EXHIBIT 2
DATE 2/3/11
HB 345

Summary of Research

Block Management Landowner & Hunter Evaluations from the 2009 Montana Hunting Season

Michael S. Lewis and Alan Charles

Administered by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), Montana's Block Management Program was established in 1985 with three main goals:

1. To maintain public hunting access to private and isolated public land.
2. To help landowners manage public hunting on lands under their control, and provide benefits to offset the impacts of those public hunting activities.
3. To help FWP accomplish its mission of managing wildlife resources. In a state where nearly 65 percent of the land is privately owned, FWP depends on public hunting to manage populations of deer, elk, and other game animals.

A total of 1,274 landowners were enrolled in the program in 2009, comprising more than nine million acres of Block Management Areas (BMAs) across the state. Approximately 85,000 people hunted a BMA in 2009 (which resulted in more than 460,000 hunter days on all BMAs combined).

To measure the success of the program, FWP periodically conducts landowner and hunter evaluations. Two separate surveys were conducted following the 2009 Montana hunting season:

- **Landowner Evaluation.** All landowners enrolled in the program in 2009 were sent a survey by mail.
- **Hunter Evaluation.** A randomly selected sample of 761 people who hunted on a BMA(s) in 2009 were sent a survey by mail.

These two surveys were nearly identical replications of similar surveys conducted following the 2003 and 1996 Montana hunting seasons (Charles & Lewis, 2004; Charles, 1997). Hence, for the most part, results obtained from the 2009 surveys are directly comparable to 2003 and 1996 survey results.

BLOCK MANAGEMENT

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landowner survey.
the hunter survey.
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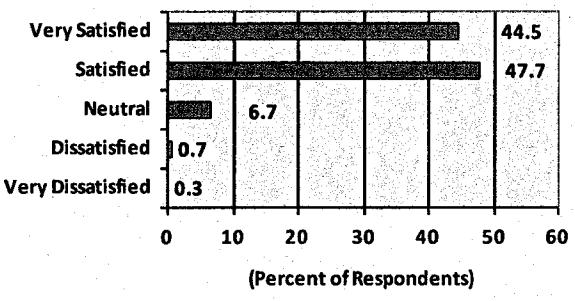
This research sum
the 2009 landowner and hunter evaluation surveys. Wherever possible, survey results obtained in 2009 are compared to those results obtained in 2003 and 1996.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2009 LANDOWNER EVALUATION

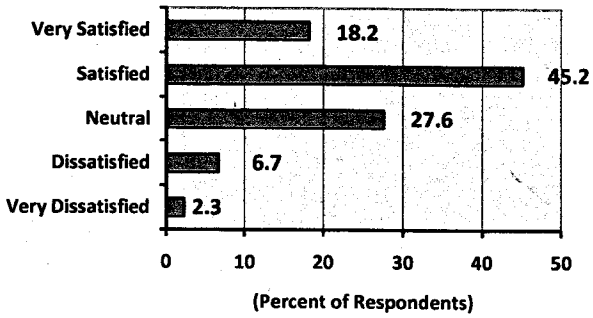
When asked how satisfied they were with the overall Block Management Program, 92 percent of the landowners who responded to the survey indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied (see Figure 1 below). This compares to 93 percent in 2003, and 80 percent in 1996.

Figure 1. Response to: *"How satisfied are you with the overall Block Management Program?"* (2009 Landowner Evaluation)



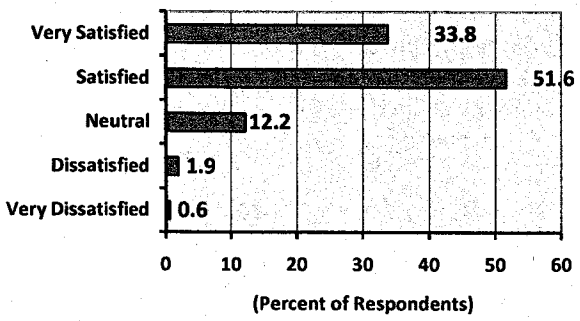
Most of the landowners (78 percent) reported the Block Management Program is an important or very important way for them to manage game numbers on their BMA(s). Related to this, 63 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the results of the program in terms of managing game numbers on their BMA(s) in 2009 (see Figure 2 on the next page). This compares to 63 percent in 2003, and 60 percent in 1996.

Figure 2. Response to: *"How satisfied were you with the results of the Block Management Program in managing game numbers on your BMA(s)?"* (2009 Landowner Evaluation)



Almost all of the landowners (92 percent) indicated that the Block Management Program is an important or very important way for them to manage hunter activities. Related to this, 85 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the results of the program in terms of managing hunter activities on their BMA(s) in 2009 (see Figure 3 below), and 79 percent were satisfied with the number of hunters who hunted on their BMA(s). Furthermore, 89 percent rated hunter behavior on their BMA(s) as being good or very good in 2009. In 2003 and 1996, 90 percent and 77 percent of the respondents respectively were satisfied or very satisfied with the program in terms of managing hunter activities.

Figure 3. Response to: *"How satisfied were you with the results of the Block Management Program in terms of managing hunter activities?"* (2009 Landowner Evaluation)



Of note, 80 percent of the landowners who completed and returned a survey for the 2009 season reported that they believe hunter behavior has improved or greatly improved as a result of the Block Management Program. This compares to 81 percent in 2003, and 76 percent in 1996.

Also, 65 percent of the landowners reported that their relationship with hunters has improved or greatly improved as a result of participating in the program. This compares to 64 percent in 2003, and 61 percent in 1996. Less than two percent of the landowners in 2009 reported that their relationship with hunters has deteriorated or greatly deteriorated as a result of the Block Management Program.

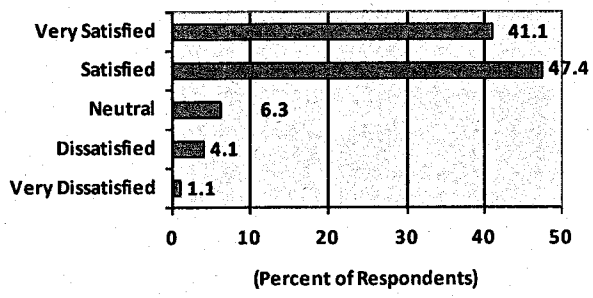
In terms of the compensation they received for enrolling in the program, 79 percent of the landowners responding to the survey reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the total compensation they received for the 2009 hunting season. Less than nine percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. In 2003 and 1996, 79 percent and 75 percent of the respondents respectively were satisfied or very satisfied with their total compensation.

Of the landowners enrolled in 2009 who expressed an opinion, 99 percent said they plan on continuing their participation in the Block Management Program for the 2010 hunting season.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2009 HUNTER EVALUATION

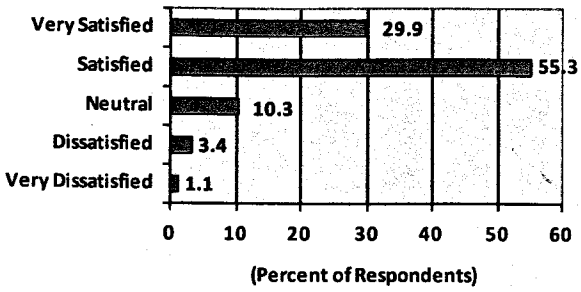
When asked how satisfied they were with the Block Management Program this past fall (2009), 89 percent of the hunters who responded to the survey reported they were satisfied or very satisfied (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4. Response to: *"Overall, how satisfied were you with the Block Management Program this past fall?"* (2009 Hunter Evaluation)



Furthermore, 85 percent of the hunters reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the hunting opportunities provided by the Block Management Program in 2009 (see Figure 5 on the following page). This compared to 86 percent in 2003, and 76 percent in 1996.

Figure 5. Response to: *"Overall, how satisfied were you with the hunting opportunities provided by the Block Management Program in 2009?"* (2009 Hunter Evaluation)



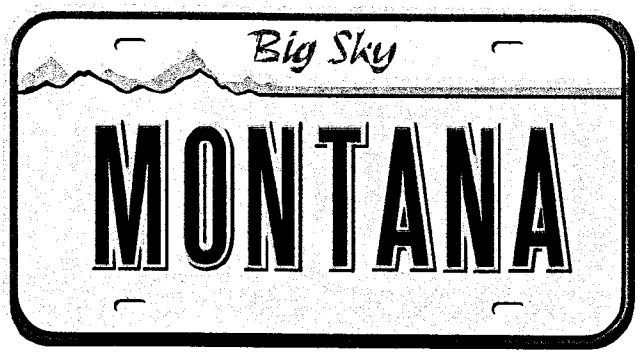
Of the hunters who responded to the survey in 2009, 83 percent reported they believe that the Block Management Program has improved or greatly improved landowner-hunter relations. Less than three percent believe that landowner-hunter relationships have been harmed or greatly harmed by the program. In 2003 and 1996, 84 percent and 70 percent of hunters respectively reported they believe the program has improved or greatly improved the relationship between hunters and landowners.

Related to hunting opportunities...

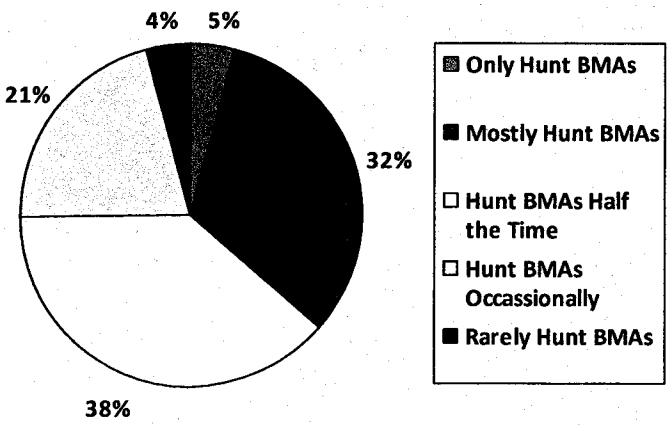
- Fifty (50) percent of the hunters who responded to the survey found game animals on BMAs hunted present in numbers meeting or exceeding their expectations in 2009.
- Sixty (60) percent were successful in harvesting game on a BMA(s) in 2009.
- Eighty-eight (88) percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the rules on BMAs hunted in 2009.
- Sixty-four (64) percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the number of other hunters encountered on BMAs hunted in 2009.

Hunter profile information (2009 season)...

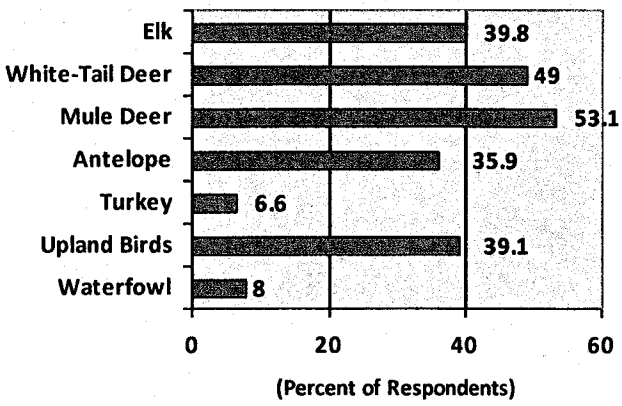
- The average hunter spent nearly 10 days hunting BMAs.
- The average hunter hunted on four to five different BMAs.



Time spent hunting BMAs...



Game Hunted on BMAs...



Discussion

The Block Management Program is designed to balance the needs of landowners, hunters, and FWP. Landowners receive assistance in managing public hunting activities and benefits to offset the impacts of allowing public hunting. Hunters receive opportunities to hunt on enrolled lands, offered either on a first-come, first-serve basis or through some other means of allocated use. FWP is able to utilize the program as a tool to help achieve wildlife management goals and objectives.

In 1995, the Block Management Program was enhanced through additional funding and authority, allowing it to grow substantially over the next fifteen years. During this time, FWP staff has explored various ways to implement the program locally to accommodate differences in regional wildlife management needs and hunter use activities.

Results of the 2010 Block Management landowner and hunter evaluations, as well as past evaluations, suggest that the program has been a success both from the perspective of landowners enrolled in the program and hunters hunting on BMAs. FWP staff has been able to use the program to effectively manage big game populations, provide diverse public hunting opportunities, and develop effective relationships among landowners, hunters, and FWP.

References

Charles, Alan and Michael S. Lewis. 2004. *Block Management Landowner and Hunter Evaluations: Survey Highlights from 2003 and Comparisons to 1996 Surveys.* Responsive Management Unit Research Summary No. 13. Helena, MT: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

Charles, Alan. 1997. *Summary of the 1996 Landowner & Hunter Evaluations.* Helena, MT: Montana, Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

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Contact the Human Dimensions Unit of FWP by phone (406) 444-4758 or visit FWP's website at http://fwp.mt.gov (and click on the following links..."Doing Business", "Reference Information", "Surveys", Social & Economic Surveys").