

## **Region 6 Citizen Advisory Council**

**September 9, 2014**

**10AM-3PM**

### **Fort Peck Hatchery**

CAC Members present: Bob Waldron, Jason Holt, Terry Stoppa, Mark Peterson, Henry Gordon, Jim Carver, Damien Austin, Carla Hunsley, and Gene Lavey.

CAC members absent: Mark Azure, Steve Harada and Deb Madison.

FWP staff present: Heath Headley, Kathy Smith, Mark Sullivan, Tim Potter Jr., Tom Flowers, Mike Herman and Kurt Cunningham from Montana Wild in Helena.

Guests: FWP Commissioner Richard Stuker and Tip Lavey.

#### **Tom Flowers**

Welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda.

- Tom addressed the sudden passing of R-6 Information/Education Manager Ron Seldon. A moment of silence was observed to recognize Ron's efforts to the Department and prayers and thoughts to his family.
- Explained how the regional staff will cover the I/E Managers duties until the position is filled.
- Discussed another vacancy within the region, that of the Information Technology Manager. That position will become vacant at the end of September. The job advertisement for the position is already posted.
- Discussed the hunting seasons which are already open – Archery Antelope, Upland Game Bird and General Big Game Archery. Kathy Smith explained that all surplus combination deer licenses have been sold.
- Briefly discussed that the Governor's Office will be announcing the recent approval of the Sage Grouse Plan.

#### **License/ Funding Issues**

Tom F. distributed two handouts. He then read a letter from Director Hagener concerning the EQC Draft Bill.

#### **Summary – Reading Letter – EQC draft**

- Funding gap solutions will be fee increases, cuts to operations and/or a shift of Funding sources/ear marked funds.
- It has been a decade since the last fee increase in 2005.
- 3 public funding meetings were held in R6. – Havre, Plentywood, Glasgow. 30 meetings were held statewide.
- The handout details the funding proposals.
- \$300,000 of general fund – AIS.
- Brief AIS summary in R-6.
- Funding Summary - \$5.7M shortfall, contact your local Legislator and/or contact Commissioner.

#### **CAC comments:**

- Mark P. discussed the need for senior discounts, Jim C. asked about the Hunting Fee of \$10.00. Tip L. (guest) asked about comparisons to other states and non-resident licenses sales.
- Terry S. has concerns about non-resident fees, especially if they increase and what that might do to the average sportsman as well as the Native Montana licenses.
- FWP Commissioner Richard S. relayed to the group the need to contact their local legislator with your concerns. He also informed the group about a possible EQC proposal.

\* Summaries fee changes for group (T. Flowers) senior's license

#### **CAC Member Roundtable**

##### **Terry S.**

- Questioned if Bailey's Reservoir is expecting any additional changes or additions (??? - Woody/Steve);
- Hire more Game wardens don't reduce them;
- Commented on the Mtn. lion issues on the CMR, including the no hunting season;
- Information was passed along to the group about the current Mtn. lion study on the CMR.

##### **Jason H.**

- Bison introduction -questioned the EIS process and the need to evaluate the landscape before an EIS, he questioned the fact about no regional comment/involvement and that everything was coming out of Helena. Tom F. explained that the Programmatic EIS has started and with a possible deadline the end of 2014. The next step after EIS will be an EA. FWP Commissioner Rich informed the group that an Oct. 9th meeting is scheduled in Great Falls to address issues from the Billings Meeting. Jason commented on the need for an EA, and that huntable bison are not going to be on the CMR.
- Moisture in S. Valley will be good for the forage and fall growth.

- There is a beaver on the ranch on Timber Creek and Square Creek. He described the number of fish that are present in the back water.

**Gene L.**

- Pass. Later gene asked about stocking the Poplar River with more Walleye and that anglers were catching catfish. (Stocking rivers ??? - Steve)

**Bob W. – Pass**

**Carla H.**

- Discussed the need for parks in Eastern MT. She explained that Doug Smith (Park Board member, resident of Plentywood) is trying to address the lack of parks in Region 6. The discussion led to a general discussion about an ATV Park.
- There are two signs at the Duck Creek Boat Ramp, which are difficult to read. She indicated that the wording on the signs needs to be darker. (Steve/Woody???)

**Damien A.**

- Archery opener was slowed down over the weekend because of access along county roads. Several BLM and CMR (Rd 201) roads were damaged because of the heavy rains in late August.
- Brought up for discussion Valley County roads, what is passable, being repaired and other access issues.
- It appears that Antelope recruitment is good.

**Henry G.**

- Feels that Upland Game Bird hatch was great, with Antelope recruitment okay and deer (MD, WT.) appears to be okay,
- Henry explained to the group that game wardens need 3/4T trucks.
- Antelope recruitment in N. Blaine is still low.
- Henry commented on Outfitter issues concerning licenses, leasing of private lands, and the possible cause of damage hunts.

**Mark P.**

- There is a lot of crop in the field, which means a lot of wildlife feed is available.
- Upland Game Bird number is great, Deer (MD) is status quo, and antelope recruitment has doubled in N. Hill Co.
- Warden Andy M. is good addition to the warden staff.
- Not much happening on the Lost River WMA.
- Mark seconds the fact that game wardens need ¾ T trucks.
- Fishing has been good at Fresno Res. Cody Nagel to contact RE stream work.

### **Jim C.**

- Walleye Unlimited sponsored Camp Walleye (Youth fishing camp) on Fourchette Bay of Fort Peck Lake. Everyone was happy and several fish were caught. Local game warden Ben M. showed up which was very much appreciated.
- Why can't License Agents help distribute Block Management booklets? Tim P. answered the question but some follow up will be needed. (Potter/Flowers to check)
- The Cree Crossing WMA appears to have a weed problem. Some of the neighbors are complaining. Mark S. said he will look into it, but that the field in question was just recently grass seeded. (Sullivan to address???)

### **Fort Peck Lake Fisheries**

#### **Heath Headley**

- PowerPoint
- 2013 Surveys – still in the field for 2014.

### **LUNCH**

### **Montana Wild Education Center**

#### **Kurt Cunningham**

- Predators – Raptors Demonstration
- Amphibians/reptiles

### **Block Management Program**

#### **Tim Potter**

- PowerPoint presentation set for the PL/PW mtg.
- R-6 updates

### **Wildlife Program**

#### **Mark Sullivan**

- R-6 Updates
- Moisture has created positive habitat conditions and has reduced fire danger Animals are more dispersed and less concentrated.
- Population surveys - slow returning but moving forward
- No EHD
- Unknown West Nile – affects Sage Grouse
- Outlooks
- Deer are slowly increasing, change in deer season – 1) No “B” tags, 2) No MD does - change is one year only.

Elk – same  
BHS – same  
New area – Little Rockies  
Moose – two licenses –R-6

- Sage Grouse season change – Sept. 1 – 30, hunting areas decreased (Zone 1 & 2), MT FWP recommended closure, but FWP Commission allowed some hunting.

## **Enforcement Program**

### **Mike Herman**

- Minor updates

## **Administrative**

- FWP Commissioner R. Stuker commented that enforcement staff should not be cut and in fact more officers should be added.
- Richard receives a number of positive comments about Region 6.
- Perdiem forms were available to all CAC members.
- Tom F. summarized the Licensing Funding Issue and asked that all question be referred to the Glasgow office.

The next CAC scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, January 13, 2015 and in Havre, MT.

Meeting Adjourned.