



**Region 5 CAC/Legislator Meeting
November 26, 2018**

Attending CAC Members: Lee Deming, Jim Ballard, Susan Gilbertz, Josh McQuillan, Kayhan Ostovar, Steve Regele, Lanie White, Dan Aadland, Doug Dreeszen, Bradford Grooms, Craig Hash, Bruce Holland, Daniel Otis, Pat Riley, JW Westman

Absent CAC Members: Chris Fleck, Bill Milton, David Russell, Rusty Butler, Philip Hughes, Lee Brunckhorst

Attending Legislators: Rep. Rodney Garcia (HD 52), Sen. Doug Kary (SD 22), Rep. Jade Bahr (HD 50), Sen. Jen Gross (SD 25), Rep. Bill Mercer (HD 46), Rep. Vince Ricci (HD 55), Rep. Sue Vinton (HD 56), Rep. Emma Kerr-Carpenter (HD 49), Sen. Cary Smith (SD 27), Sen. Margie MacDonald (SD 26), Rep. Daniel Zolnikov (HD 45)

Attending General Public: Mike Vinton, John Bradley, Len Wittman, Nick Gevock, Marcus Strange, Randy Smith, Laurie Westman

Attending FWP Legislative Liaisons: Hank Worsech, Dustin Temple, Mike Volesky, Deb O'Neill, Ron Jendro

Attending FWP Employees: Bob Gibson, Harold Guse, Ken Frazer, Barb Beck, Dianne Stiff, Ryan Rauscher, Megan O'Reilly, Raymond Schell, Derek Fagone, Paul Luepke

Bob Gibson – Introductions

Department Budget Request - Dustin Temple

- The Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) cannot spend any money without permission from the legislature.
- The budget request represents FWP's outlook on what it needs and can afford.
- The last fee increase was requested and approved at the 2015 legislative session, HB 140. FWP is required to report findings of its review to the 2019 legislature with this first report due on January 1, 2019. This document will be available to the public.
- On the Fish & Wildlife side, FWP is good financially at this time, but State Parks has some financial challenges.
- A 2018 summer survey in the State Parks was conducted to determine what hunting and angling activities are done in state parks. With those results, FWP is looking to assist the Parks budget to off-set some short-falls with general licensing and Dingell-Johnson federal money.
- During the 2017 legislature, FWP's fisheries and fish hatcheries budgets were cut substantially by nearly \$1 million, so FWP will be asking for those funds to be restored.
- Equipment requests include a one-time appropriation to match coast guard money in order to update the law enforcement boat fleet. The wildlife division is asking for permission to purchase two new aircraft that will replace two aircraft that have less than 100 hours left on them. These aircraft are used for flying game surveys.
- Automated Licensing System replacement – This system brings in \$50 million per year. The original system was written in 1998 and placed in production in 2000. The request to replace this ALS system will be in HB 10 and federal money will be the primary source to pay for it. [LC0220](#)
- Shore up FWP's infrastructure including regional headquarters offices, area offices, and fish hatcheries.
- The Governor's office of budget and program planning has the 2021 Executive Budget online <http://budget.mt.gov/Budgets>.

Questions:

JW Westman – Any look ahead for PR and DJ (federal money)?

Dustin – Dingell-Johnson (DJ) is an excise tax on fishing equipment, and Pittman-Robinson (PR) is an excise tax on guns and ammunition; the DJ federal account is flat and declining while the PR federal account is more volatile showing a decline of 33% in the last year.

Rep. Sue Vinton – Asked for an analysis on contract versus purchase of helicopters. Dustin can provide that specific information.

Sen. Jen Gross – Commented on deferred maintenance.

FWP Proposed 2019 Legislation – Hank Worsech

1. Clarify the hunting access enhancement and hunter management statutes. [LC0409](#)
2. Clarification on squaring of bonus points for applicants for hunting parties. [LC0410](#)
3. Free conservation and base hunting licenses for block management cooperators. [LC0411](#)
4. Remove the conservation license from the combination hunting licenses and make it a standalone prerequisite license. [LC0412](#)
5. Change statutorily mandated March 15 deadline for big game combo; also change the reference from “big game” combo to “elk and deer” combo in statute. [LC0413](#)
6. Removal of Headwaters State Park from the statutory list of Primitive State Parks. [LC0414](#)

Other Proposed 2019 Legislation -

1. Public Lands/Public Wildlife proposed bill – revise landowner elk license laws; this is for landowners who allow public access for free public elk hunting on their property. [LC0430](#)
2. EQC sponsored bill - revise laws related to aquatic invasive species programs. [LC0396](#)

Question/Answers:

The quality of opportunity for block management land? Answer - Ryan Rauscher explained the process for selecting landowners who become block management cooperators. As far as quality of opportunity, some areas don't have animals all the time.

Where does the money go for the base hunting license? That goes into the license account.

Sen. Jen Gross asked for a list of LC numbers for the proposed legislation.

Rep. Emma Kerr–Carpenter asked if there is an environmental review for state parks with a classification change. Answer - Mike Volesky explained how Headwaters State Parks became classified as primitive which means no development, and how the Environmental Policy Act fits into the process. Step one requires getting legislative approval to get this park off that primitive list, so development can occur.

JW Westman – Brought up that there is huge support for Habitat Montana and sure we'll see some bills involving this.

Comment - Habitat Montana was created in the 80's and funded by nonresident combination licenses. The break down is one fund for acquisition, another fund that covers 10% maintenance and lastly 10% into a trust. This has to be authorized by the legislature every two years.

Pat Riley – Asked about the legislative opposition to acquisition; the Governor and conservation easements and Land Board's role?

Mike Volesky explained that Habitat Montana is used for both acquisition and easements. FWP's job is to actively look for good acquisition and easements. There is the continual debate about how much acquisition is the right amount. The Land Board approves/disapproves any land acquisition over 100 acres or the \$100,000 value threshold. The Governor has recently sued in Supreme Court to protect conservation easements with landowners.

FWP's Legislative Liaisons for the 2019 Session: Dustin Temple, Mike Volesky, Deb O'Neill, Hank Worsech, Ron Jendro, Tom Reilly and Quentin Kujala

<https://leg.mt.gov/session/>