

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: June 14, 2018

Agenda Item: Dome Mountain WMA Inholding Conservation Easement Assignment (R3)

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Endorsement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 mins

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Background: The Fish and Wildlife Commission endorsed a proposal in April to purchase a private inholding on Dome Mountain WMA of approximately 161 acres. As described in the April cover sheet, the parcel is encumbered with a conservation easement held by FWP. Conservation easements (CEs) are legal agreements that run with the land in perpetuity. As the potential future owner of this parcel, it is preferable for another entity to eventually take responsibility for administering this CE. Contingent on the purchase of this inholding, FWP intends to assign this CE to another party, to continue to administer the CE and to enforce its terms. Tentatively, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) has expressed interest in partnering with FWP to accept assignment of this CE and the associated responsibility, which may also involve modifying CE terms. If RMEF chose not to accept this assignment, FWP would seek another partner organization to serve this role.

Public Involvement Process & Results: There has been no public involvement pertaining this proposal. Upon endorsement, FWP would conduct due diligence, environmental analysis, and public review processes to help determine the issues and the viability of this proposal.

Alternatives and Analysis: The proposal to transfer the CE on the Dome Mountain inholding to another party is partly contingent on the acquisition of this parcel.- If the parcel were not acquired, this action would not be necessary.- Purchasing the parcel would prevent further conflicts associated with private inholdings and would help assure the long-term integrity of Dome Mountain WMA.- Assigning this CE to another party is a preferable business practice when owning the same land in fee title.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: The department recommends endorsement of this proposal. Transferring the CE to another party is the department's preferred approach, if FWP were to purchase the subject inholding.

Proposed Motion: I move the commission endorse the proposal to assign to another organization the conservation easement for the 161-acre inholding of the Dome Mountain WMA, allowing the department to conduct further evaluation and public review.