access to their land outside Belfry. It has been used by some bowhunters. Dan has sold 280 acres of his property and kept 40 acres with his house, so he is no longer in block management. His neighbor to the south is still in block management.
- **Doug Dreeszen** – Do you get many complaints from the public on the scopes with batteries that have the illuminated reticles? Randy Arnold, R-5 Warden Sergeant – They are legal, so we don't get to many complaints. The ones that are not legal are those that send out a visible beam of light, so a laser type of scope that sends out a laser beam would be a use of artificial light. A scope that has a range finder in it or a lit reticle or a halo red dot, any of those are legal for big game hunting with a rifle. What is not legal is any battery powered device attached to a bow during the archery only season and archery only hunting areas that are defined and/or adopted by the Commission. A while back there was an article in the Billings Gazette about some students from Rocky Mountain College who were doing a project with ospreys which includes taking them out of their nests. Is that overseen by FWP? Ray Mule' – Yes. Any time you handle any wildlife in the state, it has to be approved by us. Allison Begley put that project together. That was information that was going to be useful relative to the oil spill. We wanted to monitor the nesting raptors in those areas, and an easy one to get a handle on to see if the oil spill would have had any negative impacts on them were the ospreys. The black bear in the Billings heights that was tranquilized, and was on television, several people came to Doug and asked if that bear died as they didn't have a net there, etc. Randy said that the Heights bear was lowered down with a rope with the help of the Billings fire department. There are times that bears take a tumble, but

generally when they are anesthetized to that point, their bodies are really limp, plus they are such a sturdy animal to begin with. Bears do remarkably well with some pretty long falls. At times we do try to soften the blow.

- **Dan Aadland** – Dan is curious like everyone else about how the drought and grazing that resulted in a lot of areas is going affect us down the road. Dan went into Trout Creek about three weeks ago before the cattle were pulled out, and it really got hammered by grazing. This area is a popular for hunters in the fall. The fence between the Custer and the Gallatin was not completed, and the agreement was to use a rider to keep the cattle on their side of the fence. Instead they set salt blocks right in the middle of the Forest Service trail in the bottom probably ever quarter mile, so the bottom of Trout basically looks like a corral. As many hunters that go in there, FWP will hear about it and for sure the Forest Service will hear about it. Dan will miss Jeremiah Wood when going out on 310's permit. Two sons of Dan's pass on their thanks to the State of Montana on the Nonresident Native license program as they were able to affordably purchase elk licenses through that new program. The rise in costs of the nonresident combination licenses had about priced them out of purchasing licenses in Montana. Dan and his wife attended the Outdoor Writers Conference in Alaska.
- **Doug Haacke** – Good progress is being made on the repair work on the Bighorn FAS. People are pleased with that. Been getting feedback on the new Holmgren FAS on the Yellowstone River. This site is very popular and well received. Doug just signed up online for the new My FWP, and he just received an e-mail update on the Director giving an award to those employees from the Billings office and region who worked or were involved with the Exxon oil spill work since July of 2011.

Topics for future meetings: Pheasant Production Habitat Projects; Bison Management Plan

Person responsible:
Bob Gibson

Deadline:
Future CAC Meetings

Wolf Season/Big Lake Acquisition

Ray Mule'

Discussion:

- Wolf Seasons – Archery: September 1 – October 14, 2012
Rifle: October 15, 2012-February 28, 2013
Trapping: December 15, 2012-February 28, 2013

There are no quotas this year, except for two areas one bordering Yellowstone Park (WMU 316) and the other bordering Glacier Park (WMU 110). Hunters can take not more than three wolves total. One can be taken during the rifle season and two during trapping season or if just strictly trapping, then three wolves. Foothold traps are only allowed (no snares). A wolf trapping certification course is a prerequisite to trapping wolves in Montana. All classes have been completed in our area and pretty much statewide.

- Big Lake WMA – This is a wetland complex northwest of Molt. We had existing issues along the east shoreline. Our property boundary did not encompass the entire shoreline, and made fencing very difficult. For two years we've been working on trying to purchase some additional property on the east short of the lake that would allow having the entire shore of the lake enclosed within our boundary. That has just been completed with FWP Commission approval, and today, October 15, 2012, the State Land Board approved it. By the end of the month we should have ownership of about 1,110 acres, with an additional 168 acres that we will pursue to complete this project. The Montana migratory bird license dollars were used to purchase this property.

Action items: Informational

Person responsible:
Ray Mule'

Deadline:
None

Proposed FWP Legislation for 2013 Session

Bob Gibson

Discussion:

- Wolf Legislation that could make changes to use of electronic calls, harvest of more than one wolf, decrease the nonresident license price and eliminate the requirement for hunter orange after the general big game season closes.
- Restore the language to the Dingell-Johnson Assent Statute.
- Make permanent the "Good Neighbor" statute.

- Clean-up the youth combo bill that allows a nonresident youth to apply for a combination hunting license at the same time as the adult family member who is sponsoring them.

Action items: Next CAC Meeting Topic

Person responsible:
Bob Gibson

Deadline:
Ongoing

FWP Statewide Fisheries Management Plan

Ken Frazer

Discussion:

The public meeting for Region 5 was held on September 20, 2012. The public comment period has been extended until October 26, 2012.

The draft management plan was put together with the idea to get public participation. The purpose of the plan is to provide fisheries with a management guide that identifies the direction FWP is going towards in different waters and for different species. This is an adaptive plan and is five years to begin with. There are two parts to the plan with the first part being done in Helena with an overview of the total fisheries program for the state. This looks at three areas including fisheries management in our hatcheries program, habitat, and access and recreational management. The fisheries management program includes goals, sampling or monitoring systems, regulation setting, all the fish hatcheries, the fish health program, the aquatic invasive species program,, an in-depth look at the bait fishing regulations, our management planning, surveys, different activities that are permitted like hoop netting or commercial seining and our native species management. The habitat program section includes goals, the in-stream flow program, mitigation program, water quality, some of the habitat restoration programs, funding sources and how they work, the permitting process for the 310, 124 and water quality. Since Fisheries has taken over the fishing access site program they went into more depth on the access program. Some of the other recreational management discussed includes the Big Hole Management plan and the special use on the Madison and Clarks Fork where floaters as well as fishing are managed on some of our fishing access sites, plus stream access issues.

Part two is what Ken worked on. All the biologists were asked to look at all the areas in the state, which ended up being broken into 40 different drainage areas. The areas are composed of individual waters, parts of streams, or entire drainages. A management plan was put together on each one of those drainage areas. Those management plans include the physical description of the area, fisheries management, habitat, fishing access and recreation, and special management issues. Ken reviewed the four drainage areas in Region 5 that include the Upper Yellowstone, Middle Yellowstone, Bighorn and Musselshell.

The plan is on the FWP website for public comment.

Administrative Housekeeping &Adjourn

Bob Gibson

Next Meeting: Early December 2012.

Person responsible:
Bob Gibson

Deadline:
Notify CAC
Members by
end of
November,
2012