

## ***FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** July 14, 2011

**Agenda Item:** Mountain Acres proposed FAS acquisition

**Division:** Fisheries

**Action Needed:** Final Approval

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

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### **Background**

Big Spring Creek is a popular trout stream in Lewistown that, unlike larger productive fisheries, requires multiple access points for bank angling since it is too deep to wade and too small to float. FWP applied for and was awarded a grant for \$54,000 from the Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Trust to acquire the 6.27A Mountain Acres parcel, which would be managed as a fishing access site and riparian area. The purchase price for the parcel is \$64,000. The additional funds required for purchase will be obtained from the Fishing Access Site Acquisition Fund. Because Big Spring Creek was channelized at Mountain Acres in 1961, and the stream length was reduced over 50% in this reach, FWP also will work to restore meanders to the stream and repair the riparian area. "Down cutting" resulted in an entrenched channel with very limited flood plain and limited pools and meanders. Stream straightening caused so many problems that it was one of the main reasons that the Streambed and Land Preservation Act (310 law) was enacted. In 2007, FWP purchased a 62-acre conservation easement on the north side of Big Spring Creek for the stream restoration project and streamside public access (Machler Easement). The Mountain Acres parcel, however, is needed for part of the stream restoration on this reach of the creek for both hydrologic and social reasons. Location of the new stream channel on this parcel would help mitigate mobile home park resident's concerns about moving the stream away from the mobile home park. This parcel would also enhance access, particularly for the youth of Lewistown, by providing access through a residential area.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

On March 11, 2009 a public meeting in Lewistown on the stream restoration project was attended by about 25 people. Overwhelming support was voiced for the project. Some concern, however, was raised by a few lot renters. The owners and representatives of the Mountain Acres Mobile Home Park, however, supported the project. On May 19, 2011, an environmental assessment addressing potential impacts of the proposed acquisition was released for public comment. Comments were received from five individuals or groups; three were supportive and two did not favor the stream restoration project. No comments voiced opposition to acquisition of the parcel.

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

Proposed Action: Acquire the 6.27-acre property to enhance public access to Big Spring Creek and provide the optimum routing for the stream restoration project.

No Action alternative: If this property is not acquired, access would not be further enhanced and the movement of the stream away from the mobile home park would not be mitigated.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

FWP recommends that the Commission approve the acquisition of the 6.27-acre Mountain Acres property.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move that the FWP Commission authorize FWP to acquire the Mountain Acres parcel on Big Spring Creek.