



# AFFILIATE CORNER

**Anaconda Sportsmen Club (ASC)** – ASC is particularly disturbed with two accessible Land Banking parcels that have been nominated for disposal in the DNRC Land Banking process; one on Bielenberg Canyon Road and one on Racetrack Road. Both parcels provide significant access for hunting yet are in the preliminary stages to be sold. The replacement options for the Divide diversion dam on the Big Hole River, which is deteriorating have been released to the public. ASC supports replacement options to include at least two that would be navigable with a drift boat. ASC is also pursuing clarity on the legality of access to county-owned Hearst Lake.

**Big Sky Upland Bird Association (BSUBA)** – BSUBA brought their annual sporting clay event, the Wing-shot Warm Up east of the Continental Divide this year. The event held near Silver City north of Helena, drew 33 gunners. BSUBA also had an introductory program to get youth into the clay target sports at the Missoula Trap and Skeet Club in July. For more info contact President Dennis Daneke at 239-4515, [ubc0028@qwestoffice.net](mailto:ubc0028@qwestoffice.net).

**Billings Rod and Gun Club (BR&GC)** – BR&GC once again initiated their landowner appreciation program for 2009 by presenting gate latches to ranchers who allow public hunting opportunities. Over the years, the club has presented more than 200 ranchers with steel gate openers as a token of their thanks. BR&GC has been working with Magic City Fly Fishers to identify problem county bridges that need work to comply with the recently enacted bridge access law.

BR&GC archery division has actively worked with the Billings City Parks Department providing archery education programs. The first round enlisted 30 youth archers; the program was successful enough that a second round was instituted.

**Bitterroot Valley Houndsmen Association (BVHA)** – BVHA continues to advocate for a comprehensive state-wide mountain lion plan currently being developed by FWP due out next year. BVHA had a booth at both the Darby Logger Days celebration and Bullarama events discussing conservation-based mountain lion management and soliciting membership.

**Custer Rod and Gun Club (CR&GC)** – Range improvements have finally been completed after 4 years of work. CR&GC continues its outreach providing youth Trap League followed by 4 weeks of Women's Trap League. They had their fall Turkey Shoot on September 27, 2009. CR&GC sportsmen are assisting FWP Region 7 installing game enclosure fences around haystacks in the Tongue River valley.

**Dawson County R&G Club (DCR&GC)** – DCR&GC was instrumental in providing \$5000 in earnest money to purchase land for the Black's Bridge FAS, the only public boat access to the Yellowstone River for 60 miles. In order to become functional the site will need a groomed access road and developed boat ramps; some issues remain regarding vandalism, safety and improvement funding that could be addressed by DCR&GC members and fellow citizens. Extended closures for muddy conditions are further frustrating local sportsmen. DCR&GC are working with FWP to resolve these challenges.

**Flathead Wildlife Inc. (FWI)** – FWI has asked to manage a property donation where a youth fishing pond is planned. FWI continues to pursue resolution with Flathead County stemming from the placement of a home across the public access easement into MacGregor Lake.

**Gallatin Wildlife Association (GWA)** – GWA current focuses are on the Draft FWP Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy and the Draft EA for the Robb/Ledford WMA in the Snowcrest Mountains south of Alder, MT. Livestock grazing, illegal high fences, riparian conditions and domestic sheep trailing are all major concerns impacting the Game Range which was purchased for the purpose of providing winter range for elk, deer, and bighorn sheep. Knowledgeable club members have provided detailed comments for the Robb/Ledford WMA and the Bighorn Strategy with detailed scoping comments to be submitted for the Grazing Plan, Domestic Sheep Trailing and Status of Greenhorn Bighorn Sheep MOU in the near future. GWA recently protested the Beaverhead/Deer Lodge Forest Plan in conjunction with Safari Club due to the lack of detailed analysis of habitat for bighorn sheep and bison. Former Colorado State University Wildlife professor, GWA member Jim Bailey, provided the substantial comments for the Bighorn Strategy plan.

GWA meets every Wednesday morning for breakfast at the Wheat Montana restaurant on 12th Avenue in Bozeman; call President Glenn Hockett for details, 581-6352.

**Great Falls Archery (GFA)** – GFA had a successful King's Hill Shoot in July and the club is winding down as members enjoy the bowhunting season.

**Helena Hunters and Anglers (HeH&A)** – HeH&A received a positive ruling in Federal Court where they protested the Helena National Forest's decision to permit a Montana National Guard biathlon project proposed for McDonald Pass. HeH&A teamed up with four other entities in District Court, where Judge Donald Molloy ruled that the HNF's EA was inadequate in its analysis of the project especially where habitat connectivity and T&E species are concerned. Molloy agreed that the biathlon project has high potential to do significant harm to the area's wildlife habitat and the wildlife movement corridor along the continental divide.

HH&A will provide labor for a bear hair study in the area of MacDonald Pass which will provide additional biological data to further justify HeH&A's claims.

**Hellgate Hunters and Anglers (HgH&A)** – HgH&A is in the process of developing a Strategic Plan for their organization and has approached FWP Region 2 to involve a wildlife biologist input into their strategic planning process. Member Corey Fisher was an extremely helpful volunteer at the Montana Matters Collaboration for Conservation Concert in Missoula, Sept 18.

**Laurel Rod and Gun Club** – Laurel Rod and Gun club successfully raised \$23,000 in its annual banquet dedicated to youth shooting education programs. LR&GC continues to encourage youth shooting activities.

**Libby Rod and Gun Club (LR&GC)** – After extensive construction, the new LR&GC clubhouse, owned by Lincoln County on leased Kootenai NF property is finally completed. LR&GC's first meeting in the new building was held there on September 15. LR&GC is debating internally whether to endorse the Roderick Mountain Wilderness addition in the Yaak River country proposed in Senator Jon Tester's Forest Jobs and Recreation Act. Although members are positively inclined some opposition has been expressed. LR&GC policy requires that controversial issues cannot receive final recommendation during a club meeting when proposed so they will consider a vote at their in October.

**Medicine River Canoe Club (MRCC)** – MRCC has been monitoring and providing safety-spotting for the Great Falls Special Olympics Kayak Club during their practice sessions at Wadsworth Park. MRCC finished up a summer schedule that included float trips down the Marias and Milk rivers finishing the summer season with a moonlight canoe trip on the Missouri River near Great Falls.

**Park County R&G –PCR&GC** still continues to monitor the Ameya Preserve state land bank purchase proposed for the Bullis Creek area south of Livingston (see Montana Wildlife July/August 2007.) The project has been essentially abandoned due to their and MWF's vigilance. PCR&GC provides significant support for area youth and hosted the FWP hunter safety program field day. PCR&GC also helps administer Hunter Safety exams. Their input with the local 4-H scholastic trap team promotes youth shooting opportunities and hunting ethics.

**Public Land/Water Access Association (PLWA)** – PLWA continues in court to establish legal access on the Mabee Road near Roy, MT. Last year a local landowner and outfitter locked a gate across the road claiming it was private. PLWA researched records to confirm the road existed before homesteading patents were filed making it a public road as per the federal RS 2477 statute. Attorneys for the rancher dispute RS2477 status so PLWA is moving forward seeking people who have traversed the Mabee Road unrestricted in past years to establish public use patterns. If anyone can help in this regard, we encourage contact with PLWA, President John Gibson, 406-656-0384 [jcgibson@imt.net](mailto:jcgibson@imt.net); you may be asked to sign an affidavit to the effect that your statement is genuine.

**Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association (RCF&WA)** – RCFWA actively worked with area biologists to generate newly updated big-game population surveys and funded the mule deer study portion from club coffers. Changes in 2009 regulations now more closely reflect the current state of the Bitterroot Valley's big game herds.

RCF&WA has approached Ravalli County Commission on the closure of the Hughes Creek Rd. in the West Fork of the Bitterroot River drainage. RCF&WA provided documentation to copies of the original road declaration making it a public road, a copy of the original Commissioners Journal, documentation on attempts to have it abandoned, the documented refusal by the County Commissioners to abandon it in 1982, and the history of the road up to October 19, 1988. The road leads to enormous acreages of public land. For more about RCF&WA and their activities, visit their new website [www.rcfwa.com](http://www.rcfwa.com) for more.

**Rosebud/Treasure Wildlife Association (RTWA)** – RTWA had their annual meeting on September 17. RTWA is working with Forsyth based Game Warden, Matt Hagedorn on the disposition of confiscated big game carcasses. The meat is available to financially disadvantaged folks in Treasure County, so RTWA will fund meat-processing for those recipients who can't afford to cover expense.

**Russell Country Sportsmen (RCSA)** – RCSA continues its intensive participation in sportsmen's issues in the Great Falls area. RCSA participated in seeking access advocates in the Lewistown area in conjunction with MWF affiliate PLWA. Efforts in the Great Falls area to do the same have begun. RCSA officers toured the Beartooth Wildlife Management Area near Holter Lake with the Devil's Kitchen Working Group.

RCSA is working with the Sun River Elk Working Group on roading and grazing. RCSA provides input into Benton Lake NWR and CMR NWR management planning processes. RCSA has been pursuing time extensions for hunt camps on FS land and also supported land exchanges between the Lewis and Clark NF and the Bair Ranch which consolidated FS properties in the Tenderfoot Creek drainage.

RCSA has an active Board that remains involved in numerous projects to protect hunting and fishing activities. For more, contact President Dave Pavlicek by phone at 406-7878-5151 or by email at [david.pavlicek@bnsf.com](mailto:david.pavlicek@bnsf.com).