

Report to the Colorado Wildlife Commission  
By the Wildlife Management Education Fund  
Public Education Advisory Council  
November 2006

The WMEF had in excess of \$200,000 carried over in its dedicated fund account into The Wildlife Management Education Fund (WMEF). Public Education Advisory Council (Council) has made excellent progress in the last calendar year and in the 2006/2007 CDOW fiscal year. This progress occurred despite the fact that the WMEF Council was financially and functionally limited due to a restricted spending authority in the 2005/2006 fiscal year of \$500,000 calendar year that began in January 2006. This money was generated from accumulated contributions to the program from the limited license "Check Off" mechanism created by the legislature for the WMEF in 1999. This fund raising mechanism was terminated on December 31st, 2005 and was replaced by the new \$.75 license surcharge that became effective on January 1st, 2006.

As of June 30th, 2006 the new program had generate slightly over one half million dollars so that the dedicated fund totaled approximately \$700,000. From July 1, 2006 to mid-September the license surcharge generated approximately another \$225,000. with the balance of the big game rifle hunting seasons still pending. Over the counter license sales from these seasons and the corresponding license surcharge revenue collected ensures that the WMEF will meet the revenue projections of \$900,000 made by the CDOW, and upon which our previous spending authority request was based. Total revenue generated through December 31st 2006 and additional revenue generated throughout the balance of the 2006/2007 fiscal year will help the WMEF estimate average, annual revenue and develop its spending authority requests and program expansions accordingly. The WMEF Council working with the CDOW decided to be conservative in developing its spending authority request for 2007/2008. The Council felt that it was important to have a more established revenue track record before expanding the educational program. Additionally because the formal program was only launched in the Fall of 2006 the Council wanted to be able to assess the program's progress and impact, via scientific survey and research before expansion. The WMEF Council will propose expanding the program, thereby further meeting its legislative mandates, once these tasks are accomplished satisfactorily.

Working in cooperation with the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) and Colorado Wildlife Commission (CWC) the WMEF successfully secured a spending authority (2006/2007) of \$900,000. from the legislature as part of the CDOW's long bill. The majority of these dollars (\$800,000.) are directed into a contract with Extra Strength Marketing Communications (Extra Strength) to develop and implement the comprehensive public education program.

To initiate that contract the WMEF Council worked with the CDOW and DNR throughout early 2006 to write and issue a formal RFP. These efforts resulted in a contract that was awarded to Extra Strength in September 2006, after a thorough evaluation and selection process involving multiple RFP respondents. Successfully navigating the RFP process took several months of time and effort. The contract was

negotiated for five years, renewable annually, to ensure that continuity would exist in the program.

In the Spring of 2006 the Council received special funding from the CWC's "Discretionary Fund" to finalize research that was necessary to establish a "baseline" of data against which the educational program could be measured. Essentially the research validated certain levels of knowledge about wildlife, wildlife management and hunting and fishing held by the general public. The educational program itself has built-in research modules that will help the Council evaluate it's program's effect and re-tune it as required to ensure that the public is receiving and assimilating the information presented. The research base provides the platform from which those measurements can be made.

Extra Strength's educational program plan for the WMEF in the first year (06/07) is designed to utilize radio, TV and outdoor billboard communication mediums. Almost 84% of the budget is directed towards media purchase with the balance being expended in production, creative and consulting fees. We feel that the ratio of funds being devoted to media purchase is excellent and reflects the WMEF's continued dedication to its legislative mission and commitment to its constituents in the hunting and fishing communities.

Radio began in October, television in November and the outdoor billboard communications component will start in January 2007. Most of the first year's programs will conclude by the late spring of 2007. Research to assess the program's impacts will occur in February 2007 and again in June 2007. The 2007/2008 program will be developed in the spring of 2007 and with approved spending authority can begin as early as July 2007.

The initial thrust of the program is to educate the public about the basic mission, effort and successes of the CDOW. Accurate public understanding of the CDOW's role in re-establishing and re-introducing species while simultaneously managing populations of existing species and preserving critical habitat is paramount. As the program evolves the public will be informed more about how the CDOW is supported financially and the important roles that hunting and fishing play in wildlife management. Critical information and facts about how important wildlife management and recreation is to the Colorado economy and communities will be presented. The important balance that exists in our state between private land and wildlife also needs to be understood by the public. These educational objectives along with others developed in the WMEF's original educational PLAN will be introduced as the program progresses and expands in future years.

Another important note involves our sponsorship program. The WMEF in previous reports discussed a plan to attempt to leverage our funds using sponsor's dollars that would help us expand our media program and public outreach. Unfortunately new regulations within DNR and the CDOW will make such an effort more complex. It appears that if we are going to seek out sponsors that we have to develop an entirely

separate program(s) to do that. The WMEF cannot simply tag our existing educational vehicles with a sponsor's name and expand the media coverage using their donated dollars. The Council believes that sponsors will have little incentive to invest dollars in our program if they cannot be acknowledged publicly. To recognize any sponsor publicly the WMEF will have to first formally offer these sponsorship opportunities to the public sector. To accomplish this will require that we develop a separate but parallel program. The WMEF has abandoned this idea for their 2006/2007 fiscal year because of these complexities and will re-evaluate whether or not such an effort is cost effective to pursue in the future.

The WMEF and Council are committed to continuing to work closely with the CDOW and CWC. Council members are volunteers. The Council members are dedicated and have contributed thousands of volunteer hours to meet our legislative mandates. We are excited about this first year and the launch of this comprehensive education program. We believe that this program will grow to be a model for other states to follow but more importantly we believe that this program will help all Coloradans understand and appreciate what incredible values exist within our diverse wildlife resources. Wildlife resources that only exist because they are professionally managed by the CDOW with the cooperation and help from hunters, anglers, land owners and conservationists and the financial support from hunting and fishing license sales. Our Mission is simple:

Keeping Colorado Wild!

Respectfully Reported,  
Robert (Bob) Radocy,  
Chairman WMEF

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