DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION

BRIAN SCHWEITZER, GOVERNOR

STATE OF MONTANA

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SOUTHWESTERN LAND OFFICE
1401 27th Avenue
Missoula, Montana 59804-3199

March 11, 2008

Dear Interested Party:

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is beginning an Environmental Assessment (EA) on a parcel of Trust land located eight miles southeast of Drummond, MT within Powell County. This parcel has been nominated for sale by the Department through the Land Banking program (MCA 77-2-361 through 77-2-367 passed by the 2003 State Legislature). The general intent of the Land Banking program is for the state to dispose of scattered parcels of land that do not have legal access, generate substantially less income for the trust than their relative value or are difficult for DNRC to manage. Proceeds from land sales are then used to acquire new land that provides a greater rate of return to the Trust, as well as meeting other statutory and administrative rule guidelines. The land banking statutes allow DNRC to sell up to 100,000 acres of Trust land prior to an evaluation of the merits of the program by the Legislature in 2009. The program also requires that DNRC acquire new property before it sells more than 20,000 acres.

The parcel of land is located approximately eight miles southeast of Drummond, MT is described as the S1/2N1/2 and the S1/2 of Section 28, Township 10 North – Range 11 West, containing 480 acres. This parcel is primarily grassland and does not have legal public access.

We are currently conducting an analysis under the Montana Environmental Policy Act of the impacts that may occur as a result of the proposed land sale. This analysis is to be completed prior to presenting the proposal to the Board of Land Commissioners (Board) for preliminary approval. If approval is received from the Board, the Department will then conduct an appraisal to determine an estimated value and recommended minimum bid price for sale. The proposal will then be brought back before the Board to establish the minimum acceptable bid for the parcel and approval to proceed with the sale process.
DNRC is contacting you as a part of the public scoping process for the Environmental Assessment, and would appreciate any comments you may have regarding the proposed sale of this parcel. Comments **will be accepted until 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 10, 2008** and should be sent to:

Liz Mullins, Land Use Planner
DNRC Southwestern Land Office
1401 27th Avenue
Missoula, MT 59804
lmullins@mt.gov

Additional information on the land banking program can also be found at http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/trust/land_banking/default.asp#about. Please feel free to contact me at (406) 542-4345 or lmullins@mt.gov with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Liz Mullins, DNRC
Land Use Planner

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