



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL AND INFORMATION SHEET

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Meeting Date: February 12, 2026

Agenda Item: Hilleman Fishing Access Site Recreation Easement from the City of Miles City to FWP

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Proposal: Fish, Wildlife, and Parks proposes to accept a perpetual recreation easement from Miles City for the management and operation of the 1.2-acre Hilleman Fishing Access Site (FAS) located one mile east of Miles City on the I-94 Business Loop. The FAS would include a boat ramp, parking lot, and day use area providing access to shoreline fishing. The project is a partnership between Walleyes Unlimited, Miles City, and FWP. The proposed project represents a rare opportunity for FWP to acquire interest in a property in a good location for a high-quality boat ramp and sought after recreational opportunities along the Lower Yellowstone River (LYR). The proposed project would provide new public access and recreational opportunities in an area of need, thereby helping to fulfill priorities established by FWP and the LYR Corridor Advisory Committee in 2021.

Public Involvement Process & Results: In 2021 a LYR Corridor Advisory Committee was created to identify and prioritize opportunities for improved access along the LYR. Sponsored by the Governor and convened by FWP, the make-up of the 12-member Advisory Committee reflected the diversity of the area with members representing agriculture, recreation, conservation, and the local economy. The Advisory Committee held five public meetings in 2021/2022 that provided opportunities for public comment. Representatives of Walleyes Unlimited were members of the Advisory Committee and originally proposed the FAS. Walleyes Unlimited held three open house meetings to take public comments and raise funds for the project. The Miles City Council discussed the Hilleman FAS project at two meetings, both of which allowed public comment. FWP published an Environmental Assessment (EA) that detailed the Hilleman FAS concept plans and included a 15-day comment period.

The EA comment period resulted in 11 supportive comments. Input received at various city, advisory committee, and Walleyes Unlimited meetings was positive and constructive. The meetings and other public outreach have resulted in a strong showing of local support for the project, including over \$150,000 raised by Walleyes Unlimited.

Analysis & Alternatives:

Alternative A: The commission approves the proposed no-cost perpetual easement from Miles City. FWP would design and construct the FAS in partnership with Walleyes Unlimited. The FAS would provide motorboat access within an access gap where the closest motorboat ramp is 40 miles upriver and 11 miles downriver.

Alternative B: The commission does not accept the no-cost perpetual easement from Miles City. The proposed project site would remain undeveloped, and the property would not offer a public boat ramp to accommodate motorboats.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the recreation easement from Miles City to FWP for the Hilleman FAS. The easement will allow FWP to leverage Walleyes Unlimited funding and public support to design and build an FAS on the LYR in an area of need.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve FWP's proposal to accept a perpetual recreation easement on 1.2 acres of land from Miles City for the purpose of building and operating the Hilleman FAS.

