

# MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

## FISH AND WILDLIFE DIVISION

EXHIBIT 5

DATE 1-11-11

HB 2

### DIVISION ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

The Fish & Wildlife Division is responsible for the stewardship of Montana's fish and wildlife and their habitats. Through conservation of important lands and habitat, thoughtful management of limited resources, and partnerships for access, we work to sustain the quality recreational opportunities that are expected and desired by Montana hunters, anglers and wildlife enthusiasts. The Division is organized into five bureaus and seven regions to support and implement program functions.

- Fisheries: responsible for preserving and perpetuating aquatic species and their ecosystems, and for meeting public demand for fishing opportunities and aquatic wildlife stewardship.
- Enforcement: responsible for ensuring compliance with laws and regulations for the protection and preservation of fish and wildlife species and regulations.
- Wildlife: responsible for preserving and perpetuating terrestrial wildlife species and their ecosystems and for meeting public demand for hunting, trapping and viewing opportunities and wildlife stewardship.
- Communication & Education: through its Helena office and 7 regional information managers, provides primary information, public outreach, and education programs.
- Fish & Wildlife Administration: region and Helena administrative staff are responsible for developing strategic and operational guidance, managing division programs, maintaining and supporting biological databases, and producing GIS data systems.

### DIVISION PRIORITIES

- **HABITATS** – identify priority habitats, including large or threatened landscapes, and secure additional funding for their conservation.
- **SPECIES** – emphasize priority species to develop new plans or implement existing plans or conservation strategies.
- **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION** – Keep existing participants and introduce new users to hunting, trapping, fishing, and wildlife watching.
- **FISH AND WILDLIFE VIOLATIONS** – regulation compliance must remain an essential component of fish and wildlife management.
- **LONG RANGE PLANNING** – develop and implement plans to manage, conserve and protect fish and wildlife populations.
- **PUBLIC AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT** – focus on programs to increase public awareness of FWP activities, understanding of FWP issues, and support for FWP efforts.
- **DATA ASSESSMENT** – provide the public with fish and wildlife information to make informed land use and energy development decisions.
- **SPECIES OF CONCERN** – monitor and plan for the impact of the Endangered Species Act on resident Montana wildlife.
- **ACCESS** – provide more options to landowners to provide access to private and public lands.

### DIVISION CHALLENGES

- Staff recruitment and retention is problematic largely because of non-competitive salaries.
- Access.
- Constructively engaging the public in resource management issues and decisions affecting the public.
- Emotionally charged issues that affect hunters, anglers, and landowners across Montana.
- Maintain management of resident public wildlife species rather than lose authority to the federal government.

# FISHERIES

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Maintain a world-renowned fishery in Montana that supports more blue-ribbon streams than any state.
- Two new fishing access sites were developed on the Missouri River and public access was secured on private land along the most heavily fished reach of the Missouri River as a result of the Sterling Ranch Private Lands Fishing Access Agreement.
- The Future Fisheries Improvement Program (FFIP) has funded 113 habitat improvement projects at a cost of \$3.6 million, mostly on private land.
- FWP is working with 33 Big Hole River landowners to address conservation concerns for Arctic grayling in the Big Hole River basin while helping landowners address production needs. Four site plans have been completed and signed by participating landowners.

## CHALLENGES

- Protecting Montana waters from the negative impacts of aquatic nuisance species.
- Providing fishing access for anglers.
- Management of species subject to the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) including bull trout, cutthroat trout, Arctic grayling, and pallid sturgeon. ESA increases the complexity of management, impacts regulations and can result in loss of angling opportunities.

## DECISION PACKAGES

- **DP #301 Restore OTO Aquatic Nuisance Species Program (ANS)** **\$110,000**  
This proposal will make permanent FWP's commitment to the ANS Program with 1.75 FTE and operations, and operations for the Weed Management Program.
- **DP #302 Restore OTO Private Lands Fishing Access** **\$50,000**  
This request is to make permanent the \$50,000 for fishing access on private land and at bridge access sites to continue providing landowners with sufficient funding to mitigate for impacts such as weed control, parking area improvements, fencing, cattle guard installation, etc.

# ENFORCEMENT

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Enforcement issues an average of 4,500 formal citations for fish and game violations annually. Based on formal citations processed each year, FWP has an average conviction rate of 92%.
- In the last two years, FWP and the Attorney General's Office prosecuted 20 major wildlife cases involving commercialization and abuse of the state's wildlife resources. Major sentences were issued for illegal outfitting, misuse of licenses, hunting without licenses, over limits, residency fraud and other violations.
- Recently, a two year joint investigation with Wisconsin and North Dakota culminated in prosecution of 12 individuals for illegal take of numerous deer over several years. Restitution of \$17,400 was awarded and the state and licenses were revoked for a combined total of 63 years.
- Enforcement works closely with the Montana Department of Revenue to investigate residency cases. One case resulted in over \$300,000 in back taxes being assessed to an individual.

## CHALLENGES

- With almost half the population of Montana participating in fishing and hunting, Montana game wardens are spread thin; each covers an area of about 2,000 square miles (about the size of Delaware).
- Communications and safety are critical issues for wardens routinely working alone in remote locations.

## DECISION PACKAGES

- **DP #401 Restore Warden Overtime** **\$580,000**  
Funds the MPEA Collective bargaining agreement for overtime compensation of existing FTE by reducing excessive comp-time build up for time spent working holidays and call-out response.
- **DP #402 Restore Law Enforcement Funds** **\$77,600**  
Restores base project funds not spent in the base year.

# WILDLIFE

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Maintained FWP's Wildlife Program as one of the premier wildlife management programs in the country with outstanding opportunities for hunters and trappers.
- Demonstrated that FWP can successfully manage wolves through successful implementation of a hunting season and preparations for a second season.
- Implemented the Milk River Initiative which conserves, protects, and restores vital habitat in northeastern Montana.
- Worked cooperatively with four Native American tribes as they exercised their treaty hunting rights to harvest bison in areas adjacent to Yellowstone National Park.

## CHALLENGES

- Brucellosis is present in Montana elk at low levels in hunting districts surrounding Yellowstone National Park. FWP must implement a risk-mitigation strategy for preventing comingling and minimizing risk of disease transmission between wildlife and livestock.
- Changes in access, resulting in management issues and loss of opportunity.
- Potential listing of multiple species under federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), including forest carnivores such as wolverine and fisher. ESA increases the complexity of management, impacts regulations and can result in loss of hunting and trapping opportunities.

## DECISION PACKAGES

- **DP #503 Restore OTO Block Management (Wildlife & Enforcement)** **\$1,700,000**  
Maintains current level funding authority for the Hunting Access Enhancement Program.
- **DP #504 Restore OTO Game Damage Herders** **\$46,000**  
Restores operations to the game damage program to hire short-term workers to herd game animals away from crops and stored hay/grain to mitigate game damage on private property.
- **DP #505 Restore OTO Auction Programs** **\$184,800**  
By law, earmarked auction account funds for sheep, goat, elk, etc. are used for enhanced survey efforts, focused research, and population management of those species.
- **DP #506 Restore Coming Home to Hunt** **\$50,000**  
Authorize use of this new, earmarked revenue to meet the intent (access to public lands) of the Coming Home to Hunt program which provides access to public lands through private land.
- **DP #507 Restore OTO Migratory Bird Funding** **\$80,000**  
Earmarked funding supports a three-year contract for project monitoring which started in May, 2010. Project site evaluations will help FWP better develop and implement projects in the future.
- **DP #501 Elk Management Strategy for Brucellosis** **\$639,936**  
This proposal will support staff and funding to implement a risk-mitigation strategy for minimizing comingling and the risk of disease transmission between livestock and elk in high risk areas.
- **DP #508 Restore Upland Game Bird Program** **\$266,000**  
Replaces earmarked Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program (UGBEP) license dollars with federal Pittman-Robertson dollars and allows FWP to match three federal dollars to each UGBEP dollar to enhance the Capital habitat program.

# COMMUNICATIONS AND EDUCATION

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completion of phase 1 of the Montana Outdoor Discovery Center.
- Managing FWP communications associated with a variety of high profile and controversial issues including bison, wolves, and wildlife disease.
- In collaboration with Department of Agriculture, coordinated a public outreach effort targeting aquatic nuisance/invasive species. Post survey indicated that awareness increased.

## CHALLENGES

- Responding to public demands for integrating new communication techniques into outreach efforts and getting information to the public where they expect to find it in terms they can understand.
- Addressing the problem of incomplete and inaccurate information used by the public as a basis for public comment. Informed input is critical.
- Changing the behavior of anglers and boaters specific to aquatic nuisance/invasive species, and getting them to follow the Inspect, Clean and Dry message to prevent the spread of undesirable species.
- Recruitment and retention necessary to maintain Montana's hunter base in the face of an aging hunting population.

## DECISION PACKAGES

- **DP #802 Restore OTO Communications & Education Operations** **\$60,000**  
Restores operations needed for increased costs of printing, general supplies and travel.
- **DP #803 Restore Dingell-Johnson Communications & Education Appropriation** **\$38,000**  
Restores funding authority needed to support aquatic education programs in public schools.
- **DP #801 Montana Outdoor Discovery Center Operations** **\$136,566**  
Operations authority is needed to support educational programs for students, hunter/angler education, youth groups, adult education and workshops in this recently renovated facility.

# FISH AND WILDLIFE ADMINISTRATION

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Providing a computerized information system for evaluating fish and wildlife habitat needs that is available to the public.
- Completed a "Block Management Mapping System", an online system that allows hunters to view all Block Management Area (BMA) contracts and download and print BMA maps.

## CHALLENGES

- Responsible resource management combined with appropriate allocation of limited resources.
- Finding the proper balance between energy, transportation, subdivision and natural resource development and healthy fish and wildlife habitat, the lynch pin of healthy fish and wildlife populations.
- Access.
- Balancing biologically sound fish and wildlife management while respecting personal property rights.

## DECISION PACKAGES

- **DP #1201 Restore OTO Urban Wildlife Planner** **\$175,792**  
This land use specialist provides expertise and direction regarding residential development and transportation impacts on Montana's fish and wildlife resources at the state and local level.