

OTHER ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES

Attention Fall Game Bird Hunters:



Don't miss out on the **Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters** – an exciting new opportunity to hunt upland game birds and waterfowl on enrolled tracts of CRP and other quality habitats. Through cooperation of private landowners and federal Farm Bill funding delivered to FWP through the Farm Service Agency, this new program provides game bird hunters with walk-in access on enrolled lands with no further permission required. Information about the program, including a comprehensive map, may be found at fwp.mt.gov.

Block Management and Public Lands

In many cases, enrollment of deeded ground into block management provides access to otherwise inaccessible tracts of state or federal land or blocks together large tracts of public and private land. Each block management area (BMA) has rules unique to that BMA. Recreationists should become familiar with the individual BMA ranch rules **prior** to actually hunting on the BMA. As a general rule, BMA restrictions do not apply to legally-accessible tracts of public land adjacent to, or contained within, the BMA boundaries. However, in some cases, legally-accessible public lands **ARE** formally enrolled, with BMA restrictions imposed for resource or hunter management reasons. **Contact regional FWP staff to verify rules for accessible public lands associated with BMAs.**

Streams and Access

Some BMAs have streams within their boundaries, so it is important to know and understand Montana's Stream Access Law. Under this statute, rivers and streams capable of recreational use may be used by the public within the **ordinary high water marks**. Although this law gives recreationists the right to pursue water-based activities within the high water marks of rivers and streams, it **does not give recreationists the right to enter private lands bordering those streams or to cross private lands to gain access to streams**. Islands may or may not be public lands. Before hunting on islands, always verify ownership. Check with county offices or FWP regional offices to confirm land ownership.

Other FWP Hunting Access Opportunities

In addition to the Block Management Program, other FWP programs may provide hunting access opportunities. These include:

- 1) Public Land Access Projects - focus on public access to state and federal lands;
- 2) Special Access Projects - regional species-specific projects;
- 3) Habitat Montana - focuses on habitat protection through conservation easement; may also include limited public access provisions;
- 4) Upland Game Bird Habitat and Pheasant Release Program - long-term upland bird habitat projects; statewide listing available September 1;
- 5) Wildlife Management Areas and Fishing Access Sites - FWP-owned lands which may provide public hunting access opportunities;

*While these public hunting access opportunities may or may not be managed under the the Block Management Program, people interested in learning more about specific opportunities are encouraged to contact the regional FWP headquarters in the region where a hunt is planned.