

**Region 6 Citizens Advisory Council****DATE: Tuesday August 31, 2021****TIME: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.****PLACE: Fort Peck Multi-Species Fish Hatchery**

**Region 6 CAC members present** - Ken Forbregd, Ron Garwood, Miles Hutton, Jay Crandell, Brian Olson, Don Kaveshan, Fred Perry, Tyler Tarum, Aaron Wittmer, Tami Burke, Perri Jacobs

**Region 6 CAC members not present** - Lars Anderson, Scott Azure, Pam Wilson

**FWP Helena Staff** - Ron Jendro

**FWP Regional Staff** - Drew Henry, Steve Dalbey, Heather Dulaney, Heath Headley, Marc Kloker, Scott Thompson, Shane Reno

**Guests**- Fish and Wildlife Commission Chair, Lesley Robinson, Darlyne Dascher,

**Marc Kloker:**

- Welcomed group and opened meeting with an overview of the agenda and introductions of CAC members and FWP employees.

**Drew Henry:**

- Gave a personal introduction of himself and his education background, as well as his work history for FWP over the year.
- Brief overview of construction of Glasgow office and Havre building.
- CAC charter review- explained the CAC would be more involved in the season setting process. The next CAC meeting on January 5, 2022, will only have one agenda item of discussing the season setting. The next step would be a public meeting with CAC members.
- Red Tape Initiative- Implement regulatory reform work group with in FWP
- Reorganization in forming Parks and Recreation with several bureau's being impacted. Specifically, maintenance and access in region 6.
  - o Hope Stockwell is the division administrator.
  - o The purpose is to track maintenance on all WMA, FAS' etc. for the next 2 years. This will create a rate structure to know how much it costs to maintain them all with the hope of getting funded at a higher level for all the sites.
- Reorganization of all regional administrative staff. Lyndsey Dodge is the new Administrative Support Operations Bureau Chief oversee all regional administrative staff, the front desk staff and DO staff at Headquarters. The reorganization is to help with consistency with changes occurring in policy and licensing so that each region helps customers by giving the same answers.
- Staff changes in region 6; Hiring a wildlife biologist at the Glasgow office to replace Drew. Also hiring a non-game biologist to replace Heather Harris who accepted a position as the state grassland and wetland coordinator, based out of Glasgow.
- Block management technicians have been through orientation and are currently out in the field opening boxes. Tim still has two open positions and looking to fill those.

- We will also be hiring CWD technicians for the hunting season. One is stationed in Havre and one will be at the Glasgow office along with a CWD logistic coordinator who will make sure samples are submitted to the lab in a timely manner.

**Scott Thompson: Wildlife Update**

- Talked about the season setting process and what the CAC's role will be.
  - o Regional development through 9/1
  - o Public vetting 9/20-10/20; NEW and formalized
  - o FWP prepares for the Fish & Wildlife commission 11/24
  - o Fish & Wildlife commission endorsement 12/14
  - o Public comment period 12/15-1/15
    - Four public meetings in region 6; January 5<sup>th</sup>- FWP and CAC will host the last public meeting with CAC members who can also give public comment.
  - o Simplifying hunting season objectives by:
    - Reducing the number of hunting districts.
    - Reducing permit types.
    - Reducing season date structures
    - Hunting districts the same for all species.
  - o WHY?
    - To print regulations earlier
    - Simplify regulations to help recruit, retain and reactive hunters

*Action Item: Tami Burke- requested tables and maps of proposed changes to be emailed.*

- Region 6 proposals
  - o Consolidate hunting districts
    - 622 and portion of 631 to correspond with deer and elk HD changes
    - 631 east of Ridge Rd with 630 and 632
  - o Combine whitetail licenses
    - 006-00 and 699-00 would be under the same license, 006-00
  - o License adjustments – Goal is to eliminate and/or combine license/permit types so there are fewer.
    - Tasked with eliminating all antlerless elk permits statewide
      - Eliminate the 698-00 and reallocate the 300 permits to the existing b-licenses: 621-01 and 622-00
    - Eliminate youth license 699-01 valid in HD 690
  - o Establish a black bear management unit (600)
    - Same dates as the rest of the state
  - o Establish calendar dates for spring turkey. April 15- May 31
  - o Realign R6/R7 turkey regional boundary to HWY 200, which is known regional boundary for all other wildlife species.
  - o Remove waterfowl closures for Nelson Reservoir and McLean Reservoir.

*Open discussion of strengths and weaknesses for season setting proposals:*

- **Expanding 622:**

*Strengths*

- More harvest success
- Manage herds better
- Improve elk distribution

*Weaknesses*

- Potentially more pressure from the East in wet falls
- Confining too many hunters into a small area

*Suggestions:*

- Ron Garwood: would we increase archery permits in HD 622
  - o Aaron, Tami and Perri said more 620-21 archery permits would add to already congested archery units
- Brian Olson: Larger districts (like HD 700) might be better

**Combining HDs 630, remainder of 631 and 632 into “NEW” 630:**

*Strengths*

- Elk distribution and can be more conservative in future
- Manage herd that resides there

*Weaknesses*

- Loss of revenue if decrease in license/permit levels

**Eliminate 698 antlerless permit:**

*Strengths*

- Clear up confusion for license/permit holders

*Weaknesses*

- Potential to increase congestion on the CMR

*Suggestions:*

- Brian Olson: Make a new license (elk b) valid off the CMR *or* make it so if you harvest an elk b, you can't use general elk license in same hunting district.

**HD 690- Eliminate 699-01 (youth B- license):**

*Strengths*

- *Weaknesses*

- Removing 2-day early youth opener in HD 690

**Increase either sex 690-20 from 35 to 50:**

- *Aaron Wittmer: Probably wouldn't change ability to harvest due to inaccessible elk*

**Combine whitetail licenses 006-00 & 699-00:**

*Strengths*

- Available to purchase all season with no quota
- Increase in revenue
- Good tool going into bad winter by reducing high population

*Weaknesses*

- Potential for more outside area hunters
- Could result in exploiting small populations in areas

**Establish Bear Mangement Unit/ Black Bear Season across Region 6:**

*Strengths*

- Good!
- Eliminate conflict

*Weaknesses*

**Turkey spring season dates, R6 boundary, and waterfowl closure removals**

- **No red flags**

**Steve Dalbey: Fisheries Update**

- Fresno Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan 2022-2031
  - Fresno is the 5<sup>th</sup> most heavily fished water in Region 6.
  - Plan was drafted in conjunction with a 9 member advisory group that represented;
    - Local Walleye anglers
    - Out of Area walleye anglers
    - General/Youth anglers
    - Local Business
    - Local Government.
  - The Management Plan Goal; The Fresno Reservoir fisheries will be managed as a walleye fishery with the primary goal of high angler catch rates for Stock and Quality walleye. This will be accomplished by stocking hatchery walleye to augment the wild walleye population. An emphasis will be placed on habitat enhancement efforts to support other species of interest (yellow perch, black crappie and forage species). Under this Management Goal, angler harvest of walleye will be essential to maintain a healthy fishery.
  - Draft plan is on the October FWP Commission agenda for final approval.

## **Marc Kloker:**

### Hunter Ed & Bowhunter Ed

- Continued hunter ed and bowhunter ed in class sessions starting June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Bowhunter ed in-class participation has dropped off
- Field day open to online students, but no one has signed up yet
- First in-class hunter ed starts September 13<sup>th</sup>.

### Communication

- Good steward of the land press release – would like to make it into a video, in the near future.

## **Lesley Robinson: Fish & Wildlife Commission Chair**

- Approved town of Jordan plan for deer in town.
- Increased wolf quota to 450 – 10 hunting and 10 trapping
  - o Baiting and night hunting on private land
- Starting October 1<sup>st</sup>, she will be the region 6 representative. There are only 5 representatives right now and they are adding two more, for a total of 7.

## **CAC Round Table:**

### **Aaron Wittmer:**

- Need to hire more wardens. They need help covering such large areas with larger numbers of people hunting.
- Large deer numbers and seeing an uptick in town deer. Lots of twins and triplets seen around town.

*Marc suggested a list of people to “give” deer to.*

*Shane, Scott and Aaron discussed the potential for the city to initiate a plan to deal with urban deer with F&W Commission approval. FWP staff have tried to facilitate this. Chair Robinson subsequently described the newly approved Town of Jordan deer plan.*

### **Ken Forbregd:**

- Dry earth, lots of wind and fires!
- Ike’s pond stayed full pool all summer and fish stuck around. The fish are about 9 inches now and doing well. Needs to encourage anglers to keep fish when caught. The pond is also bringing in wildlife. A mule deer fawn was killed by three coyotes on the walking trail. The boat ramp was used all summer.
- Wildlife is doing well. Amazed how wildlife have positively responded to the conditions
- Culbertson Bridge FAS getting lots of use and the fishing on the river (Missouri) continues to be good.

**Brian Olson:**

- Fishing was good but trailing off now for walleye. Trout fishing is good below the dam.
- Concerned with spearfishing possession limits and the amount of area they take up on the lake. If they have a flag up, the distance is to keep 150 feet away.
- Would like to see cameras at fish cleaning stations.
- Pushing for gas tax on the water.
- Kudos to Steve and Fresno committee – has heard great feedback.
- Would like to know the protocol for donating deer this season.

**Ron Garwood:**

- Gophers have run out of grass- seem to be eating the grasshoppers
- Lots of whitetail deer along the river bottom. Good number of mule deer. Hasn't seen any EHD, that he knows of. Found a dead doe in January but unsure of what caused it.
- A lot of doves and turkeys by the river bottom. Seen some pheasants but likely down
- Comment period for the EA, bison grazing for the APR, through September 28th. (Perri Jacobs) discussed the issue.
- Valley County Conservation District is concerned about the EA and have a FOIA request to BLM for BLM/APR correspondence if anyone wants to look at it.

**Jay Crandell:**

- Found a couple of mature antelope dead in a field. Thinking it is either blue tongue or EHD.
- The border patrol and gun club put on a training for women around Scobey with handling guns.
- A couple of moose sightings near Peerless.
- Some bird – young pheasants and grouse
- Lots of deer!
- Is FWP monitoring CWD still? Seeing sickly looking deer with droopy ears. (S. Thompson answered) YES – Still offering tests at no cost to the hunter.
- Nice rains!

**Miles Hutton:**

- Worried about drought all summer. Lucked out and no fires.
- Described “Welcome to our ranch” messaging that used to be in the hunting regulations in the 1990's. Suggested the department look into reinitiating that.
- Overran with gophers. Ammo in short supply and expensive.
- Sharpies and huns – seen several coveys and not too bad.
- Lots of antelope, fawns, mule deer with triplets, few whitetail bucks
- A lot of coyotes, a few swift fox, skunks and raccoons.
- Having a hunter education class in September.
- Seen geese flying south.
- Has not seen any moose or elk.

**Don Kaveshan:**

- In reference to donating deer, he mentioned he donated his deer license last year to disabled veterans

- Seen about 36 sharptail around his property
- Lots of mule and antelope.
- Creel survey is going fair.
- Grasshopper problem – sprayed for them and killed tons.

**Fred Perry:**

- Fishing on Nelson Reservoir was no good all summer but the last 4-5 weeks has been great.
- Fourchette fishing has been phenomenal
- Seeing sage hens – seen 3 broods, pheasant good, grouse is sparse.
- Antelope- two bucks with deformed horns, but a fair amount out there.
- Got rain finally, 12-14 days 2 ½”
- Moose west of Wagner by Malta with twins.

**Tyer Tarum:**

- Numbers are good across the board and good age structure.
- Great bluegill fishing for he and daughter and Easy to catch fish with grasshoppers.

**Perri Jacobs:**

- Not much hay was put up, only 4 bales in 3 hours due to it being so dry.
- Coyote numbers are up and very vocal.
- Seen fawn loss due to drought. Eleven does and no fawns. Haven't seen much for deer by her property. Lots of mule deer bucks .
- 2.2” rain last week
- Elk around their corrals
- A neighbor lost a steer calf yearling. The state trapper thinks it's a mountain lion, still investigating. Maybe increase mountain lion quota.
- Their reservoir has dried up.

**Tami Burke:**

- Good elk, deer and antelope numbers.
- Started setting up hunting camps.
- Utilizes Sullivan Park Trail
- Kudos to Tim Potter for the nice and bright block management signs.

**Scott Azure:** (absent) report submitted

- Bird counts are slightly lower than average in the north country but loaded by the river bottom.
- Tribe might possibly allow non-tribal hunters to help with the huge mule deer population.
- Moose sightings have been way down, they are mostly by the river bottom.
- Because of the drought and hay shortage, the tribe has doubled the number of buffalo to be taken this year.

**Pam Wilson:** (absent) report submitted

- Appreciated the press release on good steward to the land.
- Bragged about the MSU-N women's basketball team for painting the inside of the pavilion at Bear Paw Lake.

- Would like to find more community service projects for FAS sites:
  - Garbage clean-up
  - Painting
  - Pruning/cutting grass
  - Spreading gravel or working on boat ramps

**Guest - Darlyne Dascher:**

- Turkey population by her place is sparse.- had only 1 chick survive.
- Lots of sharpie and not a lot of sage grouse.
- Decent amount of deer- no big bucks yet.

**Ron Jendro:**

About 1,800 special licenses, out of 3,000, for the outfitter licenses have been issued.

Director's office is travelling the state doing Open Door Tours.