CMR Community Working Group Meeting Summary

Where: Jordan Fairgrounds
Opening: 10:12 AM
Attendance: 46

Self-Introduction & Grounding Question: How important is local involvement/influence of communities in natural resource decisions?

Missouri River Breaks Big Horn Sheep Conservation:
Kurt Alt – Staff Biologist for the Wild Sheep Foundation: 30,000 foot overview of Wild Sheep – showed a distribution map of Big Horn Sheep across the landscape from 1850, 1960, and 2012.

- 1950 = 15, 000 - 18, 000 Big Horn sheep
- 1960 = 25,000 Big Horn sheep
- 2012 = 85,000 Big Horn sheep
- Since 1922 Montana has only brought in 28 sheep but has exported a couple thousand.
- Montana Solution to a Montana Problem: Separation of domestic and wild sheep
    - Interaction working groups
    - Separations strategies
    - Disease – Movi –(*mycoplasma ovipneumonia*) surveillance, research, and application – in both the domestic and wild sheep.
    - Education & Outreach

John Vore – Game Management Bureau Chief with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:

- Big Horn Sheep Status in Montana
    - Ideally have a 14 mile buffer between domestic and wild sheep
    - Currently 43 herds = 6,500 Big Horn sheep, 5,500 in herds managed by FWP
- Montana Big Horn Sheep Conservation Strategy - came out in 2010
    - Identified goals to establish 5 new viable and huntable populations over the course of the next 10 years and augment the existing populations.
    - Protocols for Transplanting Big Horn Sheep

Review groups creation and processes:
Mission Statement:
Mission statement was read by Dean Rogge
Purpose of the Group:
Purpose statement was read and it was noted that perhaps the language should be changed so that the Mission and Purpose both indicate that the group will focus on the Refuge *and* surrounding communities. Carie Hess noted that as the group has progressed the area of focus has evolved to include the CMR National Wildlife Refuge and the Six Counties that surround the CMR. It was thought that the planning committee could discuss this on the next planning call and bring to the working group.

The 3 part goals were reviewed:

- First Goal read by Ross Butcher
- Second Goal read by Bridget Nielsen
- Third Goal read by Jason Holt
- It was noted that those goals form the basis for the draft work plan.

Bison Committee Report:

The Bison Committee met for the first time on October 5, 2016 at the Jordan Public Library by phone and in person. The "questions"or topics of discussion were prioritized by the group.

- Forum for people to openly express their views.
- Group agreed to review the FWP EIS
- Rachel Reported that the future agenda topics were for the committee:
  - Review of the FWP Bison EIS
  - Local Buy-in and support, developing a picture of what that actually looks like
  - Meet the evening before the full group meeting or at least the same month as the full group meetings. Email will be used to distribute materials for review before the meetings.
  - There will be a page on the CMR Working Group website for the Bison Committee.

Sage Grouse Committee Report:

- Next meeting November 18th
  - MSGOT is struggling to define "mitigation"
  - The original stakeholders group was reconvened to discuss how to value mitigation credits when the mitigation tool is not in place yet.
- The sage grouse committee will continue to meet in the odd numbered months.
- Conservation menu – Has gone to press and hard copies will be distributed at the Partner Biologist meeting on October 12th in Lewistown. Plans are underway for an online version and a second printed version to keep the information current. Bridget Nielsen would like to see the menu distributed to all the Conservation Districts and educational opportunities for the districts to see how to use the tool.

Work Plan:

- Review of Work Plan
  - Committees have been made and will continue to be created as needed.
- When contacting potential presenters, it would be helpful to send them a copy of the group's mission, purpose, and goals to give them guidance on the group's focus and help them tailor their presentation to the group.

- Dean Rogge suggested that the group pursue finding ways to discourage litigation against plans that were developed collaboratively with involvement of diverse stakeholders. He mentioned that some assurance that these plans could stand up in court would greatly improve people's willingness to participate in these lengthy, and sometimes tense processes, and bolster the concept of cooperative conservation.
- Ron Stoneberg proposed that the CMR CWG form a committee to explore cattle grazing opportunities on the CMR. Paul Santavy stated that it is too early to have this discussion as the habitat management plans have not been complete. He then provided a summary of where the Refuge is in the CCP development process. It was further noted that the CMR will likely transfer from the annual grazing to a more prescribed grazing management style.

December Agenda Items:
WWF – Community & Economics Research project
PPJV Wildlife Habitat Modules using GIS data

Next Meeting: December 8th – Malta

Closing Remarks: