



Montana State Parks & Recreation Board Agenda Item Cover Sheet

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: March 3, 2022

Agenda Item: Lower Yellowstone River Zero Site Acquisition Endorsement

Time Needed on Agenda: 15 Minutes

Background:

During the 2021 session, the Legislature pledged \$4 million for river access, habitat, & recreation projects on the lower Yellowstone River between Hysham & the North Dakota border. Building on a local initiative, Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) convened a 12-member citizen-advisory committee, sponsored by Governor Gianforte, during the summer of 2021 to guide use of the \$4 million with an eye toward opportunities & recommendations for improved access, habitat conservation, & sustainable economic development along the corridor. The committee was tasked with developing a scoring matrix for evaluating acquisition opportunities & identifying investments needed to maximize habitat conservation & protection while enhancing sustainable public access & recreational opportunities.

The committee submitted its recommendations to FWP in November. Among them was a recommendation to purchase a long-term easement on 10-20 acres of state land in Prairie County, known as the Zero property, to enhance river access between Miles City & Terry. Zero is already accessible from the river but has no amenities. The committee proposed seeking an easement or fee title purchase of an adjacent parcel to provide access from Old Highway 10 West. Development possibilities include a parking area, concrete boat ramp, & latrine. Currently, the only other public access to the river in this area is upstream on the north side of the Yellowstone at Bonfield Fishing Access Site (FAS), which requires travel over 3 miles of minimally maintained road & a bridge that only allows for narrow trailers.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

The Lower Yellowstone River Coalition held multiple community listening sessions prior to the 2021 legislative session. The Lower Yellowstone River Corridor Advisory Committee held multiple public meetings between August & October 2021 & issued its recommendations in November 2021.

FWP would pursue formal public comment through the due diligence & development process if endorsed.

Alternatives & Analysis:

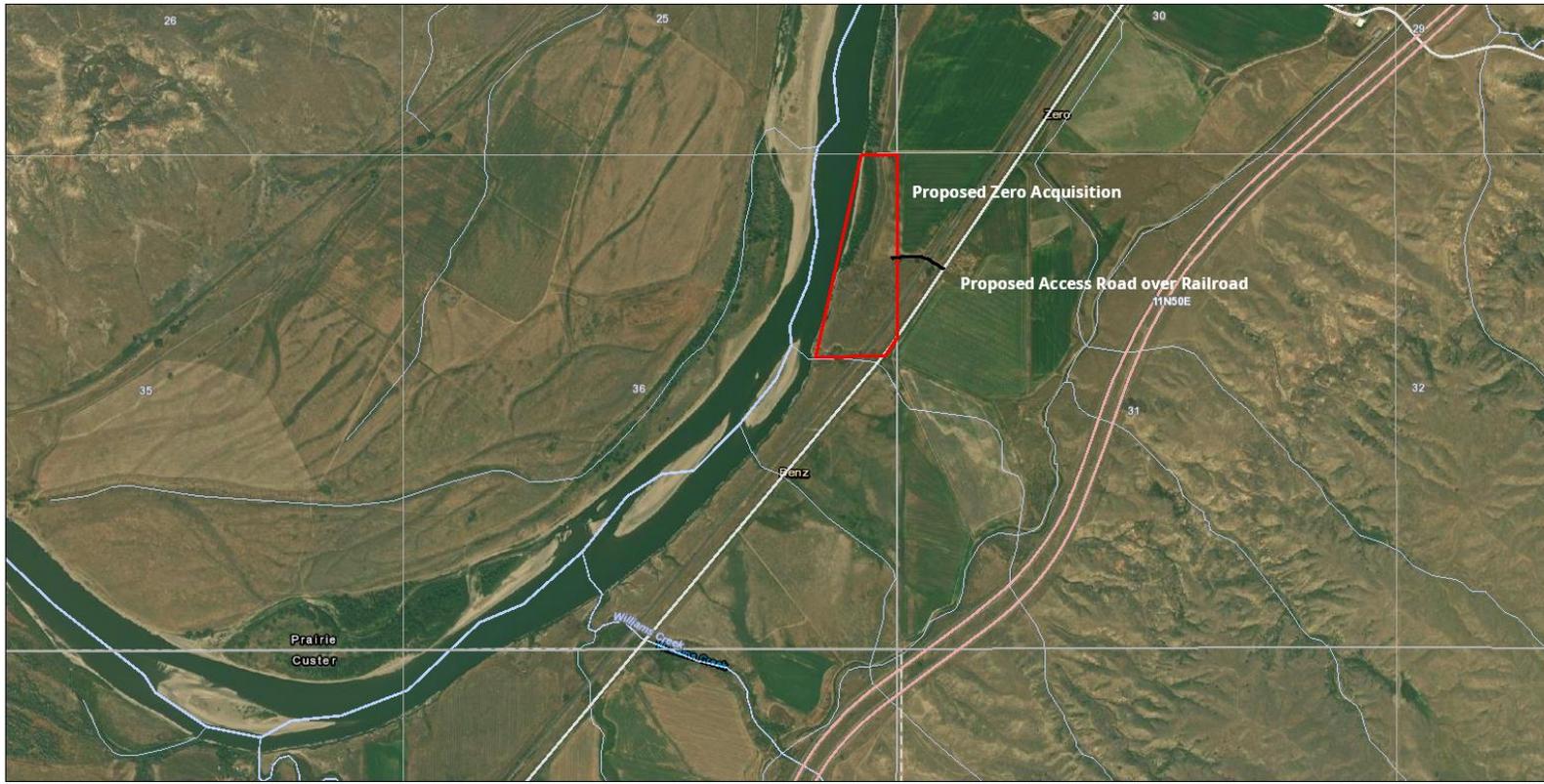
Proposal alternatives & analysis would be developed by FWP. Upon endorsement by the Board, FWP would conduct appropriate due diligence, analysis, & a public review process.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale:

FWP recommends endorsement of this proposal, allowing FWP to further pursue & evaluate it & to offer opportunities for public review & comment.

Proposed Motion:

I move the Parks & Recreation Board endorse efforts by Fish, Wildlife & Parks to pursue acquiring interest in the Zero property & adjacent land to improve access to the Lower Yellowstone River.



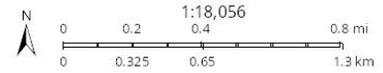
Fishing Access Site Locations

-  HUNTING ALLOWED
-  NO HUNTING

Fishing Access Site Boundaries

-  HUNTING ALLOWED
-  NO HUNTING

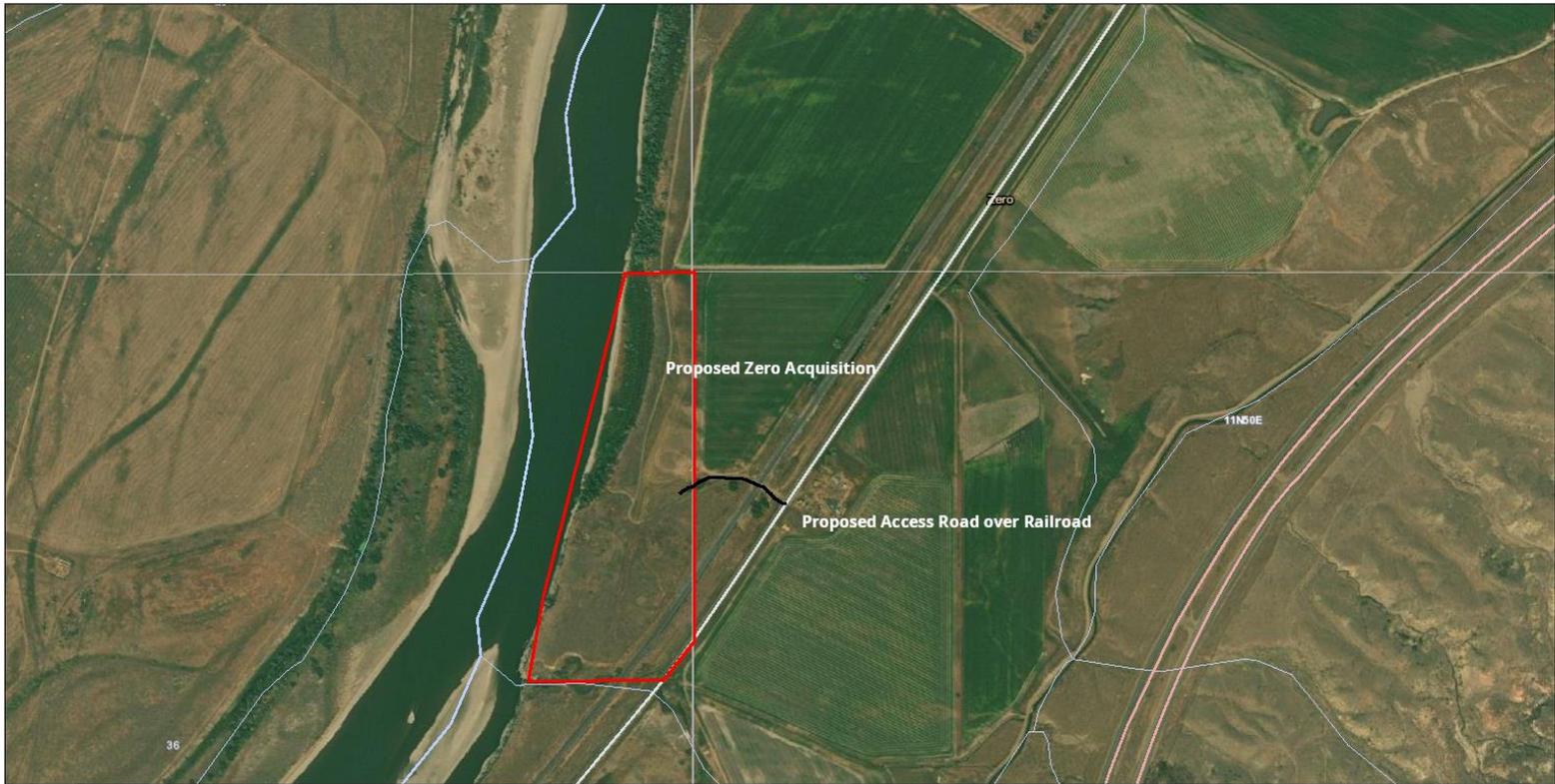
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December 29, 2021



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Some layers may not appear in the legend due to page size limitations.

Image 3:



Fishing Access Site Locations

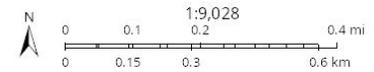
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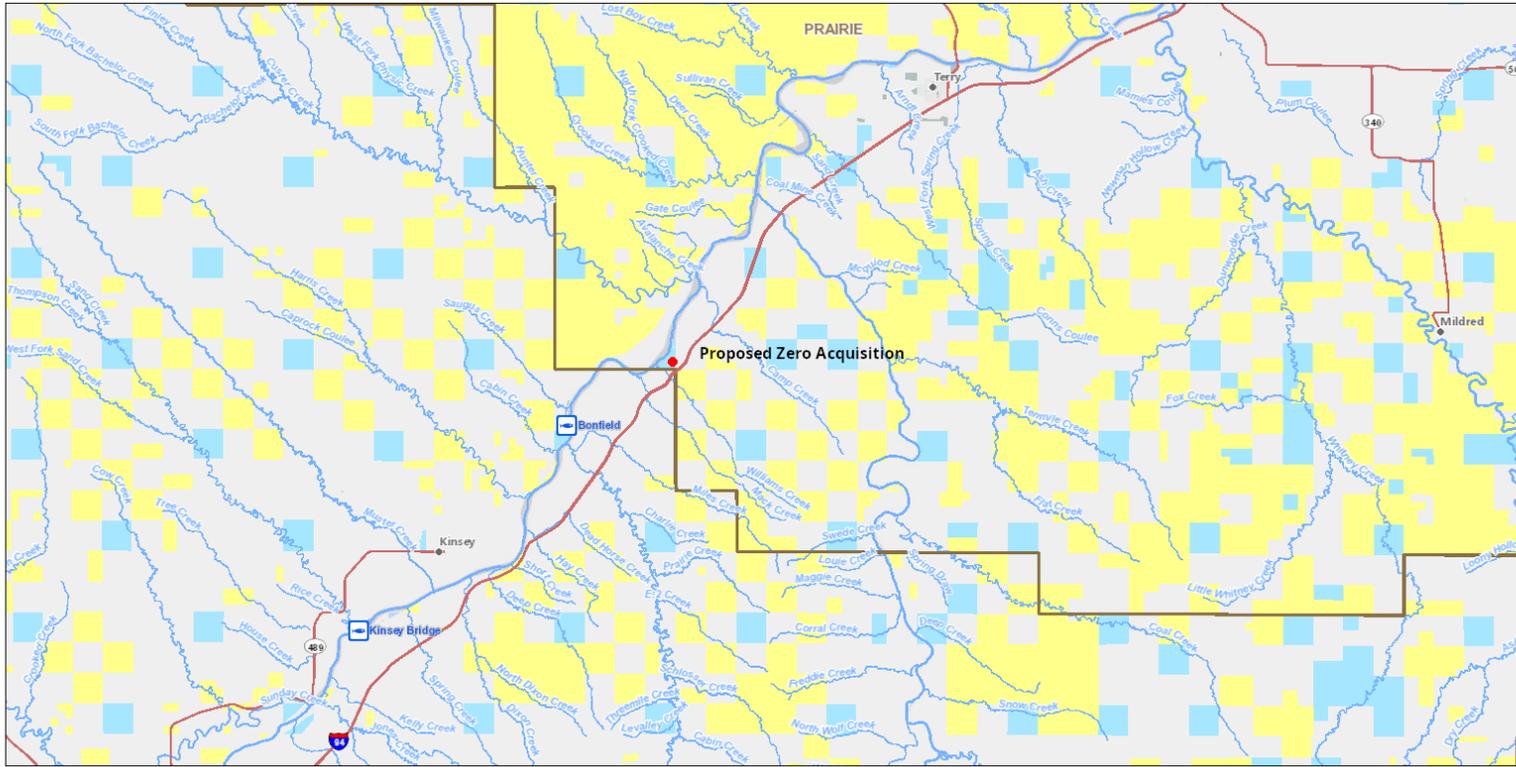
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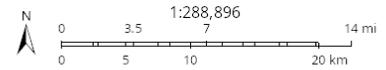
Image 4:



Fishing Access Site Locations

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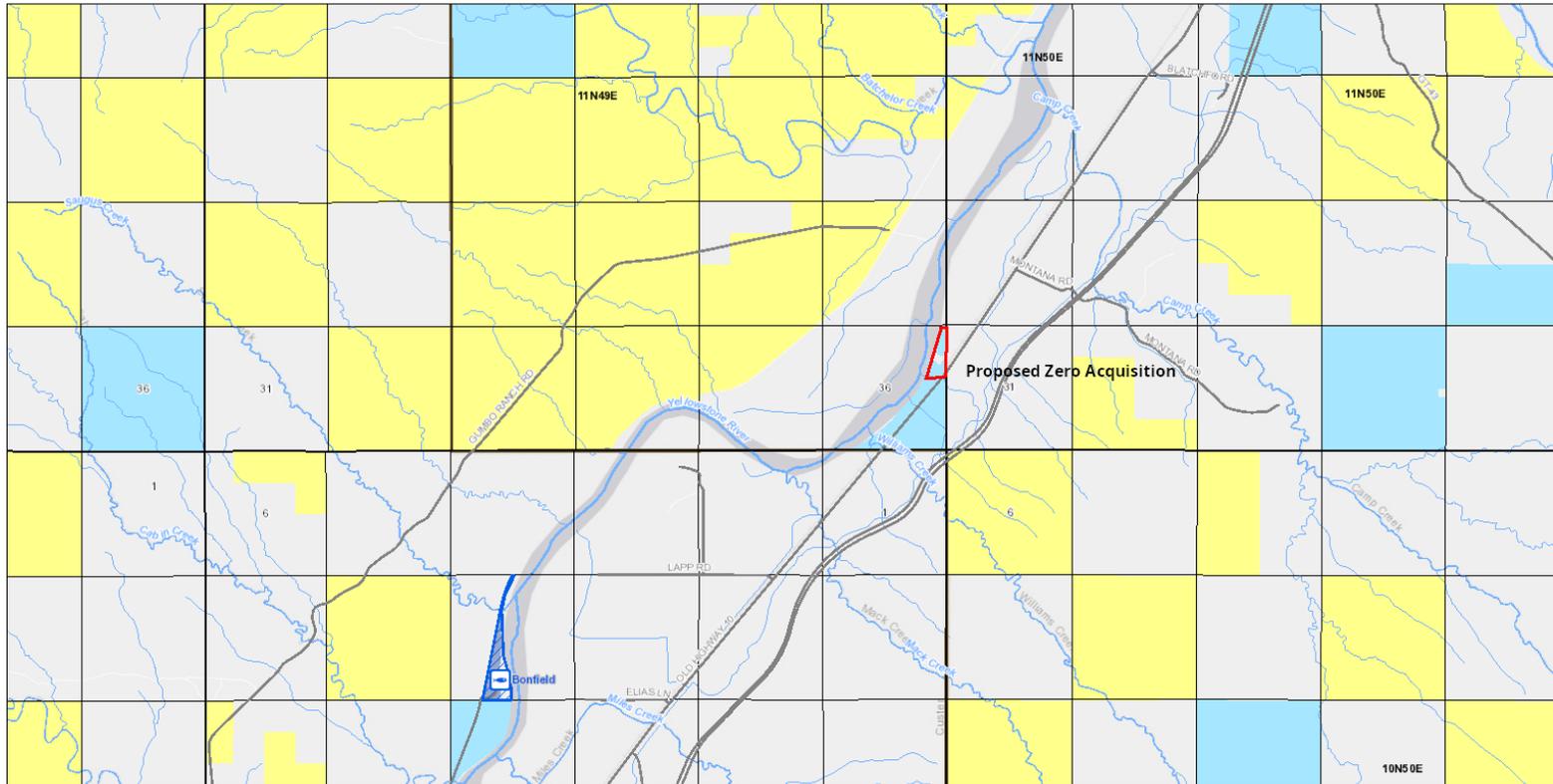
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Image 1:



Fishing Access Site Locations

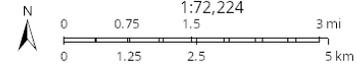
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Fishing Access Site Boundaries

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Image 2: