

Region 6 Citizens Advisory Committee
DATE: Tuesday, June 8, 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, Jim Carver, Mark Peterson, Perri Jacobs, Mark Azure, Dirk Monson, Jay Crandall, Jason Holt

Region 6 CAC members not present: Deb Madison, Brian Olson, Gene Lavey

FWP members present: Mark Sullivan, Marc Kloker, Steve Dalbey, Todd Tryan, Tim Potter, Heath Headley, Dave Fuller, Scott Thompson, Macy Dugan

Guest Speaker(s): None

Guests attending the meeting: Michael Kinzey Biologist from Fort Belknap

Welcome; review of agenda; Introduction of CAC members, FWP staff,- Marc Kloker and Mark Sullivan

FWP staff changes and Region 6 updates- Mark Sullivan

Region 6 is basically fully staffed, and the only position we are looking to fill is the biologist in Malta. Scott spoke that this is in process and had 24 applicants. Mark briefly mentioned the '15 and Forward project.

Review of action items from the last meeting—as assigned

1. Terry Stoppa

Are there any statistics on the use of the Lost River WMA?

From Scott Hemmer via email: Here were the total visitor numbers this year for the Lost River WMA:

Year	Hunter Roster Numbers
2013	154
2014	123
2015	203

“This year I had placed sign-in sheets in the box earlier in the year and had 18 people sign in prior to the hunting season, which I didn’t capture in previous years. Even without these 18 visitors the total numbers were up this year. I counted each name signed in. Some people may have signed in multiple times and I counted them each time they signed in. This is a minimum count since some people may only sign in once and others may not sign in at all.

-Jim Carver asked what could be done to increase those numbers because the access is not very good. Mark S. responded that the access is difficult, but sometimes that is what hunters/recreationists are looking for.

-Mark P. asked about the plan for the newer acquisition. Mark S. and Scott said that this was in the works.

Mark P. asked about how we are going to manage the elk at Lost River, etc. Mark S. said that there are no current plans on changing the current "general tag" management.

There was also some conversation on the current moose population.

Jason asked about allowing people out on WMA's when it is not hunting season. Scott said there is currently no restrictions and that our WMA's are open year round.

2. Mark Peterson

-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.

Dave Fuller has been in touch with the trails coordinator for FWP. They will stay in touch on the project as it progresses.

3. Brian Olson (Brian was not present)

-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.

Steve answered that he and Cody have put together a list.

Access:

Dry Fork- potential boat ramp or parking area
Fishing access to the Havre water weir on the Milk River
Kids fishing pond opportunities in the Havre area

Habitat:

Xmas tree reefs on Fresno
Fresno man-made perch spawning structures
Baileys habitat project
Dry Fork habitat project (off shore shoals/rock piles)

Rearing Ponds:

Funding for continued use and maintenance of Hill County water ponds in Kremlin

Jay Crandell

-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.

Marc mentioned to the group that the Tim Potter and Jay had been in touch and were enrolling some new block management in Daniels Co.

Dave addressed the question that Terry had at a previous meeting about putting a shade-shelter over the camp host pad. Dave responded that all three camp hosts that are there this summer have said that they didn't feel it were necessary.

Action Item: Steve/Dave- Find out the history on the acquisition of the Bear Paw Lake FAS- bring up to the group and also be in touch with Mark Peterson (no long on the CAC)

Wrap-up of Fall Elk Distribution Study in the Missouri River Breaks- Scott Thompson

Scott showed a Power Point on the study, highlighting

- Population trends

- Elk licenses and harvest success

- This study was addressing the public access to the elk herds

- Methods of the study

- Results showing the movement of the elk across the breaks districts

- Acknowledgements

Dirk asked if the dispersal during archery/rifle might be due to behavior of the elk rather than hunting pressure...such as the bunching up during the rut and dispersing at the end of the rut (beginning of rifle.) Scott responded that could be part of it, but also that elk will bunch up prior to the winter as well. Scott also discussed that there may be a lot with elk being a long-lived species and much of their distribution may be learned behavior.

Wildlife Survey Update: deer, upland birds, elk, bighorn sheep- Scott Thompson

Elk-

Missouri Breaks (every other year survey)- objective of 1,700-2,000. In 2016 crews counted 3400 elk. That is a 31% increase from the previous study 2 year prior. Long term average is 2,900.

Bears Paw- Objective of 250 elk. In 2016, 435 were counted, and 415 last year. Long term average is 380.

Sheep-

622- Objective is 200. This year 318 were counted. 300 were counted 2 years ago.

Mule deer-

Post season-49% above average, 17% above last year.

Spring susurvey-47% above average, 29% above last year.

-most numbers were seen Glasgow west.

Whitetail-

Region-wide 39% below average

East of Glasgow is closer to average, 20% below

Milk River is 58% below average

Sagegrouse-

16 trend leks are used for population trends

863 males = 54 males/lek, 45% above average, 55% above last year

Scott mentioned the Alberta sagegrouse translocation and handed out the pamphlet for it.

Walleye spawning effort, 2016- Heath Headley

Heath presented a Power Point with a lot of pictures, explanation, stats, and information of the success 2016 walleye spawn.

Fisheries Update- paddlefish, Nelson draw down,-Steve Dalbey

Steve gave an overview of the Pallid sturgeon larval drift study on Lower Missouri.

He gave a recap of the paddlefish “permit” section in the Upper Missouri, and the effectiveness of the mandatory reporting of harvest.

Nelson drawdown- starting to pull levels down right now. Goal is be all the way down by Aug. 15 and refill before ice-up. The boat ramp will also be done at the same time.

FAS Fisheries Update-Dave Fuller

Dave gave an update on his plans with the program. He is looking to do a lot more of the “private lands to fish” program to gain access.

Jim asked about the possibility of new boat ramps in the Malta area along the Milk. Dave said that is something he has been interested in.

Dirk mentioned he’d like to see us promote more fishing in the Milk River around Glasgow.

Information and Education update- Marc Kloker

Marc gave a Power Point picture update on activities in I&E. Marc also covered potential changes in bowhunter safety July 31 class/cutoff date and possibly removing the adult field day.

Enforcement Update-Ron Howell

Ron explained the new license on your phone option.

Black bears are becoming more of an issue in the region.

Mark P. asked about preventative measures for the potential for grizzly bears to move to an “imaginary boundary” of HW 87. So far there has been no action taken in our region.

CAC Roundtable; public comments

Jason Holt

Jason will be going to a CMR working group meeting on June 23, and it would be nice to see some of FWP there.

They are putting in a cattle guard so people can drive through the Horse Ranch without opening a gate.

Jason drove up Beaver Branch Rd. on the way to the meeting and saw antelope, so that was good to see.

He asked about the reservoirs or “pits” on BLM and if they are filling them in on purpose of reducing mosquitoes. Mark had heard that they are looking at building new ones, but that is not really any of FWP decisions.

He mentioned that white tail population being 58% below average might be a good thing.

Jason noted that he likes the agenda and the action items on the back, and feels the CAC is heading in a good direction.

Jim Carver

Malta WU Chapter had their kids day last weekend and they had about 20 kids and more girls than boys. Didn't catch many fish, but had a lot of fun.

Malta WU is putting in \$10,000 and about \$6,000 from other chapters for the boat ramp.

Mark Peterson

Sharptail numbers look good, but CRP is being lost.

Deer numbers and conditions on his place don't look real good at this time.

Mentioned looking a day use on Lower Lake. Look to only charge for camping and not fishing.

Fresno WU did a great job at their kids day and the kids really loved the boat rides

Bear Paw Bowmen doing their shoot south of Chinook. June 18-19.

Mark says thanks to the Dept. for his years on the CAC.

Terry Stoppa

Whenever he/friends are called on the elk phone survey at the end of the year, they are asked if they have seen any wolves. He wonders if anybody has every reported that wolves in R6?

Action: Scott Thompson- look up to see if anybody ever says they see wolves in R6

Terry asked if we ever recorded the number of hunters in the Rookery WMA? Mark S. says that no, we don't do that for WMA's with the exception of Lost River.

Asked about his son and the native MT license.

Action: Marc Kloker- see if his son has to go to the regional office to purchase the deer license.

Dirk Monson

Hears comments from hunters and landowners in 631 and 632 that elk numbers in those districts are low, and is concerned by the newer cow license that are open for 631 and 632.

Discussion lead to further talk on elk, movement, change of land use, etc. that has changed the movement of elk in the breaks.

Said the Milk River is neat to see how it has regenerated after the WT die-off and flooding. He is seeing amazing regeneration in plant species as a result.

Went to the meeting on the fiscal changes for the department a few years ago at the CWood, and he was struck by the fact of all the FWP personnel from there from Helena and wonders about the expense and use of funds for buildings and spending and thought that meetings like that were overstaffed. Mark responded that it also is important to get folks from Helena out here too.

Terry asked how things such as the number of warden staff in the state are determined. Mark S. said it is from legislature. Terry wishes we had more enforcement.

Henry Gordon

Has there been any introduction of wolves south of the Bears paw. Mark S. say that no, there hasn't been. Henry has visited with two different ranchers and they always ask about this.

BR12 reservoir north of Zurich was breeched and wonders what the BLM will do with it. It is just a mud hole now.

Henry said that he is all about the "block management" of ponds for fishing access that Dave described earlier.

Says that birds have had a good winter, there are plenty of pheasants, and he thinks hatch will be good. He saw one batch of around 80 sharptails. Huns look good.

Perri Jacobs

Mild winter makes it seem like wildlife is everywhere. A bunch of critters and fawns have been seen this spring. They also saw a moose on Friday on Dry Fork road headed to HW 191.

Asked about a letter she received offering a conservation easement of 30 years a 0.50/acre/year and that she can't manipulate grass. Scott responded that yes, the language is pretty vague, and that the intent is not wanting to till the property.

Action: Scott T. to look up how many of the 30-year Conservation Leases for Working Lands have been agreed upon.

Jay Crandell

Antelope numbers seem to be exploding, good mule and WT deer, pheasants not as good as they used to be, but quite a few are still around.

Mark Azure

He hopes to discuss wildlife enforcement with Fort Belknap and FWP. There is difficulty in knowing the different ownership in the area outside of the tribal boundaries.

Mark A. says the tribe is looking at an agreement of joint use of licenses on certain areas.

Also brought up Dirk Paulson. He said that long ago when he was the director of the tribal fish and game, a resolution passed that FWP had to let tribe know that they are crossing through tribal lands. He expressed concern for Dirk because certain tribal members threatened to cause him harm. Mark A. and others met with the governor, expressing they were concerned about Dirk's safety as well. They feel that this was not represented well in the paper.

The tribal council feels that Dirk was a scapegoat as the spotlight was put on him and not the real issues. Mark A. said that he felt the articles were unfair, but they decided to not put in a response.

Henry wants clarification on what jurisdiction Dirk or other FWP have on land outside the reservation. He suggested that areas of disputed land could be ran like a Block Management.

Ron said that Mark A. has been very good to work with and that he has high hopes that together, FWP and Ft. Belknap can come up with a solution to the issues. He is hoping that the lines of communication can remain open.

Guests:

Michael Kinzey (guest of Mark Azure's)

The tribe has started up the black-footed ferret program for the first time since the 90s. 2013 released 32 ferrets, in 2014. 7,500 acres of prairie dog acres, Snake Butte 2,400, Lake 17 site 1,200.

This last fall they released 15 more ferrets, and documented wild born kits. They trapped and vaccinated the kits for distemper and plague. Got 5 of perhaps 9 done.

This summer they contracted MT Conservation Corp and will put insecticide from burrow to burrow to reduce flea numbers. They will also put 15 more ferrets in this fall. They are pit-tagged for ID. The ferrets have been coming from Fort Collins, Co. breeding facility. The longterm goal is to have up to 30 breeding adults residents.

They have released about 63 ferrets in the past 3 years and only have about 10 left. The loss is likely due to predation and distemper.

Acknowledgment of CAC service: 2nd Term: Jim Carver, Mark Peterson, and Henry Gordon.
1st Term: Eugene Lavey and Deb Madison.

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