Private Land/Public Wildlife Advisory Council

Report and Recommendations

Presented
to
Governor Steve Bullock,
the 64th Legislature
&
Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

January 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction **3**

Executive Summary **4**

Goals & FINAL Recommendations **5-17**

Goal A, Recommendations 1-4 (5-11)

Goal B, Recommendation 5 (12)

Goal C, Recommendation 6 (13-14)
Goal D, Recommendations 7-8 (15-17)

List of Council Members (Appendix A) **18**

Council's statutory charge (Appendix B) **19**

Governor Bullock's charge to Council (Appendix C) **20**

Block Management Hunting Access Program Report (Appendix D)

Fishing Access Enhancement Program Report (Appendix E)

Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project
Research Summary Number 35 (Appendix F)

Introduction

In November, 2013, Governor Steve Bullock appointed 18 citizens representing the interests of Montana hunters, anglers, landowners, and outfitters to the Private Land/Public Wildlife Council. While MCA 87-1-269 articulates the basic statutory charge of the Council, which is to report to the Governor and the Legislature regarding various elements of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks (FWP) Hunting and Fishing Access Enhancement Programs (Appendix A), Governor Bullock provided Council members with a more general charge, urging the group to focus work efforts on recommendations that might help improve relationships among Montana hunters, anglers, landowners, outfitters, and FWP, and improve access to Montana private and public land while recognizing the contributions of Montana landowners in providing habitat for Montana public wildlife resources and access opportunities for public hunters and anglers. (Appendix B)

Council members met seven times at various locations throughout the state from January – August, 2014. All meetings were public meetings that included specified times for taking public comment. During the interim between meetings, Council members worked on preliminary draft recommendations through working group assignments. All meeting summaries and related information were posted on the FWP PL/PW website throughout this process.

FWP provided staff assistance to the Council as needed, which included providing background informational material, coordinating meeting logistical arrangements, and working with a contracted facilitator to conduct meetings.

Facilitation services were provided by University of Montana Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy Center, through a contractual agreement between FWP and U of M.

In August, 2014, the Council adopted 4 goals and 8 DRAFT Recommendations, which were offered for public comment during a 30-day comment period from August 12 – September 12. A total of 22 interested persons and 5 organizations offered comment by email or written communication, while an additional 35 individuals and 1 organization offered comments using an online survey.

In September, 2014, after reviewing public comments and considering issues raised through those comments, the Council adopted the 4 goals and 8 FINAL Recommendations, which are offered here through this report to Governor Bullock, the 64th Legislature, and FWP.

Executive Summary

<u>Goal A:</u> Maximize access to public lands while respecting and understanding private property rights.

Recommendation 1: The Governor should coordinate the appointment of an Interagency Access Committee, led by MACO, with representatives from the BLM, USFS, USFWS, DNRC and FWP, to be charged with: (1) developing an inventory of public roads; (2) developing an inventory of public lands where public access is restricted or not available, and; (3) issuing an annual report that will be made available to the public and agencies to assist with projects and programs designed to promote public access to public lands. Adequate funding and personnel should be provided to fulfill this recommendation.

Recommendation 2: FWP should develop voluntary corner-crossing access agreements as a pilot project with private landowners through the FWP Access Public Lands Program that will provide public access to public land that is not otherwise legally accessible.

Recommendation 3: FWP should continue and expand the existing program to mark boundaries and legal entry/ exit points on legally accessible state and federal public lands.

Recommendation 4: Create a new license statute by combining elements of "Native Montana Nonresident License" (MCA 87-2-514) with current "Home to Hunt license" (MCA 87-2-526).

<u>Goal B</u>: Improve communication and relationships among outfitters, landowners, hunters, and Fish, Wildlife, & Parks in order to understand and respect each other.

Recommendation 5: FWP should market, advertise, and more strategically communicate the value and availability of FWP access options to landowners and other stakeholders.

<u>Goal C:</u> Increase public access to private property and outfitted lands owned by traditional and non-traditional landowners by addressing their needs and building relationships.

Recommendation 6: FWP should expand the options within the *existing* statutory authority of MCA 87-2-513 *(Landowner Elk Permit for Access Program – formerly referred to as HB 454 Program)* to allow issuance of either-sex or antlerless elk permit(s) to a landowner who offers free public hunting through a contractual public elk hunting access agreement.

<u>Goal D:</u> Improve hunter compliance and recognize good behavior.

Recommendation 7: The Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project (HLSP) should be supported, encouraged, updated, improved, and expanded.

Recommendation 8: FWP should develop Public Service Announcements (PSAs) that recognize and publicize good hunter/landowner relations.

Goals and FINAL Recommendations

<u>Goal A:</u> Maximize access to public lands while respecting and understanding private property rights.

Recommendation 1: The Governor should coordinate the appointment of an Interagency Access Committee, led by MACO, with representatives from the BLM, USFS, USFWS, DNRC and FWP, to be charged with: (1) developing an inventory of public roads; (2) developing an inventory of public lands where public access is restricted or not available, and; (3) issuing an annual report that will be made available to the public and agencies to assist with projects and programs designed to promote public access to public lands. Adequate funding and personnel should be provided to fulfill this recommendation.

1. This must be a county-controlled and county-driven process supported by sufficient funding.

2. One option for county consideration would be to establish a committee to work on this process over a period of time. This would allow for community conversations with landowners to address questions and issues that could arise as access roads are more clearly identified.

3. Participation and the involvement of the Montana Association of Counties are essential to this effort.

4. Funding may be available from state and federal agencies to help counties work on this initiative.

5. It would be beneficial to know what work has already been done to clarify access roads. For example, work on this issue already accomplished by the Forest Service and Fergus County may be instructive to other agencies and counties motivated to do this work.

6. The desired end product is some type of map, in a consistent format across all counties, which is useful for sportsmen and the public in general.

7. The inventory of roads should include jurisdiction of road (federal, state, county, private, undetermined) and status (open, closed, unspecified).

Rationale

A document containing an inventory of public roads would provide the needed baseline information to complete the inventory of the public lands where public access is restricted or not available. This effort would help alleviate conflict between sportsmen and private property owners and allow agencies, sportsmen's groups and NGO's to focus access work with private landowners along key routes. Over the long term, legal access points would be made known to sportsmen and landowners, and improved relationships and access to public lands would result. In addition, implementation of this recommendation would give visibility to the PL/PW Council's concern about public access to public land. It would provide Governor Bullock an

opportunity to solicit appropriate action that reinforces his interest in public access. It would help the Interagency Access Committee to become more effective. In addition, it is a recommendation that is specific, viable, and potentially effective in improving access and agency access coordination.

Background

There are roads, or segments of roads, that have been maintained and used for many years whose legal standing is uncertain. Some roads created through the petition process were not constructed exactly as described in the petition. There are also legal rights-of-way where a road was never constructed or has fallen out of use and is no longer maintained. As such, many county roadbooks and maps have inaccuracies concerning the legal status of maintained roads and the depiction of legal rights-of-way where no road physically exists.

Recommendation 2: FWP should develop voluntary corner-crossing access agreements as a pilot project with private landowners through the FWP Access Public Lands Program that will provide public access to public land that is not otherwise legally accessible.

1. Typical terms of the agreements could specify:
   a. No restrictions on species that could be hunted;
   b. No restrictions on weapons that could be used;
   c. Access would be available from September 1 – January 1;
   d. Only walk-in hunting access would be allowed;
   e. Individual circumstances would allow for tailoring to specific needs;

2. Compensation may be considered by FWP per agreement.

3. Regional FWP regional staff, in conjunction with appropriate land management agency staff, will make a determination of the priority and desirability of a potential corner crossing.

4. Public notice of project sites may include:
   a. Publication of online coordinates;
   b. Maps made available at FWP offices and on FWP website, and on-the-ground markers and signage, offered in the least intrusive manner possible, similar to that used a bridge fishing access sites;
   c. Parking areas, where necessary, would be established through terms specific to the individual landowner agreements;

5. Hunters using the program are advised to be proficient in the use of a GPS, and encouraged to complete the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project

6. Establish one or two agreements in September 2014, if possible, and at least one agreement per FWP Region thereafter

7. Initial volunteers may be sought by willing Council members and FWP field staff.

8. Upfront costs to FWP are anticipated for signage, set-up, fencing, materials, staff time, etc. These and other longer term costs are anticipated to maintain the program.

9. BMP access coordinators may conduct follow-up monitoring of landowner satisfaction Sign-in boxes should be used to track hunter participation and acquire hunter satisfaction data. FWP field staff will be used to evaluate program

Rationale

Montana contains approximately 31 million acres of state and federal land. Many parcels of this public land are adjacent to each other only at the corners. Other parcels touch public roads or waterways only at the corner. In Montana, crossing at corners is not considered legal access. FWP should work with interested, volunteer landowners in a respectful manner to increase access to public land through a Corner Crossing pilot project.

Recommendation 3: FWP should continue and expand the existing program to mark boundaries and legal entry/ exit points on legally accessible state and federal public lands.

1. If necessary, develop an interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to accomplish this work on public land by all agencies.

2. Replicate and expand the existing program as a model to be used around the state.

3. Support the hiring/retention of staff to accomplish the work.

4. Would not require legislation; might require re-allocating existing resources (staff and money) or might require additional resources.

Rationale

Many of Montana's nearly 31 million acres of state and federal land are legally accessible, but often there are no signs or markers indicating where the legal entry or exit points are located. In many cases, there is also no fence or other marker identifying the parcel boundary. Better marking of these legally accessible state and federal lands could help reduce conflicts between recreationists and private landowners while also helping identify more access opportunities for hunters and other recreationists.

Recommendation 4: Repeal "Native Montana Nonresident License" (MCA 87-2-514) and amend "Home to Hunt license" (MCA 87-2-526), as indicated below:

MCA 87-2-526. License for nonresident to hunt with resident sponsor or family member -- use of license revenue.

(1) In addition to the nonresident licenses provided for in 87-2-505 and 87-2-510, the department may offer for sale 500 B-10 nonresident big game combination licenses and 500 B-11 nonresident deer combination licenses. The licenses may be used only as provided in this section and as authorized by department rules. Sale of licenses pursuant to this section may not affect the license quotas established in 87-2-505 and 87-2-510. The price of licenses sold under this subsection must be ~~the same~~ ½ the price of ~~as~~ nonresident big game combination licenses and nonresident deer combination licenses offered by general drawing pursuant to 87-2-505 and 87-2-510.

(2) A license authorized in subsection (1) may be used only by an adult nonresident family member of a resident who sponsors the license application and who meets the qualifications of subsection (3). The nonresident family member must have completed a Montana hunter safety and education course prior to March 1, 2015 or have previously purchased a resident hunting license, or been born in Montana or been born to parents who were residents at time of birth.. A nonresident family member who receives a license pursuant to subsection (1) must be accompanied in the field by a sponsor or family member who meets the qualifications of subsection (3).

(3) To qualify as a sponsor or family member who will accompany a nonresident licensed under subsection (1), a person must be a resident, as defined in 87-2-102, who is 18 years old or older and possesses a current resident hunting license and who is the nonresident's ~~within the second degree of kinship by blood or marriage. The second degree of kinship includes a~~ natural or adoptive mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, spouse, grandparent, or grandchild~~, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, father-in-law, mother-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, stepsister, stepson, and stepdaughter.~~ . The sponsor shall list on the license application the names of family members who are eligible to hunt with the nonresident hunter.

(4) If the department receives more applications for licenses than the number that are available under subsection (1), the department shall conduct a drawing for the licenses. Applicants who are unsuccessful in the drawing must be entered in the general drawing for a nonresident license provided under 87-2-505 or 87-2-510, as applicable.

(5) All money received from the sale of licenses under subsection (1) must be deposited in a separate account and must be used by the department to acquire public hunting access to inaccessible public land, which may include obtaining hunting access through private land to inaccessible public land.

Rationale
With the changes recommended by the Licensing and Funding Advisory Council for these two similar, yet different, types of licenses, it makes sense to combine attributes of both licenses into a single license that will maintain the PL/PW Council's original intent in creating a Home to Hunt license whereby nonresident family members can come to Montana to hunt with resident family members, with the revenue generated being used to improve public hunting access to public lands.

Background
There are currently two types of similar nonresident (NR) deer and elk licenses that have been rendered unappealing and/or nonfunctional due to changes that have occurred since their adoption.

MCA 87-2-526 provides authority for FWP to issue a B10 NR deer/elk combination license or B11 NR deer combination license to a nonresident hunter sponsored by a resident family member. The hunter is required to be accompanied in the field by a resident family member who meets the eligibility requirements for sponsoring a nonresident hunter under this statute. There is a limit of 500 B10 and 500 B11 licenses of this type, and all license revenue is earmarked for FWP to use to secure public access to public land.

MCA 87-2-514 provides authority for FWP to issue a nonresident fishing license, upland game bird license, deer A tag, and elk license to a "nonresident relative of a resident," defined as "a person born in Montana who is the natural or adoptive child, sibling, or parent of a resident, but is not a resident." The fee for each of these licenses is four times the amount charged for an equivalent resident license. There is no limit on these licenses. Most of the revenue from these licenses goes into the FWP general license account.

In 2014, the Fish & Wildlife Licensing and Funding Advisory Council developed recommendations to change deer and elk licenses under MCA 87-2-514 into B11 deer combination and B10 deer/elk combination license types, and change the fees for B11 deer combination and B10 deer/elk combination licenses under both MCA 87-2-526 and 87-2 514 to ½ the fee charged for nonresident general B11 deer and B10 deer/elk combination licenses. All B11 and B10 combination licenses include fishing and upland bird license privileges.

The Licensing and Funding Advisory Council also asked the Private Land/Public Wildlife Council to consider developing a recommendation as to how the two licenses types created in MCA 87-2-514 and MCA 87-2-526 might be combined into a single license statute, since the original Home to Hunt License was a product of previous PL/PW Council recommendations.

NOTE: Several people who commented on Draft Recommendation #4 cited questions or concerns that nonresident hunters purchasing the "Come Home to Hunt" license (MCA 87-2-526) are required to "be accompanied in the field by a sponsor or family member…" under the current statute. Members of the Council wanted to responsive to those comments, and requested that FWP provide an explanation, with examples, of how the requirement to "be accompanied in the field" is interpreted, so that some of those questions and concerns could be addressed.

EXPLANATION: The Departments understanding of the intent behind creating this license was that it would offer a special opportunity to eligible nonresident hunters to return to Montana to once again hunt with their family members. Subsequently, the requirement for "a nonresident family member who receives a license…must be accompanied in the field by a sponsor or family member who meets the qualifications under (3)" was written into this law. The Department's interpretation of the meaning of "must be accompanied in the field," in a general sense, is that the sponsor or eligible family member must be a participant in the hunting experience that takes place in the field.

Examples of situations that might meet that requirement include:

a) an eligible family member hunting with the licensee as a fellow hunter;
b) an eligible family member staying in camp with the hunter (camp could be temporary camp or permanent residence on site at the hunting location);
c) an eligible family member assisting the licensee with transportation by vehicle at the hunting site;

Examples of situations that probably would not meet that requirement include:

a) an eligible family member remaining in town while the licensee hunts afield;
b) an eligible family member never being present in the location where the licensee hunts;
c) an eligible family member who hunts in a geographic location so completely removed from the location where the licensee is hunting that there is clearly no sense of accompaniment between the two hunts being conducted;

As is the case with enforcement of any law, the details of each specific situation will determine whether or not the law enforcement official feels the law has been violated, and if so, what the appropriate action is to address the infraction. This law has been in effect since the 2010 hunting season, and no substantive law enforcement issues have arisen.

<u>Goal B</u>: Improve communication and relationships among outfitters, landowners, hunters, and Fish, Wildlife, & Parks in order to understand and respect each other.

Recommendation 5: FWP should more strategically communicate the value and availability of FWP landowner and/or access programs to landowners and other stakeholders.

1. Develop a booklet that identifies that range of options available to landowners who could provide public recreation access. The booklet should explain, with specific examples, how many of the programs can be tailored to each landowner. Include landowner liability information. should include mention of various working groups.

2. Develop a website geared towards landowners, which makes the "landowner toolbox" easy to understand. One section of the website should be used to clarify landowner liability protections under current statute.

3. Develop a commercial/series of commercials that markets relationships between hunters and landowners in order to "re-brand" these relationships. The vision is of a landowner and hunter standing and working together.

4. Encourage and support development of local working groups of stakeholders where appropriate.

Rationale

Private landowners own approximately 64 million acres of land in Montana and are stewards of the public wildlife resource. They provide important wildlife habitat and control access to public wildlife resources on private land. Good relationships among all stakeholders are a strong cornerstone for increasing access to private and public lands, and rely on trust, good communication, and cooperation among all parties.

<u>Goal C:</u> Increase public access to private property and outfitted lands owned by traditional and non-traditional landowners by addressing their needs and building relationships.

Recommendation 6: FWP should expand the options within the *existing* statutory authority of MCA 87-2-513 *(Landowner Elk Permit for Access Program – formerly referred to as HB 454 Program)* to allow issuance of either-sex or antlerless elk permit(s) to a landowner who offers free public hunting through a contractual public elk hunting access agreement.

1. Permits may be issued in multiples of 5, with ratios that could include a 1:2 ratio for either-sex (ES) permits between landowner and public, with remainder of permits issued under this authority being antlerless (A) permits for the public. This would maintain statutory cap of no more than 20% of total permits issued under MCA 87-2-513 being issued to landowner, landowner's family member, or ranch employee.

   EXAMPLE: an agreement might allow for the following MCA 87-2-513 permits:

   - 1 ES permit to landowner, 2 ES permits to public + 2 A permits to public
     (OR)
   - 2 ES permits to landowner, 4 ES permits to public + 4 A permits to public
     (OR)
   - 3 ES permits to landowner, 6 ES permits to public + 6 A permits to public

2. In addition to the MCA 87-2-513 permits issued in the examples cited above, the number of additional antlerless opportunities provided to hunters with permits (or licenses) valid for the entire hunting district will depend upon the specific circumstances of the agreement, including such factors as elk herd objective levels, size of land enrolled, etc.

3. The intent of expanding this program is to increase landowner participation and access for hunters during the regular hunting seasons (bow and general), while still allowing flexibility for potential participation in early or late management seasons or damage hunts, IF statutory and ARM public hunting access eligibility criteria is met.

4. Landowners and hunters participating in the program are encouraged to complete the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project course before applying.

5. This effort should be considered a pilot effort that would last for four years.

6. FWP is encouraged to accept landowners into this program only if the landowner has not already been issued an elk permit through landowner preference.

Rationale

The rationale for the recommendation is to create more incentive for more landowners to participate in this program, to create more access opportunities for sportsmen and to offer additional tools for managing elk. This program was created in law in 2003, but has had only one landowner per year participate in the program.

Background

MCA 87-2-513 provides authority for FWP to issue either-sex or antlerless elk permit(s) to a landowner who enters into contractual public elk hunting access agreement under the following provisions:

- Permits are nontransferable and may not be sold;
- Permits may only be used on landowner's property that is opened to public access through a contractual agreement;
- No more than 20% of the permits issued may go to the landowner, landowner's family member, or full-time ranch employee;
- Through the contractual public elk hunting access agreement, the landowner must allow free public elk hunting throughout the regular hunting season;
- The contractual public elk hunting access agreement must also include public hunting by hunters using permits (or B licenses) valid for the hunting district;
- The contractual public elk hunting access agreement developed by the department and the landowner defines the areas that will be open to public elk hunting, the number of public elk hunting day that will be allowed on the property, and other factors that the department and the landowner consider necessary for the proper management of elk on the landowner's property.
- The department may prioritize distribution of permits according to the areas the department determines are most in need of management.

Goal D: Improve hunter compliance and recognize good behavior.

Recommendation 7: The existing Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project (HLSP) should be supported, encouraged, updated, improved, and expanded.

1. Increase participation through development of a marketing and information plan.
   a. Encourage FWP staff to complete the HLSP course and help market it; raise awareness of project at appropriate FWP public meetings and through displays and information materials at FWP offices; utilize FWP website to promote the project;
   b. Encourage hunter education and bow hunter education instructors to complete the HLSP course and encourage students to also complete the HLSP course;
   c. Increase outreach with high schools, perhaps promoting project as homework assignment or extra credit; target college programs that include agriculture and wildlife majors as a pilot effort;
   d. Encourage private sector companies to help promote the project;
   e. Utilize media outlets like TV outdoor sportshows and FWP Wardens TV show to promote the project;
   f. Target an audience that is all inclusive of hunters, landowners, and resource-oriented citizens of Montana;
   g. Encourage Governor to promote the project as a means of helping bridge the gap between rural/urban Montana citizens and resident/nonresident Montana landowners;

2. Update, improve and expand the program.
   a. Add new videos, perhaps having them change periodically, and utilize videos featuring female hunters;
   b. Improve analytics of web-based system to gather useful data;
   c. Explore additional incentives to encourage people to complete the project, including an informational booklet for landowners; decals, patches, or other rewards for individuals who complete the project;
   d. Encourage FWP to appoint a small advisory group to assist with this effort, including varying age groups for appropriate representation;

Rationale

We believe citizens and wildlife in Montana will benefit by more people completing the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project because the program helps to bridge the rural-urban community gap, promote good hunter-landowner relationships, and reduce unintended consequences related to hunting on private lands. The project provides tools to gain knowledge of the importance of respect, appreciation, privilege, and responsible behavior to help develop understanding and build relationships to improve hunting opportunities and experiences on private land.

Background

The Montana Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project is a web-based information program available for anyone interested in promoting responsible hunter behavior and good hunter-landowner relations in Montana.

The program is delivered through an interactive webpage found on the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) website www.fwp.gov . It is a voluntary program designed to be completed by participants, at their own pace. Upon successful completion, participants are awarded a certification of completion and they can request a free cap and bumper sticker bearing the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project logo from MFWP.

The Hunter-Landowner Stewardship program was developed based on recommendations from two citizen's advisory councils, the Hunter Behavior Advisory Council and the Private Land Public Wildlife Council, urging MFWP to expand efforts to promote responsible hunter behavior and good hunter-landowner relationships beyond Montana's basic hunter education program. In response, the agency convened a group of hunters and landowners to identify key issues relevant to the topic, and assist with development of information that might help effectively address those issues.

The goals of the program are to:

- Promote better understanding of the common ground and different perspectives held by landowners and hunters
- Promote better understanding among landowners and hunters about what constitutes acceptable hunter behavior.
- Provide landowners and hunters with information and ideas about how to develop and maintain good relationships
- Provide information about the shared experience of landowners and hunters in various hunting situations.

The webpage can be found at www.fwp.gov by clicking on the links in the following order: "Hunting", and then under quick links "Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project".

Recommendation 8: FWP should develop outreach products, to include Public Service Announcements (PSAs), that recognize and publicize examples of good relations among hunters, landowners, and outfitters.

1. Publicize work done by landowners, hunters, outfitters, FWP and others to promote access and relationships.
    a. FWP could actively solicit and promote this work in public forums, for example, on FWP's website. This would also be a great way to form and/or strengthen partnerships with NGOs.
    b. Request that Information and Education staff at Regional Offices help facilitate this publicity.
    c. Request that FWP staff compile a list of awards currently offered to stakeholders by various organizations.
    d. Also provide recognition in a general way, not specific to any particular individual, for landowners and outfitters who are not formally enrolled as BMP cooperators but still provide access.

Rationale

FWP should actively work to produce information designed to recognize good relations among hunters, landowners, and outfitters. This information should be provided to a broad audience, and focus on promoting and enabling improved relationships and trust among all stakeholders.

APPENDIX A

Council Members (2013-2015)

NAME	RESIDENCE	AFFILIATION
Joe Perry, Chair	Brady	Hunter/Angler
Rich Stuker	Chinook	Landowner/F&W Commissioner
Dwayne Andrews	Miles City	Hunter/Angler
Chris King	Winnett	Landowner
Kathy Hadley	Deer Lodge	Hunter/Angler
Jack Billingsley	Glasgow	Outfitter
Blake Henning	Missoula	Hunter/Angler
Daniel Fiehrer	Helena	Landowner
Lisa Flowers	Glasgow	Hunter/Angler
Denley Loge	St. Regis	Landowner
Rod Bullis	Helena	Hunter/Angler
Tom Jacobson	Great Falls	Hunter/Angler/State Representative
Jim Peterson	Buffalo	Landowner/State Senator
Kendall Van Dyk	Billings	Hunter/Angler/State Senator
Robert DesRosier	Browning	Tribal Member
George Bain	Missoula	USFS ex-officio
Kevin Chappell	Helena	DNRC ex-officio
Pat Gunderson	Glasgow	BLM ex-officio

APPENDIX B
COUNCIL CHARGE/PURPOSE

MCA 87-1-269. "**Report Required - review committee.** (1) The governor shall appoint a committee of persons interested in issues related to hunters, anglers, landowners, and outfitters, including but not limited to the hunting access enhancement program, the fishing access enhancement program, landowner-hunter relations, outfitting industry issues, and other issues related to private lands and public wildlife. The committee must have broad representation of landowners, outfitters, and sportspersons. The department may provide administrative assistance as necessary to assist the review committee.

(2) (a) The review committee shall report to the governor and to the 59th legislature regarding the success of various elements of the hunting access enhancement program, including a report of annual landowner participation, the number of acres annually enrolled in the program, hunter harvest success on enrolled lands, the number of qualified applicants who were denied enrollment because of a shortfall in funding, and an accounting of program expenditures, and make suggestions for funding, modification, or improvement needed to achieve the objectives of the program.

(b) The review committee shall report to the governor and to the 59th legislature regarding the success of the fishing access enhancement program and make suggestions for funding, modification, or improvement needed to achieve the objectives of the program.

3) The director may appoint additional advisory committees that are considered necessary to assist in the implementation of the hunting access enhancement program and the fishing access enhancement program and to advise the commission regarding the development of rules implementing the hunting access enhancement program and the fishing access enhancement program."

APPENDIX C - GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK'S CHARGE TO THE PL/PW COUNCIL

WHEREAS, relations among landowners, hunters, outfitters, and FWP have become increasingly strained over the past several years;

WHEREAS, some landowners feel their contributions to providing wildlife habitat and hunting opportunities are not adequately appreciated or rewarded, while other landowners are unable to control game animal populations due to actions of neighboring landowners who either allow no hunting or very restricted hunting that prevents adequate harvest of game animals;

WHEREAS, hunters are increasingly concerned about diminishing access to private and public lands for hunting opportunities and harvest of game animals;

WHEREAS, while licensed hunting outfitters provide valuable services to hunters and landowners, their activities can affect availability of public hunting opportunities and management of Montana's public wildlife resources;

WHEREAS, other types of commercial hunting activities can affect availability of public hunting opportunities and management of Montana's public wildlife resources;

WHEREAS, the long-term viability of Montana's free-ranging public wildlife resources and hunting heritage is threatened;

NOW, THEREFORE, Governor Steve Bullock charges the Private Land/Public Wildlife Council, appointed in compliance with MCA 87-1-269, to develop recommendations to help achieve common goals, to include, but not limited to the following:

1) **Maximize access to private and public land to provide for public hunting opportunities and effective management of public wildlife resources;**

2) **Maximize landowner satisfaction with available options for effective management of area game populations while minimizing impacts of allowing public hunting;**

3) **Maximize hunter satisfaction with available options for public hunting access opportunities that can help achieve effective management of area game populations;**

4) **Maximize outfitter satisfaction with available options for providing public hunting opportunities that can help achieve effective management of area game populations;**

5) **Maximize effective use of FWP programs, tools, &activities that potentially affect hunting access;**

6) **Minimize the number of people that do not hunt in Montana because of access-related limitations;**

7) **Minimize the number of problematic wildlife concentration management situations that result from access-related circumstances;**

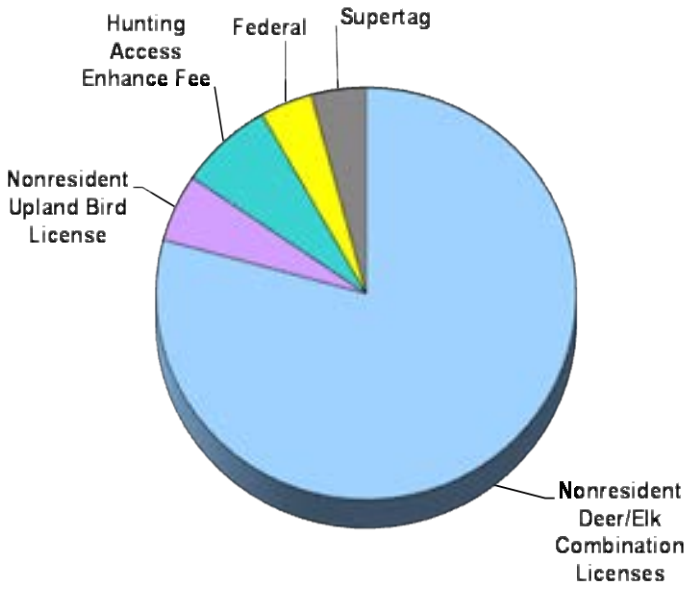
APPENDIX D

Block Management Hunting Access
Program Report

BLOCK MANAGEMENT HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAM REPORT

2014

BLOCK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM REVENUE



Nonresident Big Game Combination Licenses

Effective 2011 license year, of the fee paid for the nonresident big game combination license, 25% is earmarked for the hunting access enhancement programs.

Nonresident Upland Game Bird License

Effective 2000 license year, nonresident upland game bird license fee increased to $110, with $55 earmarked for the hunting access enhancement programs.

Resident/Nonresident Hunting Access Enhancement Fee

Effective 2002 license year, hunting access enhancement free created ($2 resident/$10 nonresident), with revenue earmarked for the hunting access enhancement program.

Supertag

Effective 2006 license year, supertag created- lottery with unlimited chances ($5 each) for Supertag – 5 Supertags – 1 each for elk, deer, moose, sheep, goat; 2007 – antelope, mountain lion, bison added to list of Supertag options; except for license agent commissions, all proceeds must be used by the depart for hunting access enhancement programs and law enforcement;

Federal

PR excise tax dollars – amount varies annually;

Program Name
Block Management Hunting Access Program

Program Manager
Alan Charles, Coordinator, Landowner/Sportsman Relations

FY14 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES:

Program Administration	$280,000
Landowner Contracts:	$4,540,000
Landowner/Hunter Services:	$1,430,000
Enforcement (6 FTE):	$440,000
TOTAL :	$6,690,000

Program Administration: Portions of the time spent by one full-time state administrator, one state administrative support staff person, 6 regional program coordinators, and one regional administrative support staff person performing program administrative duties such as processing block management contracts, issuing payments and cooperator licenses, and preparing necessary program reports are the source of program administration expenditures.

Landowner Contract Payments: Under statutory authority (87-1-267 MCA), "Benefits will be provided to offset potential impacts associated with public hunting access, including but not limited to those associated with general ranch maintenance, conservation efforts, weed control, fire protection, liability insurance, roads, fences, and parking area maintenance." The current system, articulated in 12.4.206 ARM, provides for cooperators to receive a $250 annual enrollment payment, and up to $11 per hunter day in annual impact payments, with optional 5% additional weed management payment. Total annual payment may not exceed $12,000. **In 2009, landowners received an average increase of 9% per landowner payment, when FWP increased the hunter day payment from $10/HD to $11/HD, resulting in approximately $460,000 more being paid to landowners enrolled in the program. Annual payments have remained at that increased rate through the 2012 hunting season.**

Landowner/Hunter Services:

- Approximately 45 seasonal BMA technicians are hired each hunting season to help set up, sign, patrol, and dismantle BMAs;

- Regional program coordinators negotiate contracts, produce informational materials, supervise seasonal staff, and respond to the needs of hunters and landowners.

- Program materials such as signs, sign-in boxes,, permission slips, maps, and tabloids are funded through program operations budgets. Annually, approximately150,000 maps, 34,000 regional BMA tabloids, and over 25,000 BMA signs are printed and distributed.

- Included in this category are expenditures for marking public land access points and special access projects (local projects focused on a specific species).

Enforcement (6 FTE):
A total of 6 full-time warden positions are funded through Hunting Access Enhancement Program sources. This 6 FTE is allocated statewide to game wardens who patrol BMAs for hunter compliance of landowner and FWP rules. Game wardens also assist with BMA contract negotiations, delivery of BMA materials, and landowner/FWP contacts.

Weed Management Payments: SB 326 (effective March 1, 2000) authorized FWP to offer up to 5% in additional incentive payments to Block Management Cooperators who agree to use those payments for specific weed management activities on their lands. For FY10, a total of $200,189 was paid specifically for use in weed management activities on BMAs. In past years, of landowners who elected to receive weed management payments:

34% indicated their intent to hire contractors for weed management measures;
86% indicated their intent to purchase herbicide or other chemicals;
6% indicated their intent to donate the payment to a county weed board;
3% indicated their intent to lease or rent livestock for weed control;
4% indicated their intent to implement some type of weed education;

*Some landowners indicated they intended to use the payment for multiple uses.

ENROLLMENT STATUS
Potential new cooperators are identified through various means, including individuals contacting FWP formally and asking to be placed on a waiting list for future enrollment consideration, individuals contacting FWP field staff and discussing possible future enrollment in the program, and FWP identifying potential candidates in high-priority areas or offering high-priority hunting opportunities and making initial contacts to identify potential interest in future enrollment. At the end of the 2013 hunting season, regional program coordinators reported 8 potential new cooperators could not be enrolled due to lack of funding.

BLOCK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM REPORT

- **PROGRAM STATISTICS**
- **PROGRAM EVALUATION**
- **PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

PROGRAMS FOR HUNTER MANAGEMENT AND HUNTER ACCESS

< The department may establish within the Block Management Program programs of landowner assistance that encourage public access to private and public lands for the purposes of hunting. **(87-1-265 through 87-1-269 MCA)**

< Participation is voluntary, based on agreements between the landowner and FWP.

< Recreational liability protection (as described in 70-1-201 MCA) is extended to cooperators participating in the program.

< A landowner participating in the program may receive benefits, including compensation up to $12,000 annually, for providing public hunting access to enrolled land.

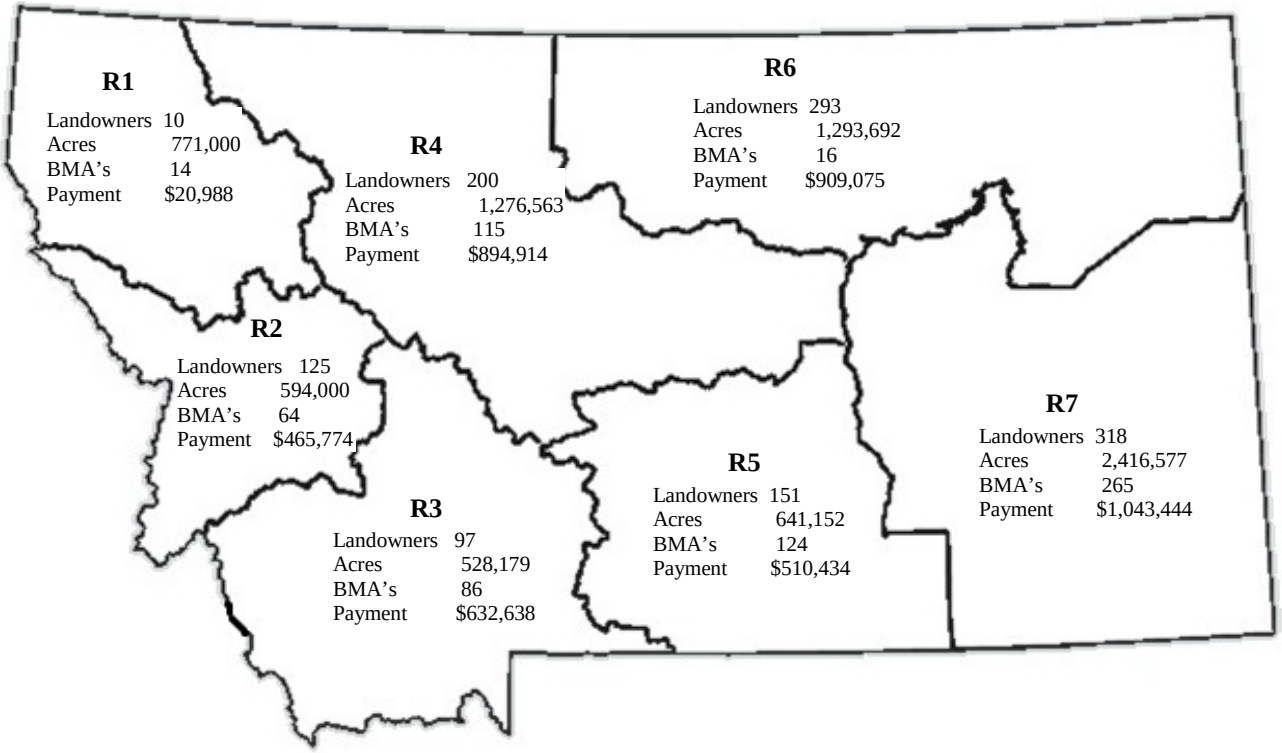
< Benefits will be provided to offset impacts associated with public hunting access including but not limited to general ranch maintenance, conservation efforts, weed control, fire protection, liability insurance, and road/parking-area maintenance.

< Enrolled resident and nonresident landowners may receive a non-transferable resident Sportsman's license or nonresident Big Game Combination license, as applicable.

< Licenses granted in this program will not affect the quota of 11,500 nonresident Big Game Combination License.

2014 Block Management Program Statistics

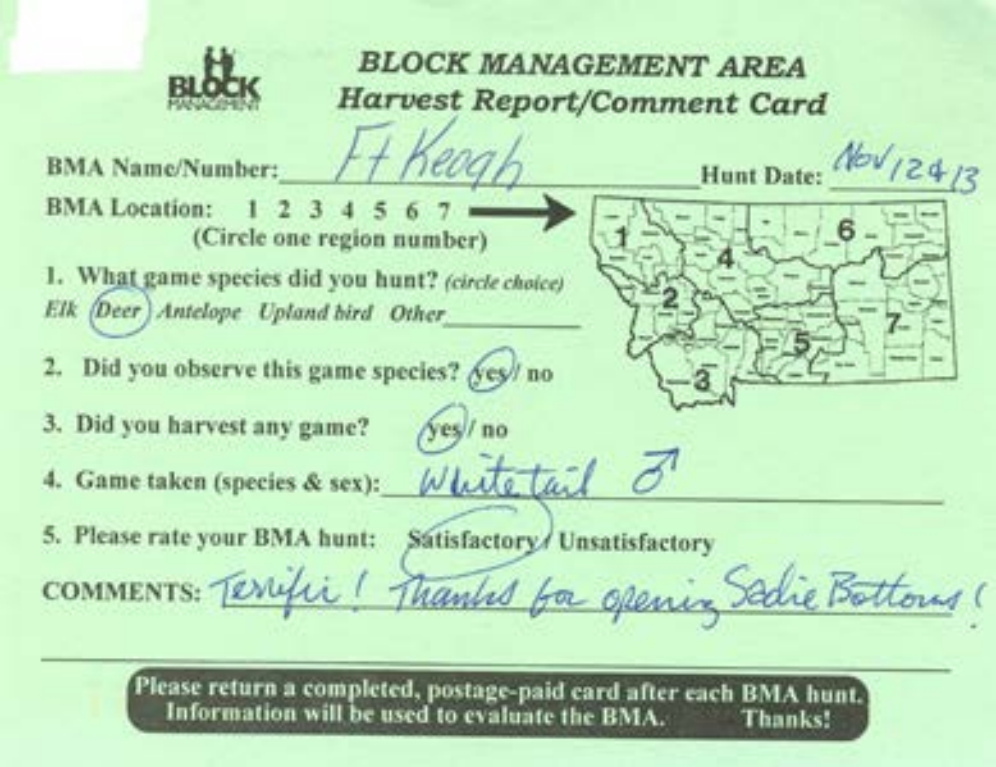
1,194 Landowners 828 BMA's 7,392,123 Acres $4,477,266 L/O Payments



2013 Season
Hunter Comment Cards/Daily Sign-In Coupons

A total of <u>16,274</u> hunter comment cards were received for the 2013 hunting season. These cards were voluntarily returned, and answered 3 specific questions.

<u>COMMENT CARD SAMPLE</u>



BLOCK MANAGEMENT AREA
Harvest Report/Comment Card

BMA Name/Number: Ft Keogh Hunt Date: Nov 12 & 13

BMA Location: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(Circle one region number)

1. What game species did you hunt? *(circle choice)*
Elk *Deer* *Antelope* *Upland bird* *Other*_____

2. Did you observe this game species? yes / no

3. Did you harvest any game? yes / no

4. Game taken (species & sex): White tail ♂

5. Please rate your BMA hunt: Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

COMMENTS: Terrific! Thanks for opening Sedie Bottoms!

Please return a completed, postage-paid card after each BMA hunt.
Information will be used to evaluate the BMA. Thanks!

<u>SUMMARY OF RESULTS</u>

Total received: 16,274

Total hunters observing game they were hunting:	**10,616**	**65%**
Total hunters who bagged game:	**3,833**	**24%**
Total hunters who rated BMA experience satisfactory:	**12,874**	**79%**

NOTE: These cards are used to evaluate individual BMAs, monitor regional, area, and program trends, and measure general hunter satisfaction with their BMA experience. Hunter comment card information is also incorporated into daily sign-in coupons used extensively in FWP regions 4, 5, and 6, at Type I BMAs where hunters administered their own permission.

Summary of Research

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

HD Unit Research Summary No. 31

Block Management Landowner & Hunter Evaluations from the 2009 Montana Hunting Season

Michael S. Lewis and Alan Charles

June 2010

Administered by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), Montana's Block Management Program was established in 1985 with three main goals:

1. To maintain public hunting access to private and isolated public land.
2. To help landowners manage public hunting on lands under their control, and provide benefits to offset the impacts of those public hunting activities.
3. To help FWP accomplish its mission of managing wildlife resources. In a state where nearly 65 percent of the land is privately owned, FWP depends on public hunting to manage populations of deer, elk, and other game animals.

A total of 1,274 landowners were enrolled in the program in 2009, comprising more than nine million acres of Block Management Areas (BMAs) across the state. Approximately 85,000 people hunted a BMA in 2009 (which resulted in more than 460,000 hunter days on all BMAs combined).

To measure the success of the program, FWP periodically conducts landowner and hunter evaluations. Two separate surveys were conducted following the 2009 Montana hunting season:

- **Landowner Evaluation**. All landowners enrolled in the program in 2009 were sent a survey by mail.
- **Hunter Evaluation**. A randomly selected sample of 761 people who hunted on a BMA(s) in 2009 were sent a survey by mail.

These two surveys were nearly identical replications of similar surveys conducted following the 2003 and 1996 Montana hunting seasons (Charles & Lewis, 2004; Charles, 1997). Hence, for the most part, results obtained from the 2009 surveys are directly comparable to 2003 and 1996 survey results.

BLOCK MANAGEMENT

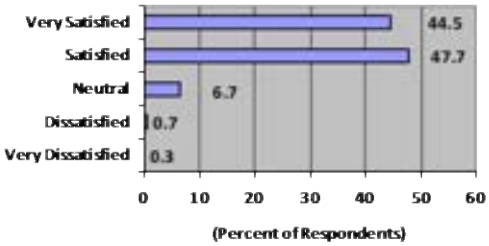
Overall, there was an excellent response to both 2009 surveys. A 66 percent response rate was achieved from the landowner survey. A 60 percent response was achieved from the hunter survey. These response rates are considered to be very high for mailback surveys of this type.

This research summary highlights the key findings from both the 2009 landowner and hunter evaluation surveys. Wherever possible, survey results obtained in 2009 are compared to those results obtained in 2003 and 1996.

Highlights from the 2009 Landowner Evaluation

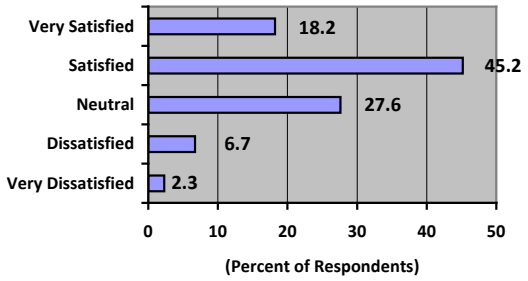
When asked how satisfied they were with the overall Block Management Program, 92 percent of the landowners who responded to the survey indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied (see Figure 1 below). This compares to 93 percent in 2003, and 80 percent in 1996.

Figure 1. Response to: *"How satisfied are you with the overall Block Management Program?"* (2009 Landowner Evaluation)



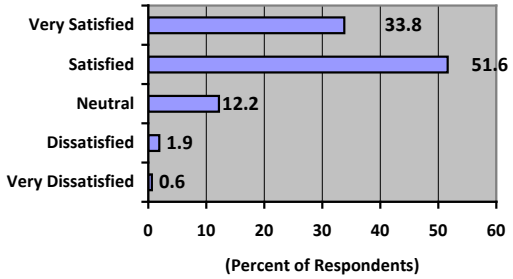
Most of the landowners (78 percent) reported the Block Management Program is an important or very important way for them to manage game numbers on their BMA(s). Related to this, 63 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the results of the program in terms of managing game numbers on their BMA(s) in 2009 (see Figure 2 on the next page). This compares to 63 percent in 2003, and 60 percent in 1996.

Figure 2. Response to: *"How satisfied were you with the results of the Block Management Program in managing game numbers on your BMA(s)?"* (2009 Landowner Evaluation)



Almost all of the landowners (92 percent) indicated that the Block Management Program is an important or very important way for them to manage hunter activities. Related to this, 85 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the results of the program in terms of managing hunter activities on their BMA(s) in 2009 (see Figure 3 below), and 79 percent were satisfied with the number of hunters who hunted on their BMA(s). Furthermore, 89 percent rated hunter behavior on their BMA(s) as being good or very good in 2009. In 2003 and 1996, 90 percent and 77 percent of the respondents respectively were satisfied or very satisfied with the program in terms of managing hunter activities.

Figure 3. Response to: *"How satisfied were you with the results of the Block Management Program in terms of managing hunter activities?"* (2009 Landowner Evaluation)



Of note, 80 percent of the landowners who completed and returned a survey for the 2009 season reported that they believe hunter behavior has improved or greatly improved as a result of the Block Management Program. This compares to 81 percent in 2003, and 76 percent in 1996.

Also, 65 percent of the landowners reported that their relationship with hunters has improved or greatly improved as a result of participating in the program. This compares to 64 percent in 2003, and 61 percent in 1996. Less than two percent of the landowners in 2009 reported that their relationship with hunters has deteriorated or greatly deteriorated as a result of the Block Management Program.

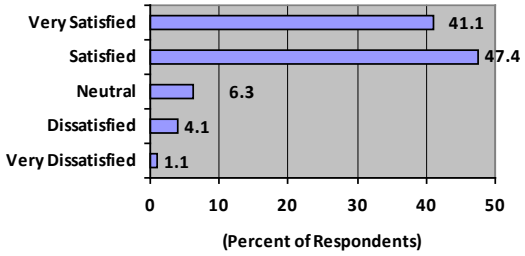
In terms of the compensation they received for enrolling in the program, 79 percent of the landowners responding to the survey reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the total compensation they received for the 2009 hunting season. Less than nine percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. In 2003 and 1996, 79 percent and 75 percent of the respondents respectively were satisfied or very satisfied with their total compensation.

Of the landowners enrolled in 2009 who expressed an opinion, 99 percent said they plan on continuing their participation in the Block Management Program for the 2010 hunting season.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2009 HUNTER EVALUATION

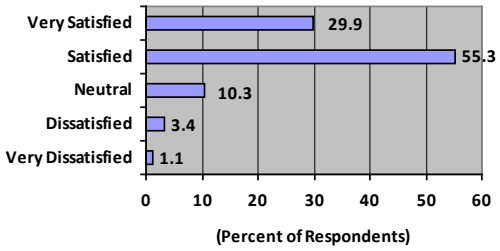
When asked how satisfied they were with the Block Management Program this past fall (2009), 89 percent of the hunters who responded to the survey reported they were satisfied or very satisfied (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4. Response to: *"Overall, how satisfied were you with the Block Management Program this past fall?"* (2009 Hunter Evaluation)



Furthermore, 85 percent of the hunters reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the hunting opportunities provided by the Block Management Program in 2009 (see Figure 5 on the following page). This compared to 86 percent in 2003, and 76 percent in 1996.

Figure 5. Response to: *"Overall, how satisfied were you with the hunting opportunities provided by the Block Management Program in 2009?"* (2009 Hunter Evaluation)



Of the hunters who responded to the survey in 2009, 83 percent reported they believe that the Block Management Program has improved or greatly improved landowner-hunter relations. Less than three percent believe that landowner-hunter relationships have been harmed or greatly harmed by the program. In 2003 and 1996, 84 percent and 70 percent of hunters respectively reported they believe the program has improved or greatly improved the relationship between hunters and landowners.

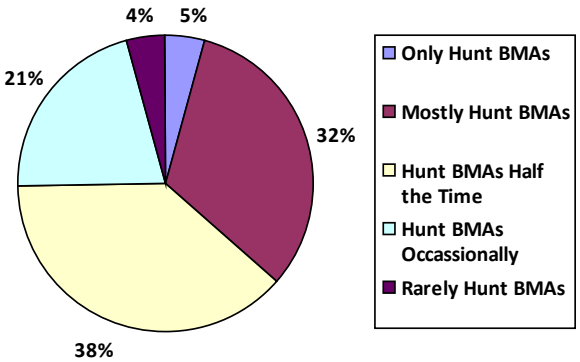
Related to hunting opportunities…

- Fifty (50) percent of the hunters who responded to the survey found game animals on BMAs hunted present in numbers meeting or exceeding their expectations in 2009.
- Sixty (60) percent were successful in harvesting game on a BMA(s) in 2009.
- Eighty-eight (88) percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the rules on BMAs hunted in 2009.
- Sixty-four (64) percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the number of other hunters encountered on BMAs hunted in 2009.

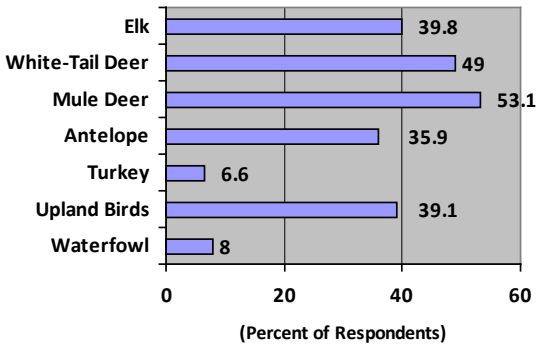
Hunter profile information (2009 season)…

- The average hunter spent nearly 10 days hunting BMAs.
- The average hunter hunted on four to five different BMAs.

Time spent hunting BMAs…



Game Hunted on BMAs…



Discussion

The Block Management Program is designed to balance the needs of landowners, hunters, and FWP. Landowners receive assistance in managing public hunting activities and benefits to offset the impacts of allowing public hunting. Hunters receive opportunities to hunt on enrolled lands, offered either on a first-come, first-serve basis or through some other means of allocated use. FWP is able to utilize the program as a tool to help achieve wildlife management goals and objectives.

In 1995, the Block Management Program was enhanced through additional funding and authority, allowing it to grow substantially over the next fifteen years. During this time, FWP staff has explored various ways to implement the program locally to accommodate differences in regional wildlife management needs and hunter use activities.

Results of the 2010 Block Management landowner and hunter evaluations, as well as past evaluations, suggest that the program has been a success both from the perspective of landowners enrolled in the program and hunters hunting on BMAs. FWP staff has been able to use the program to effectively manage big game populations, provide diverse public hunting opportunities, and develop effective relationships among landowners, hunters, and FWP.

References

Charles, Alan and Michael S. Lewis. 2004. *Block Management Landowner and Hunter Evaluations: Survey Highlights from 2003 and Comparisons to 1996 Surveys.* Responsive Management Unit Research Summary No. 13. Helena, MT: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

Charles, Alan. 1997. *Summary of the 1996 Landowner & Hunter Evaluations.* Helena, MT: Montana, Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

About the Authors

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To obtain copies of this summary

Contact the Human Dimensions Unit of FWP by phone (406) 444-4758 or visit FWP's website at http://fwp.mt.gov (and click on the following links…"Doing Business", "Reference Information", "Surveys", Social & Economic Surveys").

BLOCK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
Mission, Goals, Enrollment Criteria & Process

Mission Statement

Block Management is a cooperative, adaptable program designed to maintain Montana's hunting heritage and traditions by providing landowners with tangible benefits to encourage public hunting access to private land, promote partnerships between landowners, hunters, and FWP, and help manage wildlife resources and the impacts of public hunting.

Goals

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT
1) Program supports state & regional wildlife program objectives.
2) Program supports other FWP wildlife programs.

HUNTER OPPORTUNITY
1) Program maintains current opportunities and expands new opportunities.
2) Hunter pressure is managed at levels satisfactory to landowners and hunters.

LANDOWNER RELATIONS
1) Program recognizes landowner contributions to maintaining wildlife resource.
2) Program establishes long-term positive relationships with hunters/landowners/FWP.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY
1) Program is fiscally responsible and accountable.
2) Program maintains a measurable, acceptable level of satisfaction among participants.
3) Ongoing structured program review maintains program adaptability.

PARTICIPANT EDUCATION/OWNERSHIP
1) Program fosters ownership among program participants.
2) Program fosters responsible hunter behavior.
3) Program increases hunter respect for private property and landowner concerns.

Regional Block Management Program Enrollment Process

1) Existing cooperators in each region will be evaluated through criteria and a process that:
    a) Identifies them as ineligible for re-enrollment;
    b) Identifies them as eligible for re-evaluation and equal consideration with new enrollment and other re-evaluated re-enrollment candidates;
    c) Identifies them as eligible for automatic re-enrollment;

2) The regional block management coordinator shall use a BMA Property RE-ENROLLMENT WORKSHEET to circulate a list of cooperators who were enrolled during the previous year to the appropriate field warden and field biologist for input. If applicable staff, including the program coordinator, agree that a cooperator should be automatically enrolled, no further action is required beyond having the regional coordinator maintain copies of the completed Automatic RE-ENROLLMENT Review Report in the current file for documentation of the re-enrollment decision.

3) Each Regional Supervisor will appoint a committee (which includes, at a minimum, the regional block management coordinator and at least one member each from the Wildlife and Enforcement divisions) to make annual Block Management Program regional enrollment and re-enrollment (if not identified for automatic re-enrollment) recommendations, which the Regional Supervisor will ultimately approve or disapprove in writing.

4) All new enrollment and re-evaluated re-enrollment candidates will be evaluated and ranked through a process which utilizes the ENROLLMENT Evaluation Form and BMA Property Application Form to document criteria and related information.

5) The Regional Block Management Enrollment Committee shall evaluate all previous BMA properties designated for "re-evaluation and ranking with new properties" and any new properties offered for enrollment utilizing these forms:
    - BMA Property RE-ENROLLMENT Worksheets
    - BMA Property ENROLLMENT Application Forms
    - BMA Property ENROLLMENT Evaluation Forms
    - ENROLLMENT Decision Report

6) All evaluations will be recorded on the appropriate form, including the names of FWP staff who provided input relevant to the evaluation and recommendations. Completed Decision Reports will be approved and signed by the Regional Supervisor. Original copies of signed forms and related materials will be maintained by the regional Block Management Coordinator, with copies of the signed ENROLLMENT Decision Reports sent to the Field Services office in Helena, care of the Coordinator of Landowner/Sportsman Relations.

Region _____ BMA Property

ENROLLMENT Evaluation Form

Instructions*: This form is to be used to evaluate all new properties offered for enrollment AND any existing BMA properties which have been designated for re-evaluation and ranking with new enrollment candidates. Scores and comments developed in completion of this form will be used by the Regional Block Management Enrollment Committee to determine which properties will be enrolled, and in what order of priority.*

Landowner Name: _____BMA acreage (private & isolated public)_____

BMA/Ranch Name: _____General Location: _____

1. Is this new property offered for enrollment _____ (OR) existing BMA property being re-evaluated _____?

2. What is/are the PRIMARY hunting opportunity(ies) available on this property:

   ELK M/WTDEER ANT UGBD PHST TRKY WTRFWL BEAR OTHER:_____

Criteria to be considered is making enrollment decisions	**Low Med High**
What is the level of public demand in the hunting district or general area for the type of hunter opportunity offered with this property? *Explain:*	1 2 3
What is the level of FWP need for the type of hunter opportunity offered with this property, as it relates to regional management objectives or regional access strategies? *Explain:*	1 2 3
How does this property rank in terms of size, land composition, and habitat type/quality necessary to provide the primary hunter opportunity offered with this property? *Explain:*	1 2 3
What is the potential for high levels of hunter satisfaction, based on opportunity offered, proposed levels of hunter use, and proposed methods of hunter management? *Explain:*	1 2 3
Additive Criteria	**NO YES**
Can enrollment of this property potentially address an existing game damage problem? *Explain:*	0 1
Will enrollment provide access to adjacent public land with limited/no public access? *Explain:*	0 1
Will enrollment provide access to private land previously closed to free public access? *Explain:*	0 1
Will enrollment of this property add acreage to an existing BMA? *Explain:*	0 1
Will enrollment provide some kind of special opportunity that is in high demand? *Explain:*	0 1
Will property be enrolled without any restriction on season length or sex/species of game? *Explain:*	0 1
TOTAL SCORE	

1. Where does this property rank in terms of enrollment priority? **Low Med High**

2. Based on regional budget and enrollment process, is this property assigned a sequential number (optional) to identify where, in order of priority, it ranks? **Yes / No #_____**

ROAD
CLOSED

APPENDIX E

Fishing Access Enhancement Program Report

FISHING ACCESS ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Program Name
Private Land Fishing Access

Program Manager:
Allan Kuser, Fishing Access Program Coordinator

Program Authorizing Statute:
This program was introduced as HB 292 and titled "Fishing Access Enhancement Program". The statutory reference is **87-1-285, 87-1-286, MCA**.

Program Funding
Funding is $25,000 a biennium from the general license account.

Program Status:
The program is in its ninth year of funding.

Program Synopsis

The purpose of the program as stated in HB292 is "to provide incentives to landowners who provide access to or across private land for public fishing." House Bill 292 was enacted by the 2001 Legislature on a trial basis with the intention of augmenting the existing FAS acquisition program. The sole purpose of this program is to give practical, tangible assistance to those landowners who allow the public access across their lands in order to fish streams or lakes that otherwise are not accessible.

The PLFA Program differs from the FAS Program in three ways:

1. The funding is specifically earmarked for use on private land.
2. It is not a capital program through which FWP develops facilities on private land, i.e. boat ramps, dam repairs, stream bank stabilization, etc. Compensation provided to the landowner can be used for these things at his or her discretion.
3. It is a stand-alone program that does not incorporate the Lands Section in negotiating deals, the D&C Bureau to design and engineer projects, or the Parks Division to maintain the sites.

Program Goals
The goal of the program is to open up private lands to angler access. Essentially any project that accomplishes that goal is acceptable. Examples of acceptable projects include but aren't limited to the following:

- Providing anglers a parking area and access to a stream or water body on private land.
- Obtaining access through private land to get to a stream or lake that's not otherwise accessible.
- Obtaining access along a stream corridor above the ordinary high water mark.

FY 2014

PRIVATE LAND FISHING ACCESS PROJECTS

Program Funding

2014 Allocation	$15,000
2014 Expenditure	$31,650

1. Fred Davison dba Many Hills Ranch (R4)

The Many Hills Ranch is located in the Highwood Mountains east of Great Falls. The Agreement provides for public angling access site on Highwood Creek. The landowner requested assistance in tracking who was on his property and in keeping vehicles in designated parking areas. The department will provide a sign in box and signs to designate parking/camping areas. Highwood Creek transects a portion of the ranch providing approximately .5 miles of fishing opportunity within the boundaries of the property.

Contract Date: This Agreement is effective from June 15, 2013 thru June 14, 2018.
Contract Terms: Compensation is $900 annually for 5 years for a total of $4,500.

2. Gordon Cattle Company / Kuhr Reservoir

H. C. Kuhr Reservoir is a 25-acre reservoir located 15 miles south of Chinook. This reservoir has been open to the public and managed by Montana Fish, Wildlife, Parks since 1990. Since that time H.C. Kuhr has been a popular fishing access site and FWP has invested a fair amount of time and money into developing and maintaining access to this reservoir. The reservoir is a popular summer and winter trout fishery. On average the reservoir receives 280 angler days during the spring and summer (March-September) and 60 angler days during the winter (December-February). Anglers routinely catch 14 to 20 inch trout.

Since 1990, FWP has provided signs identifying access to the site and the rules of the reservoir and some funding for various maintenance projects. In addition, the reservoir is actively managed through annual sampling and stocking. In 2003, the reservoir was drained and renovated to remove white sucker and restocked with rainbow trout.

Funding provided through the PLFA program will be used to repair the existing bridge providing public access to the reservoir.

Contract Date: This Agreement is effective from Oct 1, 2015 thru Oct 1, 2030.
Contract Terms: Compensation is $1,000 annually for 15 years for a total of $15,000. A previous Cooperative Agreement with the landowner on Kuhr Reservoir is in effect until Oct 1, 2015, the effective starting date of this Agreement.

3. Pete Anderson

Property owned by the Montana Department of Transportation and leased to the Central Montana Railroad (CMR) borders the north side of the Hruska FAS. Mr. Anderson who uses it for grazing purposes subsequently leases the property from CMR. Cattle trespass onto the Hruska FAS has been an on-going problem for several years. Big Spring Creek meanders in and out of the MDT/Hruska FAS property boundary making it very difficult to fence. An agreement was reached with Mr. Anderson for FWP to build a fence on the currently unused railroad track bed. Local Trout Unlimited members helped to construct a fence on the track bed. The purpose of the Agreement is to compensate Mr. Anderson for allowing public access on the MDT side of Big Spring Creek.

Contract Date: The Agreement is effective from Nov 1, 2013 – Oct. 31, 2018.
Contract Terms: Compensation is $1,000 annually for 5 years for a total of $5,000.

4. Tucker Headgate Ditches

The east tucker access on the Bitterroot River is across the river from the Tucker FAS but is not accessible from the FAS as they are on opposite banks of the river with no bridge crossing. The river is also wide and braided at this location. The east tucker access site is located on private property owned by multiple ditch companies who have allowed public access to the river via their property. However due to a lack of parking space fishermen have been parking in front of the ditch companies' entrance road blocking access to the ditch. Through this Agreement the ditch companies have expanded the public parking area, installed fencing, signage and a new gate to their entrance road. The improvements provided thru this Agreement have guaranteed continued public access into the foreseeable future.

Contract Date: The Agreement is effective from July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2015.
Contract Terms: Compensation is $500 annually for 2 years for a total of $1,000

5. Doug Gamma

Mr. Gamma owns property on Ashley Lake west of Kalispell. Mr. Gamma's family has historically allowed public access for ice fishing though his property but lately parking and litter problems are creating a nuisance for the family. Funding provided through this program has assisted Mr. Gamma in providing signing, and making improvements to the parking area for anglers using his property. He also polices the area for trash. This is the eighth year of this annual agreement.

Contract Date: The Agreement is effective from "ice up to ice out" winter 2013/ 2014.
Contract Terms: Compensation is $1,250 for 1 year.

6. Loon Lake 4-H Camp

The Loon Lake 4-H Camp adjoins the Loon Lake FAS in Flathead County. It's located approximately 5 miles SE of Big Fork, MT. FWP owns 3 acres of land at the Loon Lake FAS which is wetlands and unsuitable for building. Public access to the lake is gained through the 4-H Camp. This agreement with the 4-H Camp allows public use of their road and boat ramp and dock. FWP provides a temporary vault latrine for public use. In addition to compensation for allowing public access and use of their facilities FWP will include Loon Lake on the FAS caretakers litter patrol. Game wardens will also patrol the lake for violations related to FWP regulations.

Contract Date: The Agreement is effective from July 1, 2012 thru June 30 2014
Contract Terms: Compensation is $1,000 annually for two years for a total of $2,000

1) **Spring Creek Community Center (R5)**

The Spring Creek Community Center is located on the Stillwater River approximately 6 miles upstream of Absarokee. The county road leading to the bridge is narrow and ranchers were often blocked from crossing the bridge with farm machinery due to cars left by anglers accessing the river at the bridge. Warden Jeff Scott worked with the community to allow anglers to use the Community Center parking lot and put up signage directing anglers to the Center. As a result vandalism and litter has been on the increase at the Community Center. Funding will be used to cover additional expenses being incurred.

The Spring Creek Community Center is a private nonpolitical association that is not connected with a local governing body. A volunteer board is responsible for directing activities and use of the facilities. Ownership of the building and management of the property is assumed by members of the community at large. The property on which the building and parking lot is constructed is privately owned.

Contract Date: The Agreement is effective July 1, 2012 thru June 30, 2014.
Contract Terms: Compensation is $1,200 annually for two years for a total of $2,400

APPENDIX F

Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project
Research Summary No. 35

Summary of Research

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Selected Results from a Participant Evaluation Survey Regarding the Montana Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project

HD Unit Research Summary No. 35

Zoe King, Michael S. Lewis, and Alan Charles

October 2012

Abstract: *The Montana Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project is a web-based information program available to anyone interested in promoting responsible hunter behavior and good hunter-landowner relations in Montana. To help review this program, FWP set up a five question evaluation that enables participants to provide program-related feedback and recommendations. Following a recent analysis of the responses to this evaluation, FWP confirmed that the program is providing helpful information regarding a number of important landowner and hunter issues. The program also appears to be helping to change the behavior of many participants. In particular, many of the hunters who have completed the program indicated they are now more aware of a variety of landowner concerns that are important to consider as part of hunting on privately owned land. Program participants also offered a diverse array of ideas regarding how the program could be further enhanced. FWP is carefully reviewing these recommendations as part of its continuing efforts to promote responsible hunting behavior and good hunter-landowner relations in Montana.*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Established nearly two years ago, the Montana Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project is an information program for anyone interested in promoting responsible hunter behavior and good hunter-landowner relations in Montana. The program is delivered through an interactive webpage found on the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) website. It is a voluntary program designed to be completed by participants at their own pace. Upon successful completion, participants are awarded a certification of completion and they can request a free cap and bumper sticker bearing the program logo from FWP.

The program was developed based on recommendations from two citizen's advisory councils, the Hunter Behavior Advisory Council and the Private Land/Public Wildlife Council, urging FWP to expand efforts to promote responsible hunter behavior and good hunter-landowner relations beyond Montana's basic hunter education program. In response, the agency convened a group of hunters and landowners to identify key issues relevant to the topic, and assist with development of information that might help effectively address those issues. Staff from FWP's Communication and Education Bureau, Landowner/Sportsman Relations Section, Technical Services Section, and Web Content Team worked together to develop and implement the program. Goals of the program include:

- **Promoting better understanding of the common ground and different perspectives held by landowners and hunters.**
- **Promoting better understanding among landowners and hunters about what constitutes acceptable hunter behavior.**
- **Providing landowners and hunters with information and ideas about how to develop and maintain good relationships.**
- **Providing information about the shared experience of landowners and hunters in various hunting situations.**

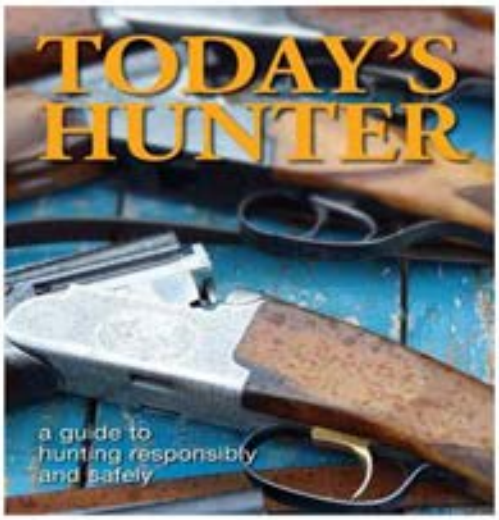
The webpage for the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project can be found at fwp.mt.gov (FWP's website). At the FWP homepage, click on these links in the following order: *"Hunting"*, *"Hunter Access"*, and *"Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project"*.

ABOUT THE EVALUATION & RESULTS

To help review this unique program, FWP set up a five question online evaluation survey at the end of the program that enables participants to provide program-related feedback and input. The five questions in the evaluation survey are as follows:

1. In what way did participating in this program affect your view of responsible hunter behavior and/or hunter-landowners relations in Montana?
2. Are you considering doing anything different than you have in the past regarding responsible hunter behavior and/or hunter-landowner relations?
3. Would you recommend this program to anyone else and who would that be?
4. Do you have any suggestions for FWP on how the agency might improve this program?
5. Do you have any suggestions on what else could be done to promote responsible hunter behavior and good hunter-landowner relations in Montana?

This research summary provides selected results from this important program evaluation. The results presented in this summary are based upon input received from nearly 500 people who have voluntarily participated in this program since its inception in the fall of 2010. Approximately three-quarters of the evaluation surveys were completed by hunters. The remaining evaluations were primarily completed by those participants who identified themselves as being both a landowner and a hunter.



According to the participants who completed the evaluation, the program has positively affected their views of responsible hunter behavior and hunter-landowner relations in a number of different ways. The most frequently received comments included:

- *It reaffirmed much of what I already knew. The program reinforced my views of responsible hunting behavior.*
- *It provided valuable insight regarding a number of legitimate landowner concerns.*
- *It helped to me to better understand the issues faced by both landowners and hunters.*
- *It showed the different perspectives of hunters and landowners so they can work together.*
- *It was a useful reminder of hunting ethics and responsibility, and the need for hunters to build good relationships and be an asset to landowners.*
- *I learned a lot from the program*
- *Good idea. Good information. Good program.*

Program participants also reported they are doing many things differently now as a direct result of completing the program. The most frequently mentioned changes in behavior that were reported by participants included:

- *I now better communicate my intentions to landowners and try to understand their expectations and act accordingly.*
- *I am now more aware of a variety of landowner concerns that are important to consider as part of hunting on privately-owned land.*
- *I will now report possible violators to appropriate authorities.*
- *This helped me to know how to talk to and ask a landowner for hunting access.*
- *I am more aware of and stay current on rules, regulations, and hunter-landowner issues.*
- *I let landowners know how much I appreciate hunting on their lands.*
- *I remind others about responsible hunter behavior and the importance of hunter-landowner relations.*

A strong majority of the program participants indicated they would recommend the program to others including friends, family members, hunting partners, other hunters, and landowners. Many participants mentioned the importance of recommending the program to new hunters (including youths), nonresident hunters, and others who have little experience hunting in Montana.

When asked if they have any suggestions for how FWP might improve the program, program participants offered a diverse number of recommendations. Some recommendations addressed the content and delivery of information, while others suggested ways to enhance the program beyond existing content and format. FWP intends to carefully review these recommendations and incorporate those ideas most useful in helping to update and improve the program. The most frequently mentioned recommendations included the following, organized under three general headings:

(1) Program /Information

- *Make it mandatory for nonresidents to get a license.*
- *Make completion of this program mandatory to hunt on privately-owned land.*
- *Make it a part of the hunter education safety program.*
- *Require that all violators complete the program.*
- *Make it a book/CD and sell it. Offer the program to clubs, groups, etc.*

(2) Content/Design

- *The program is too long.*
- *The download time is too slow (e.g., many users couldn't get the videos to run fast enough).*
- *There is a need for a "save" button. There is no way for a person to stop, leave the program, and return to the site and begin again where they last left off.*
- *There is a need for more videos (e.g., regarding accidents, shooting too close to a hunting partner/vehicles/buildings, etc.).*

(3) About the Questions

- *Many of the questions were too easy.*
- *The easy questions are okay for beginners, but more questions are needed for advanced hunters.*
- *There is a need for less text and more focus on questions/videos.*

Last but not least, program participants offered many suggestions about what else could be done to promote responsible hunter behavior and good hunter-landowner relations in Montana. The most frequently received suggestions included:

- *This program is a good start. There is a need to continue efforts to better inform and educate both hunters and landowners. This will open the door for all sides (including landowners, hunters, and FWP) to work together.*
- *There is a need to better market and get the word out about this program.*
- *This program should be mandatory for all violators.*
- *Provide opportunities for hunters, landowners, and FWP staff to get together and meet face-to-face (e.g., community meetings, work days, social events, etc.).*