

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: July 9, 2015

Agenda Item: Biennial Rule Regulating Use in Nature Conservancy Land Recreation Management Area

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 15 minutes

Background

In January 2015, The Nature Conservancy acquired 117,152 Plum Creek Timberland in the Clearwater and Blackfoot watersheds. In February, FWP met with TNC to discuss ideas for a possible land recreation management plan for the 163,883 acres in Mineral, Missoula, and Powell counties. The land is enrolled in FWP's Block Management program, which provides free public access during the fall big game hunting seasons. The proposed biennial rule will provide year-round recreational access for public use.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Public notice of the rules and a public comment period will begin if the Commission approves the proposed rules.

Alternatives and Analysis

Managed public access will reduce the resource damage, prevent vehicular damage to soils and vegetation, and will avoid excess disturbance to native wildlife including threatened and endangered species. Without these rules, TNC may close these lands to public access.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends the Commission propose the rule for public comment.

Proposed Motion

I move that the Fish & Wildlife Commission propose biennial rules regarding public use within The Nature Conservancy Land Recreation Management Area.