



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** August 20, 2021

**Agenda Item:** Nongame Check-off Workplan

**Action Needed:** Final **Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

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**Background:** Under the provisions of 87-5-122, MCA, “the FWP Commission shall review and annually approve the nongame wildlife program’s projects recommended for funding from the nongame wildlife tax check-off account. The Commission shall provide for public comment during the review and approval process.” While final 2020 tax year donations are unknown at this time, the average received by FWP from the 2004-2018 tax years was \$30,000-\$40,000/year. FWP is proposing some combination of the following work in FY21 dependent on the final allocation:

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| <b>\$30,000</b> | Inventory, monitoring, and conservation work on Montana Species of Concern and species in need of inventory as determined through a formal ranking process*. |
| <b>\$5,000</b>  | Wildlife viewing and outreach projects that encourage more Montanans to appreciate Montana wildlife.   |
| <b>\$5,000</b>  | Competitive graduate student stipend for nongame research.   |

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** The department received ten comments and one letter of support for implementing the nongame program check-off workplan. The department is not recommending any changes in response to these comments as all were in support.

**Alternatives and Analysis:**

The recommended work addresses several components of FWP’s overall nongame management program (including threatened and endangered species management), as identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan. **\*One of the Nongame Program’s fundamental objectives is to maintain the distribution and abundance of nongame species to reduce the potential for Endangered Species Act listings and thereby minimize negative impacts to landowners, recreationists and user groups.** Tax check-off funding is used to address high-priority habitat, survey and inventory, and species conservation needs. Examples of survey and inventory efforts that have been recently completed or are currently underway include targeted surveys for grassland birds, harlequin duck, great gray owl, golden eagle, alpine dwelling rosy finches, northern bog lemming, multi-species monitoring on Wildlife Management Areas, and monitoring bat populations to detect and track the spread of the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome. Successful wildlife viewing projects have been implemented at North Shore Wildlife Viewing Area and the Clark Fork Waterfowl Production Area. Alternatives to the current work plan could include allocating more or less funding among these categories or identifying new categories.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** FWP recommends the commission adopt the proposed work for funding with nongame tax check-off funds.

**Proposed Motion:** I move that the commission approve the proposed Nongame Tax Check-Off Workplan for Fiscal Year 2022.