

## 2006 PLPW Survey Results Summary

During 2006, the Private Lands Public Wildlife (PLPW) Access Program contracted three surveys to determine past performance and future goals. The survey was very similar to the one conducted in 2001 to determine if the program would become a permanent part of the Wyoming Game & Fish Department. The three survey participants were Department employees, participating landowners and hunters/anglers. Daly Sheldon in the Strategic Management Office surveyed department employees, while Disc Information Services, Inc. surveyed sportspersons and participating landowners. Results of these surveys are included below. For a more detailed analysis, please see the complete survey.

### Department Employees

Daly Sheldon, Strategic Management Coordinator, surveyed department employees. Employees were divided into two groups, those having direct contact with landowners or hunters/anglers (long form) and those who do not have direct contact with landowner or hunters/anglers (short form).

#### Results from both long and short forms.

- 55.9% of all respondents indicated that they had done work related to the PLPW Access Program.

#### Results from those 56% that had worked with the PLPW Access Program:

- September, October and November were the busiest months assisting program.
- Most employees performed between 0-14 hours a month during busiest time.
- Assistance included: providing assistance/information to hunters/anglers; monitoring use on access areas; and enforcing compliance of rules on access areas.
- 39.1% of employees indicated the amount of time spent on PLPW has increased since 2001.
- 26.8% reported the volume of PLPW related work had increased. however, only 14.2% indicated volume of PLPW negatively affected their ability to perform other duties in a timely fashion.
- Level of assistance received from PLPW staff had increased for 73.0% of employees since 2001.

#### Results from long form only:

- 65.6% felt PLPW has been successful in either maintaining or enhancing hunter access and 41.4% for angler access to private lands.
- 58.6% felt landowners are content with PLPW.
- 53.9% felt hunters were content with access provided by Hunter Management Areas.
- 60.2% felt hunters were content with access provided by Walk-in Hunting Areas.

- 34.4 % felt anglers were content with fishing access through Walk-in Fishing Areas.
- 50.8% felt they felt Walk-in areas have been helpful in developing amenable relationships with landowners.
- 46.9% felt they felt Hunter Management areas have been helpful in developing amenable relationships with landowners.
- 41.4% felt Walk-in Areas have been effective if providing access to landlocked public lands.
- 44.5% felt Hunter Management Areas have been effective if providing access to landlocked public lands.
- Based on experience with PLPW, 46.1% felt Department's relationships with hunters have improved.
- 25.0% felt Department's relationships with anglers have improved.
- 36.7% felt that landowners' perceptions of the Department have improved.

### **Participating Landowners**

All landowners who were enrolled in either a Hunter Management or Walk-in (both hunting and fishing) Area program were surveyed. Disc Information Services, Inc. was contracted to perform the surveys to determine current perception of the Department and the PLPW Access Program. Some results are:

- 65.9% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the PLPW Access Program and how it worked. An additional 25.9% indicated they were very satisfied, for an overall satisfaction rate of 91.8%.
- The Walk-in Hunting Area Program made it more convenient for landowners to provide access for 80% of landowners.
- Concerning incentives provided to landowners for all respondents, 86.3% were either satisfied or very satisfied with the incentives.
- 76% of landowners indicated that they had allowed some sort of free access prior to enrollment in the PLPW Access Program.
- Of the 24% of landowners that did not allow access, 66% did not allow access at all, 26% charged access fees and 19% had an outfitter.
- Since establishment of an access area on their property, 47.3% of landowners state that the level of use by hunters/anglers has increased.
- 53.4% of landowners feel their relationship with the Department has strengthened due to participation in the PLPW Access Program. An additional 8.5% said their relationship has greatly improved for an overall figure of 61.9%.
- Landowners report that their relationship with hunters/anglers has increased (39.9%) or greatly increased (4.6%) since participation in the PLPW Access Program. While 83.4 % stated that hunter/angler behavior has been satisfactory or very satisfactory.
- Concerning number of hunters using property, 64.3% report that it is about right while 28.9% don't know.
- 95.9% of all landowners report that it was either easy or very easy to work with the Wyoming Game & Fish Department in establishing access.
- 93.3% report that they are satisfied with the placement of signs on their property.

- 87.2 % indicated that a PLPW area has met their expectations.
- Most of landowners have been involved with the PLPW Access Program for 4 years (23.8%) or 3 years (19.8%).
- When given the option, 60.3 % of landowners signed a 5-year contract compared to annual contracts (19.6%).
- Majority of landowners that signed multi-year contracts did so for the financial incentives (45.5%), ease of process (25.3%) and belief in providing access (24.2%).

### **Hunters and Anglers**

Hunters and anglers who purchased 2006 licenses for elk, deer, antelope, small game, upland game bird and fishing licenses were randomly subsampled weighted by the total number of licenses sold for each category. There were four sections survey participants were asked to complete: Hunter Management Area, Walk-in Hunting Area, Walk-in Fishing Area and Access Yes. Disc Information Services, Inc. was also contracted to perform the surveys to determine current perceptions of the Department and the PLPW Access Program. Some results are:

#### **Walk-in Hunting Areas (WIHA):**

- Overall, 75.4% of respondents were either very satisfied (34.2%) or satisfied (41.2%) with the access provided by the WIHA program.
- 73.7% agreed the availability of WIHA allowed them to hunt more than they would have without the areas.
- 20% of respondents indicated they had hunted on a WIHA during 2005.
- Most hunters used 1-3 WIHA an average of 6-10 times a year.
- Respondents primarily pursued deer with Big Horn County receiving the most utilization.
- Hunters indicated that the behavior of other hunters (56.3%) and landowners (89.5%) were either good or excellent.
- 61% felt it was easy to locate a WIHA while only 9.6% felt it was difficult.
- Hunters felt that the PLPW Access Program has improved their relationships with landowners (65.1%) and the Department (61.6%).
- 83.6% of respondents plan on hunting a WIHA in the future.

#### **Walk-in Fishing Areas (WIFA):**

- Overall, 78.5% of respondents were either very satisfied (30.8%) or satisfied (47.7%) with the access provided by the WIFA program.
- 63.6% agreed the availability of WIFA allowed them to fish more than they would have without the areas.
- 9.5% of respondents indicated they used a WIFA in 2005.
- Most anglers used 1-3 WIFA an average of 3-10 times.
- Anglers primarily used WIFA in Natrona County.
- 57% reported it was easy to find a WIFA.
- Anglers indicated that the behavior of other hunters (55.3%) and landowners (85.8%) were either good or excellent.

- Anglers felt that the PLPW Access Program has improved their relationships with landowners (58.1%) and the Department (61.4%).
- 89.9% of anglers plan on fishing a WIFA in the future.

Hunter Management Areas (HMA):

- 85% of respondents were either very satisfied (30%) or satisfied (55%) with the hunting opportunity provided by the HMA program.
- 74.8% agreed the availability of HMA allowed them to hunt more than they would have without the areas.
- 10% stated they had hunted on a HMA in 2005.
- Hunters primarily hunted 1-2 times for deer, elk and antelope. Muddy Mountain was the most heavily utilized HMA.
- 63.1% of respondents indicated that it was easy to locate a HMA to hunt with 71.2% agreeing that it was easy to obtain permission.
- Hunters indicated that the behavior of other hunters (61.9%) and landowners (94.8%) were either good or excellent.
- Hunters felt that the PLPW Access Program has improved their relationships with landowners (79.4%) and the Department (73.1%).
- 79.8 % of all respondents plan on hunting a HMA again.

Access Yes:

- 60.1% indicated they have heard of the Access Yes program.
- However, only 26.4% donate to it. 49.3% do not donate to the program.
- 43.4% indicated they would donate in the future while 35.6% are uncertain.
- A reasonable method of financially supporting Access Yes in the future consisted of special management stamp (52%), donation (52.3%) and other (11.5%) while 9.3% said they would not support.

The “other” category of what sportsmen would support as a reasonable method to financially supporting Access Yes consists of the following recommendations: Add \$1 per license, raffles & auctions (equipment, big game licenses), and state funds.