



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL AND INFORMATION SHEET

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Meeting Date: October 14, 2026

Agenda Item: Hannah Ranch Conservation Easement

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Minutes

Background: Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to purchase a 99-year Conservation Easement (CE) to protect 3,652 acres of important wildlife habitat, provide public access to CE deeded and adjoining public lands, and ensure the land continues to be used for traditional agricultural practices.

The proposed Hannah Ranch term CE is located approximately 6 miles south of Moore and 17 miles southwest of Lewistown, MT in Fergus County.

The land is located within FWP Administrative Region 4, in deer/elk hunting district (HD) 411. The landowners, Jamie and Lisa Gilbert, seek to conserve open-space, wildlife habitat, agricultural values, and recreational access on their property by selling a term CE to FWP.

Included in the CE is 15-foot wide access easement approximately 0.53 miles in length. This access easement will begin at a parking area on the far northeast end of the Hannah Ranch and run south along an eastern fence line. It then jogs east a short distance to where it intersects national forest property. The easement will provide year-round walk-in access to the national forest. At the request of the landowners, who wish to leave a permanent legacy, this element of the CE will be perpetual rather than the remainder of the CE which will terminate after 99 years.

Public Involvement Process & Results: A press release initiating the 30-day scoping period was issued on January 10, 2023, to inform the public about and solicit comments on a proposal for FWP to purchase a perpetual CE on the Hannah Ranch. During this scoping period, FWP received 23 comments. Which were addressed in the EA.

The Draft EA was made available for public review and comment from June 29 to July 28, 2026. FWP received 141 written comments via email and written mail during this comment period. FWP subsequently identified two errors in the Draft EA and issued a Corrected Draft EA on August 11, 2026. A supplemental comment period was held from August 12-August 21, 2026. FWP received 5 additional comments during this period, for a total of 146 comments. All comments have been addressed in the Decision Notice.

Through the MEPA process, FWP did not find any significant negative impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives & Analysis:

Proposed Action: To purchase the Hannah Ranch CE on high-priority wildlife habitat. This purchase would ensure habitat functions and public recreational access while keeping the property in private ownership.

No Action: FWP would forgo a partnership to conserve and enhance valuable wildlife habitats and to ensure public access.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends approval of this proposal to conserve and enhance wildlife habitat and public recreation opportunities on this land.

Proposed Motion: I move the commission approve the Hannah Ranch CE as presented.