



Region 2
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
September 24, 2020

Dear Interested Citizens:

Thank you for your thoughtful reviews and comments on a proposal by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to conduct forested habitat restoration treatments on approximately 100 acres of forest land on its Mount Jumbo Wildlife Management Area (MJWMA), northeast of Missoula in Missoula County. The objectives of the proposed treatments are to: 1) increase forage potential on elk and deer winter-range, 2) promote stand conditions that would allow fire to burn at low-severity appropriate for the habitat type, and 3) reduce fuel loading in the wildland urban interface.

Treatments would involve removal of conifer trees (both merchantable and submerchantable) through a combination of mechanical and non-mechanical treatments. FWP is coordinating this project with the Missoula Ranger District of the Lolo National Forest, which is implementing similar treatments on its ongoing Marshall Woods Project on its nearby lands. Similar treatments are also being planned on adjacent City of Missoula land. The proposed treatments on the MJWMA compliment those projects by helping reduce hazardous fuels at a larger scale, as well as increasing forage potential on deer and elk winter-range. The project purpose is to improve wildlife habitat; this project would not be proposed if not for a need to conserve and improve wildlife habitat on the WMA.

Enclosed is a decision document in which I explain my rationale for recommending that the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) approve the habitat restoration treatments on the MJWMA, as proposed and described in the draft environmental assessment (EA) under the preferred action (Alternative B). Upon completion of the public involvement process and by inclusion of information noted in the Decision Notice, FWP accepts the draft EA as final. The decision document also includes all public comment received during the public review period.

FWP expects to request approval for this proposal at the regularly scheduled Commission meeting on October 22, 2020. This meeting is open to the public as are other Commission meetings, and it is expected to be a "virtual meeting" via Zoom. (A few days prior to the meeting, please see FWP's webpage <http://fwp.mt.gov/default.html> ["Commission"]) for the agenda schedule and details on how to watch and/or participate.)

Please feel free to contact me at 406-542-5500 with any questions you may have. Thank you for your interest and participation.

Sincerely,

Randy Arnold
Regional Supervisor

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