

SENT EMAILS

BILL LANE

Region 7 Commissioner

August 16 to November 8, 2024

Wickman, Erik

From: Wickman, Erik <Erik.Wickman@mt.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 5:23 PM
To: commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Legal Update Sessions

Got it, sir! 😊

Erik Wickman | *Executive Office Manager* | *Assistant to the Director*
Headquarters | Director's Office
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Office: (406) 444-7826 | Cell: (406) 594-8921



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From: FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 5:22 PM
To: Wickman, Erik <Erik.Wickman@mt.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Legal Update Sessions

I am available so far on the 17th

Bill Lane
Region 7 Commissioner
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
Ph: (406) 438-0143 | commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org

On Wed, Sep 4, 2024 at 3:23 PM Wickman, Erik <Erik.Wickman@mt.gov> wrote:

Good afternoon, commissioners,

Three dates have been offered for the Legal Update Sessions prior to the October meeting.

There will be some preliminary information shared by Alex Scolavino from our Legal Unit within the next couple of days.

Please reply to me with the date(s) you're available. These sessions will involve Commission Legal Counsel Stuart Segrest, FWP Chief Legal Counsel Jeff Hindoiien, and FWP Staff Attorney Alex Scolavino:

Session 1 - Sept. 17 @ 1:00 p.m.

Session 2 - Sept. 23 @ 10:00 a.m.

Session 3 - Sept. 30 @ 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully,

~E

Erik Wickman | *Executive Office Manager* | *Assistant to the Director*

Headquarters | Director's Office

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Wickman, Erik

From: FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>
Sent: Monday, August 26, 2024 6:58 PM
To: Amanda Eggert
Subject: Re: speak to you about R7 mule deer decline?

406-438-0143

On Mon, Aug 26, 2024 at 2:39 PM Amanda Eggert <aeggert@montanafreepress.org> wrote:
That sounds good. I've got it penciled in on my calendar. What's the best number to reach you?

On Mon, Aug 26, 2024 at 1:08 PM FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org> wrote:
How does 12:30 sound?

On Mon, Aug 26, 2024, 1:07 PM Amanda Eggert <aeggert@montanafreepress.org> wrote:
Why don't we try for tomorrow? Any particular time work best for you?

On Monday, August 26, 2024, FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org> wrote:
I could possibly visit either this afternoon or tomorrow.

Bill

On Mon, Aug 26, 2024, 12:02 PM Amanda Eggert <aeggert@montanafreepress.org> wrote:
Hi Commissioner Lane,

Amanda Eggert with Montana Free Press here. I'm working on a story about the decline in mule deer populations in Region 7. I'd like to pick your brain about what you're seeing and hearing. Do you have time this week to chat?

Cheers,

Amanda

--

Amanda Eggert
Reporter
Montana Free Press
c: 406-370-4936
[@amandaleggert \[twitter.com\]](https://twitter.com/amandaleggert)

--

Amanda Eggert
Reporter
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--

Amanda Eggert
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Wickman, Erik

From: FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 7:15 PM
To: Gray Thornton
Subject: Re: Thank you!
Attachments: image001.png

Thank you! I really appreciate the kind words!

Bill Lane
Region 7 Commissioner
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
Ph: (406) 438-0143 | commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org

On Thu, Sep 5, 2024 at 7:25 AM Gray Thornton <gthornton@wildsheepfoundation.org> wrote:
[\[google.com\]](#)

Thank you Commissioner Lane for all you do for Montana and our wildlife!

Gray N. Thornton, President & CEO

Wild Sheep Foundation

[412 Pronghorn Trail \[google.com\]](#)

[Bozeman, MT 59718 \[google.com\]](#)

406-404-8750

Marco Polo Society Member

Summit Life Member

Chadwick Ram Society Member

Legacy Society Member



Wickman, Erik

From: FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 5:24 PM
To: Burky, Brian
Subject: Re: Tongue River Reservoir Closure lifted
Attachments: image001.png

Sorry I just saw this. Thank you for letting me know. Please let me know if there is anything I need to do.

Bill Lane
Region 7 Commissioner
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
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On Fri, Aug 30, 2024 at 9:00 AM Burky, Brian <Brian.Burky@mt.gov> wrote:

Commissioner Lane,

An Emergency Closure of Tongue River Reservoir was certified to the Secretary of State on August 23, 2024. Two fires were burning very near Tongue River Reservoir State Park and an evacuation warning was issued. The reservoir and its boat ramps were closed to all watercraft use because fire suppression resources were using reservoir water to fight the blazes and it was unsafe to have recreational crafts on the water.

On Monday August 26, 2024 the reservoir and boat ramps were re-open to the public. The press release included the following information: "Although wildfires burning near Tongue River Reservoir are still not contained, fire activity has calmed enough that the reservoir has reopened to watercrafts and an evacuation warning has been lifted. The park has been evacuated three times this summer due to nearby fires, but this was the first emergency closure of the reservoir." With the fires calming a bit, aerial fire fighters sourced water elsewhere. FWP worked hard to limit the closure and impact to the public. Stage I fire restrictions remain in place.

Commissioner Lane, I am sending you this email because the formal process of lifting a closure or restriction includes the need to notify the District Commissioner. You may have seen a few press releases as this situation developed last week. The fires seem to be coming under control and I am hopeful it starts to cool off a bit next month.

Please let me know if you have questions or if would like additional information. Thank you,

Brian Burky

Region 7 POR Manager

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Email: Brian.Burky@mt.gov

Ph: 406-234-0941



THE OUTSIDE IS IN US ALL.

Wickman, Erik

From: Schmitz, Brad <brschmitz@mt.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 26, 2024 8:15 AM
To: commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org; Temple, Dustin
Cc: Feddes, Justin; Muscha, Travis; Dorak, Brett; Atwood, Steve
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Block Management Threat

All:

Our first blow-up of the season with Don Bice. The man is getting worse as time goes on. There is a long history with this fellow. He is volatile and getting more so as the years progress. We have wrestles with him over access, the ground he allows to be open, etc. His property is in a conservation easement and he is obligated to allow hunters. He has become quite sour over the years about the easement and has worked with his lawyer to try and get out of the agreement. Rick Northrup was heavily involved in this process with lawyers, etc. In the end, Bice's attorney advised him heavily to stay with the program and adhere to the terms of the agreement. He has done so, but has to blow up on someone at least once or twice a year.

I will visit with my crew and we will have a chat with the Bice's and follow up with Rick Miller. I'll be in Helena tonight – Wednesday if you need to visit more.

BJS

From: Muscha, Travis <trmuscha@mt.gov>
Sent: Saturday, August 24, 2024 9:45 PM
To: Schmitz, Brad <brschmitz@mt.gov>
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Block Management Threat

Just wanting to hopefully get ahead of this and provide you more information:

Rick has done nothing wrong. Neither Don or Lance have contacted us regarding shutting down hunting due to fire danger concerns (they have been good about it in the past but nothing this year). Bea issued archery antelope permission to a couple hunters this weekend which was completely legit. Rick's account of what happened seems to be totally correct because I was working the hockey beer booth today and happened to see Don sitting at a table so I decided to be friendly and go say hi. As soon as I approached him he went off on me (like he usually does) about allowing hunters out in these conditions. I let him do his thing and didn't want to get into anything in a public setting. I told him that I had called Lance this past week about pasture restrictions but haven't heard back and his response was well now Lance doesn't need to call you Monday because you heard it from me that we aren't allowing hunters until conditions are better. Then he told me that he confronted a hunter on the county road that he assumed was scouting and told him that he was an idiot for even thinking about hunting in these conditions and ran him off. I asked Don if the hunter had permission and he said he didn't think so, just some idiot out scouting. We now know this was Rick Miller and his story checks out.

Not sure where we go from here but thought my experience from today is also worth sharing.

Thanks,

Travis Muscha | Regional Access Manager
Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Region 7
Office: (406) 234-0929 | Cell: (406) 853-1793

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Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android \[aka.ms\]](#)

From: Rick,Diane Miller <grrizzz@q.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 24, 2024 3:32:09 PM
To: Muscha, Travis <trmuscha@mt.gov>; Schmitz, Brad <brschmitz@mt.gov>; Temple, Dustin <dtemple@mt.gov>
Cc: Sturtz, Bea <bsturtz@mt.gov>; commissionerregion1@mtfwp.org <commissionerregion1@mtfwp.org>;
commissionerregion2@mtfwp.org <commissionerregion2@mtfwp.org>; commissionerregion3@mtfwp.org
<commissionerregion3@mtfwp.org>; KC Walsh <commissionerregion4@mtfwp.org>; commissionerregion5@mtfwp.org
<commissionerregion5@mtfwp.org>; commissionerregion6@mtfwp.org <commissionerregion6@mtfwp.org>;
commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Block Management Threat

All,

I feel it is important to let you know about an experience I had with a block management landowner this morning (8/24/24). The involved property is in Region 7, Custer County, BMA Name – Bice Ranch, # 325.

I received permission to hunt the property the day prior, from the usual very friendly staff (Bea Sturtz) at the Miles City FWP office. I'm a huge advocate of the block management program and have gone through this process a hundred times. No aspect at that time seemed out of the ordinary.

Finding the ranch was a bit difficult, but I did so about 8:00 AM. Having never been on the property I noticed a young family outside one of the ranch homes and stopped to confirm my understanding of a couple of the restrictions. The young women I talked with couldn't have been nicer. She showed me on the BMA map where their cows were and where the best place to park was. I thanked her and proceeded (at a very slow speed) toward the parking area.

I hadn't gone a hundred yards when I noticed a side-by-side approaching quickly behind me. I stopped to see if there was something else, I needed to know. The driver pulled up beside me and asked if I had trouble. I said no... but was not allowed to explain further. The driver exploded in a rage. He told me he was the owner and that I was stupid, without any common sense. He said it was fire season and anyone with a brain wouldn't be doing what I was doing (he still didn't know what I was doing) and that simply walking on his

grass could start a fire. I would add that a large farm truck had gone speeding by me throwing gravel about 10 minutes before (a legit fire threat). He then kept pointing (jabbing) at his head screaming I'm stupid without common sense. For sure, he was spitting mad. At that point I noticed he had a rifle lying by his side.

The out-of-control rant was all over the place, including: he hated hunters (said all we think about and do is hunt), he was sick and tired of dealing with hunters (I'm likely the only one he's had on the place this year), and I'm scaring all of his deer (said the deer are being spooked by a truck they don't recognize). Keep in mind I haven't even got to the parking area yet. His face was beet red and the veins in his neck stood out clearly. I was keeping a close eye on that rifle.

I finally spoke over him and told him I was leaving. He was still yelling as he moved forward, and I turned around.

I have no idea what set this guy off, but it could have turned very serious had he grabbed the weapon. What the hell?

Without question, this landowner needs to be removed from the program. Can you imagine if this kind of tantrum were to happen to someone else who may have felt threatened enough that they pull their firearm in defense. That risk is a definite possibility with this guy and cannot be ignored.

Perhaps the rage was brought on by a medical condition or other uncontrollable factor? Whatever the case, the owner clearly hated me and my kind (hunters) and is not going to put up with us any longer.

Hoping you folks can defuse this situation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Rick Miller – Colstrip

1-406-749-0292

Wickman, Erik

From: Wickman, Erik <Erik.Wickman@mt.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2024 9:20 AM
To: commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Director calling

Thank you sir!

Erik Wickman | *Executive Office Manager* | *Assistant to the Director*
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From: FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2024 9:19 AM
To: Wickman, Erik <Erik.Wickman@mt.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Director calling

Left him a message.

Bill Lane
Region 7 Commissioner
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
Ph: (406) 438-0143 | commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org

On Wed, Oct 2, 2024 at 7:07 AM Wickman, Erik <Erik.Wickman@mt.gov> wrote:

Good morning, commissioners,

The Director has been trying to reach you both by phone to discuss an urgent issue.

He is traveling in the regions today and has spotty cell service. 406-594-7003 is his State cell.

If you're unable to reach him, please contact me immediately for a briefing.

Thank you!

~E

Erik Wickman | *Executive Office Manager* | *Assistant to the Director*

Headquarters | Director's Office

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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[\[twitter.com\]](https://www.twitter.com)

Wickman, Erik

From: FWP Commissioner Region 7 <commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 5:21 PM
To: Schmitz, Brad
Subject: Re: FW: BOR Management Agreement - Intake FAS
Attachments: image001.png

Thanks for the update!

Bill Lane
Region 7 Commissioner
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
Ph: (406) 438-0143 | commissionerregion7@mtfwp.org

On Wed, Sep 4, 2024 at 2:34 PM Schmitz, Brad <brschmitz@mt.gov> wrote:

Bill:

For your information..

FWP has always had a long-term lease with the BOR at Intake on the Yellowstone River. That lease came due a couple of years ago and a new management agreement was put together. The attached documents are the environmental assessment and decision notices for this renewal.

You can see from Brian's email listed below, the thread to access this information on-line.

In the original agreement that recently expired, FWP had Joe's Island included (this is the opposite side of the river from the Intake boat ramp). We chose not to renew the lease of this island this term as it will remain in public use under the BOR.

If you have questions about any of this, please feel free to contact Brian or myself.

Thanks

Brad

From: Burky, Brian <Brian.Burky@mt.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 1:50 PM
To: Schmitz, Brad <brschmitz@mt.gov>
Subject: RE: BOR Management Agreement - Intake FAS

You bet. The Decision Notice and final Environmental Assessment are attached and available on the web:
<https://fwp.mt.gov/public-notices/news/2024/aug/intake-fishing-access-site-management-agreement-decision-notice>

FYI – the decision to reduce the footprint of the property within the management agreement for Intake FAS was ours. Joe’s Island was removed as it was hard to access and manage. The island also had shared ownership between multiple agencies. Please let me know if you need more info. Thank you.

Brian Burky

Region 7 POR Manager

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Email: Brian.Burky@mt.gov

Ph: 406-234-0941



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Brian

From: Schmitz, Brad <brschmitz@mt.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 1:22 PM
To: Burky, Brian <Brian.Burky@mt.gov>; Bell, Riley <Riley.Bell@mt.gov>
Cc: Hould, Jamie <JHould@mt.gov>; Schenk, Bill <BSchenk@mt.gov>
Subject: RE: BOR Management Agreement - Intake FAS

Brian. I'd be happy to forward on to Bill Lane. Could you please send me the supporting documentation.

Thanks

BJS

From: Burky, Brian <Brian.Burky@mt.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 12:23 PM
To: Schmitz, Brad <brschmitz@mt.gov>; Bell, Riley <Riley.Bell@mt.gov>
Cc: Hould, Jamie <JHould@mt.gov>; Schenk, Bill <BSchenk@mt.gov>
Subject: BOR Management Agreement - Intake FAS

FYI – the request to sign a management agreement with BOR for the continued operation of Intake FAS will be before the Commission at the October meeting. It is a pretty straight-forward matter so I do not expect much in the way of questions / concerns from the Commission. The draft EA was completed earlier this summer and NO comments were received during the 15-day comment period. The DN has been issued. Our foot print will be a bit smaller (Joe's Island not included now) but otherwise the agreement is very similar and no changes to operations will be observed. Please let me know if you have questions.

Brad – can you make the R7 Commissioner aware prior to the meeting?

Thank you,

Brian Burky

Region 7 POR Manager

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630

Miles City, MT 59301

Email: Brian.Burky@mt.gov

Ph: 406-234-0941



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