

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS | 2019 REPORT TO THE MONTANA LEGISLATURE



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.







The past two years brought continued enthusiasm for Montana’s unparalleled hunting and angling opportunities—and renewed support for Montana State Parks.

FWP’s staff continues to prove essential to helping care for that which makes Montana, Montana—where *The Outside Is In Us All*.

Four core beliefs now guide all we do and who we are:

- ▶ We perpetuate **opportunities outside**
- ▶ We strive toward **balance**
- ▶ We focus on **integrity**
- ▶ We **bring people together**

These commitments reflect more than a century of service by FWP to the people of Montana and the fish, wildlife and recreational resources they cherish. These core beliefs will continue to provide a roadmap for FWP to follow for decades to come.

Here’s a look back at some of FWP’s 2017 and 2018 accomplishments forged with the help and participation of innumerable statewide partners.

—Martha Williams, *Director*



▶ **LEARN MORE**

We cover a lot of topics in this report. If you want to know more about these issues, this report provides links to videos produced by FWP and in-depth, comprehensive stories from FWP’s *Montana Outdoors* magazine. Simply type in the short URL in to a web browser or scan the QR code with your smart phone. Free QR code scanner apps are available for download from the common sources like Apple’s App Store and Google Play.



WE PERPETUATE **OPPORTUNITY OUTSIDE**

Life in Montana is often defined by the outdoors—astounding natural beauty, abundant fish and wildlife, and vast opportunities to enjoy it all.

FWP is committed to ensuring these **opportunities outside** remain a fundamental part of the agency's work.



Access

Montana continues to be a public access leader with the nearly 8 million acres that were available in 2017-18 for public hunting and other recreation via Block Management, Upland Game Bird Enhancement, Open Fields, and Unlocking Public Lands. With the arrival of three habitat specialists in 2015, and about 100 active partnerships, habitat enhancement contracts associated with the Upland Game Bird Enhancement program increased in 2018 nearly 147 percent, from 65 contracts to 161 contracts. Project acres and access acres, meanwhile, more than doubled, increasing 240 percent and 135 percent respectively. Additionally, FWP has more than 1,200 block man-

Partnerships make it easier to find access to private and public lands

agement contracts, six hunting access coordinators, and 45 hunting access technicians.

- ▶ In 2017 and 2018, FWP conserved and secured hunting access on more than 56,000 acres of working private lands through partnerships with landowners via conservation easements and acquisitions under the Habitat Montana program.
- ▶ In 2018, 3,400 new acres were made available for public access via a right-of-way easement at Timber Gulch near Glen. The easement was funded in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; Beaverhead, Jefferson and Skyline Sportsman's associations; and FWP via the sale of Home to Hunt licenses.

Fishing Access

Three new Fishing Access Sites were established: Selway Park on the Beaverhead River near Dillion, Milwaukee Bridge on the Madison River near Three Forks in partnership with the Montana Department of Transportation, and Stevensville Bridge on the Bitterroot River in partnership with the City of Stevensville.

- ▶ Bannack Flood Mitigation—Recent floods damaged his-

toric structures at Bannack State Park, a National Historic Landmark. A collaborative effort—with the Montana Department of Administration's Risk Management and Tort Defense Division—resulted in a flood-retention structure that anticipates and redirects future flash floods.

- ▶ Milltown State Park Opened—Once an EPA Superfund site, a 10-year, \$120 million effort restored more than 500 river-bottom acres capped by an interpretive plaza; river access for fishing and floating; and a new area for hiking, biking, and watching birds and wildlife.
- ▶ The project's success was marked by an extraordinary partnership, which includes the following benefactors: the Montana Natural Resource Damage Program, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Humanities Montana, Missoula County, and the Montana State Parks Foundation.



State Parks Cultural, Recreational and Historical Investments—Investments in Restoration, Preservation and Infrastructure

Milwaukee Bridge on the Madison River near Three Forks in partnership with the Montana Department of Transportation, and Stevensville Bridge on the Bitterroot River in partnership with the City of Stevensville.



Read more here:
<https://goo.gl/5EijzM>



Read more here:
<https://goo.gl/kbMywY>





- ▶ Other partners include: Bonner Development Group; Montana Department of Transportation; Montana Rail Link; Milltown Superfund Redevelopment Working Group; Missoula County Water Quality District; Clark Fork Coalition; Clark Fork River Technical Assistance Committee; Friends of Two Rivers; Five Valleys Land Trust; the Idaho-Montana Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects; the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes; Séliš-Qlispé Culture Committee; and the Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service.
- ▶ Other critical investments: \$5.65 million was invested in priority infrastructure and maintenance improvements at: Bannack for a new fire alarm system; Lewis & Clark Caverns for lighting, electrical and handrail upgrades; and Makoshika's 1.5-mile primary access road upgrades. These three infrastructure projects were funded by the 2017 Legislature.

Recreation Management Results

West Fork of the Bitterroot

A 16-member advisory committee—comprised of outfitters, anglers, and local land and property owners—helped FWP create new rules to better manage crowding on southwestern Montana’s West Fork and Upper Bitterroot rivers. The rules, which also cap outfitter and guide use to provide opportunities for non-commercial anglers, are in effect from July 1 to Sept. 15 and regulate four river segments. Compliance was good in 2018 with managers focused on informing users about the new rules on the popular river sections.

The Madison River

Recreation on the Madison River, primarily boating and angling, continues to be a draw for people around Montana and the world. However, this heavy use on a relatively short stretch of river south of Ennis has led to tensions between user groups. In 2017, angling pressure on the upper river passed 200,000 angler days—the first time a river in Montana reached that mark. This makes the upper Madison the most fished waterbody in the state.

In late 2018, the Fish & Wildlife Commission implemented a negotiated rule-making approach to find a solution. This process first involves appointing a citizen committee and then tasking it with developing recre-



Quality experiences depend on cooperation

ation management rules to manage use. This is a slightly different approach than the commission took on the West Fork of the Bitterroot River, but still one that will allow for ample public involvement, for diverse values and viewpoints to be represented, and for continuation of FWP’s commitment to provide high-quality recreational opportunities on this legendary river.

Montana State Parks AmeriCorps Program

Montana State Parks administers an AmeriCorps grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service. In 2018, 21 AmeriCorps members provided public service at 24 state parks throughout Montana. AmeriCorps members significantly increase the parks’ capacity to plan and implement educational and land improvement projects. In 2018, AmeriCorps members:

- ▶ conducted 577 education and interpretive programs that attracted 9,268 youth and 5,120 adults
- ▶ developed or improved 168 educational or interpretive products
- ▶ improved 264 acres of state park land
- ▶ created 455 volunteer events and opportunities that instilled stewardship values within local communities
- ▶ enlisted 369 volunteers to create a total of 42 new community partnerships

FWP’s AmeriCorps Program provides amazing opportunities for tomorrow’s leaders through volunteerism. It also allows them to see the value in the natural world around them and across Montana. In turn, they serve as a guide for visitors to state parks across

Read more here:
<https://goo.gl/FTCnv1>



Montana in exploring the opportunities that are available to them in the outdoors.

FishMT Website

An internal team, including the technical services, fisheries, and communication and education divisions, worked together to design a mobile-friendly web application for access to all scientific and fisheries management information FWP has compiled over the past century. At this single, easy-to-use online location, FishMT’s offerings are gleaned from nearly 2,300 anglers who responded to an online survey about their use of FWP fisheries information. From the survey results, it was clear anglers rely on FWP when they hit the water no matter what species they’re after. On

Better information translates to great outdoor experiences

FishMT, anglers can search specific waterbodies for maps, survey data, fishing access sites, fishing pressure, stocking information, regulations, and various advisories. It shows how to apply for permits for private fish ponds, aquatic scientific collection, fishing contests, and special fishing licenses.





Learn more:
<https://goo.gl/pvxaYH>



WE STRIVE TOWARD **BALANCE**

Experience shows that lasting management solutions depend on partnerships. Results emerge when biologists, irrigators, conservationists, loggers, hunters, ranchers, anglers, miners, tribes, land managers, and others work together. FWP aims to **strive toward balance** in all matters related to fish, wildlife, and state parks and in using both natural and social sciences.



Grizzly Bear Management

Based on efforts in Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho, grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem were delisted in 2017. That delisting rule was overturned in federal court in 2018. Montana has joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wyoming, and Idaho in appealing the decision. FWP continues to collaborate with Wyoming, Idaho, and federal officials to manage the GYE's 750 grizzly bears. In the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, FWP's leadership on the conservation strategy was central to the

Astonishing expansion, extraordinary cooperation and a complex suite of challenges

2018 adoption of the NCDE Conservation Strategy.

- ▶ Montana Fish and Wildlife Commissioners in December 2018 approved an administrative rule committing FWP to manage for up to 1,000 grizzly bears, demonstrating FWP's support for population objectives in the conservation strategy upon grizzly bear delisting.

This was the most significant policy decision for the NCDE in the past two years. Bears continue to expand into territory they haven't inhabited for decades. This includes bears in Stanford, Two Dot, and Stevensville. FWP continues to respond rapidly to conflicts, educating communities and citizens on how to live and recreate safely in bear country and continuing management

to ensure the viability of the recovered population.

It's clear that grizzly bears have surpassed federal recovery goals in the GYE and NCDE. Today, grizzly bears are inhabiting places in Montana where few can ever remember seeing them. In response, and to strike a proper balance in anticipation of the grizzly bear's eventual delisting, FWP has placed new bear specialists on the Rocky Mountain Front and on the Beartooth Front to better respond.

Elk Management

An innovative harvest approach continued an attempt to bring elk populations into balance with the needs of Montana hunters, landowners, and others. Performance-based elk shoulder seasons, which were first offered in 2016, occur outside the five-week general firearms season to provide additional hunting opportunities while reducing elk populations.

Solutions found in traditions

- ▶ In 2018, shoulder seasons focused on antlerless elk on private land in 57 hunting districts that were over population objectives.
- ▶ While 2018 results will be available in summer 2019, there was an overall 47 percent cow-harvest increase in 2017.

Work to reduce elk populations in areas that are over objective will remain a priority for FWP. Balancing hunter opportunities and landowner tolerance of elk is a challenge that shows no sign of easing. However,



Read more here:
<https://goo.gl/jbiyXH>



 Learn more
about FWP
shoulder seasons

FWP is committed to searching for the right balance and solutions. Shoulder seasons and their effectiveness will continue to be evaluated in 2019 as more data is available from the 2018/2019 season.

Fish Hatchery Advancement

With two new isolation facilities for native species recovery, FWP can allow propagation of wild populations with no risk of disease or AIS exposure.

New efforts in native fish health and survival

- ▶ A new isolation facility at Sekokini Springs near West Glacier focused on westslope cutthroat trout recovery in the Hungry Horse basin. The new facility, partially funded in partnership with the Bonneville Power Administration, will allow the spawning, rearing, and isolation of up to four genetically unique parent stocks of westslope cutthroat trout originating from the drainages where the offspring will be released.
- ▶ At Washoe Park in Anaconda, a new isolation facility will focus on incubating eggs and rearing fry from wild populations of westslope cutthroat and Arctic grayling for recovery in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area and in the Big Hole River, respectively.



Learn more:
<https://goo.gl/MLmE61>

Aquatic Invasive Species

In response to the discovery of mussel larvae in Montana in 2016, and with support from the Montana Legislature and dozens of partners, FWP developed an effective program to protect Montana from mussels and other invasive species that can cause significant problems to river and lake environments and impact state and local economies. Invasive mussels can choke off agricultural irrigation systems, clog drinking water and hydropower facilities, devastate Montana's fisheries, and damage boats and motors.

In 2018, no new invasive mussel (adult or larvae) populations were detected in Montana waters as FWP expanded partnerships to operate watercraft inspection stations with officials from the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Big Horn Canyon National Recreation Area, Blackfeet Nation, Garfield Conservation District, Glacier National Park, Missoula County Weed District, and Whitefish Lake Institute. In all, about 109,000 watercraft inspections, the most ever in Montana, were conducted at 35 inspection stations statewide.

Protecting our waters

- ▶ 16 out-of-state boats were intercepted transporting



Learn more:
cleandraindry.mt.gov

adult mussels, and some 200 others were found carrying aquatic plants.

- ▶ FWP wardens issued 160 warnings and 50 citations for failure to stop at AIS check stations.
- ▶ Outreach efforts in the Southwest and Upper Midwest resulted in increased awareness for boaters coming to Montana. Communication efforts around Montana increased local awareness of the issue by more than 20 percent, according to a study conducted by the University of Montana.

Enforcement

In 2017, the Montana Legislature funded FWP's enforcement program with 30 percent of federal Pittman-Robertson funds, which are not allowed to be used for law enforcement duties. The legislatively mandated change for FWP's enforcement staff was significant, as they were re-



quired to devote 30 percent of their time to activity eligible for Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act funding. Although enforcement efforts were greatly impacted, the Enforcement Division's commitment to protecting Montana's fish and wildlife resources remained strong:

Resource protection and public service

- ▶ 27,835 angler contacts with 470 citations issued
- ▶ 27,885 hunter contacts with 1,485 citations issued
- ▶ 7,265 state parks visitor contacts with 165 citations issued
- ▶ 12,725 boater contacts with 245 citations issued
- ▶ 1,835 urban wildlife calls
- ▶ 5,105 landowner contacts



Economic Impacts

Montana offers quality second to none

FWP regularly updates its statewide estimates of both hunter and angler expenditures in Montana. In late 2018, it was estimated that hunters and anglers across the state spend approximately \$1.3 billion annually in the state on trip-related expenditures.

- ▶ \$948 million spent by anglers
- ▶ \$401.4 million spent by hunters
- ▶ Top five resident and nonresident annual expenditures
- ▶ \$760.4 million by river and stream anglers
- ▶ \$187.7 million by lake and reservoir anglers
- ▶ \$174.5 million by elk hunters
- ▶ \$162.3 million by deer hunters
- ▶ \$18.4 million by pheasant hunters

State Parks visitors spend more than \$289 million annually in local communities.

MONTANA FWP CURRENT HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

“We’ve worked with FWP over the past several years, and it’s been highly successful. The volume of sawlogs worked out just fine. It’s important for the folks in Seeley Lake who are hunters and anglers. They have a great appreciation for wildlife habitat improvements. And it’s important for the people who work in the mills because it’s providing employment and job opportunities for local independent contractors. The partnership shows we can do the right thing on the ground in ways that support the economy, the wildlife, and the recreation—and we’re still able to put the raw materials to work.”

—**Gordy Sanders**, Resource Manager, Pyramid Lumber, and President, Montana Wood Products Association

Partner in Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA and Threemile WMA forestry improvements for wildlife habitat while providing raw materials for the wood products industry.

“One thing that’s so great about the program is that it doesn’t have a lot of bureaucracy or burdensome grant-reporting requirements. There’s enough so that public funds are used responsibly. But at the same time, you can actually get things done in the field. To me, it’s the perfect balance of what a grant program should look like.” *As told to Montana Outdoors, November-December 2018*

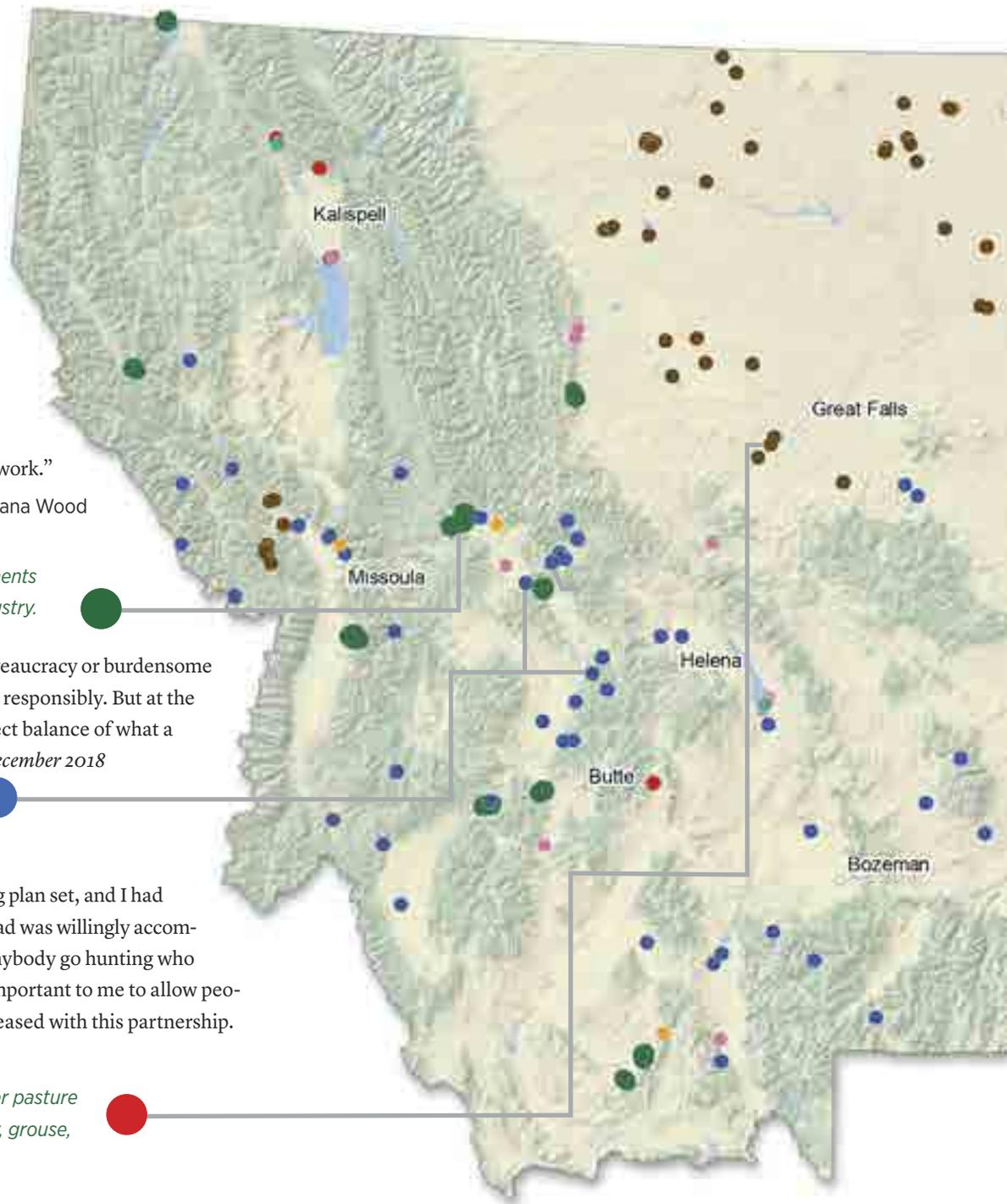
—**Ryen Neudecker**, Biologist, Big Blackfoot Chapter Trout Unlimited

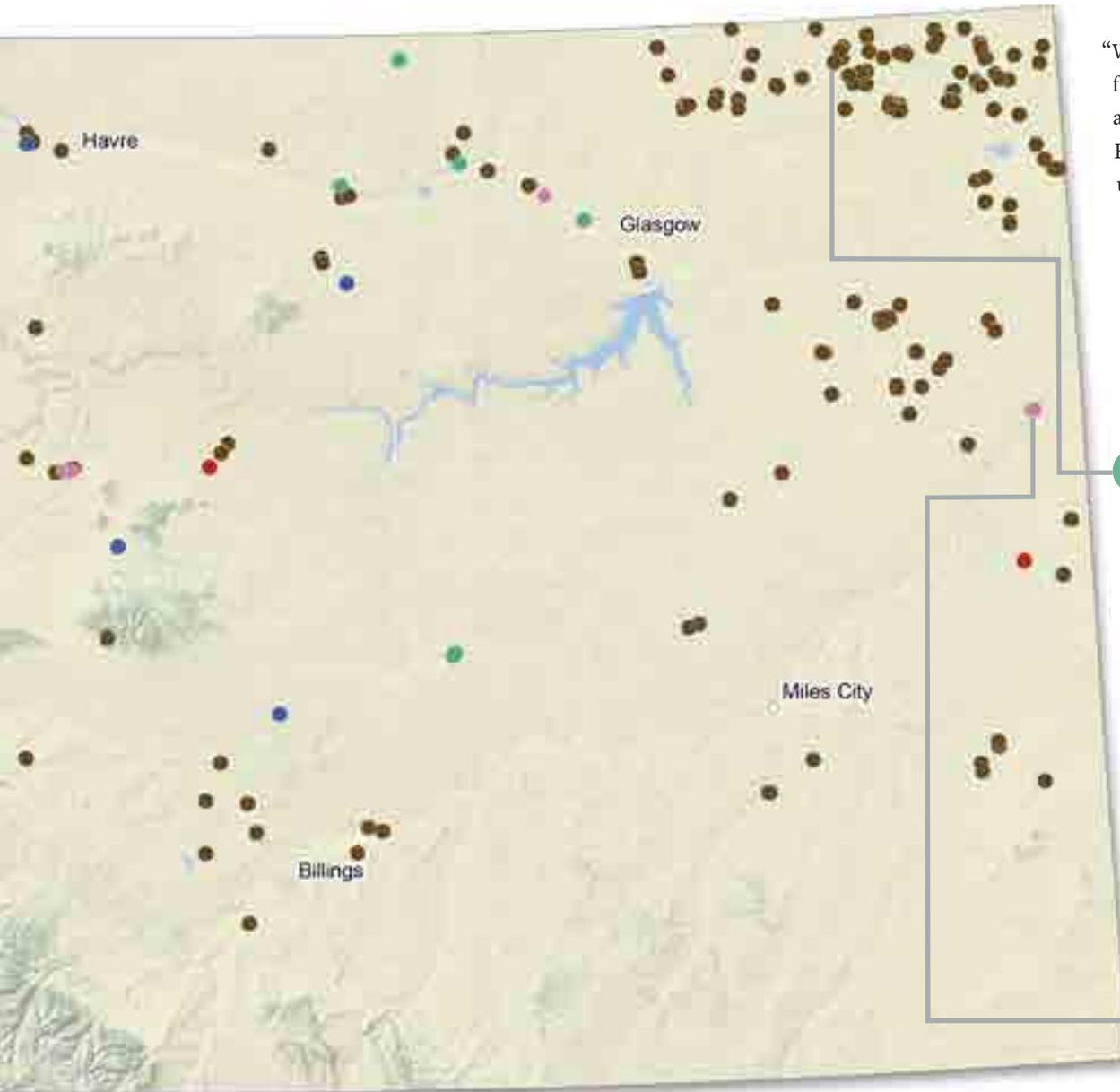
Partner in several Future Fisheries Improvement Projects

“Working with FWP was a real pleasure. We worked together to get our grazing plan set, and I had lots of questions about why were we doing this or that. And every concern I had was willingly accommodated. They were so good about things and reasonable. I’ve always let anybody go hunting who wants to go hunting, even on our home place. For some reason, it’s really important to me to allow people to hunt and now this place will be available forever. So, I’m just really pleased with this partnership.”

—**Bob Rumney**, Rancher, Cascade

Partner in 3,980-acre Birdtail Conservation Easement that maintains summer pasture on a working ranch and benefits an array of wildlife, including deer, elk, bear, grouse, mountain lions, and furbearers.





“We’re farming land that belonged to my grandparents. It’s been in the family for not quite a hundred years, but it’s getting close. I signed up, and FWP came up with a seed mix, and we got a drill from Pheasants Forever, and I seeded the area and got a good catch on it. FWP came up with part of the cost of the seed, my son and I came up with the rest. I think every farm ought to have some of its land dedicated to wildlife, so I’m putting my values where my mouth is. I was looking for a way to take that area out of production and to make it beneficial to wildlife. That program came along, and I’m happy we got to be part of it.”

—Herb Mohn, Farmer, Scobey

Partner in Open Fields and the Upland Game Bird Enhancement programs, which aim to conserve and enhance upland game bird habitat and provide quality hunting opportunities.

“We’re farming on some acres on the WMA where we grow some cash crops and put in food plots for wildlife and keep the weeds down. It’s a partnership where we trade our services, and we give back as far as keeping it managed for wildlife, so it works out real well. The locals enjoy it during hunting season, and wildlife watchers and hikers, too. I’ll get together with our biologist, and we’ll go over things, and we’ll work together to figure out what would be best for this piece of ground or that piece of ground. We try to rotate things around, so everything gets managed. We have a good relationship, they’re knowledgeable, and we enjoy working with them.

—Wade Hagler, Farmer, Savage

Farming-lease partner on Elk Island WMA to improve nesting cover, plant upland game bird food plots, and help control noxious weeds.

- Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) Project
- Migratory Bird Wetland Program Project or Grassland Conservation Lease
- Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program (UGEP) Project

- WMA Grazing/Farming Lease
- Conservation Easement Project
- Future Fisheries Project
- WMA Forestry Project

**2018 FWP
IMPACT**



WE FOCUS ON INTEGRITY

Montana's outdoor experiences are primarily supported by healthy habitat, well-maintained fish and wildlife populations, customer-friendly parks, and welcoming trails and waters.

At FWP, it starts with a commitment to public service and a pledge to be forthright, transparent, and trustworthy.

Our **focus on integrity** recognizes the public's expectation that the end products of FWP's work defines how we do business every day.



FWP Vision and Guide

With deep respect for the conservation challenges Montana faced in past years, FWP updated its 15-year-old vision document to set the agency's direction through 2026. This 10-year guide was created by FWP, along with the public and partners, with three goals in mind:

Reaffirming our commitments to Montanans and the resources they value

- ▶ better understand and meet the public's emerging values, needs, and expectations
- ▶ both the public and employees decide what to achieve
- ▶ set a direction that can be put into action

The Vision and Guide provides broad communication to FWP's more than 700 employees about the agency's foundation, its commitments to the public, and its direction in the next decade. 2018 activities included:

- ▶ all-staff gathering in Helena to learn about each other's work, gain inspiration from colleagues, and embrace a common vision moving forward
- ▶ cross-divisional, regional meetings to keep lines of communication open, think collectively and strategically about challenges, and to celebrate successes
- ▶ leadership development to cultivate new leaders within the agency, reward and retain quality employees, and apply the institutional knowledge the staff possesses
- ▶ in 2018, efforts focused on mid-level manager training

Chronic Wasting Disease Management

Chronic wasting disease, a contagious and always fatal neurological disorder of the deer family, was first found in the wild in Montana in October 2017. In 2016 and 2017, FWP worked with a citizen's advisory committee, the Montana Department of Livestock, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a statewide CWD response plan.

Focused on finding CWD where it exists and working with hunters, landowners and communities on protection and management

- ▶ Starting in 2017, FWP began a surveillance program to track and contain CWD. This included establishing four Priority Surveillance Areas encompassing 26 hunting districts.
- ▶ The 2018 sampling concentrated in the hunting districts around Philipsburg, and along the Canadian border, as well as in the known CWD-positive area in Carbon County.
- ▶ In 2018, 1,916 deer, elk, and moose sampled with 26 CWD-positive animals that included:
 - ▶ 21 deer along the Hi-Line in Liberty, Blaine, Hill, Phillips, Valley, Daniels, and Sheridan counties, including 19 mule deer and 2 white-tailed deer
 - ▶ 5 deer in Carbon County, including three mule deer and 2 white-tailed deer

To impede the spread of CWD by hunters two Transport Restriction Zones were set up to encompass two CWD-positive areas:

- ▶ TRZs are large enough to provide hunters access to game processors, taxidermists, and landfills for processing and disposing of animals
- ▶ hunters aren't allowed to transport the whole carcass, whole head, brain, or spinal column outside of the surrounding TRZ
- ▶ TRZs were established in all of Toole, Liberty, Hill, Blaine, and Phillips counties; and in Carbon County east of U.S. Highway 212 and the Roberts-Cooney Road to the Wyoming border



Read more:
<https://goo.gl/aEF22t>

Wolverine Research

The Western States Wolverine Conservation Project

When the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in 2013 considered listing wolverines under the Endangered Species Act, FWP helped lead a group that has begun to provide a new understanding of the reclusive species' status. The USFWS eventually concluded that listing was "not warranted," FWP became a core part of a multi-state, tribal, and university partnership that last year:

- ▶ revealed a surprisingly widespread distribution of wolverines
- ▶ delivered the most statistically valid population distributions ever recorded for wolverines inhabiting Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and Washington

More than 22,500 spatially referenced wolverine photos are compiled in the report, which was funded in partnership with the wildlife agencies of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and Washington; U.S. Forest Service; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; National Parks Service; the Northern Arapaho, Eastern Shoshone, and Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes; and the University of Montana and Montana State University. USFWS will use the findings when considering future wolverine listing petitions.



Read more:
<https://goo.gl/WeqNkt>



Future Fisheries Improvements

For the past 30 years, the Future Fisheries Improvement Program has provided funding for the protection and enhancement of Montana fisheries through voluntary enhancement of spawning streams and other habitats for wild fish. More than 133 stream-channel miles have been restored and some 235 miles of riparian fence installed. In 2018, among nearly 20 partners, \$675,000 in spending was approved for 26 projects on 41 stream miles that included:

- ▶ 14 structures installed or removed for wild and native fish passage
- ▶ 6 stream restorations or habitat enhancements
- ▶ 3 instream-flow improvements
- ▶ 3 riparian-fence installations

Restored waters, improved wild fish habitats

habitats for wild fish. More than 133 stream-channel miles have been restored and some 235 miles of riparian fence installed. In

These projects not only focus on the integrity of habitat critical to our fisheries, they improve and perpetuate the amazing fishing opportunities we manage in Montana.

Financial Review Advisory Committee

In 2015, the Montana Legislature passed a law that raised hunting and fishing license fees and requires FWP to review its expenditures and revenues every four years to determine the need for making future license revenue recommendations. The first report was due Jan. 1, 2019. In 2018, FWP organized the Financial Review Advisory Committee, a group of business owners, legislators, and people passionate about the resources FWP manages.

Transparency + Accountability = Financial Integrity

The group:

- ▶ reviewed expenditures for the past four years
- ▶ examined the current fund balance
- ▶ projected revenues and adjustments

The FRAC concluded a license increase is not needed at this time and recommended a matrix that can be used to analyze future needs for fee increases and recommendations on spending for the current fund balance. The department concurred with the FRAC's conclusion and will include it in its report to the Legislature.

The FRAC provides an invaluable service to the department with fresh ideas and viewpoints. In partnership with the FRAC, the department is able to reaffirm its commitment to the integrity of the budgeting process.



Read more:
<https://goo.gl/TtgSiS>

The Deadman's Basin Water Users Association recently renovated the diversion dam that feeds Deadman's Basin Reservoir. The dam, which takes 600 cubic feet per second in spring, was rebuilt at a cost of \$1 million, funded mostly by association members. FWP's Future Fisheries Program helped pay for a rock ramp that allows migrating fish to swim up and over the dam.

Water Program Stability

Managing and protecting stream-flow condition is part of FWP's fishery management mission. Water management, water monitoring, water conservation, stream restoration, and water rights are all components of this effort. FWP uses multiple management tools from formal water-right calls to cooperative efforts among water users. Highlights from 2018 include:

Streamflow conservation for fish, wildlife, and recreation

- ▶ 12 water leases in partnership with 13 water users
- ▶ 4 water leases renewed
- ▶ 4 new leases on 3 streams pending approval
- ▶ 2 permanent conversions to instream flow pending approval
- ▶ 1 lease and 2 permanent conversions in process
- ▶ 25 streamflow gages and 30 water-temperature gages were funded in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey and other partners
- ▶ 10 drought-monitoring efforts were funded in partnership with 9 conservation districts and the University of Montana
- ▶ throughout Montana, 96 stream reaches with instream flow water rights were monitored under the program using USGS and DNRC stream gages



Read more here:
<https://goo.gl/ieA66M>

Regulations Review Committee

FWP has heard for years that our hunting regulations are too complicated and very difficult to understand. In response, Director Williams chartered the Hunting and Trapping Regulation Review Work Group, which looked to thoroughly review the regulations and find ways to simplify them and make them easier for hunters to both understand and use.

The group convened in December 2017 and for 12 months, analyzed all parts of the regulations including statutory language, hunting district regulations, licenses and permit types and regulation organization.

This year hunters in Montana will see three significant changes the Deer, Elk and Antelope and Moose,

Sheep and Goat hunting regulation booklets:

- ▶ The hunting district specific regulations will be presented in a tabular format that is easier to follow and understand.
- ▶ The regulations will be reorganized to put the important information at the front of the booklet with clearer headings so people can quickly get to the information they're looking for.
- ▶ The hunting district legal descriptions will be contained in a separate booklet.

The regulations review group had several other potential changes in their recommendations to the department. Those changes will be further analyzed and implemented over the coming years.

INCLUSION: WE BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Because FWP is linked closely with many of Montana's outdoor experiences, the agency occupies a unique position when it comes to reaching out to the people of Montana.

FWP's role is vigorously discussed around Montana. Folks visit FWP offices to pay for hunting and fishing licenses, get camping information, or ask questions about where to hunt. They come to learn about outdoor opportunities—and, importantly, about ways to participate.

As FWP continues to look at better ways to engage the public, the agency's work is guided by the simple notion of inclusion to **bring people together** around the passion they have for Montana's fish, wildlife, and parks.



Habitat Conservation

Established by the Montana Legislature in 1987, funded with general hunting license fees, and put in motion with a compromise by the legislature, Habitat Montana works with interested landowners via conservation easement or lease before discussing fee-title acquisition, based on the desire of each landowner. Some 55,660 acres of critical wildlife habitat was secured in 2018. Funding included:

Partnerships that work

- ▶ \$15 million in Habitat Montana dollars
- ▶ More than \$30 million from partnerships with private landowners, Forest Legacy Program, USFWS Habitat Conservation Program, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Trust, Trust for Public Land, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, Northwestern Energy, Trout Unlimited, and other organizations

Habitat Montana projects:

- ▶ 9 conservation easements totaling nearly 54,100 acres
- ▶ 6 fee title agreements totaling 1,565 acres

Lasting habitat conservation requires partners—and being a good neighbor. In fact, Montana's Good Neighbor Policy includes fence maintenance, road maintenance, and weed control on FWP fee title ownership lands.

Habitat Montana provides a vehicle to bring people together around a common cause. It pairs hunter and angler dollars with those from many other sources to protect habitat, provide access, and help keep working lands and families viable in Montana.



Read more:
<https://goo.gl/wM6iWt>

Nongame Wildlife Management

In 2017-18, the Nongame Program established 30 partnerships with local communities, government agencies, states, and NGOs on more than 40 ongoing restoration, monitoring, research, and education projects. Projects included:

Conserve, restore, and enhance nongame wildlife and habitats

- ▶ Habitat protected and improved for native fish and 50 native wildlife species at Foy's Bend Restoration on the Flathead River
- ▶ 36 harlequin ducks banded in northwestern Montana to track relocations
- ▶ 30-50 trumpeter swans observed after the 5th year of restoration efforts in Madison Valley
- ▶ 18 adult least terns, 3 newly hatched chicks, and 3 least tern nests documented on the lower Yellowstone River—the highest count in 15 years for this federally threatened species
- ▶ 16 new greater short-horned lizard locations and 22 individuals observed by eastern Montana hunters and others responding to social media requests for sightings of this state "species in need of inventory"

(continues on page 21)

Education

Learning for life and citizenship in the outdoors

Education has long been an FWP staple that's built a hunger for outdoor activities and a desire to maintain Montana's status as a leader in teaching young and old about the value of community and conservation. Here are some highlights from 2018:

- ▶ Nearly 21,000 total visitors at Montana WILD in Helena and 55 Traveling WILD visits around the state.

Parks Interpretation & Education

- ▶ 93,000 students and others participated in programs
- ▶ 25,098 attended 90 special events

Angler Education

- ▶ 42,980 Montanans participated in programs, clinics, and events
- ▶ 380 free educational fishing license exemptions provided to groups, classrooms, and clinics

Hunter Education

- ▶ 6,590 hunter-classroom and field-day students in 330 classes
- ▶ 660 active hunter education volunteers
- ▶ 2,180 bowhunter-classroom and field-day students in 130 classes
- ▶ 290 active bowhunter education volunteers

Becoming an Outdoors Woman

- ▶ 10 events—from winter workshops to river kayaking
- ▶ 200 participants and 65 volunteer instructors



Learn more:
<https://goo.gl/LK9PvB>

Montana Parks in Focus Impacts

A public-private collaboration to strengthen state parks

Governor Steve Bullock established the Parks in Focus Commission as a public-private collaboration to strengthen the state park system and to ensure that FWP has the resources, capacity, and expertise to implement the Montana State Parks and Recreation strategic plan.

The Parks in Focus Commission worked over the past year to provide expert, independent recommendations for a plan to develop diversified revenue streams, grow strategic partnerships, and build an engaged constituency for state parks.

- ▶ The recommendations were adopted in December by the Montana Parks and Recreation Board.
- ▶ Over the course of 2018, four public meetings were held and more than 150 comments were received.

A survey conducted for the commission showed:

- ▶ 9 out of 10 surveyed Montanans said they're in search of public trails when they visit a state park
- ▶ 2.81 state parks visited per year among Montanans who visit state parks
- ▶ 67 percent of all surveyed visitors say they use parks primarily for day use



Learn more:
<https://goo.gl/xDoXk8>





Read more here:
<https://goo.gl/MebXjc>

FWP Communications

For Montanans and others to form clear and informed opinions about FWP’s work, it’s essential that the public understands and has easy access to the how, what, and why of conservation and recreation. As the communications data from 2018 make clear, people from all walks of life want to know as much as possible about the decisions and activities that affect them.

Continuing the conversation throughout Montana

- ▶ *Montana Outdoors* Magazine: No. 1 in Best Magazine category from the Association for Conservation

Information for the past 15 years

- ▶ FWP website: 1.8 million website users, 14.5 million page views
- ▶ FWP News: 345,000 email subscriptions
- ▶ 45 “Outdoor Reports” videos reached 384,000 households weekly via Montana TV news outlets
- ▶ FWP Social Media: more than 150,000 followers across all platforms
- ▶ State Parks website: 450,000 website users and 1.4 million page views
- ▶ State Parks Social Media: 56,000 users across all platforms

Citizen Science Projects established:

- ▶ 26 volunteers worked 234 hours on black swift, black rosy-finch, and chimney swift surveys
- ▶ Bat Boxes
 - 10 built and placed in and around Saco by a local couple with four in use by summer’s end
 - 50 built by Bozeman school children delivered for placement to FWP and local landowners
 - 25 multi-chambered houses built by Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops in Miles City area in response to a local public awareness campaign
- ▶ About \$50,000 was donated via the Nongame Tax Checkoff.

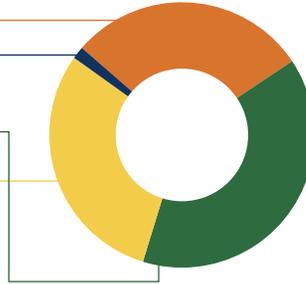


Read more here:
<https://goo.gl/JLr2qh>



2019 APPROPRIATION BY FUNDING SOURCE

General Fund	\$0.00
General license account.....	\$50,551,589.27
Earmarked state revenue.....	\$67,677,446.29
Federal Funds.....	\$52,105,424.77
Statutory	\$2,600,999.00
Total Funds.....	\$172,935,459.33



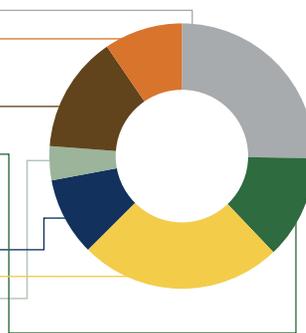
2019 EXPENDITURE CATEGORIES

Operations.....	\$97,815,699.72
Capital*	\$75,119,759.61
Total.....	\$172,935,459.33



OPERATING BUDGET BY PROGRAM

Fisheries	\$24,707,607.00	25.26%
Wildlife	\$24,106,121.00	24.64%
Administration	\$13,916,848.72	14.23%
Enforcement	\$12,351,132.00	12.63%
Department Management	\$9,355,902.00	9.56%
Parks.....	\$9,322,142.00	9.53%
Comm Ed.....	\$4,055,947.00	4.15%
Total.....	\$97,815,699.72	



FWP LEADERSHIP

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MONTANA
STEVE BULLOCK

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MONTANA
MIKE COONEY

FWP DIRECTOR
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FWP CHIEF OF STAFF
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BETTY STONE, GLASGOW
VACANT

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Mission:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, through its employees and citizen commission and board, provides for the stewardship of the fish, wildlife, parks, and recreational resources of Montana, while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations.



I'M GLASSING DECADES AHEAD.

When I buy a hunting license, I'm doing more than just purchasing a recreational opportunity. I'm also funding habitat restoration, scientific research, and access enhancement. I'm helping secure Montana's outdoor future, too. The same is true with buying a fishing license or paying a state parks fee. Those payments are how all of us chip in together to help keep Montana, Montana.



This public document was produced at state expense. For details on cost and distribution, contact Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks at 444-2535 or fwpgen@mt.gov

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

