

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND CONSERVATION**
Central Land Office



STEVE BULLOCK, GOVERNOR

(406) 458-3500
FAX NUMBER (406) 458-3506

8001 NORTH MONTANA AVENUE
HELENA, MONTANA 59602-9388

SCOPING NOTICE

Proposal to Sell DNRC Trust lands within the Beartooth, Blackleaf and Sun River Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's) May 19, 2015

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's Land Banking Program allows the agency to sell land and put the proceeds in a Land Banking Fund. The combined funds from multiple sales can then be used to purchase other lands which produce a higher level of income than the lands sold. This results in a greater income to the trust beneficiaries (U of M, MSU, Common Schools, among others).

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is evaluating a proposal to sell the trust lands managed by DNRC within three Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks WMA's located in Lewis and Clark, Cascade, and Teton Counties. The lands will be offered for public auction in each respective county. Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) has expressed interest in acquiring these lands. FWP requested and received permission from the Fish and Wildlife Commission to proceed with due diligence and negotiations. Please review the attached maps and tables of the lands being consider for sale.

In summary, there is 639.48 acres in Teton County, 8,208.78 acres in Lewis and Clark County, and 640 acres in Cascade County.

The primary objectives of the proposed project are:

- Remove trust land ownership from within WMA boundaries
- Increase Trust revenues
- Consolidate DNRC lands
- Allow FWP to own and manage all properties within WMA boundaries

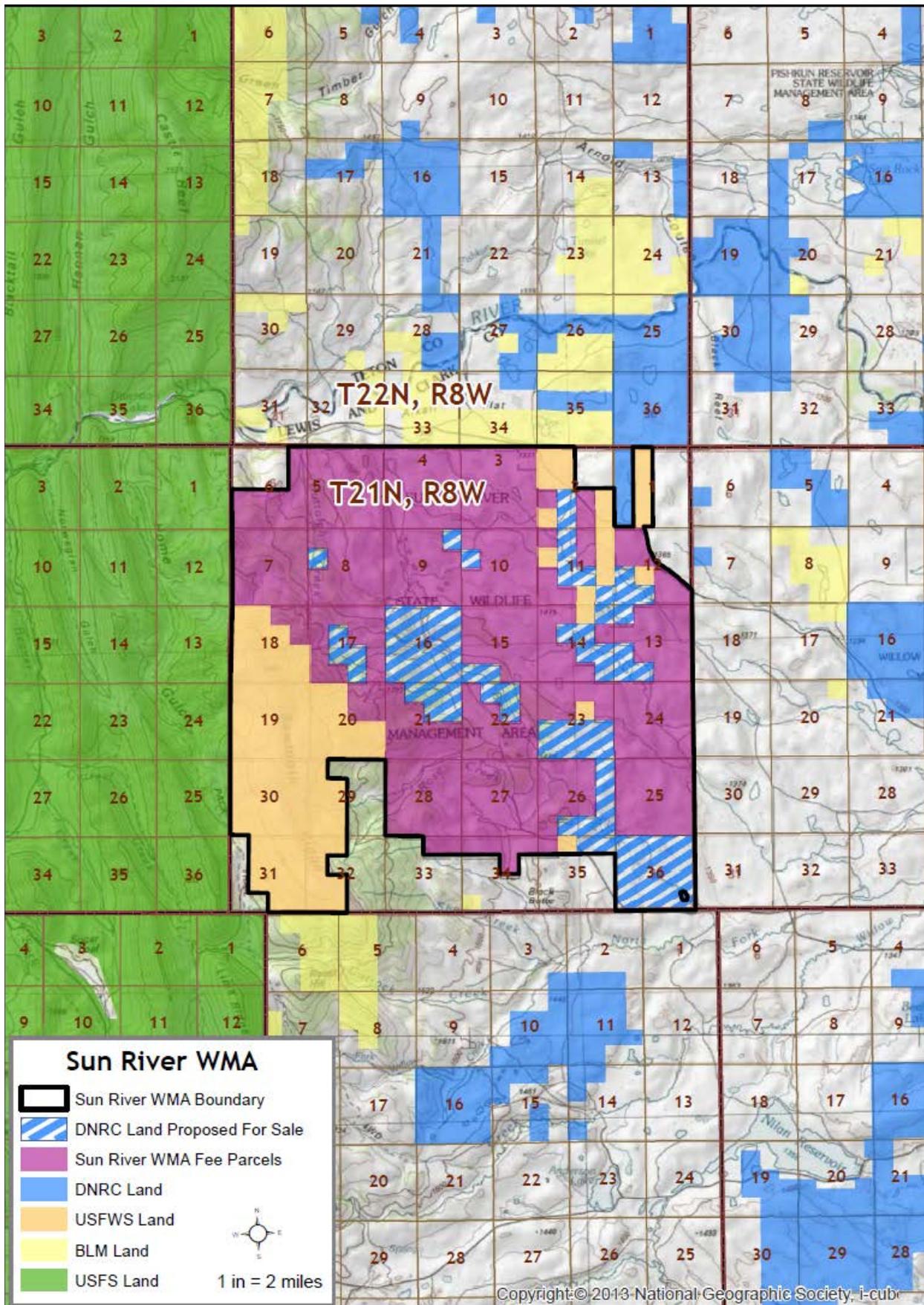
FWP management of the properties are anticipated to continue consistent with their current management actives. DNRC would be positioned to purchase properties with the sale proceeds, which generate higher revenues and provide public access and recreational opportunities.

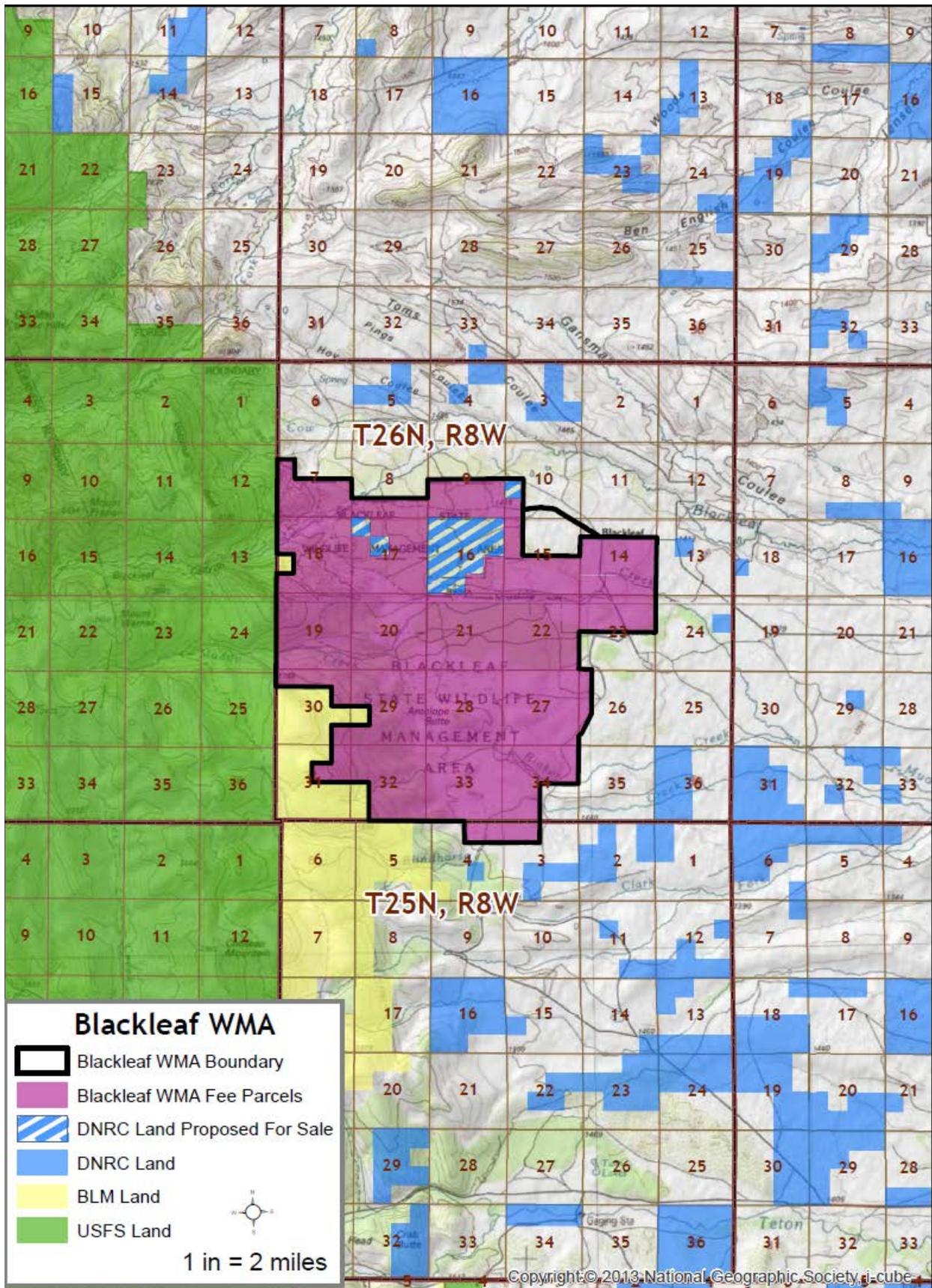
The DNRC is in the scoping phase of the project. The Montana DNRC invites written comments and suggestions concerning this proposal. Please respond by **June 15, 2015** to:

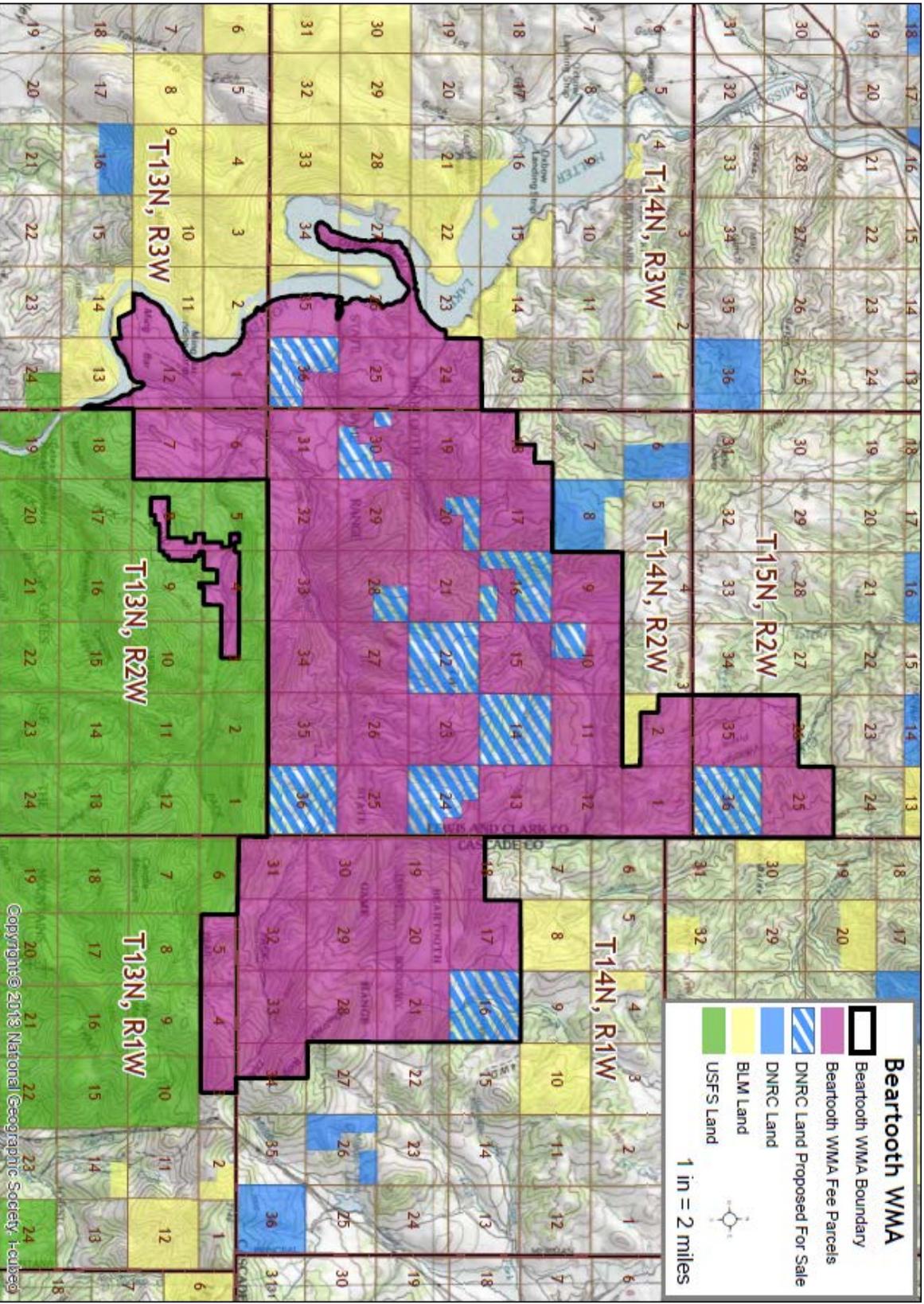
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Attn: **Hoyt Richards**
8001 N Montana Ave
Helena MT 59602
hrichards@mt.gov
406-458-3501

Tables of Lands in Wildlife Management Areas

Sun River WMA Parcels						
TWN	RNG	Sec	Description	County	Grant ID	# Acres
21N	8W	8	SW4NW4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	40
21N	8W	9	NE4NE4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	40
21N	8W	11	E2NW4, NE4SW4, NW4SE4, SE4SE4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	200
21N	8W	12	S2SW4, NW4SW4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	120
21N	8W	14	NE4NE4, SW4NE4, SE4NW4, N2SE4, SE4SE4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	240
21N	8W	2	E2SW4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	79.73
21N	8W	23	S2	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	320
21N	8W	35	N2NE4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	80
21N	8W	36	5.00 ACRES IN GOVERNMENT LOT 7 (SE4SE4)	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	5
21N	8W	36	LOTS 1 TO 7 INC.,NW4SE4,N2SW4,W2NE4,NW 4, LESS 5 AC SPECIAL LEASE IN LOT 7 (SE4SE4)	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	645.62
21N	8W	10	SW4NW4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	40
21N	8W	13	NW4NW4_NW4SW4_S2SW4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	160
21N	8W	15	S2SW4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	80
21N	8W	16	ALL	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	640
21N	8W	17	SE4NW4_W2SE4_NE4SW4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	160
21N	8W	21	NE4NW4_NE4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	200
21N	8W	22	NE4NW4_W2NE4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	120
21N	8W	26	E2E2_SW4SE4_SE4SW4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	240
Blackleaf WMA Parcels						
26N	8W	16	LOTS 1_2_4_5_ NW4_W2NE4_NW4SE4_N2SW4	Teton	Common Schools	519.48
26N	8W	10	NW4SW4	Teton	Public Building	40
26N	8W	17	SE4NW4, NW4NW4	Teton	Public Building	80
Beartooth WMA Parcels						
14N	1W	16	ALL	Cascade	Common Schools	640
14N	2W	10	SW4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	160
14N	2W	14	ALL	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	640
14N	2W	16	N2,W2SW4,S2SE4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	480
14N	2W	20	E2NW4,N2NE4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	160
14N	2W	22	ALL	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	640
14N	2W	24	SW4NE4,W2,SE4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	520
14N	2W	28	NE4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	160
14N	2W	30	LOT 2, SE4NE4,SE4SW4,SE4	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	278.43
14N	2W	36	ALL	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	640
14N	3W	36	NW4,S2	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	480
15N	2W	36	ALL	Lewis & Clark	Common Schools	640







Copyright © 2013 National Geographic Society - i-cubed

DNRC – FWP WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS SALE AND ACQUISITION PROJECT



Frequently Asked Questions



Why are DNRC and FWP undertaking the sale of these parcels under Land Banking?

DNRC and FWP attempted to transfer these lands through the land exchange process in 2012. In that proposal, FWP would have received lands in the Spotted Dog, Beartooth, Sun River and Blackleaf WMAs; DNRC would have received lands in the Robb-Ledford WMA. Many public comments were received during scoping that opposed the transfer of WMA lands to DNRC and the proposal was dropped. A number of comments supported the consolidation of FWP ownership in WMAs, but suggested FWP instead purchase DNRC inholdings in WMAs.

What are the benefits of a Land Banking sale?

This Land Banking sale would achieve FWP's goals of consolidating an intermingled land ownership within the WMA's, improving management effectiveness and efficiency and reducing the prospect of resource management conflicts that arise from the agencies' differing missions. More specific benefits include:

- FWP would save approximately \$60,000 per year in grazing lease payments to DNRC by 2016, when higher lease rate increases are fully phased in.
- Eliminate the potential for escalating future DNRC lease costs as a result of a change in lease classification or competitive bids.
- Provide improved and consistent habitat management, weed control, and road and fence management across these WMAs, eliminating the patchwork quilt approach FWP has today as a result of intermingled landownership. It would also greatly improve habitat integrity within these WMAs.

DNRC would be able to use the Land Banking sale funds to purchase replacement lands that would generate equal or greater revenues, and provide public access and recreational opportunities.

How will decisions about this sale be made?

How can the public get involved?

Land Banking sales require the approval of the Fish and Wildlife (FW) Commission and the State Land Board.

As the agencies move forward with this proposal, the decision making process will include public scoping, DNRC MEPA analysis with a public comment period for the sale process, FWP MEPA analysis with a public comment period for the acquisition, and opportunities for public comment to the FW Commission and Land Board.

Why does the Land Banking sale to FWP have to be a public auction?

The lands that FWP is seeking to purchase are public trust lands, held in trust for the benefit of Common School and Public Building beneficiaries. The Enabling Act of 1889 and current Montana statute (77-2-321 MCA) require any trust lands to be sold at a public sale (auction).

What if another party outbids FWP?

Under the Land Banking sale program, FWP as the lessee and nominator of the sale parcels is afforded the ability to stop the sale process up to ten days before the auction occurs. Any parties wishing to bid on the sale parcels at a Land Banking auction have to submit a bid deposit of 20% of the minimum bid price, 20 days before the auction. FWP would know beforehand if there would be any competitive bidders for the parcels, and would be able to cancel the auction up to ten days before the scheduled auction.

Where can I get more information?

At Fish, Wildlife & Parks: Rick Northrup, (406) 444-5633

At DNRC: Hoyt Richards, (406) 458-3501