



**Region 5 CAC Meeting
January 22, 2020**

CAC Members: Bruce Hoiland, Josh McQuillan, Kayhan Ostovar, Pat Riley, Craig Hash, Bradford Grooms, Anne Marie Emery, Lloyd Rue, Christine Whitlatch, Jim Ballard, Lee Deming, Susan Gilbertz, Steve Regele, David Russell, Lanie White, Dan Aadland, Rusty Butler

R5 Employees: Terri Walters, Jessica Goosman, Bob Gibson, Barb Beck, Dianne Stiff, Megan O'Reilly, Harold Guse, Shannon Blackburn, Bryan Giordano, Kevin Rose, Beth Shumate, Dustin Temple

Parks Board Member: Scott Brown

Welcome/Introduction: Bob Gibson/Barb Beck

- Agenda
- Reviewed CAC Charter – Barb Beck

State Park Feature: Lake Elmo SP - Terri Walters & Jessica Goosman

Recognized and thanked Kevin Kooistera from the Western Heritage Center for supplying the background information and historical images of Lake Elmo.

History –

- 1904 – Constructed for agricultural purposes and known as Holling Reservoir.
- 1920's - Purchased by Elmo and Miriam McCracken as a recreational site, Holling Lake Resort, July 1929. Dressing rooms/swimming docks in the summer months and winter ice skating and ice skate rentals. Reservoir became known as Lake Elmo being named after Elmo McCracken.
- May 1930 - Elmo Club opened and was the hot spot in Billings during the 30's and 40's.
- August 1945 - McCracken's sold the Elmo Club.
- 1946 - Club burnt down from a boiler room fire.
- 1950's to 1970's - Lake Elmo remained open to water-based recreation. The Billings water ski club held ski meets and competitions.
- Late 1970's - Monte Kimble offered the lake for private condo development and other residential housing. At this time the Lake Elmo Task Force was formed by surrounding homeowners, citizens of Billings and service organizations.
- 1975 - The 44th Montana Legislature initiated the Montana coal severance tax, with a small portion of that tax being allocated to a state park revenue trust fund. The interest off that trust fund was used to acquire, operate and maintain park system sites. This coal severance tax continues to benefit the Montana state park system today.
- 1979 - The legislature passed HB 550 that allowed for proposal submission to acquire areas to be added to the state parks system. The legislature chose which areas to be funded. The Lake Elmo Task Force submitted proposal to acquire Lake Elmo as a state park. The lake was approved and purchased with 42 acres of land for \$1.6 million.
- 1983 - Lake Elmo officially became a state park.

- 1991 - A master site plan was developed.

Today -

- Last year recreation visitation at Lake Elmo was approximately 170,000 people with the load of visitors coming out during the summer months. This includes fishing, boats (electric and nonmotorized), swimming, dog park, two pavilions with one rentable, boat ramp, picnic areas, playground, volleyball pit, horseshoe pits, plus the trail around the lake.
- Management goals for the lake - provide a safe place for people to recreate and contribute to the health and wellness of the community.
- Current challenges include vandalism from theft, damage to buildings and graffiti.
- Worked/partnered with the Billings police this past year. They wrote a security site assessment to provide guidance and recommendations on what can be done to alleviate some challenges.
- Another challenge is management of Russian olives.
- The newest challenge is Asian clams that were found in the lake during an invasive species training session.

SCORP: Beth Shumate, State Parks Administrator

- SCORP - Statewide Outdoor Organization Recreation Plan – <http://stateparks.mt.gov/about-us/scorp.html?tab=scorp2020#scorp2020SectionHeader> – Planning document for outdoor recreation and conservation management in Montana. Intended to be used at different levels from local to federal including nonprofits.
- Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) – Funding source derived from off-shore oil and gas drilling with the funds coming back to every state across the nation. Montana has allocated \$38 million since the inception of the program which started in 1965.
- Every state is required to go through a SCORP planning process. Our current plan is for 2020-2024. Already looking for input for the next plan in five years.
- Process – Advisory committee and then facilitated discussions and outreach in communities across the state.
- The 2020-2024 plan is broken down into 6 chapters that all point to the SCORP goals. The plan helps evaluate the supply and demand about outdoor recreation. Points to links within the “did you know” sections.
- Goal 1: Promote outdoor recreation opportunities for all Montanans.
- Goal 2: Enhance public access to outdoor recreation resources and facilities.
- Goal 3: Support economic vitality of communities and state.
- Goal 4: Improve quality of life through outdoor recreation experiences.
- Goal 5: Adapt outdoor recreation for a changing environment.
- Goal 6: Honor Montana’s outdoor legacy.

CAC Members observations/input on all topics: CAC members

New Members:

Christine Whitlatch – Originally from eastern Montana, quite involved with Makoshika SP and volunteered with paddlefish caviar at Intake. Recently relocated to Billings and communication instructor at City College for MSU-Billings. Involved with statewide MT Outdoor Heritage project.

Lloyd Rue – Family been in the state since the late 1880’s. Recently moved back to Big Timber and works for the federal highway administration, registered professional engineer and a transportation engineer specialist.

Anne Marie Emery – New to the state of Montana being from Idaho. Currently the executive director of the Bighorn River Alliance. Organization works to protect the wild trout fishery of the Bighorn River understanding its place in an agricultural community and within the Crow Tribal landscape.

Current Members:

Bruce Hoiland – Concerns with the new tag for 2020 license year. Shoulder season a hot topic in Roundup area. Many ranchers attended the season setting meeting.

Josh McQuillan – Encourage getting information out on grizzly bear sightings in the Red Lodge area. As the Carbon County sheriff, he's been working with the Cooney SP manager, Marina Yoshioka, making more efficient and positive strides with the park. The north shore courtesy dock should help.

Pat Riley – Shoulder season, the Wilks brothers ranch and affected neighbors. A lot of turkeys in the Roundup area. Works in water field planning and heard of potential off stream storage along the Yellowstone River. Contemplating an Army Corp bill.

Craig Hash – Elk season seemed good in Red Lodge area, but not so much for deer. Question on new licensing tags and fraud. He's RAC committee new member, and shared information on funding through the Forest Service for projects on lands adjacent to forest lands. Projects could be parking lots, fencing, weeds etc., with deadline to submit paperwork March 1.

Bradford Grooms – Concerns on wild hogs and if there has been an official plan released.

Jim Ballard – Their ranch is located 50 miles north of Billings. During shoulder season, mostly bull elk, not so much cows. Involved with the One Montana Master Hunter organization last spring and have had some people come out to hunt who are a part of that group. Concerned about wolves in area.

Lee Deming – Concerns about CWD; referred constituents to the website. Concerns about new kill tag and fraud. Complaint on high value elk tag or permits and people not allowed to apply for the drawing the next year or two. Concerns about grizzly bears and their expansion particularly in the Red Lodge and Stanford areas. Publish warnings of grizzly bear locations through the media.

Susan Gilbertz – The local Audubon Education Center is operating at full capacity looking to expand. Opportunity for partnership with state parks. The Pompey's Pillar group had been sponsoring student field trips to Pompey's but running into challenges. She will be attending the MT Water Summit, so if interested let her know.

Steve Regele – CWD is a big deal. Asked research lab in Bozeman about scavengers (hawks, eagles, coyotes) as information not available. Keep information flow on Herrera vs. Wyoming. Unless you know someone, hunting elk during the shoulder season can be a challenge. Montana Outdoors is a great resource for nongame species information. Nongame are important for the economy, state parks and other places plus important to the economy. Invasive plants (weeds) are a concern as well as mussels. Bats and information on white-nose syndrome.

David Russell – Concerned with CWD expansion into elk herds with positive elk east of Red Lodge. Grizzly bear and wolves continue to be problem in his area. The local forest service office has a large map on the wall with all the grizzly bear sightings and suggests this be shared with the public. Elk shoulder hunt was a big success in his area, and hope will continue.

Dan Aadland – The wild game butcher near him has had far fewer shoulder season elk coming in and concerns about this being an inaccessible hunt. With bison restoration efforts, concerns that bison numbers are compared to what were here before settlement then someone would find criteria to add bison to a federal listing curtailing ability to manage them. A study just completed on actual cost of predator (wolf) depredation on cattle operations at the University of Wyoming which he will share with CAC members.

Rusty Butler – He lives in Broadview. With CWD testing, question on who should pay; access issues in the Snowy Mtns.; the new tagging system; interest in the shoulder hunts where they are successful and

landowner participation allowing hunting; and available data on predators.

Kayhan Ostovar – Being an educator at Rocky Mtn. College, he discusses the North American model of wildlife conservation with his students. The students struggle with the late season hunts for elk as to how that fits into the North American model of wildlife conservation. Curious on the public season meetings and those results. CWD questions, great job on education with website and paying for sampling tests plus good hunter response. Questions with positive sample that is taken to a butcher, and what are the recommendations for sterilization. Interested in ways to enhance habitat for wildlife and nongame species at Lake Elmo SP.

Current hot topics: R5 program managers

CWD – Kevin Rose

- CWD – 7000 total samples were taken across the state.
- First year for sampling at regional headquarters – done for customer service and not a part of the surveillance plan.
- Priority areas are rotated around the state with R5 being two years ago. R7 was targeted last year. R5 will be targeted this year. Samples will be taken at all R5 check stations this fall.
- Last fall the R5 technicians at the office collected samples at the Billings heights check station on weekends because of positive whitetail deer near Huntley before the season.
- Our two technicians offered outstanding customer service and collected over 870 samples at this office. R5 office accounted for over 10% of the samples in the entire state.
- Of the 7000 total samples about 1,000 were hunter submitted. This year because of customer service FWP was paying the testing.
- We are planning the same this fall with technicians located at every regional office, targeted surveillance for R5 next year and paying for sampling tests the hunters want to submit.
- FWP is budgeted for about 10,000 tests next year. It costs about \$18 per sample. If we get 11,000, we are okay, but if we get 20,000 then there will be budget issues.
- We had 143 suspects come back and then sent the second half out for a different test to verify. We ended up with 143 positives out of the 7000 samples with 2 moose near Libby and 1 elk near Red Lodge and the rest were deer (whitetail and mule deer).
- Cannot afford testing of all the animals in the state as that would be spending more on testing than is made in license sales.
- Sterilizing tools – recent research released before the season began looking how to denature the prions and make them noninfective. The new research for metal tools is 40% household bleach solution per 5-minute soaking and then wash that off with dishwasher soap.
- Processors – with a positive sample in R5 either Kevin or Harold talks to the hunter and finding out where the animal was processed. If it goes to a processor, we contact the Health Department who then contacts the processor. The processor will then get the records of all the deer that potentially could have been infected by cross contamination and notifying hunters.
- If processing at home, break it down, label and freeze. After sending in the sample it takes two to three weeks until you get the results back.
- CWD website links: <http://cwd-info.org/category/international/>
<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/diseasesAndResearch/diseases/chronicWastingDisease/management.html>

Season Setting – Kevin Rose

- We have completed four meetings in R5 - Roundup, Big Timber, Billings, and Red Lodge.

- The season setting process is conducted every two years to make major changes to hunting season regulations. This can include shoulder seasons, quota ranges, boundary changes, etc.
- All information is available on the website. On the home page look for the biennial season setting link. This will take you to all the changes and justifications. The deadline to comment is January 27 at 5 p.m. Comments can be made directly to FWPWLD@mt.gov.
- The hot topic for season setting has been the elk shoulder seasons. At the Billings meeting opposition to the shoulder seasons. The other three meetings support for shoulder seasons.

Bison Restoration – Kevin Rose

- The EIS was about eight years in the making and recently released. Basically, this EIS says FWP would have a role in bison restoration, but we are not proposing it anywhere. If someone has a proposal, FWP will evaluate those by the criteria that is in the EIS. It would go to the Commission and then there would be a public process involving landowners within the community where the proposal would be located.
- This EIS does not address the bison located in Yellowstone National Park, and north of there as those are managed for disease control.
- R5 is not a part of the question as we do not have any proposals within this region.

Wild Hogs – Kevin Rose

- If you see or suspect wild feral swine anywhere, that needs to be reported to the Department of Livestock. FWP does not have any authority over feral swine.
- If feral swine are found in the state of Montana, it is illegal to hunt them.
- The way to control feral swine is by targeted trapping. The USDA Aphis Wildlife Services is the agency who would conduct the trapping.

Bat Sampling - Megan O'Reilly

- Trying to ramp up the white nosed syndrome bat sampling this spring in Montana. Please let Megan (247-2966) know of any folks who have bat houses, or bats in barns, etc. for sampling in May and June. Need 15 or more per colony for sampling. Please take this message back to your counties and communities.

2020 Licensing Modernization/Explore MT – Dianne Stiff, Dustin Temple

Changes:

- Beginning March 1, the new licenses for 2020 will be available both through online licensing and license providers. Beginning this year, both licenses and carcass tags will be printed on regular paper, and license buyers can print them at home or still have the option of your local license provider. Licenses will no longer be mailed out of Helena.
- Drawing applications will be entered through the online licensing at home or at your local FWP office. Mail in drawing applications will no longer be accepted. A valid e-mail address will be needed to apply this year. This allows for the drawings to be conducted sooner and permits or licenses conveniently printed at home through e-mail notification.
- The drawing deadlines are April 1 for elk or deer permits, May 1 for moose, bighorn sheep, goat and bison, June 1 for deer B, elk B, and antelope.
- FWP's Licensing and Technology Services Division have worked diligently to come up with several layers of fraud prevention for the tags, including:

- The link in the e-mail the customer receives at the conclusion of the transaction that prints out their carcass tag is only available once, then cannot be accessed again.
- Watermark on the carcass tag that alters when copied.
- Each new tag will generate a unique identification number when a tag is reprinted.
- Customers are encouraged to keep their licenses and carcass tags in plastic bags both before and after validating and attaching to a harvested game animal.

Explore MT license system update:

- The current ALX system is 20 years old and normally these systems only are good for 10 years.
- The 2019 Legislation approved the go ahead with planning and creation of a new system which is called Explore MT or acronym XMT.
- Proposals for the new XMT system are due from vendors by February 5th. FWP has an evaluation team that will review and score all proposals. Highest scoring vendors will be invited to do a presentation for the evaluation committee. A vendor is hoped to be selected by the beginning of April and a contract with the selected vendor by the beginning of May. The finalized contract will include a project schedule. At that time, FWP will have a better idea of when we will have a prototype of the new system that can be shared at a future CAC meeting. The new system will come online for the 2022 license year with campsite reservations coming online later, but hopefully that same year.

Invasive Asian Clams – Lake Elmo – Shannon Blackburn

- Only in Lake Elmo so far after checking up and down the irrigation canal and Rattlesnake Reservoir. Asian clams are problematic causing water quality issues, algae blooms and affect the food web, and the fisheries in Lake Elmo. They are self-fertilizing, so it only takes one clam to reproduce.
- Solution for control is complete eradication, and the best solution is drawing down the lake. This could be potentially next winter or the following winter. By drawing down the lake and exposing the clams to cold temperatures in the winter, that is what kills them.
- In addition to eradicating the clams by drawing down the lake we could establish fish habitat structure in the lake, more fishing access, and park related extending a board walk, making a safer trail along the roads, expanding the dog park, etc. We are in the very early stages of discussion.

Wrap-up and adjourn: Bob Gibson

In the next couple of months, you will see another save the date for the next meeting. Give Bob suggested topics for next time.