

CAC Meeting

Region 5 Citizen Advisory Council Meeting

January 3, 2018
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: Kayhan Ostavar, Lee Deming, Jim Ballard, Bill Milton, David Russell, Josh McQuillan, Susan Gilbertz

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

Absent CAC Members: Lanie White, Lee Brunckhorst, Steve Regele, Brady Norland, Susan Gilbertz, Chris Fleck, Thomas Miller, JW Westman

Absent Staff: Doug Habermann

Topics

1:30 p.m.	Welcome/Introductions	Bob Gibson/Barb Beck
1:45 p.m.	Chronic Wasting Disease Plan/ Response	Barb Beck/Bob Gibson/ Harold Guse
2:15 p.m.	Season Setting Process	Ray Mulé
2:45 p.m.	CAC Members Thoughts/Observations	CAC Members
3:15 p.m.	Managers' Reports	R-5 Program Managers
4:00 p.m.	CAC Memberships	Bob Gibson/Barb Beck
4:15 p.m.	Wrap-up	Barb Beck

Chronic Wasting Disease Plan/Response

Barb Beck/Bob Gibson

Presented the You-Tube Video authored by Dr. Emily Alberg, Bozeman Research Lab.

Website link:

<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/diseasesAndResearch/diseases/chronicWastingDisease/management.html>

Bob Gibson –

- Bridger Special CWD Hunt Goal: To collect 200 mule deer and 200 whitetail deer samples that the Bozeman lab can use for a statistically valid sample. This will give them plus or minus 3%, how many animals have CWD in that part of Montana and where their distribution is located. The hunt will close by species when the goals have been met or on February 15, 2018.

Barb Beck –

- FWP's draft CWD Management Plan:
 - Guides how FWP responds. Per the plan with positive tests, a hunt is set up to not wipe out the population, but to get an adequate sample size for disease prevalence and distribution.
 - The area biologist provided numbers of deer in the area, the population structure and from that how many deer were needed to harvest for a statistically valid sample.
 - Short timeframe for Commission approval of the hunt. Shortly after that, licenses went on sale first come first serve selling out within three hours (mostly online licensing). Resident tags were \$10 and nonresident \$20. There were 100 either-sex and 500 antlerless licenses sold for each species.
 - Three public meetings were held prior to the hunt (Belfry, Red Lodge and Joliet) with around 60 people in attendance at each meeting.
 - With one positive test from a mule deer near Chester, MT, Region 4 is scheduled to have a hunt beginning January 6.

Action items: Continued communication with CAC members.

Person responsible:
Bob Gibson

Deadline:
Ongoing

Season Setting Process

Ray Mulé

Interested Person letter packet: Includes all proposals across the state.

Process: Major season structure changes, hunting district boundary changes, and quota ranges are done biennially this time of year except for furbearers. Wolf seasons have been added to the biennial season setting process. Furbearers are biennially, but during the off year.

Quotas: The actual license numbers are set annually after our winter/spring population surveys.

Public comments: Accepted until January 24 at 5 p.m., <http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/>, "Opportunity for Public Comment".

Statewide proposals that will affect Region 5:

- These are for the 2018 and 2019 seasons final Commission approval on February 15.
- Hunting season dates for 2018-2019 with Saturday openers for general deer/elk and antelope. Maintain youth pheasant and waterfowl season, and deer season.
- Exemptions to the Ban on Ungulate Urine used in scents.
- Making the antelope 900-20 archery license a first and only choice with a separate earlier drawing.
- Adopt elk season structure for the 43 hunting districts that had shoulder seasons in 2016 on an annual basis rather than biennial to facilitate evaluation of their efficacy and revisiting their adoption on a 3-year cycle.
- The female mountain goat regulations would affect regions 1, 2 and 4 not regions 3 or 5. Make it illegal to take a female mountain goat accompanying a kid or a female mountain goat in a group that contains one or more kids.
- Establish a 4-Day youth-only deer season, instead of the current 2-day, in years when MEA days do not immediately precede the opening of the general big game season. Also, change the youth age from 10-15 to 10-17.
- Make crossbows legal during the fall turkey season. Spring turkey would not change.
- Game damage quotas are approved every biennium. This gives the regions authority to issue that number of licenses if necessary for game damage management season hunts, brucellosis dispersal actions and CWD hunts. For Region 5, deer -1400, elk - 600 and antelope – 300. CWD would be deer – 5000, elk – 1000 and moose - 20.

An Adaptive Harvest Management Plan is followed for setting proposals.

Region 5 Deer:

- Region 5 proposals located on page 4 of the Interested Persons letter packet.

Region 5 Elk:

- Region 5 proposals located on page 12 of the Interested Persons letter packet.

Region 5 Antelope:

- Region 5 proposals located on page 15 of the Interested Persons letter packet.

Boundary change proposal between Region 5 and 7: Change the boundary to the Bighorn River rather than the highway.

Action items: Public comments deadline.

Person responsible:
Ray Mulé

Deadline:
1/24/18 at 5 p.m.

CAC Members Thoughts and Observations

CAC Members

Lee Deming – He had a question about where FWP is with an app for purchasing licenses on their phone; people are ecstatic about FWP’s response to CWD; and he only had one negative comment on shoulder seasons with everyone else happy with those seasons.

Susan Gilbertz – She brought up the mix up with two deer on the CWD sampling which Harold Guse has already straightened out.

Kayhan Ostavar – He has also heard a positive public response to CWD information that has come out with news releases and the website. He is curious about testing next fall. Maybe privatize this effort in the state and possibly collaborate with universities. Interested in information about the predator populations and the role they play within the disease.

Jim Ballard – Not much activity with the elk shoulder seasons on their ranch. He is excited to hear about the proposal to open shoulder seasons to BLM and state lands. Overall it was a good hunting season, and there are strong numbers of mule deer does on his place.

Josh McQuillan – The special CWD hunt brought in different kinds of problems compared to the general season (licensing, trespassing, public safety). Overall feedback from constituents is FWP has done a good job. The press releases have been a great help.

Bill Milton – He would like to encourage us to keep exploring a different paradigm concept looking at large scale landscapes and community viability.

CAC Members Issue: Elk Management – Barb will send out the elk management plan to members. She asked they all read through the plan to get a foundation. We then can talk about where are we now and what are some of the reasons why and then talk about potential solutions.

Action items: Mail out the Elk Management Plan.

Person responsible:
Barb Beck

Deadline:
1/31/2018

Managers’ Reports

R-5 Program Managers

Ken Frazer –

- Our crews are in the office working on equipment and data this time of year. Last month the Commission approved three projects in our region. The donated fishing access site (FAS) on the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone, Edgar Bridge; .8 acres at Captain Clark FAS site to move our road away from the river; and the Twin Bridges FAS below Reed Point. Continuing work on the natural resource damage projects. One key site is located across the Yellowstone River from Riverfront Park. The Yellowstone River Parks Association reactivated negotiations with the landowner and have made a purchase agreement to purchase the land. We have funding to help develop this site. The Recreation Advisory Committee will be meeting sometime towards the end of January to look at all proposals, and then will decide how to distribute the funding which goes to the Governor’s office.

Ray Mulé –

- Hunting season check station work kept the biologists busy during the fall. Next, they conducted their post season surveys and now they will start on their winter elk surveys. In addition, they are formulating all the season proposals, setting up their public meetings. CWD has taken up both Ray and Shawn Stewart’s time.

Harold Guse –

- They still have a sergeant position and field warden position open. The wardens took a lot of the ground work on CWD work at the fall check stations. The PR money impact this fall happened in some counties with local enforcement picking up some of the work. Where Enforcement will see the impact is at the end of the year with tracking of hunter checks which is now in the evaluation stage. Now the wardens are in the winter patrolling of trapping and snowmobiles. Game damage calls are ramping up.

Dianne Stiff -

- New licenses will go on sale February 20, 2018, at all regional headquarters, license providers and online licensing. The elk and deer permit drawing deadline and nonresident big game combination, elk combination, and deer combination license deadline is March 15, 2018.

Bob Gibson –

- Hunter education classes will begin in about 6 weeks in every community in Region 5. Aquatic education has around 785 kids participating this school year. Bob is participating on a committee to look at rewriting regulations. This committee is made up of employees from all over the state. The first step being worked on is creating the side boards for this process.

Barb Beck –

- The new Parks Division Administrator is Beth Shumate. Marina Matheson is the new park manager at Cooney SP. The Parks in Focus effort is going to be facilitated by Headwaters Economics in Bozeman. They will be looking at sustainability for running and funding our state parks.
- New staff in Region 5 include Leah Thurman, administrative assistant at the Region 5 headquarters, and Kylie Kembel, a bear management technician stationed in Red Lodge. We have a name for the Hardin game warden, but he will not go to the Law Enforcement Academy until September.
- Greg Lemon is the new Comm-Ed Administrator. Mark Deleray is the new regional supervisor in Bozeman.
- The National Wildlife Value Study is a survey that is randomly being mailed out to people in Montana either this week or next.
- The EQC legislative committee will be meeting January 17 and 18 to discuss the evaluation of the State Parks program, CWD, dog training in upland game bird areas, sage grouse, Fish and Wildlife funding and licensing review, Aquatic Invasive Species, elimination of elk as a brucellosis vector, and grizzly bears. You can listen to this meeting on the legislative website <http://leg.mt.gov/css/Video-and-Audio/live-session.asp>.
- Recovering American Wildlife is legislation that was introduced to Congress on December 15, 2017. This bill is structured like Pittman Robertson (PR) and Dingell Johnson (DJ) excise tax, so it is a federal source of funding where they provide 75% and the state would provide 25%. It is significant as it could be \$28 million per year for the state of Montana, but at this point we do not have the match of 25%. Source of the funds are mineral extraction and offshore energy. The industry is very much behind this. The funds can be used for wildlife conservation and restoration, education and recreation.
- There is a myriad of audits with the Parks program, and PR and DJ funds.
- A committee has been formed to review FWP's funding which is now every four years.

Action items: Continued communication with CAC members.	Person responsible: Bob Gibson	Deadline: Ongoing
CAC Memberships		Barb Beck/Bob Gibson
Bob and Barb will be in contact with those members whose membership has expired, and the newer members have one more year. Bob will send a note out to CAC members asking who they know that may be interested in applying.		
Action items: Contact members for referrals.	Person responsible: Bob Gibson	Next 2 months.
Wrap-up		Barb Beck
Barb responded to a request of calling a special meeting if there is a hot topic. Yes, we certainly could, so if members see something that is engaging, call Barb and Bob, plus we will do the same. Communication is important.		
Action items: Next meeting – May.	Person responsible: Bob Gibson	Before April.