



MONTANA LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Legislative Fiscal Division

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Director
AMY CARLSON

DATE: June 15, 2022

TO: Interim Budget Committee – Section C

FROM: Rob Miller, Fiscal Analyst

RE: Aviation Report

The Natural Resources and Transportation Interim Budget Committee requested information on aircraft usage by the six agencies in Section C. The information that follows summarizes the aircraft logs provided to the Legislative Fiscal Division (LFD). Of the six agencies in Section C, four operate a total of 22 aircrafts, of which 12 are fixed wing and 10 are helicopters. The agencies flew the aircraft a total of 4,519 hours at an estimated cost of \$3.2 million over the period covered by this report.

The following table summarizes the flight hours for each agency by mission.

Natural Resources and Transportation Aircraft Usage						
(Hours flown Jan 2021 through May 2022)						
<u>Mission summary</u>	<u>FWP</u>	<u>MDT</u>	<u>DNRC</u>	<u>Livestock</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Pct of Total</u>
Wildlife Surveys & Tracking	2,059.0	-	-	-	2,059.0	45.6%
Fire Detection/Surveillance/Suppression	-	-	1,025.0	-	1,025.0	22.7%
Predator Control	-	-	-	625.7	625.7	13.9%
Transport of passengers	37.6	136.4	6.6	-	180.6	4.0%
Fish Stocking	81.0	-	-	-	81.0	1.8%
Airport Inspection/Maintenance/Certification	-	75.8	-	-	75.8	1.7%
Public Outreach	-	42.9	-	-	42.9	1.0%
Arial Surveys	-	41.4	-	-	41.4	0.9%
Other	9.1	44.8	162.7	166.9	383.5	8.5%
Total Flight Hours	2,186.7	341.3	1,194.3	792.6	4,514.9	100.0%

Montana Department of Transportation

- Total Aircraft, Four
- Hours Flown, 341.3
- Estimated Operating Cost, \$324,000

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) operates four fixed wing aircraft used primarily for transport of personnel and the various functions of the MDT Aeronautics Division.

Through the MDT motor pool, all state agencies have access to the King Air. Agencies may also access the Aero Commander and the single engine aircraft through the MDT.

Through the Aeronautics Division, the agency facilitates the maintenance of airports and the various components of airport infrastructure, including visual and electronic navigational facilities and flying aids, promote aviation safety through educational efforts and programs, and coordinate and supervise aerial search and rescue operations.

The following table summarizes the aircraft usage for the MDT.

Montana Department of Transportation Aircraft					
Jan 2021 - May 2022					
<u>Make and Model</u>	<u>Tail Number</u>	<u>Year Manufactured or Certified</u>		<u>Type</u>	<u>Operating Cost Per Hour</u>
Beech Craft C90 King Air	N28KP	1979		Fixed Wing Twin Engine	\$1,384
Aero Commander	N4622E	1968		Fixed Wing Twin Engine	\$1,434
Cessna 206	N42178	1999		Fixed Wing Single Engine	\$352
Beech A36 Bonanza	N447MA	1975		Fixed Wing Single Engine	\$426
<u>Mission</u>	<u>Beech Craft C90 King Air</u>	<u>Aero Commander</u>	<u>Beech A36 Bonanza</u>	<u>Cessna 206 Sationair</u>	<u>Total</u>
Transport of Passengers	71.9	62.0	2.5	-	136.4
Photographic Survey	-	39.5	1.9	-	41.4
Search and Rescue	-	-	-	2.3	2.3
Training	2.8	7.8	-	-	10.6
Outreach	-	-	30.8	12.1	42.9
Airport Inspection/Maintenance/Certification	-	-	23.9	51.9	75.8
Yellowstone Terminal Design	-	-	14.9	4.0	18.9
Maintenance	2.8	0.3	0.5	9.4	13.0
Total	77.5	109.6	74.5	79.7	341.3

The Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks

- Total Aircraft, Seven
- Hours Flown, 2,186.7
- Estimated Operating Cost, \$1.2 million

The agency operates four single engine aircraft designed for the short takeoffs and landings required to get into back country landings. These aircraft are also capable of flying low and slow for wildlife surveys. The helicopters deposit fish from the state hatcheries into mountain lakes, do wildlife surveys, and collaring tracking animals. The aircraft are also used to transport personnel and provide law enforcement capabilities.

Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks				
Jan 2021 - May 2022				
<u>Make and Model</u>	<u>Tail Number</u>	<u>Year Manufactured or Certified</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Operating Cost Per Hour</u>
Maule MT-7-260	N713HR	2000	Fixed Wing Single Engine	\$357
Super Cub	N4644Y	1971	Fixed Wing Single Engine	\$357
Super Cub	N6110A	1979	Fixed Wing Single Engine	\$357
Super Cub	N8862Y	1973	Fixed Wing Single Engine	\$357
Hughes 369E	N1604Z	1989	Helicopter	\$803
EUROCOPTER AS 350 B2	N61CV	2007	Helicopter	\$803
EUROCOPTER AS 350 B2	N680DG	2007	Helicopter	\$803
<u>Mission summary</u>	See appendix			

The appendix provides a summary provided by the agency of the hours flown.

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

- Total Aircraft, Nine
- Hours Flown, 1,194.3
- Estimated Operating Cost, \$1.3 million

The fixed wing Cessna aircrafts are used primarily for fire patrol/detection and personnel transportation. The helicopters provide initial attack and extended attack fire suppression support. The aircraft logs indicate that the agency transported 788 passengers, primarily firefighters, to and from fires. During fire season, these helicopters typically carry a bucket, long line, and come with a fuel tender support truck for refueling and supplies.

The following table summarizes the aircraft usage for the DNRC.

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation				
Jan 2021 - May 2022				
<u>Make and Model</u>	<u>Tail Number</u>	<u>Year Manufactured or Certified</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Operating Cost Per Hour</u>
Cessna 182	N368M	1999	Fixed Wing Single Engine	\$175
Cessna 182	N6312B	1957	Fixed Wing Single Engine	\$175
Cessna 185	N391M	1964	Fixed Wing Single Engine	\$175
Bell 206A	N384M	1985	Helicopter	\$515
Bell 206A	N392M	1969	Helicopter	\$515
BELL - UH-1H	N394M	1989	Helicopter	\$1,650
BELL - UH-1H	N395M	1992	Helicopter	\$1,650
BELL - UH-1H	N398M	1992	Helicopter	\$1,650
BELL - UH-1H	N387M	2004	Helicopter	\$1,650
BELL - UH-1H	N388M	2006	Helicopter	\$1,650
<u>Mission</u>	<u>Bell UH-1H</u>	<u>Bell 206</u>	<u>Cessna 182/185</u>	<u>Total flight Hours</u>
Fire Suppression I.A.	621.2	0.0	5.4	626.6
Training	43.7	0.0	100.7	144.4
Fire Use Admin	28.5	5.4	67.4	101.3
Fire Detection/Surveillance	4.2	0.0	293.1	297.3
Aircraft Maintenance	4.3	1.4	4.0	9.7
Non Fire Aircraft use	5.3	1.0	0.0	6.3
Longline Training	8.7	0.0	0.0	8.7
Grand Total	715.9	7.8	470.6	1,194.3

The Department of Livestock

- Total Aircraft, Two
- Hours Flown, 792.6
- Estimated Operating Cost, \$400,000

The Department of Livestock helicopters provide protection for livestock through the removal of offending predatory animals. Montana Department of Livestock entered into a Cooperative Service Agreement with United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services which allows an agreement to be established each year declaring the amount of the funds to be spent on the aerial predator control program. The portion of the livestock per capita fee that goes to the predator control program is utilized to support this agreement. These funds are used to pay a part of helicopter maintenance, fuel, and a portion of pilots salaries. Funding also comes from the Montana Stockgrowers Association, Montana Woolgrowers Association, direct payments from ranchers, Fish Wildlife and Parks, as well as the USDA. The USDA Wildlife Service provides maintenance and tracks all usage though the aerial use reports. The Wildlife Services allow only trained and certified pilots and gunners to fly in the helicopters.

The following table summarizes the aircraft usage for the Department of Livestock.

Montana Department of Livestock			
Jan 2021 - May 2022			
<u>Make and Model</u>	<u>Tail Number</u>	<u>Year Manufactured or Certified</u>	<u>Type</u>
MD/Hughes 500D	N1059T	N/A	Helicopter
BELL - OH-58C	N6962C	1999	Helicopter
<u>Mission</u>	<u>MD/Hughes 500D</u>	<u>BELL - OH-58C</u>	<u>Total flight Hours</u>
Predator Control	344.7	281.0	625.7
Ferry	42.8	95.9	138.7
Training	17.2	-	17.2
Bovine Tuberculosis	7.9	-	7.9
Maintenance	3.1	-	3.1
Grand Total	<u>415.7</u>	<u>376.9</u>	<u>792.6</u>

Appendix

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Info Request Response

Date Received: 03/16/2022

Requestor: Interim Budget Committee

1) What is the agency aircraft used for, how many trips, and for what purpose?

The following table shows the total hours flown by agency division/unit by calendar year. Calendar year 2022 represents flights for January and February.

Agency Division/Unit	Hours Flown				
	CY 2018	CY 2019	CY 2020	CY 2021	CY 2022
Administration	21.10	5.10	3.20	36.50	1.10
Design & Construction	4.00		3.00		
Enforcement	5.00		20.60	8.10	
Fisheries	107.60	130.80	79.10	81.00	
Parks & Outdoor Recreation (POR)	3.40	2.50			
Wildlife	1,810.40	1,805.40	1,341.00	1,507.10	552.90
Grand Total	1,951.50	1,943.80	1,446.90	1,632.70	554.00

The table below outlines the general purpose of aircraft flights for each agency division/unit. The Administration division flights will be outlined in more detail in answer to question #2.

Agency Division/Unit	General Purpose of Flights
Administration	To attend various meetings across the state
Design & Construction	To gather aerial information for land appraisals and capital projects
Enforcement	Investigations
Fisheries	Fish stocking and sampling
Parks & Outdoor Recreation	To gather aerial information for specific state parks projects
Wildlife	Wildlife surveys, collaring, and captures

The following tables shows hours flown for each division/unit by aircraft type.

Division/Unit	Hours Flown				
	CY 2018	CY 2019	CY 2020	CY 2021	CY 2022
Administration	21.10	5.10	3.20	36.50	1.10
Helicopter	21.10	5.10	3.20	27.20	1.10
Four Place Single Engine Plane				9.30	
Design & Construction	4.00		3.00		
Helicopter	4.00		3.00		
Enforcement	5.00		20.60	8.10	
Helicopter				8.10	
Two Place Single Engine Plane	5.00		19.90		
Four Place Single Engine Plane			0.70		
Fisheries	107.60	130.80	79.10	81.00	
Helicopter	107.60	130.80	79.10	81.00	
Parks & Outdoor Recreation	3.40	2.50			
Helicopter	3.40	2.50			
Wildlife	1,810.40	1,805.40	1,341.00	1,507.10	552.90
Helicopter	644.60	628.50	407.40	690.70	230.00
Two Place Single Engine Plane	1,131.20	1,144.70	717.50	661.10	256.50
Four Place Single Engine Plane	34.60	32.20	216.10	155.30	66.40
Grand Total	1,951.50	1,943.80	1,446.90	1,632.70	554.00

The following table shows hours flown by each aircraft.

Aircraft Type	Tail #	Location	Hours Flown				
			CY 2018	CY 2019	CY 2020	CY 2021	CY 2022
Four Place Single Engine Plane	N713HR	Helena	34.60	32.20	216.80	164.60	66.40
Helicopter	N1604Z	Kalispell	280.10	305.00	131.10	123.00	54.00
Helicopter	N520N	no longer in fleet		211.00	60.70	98.70	
Helicopter	N61CV	Helena			226.10	433.80	147.00
Helicopter	N680DG	Billings				151.50	30.10
Helicopter	N693	no longer in fleet	217.80	13.40			
Helicopter	N7120	no longer in fleet	282.80	237.50	74.80		
Two Place Single Engine Plane	N4644Y	Dillon	448.00	518.20	322.40	213.20	162.70
Two Place Single Engine Plane	N6110A	Billings	535.30	473.80	415.00	447.90	93.80
Two Place Single Engine Plane	N8862Y	Dillon	152.90	152.70	-		
Grand Total			1,951.50	1,943.80	1,446.90	1,632.70	554.00

2) When the aircraft was used for administrative uses (January 1, 2021-present), why was aircraft used? What was it used for, and is it more cost effective?

Date	Reason for Flight	Aircraft Type	Hours Flown
3/5/2021	Admin Flight to Billings and Return	Four Place Single Engine Plane	4.5
6/3/2021	Ft Peck, Hell Creek State Park Visit	Helicopter	5
6/16/2021	Hell Creek	Helicopter	4.9
6/18/2021	Browning Tribal Relations Meetings	Helicopter	4.2
7/12/2021	Conrad Pheasant Farm Visit	Helicopter	2.3
8/25/2021	To Miles City	Four Place Single Engine Plane	4.8
8/26/2021	Return from Miles City	Helicopter	2.3
8/26/2021	To Miles City for Meeting	Helicopter	2.1
9/1/2021	Return from Miles City to Helena	Helicopter	2.4
9/15/2021	Pick up from Big Sky and bring to Helena	Helicopter	2
9/15/2021	Return to Big Sky	Helicopter	2
2/8/2022	Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in Feeley	Helicopter	1.1

Administrative staff schedule flights in instances when it allows them to attend meetings at various locations around the state for the sake of cost and/or time efficiency.

For example, the above noted flights on 9/15/2021 provided transportation for Director Hank Worsch, Deputy Director Dustin Temple, and Chief Financial Officer Lena Havron to attend the Interim Budget Committee Meeting at 8:30 am in Helena and return to Big Sky to continue attending the Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) conference that was held from 9/13/2021 through 9/16/2021.

The Administration Division is encouraged to utilize the aircraft unit during times when the other divisions do not have a need to fly, and it is efficient to do so. This does two things; it saves staff time and adds additional revenue into the proprietary fund, spreading the burden of cost-recovery of the aircraft fleet across multiple divisions, keeping hourly flight rates low.

3) Is there a required number of hours that a pilot or aircraft needs to be used in a month to keep certified?

No. The agency follows FAA pilot license requirements. A pilot must record 3 take-offs and 3 landings during daytime hours every 90 days for maintaining day currency. For maintaining night currency, a pilot must record 3 take-offs and 3 landings at nighttime every 90 days. Every 2 years a pilot is required to take a check ride and must stay current with emergency training.

The agency also follows both fixed and variable aircraft equipment maintenance schedules. A helicopter must be inspected every ten days regardless of whether the helicopter was flown during that time period. A helicopter must also be inspected after every 100 hours of flight time.