

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
AGENCIES II SUBCOMMITTEE

January 23, 1979
8:15 A.M.
Room 343
State Capitol Building

Subject: Fish and Game Hearing

Tape 2; Side 2, Track 4 (800)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Rex Manuel. All members were present. Also present were Bob Robinson, LFA; Mike Kohnke, OBPP; John Wilson, Montana Council of Trout Unlimited; Charlotte K. Easter, EIC; Hugh Zackheim, Montana Wildlife Federation and from the Fish and Game: Robert F. Wambach, Tom Rippengale, Jim Posewitz, Art Whitney, Don L. Brown, Gene Allen, Larry E. Putnam, Orville Lewis, Erwin J. Kent and Ron Holliday.

Program Introduction (807)

Mr. Wambach introduced the administrators of his department, and began the presentation with a brief introduction of his department.

The department sets seasons, formulates regulations and enforce these regulations. However, the essence of the operation is much broader than this. Their mission is to protect and enhance the outdoor resources in the state. This includes the animals and fish as well as the habitats of these animals, forest, rangelands and waters of the state utilized by many recreationists. It is their job to encourage and promote the wise use of these resources.

Some of the problems the department must deal with are technical training, improving relations with land owners, diminishing resources, and limited staff to deal with these problems.

The importance of building relations with land owners cannot be over-emphasized. Much of the land utilized by the wildlife is owned by private interests. Without good landowner relations the department cannot accomplish their goals.

Other problems include snowmobile regulation, stream bank preservation, water reservations, Indian disputes, endangered species, conservation education, development of private game farms in the state, environmental impact statements required by law. The point here is to illustrate how thin the department is spread.

External Threat (850)

The department feels it is best to maintain control over Montana's resources at the state level. The state philosophy states that these resources are renewable and can be used without detriment. But, there is

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a national trend toward preservation. The department is very concerned about this federal encroachment.

If the department were not aware of this trend much of the land now available for recreational use would be taken away and set aside as national monuments. The department feels that management of public lands to regulate hunting and fishing, and management of resident wildlife and fishing species should be the prerogative of the state.

Federal Lands and Water Conservation Fund (900)

The Land and Water Conservation fund is money derived from off-shore oil and gas development. This money goes to the federal government and is distributed among the states to acquire lands to be set aside for conservation purposes. In the last three years, the federal government has tried to get this money. There was a ratio of 60/40 and there is a strong lobby to gain a greater amount for federal purposes.

Montana has allied with other rural states to protect the individual state interests. This money to the state amounts roughly to \$3 million a year to Montana, half of which goes to counties, the other half is spent at the state level.

The third threat to the department is the growth of anti-hunting sentiment in the US. These forces are strong enough that programs that fund wildlife conservation are endangered. The trend is toward programs not related to hunting and fishing, but preservation. These sentiments originate in urban areas and are creating a threat to Montana's way of life.

The Fish and Game programs have been down graded in all but four of the western states. There is no access by the Fish and Game in these states to the inner workings of government. These states are looking to Montana for leadership. Montana still has a resource that is the envy of other states and still has the stature to have an impact.

In conclusion, the department is forced into a real and consuming interest in national and international affairs. Without this interest, the federal government will take our prerogative and freedom of control over our own resources.

Strategic Plan (1054)

This plan combines fish, wildlife and recreation into a single document that provides guidelines for the future. It appraises the present condition of our resources, identifies major problems and sets goals and objectives. An executive summary of this document was provided for the members.

Budget Process (1065)

Four years ago a new budget system was introduced to the department as an experiment, setting guidelines for budget requests. The Governor's guidelines on how to function and these were combined with mandates from the legislature. Ultimately, this was combined with the department's

planning effort and with policy priorities. All this information was sent to the field officer. The budget was then built at the field level, based on field projects. The budget was then sent to the divisions to be reviewed, consolidated and cut where recommendations exceeded available funds.

The budget was reviewed in the director's office for policy compliance and for priorities. It was turned over to the budget people who recociled it and submitted it to the Budget Office. Now it has come to the legislature. Once appropriations are made it will be returned to the directors office to be reallocated among the various projects.

Program (1130)

A program is an assemblage of all activities which, taken together protect, perpetuate, enhance and manage program resource divisions to provide outdoor recreation for the people in the state.

Wildlife Program (1145)

Gene Allen was called upon to explain this program. Major responsibilities of the program are (1) to protect, perpetuate and enhance the habitat that produces the abundant and diverse wildlife that is an integral part of Montana's heritage and (2) to provide current and future generations of people with an equitable distribution of diverse and high quality outdoor recreation through the wise utilization of wildlife resources.

Three major problems confronting the Wildlife Program are increasing demands are expected on all types of wildlife-oriented recreation, intensifying land and water uses are decreasing the quantity and quality of wildlife habitat and, the access to private and public lands is declining.

This results in 2½ million man days of recreation, the number of harvested animals and all the impossible to measure benefits to people who view without consumption.

A basic activity in this program is the surveys and inventories. These provide information to proposed management information, better quality information and this means more time. They are not going to be able to continue to meet informational demands unless they keep pace with the increased demands put on the resources.

A second activity is the research bureau. This bureau tries to answer some of the questions that the surveys and inventories come up with.

A third function is the time spent with sportsmen and landowners. This involves personal interviews with landowners to identify problems. This also included the ex-officio program.

Another function is cooperation with other agencies. Some land is owned by the department, but since wildlife is a product of the land it be-

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comes necessary to work closely with the people who own the land. All land activities effect wildlife very closely. The department helps with mining reclamation, logging management, coal companies, etc. Data is needed to make sure that these impacts are successful and compatible to wildlife. This is one of the most important things that the program does.

The performance indicators are the benefits to the people. Habitat protection is very difficult to measure, but, it is very necessary.

Side 1, Track 3 (000)

Ecological Services

Jim Posewitz gave a brief overview of historical background effecting the department. The first action related to the protection of fish and wildlife was in 1864. From that point there was a continually growing body of law relating to the protection of fish and wildlife, by protecting it from the over-harvest. Everything was aimed at restricting the utilization of wildlife.

The first indication of change came in 1963 with the Stream Preservation Act. This was the first document to say that not only must the animals be protected, but also the habitat. This law has demonstrated that construction and development is possible without destroying the animal habitat.

From 1963 to the early 1970's there was not much change. The early 1970's saw a move toward protecting the environment. In all the legislation that was passed as a result of this trend, the importance of fish and wildlife habitat was protected. Therefore, the scope and responsibility of the Department has expanded.

Currently, fish and wildlife is entitled to representation. If this is to continue, none of the traditional roles of the department must stop. Priorities must be set to make these laws work for the fish and wildlife

In the appropriation the department would ask for some flexibility in order to respond to projects as they occur. Fish and Game presence must be maintained as an advocate for the preservation of wildlife. Fish and wildlife are a high concern in the state, therefore, it is important that the department be accessible to the people.

Law Enforcement (181)

Mr. Kent stated that the major responsibility if this division is to protect wildlife resources from negligent destruction by insuring compliance to regulations and morals relating to wildlife. They are also responsible for the enforcement of litter and vandalism laws and the enforcement of the Guide Outfitter Act. In addition, they coordinate the hunter safety program.

Two new significant programs include the ex-officio warden program and the sportsman's report line. The sportsman's report line was an effort

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to get sportsmen more involved with self-policing. The program has received some 136 calls as of December of this year.

Centralized Services (103)

Larry Patman summarized all the programs of this division. It is a support group for field operations. One of the larger areas is the mail operation which provides contact with hunters and fishermen. In addition, this division provides support services to the drawings.

There are 6 separate drawings every year. There is an increasing demand for a limited supply of permits. Last year, nearly 80,000 (15,000 resident and 12,000 nonresident) applications. There was a 10% increase in requests for these permits between 1977 and 1978. Problems arise because all these come to the department at the same time. Another problem, approximately 41% contain some sort of error. This is a very complex process with many requirements to be met. It requires a great deal of time, staff and effort, and this is reflected in the budget request.

Other support activities include the Conservation Education Bureau which produces big game maps, radio and TV sport, research films, Montana Outdoors magazine and conduct civic and classroom presentations.

This division is also responsible for financial and accounting support. This included vehicle support, purchasing and consigning and depositing of license proceeds.

Nearly 400,000 of the 1.1 million licenses were for the fish program. In addition, their aircraft support does assist in planting fish.

Fish Program (171)

The fisheries division's budget is \$2,000,000 and the fish program is \$4,000,000. The objective in the division is to insure the perpetuation of all aquatic species and their ecosystems and to meet the public demand for fish in state waters.

The program takes surveys and inventories to determine and evaluate the need for fish in the state. Once this is done they go out and do what's feasible and within their capacity to improve and maintain fishing. There are over 9,000 individual waters in Montana that support fish and over 300,000 licensed anglers that spent over 3.1 million man days fishing.

Management of the resource involves preservation of habitat, provide access, manipulate fish populations and fishing regulation. Of this, preservation is probably the most important job.

The department conducts research into planting of catchable wild trout production. This better insures the survival of trout once it is stocked.

Parks Program (230)

In 1965 the legislature broadened responsibility and scope of this de-

partment by transferring the administration of State Parks Law to the department. It carried a very clear mandate to make available to the people the resources of the state.

The state park program has two major functions and the management of other outdoor recreation programs. This includes the administration of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the snow mobile program, and some programs regarding boat safety.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal program administered by the states for the acquisition or development of any recreation area or facility in the state. Montana has received \$22 million matched with federal funds, making \$44 million available to the state since 1965. Thirteen million of those dollars have gone to local governments.

One development in acquisition of land is the development of procedures for gaining land without payment. In this way, the state has received in excess of \$3 million worth of land at no cost other than the cost of managing these sites.

Another area of concern has been the development of a viable and manageable snow mobile program. The program felt that someone should look at the use of other recreational vehicles in the state parks.

The program is looking at seeking alternative, viable, reasonable and adequate sources for financial support. Recommendations are listed on page 7 of the strategic plan.

A final plea was made to maintain financial flexibility to continue operation to meet the needs and challenges whatever they may be.

Financial Division (290)

Tom Rippengale gave an overview of the budgeting process within the Fish and Game Department. This process helped to gain detail but helped little in management, and they lost cost by division or region. The department reorganized to get a system summary by division, region and program.

The department took the 1979 information and using the computer multiplied each expenditure by 1.06 with the exception of personal services. This was done for 1980 and 1981.

In accordance with the budget office, the department was authorized a 6% increase in each expenditure category, except in personal services and utilities, which was allowed an 8% increase.

The bottom line of dollars requested is a 3.75% increase without personal services. From 1980 to 1981 there is a 3.48% increase. This makes a 7.4% increase from 1979 to 1981.

A 6% inflation factor cuts the department back behind current level

because the purchasing power is not what they would have had otherwise. This will make a significant difference to the department.

If the department maintains current level, the inflation increase should be 132½% of the base budget. In reality, the authorized budget is 116%, a loss of 16.48 in purchasing power.

This is an earmarked revenue agency. They are limited by the amount of money they bring in, not by the legislature. Department estimate of revenue is \$14,030,000 for 1979, \$14,609,000 for 1980 and \$16,397,000 for 1981. The biggest indicator to the department is the nonresident licenses. They estimated 15,000 license sales from this source, but the actual was 16,574. The 1980 and 1981 revenue added together is expected to be \$31,006,736, less \$28,015,052 for operations that they have requested. This leaves a balance of revenue amounting to \$2,991,684.

Present capital appropriation has \$2,275,000 of unused authority. Balance to date is \$5,085,000. Cash available is \$6,610,000.

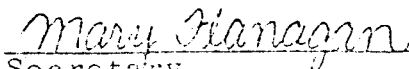
The capital request was \$4,375,000 out of these earmarked funds. The LFA and the Executive was \$1,026,000.

In conclusion, the department requested authority to spend all the revenue they collect. Currently, they can only spend what the legislature allocates. Mr. Rippengale stated that the financial reports on the department would be made available should any of the members want to look at them.

Mr. Robinson and Mr. Kehnke were requested to look at this information and report back to the subcommittee.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 A.M.


REP. REX MANUEL, Chairman


Secretary