

## MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS Fish and Wildlife Administration

### OVERVIEW

The Fish and Wildlife Administration budget funds the regional supervisors who supervise FWP's 500 field staff throughout the state and manage the fish and wildlife programs in the seven regions (Kalispell, Missoula, Bozeman, Great Falls, Billings, Glasgow and Miles City). It also includes the region's front-line office staff -- the people who sell hunting and fishing licenses, answer the phones, and respond to the majority of the questions asked by members of the public who walk in the front door. This is the budget that rents the office space and keeps the lights and heat on in regional headquarters buildings as well as the department's nine area offices (Libby, Thompson Falls, Butte, Helena, Dillon, Conrad, Havre, Lewistown and Choteau).

Where the Director's Office sets policy and direction for the agency, the regions are where programs get implemented on the ground. As members of the department's management team, regional supervisors provide leadership to the region, ensure that fish and wildlife programs are implemented in a manner consistent with law and policy, supervise and direct staff, address personnel issues and work with the local government, other agencies and the public to coordinate efforts and resolve high-profile issues.

The Fish and Wildlife Administration budget includes two Helena-based functions: A strategic planning section to support department- and division-wide planning efforts and a data services section that maintains and supports biological databases and services on the department's website, such as the mapping system for block management areas and lands enrolled in the upland game bird program that are accessible for hunting.

Priorities for this biennium will be:

- Maintain and re-build relationships with landowners, hunters, anglers, outfitters and other constituent groups.
- Ensure that FWP Commission policies and the director's vision for FWP is clearly understood by staff and communicated to the public.
- Ensure that constituent groups and the public understand the critical choices FWP makes about how to efficiently deliver service with limited resources.
- Finalize the update of the Comprehensive Fish & Wildlife Conservation Strategy, FWP's plan to keep additional species from becoming listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.
- Ensure that FWP land and facilities are operated and maintained appropriately.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Conducted 35 wolf trapper certification courses around the state during the fall of 2012 that enabled 2,400 trappers to legally trap wolves.
- Played a critical role in both the response and clean-up of the Yellowstone oil spill, led by FWP's Billings' staff.
- Led the seamless transition of the Fishing Access Site program from the Parks Division to the Fisheries Division.
- Retrofitted regional headquarters buildings with energy efficient lighting and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems in order to reduce energy consumption (HB 5 funding).
- Completed, over the past two years, 50 cooperative habitat improvement projects with private landowners in the Big Hole Valley to benefit Arctic grayling. In 2012, FWP documented the highest number of grayling age one-year or older in the Big Hole River since 2006.
- Enrolled 55 landowners in the Open Fields program, which provided upland game bird hunters with new hunting access to 16,796 acres of private land. FWP received federal funding for this program through a competitive national grant.

## CHALLENGES

- Recruiting and retaining employees who can find affordable housing in the oil patch.
- Finding ways to work effectively with local governments and communities on controversial wildlife management issues.
- Maintaining traditional hunting access in order to provide recreational opportunity and manage wildlife populations.
- Meeting the sometimes conflicting needs and expectations of an increasingly diverse constituency.

## NEW PROPOSALS

### **DP #6101 Professional Development Center Fee Allocation**

**(\$1,118)**

The executive recommends funding the PDC as a fixed cost item. This request reflects a reduction in the base equal to the amount paid to PDC. The new fixed cost amount is in the Management and Finance Division budget.