

2005 FWP PROPOSED LEGISLATION SUMMARY

- **REAUTHORIZE HUNTER ACCESS ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (SB 77 - Hansen).** Would make the Hunter Access Enhancement (Block Management Program) permanent. The program, which provides incentives to private landowners to offset potential impacts associated with public hunting access, sunsets in March 2006.
- **REAUTHORIZE THE HABITAT MONTANA PROGRAM (LC HB 79 - Golie).** Would reauthorize the Habitat Montana Program that protects critical wildlife habitat through conservation easements, fee title acquisitions and term leases. The Legislature passed enabling legislation in 1987; the program sunsets in 2006.
- **RESIDENT FEE INCREASE (HB 172 & 176 - Cohenour).** Unless revenue is increased in the 2005 legislative session, FWP will need to cut existing programs to balance its' budget. In addition, FWP believes it is important to seek a more equitable balance between resident and nonresident fees. The 2001 Legislature increased nonresident fees. FWP will continue to work with constituents specific to the issue prior to the 2005 session.
- **TRIENNIAL RECERTIFICATION OF BOAT REGISTRATION (SB 126 - Bruggeman).** Would institute a no charge re-certification for boat registration every 3 years. Montana's new one time registration for boats does not comply with federal numbering requirements that require certification at least every three years. If not corrected, FWP will lose approximately \$73,000 in federal funds per year. In addition, Montana boaters will not be in compliance and may be cited in other states or by the US Coast Guard for failing to meet the federal registration requirements.
- **ALLOW SEARCH AND RESCUE FUNDS TO BE SPENT OVER TWO YEARS (HB 173 - Heinert).** This legislation would allow funds derived from a \$.25 surcharge on each conservation license for search and rescue to be spent within a 2 year period. This will provide greater assurance counties can be reimbursed for costs of search and rescue.
- **EXTEND TERMINATION OF COUNTY RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY GRANTS (HB 119 - Golie).** Would make permanent the grant program to assist with recreational boating safety, enforcement and education. Current statute that provides for county grants for recreational boating safety sunsets in June 2006. Program has been successful in increasing boating enforcement in Carbon, Cascade and Lake counties.
- **NONRESIDENT TURKEY TAG SALES (HB 34 - McNutt).** Would allow nonresidents who have an upland bird license to purchase a turkey tag for \$55 vs. the standard \$115. FWP has found that \$115 for a turkey tag is exceeding the willingness to pay by nonresident hunters who have already purchased an upland bird license.
- **NONRESIDENT YOUTH DISCOUNT LICENSE (HB 214 - Sales).** Would create 500 nonresident youth combination licenses, in addition to the 11,500 nonresident combination licenses now available, at half the price of the regular nonresident combination license. The license would be available to youth

- accompanied by an adult resident or nonresident relative who is also hunting or fishing.
- **STRENGTHEN BOATING UNDER INFLUENCE LAW AND MINORS IN POSSESSION IN STATE PARKS (HB 120 - Facey).** Would strengthen the boating under influence law by clarifying the standard for alcohol concentration and testing and would expand the authority of FWP wardens and park rangers to address possession of alcohol by a minor in state parks and fishing access sites. Currently boating under the influence laws do not reference statutes which give alcohol concentration standards, provide for what evidence is admissible and what test should be administered.
 - **PRIVATE POND LICENSE TERM (HB 174 - Witt).** Would establish a limit of years that private pond licenses are valid, probably a 10-year limit. Currently these licenses are issued without any time limit, making administration difficult. If a term is set, the new law would include provisions for renewals, either at no cost or an amount only necessary to cover part of the administrative costs of renewals. FWP is also considering other options to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of administering private pond licenses.
 - **ALLOW THE COMMISSION TO REMOVE SPECIES FROM THE STATE ESA LIST (HB 50 - Roberts).** Would allow the FWP Commission to remove a species from the states list of endangered species through a rule amendment. Currently when species are removed from the federal ESA list, they remain on the state's list until the Legislature removes those species. As an alternative, the bill would request legislative approval to remove the peregrine falcon, now federally de-listed from Montana's list of endangered species.
 - **REMOVE FISHING ACCESS ENHANCEMENT SUNSET (HB 56 - Warden).** Would extend the fishing access enhancement program scheduled to sunset in March of 2006. Program was created as a landowner assistance program to promote public fishing access and allows landowners who provide public access to be compensated for impacts.
 - **TRANSFER OPERATIONS OF CAPITOL GROUNDS TO DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION (HB 109 - Jent).** Would transfer the responsibility for maintenance of the state building capitol complex completely to D of A. D of A and FWP currently share this responsibility.
 - **CLEAN UP LEGISLATION FOR FWP LAND ACQUISITION (HB 208 - Kaufmann).** Would: 1) eliminate the need for Commission approval of right-of-ways for utilities, highways, county roads, and 2) allow small land sales to fix encroachment and boundary problems without going to bid. The intent is to minimize Commission time on typically noncontroversial land matters, and provide a method to fix boundary disputes.