

Region 6 Citizens Advisory Counsel
DATE: Tuesday, September 9, 2015
TIME: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
PLACE: Fort Peck Fish Hatchery

Region 6 CAC members present: Henry Gordon, Terry Stoppa, Gene Lavey, Carla Hunsley, Steve Harada, Jim Carver, Deb Madison

Region 6 CAC members not present: Mark Azure, Mark Peterson, Jason Holt, Damien Austin

FWP members present: Mark Sullivan, Marc Kloker, Steve Dalbey, Chase Sanderson, Kathy Smith, Tim Potter, Ken Plourde, Tyler Haddix

Guest Speaker(s): None

Guests attending the meeting: Commissioners Richard Kerstein, Shay Piedalue from CMR, Eugene's son from Scobey, Ron Garwood local landowner/sportsman

Welcome by Mark Sullivan and Marc Kloker

Marc & Mark welcomed everyone, we went over the agenda, and introductions were given as a roundtable.

Region 6 staff openings and changes--Mark Sullivan & Steve Dalbey

Mark and Steve discussed Tom Flowers leaving and Dave Fuller as the new FAS coordinator

Fisheries Update and 2016-2019 fishing regulations and changes--Steve Dalbey

There was discussion on FASs in general and possible new sites.

Steve D. described the 2016-2019 fishing changes and timeline on changes:

Minnow species for bait-

Steve D. discussed the "designated minnow species" change. Gene mentioned that it may help with the "bucket" problem of moving species to new ponds and such and causing problems such as at O'Juel reservoir. Steve H. asked if any minnows on list that can't be used that are common in MT. Steve said, no, they are trying to have all the common ones used. There was some discussion on the public education process that this will take.

Paddlefish lottery system-

Terry had a question concerning if it is legal to spear a perch while ice fishing. **Chase said he will look into it.**

Gene commented that Buer pond north of Scobey that has too many (small) perch. More need to be taken out to increase their size. Gene also wondered, on the West Fork of Poplar river, what can FWP do to increase the fishery...possible could brook trout have a better chance of survival?

Terry asked about the stocking of Bailey reservoir, and if so, what species have been/or are currently stocked. Steve D. said we currently stock walleye, there is a sustaining perch population, and Steve (thinks) trout are stocked there.

Steve H. talked about (on Fort Peck) that the walleye fishing was not as good as last year, bass fishing was phenomenal, pike down...and he had a question about what the lake is looking like in the future. Steve D. said it's hard to tell, but the cisco population and other forage is the big deciding factor.

There was a general discussion on the salmon fishery, etc.

Block Management Update--Tim Potter, Hunting Access Enhancement Coordinator

Tim gave a handout of the changes in BMAs in the area and discussed the reasons that different landowners gave for opting out of the program.

Jim asked about where the APR land came out of BMA and also Arnotts. Carla asked how much APR still has in BM.

Henry asked if BM was supposed to end in 2016 (he had heard a rumor). Tim said that the legislation mandated to break money up in different ways, and that may have caused some folks to be confused. However, as of now, there is not a concern of BM ending.

Steve H. wondered what is ongoing to sustain and enhance the BM program. Both Tim and Mark responded that money is always an issue, and that increasing incentives would likely draw new landowners to the program.

Upland Game Bird program and hunting forecast—Ken Plourde- Upland bird specialist.

Ken gave updates and info on the Open Fields program, with a handout and the Upland Bird Access guide.

Henry talked about his 320 acres of CRP, and the challenges of keeping it enrolled. **Ken and Henry would maybe talk about options.** Richard asked/commented about the differences in the counties and their loss of CRP.

2015 hunting season forecast & season-setting processes; antelope survey results-- Mark Sullivan

Richard Kerstein mentioned the 1000s of comments on the shoulder season. Jim questioned how the shoulder season will work, and gave many good comments on the concerns and potential issues with this program.

Information and Education update, Apprentice Hunter policy--Marc Kloker

Marc gave a handout on the hunter apprentice policy and discussed and took questions. Terry asked why bowhunter ed is needed for an apprentice to bowhunt if hunter ed is not required. **Marc will follow up on this.**

'15 & Forward, exercises--Tyler Haddix- Fisheries Biologist

Tyler gave a handout on the '15 and forward initiative. He also had a short Power Point on the initiative, and showed some of the results of the clicker questions from the public. Tyler then facilitated a discussion on "What does FWP look like when it's 'good' and conversely, 'bad'."

Law enforcement and AIS update—Chase Sanderson- Warden

Chase discussed the new warden in the region...himself. Chase also described the new tagging rule, and the allowed use (and necessary steps needed to use) of suppressors while hunting.

Carla had a question on a battery-operated sight on her son's bow, and if it was legal or illegal.

CAC Roundtable; public comments

Gene Lavey- Gene would like to see more fish in the Poplar River. He said a swift fox was spotted in the last month north of Scobey. Gene wondered what is going on with the Bullwacker road access? Tim answered...the Wilks brothers are opening the Bullwacker road currently from Sept 1- Jan 1. Gene did not agree with the arrangement by the Wilks that they could control/direct how the public used the property, when it is largely public land.

Henry Gordon- Indicated that there was more than 100% more antelope than last year...25 rather than 10. He has seen 15 WT does with twins and one with triplets on his place.

He had a question/comment on bison, in particular the ones that died...how did they die? Lack of water? FWP spent a lot of money and resources on bison and how were they allowed to die? It would take more than a week for them to die of water.

Jim Carver- Jim went to the bison meeting and he had read through the EIS. He does not feel FWP was up front about the cost of putting together the EIS. Also, what will this cost the sportsmen of Montana to have free-roaming bison?

Mark addressed comments: bison working group and the question/comments on the bison hearing.

Jim had a question and/or suggestion on the ending of CAC terms. Jim thinks if someone is going to be “re-elected” then it should not be open to the public again. **Marc and Mark said we will consider his suggestion and discuss with the other managers and new supervisor.**

Terry Stoppa- Terry wondered about the fee in Beaver Creek Park for fishing and if there had been any changes with that. Steve D. responded that nothing had changed as of yet. Is that right Steve? I kinda missed your response.

Terry also commented about the camp host at Bear Paw. He wondered if we could perhaps add a shelter roof over the concrete pad to help shade the host’s trailer, making it more accommodating and/or attractive to future hosts. **Steve D. said he would consider the idea and talk to Dave Fuller about the possibility.**

Carla Hunsley- Carla noted that the salmon fishery at Fort Peck Reservoir has been real good for the area, as she knows that people are coming in from all over the state and out-of-state to have a chance at catching a salmon. Carla also mentioned that she has had an interesting time while being a member of the CAC the last 3 years.

Steve Harada- Steve said he enjoyed his time on the CAC over the last 6 years. He appreciates the efforts of FWP, particularly region 6, but he feels that Helena keeps our hands tied. However, Steve feels the CAC should have more clout and that there is a lack of follow up on what the CAC accomplishes. In addition, FWP needs to provide more transparent information concerning strategic plans in management in the future. Also, politics needs to be kept out of FWP as much as possible.

Mark and Marc plan to look at charter of CAC. We will forward a copy of the charter to current, outgoing, and incoming members, and also discuss amongst the management team at Region 6.

Deb Madison- Seb said that she will look into finding out if the reservation and FWP could work together a bit on upland bird licenses (referring to an earlier comment). Deb had several questions and concerns about the Yellowstone River and the proposed new dam at Intake. Steve D. said that plans are moving forward with the dam at intake, which will provide water to irrigators and a side channel to provide passage for sturgeon and other fish.

Among CAC members and present FWP staff, there was a lot of discussion of FWP, DNRC, BOR, and the CORP involvement with the dam on the Yellowstone.

Steve D. addressed several of her questions and concerns, and said that he would give her a call and set up a meeting with some of the folks involved.

FWP Commissioner Richard Kerstien- addressed the appointment of his commissioner position, and how it was not necessarily a “political position.” He just wanted to do it.

He had been at the bison meeting, he'd read the EIS, and he had a lot of questions as well. He also thought that the EIS sounded like it was very pro-bison. Richard was very aware that Malta-area folks had multiple concerns on the issue.