Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region 2 Headquarters
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804-3101
406-542-5500
October 15, 2008

*Governor's Office, Attn: Mike Volesky, PO Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, PO Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704
*Dept. of Environmental Quality, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
*Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, POB 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601
*Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:
Website, Commission Secretary, Division Secretaries, Regional Office Managers, Region 2 Information Officer
*State Historic Preservation Office, PO Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202
*MT State Library, PO BOX 201800, Helena, MT 59620-1800
MT Environmental Information Center, Attn: Jim Jensen, POB 1184, Helena, MT 59624-1184
Montana Natural Heritage Center, POB 201800, Helena, MT 59620-1800
Montana Audubon Society, POB 595, Helena 59624-0595
Montana Stockgrowers, 420 N. California, Helena, MT 59601
Montana Wildlife Federation, POB 1175, Helena, MT 59624-1175
Powell County Weed Supervisor
Powell County Commissioners
Powell County Planning Department
Powell County Planning Board
*The Nature Conservancy
*Five Valleys Land Trust
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
*Blackfoot Community Conservation Area Advisory Council
*Blackfoot Challenge
*US Fish & Wildlife Service
*Seeley Lake Ranger District, Lolo National Forest
Adjoining landowners
*Emailed notification of the availability of the EA; others received a full copy of the EA.

Dear Interested Citizen:

Enclosed you will find for your review the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposal to acquire three parcels (totaling 2,623 acres) adjacent to the Ovando Mountain Unit of the Blackfoot Clearwater WMA (BCWMA) north of Ovando, in Powell County. The Nature Conservancy currently owns the properties. and this project is part of the larger Blackfoot Challenge Blackfoot Community Project. If acquired the properties would become part of the BCWMA. The purpose of this proposal would be to acquire critical year-round habitat for elk, deer, grizzly bears and a host of other species. In addition, the parcels currently receive high levels of recreational use; this project would secure perpetual hunting and other recreational access to FWP and adjacent highly valued public lands.

FWP will hold a public hearing in Ovando on November 3 at 6:30 p.m. at the Ovando Fire Hall to discuss this proposed acquisition and take public comment.

This draft EA is available for review in Helena at FWP's Headquarters, the State Library and the Environmental Quality Council. It also may be obtained from the Region 2 FWP Headquarters or viewed on FWP's Internet website at http://fwp.mt.gov ("Recent Public Notices").

Comments on this draft EA must be received no later than 5:00 p.m., November 17, 2008. Comments should be mailed to Jay Kolbe, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, PO Box 1288, Seeley Lake, MT 59868 or emailed to jkolbe@mt.gov. If you have questions, please contact him by email or phone him at 406-677-0162.

As part of the decision making process under MEPA, I plan to issue the Decision Notice for this EA as early as November 18th. The Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission has the final decision-making authority for FWP land purchase proposals, and the Commission will be asked to render final decision on this proposal at its regularly scheduled December meeting. Approval will also be necessary from the Montana Board of Land Commissioners.

Sincerely,

Mack Long
Regional Supervisor

ML/sr

Enclosure: Little Doney EA