



3201 Spurgin Rd  
Missoula, MT 59805  
(406) 542-5500  
June 2, 2025

Dear Interested Citizen,

Based on environmental assessment (EA) review, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has decided to approve the Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area (SDWMA) Grazing and Water Development Plan. With this action, FWP approves a framework for focused cattle grazing and water development on the SDWMA through commission approved agreements with neighboring landowners. As proposed, FWP would implement grazing agreements and water development incrementally as need, funding, and staff resources allow.

Use of SDWMA for grazing by private landowners would be in exchange for resting adjacent native range on private land from cattle grazing on a rotational basis to benefit wildlife, especially wintering elk. This type of arrangement is referred to as an "exchange of use grazing lease agreement," or EOU agreement. Any EOU agreements would also require affected landowners to provide public hunting access to their private lands, thereby maintaining or improving public recreational opportunities on and adjacent to SDWMA.

Our hard-working staff have identified areas within the SDWMA where focused cattle grazing treatments could improve wildlife habitat. FWP's focus will be on improving upland grasslands, where elk transition between winter and summer ranges. Water development will help focus grazing away from sensitive riparian areas, wetlands, and aspen stands. By implementing and achieving these enhancement goals, FWP hopes to see increased elk use of transitional habitat between summer and winter range, improvement of winter forage productivity from wildlife on adjacent private lands, and increased diversity of grassland bird species.

FWP is directed by its mission and operating environment to work closely with private landowners if it hopes to provide for the stewardship of wildlife resources for present and future generations. Although private land comprises a lower percentage (about 30%) in FWP Region 2, a disproportionately high percentage of wildlife species and populations occur on private lands. Private lands are subject to migratory patterns of many wide-ranging birds and mammals and comprise some of the most productive wildlife habitats along the broad river bottoms and valleys of western Montana. Our focus is on protecting Montana's natural resources and this decision accomplishes that mission.

Sincerely,

Kendra McKlosky  
Region 2 Supervisor