

**Recommendation 7:** The existing Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project (HLSP) should be supported, encouraged, updated, improved, and expanded.

1. Increase participation through development of a marketing and information plan.
  - a. Encourage FWP staff to complete the HLSP course and help market it; raise awareness of project at appropriate FWP public meetings and through displays and information materials at FWP offices; utilize FWP website to promote the project;
  - b. Encourage hunter education and bow hunter education instructors to complete the HLSP course and encourage students to also complete the HLSP course;
  - c. Increase outreach with high schools, perhaps promoting project as homework assignment or extra credit; target college programs that include agriculture and wildlife majors as a pilot effort;
  - d. Encourage private sector companies to help promote the project;
  - e. Utilize media outlets like TV outdoor sportshows and FWP Wardens TV show to promote the project;
  - f. Target an audience that is all inclusive of hunters, landowners, and resource-oriented citizens of Montana;
  - g. Encourage Governor to promote the project as a means of helping bridge the gap between rural/urban Montana citizens and resident/nonresident Montana landowners;
2. Update, improve and expand the program.
  - a. Add new videos, perhaps having them change periodically, and utilize videos featuring female hunters;
  - b. Improve analytics of web-based system to gather useful data;
  - c. Explore additional incentives to encourage people to complete the project, including an informational booklet for landowners; decals, patches, or other rewards for individuals who complete the project;
  - d. Encourage FWP to appoint a small advisory group to assist with this effort, including varying age groups for appropriate representation;

### **Rationale**

We believe citizens and wildlife in Montana will benefit by more people completing the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project because the program helps to bridge the rural-urban community gap, promote good hunter-landowner relationships, and reduce unintended consequences related to hunting on private lands. The project provides tools to gain knowledge of the importance of respect, appreciation, privilege, and responsible behavior to help develop understanding and build relationships to improve hunting opportunities and experiences on private land.

### **Background**

The Montana Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project is a web-based information program available for anyone interested in promoting responsible hunter behavior and good hunter-landowner relations in Montana.

The program is delivered through an interactive webpage found on the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) website [www.fwp.gov](http://www.fwp.gov). It is a voluntary program designed to be completed by participants, at their own pace. Upon successful completion, participants are awarded a

certification of completion and they can request a free cap and bumper sticker bearing the Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project logo from MFWP.

The Hunter-Landowner Stewardship program was developed based on recommendations from two citizen's advisory councils, the Hunter Behavior Advisory Council and the Private Land Public Wildlife Council, urging MFWP to expand efforts to promote responsible hunter behavior and good hunter-landowner relationships beyond Montana's basic hunter education program. In response, the agency convened a group of hunters and landowners to identify key issues relevant to the topic, and assist with development of information that might help effectively address those issues.

The goals of the program are to:

- Promote better understanding of the common ground and different perspectives held by landowners and hunters
- Promote better understanding among landowners and hunters about what constitutes acceptable hunter behavior.
- Provide landowners and hunters with information and ideas about how to develop and maintain good relationships
- Provide information about the shared experience of landowners and hunters in various hunting situations.

The webpage can be found at [www.fwp.gov](http://www.fwp.gov) by clicking on the links in the following order: "Hunting", and then under quick links "Hunter-Landowner Stewardship Project".