



## **PUBLIC SCOPING NOTICE**

### **PROPOSED NEW MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS HAVRE FIELD OFFICE**

April 21, 2023

#### **PROPOSED ACTION**

Notice of Intent to Conduct Public Scoping and Prepare an Environmental Assessment or EA for the Proposed Action. Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks (FWP) will prepare a Draft Environmental Assessment or EA for a proposed new Havre field office at 21 River Road, Havre MT 59501.

#### **AUTHORITY**

Before a proposed action may be approved, environmental review must be conducted to identify and consider potential impacts of the proposed action on the human environment affected by the proposed action. The Montana Environmental Policy Act or MEPA, and its implementing rules and regulations, require different levels of environmental review, depending on the proposed project, significance of potential impacts, and the review timeline. Based on the applicable requirements of MEPA, FWP determined the proposed project is subject to Checklist-level EA review. Title 75, Chapter 1, Parts 1 through 3, Montana Code Annotated (MCA) and the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 12.2.429, et. seq.

FWP may initiate a process to determine the scope of the EA. To help identify the appropriate scope of the EA, FWP is inviting affected federal, state, and local government agencies, tribes, and interested persons or groups to participate in the public scoping process. ARM 12.2.432(1).

#### **BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

FWP leases its current field office location at 2165 U.S. Rte. 2, Havre, MT 59501. Due to limited office space, limited equipment storage, the lack of a meeting room, a very small customer service and retail space, a small maintenance shop, and limited public parking, a facility that can better accommodate the needs of FWP and the public is necessary. During the 2021 legislative session funding had been approved in HB 5 for the purpose of establishing a new field office in Havre using state special and federal funding. Since that time FWP has reviewed several options for office locations, ranging from vacant property to existing buildings.

FWP is proposing to purchase the property located at 21 River Road, Havre MT 59501. This property sits on 9.15 acres along the north side of the Milk River, on the north side of Havre. Existing on the property is a home, a shop, and several outbuildings. FWP has determined this property would provide the needed space and facilities for FWP to operate effectively, as well as provide greater benefits to the public.

From the date of this publication, this timeline will include multiple public processes and opportunities for public comment, to include: the Hill County Planning Board meeting (May 3, 2023) and Public Hearing (May 17, 2023), an FWP Environmental Analysis and Public Hearing (likely June 2023), and the FWP Commission meeting (August 17, 2023). The proposed purchase is anticipated to be completed by September of 2023, with needed remodeling and construction to continue through 2024.

### **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The current location of the Havre FWP field office does not meet the operating needs of FWP or the public; the goal of the proposed project is to improve upon both of those factors. The existing home has a greater capacity for office space, meeting space, and retail space. The existing shop would provide a needed facility to accommodate maintenance, construction, additional office space, and other program needs. The outbuildings would provide needed covered storage for equipment and supplies. The property would also accommodate adequate public parking and Americans with Disabilities Act or ADA-compliant accessibility. The plans that are being considered for the property would also create new opportunities for public recreation and education. FWP would anticipate construction, mostly in the form of remodeling, to begin in early 2024, with the intention of occupying the space in late 2024 or early in 2025.

### **ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED**

#### **Alternative 1: No Action**

In addition to the proposed action, and as required by MEPA, FWP analyzes the "No-Action" alternative in the EA. Under the No-Action alternative, the proposed action would not occur. Therefore, no additional impacts to the human environment would occur. The No Action alternative forms the baseline from which the potential impacts of the proposed action may be measured.

Under the No Action alternative FWP would remain at its current leased location. The existing conditions leading FWP to seek a new facility would continue and FWP would continue to search for available property for a new Havre Field Office.

#### **Alternative 2: Proposed Action**

Under the Proposed Action, FWP would purchase the property located at 21 River Road, Havre MT 59501. FWP would then begin the needed construction modifications to the existing facilities, the completion of which would allow FWP to move its office to the new location.

### **IMPORTANT DATES AND HOW TO PROVIDE COMMENT**

FWP invites interested agencies, organizations, and members of the affected public to submit comments or suggestions to assist in identifying potential significant environmental issues associated with the proposed action and in determining the appropriate scope of the EA. More specifically, comments received during this scoping period will help FWP determine public interest, identify potential issues that would require further analysis, and may provide further insight for refining the proposal or developing and analyzing additional alternatives.

In addition to this scoping notice and associated public participation process, FWP will conduct a public scoping meeting at the following location on the following date and time:

- Havre Field Office at 2165 U.S. Rte. 2, Havre, MT 59501, May 1, 2023, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The 15-day public scoping period begins with the publication of this Scoping Notice and will continue through May 5, 2023. MFWP will consider all comments received or postmarked by May 5, 2023, at 11:59pm in defining the scope of the EA.

Comments and suggestions on the content and scope of the EA should be addressed to:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 6  
Attention: Drew Henry  
1 Airport Rd  
Glasgow, MT 59230

Or, via electronic mail at: [dhenry@mt.gov](mailto:dhenry@mt.gov)

If you have any questions regarding the proposed project, please call Drew Henry, FWP Region 6 Supervisor at (406) 808-7109 or email: [dhenry@mt.gov](mailto:dhenry@mt.gov).

Thanks for your time and consideration of this proposed action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Drew Henry".

Drew Henry, Region 6 Supervisor  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks