

CAC Meeting

Region 5 Citizen Advisory Council Meeting

October 14, 2014
5:30 PM to 9:30 PM
Fish, Wildlife & Parks
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, MT 59105

Meeting called by: Bob Gibson

Type of meeting: CAC Council Meeting

Location: Region 5 Headquarters

Facilitator: Bob Gibson

Attendees: Lee Deming, JW Westman, Gary Schaff, Lee Brunckhorst, Thomas Miller, Barb Beck, Brady Norlund, Gary Hammond, Harold Guse, Ray Mulé, Bob Gibson, Ken Frazer, Dianne Stiff

Absent: Bill Milton, Doug Habermann

Guests: Doug Haacke, Doug Dreeszen, Mike Whittington

Topics

5:30-6:15 p.m.	Welcome, Dinner, Introductions	Bob Gibson
6:15-7:00 p.m.	Issues of Concern	CAC Members
7:00-7:10 p.m.	Grayling Video	Bob Gibson
7:10-8:00 p.m.	Season Openers & Outlook	Bob Gibson
8:00-8:40 p.m.	Access Ideas – Introduction to Hunter Heritage Partnership	Gary Hammond
8:50-9:20 p.m.	FWP in the Press/Legislative Update	Bob Gibson
9:20-9:30 p.m.	Housekeeping and Adjourn	Bob Gibson

Issues of Concern (Trap Line)	CAC Members
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Discussion:

Lee Deming – Talked to folks in Garfield County, and they seem to be upset with FWP in that area of the state. These folks are just up out of the refuge and they are concerned with bison and the wolf reintroduction. Haven't heard negative feedback from Region 5 landowner friends. Sportsman access is huge.

JW Westman – Extremely interested in access and going forward. Interested in the five week season/late season discussions that are being presented now. Late seasons tried before and didn't work. We will get some people beginning in January who will want to bring the late seasons back. Disease issues, not only brucellosis, but various hoof rots, chronic wasting. JW would like to see the Information Education division produce a disease fact sheet for the public. The information could include where some of the elk herds move especially in reference to brucellosis. The Main Street Montana Project as put out by the Governor's office is requiring all state directors get directly involved with this project. JW feels FWP can play a crucial role in that.

Thomas Miller – A constituent is baffled why he cannot use lighted knocks on arrows in Montana and was told it's to keep archery traditional in the state. This same person said what FWP does is really important, but they need more people (game wardens) to do the job. Another individual was furious that FWP is allowing people to hunt antelope in Yellowstone County as the numbers are not there. Both of these individuals brought up that there are a lot of coyotes. From the fishing community not a lot of grumbling.

Chris Fleck – He is a licensing provider for FWP and the only one in his small community. The general theme is that licenses are a real bargain. Wondered about whether in Region 5 there will be river recreation management issues down the road. At some point in time we may need to look at the Bighorn River and possibly the Stillwater. Certainly don't want to do anything if we don't have to but there are a lot of special interest groups that recreate on our rivers and streams. Talking to a number of people, access is the number one thing. Our river access is unparalleled in the whole country.

Lee Brunckhorst – He talked to several people about the potential license fee increases and found it was an even split. He talked to several of the hunting district 580 east slope landowners, and found a lot of animosity. He agrees on the high amount of coyotes.

Gary Schaff – All of us are looking at the movement towards the access situation. As he drove from Fishtail to Absarokee recently, he still sees a lot of both mule and white-tailed deer in that area and also sees the subdivisions. Have we looked into a slug hunting season? (Ray Mulé clarified that a landowner can set the conditions of allowing access on their property, so they could allow only hunters who shoot bow/arrow or shotgun.)

Brady Norland – A constituent who Brady visited with who is an outfitter in Bull Mountains is really upset with decreased number of permits. He indicated that he went from a \$90,000 to a \$100,000 business to down to \$30,000 to \$40,000. Brady visits with landowners north and south of Miles City. They were concerned about the low numbers of big game and particularly antelope and deer. They were wondering if doe and fawns should be hunted at all, and particularly for antelope. Brady did a lot of hunting on the south side of the Snowies during archery season in September where the new road has been built into Swimming Woman. Access has been increased there which is a good thing, but there were a lot of frustrated hunters as there were too many people up there for the opening day of archery season.

Barb Beck – FWP is hiding information about grizzly bears along the Beartooth front. Red Lodge has a community telegraph of who got chased by what and where, so when things start to repeat themselves maybe some information should get out to the public from a safety standpoint. People are concerned that the department knows where these hazardous wildlife are located, but that information doesn't get out to the public. She had a senior big game hunter concerned about losing his amount of his discount and was wondering if there is consideration of grandfathering people in.

Action items: Future Topics - 2015 Legislature; Access; Disease; River Recreation Management; Pheasant Habitat Projects; Five Week Season	Person responsible: Bob Gibson	Deadline: Next Meeting
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Season Openers/Outlook		Bob Gibson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antelope numbers and check stations – this the first news release of the year showing some of the hunter and harvest numbers. Hunter numbers are up some this year from last year, but harvest is almost flat. This is a little bit encouraging as we thought antelope were going to continue to fall off, and continue to be not as many antelope as a decade ago due to disease. The biologists did see more fawns this year than recent years, which is encouraging. Big game and upland bird season outlooks – elk numbers are up; deer are a different thing with mule deer numbers down for a number of years and whitetail deer are down because of disease (epizootic hemorrhagic disease). The dichotomy east of here is that deer numbers are down but there are a lot of fawns this year (on mule deer); as you get out of the river bottoms locally and into the Beartooth Mountains, whitetail are doing fine in those areas. Upland bird species overall are below average on pheasants, sharp-tailed grouse, sage grouse, blue grouse, and partridge, but ruffed grouse may be higher and turkeys are stable in the northern portion of Region 5, but are down in the areas south and west of Billings. Youth-only deer (always the Thursday and Friday during teacher convention); the general opener for deer and elk this fall is October 25th. Hunter Against Hunger – legislature passed last year and is strictly a donation program. 		
Action items: News Releases	Person responsible: Bob Gibson	Deadline: Ongoing
Access Ideas – Introduction to Hunter Heritage Partnership (HHP)		Gary Hammond
<p>Historically: Strategic Plan – thirty years ago this plan had measurable quantifiable metrics with habitat and access being the number one and two issues then. They still are today. Not very long after that block management begun in the eighties to address access and today we have 8.8 million acres. After that we did Habitat Montana which was an earmarked account that sportsman’s license dollars went toward purchasing fee title conservation easements for habitat. We followed that with another earmarked account, the upland game bird enhancement program which goes towards habitat.</p> <p>Today: The small towns and rural communities are suffering from the lack of access too.</p> <p>The Private Land Public Wildlife Council (PLPW) was a legislative appointed body where individuals are selected to serve terms to look at private land public wildlife issues.</p> <p>In June, we presented this program (HHP) to the PLPW. If you go to the FWP website and go to the notes from their meeting in June, this same presentation is posted there. http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/hunterAccess/plpw/meetingSummaries2014June.html</p> <p>Potential next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After hearing a presentation outlining sideboards to the HHP program, PLPW would put “flesh on the bones”; An Citizens Advisory Board, consisting of citizen council and an agency review board, would solicit, review, and select proposals from counties; Grants awarded by the Advisory committee would be overseen by the county, which could include a county coordinator to solicit, enroll, and attend to the program; 		

- A Conservation NGO would assume fiduciary responsibilities, to include fundraising and distribution of grant money.

The PLPW will be looking at this proposed program after the first of the year.

Action items: Public Support	Person responsible: Gary Hammond	Deadline: Ongoing
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FWP in the Press/Legislative Update

Bob Gibson

Two News Articles shared with CAC members:

- Five-week Season – Bozeman Chronicle News Article
 - This topic will be presented to the FWP Commission in Bozeman on Thursday morning. That is available to listen to on the FWP website.
- Upland Game Bird Council News Article – Billings Gazette

Legislative Update:

- Department Proposals –
 1. Electronic Signature
 2. Dock on Wild Horse Island
 3. Automatic Loss of Hunting and Trapping Privileges
 4. Prohibit Statewide Transport of Live Game Fish
 5. Prohibiting Dissemination of Names
 6. Creating an Enterprise Fund for Educational Purposes.

Final licensing and funding proposal – approved by the EQC and they will go forward with legislation to the 2015 Legislature.

Action items: 2015 Legislature	Person responsible: Bob Gibson	Deadline: Winter Meeting
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Housekeeping and Adjourn

Bob Gibson

Next Meeting Date – Will send some ideas out with Doodle Poll in the near future.