



## MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** December 14, 2021

**Agenda Item:** Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area Willow Creek Addition, Region 3

**Action Needed:** Endorsement

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

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**Background:** The Willow Creek property is adjacent to Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area and is located approximately 3 miles southeast of Anaconda in Deer Lodge County. The property consists of approximately 829 acres of native grassland, shrubland, conifer forest and riparian habitat. The property provides mule deer and elk winter range and pronghorn fawning and summer range. The proposed acquisition also includes a mile of Willow Creek where recent genetics data has confirmed the presence of pure strain westslope cutthroat trout and could serve as a potential bull trout reintroduction site. The property shares 2.5 miles of boundary with Mount Haggin WMA and, if acquired, the ecological values, fish and wildlife habitats, and recreational opportunities of this parcel would be incorporated into the WMA. The property is bordered to the north by a subdivision. Given current interest in Montana real estate, the Willow Creek property has a high potential for subdivision and development, which could negatively impact big game winter habitat and recreation values on the WMA.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** FWP has not sought public comment at this time with the exception of checking in with Deer Lodge County to assess level of concern or support. The county expressed general concurrence for this proposal. Upon endorsement from the commission, the department would proceed with negotiations and conduct appropriate analysis and public review process.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** Proposal alternatives and analysis would be conducted by FWP if this proposal receives commission endorsement.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** FWP recommends endorsement of this acquisition proposal because of the conservation values this parcel and the adjacent WMA lands provide.

**Proposed Motion:** I move that the commission endorse the proposed Willow Creek Addition to Mount Haggin WMA, allowing the department to initiate negotiations and conduct analysis and associated public review.