



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** August 20, 2021

**Agenda Item:** 2021 Contractual Public Elk Hunting Access Agreements

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 10 minutes

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**Background:** Seven public elk hunting access agreements are being considered for 2021 at this time. The Robert Lee Ranch and the John Swanz Ranch have been renewed multiple years. The Lee agreement specifies a single 411-20 either-sex permit for the owner, family member or an authorized full-time employee, whereas the Swanz agreement specifies two 411-20 either-sex permits for the owner, family member or an authorized full-time employee. The Lee agreement was first exercised in 2015, and the Swanz agreement was first exercised in 2002. Both agreements include a provision by which the landowners will select one-third of the participants (one for Lee and two for Swanz), and the department will notify two-thirds of the public 411-20 permit holders selected (two for Lee and four for Swanz) of the access opportunity. If any of the public hunters declines the opportunity to hunt on the ranch properties, it will be offered to the next randomly selected permit holder.

Three new agreements have been proposed since the June commission meeting. The Rocket Land and Livestock LLC, Groover Brothers Ranch, Jones Ranch Unit, 7 Bar Lazy 6 Ranch, and Daniel Johnson Ranch all wish to participate. Rocket Land and Livestock seeks one either-sex license and 410-21 archery permit, the Jones Ranch seeks two either-sex licenses and 900-20 archery permits, the Groover Brothers seek four either-sex licenses and 411-20 permits, the 7 Bar Lazy 6 Ranch seeks one either sex license and 426-20 permit, and the Daniel Johnson Ranch seeks one either sex license and 700-21 permit. Each proposal requests an equal number of hunters to be chosen from a select group (e.g., Wounded Warriors, Montana Hope Project) or a list of successful applicants for the appropriate permit by the landowners, and the remainder from the public to be awarded antlerless elk licenses (two on Rocket Land and Livestock, four on Jones Ranch, eight on Groover Brothers, and two on Daniel Johnson Ranch) or either-sex permit (two on 7 Bar Lazy 6 Ranch).

**Public Involvement Process and Results:** Both existing agreements have received favorable public review in prior years. The limited public comment was divided on the benefits of the program, although no specific opposition to the existing agreements was received. No comment was solicited on the new agreements.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** The department has had a favorable history with the existing Lee and Swanz agreements and the program overall.

**Agency Rationale and Recommendation:** The department believes the program has been beneficial and has increased public access.

**Proposed Motion:**

I move that the commission vote to approve the contractual public elk hunting access agreements with the John Swanz Ranch, Robert Lee Ranch, Rocket Land and Livestock LLC, Groover Brothers Ranch, Jones Ranch Unit, 7 Bar Lazy 6 Ranch, and Daniel Johnson Ranch.