

CAC Meeting

Region 5 Citizen Advisory Council Meeting

March 30, 2015
5:30 PM to 8:30 PM
Fish, Wildlife & Parks
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, MT 59105

Meeting called by: Bob Gibson

Type of meeting: CAC Council Meeting

Location: Region 5 Headquarters

Facilitator: Bob Gibson

Attendees: Gary Schaaf, JW Westman, Lee Brunkhorst, Tom Miller, Bill Milton, Brady Norland, Chris Fleck, Lee Deming, Doug Dreeszen, Doug Haacke, Mike Whittington, Barb Beck, Mike Ruggles, Ray Mulé, Harold Guse, Bob Gibson, Dianne Stiff, Matt Ladd

Absent: Ken Frazer, Doug Habermann

Topics

5:30-6:00 p.m.	Welcome, Dinner, Introductions	Bob Gibson
6:00-7:00 p.m.	CAC Purpose	Barb Beck
7:00-7:45 p.m.	Manager's Updates	R-5 Managers
7:45-8:15 p.m.	CAC Member Round Robin	CAC Members
8:30 p.m.	Adjourn	Bob Gibson

CAC Purpose Discussion		Barb Beck/Staff/CAC Members
CAC Purpose – Barb Beck		
<p>Future Direction of the Region 5 CAC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings will be held three times per year. • Meetings will be held during the afternoon. • Memberships will be three year terms with our current members all to serve one more year. Keep the legislative session in mind. • A few more people will be added to the existing Region 5 CAC looking at enforcement, public official, academia, land trust, and NGO (nongovernmental) backgrounds. • There may be subcommittee or ad hoc working group opportunities down the road. • The CAC Charter purpose was reviewed and all agreed that the group is strictly advisory. Bob asked the group to read the entire charter and get back to him and Barb with questions and comments. • Communication efforts between meetings will happen. Between now and the next meeting e-mail will be used which includes adding the CAC to the staff notes distribution. CAC members are to give feedback as to how that is working for them at the next meeting. 		
Action items CAC members read through entire Charter; communication effort with CAC members.	Person responsible: Bob Gibson	Deadline: By the next meeting
Managers Updates		R-5 Staff
<p>Supervisor: Barb Beck</p> <p>Barb introduced herself and her appointment as the new Regional Supervisor. Her background is a social scientist by training, and she came from the private sector. Her natural resources career started with the Forest Service where she worked for 13 years. She was a district ranger in Townsend, MT and also Grangeville, ID. She left the Forest Service to start her own consulting business based in Red Lodge, and did that for just a little over 23 years. Her consulting business was conflict resolution work and facilitation on land use and natural resource issues. Most of the federal agencies that Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) collaborates with were her clients, and she has a good understanding of their statutory responsibilities and interests. She did quite a bit of work directly for FWP during those two decades of her own business. She worked on everything from program reviews for game damage, alternative livestock, review of the interagency grizzly bear committee, trapping, the funding increase, to more recently find common ground which she is planning on discussing with our CAC group in the near future</p> <p>Administration: Dianne Stiff</p> <p>Shared license fee information and HB 140 information updating CAC members on the new FWP license structure. Members are encouraged to share with their communities the information and encourage youth (12-17) and seniors (62 or over) to purchase the half price sportsman license which is \$35.00 plus the \$10.00 base hunting fee. Just as a FYI the only way a resident of Montana can contribute to Habitat Montana is through the purchase of a resident sportsman's license. The nonresident native went to half of the nonresident big game combination license which is \$505.50. We had license provider training this spring that was well received by providers. Drawing deadline information shared included the March 15th deadline process (to be drawn April 18-22), the upcoming deadlines of upper Missouri River paddlefish on March 31 (to be drawn by the second week of April), moose, goat, sheep and bison on May 2 (with the moose goat and sheep to be drawn by the week of June 13 and bison the week of September 6), deer B, elk B and antelope on June 1 (with deer B and elk B to be drawn July 18-20 and antelope the week of August 1), and super tag chances deadline being June 30th with the drawing the week of July 11th.</p>		

Fisheries: Mike Ruggles

The Annual Fishing Newsletter is out and available to the public. This newsletter gives a summary written by each fisheries biologist throughout the state and what was significant in their area this last year. There are copies of the newsletter at all the regional offices and on the FWP website. With regards to the Aquatic Invasive Species program in the state, overall the message is getting out there, but prevention is the key (<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/species/ais>). Jason Rhoten, fisheries biologist for the western part of Region 5, has completed estimates on the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone in the Robertson Draw section; Rock Creek downstream from Red Lodge, the data has been collected but none of the results are in yet; in progress for the first time is ling sampling on the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone upstream and downstream from Bridger; the trout population estimate on Spring Creek just north of Big Timber is in progress with this area being marked but needs to be recaptured; and walleye floy tagging on Cooney Reservoir. Mike, fisheries biologist for the eastern part of Region 5, started the ling survey the third week of February on the Yellowstone River from Buffalo Mirage FAS, down to the Bighorn River, finishing up last week; and will begin the sauger floy tagging on the Yellowstone River for the next two weeks. This year fishing did take off early with early ice out as we have received over a dozen fish tag returns. Some of the bigger projects for Mike include the Egge Diversion Dam removal on the Musselshell River, hoping to select a contractor soon. Hope to have the dam out and bank restored this spring. With the Musselshell Roundup reach, there is a concerted effort with that watershed group, bringing in an engineer to see what is going there with the more recent years of flooding. The end of next month the diversion dam on the bottom end that is no longer needed will end up with a fish passage either by removal of that dam or a bypass that would be permanent. The contractor for that project has been selected. In the next Montana Outdoor's magazine there will be an article written by Brett French about the Musselshell River. With the Bighorn system Mike has calls every other week during the spring with the Bureau of Reclamation. Hoping to keep the river at 2000 cfs this year as that is good for the rainbows. There is a petition that has gone to the Fish and Wildlife Commission concerning crowding and social issues on the lower Boulder River. This will be on the Commission agenda for the meeting in April.

Wildlife: Ray Mulé

Biologists are conducting bird surveys and spring deer surveys. The Forest Service has begun their process for revising the forest management plans on the Custer/Gallatin and Lewis and Clark. CAC members are encouraged to attend the public meetings on these forest plans and provide input. The biologists are also meeting with the Forest Service to make sure fish and wildlife issues are being addressed in those plans. There are a couple of lands projects that we are working on. One has already been approved by the Commission to move which is a conservation easement on 11,000 acres of sagebrush grass land habitat north of Lavina. At the next Commission meeting we will be asking for approval to move forward on a small acquisition rounding out the Grant Marsh WMA on the Bighorn River. Just finished our season setting process. A couple of the major changes are the adding a small number of mule deer B licenses back into almost every hunting district, and elk shoulder seasons. Those seasons begin on private land August 15 to the start of the normal archery season, then we will have our normal archery season, then we'll have a rifle season for one week, then the normal five week season, then a rifle season through January 1 in most of our hunting districts in Region 5. There will be additional elk B licenses for those areas with your general elk license valid during all those time periods as well. The B licenses are mostly targeted to private land with a few on public lands to have pressure across the entire landscape at the same time. The turkey regulations had some major changes this year. If you buy every turkey license that you can get you could take nine turkeys total in Montana this year.

Enforcement: Harold Guse

All warden positions are filled in Region 5 with 10 field wardens. One position emphasizes recreation in the state parks, a criminal investigator, two sergeants, based out of Billings that are first line supervisors and the

captain, Harold, who supervises the sergeants and the criminal investigator. The captain oversees the regional enforcement program and works with the Helena enforcement staff on statewide policy and budgeting. We have had a lot of turn-over in the agency in enforcement for the last several years. A class just finished at the Law Enforcement Academy with 7 wardens graduating, and another class begins next week with 7 more wardens attending. What this results in is a lot of training for these new game wardens that are just starting out. There is costs associated with the training, new vehicles, gear and equipment for these new wardens also. The primary responsibility of the wardens is to assure the funding for the department through people buying licenses. Other priorities are access which involves dealing with landowner and sportsman conflicts with hunting or fishing access. With the AIS work we are trying to sort out how big a priority this is for our agency.

Comm-Ed: Bob Gibson

After the end of hunting season focus is turned to the education end of Comm-Ed. Aquatic education classes are being held in the local elementary schools. There are also bow hunter and hunter education spring classes going on. There is a volunteer opportunity for those interested to help with the three days of fishing for the kids at Lake Elmo. Bob is looking for helpers to set up rods and reels, and show the kids how to cast on May 17, 18 and 19.

Action items: Topic – Finding Common Ground; Lake Elmo Kids Fishing Days Volunteers	Person responsible: Barb Beck & Bob Gibson	Deadline: By the next meeting and May 2016
---	---	--

CAC Member Round Robin	CAC Members
------------------------	-------------

Gary Schaff – His brother will not be coming out to hunt this year with the nonresident native costs going up.

Bill Milton – He is going to explore a different paradigm where community and the agency communicates. Working groups composed of members of communities working with FWP to discuss and work on specific topics could change the ownership relationship and trust of the local people involved in that work and how those communities take care of large landscapes. He reflected on the CMR working group that he has been working with for the last six years.

Brady Norland – He heard shoulder season comments some negative and positive; had nonresident friends comment about the increased fees, but they are still willing to do it.

JW Westman – Would like to receive the '15 and Forward document. Would like to continue the conversation on the “Montana Model” of fish and wildlife conservation and public trust. As an education effort for Montanans we have a long history of success with the public trust being the foundation. With diseases would like an honest discussion with stakeholders.

Lee Brunckhorst – He had two different instances of liability for access that came up which he will follow up with Harold. He caught a lot of flack on the nonresident native license costs going up. The hunters against hunger program please promote that as it is really positive in his community. He is the Big Timber Food Bank president and he has seen the direct benefit with about 3,000 lbs. of venison distributed out of their local food bank in the course of a year.

Chris Fleck – Thanks to the Department for the improvements on Cliff Swallow FAS on the Stillwater River. Depending on the funding for fishing access sites would like to suggest Whitebird and Swinging Bridge FASs for boat launch recovery. As a licensing provider he is finding seniors somewhat upset on increase and

encouraged getting some additional information out to the public on the fee increases. He'd like to see licenses available on mobile devices.

Thomas – Feedback on the shoulder seasons was one good comment and one bad, and then heard the need for decisions to be driven by science. A couple of seniors he talked to thought the increase on fishing licenses is a good thing, and that it's still a good deal.

Lee Deming – He heard good comments on shoulder seasons from a dozen people; interesting comments on bison relocation; comments on making good progress on wolves, and that fishermen are pretty happy about what is going on in Region 5.

Action items: '15 & Forward Document Distribution	Person responsible: Bob Gibson	Deadline: By the next meeting.
---	-----------------------------------	--------------------------------

Housekeeping and Adjourn	Bob Gibson
--------------------------	------------

Next Meeting Date – In the next couple of weeks Bob will conduct a poll on when to meet late summer with potential topic list, and then we'll meet again sometime after the election with the legislators.