



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL & INFORMATION SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** February 12, 2026

**Agenda Item:** Assignment of Public Hunting Access - Case Ranch

**Action Needed:** Final

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

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**Background:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to accept the assignment of public hunting access rights from the Five Valleys Land Trust (FVLT), which will hold a conservation easement (CE) on the Case Ranch property in Missoula County.

The 2,330-acre Case Ranch lies south of the Blackfoot River in the Potomac Valley. It includes montane mixed-conifer forests, aspen stands, and forested wetlands and connects important wildlife habitats linking the Garnet Range, Swan Range, and Bob Marshall Wilderness.

The CE includes a perpetual right of public hunting access on approximately 1,710 acres of the ranch, with a minimum of 200 hunter days annually. It also enhances access to more than 65,000 acres of adjacent state and federal lands. The project connects public lands and conserved private lands north of Interstate 90 near Missoula extending to the U.S.-Canada border.

FVLT is not well-equipped to permanently manage the public hunting rights and therefore wishes to assign those rights to FWP. FVLT will continue to hold the CE and will be responsible for monitoring compliance with the easement. No FWP funds will be used to receive the assignment of the public hunting rights. Hunter management on Case Ranch has long been provided through the Block Management Program and public access will continue to be administered under Block Management.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** A draft environmental assessment was posted for a 15-day public comment period from Nov. 10 - 25. Printed and emailed copies were distributed to interested parties and agencies. A news release was issued on Nov. 12. FWP received five comments, all in support.

## **Alternatives & Analysis:**

Alternative A: Approve FWP's proposal to accept the assignment of public hunting access rights on Case Ranch from FVLT.

Alternative B: Take no action. FWP would not accept the assignment of public access rights from FVLT.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** FWP recommends that the Commission approve the assignment of public hunting access rights from FVLT to FWP. This action would permanently secure public access to private lands and is broadly supported by local residents and sporting groups.



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**Proposed Motion:** I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve FWP's proposal to accept the assignment of public hunting access rights on the Case Ranch from the Five Valley Land Trust.