



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** Apr. 17, 2024

**Agenda Item:** Forestry 2023 Annual Sustainable Yield Calculation

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 8 minutes

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**Background:** In 2011, Montana’s 62nd Legislature passed House Bill 619 (since codified in § 87-1-622, Montana Code Annotated [MCA]) providing a revision to FWP’s forest management laws requiring FWP to “commission a study by a qualified independent third party to determine the annual sustainable yield on forested department lands.” The initial calculation of an annual sustainable yield—defined as “the quantity of timber that can be harvested from forested department lands each year, taking into account the ability of forested lands to generate replacement tree growth...”—was completed by Mason, Bruce & Girard, Inc. (MB&G – a forestry consulting firm) on Dec. 31, 2013. The law further states that the annual timber sale requirement for the program may not exceed the annual sustainable yield. The Fish and Wildlife Commission and the State Parks and Recreation Board are required by law to “review and redetermine the annual sustainable yield for lands under their jurisdiction at least once every 5 years.” As such, FWP completed a report titled “2023 FWP Annual Sustainable Yield Calculation Update,” which summarizes changes to FWP’s forested land base, growth, and annual sustainable yield potential for these lands, and provides a “redetermination” of the potential annual sustainable yield from forested department lands.

**Public Involvement Process and Results:** FWP did not conduct a public involvement process in developing this report since it does not propose any programmatic or site-specific implementation. This report provides a review and redetermination of the annual sustainable yield for consideration by the Fish and Wildlife Commission and State Parks and Recreation Board. Actual yield (sale) of timber byproducts could be achieved through projects involving timber harvest and such projects would undergo public involvement as required by FWP policy and MEPA.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** The annual sustainable yield calculated by FWP for this five-year review and redetermination was determined to be 4.1 million board feet (MBF) per year in the short-term (<50 years) and 3.6 MBF per year in the long-term (>50 years). This is a decrease from the 2018 sustained yield calculation by 66 MBF per year in the short-term and 38 MBF per year in the long-term. FWP’s forester conducted this calculation by extrapolating the potential growth and annual sustainable yield calculated by MB&G in their 2013 report to lands added to and subtracted from FWP’s forested land base since the last update (2018). Another alternative would have been to conduct a new forest inventory and recalculation using a computer model but that was dropped from consideration because it was determined to be excessively time-consuming and costly.

**Agency Recommendation and Rationale:** FWP recommends the commission approve the annual sustainable yield calculation to comply with the statutory requirements of § 87-1-622, MCA.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the commission approve the annual sustainable yield calculation as presented by FWP.