

# CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



*Photo looking east across the Bitterroot Valley between Lolo & Florence, Mt at the project area*

<b>Project Name:</b>	Baldy Mountain Land Banking Sale
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	Spring 2012
<b>Proponent:</b>	Montana DNRC
<b>Location:</b>	All Section 16, T11N,R19W and E2NW4,NE4SW4 Section 22 T11N,R19W
<b>County:</b>	Missoula County

## I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Offer for sale at public auction, 640 acres of state land currently held in trust for the benefit of the Common School Trust and 120 acres held in trust for the benefit of the Public Building Trust (see Attachment A – maps). Revenue generated from the sale of these parcels would be deposited in a special account used to purchase replacement lands meeting acquisition criteria related to legal access, productivity, potential income generation and potential for multiple use. The new parcel/parcels would then be held in trust for the Common School and Public Building Trusts. This proposed sale is being initiated through the Land Banking Program (Montana Code Annotated 77-2-361 through 77-2-367) approved by

the Legislature in 2003. The purpose of this program is to allow the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to dispose of parcels that are primarily isolated and produce low income and allow the Department to purchase land with legal public access that can support multiple uses and will provide a rate of return equal to or greater than the parcels that were sold.

## II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

### 1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

*Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.*

A letter was sent on March 28, 2011 requesting comments be submitted by April 29, 2011 to interested parties including adjacent landowners, the Missoula County Commissioners, Land Board members, legislators, government agencies, special interest groups and others. A complete list of the individuals contacted is included as Attachment B of this EA. In addition, a public notice was published in the Missoulian and the Ravalli Republic newspapers.

### 2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

None

### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**Proposed Alternative A:** Offer two parcels for sale: all of Section 16, Township 11 North – Range 19 West, containing 640 acres and 120 acres in the E2NW4, NE4SW4 of Section 22, Township 11 North – Range 19 West. These lands would each be advertised for sale at public auction and would be subject to statutes addressing the sale of State Land found in M.C.A. 77-2-301 et seq. Proceeds from the sale would be deposited in the Land Bank Fund to be used in conjunction with proceeds from other sales for the purchase of other State Land, easements, or improvements for the beneficiaries of the respective trusts. In this case proceeds from the sale of Section 16 (640 acres) would be credited to the Common School Trust and proceeds from the sale of section 22 (120 acres) would be credited to the Public Building Trust. The State would retain the subsurface mineral rights per M.C.A. 77-2-304.

**No Action Alternative:** Defer inclusion of these tracts in the Land Banking Program. Maintain state ownership of these parcels and continue to manage the property for revenue to trust beneficiaries.

## III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

### 4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

*Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.*

Sec 16, T11N, R19W is a mixture of grasslands and forest sites. This parcel is located on footslopes and mountain sideslopes of the Sapphire Mountains. No sites with unique geology or unstable slopes were identified on the parcel. Shallow bedrock is common on steeper slopes with bedrock outcrops on ridges. Predominant soils on the open grassland sites are Bigarm gravelly loams, on 15 to 60 percent slopes. These are very dryland sites, and moderate to shallow soils on the steeper slopes. Erosion potential is moderate and increases to moderately high on steeper slopes over 45%. Historic management has been grazing of range sites. Soils in the parcel are well drained and droughty.

Predominant soils on the forested sites of both subject parcels are Winkler Gravelly loams, on 30 to 60 percent slopes. These are shallow to moderately deep soils on the steeper slopes supporting Ponderosa Pine and Douglas-fir forest types. Soils tend to be deeper and more productive on northerly aspects. Erosion potential is moderate and increases to

moderately high on the slopes over 45%. No soil disturbance activities are planned as part of this action. Historic land uses have been forestry and woodland grazing.

The NE4SW4 of Section 22, T11N, R19W contains 120 acres of State land and is primarily forested. This parcel is located on footslopes and mountain sideslopes of the Sapphire Mountains. No sites with unique geology or unstable slopes were identified on the parcel proposed for land banking. Shallow bedrock is common on steeper slopes with bedrock outcrops on ridges. Soils are moderately impacted from historic forest management and roads. No MT DEQ remediation sites or mines were noted in a database search for these parcels. There are no homes or developments on the properties.

There would be low risk of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to geology and soil quality or stability as a result of implementing the proposed action or no-action alternatives on these parcels.

The following table and map identifies soil types for the Proposed Baldy Area Land Banking Parcels.

Map Symbol	Soil Map Units	Vegetation	Percent of Total Area
18	Bigarm gravelly loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes	Range	3.3
19	Bigarm gravelly loam, 30 to 60 percent slopes	Range	28.7
20	Bigarm-Rock outcrop complex, 30 to 60 percent slopes	Range	10.2
131	Winkler very gravelly sandy loam, 30 to 60 percent slopes	Dry Forest	31.1
133	Winkler gravelly loam, cool, 30 to 60 percent slopes	Forest	13.4



**5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:**

*Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.*

The two parcels are located about 5 miles southeast of Lolo, Montana, within the Bitterroot River watershed. Sec 16, T11N, R19W has an intermittent stream in the south half of the section that is dry except for occasional surface flows during spring runoff. The section drains towards the west but surface flows are not connected to the Bitterroot River. No water rights uses were noted in this section. These are low to moderate precipitation sites, with the western footslopes of the section receiving approximately 14-18" of annual precipitation and the upper slopes in the east half of the section receiving approximately 18-24" of annual precipitation.

The parcel in Section 22, T11N, R19W is a dry forest type. Precipitation is moderate 18-24" annual average. Surface runoff is rare and mainly in the spring. This parcel is drained by an unnamed tributary of North Woodchuck Creek. There is a developed spring in the north half of this parcel that has a short segment of intermittent flow, otherwise the property does not have surface water or streams. The spring has a water right 76H 23494 00 for 1 GPM registered to the State of Montana for livestock use.

Any new proposed water uses would require an application for a beneficial water use through the permitting process administered by the DNRC Water Rights Bureau. No water quality listed impaired uses are noted for the area. There is low risk of direct, indirect or cumulative effects to water quality or beneficial uses anticipated with implementation of either the action and no-action alternative.

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## 6. AIR QUALITY:

*What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.*

These parcels are located approximately five miles southeast of Lolo, Montana at the southern end of Missoula County. The parcels are located within Airshed 3A along the southeastern boundary of the Missoula Airshed Impact Zone. Management of air quality within this Impact Zone is important as it encompasses a major population center of the state. Sale of the parcels is not expected to cause any direct or cumulative effects to air quality.

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## 7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

*What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.*

Both State parcels are predominately forested with Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine trees. The state land classification is Class 2 - Classified Forest - "lands which are principally valuable for the timber that is on them or for the growing of timber or for watershed protection" 77-1-401 (2) MCA. Records indicate commercial timber harvest has occurred in the past (1937,1956,1959,1997). DNRC stand level inventory estimates a gross commercial timber volume in Section 16 of 2.882 million board feet. A timber cruise completed in 2007 on Section 22 estimated a gross commercial sawlog volume of 769 thousand board feet.

Noxious weeds, principally Spotted knapweed and to a lesser extent Leafy Spurge occur in the area across all ownerships, including the DNRC parcel. There would be minimal if any change in noxious weeds with the proposed action.

A records search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program database for this Township (T15N-R22W) did not reveal the presence of any plant species of special concern.

No direct or cumulative effects are expected to occur to vegetation as a result of the proposed sale of the parcels.

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## 8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

*Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.*

### ***Aquatic Resources***

There are no surface waters within the parcels that have continuous flow or support fish or aquatic species. There would be no direct, in-direct or cumulative effects to aquatic life or fish with implementation of the action or no-action alternatives.

### ***Terrestrial Resources***

For this analysis direct and indirect effects were considered for the two parcels that comprise the 760 acre project area. Cumulative effects were considered for the 8 full sections surrounding section 16 T11N, R19W making up an area totaling 5,760 acres. To assess the existing condition of the project area and surrounding landscape and related impacts associated with the proposed action alternative, a variety of techniques were used. Local knowledge of the area, scientific literature, DNRC State Land Inventory data, review of aerial photographs, review of Montana Natural Heritage Program data, and consultations with other professionals provided information for the following discussion and effects analysis. The following section discloses the anticipated direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to wildlife resources from the proposed action in the project area and cumulative-effects analysis area. Past and ongoing activities on all ownerships, as well as planned future agency actions, have been taken into account in each cumulative-effects analysis for each resource topic.

The two parcels included in this action contain a mixture of grasslands and forested sites that are located along the foothills of the Sapphire Mountains and are situated within 2 miles of the Bitterroot River and Highway 93 to the west. Forest types are dominated by Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine and comprise approximately 445 acres (59%) of the 760-acre project area. Past activities in the cumulative effects analysis area have included livestock grazing and timber management. Project area parcels are surrounded by private lands, many of which have been legally subdivided, and no legal public access is present on the DNRC parcels. Very few home sites currently exist on the neighboring subdivided lands under private ownership.

## ISSUES RAISED THROUGH PUBLIC SCOPING

### Wildlife Linkage Zone

Public comment has raised the issue regarding the importance of the Baldy Mountain area as a part of a linkage zone previously identified as the Davis Creek/Lantern Ridge Wildlife Movement Zone (DFWP Comment letter, April 22, 2011). The linkage area provides for north-south movement from the Eightmile drainage and North to Lolo and west from Miller Creek to across State Highway 93 West to the Bitterroot Mountains.

### Big Game

There is concern that the proposed action would reduce: (1) big game security, (2) habitat availability, and (3) the ability of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the general public to access and manage a elk population. Additionally, the affected parcel is mapped by DFWP as important winter range for elk, mule deer and white-tailed deer. Section 16 has also been identified as providing winter range for moose.

### General Assessment and Synthesis of Effects (Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects):

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the project area would remain in DNRC ownership and the foreseeable predominant land use would be livestock grazing and forest management. Timber management could occur over the longer term as forest stands would continue to mature and provide economic value over the next several decades. Recreational use would remain limited, because the lack of legal access to the parcel would prohibit access for the general public. Habitat-altering land uses could occur under normal DNRC management, however, the parcel would be retained in DNRC ownership at this time. Long-term habitat values on the parcel for species sensitive to human disturbance would be uncertain as surrounding land uses and levels of human activity would greatly influence habitat quality and security over time. How lands will ultimately be managed on surrounding parcels over the next several decades is uncertain, however, it is likely that at least to some degree, property development will continue along the Highway 93 corridor along the Bitterroot River for some time. Existing levels of human disturbance and impact would likely continue and gradually increase over time in the cumulative effects area given the current level of subdivision and desirable location of the lands.

Action Alternative: Under the Action Alternative DNRC would relinquish ownership of the project area under the state Land Banking process. It is reasonable to expect that a private party would purchase the property. Beyond this expectation, one must speculate on further outcomes regarding future land uses that would occur outside of DNRC control following purchase by a buyer. Transferring ownership of the parcel to another party will not have any direct or immediate indirect impact on any habitat or wildlife species, however, the action does open a door for greater future risk of future development and erosion of wildlife habitat values that could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process. Ultimately the quality of habitat for large wide-ranging species, such as elk, grizzly bears (should they periodically occur in the area) and wolves would depend upon the human uses and levels of activity on surrounding ownerships. Speculating on a vast number of possible outcomes on such projects is not a requirement under MEPA and is discouraged, however, the action proposed by DNRC does create an element of increased uncertainty regarding how affected lands would be managed in the future.

Should the parcels be developed and/or intensively logged at some point in the future, the land disposal would ultimately enable a minor adverse cumulative effect contributing to temporary and/or more permanent habitat loss for a number of wildlife species in the future, most of which are currently relatively common in Montana. Cumulative habitat losses due to the development of human dwellings occur incrementally and the impact attributable to each individual development is often viewed as small, however, over time the accumulation of such developments can have profound effects on wildlife habitat and populations of native species. The quality of habitat for large, wide-ranging species would depend upon the human uses and levels of activity on surrounding private ownerships over time. Under any circumstance considered, these 760-acre parcels alone are likely not going to be able to serve as a highly functional management area that would provide enough space for wide-ranging species of wildlife to thrive in the area.

Given that the subject lands occur on the tops of foothills, northerly aspects, and on relatively steep terrain, development potential is relatively low relative to other lands on lower gentle sites. Should increased development occur on or near the parcels, some species would likely continue to use the area. For example, some deer would likely habituate and continue to show tolerance for human activity. Should additional development continue in the area, the quality of habitat and habitat values currently found on the parcel would likely erode with lasting effects during all seasons. Security for wildlife and disturbance-free space would be reduced and quality of the habitat in the general area for linkage across Highway 93 could be degraded. However, without protection of lands on existing subdivided sites between the subject parcels and the Bitterroot River, the quality of linkage habitat could be substantially compromised, regardless of development that could occur on lands considered in this proposal. Such degradation

would be cumulative to existing impacts associated with existing high levels of traffic on Highway 93 and continuing residential development on nearby lands along the Bitterroot River. Development on the project area could also result in forest clearing for home sites, which could have minor localized effects on animal usage and movements through the parcel by reducing cover for security and by removing portions of preferred forested travel routes and security. Measurable effects at the population level for most species likely to be present would not be expected. At some increased level of development, however, species such as elk will likely retreat to areas with less disturbance that may have poorer forage. The proposed action would have little effect on the ability of DFWP to manage the local elk population as DNRC has no legal access to these parcels.

Under the action alternative considering any of the further future outcomes discussed, there would be relatively low levels of cumulative effects to local wildlife populations, however the extent to which land development occurs across multiple ownerships over several decades could have adverse effects. That is, the process of developing land over time occurs incrementally, however, many small additive land development projects occurring decade after decade can result in sizable acreages of converted habitat, resulting in adverse impacts to wildlife. Such effects would be additive to other cumulative effects that may be associated with historic land uses on nearby properties (eg. livestock grazing, logging, and existing human developments etc.), and risk factors for wildlife associated with traffic on Highway 93 (eg., animal-vehicle collisions and disturbance etc.).

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#### **9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:**

*Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.*

No sensitive fish species, sensitive wetlands or sensitive plants are known to occur on the DNRC parcel. No wetlands occur on this ownership. There would be no direct, in-direct or cumulative effects to aquatic life or fish with implementation of the action or no-action alternatives.

See Attachment B for full review of terrestrial species.

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#### **10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

*Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.*

It is currently unknown if cultural or paleontologic resources are present in the parcels nominated for sale through the Land Banking Program. However, a Class III inventory for Antiquities will be conducted prior to disposition of any of these tracts.

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#### **11. AESTHETICS:**

*Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.*

The property is located within the view shed of Hwy 93 from Florence Mt to Lolo. No direct or cumulative impact to aesthetics is anticipated as a result of the proposed actions (sale of the property).

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#### **12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:**

*Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.*

This 760 acre parcel of school trust land represents a fraction of the 5.2 million acres of trust land statewide. State law and administrative rules limit the sale of trust land to a maximum of 20,000 acres prior to purchasing replacement lands. The potential sale of this parcel would affect an extremely small percentage of the school trust lands if replacement land was not purchased before the statute expires and even less impact if replacement land is purchased as anticipated.

The potential transfer of ownership would not have any impact or demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.

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**13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:**

*List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.*

There are no current DNRC studies, plans, or projects on the two parcels proposed for sale.

A potential big game movement corridor called the Davis Creek/Lantern Ridge Wildlife Movement Zone has been identified in the project vicinity. Potential impacts to this corridor are analyzed in Section 8 of this EA.

Approximately 1,440 acres of land adjacent to the trust parcels was recently purchased by the MPG Ranch (in Sections 9.10 & 15, T11N-R19W). These lands are encumbered by a conservation easement. A discussion of how the proposed sale relates to locally adopted environmental plans and goals is included in Section 19 of this EA.

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<b>IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i></li><li>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i></li><li>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i></li></ul>

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**14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

No impacts to human health and safety would occur as a result of this proposal.

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**15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:**

*Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.*

The DNRC property has been managed for the long term production of forest products. The first timber harvest activity on section 16 occurred in 1956 when 839 MBF of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir sawlogs were harvested at a value of \$19,838. In 1958-59 an additional 366 MBF was harvested and generated an additional \$1,706 to the Common School Trust. The most recent DNRC timber harvest on section 16 occurred in 1997 when 71 MBF of sawlogs were removed at a value of \$9,659. DNRC does not have permanent access to the parcel and has operated under temporary access arrangements. The current timber stand has sufficient volume to allow for a commercial timber harvest.

Adjacent land uses include rural residential, forest production and grazing, Section 16 is surrounded by one owner the MPG Ranch. The east and south lines of DNRC property in section 22 are adjacent to several small private ownerships while the remainder of the parcel (north and west sides) is bordered by the MPG ranch.

Sale of the property would not likely change the industrial, commercial and agricultural uses of the property.

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**16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:**

*Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.*

The proposal would have no effect on quality and distribution of employment.

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**17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:**

*Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.*

Currently the parcels are state-owned and not assessed taxes. Sale of this land would add additional property to the Missoula County tax base, thus increasing revenue to the county. Estimated tax revenue would be approximately \$380.00 per year.

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**18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:**

*Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services*

The proposed sale is located within DNRC's Southwestern Land Offices "Wildland Fire Protection Area" The parcels are within both the Missoula and Florence Elementary and High School Districts. The sale of the property would not cause any increase in demand for government services.

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**19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:**

*List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.*

The parcel is unzoned. The 2002 Lolo Regional Plan designates the parcel as Open and Resource with a land use designation of one (1) dwelling unit per 40 acres which calculates to a maximum recommended density of 16 lots on the 640 acre parcel and 3 lots on the 120 acre parcel. There is no adjacent subdivision. The parcels have hillsides greater than 25% slope that are subject to Missoula County Hillside Regulations prohibiting development.

The DNRC manages State Trust Lands for residential development under the Real Estate Management Plan 2005. The Plan defines residential development as a density of one residential unit per 25 acres or less or by allowing development on more than 25% of the parent parcel. If the density exceeds 25% of the parcel or is denser than 1 dwelling unit per 25 acres, then the development counts towards the threshold caps for development in the Real Estate Management Plan.

It is highly unlikely the parcel would be developed at a density described above due to Missoula County land use designations, hillsides, lack of legal access and lack of adjacent development. It is also unlikely that if developed, it would be within 5 years. If not developed within 5 years, the sale would be exempt from the acreage thresholds as per ARM 36.25.911(2) (c); therefore, no development restriction will be placed on the parcel.

Any proposal to develop these properties would be subject to review and approval under state and local regulations applicable to Missoula County.

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**20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:**

*Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.*

Section 16 (640 acres) is surrounded by one private property owner (MPG Ranch) and provides no recreational opportunities for the general public. Section 22 (120 acres) is bordered by six private residential lots ranging in size from approximately 10 to 20 acres and currently provides limited recreational opportunity for these neighbors.

There is no legal public access to either of these parcels. In response to project scoping, an adjacent landowner offered to grant resource management access to the 120 acre parcel in Section 22. A site visit was conducted and it was determined that the proposed access route was unsuitable for logging use.

One of the goals of Land Banking is to improve public access to state trust land. Revenue generated from this proposed sale would go into the state land banking fund to be used for the purchase of other lands meeting the goals of the program. Since 2010, 35,000+ acres have been purchased within Missoula County and are available for public recreational use.

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**21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:**

*Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.*

The potential sale of this parcel would not require additional housing or change population. It is unknown what land uses would occur under new ownership. Any future proposal to develop the property would be subject to review under state and local regulations.

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**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

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**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

*How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?*

The potential sale of the state land would not directly or cumulatively impact cultural uniqueness or diversity. It is unknown what management activities would take place on the land if ownership changes.

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**24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:**

*Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.*

The 120 acre parcel in section 22 was acquired from the federal government in 1903 (clear list) for support to the Public Building Grant. The 640 acre parcel in section 16 was acquired in 1938 under a patent from the federal government for support of the Common School. Both parcels are classified as forest land (principally valuable for timber or for the growing of timber or for watershed protection 77-1-401MCA). Due to location, neither parcel is suitable for rural or residential development. Both parcels are licensed for domestic grazing use to the MPG ranch.

Primary tree species are ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. Slopes are fairly steep >25% and suited for a combination of ground based (tractor) and skyline harvest systems. Overall the site has a low to moderate productivity potential for growing trees (30-50 cubic feet/acre/year).

Due to of a lack of legal access, forest management has been conducted as opportunities arise. The economic analysis assumes that reasonable access can be secured from adjacent landowners for forest management activities.

Economic Analysis:

**SECTION 16, T11N-R19W**

DNRC stand level inventory indicates a gross commercial timber volume in Section 16 of 2.882 million board feet. If DNRC were to retain the property in Section 16, it is reasonable to assume a harvest of 2,000 MBF over the next 60 years. At an estimated value of 1) \$19.61 per ton for standing trees, 2) a conversion factor of 7.07 tons per MBF and 3) a 50% trust administration cost: the 60 year timber management return for this parcel is estimated to be \$138,643. This parcel is also licensed for grazing to the MPG ranch. The current carrying capacity is 75 AUM's per year. Assuming the current carrying capacity (75 AUMS), a rental rate of \$6.44 per AUM (3 year average) and a 11.1% administration cost the total estimated return from grazing use of this parcel over the next 60 years is \$25,763. The total estimated return from historic uses (timber and grazing) over the next 60 years is expected to be \$164,406 to the common school trust. Assuming a land value of \$640,000 (\$1,000/acre), the percentage return on land value over 60 years is 25.7%. The average annual percentage return is therefore 0.43%.

**SECTION 22, T11N-R19W**

A timber cruise completed in 2007 on Section 22 estimated a gross commercial sawlog volume of 769 thousand board feet. If DNRC were to retain the property in Section 22 it is reasonable to assume a harvest of 750 MBF over the next 60 years. At an estimated value of 1) \$15.64 per ton for standing trees, 2) a conversion of 7.25 tons per MBF, and 3) a 50% trust administration cost; the 60 year timber management return for this parcel is \$42,521. This parcel is also licensed for grazing to the MPG ranch. The current carrying capacity is rated at 12 AUM's per year. Assuming the current carrying capacity (12 AUM's), a rental rate of \$6.44 per AUM (3 year average), and a 11.1% administration cost the total estimated return from grazing use of this parcel over the next 60 years is \$4,122. The total estimated return from historic uses (timber and grazing) over the next 60 years is expected to be \$46,643 to the Public Building trust. Assuming a land value of \$120,000 (\$1,000/acre), the percentage return on land value over 60 years is 38.9%. The average annual percentage return is therefore 0.65%.

Overall these parcels are average to slightly below average in forest productivity and below average in revenue return. The parcels are surrounded by private property and do not have legal access. If retained in state ownership there is no indication the parcels would be used for purposes other than forestry in the future and the prospects for future revenue would be less than average.

An appraisal of the property has not been completed. If the determination is made to proceed with sale of the properties, a land appraisal would be completed and would be used to establish the minimum bid for each parcel. The land appraisal would not include deed restrictions.

**Proposed Action Alternative:**

Land Banking statutes require that land acquired as replacement property through Land Banking is “likely to produce more net revenue for the affected trust than the revenue that was produced from the land that was sold” (Section 77-2-364 (4) MCA). Property targeted for acquisition could include agricultural or timber lands, with recreational potential or commercial potential.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Paul Moore	<b>Date:</b> November 28, 2011
	<b>Title:</b> Hamilton Unit Manager	

**V. FINDING**

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

I have selected the proposed action alternative A . The intent of the Land Banking program is to diversify land holdings to maximize the sustained rate of return to the trusts and to consolidate land ownership while improving public access to state trust lands. Overall the proposed parcels are average to slightly below average in forest productivity and below average in revenue return. With Missoula County’s limitation of no subdivisions on lands with slopes >25% it is unlikely these parcels will be developed for residential subdivision in the future and there is no need to incorporate additional deed restrictions.

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

I have evaluated the comments received and potential environmental effects and have determined that significant environmental impacts would not result from the proposed land sale. The parcels do not have any unique characteristics; threatened or endangered species and no sensitive habitat or environmental conditions exist to indicate the sale would create significant environmental effects.

I believe this EA adequately addressed the issues raised through public scoping and internal comments within DNRC. Under the action alternative low levels of cumulative effects to local wildlife populations are expected to occur.

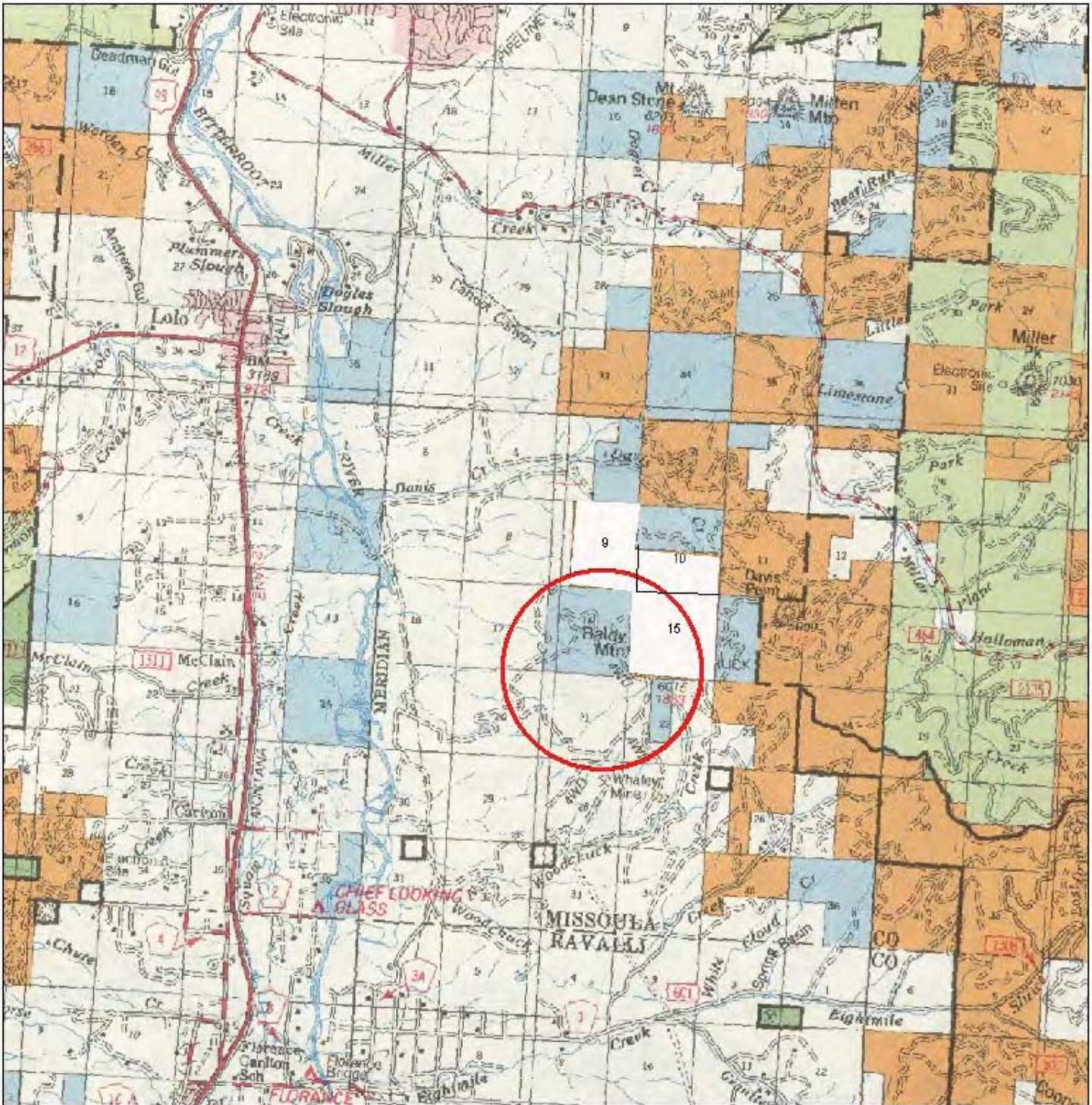
Given that 87% of the subject lands occur on the tops of foothills, northerly aspects, and on relatively steep terrain >25%, development potential is relatively low. It is highly unlikely these parcels would be developed at a density described above due to Missoula County land use designations. Any proposal to develop these properties would be subject to review and approval under state and local regulations.

**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

EIS                       More Detailed EA                       No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Anthony L. Liane
	<b>Title:</b> Southwestern Land Office Area Manager
<b>Signature:</b> /S/ Signature on File	<b>Date:</b> 11/30/11

# BALDY MOUNTAIN PROJECT AREA VICINITY MAP



**Legend**

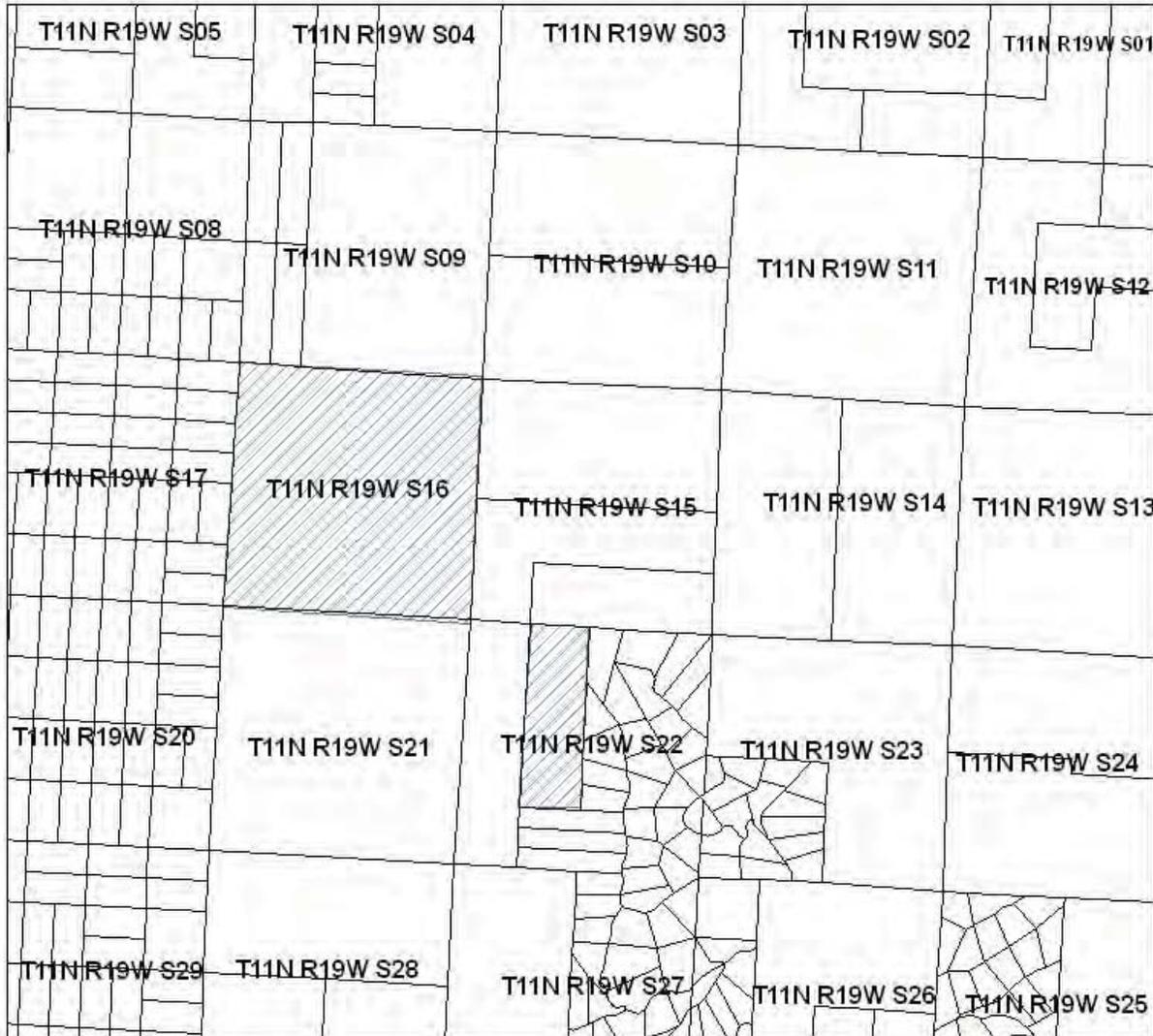
 Project\_Area

Scale  
1 Mile = approximately 3/4"



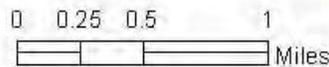
# Land Banking Nomination

Section 16: All, T11N R19W (640 Acres)  
Section 22: E2NW4SW4, T11N R19W (120 Acres)



**Legend**

-  Private Ownership
-  Montana DNRC Parcel for Nomination



## ATTACHMENT B

### CHECKLIST FOR ENDANGERED, THREATENED AND SENSITIVE SPEICES

SOUTHWESTERN LAND OFFICE  
Baldy Mountain Land Banking Project  
R. Baty  
October 6, 2011

<b>Threatened and Endangered Species</b>	[Y/N] Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures N = Not Present or No Impact is Likely to Occur Y = Impacts May Occur (Explain Below)
Lynx ( <i>Felis lynx</i> ) Habitat: SF hab. types, dense sapling, old forest, deep snow zone	[ N ] No preferred lynx habitat types occur on the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Grizzly Bear ( <i>Ursus arctos</i> ) Habitat: recovery areas, security from human activity	[ N ] Lands in the project area lie approximately 15 air miles from the nearest known occupied grizzly bear habitat, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.

<b>DNRC Sensitive Species</b>	[Y/N] Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures N = Not Present or No Impact is Likely to Occur Y = Impacts May Occur (Explain Below)
Bald Eagle ( <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> ) Habitat: late-successional forest <1 mile from open water	[ N ] Some use in winter possible while foraging on carrion. Conifer forest on the project area is too distant from the Bitterroot River to provide suitable nesting sites. No direct, indirect or cumulative impacts would be expected to result from the proposed alternative.
Gray Wolf ( <i>Canis lupus</i> ) Habitat: ample big game pops., security from human activity	[ N ] Wolves are present in the Bitterroot Valley and are likely to periodically travel through the area. However, transferring ownership of the parcel to another party will not have any direct or immediate indirect impact on any habitat or wildlife species. The proposed action would open the door for greater future risk of development and erosion of wildlife habitat values that could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process.
Coeur d' Alene Salamander ( <i>Plethodon idahoensis</i> ) Habitat: waterfall spray zones, talus near cascading streams	[ N ] No habitats preferred by Coeur d'Alene salamanders occur on the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Flammulated Owl ( <i>Otus flammeolus</i> ) Habitat: late-successional ponderosa pine and Doug.-fir forest	[N] Species occurrence records from MNHP identified flammulated owls as potentially present in section 16. However, transferring ownership of the parcel to another party will not have any direct or immediate indirect impact on any habitat or wildlife species. The proposed action would open the door for greater future

	cumulative risk of development and erosion of wildlife habitat values that could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process.
Black-Backed Woodpecker ( <i>Picoides arcticus</i> ) Habitat: mature to old burned or beetle-infested forest	[N] No preferred fire-killed stands occur on the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Pileated Woodpecker ( <i>Dryocopus pileatus</i> ) Habitat: late-successional ponderosa pine and larch-fir forest	[N] Pileated woodpecker habitat is potentially present on the project area. However, transferring ownership of the parcel to another party will not have any direct or immediate indirect impact on any habitat or wildlife species. The proposed action would, however, allow for greater future cumulative risk of development and erosion of wildlife habitat values, including habitat for pileated woodpeckers, that could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process.
Northern Bog Lemming ( <i>Synaptomys borealis</i> ) Habitat: sphagnum meadows, bogs, fens with thick moss mats	[ N] No preferred wet meadows or bogs suitable for use by northern bog lemmings occur on the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Fisher ( <i>Martes pennanti</i> ) Habitat: dense mature to old forest <6,000 ft. elev. and riparian	[ N] No preferred habitats suitable for use by fishers occur on the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> ) Habitat: cliff features near open foraging areas and/or wetlands	[ N] No preferred cliff features suitable for use by peregrine falcons occur on, or within 1 mile of the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Common Loon ( <i>Gavia immer</i> ) Habitat: cold mountain lakes, nest in emergent vegetation	[ N] No ponds or lakes suitable for use by migrating or nesting loons occur within the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Harlequin Duck ( <i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i> ) Habitat: white-water streams, boulder and cobble substrates	[ N] No high gradient streams suitable for use by harlequins occur within the project area or cumulative effects analysis area. No direct, indirect or cumulative effects to harlequin ducks would be expected to occur as a result of the proposed action.
Columbian Sharp-Tailed Grouse ( <i>Tympanuchus Phasianellus columbianus</i> ) Habitat: grassland, shrubland, riparian, agriculture	[ N] Habitat suitable for use by sharp-tailed grouse does not occur in the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Mountain Plover ( <i>Charadrius montanus</i> ) Habitat: short-grass prairie, alkaline flats, prairie dog towns	[ N] No short-grass prairie or prairie dog towns occur on, or within one mile of the project area. No direct, indirect or cumulative effects to mountain plovers are expected as a result of this project.
Townsend's Big-Eared Bat ( <i>Plecotus townsendii</i> ) Habitat: caves, caverns, old mines	[ N] DNRC is unaware of any mines or caves within the project area or close vicinity that would be suitable for use by Townsend's big-eared bats. Thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects to Townsend's big-eared bats are anticipated as a result of this project.

## **Baldy Mountain Scoping List, Attachment C**

### **Lessee/Licensee (Tlms)**

Mpg Holdings Llc  
600 W Chicago Ave Ste 825  
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Tom Hilley  
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### **Adjacent Landowners Of Record (Cadastral)**

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Sharon Rose  
Dept. Of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
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P.O. Box 8953  
Missoula, MT 59807

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
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Friends Of The Wild Swan  
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Wildwest Insititute  
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Montana Smart Growth Coalition  
Tim Davis  
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Owl Research Institute  
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Raptor View Research Institute  
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Missoula, MT 59806

Ric Smith, Chairman  
Trout Unlimited  
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Po Box 383  
Helena, MT 59624

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Montana Coalition For Appropriate Management Of  
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Janet Ellis Montana Audubon  
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Leslie Taylor MSU Bozeman  
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Nancy Schlepp MT Farm Bureau Federation  
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Bozeman MT 59715

Ray Marxer  
Matador Cattle Co.  
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Rosi Keller University Of Montana  
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#### **Land Board Members**

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Governor Brian Schweitzer  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 200801  
Helena, MT 59620

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Attorney General Steve Bullock  
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P.O. Box 201401  
Helena, MT 59620

Jenny Eck  
Attorney General Steve Bullock  
215 N. Sanders  
P.O. Box 201401  
Helena, MT 59620

Rusty Harper  
Secretary Of State Linda McCulloch  
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P.O. Box 202801  
Helena, MT 59620

Galen Hollenbaugh  
Secretary Of State Linda McCulloch  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 202801  
Helena, MT 59620

Ann Gilkey  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Denise Juneau  
1227 Eleventh Ave.  
P.O. Box 202501  
Helena, MT 59620

Lucy Richards  
DNRC Director Mary Sexton  
1625 Eleventh Ave.  
P.O. Box 201601  
Helena, MT 59620

**Beneficiary List**

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Linda McCulloch, Superintendent  
Office of Public Instruction  
P.O. Box 202501  
Helena, MT 59620-2501

Public Buildings  
Budget Director  
Office of Budget & Program Planning  
P.O. Box 200802  
Helena, MT 59620-0802

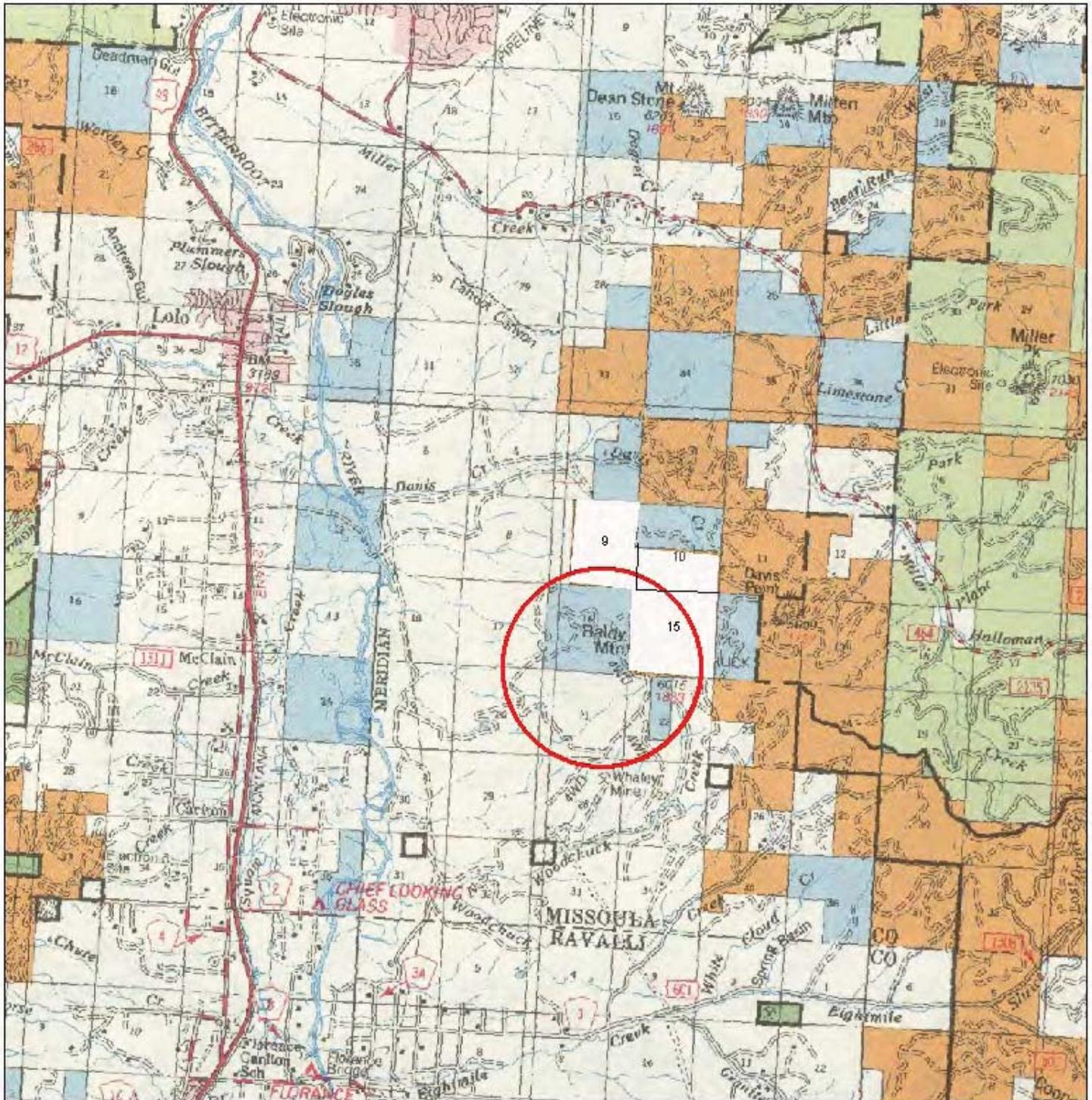
**Bureau Scoping Agency List**

Dept. Of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Attn: Hug Zacheim  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dept. Of Environmental Quality  
Attn: Tom Ellerhoff  
P.O. Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dept Of Transportation  
Attn: Shane Mintz  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001

# BALDY MOUNTAIN PROJECT AREA VICINITY MAP



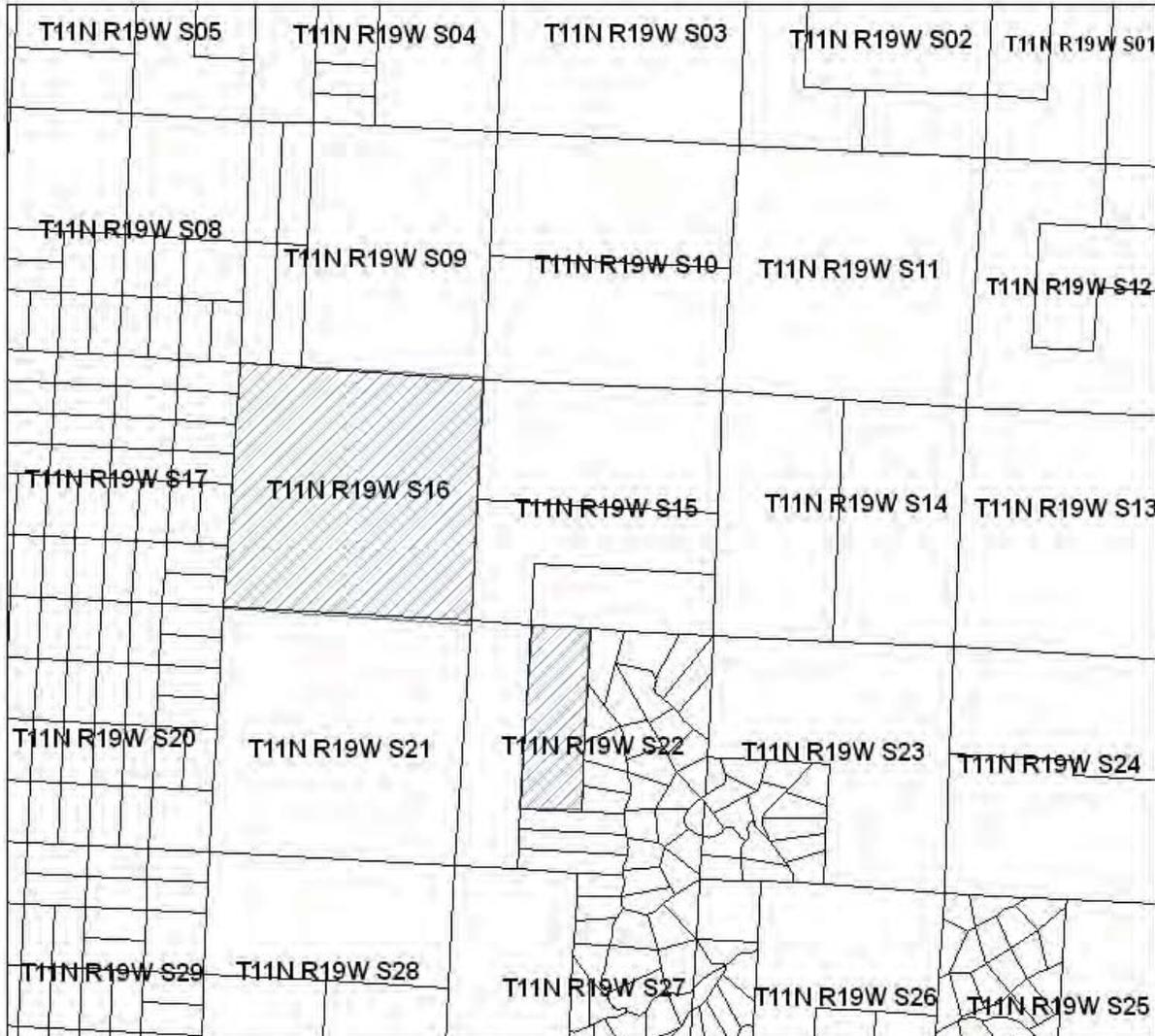
**Legend**

 Project\_Area

**Scale**  
1 Mile = approximately 3/4"

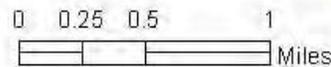


**Land Banking Nomination**  
**Section 16: All, T11N R19W (640 Acres)**  
**Section 22: E2NW4SW4, T11N R19W (120 Acres)**



**Legend**

-  Private Ownership
-  Montana DNRC Parcel for Nomination



## ATTACHMENT B

### CHECKLIST FOR ENDANGERED, THREATENED AND SENSITIVE SPEICES

SOUTHWESTERN LAND OFFICE  
Baldy Mountain Land Banking Project  
R. Baty  
October 6, 2011

<b>Threatened and Endangered Species</b>	[Y/N] Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures N = Not Present or No Impact is Likely to Occur Y = Impacts May Occur (Explain Below)
Lynx ( <i>Felis lynx</i> ) Habitat: SF hab.types, dense sapling, old forest, deep snow zone	[ N ] No preferred lynx habitat types occur on the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Grizzly Bear ( <i>Ursus arctos</i> ) Habitat: recovery areas, security from human activity	[ N ] Lands in the project area lie approximately 15 air miles from the nearest known occupied grizzly bear habitat, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.

<b>DNRC Sensitive Species</b>	[Y/N] Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures N = Not Present or No Impact is Likely to Occur Y = Impacts May Occur (Explain Below)
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Gray Wolf ( <i>Canis lupus</i> ) Habitat: ample big game pops., security from human activity	[ N ] Wolves are present in the Bitterroot Valley and are likely to periodically travel through the area. However, transferring ownership of the parcel to another party will not have any direct or immediate indirect impact on any habitat or wildlife species. The proposed action would open the door for greater future risk of development and erosion of wildlife habitat values that could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process.
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Flammulated Owl ( <i>Otus flammeolus</i> ) Habitat: late-successional ponderosa pine and	[N] Species occurrence records from MNHP identified flammulated owls as potentially present in section 16. However, transferring

Doug.-fir forest	ownership of the parcel to another party will not have any direct or immediate indirect impact on any habitat or wildlife species. The proposed action would open the door for greater future cumulative risk of development and erosion of wildlife habitat values that could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process.
Black-Backed Woodpecker ( <i>Picoides arcticus</i> ) Habitat: mature to old burned or beetle-infested forest	[N] No preferred fire-killed stands occur on the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Pileated Woodpecker ( <i>Dryocopus pileatus</i> ) Habitat: late-successional ponderosa pine and larch-fir forest	[N] Pileated woodpecker habitat is potentially present on the project area. However, transferring ownership of the parcel to another party will not have any direct or immediate indirect impact on any habitat or wildlife species. The proposed action would, however, allow for greater future cumulative risk of development and erosion of wildlife habitat values, including habitat for pileated woodpeckers, that could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process.
Northern Bog Lemming ( <i>Synaptomys borealis</i> ) Habitat: sphagnum meadows, bogs, fens with thick moss mats	[ N] No preferred wet meadows or bogs suitable for use by northern bog lemmings occur on the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Fisher ( <i>Martes pennanti</i> ) Habitat: dense mature to old forest <6,000 ft. elev. and riparian	[ N] No preferred habitats suitable for use by fishers occur on the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> ) Habitat: cliff features near open foraging areas and/or wetlands	[ N] No preferred cliff features suitable for use by peregrine falcons occur on, or within 1 mile of the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Common Loon ( <i>Gavia immer</i> ) Habitat: cold mountain lakes, nest in emergent vegetation	[ N] No ponds or lakes suitable for use by migrating or nesting loons occur within the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Harlequin Duck ( <i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i> ) Habitat: white-water streams, boulder and cobble substrates	[ N] No high gradient streams suitable for use by harlequins occur within the project area or cumulative effects analysis area. No direct, indirect or cumulative effects to harlequin ducks would be expected to occur as a result of the proposed action.
Columbian Sharp-Tailed Grouse ( <i>Tympanuchus Phasianellus columbianus</i> ) Habitat: grassland, shrubland, riparian, agriculture	[ N] Habitat suitable for use by sharp-tailed grouse does not occur in the project area, thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be anticipated.
Mountain Plover ( <i>Charadrius montanus</i> ) Habitat: short-grass prairie, alkaline flats, prairie dog towns	[ N] No short-grass prairie or prairie dog towns occur on, or within one mile of the project area. No direct, indirect or cumulative effects to mountain plovers are expected as a result of

	this project.
Townsend's Big-Eared Bat ( <i>Plecotus townsendii</i> ) Habitat: caves, caverns, old mines	[ N] DNRC is unaware of any mines or caves within the project area or close vicinity that would be suitable for use by Townsend's big-eared bats. Thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects to Townsend's big-eared bats are anticipated as a result of this project.

## **Baldy Mountain Scoping List, Attachment C**

### **Lessee/Licensee (Tlms)**

Mpg Holdings Llc  
600 W Chicago Ave Ste 825  
Chicago, Il 60654-2822

Tom Hilley  
431 E Sussex Ave  
Missoula, MT. 59801

### **Adjacent Landowners Of Record (Cadastral)**

Steve Lott  
307 Sidney St W.  
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Keith Merritt Christensen  
P.O. Box 572  
Corvallis, MT 59828-0572

Janmar H. Gonzalez  
87-250 Waiolu St.  
Waianae, Hi 96792-4704

Robert Walker  
P.O. Box 2204  
Missoula, MT 59806-2204

### **DNRC Staff**

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Donna Riebe  
Sonya Germann  
Will Wood  
Paul Moore  
Jeanne Holmgren  
Patrick Rennie  
Kevin Chappell-Grazing  
Emily Cooper  
John Grimm  
Tom Konency  
Janel Favero  
John Grassy  
Mike Mcgrath  
Jeff Collins  
Monte Mason  
Tom Hughes  
Dana Boruch  
Robert Storer

### **Appropriate Legislators**

Ray Hawk, Republican  
4878 Hoblitt Lane NW  
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Jim Shockley, Republican  
Po Box 608  
Victor, MT 59875-0608

**Appropriate Forest Service**

Forest Service  
5785 Hwy 10 W.  
Missoula, MT 59808

**Counties**

Missoula County Commissioners  
200 West Broadway  
Missoula, MT 59802-4292

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Michelle Landquist  
200 West Broadway  
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Missoula Rural Initiatives  
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**Bureau Interested Parties**

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**SWLO Interested Agencies**

Jeff Hagener, Director  
Dept. Of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
P.O. Box 200701

Helena, MT 59620-0701

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Dept. Of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59804

Sharon Rose  
Dept. Of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
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Missoula, MT 59804

Department of Environmental Quality  
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Helena MT 59620

Environmental Quality Council  
Po Box 201704  
Helena, MT 59620-1704

Nancy Anderson  
Bureau Of Land Management  
Missoula Resource Area  
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Missoula, MT 59804

Tribal Historic Preservation Office  
Confederated Salish And Kootenai Tribes  
P. O. Box 278  
Pablo, MT 59855

Jerry Sorenson  
Plum Creek Timber Company Lp  
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Montana Wilderness Association  
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Helena, MT 59601

Montana Audubon Council  
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Missoula, MT 59807

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Po Box 8249  
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Friends Of The Wild Swan  
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Jeff Juel, Ecosystem Defence  
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Alliance For The Wild Rockies  
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Raptor View Research Institute  
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Montana Environmental Information Center  
Attn. Anne Hedges  
Po Box 1184  
Helena, MT 59624

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Attn. Donald Kern  
Po Box 383  
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Montana Wildlife Federation  
Attn. Dave Majors  
3289 Wood Duck Lane  
Stevensville, MT 59870

Western Montana Fish & Game Association  
C/O Jim Clawson  
11225 Windemere  
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Montana Land Reliance  
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16 Cloninger Lane  
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Montana Coalition For Appropriate Management Of State Lands  
Attn Jack Atcheson  
3210 Ottawa  
Butte, MT 59701

Montana Coalition For Appropriate Management Of State Lands  
Attn Jack Jones  
3014 Irene St  
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Hellgate Hunters & Anglers  
Po Box 7792  
Missoula, MT 59807

Greater Yellowstone Coalition  
P.O. Box 1874  
Bozeman, MT 59771

Foundation For North American Wild Sheep  
720 Allen Ave.  
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National Wildlife Federation  
Attn Rich Day  
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Defenders Of Wildlife  
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**Beneficiary List**

Common Schools

Linda McCulloch, Superintendent  
Office of Public Instruction  
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Helena, MT 59620-2501

Public Buildings  
Budget Director  
Office of Budget & Program Planning  
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Helena, MT 59620-0802

**Bureau Scoping Agency List**

Dept. Of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Attn: Hug Zacheim  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dept. Of Environmental Quality  
Attn: Tom Ellerhoff  
P.O. Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dept Of Transportation  
Attn: Shane Mintz  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001