

**DECISION NOTICE**

**For**

**Elk Island Wildlife Management Area**

**Agricultural Lease**

**Richland County, Montana**

**Environmental Assessment**

**Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks**

**Region 7**

**Miles City, Montana 59301**

**April 20, 2012**

**PROPOSAL**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) propose to renew an agricultural (crop or hay) lease on the Elk Island Wildlife Management Area for a one year period (2012-2013). FWP has the authority under section 87-1-201 Montana Code Annotated MCA to protect, enhance, and regulate the use of Montana's fish and wildlife resources for public benefit now and in the future. The agricultural lease will commence on April 20, 2012 and will expire on March 31, 2013.

**MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) PROCESS**

The proposed agricultural lease was the subject of an "Environmental Assessment-Elk Island Management Area Agricultural Lease" (the EA), which was released to the public on March 20, 2012, and opened for comment through April 5, 2012. The EA was preceded by a press release issued on March 21, 2012.

The EA described the project and analyzed its potential effects on the human and natural environment. The EA indicated that the proposed action of renewing an agricultural lease on the Elk Island Wildlife Management Area would have no adverse environmental effect on a short-term, long-term or cumulative basis. Rather, the lease would result in enhancements in food and cover for wildlife.

**SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS AND FWP RESPONSE**

FWP received no comments to the environmental assessment.

**DECISION**

After careful review of this proposal, and in consideration of the significant wildlife and public recreational benefits that will occur during the period of this lease, it is my recommendation that

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks proceed with the proposed renewing this agricultural lease on the Elk Island Wildlife Management Area for a one year period (2012-2013).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Schmitz". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "B" and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Brad Schmitz, Regional Supervisor

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

352 I-94 Business Loop

Miles City, MT 59301

Date: April 20, 2012