



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

PO BOX 201704
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1704
(406) 444-3742

GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE	HOUSE MEMBERS	SENATE MEMBERS	PUBLIC MEMBERS	COUNCIL STAFF
PATRICK HOLMES	BRADLEY MAXON HAMLETT--Vice WILLIS CURDY JANET ELLIS STEVE GUNDERSON THERESA MANZELLA KERRY WHITE	CHAS VINCENT--Chair MIKE LANG MIKE PHILLIPS JP POMNICHOWSKI CARY SMITH GENE VUCKOVICH	SCOTT ASPENLIEDER JOHN C. BRENDEN KYLIE PAUL MATT VINCENT	TREVOR GRAFF, Research Analyst JASON MOHR, Research Analyst HOPE STOCKWELL, Research Analyst NADINE SPENCER, Secretary ERIN BILLS, Legal Staff JOE KOLMAN, Legislative

MINUTES LOG

March 22, 2018
Room 172, Capitol Building
Helena, Montana

Please note: This document is a Minutes Log and provides a notation of the time elapsed between the beginning of the meeting and the time at which the item was presented or discussed, a motion was made, or a vote was taken. The narrative presented here is provided only as a guide to the audio or video record of the meeting. The official discussion, motion, or vote is available on the audio or video archive of this meeting. The Legislature does not prepare a transcript of meeting activities. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio or video recording of this meeting.

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Please contact the Legislative Services Division at 406-444-3064 for more information.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

SEN. CHAS VINCENT, Chair
REP. BRADLEY MAXON HAMLETT, Vice Chair

SEN. MIKE LANG
SEN. MIKE PHILLIPS
SEN. JP POMNICHOWSKI
SEN. CARY SMITH
SEN. GENE VUCKOVICH

REP. WILLIS CURDY
REP. JANET ELLIS
REP. THERESA MANZELLA
REP. KERRY WHITE

MR. SCOTT ASPENLIEDER
MR. JOHN BRENDEN MS.
KYLIE PAUL
MR. MATT VINCENT
MR. PATRICK HOLMES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED

REP. STEVE GUNDERSON

STAFF PRESENT

JOE KOLMAN, Legislative Environmental Analyst
HOPE STOCKWELL, Research Analyst
ERIN BILLS, Legal Staff
NADINE SPENCER, Secretary

VISITORS' LIST (Attachment 1)

AGENDA (Attachment 2)

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

The Environmental Quality Council (EQC):

- Voted to send a letter to Montana's congressional delegation requesting assistance with capital funding for state labs.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

00:00:01 Sen. Vincent called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. The secretary noted the roll. (Attachment 3) Rep. Gunderson was excused and left his proxy with Rep. Manzella. (Attachment 4)

FIRE RELATED INDICATORS

00:00:44 Joe Kolman, environmental analyst, Legislative Services Division (LSD), said to fulfill its statutory duties to collect information on the conditions, trends, and quality of the environment the Council requested that staff look at fire related indicators. He gave a digital presentation providing information on interactive maps that are available online. (Exhibit 1)

Public comment None

EQC questions and discussion

00:17:16 Rep. White asked Mr. Kolman about a breakdown of the amount of wildland urban interface (WUI) acreage within a county or forest.

00:17:56 Rep. White said he recommends that staff contact Matt Arno, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), for the information.

00:18:46 Rep. Curdy asked John Tubbs, director, DNRC, about the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) proposed budget for air tankers and Type 1 helicopters for next fire season.

00:19:34 Rep. Curdy redirected his question to Mike DeGrosky, chief, Fire and Aviation Management Bureau, Division of Forestry, DNRC.

00:20:26 Rep. Curdy asked Mr. DeGrosky about the areas where air tankers and Type 1 helicopters are used when fighting fires.

00:20:57 Rep. Curdy asked Mr. DeGrosky if Type 1 aircraft are used primarily in the WUI.

00:21:25 Rep. Curdy asked Mr. DeGrosky about the availability and increased cost for air tankers and Type 1 helicopters based on proposed budget reductions.

00:23:07 Rep. Curdy asked Mr. DeGrosky about the cost for call-when-needed aircraft.

00:23:45 Sen. Vincent thanked staff and opened discussion on next steps. He asked Mr. Kolman about the information that was provided by the Department of Health and Human Services and if the Council should write a letter requesting that they continue to monitor the data for use as an indicator. Mr. Kolman said he will talk to the department.

00:25:31 Rep. Hamlett said he recommends looking at mortality records to track respiratory related deaths.

00:25:53 Sen. Phillips said he recommends obtaining trend data on precipitation and temperature and the frequency of thunderstorms and lightning strikes.

00:26:27 Mr. Brenden asked Mr. Tubbs about the Lodge Pole Complex fire and whether it started on private or public land.

00:27:25 Mr. Brenden commented on the amount of damage done to fences as a result of the fires. Mr. Tubbs said funding programs are available to help landowners restore fences.

00:28:43 Rep. White commented on fuel reduction within the WUI and said he recommends that the DNRC provide comments to the USFS to include the WUI in a special category as a suitable timber base in order to be able to reduce the fuel loads. He said he would like information on how much WUI is within forests and to provide it to the agency so it can be tracked.

00:30:22 Sen. Vincent said the USFS should be tracking the information because of Flame Act requirements and said staff can provide maps.

00:31:00 Mr. Tubbs said the Forestry Division will provide more detail later in the agenda and that the DNRC has focused extensively on the issue.

00:32:23 Rep. White asked Mr. Tubbs about the amount of distance the agency encourages fuel load reduction on federal land.

00:34:02 Rep. White asked Mr. Tubbs for a copy of the comments the DNRC sent to the USFS.

00:34:08 Sen. Vincent said it will also be discussed in the next agenda item.

00:34:22 Rep. Ellis commented on a news story indicating the USFS will no longer need to take fire related costs out of its budget and said she recommends finding out how it will affect funding in the state.

00:34:57 Sen. Vincent asked Mr. Holmes about the appropriation package that is currently before the U.S. Congress.

00:37:42 Sen. Vincent asked Rep. Ellis about her recommendations for next steps.

00:38:04 Sen. Vincent asked Mr. Tubbs about his recommendations for trends that the EQC should track.

00:41:09 Sen. Vincent asked Mr. Tubbs about the designations made by the governor in 2014 for new state investments in forest projects and tracking the effectiveness and trends.

- 00:42:02 Rep. Hamlett said he recommends obtaining records from airports to track trends on haze and visibility during fire season and commented on replacing damaged fences.
- 00:43:25 Sen. Phillips said he recommends tracking aridity along with climate.

FIRE RELATED STUDY TOPICS

- 00:44:40 Mr. Kolman provided information on different scenarios to fund fire preparation.
- 00:45:19 Mr. Kolman discussed the map showing the wildland fire protection districts. **(Exhibit 2)**
- 00:46:56 Mr. Kolman discussed the chart from DNRC showing the fees per parcel for all parcels or wildland parcels if revenue was raised by \$3.6 million. **(Exhibit 3)**

Options for Landowner Assessment Fees

- 00:48:33 Sue Clark, acting Forestry Division administrator, DNRC, provided an overview and background information.
- 00:50:45 Ms. Clark discussed the chart showing the DNRC's current fire protection preparedness funding structure. **(Exhibit 4)**
- 00:53:45 Ms. Clark discussed the wildland fire protection district map. **(see exhibit 2)**
- 00:54:27 Ms. Clark said the Council received a map with the DNRC Trust Land and Forestry offices. **(Exhibit 5)**
- 00:55:15 Ms. Clark discussed the benefits of a reformed wildland protection fee.
- 00:57:36 Mr. DeGrosky commented on the maps the Council received prior to the meeting and the modeling that was done by DNRC staff.
- 00:59:10 Mr. DeGrosky discussed the chart showing the fees per parcel if all parcels were assessed a fee or if only wildland parcels were assessed a fee to raise revenue by \$3.6 million. **(see exhibit 3)**
- 01:00:52 Mr. DeGrosky discussed the chart showing fire protection fees if all parcels were assessed versus only wildland parcels. **(Exhibit 6)**
- 01:04:01 Sen. Phillips asked Mr. DeGrosky about the chart.
- 01:04:24 Sen. Lang asked Mr. DeGrosky about the current assessments and the difference between acres and parcels.
- 01:06:05 Mr. DeGrosky continued his presentation.
- 01:07:35 Mr. DeGrosky discussed the charts showing surcharges for parcels with dwellings and parcels with forested land. **(Exhibit 7)**

Public comment

- 01:11:32 Tom Ray, Montana resource manager, Weyerhaeuser
- 01:12:48 Bob Gilbert
- 01:14:57 Steve Marks, Marks Ranch, Clancy

The EQC also received written public comment. **(Exhibit 8)**

EQC questions and discussion

- 01:17:07 Mr. Brenden commented on assessing parcels and on wildland parcels.
- 01:19:30 Rep. Ellis asked Mr. DeGrosky about the difference in service between direct and co-op protection.
- 01:23:01 Rep. Ellis asked Mr. DeGrosky about the definition of forested land.

01:25:12 Mr. Kolman provided the definition of forested land by the DNRC and by the Department of Revenue.

01:26:13 Rep. Ellis asked Mr. DeGrosky about the fire protection preparedness fund.

01:27:29 Ms. Paul asked Mr. DeGrosky about the chart showing fire protection assessments for all parcels versus wildland parcels and if it relates to the percentage of parcels that exist in the state. Mr. DeGrosky said the chart is scaled by rate not percentage of land existing and said he can provide the information to staff.

01:29:58 Rep. Curdy asked Mr. Tubbs about the assessments and the working relationship between the county co-ops and the state.

01:36:34 Rep. Curdy asked Mr. Tubbs about the lack of volunteers for local fire departments and using fire preparedness money to train more FTE.

01:39:42 Mr. Aspenlieder asked Mr. DeGrosky about the rates charged for parcels and acres.

01:42:46 Mr. Aspenlieder asked Mr. DeGrosky about the justification for not charging municipal areas a wildland fee.

01:44:17 Mr. Tubbs commented on the definition of municipal versus non-municipal.

01:45:30 Mr. Aspenlieder commented on taking urban areas out of the fee assessments.

01:47:44 Sen. Lang commented on private industry investment in eastern Montana for fire and provided his recommendations for funding.

01:53:06 Rep. Ellis asked Mr. Tubbs about the amount that would be charged for a parcel in the city of Helena with a dwelling on it.

01:53:59 Rep. Ellis asked Mr. Tubbs if cities would be eligible to obtain fire equipment under the fire protection preparedness fund.

01:56:16 Rep. Ellis asked Mr. Tubbs why the city of Helena is considered under direct protection.

01:57:52 Mr. Vincent commented on assessing fees in urban areas.

01:58:43 Mr. Tubbs commented on equity in tax assessments.

01:59:42 Sen. Vincent commented on discussions for next steps.

02:00:25 Rep. Hamlett asked Mr. Tubbs about the per acre charge if the DNRC assessed all private land. Mr. Tubbs said he will get the information.

02:00:59 Rep. Hamlett asked Mr. Tubbs if the DNRC considered the risk factor for a parcel in western Montana versus eastern Montana.

02:02:36 Rep. Hamlett commented on assessing the same amount of money across the state.

Firefighter Issues

02:03:02 Leanne Kurtz, research analyst, LSD, and staff for the Local Government Interim Committee (LGIC), said the EQC included a discussion of volunteer firefighters and recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters in its work plan. She said the LGIC was assigned SJR 21 (2017), a comprehensive study of local fire and emergency service providers, and HJR 25 (2017), a study of the statutes governing municipal fire departments.

02:05:03 Ms. Kurtz discussed SJR 21. **(Exhibit 9)**

02:11:02 Ms. Kurtz discussed HJR 25.

02:18:10 Ms. Kurtz said the LGIC will meet in July and provided information on the bill drafts the committee will consider.

Public comment None

EQC questions and discussion

- 02:22:11 Sen. Vincent asked Ms. Kurtz about the issue of Class 2 municipalities merging with a rural local volunteer fire department.
- 02:23:22 Sen. Vincent asked Ms. Kurtz about issues regarding workers compensation.

Prescribed Burning

- 02:24:10 Mr. Kolman said the EQC agreed in its work plan to review issues raised during the 2017 Legislative Session on prescribed burning and discussed the information that was sent to the Council. **(Exhibit 10)**

Public comment

- 02:33:58 Rep. Ray Shaw, HD 71, sponsor, HB 587 (2017)
- 02:35:23 Ted Dodge, executive director, Watershed Coalition, Upper Clark Fork **(Exhibit 11)**
- 02:41:17 Fred Stadler, Watershed Coalition, Upper Clark Fork

EQC questions and discussion

- 02:45:24 Rep. Curdy asked Mr. DeGrosky about DNRC's current prescribed fire program.

Sen. Vincent left the meeting and Rep. Hamlett took over the duties of the chair.

- 02:46:43 Rep. Curdy asked Mr. DeGrosky about the current number of burn bosses. Mr. DeGrosky said he will get the information.
- 02:47:07 Rep. Curdy asked Mr. DeGrosky about why the DNRC does most of its burning on state trust land and not on forested land.
- 02:47:59 Rep. Curdy asked Mr. DeGrosky why the Trust Lands Management Division is managing prescribed fire instead of the Forestry Division. Mr. DeGrosky referred the question to Mr. Tubbs. Mr. Tubbs was not present in the room.
- 02:48:30 Rep. Curdy requested that staff contact the DNRC for an answer.
- 02:48:52 Mr. Brenden commented on managing fire on farmland.
- 02:49:57 Rep. Hamlett asked Mr. Dodge about working with environmental groups.
- 02:50:49 Rep. Hamlett asked about next steps and said it will be discussed later today.
- 02:51:06 Sen. Vincent returned to the meeting and said he agreed. He resumed as chairman.

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAM EVALUATION

Montana Invasive Species Commission Update

- 02:52:20 Bryce Christiaens, chair, Montana Invasive Species Council, provided an update on the establishment of the independent science advisory panel, the council's work on rapid response preparedness, and the invasive species law review.

Upper Columbia Conservation Commission Update

- 02:58:52 Lori Curtis, Science and Education director, Whitefish Institute; chair, Upper Columbia Conservation Commission, by phone, provided an update on work being done by the commission.

FWP 2018 Inspection/Monitoring Season Update

- 03:03:30 Martha Williams, director, Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) said, Tom Woolf, Aquatic Invasive Species Bureau chief, FWP, will present the update.
- 03:04:18 Mr. Woolf provided information on the 2018 inspection and monitoring season.

Watercraft Fee Matrix and Scenarios

- 03:10:15 Hope Stockwell, research analyst, LSD, provided an updated copy of the watercraft fee matrix (**Exhibit 12**) and said the Council received copies of public comment. (**Exhibit 13**)
- 03:11:07 Ms. Stockwell discussed the watercraft fee matrix for other states.
- 03:20:19 Ms. Stockwell discussed Montana watercraft fee scenarios. (**Exhibit 14**)

Public comment

- 03:24:02 Joann Wallenburn, Seeley Lake
- 03:25:43 Bob Gilbert, executive director, Walleyes Unlimited Montana
- 03:35:08 Mike Bias, executive director, Fishing Outfitter's Association of Montana
- 03:38:47 Mac Minard, executive director, Montana Outfitters and Guides Association

EQC questions and discussion

- 03:42:43 Sen. Lang asked Ms. Williams about checking equipment that was brought into the state by companies that did work in the past.
- 03:44:35 Sen. Lang asked Ms. Williams about the meeting held yesterday regarding Tiber Reservoir. Ms. Williams redirected the question to Mr. Woolf.
- 03:46:26 Sen. Lang asked Mr. Woolf about the measures to protect Fort Peck Reservoir.
- 03:47:27 Sen. Lang asked Mr. Woolf about the location of inspection stations to check boats heading north from Wyoming and Billings.
- 03:49:32 Sen. Lang asked Mr. Woolf about decals for local boaters.
- 03:52:01 Sen. Vincent said the next two agenda items will be presented after lunch.
- 03:52:23 Rep. White asked Ms. Stockwell about the fee on watercraft and having a two-year cycle for the validation decal to coincide with the revenue cycle.
- 03:53:58 Rep. White asked Ms. Stockwell about nonresident motorized fees in other states.
- 03:54:35 Rep. White asked Mr. Woolf about coordinating inspection stations with Idaho and Wyoming.
- 03:55:34 Rep. Curdy asked Mr. Woolf about seaplanes from out-of-state.
- 03:57:19 Rep. Hamlett asked Mr. Bias about fines issued by local law enforcement that conduct the inspections in Idaho and where the money is credited to.
- 03:58:34 Rep. Hamlett redirected his question to Ms. Stockwell. Ms. Stockwell said she will find out.
- 03:59:07 Rep. Hamlett asked Mr. Woolf about the type of watercraft that mussels can adhere to and if rafts and kayaks are considered a vector.
- 04:00:36 Sen. Vincent asked Ms. Curtis about the cooperative agreements on Flathead Lake with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT). Ms. Curtis redirected the question to Mr. Woolf.
- 04:02:05 Sen. Vincent asked Mr. Woolf about staffing and the operating season for the inspection stations in eastern Montana.

04:03:14 Recess for lunch at 12:03 p.m.
05:01:44 Reconvene at 1:02 p.m.

SJ 5 STUDY

05:02:16 Sonja Nowakowski, staff, LSD, said the EQC received an outlook on coal markets and Montana's coal industry at its meeting in January and the potential financial consequences of reducing the mining and burning of coal in Montana. She provided an update on proposed legislation in Washington and Oregon.
05:07:02 Ms. Nowakowski provided an update on the owners of Colstrip.

Public Comment None

EQC questions and discussion

05:10:29 Sen. Phillips asked Ms. Nowakowski about the citizen's initiative in the state of Washington.
05:10:47 Sen. Vincent asked Ms. Nowakowski to provide information on the breakdown of ownership at Colstrip. **(Exhibit 15)**

SAGE GROUSE CONSERVATION PROGRAM UPDATE

Habitat Quantification Tool Progress

05:11:34 Carolyn Sime, program manager, Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program, DNRC, provided an update on the progress of the development of the Habitat Quantification Tool (HQT).

Public Comment None

EQC questions and discussion

05:15:25 Mr. Aspenlieder asked Ms. Sime about stakeholder involvement in the process.
05:17:36 Mr. Aspenlieder asked Ms. Sime about addressing stakeholder concerns before the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team (MSGOT) meets in May.
05:19:22 Mr. Aspenlieder commented on the lack of transparency and stakeholder involvement.
05:20:26 Mr. Aspenlieder asked Ms. Sime about conservation easements and the ability to use offset credits for industrial projects in the future.
05:22:27 Sen. Vincent clarified Mr. Aspenlieder's question.
05:23:06 Mr. Aspenlieder asked Ms. Sime about the purchase of the conservation easement on the 44 Ranch.
05:27:19 Mr. Aspenlieder commented on purchasing the conservation easement before the HQT was developed.
05:28:23 Sen. Lang said he is a member of the MSGOT and provided his comments and discussed the purchase of the 44 Ranch.
05:32:00 Sen. Vincent asked Ms. Sime about waiting to purchase other easements until the tool is fully developed. He gave Ms. Sime an opportunity to address the comments that were made.
05:35:13 Sen. Vincent asked Ms. Sime about looking at the quality of habitat proposed for conservation easements.
05:37:18 Mr. Aspenlieder asked Ms. Sime about the conservation easement and the credits

- created.
- 05:39:49 Sen. Vincent asked Ms. Sime about ways to create credits other than conservation easements.
- 05:40:38 Mr. Brenden commented on locking up land into perpetuity.
- 05:42:08 Rep. Hamlett asked Ms. Sime about limits on the amount of money the program will spend on easements based on market value.

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY LAB STUDY

- 05:44:07 Shauna Albrecht, Legislative Fiscal Division, provided an update on the study of the state labs located at Montana State University (MSU). She said the Council received a copy of the letter that was sent by the subcommittee to Montana's congressional delegation requesting assistance with capital funding. **(Exhibit 16)**
- 05:45:57 Rep. White commented on funding sources.
- 05:46:50 Rep. Hamlett commented on lease/purchase as a way to fund a building and said CWD is an example of why the state needs better up-to-date labs.
- 05:47:29 Sen. Vincent asked staff about the letter that was drafted by Rep. White. Mr. Kolman said the letter is the same letter that was written by the subcommittee and that it was adapted as a draft for the EQC to consider. **(Exhibit 17)**

Public comment None

EQC questions and discussion

- 05:48:32 Sen. Pomnichowski asked Rep. White for his opinion regarding the need to build a new facility.
- 05:50:28 Sen. Pomnichowski asked Rep. White about consolidating testing into one facility.
- 05:50:56 Rep. Curdy asked Rep. White about other state laboratory or testing functions, other than the four labs located at MSU, that could be part of the new lab. Rep. White redirected the question to Ms. Albrecht.
- 05:52:43 Sen. Vincent asked the Council about sending the letter.

Motion/Vote

- 05:52:53 Sen. Lang moved to send the letter to Montana's congressional delegation. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote. Rep. Gunderson and Mr. Brenden voted aye by proxy. **(Attachment 5)** Mr. Aspenlieder was excused.
- 05:53:20 Sen. Vincent asked about next steps for the subcommittee. Rep. White said they will meet after the firm is selected to be consultants on program planning for the combined lab process.
- 05:54:11 Rep. Hamlett said there is no plan to move the state crime lab into the new facility.
- 05:54:22 Sen. Vincent thanked Rep. White and Rep. Hamlett for serving on the subcommittee.

MULE DEER PERMITS

- 05:54:39 Mr. Kolman provided information on why mule deer permits are issued in certain districts is included in the work plan.

- 05:55:19 Ms. Williams said Quentin Kujala, Wildlife Management section chief, FWP, will be presenting the information.
- 05:55:42 Mr. Kujala provided information on general licenses and unlimited mule deer permits.

Public comment

- 06:04:00 Joe Balyeat, former state legislator (**Exhibit 18**)
- 06:09:15 Nick Gevock, conservation director, Montana Wildlife Federation

EQC questions and discussion

- 06:10:52 Sen. Smith asked Mr. Kujala to provide the data to support his statement that the season structure results of 10 bucks per 100 does is effective 80% of the time.
- 06:12:50 Sen. Smith said the major reason for the bill was due to the lack of evidence showing effectiveness over a 20-year period.
- 06:13:13 Sen. Smith asked Mr. Kujala about the five hunting districts that were pulled out of the unlimited permit program.
- 06:14:31 Sen. Smith asked Mr. Kujala about the 80% effectiveness and the increase in the buck to doe ratio.
- 06:15:53 Sen. Vincent asked Mr. Kujala about the number of hunting districts that have unlimited permits.
- 06:16:24 Sen. Vincent asked Mr. Kujala if the accuracy and quality of the data is corrected by observations on the ground.
- 06:17:05 Sen. Vincent asked Mr. Kujala about when the report will be completed.
- 06:17:28 Sen. Vincent said there will be a brief recess to allow time for staff to call the next speaker.
- 06:17:48 Recess
- 06:22:46 Reconvene

PUBLIC ACCESS ISSUES

- 06:23:33 Sen. Vincent provided an introduction.

MT-Plan & Access Update

- 06:24:35 Ryan Weiss, public access specialist, DNRC, provided an update on the Montana Public Lands Access Network (MT-Plan). (**Exhibit 19**)

Public comment None

EQC questions and discussion None

Wildlife Policy & Landowner Relations

- 06:35:40 Dan Vermillion, chairman, Montana Fish & Wildlife Commission, provided his perspective on wildlife policy and landowner relations.
- 06:36:37 Mr. Vermillion discussed elk populations and provided information on hunting districts in Montana. (**Exhibit 20**)

06:46:07 Terry Anderson, senior fellow, Property and Environment Research Center, by video conference, introduced the staff present in the meeting room.

06:48:20 Mr. Anderson discussed access issues in the Crazy Mountains.

06:51:05 Mr. Anderson discussed how much access is enough.

06:52:13 Mr. Anderson discussed what kind of access should be allowed.

06:53:41 Mr. Anderson discussed where access is appropriate.

06:54:36 Mr. Anderson discussed better ways to get access.

06:57:30 Mr. Anderson provided his suggestions for better landowner and hunter relations.

06:59:35 Nick Gevock, executive director, Montana Wildlife Federation (MWF), discussed access and the partnership between hunters and landowners and what the MWF has done to help build on that relationship.

07:05:10 Mr. Gevock discussed elk management.

07:07:36 Mr. Gevock discussed public access to public land issues.

Public comment

07:08:46 Brad Wilson, founder, Friends of the Crazy Mountains

07:14:25 Chuck Rein, landowner

07:23:19 Kathryn QannaYahu ([Exhibit 21](#))

07:34:04 Harold Johns, president, Skyline Sportsmen Association ([Exhibit 22](#))

EQC questions and discussion

07:39:46 Mr. Brenden commented on public access and private property landowner rights.

07:46:53 Mr. Brenden left the meeting.

07:47:06 Rep. Ellis asked the panelists about their suggestions for changes to wildlife policy to help landowner relationships. Sen. Vincent said the Private Land/Public Wildlife Council (PL/PW) has been appointed to offer solutions and commented on the direction for the EQC. He asked Rep. Ellis about her question to the panelists.

07:49:45 Rep. Ellis asked Mr. Vermillion about his suggestions.

07:53:55 Rep. Ellis asked Mr. Vermillion if the issue is a statutory issue or an appropriation issue.

07:55:34 Mr. Anderson provided his suggestions.

07:57:14 Sen. Vincent asked Mr. Holmes about the meeting schedule and agenda for the PL/PW. Mr. Holmes re-referred the question. Jason Kool, Wildlife Division, FWP, said the first meeting is scheduled for April 6.

07:58:08 Rep. Ellis asked Mr. Gevock about suggestions for changing wildlife policy to help landowner relations.

08:01:32 Sen. Vincent asked Mr. Rein about his work as an outfitter on his ranch and not being allowed to participate in the incentive programs.

08:03:28 Sen. Vincent asked Mr. Weiss about coordination with landowners.

08:06:20 Sen. Vincent asked Mr. Weiss about solutions for the next legislative session and if they will be looking at recommendations to add flexibility.

08:07:56 Sen. Lang commented on his experience with managing elk populations on his ranch in Phillips County. He said he recommends that FWP contact Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke regarding permission to open up the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge to the same standards that are in the state.

08:12:11 Rep. Curdy asked Ms. Williams about using funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for easements to improve access.
08:14:24 Rep. Manzella asked Mr. Gevock about MWF's position on corner crossing access.
08:15:45 Rep. Hamlett asked Mr. Vermillion about policy that allows tags to be issued to out-of-state landowners to hunt game on their property if they allow access.
08:19:11 Rep. Hamlett commented on land grants and how the Northern Pacific Railroad gave property that bordered the railroad.
08:20:39 Sen. Vincent thanked the participants.

08:21:24 Recess
08:34:09 Reconvene

REVIEW PROPOSED TOPICS FOR NEXT EQC MEETING

08:34:26 Sen. Vincent

Next steps: Natural Heritage program

08:34:39 Sen. Vincent
08:35:09 Ms. Paul
08:35:27 Sen. Vincent
08:35:32 Mr. Kolman said he will work with NHP staff on bill drafts.

Next steps: State Parks

08:36:19 Ms. Stockwell said she will provide more detailed information for the good neighbor policy and asked if the Council wanted more information on gas tax allocations.
08:36:39 Sen. Vincent
08:37:06 Rep. White
08:37:14 Ms. Stockwell
08:37:24 Rep. White
08:37:30 Ms. Stockwell
08:37:50 Sen. Vincent said without objection from the Council, staff will prepare bill drafts that can be discussed at the next meeting.
08:38:06 Rep. Ellis
08:38:31 Ms. Stockwell
08:38:56 Rep. White said he recommends that Council continue to receive updates on the Parks in Focus program.
08:39:09 Sen. Vincent
08:39:22 Rep. White
08:39:32 Sen. Vincent
08:39:42 Rep. Hamlett said he would like definitive information on West Shore State Park. He said he would also like information on recreational development on land that was purchased by the Parks Division.

08:40:28 Sen. Vincent
08:40:40 Rep. Hamlett
08:40:59 Sen. Vincent
08:41:25 Rep. Hamlett
08:42:06 Rep. Ellis

08:42:16 Sen. Vincent
08:42:58 Rep. White said he would like information on the enrollment procedure used in Wyoming for their trail system.
08:43:41 Rep. Curdy said the last meeting for FWP's Financial Review Advisory Committee is scheduled for April 24 and that they may have recommendations for the EQC. He requested that it be put on the agenda for May.

Next steps: Fire Indicators

08:44:20 Sen. Vincent asked staff about further direction.

Next steps: Landowner Assessment Fees

08:44:32 Sen Vincent asked about getting more information on fee equity statewide.
08:46:40 Rep. White asked about administration and tracking costs for acres versus parcels.
08:47:41 Sen. Vincent
08:48:54 Sen. Phillips said he recommends that staff work with the DNRC on bill drafts.
08:49:39 Sen. Vincent
08:50:22 Sen. Phillips
08:50:49 Ms. Paul said she would like the DNRC to provide more information regarding the comparison of parcels and acres.
08:52:43 Sen. Smith said he is in favor of making fees more equitable, but that he does not support increasing the tax burden for the citizens of the state.
08:53:20 Sen. Pomnichowski said she recommends having a representative from the Department of Revenue at the May meeting to answers questions about parcels and acres and to also revisit the ideas from the DNRC.
08:55:25 Sen. Vincent commented and asked about bill drafts for consideration. He said he will work with staff.
08:58:04 Rep. Hamlett said he requested that the DNRC provide information on the number of acres and parcels. He commented on different assessments for timberland versus grassland and on high risk parcels in the WUI.
08:59:34 Sen. Vincent said he will work with staff on the agenda.

Next steps: Prescribed Burning

08:59:50 Sen. Vincent asked about creating a permit system to reduce liability for prescribed burning.
09:00:15 Rep. Curdy said he recommends allowing the DNRC to work on it.
09:01:08 Sen. Vincent
09:01:27 Sen. Lang said Rep. Shaw is reworking his bill.

Next steps: Aquatic Invasive Species

09:02:17 Sen. Vincent said current funding will sunset and asked about the termination dates.
09:02:59 Ms. Stockwell
09:03:15 Sen. Vincent opened discussion on funding the program.
09:03:48 Sen. Pomnichowski
09:04:16 Sen. Phillips
09:04:37 Sen. Vincent
09:05:00 Ms. Stockwell

09:05:17 Sen. Vincent
09:05:37 Ms. Williams
09:05:58 Sen. Vincent
09:06:39 Sen. Phillips
09:07:08 Mr. Aspenlieder
09:08:31 Rep. White
09:09:04 Sen. Vincent
09:09:49 Ms. Stockwell
09:10:05 Sen. Vincent
09:10:17 Sen. Lang
09:12:42 Rep. Hamlett
09:14:08 Rep. Ellis
09:15:56 Ms. Stockwell
09:17:42 Rep. Ellis
09:17:59 Ms. Stockwell
09:19:00 Sen. Vincent
09:19:07 Rep. Ellis said she recommends getting more information on using a portion of the gas tax.
09:19:39 Sen. Vincent said he will work with staff on bill drafts.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY MATTER NOT CONTAINED IN THIS AGENDA AND THAT IS WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE EQC

None

INSTRUCTIONS TO STAFF

None

ADJOURN

09:23:19 With no further business before the Council, Sen. Vincent adjourned the meeting at 5:23 p.m.

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