

CAC Meeting

Region 5 Citizen Advisory Council Meeting

December 5, 2016
2:00-4:15 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

Attending CAC Members: Steve Regele, Bill Milton, Kayhan Ostovar, Lee Deming, Chris Fleck, David Russell, Lanie White, Josh McQuillan, Jim Ballard

Attending Staff: Barb Beck, Doug Habermann, Bob Gibson, Ken Frazer, Dianne Stiff, Megan O'Reilly, Ray Mule', Harold Guse, Jeff Hagener, Mike Volesky

Absent CAC Members: Thomas Miller, Brady Nordland, JW Westman, Susan Gilbertz, Lee Brunkhorst

Attending Legislators – Virginia Court, Doug Kary, Kathy Kelker, Sue Vinton, Vince Ricci

Attending Guests – Irv Wilke, John Bradley, Nick Gevock

Topics

2:00 p.m.	Welcome/Introductions - Charter, Roles, Vision & Guide	Bob Gibson/Barb Beck Barb Beck
2:30 p.m.	FWP's Budget & Legislative Proposals	Director Jeff Hagener, Mike Volesky
3:15 p.m.	Legislator Introductions/Remarks	Bob Gibson
4:00 p.m.	Wrap-up	Bob Gibson
4:15 p.m.	Adjourn	Bob Gibson

CAC Charter Highlights: Bob Gibson

Need: To provide the agency, Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), with information, ideas, emerging trends and initiatives from the public perspective. For Region 5, to identify potential conflicts, consequences, constituencies on the management of wildlife in our region. To provide a vehicle for FWP to inform key citizens with the expectation that they will in turn inform the broader public.

Expectations: The CAC help identify emerging trends and possible ways to resolve conflicts, which assists FWP with opportunities and outcomes as an agency. The CAC being members of communities in the region, make sure they understand FWP’s programs, priorities, administrative processes and limitations, and the way we do business both by policy and law.

Scope of Authority: None of the CAC recommendations under this charter will commit to FWP’s resources. Their recommendations, their knowledge and their information can be used by the department, but not decisions made by the CAC.

CAC Function with Legislators: CAC members are always encouraged to interact with their elected officials. FWP cannot take any role in those contacts. The CAC speak for themselves and can speak to the Department about their recommendations. Recommendations from the CAC to the legislators are not binding.

Membership: We recently chose seven new members to our Region 5 CAC. The CAC is now composed of 14 members which we feel represent a variety of interest groups and geographic communities across our region.

Roles/Expectations/Communication: All CAC meetings are public meetings, so we will have members of the public, the press, and representatives from other organizations attend. Any information that comes out of these meetings can be published in the paper or television stations either locally or statewide.

Roles: Director Jeff Hagener

Commission’s Role/Department’s Role: The Department’s role is to provide the best scientific information we can and to conduct public hearings, environmental assessments, etc. The Fish & Wildlife Commission consists of five members appointed by the Governor. The Department brings forth to them proposals such as hunting and fishing regulations, land acquisition or very high level policy. The Commission then looks at those proposals, listens to the public and then ultimately makes the final decisions on regulations, land acquisitions, easements, or high level policy situations. The Department and the Director’s role are to carry out those functions within the FWP, to manage the agency, the budget and work with the Legislature directly. The Legislature passes the laws that we are required to put in place and follow.

Vision and Guide: Barb Beck

Challenges - habitat, fish and wildlife populations, changing climate, increasingly diverse public, access, state parks.

Core Values – serve the public; embrace the public trust; honor tradition and heritage; work with landowners; use science; provide leadership; provide stewardship; value our workforce.

Major Commitments – public service; resource management; capacity building for effective management.

Next Steps – each region and division is instructed to develop their own priorities which will be adopted by the FWP Management Team. Priorities for Region 5: redoing the headquarter lobby, work with landowners with block management and conservation opportunities, make our decision making transparent, oil spill project restoration, work with county attorney’s and law enforcement to get cases prosecuted/moved forward.

The complete Vision and Guide booklet is on the FWP website.

Action items: Ongoing communication with CAC members.

Person responsible:
Bob Gibson

Deadline:
Ongoing

FWP's Budget: Director Jeff Hagener

FWP's fish and wildlife budget is based upon the licenses we sell and federal funding (Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds) that we match. Pittman-Robertson (PR) is the excise tax on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment. Dingell-Johnson (DJ) is the excise tax on fishing tackle, boats and boat fuel. Over the years, the PR fund has been on the rise with firearms sales but the DJ has been on the decline with fishing tackle sales on the decline. The only state general fund money that the department receives is the 1.3 million dollars for the Aquatic Invasive Species program. Another allocation that comes to the states as federal funding is state wildlife grants which is primarily for nongame wildlife. The federal money that we match is like a reimbursement program. We spend money internally first to show what the match is and then we get a reimbursement from the federal government.

Statutory Ear-Marked Programs – FWP has approximately 60 different budgeted categories in accounting with half called ear-marked programs. Ear-marked means that, for example, \$2.00 of this license must go into this program, then those are the only things that we can spend that money on which is much more restrictive.

FWP is now on a 4-year cycle with the passage of HB 140 in the 2015 Legislature. We are right on track with our fiscal note and will not be going to the legislature this time to ask for a fee increase. We will go back to the legislature in 2019 after looking at what FWP will need to do for another four years at that time.

As one agency, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the Fish and Wildlife funding and Parks funding are kept segregated. The State Parks Board is composed of five members with the same role over Parks as the Commission has over Fish and Wildlife. The division brings forward those issues that are most important and the Board approves them. The Parks earned revenue is composed of camping fees, bed tax, motorboat fuel tax, the coal tax trust and vehicle registration fees. The Parks Division is now underfunded which is the opposite of Fish and Wildlife. The demands on the state parks with higher usage, and the higher costs of the infrastructure has caused us to get behind.

The two major funding bills that FWP deals with is HB 2 for our operation authority and HB 5 which is the capital appropriation bill. In addition, if there is any individual bill introduced that has a cost tied to it, the agencies are required to put together a fiscal note, which is the best guess to what it would cost to put that program in place.

FWP's Legislative Proposals for 2017: Mike Volesky

1. Modify classification of spotted skunks (civet cats) – language clean-up.
2. Revise waiting period for bighorn sheep licenses – this would revise the 7-year wait so that hunters harvesting young rams less than $\frac{3}{4}$ curl would not be subject to the wait period when depopulating due to disease.
3. Broaden the use of wolf license account funds to include all wolf management – would like the statute to reflect a more board definition of management.
4. Digital carcass tags – this is to broaden FWP's language to allow the use of smart phone tags in addition to paper tags like other states.
5. Extend sunset date of paddlefish caviar program – current program sunsets on June 18, 2018.
6. Eliminate language that limits cold water fish propagation at the Fort Peck Hatchery – language clean-up to allow raising of more cold water species.
7. Tighten statute pertaining to fish transport and transplantation – tighten up the gap that allows for unauthorized transport and placement of fish.
8. Cross-reference statutes for penalties applicable to hunting while using projected artificial light – clarification.
9. Allocation of wild buffalo licenses to tribes for traditional purposes - recreating the same legislation that sunset on July 1, 2015.

10. Increase cap on block management payments – Private Land/Public Wildlife (PLPW) Council placeholder, and there are probably 30 to 40 cooperators that fall in this category.
11. Combine home to hunt and native Montana license statutes into a single program – PLPW placeholder – combining these two programs to eliminate confusion and create consistency.
12. Modify 87-2-513 to include a complimentary license and potentially other adjustments – PLPW placeholder – currently resident landowners who provide free public elk hunting access on their land can receive a complimentary elk permit for that land. This would include nonresident landowners.

Action items: Ongoing communication with CAC members.

Person responsible:
Bob Gibson

Deadline:
Ongoing

Legislator Introductions/Remarks

Bob Gibson

Rep. Virginia Court, HD 50 – She has served on FWP for all three terms and will be doing that again. She has a passion for the outdoors. She did support Habitat Montana in the last session, and was saddened by the outcome last session. When there are opportunities that come along and we miss them we will all regret it in the future. Yes, at the same time habitat needs to be maintained, but if we miss it now we may never get it back. She looks forward to hearing from CAC members. She also wanted to acknowledge the State Parks as she knows they are underfunded, and increasingly used by the public.

Rep. Kathy Kelker, HD 47 – From comments within her district, the most interest she received last session was support of purchasing habitat, which she supported. She understands the issues around maintaining what we have, but she believes that has more to do with State Parks. The habitat piece is the future of what we hold most dear in Montana. It is important to our culture that we have those lands available for everybody and its access for everyone. We must set priorities. For the people that she represents, it's a high priority to have access in perpetuity.

Rep. Sue Vinton, HD 56 – She is new to the legislature. She has been appointed to the 2017 FWP House Committee. Her first experience with the legislature was years ago, when her family was involved in legislation to approve a provisional hunter safety certificate for individuals with disabilities. Her and her family are very proud of that, and it was a positive experience. She is looking forward to serving in the upcoming legislature.

Rep. Vince Ricci, HD 55 – He indicated he will take a look at Habitat Montana and see what happens this year.

Sen. Doug Kary, SD 22 – He has served on FWP in the House for two terms. Passion doesn't even begin to relate the emotions that go on during those meetings. In 2011 and 2013 there were big time emotions with wolves and buffalo. We've progressed from there. With habitat brings all the responsibilities the landowner has with taking care of weeds, the population of the humans that go on that property, the wildlife. There are a lot of moving parts that go into habitat, and this is an ongoing battle.

Action items: Ongoing communication with CAC members.

Person responsible:
Bob Gibson

Deadline:
Ongoing

Wrap-up

Bob Gibson

We will conduct a poll after the first of the year to schedule our next meeting.

Potential agenda items: habitat, state parks, landownership by FWP vs. land/wildlife management, elk population and tag sales, landowner/sportsman interaction and cooperation, shoulder season status and add federal land to shoulder seasons, nonresident student licenses. Communications between meetings – will continue sending out news releases and staff notes.

Check out the FWP website: <http://fwp.mt.gov/>.

Action items: Meeting Poll; Agenda Items; Communication

Person responsible:
Bob Gibson

Deadline:
Next Spring