

FISH and WILDILFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: June 9, 2016

Agenda Item: Joiner Coulee Right of Way Easement (R6)

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final Action

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 Min

Background

FWP has been negotiating a road easement with Wetlands America Trust (WAT), a division of Ducks Unlimited (DU), on approximately one-mile of private road leading to a large block of BLM and DNRC land in Phillips County. The Joiner Coulee APL project received Commission endorsement in July 2013.

The Joiner Coulee APL project would improve access to BLM and DNRC administered land in northern Phillips County. This is a moderate public use area known for mule deer, antelope and upland game bird hunting opportunities. There is an immense distribution of non-game wildlife, including grassland birds, available for watching.

The cost of the road easement is \$30,000; DU (WAT) will donate \$10,000 and therefore the cost to FWP is \$20,000 for the road easement. The funding source is FWP's Access Public Lands Program.

Public Involvement Process & Results

FWP released a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for public comment from January 6 to February 5, 2016. The Draft EA was made available to neighboring landowners and interested parties, and was posted on the FWP webpage. FWP received two supporting written public comments from individuals.

Alternatives and Analysis

Two alternatives were analyzed and considered in the EA: 1) Proposed Action—purchase the one-mile by 30ft permanent road easement and 2) No Action—do not purchase the road easement and rely on future landowners to keep the road open to public use. Under the Proposed Action, it is the intention of FWP that the road easement would eventually be granted to the BLM. The BLM administers the public land the easement would immediately serve. In the event that the BLM would reject the road easement, the easements-would remain held by FWP.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends the Commission approve the Joiner Coulee Access Public Land Easement entailing the purchase of a road easement on approximately one-mile of private road between a Phillips County public road and BLM lands. The road easement will secure motorized public access to a large block of BLM and DNRC land in Phillips Co.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission approve the purchase of the Joiner Coulee road easement from Wetlands America Trust.