

## ***FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** March 8, 2012 \_\_\_\_\_

**Agenda Item:** Proposed Travelers' Rest State Park Acquisition \_\_\_\_\_

**Division:** Parks

**Action Needed:**

**Approval of Tentative Rule**                       **Approval of Final Rule/Action**  
 **Endorse Course of Action**                       **None - information only**

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 15 min

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### **Background**

Montana State Parks proposes to acquire approximately 24 acres of land, a visitor center building and museum, complete with a museum collection at Travelers' Rest State Park as part of the final step in park development.

This land is contiguous to the park and consists of 3 distinct parcels. Parcel A is approximately 10 acres in size and is comprised largely of riparian habitat along Lolo Creek. The Division already holds a conservation easement on this property and the acquisition would allow for further public access to Lolo Creek and consistent management. Parcel B is approximately 12 acres and is currently used for grazing. This parcel would connect the park to US Highway 12, preserving the park entrance from development and creating important trail linkage through the park connecting non-motorized trails. Parcel C houses the museum and visitor center and park offices. This parcel is currently leased by Montana FWP for these purposes.

Staff is proposing multi-faceted funding to complete this acquisition. No state revenues would be used in the purchase. It is expected that \$300,000 of Land and Water Conservation Fund monies would be used and matched by an approved request to the Missoula County Open Space Bond Fund (sponsored by Five Valleys Land Trust) and will be completed by a \$100,000 community fundraising effort spearheaded by the Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association and the Missoula Community Foundation. Pending updated appraisals, the owners would donate land, improvements and artifacts valued at approximately \$1 million.

Acquisition of this land would not only secure the park visitor center and museum, it will protect critical wildlife habitat in this urban area; provide a safe conduit for Lolo residents connecting the south and north parts of the community; and add an important buffer to this National Historic Landmark.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

If approved by the Commission, and upon completion of all due diligence, an Environmental Assessment on the acquisition would be written and distributed for public comment.

### **Alternatives and Analysis No Action Alternative:**

Do not acquire the land. The landowners could pursue other options to sell and develop the land. The division would need to eventually construct a separate visitor center and office building for the park.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

The Department recommends approval by the Commission to proceed with the acquisition of these 3 parcels of land for inclusion at Travelers' Rest State Park.

### **Proposed Motion**

"I move that the Department pursue the acquisition of these 3 parcels of land as part of Travelers' Rest State Park."