



## Minutes

### Smith River State Park & River Corridor Advisory Council Camp Baker September 16, 2014

Advisory Council Members Present: Jane Kollmeyer, Citizen Member; Joe Lamson, Citizen Member; Triel Culver, Citizen Member; Mike Meloy, Landowner Member; Joe Sowerby, Outfitter Member; John Metrione, USFS; Grant Grisak, FWP Fisheries Division; Colin Maas, Smith River State Park Manager  
Absent: Mary Sexton, Parks and Recreation Board Member

Fish Wildlife & Parks Staff Present: Mike Volesky, Chief of Staff; Chas Van Genderen, Administrator Montana State Parks; Roger Semler, Assistant Administrator Montana State Parks; John Taillie, Region 4 State Parks Manager

#### Topic Discussion:

1. Welcome, Introduction, Review Agenda
2. Review Council Charter
3. FWP Department Overview
4. FWP Parks Division Overview
5. FWP Fisheries Division Overview
6. Smith River State Park Overview
7. US Forest Service Overview
8. Smith River State Park & River Corridor Biennial Rule
9. Conversion of Deep Creek Boat Camp
10. Smith River Human/Bear Conflict Management Update
11. Council Member Topics of Concerns & Comments
12. Public Comment
13. Select Next Meeting Date, Location and Topics

#### **1. Welcome, Introduction, Review Agenda (Colin Maas & All)**

##### Member Introductions:

Colin Maas; Smith River State Park Manager

Mike Volesky; FWP Deputy Director

Jane Kollmeyer; worked for Forest Service for 30 years, first float on Smith 1994, enjoys natural resource issues, lives in Helena.

Mike Malloy; lives in Helena, property owner on Smith River, floated river since mid 1960.

Chas Van Genderen; Administrator State Parks Division

Roger Semler; Chief of Operations State Parks Division

John Taillie; Region 4 State Park Manager, started with FWP 1991 in Bozeman

Joe Lamson; floated river since 1980's, recently retired, prior Deputy Director Department of Natural Resources, Land Board staff member.

Triel Culver; Billings Montana, 1982 first Smith River trip, private practice Law Attorney

Grant Grisak; FWP Region 4 Fisheries Manager, prior Smith River Biologist for 8 years

John Metrione; US Forest Service, Natural Resource Specialist, involved recreationally and professionally with Smith River since 1970's.

Joe Sowerby; Outfitter on Smith River, permitted outfitter since 2000

Public Members Attended Meeting:

Chad Evens; Rocking C's Ranch Manager, fall 1998

Mark Agenes; Conservation Director for Trout Unlimited

Reviewed agenda

## **2. Review Council Charter (Colin Maas)**

Read through Charter

Charter Established: March 1, 2014

Purpose: Advice department on issues related to management and stewardship of the recreational, natural and cultural resources associated with Smith River State Park & River Corridor in context with Montana State Park system.

Appointed by director, can apply for 2<sup>nd</sup> term

## **3. FWP Department Overview (Mike Volesky)**

Significant location, Governor's office thought Smith River Advisory Council was necessary

7,000 applications for permits last year

Plenty of challenges: fishing and floating resource, overuse, equality of floating fairly, bears food storage, etc...

Advisory Council: sounding board, gather make recommendations; FWP follows recommendations.

Director made decision to require bear food storage for next float season.

## **4. FWP Parks Division Overview (Chas Van Genderen)**

Will take advisory council recommendations seriously

Advisory Council will be involved in variety of issues: number of boat camps, cost of boat camps, long term leases, use of the corridor enhancement account, private/public lands; Colin, Park Manager will deal with day to day issues

Encourage council to understand State Parks as a whole.

Smith River: one unit of the state park system: 55 state parks 4 grant programs; 65 permeate employees, 100 FTE, and seasonal staff. Smith River generates revenue, not enough to cover everything.

Upcoming issue: Food Storage

Liability for state of Montana: bear incidents, parks amenities increase liability to agency increase.

Council should consider decisions from the public perspective:

Parks are about people; need balance between customer and resource; need to be able to explain decisions

## **5. FWP Fisheries Division Overview (Grant Grisak)**

Smith River considered priority water: Water Rights and Governors Drought Policy (public expect state to safeguard public resource) (established in 1990's, during nine year drought)

Fisheries & Habitat Management:

Remote river limits research rely on landowners provide access

River under Murphy Water Rights, 12 streams in Montana, water lowers to 100cfs, junior water users required to stop diverting water to preserve fish and wildlife habitat.

Restrictions and Sensitivity: tied to Governors Drought Policy

Fisheries commitment to deal with water flow and temperatures, to reduce stress on fish

Habitat projects: receptive land owners, fencing projects

Future project with Montana State University: tag 3,000 fish follow movement over next 3 years. Determine critical areas during summer/winter, where do they span.

## **6. Smith River State Park Overview (Colin Maas)**

Guiding documents to manage Smith River: Smith River Management Act 23-2 401-410;

Smith River Biennial Rule: 2 year rule, specific to Smith River; 2009 Management Plan; 2000 Responsive Management Unit survey

Manager Issues: food storage, human waste management, boat camps (do we have enough/need more), resource impacts from the boat camp, permit system (contract private business outside)

## **7. US Forest Service Overview (John Metrione)**

Forest Service Concerns: similar to State Parks: boat camp management

Manage 28 sites on Smith River: 9 Helena National Forest, 19 Lewis & Clark National Forest; FWP took lead role to manage river

Trails Leading to Smith River: Travel Management Decision, limit motorized access to river, 1 legal motorized trail to Bear Gulch

No fee structure for public use, only outfitters staying on forest service, charge \$22.00 per client per day

Forest Plan Revision: Helena and Lewis & Clark Forest, going through new designation

## **8. Smith River State Park & River Corridor Biennial Rule (Roger Semler)**

Biennial Fee Rule: authority to give rule, establish user fees, legally could amend yearly, historically every 2 years

FWP Commission adopted previous rule

Parks Board will review and adopt, propose rule Oct 15 Board Meeting, follow 30 day public comment: propose no fee increase and build a toilet at Deep Creek boat camp

Last residential fee increase 2009

## **9. Conversion of Deep Creek Boat Camp (Colin Maas)**

Feed back regarding pit toilet at Deep Creek:

Mike Meloy- personally does not like pit toilet, good idea to put one in for temporary so people use site, should consider eliminating pit toilets all together in future.

Joe Lamson- Supports the idea of adding a pit toilet at Deep Creek, but necessary to increase boat camp use

Triel Culver- personally dislikes pit toilets, should consider more camps w/out pit toilet, necessary for boat camp use, in favor of pit toilet at this site  
Grant Grisak - abstain, no informed opinion  
John Metrione - digression to put in pit toilet, not supportive, agree with temporary use  
Joe Sowerby- adding one is logical for use of boat camp, in favor  
Jane Kollmeyer- not in favor but necessary, only cause there is one site of pack out  
Colin Maas- move to pack out system on river, not utilizing Deep Creek boat camp as hoped, necessary for now

#### **10. Smith River Human/Bear Conflict Management Update (Roger Semler)**

Bear activity high profile in corridor, dispatched 5 black bears 2013  
Established Internal Black Bear Management Team: look at issue in detail, document formal encounters with black bear  
Management Team Created: bear report form, series of pamphlets: bear smart, web page, orientation at Camp Baker, improved posting of closures, informed floaters of food storage  
Recommendation to Director: move forward with food storage on river  
2014 year: 2 killings of black bear from floaters, 1 bear by wardens  
Main issue: Public safety and potential for tragic bear/human encounter; want safe family friendly corridor and no closed boat campsites  
Committee Discussed Options: storage device, container, electric fence; and methods who provides resource

Continue Discussion at next meeting.

#### **11. Council Member Topics of Concerns & Comments**

Ran out of time

#### **12. Public Comment**

Mark Aagenes, Montana Trout Unlimited, concerns over Smith River Corridor and spending of Corridor Enhancement Account.

Chad Evens, Rocking C's Ranch Manager, property located first 5 miles

5 Concerns:

Weed management: wash station, gravel location

Erosion problems below Sheep Creek

Early/Late season float check-in

Smith River road issue, (maintenance of the road)

Required to stay at Camp Baker night prior (1 person to hold place in line)

#### **13. Select next meeting date, location and topics (Colin Maas)**

Next meeting: Monday October 20, 2014; 12:00 – 4:00

Location: FWP Region 4 Office, 4600 Giant Springs Rd, Great Falls, MT 59405

Topics: Food Storage, Human Waste Management