

R1 CAC Meeting  
March 2, 2016  
Public Meeting Room

Public Present: Jim Vashro

CAC Present: Jay Sheffield, Ron Hawkinson, Charles Abell, Dan Short, Mike Rooney, Joe Rudolph, Colter Comstock, Mike Robertson, Larry Lack, and Kari Gabriel; Alumni: Tony Anderson and Chuck Hunt

FWP Present: Commissioner Gary Wolfe, John Fraley, Jim Williams, Neil Anderson, Lee Anderson, and Nancy Ivy

Neil Anderson: Neil gave an overview on the second bighorn sheep sub-committee meeting. Working at getting message out regarding wild vs. domestic sheep; developing a flyer. Commissioner Wolf: National Wildlife Federation's focus is on bighorn vs. domestic sheep. Vashro: National Wildlife Federation has completed a comprehensive study. Neil: All viable herds have domestics adjacent. Jay: In my area we have domestic and wild sheep with opportunities for contact.

Commissioner Gary Wolfe: February Commission meeting focus was on season setting. Controversial issues: shoulder seasons & Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. The 1/19 meeting was to gather input. Owen Sowerwine issue was tabled to let Department deal with it.

The shoulder season controversy concerned the overlap with archery season. Will have overlap in Regions 1 & 2, but only on private land. The purpose of shoulder season is to push elk onto public lands, i.e., redistribution. There are 5 or 6 pilot shoulder seasons going on. Some are enthusiastic; some are upset. The majority of regions will have to draw a B tag to participate in 2016. If any shoulder season becomes a wreck, Commission can adapt and change. Shoulder seasons won't go on indefinitely. Wolves have changed the landscape of Yellowstone herd. Can't continue to kill bull elk in smaller herds. Have to balance what's socially, economically & politically acceptable. John Fraley noted that people left the Commission meeting at R-1 HQ pleased. Commissioner Wolfe: An amendment for 2017 season – B licenses for R-1 will be an antlerless permit, with the general elk license to be used in conjunction with that permit. Can shoot another elk in another region with a B license, but not in R-1.

Ken McDonald, FWP Wildlife Division Administrator joined us via videoconference from Helena. He gave overview of the grizzly bear delisting process, population summary, and future direction. It's a matter of managing mortalities – females at 7.6% mortality rate to keep population stable. Good approach. Montana is working with Idaho and Wyoming on MOA. FWP may take the sliding-scale approach, recommend that strategy, and move forward to delist. Optimistically Yellowstone may delist in 1 year. Jim W.: If Yellowstone gets delisted, then will be challenged again? Fraley: If congress takes plan & implements, it can't be litigated, right? Jim: Our grizzly bear science is very good. Neil: What is target for sliding scale? Ken M: Floor of 800; we're at 1,000. With the interest in grizzlies, Commissioner Wolfe recommended having Cecily Costello do the presentation she gave at The Wildlife Society meeting last week.

#### ROUND TABLE:

Joe Rudolph: We have seasonal people managing boat check stations with little or no biological experience. Have issue with level of training. Vashro: Staff go through pretty intensive training to identify invasive species. Have issue with boat being locked up if found to be wet from the rain.

Jay Sheffield: People upset about shoulder seasons. When it was explained regarding private property, it's been reasonable quiet. Commissioner Wolfe: Had talk with Tim Thier. If we don't have shoulder season (50 permits), we'll probably have 50 damage hunters. Shoulder season would be more effective.

Ron Hawkinson: Doe season last week of season well received. Would like to have handicapped hunters included. Neil: If disabled, can hunt WT does all season long.

Charlie Abell: Thanks for help in getting Stoltze; concept great. Concerned with Weyerhaeuser even though presently they say hunting will continue as with Plum Creek. Mentioned show called "Wardens." Lee Anderson said there is a push to have a conservation aspect for the program to get more of the big picture. Whitefish Lake Golf Course has goose problem. Lee: Can get permit to destroy nests and eggs. Told Charlie to contact him. Concerned with global warming and effect on grizzly bear reproduction. Neil: They occupied Arizona; they're adaptable, if they have good food resources. Disappointed not to get catch & release on Whitefish drainage. Our native trout should be protected. Commissioner Wolfe added that FWP was a critical component in the Haskill Basin (Stoltze) acquisition.

Mike Rooney: Thanks for change to antlerless. Echo what's been said regarding shoulder seasons. After landing 24-lb. rainbow, lots of people targeting big fish. Mentioned fishing survey online regarding how people perceive FWP.

Mike Robertson: Regarding shoulder seasons, FWP is just selling more licenses. If you turn it into another B tag, it won't help FWP PR. It's good if you use your elk tag. Discussed illegally introduced species, closed basin lakes, and angler pressure surveys. At Smith Lake, the pike and perch are getting little. Need to manage. Lee: Have a 50 limit. Mike: People are looking for quality fishing.

Dan Short: Delighted to see shoulder season in White Sulphur Springs. Delighted to see results of bull trout case. \$6,000 in fines; disappointed there was no loss of privileges. Regarding walleye caught in Swan Lake. Maybe be able to specify what body of water they came from. AIS rules mentioned; expands what contamination is. Regulation gripes: Missing catch & release below Blankenship. Shared Idaho F&G sign: "All cutthroat trout catch & release." Mentioned wife starting "Women on the Fly of Flathead," with 40 more advocates for fly fishing.

Chuck Hunt: Shoulder season-private land overlap, nice job. Good turnout at sportsman show at fairgrounds. 20 new members; generated \$1600 profit. McGregor Lake issue – State Lands; Landowner built house on right-of-way. Made motion to have returned to original state. Need to have house moved.

Colter Comstock: Now that people are looking at the shoulder season and are more educated about it, they are calming down. Turkey situation in town is getting resolved. One idea would be to catch them, kill them, and donate them to the food bank; or catch them and release them somewhere else. Tim felt they would become someone else's issue if this is done. Jim: Warden Chappelow is working with Tim Thier on this.

Kari Gabriel: Knows of two other fly fishing groups that aren't in actual groups for Dan Short's wife.

Larry Lack: With regard to Aquatic Invasive Species, feels that the people at boat check stations are well-trained for what they do. Getting hybrids now; will lock up boat if they have snails. The name for Plum Creek Timber Company should be changed to "Timber Real Estate Trusts." I don't trust Weyerhaeuser. Regarding black bears, Olympia National Park dealt with them. People killed them and they still multiplied. Regarding turkeys, I have no training in birds, but have been watching two flocks since 1999. We have many turkeys. I think some have reproduced three times.

Ron Hawkinson: Question for Commissioner Wolfe – Do we have results of shoulder season?  
Commissioner Wolfe – will have update next week.

Jim Vashro: Smith Lake is popular; parking gets full and spills out onto county road. Flathead Fish & WL is wondering if they can purchase land. "Conservation Hawks"

Jim W: Mark Racicot, our former governor, is on the board of Weyerhaeuser, and he knows the value of land access.

Meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.