

PRIVATE LAND/PUBLIC WILDLIFE COUNCIL
Helena, MT
December 12—13, 2016

Day 1: Meeting convened at 1:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Express, 3170 N Sanders Street, Helena, MT.

Council Members Present: Sen. Duane Ankney, Ed Beall, Cynthia Cohan, Daniel Fiehrer, Bill Geer, Denley Loge, Larry Feight, John Swanz, Dusty Crary, Mark Lambrecht (proxy for Blake Henning).

Absent: Joe Perry, Richard Stuker, Ed Bukoskey, Carl Zabrocki, Rep. Zach Brown, Lee Cornwell, Blake Henning, Nick Gevak, and Bob Ream (resigned August 2016.)

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Personnel Present: Jeff Hagener, Director; Ken McDonald, Wildlife Administrator; Hank Worsech, Licensing Bureau Chief; John Lesofski, Game Warden, Merissa Hayes and Nick Mulvaney, administrative support.

I. Agenda Overview – Worsech

II. Trap line Reports from Council Members

III. Presentation on Public Access – Ryan Weiss, DNRC Public Access Specialist

Ryan reviewed his position within DNRC and the DNRC goal of keeping public access to public lands in Montana. Ryan's four primary responsibilities are to: 1) identify opportunities for easements; 2) inventory public lands; 3) work with groups on complaints and resolutions; 4) continue to work with private landowners and government agencies to secure access.

IV. Landowner Panel

Most of Day 1 consisted of landowners from across the state who were asked to participate in a landowner panel to help better answer questions related to all things access and hunter management.

Panel members had the opportunity to share their successes in working with their land, hunters and wildlife. Panelists also addressed how they are tackling the issues, what motivates them to manage access/provide opportunity, what makes their operation successful, and the unique factors contributing to their approach.

Topics also included evaluations of participation in existing FWP programs, building relationships with hunter's and other access agencies, improving landowner and sportsman relations, and potential access opportunities in the future.

Day 2: Meeting convened at 8:00 a.m.

Council Members Present: Sen. Duane Ankney, Ed Beall, Cynthia Cohan, Daniel Fiehrer, Bill Geer, Denley Loge, Larry Feight, John Swanz, Dusty Crary, Mark Lambrecht (proxy for Blake Henning), Rep. Zach Brown, Nick Gevak.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Personnel Present: Jeff Hagener, Director; Hank Worsech, Licensing Bureau Chief; Bryan Golie, Game Warden, Nick Mulvaney, administrative support.

I. Recap/Questions & Comments from Council Members

II. Legislative Update

III. Work Session: Where Do We Go from Here?

Council members held a roundtable discussion on potential issues and goals for the council to address in the coming year.

Members discussed a variety of issues from a plan for defining success for access; additional personnel on the ground to assist with relationships; support for shoulder season hunting; landowner tolerance; habitat quality on federal lands; corner-crossing, hunter ethics and accountability; giving landowners a bigger voice within FWP; appropriately marketing FWP access programs to landowners, and finding a way to address the generational shift of landowners and types of landowners in Montana.

At the end of the discussion, council members voted for their top five issues they were wanting to address.

- Hunter education/hunter ethics
- Hunter accountability/penalties for improper hunter behavior
- Improving habitat quality on Federal and State lands
- Trespassing
- Hunter access for success

IV. Nonresident Landowner Relations

Brian Golie provided a presentation about non-resident landowners and working with hunters and non-resident landowners on issues related to access.

V. Public Comment – No one provided public comment.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Next Meeting Dates – Unknown at this time