MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION
AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: June 24, 2021

Agenda Item: Pheasant Releases

Action Needed: Endorsement **Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

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Background: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has administered a pheasant release program since 1987, whereby landowners or pheasant producers raise and release pheasants for population enhancement and expanded public hunting opportunity. Private landowners seek cost reimbursement through the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program (UGBEP). For fall 2021, FWP is proposing the purchase and release of pen-reared pheasants on private lands for population enhancement purposes, as well as state wildlife management areas for hunter recruitment purposes. These releases are intended to expand hunting opportunity on private lands and to be used as a young hunter recruitment tool during the youth weekend pheasant hunting season. The specific locations where pheasants will be released is still being determined, so FWP is seeking programmatic approval for pheasant releases in suitable locations.

Public Involvement Process & Results: FWP has not sought any general public input on this proposal at this time. The Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program Citizen Advisory Council was informed of the proposal during their March 2021 meeting. Upon endorsement by the commission, FWP would make this proposal available for public review and comment.

Alternatives & Analysis: The intent of this proposal is to expand pheasant hunting opportunity and to encourage young hunter participation. The alternative would be to not conduct these releases and forego associated hunting opportunities.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the commission endorse this proposal, allowing for further public input and associated analysis and adjustment as appropriate.

Proposed Motion: I move the commission endorse the pheasant release proposal, allowing the department to seek public input and conduct further analysis.