

# CAC Meeting

## Region 5 Citizen Advisory Council Meeting

October 16, 2017  
1:30-4:30 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**

Attending CAC Members: Steve Regele, Kayan Ostovar, Lee Deming, Lee Brunckhorst, Jim Ballard, Lanie White, and Kris Kohloff (guest)

Attending Staff: Barb Beck, Bob Gibson, Ken Frazer, Ray Mulé, Doug Habermann, Harold Guse, Dianne Stiff, Megan O'Reilly

Absent CAC Members: Thomas Miller, Bill Milton, Brady Norland, Susan Gilbertz, David Russell, JW Westman, Chris Fleck, Josh McQuillan

### Topics

1:30 p.m.	Welcome/Introductions	Bob Gibson/Barb Beck
1:45 p.m.	Key Issue Updates:	Barb Beck
	Pipeline oil spill mitigation	Ken Frazer
	AIS stats	Ken Frazer
	Dog training rules	Bob Gibson
	Enforcement time/funding	Harold Guse
2:15 p.m.	CAC members thoughts/observations	CAC Members
3:15 p.m.	In-depth topic discussion:	Megan O'Reilly
	nongame programs	
4:00 p.m.	Managers' reports	R-5 Program Managers
4:30 p.m.	Housekeeping, Next Steps and Adjourn	Bob Gibson

**Personnel Updates – Barb Beck**

- Parks Division and Communications/Education administrators – in process of being filled; R-3 Regional Supervisor position, Bozeman, being advertised; R-5 hiring/recruitment process for two positions - Bear Management Technician, Red Lodge, and Administrative Assistant, Region 5 front office.

**Pipeline oil spill mitigation – Ken Frazer**

- Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP) – Out of the \$12 million-dollar settlement with Exxon, about \$2.2 million was run through for recreational loss due to the oil spill. A Citizens Advisory Committee was created to determine how to spend that money. They received 28 applications for projects by sixteen different groups. FWP is working with other groups as there is overlap on some of the proposed projects, with FWP's main goal to increase public access on the Yellowstone River within the affected area.
- FWP asked for \$500,000 with a match of about 50%. The three key access areas on the Yellowstone River include the upper section between Columbus and Park City; the middle section from Park City down to Huntley Dam; and the lower section just above Waco Dam down to the mouth of the Bighorn River. Maps will be sent out to the R-5 CAC members.

**AIS statistics update – Ken Frazer**

- The latest statistics from Tom Woolf on AIS statistics as of October 16, over 77,000 boats have been inspected. Seventeen vessels were intercepted with zebra quagga mussels with all being decontaminated. Over 80 citations were issued for people running check stations. Regular check stations closed October 15. Boats that continue to come into the state will still need an inspection. Regional offices will be continuing this effort around the state. There were over 1,300 plankton samples taken around the state with nothing new for contamination. There were divers and snorkelers in Canyon Ferry and Tiber this fall plus mussel sniffing dogs brought in from Alberta, Canada, which have not found any evidence of contamination this fall. Surveys have been completed at the same time for other invasive species, snails, clams, crayfish and weeds. No evidence of any aquatic invasive species infestation of any kind around the state. Education of the public has been successful so far. The mussel response guidelines have been established and available. We had a limited fish kill late this fall on the Yellowstone River. There were enough fish to determine that it was related to the PKD parasite. A rapid response PKD plan has been established.

**Dog training rules update – Bob Gibson**

- Montana's statutes define when and how to train dogs in the field. FWP drafted rules to clarify these statutes with limits on how many dogs could be trained at one time and how close they could be to upland bird habitat. The Environmental Quality Council (EQC) conducted a meeting and decided that this should be handled in statute not within FWP rules, so the next legislature will take on updated legislation. FWP went ahead with the hearings and comments from dog owners around the state regarding the current statutes.

**Enforcement time and funding update – Harold Guse**

- The legislature mandated 30% federal funding for Enforcement, which is Pitman-Robson money (federal tax on firearms). A snap-shot of the last two months shows these comparisons. July 2016 - 1,258 angler contacts, July 2017 – 351; August of 2016 - 728 anglers, August of 2017 – 214 anglers; boat contacts were down by 40% in July and 50% down in August. It is having a large impact and is directly impacting planned activities.

Action items: Continued communication with CAC members.

Person responsible:  
Bob Gibson

Deadline:  
Ongoing

**CAC members thoughts and observations**

Region 5 CAC Members

**Lee Deming** – Feedback on the FWP logo effort is why waste your time? He contacted his representative regarding the 30% federal funding for Enforcement, but has not heard anything yet. He has an e-mail into his senator. Need to get the word out on the Enforcement time/funding. Concern about the angler's log program cut. He let everyone know about a business that is producing videos in the back country and a commentary that is negative for FWP.

**Kayan Ostovar** – Thanks to the Department, especially the fisheries and the nongame program, Megan and Ray, for helping collaborate with student projects this summer. As he has been out hunting this fall, he has seen more people driving on state land. Landowners are frustrated as well. Somehow the message needs to get out to the public that they cannot drive on state land. With the increased cost of nonresident student licenses, no one is purchasing those and hunting here now.

**Steve Regele** – Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, Our Montana, YRPA and other organizations are collaborating to write letters to get the message out on the trend of state and federal agencies doing more with less. In addition, this ties into funding that continues to decline.

**Jim Ballard** – He would like direction as to who to contact on specific questions that he is getting from landowners and hunters.

**Lee Brunckhorst** – There is a focus group of landowners on the east side of the Crazies who are trying to work together to come up with ideas.

**Lanie White** – Worried about elk numbers, the fact that hunters are aging, and brucellosis.

**JW Westman** – Bob shared JW's comments as he was unable to attend this meeting. JW's constituents have concerns with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) knocking at the door, scary and a game changer. The latest elk management plan on brucellosis with reference to feed grounds in Wyoming. Elk shoulder seasons are still a contentious topic with people. The recent story about the rebranding of the grizzly bear logo is not popular with people either.

**Bill Milton** – Barb shared his thoughts as he was unable to attend this meeting. He talked about a group out of Petroleum County that have been meeting looking at large scale landscapes and viability of communities discussing various issues and continues to advocate that kind of an approach.

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Ongoing

In-depth topic discussion: nongame programs

Megan O'Reilly

- ❖ Megan is the Region 5 nongame specialist with seven positions statewide; one in each region.
  - What species are nongame?
    - Anything that is not classified as something else is nongame. Of 420+ bird species in Montana, only 35 of those are huntable. That leaves 385 bird species alone that are classified as nongame and fall under that category. We have 100 mammals in Montana and only 46 of those are classified as something other than nongame, so that leaves us 64 mammals that are nongame. We have 30+ species of reptiles and amphibians. If you put all that together, 85% of wildlife in Montana is nongame.
  - Why do we care about nongame species?
    - Economic impacts on agriculture; create habitat for other species; recreation; and bolster the food chain.
  - What else is good about nongame?
    - Habitat specialist – structural diversity; species diversity in plants; and nongame are amazing to watch.
  - What are the Department's legal obligations?
    - FWP's policy is to manage certain nongame wildlife for people to enjoy, for science, and to make sure they continue to flourish on the landscape.
    - We are to conduct investigations on nongame wildlife to figure out what their distribution is now.
    - Acquisition of land and aquatic habitat for nongame species.
    - Preventing the need for listing under the Endangered Species Act.
    - If they do become endangered that we maintain what we have and try to recover those species the best, we can.
  - Nongame Program Objectives:
    - Conserve, enhance and restore habitat for wildlife.
    - Maintain distribution and abundance of these species.
    - Minimize the number of nongame species that are a species of concern.
    - Increase support of wildlife both internally and externally.
    - Increasing access to nongame wildlife.
  - How do we meet those objectives?
    - Currently there are seven nongame specialists statewide, plus an avian biologist in Helena.
    - Between those eight specialists and area biologists throughout the state, there is a wide diversity of interests. With that there is a wide range of projects being worked on throughout the state.
  - Healthy habitat for diversity of species:
    - Easements/acquisitions
    - Restoration
    - Technical services
  - Species specific population work
    - Inventory
    - Disease mitigation
    - Augmentation
    - Research
  - Successes
    - Endanger Species Act (ESA) listing avoidance, Species of Concern (SOC) down listing
    - Habitat conservation and restoration
    - Maintenance of opportunity (caving, falconry, etc.)
    - Improved coordination with other agencies
    - Broader way of thinking about species and habitat work
  - Who cares and why?
    - Wildlife viewing by residents/nonresidents
    - Industry
    - Private businesses
    - Private landowners as stewards of the habitat
    - General public

- Who pays?
  - Per 2015:
    - Wildlife mitigation trust fund 8%
    - Private funds 2%
    - Nongame wildlife account 5%
    - Miscellaneous federal funds 3%
    - Pittman-Robertson 33%
    - State Wildlife Grants 29%
    - General license 20%
- What does the future hold?
  - Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife resources (<http://www.fishwildlife.org/index.php?section=blueribbonpanel>)  
 Recommendations - #1 congress dedicate up to 1.3 billion  
 Recommendations - #2 convene a working group

Action items: Continued communication with CAC members.	Person responsible: Bob Gibson	Deadline: Ongoing
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Managers' reports	R-5 Program Managers
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**Ray Mulé –**

- Season setting is an ongoing process now. The Commission is now taking recommendations from the public and the Department on what they are going to propose in the tentative. The December meeting will have the tentatives on the agenda. The public meetings will be held around the state in January with the Commission passing the final recommendations for the 2018-2019 hunting seasons at their February meeting.
- This year Region 5 and a portion of Region 3 have been targeted on a major monitoring effort for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). This has been a major effort at all check stations in our region. Looking at 300 deer samples from each hunting district within the monitoring area. If we do detect CWD, there is management plan in place that will guide us on what we do next which includes ramped up surveillance and sampling, population reductions, etc. Each year this will be an ongoing effort that will move around the state.
- The Grant Marsh WMA project has been completed and opened on September 1. The hiring of a bear management technician will help with the increased grizzly population on the Beartooth face.
- With the delisting rule passed on grizzlies, Montana is managing grizzly bears. We are trying to build tolerance educating people on how to live in bear country safely, and what to do in situations to avoid bear conflicts.

**Ken Frazer –**

- Region 5 fisheries field crews are about done with field sampling; natural resources damage oil spill; and budget cuts.
- DJ (Dingell-Johnson) funding has been dropping steadily for the last several years. We are looking at a million-dollar cut in the fisheries budget with a local 26% cut in Region 5 operations (field work). The anglers log program is going to be cut. The USGS contract for monitoring gaging stations around the state is going to be dropped. In Region 5 we are looking at cutting the mountain lakes program by 30%. Standard sampling will be done every other year. Survey shocking will not be done any longer. Catchable stocking of larger trout will be cut by 50%.

**Harold Guse –**

- Two open positions in Region 5, Hardin game warden and local sergeant. The Hardin position will be open for quite a while, and the sergeant position should be posted as soon as it is approved.

**Doug Habermann –**

- The parks season is winding down with limited hours at parks like Pictograph and Mikoshika.
- Interviewing the Parks Administrator soon. The head of Parks Operations is another open position.
- The Governor has appointed our new Park Board members and they will be meeting next week.
- The Governor is appointing a group called Parks in Focus that will be working on funding options for state parks.

Action items: Continued communication with CAC members.	Person responsible: Bob Gibson	Deadline: Ongoing
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Wrap-up and adjourn	Bob Gibson
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Bob Gibson – Next meeting will be early January. A doodle poll will be sent out on preferable dates. Agenda Topic Ideas: Branding effort/season setting/CWD results/options for youth into outdoor recreation.

Action items: Meeting Poll; Agenda Items; Communication	Person responsible: Bob Gibson	Deadline: End of November
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