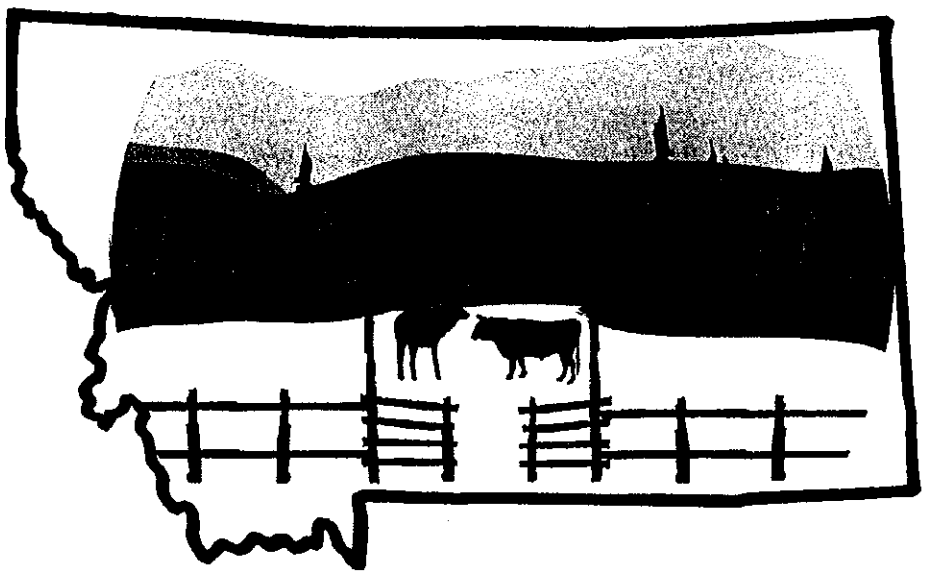
Private Land/Public Wildlife Advisory Council

Report and Recommendations



Presented to
Governor Brian Schweitzer
and the
61st Legislature

January, 2009

BLOCK MANAGEMENT

Private Land/Public Wildlife Council – Member List – (2007 - 2009)

Land Tawney, Chair
720 Strand Ave
Missoula, MT 59801

Gordon Haugen
22 Barclay Drive
Bozeman, MT 59715

Max McDonald
PO Box 536
Vaughn, MT 59487

Doug Schott
2314 Kelsey Lane
Stevensville, MT 59870

Rick Miller
420 Alder Court
Colstrip, MT 59323

Kathy Hadley
1016 East Side Road
Deer Lodge, MT 59722

Brett Todd
664 HWY 10 East
Big Timber, MT 59011

Dick Iversen
Box 522
Culbertson, MT 59218

Jamie Byrne
1012 Prairiedale Road
Ekalaka MT, 59324

Mike Penfold
3552 Prestwick
Billings, MT 59101

Donna Tate McDonald
P.O. Box 109
Alder MT 59710

Representative John Ward
4525 Glass Drive
Helena, MT 59602

Senator Lane Larson
1417 Cedar Canyon Road
Billings, MT 59101

Dan Vermillion
PO Box 668
Livingston, MT 59047

Lindsay Giem
1923 MT HWY 41 S
Twin Bridges, MT 59574

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COUNCIL CHARGE/PURPOSE

In 1995, a review committee (Private Land/Public Wildlife Council) was established in statute to make recommendations to the Governor regarding issues related to private land and public wildlife. The Council's statutory charge is articulated in Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 87-1-269 as follows:

"**Report Required - review committee.** (1) The governor shall appoint a committee of persons interested in issues related to hunters, anglers, landowners, and outfitters, including but not limited to the hunting access enhancement program, the fishing access enhancement program, landowner-hunter relations, outfitting industry issues, and other issues related to private lands and public wildlife. The committee must have broad representation of landowners, outfitters, and sportspersons. The department may provide administrative assistance as necessary to assist the review committee.

(2) (a) The review committee shall report to the governor and to the 59th legislature regarding the success of various elements of the hunting access enhancement program, including a report of annual landowner participation, the number of acres annually enrolled in the program, hunter harvest success on enrolled lands, the number of qualified applicants who were denied enrollment because of a shortfall in funding, and an accounting of program expenditures, and make suggestions for funding, modification, or improvement needed to achieve the objectives of the program.

(b) The review committee shall report to the governor and to the 59th legislature regarding the success of the fishing access enhancement program and make suggestions for funding, modification, or improvement needed to achieve the objectives of the program.

3) The director may appoint additional advisory committees that are considered necessary to assist in the implementation of the hunting access enhancement program and the fishing access enhancement program and to advise the commission regarding the development of rules implementing the hunting access enhancement program and the fishing access enhancement program."

In August, 2007, Governor Brian Schweitzer appointed 15 Council members to terms ending June 30, 2009, re-affirming the Council's charge as follows:

a) **preserving Montana's hunting heritage;**

b) **providing public hunting access on private and isolated public land;**

c) **reducing landowner impacts related to public hunting access;**

d) **providing tangible incentives to landowners who allow public hunting;**

e) **helping outfitters stabilize their industry and improve their image.**

The PL/PW Council will work by consensus to reach decisions. A way to test whether or not the group is achieving consensus is to ask the participants how they feel about a particular proposal or option according to the following statements:

1. I can say that I **wholeheartedly agree** to the decision.
2. I find the decision **perfectly acceptable.** It is the best option available to us.
3. I can **support** the decision, although I'm not especially enthusiastic about it.
4. I do not fully agree with the decision and need to register my view about it. However, I do not choose to block the decision. **I am willing to support the decision** because I trust the wisdom of the group.
5. I do not agree with the decision and feel the need to **block** the decision from being accepted as consensus.
6. I feel we have no clear sense of unity in the group. We need to **do more work before consensus can be achieved.**

Consensus is achieved if all participants indicate that they are at levels 1-4.

When someone determines a position at 5 or 6, that person must assume the burden of clearly articulating his or her concern to the larger group, and if possible, work to develop a solution which that person can present to the group for the group's consideration. The group may continue with the procedure until consensus is achieved or the group decides to not move forward with a particular decision or recommendation.

Council Activities

During the period September 2007 through December 2008, the Council met six times at various locations throughout the state. In September 2008, the Council presented five Draft Recommendations to the public for comment. Upon completion of a 45+ day public comment period, during which 18 individuals or organizations submitted formal comments, the Council met by conference calls on December 18 and December 29, 2008, and adopted, through consensus, **five (5) FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**, which are contained in this report on the following pages.

Council members produced a list of "**Top Twelve Landowner Concerns Related to Public Hunting Access,**" which was published in newspapers throughout the state during the opening weeks of Montana's big game hunting season (see Appendix XXX). Also identified were information needs including an **updated report on the variable-priced outfitter-sponsored license** (see page XXX of this report) and **baseline information about how hunting is managed on private land in Montana** (see page XXX of this report).

Council members identified the two issues as high-priority items needing further work, with subcommittees appointed to continue work on these topics:

- **Harboring Wildlife**
- **Variable-priced outfitter-sponsored license;**

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND RATIONALE

The Private Land/Public Wildlife Council adopted through consensus the following 5 Final Recommendations.

1. Stewardship Landowner-Hunter Program:

Problem Statement: Relationships between landowners and hunters are deteriorating over time, with our Montana hunting cultural heritage suffering as the loss of privileges for access to private land results in reduced quality public hunting opportunities and Fish Wildlife and Park's ability to manage public wildlife through hunting.

Concept:

- Create a voluntary continuing hunter education program;
- Target audience includes all hunters and all landowners;
- Program will be developed, evaluated, endorsed, and modified over time by a working partnership of stakeholders including wildlife/hunter interests, landowners, and FWP, and administered by FWP;
- Program will be delivered through the web or available by home study;
- Program will encourage local efforts to promote positive landowner/hunter relationships;
- Graduates will receive an ID card, and possibly a voluntary personal hunter profile web page;
- Landowner/hunter incentive ideas will be explored to encourage participation;
- Program content could include the historical roles of hunters and landowners in establishing and maintaining wildlife populations, and etiquette and good norms in establishing and maintaining good landowner/hunter relationships;
- Desired outcomes include reduction in problems with hunter behavior that negatively impacts landowners, resulting in more hunters being offered the privilege of hunting on private land through establishment of good landowner/hunter relationships;
- No legislation is required to implement this recommendation.

2. Modify Block Management License Benefit

Problem Statement: Under current law, Block Management cooperators may only designate immediate family members related by blood to receive a AAA resident Sportsman's License or a B-10 nonresident combination deer/elk license in lieu of the cooperator receiving the license, and the cost of a designated license must be deducted from the landowner's Block Management payment. These restrictions have limited the number of landowners who are interested in this benefit

Concept:

- Propose legislation to delete the mandatory deduction requirement;
- Expand the definition of who can receive the license to include persons related by marriage and ranch employees, as defined by FWP in commission rule;
- The new definition of "immediate family member," defined in FWP Commission Rule, is proposed to be "a person related by blood or marriage who qualifies as a parent or parent-in-law, grandparent or grandparent-in-law, child or child –in-law, or grandchild or grandchild-in-law of the cooperator and spouse and includes legally-adopted children and the cooperator's and spouse's siblings and siblings' children;
- The definition of "ranch employee," defined in FWP Commission Rule, is proposed to be "a person employed by the landowner to perform farm or ranch duties for which a wage is paid, subject to Montana income tax laws;"
- Legislation is required to implement this recommendation.

3. No Hunting Guide License and Outfitter-Sponsor License in Same Year Proposal

Problem statement: Current Administrative Rule of Montana (ARM) 12.3.125 (which explains what guiding services an outfitter is required to provide for hunters who qualify for outfitter-sponsored licenses) may not be adequate to ensure that the outfitter-sponsored licenses are being used in a manner consistent with the intent of the law that created them. Currently some outfitters are able to get around the ARM rule by having at least one of the hunters in the drop camp obtain a hunting guide's license.

Concept:

- Develop a new Board of Outfitters administrative rule that prevents a person from being issued a Montana Hunting Guide License in the same year that person holds a valid variable-priced outfitter-sponsored B10 or B11 license;
- NOTE: ARM ....states that "For the purposes of this statutory requirement, 'guiding services' are provided when an outfitter, or a guide or professional guide employed by the outfitter, has an actual physical presence in the field escorting and directing the clients a majority of the hunting day;"
- No legislation is required to implement this recommendation.

4. Pilot Program Access Management Area Proposal

Problem Statement: The current Block Management Program may not meet the needs of all current, former, and potential landowner enrollees. There is a need to explore alternative ways to develop local habitat/access private land partnerships by developing and identifying ways to increase and maintain landowner participation in access programs.

Concept:

- Utilize regional Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs) or other local groups which represent affected constituencies to establish pilot Access Management Area efforts;

- Working within current statutory and administrative rule authority, CACs or local groups will develop new approaches for local habitat/access private land partnerships that meet local needs of landowners, hunters, outfitters, and FWP management goals;

- CACs or local groups could identify potential enrollees, help determine which lands are enrolled, and suggest how hunting and wildlife on enrolled lands should be managed;

- Enrollees could be eligible for incentive options which reward habitat and access management in ways different from current Block Management payment system;

- Access Management Areas may provide for a shared use between non-guided and guided hunters;

- NOTE: Regional CACs comprised of citizens representing different interests are appointed by the Department for each of the seven FWP administrative regions. The role of the CAC is to provide input to FWP regarding information and the perspective of local citizens on FWP issues, and to help inform other citizens in the region about FWP programs and issues;

- No legislation is required to implement this recommendation.

#5. "Coming Home to Hunt" Pilot License Proposal

Problem Statements:
#1. Montana's hunting heritage is promoted by families continuing to hunt together. Many residents of Montana have watched family members move out of state in pursuit of expanded employment opportunities. These adult nonresident family members can have a difficult time drawing a license to come home to hunt.
#2. There is a need for new revenue to address public land access concerns. Access to public lands is becoming increasingly difficult as traditional routes across private land are closed to public hunters.

Concept:

- As a PILOT effort, create a new pool of licenses not to exceed 500 Deer/Elk Combination nonresident licenses and 500 Deer Combination nonresident licenses. These new licenses would be used by adult nonresident family members of Montana residents who would sponsor their application.

- To qualify as a recipient, the adult nonresident family member must demonstrate that he or she has previously completed a Montana hunter safety course before the effective date of passage of this legislative proposal or held a Montana resident hunting license; *(NOTE: Documentation of eligibility could include an old hunting license or hunter safety certificate, or be verified through FWP records;*

- To qualify as a sponsor, a person must be a Montana resident 18 years or older who is within the second degree of kindred, by marriage or blood. "Within the second degree of kindred" means a mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, spouse, grandparent, grandchild, brother- or sister-in-law, son- or daughter-in-law, father- or mother-in-law, step-father, step-mother, step-sister, step-brother, step-son, and step-daughter; *(NOTE: Under Montana law (MCA) 87-2-106), making false statements on license applications or affidavits constitutes a misdemeanor, subject to penalties of a fine up to $1,000, jail time up to 6 months, or both.)*

- An applicant for a "Coming Home to Hunt" license must be personally accompanied while hunting by a person who is qualified under the terms of "sponsor" of this section. Sponsor will list on license application the names of family members eligible to hunt with sponsored hunter.

- Licenses would be sold at the same price as a general draw nonresident Deer/Elk Combo or Deer Combo license;

- A drawing for these licenses would be conducted first, with unsuccessful applicants getting a second chance in the general license drawing to draw a general nonresident deer/elk or deer license;

- FWP would survey all "Coming Home to Hunt" license holders each year to determine where they hunted (own land, other private lands open to public hunting, block management lands, leased private land closed to public hunting, public lands). PLPW and FWP would develop an annual report to document use of the license as it relates to land where hunting occurred and whether this license and the associated public lands access efforts have resulted in a net increase or decrease in hunting opportunities for resident hunters;

- Legislation is required to implement this recommendation. There will be a 4-year sunset date attached to this legislation. *(NOTE: **Sunset Law**: A law that automatically terminates the program it establishes unless it is expressly renewed by the state legislature.)*

Improved Hunter/Landowner Relations

How hunters can address 12 landowner concerns related to public hunting access

Press Release submitted by members of the Private Land/Public Wildlife Council

The Private Land/Public Wildlife Council, a group of 15 citizens including hunters, landowners, outfitters, legislators, and an FWP Commissioner appointed by Governor Schweitzer to make recommendations regarding hunting and fishing access issues, felt as a group that it would be a good idea to identify a list of the top twelve concerns landowners have related to public hunting access and explain how hunters could address those concerns. For some hunters, these concerns and solutions may seem intuitive. For others, the concerns and solutions may identify something new. Our hope is that this effort may help make the 2008 hunting season an enjoyable experience for all Montana landowners and hunters. (NOTE: The PL/PW Council has also just released a list of 5 draft recommendations for public comment. To learn more, go online to http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/hunteraccess/plpw or call (406)-444-3798).

Top Twelve Landowner Concerns, and Solutions for Hunters:

#1) Bad timing for permission requests

Most landowners prefer to be contacted by phone or in person between 7:00am and 9:00pm. If possible, hunters should establish the preferred time with the prospective landowner prior to season.

#2) Litter

Simply following the rule "if you brought it in, make certain you bring it out" will take care of this concern. Where hunters sometimes stumble is with those things that appear to be non-important. Visible discarded toilet paper is a prime example of an overlooked eyesore for the landowner. Also, be your brother's keeper and take out any litter that may have been left by others.

#3) Alcohol

There is a time and place for everything. Drinking while in the field is not one of them. Good decisions are made by clear minds.

#4) Driving on soft wet roads

Keep in mind that the ruts created by sportsmen during wet periods remain long after the hunter is gone. Making the responsible decision to return another day when the roads have dried out is a huge step in the right direction. Most landowners will not hesitate to give you permission for a later date in return for you being conscientious about not wanting to damage a road. Remember, a rutted ranch road is a constant "negative" reminder to all who travel it after the hunting season.

#5) Driving off designated roads

Be clear about landowner expectations. This is especially true for off-road vehicles. Do not travel off designated roads unless permission has been specifically granted to do so.

#6) Random shooting

If plinking and plunking are in your plans for the day, make sure you discuss those intentions with the landowner and secure the necessary permission.

#7) Game handling.

Most landowners understand the proper field care of harvested animals. Make sure your methods are effective and respectful. Leaving the hide on an animal in 80+ degree weather, or field dressing an animal at an access gate, leaves a lasting poor impression.

#8) Not respecting the permission agreement.

Discuss any requested changes prior to implementing them. One example would be getting permission for two hunters, but showing up with four. Another would be agreeing to hunt only a specific species or sex and then harvesting something outside of that agreement.

#9) Hunting outside of designated area

Clearly understand the boundaries of your area. A negative confrontation with the landowner is almost guaranteed if you are found outside of those boundaries.

#10) Game retrieval

Talk with the landowner about this issue. Be clear about what is acceptable and what is not. Refrain from asking the landowner to help. Keep in mind this is your hunt, not the landowner's. The intent is to impact the landowner's daily routines as little as possible.

#11) Livestock

Shooting near livestock is a risk that landowners cannot afford. A stray bullet or ricochet can leave serious results. Give livestock a wide berth and always make sure of the target and beyond. Be sure there is minimal interaction between hunting dogs and livestock. Hunting dogs pursuing or otherwise bothering livestock will most certainly result in the landowner asking you to leave (and probably not come back).

#12) Gates

Unless specifically instructed otherwise, leave gates as they are found. A gate found open is probably in that position for a reason. If unsure, mention it to the landowner.

Montana has a long heritage of landowners sharing their private lands with public hunters. Our goal as a Council in identifying key landowner concerns related to public hunting access, and providing ways for hunters to address those concerns, is to encourage and promote good hunter/landowner relations and help maintain Montana's hunting heritage and traditions.

2008 Survey of Private Landowners in Montana Regarding Hunting Access Management on Private Lands –and- Views About Fish & Wildlife

A study conducted cooperatively by:

This research project is a collaborative effort between Colorado State University, the Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). The overall purpose of the study is to better understand how private landowners manage hunting access on the lands they own in Montana. The study also includes an assessment of landowner values toward wildlife and wildlife management.

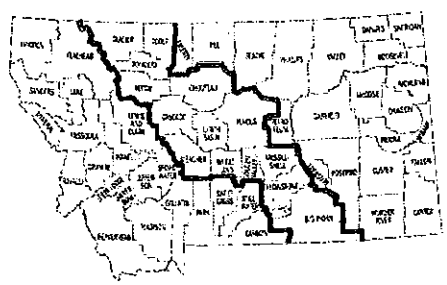
This study is the first of its kind to be conducted in Montana, and is intended to provide baseline data that can be used to document trends in private land hunting access management over time. Study results will enable FWP to better understand how hunting is currently managed on private lands in the state, and help the agency determine implications and develop plans for working with private landowners in the future on issues related to hunting access and wildlife management.

Objectives:

1. To determine which species and sexes of wildlife for which landowners allow hunting access. The focus is on access for the hunting of deer, elk, antelope, and upland game birds. The latter is defined to include pheasants, Hungarian partridge, and sharp-tailed grouse (mountain grouse, sage grouse, and turkeys were excluded from the upland game bird classification used in the study).
2. To understand which systems landowners are currently using to manage hunting access on their lands:
   - Block Management Program.
   - Non-Block Management Program without a fee involving mostly hunters who are family/friends.
   - Non-Block Management Program without a fee involving mostly hunters who are NOT family/friends.
   - Outfitting by the landowner.
   - Outfitting by someone other than the landowner.
   - Lease agreement with a non-outfitting business that markets hunting opportunities.
   - Lease agreement with a hunter or group of hunters.
   - Access fees (non-lease) charged per hunter or group of hunters.
3. To provide information about the values and basic beliefs landowners hold concerning wildlife and wildlife management.

Study Population:

The target population for this study was private landowners in Montana, with a focus on those who own *at least 160 acres*. Data were collected via a mail-back survey administered to a randomly selected sample of 3,000 landowners during the summer of 2008. Sampling was stratified by region to ensure relatively equal representation of landowners across three major areas of the state—west, central, and east.



Status of the Project:

At the time of this report, FWP is working closely with Colorado State University to develop a complete report of survey results. It is anticipated a project report will be finalized by February 1, 2009.

SAMPLE OF SOME QUESTIONS FROM THE SURVEY

ELK

9. During the hunting season, are elk present on the land you own? **(check only one)**

   [ ] NO.....**Go to question 17**
   [ ] YES

10. Does elk hunting occur on the land you own? **(check only one)**

   [ ] NO ⟶ **If no, why not?**_____
   [ ] YES

   _____

   _____

BULL ELK HUNTING

11. Does bull elk hunting occur on the land you own? **(check only one)**

   [ ] NO.....**Go to question 14**
   [ ] YES

12. Each year, about how many bull elk hunters hunt on the land you own? _____

13. Below is a list of different management systems that landowners in Montana use to manage hunting on their lands. Using this list, please respond as follows:

   (a) First, **check all systems** that apply to how bull elk hunting is managed on the land you own.

   (b) Second, **CIRCLE ONLY ONE LETTER** corresponding to the ONE SYSTEM that best represents how MOST bull elk hunting is managed on the land you own.

   [ ] A. Block Management Hunting Access Program
   [ ] B. Non-Block Management hunting without a fee involving mostly hunters who are family/friends
   [ ] C. Non-Block Management hunting without a fee involving mostly hunters who are NOT family/friends
   [ ] D. Outfitting by you as the landowner
   [ ] E. Outfitting by a licensed outfitter other than yourself
   [ ] F. Lease agreement with a non-outfitting business that markets hunting opportunities
   [ ] G. Lease agreement with a hunter or group of hunters
   [ ] H. Access fees (non-lease) charged per hunter or group of hunters

COW ELK HUNTING

14. Does cow elk hunting occur on the land you own? **(check only one)**

   [ ] NO.....**Go to question 17**
   [ ] YES

15. Each year, about how many cow elk hunters hunt on the land you own? _____

16. Below is a list of different management systems that landowners in Montana use to manage hunting on their lands. Using this list, please respond as follows:

   (a) First, **check all systems** that apply to how cow elk hunting is managed on the land you own.

   (b) Second, **CIRCLE ONLY ONE LETTER** corresponding to the ONE SYSTEM that best represents how MOST cow elk hunting is managed on the land you own.

   [ ] A. Block Management Hunting Access Program
   [ ] B. Non-Block Management hunting without a fee involving mostly hunters who are family/friends
   [ ] C. Non-Block Management hunting without a fee involving mostly hunters who are NOT family/friends
   [ ] D. Outfitting by you as the landowner
   [ ] E. Outfitting by a licensed outfitter other than yourself
   [ ] F. Lease agreement with a non-outfitting business that markets hunting opportunities
   [ ] G. Lease agreement with a hunter or group of hunters
   [ ] H. Access fees (non-lease) charged per hunter or group of hunters

Information related to the Variable-Priced Outfitter-Sponsored Nonresident Deer/Elk and Deer Combination Licenses (1996 – 2008)

VARIABLE PRICED OUTFITTER-SPONSORED LICENSES

History: The 1995 Legislature, through HB 195, created variable-priced outfitter sponsored licenses, to be offered and issued for the first time in 1996. Section 87-1-268 says:

> The commission shall annually set fees for outfitter-sponsored Class B-10 and Class B-11 licenses allowed under 87-2-505 and 87-2-510. The fees must be set at a market rate intended to sell as close to but not more than an average of 5,500 Class B-10 licenses and 2,300 Class B-11 licenses each year, calculated over a 5-year period.

12-3-180 ARM: CALCULATION METHOD – VARIABLE PRICED OUTFITTER SPONSORED LICENSES B-10 AND B-11

(1) The commission shall determine the upcoming year's target number of the variable priced outfitter sponsored class B-10 and B-11 licenses using a unit method. The commission will evaluate the number of licenses sold in the previous years within the five year unit of time to determine the number of licenses to be sold in the upcoming license year.

(2) The five year unit of time is self-inclusive. Any under or over sale of licenses in a previous five year unit shall not affect the target number of licenses in the current five year unit. The adjustments to over or under sales of licenses shall be made only within the current five year unit.

(3) The year 2001 is the first year in the first five year unit under this rule, and the commission shall consider data from this year in making its target number calculations.

(4) The target amount of licenses to be sold is 27,500 class B-10 and 11,500 class B-11 within each five year unit.

Overview: Currently we are in the third five year unit, the B-10's oversold by the target of 27,500 licenses by 65 license during the first five year unit and by 170 licenses the second unit. We are preparing for year four and there are currently 9,922 licenses available to sell in the last two years in order to comply with 87-1-268 MCA. The previous years quota was set at 5,000 licenses with a fee of $1,500. We are also the third five-year unit for the B-11's. The B-11's oversold by the target of 11,500 licenses by 279 licenses during the first five-year unit and by 23 licenses the second unit. We are preparing for year four and there are currently 4,060 licenses available to sell in the last two years in order to comply with 87-1-268 MCA. The previous years quota was set at 2,000 licenses with a fee of $1,100.

11/7/2008 hpw

VARIABLE-PRICED LICENSES

(2/6/08)

B-10 Sales - Big Game Combos

Year	Target	Price	Sales at Deadline	Date Sold Out	Net Sales
1996	5,500	$835	5,213	6-May	5,420
1997	5,500	$835	5,127	30-Apr	5,388
1998	5,500	$835	5,331	1-May	5,372
1999	5,500	$835	5,455	16-Mar	5,405
2000	5,600	$835	6,209	Deadline	5,980
2001	5,500	$975	5,719	Deadline	5,539
2002	5,400	$1,100	5,011	41 left on 9/3/02	5,209
2003	5,600	$1,025	4,801	276 left on 9/03	5,324
2004	5,800	$975	'5,321	9-Jun	5,746
2005	5,750	$975	6,010	Deadline	5,852
2006	5,500	$995	6,589	Deadline	6,483
2007	5,000	$1,195	6,064	Deadline	5,876
2008	5,000	$1,500	5,366	Deadline	**5,219**
2009	**4,750**	**$1,500**			
2010					

B-11 Sales - Deer Combos

Year	Target	Price	Sales at Deadline	Date Sold Out	Net Sales
1996	2,300	$515	3,114	Deadline	3,085
1997	2,100	$675	2,395	Deadline	2,365
1998	2,000	$725	1,994	Deadline	1,973
1999	2,000	$745	2,143	Deadline	2,112
2000	1,955	$775	2,304	Deadline	2,256
2001	2,300	$850	2,183	13-Aug	2,254
2002	2,565	$775	2,148	201 left on 9/3/02	2,329
2003	2,300	$775	2,026	2-Sep	2,255
2004	2,300	$775	2,298	March 16th	2,265
2005	2,400	$775	2,458	Deadline	2,420
2006	2,300	$795	2,511	Deadline	2,492
2007	2,200	$845	2,733	Deadline	2,682
2008	2,000	$1,100	2,292	Deadline	**2,266**
2009	**1,800**	**$1,100**			
2010					

HISTORICAL NUMBER OF OUTFITTERS AND GUIDES

YEAR	OUTFITTERS	GUIDES	Hunting Only	Fishing Only	Both	Total Outfitters with Ability to Provide Hunting Services	Total Acerage Where Private Landowners Allow Licensed Outfitters to Operate **
1904	14						
1955	173						
1972	470	662					
1973	456	739					
1974	449	612					
1975	413	550					
1976	404	531					
1977	389	588					
1978	419	720					
1979	430	720					
1980	487	773					
1981	531	851					
1982	613	1018					
1983	564	1004					
1984	563	1086					
1985	588	1276					
1986	604	1202					
1987	602						
1988	678						
1989	605						
1990	653						
1991	695	1567					
1992	676	1641					
1993	674	1700					
1994	754	1805					
1995	808	1717					
1996	771	1861				529	
1997	762	1859				534	
1998	732					532	
1999	747	1799				530	
2000	711	2123				501	
2001	720	1797				497	
2002	722	1818				484	
2003	722	1871				478	6.4
2004	725	1853				471	
2005	738	2018	164	279	295	459	5.4
2006	744	2037	165	280	299	464	
2007	748	2000	162	292	288	450	5.2

1903-1971 THE FEE FOR AN OUTFITTER'S LICENSE WAS $10.00

1972-1982 THE FEE FOR AN OUTFITTER'S LICENSE WAS $50.00 AND A GUIDE'S WAS $15.00

1983-1994 THE FEE FOR AN OUTFITTER'S LICENSE WAS $100.00 AND A GUIDE'S WAS $25.00

1995 THE FEE FOR AN OUTFITTER'S LICENSE WAS $150.00 AND A GUIDE'S WAS $75.00

1996-1999 THE FEE FOR AN OUTFITTER'S LICENSE WAS $235.00 AND A GUIDE'S WAS $75.00

2000-PRESENT THE FEE FOR AN OUTFITTER'S LICENSE IS $300.00 AND A GUIDE'S IS $100.00

List Compiled By The Montana Board of Outfitters Based On Historical Records

** Number shown in millions of acres. Number does not reflect or imply a lease agreement, if the land is exclusive to the outfitter, or if the land is open to public hunting; it only reflects that the landowner gave an outfitter permission to provide services on the private land.

Summary of Research

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Selected Results From a 2008 Survey of Montana Big Game Outfitters Regarding the Variable-Priced Outfitter Sponsored License

RMU Research Summary No. 25

December 2008

Alan Charles & Mike Lewis

Each year, resident and nonresident hunters eagerly await Montana's deer and elk hunting seasons. While there are no limits on the number of resident licenses that may be sold each year, legislatively established limits have been placed on nonresident license sales. Only 17,000 nonresident combination deer/elk (B-10 licenses) and 6,000 nonresident deer (B-11 licenses) may be sold annually. Most of these licenses are made available via a special drawing, and are called "general category" B-10 and B-11 licenses. However, a portion of these licenses are "reserved" for sponsored clients of licensed outfitters. These reserved licenses are called "variable-priced outfitter sponsored" B-10 and B-11 licenses.

Variable-priced outfitter sponsored (VPOS) licenses were legislatively established in 1995, based upon recommendations from the Montana Private Land/Public Wildlife (PL/PW) Advisory Council. Prior to creation of VPOS licenses, outfitter-clients had to compete for a limited number of outfitter-sponsored deer and elk licenses through a random drawing. The rationale for creating the VPOS licenses, as reported in a December 6, 1994 PL/PW Report presented to the Governor and the 1995 Legislature, was to:

- Maintain stability in the outfitting industry.
- Increase competition among outfitters, thus limiting growth in the industry.
- Provide money to fund public hunting access programs while maintaining lower-priced licenses for other nonresident hunters[1].
- Maintain the current level of outfitter clients.

VPOS licenses are licenses guaranteed to those nonresidents willing to pay a market-based price which is set annually. Prices are adjusted to sell an average of 5,500 B-10 and 2,300 B-11 licenses each year over a 5-year period. While nonresidents who draw a general category B-10 or B-11 license may hunt on their own or employ the services of an outfitter if they wish to do so, nonresidents who purchase a VPOS license must hunt with the outfitter who sponsors them or another licensed outfitter.

In the spring of 2008, FWP, at the request of and in partnership with the PL/PW Advisory Council, initiated a survey of licensed big game outfitters in Montana. The purpose of this survey was to determine outfitter impacts and attitudes regarding the VPOS licenses.

[1] At the time of the study, the price of the VPOS B-10 and B-11 licenses were $1,500 and $1,100 respectively. This compared to $643 for the general category B-10 license and $343 for the general category B-11 license. A significant portion of the fees collected from the sale of VPOS licenses is used to help support funding of Montana's Block Management Hunting Access Enhancement Program.

Mailback surveys were administered to 401 licensed outfitters in the state who were eligible to offer outfitted hunting opportunities for deer and/or elk. A total of 190 outfitters completed and returned their survey, resulting in a 47 percent response rate to the survey.

Licensed outfitters were asked how VPOS licenses have impacted their business in the following areas:

1. *CLIENTS...overall number of clients, repeat clients, VPOS license clients, general category license clients.*
2. *SPECIES HUNTED...elk, deer, other species.*
3. *BUSINESS...profitability and stability.*
4. *LANDS HUNTED...private and public.*

Licensed outfitters also were asked about their familiarity and satisfaction with the current system used to administer and set the price of VPOS licenses

RESULTS

CLIENTS

VPOS licenses were first made available in 1996. Keeping that in mind, outfitting businesses were asked to identify trends observed in the number of clients they have served during the past ten years. The following trends, including trends on VPOS license clients (Figure 1), were noted by respondents:

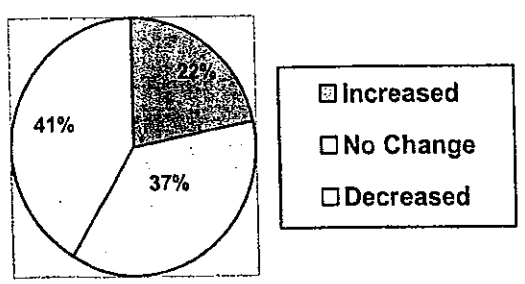
Total number of clients during the past ten years:

- 23.8% of the respondents reported an increase.
- 35.9% of the respondents reported no change.
- 40.3% of the respondents reported a decrease.

Number of repeat clients during the past ten years:

- 24.6% of the respondents reported an increase.
- 40.4% of the respondents reported no change.
- 35.0% of the respondents reported a decrease.

Figure 1. Response to: "Overall, has your number of VPOS license clients changed during the time you have outfitted between 1996 and 2007?"



Eighty percent of the respondents reported they had clients who purchased a VPOS B-10 license in 2007. Those respondents who did not sponsor any clients gave the following reasons:

13.3% Could not sell the hunt due to the cost of the VPOS B-10 license.

3.3% Had an adequate number of clients who utilized the general category B-10 license.

33.3% Had an adequate number of clients who purchased the VPOS B-11 license.

0.0% Utilized the landowner sponsored B-11 license only.

50.0% Other miscellaneous reasons

Fifty-five percent of the respondents reported they had clients who purchased a VPOS B-11 license in 2007. Respondents who did not sponsor any clients gave the following reasons:

28.6% Could not sell the hunt due to the cost of the VPOS B-11 license.

1.8% Had an adequate number of clients who utilized the general category B-11 license.

42.9% Had an adequate number of clients who purchased the VPOS B-10 license.

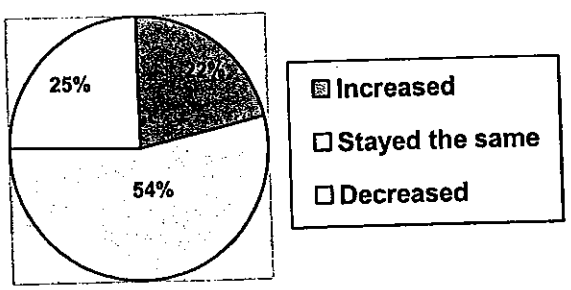
0.0% Utilized the landowner sponsored B-11 license only.

26.8% Other miscellaneous reasons

Aside from VPOS licenses, most nonresident deer elk and deer licenses are made available via a special drawing, and are called "general category" licenses.

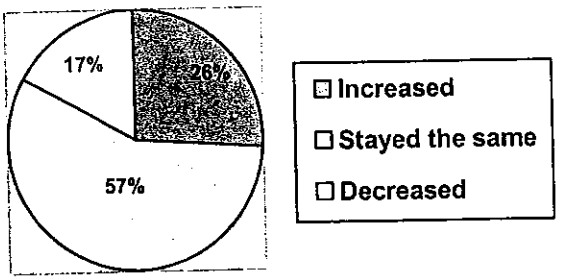
Fifty-two percent of the respondents reported they had clients who utilized the general category B-10 license in 2007. Twenty-five percent of those respondents said that the percentage of their clients that utilize the general category B-10 license has decreased due to the existence of VPOS licenses (Figure 2). On the other hand, 22 percent reported an increase in the percentage of their clients that utilize the general category B-10 license due to the existence of VPOS licenses.

Figure 2. Response to: "Has the percentage of your clients that utilize the general category B-10 license changed due to the existence of the variable-priced outfitter sponsored license?"



Twenty-eight percent of the respondents reported they had clients who utilized the general category B-11 license in 2007. Seventeen percent of those respondents said that the percentage of their clients that utilize the general category B-11 license has decreased due to the existence of VPOS licenses (Figure 3). In contrast, 26 percent reported an increase in the percentage of their clients that utilize the general category B-11 license due to the existence of VPOS licenses.

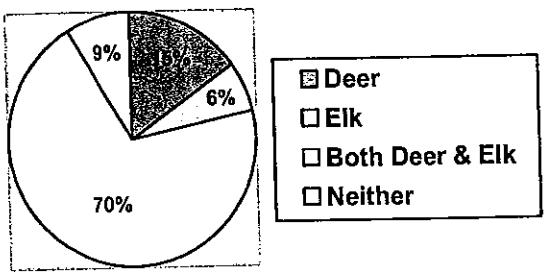
Figure 3. Response to: "Has the percentage of your clients that utilize the general category B-11 license changed due to the existence of the variable-priced outfitter sponsored license?"



Species Hunted

When asked for what species their business outfitted in 2007, 70 percent of the respondents reported both deer and elk (Figure 4).

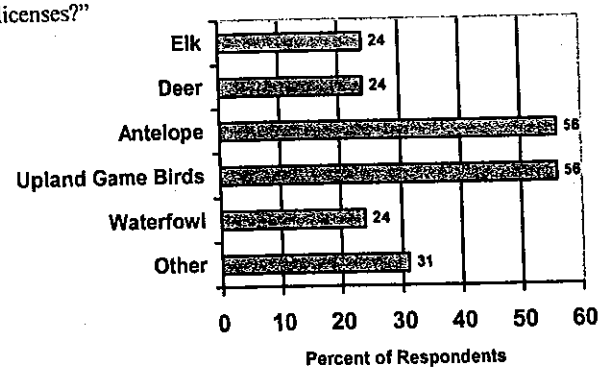
Figure 4. Response to: "Did you outfit hunters for any of the following animals in 2007?"



Nearly 60 percent of the respondents reported their business depends the most on elk outfitting, while 23 percent reported they depend on mule deer the most. Thirteen percent reported they depend on whitetail deer the most. The remaining seven percent reported other game species.

Twenty-five percent of the respondents indicated they have diversified their business to include additional species due to the VPOS licenses (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Response to: "What other species have you included to diversify your business due to the variable-priced outfitter sponsored licenses?"



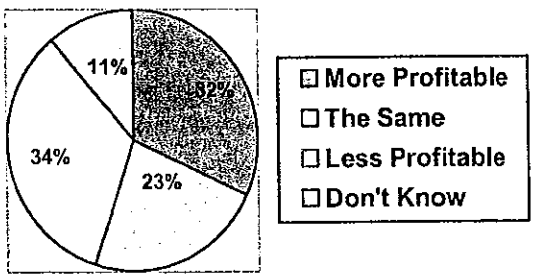
In addition to the above, 33 percent of the respondents reported they have specialized their operation to hunt for a higher quality trophy due to VPOS licenses.

Business

When asked if they are getting the clients they need from the current licensing system, 54 percent of the respondents said "Yes" and 46 percent said "No." Also, 30 percent of the respondents reported that the number of licensed hunting guides they have employed has decreased during the past ten years. However, 19 percent reported an increase in the number of guides employed during that same timeframe. Fifty-one percent reported no change.

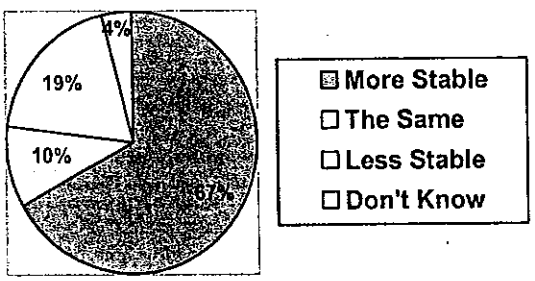
In terms of profitability, 32 percent of the respondents reported that VPOS licenses have made their business more profitable (Figure 6). On the other hand, 34 percent reported their business has become less profitable. Twenty-three percent reported no change in profitability.

Figure 6. Response to: "Has the variable-priced outfitter sponsored license affected your individual business's net profit?"



In terms of stability, 67 percent of the respondents reported that VPOS licenses have made their outfitting business more stable (Figure 7). Nineteen percent reported their business has become less stable. Ten percent reported no change in stability.

Figure 7. Response to: "Has the variable-priced outfitter sponsored license affected the stability of your outfitting business?"



Lands Hunted

Survey respondents responded as follows when asked, "Which of the following land ownerships do you use for your outfitting business?"

48.4% Private (self-owned)
62.0% Private (leased)
54.9% U.S. Forest Service
41.8% Bureau of Land Management
45.1% State land
6.0% Other

Only 15 percent of the respondents think the VPOS license has affected the amount of private land available for their outfitting business.

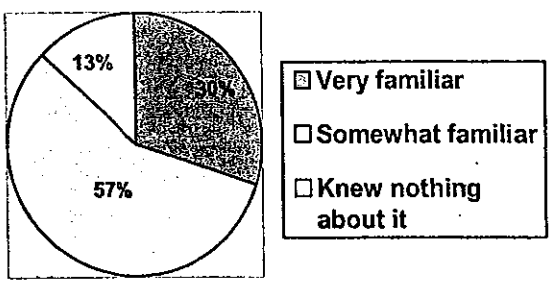
Twelve percent of the respondents indicated that the number of acres of **private land they lease** has increased during the past ten years. On the other hand, 21 percent reported the number of private land acres they lease has decreased during that same time span. Forty-four percent reported no change, and for 23 percent of the respondents the question was not applicable.

Eight percent of the respondents reported that the number of acres of **public land on which they outfit** has increased during the past ten years. Conversely, 10 percent reported the number of public land acres on which they outfit has decreased during that same time span. Sixty-seven percent reported no change, and for 15 percent of the respondents the question was not applicable.

Familiarity & Satisfaction with the Current System Used to Administer and Set the Price of VPOS Licenses

Currently, by statute, the FWP Commission annually sets the price of VPOS licenses based upon recommendations of a committee consisting of two outfitters, two sportspersons, and one FWP Commissioner. When asked how familiar they are with this system, 30 percent of the respondents indicated they were "very familiar" (Figure 8). Nearly 60 percent reported they were "somewhat familiar" with this system. Thirteen percent indicated they knew nothing about it.

Figure 8. Response to: "How familiar are you with the current system used to annually set the price of the variable-priced outfitter sponsored licenses?"



Only 25 percent of the respondents reported they were "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with the current system used to annually set the price of VPOS licenses. Sixty-three percent indicated they were "somewhat dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied." Twelve percent were neither satisfied or dissatisfied.

Only a third of the respondents (34 percent) reported they were "satisfied" or "highly satisfied" with the overall FWP administration of the VPOS license sales process. Forty-one percent were "dissatisfied" or "highly dissatisfied." Twenty-five percent were neither satisfied or dissatisfied.

DISCUSSION

Since 1996, the number of licensed hunting outfitters has decreased, with Montana Board of Outfitters (MBO) licensing 529 hunting outfitters in 1996 and 450 hunting outfitters in 2007.

Although accurate data documenting the amount of private land used by licensed hunting outfitters was not available from MBO until 2003, according to MBO the amount of private land where licensed outfitters are authorized to outfit has decreased from 6.4 million acres in 2003 to 5.2 million acres in 2007.

Since 1996, the sale of VPOS licenses has generated more than 50 million dollars that have been used to fund the majority of expenses associated with the Block Management Program, a private land public hunting access program which was enhanced in 1995 based upon recommendations from the PL/PW Advisory Council.

Also since 1996, the number of nonresident hunters purchasing VPOS licenses has remained relatively constant, with an average of 5,523 B-10 and 2,331 B-11 licenses being sold annually during the time period 1996-2005. Because the system used to sell these licenses allows for annual fluctuations in price and numbers sold to achieve a 5-year average of licenses sold, in some years there have been more or less than the average number of licenses sold. The current five-year period began with the 2006 license year.

The intent of this survey, conducted in 2008, was to gain input from members of the outfitting industry that could help determine outfitter impacts and attitudes regarding the VPOS license, particularly as they may relate to how the license has affected outfitting business stability and profitability, the clients of hunting outfitters, the land where outfitted hunting occurs, and the animals hunted.

While the data would suggest there is general support among hunting outfitters for some type of guaranteed license system, there also appears to be widespread concern regarding the current high price of the licenses and the impact that may be having on the type of client purchasing the license ("blue collar workers" being replaced by "rich people") and ("repeat clients who come back year after year being replaced with clients who only hunt one or every several years"). The data also indicates that outfitters who operate on mostly public lands feel they are affected differently by the current system of VPOS licenses than outfitters who operate mostly on private land.

Data gathered from questions asking what system of license issuance hunting outfitters preferred (previous, current, or something new), and what could be done to make the overall system work better, identified several general themes or similar ideas, as well as individual and often disparate suggestions. Among the general themes were things like "allocate the licenses based upon a percentage of past documented use," "use a system of outfitter allocation like that used in Idaho," "create separate pools of licenses for public land outfitters and private land outfitters," and "stabilize the prices of VPOS licenses for some period longer than just one year."

Overall, based upon the results of this survey, it appears that while some outfitters have fared better or worse under the current licensing system, the majority of outfitters seem to have continued to conduct business much as they did before this license system was adopted. Some outfitters have modified their businesses to incorporate new hunting opportunities, adapted pricing of hunts in different ways to incorporate or otherwise compensate for increased costs of the license, and attempted to market hunts to hunters who purchase licenses other than just the VPOS license.

Although many outfitters cited dissatisfaction with both the overall FWP administration of the VPOS license sales process and the current system used to annually set the price of the VPOS licenses, it was not clear from the responses how much of this dissatisfaction was directly related to the actual prices of the license versus the lack of familiarity with the current system or other factors.

Results of this survey will be provided to the PL/PW Advisory Council, MBO, the Montana Outfitters and Guides Association, FWP, and members of the public and the legislature as one tool for use by these groups and individuals to determine how this particular license system is functioning in terms of the intent behind creating the license, and the impacts it has had over the past 10 years.

About the Authors

Alan Charles, Coordinator, Landowner/Sportsman Relations, Field Services Division, FWP, Helena, Montana.

Michael S. Lewis, Human Dimensions Specialist, Responsive Management Unit of FWP, Helena, Montana.

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Contact the Responsive Management Unit of FWP by phone at (406) 444-4758.

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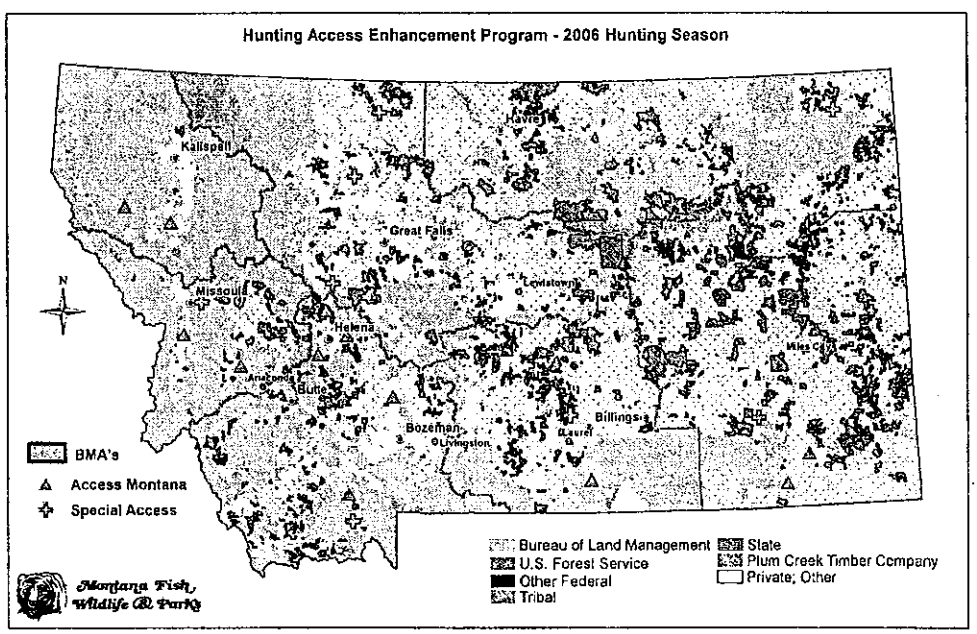
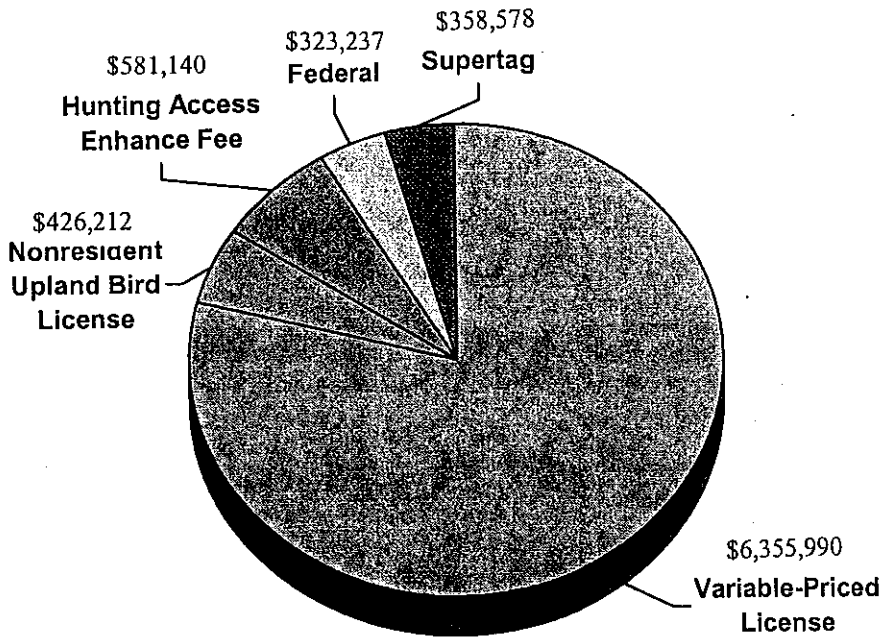
HUNTING ACCESS ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM REPORT



(Block Management, Access Montana, Special Access Projects)

HUNTING ACCESS ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM – FY08 REVENUE



Variable-Priced Outfitter-Sponsored Nonresident Big Game Combination Licenses

A portion of the revenue generated by the sale of variable-priced nonresident hunting licenses set aside for clients of licensed outfitters is used to fund the hunting-access programs. Prices are set at market rates to ensure an average annual sale of 5500 Big Game Combination Licenses and 2300 Deer Combination Licenses. The annual average sale is calculated over a 5-year period.

Nonresident Upland Game Bird License

Effective 2000 license year, nonresident upland game bird license fee increased to $110, with $55 earmarked hunting access enhancement programs.

Resident/Nonresident Hunting Access Enhancement Fee

Effective 2002 license year, hunting access enhancement free created ($2 resident/$10 nonresident), with revenue earmarked for hunting access enhancement program.

Supertag

Effective 2006 license year, supertag created- lottery with unlimited chances ($5 each) for Supertag – 5 Supertags – 1 each for elk, deer, moose, sheep, goat; 2007 – antelope, mountain lion, bison added to list of Supertag options;

Federal

PR excise tax dollars – amount varies annually;

Program Name
Hunting Access Enhancement Program
(includes Block Management, Access Montana, and Special Access Projects)

Program Manager
Alan Charles, Coordinator, Landowner/Sportsman Relations

FY08 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES:

Landowner Contracts:	$4,190,271
Landowner/Hunter Services:	$1,634,876
Enforcement (6 FTE):	$363,679
Administrative Overhead:	$467,435
TOTAL :	**$6,656,261**

Landowner Contract Payments: Under statutory authority (87-1-267 MCA), "Benefits will be provided to offset potential impacts associated with public hunting access, including but not limited to those associated with general ranch maintenance, conservation efforts, weed control, fire protection, liability insurance, roads, fences, and parking area maintenance." The current system, articulated in 12.4.206 ARM, provides for cooperators to receive a $250 annual enrollment payment, and up to $10 per hunter day in annual impact payments, with optional 5% additional weed management payment. Total annual payment may not exceed $12,000.

Landowner/Hunter Services:

- Approximately 45 seasonal BMA technicians are hired each hunting season to help set up, sign, patrol, and dismantle BMAs;

- Regional program coordinators negotiate contracts, produce informational materials, supervise seasonal staff, and respond to the needs of hunters and landowners.

- Program materials such as signs, sign-in boxes, rosters, permission slips, maps, and tabloids, and personal services and benefits for program staff are funded through program operations budgets. For the 2007 hunting season, nearly 150,000 maps, 34,000 regional BMA tabloids, and over 25,000 BMA signs were printed and distributed.

- Included in this category are expenditures for Access Montana projects (public land access) and Special Access projects (local projects focused on a specific species).

Enforcement (6 FTE):
A total of 6 full-time warden positions are funded through Hunting Access Enhancement Program sources. This 6 FTE is allocated statewide to game wardens who patrol BMAs for hunter compliance of landowner and FWP rules. Game wardens also assist with BMA contract negotiations, delivery of BMA materials, and landowner/FWP contacts.

Administrative Overhead
All FWP programs are assessed an administrative overhead charge, which is used to pay for various indirect costs associated with support functions primarily performed by staff in the Administration & Finance and Department Management divisions. Examples of such support functions include accounting, budgeting, property, personnel, administrative support, and data processing services. Administrative overhead charges are assessed on accounts based upon a percentage of overall expenditures.

Weed Management Payments: SB 326 (effective March 1, 2000) authorized FWP to offer up to 5% in additional incentive payments to Block Management Cooperators who agree to use those payments for specific weed management activities on their lands. For FY05, a total of $171,140 was paid specifically for use in weed management activities on BMAs. In past years, of landowners who elected to receive weed management payments:

34% indicated their intent to hire contractors for weed management measures;
86% indicated their intent to purchase herbicide or other chemicals;
6% indicated their intent to donate the payment to a county weed board;
3% indicated their intent to lease or rent livestock for weed control;
4% indicated their intent to implement some type of weed education;

*Some landowners indicated they intended to use the payment for multiple uses.

ENROLLMENT STATUS
Potential new cooperators are identified through various means, including individuals contacting FWP formally and asking to be placed on a waiting list for future enrollment consideration, individuals contacting FWP field staff and discussing possible future enrollment in the program, and FWP identifying potential candidates in high-priority areas or offering high-priority hunting opportunities and making initial contacts to identify potential interest in future enrollment. At the end of the 2007 hunting season, regional program coordinators reported approximately 9 potential new cooperators could not be enrolled due to lack of funding.

BLOCK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM REPORT (1996 – 2008)

- PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION
- PROGRAM FUNDING
- PROGRAM EVALUATION

PROGRAMS FOR HUNTER MANAGEMENT AND HUNTER ACCESS

< The department may establish within the Block Management Program programs of landowner assistance that encourage public access to private and public lands for the purposes of hunting. **(87-1-265 through 87-1-269 MCA)**

< Participation is voluntary, based on agreements between the landowner and FWP.

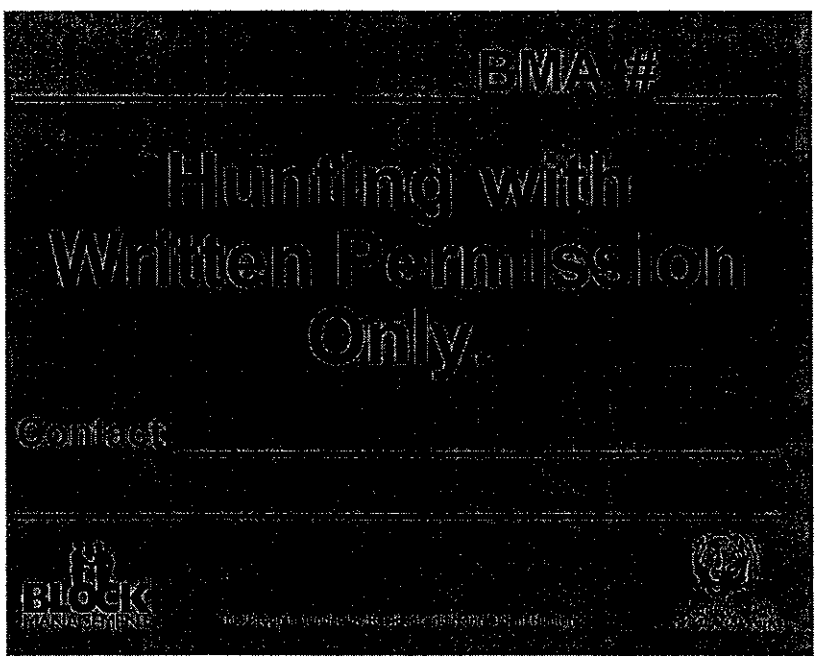
< Recreational liability protection (as described in 70-1-201 MCA) is extended to cooperators participating in the program.

< A landowner participating in the program may receive benefits, including compensation up to $12,000 annually, for providing public hunting access to enrolled land.

< Benefits will be provided to offset impacts associated with public hunting access including but not limited to general ranch maintenance, conservation efforts, weed control, fire protection, liability insurance, and road/parking-area maintenance.

< Enrolled resident and nonresident landowners may receive a non-transferable resident Sportsman's license or nonresident Big Game Combination license, as applicable.

< Licenses granted in this program will not affect the quota of 11,500 nonresident Big Game Combination Licenses.



2008 Block Management Program Statistics:

- **1,256 Cooperators; 924 (BMAs); 8,449,162, Acres;**

REGIONAL STATISTICS

R1: 9 Cooperators; 11 BMAs; 762,558 acres (majority is corporate timber land);

R2: 125 Cooperators; 62 BMAs; 742,884 acres;

R3: 106 Cooperators; 89 BMAs; 702,230 acres;

R4: 208 Cooperators; 121 BMAs; 1,436,008 acres;

R5: 186 Cooperators; 158 BMAs; 816,243 acres;

R6: 283 Cooperators; 179 BMAs; 1,101,150 acres;

R7: 339 Cooperators; 304 BMAs; 2,743,454 acres;

2007 Block Management Program - Season Averages

a) average number of acres per cooperator..... 6,473
b) average number of hunter days per cooperator.....362
c) average landowner contract payment.....$3,274
d) average hunter use (resident / nonresident).... 84% res. / 16% nonres.

BLOCK MANAGEMENT SUMMARY – (1996 – 2007)

Year	Total Cooperators	Total BMAs	Total Acres	Total Hunter Days	Total Payments to Landowners
1996	882	796	7,131,119	345,833	$2,757,103
1997	937	744	7,545,606	364,090	$2,571,358
1998	916	719	7,259,606	297,440	$2,541,863
1999	930	720	7,147,023	294,784	$2,545,761
2000	1004	766	7,696,500	326,180	$2,792,854
2001	1082	857	8,653,420	348,524	$3,200,561
2002	1150	921	8,809,758	378,444	$3,556,451
2003	1245	986	8,761,893	408,093	$3,897,189
2004	1262	981	8,767,387	410,924	$3,943,073
2005	1237	935	8,528,241	421,636	$3,917,848
2006	1244	939	8,294,611	436,267	$4,091,161
2007	1256	920	8,106,504	442,258	$4,123,583

BLOCK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
Mission, Goals, Enrollment Criteria & Process

Mission Statement

Block Management is a cooperative, adaptable program designed to maintain Montana's hunting heritage and traditions by providing landowners with tangible benefits to encourage public hunting access to private land, promote partnerships between landowners, hunters, and FWP, and help manage wildlife resources and the impacts of public hunting.

Goals

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT
1) Program supports state & regional wildlife program objectives.
2) Program supports other FWP wildlife programs.

HUNTER OPPORTUNITY
1) Program maintains current opportunities and expands new opportunities.
2) Hunter pressure is managed at levels satisfactory to landowners and hunters.

LANDOWNER RELATIONS
1) Program recognizes landowner contributions to maintaining wildlife resource.
2) Program establishes long-term positive relationships with hunters/landowners/FWP.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY
1) Program is fiscally responsible and accountable.
2) Program maintains a measurable, acceptable level of satisfaction among participants.
3) Ongoing structured program review maintains program adaptability.

PARTICIPANT EDUCATION/OWNERSHIP
1) Program fosters ownership among program participants.
2) Program fosters responsible hunter behavior.
3) Program increases hunter respect for private property and landowner concerns.

Regional Block Management Program Enrollment Process (2007)

1) Existing cooperators in each region will be evaluated through criteria and a process that:
   a) Identifies them as ineligible for re-enrollment;
   b) Identifies them as eligible for re-evaluation and equal consideration with new enrollment and other re-evaluated re-enrollment candidates;
   c) Identifies them as eligible for automatic re-enrollment;

2) The regional block management coordinator shall use a BMA Property RE-ENROLLMENT WORKSHEET to circulate a list of cooperators who were enrolled during the previous year to the appropriate field warden and field biologist for input. If applicable staff, including the program coordinator, agree that a cooperator should be automatically enrolled, no further action is required beyond having the regional coordinator maintain copies of the completed Automatic RE-ENROLLMENT Review Report in the current file for documentation of the re-enrollment decision.

3) Each Regional Supervisor will appoint a committee (which includes, at a minimum, the regional block management coordinator and at least one member each from the Wildlife and Enforcement divisions) to make annual Block Management Program regional enrollment and re-enrollment (if not identified for automatic re-enrollment) recommendations, which the Regional Supervisor will ultimately approve or disapprove in writing.

4) All new enrollment and re-evaluated re-enrollment candidates will be evaluated and ranked through a process which utilizes the ENROLLMENT Evaluation Form and BMA Property Application Form to document criteria and related information.

5) The Regional Block Management Enrollment Committee shall evaluate all previous BMA properties designated for "re-evaluation and ranking with new properties" and any new properties offered for enrollment utilizing these forms:
   - BMA Property RE-ENROLLMENT Worksheets
   - BMA Property ENROLLMENT Application Forms
   - BMA Property ENROLLMENT Evaluation Forms
   - ENROLLMENT Decision Report

6) All evaluations will be recorded on the appropriate form, including the names of FWP staff who provided input relevant to the evaluation and recommendations. Completed Decision Reports will be approved and signed by the Regional Supervisor. Original copies of signed forms and related materials will be maintained by the regional Block Management Coordinator, with copies of the signed ENROLLMENT Decision Reports sent to the Field Services office in Helena, care of the Coordinator of Landowner/Sportsman Relations.

Region _____ BMA Property

ENROLLMENT Evaluation Form

Instructions: *This form is to be used to evaluate all new properties offered for enrollment AND any existing BMA properties which have been designated for re-evaluation and ranking with new enrollment candidates. Scores and comments developed in completion of this form will be used by the Regional Block Management Enrollment Committee to determine which properties will be enrolled, and in what order of priority.*

Landowner Name: _____ BMA acreage (private & isolated public)_____

BMA/Ranch Name: _____ General Location: _____

1. Is this new property offered for enrollment _____ (OR) existing BMA property being re-evaluated _____?

2. What is/are the PRIMARY hunting opportunity(ies) available on this property:

   ELK M/WTDEER ANT UGBD PHST TRKY WTRFWL BEAR OTHER:_____

Criteria to be considered is making enrollment decisions	Low	Med	High
What is the level of public demand in the hunting district or general area for the type of hunter opportunity offered with this property? *Explain:*	1	2	3
What is the level of FWP need for the type of hunter opportunity offered with this property, as it relates to regional management objectives or regional access strategies? *Explain:*	1	2	3
How does this property rank in terms of size, land composition, and habitat type/quality necessary to provide the primary hunter opportunity offered with this property? *Explain:*	1	2	3
What is the potential for high levels of hunter satisfaction, based on opportunity offered, proposed levels of hunter use, and proposed methods of hunter management? *Explain:*	1	2	3
Additive Criteria	**NO**		**YES**
Can enrollment of this property potentially address an existing game damage problem? *Explain:*	0		1
Will enrollment provide access to adjacent public land with limited/no public access? *Explain:*	0		1
Will enrollment provide access to private land previously closed to free public access? *Explain:*	0		1
Will enrollment of this property add acreage to an existing BMA? *Explain:*	0		1
Will enrollment provide some kind of special opportunity that is in high demand? *Explain:*	0		1
Will property be enrolled without any restriction on season length or sex/species of game? *Explain:*	0		1
TOTAL SCORE			

1. Where does this property rank in terms of enrollment priority? **Low Med High**

2. Based on regional budget and enrollment process, is this property assigned a sequential number (optional) to identify where, in order of priority, it ranks? **Yes / No** **#**_____

BLOCK MANAGEMENT

Region _____ LANDOWNER RE-ENROLLMENT CHECKLIST

Dear Cooperator (personalized with name),

Your Block Management contract is due for renewal, and we hope you will consider re-enrolling again this year. To help us understand how the program is working for you, please complete this brief survey and return it to the regional FWP office.

The Block Management Program is designed to help landowners manage public hunting on private and isolated public land under the landowner's control. **Hunter management** is the foundation of the program. Various benefits are offered to landowners who enroll, including compensation and services to offset potential impacts associated with public hunting. The primary goal of the program is to help you, the landowner, manage hunting at levels and in ways that meet your needs and the needs of the Department, in terms of managing area game populations and providing public hunting opportunities.

With that in mind...

1) What are your goals for enrolling in the program, and are those goals being met?

- Goal 1: _____ Yes / No

  If "No," what would you like to see done differently? _____

  _____

- Goal 2: _____ Yes / No

  If "No," what would you like to see be done differently? _____

  _____

2) Are you satisfied with the number of hunters and hunter days on your BMA? Yes / No

   If "No," what would you like to see done differently? _____

   _____

3) Are you satisfied with the way hunter activities are currently being managed? Yes / No

   If "No," what would you like to see done differently? _____

   _____

4) Are you satisfied with the way game numbers are currently being managed? Yes / No

   If "No," what would you like to see done differently? _____

   _____

5, Are you satisfied with the current benefits, to include compensation, license, FWP seasonal staff help? Yes / No

   If "No," what would you like to see done differently? _____

   _____

HUNTER HARVEST INFORMATION

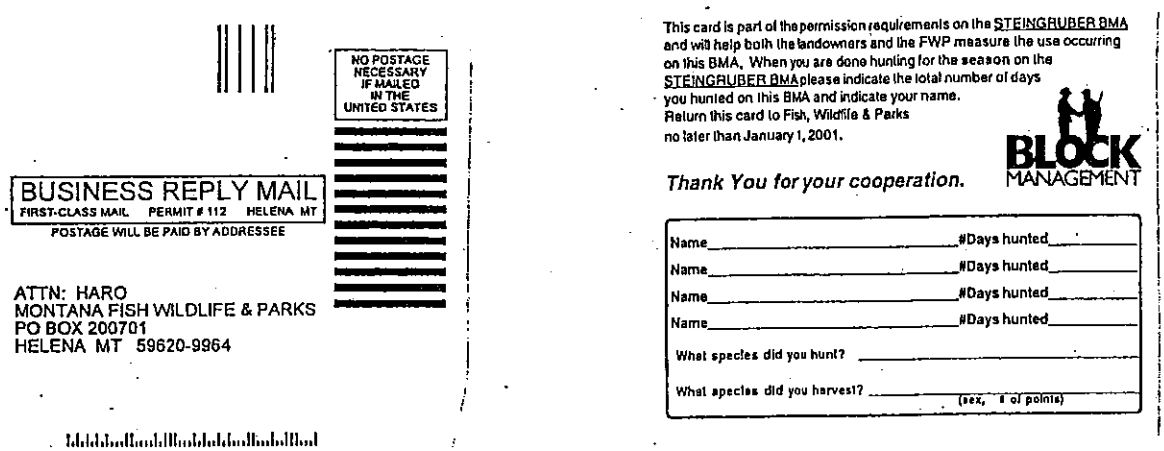
While hunter harvest data is generally not collected for specific, individual Block Management Areas (BMAs), a variety of data collection techniques are used to assess hunter harvest on lands enrolled in the Block Management Program. Listed below are some examples of some of these techniques. Also listed are references to other portions of this report which contain harvest information.

Hunter Surveys:

Example: Region 1 (Northeast Montana) – calculates the success rate for individual hunting districts, and subsequently calculates the success rates for regional Block Management Areas based upon the ratio of BMA land within a district to overall land contained within that same district. For the 1999 hunting season, harvest estimates indicate that at least 1,944 white-tailed and mule deer, 515 elk, and 85 bear were harvested on Region 1 BMAs.

Post-Paid Permission Cards:

Example: Some BMAs utilize a post-paid card which grants permission to hunt the BMA for the entire season, with return of the card identifying amount of time spent hunting the BMA and harvest success. Typical return rates range from 20% - 40%, providing for rough estimates of harvest and BMA use (typically, these type of contract payments are based on several years' average use, and further accounted for by periodic patroller reports of BMA use. Shown below is an example of a card used for a Region 3 (southwest Montana) BMA:


NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT # 112 HELENA MT
POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

ATTN: HARO
MONTANA FISH WILDLIFE & PARKS
PO BOX 200701
HELENA MT 59620-9964

This card is part of the permission requirements on the STEINGRUBER BMA and will help both the landowners and the FWP measure the use occurring on this BMA. When you are done hunting for the season on the STEINGRUBER BMA please indicate the total number of days you hunted on this BMA and indicate your name.
Return this card to Fish, Wildlife & Parks no later than January 1, 2001.

BLOCK MANAGEMENT

Thank You for your cooperation.

Name_____ #Days hunted_____
Name_____ #Days hunted_____
Name_____ #Days hunted_____
Name_____ #Days hunted_____
What species did you hunt? _____
What species did you harvest? _____ (sex, # of points)

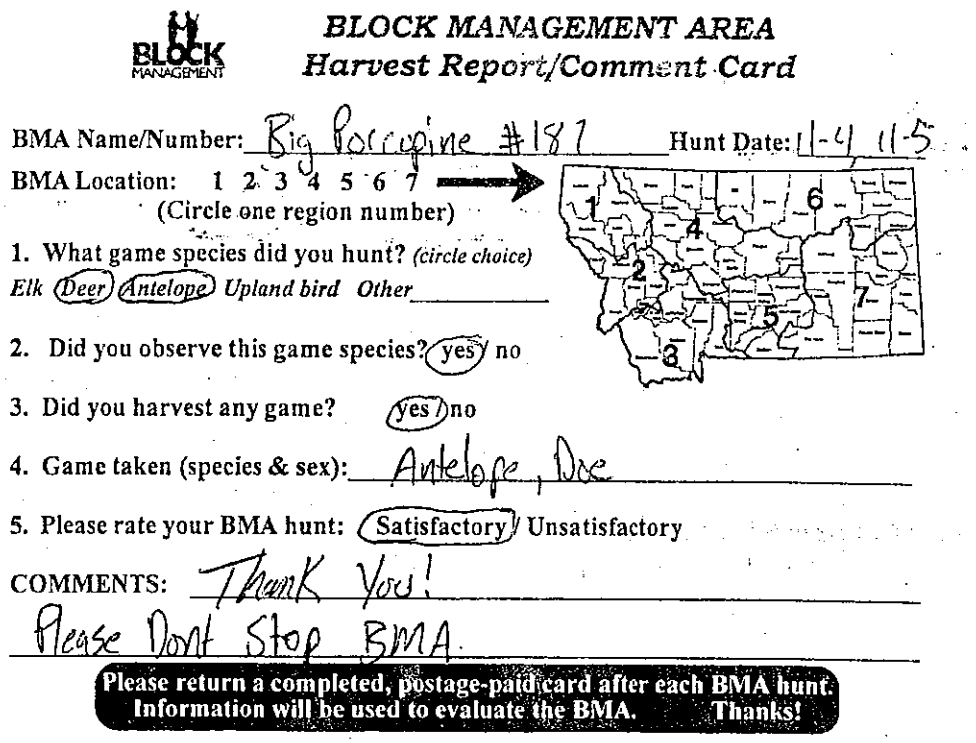
BMA Technician/Patroller Reports:

Example: Some BMAs have BMA technicians assigned to that specific BMA. One of the technician's duties is to interview hunters and record information. An example of a patroller's report for the 1999 hunting season, from a Region 4 (north-central Montana) BMA, follows: "During the period _____, I interviewed 291 hunters, consisting of 89% adult males, 5% adult females, and 7% juveniles high school age or younger. I recorded harvest of 14 mule deer, 13 white-tailed deer, and 6 elk during this period. I recorded only harvested big game, and made no record of upland birds or waterfowl harvested on this BMA."

2007 Season
Hunter Comment Cards/Daily Sign-In Coupons

A total of 17,852 hunter comment cards were received for the 2007 hunting season. These cards were voluntarily returned, and answered 3 specific questions.

COMMENT CARD SAMPLE



BLOCK MANAGEMENT

BLOCK MANAGEMENT AREA
Harvest Report/Comment Card

BMA Name/Number: Big Porcupine #187 Hunt Date: 11-4 11-5

BMA Location: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(Circle one region number)

1. What game species did you hunt? *(circle choice)*
*Elk Deer Antelope Upland bird Other*_____

2. Did you observe this game species? yes no

3. Did you harvest any game? yes no

4. Game taken (species & sex): Antelope, Doe

5. Please rate your BMA hunt: Satisfactory Unsatisfactory

COMMENTS: Thank You!
Please Dont Stop BMA.

Please return a completed, postage-paid card after each BMA hunt. Information will be used to evaluate the BMA. Thanks!

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Total received: 17,582

Total hunters observing game they were hunting:	10,319	58%
Total hunters who bagged game:	5,576	31%
Total hunters who rated BMA experience satisfactory:	14,619	82%

NOTE: These cards are used to evaluate individual BMAs, monitor regional, area, and program trends, and measure general hunter satisfaction with their BMA experience. Postage-paid hunter comment cards were included in every regional tabloid distributed to hunters. Hunter comment card information is also incorporated into daily sign-in coupons used extensively in FWP regions 4, 5, and 6, at Type I BMAs where hunters administered their own permission.

Hunter Check Stations:

Example: In Region 5 (south-central Montana), harvest information gathered at biological game check stations is recorded by landowner and land status. This information is used to develop and evaluate management strategies for regional hunting districts. An example of the kind of data produced during the 1999 hunting season appears below:

Antelope habitat in HD 513
25% BMA
75% private with limited accessible public land

Block Management Harvest	Other Lands Harvest
24% of the antelope bucks	29% of the antelope bucks
31% of the antelope doe/fawns	16% of the antelope doe/fawns
55% of the total antelope harvest	45% of the total antelope harvest

Antelope Hunting District 513

Block Management Harvest	Other Lands Harvest
60% of antelope bucks = 1.5 years old	40% of the antelope bucks = 1.5 years old
40% of antelope bucks > 1.5years old	60% of antelope bucks > 1.5 years old
75% of antelope fawns, both sexes*	25% antelope fawns, both sexes*
65% antelope does, all ages	35% antelope does, all ages

*Small sample size – total of 4 animals

Daily Sign-In Coupons:

On many BMAs, hunters sign themselves in daily, using a two-part coupon. One portion is deposited in a sign-in box, the other is carried by the hunter as proof of permission. After the hunt, the hunter may annotate harvest information on his portion and deposit it upon departure, providing a record of game seen, game harvested, and hunter satisfaction. For the 2001 hunting season, a total of 10,596 Daily Sign-In Coupons were returned. For more complete program data compiled from these cards, see subsequent section entitled "2001 Season Hunter Harvest/Comment Cards." Listed below is an example of data collected from a Region 6 (northeast Montana) BMA:

From 12 Malta area BMAs, 3,340 daily permission coupons were issued.
Of these, 851 (26%) were returned with annotated data.
Of the 851 hunters who returned cards, 604 (71%) observed game.
Of the 851 hunters who returned cards, 215 (25%) bagged game.
Of the 851 hunters who returned cards, 695 (82%) rated BMA experience "Satisfactory."

Note: This information was compiled for each specific BMA which utilized daily sign-in coupons, providing a "hunters' report card" of BMA experiences.

Summary of Research

Block Management Landowner and Hunter Evaluations: Survey Highlights from 2003 and Comparisons to 1996 Surveys

Alan Charles and Michael S. Lewis

May 2004

RMU Research Summary No. 13

Montana's Block Management Program was established in 1985 amid concerns that public hunting access to private land was diminishing. Administered by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), the program has three main goals:

- To maintain public hunting access to private and isolated public land.
- To help landowners manage public hunting on lands under their control, and provide benefits to offset the impacts of those public hunting activities, like increased road maintenance, noxious weed control, time spent dealing with hunters, etc.
- To help FWP accomplish its mission of managing wildlife resources. In a state where nearly 65 percent of the land is privately owned, FWP depends on public hunting to manage populations of deer, elk, and other game animals.

A total of 1,251 landowners were enrolled in the program in 2003, comprising 8.8 million acres of Block Management Areas (BMAs) across the state. Approximately 80,000 people hunted a BMA in 2003 (which resulted in approximately 400,000 hunter days on all BMAs combined).

To measure the success of the program, FWP periodically conducts landowner and hunter evaluations. Two separate surveys were conducted following the 2003 hunting season:

1. **Landowner Evaluation.** All landowners enrolled in the program in 2003 were sent a survey by mail.
2. **Hunter Evaluation.** A randomly selected sample of 1,250 people who hunted on a BMA(s) in 2003 were sent a survey by mail.

These two surveys were replications of similar surveys conducted in 1996 (Charles, 1997). Hence, for the most part, results obtained from the 2003 surveys are directly comparable to 1996 survey results.

This research summary highlights the key findings from the 2003 landowner and hunter evaluations. Wherever possible, survey results obtained in 2003 are compared to those results obtained in 1996.

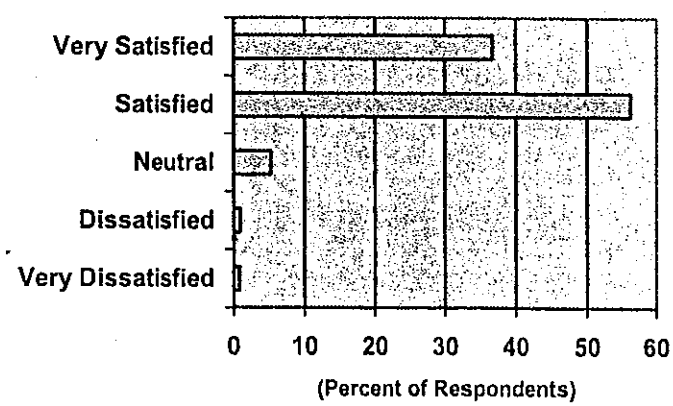
EXCELLENT RESPONSE TO BOTH SURVEYS

Overall, a 73 percent response rate was achieved from the landowner survey. A 64 percent response rate was achieved from the hunter survey. The response rates achieved for both surveys are considered to be very high for a mailback survey of this type.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2003 LANDOWNER EVALUATION

When asked how satisfied they were with the overall Block Management Program, 93 percent of the landowners who responded to the survey reported they were satisfied or very satisfied (see Figure 1). This compares to 80 percent in 1996.

Figure 1. Response to: "How satisfied are you with the overall Block Management Program?" (2003 Landowner Evaluation)

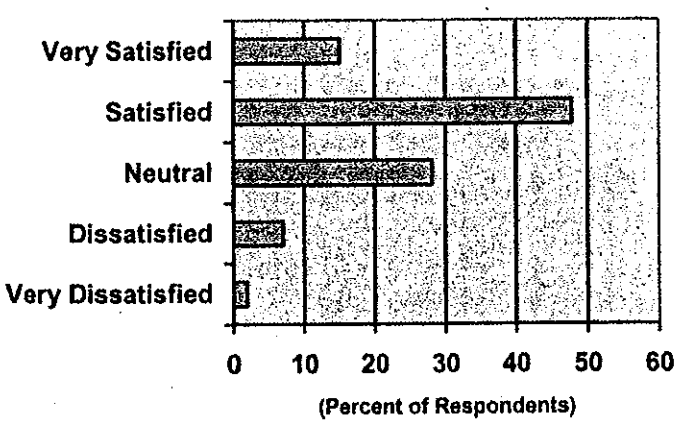


BLOCK MANAGEMENT

PUBLIC ACCESS • PRIVATE LAND

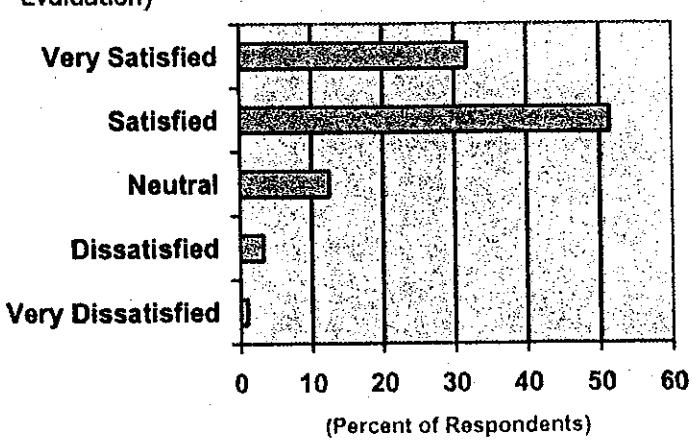
Most of the landowners (79 percent) reported the Block Management Program is an important or very important way for them to manage game numbers on their BMA(s). Related to this, 63 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the results of the program in terms of managing game numbers on their BMA(s) in 2003 (see Figure 2). This compares to 60 percent of the respondents in 1996.

Figure 2. Response to: "How satisfied were you with the results of the Block Management Program in managing game numbers on your BMA(s)?" (2003 Landowner Evaluation)



Almost all of the landowners (90 percent) also indicated that the Block Management Program is an important or very important way for them to manage hunter activities. Related to this, 83 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the results of the program in terms of managing hunter activities on their BMA(s) in 2003 (see Figure 3), and 81 percent were satisfied with the number of hunters who hunted on their BMA(s). Furthermore, 91 percent rated hunter behavior on their BMA(s) as being good or very good in 2003. In 1996, 77 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the program in terms of managing hunter activities.

Figure 3. Response to: "How satisfied were you with the results of the Block Management Program in terms of managing hunter activities?" (2003 Landowner Evaluation)



"Block Management helps preserve Montana's hunting heritage and traditions."

--Jeff Hagener, Director of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Of note, 81 percent of the landowners who completed and returned a survey for the 2003 season reported that they believe hunter behavior has improved or greatly improved as a result of the Block Management Program. This is a five percent increase from 1996.

Also, 64 percent of the landowners reported that their relationship with hunters has improved or greatly improved as a result of their participation in the program. That's a three percent increase from 1996. Less than two percent of the landowners in 2003 reported that their relationship with hunters has deteriorated or greatly deteriorated as a result of the program.

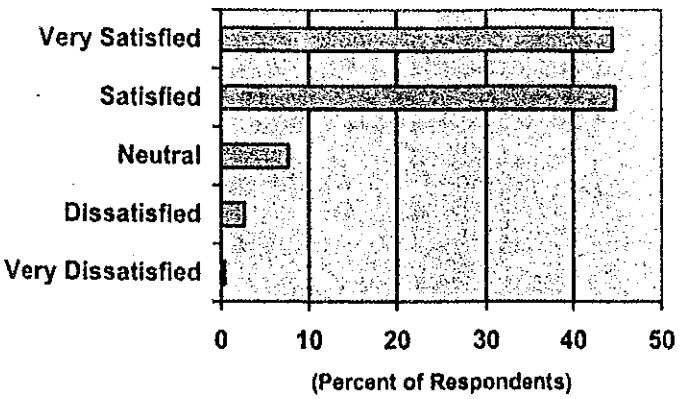
In terms of the compensation they received for enrolling in the program, 79 percent of the landowners responding to the survey reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the total compensations they received for the 2003 hunting season. Less than seven percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. In 1996, 75 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their total compensation.

Of the landowners enrolled in 2003 who expressed an opinion, 99 percent said they plan on continuing their participation in the Block Management Program for the 2004 hunting season.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2003 HUNTER EVALUATION

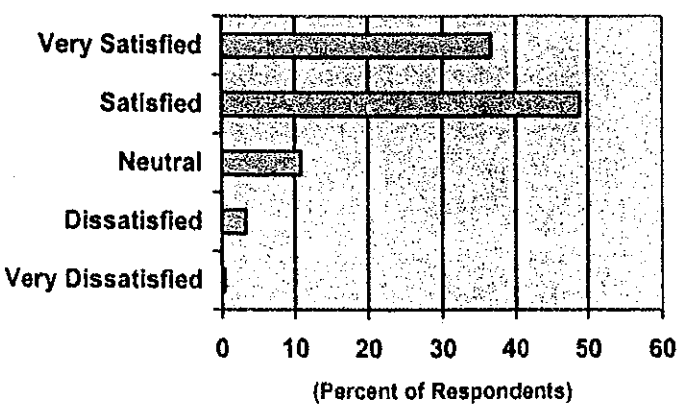
When asked how satisfied they were with the Block Management Program this past fall (2003), 89 percent of the hunters who responded to the survey reported they were satisfied or very satisfied (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Response to: "Overall, how satisfied were you with the Block Management Program this past fall?" (2003 Hunter Evaluation)

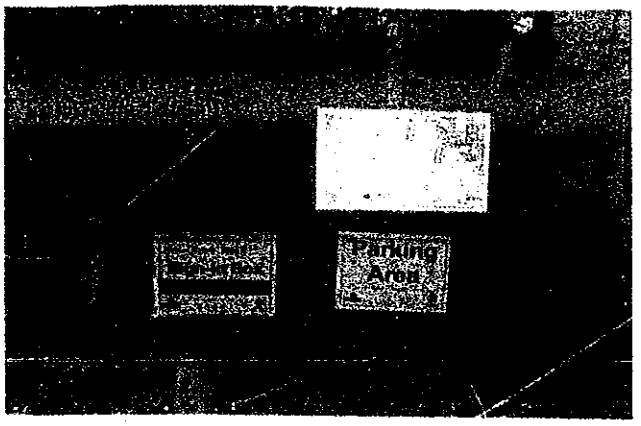


Furthermore, 86 percent of the hunters reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the hunting opportunities provided by the Block Management Program in 2003 (see Figure 5). Of note, this was nearly a ten percent increase from results obtained in 1996.

Figure 5. Response to: "Overall, how satisfied were you with the hunting opportunities provided by the Block Management Program in 2003?" (2003 Hunter Evaluation)



Of the hunters who responded to the survey in 2003, 84 percent reported they believe that the Block Management Program has improved or greatly improved landowner/hunter relationships. Less than two percent believe that landowner/hunter relationships have been harmed or greatly harmed by the program. In 1996, 70 percent of the hunters reported they believe the program has improved or greatly improved landowner/hunter relationships.

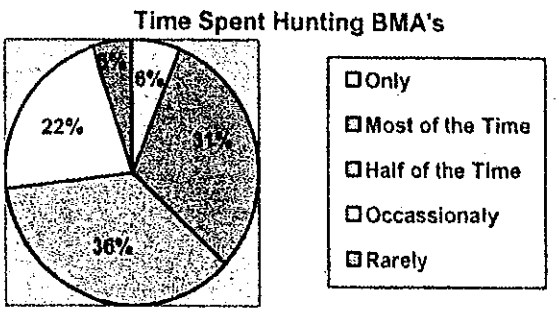


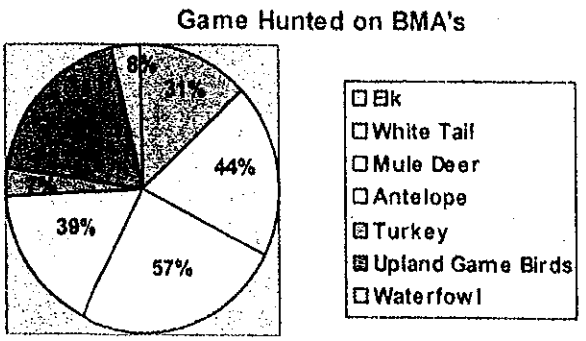
Related to hunting opportunities:

- Sixty-eight percent of the hunters who responded to the survey found game animals on BMAs hunted present in numbers meeting or exceeding their expectations in 2003.
- Seventy-three percent were successful in bagging game on a BMA(s) in 2003.
- Ninety-percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the rules on BMAs hunted in 2003.
- Sixty-four percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the number of hunters encountered on BMAs hunted in 2003.

Hunter profile information (2003 season):

- The average hunter spent 9 days hunting BMAs.
- The average hunter hunted on 4 different BMAs.





DISCUSSION

The Block Management Program is designed to balance the needs of landowners, hunters, and FWP. Landowners receive assistance in managing public hunting activities and benefits to offset the impacts of allowing public hunting. Hunters receive opportunities to hunt on enrolled lands, offered either on a first-come, first-serve basis or through some other means of allocated use. FWP is able to utilize the program as a tool to help achieve wildlife management goals and objectives.

In 1995, the Block Management Program was enhanced through additional funding and authority, allowing it to grow substantially over the next ten years. During this time, FWP staff explored various ways to implement the program locally to accommodate differences in regional wildlife management needs and hunter use activities.

Results of the 2003 Block Management landowner and hunter evaluations, as well as past evaluations, suggest that the program has been a success both from the perspective of landowners enrolled in the program and hunters hunting on BMAs. FWP staff has been able to use the program to effectively manage big game populations, provide public hunting opportunities, and develop effective Department/landowner/hunter relationships.

Under statutory sunset provisions, the program is due to expire March 1, 2006, meaning that the 2005 Legislature must act to either extend or remove the sunset provisions for the program to continue. Based on the high level of interest expressed by hunters and landowners in participating in the program, and given the high levels of satisfaction expressed by both landowners and hunters in the 2003 and other program evaluations, FWP expects to ask the 2005 Legislature to continue the program.

REFERENCES

Charles, Alan. 1997. *Summary of the 1996 Landowner & Hunter Evaluations.* Field Services Division of FWP. Helena, MT: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Alan Charles, Coordinator, Landowner/Sportsman Relations, Field Services Division, FWP, Helena, Montana.

Michael S. Lewis, Human Dimensions Specialist, Responsive Management Unit of FWP, Helena, Montana.

TO OBTAIN COPIES OF THIS SUMMARY

Contact the Responsive Management Unit of FWP by phone at (406) 444-4758.

Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks
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Helping You Succeed!

ACCESS MONTANA REPORT

Program Title:
Access Montana

Program Coordinator:
Alan Charles

Program Authorizing Statute:
MCA 87-1-265 Hunter management and hunting access enhancement program created. The department may establish...programs of landowner assistance that encourage public access to private and public lands for purposes of hunting and may adopt rules to carry out program purposes.

Program Funding:
Source: Portions of license fees funding the Hunting Access Enhancement Program
FY08 Program Allocation: $30,000

Program Mission: *Access Montana* coordinates FWP agency activities related to hunting access on public lands. The program works to negotiate and maintain legal public hunting access to public lands, resolve landowner/sportsman conflicts, assist in marking public land boundaries, and disseminate information about hunting access on public lands. *Access Montana* utilizes a cooperative inter-agency approach for the resolution of landowner/sportsman conflicts related to hunting access on public lands.

Program Goals:
- Coordinate efforts to identify public lands where public hunting access currently exists.
- Coordinate efforts to identify public lands hunting access needs and, where necessary, establish legal public hunting access to public lands either where such access does not currently exist or where current access is threatened.
- Reduce landowner/sportsman conflicts related to hunting access on public lands.

Program Objectives:
- Work with regional staff and state and federal land managers to implement boundary marking projects in targeted areas to reduce conflicts and improve hunter dispersion.
- Solicit input from landowners, sportsman, and department staff to identify areas of historic conflict and develop appropriate solutions wherever possible.
- Develop and disseminate directories, maps, and informational brochures to assist the public with information about hunting access to public lands.
- Identify and prioritize areas where hunting access to public lands is needed, but either not available or threatened.
- Participate in state and federal land management agency planning and decision-making processes that affect public land access.
- Work to develop partnerships with local and regional state and federal land management agency personnel responsible for implementing public land access projects.

PROJECT SYNOPSIS – STATUS REPORT

- Munson Creek Access (Thompson Falls) – Joint FWP / USFS trailhead development. Provides critical access for sheep hunting. – Complete - Project Cost: $46,000 – FWP cost share: $23,000.

- Ninepipe Area Recreation Map – Reprint – identifies FWP, USFWS, and Tribal Lands available for hunting and other recreational use in the Ninepipe area. – Complete – Total Project Cost: $1,500 for 5,000 copies – FWP cost share: $1000.

- McCarty Creek Access (Boulder) – Joint FWP / Jefferson County / USFS / DNRC project. Road development and parking area that provides access to large block of Beaverhead Deerlodge Forest. – Completed – Total Project Cost: $11,800 – FWP cost share: $3,000.

- North Hills Access Project (Helena) – Joint FWP / BLM easement and road development. Development of alternative route that provides access to southern end of Sieben BMA, BLM and DNRC lands. Route will provide year-round access to public lands – Completed – Estimated Total Project Cost: $40,000 – FWP cost share: $16,500.

- Quartz Creek Access to Helena National Forest (Clancy) – Long-term agreement whereby FWP provided two cattle guards in exchange for a 5-year agreement to provide access to the Helena National Forest – Completed – Total Project Cost: $2,300.

- Armstrong Ranch Access Corridor and Parking Area (Bozeman – Bridger Moutains) – Long-term agreement that provides an access corridor and fenced parking area for excellent mule deer opportunities in the Gallatin National Forest. Agreement provides year round access for a variety of recreational opportunities – Completed – Total Project Cost: $9,500.

- Hay Draw Recreational Access Corridor (Broadus) – Joint FWP/BLM project provided drive in access across DNRC land to access multiple sections of BLM lands. Project involves development of an access road, parking areas, marking of approximately 30 miles of perimeter boundary lines, and agreement to provide patrolling through the hunting season - – Completed –Total project cost: $41,000 – Estimated FWP cost share: $20,500.

- Private Land Ownership Maps – Joint FWP/NRIS project to produce accurate, updated electronic map information, using USGS 100,000 quad map series, that identifies ownership of private land throughout the state – Completed – Total Cost to FWP: $0, other than staff time.

- Larb Hills Public Cooperative Access Project (R6) – Joint efforts between FWP and BLM to install boundary signs on more than 4,000 acres of BLM land in Phillips County. Established two parking areas with information kiosks, and installed metal posts/signs along boundary.
- Three Buttes Cooperative Access Project (R6) – Cooperative signing effort between BLM, DNRC, private landowners, and FWP to install BLM and DNRC boundary signs and one information kiosk on more than 4,000 acres of BLM and DNRC land located 16 miles south of Culbertson along the Missouri River (Richland County).

- Smith 6-S Ranch Access in the East Pioneer Range – project provided for a 1+ mile long access corridor road across private land to USFS land, with perpetual public access easement purchased by FWP and new road built to reduce damage to riparian caused by location of previous road. Project was a joint effort between private landowner, USFS, BLM, DNRC, local sportsman's groups, and FWP. Total project cost: $70,000.

SPECIAL ACCESS PROJECTS REPORT

Program Title:
Special Access Projects

Program Coordinator:
Alan Charles

Program Authorizing Statute:
87-1-265 MCA. Hunter management and hunting access enhancement program created.
(1) The department may establish...programs of landowner assistance that encourage public access to private and public lands for purposes of hunting...
(3) The department may also develop similar efforts outside the scope of the block management program that are designed to promote public access to private lands for hunting purposes."

Program Funding:
Source: Portions of license fees funding for the Hunting Access Enhancement Program
FY 08 Program Allocation: $30,000

Program Mission:
The department may initiate Special Access Projects that address species-specific, regional needs that may not lend themselves to involvement either in Block Management or Access Montana. Special Access Projects may also be used to develop pilot projects to address species-specific, regional hunting access issues.

Program Goals:
- Address localized, species-specific hunting access needs in innovative ways;
- Explore new methods for developing hunting access/hunter management agreements;
- Develop pilot projects that may lead to future enrollment in conventional programs;
- Involve localized communities of landowners, hunters, and FWP staff in projects;

Program Objectives:
- Provide regional staff with enough flexibility to develop local projects that can address regional species-specific hunter management/hunter opportunity needs;
- Utilize available funding to develop pilot projects that will aid in the future development and structure of the Hunting Access Enhancement Program;
- Utilize Special Access Projects to meet needs that cannot otherwise be met through existing administrative frameworks of the Block Management and Access Montana programs;
- Develop a wide array of hunting access options from which landowners, hunters, and FWP can choose when developing hunting access agreements or selecting hunting access opportunities;

PROJECT SYNOPSIS – STATUS REPORT

- Northeast Montana (Glasgow) – Individual hired under personal services contract, assigned duties to provide area landowners with information about FWP hunting access programs and discuss potential hunting access agreements focused on upland bird hunting opportunities - Completed - Project Cost: $4,800.

- Southwest Montana (Madison Valley) – Elk Hunt Coordinator hired to assist hunters and landowners in the southern portion of the Madison Valley by coordinating public elk hunting activities – ongoing - Project Cost: $3,000/annually.

- Central Montana (Bear Paw Mountains – Big Sandy) – Elk Hunt Coordinator hired to assist hunters and landowners in the Bear Paw Mountains area by coordinating public elk hunting activities – ongoing - Project Cost: $5,000/annually.

- North Central Montana (Sweet Grass Hills – Shelby) – Elk Hunt Coordinator hired to assist hunters and landowners in the Sweet Grass Hills area by coordinating public elk hunting activities – ongoing - Total Project Cost: $3,500/annually.

- West Central Montana (Helena) – Elkhorn Working Group formed to study issues related to management of elk in the Elkhorn Mountains and make recommendations to the department regarding their efforts - In Progress. Project Cost: $4,500.

- Southwest Montana (Madison Valley) – Madison Valley Working Group formed to study issues related to management of elk in the Madison Valley, along with other wildlife and habitat management issues in that area – ongoing – Project Cost: $4,000.

- West Central Montana (White Sulphur Springs) – Elk Hunt Coordinator hired to assist hunters and landowners in the East Big Belts area during late season hunt by coordinating public elk hunting activities – completed – Project Cost: $5,171.

- Eastern Montana (Billings) – Elk Hunt Coordinator hired to assist hunters and landowners in the Pine Ridge area by coordinating public elk hunting activities – completed – Project Cost: $1,500.

- Eastern Montana (Miles City) – Hunters Against Weeds Car Wash – FWP/Custer Rod & Gun Club joint project offering a free car wash and decal to hunters who produced a valid hunting license during a three-day period including opening day of antelope season – complete – Project Cost: $2,419.

FISHING ACCESS ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Program Name
Private Land Fishing Access (2009)

Program Manager:
Allan Kuser, Fishing Access Program Coordinator

Program Authorizing Statute:
This program was introduced as HB 292 and titled "Fishing Access Enhancement Program". The statutory reference is **87-1-285, 87-1-286, MCA.**

Program Funding

FY 08 Allocation	$25,000
FY 08 Expenditure	$ 9,136

Program Status:
The program is in its seventh year of funding.

Program Synopsis
The purpose of the program as stated in HB292 is "to provide incentives to landowners who provide access to or across private land for public fishing." House Bill 292 was enacted by the 2001 Legislature on a trial basis with the intention of augmenting the existing FAS acquisition program. The sole purpose of this program is to give practical, tangible assistance to those landowners who allow the public access across their lands in order to fish streams or lakes that otherwise are not accessible.

The PLFA Program differs from the FAS Program in three ways:

1. The funding is specifically earmarked for use on private land.
2. It is not a capital program through which FWP develops facilities on private land, i.e. boat ramps, dam repairs, stream bank stabilization, etc. Compensation provided to the landowner can be used for these things at his or her discretion.
3. It is a stand-alone program that does not incorporate the Lands Section in negotiating deals, the D&C Bureau to design and engineer projects, or the Parks Division to maintain the sites.

2007
PRIVATE LAND FISHING ACCESS PROJECTS

1. William Butler

Mr. Butlers property is located adjacent to Table Rock FAS on Little Prickly Pear Creek in the Missouri River drainage north of Helena. MDT granted a recreation easement to FWP for the purpose of developing an FAS at this location. Some of the facilities for the FAS were constructed on property now owned by Mr. Butler. The PLFA arrangement allows the public to continue to use the FAS until another more permanent arrangement can be formalized with Mr. Butler.

The negotiated fee was $500 for 1 year.
The Agreement expires on Oct. 18, 2008.

2. Doug Gamma

Mr. Gamma owns property on Ashley Lake west of Kalispell. Mr. Gamma's family has historically allowed public access for ice fishing though his property but lately parking and litter problems are creating a nuisance for the family. Funding provided through this program will assist Mr. Gamma in providing a porta potty, signing, and improve the parking area for anglers using his property.

The negotiated fee was $750 for 1 year.
The Agreement expires with "ice out" in the spring of 2008.

3. Flathead Land Trust

This Agreement provides public access to McWennegar Slough. McWennegar Slough is a 26-acre site located approximately 4 miles east of Kalispell off of Highway 35. It was donated to and is currently owned by the Flathhead Land Trust who is interested and willing to assist FWP is acquiring the property to be developed and used as an FAS. In the meantime FWP is working with MDT to obtain a Recreation Use Permit on the land between Hwy 35 and the Flathead Land Trust property. The purpose of the Agreement is to provide indemnification to the FLT and a small amount of funding for miscellaneous expenses associated with allowing public access while FWP continues to pursue fee title to the property.

The negotiated fee was $800.00 for 1 year.
The Agreement expires on March 31, 2008.

4. Bernie Nowak

Mr. Nowak's property is located in the upper Rock Creek drainage adjacent to State Highway 348 north of Phillipsburg. Anglers have historically pulled off the paved roadway and parked on Mr. Nowak's property. The purpose of this Agreement is to provide indemnification for Mr. Nowak. In addition the Regional FWP staff will provide assistance in developing a small parking area, fencing and signs directing the public where to park.

The negotiated fee was $25 for 2.8 years.
The Agreement expires on June 30, 2010.

2008
PRIVATE LAND FISHING ACCESS PROJECTS

1. William Butler (R1)

Mr. Butlers property is located adjacent to Table Rock FAS on Little Prickly Pear Creek in the Missouri River drainage north of Helena. MDT granted a recreation easement to FWP for the purpose of developing an FAS at this location. Some of the facilities for the FAS were constructed on property now owned by Mr. Butler. The PLFA arrangement allows the public to continue to use the FAS until another more permanent arrangement can be formalized with Mr. Butler.

The negotiated fee was $500 for 1 year.
The Agreement expires on Oct. 18, 2009.

2. Flathead Land Trust (R1)

This Agreement provides public access to McWennegar Slough. McWennegar Slough is a 26-acre site located approximately 4 miles east of Kalispell off of Highway 35. It was donated to and is currently owned by the Flathhead Land Trust who is interested and willing to assist FWP is acquiring the property to be developed and used as an FAS. In the meantime FWP is working with MDT to obtain a Recreation Use Permit on the land between Hwy 35 and the Flathead Land Trust property. The purpose of the Agreement is to provide indemnification to the FLT and a small amount of funding for miscellaneous expenses associated with allowing public access while FWP continues to pursue fee title to the property.

The negotiated fee was $800.00 for 1 year.
The Agreement expires on May 22, 2009.

3. Fred Davison - Many Hills Ranch (R4)

The Many Hills Ranch is located in the Highwood Mountains east of Great Falls. The Agreement provides for public angling access site on Highwood Creek. The landowner requested assistance in tracking who was on his property and in keeping vehicles in designated parking areas. The department will provide a sign in box and signs to designate parking/camping areas. Highwood Creek transects a portion of the ranch providing approximately .5 miles of fishing opportunity within the boundaries of the property.

The negotiated fee was $4000.00 for 5 years ($800/yr).
The Agreement expires on June 14, 2013.

4. Teller Wildlife Refuge (R2)

The Teller Wildlife Refuge is a privately owned 1,200-acre ranch that was placed under a conservation easement in the 1980's by Otto Teller. The Teller Refuge is adjacent to FWP's Woodside FAS and provides enhanced access to the Bitterroot River for anglers as well as other related recreation activities. Although the Teller has historically been open to the public it was closed last year because of ongoing concerns over theft of items, domestic animal control, litter and vandalism. Funding provided through this program provided for fencing and for signage to display site regulations. The Refuge has since been reopened for public access.

The negotiated fee was $1,500 for 1 year.
The Agreement expires on Sept 30, 2009.

5. William Muir

William Muir and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks have worked together to develop public fishing access and a parking area that allows for pedestrian access to Phantom Coulee Reservoir (a.k.a. Englandt Res.). Phantom Coulee Reservoir is located approximately 7.5 miles east of Geraldine, MT. Access will be acquired at a sign-in box adjacent to the parking area. Funding through this program provided for gates, fencing, sign posts, gravel for the parking area and sign-in box materials. An additional $500 is allocated for landowner compensation for weed control efforts, litter control, maintenance, etc.

The negotiated fee was $2,333.60 for 2 years of which $1833.60 was for materials. Future annual compensation is $500/yr.
The Agreement expires on April 1, 2010