

**Region 4 CAC Meeting
Minutes
April 25, 2011
Region 4 Headquarters
Great Falls MT**

FWP Staff – Gary Bertellotti, Fred Schultz, Matt Marcinek, Graham Taylor, Mike Martin, Bruce Auchly and George Liknes

CAC Members – Doug Deffe', Karl Gies, Dennis Hanson, Lisa Flowers, Mike Labriola, Bryan Thies, Charles Boccock, Joe Rapkoch, Fred Davis and Jodie Butler

Public/Guests – Ron Moody, FWP Commissioner; Alex Ferguson, Great Falls and Lauri Hanauska-Brown, FWP Helena

Gary opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. Asked if there were any additions to the agenda. None were offered.

CAC Member Discussion Items:

Went around the room for CAC discussion items and comments.

Dennis Hanson: He's getting a lot of questions about Tiber and the walleye plant and what else is happening. Seeing lots of antelope in the area and hopes the quotas go up. Big concern is that no one put in to run the marina on Tiber. Sort of sad that a lake that big and popular can't find someone to run the marina. Actually not a very financial adventure if you want to know the truth. But really needed.

Mike Labriola: Annual concerns about cruising trout in Holter Lake by Log Gulch. Lot of complaints about fishing and boating around BLM boat ramps. Asked about Tunnel Lake grayling. None have moved up the canal this past year. George says they fish won't reproduce and will just get bigger. Enjoy hooking into one but remember they are catch and release only.

Bryan Thies: Did FWP get a lot of comments on fishing regulations. All comments go to Helena and we haven't seen any of those as of yet. Seems like there is a lot more predators on the river – pelicans, osprey. Overall the system produces enough fish, as populations are OK, for fishermen and wildlife. Asked if we keep trends on whitefish? We don't monitor them like trout. They are very sensitive to shocking – a lot of mortality. We think they have declined in the Missouri River. Asked about outfitter quotas after I-161 passage. There are no outfitter quotas. Now hunters can hire a guide

and once through with the guide can hunt anywhere else if there license hasn't been filled. No requirement to hunt with the guide only as before.

Karl Gies: Concerned about northern pike getting into Spring Creek. Folks are still concerned about access in the Lewistown area. Big issue.

Charles Bocoock: Asked if we have flushing on the river due to the snowpack in conjunction with the walleye spawn. If Tiber fills can we move large perch from Lake Frances? Biologist would like to have larger perch in Frances so it is not warranted to move them at this time. Asked about Cormorants. We are doing nothing with Cormorants at this time.

Jodie Butler: There is a mountain lion on Frenchman Ridge. Two wolves were observed in the Carter/Ft Benton area.

Fred Davison: Asked about cutthroats in the Highwoods. Looks like all cutthroat projects will go forward at this time. He is seeing lots of deer, antelope and birds in his area.

Joe Rapkoch: There are some concerns on grizzly bears on the Marias WMA. Hearing good comments on weed control on Marias WMA by FWP. Seeing a lot of antelope in Shelby area.

General Discussion Items:

Gary – Discussed the situation of replacing members on the FWP Commission. Willie Doll was not reappointed. He was replaced by A.T. Rusty Stafne of Wolf Point. That will be representative for the northeastern part of the state. Dan Vermillion was reappointed by the governor. The Senate Fish and Game Committee originally voted against and later voted to approve to confirm that appointment. The discussion was over the Commission decisions regarding Missouri River Breaks Archery permits for elk.

Gary then went over legislative bills that affected our department. Initially there were 169 bills proposed and 110 introduced. Of the 110 introduced 35 were passed. Gary provided a handout of all the bills and discussed mainly the bills that were passed. During this session several bills were killed by the testimony of sportsmen of Montana. Didn't happen as much during the last session but it was great to see sportsmen and women working on their behalf during the session. It seems that during the session a lot of bills had themes to them – wolves, bison, land acquisition, diversion of FWP funding, state employees/state government, aquatic invasive species to name a few.

Dennis Hanson asked how FWP felt about Parks going to Commerce. Gary stated that Matt would cover some of that in his Parks briefing. It turned out to be a very complicated proposal once it was really looked into.

Charles Bocock asked about HB 621 and he had a concern about jumping carp, an aquatic invasive species. There are dollars attached to HB 2 to help fight invasive species but don't know if FWP has the actual funding to utilize those dollars.

Karl Gies has concerns about northern pike in Spring Creek coming from East Fork Reservoir when the dam is repaired. That is something that is being looked into as we really don't want northern in Spring Creek.

HB 2 gave us authority on an additional \$2.0 million for some special funding projects but we really don't have the actual funding (dollars) to utilize and go forward on these projects. We are still in dire straits as far as funding goes and we will need more revenue in 2013 to stay afloat.

Matt Marcinek – Parks – The new Parks' reservation system went into effect this spring and it is working well. We have no parks in Region 4 that allows camping so we are not part of the system this year. The reservation system does not apply to Fishing Access Sites.

Did a work float last week on the Smith River. Cold and wet week. Not a lot of ice damage on the river this year. This was our first year of the super permit drawing for the Smith River and it went well. A gentleman from Drummond won the drawing.

First Peoples Buffalo Jump and Giant Springs will be busy this spring with lots of school groups. .

We are presently working on development EA's at Largent's Bend and Little Muddy Creek. A project to develop more camping spots at Newlan Creek Reservoir is being considered. A scoping meeting is scheduled for April 27th.

Graham Taylor – Wildlife - Lauri Hanauska-Brown, Nongame Threatened and Endangered Species Chief, Helena, gave a current briefing on the status wolves in Montana. On April 15 Senators Baucus and Tester introduced a rider that delisted wolves by Congressional action. It hasn't gone through yet. There is a 60 day window before it will be made into law. Rule must be published into law before it goes into effect. It will be base on the 2009 rule. Several states including Montana and Idaho are affected by the law. Wyoming is not part of the law since they still don't have an approved management plan. We are looking at having a fall hunting season this year based on 2010 quotas. Last hunting season for wolves in Montana was 2009. When the law comes out there will be no separation of areas in the state where wolves are treated differently. All wolves throughout Montana will be treated the same. SB 348 calls for \$900,000 be set aside for wolf management. The feds will offer some funding as in the past but as the wolves are delisted expect funding to decrease each year from the feds. SB 414 would have allowed any landowner to shoot wolves on site on their property. This is a concern for management purposes. Hopefully this bill is dead. There were numerous bills proposed on wolves throughout the session.

There are still lots of elk on the Sun River WMA, in excess of 2500, that may cause some human/wildlife conflicts unless the weather warms up and elk decent to move to the backcountry. There is a wall of snow/water between the game range and backcountry and the elk aren't moving. The Maris/Sun River snowpack is at 154%. Question is do we delay opener for antler hunting on May 15th. After some discussion the CAC voted and recommended that we delay the opener. CAC will send a letter of recommendation to the Commission.

Conversations have begun on the season structures for 2012 and the regulation cycle. We need input. We will be having scoping meetings around the state beginning in early fall. I will develop a list of possible hot topics and get it out to the CAC. The discussions are not centered on quotas for hunting districts, etc. but on changes to the way we do business – for example last time we changed the start of the hunting season from a Sunday opener to a Saturday opener.

We lost our wildlife biologist in the Lewistown area the end of last December. We won't be hiring someone for some time. So there are a lot of things not happening in the wildlife area in Lewistown. For example no surveys being flown. If we don't get a biologist in time quotas will established on a conservative basis for the upcoming hunting season.

There wasn't much effect on the wildlife populations in the Region 4 area. Different story in Region 6 with all the snow they accumulated over the winter and with possible flooding this spring. Our Mule Deer and Antelope are in a down cycle at this time but we have plenty of elk and white-tailed deer

George Liknes – Fisheries – We are presently working on the FAS (Fishing Access Sites) transition from Parks to Fisheries for maintenance and acquisition. We are looking at settling equipment and land issues too. Not as easy of a transition as we first thought. Must be first approved by the head of Fish and Wildlife Division and then the Director. Looking for the changeover to occur on July 1, 2011.

In checking the water supply forecast we have lots of snow pack throughout the state. Every drainage in Montana is over 120%. Good for fish and irrigators. Working on an EA for northern pike. We have small population in Toston Reservoir and Jefferson River. There have been northern reported in Canyon Ferry and Lake Helena. We don't want northern in Hauser or Holter. At this time there is no limit on northern in the Missouri River reservoir system, mainly Canyon Ferry. The population Toston Reservoir is concentrated in one area of the reservoir and we would like to get rid of them.

We have several cutthroat projects this summer with a few of them in the Highwood Creek area.

Tiber Reservoir update. All is going as planned as far as transferring walleye plants from Petrolia and Wadsworth Reservoirs to Tiber. This year we hope to transplant

approximately 50,000 fingerlings and next year 100,000 fingerlings intended for Lake Francis to Tiber.

Mike Martin – Enforcement – Region 4 Enforcement is now fully manned. Kyle Anderson, our new warden in Lewistown, completed his training at the Law Enforcement Academy in early April and is now in Lewistown.

We are in our normal spring mode – black bear season, turkeys and patrolling the game ranges for folks trying to sneak on to the game ranges and steal antlers before the openers. Just got a call tonight from Warden Golie and he caught someone sneaking on to the Beartooth WMA. Second time he has caught this individual.

Doug Deffe' congratulated Wardens Kqyn Kuka and Wendy Kamm and biologist Graham Taylor for their work at the local schools, giving talks, etc. Also commended Kqyn for her work with Walleye Camp last summer.

Commissioner Ron Moody –

Asked the CAC for suggestions, ideas they may have for items/themes that have come up in the Legislature and will surely arise again in the next session. 1. Walleyes Advocates vs Trout Advocates 2. Bow hunters vs Rifle Hunters 3. Meat Anglers vs Catch and Release anglers 4. Social vs Biological decisions in Commission decision making.

Commission recently gave approval to strategic plan on Upland Game bird Enhancement program. There will be a series of open houses throughout the state on April 18th. Next Upland Game bird Enhancement Council meeting will be May 20th.

Gary Bertellotti adjourned the meeting and told the CAC if some issues, projects or whatever needs clarifying or discussed that we as a resource would gladly come out to your area to cover the subject. Please feel free to contact us.

NEXT MEETING: Looking at having our next meeting in July or August. Will throw out some dates when the time gets closer. Where do you want to have the meeting? – Great Falls R-4 Headquarters, First People's Buffalo Jump State Park, Lewistown, Beartooth Wildlife Management Area, Ft Benton – looking for suggestions.