

**CAC MEETING**  
**FWP, R1 Public Meeting Room**  
**4/10/2013**  
**6:30 p.m.**

**Present:** Randy Richard, Ron Hvizdak, Paul Fielder, Bernie Cassidy, Mike Shepard, Brent Mitchell, Tony Anderson, Chuck Hunt, Wally Wilkinson, Mike Corkish, Greg Foley, Rick Komenda, Jon Dahlberg, Warren Illi, and Roger Diegle

Mark Deleray, Jim Vashro, Ryan Kreiner, Kenny Breidinger, Jim Satterfield, John Fraley, Lee Anderson, and Martha Abbrescia

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**Multi-Media Presentation:** Lee Anderson showed an episode of the Montana Game Warden series that focused on the Whitefish Poaching case of at least 20 whitetail deer.

New Legislation: Lee explained that due to new legislation regarding the black bear, there will be only a 24 hour wait versus a 5-day wait.

**Jim Vashro, Regional Fisheries Manager** shared upcoming Kid's Fishing Days with everyone. 4/13 is at Pine Grove Pond, and 4/27 is at Snappy's Pond.

Jim Vashro gave an overview of Noxon Rapids Reservoir and historical facts and management. Jim then introduced Kenny Breidinger and Ryan Kreiner, Biologists at the Thompson Falls Area Office.

**Power Point Presentation:** Kenny Breidinger / Biologist  
Draft EA to Investigate Suppression of Walleye in Noxon Reservoir. (See attached presentation).

**Questions ?**

Shepard: Where are most of the comments coming from, up here or down there?

Paul Fielder brings 35 pages of petitions with over 500 signatures opposed to the Walleye Suppression project. The local opinion is to definitely leave it alone.

Jim Satterfield asks for thumbnail sketch on how to go about suppressing walleye: The most successful technique has been electro-fishing over spawning bars.

Ryan Kreiner points out how the fall gillnetting works: we target older fish (3&4 year olds) time is needed to detect the change...if any project is being made. We will look for missing age classes with our catch.

Jim Satterfield asks for the CAC's input on the Topic of Walleye Suppression at Noxon Rapids Reservoir.

Warren Illi – preserve native fisheries and promote angling opportunities..basically as long as the fishery being preserved is native fish only. What is all this suppression doing to angling opportunities? If removing all bag limits on non-native game fish is the trend then fishing in western Montana is in deep trouble. What's the cumulative effects of all this? ...Not only to fishing, but to the economy, etc. An EIS would give a better objective.

Paul Fielder: Can't express enough how huge of a topic of discussion this is in Sanders County. People are watching FWP to see how FWP will treat the opinions of the locals. Jim Satterfield – when I made the decision to extend the comment period, I told the public we'd still be conducting routine sampling. Biologists are still studying the reservoir and there is still a lot of things that can happen in lieu of suppressing fish. They are experimenting with ways to suppress that does not create a large by-catch.

Mike Shepard: has been a fly-fisherman since he was 11 years old. It does sound like a localized problem. Realize they were illegally introduced, but...its a localized issue...if FWP doesn't listen to what the locals wants, it will be more nails in FWP's coffin.

Chuck Hunt: Agrees with what Shepard said. The damage is done. I think there are waters in the western part of the state that can manage native trout and there are waters that do well with warm-water fish. Manage them accordingly.

Bernie Cassidy: Has concerns with how far upstream these walleye will go?

Mike Corkish: What are the driving forces? Is it because they were illegal? Kenny Breidinger – The biology of the walleye and the threat they pose to native fish.

Kenny – current popular issue content in the comments received

- impacts to local economy
- people don't want to drive to the eastside of the state to go walleye fishing
- they taste good

Randy Richard – what are the odds that the walleye can be eradicated? Are we wasting money and time? Would this be a continuing project, never ending? Jim Satterfield – Suppression is the goal, not eradication. Randy -What's the point? It's an exercise in futility.

Tony Anderson – All species of fish cannot be everywhere. Don't waste your time & money trying to suppress walleye when they already are there.

Jim Satterfield – a successful project would be able to show after 6 years, that we have made an impact on the increase of walleye.

Roger Diegle: Tourism...people don't think of coming to western Montana to fish for walleye (or perch). Are we going to start enforcing the policy? i.e., item 4 – close the body of water to all fishing. Why are we picking and choosing which policies to try to enforce? Maybe the policy should be changed.

Bernie: We should explore other routes to involve the public

Jim Satterfield: WE are considering the possibility of reissuing another assessment (EA or EIS, TBD). We might elaborate this process to include an advisory group representing all perspectives, and an independent facilitator.

Chuck Hunt: Probably a good idea to do a proper EIS, open it back up to public comment and really get a full idea of the impacts. We, (FWP) insisted that Flathead Lake issue got an EIS. Do the same at Noxon.

Jon Dahlberg: What are the thresholds for an EIS vs. an EA? Doesn't seem like two EA's make one EIS. Jim Satterfield – we will go back to Helena to make sure we are at the proper level for EA vs. EIS.

Brent Mitchell: Co-existence...apparently there are places in the mid-west where walleye coexist with other species? What's the key here? Under what conditions can they coexist? And do those conditions exist at Noxon?

Randy Richard: When we look at the impact on the economy, we're missing one thing... if the fishing is really good, the economy will prosper. If we have poor trout fishing and poor walleye fishing, the economy will, in fact, suffer. We currently have good walleye fishing...the economy in those parts is doing well.

Walleye were illegally introduced into Canyon Ferry. Why haven't they been suppressed?

Jim Vashro: The majority of what we're doing is non-native fish management. We do, however, have some of the very best native fish that we are trying to keep. They don't coexist, we have very unproductive systems, and the Midwest has very productive systems. When you introduce walleyes on top of salmonids, the salmonids die. Bonehead moves by bucket biologists is what is hurting all of you. Waters have a limited carrying capacity; when you add something new, something must go. Noxon is not a great trout fishery, it is a pike and bass fishery; if you suppress walleye, you still won't have that many trout.

Paul Fielder: The suppression plan is spending a lot of money to minimize fishing opportunities that these fishermen pay for.

Mark from Walleye Unlimited: Leave them alone, it's a successful fishery. Maybe they were illegal, perhaps a mistake from the Miles City Hatchery in the early 80's.

Jim Vashro: it doesn't matter how they got there, the policy still applies. They are illegal & unauthorized.

Roger Diegle: What would happen if WCT got listed? It would extend ESA restrictions to a much wider swath of Montana.

Wally Wilkinson: Has a hard time supporting these bucket biologists. If we do nothing, they win.

Jim Satterfield – We're going to wrap up the Walleye issue for now. The comment period is running through the 4/19/2013, and we will see if an EIS be needed.

**End of Year Meeting is scheduled for Wed, May 29<sup>th</sup>...either at Lone Pine or here.**