Environmental Assessment Decision Notice

Dome Mountain Wildlife Management Area Addition
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 3, Bozeman
August 2018

Proposed Action and Need

The enclosed Decision notice has been prepared for the proposed acquisition of a 161-acre addition to the Dome Mountain Wildlife Management Area (DMWMA) through purchase from a private landowner.

This acquisition will be a small but important addition to DMWMA and to an expanse of native habitat currently conserved as public land providing wildlife and recreational connectivity between Yellowstone Park and areas to the north in Montana. The proposed acquisition would result in the parcel and adjacent larger landscape being managed consistently for wildlife conservation and public recreation, with high potential for positive impacts for wildlife, habitat, and public opportunity.

Corrections to Draft Environmental Assessment

The Environmental assessment incorrectly stated that the dwelling on the parcel was built 70 years ago and is considered to be of cultural significance. During due diligence, the status of the dwelling on the parcel was clarified to have been built in the late 1980's. Structures that are 50 years or older may be considered culturally significant by the State Historic Preservation Office. Since this dwelling was built approximately 30 years ago, it is not considered a cultural resource. FWP intends to remove the dwelling in order to restore native habitat for fish and wildlife in the meadow and riparian area where the dwelling and its outbuildings are located.

Public Process and Comments

FWP is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environments. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on May 5, 2018. The public was notified that the EA was available for review and comment as follows:

- Public notices in The Bozeman Chronicle and The Livingston Enterprise
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife and Parks web page: fwp.mt.gov
- Interested parties were notified by email

Public comments on the proposed action were taken for 30 days (through June 3, 2018).

A total of 10 individuals and 4 organizations commented on the proposed acquisition. One individual was opposed, all others were in support, and some management suggestions were included. FWP's response to comments are in bold in Table 1.

FWP thanks all parties that took time to provide comments on the proposal.

Table 1. Summary of comments received regarding the proposed Dome Mountain WMA Addition:

PARTY	FROM	SUPPORT OR OPPOSE	COMMENTS
9 Individuals	Park and Gallatin Counties	Support	Nine letters or emails of support without management suggestions or additional comments were received. Letters were supportive of acquisition for the purpose of conserving habitat for fish and wildlife and for providing recreational opportunities. **FWP response: Thank you for your comments**
1 Individual	Gardiner, MT	Oppose	The FWP cannot even control the weeds in their fishing access sites, how on earth will they control them in such a remote location. Absolutely against the sale of this parcel **FWP response: Thank you for your comment. The parcel has a weed infestation in the area surrounding the home site. FWP will treat those weeds using chemical treatment and mechanical removal in order to conserve native vegetation.**
Montana Audubon		Support	We would like FWP, as much as possible, to manage the newly acquired Dome Mountain WMA parcel for its native vegetation. It is especially important for FWP to manage its wetland and riparian lands in a way that allows recreationists to access the area, but also protect this important habitat for both fish and wildlife habitat. **FWP response: Thank you for your comment. FWP agrees with these comments and intends to manage for native vegetation including pursuing opportunities for habitat projects to enhance and maintain the riparian/wetland area on this parcel.**
Montana Sportsmen Alliance, Park County Rod & Gun Club, Gallatin Wildlife Association		Support	Email comments were received from these three organizations expressing support for the acquisition, without offering any additional comments or management suggestions. **FWP response: Thank you for your comments**

Final Environmental Assessment

The Environmental Assessment, together with this Decision Notice, will serve as the final document for this proposal.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment and public comment, it is my decision to approve the proposed action to acquire the 161-acre parcel for addition to the Dome Mountain Wildlife Management Area, pending Fish and Wildlife Commission approval.

I find there to be no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Mark Deleray
Region 3 Supervisor
Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks