

**Region 6 Citizens Advisory Committee**

**DATE: Tuesday, January 26, 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, Jim Carver, Mark Peterson, Perri Jacobs, Brian Olson, Jay Crandall, Jason Holt

Region 6 CAC members not present: Mark Azure, Deb Madison, Dirk Monson

FWP members present: Mark Sullivan, Marc Kloker, Steve Dalbey, Chase Sanderson, Kathy Smith, Tim Potter, Heath Headley, Shane Reno

Guest Speaker(s): None

Guests attending the meeting: Commissioners Richard Kerstein, Commissioner Rick Stuker, Shay Piedalue from CMR, Tip Lavey- Gene's son and chauffeur, Christy Hagler- district director for Ryan Zinke

**Welcome; review of agenda; Region 6 staff openings and changes--**Mark Sullivan and Marc Kloker welcomed all of the new and existing members and special guests, and Marc went over the agenda and the packet of handouts.

**Introduction of CAC members, FWP staff, and special guests-**

-folks present answered a series of questions:

Name

Where they are from (background)

Occupation and outside affiliation

What is your favorite "fish" or "wildlife" in the State of Montana? Why?

\*During the introductions, Jim Carver had a question of Commissioner Kerstein as to why he chose to vote yes on the transfer of sage grouse birds to Alberta. Richard answered that his reasoning was that the proposed population of removing 40 from 10,000 or so estimated sage grouse seemed insignificant, and that they will also be taken care of in Canada. Jason added that he felt sage grouse are doing fine in Montana.

**Review of CAC charter--Mark Sullivan**

-Mark covered the Citizen Advisory Committee Charter, available on the FWP website.

**Review of action items from the last meeting—as assigned**

Terry's question if it is legal to spear perch: Chase answered that it is not. Only walleye, northern, sauger, and burbot may be speared. In addition, in Fort Peck Reservoir, you also spear Chinook salmon and lake trout.

Henry and Ken Plourde had discussed talking about options for CRP: Henry said they have been in touch.

Terry's question about why bowhunter ed is needed for an apprentice to bowhunt if hunter ed is not required: Marc responded the bill was written that way, and he was not sure of the reasoning behind it.

Jim's question/suggestion on the ending of CAC terms: Mark responded that the CAC Charter specifies that terms are to be from 2 to 4 years and in R6 the CAC term is 3 years. Members may serve up to two terms, but since there is a high interest level in serving on the CAC, we require members to reapply for a second term and be taken into consideration along with all of the other applicants. This resulted in a lengthy discussion on the CAC membership recruiting and applications.

Terry's question on the possibility of putting up a shelter roof over the concrete pad at Bear Paw FAS: Steve and FAS coordinator Dave Fuller have been in touch and are still looking into it.

Question/comments about the role of CAC: Marc had emailed a copy to all CAC members (old and new) after the September meeting. Mark addressed the CAC Charter earlier in the meeting.

Deb Madison's concerns about the Yellowstone River project: Steve has been in touch with Deb and others about resolving/addressing some of the questions and concerns.

**Wildlife Updates: 2015 hunting season Block Management wrap up--Tim Potter.**

Tim went over a breakdown of the number of landowners and acreage involved. He also had a spreadsheet showing the numbers of hunters...up 13% from last year total. Tim showed statistics on the different large BM areas (north Valley, north Phillips, North Blaine, etc.), showing trends in the number of hunters.

-R. Kerstein mentioned about the possibility of allowing non consumptive users in block management, but not sure how it would be paid.

-R. Stuker said maybe that is something that could be discussed with the Finding Common Ground group.

**Wildlife Updates: Check station summary; 2016-17 hunting proposals —Mark Sullivan (in place of absent Scott Thompson)**

-The results for the Havre Check station were displayed during lunch, and no discussion was presented due to being short on time. CAC members had been emailed a copy of the check station summary as a press release, and also were given a copy of the totals in their packet at the meeting.

-Mark presented for Scott Thompson, using a power point highlighting the changes in Region 6 for deer, elk, antelope, etc. CAC members were given a copy of the proposed changes in their packet.

-Terry suggested the idea of issuing more permits during the regular season to get the harvest objective when things are more accessible due to better weather and trail conditions. Mark responded that it is more of a distribution issue, and that many elk were on land where hunters do not have access during the general season so issuing more permits does not help. This is why the late shoulder season was being looked at as a strategy.

-Henry asked about the difference between a damage hunt and a shoulder season, and how that works with outfitters. Mark responded that the shoulder season is another part of our hunting seasons and is in the big game regulations. Damage hunts are tied directly to game damage problems and are not listed in our big game regulations and can only take place on land open to some public hunting during the general big game season.

-R. Stuker addressed some of the questions on shoulder seasons.

-Brian wondered why you can use a general permit for a shoulder season in some areas (not in region 6). He suggested if we are issuing shoulder season licenses, that why not charge more money for that opportunity? R. Stuker mentioned that people balk quite a bit at charging more for licenses.

### **Information and Education update; HB 140 changes in FWP license structure--Marc Kloker**

-Marc gave an update and review on things going on in the I&E department since the Sept. meeting. Included in the packets to each member was a copy of the HB 140 changes in FWP license structure.

### **Fisheries Update --Steve Dalbey**

Steve gave a presentation on Region 6 fisheries...boundaries of management areas, trends in styles of fishing/pressure over the years, and changes for 2016-19 fishing regulations.

### **Fort Peck Reservoir Update-- Heath Headley**

Heath did a presentation on forage species, showing the effects of shoreline and water conditions that fluctuate with lake elevations and ice conditions. Heath also presented information on past and current walleye and northern abundance and size structure, along with a brief summary and outlook for the 2016 reservoir fishery.

### **Enforcement Update--Shane Reno**

Shane recapped some of the bigger law enforcement cases, including the 65 over-limit of sharptail grouse, the spotlight poaching case outside Havre (lots of discussion about the fines and privileges lost in this case), and the poached Fort Peck trophy deer.

## **CAC Roundtable; public comments**

### **Terry Stoppa-**

-Terry was pleased with the change made on the amount of trout limit in Bear Paw Lake.  
-Had a question for Tim on any chance of getting more BMA west of Havre. Tim said that Andy Matakis is working on some new land owners in that area.

-Terry was wondering if there were any chance of getting an occasional check station on the west side of Havre? Mark answered that it is just too difficult for man power and time to have more than one permanent check station in the Region. We rely on harvest surveys for most of our data.

-Are there any statistics on the use of the Lost River WMA? Scott Hemmer will get back to Terry usage of the WMA for the last few years.

### **Jason Holt-**

-Range update: Winter rain has frozen over snow, and a large chunk of the range has been covered in ice. Deer seem to be doing OK, as there are a few around. Saw antelope on the content road today, and last year had seen them further north, so they seem to be moving south.

-Jason attended a bison meeting in Malta with Ryan Zinke that was discussing the BLM allowing APR to remove interior fences for pasture, when other ranches of livestock, etc. are in rotation systems. He noticed that the Malta meeting had local deputies there and it was well received. In contrast, Jason had heard that much of the Malta public was opposed to the wardens that were present at the bison hearing, and that locals are still talking about the feeling that wardens were intimidating people.

-Mark P. asked Jason if it is fair to say that private farming or agriculture folks seem to need to meet certain guidelines set forth by the BLM and other agencies, whereas it seems like the APR does not need to meet those same guidelines. Jason responded that yes, there seems to be some of that especially with the BLM, but Jason is glad to see that the renegotiation of the Page property that APR bought retained the same conservation easement provisions that FWP set forth originally. APR seems to have a lot of money and power and connections in high places.

### **Mark Peterson-**

-Range Update: sharptails have increased, whitetails up (pushed down from Canada?), jackrabbits on the rebound.

-Discussed the Beaver Creek Lake project, and that it was a good cooperative project/effort with multiple entities.

-Suggested looking at Fort Assiniboine as a possibility for a state park.

-Talk of the Beaver Creek Park- day-use permit for fishing is still on the table.

-There has been talk of trying to get a walking trail from Kiwanis Park to Bear Paw Lake. Mark P. wondered if FWP could help with some parts of it (funding, etc.) and possible interpretive signs, etc. **Steve and Marc will look into funding for this trail and/or interpretive signs.**

### **Perri Jacobs-**

-Perri mentioned that she is part of the Ranchers Stewardship Alliance, whose mission is to promote the ecological, social and economic conditions that will sustain the biodiversity and integrity of the America's northern mixed-grass prairie for present and future generations.

### **Brian Olson**

-He would like to see us make a list of table-ready projects, so that when WU gets money, they could potentially help FWP on projects without having to jump through a bunch of hoops. **Steve will look into this with his staff and try to put something together.**

-Brian has been seeing issues of folks pulling their spear houses out and leaving the hole unmarked. It is a dangerous situation...and talked about perhaps mandating that spear holes are marked when they are left.

-He discussed that putting out setlines or tip-ups should be handled differently to give more of a "fair chase" to fish, and also that those lines should be attended more regularly.

### **Jay Crandell**

-Range Update: Antelope have rebounded in the Daniels Co area. Deer population is doing well.

-Access is an issue with all of the DNRC and private land in Daniels County. Maybe look at getting some BMA's into connecting some of this to DNRC land. **Tim and Ryan Linder can follow up on this.**

### **Gene Lavey**

-Wonders when we will finally put brook trout in the westfork.

-Asked about the status of Box Elder Reservoir. Steve responded that they are catching some fish, but there is still some problems with known water quality.

-Deer are doing well and there looks to be a good bird population still.

### **Henry Gordon**

-Wondered what happened to bighorn sheep that was running loose by Lloyd. Shane said that he has not heard that it was ever found, but Scott H. had gone to look for it.

-Antelope were 3-400% more than last year.

-Henry had a question along the line of BLM removing fences and bison grazing. Henry is in a conservation easement and knows that if he sells it the fences have to stay as per agreement with the easement. He knows that John Cowells easement had developed fences and water, and heard

that FWP would allow taking the fences out for APR and their bison use. Mark said that is not correct; there are no plans to take out any fences on the Cowell Ranch and that FWP would not support doing this.

-Whitetail seem to have left the country, but they may all be on his neighbor's property.

### **James Carver**

-He would like, on top of Reynolds hill that goes down to Fourchette bay, an area for overflow parking. He had contacted the CMR but hasn't heard anything back. There was a discussion that this is not a FWP issue, but perhaps we could have a CMR representative at the next CAC meeting.

-Jim wonders where things are in the Nelson Reservoir dam project. **Steve plans on having Cody speak to this matter at the next meeting.**

-Jim gave FWP thanks for cutting back on the Murph's ice fishing tourney numbers.

-He liked the HB 140 licensing changes spreadsheet that was in the handouts.

-He attended the season setting meeting in Malta. Jim mentioned that Scott Thompson did a good job with the season setting, and he likes the proposed changes overall.

### **Special Guests Roundtable:**

**Commissioner Stuker**- Mentioned that Fort Assiniboine was looked at as a State Park, but it was determined that it wouldn't work. During commission meetings, Commissioner Stuker recommended that early shoulder seasons (elsewhere in the state) begin (for rifle) Aug. 15 until the start of archery, and then start again during the general season.

**Commissioner Kerstein**- Mentioned that he is getting a lot of comments on the elk changes, particularly for the western part of the state.

Set next meeting ideas/topics/date; allocate per diem; adjourn; drive home safe!

Potential agenda items for June meeting