



**Region 5 CAC Meeting
September 12, 2018**

CAC Members: Lee Deming, Jim Ballard, Susan Gilbertz, Kayhan Ostovar, Lanie White, David Russell, Dan Aadland, Doug Dreeszen, Craig Hash, Bruce Hoiland, Daniel Otis, Bradford Grooms

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

Absent CAC Members: Lee Brunckhorst, Chris Fleck, Bill Milton, Steve Regele, JW Westman, Pat Riley, Philip Hughes, Josh McQuillan

Guest Speaker: Scott Brown – Parks in Focus

Welcome/Introductions/Review Agenda & Charter – Bob Gibson & Barb Beck

Parks Overview; Parks in Focus – Scott Brown

About the Board - The Montana State Parks & Recreation Board is a citizen-led board appointed by the governor that consists of five members, one member from each district in the state. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Director, Martha Williams, serves as secretary to the board.

Board Members –

District 1 (Northwest)

Angie Grove, Helena (Chair)

- agrove7232@gmail.com
- 406-461-3420

Angie Grove has 28 years with the Montana Legislative Audit Division, working specifically with the State Parks Division.

District 2 (Southwest)

Jeff Welch, Livingston

- jeff.welch@mercurycsc.com
- 406-586-2280

Jeff Welch is the president and founder of MERCURYcsc in Bozeman.

District 3 (North Central)

Mary Sheehy Moe, Great Falls

- Mary.sheehy.moe@gmail.com
- 406-868-9427

Mary Sheehy Moe had a distinctive career in education, most recently serving as the Deputy Commissioner for Two-Year Education for the Montana University System and served as a State Legislator.

District 4 (North East)

Betty Stone, Glasgow

- betty@cwimt.net
- 406-228-8173 h
- 406-263-8213 c

Betty Stone has been the manager at the Cottonwood Inn for 28 years and a co-owner since 2004. She also serves as past chair and director of Two Rivers Economic Growth, development director of Missouri River Country and is on the Montana Lodging and Hospitality Association Board.

District 5 (South East)

Scott Brown, Billings

- scott@thebasecamp.net
- (406) 248-7257

Scott Brown is the owner of The Base Camp in Helena and Billings and is an avid outdoor enthusiast.

Doug Habermann has been with FWP for 35 years. He is retiring at the end of September to begin his next career as executive director of Bike Walk Montana in Helena.

Montana State Parks in Focus Commission –

- This Commission is a Governor appointed group whose mission is to figure out ways to fund our Montana State Parks. This group will soon have their third meeting with the final fourth meeting to be held in December. There are 55 state parks in our Montana State Parks system. Region 5's state parks include Chief Plenty Coup, Pictograph Caves, Lake Elmo, Rosebud Battlefield, Tongue River Reservoir, Pirogue Island, Medicine Rocks, Makoshika, Brush Lake, and Hell Creek.
- In preparation for this new focus group a survey was completed by the University of Montana. There were over 6,000 Montana residents 18 yrs. and older who were surveyed. This complete report is on the state park's website <https://myfwp.mt.gov/getRepositoryFile?objectID=87498>. The results show 22% of users prefer state parks for overnight use and 67% for day use. The number one amenity desired by both day and overnight users is trails. Picnic shelters, swimming areas, education, and interpretive centers were also on that list. The survey found that 9 out of 10 Montanans had visited state parks at some point. State parks are not only important for local citizens to use, but also draw outside visitors who then impact local communities economically.
- Doug Habermann –
 - Shared handouts with CAC members showing a map of the state parks and a graph showing the time line for state parks. Lewis and Clark Caverns was Montana's first state park, and in 1939 the state legislature established a State Park System and Commission, with the State Parks Board beginning in 2013.
 - With the 2017 legislative session, state parks funding was decreased; in Region 5 for example, the reduction was \$70,000 in operations alone which hampers the needs within the parks.
 - All funds are from fee collection in the state parks and the \$6.00 fee on resident license plates. About 80% of Montanan's choosing to pay the license plate fee brings in about \$2 million per year.
 - The 2017 legislature allocated some existing funding for state park projects. Outside of state parks, \$2 million was allocated to Virginia City, and \$1.5 million to Garfield County for road improvements to Hell Creek SP. Three other state parks projects include the Makoshika road project; Hell Creek septic and water project which recently was stopped because of a local group who filed an injunction; the new fire system at Bannack; and new lighting at Lewis and Clark Caverns.
 - The newest state park, Milltown, just opened in 2018.
 - State parks are composed of determined staff and support from local communities. Examples – Walleyes Unlimited, Museum of the Rockies, several friends' groups, etc.
 - Beth Shumate – the new Parks Administrator, came from our trails program.
 - Other ways state parks reach out to communities is through recreational trails, OHV, snowmobile, land and water recreation funding (LWCF), and accessible playground programs.

Grizzly Bear Management/Delisting – Bob Gibson

- Impending Decision by the Court
 - The Wyoming hunt has been stopped temporarily and the court has been asked to put the greater Yellowstone grizzly bears back onto the endangered species list.
 - *Since this CAC meeting the decision has been made by the court to relist the greater Yellowstone grizzly bears. More to come.*

Draft of Proposed Changes in Regulation Books – Bob Gibson

- FWP has taken on an initiative this year appointing a committee composed of employees from the regions, the wildlife division and programmers within the Department to address the complexity of the hunting regulations.
- Bob handed out the current regulations and a working proposal the committee is working on.

- Bob went through the draft proposal with CAC members, but it is not ready to be shared yet.
- Hoping to go to the Commission this fall and have some of the changes made in the 2019 deer/elk/antelope regulations.
- In the future hoping to have regulations printed much earlier and changes in drawing deadlines.

CAC Members Thoughts and Observations – CAC Members

Lee Deming – Has heard concern about CWD with folks wondering how to get game they've harvested tested. Lee shared information on electronic licenses. He used an app on his phone for Utah.

Dan Aadland – Grizzlies are a hot topic right now as Bridger Creek is heavily used. He hears of large ranches that are harboring elk. He has hopes FWP keeps its stance against thermal imaging technology, and not allowing crossbows during archery season.

Kayhan Ostovar – Drones harassing wildlife are becoming an issue. Direct people to the video on the FWP website for CWD self-sampling and testing submission (submitting your own sample): <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/diseasesAndResearch/diseases/chronicWastingDisease/management.html> Rocky Mountain College conducted a lot of summer research working with Ken Frazer's fisheries team and Megan O'Reilly. There are a lot of Rocky's students now working for FWP. Completed their 12th annual Yellowstone River clean up float with 30 volunteers on the river. Anyone interested in volunteering, it's always the second Saturday of September.

Lanie White – A lot of talk about CWD and how harsh the winter was with deer, elk and antelope being affected. A lot of talk about grizzly bears in the Crazy Mountains, plus they received a flyer informing them their ranch is located in the grizzly bear danger zone and recommending they do not have food sitting outside. Observed more moose and upland birds on their place.

Craig Hash – With CWD, his family did not hunt the Pryor Mountains last year because meat processors would not take the meat. Questions on boat inspections for AIS.

Bradford Grooms – Most comments are on public access and he directs people to the FWP website.

Jim Ballard – Asked for clarification of the base hunting license which is \$2 goes to access Montana programs and the other \$8 an increase in revenue. Clarification on the 900-20 archery tag, bonus points and auction tags.

Bruce Hoiland – Concerns about fishing in the Musselshell and people not catching catfish from Roundup down to Crooked Creek. Landowners are concerned about EHD in deer as they are seeing dead deer along the river.

David Russell – In his area, landowners would like to see the shoulder seasons continue. Grizzlies are coming in strong on landowner's property in the Nye and Bridger area. The elk population and predator situation are going to take its toll on agricultural people.

Daniel Otis – Asked when Indian Fort FAS repairs would happen. Been hard on the town of Reed Point.

Susan Gilbertz – One of her students applied for the R5 CAC, but never got any information back. Following up on where the application ended up. Barb Beck will respond to the applicant.

Doug Dreeszen – Confusion on the elk shoulder season regulations. He agrees that it is a good move to simplify the hunting regulations.

Managers' Reports – R-5 Program Managers

Megan O'Reilly – Annual hunting forecast overview for Region 5 –

- Mule deer and antelope – the rough winter caused a lot of mortality, so they will be harder to find. Two exceptions for mule deer are south of the Musselshell and northwest of Billings where populations are doing pretty well. Antelope northeast of Harlowton and between Columbus and Harlowton are doing pretty good. Whitetail show low fawn recruitment but are above objective across the board in the region.
- Pheasants – The Clarks Fork crow counts show over-winter survival is pretty low. The Yellowstone and Musselshell crow counts were similar to slightly below last year, so will depend upon brood survival in early spring, but appear down from past years. Prairie grouse had a tough year with hail and flooding in the spring. Mountain grouse are looking pretty good this year.
- White nose syndrome in bats – the closest it has been to Montana prior to this summer was Washington

state. It is caused by a fungus, affects bats particularly when they are roosting in the winter which causes them to be active when they are supposed to be hibernating. Phase I was to ramp up surveillance efforts. We are now in Phase II because there were detections in Wyoming and South Dakota this summer. We are now pushing stronger surveillance, education to the public and making sure people decontaminate if caving.

- **CWD** – Region 5 has a Transport Restriction Zone. If your animal comes out of Carbon County east of Highway 212 and Cooney Road, it cannot be transported out of Carbon and Yellowstone counties until the animal has tested negative for CWD. Testing is not mandatory in our region this year, plus we will not pay for the testing unless it comes out of the positive area in Carbon County. The game wardens are meeting with all processors and taxidermists to answer questions on CWD which should alleviate problems with local meat processors accepting game for processing this fall. The game wardens will continue collecting samples.

Ken Frazer – This year most of the region's fishing access sites were shut down due to flooding. We still have Grant Marsh and Indian Fort FASs that are walk in only due to roads being washed out. Good fish samplings were completed on the upper Yellowstone drainage. Due to high water the lower Yellowstone ling sampling only saw two weeks of completion. The high country lakes in the Beartooth's went really well this summer. The crew completed between 50-60 lakes. Our goal is 30 a year, so we completed double the amount of lakes this year. We will have a large project in a couple of years on the Buffalo Fork of Slough Creek. This project will be to remove the rainbow that are feeding into the pure Yellowstone Cutthroat population in Yellowstone Park. Recaps have been conducted on the lower Bighorn River. Not finding as many fish as they expected. Missing the 2-year age class of fish that are 11-14 inches. Will check other parts of the river on the upper section and even lower on the Bighorn to see if the fish have moved. The Columbus crew has been working on the Boulder River getting sampling done. Just getting into our fall sampling with Cooney, Deadman's, Bighorn Lake and small lakes like Lake Elmo and Broadview pond.

Harold Guse – Region 5 is fully staffed. The funding change last legislative session with 30% federal PR money has had a substantial impact on Enforcement work, especially with hunter and fisherman contacts.

Dianne Stiff – Archery on Black Bear closed 9/14, Moose/Goat/Sheep/Black Bear (fall)/Wolf/Back Country Deer/Elk all opened on 9/15, Youth Only Pheasant and Waterfowl weekend 9/22 & 23, Roundup Management Hunt for archery only deer licenses will go on sale at 5:00 a.m., October 2, through online licensing first come, first serve with a limit of 2 per person.

Wrap-up – Bob Gibson will send an e-mail out regarding a November meeting time frame for the next CAC meeting that will include legislators.