

DNRC – FWP WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS SALE AND ACQUISITION PROJECT



Frequently Asked Questions



Why are DNRC and FWP undertaking the sale of these parcels under Land Banking?

DNRC and FWP attempted to transfer these lands through the land exchange process in 2012. In that proposal, FWP would have received lands in the Spotted Dog, Beartooth, Sun River and Blackleaf WMAs; DNRC would have received lands in the Robb-Ledford WMA. Many public comments were received during scoping that opposed the transfer of WMA lands to DNRC and the proposal was dropped. A number of comments supported the consolidation of FWP ownership in WMAs, but suggested FWP instead purchase DNRC inholdings in WMAs.

What are the benefits of a Land Banking sale?

This Land Banking sale would achieve FWP's goals of consolidating an intermingled land ownership within the WMA's, improving management effectiveness and efficiency and reducing the prospect of resource management conflicts that arise from the agencies' differing missions. More specific benefits include:

- FWP would save approximately \$60,000 per year in grazing lease payments to DNRC by 2016, when higher lease rate increases are fully phased in.
- Eliminate the potential for escalating future DNRC lease costs as a result of a change in lease classification or competitive bids.
- Provide improved and consistent habitat management, weed control, and road and fence management across these WMAs, eliminating the patchwork quilt approach FWP has today as a result of intermingled landownership. It would also greatly improve habitat integrity within these WMAs.

DNRC would be able to use the Land Banking sale funds to purchase replacement lands that would generate equal or greater revenues, and provide public access and recreational opportunities.

How will decisions about this sale be made? How can the public get involved?

Land Banking sales require the approval of the Fish and Wildlife (FW) Commission and the State Land Board.

As the agencies move forward with this proposal, the decision making process will include public scoping, DNRC MEPA analysis with a public comment period for the sale process, FWP MEPA analysis with a public comment period for the acquisition, and opportunities for public comment to the FW Commission and Land Board.

Why does the Land Banking sale to FWP have to be a public auction?

The lands that FWP is seeking to purchase are public trust lands, held in trust for the benefit of Common School and Public Building beneficiaries. The Enabling Act of 1889 and current Montana statute (77-2-321 MCA) require any trust lands to be sold at a public sale (auction).

What if another party outbids FWP?

Under the Land Banking sale program, FWP as the lessee and nominator of the sale parcels is afforded the ability to stop the sale process up to ten days before the auction occurs. Any parties wishing to bid on the sale parcels at a Land Banking auction have to submit a bid deposit of 20% of the minimum bid price, 20 days before the auction. FWP would know beforehand if there would be any competitive bidders for the parcels, and would be able to cancel the auction up to ten days before the scheduled auction.

Where can I get more information?

At Fish, Wildlife & Parks: Rick Northrup, (406) 444-5633

At DNRC: Hoyt Richards, (406) 458-3501