

Notice of Habitat Conservation Lease Proposal

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) is proposing a habitat conservation lease. Conservation leases are incentive-based, voluntary agreements offered by FWP to help conserve priority wildlife habitats on private lands while also supporting working agricultural lands and public hunting and recreation opportunity.

The basic intent of the Conservation Lease Program is to retain substantial blocks of high priority native or restored wildlife habitats while keeping working agricultural lands as working lands. There are five priority focal habitats that qualify for enrollment: sagebrush grasslands, mixed grasslands, intermountain grasslands, riparian/floodplain, and wetland-grassland complexes. The overarching goal of the Program is to enroll 500,000 acres over a 5-year timeframe.

Private landowners can enroll their land into a 30- or 40- year conservation lease in return for a one-time per-acre lease payment. Funding for the Program is generally derived from state hunting license fees and federal Pittman Robertson Wildlife Restoration funds.

For more information, please refer to the Habitat Conservation Lease Program web page: <https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/habitat/habitat-conservation/lease-program>

A programmatic environmental analysis ([PEA](#)) and supplemental environmental analysis ([SEA](#)) were completed by FWP at the start of the Habitat Conservation Lease Program.

This Notice serves to

- 1) inform the public and adjacent landowners of a proposed habitat conservation lease, providing an opportunity for review and comment (as required by MCA 87-1-241)
- 2) document if the programmatic environmental analysis is consistent with the circumstances of individual proposed conservation leases.

Description of Proposed Habitat Conservation Lease:

Project Name: Mark James French Habitat Conservation Lease

Location of Property: Malta, Phillips County, Montana

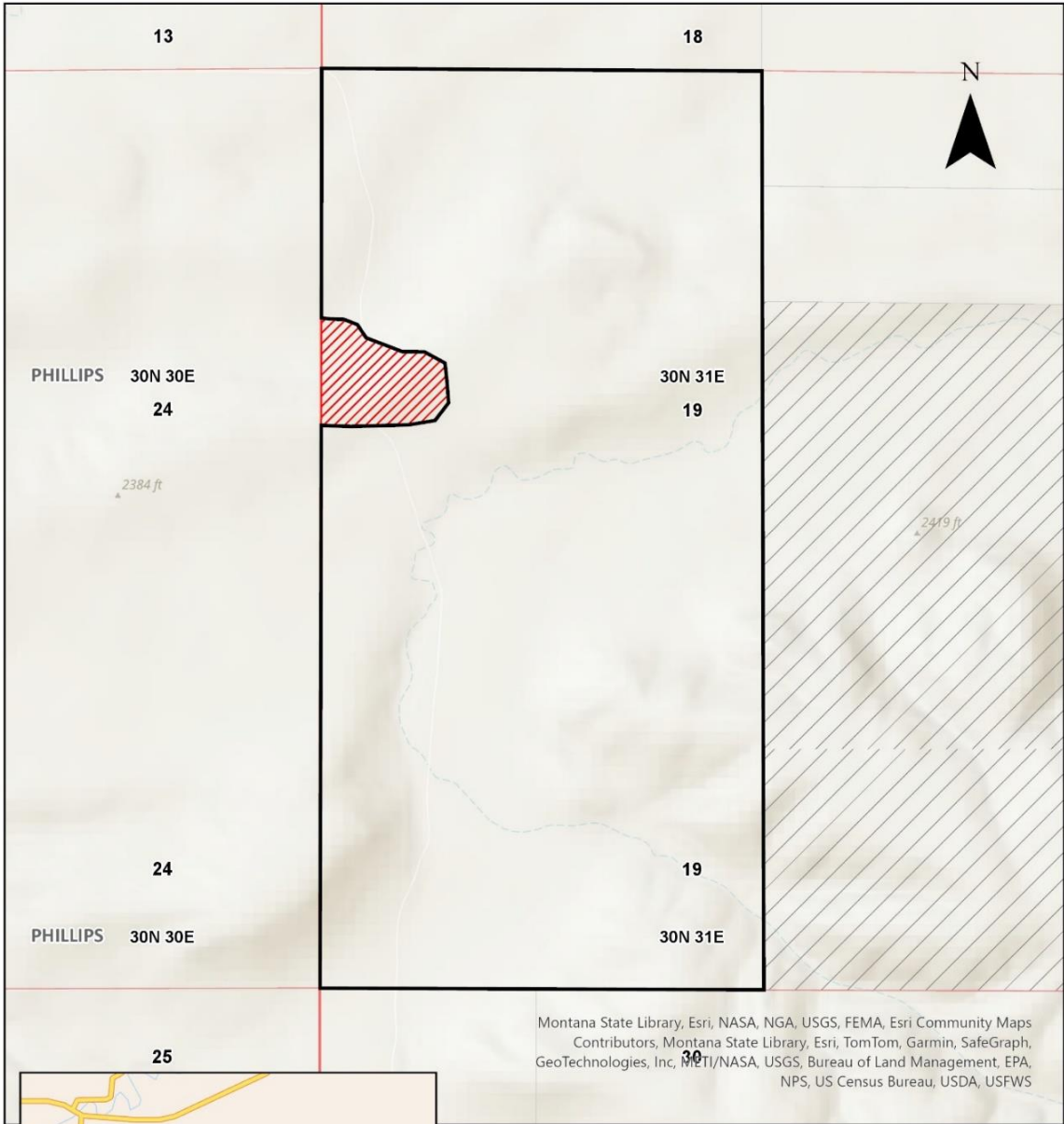
Legal Description: NW 1/4 and SW 1/4 of Section 19, T30N, 31E

Duration of Lease: 40 years

Total Acres Proposed To be Enrolled: 307.9

Total Acres of Priority Habitat: 307.9

Mark French Habitat Lease Proposal



Montana State Library, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Montana State Library, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS

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Prepared by Thomas Sutton
Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Region 6

Public Access details:

Landowner agrees to allow 10 hunter days each year between September 1 and January 1. Permission to access to the entire property will be granted by phone.

Checklist pertaining proposed habitat conservation lease:

Checklist	Yes	No*
Proposed Conservation lease is being made aware to adjacent landowners for review and comment?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The habitat conservation lease meets the requirement of at least 50% Priority Habitat?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landowner agrees to meet Conservation Requirements listed in PEA and as laid out in the standard lease agreement?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landowner agrees to provide at least the minimum Public Access Requirement?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Environment impacts of this proposed habitat conservation lease, including to wildlife habitats and associated ecological functions for soil, water, and air are consistent with conclusions analyzed in the PEA (pages 18-20)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Environment impacts of this proposed habitat conservation lease, including to land uses, profitability, community, and public service are consistent with conclusions analyzed in the PEA (pages 20-23)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impacts and anticipated benefits of this proposed habitat conservation lease are consistent with the Narrative Evaluation and Comment in the PEA (page 24).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*For any of the above criteria, if “No” was selected, provide explanation and additional information:

Public comment period details:

The public comment period begins on the date of publication on the FWP and Environmental Quality Council (EQC) website. Written or e-mailed comments will be accepted through the last day of the public comment period, as listed below:

Date Published: March 25, 2024

Length of Public Comment Period: 30 days

Public Comment Period Begins: March 25, 2024

Public Comment Period Ends: April 23, 2024

Public Meeting Date: April 18, 2024, 12:00pm (noon)
Public Meeting Location: Ranchers Stewardship Alliance office (across from the post office)
121 S. 2nd St E
Malta, MT 59538

Link to Join the meeting virtually:

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/88910739202?pwd=OEEveUZTdUNvT1MwSkdDa2pObW9KQT09>

Where to submit Comments on the Proposed Lease:

Name: Thomas Sutton

Email: Thomas.Sutton@mt.gov

Mailing Address:

Montana FWP

Attn: Mark French Habitat Lease

1 Airport Road

Glasgow, MT 59230

Website: <https://fwp.mt.gov/news/public-notice>