



MONTANA TRUST LANDS

Recreational Use Guide

This is a simple reference guide for general recreational use of trust land.

Comprehensive regulations are in Montana Code Annotated [77-1-801 - 77-1-815](#) and Administrative Rules [36.25.143-36.25.167](#).

Trust lands are different than other public land because they have a constitutional purpose to earn money for public schools and other institutions. Revenue is generated on trust land through leases, licenses, commercial timber, and mineral development. Most legally accessible trust lands are open to the public for recreational use.

REQUIRED LICENSE

A **Conservation License** is required to recreate on state land. The conservation license is a prerequisite for all hunting and fishing activities in Montana, so if you have a current license to hunt, fish, or trap in Montana, you already have the Conservation License.

License cost

- residents \$8
- non-residents \$10
- youth/senior \$4
- No license required for youth under 12.

Licenses are valid from March 1 – February 28 each year.

Purchase at <https://ols.fwp.mt.gov/>

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Motorized Vehicles:

- **Open:** public roads (federal, state, and dedicated county roads)
- **Closed:** All other roads unless signed otherwise by DNRC.
- **Parking:** within 50 feet of a public road. Do not block gates or roads.

E-Bikes are considered motorized vehicles on trust land. They are allowed on public roads only.

Snowmobiles are limited to public roads through leased land but are generally allowed off-road on unleased land. There may be environmental factors that limit snowmobile use in certain areas. Contact the local DNRC field office to confirm allowable use in specific areas.

Pets must be on a leash or otherwise under control.

Horseback Riding is generally allowed on trust land. Horses must be restrained and cannot be within any stream riparian zone for more than one hour. Feed must be certified weed seed free.

Camping is allowed within 200 feet of access point for tent or non-motorized camping, and within 50 feet of access point if motorized vehicle is required (RV or camper trailers). Stay is limited to 2 days on leased land, and up to 16 days per month on unleased land.

Campfires are not allowed on leased land.

Firearms:

- shooting is not allowed within ¼ mile of a dwelling or associated outbuilding.
- See access webpage for locations of other special restrictions.
- Targets and debris must be cleaned up.

Littering: Pack it in, pack it out.

Gates: Leave gates the way you find them – if it's closed, close it behind you.

Land use: Trust lands are always at work earning money to fund schools. Most are leased for agriculture or grazing, or under active timber management. Be mindful of lessee rights; respect fences, gates, and other privately-owned improvements.

OTHER USES

These uses require separate/additional authorization from DNRC. Contact the local DNRC field office to inquire or apply:

- Trapping
- Commercial or concentrated (group) uses
- Cutting or gathering wood, including Christmas Trees
- Collecting valuable rocks/minerals and mineral exploration
- Collection or disturbance of archaeological, historical, or paleontological sites.

ACCESS AND RESTRICTIONS

Legal access means access through:

- public road
- adjacent public land
- public waters under stream access law
- permission from adjacent private landowner.
- public access agreement between private landowner and Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

It is NOT legal to access trust land by:

- Aircraft
- Crossing private land without permission

Recreation is not allowed on trust land that:

- has active growing crops
- is for residential use (cabin/home sites)
- is leased for commercial use
- has active military training
- has extreme wildfire threat
- Is otherwise specifically closed or restricted.

Other site-specific restrictions may be in effect.

See our access webpage or contact the local DNRC field office for details.

Block Management Agreements

If enrolled, Block Management rules apply.

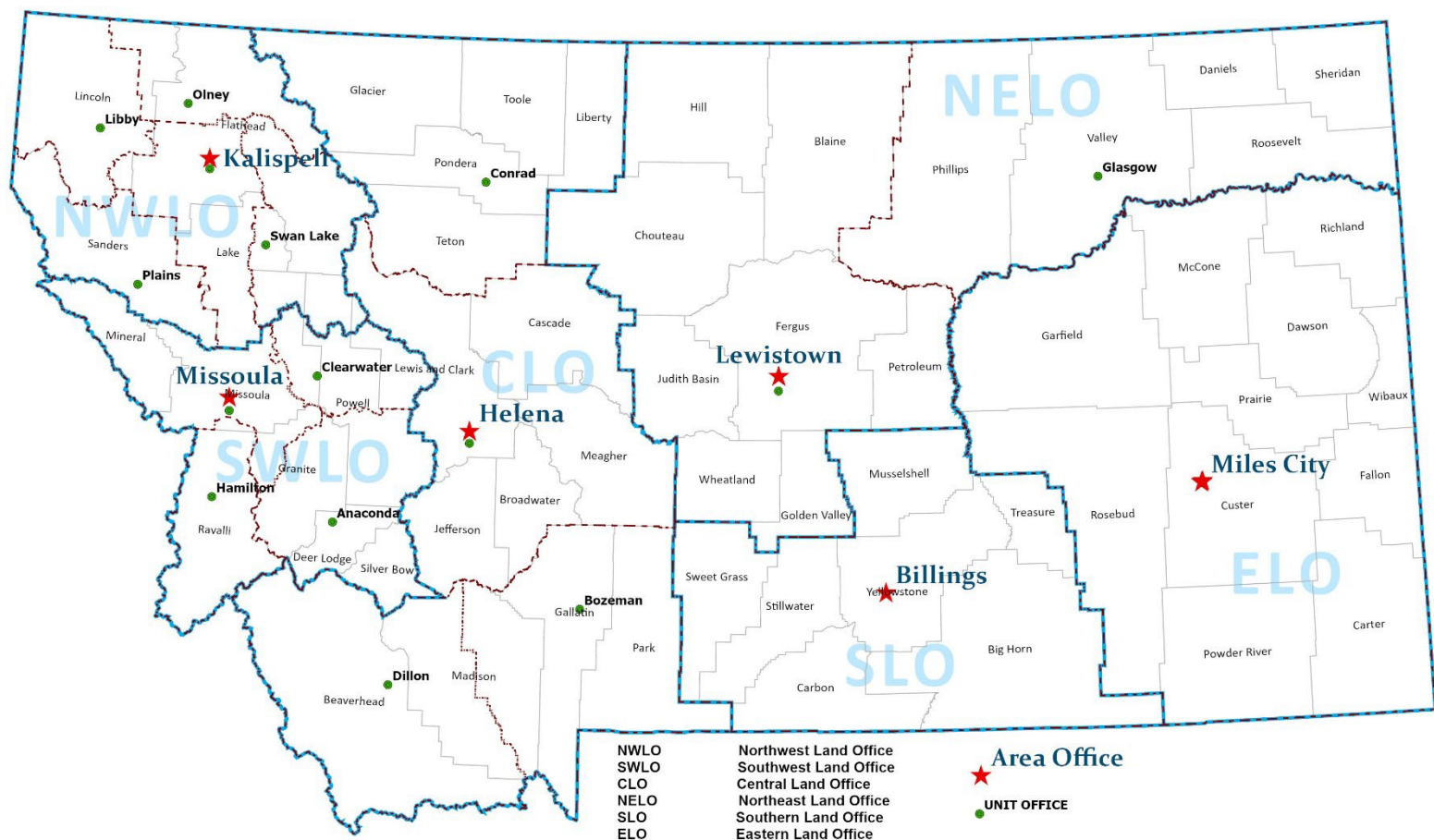
Notification Requirements

Agriculture or grazing lessees may require notification (not permission) prior to entry on legally accessible trust land. If notification is required, DNRC signs will be posted at common access points with notification details.

EXISTING LEASE RIGHTS

1. Most trust land east of the continental divide is leased. Forested land west of the divide is generally unleased. Contact the local DNRC field office to confirm if land is leased.
2. Lessees may have rights to use certain roads that are closed to the public.
3. Lessees may require notification (not permission) prior to entry on leased land.
4. Improvements on trust land, including fences and gates, are privately owned by lessees.

Trust Land Management Offices



NORTHWESTERN LAND OFFICE (NWLO)

655 Timberwolf Parkway,
Suite 1
Kalispell, MT 59901-1215
406-751-2240

Kalispell Unit Office

655 Timberwolf Parkway,
Suite 2
Kalispell, MT 59901-1215
406-751-2241

Libby Unit Office

177 State Lands Road
Libby, MT 59923
406-283-3525

Plains Unit Office

14 Airport Rd PO Box 219
Plains, MT 59859
406-826-3851

Stillwater Unit Office

Stillwater State Forest
P.O. Box 164
Olney, MT 59927
406-881-2371

Swan Unit Office

Swan River State Forest
34925 MT Hwy 83
Swan Lake, MT 59911
406-754-2301

SOUTHWESTERN LAND OFFICE (SWLO)

1401 27th Ave.
Missoula, MT 59804
406-542-4200

Anaconda Unit Office

1300 Maguire Road
Anaconda, MT 59711
406-563-6078

Clearwater Unit Office

48455 Sperry Grade Rd.
Greenough, MT
59823-9635
406-244-5857

Hamilton Unit Office

1801 N. First Street
P.O. Box 713
Hamilton, MT 59840
406-363-1585

Missoula Unit Office

3206 Maverick Lane
Missoula, MT 59804
406-542-4201

EASTERN LAND OFFICE (ELO)

85 Garryowen Road
Miles City, MT 59301
406-232-2034

CENTRAL LAND OFFICE (CLO)

8001 N. Montana Avenue
Helena, MT 59602
406-458-3500

Bozeman Unit Office

2273 Boot Hill Court,
Suite 110
Bozeman, MT 59715
406-586-5243

Conrad Unit Office

416 Main Street
P.O. Box 961,
Conrad, MT 59425
406-505-6001

Dillon Unit Office

840 North Montana Street
Dillon, MT 59725
406-683-6305

Helena Unit Office

8001 N. Montana Avenue
Helena, MT 59602
406-458-3500

SOUTHERN LAND OFFICE (SLO)

Airport Industrial Park
1371 Rimtop Drive
Billings, MT 59105
406-247-4400

NORTHEASTERN LAND OFFICE (NELO)

613 N. E. Main Street
P. O. Box 1021
Lewistown, MT
59457-1021
406-538-7789

Lewistown Unit Office

613 N. E. Main Street
P.O. Box 1021
Lewistown, MT
59457-1021
406-538-7789

Glasgow Unit Office

224 Sixth Street South
PO Box 1007
Glasgow, MT 59230-1007
406-228-2430

FORESTRY AND TRUST LANDS DIVISION

Recreational Use & Public Access

1539 Eleventh Avenue
PO Box 201601
Helena, MT 59620
406-444-5760