



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL & INFORMATION SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** August 19, 2026

**Agenda Item:** Stimson Timberland Legacy Conservation Easement, Region 1 and 2

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 10 minutes.

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**Background:** FWP proposes to purchase a 20,629-acre conservation easement, called the Stimson Timberland Legacy Conservation Easement (CE). This working forestland is important fish and wildlife habitat owned by Stimson Lumber (Stimson) in Lincoln, Mineral, and Sanders counties (see map). The CE has an appraised value of \$29,293,900. The proposed CE would prevent development, protect important wildlife habitat, maintain key landscape connectivity, and provide permanent free public recreation access to the affected lands while respecting the rights of third-party mineral and easement holders. Forest management and sustainable timber harvest would continue and is a value recognized by the CE. The land supports populations of deer, elk, moose, black bears, mountain lions, and a variety of other wildlife. Hunters and anglers have used these lands for generations, and the property currently provides approximately 6,000 days per year of public hunting and angling use. Bull trout, grizzly bear, Canada lynx, wolverine, and whitebark pine have also been observed on or near the property; all species listed as Threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Secured funding include: \$10,200,000 from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Forest Legacy Program, \$250,000 from Avista, \$150,000 from NorthWestern Energy, and \$1,015,000 from private fundraising coordinated by the Trust for Public Lands. Stimson has committed to donate approximately 60 percent of the CE value (\$17,678,900).

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** A Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was available for public review and comment from May 8 to June 6. Public hearings were held in Libby on May 12, Thompson Falls on May 13, and Superior on May 14. Draft EA was posted on FWP's Public Notice webpage: <https://fwp.mt.gov/news/public-notices>. The Draft EA was also made available for public review on the Environmental Quality Council (EQC) website: <https://leg.mt.gov/mepa/search>, by individual request, and through notice to identified interested parties. FWP received 14 comments during the public comment period. All substantive issues raised by commenters are addressed in the decision notice. The Lincoln, Mineral, and Sanders County Commissions have provided letters indicating their support for the CE.



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**Alternatives & Analysis:** In the EA the Department evaluated two alternatives, which correspond with the alternatives presented below. FWP concluded that if no action were to occur, Stimson may, at some future time, change its public access policies or decide to develop or sell some or all of the affected property. Associated wildlife habitats, public recreation, and working timber lands could shift to other land uses, including subdivision development or other forms of land conversion.

- A. The commission may vote to approve purchase of the 20,629-acre CE.
- B. The commission may vote not to approve the purchase of the 20,629-acre CE.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** The department recommends the commission approve the purchase of the 20,629-acre Stimson Timberland Legacy CE to ensure conservation values and associated public benefits would be protected.

**Proposed Motion:** I move that the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the purchase of the Stimson Timberland Legacy CE as proposed.



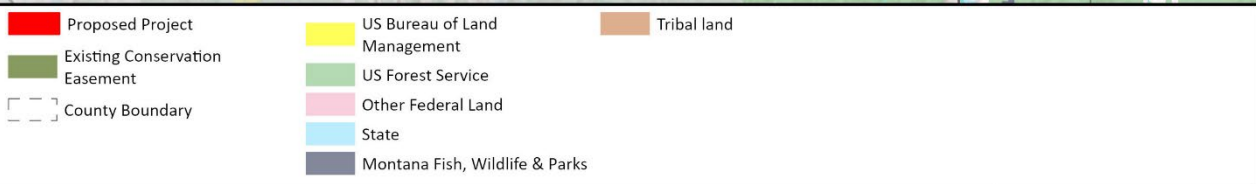
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## Stimson Timberland Legacy Project

## MONTANA FWP

20,629 Acres



Conservation easement data from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Helena, MT. Background imagery from Esri.  
All other data from Montana State Library, Helena, MT. Map produced by MFWP Leah Breidinger | 6/9/2026 | #0558859\_Overview

