



Region 6 Citizens Advisory Council
DATE: Wednesday, January 5, 2022
TIME: 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
PLACE: Zoom Meeting

Region 6 CAC members present - Lars Anderson, Scott Azure, Jay Crandell, Ken Forbregd, Miles Hutton, Brian Olson, Fred Perry, Aaron Wittmer, Perri Jacobs

Region 6 CAC members absent - Tami Burke, Ron Garwood, Don Kaveshan, Tyler Tarum, Pam Wilson

FWP Helena Staff - None

FWP Regional Staff - Steve Dalbey, Heather Dulaney, LaWana Grewe, Scott Hemmer, Drew Henry, Nicole Hussey, Marc Kloker, Jared Krebs, Tim Potter, Shane Reno, Scott Thompson, Ryan Williamson

Guest: - Fish and Wildlife Commission Chair, Lesley Robinson

Marc Kloker:

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

Drew Henry:

Greeted the CAC members and Commission Chair Lesley Robinson

Scott Thompson:

Season Setting Proposals

- Process to make framework adjustments to the Hunting Seasons for the next two years (2022 & 2023)
 - Hunting District Boundaries
 - Add or eliminate License/Permit types
 - Change season dates
- Typically, does not address annual variations in license quotas

Season Setting Process

Sep. 1	FWP Regions develop potential changes thru September 1, based on biology and guidance to simplify.
Sep. 20 – Oct. 20	Public vetting and initial public input on FWP proposals
Nov. 24	FWP prepares season proposals for Fish and Wildlife Commission
Dec. 14	F&W Commission decides on proposals to put out for public comment. Includes proposals not from FWP
Dec 15 -Jan 21	Public Comment Period – Public meetings in Havre, Plentywood, Glasgow, Malta CAC Meeting

Feb. 4

Final F& W Commission meeting

- Reduce the number of hunting districts (HD) and to increase their size
- Eliminate and/or combine license/permit types (LPTs) so there are fewer types
- Review season date structures to have fewer
- Strive to make HDs the same for all species

Elk Statewide

- Add a new statewide, unlimited antlerless B license valid on private land in elk hunting districts that are greater than 200% above objective.
 - Valid during open seasons for those hunting districts (for example, if there is an early and a late season, they would be valid during those.
 - For 2022, that would include the following Hunting Districts: • HD 260 • HD 411/535 (new) • HD 417 • HD 426 HD 450 • HD 515 new • HD 575 • HD 580 • HD 590 • HD 690 • HD 700 • HD 702/704/705
- Permits for either-sex elk or brow-tined bull will limit the holder to hunting for antlered elk within only the designated HD for the period identified on the permit.
 - Antlerless elk hunting will not be limited by the permit.
 - A general license may be used to hunt in any open district during dates outside of that identified on the permit
 - Example- 690-21 permit holder would be restricted to hunting bull elk in HD 690 during archery season. Could then use general elk license for any general elk opportunities during the general season.

Hunting District Consolidation

- New Deer/Elk/Lion HD 622
 - Combine HD 622 and portion of HD 631 west of Ridge Road

Prepare for upcoming Elk Plan rewrite and elk objective discussions
- New Deer/Elk/Lion HD 630
 - Combine that portion of HD 631 east of Ridge Rd with HDs 630 and 632. Moving the boundary consistently puts 630s at a stable 300 quota. This reduces LPT from 8 to 5. We will still manage for objectives in the 620s it is 100 -165, int the 630s it is 300 -500.
- Antelope HDs are proposed to align with above Goal: Reduce the number of hunting districts (HD) and to increase their size.

Eliminate antlerless elk permit-Statewide

- Convert the 698-00 antlerless permit to an elk B-license (quota 300)
 - Valid in Breaks HDs 620, 621, 622 off the CMR refuge.
 - Valid during archery only and general seasons

Bears Paw Elk -HD 690

- Remove the 699-01 youth elk B-license valid in HD 690
 - Youth can already hunt on general license for cows

- Very low harvest success rate
- Increase 690-20 Either-sex elk permit from 35 to 50. Adjust quota range to 15 - 100 (current range 10-50).
- HD 690 included in new statewide, unlimited antlerless B license valid on private land in HDs that are greater than 200% above objective

White-tailed Deer-R6

- Eliminate Region 6 Antlerless WT licenses 699-00 (quota of 4,000):
 - Increase per person limit for the Over the Counter, (OTC) antlerless whitetail B-license from one to four.
 - 699-00 currently sells surplus annually and we typically have not sold out of the license.
 - As whitetail populations fluctuate (EHD, winter, spikes), we could adjust the per person limit.

Goal: Eliminate and/or combine license/permit types (LPTs) so there are fewer types

Upland Game Bird-Statewide

- Extend Upland Game Bird season to January 31
 - Includes Pheasant, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Partridge (Gray and Chukar), and Mountain Grouse
 - Currently ends January 1.

Turkey-Statewide

- Spring Turkey Season:
 - Set established calendar dates of April 15 – May 31 for spring turkey instead of dates revolving around weekends.
 - This delays the opener by 5 days and extends the closure by 15 days (based on 2021 dates).
 - Mirrors spring black bear season dates
 - Follows concept of set dates already established for fall (Sept 1-Jan 1)

Goal: Reduce number of season date structures

- Fall Turkey Season:
 - Allow use of air rifle as legal means of take of turkeys during the fall season.
 - May be a .177 caliber air rifle shooting a pba pellet at least 1250 feet per second or
 - A .22 caliber air rifle shooting a pba pellet at least 950 feet per second.
- Region 6/7 boundary:
 - Adjust regional boundary for turkey regulations to mirror the administrative Region 6/7 boundary at highway 200.
 - Functionally, removes the Region 7- 2nd turkey license from those portions of Richland and Dawson Counties in Region 6

Goal: To make HDs the same for all species

Migratory Bird-Central Flyway

- Establish a Light Goose Conservation Order for snow and Ross's geese in the Central Flyway that occurs from March 1 to May 15.

***Goal:** A conservation order is a season in which specific waterfowl may be taken to aid in reducing overabundant populations that have been determined to have a deleterious effect on their arctic breeding grounds.*

Black Bear-Statewide

- Black Bear-R6
 - Establish a new BMU 600 that will encompass entire Region 6.
 - The Quota would be 4 Spring Season/ 4 Fall Season
 - In response to increasing black bear numbers and conflicts in the region
 - Provide hunting opportunity
- Eliminate the requirement that each harvested black bear needs to be physically inspected by a department employee.
 - Successful hunters will be required to submit a premolar from any black bear harvested and provide it to a department office within 10 days either in person or by mail (postmarked within 10 days).

Submit Public Comment

YOUR role is to provide public comment on the proposals to the F&W Commission (They are the Decision Makers.)

Email: fwpwld@mt.gov

Online: <https://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/public-comment-opportunities/>

Steve Dalbey: Fisheries Update

- Management Plan on Fort Peck rewrite 2022
 - Ten-year plan

Marc Kloker:

Hunter Ed & Bowhunter Ed

- In the clear to have HE in person classes. Classes will crank up in February through May.
- Instructor workshops will be held in April

XMT – Explore Montana is a new addition to selling licenses. It will bring big changes!

- February 28th the digital wallet app will be available. It will give hunters the ability to choose a digital license.
- Serving on the R3 Working Group (Recruit, Retain, Reactivate). I will report when we next meet in person.

CAC Round Table

Perri Jacobs:

- Not seeing much wildlife. There are 25 deer eating her expensive hay. No antelope seen, just coyotes and small critters.
- No road complaints this year because there was no rain.
- Due to drought and winter, it will be quite interesting to animal numbers in the spring.

Aaron Wittmer:

- Mixed bag on hunting. My 10 yr. old harvested his first deer. Seeing lots of waterfowl and have had success hunting them with some effort.
- Mountain Lion harvest in HD690 closed quickly. Most came from the same location. Perhaps we need to increase the quota?
- Fielded many comments about changes to elk hunting in HD 690. Happy that the commission listened to the public and took items off the agenda. Thank you.

Miles Hutton:

- Most hunters I have ever seen this season. It was miserable hunting due to wind. There were lots of trespass issues around Turner.
- Seeing lots of coyotes and red fox
- Have seen comments on Facebook about the season setting proposals. Feel that elk need pushed off of sanctuary areas.
- Agrees that we need to increase lion quotas
- Did see 50 deer by the highway by Turner on the way home tonight.

Fred Perry:

- Fishing on Nelson Reservoir and Fourchette has been excellent.
- Lack of nice mule deer bucks but were some nice antelope bucks harvested. Not seeing a lot of them.
- Coyotes raising hell with antelope. Low fawn numbers.
- Saw moose on the Milk River between Saco and Dodson
- Whitetails seem to be doing fine on the Milk River, but less seen on side creeks
- More grouse than pheasants.
- Water and hay are non-existent, have to feel for the farmers and ranchers.

Jay Crandell:

- High hunter numbers and high harvest. There are still plenty of deer left.
- Lots of coyotes, bird numbers seemed about average
- Court docket filled with hunter violations. Wardens Ryan Linder and Todd Tryan did an excellent job patrolling. Could still use more enforcement.
- Attended meeting with DNRC. Talked about increasing state land access fee by \$1 to be earmarked for enforcement.
- BMA issues related to signing in and driving off road.

Ken Forbregd:

- Scott Thompson's plate is full! Appreciate the season setting presentation tonight.
- Fishing on the Missouri River was impacted by irregular water releases. It was supposed to be a 4-inch raise in water level. It ended up being 8 feet due to ice jams, etc.

- EHD affected the deer population. I do have a few in my yard eating the raspberry bushes.
- In favor of extending the UGB season to January 31.
- Ike's Pond - The fish are about 13 inches now. (Planted 5" – 6" fish)

Lars Anderson:

Interesting year, cold and dry

- There are critters around, but they seem to be in new places due to climate-driven distribution
- Bison handling coming up in 3 weeks

Scott Azure:

- Birds are fantastic, lots of them.
- Deer hunting numbers okay. It was harder to find mature bucks
- For the Poplar River the water came up at the right time. It will be good ice fishing.
- Hopeful high snowfall will improve the walleye fishing.

Question for Drew Henry – Will the Walleye Spawn be accepting volunteers this year?

Answer: We are hopeful that we can return to allowing volunteers to help on the Spawn.

Brian Olson:

- Quit fishing reservoir due to gas prices and poor fishing. There were lots of 16–17-inch good eating fish caught.
- People are worried about horn size of deer. The body size is good though.
- Did a lot of pheasant hunting on Fort Peck Indian Reservation.
- BMAs were tough to hunt due to a lot of use. Saw a lot of Washington license plates.