

Notice of Habitat Conservation Lease Proposal

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) is proposing a habitat conservation lease. Conservation leases are incentive-based, voluntary agreements offered by FWP to help conserve priority wildlife habitats on private lands while also supporting working agricultural lands and public hunting and recreation opportunity.

The basic intent of the Conservation Lease Program is to retain substantial blocks of high priority native or restored wildlife habitats while keeping working agricultural lands as working lands. There are five priority focal habitats that qualify for enrollment: sagebrush grasslands, mixed grasslands, intermountain grasslands, riparian/floodplain, and wetland-grassland complexes. The overarching goal of the Program is to enroll 500,000 acres over a 5-year timeframe.

Private landowners can enroll their land into a 30- or 40- year conservation lease in return for a one-time per-acre lease payment. Funding for the Program is generally derived from state hunting license fees and federal Pittman Robertson Wildlife Restoration funds.

For more information, please refer to the Habitat Conservation Lease Program web page:
<https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/habitat/habitat-conservation/lease-program>

A programmatic environmental analysis (PEA) and supplemental environmental analysis (SEA) were completed by FWP at the start of the Habitat Conservation Lease Program. This Notice serves to 1) inform the public and adjacent landowners of a proposed habitat conservation lease, providing an opportunity for review and comment (as required by MCA 87-1-241) and 2) document if the programmatic environmental analysis is consistent with the circumstances of individual proposed conservation leases.

Proposed Lease Information:

Project Name: Larry Smith / Overpass Ranch Habitat Conservation Lease

Location of Property: west of Malta, Phillips County, Montana

Legal Description:

North Unit

S06, T30 N, R28 E, PARCEL 2 OF AMENDED COS 343 LOCATED IN SECTIONS 5, 6, 7 & 8

S23, T31 N, R27 E, SE4

S35, T31 N, R27 E, NE4NE4, S2N2, N2SW4, SE4

S24, T31 N, R27 E, ALL

S07, T31 N, R28 E, LOTS 1, 2, 3, W2NE4, E2NW4, NE4SW4

S19, T31 N, R28 E, LOTS 1, 2, 3, 4, E2W2

S29, T31 N, R28 E, SW4NE4, S2NW4, N2SW4, SW4SW4

S32, T31 N, R28 E, LOTS 1, 2, 3, 4, N2S2, S2N2, NW4NE4, N2NW4

S01, T30 N, R27 E, LOTS 1, 2, 3, 4, S2N2, NW4SE4 AND THAT PART OF SW4 LOCATED NORTH OF US HIGHWAY 2 LESS A M&B TRACT IN SE4SW4 BK 17 PG 528 LESS A M&B TRACT IN

S02, T30 N, R27 E, E2 OF LOT 1, W2 OF LOT 2, S2NE4, SE4NW4 AND THAT PART OF SW4NW4 AND S2 LOCATED NORTH OF US HIGHWAY 2 LESS A M&B TRACT IN SW4NW4 & NESE4 SEE B

S34, T31 N, R27 E, SE4SW4, S2SE4

S06, T30 N, R28 E, LOTS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, S2NE4 AND THAT PART OF LOTS 6, 7, NE4SW4 AND N2SE4 LOCATED NORTH OF US HIGHWAY 2 LESS A M&B TRACT IN LOT 7 SEE BK 17 PG 3

S03, T30 N, R27 E, LOTS 1, 2, 3, & THAT PART OF SE4NE4 AND NE4SE4 LOCATED NORTH OF US HIGHWAY 2 LESS A M&B TRACT IN SE4NE4 SEE BK 40 PG 9 LESS A TRACT IN LOT 3

S31, T31 N, R28 E, LOTS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, NE4, E2NW4, NE4SW4, N2SE4

S05, T30 N, R28 E, PARCEL 1 OF AMENDED COS 343 LOCATED IN SE4SE4

S12, T31 N, R27 E, ALL

S25, T31 N, R27 E, W2W2

S18, T31 N, R28 E, LOTS 2, 3, 4, SE4SW4, NE4SE4, S2SE4

S25, T31 N, R27 E, W2NE4

S26, T31 N, R27 E, N2, SW4, N2SE4, SE4SE4

S11, T31 N, R27 E, E2E2

S13, T31 N, R27 E, N2, E2SW4, SE4

S30, T31 N, R28 E, LOTS 2, 3, 4, W2NE4, SE4NE4, E2W2, SE4

S04, T30 N, R28 E, LOTS 3 & 4

S05, T30 N, R28 E, LOTS 1, 2, 3, 4, S2N2, AND THAT PART OF SW4, N2SE4, SE4SE4 LOCATED NORTH OF US HIGHWAY 2 LESS A M&B TRACT IN SW4 AND SE4SE4 SEE BK 17 PG 525

S33, T31 N, R28 E, LOT 1, SW4NW4, NW4SW4

Middle Unit

S07, T29 N, R27 E, N2 N2S2

South Unit

S32, T28 N, R27 E, SW4, N2SE4, SW4SE4

S25, T28 N, R26 E, LOTS 1, 2, 3, 4, E2

S29, T28 N, R27 E, SW4

S20, T28 N, R27 E, SW4NW4, NW4SW4, S2SW4

S19, T28 N, R27 E, LOT 4, SE4NE4, SE4SW4, NE4SE4, S2SE4

S21, T28 N, R27 E, N2

S32, T28 N, R27 E, NW4

S05, T27 N, R27 E, LOT 4

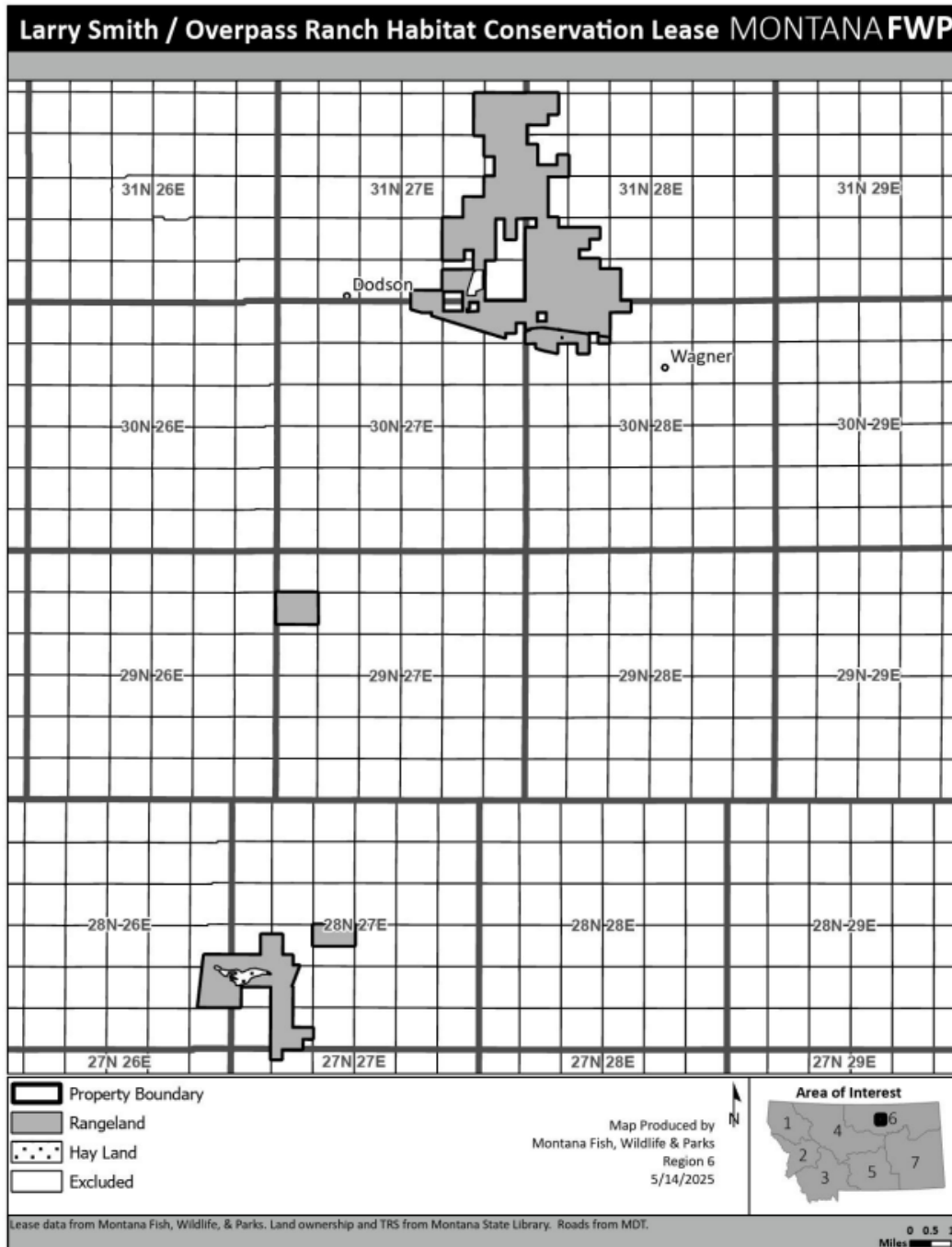
S29, T28 N, R27 E, N2NW4, PARCEL A OF COS 468

S30, T28 N, R27 E, LOTS 1, 2, 3, 4, NE4, E2NW4

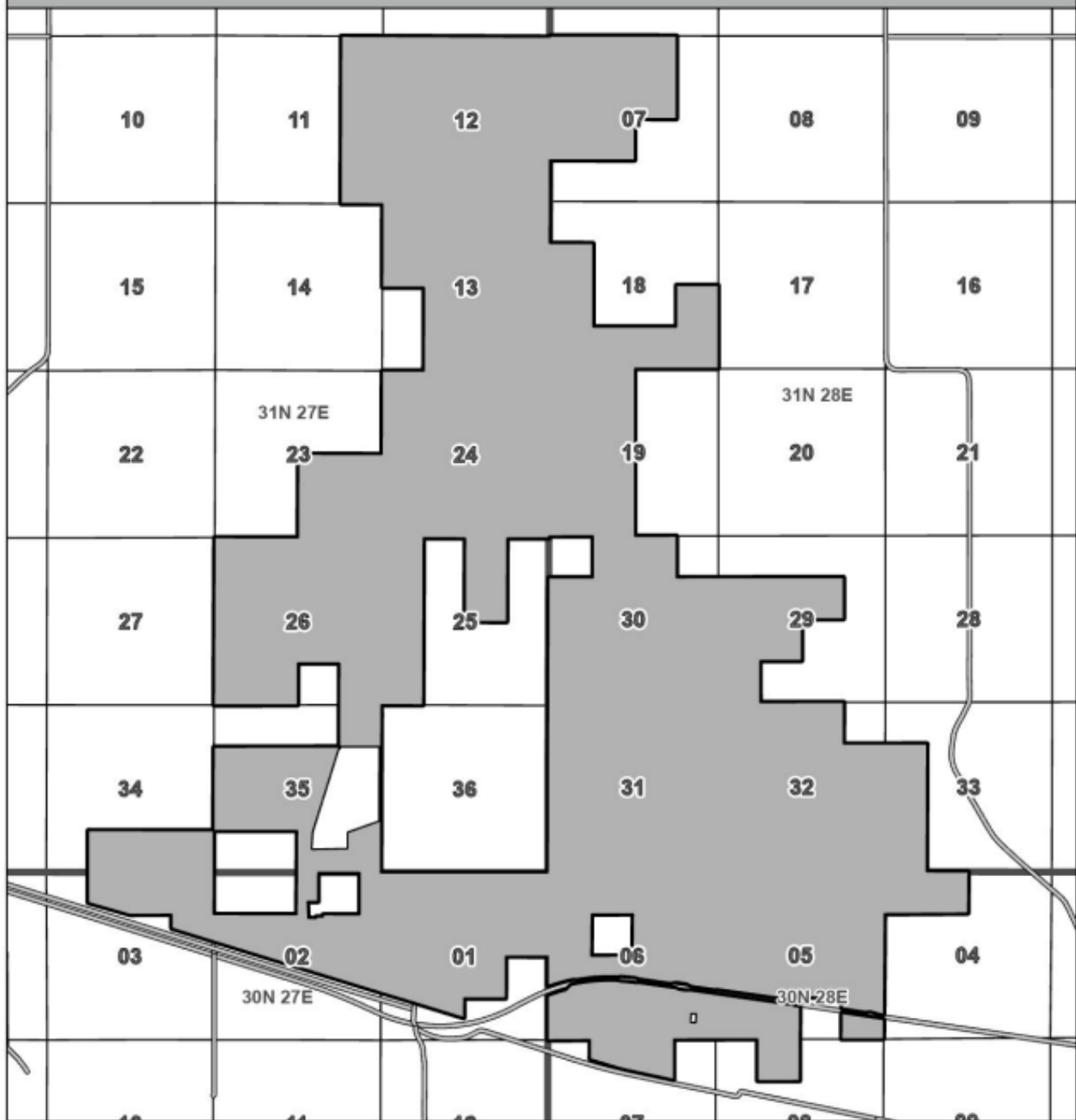
S24, T28 N, R26 E, LOT 4, S2SE4

Less and excepting therefrom the excluded areas shown on the following map.

Map:



Larry Smith / Overpass Ranch Habitat Conservation Lease MONTANA FWP

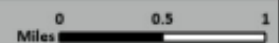


- Property Boundary
- Rangeland
- Excluded
- Road

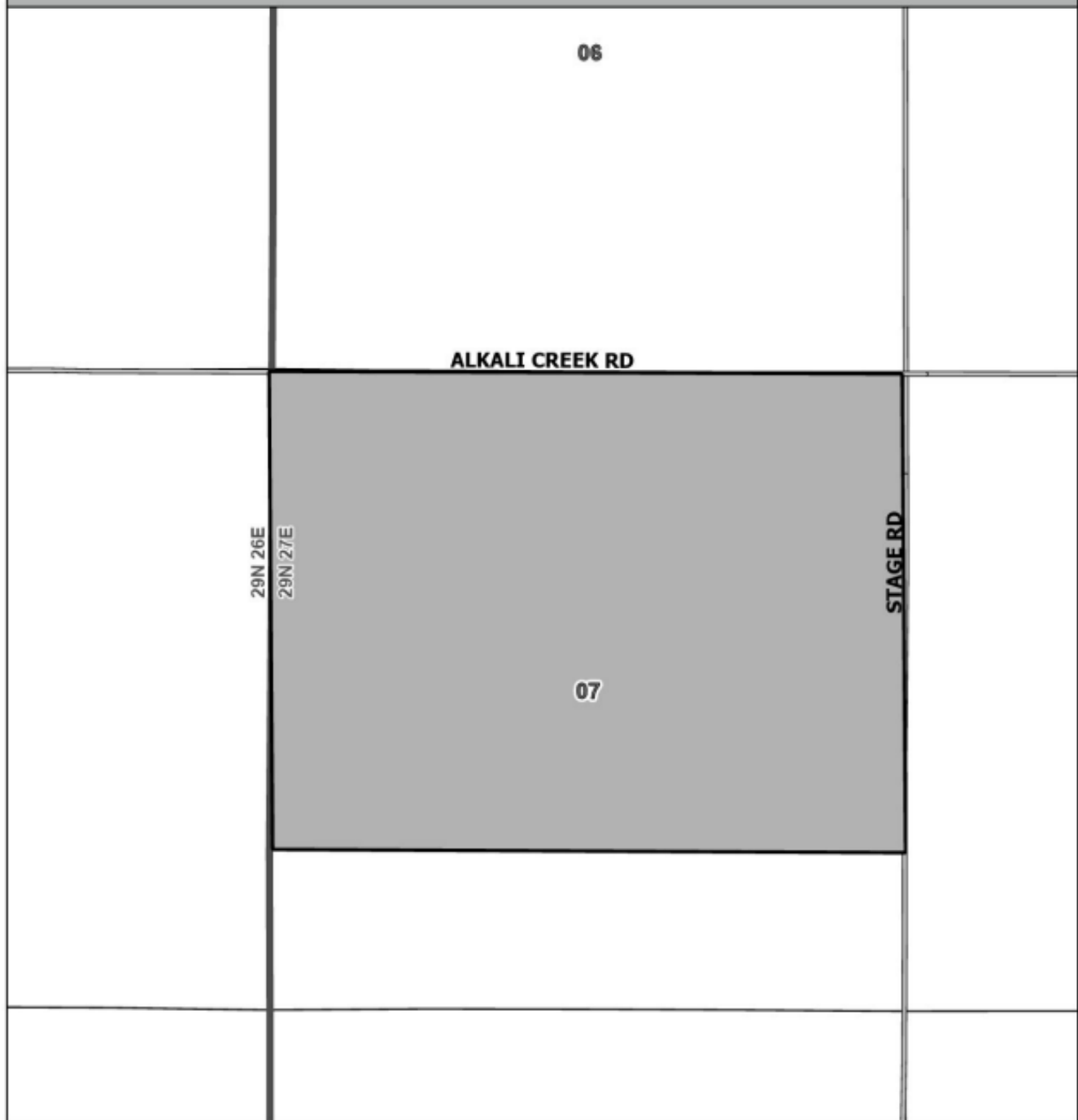
Map Produced by
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 6
5/14/2025



Lease data from Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks. Land ownership and TRS from Montana State Library. Roads from MDT.



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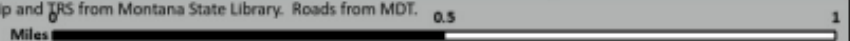


- Property Boundary
- Rangeland
- Road

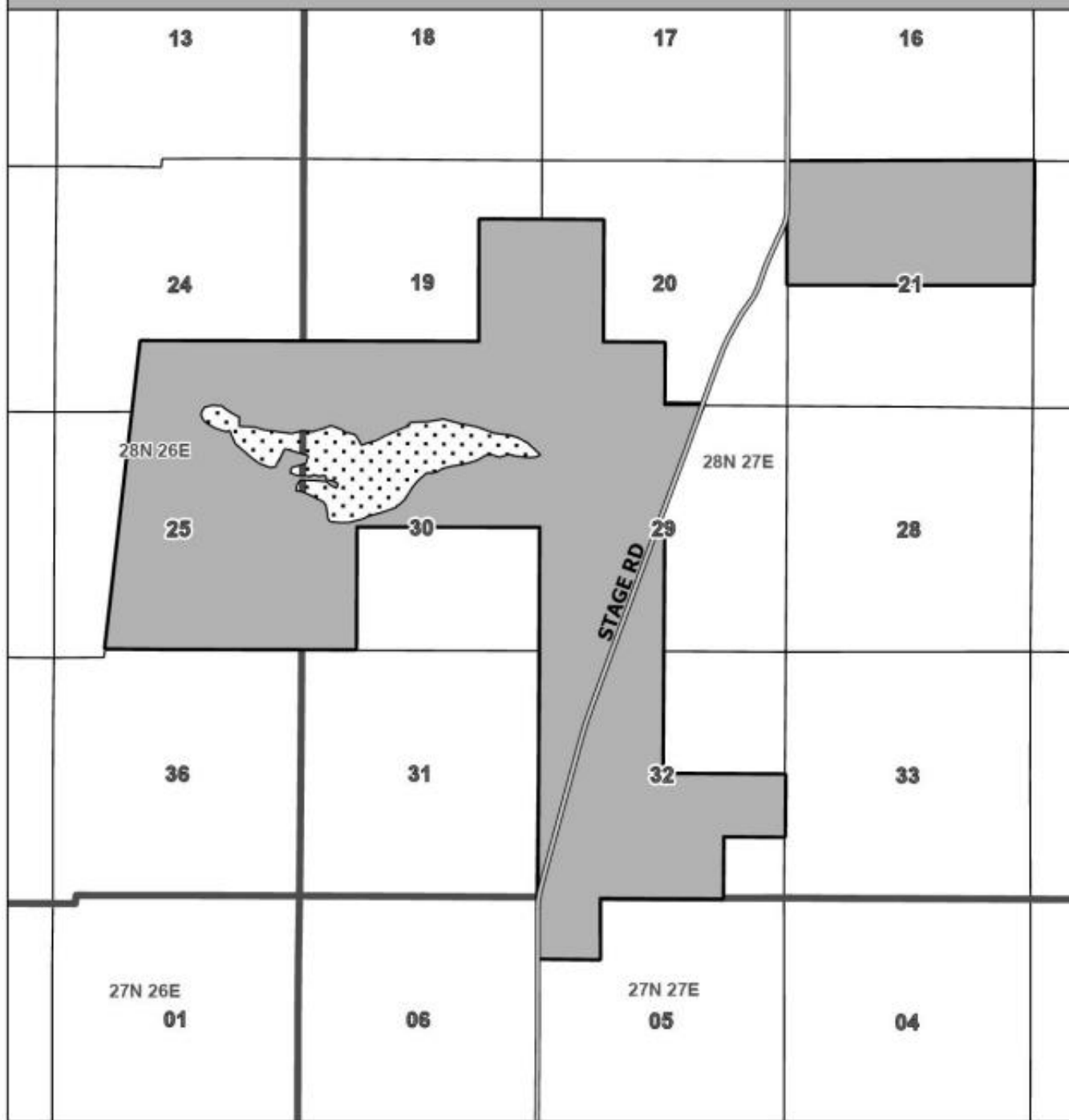
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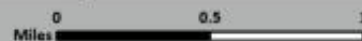


- Property Boundary
- Rangeland
- Hay Land
- Road

Map Produced by
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 6
5/14/2025



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Duration of Lease: 40 years

Approximate Acres Proposed To be Enrolled: 11,762

Approximate Acres of Priority Habitat: 11,600

Approximate Acres by Land Type:

Rangeland	11,600
Hayland	162

Public Access details:

As part of this Habitat Conservation Lease, Larry Smith agrees to allow 416 recreation days to the public each year. At least 139 of those recreation days will be for hunting from September 1- January 1. Larry Smith may also choose to offer the 277 remaining recreation days for hunting during that time. Larry Smith will provide a contact name and phone number for the public to obtain permission for access.

Public comment period details:

Duration of Public Comment Period: The public comment period begins on the date of publication on the FWP website. Written or e-mailed comments will be accepted through the last day of the public comment period, as listed below:

Date Listed: May 20, 2025

Length of Public Comment Period: 30 days

Public Comment Period Begins: May 20, 2025

Public Comment Period Ends: June 19, 2025

Comments must be addressed to the FWP contact, as listed below.

Where to submit Comments on the Proposed lease:

Name: Sky Losleben

Email: sky.losleben@mt.gov

Mailing Address:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

ATTN: Larry Smith / Overpass Ranch Habitat Lease

1 Airport Road

Glasgow, MT59230

Public Meeting Date: May 29, 2025, 3:00 PM

Public Meeting Location:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Region 6 Headquarters

1 Airport Road

Virtual Link: <https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/82839317126?pwd=2isJOCUjJhgIJXHvT3TEXoPnM0pN6f.1>

Checklist pertaining proposed habitat conservation lease:

Checklist	Yes	No*
Conservation lease is being made available to adjacent landowners for review and comment?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The habitat conservation lease meets the requirement of at least 50% Priority Habitat?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landowner agrees to meet Conservation Requirements listed in PEA and as laid out in the standard lease agreement?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landowner agrees to provide at least the minimum Public Access Requirement?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Environment impacts of this proposed habitat conservation lease, including to wildlife habitats and associated ecological functions for soil, water, and air are consistent with conclusions analyzed in the PEA (pages 18-20)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Environment impacts of this proposed habitat conservation lease, including to land uses, profitability, community, and public service are consistent with conclusions analyzed in the PEA (pages 20-23)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impacts and anticipated benefits of this proposed habitat conservation lease are consistent with the Narrative Evaluation and Comment in the PEA (page 24).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*For any of the above criteria, if "No" was selected, provide explanation and additional information:
None.