



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Wildlife Division
PO Box 200701
Helena MT 59020-0701
January 13, 2014

Dear Interested Person:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is requesting public comment on the Keep Cool Hills Management Area Biennial Rule. This proposal would extend for two years, through F&W Commission rule, a 15,000-acre cooperative management area north of Lincoln that was established by commission rule in 2007. Sieben Ranch Company owns most of the land, with some parcels owned by the Montana Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. A portion is State Land, administered by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. The cooperative management area rules would provide for managed public access throughout the year. Prior to 2006, unmanaged public access resulted in significant resource damage to lands in this area, causing affected landowners to consider closing the area to public access. See additional information attached.

For further clarification, you may call the Wildlife Bureau office at 406-444-2612. To submit comments electronically, this letter with the imbedded link below can be found under "Opportunity for Public Comment" on the Hunting home page at the fwp.mt.gov website. Written comments can be sent to: FWP – Wildlife Bureau, Attn: Public Comment, POB 200701, Helena MT 59620-0701. **The deadline for public comment is 5:00 PM Friday, February 14, 2014.** Final adoptions will be made at the March 13, 2014 FWP Commission meeting.

<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/publicComments/keepCoolHillsManagementAreaBiennialRule.html>



Montana Fish & Wildlife Commission

Keep Cool Hills Cooperative Hunting Access and Recreation Management Area

Public Use Special Regulations

BIENNIAL RULE

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Montana Fish & Wildlife Commission adopts the following rules and regulations to govern recreational use within the designated Keep Cool Hills Hunting Access and Recreation Management Area in Lewis and Clark County for the purpose of gaining hunting access and recreational privileges on private land, to prevent vehicular damage to soils and vegetation, and to avoid excessive disturbance to native wildlife including threatened and endangered species.

This Rule is effective from 3/29/14 to 3/28/16 .

The designated area of the Keep Cool Hills Cooperative Hunting Access and Recreation Management Area is depicted in Figure 1 below:

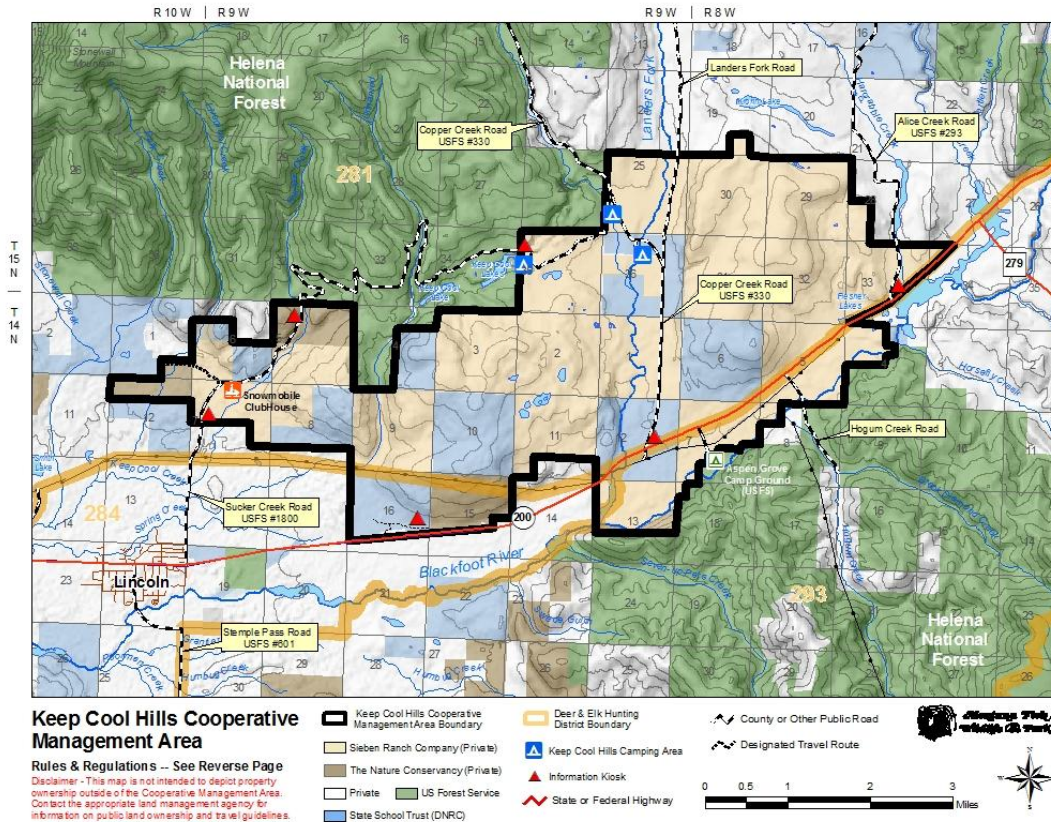


Figure 1. Keep Cool Hills Cooperative Hunting Access and Recreation Management Area Map.

Because the public enjoyment of the recreational facilities of these lands necessitates rules, regulations and enforcement, the provisions of 23-1-106 and 87-1-303 M.C.A. apply. It is therefore ordered that it shall be unlawful for any person to:

- 1. Drive any motorized wheeled-vehicle in the above-described area except on county roads, on private roads designated open for motorized travel, or in designated parking

and camping areas as posted. Landowners and/or their designee in the course of administrative work, and federal, state, and county officials in the course of their official duties will be exempt from these vehicular restrictions.

2. Park any vehicle in such a manner as to obstruct traffic or block any gate.
3. Trespass, hunt, or discharge a firearm within areas posted as safety zones. Target shooting and discharge of firearms is prohibited on Sieben Ranch Company land from June 1 through August 31, annually.
4. Remain in the above-described area when ordered to leave for cause by a landowner or law enforcement officer.
5. Camp on Sieben Ranch Company or The Nature Conservancy land except in designed areas as posted. Camping on DNRC land is allowed within 200 feet of customary access points, but limited to 7 days.
6. Disturb, harass or otherwise interfere with livestock.
7. Operate a snowmobile in the above-described area between April 2 and November 30. Snowmobile use is allowed seasonally from December 1 through April 1, and shall be restricted to designated trails.
8. Conduct commercial outfitting or guiding of hunters or fisherman in the above-described area.

STATEMENT OF LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR THE RULE

Section 23-1-106, MCA and section 87-1-303, MCA gives the Fish & Wildlife Commission authority to adopt and enforce rules governing uses of lands that it operates under agreement with or in conjunction with a private owner.

This rule was adopted by the Fish & Wildlife Commission on _____, 2014.

Dan Vermillion, Chairman
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission