



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: June 24, 2021

Agenda Item: Stimson Lumber Recreational Access Biennial Rule, R1

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background: A biennial rule was established through the Fish and Wildlife Commission for 119,761 acres privately held by the Stimson Lumber Company in August of 2019. Through this rule, the Stimson Lumber Company is willing to open their lands for year-round public recreational access opportunities. Prior to the implementation of a biennial rule, FWP worked closely with Stimson Lumber Company to develop a joint proposal for managing public recreation on their privately owned timberlands in FWP Administrative Region 1. The renewal of this biennial rule would continue the successful partnership and continue to allow for the management of year-round public recreational access on Stimson Lumber Company lands for another two years.

Public Involvement Process & Results: The Fish and Wildlife Commission endorsed the tentative Stimson Lumber Company biennial rule for public comment at the April 1, 2021, commission meeting. The proposed biennial rule was available for public review and public comment on the FWP website from April 1 through May 3, 2021. FWP issued interested persons letters and emails on April 6, 2021. FWP received no public comments for the Stimson Lumber Company biennial rule renewal.

Alternatives and Analysis: Managed public access will help reduce the resource damage, vehicular damage to soils and vegetation, and excess disturbance to native wildlife including threatened and endangered species. Without these rules, Stimson Lumber Company may be forced to increase restrictions on public use and ultimately close these lands to public access.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the commission renew the proposed Stimson Lumber Company biennial rule for another two years. The biennial rule would allow FWP to work in partnership with Stimson Lumber company to continue to provide opportunities for year-round public recreational access to high-quality, privately owned lands.

Proposed Motion: I move that the commission approve the renewal of the Stimson Lumber Company Recreation Management Area Biennial Rule for 2021-2023.