

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 59th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

JOINT APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON LONG RANGE PLANNING

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN JACK WELLS**, on February 3, 2005 at 8:00 A.M., in Room 350 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Rep. Jack Wells, Chairman (R)
Sen. John Brueggeman (R)
Sen. Bob Keenan (R)
Rep. Ralph L. Lenhart (D)

Members Excused: Sen. Mike Cooney (D)

Members Absent: Sen. Jon Tester, Vice Chairman (D)
Rep. Carol C. Juneau (D)
Rep. John E. Witt (R)

Staff Present: Laura Dillon, Committee Secretary
Jon Moe, Legislative Branch
Amy Carlson, OBPP

Please Note. These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted: HB 5, 2/3/2005
Executive Action:

Reference book is: Governor's Budget State of Montana, Fiscal Years 2006-2007, Long Range Building Program (LRBP), Volume 4.

CHAIRMAN WELLS called the meeting to order. He informed the committee members that they would be hearing a presentation from Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP).

Fish, Wildlife and Parks Presentation

Jeff Hagener, FWP, gave a slide show presentation of different projects administered by FWP and distributed copies of proposed HB 5 amendments (Exhibit 1). There are no general fund appropriations for FWP projects. FWP operates entirely from license fee revenues and federal government funds. FWP is generally expected to match any federal dollars it receives.

[EXHIBIT\(jlh27a01\)](#)

Mr. Hagener stated that FWP is requesting a total authority of \$32.4 million to address 23 different projects. Department Fisheries Projects include dam repairs, reclamation projects and fisheries projects.

Big Springs PCB Cleanup

Mr. Hagener stated that this project will address levels of Polychlorinated Byphenyls (PCB) present at the Big Springs Hatchery Site. The PCB levels result from old paint that was used to paint the hatchery raceways. The water at the hatchery and areas immediately surrounding will be restored.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 10.5}

Future Fisheries Improvements

Mr. Hagener said FWP was asking for \$1.19 million dollars for Future Fisheries Improvements. The River Restoration Fund will contribute \$190,000 to Future Fisheries Projects.

Fishing Access Site Acquisition

Mr. Hagener continued his presentation with Fishing Access Projects. A total of \$750,000 has been earmarked for these projects. Mr. Hagener gave some examples of public fishing access sites. There are currently 320 such access sites around the state.

Fishing Access Site Maintenance

Mr. Hagener described this as the second part of fishing access projects. These projects generally include fencing, vandalism repairs, latrine pumping, and weed control.

Fishing Access Site Protection

Mr. Hagener gave an example of a new boat ramp that was completed as part of the Fishing Access Site Protection Projects. Dirt work and other construction is kept to a minimum when a new fishing access site is acquired. The objective is to provide access to the stream or lake without disturbing its natural state. Fences are generally used to try to minimize traffic access to a site.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 10.5 - 19.8}

Hatchery Maintenance

Mr. Hagener said hatchery maintenance was a major issue for the agency. FWP must operate and maintain nine existing hatcheries across the state. The hatcheries produce several varieties of Walleye, Bass, Trout, Pike, and other species as needed. The hatcheries stock approximately 600 bodies of water throughout the state, including other hatcheries and ponds. Fish are not stocked into rivers, as the emphasis is on maintaining their natural state.

Community Fishing Ponds

Mr. Hagener discussed several examples of children's fishing ponds that are maintained by FWP. This program is funded with federal money that must be matched by the department.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 19.8 - 28.5}

FWP Dam Repairs

Mr. Hagener explained that FWP does own dams in several locations and reservoirs. The department is requesting \$264,000 of general license funds. These funds would be used to stabilize high hazard dams in the state.

Rose Creek Hatchery

Mr. Hagener presented the Rose Creek Hatchery Project. FWP has proposed to sell the Jocko River Hatchery to the Salish and Kootenai Tribes. They would like to use the money from this sale to purchase the undeveloped Rose Creek Hatchery Site. There are two amendments proposed by FWP in reference to this project (Exhibit 1).

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 4.2}

Boat Washing Stations

Mr. Hagener told the committee that the boat washing program has proved to be very popular and FWP would like to be able to contribute more funding. The department would like to put \$100,000 towards the Boat Washing Station Projects in the coming biennium. Boat washing ensures that non-native plant and animal species do not infiltrate other bodies of water. Non-native species can be harmful to the existence of the native species.

Fish Cleaning Stations

Mr. Hagener added that the Fish Cleaning Station Projects are also very popular. These sites offer a convenient method to clean fish and properly dispose of the waste right at the site. The project request is for \$150,000. Of this total, \$37,500 will have come from private sources. This program will allow local angling groups to raise funds for these stations.

Fort Peck Equipment Storage Building

Mr. Hagener stated that an adequate storage facility is necessary to protect FWP equipment from vandalism and the weather. The existing building is very worn down. The original scope of the project has been scaled down. One of the proposed amendments (Exhibit 1) will reduce the amount requested for this project.

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 4.2 - 8.5}

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

REP. LENHART commented that the water levels in many access areas are going down as a result of drought. He asked what FWP was doing to keep boat ramps accessible.

Mr. Hagener replied that the Corps of Engineers provides the funding to extend existing boat ramps. FWP tries to identify the best access point under low water conditions before putting in any new ramps.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked who previously owned the Black's Ford Fishing Access Site.

Chris Hunter, FWP, stated that the the department originally leased the site from the landowners. FWP recently purchased the site.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked if the Lake Francis Boat Ramp had been completed.

Mr. Hunter believed the project had been completed.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked how warm and cold water species were distributed among state hatcheries.

Mr. Hunter answered that one hatchery in the state deals with warm water species. The other eight hatcheries specialize in cold water fish.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked about the varieties of fish produced by the hatcheries.

Mr. Hunter described the kinds of fish at the hatcheries.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked when the Fort Peck Hatchery Project was expected to be completed.

Mr. Hunter stated that \$23 million had been authorized by Congress for completion of the project. The hatchery is expected to begin production in September of this year.

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 8.5 - 15.6}

REP. LENHART asked if FWP had ever determined the survival rate of the fish once they are planted.

Mr. Hunter replied that FWP is currently working on a project at Fort Peck Lake to determine survival rates.

REP. LENHART asked why there were fewer Walleye in Fort Peck Lake.

Mr. Hunter responded this was partly due to the drop in water levels.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked about the status of Tongue River.

Mr. Hunter replied that Tongue River was not seeing as significant a decrease in water levels. There are abundant amounts of crappie fish in the river.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked what costs were associated with operation of the boat washing stations.

Mr. Hunter responded that the stations use pressure washing to clean the boats. A mat collects and recirculates usable water. FWP could construct two to three more stations with the funding currently available. The stations are mobile and could be placed wherever there is greatest demand.

Mr. Hagener moved on to Wildlife Projects that will be addressed by FWP. The department is requesting \$8.025 million for funding of these projects during the coming biennium.

Habitat Montana

Mr. Hagener stated that the Habitat Montana Projects are intended to address important habitats that are seriously threatened in the state. These projects must be distributed throughout the state. Conservation easements are the primary tool by which these projects are administered. Mr. Hagener described previous habitat projects.

Upland Game Bird

Mr. Hagener explained that Upland Game Bird Projects are generally carried out through cooperation with local groups. A portion of several bird license fees go to fund these projects. Pheasants and other game birds are released through the program. Currently, the program maintains over 500 active habitat contracts with landowners and other private agencies.

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 15.6 - 31}

Wildlife Habitat Maintenance

Mr. Hagener continued that road and fence repair projects, as well as weed control projects were all part of the Wildlife Habitat Maintenance Program. FWP works with public and private owners to maintain boundary fences and usable access roads. The department has worked with a number of landowners on livestock grazing projects. These projects improve the overall wildlife and livestock production of the land.

Migratory Bird

Mr. Hagener stated that a \$625,000 authorization has been requested to fund Migratory Bird Programs. These projects are funded with earmarked license fees that come from the sale of migratory bird stamps. Projects can also receive federal and private funds. The projects focus on wetland habitat restoration, habitat enhancement, and habitat conservation and protection.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses: none.

Mr. Hagener began his presentation of Parks Projects.

Motorboat Recreational Park

Mr. Hagener explained typical improvements done at a motorboat park. These projects can include concrete ramps, parking areas and disability access. FWP is asking for authority in the amount of \$4.3 million to address Motorboat Recreational Park Projects in the coming biennium.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 15.3}

Cultural and Historic

Mr. Hagener stated that a \$2.5 million authority has been requested for Cultural and Historic Projects. Many familiar sites qualify under the Cultural and Historic Program including Elk Horn, Bannack, Smith River, Plenty Coups Pictograph Caves, Lewis and Clark Caverns, Tower Rock, and Traveler's Rest. Parking, signs and kiosk information are maintained through this program.

Grants Program/Federal Projects

Mr. Hagener described the different federal and grant funded projects administered through the department. He explained the funding sources for the projects.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants

Mr. Hagener stated that this grant program was established in 1965 by Congress. Over 750 projects have been funded in Montana through the program. This funding is made available by proceeds from off-shore oil reserves, which are owned by the Federal Government. All grant amounts require a 50/50 match. The funds must be used for outdoor recreation facilities.

Federal Trails Grants

Mr. Hagener explained that a portion of the federal gasoline tax goes to fund the Federal Trails Grants Program. 60 percent of the grant allocation goes to fund non-motorized and motorized trail projects. The remaining 40 percent funds diversified trail projects.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 15.3 - 25.6}

Off Highway Vehicle Trails Grants

Mr. Hagener stated that the authority request for these projects equaled \$330,000. A portion of the funding for Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trail Projects comes from the OHV fuel tax. Typical

projects include restoration of damaged areas, promotion of ethics in OHV riders, weed control, and trail rangers.

Federal Wallop-Breaux

Mr. Hagener explained that these funds come from taxes on fishing equipment. FWP is requesting \$1.5 million in authority to administer these projects. Funding is provided to individual states for motorboat related projects via a United States Fish and Wildlife Service grant. No state funds will be expended as part of these projects.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 25.6 - 32}

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

REP. LENHART asked how the Habitat Montana Program was supervised.

Mr. Hagener replied that the program was administered under the Wildlife Division of FWP.

REP. LENHART asked when the Land Water Conservation Fund Grants would be awarded.

Doug Monger, FWP, answered that the grants are currently out for public notice. He believes grant recipients will be notified in late March or early April.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked how the number of visitors per site was calculated.

Mr. Monger replied that this number is configured through the use of traffic counters and surveys.

Statewide Building and Maintenance

Mr. Hagener discussed the request for Statewide Building and Maintenance Projects. The project request is for \$400,000 spending authority of general license funds and \$400,000 authority in land trust interest funds. These projects are managed separately from FWP projects because they address specifically administrative sites around the state. The projects are prioritized by human health and safety, and code maintenance.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked for further explanation of the funding figures listed in the presentation.

Mr. Hagener explained that he had discussed both current figures and those from the previous biennium in his presentation.

REP. LENHART asked if the Block Management Program numbers were increasing.

Mr. Hagener replied that the Block Management Program was not part of any of the programs presented today. The number of landowners taking part in the program has remained relatively stable after increasing for several years.

Mr. Hagener went over the important points of the proposed amendments to HB 5 (Exhibit 1) and then concluded his presentation.

CHAIRMAN WELLS adjourned the meeting.

{Tape: 2; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 17}

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 10:00 A.M.

REP. JACK WELLS, Chairman

LAURA DILLON, Secretary

JW/ld

Additional Exhibits:

EXHIBIT ([j1h27aad0.PDF](#))