



Region 2
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
June 3, 2021

Dear Interested Citizens:

Thank you for your thoughtful reviews and comments on a proposal by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to conduct habitat restoration treatments on approximately 1,116 acres of forest and grass/shrublands on its Calf Creek Wildlife Management Area (CCWMA), located east of Hamilton in Ravalli County. The objectives of the proposed treatments are: 1) improve elk and deer winter forage, 2) restore grass/ shrublands through conifer removal, 3) promote stand conditions that would allow fire to burn at low-severity appropriate for the habitat type, and 4) promote aspen growth and regeneration.

FWP issued a draft environmental assessment (DEA) describing the proposal, which was available for public review and comment for 30 days (Feb 5-March 8, 2021). In April, FWP also conducted a public field tour and an extended 16-day comment period.

Enclosed is a decision document in which I explain my rationale for recommending that the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) approve this habitat restoration project. In response to public comments and input, FWP made modifications to the original project (proposed and described in the DEA); these changes are identified in the "Changes Made to the Draft EA" section of the enclosed decision notice (DN). In this DN, I have chosen the preferred action (Alternative B), with the changes identified. Therefore, the draft EA, in combination with the information and project adjustments added in this DN in response to public comment, constitute the final EA. The decision document also includes all public comment received during the public review period.

FWP expects to request approval for this proposal at the regularly scheduled Commission meeting on June 24, 2021. This meeting is open to the public as are other Commission meetings, and it is expected to be a "virtual meeting" via Zoom. (A few days prior to the meeting, please see FWP's Commission webpage <https://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/commission>, for the agenda and details on how to watch and/or participate in the Commission's meeting.)

Please feel free to contact me at 406-542-5500 with any questions you may have. Thank you for your interest and participation.

Sincerely,

Randy Arnold
Regional Supervisor

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