



DECISION NOTICE
on
Chief Plenty Coups State Park Hay Lease
Environmental Assessment

Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to renew an existing agricultural lease at Chief Plenty Coups State Park for an additional 10 years.

Alternative Considered

Under no action, the lease expires, and the agricultural plots would no longer be actively managed. Discontinuation could also lead to spread of noxious weeds in these previously farmed areas as FWP does not have the staff resources to undertake or manage farming activity on this property. In addition, there would be a loss of revenue to the department. The current lease holder has met the requirements of the current lease as well as provided good resource management on the leased property.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment. No public comments on the proposed project were received. Legal notices were printed in the Billings Gazette and the Helena Independent Record; and the Draft EA was posted on the FWP webpage: <http://fwp.mt.gov//publicnotices/>.

Summary of Public Comment

No written comments were received during the public comment period.

Final Environmental Assessment for the Chief Plenty Coups State Park Agricultural Lease

There are no modifications necessary to the Draft Environmental Assessment based on public comment. The Draft Environmental Assessment, together with this Decision Notice, will serve as the final document for this proposal. This is based on the lack of public comment, the positive benefits of this activity as outlined in the Environmental Assessment, the past performance of the current lease holder, and to be consistent with other FWP agricultural leases. Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and the need to continue the sharecrop agricultural use in the Chief Plenty Coups State Park to maintain the historic aesthetics of the park, to provide effective and economic method for vegetation management, and to reduce potential fire fuel, it is my decision to proceed with the proposed action, described in the EA. I find there no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Thank you for your interest,



Mike Ruggles
Region 5 Supervisor
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks