MONTANA

WILDLIFE MITIGATION PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT

FY2019

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MITIGATION SUMMARY

Construction of Libby and Hungry Horse Dams in northwest Montana flooded 90 miles of the Kootenai and Flathead Rivers, 101 miles of tributary streams, and 52,105 acres of important wildlife habitats. An additional 4,100 acres were lost due to construction and relocation of roads and railroads. Efforts to mitigate these wildlife impacts have been funded by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) since the 1970s. The responsibility for completing this mitigation was transferred to Montana through the 1988 wildlife mitigation agreement between BPA and the State of Montana.

This report summarizes mitigation activities and expenditures associated with the Montana wildlife mitigation program for impacts caused by construction and inundation from Libby and Hungry Horse Dams during state fiscal year (FY) 2019 (7/1/18 through 6/30/19). Over the past year we completed an additional 6,681 acres of mitigation, bringing the total acres of wildlife habitat that have been enhanced or conserved to 272,104 acres. We also restored and enhanced habitats, monitored past projects, and participated in several other activities outlined in this report to benefit wildlife and the recreating public in northwestern Montana.

Table 1. Acres of wildlife habitat lost to hydroelectric development, and mitigation accomplished through June 2019.

Habitat Category	Hungry Horse	Libby	Hydropower Losses*	Mitigated thru 6/18	Mitigated FY2019	Total Project Acreage**
Riparian/Wetland	6,876	11,724	14,488	22,606	1,173	23,779
Palouse Prairie/Ag	0	1,583	1,251	9,033	52	9,085
Upland Forest	16,804	19,218	27,953	233,784	5,456	239,240
Total	**23,680**	**32,525**	**43,692**	**258,007**	**6,681**	**272,104**

*Mitigation obligation based on congressional repayment allocation – Hungry Horse 76%, Libby 79%.
**A detailed list of all mitigation projects that have been completed is included in Appendix A.

At more than 6-times the hydropower losses and 4.8-times the total number of acres impacted, these past accomplishments provide full mitigation for wildlife impacts resulting from construction and inundation of Libby and Hungry Horse Dams. Current program emphasis is to manage and monitor the investments made in wildlife habitat enhancement and conservation over the last 30+ years. We also continue to work on new projects as allowed under the BPA agreement. We do this to maintain our ongoing partnerships that continue to enhance and conserve wildlife habitats that benefit our five program priorities: wetland/riparian habitats, grizzly bears, terrestrial furbearers, bighorn sheep, and Palouse prairie/Columbian sharp-tailed grouse.

PROGRAM PLANNING & COORDINATION

Alan Wood, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

This work includes all administrative activities associated with program development, planning, budgeting, personnel management, and reporting. It also includes ongoing efforts to coordinate and integrate our activities with other related wildlife. The following is a list of coordination activities during fiscal year 2019.

NW Power and Conservation Council Fish and Wildlife Program

We continued to participate in activities of the Council that have potential to influence the wildlife mitigation program in Montana. Most significant was Council's call for program amendments.

Columbia River Power System EIS

Three federal agencies responsible for operating the Columbia River power system are evaluating alternatives for long-term system operations and its potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts on flood risk management, irrigation, power generation, navigation, fish and wildlife, cultural resources and recreation. We continued to work closely with our fisheries staff and other wildlife managers as this process moves forward.

Flathead River-to-Lake Initiative

MFWP joined local citizens working together to enjoy and care for the Flathead River and Flathead Lake. The Initiative helps find incentives for private landowners that want to restore and conserve vital fish and wildlife habitat on their property. We met with partners to coordinate ongoing conservation and restoration efforts and participated in outreach activities.

Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) provides federal grants to states for conserving important forests that are threatened with conversion to nonforest uses. We continue to attend annual project review meetings in support of grant applications for our ongoing conservation projects.

Major Activities Planned for FY2020

1. Continue to coordinate with River-To-Lake partners to build on past conservation efforts, efficiently utilize existing grants, apply for new grants, continue restoration and conservation projects, and continue outreach and education with private landowners.
2. Participate in the Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service grant programs to obtain funding for new projects as opportunities arise.
3. Continue to participate in Northwest Power and Conservation Council activities and other pertinent Columbia Basin groups to stay current with the Council's fish and wildlife program.
4. Participate in other coordination activities that will complement wildlife mitigation activities.

Table 2. Budget summary for Program Planning and Coordination, FY2017 through FY2019.

Budget Category	FY17	FY18	FY19
Personal Services	$20,650	$21,062	$23,310
Operations & Maintenance	$443	$1,159	$603
Subtotal	$21,093	$22,221	$23,913
MFWP Overhead	$2,895	$3,202	$3,106
Total	**$23,988**	**$25,423**	**$27,019**

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND RESTORATION

Franz Ingelfinger, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Ashley Creek Cattle Exclusion and Bank Restoration

In spring of 2016 MFWP and partners initiated a stream bank restoration project on Ashley Creek, a tributary to the Flathead River. Leveraging Montana DEQ non-point source 319 funding, fencing was erected to exclude cattle and create a 35-foot buffer along a ½ mile section of Ashley Creek. Site monitoring documented vegetation re-establishment, bank stabilization, and good survival of woody plantings. To accelerate site recovery and establishment of shading vegetation, volunteers planted additional hawthorn, aspen and cottonwood seedlings during the fall of 2017. Planting survival remains high through the 2019 growing season. In addition, in 2019, fence gates were upgraded to metal tarter-style gates to eliminate cattle trespass. The three-strand wire gates installed with the original project were breached frequently by cattle.

Weed Management

Wildlife staff continued to work with MFWP fisheries staff to contract for weed management on two wildlife management areas (North Shore WMA and North Swan WMA). This is the second year of a multi-year term contract with a weed control contractor. Negotiating a long-term contract has reduced costs and improved weed management due to applicator continuity. During FY19, spring herbicide applications were made to the North Shore WMA and North Swan WMA. Primary weeds controlled included Canada thistle, houndstongue, spotted knapweed, and orange hawkweed.

Habitat Enhancement North Shore Wildlife Management Area (WMA)

A new management plan for the North Shore WMA was finalized in February 2019. Key recommendations include drainage ditch improvements to retain and manage field flooding for benefit of migrating waterfowl and shorebirds; naturalization of certain cultivated areas to expand permanent cover; and use of leave grain, food plots, and cover plots to provide forage and shelter for migrating waterfowl and upland gamebirds. Two partnerships continue to be central to WMA management success: MFWP's tenant farmer, and the Montana's Upland Gamebird Enhancement Program. In early 2017, MFWP negotiated a five-year lease agreement with a local farmer. This tenant farmer has agreed to several soil health BPMs, assistance planting buffer strips and food and cover plots, and a 20% crop share left standing for migrating waterfowl and upland gamebirds. In addition, funds from the Montana Upland Gamebird Enhancement Program pay for seed for buffer strips and diverse plantings for leave areas.

Foys Bend Fish Conservation Area (FCA)

Foys Bend FCA is managed to maintain and enhance native and native-like riparian lands, wetlands and uplands for the benefit of fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and floodwater retention. Since acquisition in 2009, MFWP has explored techniques for re-vegetating and naturalizing former alfalfa fields and pasturelands. We continue to implement and evaluate different planting techniques and employ lessons learned throughout the region. This season we expanded a nursery-style tree planting program and continued direct cottonwood seeding experiments.

<u>Nursery-Style Plantings:</u> This is our third growing season experimenting with tree farming techniques aimed at transitioning former floodplains back into riparian forests. We continue to evaluate this nursery-style approach in which bareroot cottonwood seedlings are planted in rows on 15-foot centers and protected from deer and vole browse with 5-foot tree tubes. In addition to eliminating browse, tree

tubes provide a favorable growing environment and permit application of broad-spectrum herbicide to control competing weeds and grass. Mowing is used to limit weed establishment and reduce vole density by eliminating cover. Seedlings grow quickly, reaching almost 10 feet tall after two growing seasons. However, many of the early plantings (2017) are increasingly susceptible to wind-damage. This issue was not unanticipated. We have also been evaluating modified approaches to reduce planting susceptibility to wind damage and pruning techniques to increase resilience and recover wind-damaged plantings. Ultimately, site selection may be a key to success, with this technique not appropriate in high wind environments.

Direct-Seeding of Cottonwoods: Cottonwoods are a flood-dependent species in decline across the dam-influenced West. Since 2017, MFWP has experimented with ways to establish cottonwoods directly from seed, absent the natural hydrology that historically established and sustained these riparian communities. Primary challenges include soil preparation, seed collection, storage and sewing, irrigation, weed control, and whether techniques can be implemented at an ecologically significant scale.

Work at Foys Bend has focused on seeding former hay fields. After three years, we believe we have an approach that is both scalable and broadly applicable. In 2020 we will significantly increase our efforts. At Foys Bend we have prepared six acres for seeding. Over the next two years we will experimentally evaluate questions of soil preparation, seeding rate, herbicide and irrigation schedule, as well as evaluate the feasibility of transforming reed canarygrass-dominated areas with direct-seeding techniques.

Figure 1: Seeded in 2018, after two growing seasons, these cottonwood seedlings average more than six-feet tall.

Figure 2: Germination studies are used to evaluate cottonwood seed viability, germination decline with storage, and whether seed handling and processing methods affect seed viability. Results indicate high initial seed viability (>95% germination rate) retained through 25-days of storage. After 25-days, germination rate declines precipitously.

Major Activities Planned for FY2020

1. Increase scale and experimentally evaluate direct seeding techniques across a broad range of conditions and soil types.
2. Continue weed spraying and efficacy monitoring at Foys Bend and North Shore WMA.

Table 3. Budget summary for restoration projects, FY2017 through FY2019.

Budget Category	FY17	FY18	FY19
Personal Services	$31,260	$36,368	$38,153
Operations & Maintenance	$1,564	$940	$3,175
Subtotal	$32,824	$37,308	$41,328
MFWP Overhead	$4,505	$5,375	$5,368
Total	**$37,329**	**$42,683**	**$46,696**

MANAGEMENT & MONITORING

By Chris Hammond Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Dancing Prairie Preserve Conservation Easement

MFWP purchased this conservation easement from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in 1995. The purpose of this easement was to cooperate with TNC in the preservation and protection of the area that is unique in its wildlife, plants, and origins as partial mitigation for Palouse prairie habitat flooded by Libby Dam. MFWP reviewed the property in May 2018 and found TNC to be in full compliance with the easement terms.

Thompson-Fisher Conservation Easement

This easement was completed in September 2003. Plum Creek Timber Company merged with Weyerhaeuser in February 2016 making Weyerhaeuser responsible for managing the property under the terms of the conservation easement and associated management plan. MFWP visited the property in October 2018 to conduct annual monitoring and found Weyerhaeuser to be in full compliance with the terms of the conservation easement.

Swan Valley Conservation Easements

These conservation easements were completed in September 2006 and December 2010. MFWP reviewed all three Swan conservation easements in October 2018 and found that the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation was in full compliance with the terms of the conservation easements.

Kootenai Valleys Conservation Easement

This easement was completed in 2012. MFWP visited the property in October 2018 to conduct annual monitoring. Stimson Lumber Company was found to be in full compliance with the terms of the conservation easement.

Haskill Basin and Trumbull Creek Conservation Easements

Haskill Basin conservation easement was completed in February 2016 and Trumbull Creek in February 2017. The site visit was conducted in October 2018 and F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Company was found to be in full compliance on both properties.

Sharp-tailed Grouse

MFWP completed the environmental assessment for the restoration of sharp-tailed grouse in western Montana. A recommendation to reintroduce sharp-tailed grouse into three areas of western Montana: the Blackfoot Valley, the northern Bitterroot Valley, and the Drummond area was presented in a decision letter to the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The commission approved the project in April 2019. Analysis of lek site specific habitat from areas considered as source populations is schedule for FY20 with trapping and relocation efforts to begin during the fall of 2020 in FY 2021.

North Shore Viewing Area

In spring of 2019, MFWP began work on the North Shore Wildlife Viewing Area in Kalispell. The viewing area is located on the northwest corner of the North Shore Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The WMA abuts the US Fish and Wildlife Service's 1,887-acre North Shore Waterfowl Production Area, and together they protect the lake's longest stretch of undeveloped shoreline and are part of the Audubon-designated Flathead Lake Important Bird Area (IBA). The IBA supports over 229 bird species, including 172 species that are common or seasonally abundant, and hosts tens of thousands of migrating waterfowl that rest and feed in the waters off Flathead

Lake's north shore and within adjacent farm fields that flood during springtime. The viewing area was designed to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. Completion of the viewing area is expected during FY 2020.

Major Activities Planned for FY2020

1. Finish additional habitat analysis comparing source population habitat to reintroduction site habitat for sharp-tailed grouse reintroduction project.
2. Complete research proposal for sharp-tailed grouse reintroduction project.
3. Begin community outreach in areas where sharp-tailed grouse will be reintroduced.
4. Begin logistical planning for capture and transport of grouse from source populations
5. Continue building capacity for long-term monitoring and research associated with sharp-tailed grouse reintroduction.
6. Continue annual monitoring of the various conservation easements to ensure compliance with these agreements.
7. Work with newly hired Eureka Area Wildlife biologist to monitor Ural-Tweed bighorn sheep herd and evaluate response to past forest habitat treatments.

Table 4. Budget summary for management and monitoring, FY2017 through FY2019.

Budget Category	FY17	FY18	FY19
Personal Services	$39,818	$36,325	$40,573
Operations & Maintenance	$18,592	$13,943	$21,467
Subtotal	$58,410	$50,268	$62,040
MFWP Overhead	$8,016	$7,243	$8,058
Total	**$66,426**	**$57,511**	**$70,098**

KOOCANUSA RESERVOIR HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Lynn Johnson, Kootenai National Forest

The Kootenai National Forest (KNF) began working with the Army Corps of Engineers in the 1970s to improve wildlife habitats on federal lands to mitigate impacts of habitat lost due to the creation of Koocanusa Reservoir by Libby Dam. Work continues using partnerships with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP)/Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and KNF funds enhancing big game habitat on over 31,000 acres over the last four decades.

The KNF's commitment to continue this work included completing the Forest-wide Fuels Reduction and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement environmental assessment (2001). This analysis provided planning and implementation guidance to continue the partnership and outlined wildlife enhancement objectives that maintain and expand on this habitat work. Treatment areas from the original BPA treatment units were incorporated into this planning document along with other wildlife habitat improvement areas on the KNF that were outside the Libby Dam mitigation area boundary. The KNF is also incorporating future habitat enhancement work into recently completed planning analyses that overlap with units in either the Forest-wide Fuels document or the original BPA treatment units. These recent planning efforts include the East Reservoir EIS, McSutton EIS, Lower Big EIS, Young Dodge EIS and Gateway Ecological Restoration EA.

Habitat Enhancement

Over the past year (July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019), the KNF focused their efforts on two general areas for habitat enhancement along Lake Koocanusa. These areas were designed to maintain the benefits achieved through past wildlife habitat enhancement projects and included the Green Basin area (specifically a 450 acre ecosystem maintenance burn project and follow-up noxious weed treatments), and the Ten Mile area (specifically a 730 acre aerially ignited ecosystem maintenance burn with related noxious weed treatments). Both projects are a continuation of the efforts of the Kootenai River Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project, designed to promote healthy and fully functioning ecosystems, and overlap with areas treated in the past. During the fall and early spring timeframes, planning, layout and program administration occurred for these areas. This work included the field verification of unit boundaries, developing desired stand conditions, creating treatment prescriptions, conducting wildlife habitat surveys, updating prescribed burn plans, soliciting input from other resources, and updating existing NEPA documents.

Green Basin Ecosystem Maintenance Burn

The 2019 Green Basin prescribed burn is a continued effort in a long-term project that began in the mid 1980's, designed to minimize the spread of noxious weeds and maintain the historic fire regime within the area through prescribed maintenance burning in this ponderosa pine habitat. The Green Basin area is located on the West Kootenai area of the Rexford Ranger District, of which a large portion of the lower elevations consists of private land which has been and continues to be subdivided and developed. Agriculture, urban development, cattle, horses, dogs, and fences are replacing winter range as well as hindering movement within this area. Additionally, the Caribou Fire of 2017 occurred on the West Kootenai, burning over 24,000 acres of land, dramatically altering vegetation and habitat within close proximity to Green Basin. This area provides a major portion of the remaining native bunchgrass and bitterbrush winter range habitat in the lower elevations of the West Kootenai, as well as providing a movement corridor across the international boundary.

Over the last five years the Rexford Ranger District has focused efforts in maintaining and restoring the 935-acre Green Basin area. With assistance from both the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Mule Deer Foundation, and a grant from the Washington Office of the Forest Service for fuels reduction and forest health improvement work, the Forest Service has been able to complete approximately 64 acres of thinning and excavator piling of densely overstocked Douglas fir stands, and approximately 650 acres of prescribed burning, including the 2019 burn. Weed surveys have also been completed over approximately 400 acres and subsequent herbicide treatment activities have taken place over approximately 40-80 acres utilizing backpack, UTV and truck mounted spray equipment.

During the spring of 2019, over a four-day period in late April, hand ignition of approximately 450 acres was completed within the south half of the Green Basin Area. This burn block had been treated with prescribed fire two previous times, in 1986 and 2002, and will be evaluated for prescribed burn treatments again in another 10-12 years. With the completion of the 2019 burn, all project level objectives continue to be met within the Green Basin project area. The low intensity under burn rejuvenated the shrubs and grasses that had become decadent, woody and unpalatable to ungulates, and the large openings have been maintained through the reduction of small conifer encroachment. Through these measures the overall quality and quantity of native browse and grass species in this important winter range habitat have been improved. Another primary objective that was achieved was to reduce the fuels within the area, providing a temporary zone of modified fire behavior should a wildfire occur, until the time fuels naturally accumulate again.

Figure 3. The above photo at left depicts strips of low intensity fire moving through the needlecast and grasses that make up the majority of the ground cover in the Green Basin area. The photo at right shows a group of mule deer moving through the decadent bitterbrush fields while firefighters light through the trees in the background.

Tenmile Face Ecosystem Maintenance Burn

Over the winter of 2016/2017, personnel from Fish, Wildlife and Parks placed satellite transmitters on two ewes from the Ural-Tweed bighorn sheep herd in the Tenmile area. The movement of these sheep has since been monitored, with the observance of use within and adjacent to the Tenmile drainage, including the area within the Tenmile Face Ecosystem Maintenance Burn. Additionally, during the late summer and fall of 2018, an extensive data search was completed in order to better understand the history of the prescribed burn treatments conducted in the area between Stone Hill on the north and Volcour Gulch on the south. Burn locations, dates, and as much specific burn day and post burn monitoring information as possible has been gathered for the burns conducted within this herd's historic range. This effort was conducted in hopes of gaining a better understanding of the effects that

prescribed burning is having on the sheep habitat, and to better inform decisions about future habitat improvement projects within the area.

Figure 4. One of the collared ewes at far right stands on the bank at the edge of the highway just below the Tenmile Face Ecosystem Maintenance Burn.

On May 3rd, 2019 aerial ignition of the Tenmile Face prescribed burn was completed over 730 acres across the west facing slope of the mountains just north of the Tenmile drainage on the east side of Koocanusa Reservoir. This area was treated with prescribed fire three previous times starting in the 1980's and most recently in 2001. The target condition for the area is a mosaic of fire-maintained park-like ponderosa pine stands interspersed with areas of dense ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, western larch and lodgepole pine to serve as big game hiding and thermal cover. A mix of grasses and shrubs dominate the ground cover providing good forage for big game such as mule deer, bighorn sheep and elk.

The purpose of this specific burn unit was to conduct a burn of low to moderate intensity in order to maintain these conditions in the area. Field reviews following the prescribed burn confirmed that sprouting had been stimulated and much of the dead material had been removed from the forbs and shrubs, therefore improving the forage quality and quantity of this habitat component. The fire had burned in a mosaic pattern, covering 70-90% of the area and providing a short-term nutrient flush to the vegetation, resulting in improved forage. Fire was successfully reintroduced to this landscape at intervals that are consistent with historical fire regimes, and the naturally occurring fuels were reduced, while the larger diameter mature trees were maintained within the area.

Documented sheep movements following the burn indicate continued use of the area, with additional sightings of the collared ewes with lambs of the year. Sightings over the summer also include mule deer and elk, confirming use of this habitat by a variety of wildlife.

Both prior to and following the prescribed burn, noxious weed surveys, herbicide treatment and biological control activities were conducted within the area, primarily focusing on the open roads that provide the most likely spread and dispersal of seeds, and in the dispersed camp site just south of the burn unit. The focus was primarily on spotted knapweed and oxeye daisy, however other noxious weed species were targeted where they were found.

Figure 5. The above photo at left shows consumption of needlecast and grasses in an area within the Tenmile Face prescribed burn the day following ignition. The photo at right was taken in a similar area in mid-August and depicts the regrowth of the grasses and shrubs within the area.

Table 5. Annual work plan accomplishments and costs associated with the Libby Dam Habitat Enhancement Projects, July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.

2019 Activities	**MFWP Mitigation Costs**	**Partnership Contribution**	**KNF Cost Share Contribution**	**Total Costs**
Project Planning for the Tenmile Face RX Burn – 730 Acres	$3,100		$2,400	$5,500
Tenmile RX Burn Implementation – 730 acres	$10,025	$0	$22,825	$32,850
Project Planning for the Green Basin RX Burn – 450 Acres	$0	$0	$1,400	$1,400
Green Basin RX Burn Implementation – 450 Acres	$0	$3,550 Mule Deer Foundation	$23,450	$27,000
Total	**$13,125**	**$3,550**	**$50,075**	**$66,750**

ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Kris Tempel, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Land Trust Partnerships

Through specific agreements with land trusts, the MFWP wildlife mitigation program is able to help defray some of the landowner's costs associated with donated or bargain sale conservation easements. The expenses covered include appraisals and other required documentation such as mineral reports and resource documentation reports. This program is offered to landowners who donate or offer bargain sale conservation easements on lands with habitats that benefit species impacted by construction of Hungry Horse and Libby dams and meet the priorities outlined in the operating plan (Wood 2016).

Table 6. Summary of completed partnership projects for FY2019.

Project Name	Project Type	Partner	Costs Paid by FWP	Total Project Acres	Riparian Wetland Acres	Upland Forest Acres	Prairie Habitat Acres	Subirr. Or Ag Acres	Cost Per Acre
Kootenai Basin									
Wild River	Fee	Vital Ground	**$3,586**	**42**	**10**	**0**	**0**	**32**	**$85**
Kootenai Total			**$3,586**	**42**	**10**	**0**	**0**	**32**	**$85**

Project Name	Project Type	Partner	Costs Paid by FWP	Total Project Acres	Riparian Wetland Acres	Upland Forest Acres	Prairie Habitat Acres	Subirr. Or Ag Acres	Cost Per Acre
Flathead Basin									
Swan Valley	CE	MLR	**$4,139**	**158**	**5**	**133**	**0**	**20**	**$26**
North Fork Forest	CE	FLT	**$2,512**	**71**	**8**	**63**	**0**	**0**	**$35**
North Fork Floodplain	CE	FLT	**$3,376**	**30**	**0**	**30**	**0**	**0**	**$112**
Flathead Total			**$10,027**	**259**	**13**	**226**	**0**	**20**	**$58**

MLR = Montana Land Reliance
FLT = Flathead Land Trust

Wild River Project: MFWP worked with the Vital Ground Foundation to conserve 42 acres along the Kootenai River just upstream of the confluence with the Yaak River. Vital Ground now owns the property which consists of 10 acres of riparian/wetland habitat along the Kootenai River which was threatened by subdivision and development. Conservation of this land benefits grizzly bears, Canada lynx, wolverine, white sturgeon, and bull trout. The parcel falls in the middle of the identified high priority grizzly bear/wildlife linkage area across the Kootenai River and Highway 2 between Troy, Montana and the Idaho border. Protection of this area secures a link between surrounding public/protected lands enabling grizzly bears, Canada lynx, and wolverine to access low elevation habitats and move freely across the Kootenai Valley and River to other protected areas from now into the future. Securing

permanent connectivity gives this small threatened population of grizzly bears the ability to disperse from the northern Purcell region to the more isolated Cabinet Mountains where fewer than 25 grizzlies are thought to reside. Maintaining natural connectivity is critical for the Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear population's recovery and genetic health. Vital Ground is now working with MFWP to place a conservation easement on the land through a US Fish and Wildlife Service Land Acquisition grant which will preclude 12 home sites and permanently reduce potential sources of mortality and human conflicts to grizzly bears, Canada lynx, wolverine, (and possibly white sturgeon and bull trout through illegal fishing). The conservation easement will preclude subdivision and development and associated impacts to riparian/bench and riverside habitats that could be detrimental to a recovering population of white sturgeon and a small population of fluvial bull trout.

Swan Valley Project: MFWP worked with the Montana Land Reliance to conserve 158 acres in the Swan Valley. This project was the last unallocated portion of land remaining in the Montana Legacy Project. This forested property contains a majority of lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, and ponderosa pine with a mix of Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir, western larch, and western white pine. There are also a few black cottonwood and aspen trees near meadow openings and in ephemeral drainage bottoms, providing habitat for grizzly and black bears, gray wolves, bald eagles and a variety of other wildlife species. The property also has 5 acres of wetlands and 20 acres of meadow habitat.

North Fork Forest Project: MFWP worked with the Flathead Land Trust to conserve 71 acres of forestland in the North Fork Flathead drainage. The property consists primarily of forested land with a mix of upland coniferous forest, wetland coniferous forest, and wetland deciduous forest. One small emergent wetland is also present along the western boundary. This mix of upland habitats, set between undeveloped Glacier National Park and the Flathead National Forest, supports excellent habitat for several species of large mammals, including grizzly bear, black bear, gray wolf, mountain lion, moose, elk, deer, and coyote, as well as potential habitat for 122 species of birds and several species of small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

North Fork Floodplain Project: MFWP worked with the Flathead Land Trust to conserve 30 acres of forested riparian area in the North Fork Flathead drainage. The entire property consists of early successional forest and shrubland that burned in the 1988 Red Bench Fire. It consists primarily of upland deciduous forest, dominated by quaking aspen with some scattered lodgepole pine, as well as a small amount of sagebrush shrubland. This mix of upland habitats, set between Glacier National Park and the Flathead National Forest, supports excellent habitat for several species of large mammals, including grizzly bear, black bear, gray wolf, mountain lion, Canada lynx, moose, elk, deer, coyote, and badger, as well as potential habitat for 113 species of birds and several species of small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

Phase 2 of the Whitefish Lake Watershed Project

MFWP, with assistance from The Trust for Public Land, worked with multiple partners to complete the second phase of the Whitefish Lake Watershed Project just north of Whitefish, Montana. The entire project is 13,398 acres of important fish and wildlife habitat including a rare fen, a migratory corridor for bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout habitat, nesting habitat for trumpeter swans, and important spring grizzly bear habitat. The first phase was completed in FY2018 and includes the northwestern-most 11 sections of the project consisting of 7,018 acres. MFWP holds the conservation easement, which protects significant fish and wildlife habitat and connectivity corridors, and was funded using the U.S. Forest Service Forest Legacy Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants Program, and MFWP Habitat Montana Program. In FY2019, the same funding

sources, plus the MFWP Migratory Bird Wetland Program, were used to place the five sections (3,200 acres) directly to the south of first phase of the project under an MFWP-held conservation easement. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) paid the underlying fee for all 16 sections and now has fee ownership. Also, in FY2019, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) fisheries mitigation funding was used to purchase the eastern-most 5 sections (3,180 acres) of the property and title was transferred to the DNRC with BPA holding a conservation easement. The entire 13,398-acre property is now part of the Stillwater State Forest.

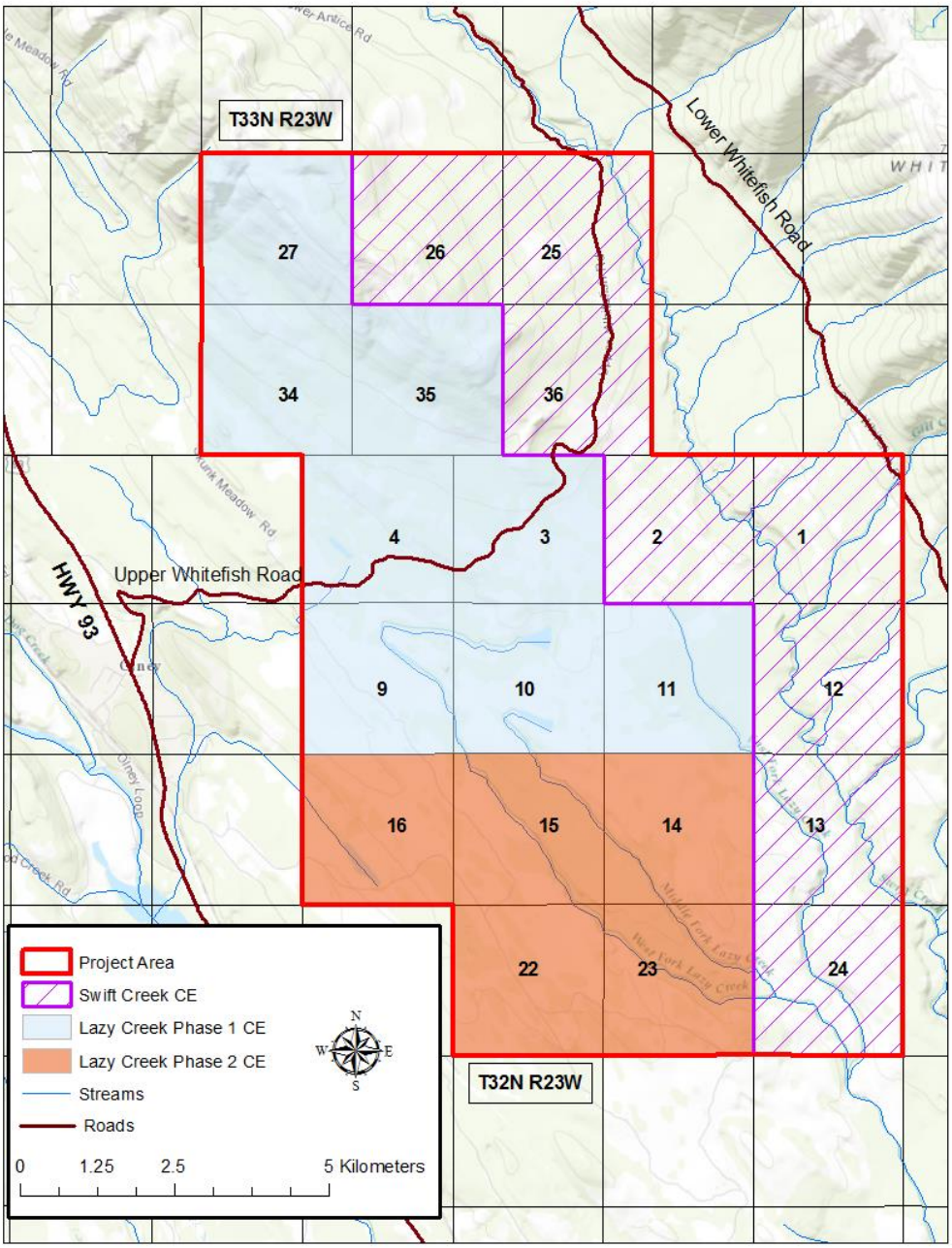

Figure 6. Map of the Whitefish Lake Watershed Project.

Major Activities Planned for FY2020

1. Complete the Kootenai Forestlands Conservation Easement Project.
2. Continue to work with local land trust partners to encourage donated and bargain sale conservation easements by covering some of the associated project costs.
3. Continue to help fund preliminary appraisals for both potential MFWP and partners high priority conservation projects.
4. Continue to identify and develop new partnership opportunities that conserve priority habitats within northwestern Montana.

Table 7. Budget summary for MFWP Active Partnerships, FY2017 through FY2019.

Budget Category	FY17	FY18	FY19
Personal Services	$45,430	$46,336	$104,475
Operations & Maintenance	$16,794	$8,200	$44,827
Capital	$0	$0	$0
Subtotal	**$62,224**	**$54,536**	**$149,302**
MFWP Overhead	$8,540	$7,858	$19,391
Total	**$70,764**	**$62,394**	**$168,693**

Figure 7. Aerial view of the Whitefish Lake Watershed Project. (Photo by Kestrel Aerial)

OPERATIONAL LOSSES – Hungry Horse and LIBBY DAMS

Dwight Bergeron, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) sells electricity from Libby and Hungry Horse Dams. The Northwest Power Act requires BPA to mitigate fish and wildlife losses associated with both dams. Wildlife losses attributable to construction and inundation were settled in 1988 under an agreement between BPA and the state of Montana. BPA retains full legal responsibility for mitigating wildlife impacts caused by ***operations*** of Montana's federal hydropower facilities.

Dam operations significantly alter the flow regime of rivers. Spring flows have been attenuated while winter flows are significantly higher than normal. In addition, daily and hourly flows can change drastically depending on hydro-related demands. Alterations in flow regimes are translated to changes in water, habitat structure, wildlife communities and floodplain characteristics. The project methodologies and results can be found on the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho's website:

http://www.restoringthekootenai.org/ResourcesKootenai/OnlineLibrary/wildlifelibrary/

This report summarizes Montana's continued participation in a project to quantify and mitigate wildlife, and wildlife habitat losses caused by operations of Libby Dam. Working in coordination with the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI), one of the stated goals of the project was to develop a methodology applicable to other Columbia River Basin dam operations. The Flathead River (and Hungry Horse Dam) was identified as a test site to determine the portability of the Kootenai Operational Loss Assessment methodology. The results of the successful Flathead River Operational Loss Assessment were highlighted in earlier annual reports that highlighted significant riparian habitat losses within the Flathead River system (Table 8). Without active remediation efforts, the functionality will continue to decline, and associated losses will increase.

Table 8. Flathead River operational losses (acres) by flood return category.

Flood Return Category	Floodplain Acres	Function Loss (1-IFFA/10)	Operational Losses (Acres)
1-50-year contemporary floodplain	29,029	0.35	10,160
51-year contemporary to 100-year historic floodplain	15,849	1.0	15,849
Lower Flathead River-downstream of Flathead Lake	1,609		312
Total Operational Impacts			**26,321**

Habitat Restoration Efforts – Blackwell Gravel Pit

Work continued on an abandoned Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) gravel pit adjacent to the Kootenai River that is connected to the river only through groundwater fluctuations. At high flows, the gravel pit has a small amount of standing water in the bottom of the basin. MFWP, in consultation with KTOI and ACE, developed a detailed project design for the Blackwell gravel pit. The proposal included connecting the gravel pit to the Kootenai River and creating an outlet at the south end of the gravel pit. The project will add to existing wetland, create additional riparian terrestrial habitats and improve upland habitat. Environmental compliance work and final minor project designs have been completed by ACE, with two questions regarding cultural review and a single hydrologic question remaining to be analyzed by the ACE.

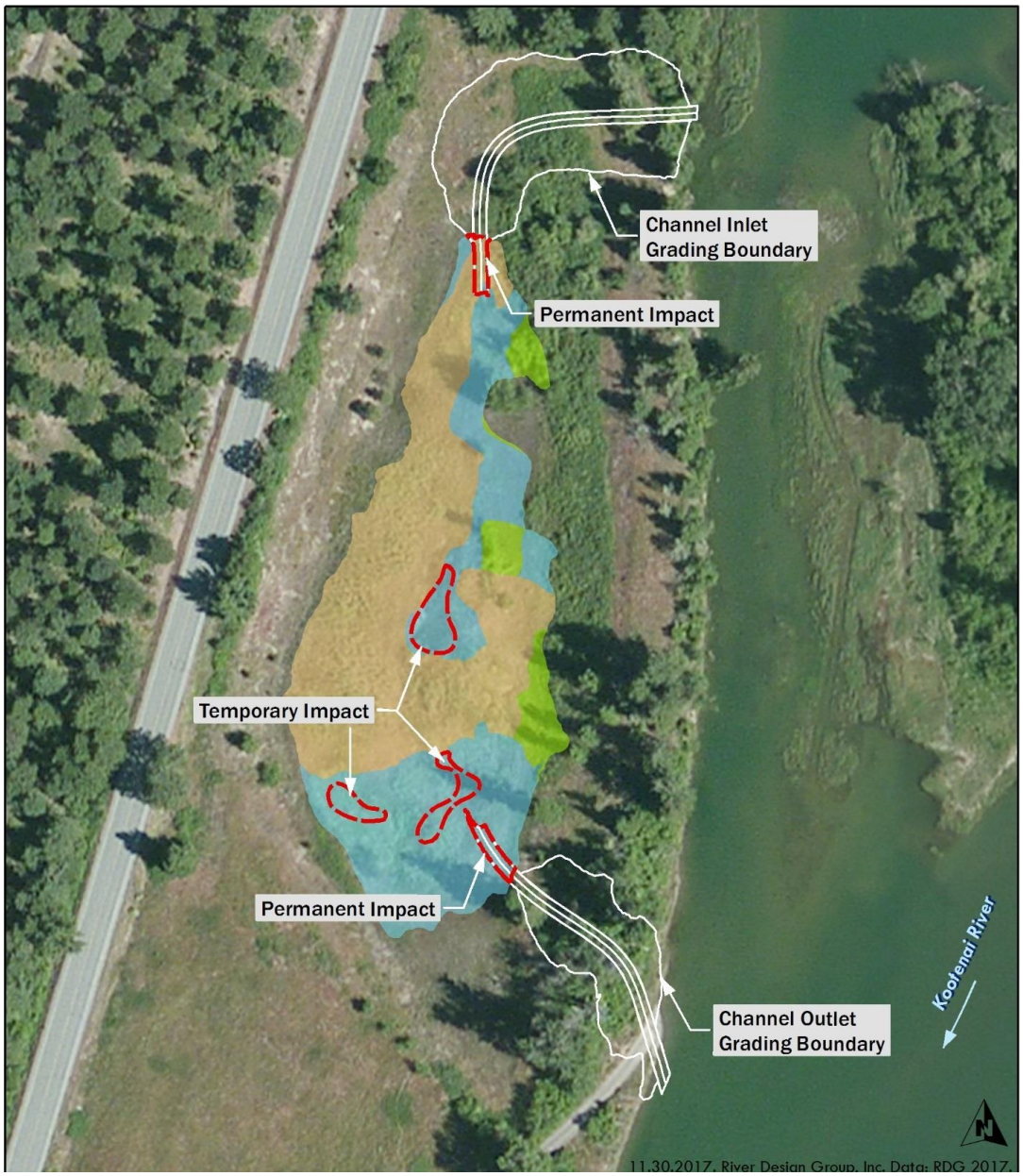

Figure 8. Preliminary Design for Restoration of the Blackwell Gravel Pit.

Habitat Restoration Efforts– Dunn Creek

During fiscal year 2016, the ACE completed an erosion control project along the banks of Dunn Creek where it joins the Kootenai River. The project created three islands and recontoured the adjacent bank to prevent serious erosion. MFWP planted seedling shrubs and trees within the recontour area. Success of the planting was limited because of several factors; initially lack of water following planting, then subsequent competition from weeds and grasses. A plan was developed this year to replant the area (Table 9) including a watering system and control measures for weeds to overcome previous problems. Previous plantings have also documented problems with browsing ungulates especially on nursery plants. In order to reduce destructive browsing, the area will be fenced with 10-foot fence posts and six-foot wire mesh surrounding the area. A single strand wire will be added above the wire mesh for added effect and reduced cost. This work will be completed in fiscal year 2020.

Table 9. Plant list for the Dunn Creek replanting project

Species planted	Number planted
Aspen	60
Sandbar Willow	100
Woods Rose	150
Black Cottonwood	134
Ponderosa Pine	100
Bebb willow	25
Dogwood	100
Chokecherry	55
Black Hawthorn	200
Thinleaf Alder	25
Serviceberry	150
Snowberry	16
Ceanothus	48
Total	1,163

Ongoing Monitoring of Songbird Communities

We continued monitoring songbird communities to document baseline population conditions along the Kootenai River and subsequent changes resulting from riparian mitigation projects. Approximately one third of the original established points are monitored each year with the remaining points surveyed on a rotating basis over subsequent years. New points were added to establish baseline conditions and assess expected community changes associated with recent restoration work.

During the current 2019 fiscal year, we completed the subset of point count locations along the Montana portion of the Kootenai River. Additionally, the Flathead point counts had not been surveyed for several years so those were completed as well. That included all points along the South Fork and mainstem of the Flathead River and its floodplain, along with reference points on the North Fork of the Flathead River. Point counts for fiscal year 2019 were conducted during May through June and completed during July (FY2020). Techniques were consistent with those described in earlier annual

reports. Timing of all point counts were coordinated with our KTOI partners and joint training sessions were conducted to maintain survey consistency and data compatibility within the project.

Additional Fieldwork

Point counts were also conducted for the second year within the West Kootenai Wildlife Management Area (WMA), an early mitigation property. The WMA recently experienced a wildfire extending over a large percent of the area. The WMA has been mapped for fire intensity and a variety of management strategies have been implemented, including post-fire salvage logging of various burn intensities. A set of point counts has been established across the variety of habitats influenced by these past events. Bird observations were recorded in 3-, 5- and 10-minute intervals in order to be comparable with other data sets. Point locations were situated completely within one type where possible. The entire set of points was sampled within three timeframes; late May to early June, mid-June to late June and late June to early July. The point counts will continue to monitor bird community responses to these changes. Preliminary results indicate increased numbers of individuals and increased diversity. For example, the numbers of Black-backed Woodpeckers increased substantially. While species diversity increased with the appearance of primary cavity nesters like Three-toed Woodpeckers and Lewis's Woodpecker, and even non-cavity nesting birds like Lazuli Buntings.

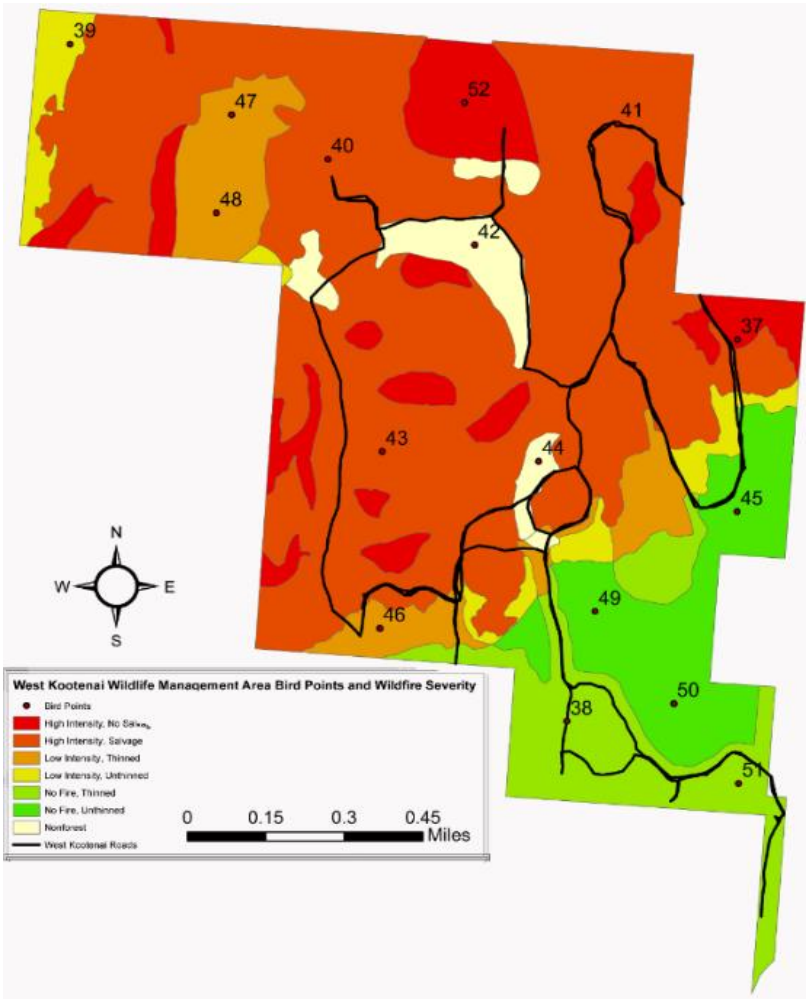

Figure 9. A map of burn intensity and point count locations on the West Kootenai WMA.

Other Duties

- Coordination meetings
- Hiring technicians
- Database review
- Outreach to additional partners
- Design and purchase plantings and plants
- Purchase equipment
- Contract with planting crews

Coordination Efforts

Restoration within the Kootenai River valley has involved a wide array of individuals and groups. The following is a list of Partners and groups that we have interacted with thus far in these various efforts including partnership projects.

Kootenai Tribe of Idaho	Army Corps of Engineers
Idaho Fish and Game	Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
MFWP Fisheries Division	Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
Lincoln County Commissioners	Kootenai River Network

Northwest Power and Conservation Council

Major Activities Planned for FY2020

1. Data Collection
    - On long-term monitoring sites along the Kootenai River
    - Complete data entry and data base management
    - Proof all data from Montana sites and include vegetation data within data bases

2. Restoration Planning
    - Develop new partnerships to help with the Kootenai River Restoration efforts
    - Develop MOU to direct cooperative restoration efforts on ACE properties
    - Design fall planting in conjunction with partners for Blackwell Gravel Pit
    - Complete fencing for Blackwell and Dunn Creek areas
    - Identify and construct watering regimen for project plantings
    - Identify and plan additional restoration projects along the Kootenai River
    - Investigate the feasibility of revisiting data points established on Firefighter Mountain during the 1990's as a 20-year review effort.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY JULY 2018 THROUGH JUNE 2019

Alan Wood, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Fund Balance

The balance of the Wildlife Mitigation Trust account as of June 30, 2019, was $11,409,885 (Table 10), an increase of $218,816 from last year.

Revenue

Revenue during Fiscal Year 2019 was $561,747, the highest recorded since 2008 (Table 11). Investments earned $283,808. There was also a $289,288 increase in the value of the trust fund investments, due primarily to the shift of investments from high-quality corporate bonds to the state Trust Fund Investment Pool as described in last year's annual report.

Direct Expenditures

Direct expenditures totaled $308,822, which included $225,160 for personal services and $83,662 for operating expenses (Table 12). That represents an increase of $125,086 from last year resulting partially from the filling of our Habitat Conservation Biologist position that had been vacant since FY15.

Trust Fund Summary

The current trust fund balance of $11,409,885 is a result of $13,000,000 transferred from BPA to Montana, $14,227,395 in total earnings, $15,859,181 in expenses, and $41,671 added from a one-time accounting change to track investments based on their fair market value (Table 13).

Table 10. BPA wildlife mitigation trust fund assets, liabilities and fund balance as of June 30, 2019.

ASSETS		
Cash In Bank	$45,396	
Interest Receivable	$35,256	
L/T Corporate Securities at Par	$3,500,000	
L/T Security Premium	$1,161	
Short-term Investment Pool (STIP)	2,778,914	
Trust Fund Investment Pool (TFIP)	$5,000,000	
TFIP Appreciation/Depreciation	$91,832	
STIP Appreciation/Depreciation	$389	
Cash Collateral	$58,604	
Long term Securities Appreciation/Depreciation	$(14,621)	
TOTAL ASSETS		$11,496,931
LIABILITIES		
Vouchers Payable	$11,352	
Fiscal Year End Payroll	$17,090	
Liability Under Securities Lending	$58,604	
TOTAL LIABILITIES		$87,046
FUND BALANCE (Assets - Liabilities)		$11,409,885
FUND BALANCE		
Initial Principal	$13,000,000	
One-time Accounting Adjustment 6/30/98	$41,671	
Cumulative Earnings through 6/30/18	$13,665,648	
Cumulative Expenses through 6/30/18	$(15,510,250)	
TOTAL FUND BALANCE 6/30/18		$11,197,069
TOTAL FY2019 REVENUE		$561,747
FY2019 EXPENDITURES		
Budgeted Expenditures	$308,822	
MFWP Overhead Assessments	$40,109	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		$(348,931)
FUND BALANCE 6/30/19		$11,409,885

Table 11. Income from investments in the Wildlife Mitigation Trust Account, 7/1/18 through 6/30/19.

REVENUE		
Long Term Bond Income	$66,025	
Trust Fund Investment Pool (TFIP) Earnings	$165,391	
Short-term Investment Pool (STIP) Earnings	$52,392	
Administrative Expenses	$(6,679)	
Amortization Bond Premiums	$(5,548)	
Investment Appreciation/Depreciation	$289,288	
Security Lending Expenses	$(954)	
Security Lending Earnings	$1,833	
TOTAL REVENUE		$561,747

Table 12. Expenditures in the Wildlife Mitigation Trust Account, July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.

PERSONAL SERVICES		
Salary and Wages	$163,893	
Employee Benefits	$61,267	
Total Personal Services		$225,160
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Contracted Services	$53,851	
Supplies and Materials	$2,410	
Communications	$3,020	
Travel	$11,367	
Rentals	$952	
Repair and Maintenance	$3,054	
Training and Other	$9,008	
Total Operating Expenses		$83,662
CAPITAL EXPENSES		
Closing fees	$0	
Title Search	$0	
Legal Fees	$0	
Total Capital Expenses		$ 0
TOTAL DIRECT EXPENDITURES		$308,822

Table 13. Summary of annual payments, interest earnings and expenses charged to the Wildlife Mitigation Trust Account, 1989 through 6/30/19.

FISCAL YEAR	PAYMENTS	EARNINGS	EXPENSES	BALANCE
1990	$2,000,000	$83,069	$0	$2,083,069
1991	$2,000,000	$248,869	$193,464	$4,138,474
1992	$2,000,000	$281,841	$359,290	$6,061,025
1993	$2,500,000*	$371,564	$288,330	$8,644,259
1994	$2,000,000	$449,468	$364,237	$10,729,490
1995	$2,500,000	$712,794	$393,827	$13,548,457
1996		$940,760	$689,588	$13,799,629
1997		$921,217	$417,409	$14,303,437
1998	$41,671**	$1,098,449	$469,904	$14,973,653
1999		$811,065	$701,833	$15,082,885
2000		$743,744	$436,916	$15,389,713
2001		$1,281,907	$3,520,048	$13,151,572
2002		$856,654	$407,833	$13,600,393
2003		$796,172	$2,150,709	$12,245,856
2004		$68,293	$1,159,818	$11,154,331
2005		$304,645	$194,209	$11,264,767
2006		$291,390	$193,069	$11,363,088
2007		$610,687	$289,862	$11,683,913
2008		$627,289	$259,701	$12,051,501
2009		$278,216	$258,554	$12,071,163
2010		$735,586	$312,962	$12,493,787
2011		$264,577	$289,111	$12,469,253
2012		$219,789	$398,677	$12,290,365
2013		$132,408	$303,333	$12,119,440
2014		$211,502	$387,581	$11,943,361
2015		$120,047	$371,207	$11,692,201
2016		$150,174	$259,840	$11,582,535
2017		$36,624	$228,730	$11,390,429
2018		$16,848	$210,208	$11,197,069
2019		$561,747	$348,931	$11,409,885
TOTAL	$13,041,671	$14,227,395	$15,859,181	$11,409,885

*Total includes $500,000 transferred to trust fund from BPA Habitat Protection Grant

**One-time accounting addition to track investments based on their fair market value.

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APPENDIX A
LIST OF WILDLIFE MITIGATION PROJECTS

Project	FY	Subbasin	Total Ac.	Cost*	Forest	Wetland	Prairie/Ag
KNF Misc. Big Game	1970s	Kootenai	6,596		6,596	0	0
Libby Misc. Ducks	1970s	Kootenai	157		0	157	0
DeRozier	1980	Kootenai	1,418	$1,159,918	617	0	801
W. Kootenai	1980	Kootenai	920	$752,556	920	0	0
Kootenai Falls	1980	Kootenai	107	$87,526	107	0	0
FNF Ladenburg	1989	Flathead	1,094	$400,000	0	1,094	0
KNF Ural-Tweed	1990	Kootenai	1,100	$58,479	1,100	0	0
Libby Dam Wildlife	1991	Kootenai	840	$29,302	840	0	0
TNC Copper Creek	1991	L. Clark Fork	107	$2,200	0	107	0
FNF Cedar Ridge	1994	Flathead	300	$5,246	300	0	0
MFWP Dancing Prairie CE	1996	Kootenai	680	$175,272	0	0	680
FY96 Partnerships	1996	Kootenai	160	$4,250	140	20	0
FY96 Partnerships	1996	Flathead	220	$7,076	200	20	0
FY97 Partnerships	1997	Flathead	200	$13,177	0	175	25
Big Spruce Island	1997	Flathead	40	$55,087	0	40	0
Big Mountain	1998	Flathead	1,289	$16,000	1237	52	0
FY98 Partnerships	1998	Kootenai	427	$6,240	256	10	161
FY98 Partnerships	1998	Flathead	1,248	$30,071	744	252	252
TCL Exchange	1999	L. Clark Fork	235	$156,462	0	235	0
FY99 Partnerships	1999	L. Clark Fork	48	$5,132	0	48	0
FY99 Partnerships	1999	Flathead	600	$22,378	406	139	55
Coriell Island	1999	Flathead	73	$22,212	0	73	0
FNF Dry Parks Burn	2000	Flathead	3,713	$6,137	3,713	0	0
FNF Red Bench	2000	Flathead	452	$42,449	452	0	0
FY00 Partnerships	2000	Kootenai	315	$4,864	105	210	0
FY00 Partnerships	2000	L. Clark Fork	2200	$10,000	1,900	100	200
FY00 Partnerships	2000	Flathead	1961	$34,866	772	191	998
FNF Firefighter	2001	Flathead	911	$86,872	911	0	0
Island Lake FAS	2001	Kootenai	37	$25,000	29	8	0
FY2001 Partnerships	2001	L. Clark Fork	410	$11,320	214	64	132
FY2001 Partnerships	2001	Flathead	989	$72,870	613	334	42
Loosestrife Control	2001	Flathead	184	$113,921	0	184	0
Palmer	2002	Flathead	116	$25,000	0	22	94
FY2002 Partnerships	2002	L. Clark Fork	193	$14,033	160	13	20
FY2002 Partnerships	2002	Flathead	598	$37,695	270	80	248
KNF Kootenai River	2002	Kootenai	6,895	$412,122	6,895	0	0
FY2003 Partnerships	2003	Flathead	1,340	$10,326	610	288	442
Fisher River CE	2004	Kootenai	57,843	$2,474,587	53,725	4,118	0
Thompson River CE	2004	L. Clark Fork	84,172	$3,442,571	78,179	5,993	0

Project	FY	Subbasin	Total Ac.	Cost*	Forest	Wetland	Prairie/Ag
FY2004 Partnerships	2004	Flathead	1,879	$51,163	275	790	814
FY2005 Partnerships	2005	Flathead	924	$32,539	538	75	311
FY2005 Partnerships	2005	L. Clark Fork	116	$8,150	47	42	27
FY2006 Partnerships	2006	Flathead	268	13,640	200	68	0
FY2006 Partnerships	2006	Kootenai	950	11377	928	22	0
Swan Valley Partnership	2006	Flathead	6,083	$7,366	5,816	267	0
Swan Valley Partnership	2007	Flathead	1,121	$44,381	1,053	68	0
Swan Valley Fee	2007	Flathead	480	0	432	48	0
Elk Creek Fee	2007	Flathead	640	0	401	239	0
FY2007 Partnerships	2007	Flathead	607	$32,811	311	96	200
FY2007 Partnerships	2007	Kootenai	80	$9,412	60	20	0
Swan Valley Fee	2008	Flathead	960	0	833	127	0
Noggle Creek addition	2008	Kootenai	255	0	235	20	0
FY2008 Partnerships	2008	L. Clark Fork	100	$1,113	60	40	0
FY2008 Partnerships	2008	Flathead	2,714	$68,266	881	735	1,098
Swan Valley Fee	2009	Flathead	320	$18,618	272	48	0
N Shore Flathead Lake	2009	Flathead	161	$7,500	0	11	150
Foys Bend	2009	Flathead	245	0	0	143	102
Hay Creek	2009	Flathead	51	0	21	30	0
FY2009 Partnerships	2009	Flathead	1,023	$25,562	873	90	60
Paint-Emery Burn	2009	Flathead	4,667	$18,610	4,667	0	0
FY2010 Partnerships	2010	Kootenai	155	$9,525	145	10	0
FY2010 Partnerships	2010	Flathead	1,950	$50,931	718	359	873
Osprey View FCA	2010	Flathead	25	0	0	20	5
Ninepipe Wetlands	2010	Flathead	87	0	0	87	0
FY2011 Partnerships	2011	Kootenai	41	$3,189	31	10	0
FY2011 Partnerships	2011	Flathead	153	$9,500	78	0	75
CSKT Steel Bridge	2011	Flathead	146	$0	0	146	0
West Swan CEs	2011	Flathead	9,349	$8,675	8,034	1,315	0
Swan Valley Fee	2011	Flathead	452	$0	432	20	0
Swan Valley Fee (BPA)	2012	Flathead	167	$0	145	22	0
FY2012 Partnerships	2012	L. Clark Fork	588	$7,712	523	25	40
FY2012 Partnerships	2012	Flathead	906	$27,716	307	309	290
Kootenai Valleys CE	2013	Kootenai	27,992	$0	26,476	1,516	0
FY2013 Partnerships	2013	Flathead	738	$10,000	598	140	0
North Shore WMA II	2014	Flathead	189	$0	5	6	178
FY2014 Partnerships	2014	Flathead	120	$5,796	80	40	0
FY2014 Partnerships	2014	Kootenai	85	$9,632	70	15	0
Otter Island Additions	2015	Flathead	20	$0	0	20	0
FY2016 Partnerships	2016	Flathead	597	$15,491	151	233	213
FY2016 Partnerships	2016	Kootenai	142	$4,999	132	10	0

Project	FY	Subbasin	Total Ac.	Cost*	Forest	Wetland	Prairie/Ag
North Shore WMA III	2016	Flathead	77	$0	0	1	76
Haskill Basin CE	2016	Flathead	3,022	$0	2,976	46	0
Trumbull Creek CE	2017	Flathead	7,098	$0	6,988	110	0
FY2017 Partnerships	2017	Flathead	76	$3,819	57	0	19
FY2018 Partnerships	2018	Flathead	398	$20,000	0	46	352
Lazy Creek 1	2018	Flathead	7,018	$0	5,924	1,094	0
Lazy Creek 2	2019	Flathead	3,200	$0	2,478	722	0
Swift Creek	2019	Flathead	3,180	$0	2,752	428	0
FY2019 Partnerships	2019	Kootenai	42	$3,586	0	10	32
FY2019 Partnerships	2019	Flathead	259	$10,027	226	13	20
Total			**272,104**	**$10,384,323**	**239,240**	**23,779**	**9,085**

*Direct project cost incurred by the Wildlife Mitigation Trust Fund.

APPENDIX B. CONSERVATION EASEMENT MONITORING REPORTS

DANCING PRAIRIE CONSERVATION EASEMENT FY2019 REPORT

Easement: Dancing Prairie Conservation Easement

Guiding Documents: Amended? (note date) NO
Easement dated: 10/27/95
Baseline dated: 9/1/95
Management Plan dated: 10/26/95
Grazing Plan dated: N/A
Special notes: This easement is intended to protect Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and Spaldings catchfly (a rare plant).
Landowner Contact: Steve Kloetzel, TNC Phone: 406-214-2036
MFWP Regional Biologist: Ethan Lula Phone: 406-210-4677

Name of person completing monitoring visit and report: Jerry Wells
Date of site visit: May 2, 2018 Date of last monitoring report: July 18, 2017

Current Landowners: The Nature Conservancy
Has property been transferred since last visit? _____YES X NO
If yes: Name of New Owner: _____Phone: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Does new landowner have easement documents? __ Recorded in Book:___Page:___
Owner contacted before visit? _X_YES___NO Date: _____
Did owner accompany site visit? ____ YES X NO
Others on site visit? (list affiliations): _____None_____

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES SINCE LAST REPORT

Did activities occur requiring Prior Approval?	None observed
Did any activities occur requiring Prior Notice?	None observed
Did landowner exercise any limited reserved rights?	None observed
Were there any significant changes in Conservation Easement land use?	None observed
Were there any major natural occurrences? Describe.	None observed
Are activities on surrounding lands affecting the easement? Describe.	None observed

SUMMARY OF VISIT

Description of Monitoring Visit:
Jerry spent 2 hours walking around the property and taking photos.

Status of Management Plan: No change.

Are the Purposes/Conservation Values of the CE property being upheld sufficiently? YES

MFWP Rights and Responsibilities
Are MFWP Rights and Responsibilities being met? YES
There is some public hunting for elk in an effort to keep the preserve from becoming a refuge.

Landowner Rights and Responsibilities

Did landowner exercise right to build educational facility with Prior Notice? None observed

Where there changes to and within Building Envelopes?	None observed
Was there livestock grazing in accordance with grazing plan?	None observed
Cultivation, sod-busting or other range management?	Yes
A prescribed burn was done on the west side of the property on April 20, 2018	
Removal of shrubs or timber?	None observed
Maintenance or construction of roads, fences, utilities or improvements?	None observed
Water developments, alteration to wetlands or changes to water rights?	None observed
Agrichemicals used or any pest management?	Yes
There is annual spot spraying of weeds.	
Exploration/extraction of soil, sand, gravel, hydrocarbons or minerals?	None observed
Any subdivisions, property sales or leases?	No
Any restoration and/or habitat enhancement?	Yes
A prescribed burn was done on the west side of the property on April 20, 2018	
Any unauthorized commercial uses?	None observed
Any dumping	None observed
Any game farming or related activity?	None observed
Other significant land management issues of interest?	None observed
Additional Comments:	None
Summary of unresolved issues:	None
Landowner concerns or questions	None
Additional comments	None

TNC was in compliance with all terms of the conservation easement during FY2019.

THOMPSON/FISHER CONSERVATION EASEMENT FY2019 REPORT

Easement: THOMPSON FISHER CONSERVATION EASEMENT

Guiding Documents

Easement dated: December 20, 2000
Easement RESTATED: May 24, 2001; September 23, 2002; November 27, 2002; September 26, 2003 (Fourth Restatement)
Baseline dated: March 19, 2004 (Landowner) April 5, 2004(MFWP)

Landowner contact: Dave Williams and Jerry Akin, Flathead and Libby Unit Foresters, Assigned as Plum Creek Timberlands Liaisons for the conservation easement

MFWP Regional Biologist: Bruce Sterling Phone 406-827-4389

Name of person completing the visit and monitoring report: Kevin League

Date of site visit: October 3-4, 2018 Date of Last monitoring report: September 26, 2017

Current Landowners: Weyerhaeuser
Mailing Address: 2050 Highway 2 West, P O Box 8990
Kalispell, MT 59904

Has property been transferred since last visit? No
If yes, name of new owner:
New owner mailing address:
Does new owner have easement documents?
If yes please provide recording information:
Recorded in Book: Page:

Owner contacted before visit? Yes
Did owner accompany site visit? No
Others on site visit: None.

Is owner in Block Management Program? Yes

Office tasks/actions requiring follow-up:
Close to amending the CE to resolve encroachment issues
Continue to monitor and enforce camping and travel by public into riparian areas

Did any management activities occur requiring Prior Approval?	None observed
Did any activities occur requiring Prior Notice?	None observed
Did landowner exercise any limited reserved rights?	Yes

Subdivision to Stimson (about 1/3 of the Fisher River portion
Grazing Leases-see report from Weyerhaeuser.

Mining activity – see report from Weyerhaeuser
Outfitting – See report from Weyerhaeuser

Were there any significant changes in Conservation Easement land use? None observed
Were there any major natural occurrences? Describe. None observed
Are activities on surrounding lands affecting the easement? None observed
Description of Monitoring Visit:
Kevin spent two days on the property touring by vehicle exploring portions of the property he had not seen in the past.

Status of Management Plan: Same

Are the Purposes/Conservation Values of the CE property being upheld sufficiently? YES
Weyerhaeuser plans to maintain public access across all of its lands.

Are MFWP rights and responsibilities being met? YES

LANDOWNER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Buildings and structures: None
DNRC cabins still need resolving

Grazing – Range Management: Yes
See grazing reports in files. Trespass livestock in the north Thompson.

Cultivation, sod-busting, or other range management: None observed

Timber management: YES
Timber harvesting is active. See report in files.

Maintenance/construction to roads, fences, utilities or other improvements: YES
Normal maintenance.

Water Developments – alterations to wetlands and riaprian areas – changes to water rights:
None Observed

Agrichemicals use – Pest management: YES
Landowner is actively spraying and using biocontrols.

Exploration and/or extraction of soil, gravel, sand, hydrocarbons or other minerals: YES
See Landowner reserved rights section.

Subdivisions, property sales, or property leases: Yes
See Landowner reserved rights section.
Restoration and/or Habitat Enhancement: Observed
Lone Man and Patrich Creeks riparian fencing to prevent grazing. See notes in file.

Unauthorized commercial uses: Observed

Commercial Outfitting: See report on file.

Dumping:	None Observed
Game farming or related:	None Observed
Other significant land management issues of interest	None Observed
Reporting Requirements:	All were met.
Unresolved Issues:	None

Plum Creek was in compliance with all terms of the conservation easement during FY2019.

SWAN VALLEY CONSERVATION EASEMENTS FY2019 REPORT

Easements: NORTH SWAN VALLEY, WEST SWAN VALLEY & SWAN RIVER

Guiding Documents

Easement dated: February 10, 2006
Easement RESTATED: September 1, 2006
Baseline dated: North Swan January 22, 2007, West Swan & Swan River December 2012

Landowner contact: Nick Ashenwald, DNRC Phone: 406-754-2301

MFWP Regional Biologist: Jessy Coltrane Phone: 406-751-4584

Current Landowners: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

Name of person completing last monitoring visit and report: Kevin League

Date of site visit: October 1, 2018
Date of Last monitoring report: September 26, 2017

Has property been transferred since last visit? No
If yes, name of new owner:
New owner mailing address:
Does new owner have easement documents?
If yes please provide recording information:
Recorded in Book: Page:

Owner contacted before visit? Yes
Did owner accompany site visit? No
Others on site visit:

Is owner in Block Management Program? No, land open under state land access rules.

Office tasks/actions requiring follow-up: Road density

Did any management activities occur requiring Prior Approval?	None observed
Did any activities occur requiring Prior Notice?	None observed
Did landowner exercise any limited reserved rights?	None observed
Were there any significant changes in Conservation Easement land use?	None observed
Were there any major natural occurrences? Describe.	None observed
Are activities on surrounding lands affecting the easement?	None observed

Description of Monitoring Visit:
I met with Nick at his office and toured South Woodward, Squeezer, .

Status of Management Plan: Same

Are the Purposes/Conservation Values of the CE property being upheld sufficiently? YES

Are MFWP rights and responsibilities being met? YES

LANDOWNER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Buildings and structures: None observed

Grazing – Range Management: None observed

Cultivation, sod-busting, or other range management: Not applicable

Timber management: None observed
No harvest in 2018

Maintenance/construction to roads, fences, utilities or other improvements: Yes
Normal maintenance activity.

Water Developments – alterations to wetlands and riaprian areas – changes to water rights:
None observed

Agrichemicals use – Pest management: Yes
Routine weed spraying

Exploration and/or extraction of soil, gravel, sand, hydrocarbons or other minerals: None observed

Subdivisions, property sales, or property leases: None

Restoration and/or Habitat Enhancement: Yes
Section 25 Squeezer Creek Ridge whitebark pine restoration project, 14 acres.

Unauthorized commercial uses: None observed

Dumping: None observed

Outfitting: None observed

Game farming or related: None observed

Other significant land management issues of interest: None observed

Goat, Squeezer, Woodward and South Woodward Creek provisions: Being met

Landowner concerns/questions:
Someone or somebody is trespassing over the Missions onto DNRC land in the Swan.

The landowner was in compliance with conservation easement terms during FY2019.

KOOTENAI VALLEYS CONSERVATION EASEMENT FY2019 REPORT

Easements: KOOTENAI VALLEYS CONSERVATION EASEMENT

Guiding Documents

Easement dated: 2012
Baseline dated: 2012

Landowner contact: Barry Dexter Phone: 208-762-6552

MFWP Regional Biologist: Tonya Chilton Phone: 406-293-4161

Current Landowners: Stimson Lumber Company
520 S.W. Yamhill, Suite 700
Portland, OR 97204-1330
Has property been transferred since last visit? No
If yes, name of new owner:
New owner mailing address:
Does new owner have easement documents?
If yes please provide recording information:
Recorded in Book: Page:

Owner contacted before visit? Yes
Did owner accompany site visit? No
Others on site visit: None

Is owner in Block Management Program? Yes

Name of person completing monitoring visit and report: Kevin League

Date of site visit: October 10, 2017
Date of Last monitoring report: October 2, 2018

Office tasks/actions requiring follow-up: None

Did any management activities occur requiring Prior Approval? No

Did any activities occur requiring Prior Notice? No
Did landowner exercise any limited reserved rights? Yes
One gravel pit is technically active.
Were there any significant changes in Conservation Easement land use? None observed

Were there any major natural occurrences? Yes
Summer drought.

Are activities on surrounding lands affecting the easement? None observed

Description of Monitoring Visit:
Kevin visited with Bruce at his office.

Status of Management Plan: Same

Are the Purposes/Conservation Values of the CE property being upheld sufficiently? YES

Are MFWP rights and responsibilities being met? YES

LANDOWNER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Forest Management Yes
125 acres shelterwood, 216 acres clearcut, 346 acres thinning

Regulation of Public Use No
No shutdown this year due to fire weather.

Maintenance/construction to roads, fences, utilities or other improvements: Yes
Normal maintenance. Brushed out roads in Ruby Creek.

Use of chemical and biological agents: Yes
Aerial fertilization of 910 acres in Ruby Creek.

Water Rights No change

Exploration and/or extraction of soil, gravel, sand, hydrocarbons or other minerals: Yes
Small amount of material removed from Keeler Quarry.

Subdivisions, property sales, or property leases: None observed

Restoration and/or Habitat Enhancement : None observed

Telecommunications Sites, Utilities and Pipelines: None observed

Dumping: None observed

Outfitting: None observed

Game farming or related: None observed

Special management provisions: None observed

Landowner concerns/questions: None
Stimson is looking into a public access/CE success info sign for CE.

The landowner was in compliance with conservation easement terms during FY2019.

HASKILL BASIN CONSERVATION EASEMENT FY2019 REPORT

Easements: HASKILL BASIN CONSERVATION EASEMENT

Guiding Documents

Easement dated: 2016
Baseline dated: 2016

Landowner contact: Paul McKenzie Phone: 406-892-7000

MFWP Regional Biologist: Ethan Lula Phone: 406-210-4677

Current Landowners: F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Company
600 Halfmoon Road
Columbia Falls, Montana, 59912
Has property been transferred since last visit? No
If yes, name of new owner:
New owner mailing address:
Does new owner have easement documents?
If yes please provide recording information:
Recorded in Book: Page:

Owner contacted before visit? Yes
Did owner accompany site visit? Yes
Others on site visit: Paul McKenzie

Is owner in Block Management Program? Yes

Name of person completing monitoring visit and report: Kevin League

Date of site visit: October 18, 2018
Date of Last monitoring report: September 27, 2017

Office tasks/actions requiring follow-up:
Stay in communication if public use on the private Haskill Creek Road pops up again

Did any management activities occur requiring Prior Approval? No
Did any activities occur requiring Prior Notice? Yes
Public access closure during extreme wildfire risk in August
Did landowner exercise any limited reserved rights? No
Were there any significant changes in Conservation Easement land use? None observed
Were there any major natural occurrences that affected the Conservation Easement? No

Are activities on surrounding lands affecting the easement? None observed
Description of Monitoring Visit:
Kevin and Paul toured the property by vehicle.

Status of Management Plan: Same

Are the Purposes/Conservation Values of the CE property being upheld sufficiently? YES

Are MFWP rights and responsibilities being met? YES

LANDOWNER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Forest Management Yes
43 acres harvested, landowner report on file in Helena.

Regulation of Public Use Yes
Public access closure during extreme wildfire risk in August.

Maintenance/construction to roads, fences, utilities or other improvements: Yes
No new roads. Whitefish trail complete. Normal road maintenance, several bridges slated for repair.

Use of chemical and biological agents: Yes
Landowner actively spraying for weeds.

Water Rights No change

Exploration/extraction of soil, gravel, sand, hydrocarbons or other minerals: None observed

Subdivisions, property sales, or property leases: None
Trail parcel survey close to being completed.

Restoration and/or Habitat Enhancement : None observed

Telecommunications Sites, Utilities and Pipelines: None observed

Dumping: None observed

Outfitting: None observed

Game farming or related: None observed

Special management provisions: None observed

Landowner concerns/questions: None

The landowner was in compliance with conservation easement terms during FY2019.

TRUMBULL CREEK CONSERVATION EASEMENT FY2019 REPORT

Easements: TRUMBULL CREEK CONSERVATION EASEMENT

Guiding Documents

Easement dated: 2017
Baseline dated: 2017

Landowner contact: Paul McKenzie Phone: 406-892-7000

MFWP Regional Biologist: Tim Thier Phone: 406-882-4697

Current Landowners: F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Company
600 Halfmoon Road
Columbia Falls, Montana, 59912
Has property been transferred since last visit? No
If yes, name of new owner:
New owner mailing address:
Does new owner have easement documents?
If yes please provide recording information:
Recorded in Book: Page:

Owner contacted before visit? Yes
Did owner accompany site visit? Yes
Others on site visit: Paul McKenzie

Is owner in Block Management Program? Yes

Name of person completing monitoring visit and report: Kevin League

Date of site visit: October 18, 2018
Date of Last monitoring report: September 27, 2017

Office tasks/actions requiring follow-up:
Continue to monitor the rogue trail system.

Did any management activities occur requiring Prior Approval? No
Did any activities occur requiring Prior Notice? Yes
Temporary closure due to wildfire risk in August and at 4-corners for timber management.
Did landowner exercise any limited reserved rights? No
Were there any significant changes in Conservation Easement land use? None observed
Were there any major natural occurrences? No
Are activities on surrounding lands affecting the easement? None observed
Description of Monitoring Visit:
Kevin and Paul toured the property by vehicle.

Status of Management Plan: Same

Are the Purposes/Conservation Values of the CE property being upheld sufficiently? YES

Are MFWP rights and responsibilities being met? YES

LANDOWNER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Forest Management Yes
Yes. see report on file with MFWP in Helena.

Regulation of Public Use Yes
See prior notice above.

Maintenance/construction to roads, fences, utilities or other improvements: Yes
Normal maintenance.

Use of chemical and biological agents: Yes
Landowner actively spraying weeds. See report on file with MFWP.

Water Rights No change

Exploration and/or extraction of soil, gravel, sand, hydrocarbons or other minerals Yes
$-mile pit active. See landowner report on file with MFWP in Helena.

Subdivisions, property sales, or property leases: None

Restoration and/or Habitat Enhancement : None observed

Telecommunications Sites, Utilities and Pipelines: None observed

Dumping: None observed

Outfitting Commercial Recreation: Yes
Ravenwood youth camp and Family Forestry Expo

Game farming or related: None observed

Special management provisions: None observed

Landowner concerns/questions: Yes
Dumping of abandoned vehicles, rogue trail users and new user-created trails still an issue.

The landowner was in compliance with conservation easement terms during FY2019.