

Montana Sportsmen Alliance

SB 178 AN ACT ALLOWING THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS TO RETAIN A PERCENTAGE OF THE CLASS B-10 LICENSE FEE IF AN APPLICANT CHOOSES TO PURCHASE ONLY A PORTION OF THE LICENSE; AMENDING SECTION 87-2-511, MCA;

POSITION: To be clear, MSA would prefer a complete repeal of last sessions **HB 607** which allows Non Resident hunters to game the system to acquire a deer tag. It also **cost FWP significant revenue and has re-directed earmarked funds away** from Public Access Programs like **Block Management** which have overwhelming support from participating landowners and hunters. We expect all licenses and earmarks to be on the table for the upcoming discussion on license increases. Please see attachments.

Montana Sportsmen's Alliance **Supports** this bill because:

It reduces the considerable financial impact of allowing Non-Residents to return part of their B-10 combination license for a refund, **a benefit Montana resident hunters neither receive nor expect.**

Once again we would like to state our **Support** for SB 178.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Montana Sportsmen Alliance Leadership Group

Vito Quatraro-Bozeman	580-1130
Joe Perry-Brady	627-2369
John Borgreen-Great Falls	453-4273
Sam Milodragovich-Butte	490-2224
Robert Wood-Hamilton	531-5043
JW Westman-Laurel	633-2415

REVENUE FOLLOWING THE PASSAGE OF I-161

In November 2010, the passage of I-161 ended the sale of about 7,800 guaranteed nonresident hunting licenses, known as "Outfitter Sponsored Licenses." The initiative also raised the cost of nonresident combination licenses and resulted in all nonresident applicants competing equally in the drawings for the limited number of deer and elk hunting licenses. Additionally, I-161 changed how FWP must distribute nonresident deer and elk hunting licenses revenue.

License Sales Distribution	5 Yr Avg Prior to I-161	I-161 Revenue	I-161 Net Loss/Gain
General License	\$9,090,000	\$9,230,000	\$140,000
Upland Game Bird	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$0
Habitat Montana	\$3,610,000	\$5,080,000	\$1,470,000
Hunting Access	\$4,930,000	\$5,380,000	\$450,000
Search and Rescue	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0
TOTAL	\$18,040,000	\$20,100,000	\$2,060,000

THE UPSHOT: The first column shows the five-year average revenue FWP received prior to the passage of I-161. The second column shows revenue following I-161's passage. Upon examining the potential financial affect of the voter initiative's passage, FWP correctly forecast a net revenue gain of \$2 million.

REVENUE FOLLOWING ENACTMENT OF HOUSE BILL 607

The 2011 Montana Legislature passed into law HB607, which further affected nonresident Big Game Combo and Deer Combo license revenue. The law allows a successful Big Game (deer & elk) Combo applicant, **who does not obtain an elk permit via the special drawing, to turn in the elk license** and retain the deer, fishing, and upland game bird licenses and **receive a \$358 refund**. HB607 also **changed the distribution of the revenue** when the Big Game Combo applicant chooses to invoke this option.

In 2011, FWP received 805 requests to return the elk license and keep the deer license included in the Big Game Combo license. Although available for resale, none of the returned 805 elk licenses were purchased by other nonresidents. That amounted to a potential revenue loss of about \$600,000, due to unsold licenses.

License Sales Distribution	HB607 Returns	HB607 Deer Reissues	HB607 Net Loss/Gain	HB607 Elk Reissues (Unsold)
General License	(\$390,000)	\$450,000	\$60,000	(\$600,000)
Upland Game Bird	(\$20,000)	\$0	(\$20,000)	
Habitat Montana	(\$130,000)	\$0	(\$130,000)	
Hunting Access	(\$190,000)	\$0	(\$190,000)	
Search and Rescue	\$0	\$0	\$0	
TOTAL	(\$730,000)	\$450,000	(\$280,000)	(\$600,000)

THE UPSHOT: The first two columns show how HB607 shaped revenue redistribution to the specific programs. First, the full price of the Big Game Combo license is pulled out of its traditional distribution programs and earmarked accounts. Then, the amount from the deer combination license is distributed to just the General License account. The third column shows the net gain or loss to the programs and earmarked accounts. The final column shows the unrealized revenue of \$600,000 that would have gone into the General License Account, had the more than 800 returned elk only licenses been resold.



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 East Sixth Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-0701
Tel: (406) 444-4786
Fax: (406) 444-9733
fwp.mt.gov

CONTACT:

Sue Daly | 444-3107 | sdaly@mt.gov
Joe Maurier | 444-3186 | jmaurier@mt.gov

Summary of Research



Block Management Landowner & Hunter Evaluations from the 2009 Montana Hunting Season

HD Unit Research Summary No. 31

Michael S. Lewis and Alan Charles

June 2010

Administered by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), Montana's Block Management Program was established in 1985 with three main goals:

1. To maintain public hunting access to private and isolated public land.
2. To help landowners manage public hunting on lands under their control, and provide benefits to offset the impacts of those public hunting activities.
3. To help FWP accomplish its mission of managing wildlife resources. In a state where nearly 65 percent of the land is privately owned, FWP depends on public hunting to manage populations of deer, elk, and other game animals.

A total of 1,274 landowners were enrolled in the program in 2009, comprising more than nine million acres of Block Management Areas (BMA) across the state. Approximately 85,000 people hunted a BMA in 2009 (which resulted in more than 460,000 hunter days on all BMAs combined).

To measure the success of the program, FWP periodically conducts landowner and hunter evaluations. Two separate surveys were conducted following the 2009 Montana hunting season:

- **Landowner Evaluation.** All landowners enrolled in the program in 2009 were sent a survey by mail.
- **Hunter Evaluation.** A randomly selected sample of 761 people who hunted on a BMA(s) in 2009 were sent a survey by mail.

These two surveys were nearly identical replications of similar surveys conducted following the 2003 and 1996 Montana hunting seasons (Charles & Lewis, 2004; Charles, 1997). Hence, for the most part, results obtained from the 2009 surveys are directly comparable to 2003 and 1996 survey results.



Overall, there was an excellent response to both 2009 surveys. A 66 percent response rate was achieved from the landowner survey. A 60 percent response was achieved from the hunter survey. These response rates are considered to be very high for mailback surveys of this type.

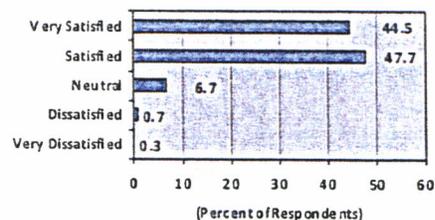
This research summary highlights the key findings from both the 2009 landowner and hunter evaluation surveys. Wherever possible, survey results obtained in 2009 are compared to those results obtained in 2003 and 1996.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2009 LANDOWNER EVALUATION

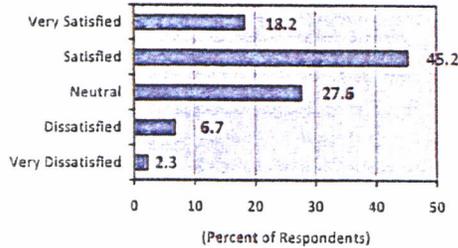
When asked how satisfied they were with the overall Block Management Program, 92 percent of the landowners who responded to the survey indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied (see Figure 1 below). This compares to 93 percent in 2003, and 80 percent in 1996.

Figure 1. Response to: "How satisfied are you with the overall Block Management Program?" (2009 Landowner Evaluation)



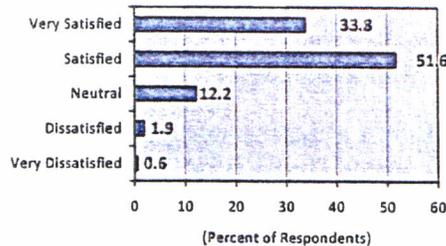
Most of the landowners (73 percent) reported the Block Management Program is an important or very important way for them to manage game numbers on their BMA(s). Related to this, 63 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the results of the program in terms of managing game numbers on their BMA(s) in 2009 (see Figure 2 on the next page). This compares to 63 percent in 2003, and 60 percent in 1996.

Figure 2. Response to: "How satisfied were you with the results of the Block Management Program in managing game numbers on your BMA(s)?" (2009 Landowner Evaluation)



Almost all of the landowners (92 percent) indicated that the Block Management Program is an important or very important way for them to manage hunter activities. Related to this, 85 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the results of the program in terms of managing hunter activities on their BMA(s) in 2009 (see Figure 3 below), and 79 percent were satisfied with the number of hunters who hunted on their BMA(s). Furthermore, 89 percent rated hunter behavior on their BMA(s) as being good or very good in 2009. In 2003 and 1996, 90 percent and 77 percent of the respondents respectively were satisfied or very satisfied with the program in terms of managing hunter activities.

Figure 3. Response to: "How satisfied were you with the results of the Block Management Program in terms of managing hunter activities?" (2009 Landowner Evaluation)



Of note, 80 percent of the landowners who completed and returned a survey for the 2009 season reported that they believe hunter behavior has improved or greatly improved as a result of the Block Management Program. This compares to 81 percent in 2003, and 76 percent in 1996.

Also, 65 percent of the landowners reported that their relationship with hunters has improved or greatly improved as a result of participating in the program. This compares to 64 percent in 2003, and 61 percent in 1996. Less than two percent of the landowners in 2009 reported that their relationship with hunters has deteriorated or greatly deteriorated as a result of the Block Management Program.

In terms of the compensation they received for enrolling in the program, 79 percent of the landowners responding to the

survey reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the total compensation they received for the 2009 hunting season. Less than nine percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. In 2003 and 1996, 79 percent and 75 percent of the respondents respectively were satisfied or very satisfied with their total compensation.

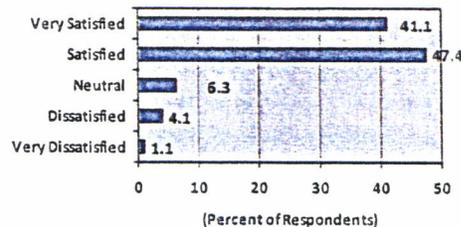
Of the landowners enrolled in 2009 who expressed an opinion, 99 percent said they plan on continuing their participation in the Block Management Program for the 2010 hunting season.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2009 HUNTER EVALUATION

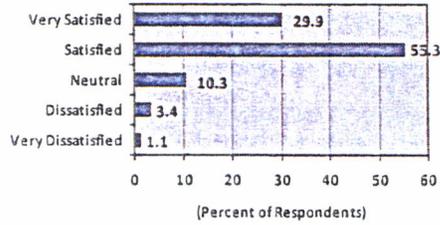
When asked how satisfied they were with the Block Management Program this past fall (2009), 89 percent of the hunters who responded to the survey reported they were satisfied or very satisfied (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4. Response to: "Overall, how satisfied were you with the Block Management Program this past fall?" (2009 Hunter Evaluation)

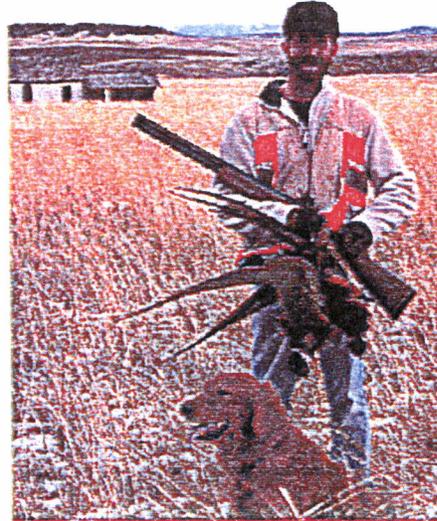


Furthermore, 85 percent of the hunters reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the hunting opportunities provided by the Block Management Program in 2009 (see Figure 5 on the following page). This compared to 86 percent in 2003, and 76 percent in 1996.

Figure 5. Response to: "Overall, how satisfied were you with the hunting opportunities provided by the Block Management Program in 2009?" (2009 Hunter Evaluation)



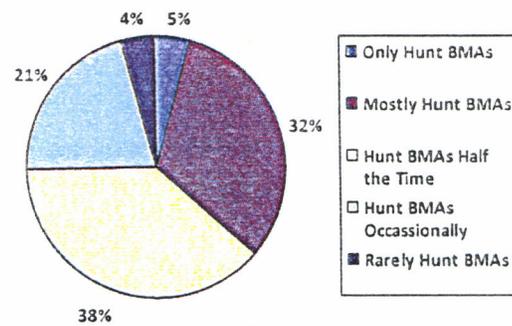
Of the hunters who responded to the survey in 2009, 83 percent reported they believe that the Block Management Program has improved or greatly improved landowner-hunter relations. Less than three percent believe that landowner-hunter relationships have been harmed or greatly harmed by the program. In 2003 and 1996, 84 percent and 70 percent of hunters respectively reported they believe the program has improved or greatly improved the relationship between hunters and landowners.



Related to hunting opportunities...

- Fifty (50) percent of the hunters who responded to the survey found game animals on BMAs hunted present in numbers meeting or exceeding their expectations in 2009.
- Sixty (60) percent were successful in harvesting game on a BMA(s) in 2009.
- Eighty-eight (88) percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the rules on BMAs hunted in 2009.
- Sixty-four (64) percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the number of other hunters encountered on BMAs hunted in 2009.

Time spent hunting BMAs...



Hunter profile information (2009 season)...

- The average hunter spent nearly 10 days hunting BMAs.
- The average hunter hunted on four to five different BMAs.

Game Hunted on BMAs...

