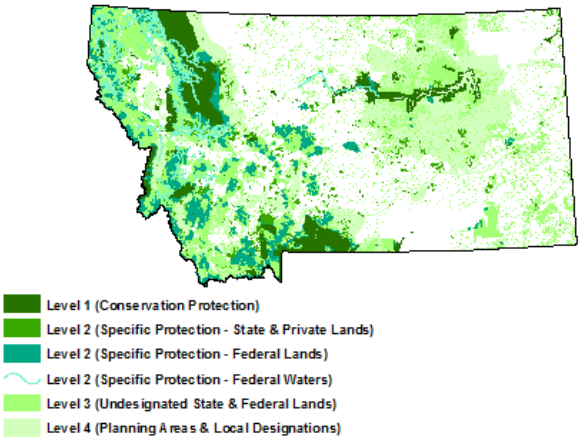
DESIGNATED AREAS



SUMMARY: Designated areas depict lands and water bodies having biological, recreation, conservation and/or socioeconomic value based on a variety of conservation and management programs. This includes, but is not limited to federal, state and local designations; recreation areas, and conservation lands.

MEASUREMENT UNIT: This layer is comprised of polygons and lines of varying size. Source data were developed at scales of 1:24,000 and 1:100,000.

DATA SOURCE(S): Designated areas drew primarily from the stewardship layer managed by the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP). Other layers used include Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) lands, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Roadless Areas, Northwest Power Planning Council protected areas, and the national Protected Areas Database.

METHODS: Lands were categorized into seven value groups based on management practices, type of area (water body or land) and level of protection. These value groups are defined below.

- Level 1 (Conservation Protection): Public lands and privately owned preserves managed to retain a natural state and protected from conversion. These include national parks and federal wildlife refuges and wilderness areas.

- Level 2 (Specific Protection - State and Private Lands) : State Lands and privately owned conservation easements managed for specific purposes (waterfowl production, habitat preservation, recreation) and protected from some types of conversion. These include FWP wildlife management areas, state parks, conservation easements and fishing access sites and privately held conservation easements.

- Level 2 (Specific Protection Federal Lands)- Federal lands with preliminary designation for conservation protection from most types of conversion. These include USFS and BLM roadless areas.

- Level 2 (Specific Protection – Federal Waters) – Rivers and streams that have been protected from some types of conversion due to either a National Wild and Scenic Rivers System designation or the Northwest Power Planning Council Protected Areas Program

- Level 3 (Undesignated State and Federal Lands) -Public lands managed for natural resources including resource extraction (logging, grazing, mining) but protected from conversion to urban. These include all remaining USFS and BLM federal lands and State Lands.

- Level 4 (Planning Areas and Local Designations)- Lands that may not be managed or protected but are recognized as valuable from a biological or recreational standpoint. The protection status of many of these lands is unknown and some lands are privately owned with no protection. These include The Nature Conservancy Ecoregions, Audubon Bird Areas,

FINAL CATEGORIZATION: Lands were placed into value groups based on management practices and level of protection.

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