



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region Three Citizen's Advisory Committee FWP Region 3 – Bozeman June 6, 2013

CAC Attendees: David Gibson, Rick Arnold, Leroy Mehring, Cale Christiansen, Dan Crismore, Ken Sinay, Joe Cohenour, Bill Mealer, Cyndy Andrus, Tom Helm, Barb Cestero

CAC Absent: Richard Grady, Michael Dailey, Katie Weaver

FWP Staff Present: Pat Flowers, Andrea Jones, Christine Marozick, Jerry Walker, Howard Burt, Sam Sheppard, Travis Horton, Rick Northrup, Adam Pankratz, Jeff Hagener, Jennifer Ramsey, Cheryl Morris, Abby Nelson

Public: Sam Samson, Laura Lundquist (Bozeman Daily Chronicle), Dan Porter, Glenn Monahan, Nancy Schultz, Norm Bishop, Jim Bailey, Elise Bacchus, Art Simon, Vernon Campbell, Maggie Spinelli, Felix Spinelli, Jamie Leary (KBZK), Don Buchanan, Becky Weed, Eric Turcio (KTVM)

Greetings, Introductions, Roundtable – Pat Flowers

Greetings, introductions, roundtable, and public comment

Pat – Summary of recent high profile issues: three dead bison found in Yellowstone River, introduction of domestic sheep to Gardiner Basin, wolf harvested outside park in response to sheep predation

Question and answer session with the FWP Director's Office, *Jeff Hagener*

Jeff: Encourages local participation and interaction with field employees. Wants to emphasize importance of FWP working with people in the communities since they have expressed high importance of fish and game issues to governor. Overview of new commissioners.

Three highest priority issues from governor:

- 1) Fully transparent budget for 2013 legislature (Jeff summarized license sales and how it affects the structure of our current budget)
- 2) Land acquisitions and landholdings, current holdings (about 440,000 acres of land) and process to buy new
- 3) Landowner relations: Block management program, working with private lands in management of our resources, transition of land ownership/change of mindset of landowners

Other areas of importance:

- Endangered Species Act (including wolves, grizzly bears, sage grouse, lynx, wolverines, bull trout, pallid sturgeon)
- HB 24 was passed establishing a new Parks and Recreation Board (as of July 1, 2013)
- Aquatic Invasive Species

Questions/Comments:

Ken Sinay: Decline in license sales has always been an issue. Need alternative ways of thinking and creative thought.

Jeff Hagener: Challenge is finding those and then getting support. Sportsmen numbers are going down. Wildlife watchers are going up. We are looking for any ideas.

Jim Bailey: All benefit from wildlife. We should all pay. Suggested through income taxes. Regarding land acquisitions: nationwide magazine article on attractive cities in Rockies and featured Bozeman.

Glenn Monahan: Population in Montana has increased as well as popularity. Encourages buying land now before it gets more expensive. Tourism is now passing agriculture in economy. Believes having free ranging bison in Montana would boost economy greatly. Please forge ahead with this.

Jeff Hagener: Our intent is to do so. Obligated to do statewide plan. Has been stalled with change in administration.

Glenn Monahan: Reinstate Bison Working group.

Bill Mealer: Wyoming's elk population is artificially saturated. Don't look at that model. Regarding transparency in financial values and expenses of Wildlife Management Areas: what is the purpose of the WMA's and the benefit of grazing in riparian areas?

Jeff Hagener: Primary emphasis is for wildlife management, not a for-profit mechanism.

Norm Bishop: Public information plan on wolves and their ecology?

Jeff Hagener: Directed to Andrea –

Andrea Jones: Did public information outreach on not just how to kill wolves but how to live with wolves.

Pat Flowers: We will be stepping into this quite a bit more here in the future.

Nancy Schultz: Concern about climate change and effects of drought. WMAs and grazing allotments. Protecting riparian areas, use science.

Rick Arnold: Westslope cutthroat trout – will this be a continued concern?

Jeff Hagener: Yes. Used example of recovery project in lakes in Flathead Drainage.

Leroy: Stop rewarding bucket biology with fish derbies. Expressed concern about wolves and population of elk in and around YNP.

Bill Mealer: Issue of introducing domestic sheep around Electric Peak area. Wanton negligent behavior, should FWP be able to fine them?

Jeff Hagener: Something like this would need to come from constituents.

CAC Feedback on FWP Image and Public Perception

Cindy: Can go either way. Always hear the bad things on the news. What are we doing to tell our story and the good we do/success stories?

Rick Arnold: Main thing I heard too.

Dave Gibson: Paper does a feature on students' or teachers' accomplishments. Put a face on the organization by featuring accomplishments. Ex. Jerry's been here 30 years.

Joe Cohenour: I'm surrounded by sportsmen so I hear all about getting rid of wolves. What else can we do to start knocking down population before it gets out of control?

Jeff Hagener: Last year was first year we've seen wolf population drop a bit. Trying for adaptive management.

Felix Spinelli: In terms of public awareness, other states have done studies on values of natural resources.

Rick Arnold: General consensus is that FWP is performing at a reasonable level given budget and staff shortage. Need to make positive things more apparent to public. Solicit more private funding. FWP needs to have more positive relationships with different partners and collaborate more with public individuals/non-profits. More protection for native fish. More wardens and better paid. No need to have regulations if they can't be enforced. Social conflict and crowding on rivers. Felt doing a pretty good job with wolves thus far. Bison management needs to be 100% under FWP.

Leroy Mehring: Agree we need to treat wardens better. Every sportsman group is against the "B Tag." Sportsman groups were upset that they were not informed about the Milk River Acquisition. The entire state needs to be informed about things like this.

Jeff Hagener: I would like all the commissioners to be out on the ground before purchases like this happen.

Tom Helm: Thrilled that Governor wants to concentrate again on private land owners allowing access. Attitude and etiquette of sportsman needs to be addressed, perhaps by sportsman groups. Upset that "Roadkill Bill" passed.

Jeff Hagener: FWP did oppose "Roadkill Bill" initially. Eventually supported it b/c of rules that will be in place. All that needs to be worked out.

Cale Christiansen: Don't get a lot of good feedback, so agree with idea of putting out better publicity on what FWP does well.

Barb Cestero: People really value the work of the department. Less positive feedback was clouded by last legislative sessions. "Unresponsive." Outdoor recreationists who don't hunt or fish don't know how to participate and make their voices heard. There is not always the transparency that people like to see.

Ken Sinay: Majority of public is not engaged with FWP but they are very trusting of FWP's intent and expertise. Killing wildlife as part of wildlife management is outdated. Little opportunity for public to contribute. FWP is overly influenced by consumptive user, money. Reactive instead of proactive. FWP is too political. Personal opinion that FWP is too much of a "boys' club." Need new influence, sources of income, new involvement. Interact more with Montana Tourism Dept.

Bill Mealer: Most of hunting community supports FWP. Most unhappy is outfitters. Fishermen see FWP in a positive light.

Dan Crismore: Sheridan disappointed that for 20 years FWP had a substandard biologist, now a lengthy absence of a biologist. Feels abandoned by FWP. Positive feedback on Neil Anderson and brucellosis research. Commended work of local game warden. Community feels that FWP is

reactive instead of proactive. Optimistic that with the right person in the biologist position, relationship will improve.

Dave Gibson: Positive input was lukewarm, while negative was felt more strongly. Some negative is based on misinformation. Lack of presence at organization's events. Possibly have FWP pay for memberships.

Madison River Citizens Advisory Committee Recommendations, Cheryl Morris

Rick Arnold: Concerned that of seven members of committee, four were outfitters/guides/shop owners. When final product was presented, however, it was put together very well and not biased towards outfitters/guides. Concerns about how to implement some of the management plans. i.e. Iron Rangers. Who's collecting? Who's paying? Who defines "proper etiquette?" What is over-crowded?

Pat Flowers: This was just the initial step. Next step is to work out these questions. Department's task is to work out any other considerations, alternatives.

Wolf season proposals, Howard Burt

Grazing on Wildlife Management Areas, Rick Northrup

- Habitat Montana Policy
- Brief History
- Fundamental Bases for Grazing Leases
- Grazing Leases Evaluation

Rick Arnold: What plans do you have in place to keep cows out of streams where fish may be spawning?

Rick Northrup: Using a grazing rotation that is protective and a stocking rate that is fitting with our wildlife conservation needs. Try to avoid putting in riparian fences.

Glenn Monahan: Cottonwood forests on Missouri are predicted to be extinct within 20 years due to cattle grazing in riparian areas. Three scientific legs are Sampson from 1900s, Hormay's 1950s, and Aldo Leopold. You are not using the best available current science to base this program on. FWP should get out of the livestock grazing program.

Nancy Schultz: *gave example of sciences to use to base livestock grazing program*

Rick Northrup: Have a lot of monitoring data that will soon come out and show a substantial improvement on vegetation in time. We are fulfilling a need to restore some deteriorating habitat.

Jim Bailey: None of the four goals said anything about increasing the use and abundance of wildlife on WMAs. Standards being used are for agriculture, not wildlife habitat.

Bill Mealer: What is the income of grazing verses the cost of the grazing?

Environmental assessment on year-round tolerance for bison, Pat Flowers

Laura: When would this go into effect?

Pat: Probably next year. Tentative to have approved by this fall.

Rick Arnold: If the primary purpose of the no-tolerance zone is to keep birthing females away from cattle, why are they killing bulls?

Pat Flowers: That language was in the original document. This is a legitimate question. It is being discussed. We know more now than when we first adopted the plan.

Leroy Mehring: Would like Travis to address the deteriorating fishing conditions at Harrison. Try putting salmon in if rainbow aren't working.

Pat: We'll put this on the agenda for next meeting.

Rick Arnold: Respect Your Rivers and Granny Trout. Six months ago had an opportunity to pass it along to Montana Outdoor Science School. They now are disinterested and don't have the money to run it. I recommend re-accepting the Granny Trout and Respect Your Rivers campaign and encourage FWP to reincorporate it into the new Madison River MSRP program.

Pat : FWP (Andrea) cannot take this back on. Possibly as a part of the new MSRP budget, but I think that's too narrow. If we could find another third party to take this on, such as TU, it would move forward a lot quicker than it can with FWP.

Public comment:

None

2013 Dates:

March 7, 2013 12:30

June 6, 2013

September 12, 2013

December 5, 2013