



January 13, 2026

Montana Fish & Wildlife Commission  
c/o FWP Liaison – Director’s Office  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701

**Re: Support for Hilleman FAS Recreation Easement (Miles City)**

Dear Members of the Fish & Wildlife Commission:

On behalf of the Public Land Water Access Association (PLWA), we enthusiastically submit this letter in support of the *Hilleman Fishing Access Site Recreation Easement* in Miles City. PLWA is a Montana based non-profit whose mission is to maintain, restore and defend public access to the boundaries of all Montana’s public lands and waters. PLWA has been around for over 40 years and represents the interests of over 700 anglers and recreationists across the State and beyond.

The Hilleman FAS Recreation Easement will secure perpetual public access on approximately 1.2 acres of land along the Lower Yellowstone River (LYR) and provide future recreational opportunities on a key section of the Yellowstone River for generations. The Lower Yellowstone River near Miles City currently lacks developed motorized boat access—the nearest formal boat ramps are located more than 40 river miles upstream and about 11 miles downstream. Establishing a designated public launch site at Hilleman will fill a critical access desert for motorized and non-motorized boaters, anglers, and river users. Additionally, it will provide meaningful socioeconomic benefits to the area for many years to come.

This project enables FWP to leverage local funding and support, including contributions from fantastic community partners such as Walleyes Unlimited and the City of Miles City, ensuring that the site is thoughtfully planned, funded, and built to serve long-term recreation needs of the locals. The Hilleman FAS proposal represents an efficient use of public resources while securing permanent public access in perpetuity—a core objective of PLWA’s mission.

PLWA encourages the Commission to approve the Hilleman FAS Recreation Easement and secure public access along a critical corridor of one of Montana’s most iconic waterways; for this generation and those to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important proposal and don’t hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Dylan Pipinich, PLWA President  
Public Land Water Access Association

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**BACKCOUNTRY  
HUNTERS & ANGLERS  
MONTANA**

January 27, 2026

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers and our membership, we wish to submit strong support for the proposal to accept a perpetual recreation easement from Miles City for the management and operation of the Hilleman Fishing Access Site (FAS). Our community of avid hunters and anglers supports access to our public waters, and there are very few fishing access sites close to Miles City for the community there. The closest upstream motorboat launch is 40 river miles away and the closest downstream boat launch is 11 miles from the city. This fishing access site will reduce pressure on these other sites, which is beneficial to both the recreationists and the wildlife that occupy these sites. As indicated by the final Environmental Assessment, there will be no adverse impacts to the physical and human environment with this undertaking. It is, quite literally, a win-win.

As the commission is aware, this recommendation comes from a partnership between the conservation organization Walleyes Unlimited (WU), the city of Miles City, and the department. WU has raised substantial funding to assist with this project and Montana BHA stands ready to assist as well.

Montana BHA strongly supports this proposal and applauds this multi-year effort and cooperation between WU, FWP, and the community of Miles City.

Sincerely,

Jake Schwaller  
Board Chair  
Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers