

**Private Land / Public Wildlife Council
MEETING SUMMARY**

Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 15, 2014, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Headquarters

Council Members Present:

Joe Perry (Chairman), Richard Stuker (Vice-Chairman), Dwayne Andrews, Chris King, Kathy Hadley, Jack Billingsley, Blake Henning, Rod Bullis, Daniel Fiehrer, Lisa Flowers, Denley Loge, Tom Jacobson (State Representative), Jim Peterson (State Senator), George Bain (ex officio – USFS), Jim Ledger - Proxy for Pat Gunderson (ex officio - BLM)

FWP Staff Present:

Jeff Hagener, Ken McDonald, Alan Charles, Joe Weigand, and Mike Lewis

Facilitation Team:

Emily Schembra, Mary Ellen Wolfe, and Kara Daniels (Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy)

MEETING SUMMARY:

This document summarizes the Private Land / Public Wildlife Council (Council) meeting convened on Wednesday, May 14th and Thursday, May 15th, 2014. The summary focuses on agenda items, discussion, and action items related to each agenda item. Meeting presentations and handouts are attached.

Wednesday, May 14th

AGENDA ITEM 1: WELCOME AND TRAPLINE REPORTS

Joe Perry (Chair) opened the meeting with a welcome, and asked members to share their trapline reports from the past month. General themes that emerged from the reports included:

- Trapline Communications in contrast to “Official Council Communications”
 - Joe shared that he sent out a survey regarding HB 454 to his trapline to gather information for the Working Group and then he learned the survey had been distributed more broadly than expected with comments added. This caused some confusion which will be addressed within the HB 454 Working Group.
 - Some of the comments shared were constructive and will be discussed within the Working Group.
 - Emily noted that the issue of Joe’s survey indicates that a new ground rule is needed to clarify what constitutes “Official Council Communications.” The proposed wording to be added to “IV. Media Relations and General Communications” of the Council’s “Operating Guidelines and Ground Rules” was read and approved:
 - c. *“Official communications on behalf of the PL/PW Council shall be made only by the Chair or Vice-Chair or a designated spokesperson. Official communications are statements, mailings, etc. which:*
 - i. *result from deliberation and discussion of the entire Council;*
 - ii. *are agreed upon by all Council members; and*

iii. a consensus-based group decision has been made to release them to a defined audience(s) at a given point in time.

- Council members need to ensure individuals and groups on their traplines know that a circulated document is a work in progress/draft.
- Alan reminded the Council that all official documents are or will be posted on the FWP website for wide public access. He recommended that in the future the Council ensure that documents are ready to be made public. He emphasized that working documents need to stay internalized. He offered the FWP protocol and website as an available tool.
- Council members requested that they be informed at all meetings if the Press is in the room.
- Landowners/ranchers suggest talking to more sportsmen, possibly to conduct listening sessions.
- Fee increases are not sounding like they will be a problem for many hunters, for example, improve the BMP or put boots on the ground seems to be acceptable. People would like to know what they get for their increased fees and landowners want more transparency with boots on the ground.
- License fee increase needs to focus on access to public lands not just the BMP
- Access continues to be an issue, there is some dissatisfaction with the BMP and some feel that improvements to the program are needed.
- Three points regarding nontraditional landowners buying up large land tracts:
 - Hearing concern about related access concerns.
 - Non-traditional new landowners might be under the umbrella of the BMP
 - The nontraditional landowner has to make a business decision. They have two things, control and to offer a quality hunt; are not interested in public hunting. Quality control is what is important to them.
- Roads: Existing roads aren't necessarily public roads; gating public roads is an issue and the need to know who has legal rights to the roads is vital.
- Resident hunters don't know what 454 is, so better marketing is needed. However, in conversation with people in the Glasgow area, one person expressed interest in 454 and thought his neighbors might be as well. This person suggested making 1-2 license transferrable.
- Bison are a hot-button issue with the potential to inhibit landowner/public relationships. Suggested that the Governor and FWP Director talk about what the proposal is, explicitly, to improve public understanding.
- The need to manage and increase cow elk hunting is uniform. Ranchers are having trouble with elk eating their hay stacks. There is a need for opportunity and access to lands to help manage the herds.
- Late season hunts are supported.
- One disabled person would be willing to pay a trespass fee for access
- Regarding the Durfee Hills exchange: the opposition is that someone with a lot of money is "tying up land" and there's an overall resentment for blocking off the sportsmen.
- Regarding BMP:
 - Some BMP landowners don't get to harvest at the appropriate time to reduce damage and though the damage hunts are reasonable, sometimes individuals don't show up. An over the counter damage control tag is suggested. Animals are also

being harbored in subdivisions with 20 acre plots. A Missoula individual doesn't want to bring in an outfitter because he likes public access, but it doesn't address the elk damage he experiences and he is surrounded by small acre lands. He is interested in some kind of compensation for damage of fences, hay, cattle losses.

- A lot of landowners aren't sure if they will renew their BMP contract once it expires. Areas that are over objective for elk are suggesting only cow hunts until the numbers are under control. One individual can't grow several crops because of the elk, the individual lost \$70,000 one year due to elk depredation; suggested FWP lawsuit for damage and mismanagement.
- Public comments heard at the license meeting in Glasgow indicated that people seemed to be okay with current recommendations, the base hunting license seems to be okay and the conservation license could include revenue for non-consumptive users in the future.
- In some parts of the state there is a perceived disconnect between FWP's people on the ground and Helena. Several landowners blame the sportsmen for mismanagement resulting from the disconnect between people on the ground and the agency.
- A revised brucellosis-bill is being researched and developed which envisions a \$3 million fund to reimburse landowners whose cattle are identified for quarantine for a brucellosis case. The intent is to keep the ranchers on the land if they have a brucellosis hit.

AGENDA ITEM 2: WORKING GROUP BREAKOUT SESSION

Three Working Groups met to continue their work on recommendations regarding: the HB454 Expansion/Pilot program; a volunteer Corner Crossing program and the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship program.

AGENDA ITEM 3: WORKING GROUPS REPORT AND DISCUSS PROGRESS WITH COUNCIL

HB 454 Expansion/Pilot Program Working Group Notes:

- The primary objectives of this pilot would be to manage areas where elk are over-objective and to open up hunting access on private lands.
- Landowner would receive two either sex elk permits good for family or employees.
 - The group discussed the merits of allowing the landowner to give the permits to a pre-selected designee in addition to family or employees. However, there was not agreement, and further discussion is warranted.
 - All members agreed that the landowner's permits could not be sold, and discussed the possibility of a penalty for anyone who sells a license.
- The landowner would have to allow two either sex elk permits to the public, plus a *minimum* of four cow permits (six hunters total).
- There would need to be caps on the number of permits. The caps would be based on the percentage the parcel is over-objective for elk, with the minimum criteria for landowner participation being 50% over-objective. The cap on permits would increase in increments of 50%, so landowners with property 100%, 150% over, and so forth would have a higher cap.

- The permits would come as additional permits to the existing pool; however, the group discussed the idea of restricting the additional permits to no more than 10% of what is already offered by FWP in the hunting district.
- Hunting would be allowed within the general, Commission-approved hunting season
- Elk permits would be good on the landowner's ranch, including his/her private land, in-holdings, and bordering lands that the landowner holds permits or leases on.
- Hunters participating in the program must complete the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project course before applying.
- This would be a pilot program lasting four years (the group discussed a sunset after six years, but ultimately decided they would only be able to live with a four-year sunset plan).
- Plenary Discussion:
 - Regarding a "Designee" and the idea that tags can't be sold: make sure that is clear.
 - Not knowing about this program is one of the biggest hindrances to it. There's a need for additional education, press releases, wardens can push it, when people are signing up for BMP they can also consider HB 454 permits.
 - Legislation would not be needed if you went through a rule adoption, or if you the term "designee" is scratched
 - It isn't clear yet that the incentives associated with this program are enough to motivate many landowners to participate.
 - Are other species besides elk being considered? Not at this time.
 - The odds of drawing in certain areas is tough (e.g. the Missouri Breaks) and if they can't draw a permit on their own property, is getting one every year fair? E.g. what if one of these landowners packaged the designee with available tags and allowed for other species?
 - Important to talk to people and test the water to see if there is any traction and incentive here.
 - Potentially after the next meeting, run the proposal by the Wildlife Federation

Corner Crossing Working Group Notes:

- **Goal:** Maximize access to public lands while respecting and understanding private property rights.
- **Recommendation:** Develop a volunteer corner crossing program
- **Rationale:** Work with landowners in a respectful manner to increase access to public land
- What incentives are there for a landowner to participate?
 - Provide an incentive to allow corner crossing using one or more of these:
 - FWP assistance/marketing
 - Hunter day permit/flat fee
 - Unlocking State Lands program
 - Opportunity to provide/increase access
- Volunteer pilot program, with one pilot in each of the seven regions
- Hunter requirements to participate –
 - GPS recommended
- How does the group envision this agreement being captured?

- Through a contract between FWP and a landowner that lines out where, how, when, and flat payment (i.e. a temporary access agreement)
- Housed within the Accessing Public Lands program (NOT BMP)
- *Need to have FWP determine the flat fee (E.g. Are there existing examples for fishing access?)*
- How will the public be provided notice of where these access points are and what the details of the agreement are?
 - Online coordinates
 - Maps available at FWP offices
 - On-the-ground markers and signage
 - Follow the fishing access model for bridge access – Least intrusive for landowner.
- **Implementation**
 - Council members are willing to seek initial participants
 - Suggestions for participants should also be sought from wardens and biologists
 - Would payment need to be approved by the Commission?
 - Cost to FWP – signs, time, materials
 - Tracking hunter participation...
 - Sign up at FWP offices
 - Track downloads (of maps?)
 - Sign-in boxes
 - Online sign-in
 - Landowner permission/sign-in
 - Provide access from September 1st to January 1st
 - Follow-up and monitoring of landowner/hunter satisfaction
 - FWP field staff appraisal of pilot program
 - Time frame for implementation: desired start in fall 2014 (i.e. A couple of projects? Might not be ready for one in every region)
- **What type of access?**
 - No species or weapons restrictions
 - Walk-in only
 - Consistency and simplicity

Alan was asked to seek additional information, do research within FWP regarding fees for the Working Group's next meeting.

- Plenary Discussion:
 - Research needs to be done by the department to ensure the statutes and authorities currently in existence will allow for this.
 - To be determined: a possible flat fee? E.g. small fee/compensation or tax credit
 - The Working Group wouldn't restrict interest in the program if there is more than one landowner interested in it in a given region.
 - The Working Group agreed they wanted to simplify and reduce complexity for the pilot project.
 - It is not to be aligned with the Block Management Program.

Hunter-Landowners Stewardship Working Group Notes

- **Goal:** Improve hunter compliance and recognize good behavior

- **Recommendation:** Support and encourage the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project
The Council is in agreement that participation in the Project should be encouraged and the Project should be updated, improved, expanded, and/or re-worked in some way.
 - Include in a descriptive paragraph: hunters, landowners, sportsmen and FWP
- **Developed Recommendation:** Increase participation through improved marketing & information plan
 - Ask FWP staff members to take it and help promote it
 - Include it in the bow and hunter education course
 - Increase outreach with high school and college students → college programs including Ag and wildlife majors as a pilot project
 - Have large corporations (for example: Cabelas) help push it, have a condensed version to help “hook” people for them to provide
 - MT outdoor sports TV, or warden programs
 - Encourage the Governor to help
 - FWP public meetings when appropriate
 - Implement in the hunter and bow education course and encourage the instructors to take it as well
 - Market at the agency offices with a stand up display to increase public curiosity
 - Have access to a visual of participation increase
 - Include on the FWP website a template for a thank you card for sportsmen to give to landowners
 - Include an informational booklet for landowners
 - Place an ad in the AARP newsletter
 - Provide decals or patches for individuals that complete the program
- Audience:
 - All inclusive, hunters, landowners, resource citizens of MT
 - FWP needs to grow the audience it but at the same time utilize current participants to spread the word/participation-spread the word through agencies (RMEF) members
 - College students:
 - Utilize college programs (check station work with the U of M, Wildlife Society, Wildlife and Agriculture Majors)
 - High school students:
 - As a homework assignment or extra credit
- Update, improve, and/or rework the program. For example: add new videos; add more female hunter photos/videos
 - Add videos with women/female hunters
- Highlight the personal building blocks - **respect, appreciation, privilege, responsible behavior** - that develop/grow into good behavior throughout the program.
 - Display progress and numbers of people taking it
 - let people know what FWP is doing and how they can help increase numbers
- Articulate the specific benefits of participating in the program. For example: how to approach a landowner, understand the logistics of hunting on private land, and understand fire danger.
 - Who does this benefit?

- The collective benefit is huge. The impact can be considered as a comparison with the invasive species and bear ID quiz
 - Landowners, sportsmen, wildlife will all benefit
 - Sportsmen will learn how to handle being told “no” respectfully
 - Landowners and hunters can build positive rapport between each other
- Improve analytics of web-based system to gather useful data
 - Sell advertisement spots in videos
- Explore incentives to encourage people to complete the project and develop good working relationships with landowners. Share experiences with other hunters so they see the value in completing the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project.
 - Bridge rural-urban & resident/non-resident landowners gap by helping them relate to each other Display positive feedback toward the content from Stock Growers Association or Pheasants Forever for example or other landowners
- **Rationale for the Recommendation:** We believe that the citizens and wildlife in Montana will benefit by the completion of this program. The completion of this program will help bridge the rural-urban gap, promote good hunter/landowner relationships and reduce/prevent unintended consequences.
 - This program provides tools for respect, appreciation, privilege, and responsible behavior that can develop and grow into building relationships that will allow for hunting on private land.
- **Time Frame for Implementation:**
 - Short Term:
 - Updating and implementing marking plan which is ongoing
 - A trade for advertisement on videos with a well-known organization to help promote this program: include their logo on the program videos if they include the programs information publically (via website)
 - Include a photo opportunity/advertisement/promotion after a plan is set in place with hunters and landowners
 - Ask the Governor to push this once a plan is set up
- **Implementation Needs/Steps** (Alan will help here): *Nothing discussed so far requires legislation, though work has just begun.*
 - Ask the Governor to help implement and set an example *once a plan is ready*
 - Pull together a small working group or advisory board that can assist with implementation and keep track of progress. **Group should include:**
 - Varying age groups for appropriate representation
 - Consideration of key members/individuals is needed
- Plenary Discussion:
 - Likes the idea to include it in the hunter education course
 - Suggested to make it mandatory for access onto private lands
 - Alan said that with the initial building of the program, it was important to make it voluntary to help people stay out of bad situations. Voluntary actions “lead by example” is the current idea
 - One idea was that hunters required to complete remedial hunter safety for violations could be asked to also complete this program.

AGENDA ITEM 4: DISCUSS RECENT HUNTER ACCESS SURVEY RESULTS

Mike Lewis of the Responsive Management Group in FWP shared preliminary data gathered through recent hunter surveys. The data analysis should be completed by the June Council meeting and it will be provided to Council at that time.

AGENDA ITEM 5: BLOCK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM COORDINATOR DISCUSSION

Bart Morris, former BMP Coordinator and Kendra McCloskey, former Hunting Access Technician, now BMP Coordinator each spent time reviewing BMP implementation in Region 2.

Mr. Morris shared “A Day in the Life” of a regional BMP Coordinator, giving a snapshot of BMP implementation by a walk through his calendar year. In March and April he enrolled landowners, handled all of the related paperwork, held small intimate BBQs, worked at building relationships by talking to landowners individually. In May he worked on re-enrollments and courted new/potential cooperators. In June he collected contracts, spent lots of time on the phone and hired temporary program staff/hunter access technician (HATS). July was spent re-doing/re-assessing problems with maps and other discrepancies. August was the time for deadlines, when all the regulations need to be out to meet the goal for BMP land ready to be accessed by September 1. September required him to be responsive to landowner calls and issues and spend time in the field stocking boxes, making sure that coupons, maps etc. are available, as needed. By October’s opening of rifle season, the HATS were trained by Enforcement to be the face of FWP in the field. November was spent patrolling and reacting to issues. December through January was hunting season’s end through damage hunts. Some HATs became Damage Coordinators; work involved data collection. February work was data entry and analysis. Then the cycle began again. Philosophically, relationships and trust with landowners, sportsmen and internal team mates (warden and biologists) plus hiring the right temps were the most important things to him throughout the year.

Mr. Morris suggested a number of improvements to the BMP Program in Region 2 based on his experiences with it. Access is a stated FWP priority. From his perspective, actions speak louder than words. The Regional Access Coordinator position seems to be a job of lesser value than those of a game warden and biologist. He did not always feel effective or valued. Relationships are the foundation of any access program and FWP, wardens and biologists don’t work as well as they could as a team. They have huge differences that negatively affect their end goal. Biologists and wardens are overworked with not enough time and they must prioritize. In spite of these things, Montana’s BMP is the best private land access program available in the United States. However he thinks it has hit its peak. He did all he could to look at other existing opportunities and ‘out of the box’ options out there (such as Special Access agreements). He feels that FWP is behind in technology and needs to embrace it and lead.

Questions from the Council included:

- “What’s the potential of putting new landowners into the program? It is limited, budget drove capacity to ask people, misconception of the BMP is the main reason landowners don’t sign up and mistrust.

- If he had more money does he think that would have been sufficient to open up more land? Yes, but not necessarily. The prime real estate that has been identified.
- When Region 2 people mention thinking outside of the box ideas, how are these ideas put into action? Talk to those individuals, build trust and find ideas after talking to them. There is no such thing as a uniform option. One of the biggest issues he dealt with is landowners who got tired of dealing with the bad sportsmen so they would just close their land.

Ms. McCloskey spoke from the Hunter Access Technician perspective. Her experience emphasizes the importance of communication, instilling a sense of teamwork, allowing for the team to identify/pick up on issues with landowners. She learned to be able to immediately deal with issues and be the face of the department for landowners' or the public's questions. Fresh HATS have the energy and ability to make connections to inform wardens, biologists, landowners and increase the line of communication. They also help with record keeping.

AGENDA ITEM 6: PRESENT STRAW DOG EXAMPLE OF COMBINED COMING HOME TO HUNT AND NON-RESIDENT NATIVE MONTANA LICENSE

Alan Charles shared a straw dog example of combined Coming Home to Hunt and Non-Resident Native Montana licenses. The Council reviewed and discussed possible changes to the wording for Qualifications and Fees. The following changes were generally agreed upon and are to be reconsidered at the June Council meeting.

- *Changes to Qualifications*
 - Instead of “Must have previously purchased MT resident hunting license (or) completed MT hunter education course,” the Council would like to simplify the qualification to only “must have purchased a MT resident hunting license.
 - The Council would like to either keep the requirement from the Native Montana Nonresident license that the participant “Must have been born in MT...” or add the requirement that the participant must have previously been a Montana resident.
- *Changes to the Fee*
 - The Council questioned the license fees. Alan clarified that the fees for a New Come Home to Hunt license were recommended by the Licensing and Funding Advisory Council.

AGENDA ITEM 7: PUBLIC COMMENT

- **Bryan McCullough (Helena):** Since 2006, he feels that he has lost access in Regions 3-5 due to the lack of late season hunts. Several unsuccessful hunters are willing to hunt during late hunts where the elk are. Women who hunt would jump on the option for late hunts. The definition of a “successful” hunt: those who are looking to fill the freezer are more than happy to harvest a cow. On page 68 of current regulations, he perceives that

FWP only works with landowners that do what FWP wants. Suggests surveying landowners that would allow late hunts.

- **Paul Ellis**, Bozeman Outfitter and resident hunter: 454 could have 20 extra tags, landowners will allow antlerless hunting and he thinks if FWP works with landowners more than 4 antlerless tags could be an option. It is not a question of access, it is a question of quality and quantity. Start managing for quality on public lands. Why are hunters satisfied with limited access with BMA but when a private landowner blocks their land to family/friends they get ridiculed?
- **Tim Aldrich**, Missoula member of the Licensing Council: If we don't create opportunities, everything else goes away and opportunities are tied with funding. Regarding incentives, Idaho has a landowner appreciation program with extra tags, they are now thinking about having the landowners sell tags which are a concern. Corner crossings: we must create quality opportunity and value at the end. Regarding 454, the scale of benefit might not be there or it needs to be tested.

AGENDA ITEM 8: WRAP-UP AND ADJOURN

Adjourn.

Wednesday, May 15, 2014

AGENDA ITEM 1: WELCOME

Joe Perry (Chair) opened the meeting and turned it over to facilitator Mary Ellen Wolfe to work as a plenary to refine preliminary recommendations.

AGENDA ITEM 2: COUNCIL WORKS AS A PLENARY TO PRIORITIZE AND REFINES PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council worked through the preliminary recommendations for Goals 1-5, discussing each one and subjecting them to their screening criteria. Below existing recommendations are underlined; new wording is highlighted in **bold**. Detailed notes from the plenary working session are attached as Addendum A.

REVISIONS TO
Private Land Public Wildlife Advisory Council
Preliminary Recommendations

Beginning in January 2014, the Private Land Public Wildlife Council (PL/PW Council) worked to identify and prioritize the most important issues and problems around hunting access and hunter, landowner, outfitter, and Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) relations. From these issues, Council worked to develop, by consensus, six primary goals for solutions and recommendations. The goals include:

- 1) Maximize access to public lands while respecting and understanding private property rights.
- 2) Understand, respect and improve communication among outfitters, landowners, hunters, and Fish, Wildlife & Parks in order to understand and respect all stakeholders.
- 3) Increase public access to private property and outfitted lands owned by traditional and non-traditional landowners by addressing their needs and building relationships.
- 4) Make the Block Management Program (BMP) easier to use for all parties (hunters, landowners, and FWP).
- 5) Improve FWP credibility with landowners and hunters.
- 6) Improve hunter compliance and recognize good behavior.

, In April 2014 the Council developed a package of preliminary recommendations, which are described below. Four working groups have been tasked to further develop several recommendations, which include:

- A recommendation for a pilot program to increase public access to private property and outfitted lands (potentially an expansion of HB 454)
- A recommendation for a volunteer corner crossing program
- A recommendation to support and encourage the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project
- A recommendation **that combines the Home to Hunt and Non-Resident Native licenses.**

Listed below are the refined goals and preliminary recommendations 1 – 5, including notes reflecting discussion points and action items that resulted from Council deliberations at this meeting:

GOAL 1: MAXIMIZE ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS WHILE RESPECTING AND UNDERSTANDING PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS.

Preliminary Recommendations to Address Goal 1:

- 1. (Revised) Ask the Governor to reconstitute the Interagency Access Committee to inventory access opportunities across MT, and to identify and prepare an annual report with a prioritized list of access options and successes.**

- During Council discussion of this draft recommendation, relevant Public Comment was received from Linda Cardennis: Wildlife Biologist with BLM & liaison with RMEF who was attending the meeting.
 - Key priorities Linda identified:
 - Issue of Access: lack of cross-communication between agencies
 - Lack of national mandate or national code
 - Work is currently being completed informally
 - Recommend: put together strong letters to BLM field offices that are about to engage in land/access planning. Have them look at roads, and areas that could opt for access opportunities. Have them specifically analyze new access options and have the PL/PW request feedback
 - Have them do a systematic analysis
 - They'd like to use MT as a pilot case
 - Recommend the Governor make a priority statement and work on this letter
 - Come up with a draft and send it to the Governor
- The group agreed that that the Council would draft a letter recommending that the Governor reconstitute the IAC to collectively take the inventory by writing a letter to the State Director of the BLM; the Regional Forester of the USFS; the USGS and the Director of the DNRC.
 - **Rod, Kathy, Lisa, George, Dwayne** will work together to come up with a draft and send out to council members for review before it is sent to the Governor.
- The Council screened the recommendation using their Evaluation Criteria and all agreed that the recommendation met all criteria.
- **NEW Bullet under Goal 1: Recognize that land trades are still a viable tool in the toolbox.** [Moved from previous location as Recommendation 5.]

IMPLEMENTATION: *Would not require legislation*

2. Be sensitive to roads, as the issue of public versus private roads is a challenging legal topic. [PENDING]

- Discussion: Shouldn't just drop it, addressed in the first recommendation
- Can we include legal language within #1
- Sensitive issue: comes down to relationships, and the PL/PW can take hold of that and talk face to face with landowners
- It is a legal issue
- Decision: **NEW Access Roads Working Group: Representative Jacobson, Chris, Rich** to refine this recommendation and possibly combine with Recommendation #1.

~~**2. Evaluate grazing opportunities that may improve access on a case-by-case, year-by-year basis.**~~

3. Develop a volunteer corner crossing program

- Discussion: There was extended discussion about this program, including possible incentives for it. The Chair and the Working Group agreed it would be very desirable for FWP to get one or more volunteer corner crossings up and running

this fall. Alan was asked to talk with Jeff about using the access program to make this happen this fall. He will report back on this at the next meeting.

- The Working Group believed there needs to be an incentive for landowners to participate, such as a fee or tax credit. They asked Alan to research this for their next meeting. This recommendation may require a fiscal note.
- It may be most realistic to extend the desired deadline for a corner crossing pilot to the end of 2015 due to the realities of getting anything instituted and done on the ground, including public comment, as required.
- Decision: The Council agreed to leave it as is since work still needs to be done: FWP needs to research information regarding funding mechanisms and fee structure and there will be a Committee conference call before the June meeting to refine and finalize the recommendation.

IMPLEMENTATION: *Would not require legislation*

- 4. Ask FWP to continue and expand the existing program and develop Interagency MOU to mark property boundaries and identify entry and exit points on legally accessible lands.**

IMPLEMENTATION: *Would not require legislation; might require re-allocating existing resources (staff and money) or might require additional resources (staff and money), which would require legislation (new FTE or money)*

GOAL 2: UNDERSTAND, RESPECT AND IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AMONG OUTFITTERS, LANDOWNERS, HUNTERS, AND FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

Preliminary Recommendations to Address Goal 2:

- 1. Market, advertise, and more strategically communicate the value and availability of access options to landowners and other stakeholders.**

IMPLEMENTATION: *No legislation required; could be accomplished with existing resources;*

- 2. Support and encourage the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project.**

- Discussion: This recommendation belongs under both Goal 2 and Goal 6.

- 3. ~~Support and encourage local, task-oriented resource management groups.~~**

- Discussion: Groups will establish themselves and the department is already doing this on an as needed basis

GOAL 3: INCREASE PUBLIC ACCESS TO PRIVATE PROPERTY AND OUTFITTED LANDS OWNED BY TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL LANDOWNERS BY ADDRESSING THEIR NEEDS AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS.

Preliminary Recommendations to Address Goal 3:

1. **As a pilot program, broaden HB 454 Hunting Access Agreements (or develop an entirely new pilot program) in order to better achieve elk management objectives.**
 - a. Discussion: Leave as is with working group and address during June meeting

GOAL 4: MAKE THE BLOCK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (BMP) EASIER TO USE FOR ALL PARTIES (HUNTERS, LANDOWNERS, AND FWP).

Preliminary Recommendations to Address Goal 4:

1. **The PL/PW Council supports, and would like to maintain, the cooperator flexibility currently built into the Block Management Program.**
 - Discussion: Good as is
2. **Move forward with web-based enhancements to the BMP website.**
 - Discussion: Good as is
3. **Where feasible, enhance BMP maps with fence lines and other landmarks.**
4. **Develop a BMP Smartphone app and explore possibilities to either sell the app to users or sign a financing agreement with a private company to develop the app.**

IMPLEMENTATION: *Any sort of contracting and/or generation of dollars from use of public information would depend upon FWP IT and Contracting Policy, and FWP legal opinion.*

5. **Promote regional consistency, both through boots on the ground and the options that are available to landowners.**
 - Discussion: Regarding all rules, forget finances and necessary resources for now and revisit later

IMPLEMENTATION: *No legislation is required for any of these recommendations, and most of these are already in progress using existing FWP resources (staff and money).*

GOAL 5: IMPROVE FWP CREDIBILITY WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Preliminary Recommendations to Address Goal 5:

1. **FWP should promote a consistent, accurate message.**
2. **FWP should attempt to attend club meetings of all “stakeholders” (hunters, landowners, and outfitters) on a consistent basis in order to build credibility.**
 - Discussion: The groups hosting the meetings should strive to (1) invite the FWP staff and (2) protect FWP staff who attend

3. **Honor BMP cooperators at sportsmen banquets.** [The Council's thought was that sportsmen – not always FWP – should be the ones recognizing landowners who allow access and form relationships with hunters.)
 - Discussion: Come back and work on it later.

IMPLEMENTATION: *No legislation is required for any of these recommendations, and most are already in progress using existing FWP resources (staff and money).*

NOTE: The Council will work on Goal 6 Recommendations and complete refinement and criteria screening at the June meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 3: WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS

Next Steps between this meeting and the June meeting include:

- Working Groups, including the NEW Access Roads Working Group (with Rep. Tom Jacobsen, Chris King and Rich Stuker) are tasked to convene conference call meetings to refine and finalize their recommendations, rationale and implementation tasks prior to the June Council meeting.
- Joe Perry, Rich Stuker, Alan Charles and Mary Ellen Wolfe will finalize the June meeting agenda taking into consideration the possible agenda items identified by the Council:
 - Complete refinement and criteria screening for Goal 6 Recommendations.
 - Revisit the Combined Coming Home to Hunt and Non-Resident Native Montana License Straw Dog
 - A presentation on a new program proposal A presentation from a regional access coordinator. Consider inviting the Regional BLM Director to the June meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 4: PUBLIC COMMENT

- **Michael Pacora**, Missoula business owner and public land hunter: In Units 280 and 290, unlimited cow tags in 2006, limited access to where elk actually were. Tried to get on the call list to get set up and access those Block Management Areas. Observed limited use on those Block Management Areas, in 290 he has observed several wounded elk, and heard multiple shots (40-50) at a time, he's concerned that the Block Management landowners allow family/friends to "wholesale slaughter" elk. Landowners are posting/privatizing public roadways. He has been intimidated and chased off by landowners when trying to continue on public roads. Outfitters use private ground to access landlocked public lands, he can't afford the fee landowners ask for.

Response to Council questions:

- People that sign in at boxes sometimes don't adhere to the BMA rules
- For several BMAs, he called FWP for access or reservations and was told those areas are full and never had the option to provide his information or get on a waiting list

- Public county road through private land was closed
- **Tim Aldrich:** Regarding Come Home to Hunt & Non-Resident, recommends making the prices equal. Having agencies work together to address access and management. FWP credibility with stakeholders is at issue. People don't feel well represented by FWP.

Adjourn.

ALL MEETING FOLLOW-UP ITEMS AND TASKS

- Alan Charles will research possible fee/funding options for the Corner Crossing Working Group and provide this information to the group for their interim Working Group conference call.
- Alan Charles will talk with Jeff Hagener about using the access program regarding getting one or more demonstration projects on the ground this fall, to be reported back next meeting
- A letter will be drafted to the Governor requesting that he reconstitute the Interagency Access Committee to do an inventory of access opportunities: Rod Bullis, Kathy Hadley, Lisa Flowers, George Bain and Dwayne Andrews will work together to a draft and send it out to council members for review before submission.