



1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

March 24, 2022

To: Governor's Office, Sheena Wilson, State Capitol, Room 204, P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, State Capitol, Room 106, P.O. Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:
Director's Office Parks Division Lands Section FWP Commissioners
Fisheries Division Legal Unit Wildlife Division Design & Construction
MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202
MT State Parks Association, P.O. Box 699, Billings, MT 59103
MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620
James Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
Jerry DiMarco, P.O. Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771
Robert L. Sanders, Ducks Unlimited, P.O. Box 183, Elliston, MT 59728
Abby Dresser, Ducks Unlimited, 240 Jackson Lane, Belgrade, MT 59714
Montana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624
Jeff Sturm, Pheasants Forever, 3445 York Rd., Helena, MT 59602
Gallatin Wildlife Association, P.O. Box 5276, Bozeman, MT 59717
Broadwater County Commissioners, 515 Broadway, Townsend, MT 59644

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Decision Notice is for the proposed renewal of six existing agricultural lease and one existing bee yard (apiary) lease on the Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area (CFWMA) for seven (7) years (January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2029). If approved by the Fish & Wildlife Commission, lessees would be given the choice of either a cash lease or a payment in-kind lease (payment is in services rendered in lieu of a cash lease payment) for the new seven (7) year leasing period. The bee yard (apiary) lease is proposed to be set at \$175.00/year for the 7-year lease period.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on February 1, 2022. Public comments on the proposed project were taken through March 2, 2022. Copies of the EA were mailed to potentially interested individuals and groups. Legal notices were printed in the Bozeman Chronicle, Helena Independent Record, and the Broadwater County Reporter. The Environmental Assessment was also posted on the FWP webpage: <http://fwp.mt.gov>.

One individual commented on the EA. A summary of the individual's comments and the Department's responses to those comments are found in the Decision Notice.

It is my decision, based on the Environmental Assessment and the results of the public comment process to recommend approval of the Proposed Action (Alternative B) of renewing the six existing agricultural (farming) leases and the one existing bee yard lease for 7 years (January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2029). If approved by the Fish & Wildlife Commission, lessees would be given the choice of either a cash lease or a payment in-kind lease (payment is in services rendered in lieu of a cash lease payment) for the new seven (7) year leasing period. The bee yard (apiary) lease is proposed to be set at \$175.00/year for the seven (7) year lease period.

Renewing the six existing agricultural leases and the one existing bee yard (apiary) lease on the CFWMA would provide many positive benefits to both wildlife and the community. The agricultural leases demonstrate that agricultural production cannot only co-exist with wildlife, but even benefit many wildlife species. Managing a portion of the CFWMA as agricultural leases provides positive benefits for a variety of wildlife species that utilize the CFWMA, and it also helps maintain a good relationship between FWP and the local community.

The analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment as a result of the project. I therefore conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Questions regarding this Decision Notice should be mailed to:

Attention: Adam Grove
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
P.O. Box 998
Townsend, MT 59644

Or e-mailed to adgrove@mt.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marina Yoshioka', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marina Yoshioka
Region 3 Supervisor

Attachment