

MRCDC Coordinator's Meeting Report

Who:	Laurie Riley, Dean Rogge, Dick Iversen, Buzz Mattelin
What:	Lower Missouri Coordinated Resource Management hosted Nick Kazcor with USFWS to talk about a proposed new wildlife refuge at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers in Richland and Roosevelt counties.
Where:	Culbertson Public Library, Culbertson, MT
When:	March 1, 2011
Why:	News of this proposed project was first heard when the FWS objected to landowner (Ames) water permit. The FWS objection was based on this proposed refuge.
Accomplished:	<p>Landowner representatives from McCone, Richland, Roosevelt and Valley counties helped make up the 30 audience members.</p> <p>Introductions- I spoke on behalf of the Council, explained who we are and what we are working on. Deb Madison of the Fort Peck Tribes gave an overview of the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee.</p> <p>Nick Kazcor, Division of Refuge Planning, US Fish & Wildlife Service, explained the concept for the refuge. He started the discussion by apologizing for FWS's objection to the Ames water permit. He said the FWS needs to have an approved land acquisition authority in order to receive land. FWS started looking at the Missouri River about a year ago in their efforts to protect endangered species and migratory birds and to implement conservation work. Currently, FWS is reviewing the idea and will only work with willing sellers who wish to sell land or sell a conservation easement on a voluntary basis.</p> <p>FWS uses the refuge designation to implement conservation practices – but this particular refuge proposal is at least 2 years away from getting to the public part of the process. FWS would release a draft proposal of the project and see if there is interest in selling land or permanent conservation easements. River easements are new to FWS. Forming a designated area give the FWS the means to purchase property and enter into conservation easements with private landowners. A boundary has not yet been identified. Land prices are evaluated by the Realty Division of the FWS and funding comes from the LWCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund) proceeds from the Outer Continental oil and Gas revenue. The area FWS has discussed is Culbertson to Hwy 85 Bridge and the Confluence to Intake.</p> <p>The audience was very negative about the proposed refuge. They do not want a new refuge in their counties, they do not want to sell land to the FWS. The feeling was that management of current refuges has a negative impact on wildlife and grazing opportunities have been greatly reduced. The mismanagement in the FWS may not be created by the Service but individuals in the Service bringing their own agendas to the issues; management is being backed and promoted by wealthy individuals or environmental groups. FWS should incorporate local input on management issues.</p> <p>Dick Iversen asked the group if they would like to have the LoMo CRM continue to keep them informed about the proposal or if they would like some other group to keep</p>

	the information flowing. The general feeling was the LoMo CRM should continue to pursue the details of the proposal. After 2.5 hours of discussion all of the people present wanted nothing to do with a new wildlife refuge.
Follow Up:	The Council was asked to write a letter opposing the new refuge. We should stay in contact with the LoMo CRM and be active in opposing the refuge.