



490 N. Meridian Road  
Kalispell, MT 59901

## **Public Scoping Notice**

### **Proposed Upper Thompson Connectivity Project Conservation Easement**

May 5, 2023

#### **Proposed Project Description**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) may be preparing an Environmental Analysis on a proposal to purchase a conservation easement within Flathead and Sanders counties, Montana. FWP is working with The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and Green Diamond Resource Company (Green Diamond) on a proposed project to place 47,907 acres of highly productive timberland in the Thompson River drainage under conservation easement (see attached map).

The proposed conservation easement, to be held by FWP, would allow Green Diamond to retain ownership of these timberlands, preclude development, protect important wildlife habitat, and provide public access and associated recreational opportunities. The U.S. Forest Service Forest Legacy Program and grant funding raised by TPL would be likely funding sources if this proposal were to proceed to completion.

This project would conserve a movement corridor for elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and moose as well as critical habitat for bull trout, grizzly bear, and Canada lynx, ESA-listed Threatened species. Conservation easement terms would preclude the human-wildlife conflicts that come with residential development of properties within wildlife habitat, especially those with grizzly bears, black bears, and mountain lions. The property currently provides over 45,000 days per year of public hunting and angling that would be secured in perpetuity under this proposal. The project borders the 142,000-acre Thompson-Fisher Conservation Easement, the 86,000-acre proposed Montana Great Outdoors Conservation Easement, as well as Lolo National Forest, Kootenai National Forest, and DNRC lands.

#### **Project Objectives**

The primary objectives of this conservation easement project include:

- Conserve important fish and wildlife habitat including riparian habitat and movement corridors.
- Provide permanent free public recreational access and for public hunting, fishing, and other recreation.
- Improve public access to public land.
- Allow the property to be sustainably managed for timber production.

**Public Involvement and Process**

The 30-day comment period will begin on *May 5, 2023*. Please submit either written or e-mailed comments by ***June 3, 2023*** to:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Leah Breidinger, Habitat Conservation Biologist  
Re: Proposed Conservation Easement  
490 N. Meridian Road  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
lbreidinger@mt.gov

Comments received from this preliminary evaluation will help FWP determine public interest, identify potential issues that would require further analysis, and may provide insight for refining the proposal or for developing and analyzing one or more alternatives. Upon completion of the preliminary evaluation, FWP will determine next steps, which may include conducting an environmental analysis with additional opportunity for public input or taking no further action on the proposed project.

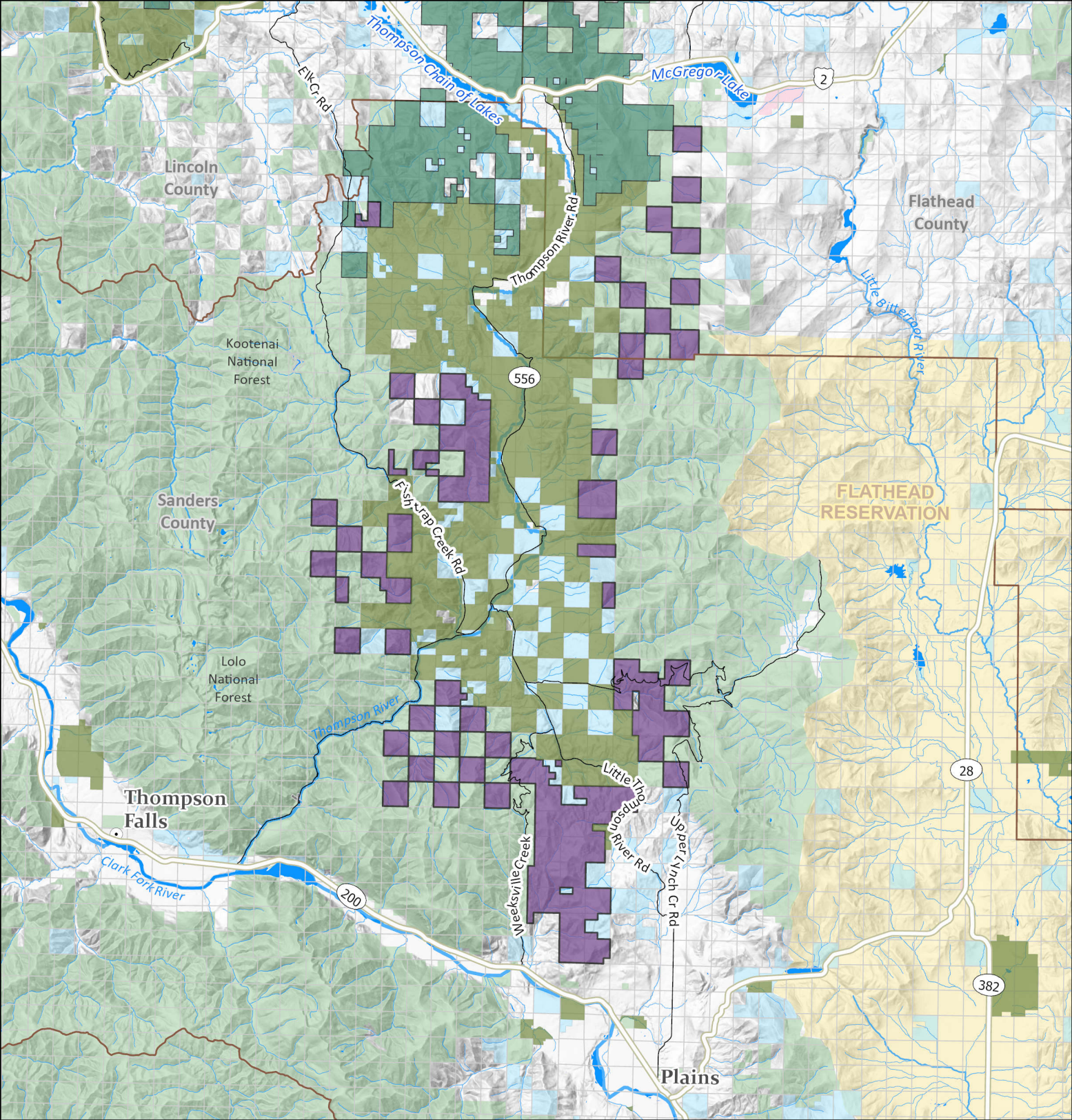
If you have any questions regarding this project or preliminary evaluation process, please contact Leah Breidinger at (406) 751-4573 or via email at lbreidinger@mt.gov.

Sincerely,

*Lee Anderson*

Lee Anderson  
Region One Supervisor





Proposed Upper Thompson Connectivity Project

Proposed Montana Great Outdoors Project

Existing Conservation Easement

US Fish and Wildlife Service

US Forest Service

State

Flathead Reservation

Map Produced by:  
Wildlife Mitigation Program  
Wildlife Division Region 1  
4 May 2023

Area of Interest

An inset map of Montana with its counties numbered 1 through 7. A red square highlights the area of interest in the northwest corner, covering parts of Lincoln, Sanders, and Flathead counties.

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Miles