



FWP RESTRUCTURING

In July, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Director Joe Maurier, announced that he is restructuring the agency. The reorganization is part of an effort to “get us set up for the future,” Maurier told Susan Gallagher of the Associated Press.

As part of the new structure four divisions will be consolidated under the Division of Fish and Wildlife. A new division administrator will lead Fisheries, Wildlife, Law Enforcement and the Communication & Education divisions under one umbrella. Some staff are also being reassigned as part of the new structure.

The department recently hired David Risley, a 30-year veteran of Ohio’s state wildlife agency, to become the first administrator of the new Fish and Wildlife Division effective August 15.

Risley, 55, leaves his post as the wildlife management and research administrator with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ Wildlife Division, a position he’s held since 2002.

FWP director Maurier said Risley was selected from a pool of 15 applicants and was among seven finalists interviewed for the job last month. “David has achieved an impressive number of accomplishments during his 30-year career in Ohio, and he has an excellent grasp of the issues facing fish and wildlife managers today. He has the right interests and personality for Montana and he’s a great fit for FWP,” Maurier added.

Risley earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in wildlife management from Ohio State University. He began his career with the Ohio DNR’s Wildlife Division as a private lands wildlife biologist in 1979. Most recently Risley has directed Ohio’s wildlife management and research programs and responsible for the division’s 130 full-time employees and a \$4.8 million budget.

Fish, Wildlife and Parks also hired a new second-in-command; a post that has been held by Chris Smith will be filled by Art Noonan as the new Deputy Director of the department. Smith has been moved to special projects that include work on the Helena wildlife center.

Noonan has more than 35 years of experience in the legislative process, in both federal and state government. Noonan worked for the Montana Legislature from 1975 to 1979. He then worked for former Congressman Pat Williams and Senator John Melcher until 1996, where he staffed the House Interior Committee and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. While in Washington, Noonan managed staff, prepared legislation and worked with various state and national constituencies, including private landowners, federal public-land managers, state fish, wildlife and parks agencies and others.

Noonan also served as director of a foundation sponsored by AWARE. Inc., dedicated to assisting Montanans with special needs, from 1997 to 2006. Most recently, Noonan was the executive director of the Montana Democratic Party, from which he has resigned. He currently serves as a legislator for House District 74 representing the Butte area.

Additionally, the department has shifted responsibilities and hired an assistant parks administrator to succeed Chas Van Genderen. Genderen previously held the job and is now the FWP Parks Division Chief, the post Maurier held before Gov. Brian Schweitzer named him director of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in November. Roger Semler was recently promoted to assistant administrator for park operations in Helena under Genderen.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks announced the hiring of Woody Baxter who will serve for the next six months as the acting Region 4 State Parks manager based in Great Falls. A 23-year FWP veteran, Baxter is the FWP Region 6 Parks manager based in Glasgow. He will continue in that position but will spend the majority of his workweek in Great Falls replacing Roger Semler.