

**Private Land/Public Wildlife Council
Meeting Summary
Lewistown, Montana
August 3-4, 2010**

Council Members Present: Land Tawney, Chair; Dick Iversen; Brett Todd; Rick Miller; Jack Billingsley; Wagner Harmon; Chris King; Representative Jeff Welborn; Lindsay Seidensticker; FWP Commissioner Ron Moody; Kathy Hadley; Joe Cohenour; **Absent:** Senator Steve Gallus; Jack Rich; Mike Penfold;

FWP staff in attendance: Quentin Kujala, Wildlife Management Bureau; Alan Charles, Coordinator of Landowner/Sportsman Relations. Also in attendance was Brian Kahn, facilitator;

Tuesday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

I. Council Chair – Welcome/ Finalize Agenda

II. Committee Work Sessions

Council members spent the morning of August 3rd, working in 2 committee work sessions, continuing to develop draft recommendations. Due to several members being absent from the Landowner Programs Committee, the remaining members from that committee worked with the Program Funding/Enhancement Committee. Brief synopses of committee reports appear at the end of this summary.

III. Trapline Reports

Council members reported on issues identified since the last meeting. Included in these comments were the following:

- *PWC proposal – some people don't feel it is a major issue;*
- *Shared Resource Proposal quickly becomes complicated when trying to explain it;*
- *PWC proposal is regarded by some as a private property rights issue;*
- *Shared Resource Proposal – still too undeveloped to know how it might be implemented;*
- *I161 – overshadowed discussion of all other issues and ideas;*
- *Reactions from MWF, MFB, AND MSGA leadership regarding the PWC Proposal were mixed, but overall encouraging that the Council may be on the right track in developing a potential process for resolving some of these difficult issues;*
- *Shared Resource Proposal (also referred to as the Shared Access Proposal) – makes some people nervous, questioning whether or not it is some type of Ranching for Wildlife idea;*
- *Some people are concerned that FWP is becoming a land management agency, by purchasing more and more land when they think FWP cannot manage land it already owns;*
- *Wolves and over-objective elk herds generated a fair amount of comments from people;*
- *I161 has a lot of people looking to PL/PW Council for ideas and alternative solutions;*

IV. Information Updates

Alan Charles updated Council on status of outfitter-sponsored nonresident license sales, sales of the newly-created Home-to-Hunt nonresident licenses, and Block Management Program enrollment statistics. Also mentioned was FWP's intent to submit a grant proposal for some of the "Open Fields" federal farm bill money allocated to support state and tribal agency hunting

access programs. Alan noted that the formal name of the program is now the Voluntary Public Access – Habitat Enhancement Program.

V. Public Comment Period

One member of the public offered comments, telling Council members that the PWC Proposal is not needed, that the Commission currently has the tools to address this issue, and that the only way to address over-populations of elk is to kill elk. This individual emphasized the importance of private property rights in considering ideas for attempting to resolve issues related to wildlife concentrations.

VI. Action Items: Council members agreed on the following three action items:

- a) by September 1, have draft recommendations from the 2 working committee revised and made available to all Council members for review and necessary revision;
- b) by mid-September, have information on the PL/PW Council website which is accurate, objective, and useful for the public to understand issues related to I161;
- c) by October 1, have draft recommendations finalized and made available for a 45-day public comment period;

V. Next meeting: The next Council meeting will be scheduled for early – mid December, at a site not yet determined.

Council Adjourned. (While the meeting was scheduled to last for 2 days, Council members completed work in one day, and subsequently cancelled the meeting scheduled for August 4).

Committee Reports

- a) Problematic Wildlife Concentration Committee – the committee presented the draft paper to the full Council for input and subsequent approval by the Council. After considerable discussion and refinement of the draft discussion paper, the Council agreed to move forward with further refining this draft recommendation, prior to soliciting final Council approval for adopting it as a draft recommendation.

Appearing below are talking points and a definition relevant to this topic:

COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR PROBLEMATIC WILDLIFE CONCENTRATIONS

Summary:

- **Problematic Wildlife Concentration (PWC) poses significant risks to private property rights, landowners and neighbors, the health of domestic and wild herds, our Montana hunting heritage and legally-mandated game management objectives.**
- **At present, any person can initiate a PWC complaint and Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission may modify license/permit/season structures, including either-sex, bull/buck/cow/doe tags, etc.**
- **Additionally, there is potential for lawsuits or “one-sided” legislation.**
- **The PLPW thinks there is a better solution, and has developed this proposal for collaborative discussion among key interests, leading to a carefully considered action plan to deal with this important issue.**

Our proposal is based on recognition that

- **Important private and public interests are involved;**
- **Collaborative, community-based solutions should be given priority;**
- **Responsible representatives of key interests—agriculture, landowner, outfitter, sportsmen –must be at the table;**
- **Any directed remedial action should have understanding and support of all interests;**

Our proposal includes a 6-year “sunset”; the process would terminate unless renewed with support of the key interests.

Definition:

For the purposes of this proposal, “Problematic Wildlife Concentration” (PWC) is defined as the intentional or unintentional concentration of big game animals where game management by hunting has not been able to be effectively utilized, resulting in negative impacts to neighboring area and landowners, failure to achieve legally-mandated Fish, Wildlife and Parks management objectives, and/or risk to domestic and wild herd health.

- b) Program/Funding Enhancement Committee – in searching for some way to **acknowledge, promote, and reward role-model behavior displayed by Montana hunters, landowners, and outfitters who through their actions by working together help preserve Montana’s hunting heritage and traditions**, the committee reported to the Council on ideas for defining Shared Resource Access Areas, possible ways to utilize nonresident deer licenses split off from the B10 deer/elk general and outfitter-sponsored licenses, and general concepts for how landowners, hunters, and FWP might be able to cooperate in establishing and managing Shared Resource Area projects that could yield successful wildlife management and shared access to public wildlife resources by outfitted hunters, landowner-sponsored hunters, and non-outfitted, non-sponsored hunters.