

CAC/Legislative meeting 11/30/16 – 6:00pm

Introductions: all

John Fraley:

- Agenda review

Neil Anderson:

- Shoulder season - R1 has been successful, good effort
- General season – good success, harvest statistics overview, many does taken by general deer tag holders
- Mule deer research projects are coming up this winter

Commissioner Gary Wolf:

- *Commission meeting in November meant a lucky day for a buck
- Meeting included discussion of 6 citizen petitions, all water related. Houseboats on Flathead Lake - citizens concerned about this occurring more, it isn't regulated by any statutory authority by any Agency.
- December meeting topics include the archery technology proposal, it will be final, comment period ended, but Commission will take comment. There will be a progress report on the new lion management plan.

Dustin Temple:

- *Following in Sue Daly's footsteps is tough
- Overview of FWP finances & HB140 overview
- Reviewed handouts relating to Fish and Wildlife, and Parks funding
- Revenue after HB140 is higher in 2016 than anticipated. Base Hunting License; there were 1.8 billion sold, considered a barometer for participation. Non-resident combination licenses sold out. Conservation license sales were stable.
- Outlook is good
- Parks – new snowmobile trails pass & OHV sticker increase
- Parks needs new revenue; any ideas welcome
- Discussion on PR funds/state fund matches
 - Jim Williams noted Parks visitation trajectory, increasing dramatically
 - Dave Landstrom commented about visitation doubling within 6 years. We average 75% resident visitation.

Hank Worsch:

- Will be the FWP Legislative Liaison – will get it right by talking, early, get conversation going
 - Rep. Noland remarked that we are not as scary as he had thought, was easy to work with. "Ears" need to be mutual.
- Reviewed handouts on legislative website, process and proposals (will be looking for sponsors on these)
- Broad conversation regarding wolf and fund allocation. Is there leftover funds?
- Electronic tagging - FWP is looking for authority for exploring electronic tagging options. Concern about cell coverage/harvest location privacy. Does the bill have a sunset date?
- Bison licenses for Tribes, independent of treaty hunting
- Increasing Block Management payments; would affect 60 cooperators
- Combining Come Home to Hunt & Native MT licenses into single program. Will be more discussion on this; how it will work/specifics.

Legislators-

Sen. Keith Regier:

- Wild Horse dock status?
 - Landstrom – public was opposed to dock. Where'd funding go? To other dock project in State.

Rep. Matt Regier:

Rep. Zac Perry:

- AIS emergency response?
 - Williams shared Governor Bullock's press release concerning the Incident Command Structure created
 - Temple went over funding sources

Sen. Jennifer Fielder:

- Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee Chair
- Parks Land internal review clarification. PR funds used to purchase other lands. Parks audit coming; Sen. Hamlet concerned.
- Harvest and heritage rights bill – statute doesn't define what big game is
 - Williams deferred to Director's office
 - Hank encouraged Sen. Fielder to talk with them (Becky Dockter, Quentin Kujala)
- She needs help from FWP. Is not introducing a lot of legislation, devoting time to Fish and Wildlife Committee.

Rep. Frank Garner:

- AIS big concern
- Access for hunting on Weyerhaeuser/general access to public land. How to incentivize access to public land surrounded by private.
 - Lee Anderson addressed Weyerhaeuser concern – has good rapport so far. They maintained annual agreement. They've been receptive. Working on education. There are corporate vs. private employee perceptions.
 - Sen. Fielder stated that people want us to be pro-active with the company

Sen. Bob Keenan:

Rep. Randy Brodehl:

- AIS – funding mechanism for the Incident Command Team?
 - Temple – Environmental Contingency Fund
- Island Lake – what was Capitol Project, and cost?
 - Deleray – 4 components; road, campsites, boat ramp, environmental protections. Will get costs to him

Rep. Derek Skees:

- Home to Hunt – change definition of native to 30 years... humor

Rep. Carl Glimm:

- Chair on FWP budget subcommittee
 - Briggs – access to rivers; non-motorized don't pay, look for other sources of funding. Use is becoming more heavy in remote places

Sen. Mark Blasdel:

Rep. Dave Fern:

- AIS
- Sitting on MDOT committee – interested in strategies to mitigate road kill costs/damage. Signage similar to British Columbia (big/bold/graphic, #'s of road kills, make people nervous/cautious)?

Rep. Mike Cuffe:

- Two deer ran into him on way to Helena
- Compliment – 2 years ago folks in Eureka were frustrated. Shoulder seasons happened and had went well, seem to be successful.

- Bighorn Sheep out of Libby – are pests, pretty intense complaints
- AIS – mussel invasion is huge deal. He carried legislation in 2013 for AIS and participated in an AIS summit. Is disappointed the issue wasn't on the agenda for this CAC. He's part of a group who lobbied in Washington for funding. Why aren't we closing waters to boats that have been affected?
 - Williams/Deleray – AIS program is huge. Ran out of Helena. Process of confirmation. Huge effort, lead by DNRC.

Rep. Keith Regier:

- What can be done about AIS?
 - Deleray – is tasking Kenny Breidinger with white paper to predict AIS invasion. Factors regarding results of introduction, variations.

Rep. Dave Fern:

- Whitefish Lake Institute has lots of information on mussels
 - Deleray stated we work with them and the Flathead Lake Biological Station

CAC Members –

Arlie Burk:

- Bighorn Sheep in Thompson Falls
 - Williams noted they're the only native herd in MT

Ron Hawkinson:

- Speed limit (55) works to reduce sheep fatalities
- I177 – would like legislation to alleviate having to fight this type of initiative again; funding for opposing it
- Antlerless elk regulations in other areas (R3) – concerned about over harvest
- Complimentary licenses for landowners – makes non-residents more likely to purchase property, use for private hunting only

DJ Rankosky:

- HD 109 buck mule deer harvest, still illegal harvest occurring
- HD 132 antlerless elk harvest on private land – there are no more elk there or in HD 130. Could HD 132 boundaries change?
 - Williams said regulation was made to address game damage
 - Tryg Koch farms for landowners who do experience damage from elk still
 - Williams – elk management plan needs revisited
- Trail cams – what is legal and when? Frustrated he can't use during other times.
 - Gary Wolf – discussed Commission rule making regarding trail cams

Charles Abell:

- Thank you to Legislators attending
- Supports Mike Cuffe's concerns regarding mussels, especially Whitefish Lake. Legislators need to work on this. Can't sacrifice our waters. Need consistency with check stations.
 - Sen. Fielder – Federal Government didn't/wouldn't contain original find of mussels

Dan Short:

- Appreciate Legislators interest
- Supporting Habitat MT – funding is from non-resident combination licenses, could be more diverse
- Future Fisheries – help landowners mend fences
- AIS – had luxury of being in prevention mode, now have to ramp up. Not just FWP issue, much broader. Need to take seriously.

Joe Rudolph:

- AIS – he worked with Eurasian Milfoil issue with other Agencies, they have no control of that now.

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Jay Sheffield:

- Block Management is important. Encourage access.
- Early doe season was tremendous success. Took a lot of deer, close to home, habituated deer harvested.
- Wolf collaring on public roads – frustrated that road was closed during hunting season.

Rich Hjort:

- Thank you Legislators
- Ten year olds shouldn't hunt. Thinks FWP just wants the funding.
- Wardens – need more, and more money
 - Lee Anderson agreed, need more FTE. Not easy for Legislators to get

Thad Briggs:

- Wardens – need more. He is a caretaker of land with trespass issues which FWP wardens address better than County
- Supports walleyes
- AIS – check stations are sporadic, not all the same. Thorough in some areas, not in others
- HD 109 buck mule deer harvest is problematic

Tryg Koch:

- Thank you Legislators
- Block Management – Weyerhaeuser needs more payment
 - Lee explained funding. They don't get paid but receive enforcement
 - Worsech will be meeting with large landowners; how can we help you, help us? Come up with new ideas, not just Block Management. Trying to get back to respect.
- Sweet Grass Hills block management, call in reservation, hard to get on. Concerned non-hunters are taking spots.
 - Hank to check into this
- HD 170-132 – elk and deer on 90% private land that doesn't allow hunting. Could late archery season work, be proposed? Feels it would be accepted more.
 - Neil – HD 170 deer was expanded for archery, can add to season setting proposals.

CAC Alumni/Public –

Paul Fielder:

- I177 – was appointed chairman of opposing committee, created flyer, had groups help fight it. People trust wardens. Initiative failed 63-37%. One County passed it. Talked about Wayne Purcell's, Humane Society, statement about using the ballot box to stop hunting and trapping.
- Supports trail cam issue

Chuck Hunt:

- Thanks (Legislators, Gary, Hank, Dustin) for the support. It is greatly appreciated
- Hope constraints can be taken off of FWP funding

Jim Vashro:

- Flathead Wildlife Inc. – public access is huge issue
- Habitat Montana important
- Weyerhaeuser land is for sale, FWP needs to be able to purchase
- Public roads blocked by private landowners. Should be expensive to do (legally).
- Appreciate consensus over AIS. Already being impacted by illegal introductions (fish). FWP should take the issue more seriously and educate

Larry Lack:

- Pleased to hear concern about AIS and contributing factors. Lucky to get to management level. Every year we lose grant money. Need to fund AIS. Control access, improve check stations. Boats are only checked from one direction. Stations are easy to avoid.

Mike Sheppard:

- Thanks to Legislators
- Bowhunting and trapping being targeted, bowhunters are right behind trappers. Noted Bob Muth's Facebook page – opposes hunting altogether. Addressing Legislators - Call us (bowhunters, etc.) if you have any questions.

Tony Anderson:

- Fishing Patagonia – strict rules for going fishing there; had to bring new equipment, etc. We're not stopping AIS at borders. Get permit 1st before bringing in boats and other equipment.

Brent Mitchell:

- Access – Flathead Wildlife backs up by suing (County). Most important to sportsman. Why doesn't Legislature approve funding for new FAS or other access? Could be partisan or philosophical difference?
 - Sen. Keenan – FWP; Legislators don't want it to become a general fund Agency. He has been in office most sessions, since 1995.

Nick Gevock:

- With Montana Wildlife Federation Coalition of Sporting Groups
- Habitat Montana is great program. Make sure it remains whole.
- Road closures issue – going to have bill to up fine
- Block Management - support landowner raise
- Livestock loss – cut down on grizzly conflicts. Sunsets, existing bill regarding road kill processing.
- AIS – Feral Swine bill passed, pro-active on conservation measures
- Invite them to “meet and greet”
- Glad to see trapping ban go down

Jim Williams – wrap up

- For CAC members we look for people who challenge us. They keep us grounded.
 - Sen. Fielder – Jim is responsive, follows up, gets it done.