



## **FWP Region 1 Citizen Advisory Committee**

May 20, 2026

FWP Region 1 Office, 490 N. Meridian, Kalispell

### **CAC Members Present**

**Don Wilkins**, Libby, **Katie Little**, Eureka, **Rett Parker**, Whitefish, **Ray Halloran**, Bigfork, **Jay Sheffield**, Libby, **Denise VanArtsdale**, Rollins, **Emery Grady**, Bigfork

### **FWP Staff Present**

Amber Steed, Malia Freeman, Chris Neu, Sean Cox, Macy Dugan, Neil Anderson, Dave Landstrom, Lynsay Finley

### **Others Present**

**Ian Wargo** (Fish and Wildlife Commissioner), **Jody Loomis** (Parks and Recreation Board)

### **Agenda**

#### **6 p.m.** - Welcome and Introductions

- Amber Steed introduced Malia Freeman as new regional communication and education program manager.

**6:10 p.m.** – Commissioner/Parks Board Member Update: Ian Wargo, Montana Fish and Wildlife Commissioner, & Jody Loomis, Montana State Parks and Recreation Board

- Loomis provided an update on trail maintenance, trail grooming, funding

**6:30 p.m.** – Presentation on predator/prey dynamics and updates on Region One elk, moose, and mule deer from Neil Anderson

- Questions from CAC members:
  - Are you using the Noxon study to predict what is happening in all of Region 1?
  - Has FWP looked at flying HD 103 for elk surveys? Recent timber harvests could have made the district more aerially accessible.
  - Does FWP set the length of these studies, and do you ever extend them to get more data?

## **7:30 p.m. – Discussion of CAC roundtable submissions**

James Nielson (not present)

- Need increased investment in FWP staff, operations, and compensation to address public frustrations and stewardship needs.
- Emphasized Montana's greatest asset is its wildlife, landscapes, access, and outdoor heritage, which requires investing in the people managing them.
- Stressed the historic and ongoing role of sportsmen in conservation, funding, and stewardship and cautions not to lose sight of that.
- Concerned about cumulative pressures in Region 1 (growth, recreation, development, multi-use conflicts) causing permanent habitat and access loss.
- Wants continued focus on access opportunities for elderly and disabled Montanans.

Kendal Bortisser (not present)

- Frustrated that poaching penalties seem too lenient and questions why lifetime license loss is not used more often; suggests legislative action.
- Asks for CAC meetings to be scheduled on a predictable, recurring calendar and set in advance.
- Requests website updates for R1 CAC minutes, agendas, and contact info, plus emailing agendas before and minutes after meetings.

Katie Little

- Emphasizes need for stronger game warden presence around Eureka to address violations behind gates and road hunting, especially under new rules.
- Wants FWP/Commission explanation and transparency on cow permits restricted to private land and perceptions of "privatizing" elk hunting.
- Seeks more road closures near Eureka during rifle season to reduce road hunting pressure and improve fair-chase, walk-in hunting.
- Concerned about combined effects of open roads, predators, logging, and subpar habitat management on wildlife in lowland areas.
- Requests better public outreach and a clear map on the new Region 1 border-area changes and draw-only bull tag boundaries.

Don Wilkins

- Wants an update on Green Diamond and Stimson conservation easements.
- Asks about discussions with Southern Pines Plantation on possible conservation easements and, if not, options for public access to their lands for hunting this season.

Ray Halloran

- Asking about the status of the Conclow Fishing Access near Dayton, which appeared to still be closed.

Emery Grady

- Requests clarification of "private land only" for hunters over age 75 harvesting an elk in Unit 285, and whether a general license plus proof of age is all that's required.

Denise VanArtsdale

- Requests clarification on whether the nonresident ten-day delay applies only to grouse or also to pheasant.
- Notes angler concern that redefining soft-plastic lures to effectively disallow them on the river limits effective tools for pike and lake trout.
- Shares strong positive feedback on FWP support for the Youth Shoot bird releases.

8:30 p.m. – Adjourn