

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: October 8, 2015

Agenda Item: Request to Place and Operate a Radio Tower on FWP Land

Division: Lands

Action Needed: Endorsement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background

FWP is seeking the Commission's endorsement to proceed with a proposal from Montana Radio Company (MRC) to place a 499-foot high radio tower on FWP land above the Great Falls Sport Shooting Complex (GFSSC) north of Great Falls. MRC approached FWP with its proposal in 2014 but had other permits and approvals to complete, including those from the Federal Aviation Administration, Cascade County, and Malmstrom Air Force Base. FWP also had to complete an environmental assessment (EA) before beginning any official process or consideration. In May, MRC had secured most of the needed permits and FWP completed an EA and released it for public review and comment.

Public Involvement Process & Results

FWP provided input to Cascade County and completed an EA with a 30-day public comment period. Three comments were received; one opposed, one favored, and one was neutral while providing additional information. FWP and MRC met with members of the GFSSC to assess options and alternatives. GFSSC members concluded the tower would not be problematic.

Alternatives and Analysis

Three alternatives are proposed, including no action and two related to the placement of the tower. Alternative 1, with placement on the southwest side above the main shooting complex range areas, was determined to be best.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends that the Commission endorse the proposal, which would allow FWP to assess all details and develop a contractual agreement for use of the property. The proposed location already has two existing communication towers (approximately 200 feet tall) and a small building on site. The tower would provide Fort Benton and surrounding communities with radio service and station reception from MRC.

Proposed Motion

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission endorse the proposal to place a Montana Radio Company radio tower on FWP property north of Great Falls.