



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

R1 CAC Meeting – 4/24/19

Legislative update & Fisheries project review

Present:

- FWP - Jim Williams, Dillon Tabish, Mike Hensler, Neil Anderson, Lee Anderson, Kenny Breidinger, Leo Rosenthal, Matt Boyer, Kristy Personett
- CAC – Cheryl Bowland, Bill Swagger, Amy Jacobs, Danielle Coffman, Clifford Kipp, Darwon Stoneman, Angie Tennison, Sue Corrigan, Sandy Burch, Nicole Stickney, Jessie Walthers, Mark Christensen, Kyle Smalley, Erik Brown
- CAC Alumni – Mike Shepard, Larry Lack, Larry Rattray, Chuck Hunt, Jerry Smalley, Tony Anderson, Jim Vashro, Dan Schultz, Lucky Salz, Charlie Abell

Welcome & Introductions:

- Tabish –
 - Sharp-tail grouse reintroduction
 - Columbia Falls Community Fishing Pond/City Park
 - Hunter Education completed for spring – need instructors
 - Legislation: FWP did will in the session
 - Governor’s nominees for Commission

3 Forks of the Flathead River Native Trout Overview and Regulations -

- Hensler: Regulations –
 - 2020 Fishing regulations process (Feb – Oct)
 - Is change necessary?
 - Public recognition?
 - Is the regulation the best for the fishery?
 - Alternatives
 - Possible changes/information:
 - Bass –
 - Separate small and large mouth; small mouth appear in 18+ lakes
 - More conservative for LMB, more liberal for SMB
 - Necessity for spawning closure
 - Little Bitterroot –
 - Kokanee Exception due to small & large species
 - Bull Lake –
 - Northern Pike illegal introduction
 - Bull Trout numbers reduced; 150 redds to 17 redds
 - Anglers wanted tip-ups
 - Spearing? With mandatory kill

Walleye/crappy –

Necessity to be in Western District rules

Group wants them to be classified as “native”

Thompson River Exceptions –

*size of fish in different lakes/same species

Flathead River -

Complicated regulations, simplify them

Three Forks of the Flathead -

Terminal tackle, downstream extent

- Leo Rosenthal – 3 Forks of the Flathead:
 - Overview of fisheries monitoring and population estimates
 - Bull Trout: Threatened under ESA, complex life history, many threats
 - WCT: MT State Fish, reduced distribution, few pure populations
 - Bull Trout fishery reopened 2004
 - Don't forget, keep them wet
 - Change angler philosophy – what's a good day of fishing?
 - Proposed changes
 - Single point hooks only; Rapala is one hook
 - Allow all tackle types
 - 3 Forks down to Teakettle
 - Proactive vs reactive
 - Creel survey discussion
 - General discussion:
 - Tony A – barbless in Idaho; hooks deeper, holds better, enforcement is a factor
 - Jessie W – hook limit, limited use?
 - Dani C – have regulation even if not enforceable
 - Mark C – guidelines?
 - Larry R – education, not regulation
 - Sandy B – online ed prior to purchasing license, social media, HOF/kids, update online tests, reach out of state anglers
 - Bill S – supportive, market it right
 - Erik B - great proposal, hook size could be limited also, Bull Trout re-introduction? FYI on patrack.com and South Fork fishery
 - Jessie W - stable population? Percentage of injured fish considered in viable populations?
 - Leo – catch rates are high (7-10/hr) due to clean water and little feed
 - Mike S – if regulation doesn't pass?
 - Tony A – look at science; bottom line
 - Dan S – support catch and release; regulation attacks tackle user, not _____, go single point (further)
 - Sandy B – why not limit bait fishing?
 - Larry R – 6-year-old kid; bait easiest to catch
 - Jerry S - is this the 1st place? Others to look at for studies?

Jessie W – get buy in, simple now or drastic later
Dan S – presentation/education

- Fish regulation scoping, through 5/31
 - Jim V -scoping needs opened up (1/2 way through), could open up solutions
 - hooking scars; can you tell if it's single hook or treble hook?
 - feels hooking scars (Huey & Jimmy) are anomaly
 - Chuck W – percent of fish injured (population vs #'s w/ hook injuries)

Next meeting: May 29, 5:00 BBQ @ Lone Pine

Adjourned...