

House Bill 2 Questions and Answers from February 8, 2021

Natural Resources and Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee

Q: What is the funding source you use to pay APHIS Wildlife Services?

A: It is the wolf depredation account and, pursuant to 87-1-217 MCA, is used for lethal action to take problem wolves that attack livestock. We provide \$110,000. Any unspent or unencumbered money at the end of the fiscal year must remain in the account.

Revenue sources are:

50% of each Class E-1 resident wolf license, and

50% of each Class E-2 nonresident wolf license.

Q: How many modified positions does FWP have and are they filled? What are they? For the past five years, how many have been converted to base?

A:

Modified Position Tables for FWP							
	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	Vacant	Converted to Base
01_TSD	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
03_Fisheries	22.26	22.76	106.90	107.60	21.43	4.88	0.00
04_Enforcement	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	0.00
05_Wildlife	11.50	12.50	8.60	9.50	12.71	2.78	7.10
06_Parks	1.00	1.00	2.73	2.73	2.73	1.73	0.00
08_Com Ed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	1.00	0.00	0.00
09_Admin	0.00	0.50	1.50	1.75	2.75	0.00	0.00
	34.76	36.76	120.73	123.08	44.12	10.39	7.10
AIS accounts for 85.44 of the modified FTE in FY18 & FY19. These positions were received as permanent in FY20 & FY21 through HB 411.							

Q: Please provide an update/summary on "Unlocking State Lands." How was it expanded in 2015 and 2017?

A: This program provides a tax credit to landowners who provide access to inaccessible public lands. There is no budget or funding for this within FWP as it is a tax credit. You can find more information on page 36 of the PL/PW report.

Q: What is the department doing to make PALA successful?

A: FWP worked with the Private Land/Public Wildlife Advisory committee, landowners, and other businesses across Montana to develop the PALA program. We spent approximately \$21,000 in advertising costs, including radio, tv, print, press releases, interview with Northern News Network, direct mail, and online target marketing campaign to get the word out about this new program. The direct mail effort targeted landowners who had a federal (BLM) or state lease that contained inaccessible public lands. Additionally, our hunter access coordinators, biologists, and



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wardens are making connections with landowners who may qualify. Though the first year started slow, with the ARM finally approved on May 1 and an application period running till June 19, 2020, we still opened approximately 200,000 acres of inaccessible and under accessible lands.

Q: What is the process/criteria on PALA improvements for landowners?

A: The landowner provides us with a cost estimate for their project. We then work with our Design and Construction unit (D&C) and their price/cost list to get an idea of what historical FWP costs have been. Next, we negotiate with the landowner. For example, we use the D&C cost list for a starting point (e.g., yards of rock, culvert type and length).

In 2020, a landowner-provided estimate was \$15,000 for bridge repair. We negotiated that we would reimburse for half the cost if the landowner would agree to a 10-year agreement. We reimbursed the landowner once they provided us the costs and invoices/receipts for the \$7500. The total cost of the bridge was around \$21,000, but our reimbursement was based off what the landowner and FWP staff negotiated.

Q: What is the projection on 2021 spending for PALA?

A:

Region	County	Agreement Term	Sum of Total Public Land Acres Opened or Access Improved	Sum of FY2021	Total Contractual Obligation for Current Contracts
	3 Jefferson	1 year	640	\$1,250.00	\$1,250.00
3 Total			640	\$1,250.00	\$1,250.00
	4 Fergus	1 year	4,248	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
	4 Lewis and Clark	1 year	560	\$4,250.00	\$4,250.00
	4 Petroleum	1 year	4,820	\$5,750.00	\$5,750.00
4 Total			9,628	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
	5 Carbon	1 year	471	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00
	5 Musselshell	1 year	1,342	\$2,750.00	\$2,750.00
5 Total			1,813	\$9,750.00	\$9,750.00
	6 Chouteau	1 year	1,490	\$9,750.00	\$9,750.00
	6 McCone	1 year	5,196	\$19,500.00	\$19,500.00
	6 Phillips	1 year	1,827	\$7,700.00	\$7,700.00
	6 Valley	10 year	53,960	\$32,000.00	\$320,000.00
6 Total			62,473	\$68,950.00	\$356,950.00
	7 Carter	1 year	543	\$6,250.00	\$6,250.00
	7 Custer & Fallon	10 year	32,000	\$22,250.00	\$80,000.00
	7 Dawson	1 year	967	\$7,250.00	\$7,250.00
	7 Fallon	1 year	1,603	\$9,250.00	\$9,250.00
	7 Garfield	1 year	24,000	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00
	7 Prairie	10 year	65,702	\$17,500.00	\$175,000.00
7 Total			124,815	\$69,500.00	\$284,750.00
Grand Total			199,369	\$169,450.00	\$672,700.00



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Q: How much is in your base budget currently to fund other area offices? Break down by location.

A:

Regional Office Base Budget - Operations & Maintenance		
Region	Office Name	Total
Region 1	Region 1 Headquarters	\$86,362.00
	Libby Area Office	\$12,184.00
	Thompson Falls Area Office	\$6,631.00
Region 1 Total		\$105,177.00
Region 2	Region 2 Headquarters	\$93,244.00
Region 2 Total		\$93,244.00
Region 3	Region 3 Headquarters	\$99,880.00
	Butte Area Office	\$33,274.00
	Dillon Area Office	\$26,730.00
	Helena Area Office	\$19,775.00
Region 3 Total		\$179,659.00
Region 4	Region 4 Headquarters	\$83,816.00
	Choteau Area Office	\$9,519.00
	Conrad Area Office	\$10,340.00
	Lewistown Area Office	\$52,803.00
Region 4 Total		\$156,478.00
Region 5	Region 5 Headquarters	\$87,416.00
Region 5 Total		\$87,416.00
Region 6	Region 6 Headquarters	\$55,162.00
	Havre Area Office	\$42,781.00
Region 6 Total		\$97,943.00
Region 7	Region 7 Headquarters	\$88,308.00
Region 7 Total		\$88,308.00
Grand Total		\$808,225.00

Q: Provide a cost comparison between fleet and state motor pool.

A: The Fish, Wildlife & Parks Vehicle Fleet is comprised of the following vehicles by type:

Vehicle Class	FYE 2020
Total # of 1/2 Ton Trucks	270
Total # of 3/4 Ton Trucks	287
Total # of Utility Vehicles	29
Total # of Vans	3
Total # of Sedans	23
Total	612



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The Department of Transportation motor pool fleet is comprised of 1,008 vehicles, but only 730 are comparable to FWP fleet.

Vehicle Class	As of 1/12/2021
Class 04 Large SUV's	57
Class 06 Sedans	402
Class 07 Small Pickups	46
Class 11 Pickups ½ Ton & ¾ Ton	142
Class 12 Vans	83
Total	730

FWP uses a similar rate structure to that of the DOT motor pool. Below shows a direct comparison of the FWP fleet rates for FY 2022 and FY 2023 to that of the DOT motor pool.

FWP Fleet Rates for FY 2022 and FY 2023				
Vehicle Class	Assigned Rate per Hour	Usage Rate		
		Tier 1 \$2.12/gal	Tier 2 \$2.62/gal	Tier3 \$3.12/gal
Sedans	\$ 0.63	\$ 0.14	\$ 0.16	\$ 0.17
Vans	\$ 0.26	\$ 0.22	\$ 0.24	\$ 0.27
Utility	\$ 1.44	\$ 0.22	\$ 0.25	\$ 0.27
1/2 Ton Pickup	\$ 1.04	\$ 0.25	\$ 0.28	\$ 0.31
3/4 Ton Pickup	\$ 1.48	\$ 0.30	\$ 0.34	\$ 0.38

DOT Motor Pool Rates - FY 2022				
Vehicle Class	Assigned Rate Per Hour	2.26/gal	2.76/gal	3.26/gal
		Usage Rate	Usage Rate	Usage Rate
Sedans	\$ 1.16	\$ 0.11	\$ 0.13	\$ 0.15
Vans	\$ 1.45	\$ 0.14	\$ 0.16	\$ 0.19
Large SUV's	\$ 1.69	\$ 0.16	\$ 0.19	\$ 0.22
Pickups ½ Ton & ¾ Ton	\$ 1.31	\$ 0.18	\$ 0.21	\$ 0.24



DOT Motor Pool Rates - FY 2023				
		\$2.26/gal	\$2.76/gal	\$3.26/gal
Vehicle Class	Assigned Rate Per Hour	Usage Rate	Usage Rate	Usage Rate
Sedans	\$ 1.24	\$ 0.11	\$ 0.13	\$ 0.15
Vans	\$ 1.57	\$ 0.14	\$ 0.17	\$ 0.19
Large SUV's	\$ 1.81	\$ 0.16	\$ 0.19	\$ 0.22
Pickups ½ Ton & ¾ Ton	\$ 1.43	\$ 0.18	\$ 0.21	\$ 0.24

FWP leases five DOT motor pool vehicles year-round and most administrative travel from Helena uses these vehicles. Additionally, staff reserves motor pool vehicles regularly.

Q: What are the criteria used to identify vehicle replacement?

A: The cost per mile formula used for replacement purposes is generated through the fleet management system (Agile Assets). This fleet software accumulates all vehicle related operating expenses: fuel; maintenance costs (e.g., oil changes, car wash, tires, parts, labor); all repair costs, including mechanical; and accident repairs. Essentially, this is all money spent to maintain and operate the vehicle for one year. This annual dollar amount is divided by the number of miles driven during that year, equaling the basic MPG or cost per mile.

Q: How many hours do the pilots typically fly each year?

A: About 2,400 hours per year. FWP has three full time pilots, two of which fly approximately 1,800 total hours each year. The other is the Aircraft Unit Bureau Chief, and he flies about 300-400 each year. The part time pilots share approximately 400 hours each year.

Q: Why is the Aircraft Unit at FWP needed? Is it more cost effective than contracting the services?

A: The main reason the aircraft unit exists is safety. Our pilots are wildlife pilots and are trained and honed to fly wildlife, mountains, and Montana in general. Our accident record speaks for itself. We have had no fatalities in the history of the aircraft unit. Idaho, Wyoming, Washington, California, and Texas have had dozens of accidents and fatalities over the last 20 years using contractors. When you hire a contractor, you have no control over who the pilot might be and what kind of experience they might have. There are very few wildlife pilots left in the world and we have the best. Additionally, the Aircraft Unit is more efficient conducting surveys because we do not have the financial incentive to stay airborne longer as some contractors do.

The FWP biologists also have a difficult time finding aircraft to conduct summer surveys and fisheries work because of high-paying firefighting competition. There is little to no availability during the summer months because of the lucrative contracts offered by the Forest Service. Additionally, many fixed wing contractors are not available during spray season, as they make much of their money by spraying. If FWP has to rely heavily on contractors for our flying needs, we likely will have a reduced effort in survey and inventory.



Aircraft Cost if All Flights Were Contracted			
Aircraft Type	Avg Contracted Rate/hour	FY 2020 Flight Hours	Total Cost
2 place single-engine plane	\$283.75	808.4	\$229,383.50
4 place single-engine plane	\$283.75	155.2	\$44,038.00
Turbine helicopter	\$1,500	610.8	\$916,200.00
Total		1574.4	\$1,189,621.50

Aircraft Cost Using FWP Rates			
Aircraft Type	FWP Fleet Rate/hour	FY 2020 Flight Hours	Total Cost
2 place single-engine plane	\$357	808.4	\$288,598.80
4 place single-engine plane	\$357	155.2	\$55,406.40
Turbine helicopter	\$803	610.8	\$490,472.40
Total		1574.4	\$834,477.60

Aircraft Cost Comparison			
Aircraft Type	FWP Cost	Contracted Cost	Difference (FWP-Contracted Cost)
2 place single-engine plane	\$288,598.80	\$229,383.50	\$59,215.30
4 place single-engine plane	\$55,406.40	\$44,038.00	\$11,368.40
Turbine helicopter	\$490,472.40	\$916,200.00	-\$425,727.60
Total	\$834,477.60	\$1,189,621.50	-\$355,143.90

Q: What is the cost of insurance for the aircraft unit?

A: We pay approximately \$44,000/year for aircraft insurance.

