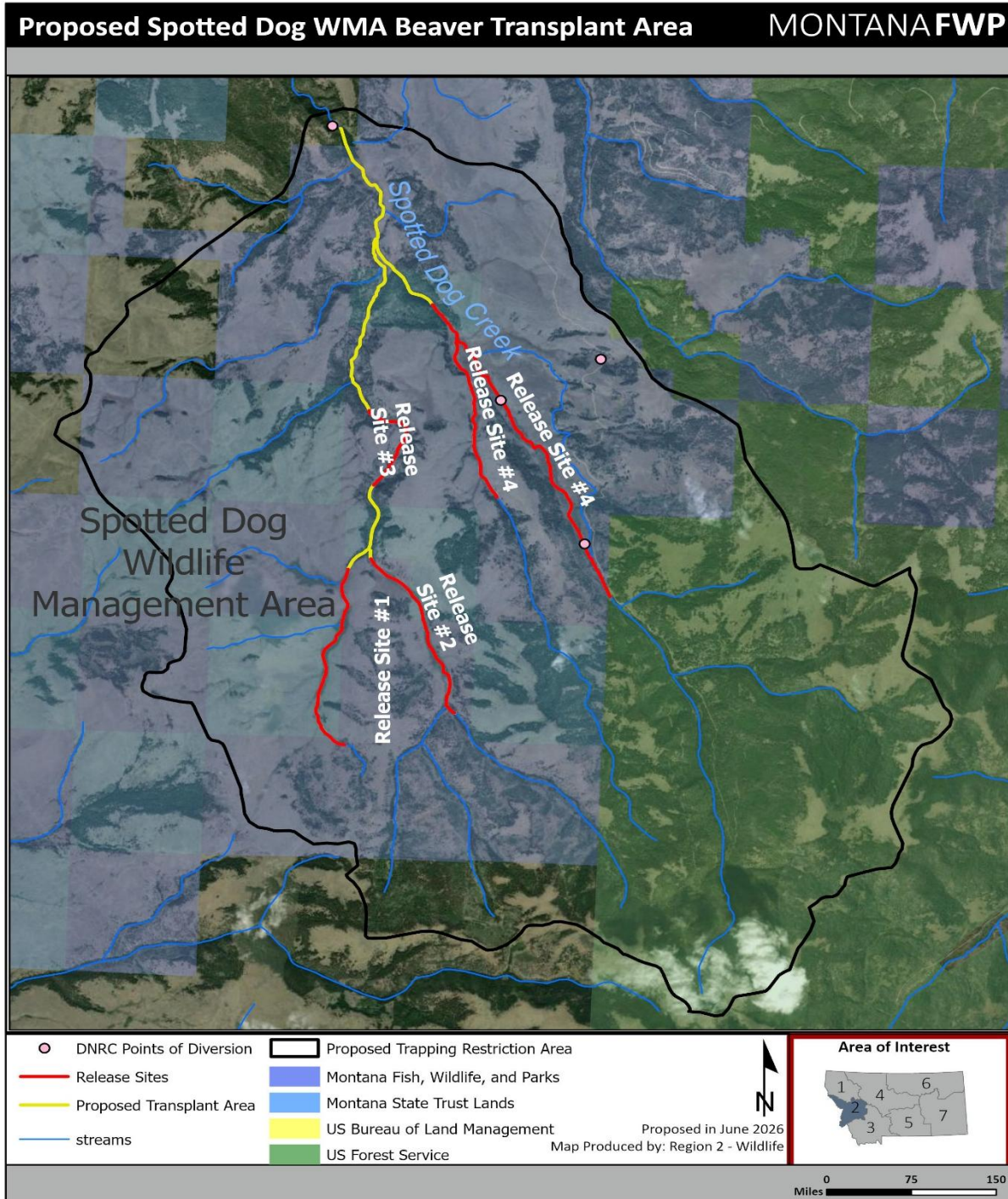




# Montana Beaver Transplant Program

## Spotted Dog WMA Beaver Transplant Area – Project Brief



Overview of the proposed Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area Beaver Transplant Area near Avon.

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**Stream Name(s):** Spotted Dog Creek, South Fork Spotted Dog Creek, Middle Fork Spotted Dog Creek, West Fork Spotted Dog Creek

**Project Overview:** FWP and the Natural Resource Damage Program have been undertaking stream restoration efforts on Spotted Dog WMA for the past 8 years. These efforts have been designed to increase the amount of suitable habitat for beavers in the Spotted Dog Creek drainage with the goal of facilitating expansion of the existing beaver population on the WMA. While these efforts have been somewhat successful so far at expanding the beaver population, much of the restoration work remains unoccupied. The structures used in the restoration efforts will naturally degrade over time if they are not built on, maintained, and expanded by an active and well-distributed beaver population. Once the structures have facilitated beaver expansion, maintenance is no longer needed because they become incorporated into beaver colonies within the WMA. We are therefore proposing to transplant beavers that involved with human-beaver conflicts (e.g., plugging culverts or headgates) in the Upper Clark Fork River Basin into the Spotted Dog WMA to augment the existing beaver population. This would facilitate beavers moving into the remaining unoccupied restoration areas to enhance and perpetuate the restoration actions. Transplants would cease once habitat-based criteria for beaver occupancy have been met (i.e., a certain number of beaver colonies active in the Transplant Area for a certain number of years).

**Landowner Outreach:** FWP and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) are the only landowners within the proposed Transplant Area. FWP holds the lease on all DNRC parcels in the WMA and is authorized to conduct stream restoration efforts on these lands. Beavers would only be released onto FWP property but could potentially disperse into DNRC lands nearby. Cross Canyon Ranch is located downstream of the Transplant Area and is the only private landowner between the proposed Transplant Area and the Little Blackfoot River. Cross Canyon Ranch has been supportive of the restoration work on the WMA and they did not express any opposition to transplanting beavers onto the WMA. They expressed some concern about beavers dispersing out of the WMA and potentially causing conflicts with their irrigation infrastructure, but were willing to work with FWP and our partners at the Montana Beaver Conflict Resolution Program and local trappers to address beaver-human conflicts should they arise on the ranch. The Helena Lewis and Clark National Forest is upstream of the WMA but there is no suitable habitat for beavers on Forest Service lands so they were not contacted as part of this project.

**Trapping Restrictions:** To stay consistent with the annual cycle of trapping regulation changes, FWP is considering proposals for trapping restrictions to be presented at the August 2026 commission meeting. Such proposals may include trapping closures in approved beaver translocation areas.