



Department of Natural Resources & Conservation Cabin & Home Site Sales Report September 2025

Background

SB369 passed the Legislature in 2013 with bipartisan support. SB369 enacted a Cabin and Home Site Sale Program whereby the proceeds of trust land sales would be placed in a special Land Banking account which could only be used to acquire other real property interests that provide equal or better revenue for trust beneficiaries.

Statute & Rule Requirements

Statute requires the sale of cabin and home sites at the request of a lessee or improvements owner, only if approved by the State Board of Land Commissioners (Land Board) and if the sale is consistent with the Land Board's fiduciary duty of attaining full market value.

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) was required to annually report to the Environmental Quality Council (EQC) a summary of land sales of those lands that were state land cabin or home sites pursuant to 77-2-318, MCA, and efforts by DNRC to comply with the requirements of 77-2-318 (1) MCA. During the 2025 legislative session, HB 562 repealed the reporting requirement previously found under 77-2-366, MCA.



View from Valley County Home Site

Goals of the Program

The goals of the program are to:

- meet the legislative intent of SB369 as outlined above.
- maximize the revenue from the sale of these state cabin sites for the beneficiaries, with sales occurring over a reasonable period of time and spread throughout different neighborhoods in Montana.
- improve the investment portfolio of the beneficiaries by purchasing replacement lands that provide better income returns with fewer management costs.

Cabin Site Sale Program Summary

Administrative Rules (ARM 36.25.701 through 708) were given final approval by the Land Board in December 2013. As of June 30, 2025, **272** cabin/homesites have been sold for a total of **\$37,654,050**. Of that total, **\$1,070,113** has been used to purchase access easements to the cabin or home sites as a part of the sale transaction and allocated to the respective trust's permanent fund for easement compensation, pursuant to 77-2-318, MCA.

Sites Sold through the Cabin & Home Site Sales Program 2014-2025

CALENDAR YEAR	# SOLD	SALE PRICE
2014*	3	\$580,000
2015*	3	\$596,000
2016	14	\$2,499,500
2017	38	\$3,651,225
2018	26	\$4,328,325
2019	41	\$4,137,800
2020	41	\$7,307,500
2021	37	\$4,418,200
2022	28	\$5,367,500
2023	29	\$3,861,000
2024	7	\$537,000
2025	5	\$370,000
Total Sales Closed	272	\$37,654,050
Sales Granted Final Land Board Approval	5	Pending Closing
Sales Granted Preliminary Approval by the Land Board	7	Pending Processing

**The pilot program started in 2014- 2015 and was integrated into existing workloads. In 2016, operations for the program were funded and staffed with an additional FTE.*

***The total sites listed in the above table are shown by calendar year; data current as of June 30, 2025.*

DNRC's portion of processing costs for cabin/homesite sales as of June 2025 is approximately \$703,000. These costs include appraisal fees, land surveys, and marketing (for vacant sites) offered for sale. Buyers of cabin and home sites are responsible for additional processing costs, this includes nomination fees, legal advertising, appraisals attributable to improvements, cultural resource inventories, any required environmental reviews, and document filing fees.

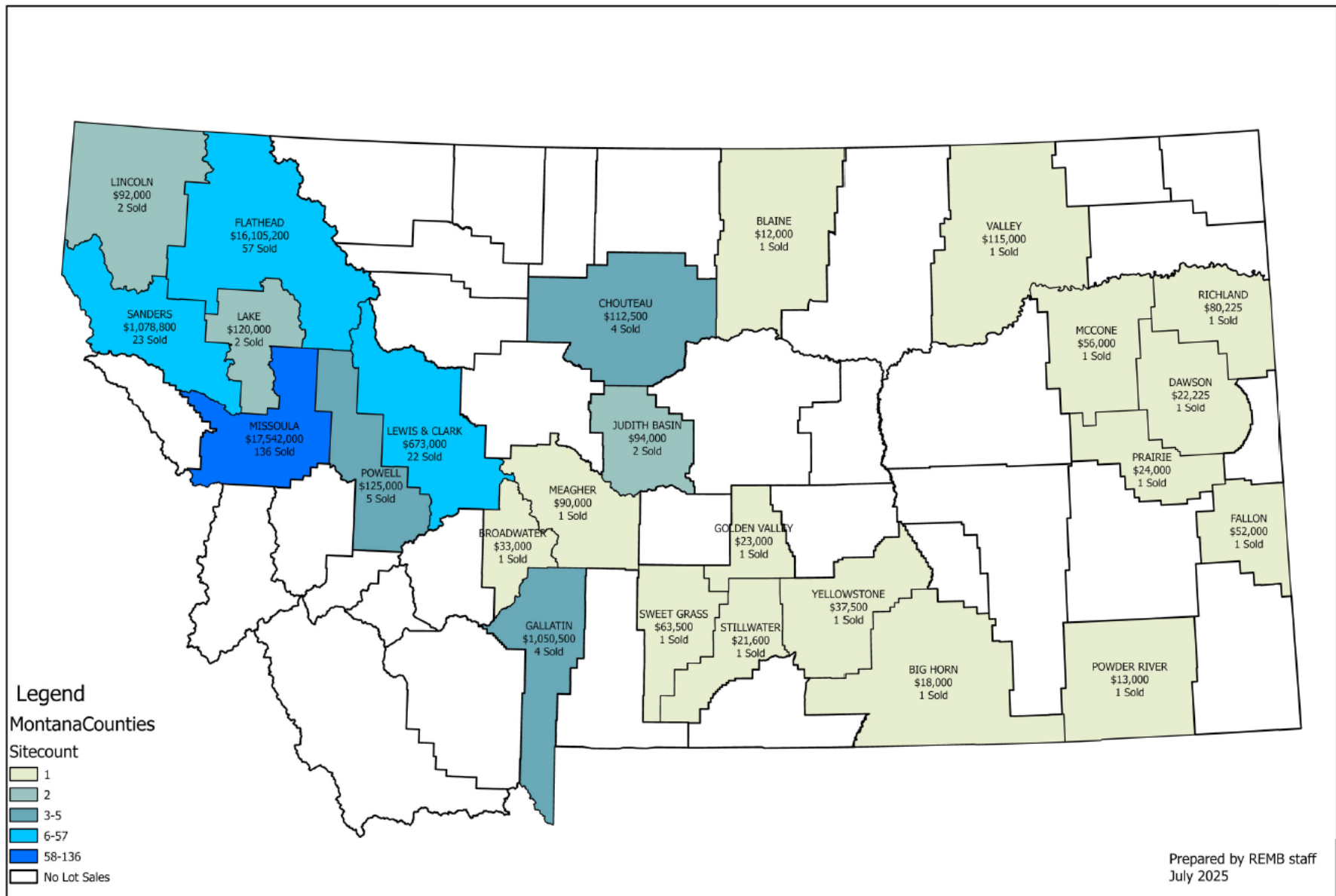
Solicitation for the 2024-2025 sale cycle began in October 2023. After selection of nominated sites to be included for sale in the 2024-2025 Cabin Site Sales Program, the Land Board granted preliminary approval for nine cabin site sales in May of 2024. Four nominated cabin site sales received preliminary

approval in December of 2024. As of June 30, 2025, 9 sales are still in process from the 2024-2025 sales cycle. Solicitation for the 2026-2027 sale cycle will occur in the fall of 2025.

Approximately 38% of lessees withdrew from the 2022-2023 sale cycle, most frequently after notified of the appraisal results. Approximately 8% of lessees have withdrawn from the 2024-2025 sale cycle, most frequently prior to submitting processing costs. Over the course of the program there have been 374 lessee-nominated cabin sites; of these nominated sales, 105 have withdrawn for a withdrawal rate of 28%.

Over the life of the program, hearings due to contested appraised value have been requested for 56 cabin and home sites. Of these, 11 hearings were cancelled by the lessee. Among the hearings that proceeded, 67% resulted in recommendations of no change by the Administrative Law Judge. Fewer than one in five hearings have resulted in recommended downward adjustments to land values, which have ranged from \$8,500 to \$127,000.

The average time frame to complete a sale from appraisal to closing is eleven months.



Montana Trust Lands Cabin & Home Site Sales by County, 2014 - June 2025



Cabin & Home Site Sales by Trust

