

Ruggles, Mike

From: Vance Drain <Vance.Drain.335200700@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 7:20 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

Hello all,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I also support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment. Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands.

Connected, intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will help protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I completely support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

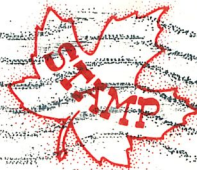
Regards,
Vance Drain
46 Beaver Creek Rd
Absarokee, MT 59001

4/23/22

KOOTENAY LAKE, Kuskanook, B.C.

The peaceful resort of today contrasts with the turbulent past before the turn of the century, when Kuskanook mushroomed as a railroad construction camp, and lake-head terminal. Several hotels, stores and houses climbed the hillside above the railway and sternwheeler landing.
Photo by E. Anderson

KOOTENAY
CARD



Mari Von Hoffmann
PO Box 704
Missoula, MT 59806

I support your attempt to buy the Allen Ranch from Shodair Hospital. It is a win-win for Montana!
Mari von Hoffmann

MT FWP

ATTN: Big Snowy Mtns
WMA Acquisition

2300 Lake Elmo Dr.

Billings, MT 59105



Printed in Canada by
KSS-8423



Ruggles, Mike

From: Bill and Polly Cunningham <BillandPolly.Cunningham.399415207@p2a.co>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 5:10 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Bill and Polly Cunningham
308 3rd Ave NE
Choteau, MT 59422

Ruggles, Mike

From: Michael Dayton <Michael.Dayton.356960344@p2a.co>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 12:50 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Michael Dayton
3107 E MacDonald Dr
Billings, MT 59102

Ruggles, Mike

From: Bob Barber <Bob.Barber.423799961@p2a.co>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 12:05 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Bob Barber
310 7th Ave W
Lewistown, MT 59457

Ruggles, Mike

From: Craig Flentie <Craig.Flentie.441437854@p2a.co>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 12:25 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I would like to express my support for acquiring the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for.

Regards,
Craig Flentie
208 Southland Rd
Lewistown, MT 59457

Ruggles, Mike

From: Don Thomas <Don.Thomas.301323873@p2a.co>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 9:33 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

As a longtime resident of Central Montana and an avid outdoorsman, I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Don Thomas
1898 Timberline Rd
Lewistown, MT 59457

Ruggles, Mike

From: Scott Laird <slaird@trcp.org>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 4:37 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Sorry we missed the deadline earlier today. Please accept our support for the Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition.
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
725 West Alder, Ste 1 Missoula, MT 59802 (406) 531-8344
Thanks, Scott Laird

Sent from [Mail \[go.microsoft.com\]](mailto:go.microsoft.com) for Windows

Ruggles, Mike

From: Montana Elk <mtelkcoalition@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 1:38 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Cc: Worsech, Hank; CommissionerRegion1@mtfwp.org; CommissionerRegion2@mtfwp.org; CommissionerRegion3@mtfwp.org; KC Walsh; CommissionerRegion5@mtfwp.org; CommissionerRegion6@mtfwp.org; CommissionerRegion7@mtfwp.org; Freeman, Michael
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MCEMC Big Snowy WMA EA Comment Letters
Attachments: Big Snowies Sign on letter Elk Coalition final.pdf

Dear Supervisor Ruggles,

I've attached our comment letter regarding the Big Snowy WMA EA. Please let us know when you get this email and let us know if we can help or answer any questions.

Best regards,

The Montana Citizens' Elk Management Coalition





April 25, 2022

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
1420 East Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT, 59620

Big Snowy Wildlife Management Area Acquisition

Dear Supervisor Ruggles,

The Montana Citizen's Elk Management Coalition is made up of several resident hunter-based rod & gun clubs, statewide organizations, individuals who are landowners, outdoor professionals, and many individual citizens of Montana who hold their wildlife in high regard. We strongly encourage the agency to advance the Big Snowy Wildlife Management Area acquisition to the Commission for their approval. We also wish to thank Region 5 personnel and the Lands Division for their outstanding work on this project.

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Shodair Children's Hospital deserve high praise for working with Fish, Wildlife and Parks in finding the best path forward. This proposed acquisition will enhance Montana's ability to manage chronic elk population challenges in one of our most wildlife-rich areas.

As Montana moves toward managing elk in a more effective manner, projects like this help extend our decades old dedication to habitat conservation and increasing public access to public wildlife by improving access to a literal mountain of public land. The 5,677 acres in this proposed purchase opens (and connects to) tens of thousands of acres of public ground in the Big Snowies. It provides opportunities to hunt elk and other wildlife while protecting critical winter range. The Coalition also finds that this project is critical in helping reduce elk /private land conflicts with neighboring landowners while providing better opportunities for hunters to disperse in order to increase the likelihood of finding elk on open land.

The Habitat Montana Program is Montana's best tool to ensure that wildlife and working landowners have the tools necessary to succeed to effectively managing elk in Montana. For 30 years, this program has increased access to public lands, while also ensuring wildlife continue to have places to thrive and working landowners have tools to help them stay on the land while permanently conserving over 470,000 acres between fee title acquisition and conservation easements. This project highlights the good that happens when hunters, landowners, and wildlife managers work hand-in-glove to find the best outcomes for everyone.

On behalf of our multitude of groups and individuals comprising the Montana Citizen's Elk Management Coalition, we strongly endorse this acquisition. Also, we extend a heartfelt thanks to Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the partners who worked tirelessly navigating this project forward.

CC: Director Hank Worsech, Fish & Wildlife Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Governor Greg Gianforte

Signed,

Jim Vashro, President
Flathead Wildlife Incorporated, Kalispell MT

Gary Ouldhouse, President
Anaconda Sportsmen Club

JW Westman
Laurel Rod & Gun Club, Laurel MT

Justin Schaaf, President
Keep it Public

Clint Nagel
Gallatin Wildlife Association, Bozeman, MT

Walker Conyngham, President
Hellgate Hunters & Anglers

Kathy Hadley
Landowner, Montana Artemis Alliance

Steve Platt, President
Helena Hunters & Anglers Association

Lisa Ballard
Outdoor Writer, Red Lodge MT

Kevin Farron, Chapter Coordinator
Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Andrew McKean
Outdoor Writer, Glasgow, MT

Marcus Strange, Government Affairs Director
Montana Wildlife Federation

Ruggles, Mike

From: Mike Carlson <mcarlson@midrivers.com>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 11:18 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

To MT FW &P..

I would like to comment on the Big Snowy Mountain WMA Acquisition Proposal.

I am opposed to this project and am aware of the location and the land.

First there needs to be a public meeting or series of these in various close-by locations to discuss this proposal with all interested parties. I would be interested in hearing what the county commissioners and other adjacent landowners have to say. My biggest concerns is for the loss of productive agricultural range lands to a one purpose use - wildlife. There is a loss of tax base and revenue source to the county that has to be absorbed by other landowners in the county. Any loss of any tax base affects money for schools, roads, and other county needs. This land use change is forever.

While I am not in favor of this unit being purchased by an adjacent large ranch or an out of state interest, I always support the purchase of a ranch by a young family. The long term economic potential of a new ranch unit lasts for at least one generation or around 40 years and longer. Besides producing food (livestock) there are significant sales and purchases needing to keep a ranch operating. Operating expenses for a ranch from living expenses, equipment and vehicle maintenance, purchases, and ranch maintenance and improvements are a significant local and regional economic boost. Those economic concerns are never even addressed with this type of proposal.

The economics of conversion to a WMA to benefit only elk and few more hunters in the fall doesn't pencil out. The purchase price of this ranch is huge and exaggerated. I don't feel this a good use of federal funds and state sportsman dollars. Then there are costs forever to the state FWP to manage this area. Then more hunting of elk will quickly drive them to neighbors. It will only lead to more elk problems.

The idea that this proposal and sale would benefit a children's hospital must not even be considered. It covers up the real issues such as the value of private property to support both agriculture and wildlife. This is the way it works in Montana and all of us landowners support certain levels of wildlife along with our land use. There is little to be gained and more local economic values to be lost with this proposal.

Thanks

Mike Carlson, Glendive, Montana

406-989-0019

Ruggles, Mike

From: Tanya Gates <iluvmt13@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 9:43 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition
Attachments: Big snowy comment.docx

Sent from my iPhone

April 25, 2022

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks
Ashley Taylor, FWP R5 Wildlife Biologist
Linnaea Schroeer, FWP MEPA Coordinator
2300 Lake Elmo Dr.
Billings, MT 59105
Fwregion5pc@mt.gov

RE Big Snowy Mountain WMA Acquisition

Ms. Taylor and Ms. Schroeer:

Please consider my comments for the above acquisition.

The benefits for acquiring this property are a treasured asset to wildlife, sportsmen, and other wildlife related recreation. The land is comprised of prairie grassland with a rich native vegetation ideal for elk, mule deer, pronghorn deer, and white-tailed deer, especially during the winter months. The allocation of this WMA would keep this land in its native state and create a conductivity with the northerly BLM's Twin Coulee Wilderness Area and the US Forest Service's Big Snowies Wilderness Study Area.

The permanent public access this WMA would create for public recreation opportunities is vast. The WMA would open up hiking, wildlife viewing and access to a largely land locked island mountain range with an elk population that is currently 900% over objective as stated in the EIS. This would allow an opportunity for the public land hunter to help manage this elk population with a quality hunt.

The opportunity to obtain this property and create the Big Snowy Mountain WMA is needed and warranted. I can't think of another ideal opportunity to use Pittman Robertson Funds and Habitat Montana monies. It truly would be a win for wildlife and recreationist to gain a new WMA.

Thank you for your time,

Tanya Gates
178 Huckleberry Lane
Florence, Mt 59833
406-544-0536
lluvmt13@gmail.com

Ruggles, Mike

From: Buster Front <busterfront@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 9:44 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear FWP:

I fully support the Department's proposal to acquire the 5,677 acre parcel from Shodair Hospital to ultimately become the Big Snowy Mountains WMA. Not only does this parcel provide a great mix of wildlife habitats, but the fact that this acquisition will improve access to over 100,000 acres of adjoining public lands is truly remarkable. I cannot think of a more beneficial use of federal PR and Habitat Montana dollars.

I would like to thank and acknowledge FWP wildlife biologist Ashley Taylor for her hard work on this great proposal, and recognize the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for their support and assistance in pursuing this acquisition. Lastly, I would like to sincerely thank Shodair Hospital for recognizing the value of public lands to Montanans.

Please adopt Alternative B in the EA and get this proposal approved by the Commission and State Land Board.

Sincerely-
Dave Yerk
PO Box 746
Choteau, MT 59422

Ruggles, Mike

From: Christine Ebeling <Christine.Ebeling.543193807@p2a.co>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 7:45 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Christine Ebeling
4700 Huckleberry Dr
Great Falls, MT 59404

Ruggles, Mike

From: Rudy Verzuh <Rudy.Verzuh.318491031@p2a.co>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 8:43 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Rudy Verzuh
312 29th Ave NE
Great Falls, MT 59404

Ruggles, Mike

From: Alan Hilden <Alan.Hilden.218142921@p2a.co>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 8:50 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Alan Hilden
720 Judicial Ave
Billings, MT 59105

Ruggles, Mike

From: Taylor, Ashley
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 8:42 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition
Attachments: Big.Snowy.WMA.Comment.2022.pdf

Forwarding to official public comment email box.

Ashley Taylor

Wildlife Biologist

Wildlife Division

[Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 5](#)

2300 Lake Elmo Dr.

Billings, MT 59105

O: (406) 473-2504 | C: (406) 794-1446

From: Jim Homison <jfhomison@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 9:38 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments <fwpreion5pc@mt.gov>
Cc: commissionerRegion1@mtfw.org <commissionerRegion1@mtfw.org>; CommissionerRegion2@mtfw.org <CommissionerRegion2@mtfw.org>; CommissionerRegion3@mtfw.org <CommissionerRegion3@mtfw.org>; KC Walsh <commissionerregion4@mtfw.org>; commissionerregion5@mtfw.org <commissionerregion5@mtfw.org>; CommissionerRegion6@mtfw.org <CommissionerRegion6@mtfw.org>; CommissionerRegion7@mtfw.org <CommissionerRegion7@mtfw.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

My comment is attached.

Thank you.
Jim

To All Concerned:

My name is Jim Homison and I live in Stanford, Montana. I have hunted the south side of the Snowy Mountain Range nearly every fall since 1976, long before living in the area. I consider myself a sportsman-at-large and I am not representing any organized groups or associations that you routinely hear from. I do happen to be a member of MTFWP's neighboring Region 4 Citizens Advisory Council.

I enthusiastically support the proposal for MTFWP to purchase this property from Shodair Children's Hospital and placing it in public stewardship as a Wildlife Management Area. Here are several reasons why I believe MTFWP should proceed with this wise investment of resources.

- Public access to the public lands on the eastern end of the Big Snowy Mountains would be greatly enhanced with MTFWP ownership of this property. The current lack of good public access is a major factor contributing to the issue in my next item.
- The hunting districts involved have a severe over population of elk, many times over objective largely due to lack of public access to both public and private land. This property acquisition would help MTFWP and hunters to bring the elk population to levels in line with agency goals.
- Block Management Areas and associated public hunting are non-existent in this area. This factor also contributes to the difficulties to managing the elk harvest.
- MTFWP acquiring this property and making it a WMA would enable MTFWP to perform habitat improvement projects such as prescribed burning for conifer encroachment reduction and aspen enhancement.
- Transferring ownership of this property to MTFWP would not remove the property from the property tax roles of Golden Valley County. MTFWP plans to allow agricultural use of the property. Impact on the local agricultural economy should be limited and the local general economy would likely benefit during the fall hunting season.
- Initial development costs (which should be relatively minimal) and annual maintenance costs (such as for fencing and weed control) would likely be derived from MTFWP **user fees (ie. the sale of hunting licenses)** along with possible grant money and partnerships. There should be no burden on the general tax payers of Montana with the addition of this WMA
- According to recent national news reports, firearm and ammunition sales are at all time highs. It follows that available federal grant money through the Pittman-Robertson Act should also be plentiful and available for this acquisition. Acquiring the Shodair property is a one time opportunity to acquire a very special and useful piece of property that would likely never be for sale again. The timing is right to move ahead with this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Jim Homison
Region 4 Citizens Advisory Council Member
Stanford, Montana

Ruggles, Mike

From: Jack Ballard <jb4montana@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 7:48 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I support the proposed purchase of the Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area. I support Alternative B of the Draft Environmental Assessment which would make it happen.

This is high-quality wildlife habitat in a place where more public access is needed. With Montana's growing population we need more public land and better access to existing public land to maintain quality recreational experiences, particularly hunting. This proposed WMA is a great fit for Habitat Montana funding.

Jack Ballard
PO Box 1343
Red Lodge, MT 59068
406-696-9841

Ruggles, Mike

From: Christine Mullaney <Christine.Mullaney.264636472@p2a.co>
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 8:09 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Christine Mullaney
103 Broadway Ave S
Red Lodge, MT 59068

Ruggles, Mike

From: Sharlene Inglis <Sharlene.Inglis.480010863@p2a.co>
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 9:53 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Sharlene Inglis
1715 St Johns Ave
Billings, MT 59102

Ruggles, Mike

From: Shannon Fisher <Shannon.Fisher.542596090@p2a.co>
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 9:24 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

I am an avid hunter, hiker, and enjoy camping in many of our public lands in Montana. I believe that all Montanans should have access to our public lands; and that most of us can never have that opportunity, is horrible. Please help rectify this and get Montanans access to the beautiful lands that we all share. Thank you.

Regards,
Shannon Fisher
518 Countryman Creek Rd
Columbus, MT 59019

Ruggles, Mike

From: Cliff Linster <Cliff.Linster.264636481@p2a.co>
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 4:21 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Cliff Linster
540 Avenue D
Billings, MT 59102

Ruggles, Mike

From: David Horn <David.Horn.235237927@p2a.co>
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 4:49 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
David Horn
643 Twilight Dr
Billings, MT 59101

Ruggles, Mike

From: Debra Miller <Debra.Miller.321250557@p2a.co>
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 2:54 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Debra Miller
2112 4th Ave N
Billings, MT 59101

Ruggles, Mike

From: Jazmyn Willis <Jazmyn.Willis.294952216@p2a.co>
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 12:39 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Jazmyn Willis
4029 Ella Ave
Great Falls, MT 59405

Ruggles, Mike

From: Sarah Bower <Sarah.Bower.482272258@p2a.co>
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 10:15 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Sarah Bower
1027 4th Ave N
Great Falls, MT 59401

Ruggles, Mike

From: Christine McKay <Christine.McKay.425678396@p2a.co>
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 10:04 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Christine McKay
203 Cooper Dr
Cascade, MT 59421

Ruggles, Mike

From: Harvey Nyberg <Harvey.Nyberg.218028577@p2a.co>
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 7:49 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am a lifelong hunter, angler, hiker, wildlife watcher and conservationist. Central Montana probably has as high a percentage of the population who are hunters and anglers as anywhere in the state and these folks want and deserve good access to large blocks of public lands such as the Big Snowies. Living in Lewistown, public access is very limited to the Big Snowy Mountains. This acquisition is going to make a substantial increase in that access.

Therefore, I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Harvey Nyberg
609 W Evelyn St
Lewistown, MT 59457

Ruggles, Mike

From: Olin Lyons <Olin.Lyons.420893347@p2a.co>
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 5:44 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Olin Lyons
10 Pleasant View Ln
Belt, MT 59412

Ruggles, Mike

From: Michael Enk <Michael.Enk.287465846@p2a.co>
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 12:14 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

As a longtime Montana resident, I am an active user of our public lands and am excited to learn about the opportunity to acquire prime wildlife habitats and increase public access to the Big Snowies with a new Wildlife Management Area. Therefore, I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (Alternative B of the Draft Environmental Assessment).

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Without question, projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for.

Regards,
Michael Enk
6432 43rd St SW
Great Falls, MT 59404

Ruggles, Mike

From: Larry Carter <Larry.Carter.433882354@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 11:21 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Larry Carter
614 1st Ave N
Fairfield, MT 59436

Ruggles, Mike

From: Moriah Simpson <Moriah.Simpson.360841981@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 8:52 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Moriah Simpson
113 Lone Pine Dr
Lewistown, MT 59457

Ruggles, Mike

From: Charles Jennings <Charles.Jennings.287607631@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 10:01 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Charles Jennings
317 Fox Dr
Great Falls, MT 59404

Ruggles, Mike

From: Randi Graves <Randi.Graves.506603433@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 3:06 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Randi Graves
136 Skyline Dr NE
Great Falls, MT 59404

Ruggles, Mike

From: Rick Kerr <Rick.Kerr.258819485@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 7:38 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Rick Kerr
PO Box 1276
Choteau, MT 59422

Ruggles, Mike

From: KURT STRASSER <KURT.STRASSER.216420285@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 2:33 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
KURT STRASSER
1201 6th Ave S
Great Falls, MT 59405

Ruggles, Mike

From: Joan Thomas <Joan.Thomas.542993468@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 2:27 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Joan Thomas
122 E Lake Ave
Lewistown, MT 59457

Ruggles, Mike

From: Edward Kelley <Edward.Kelley.320017881@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 2:10 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Edward Kelley
4052 6th Ave S
Great Falls, MT 59405

Ruggles, Mike

From: Roy Knudsen <Roy.Knudsen.492371545@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 1:17 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Roy Knudsen
1124 County Line Rd
Fort Shaw, MT 59443

Ruggles, Mike

From: Amy Olson <Amy.Olson.242847913@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 11:57 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

As a retired Air Force veteran who greatly values the immeasurable positive impacts of wild public lands and waters, I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

There's no such things as too much pristine public wilderness to support a healthy eco-system for all man, beast, fish and fowl.

Regards,
Amy Olson
33 Castner St
Belt, MT 59412

Ruggles, Mike

From: Patrick McGuffin <Patrick.McGuffin.218243226@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 11:52 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Patrick McGuffin
250 Ulm Vaughn Rd
Great Falls, MT 59404

Ruggles, Mike

From: Benjamin Simpson <Benjamin.Simpson.542965711@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 11:19 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I live in Lewistown and hunt and backpack in the Big Snowy Mountains, and I am writing to emphatically express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Benjamin Simpson
113 Lone Pine Dr
Lewistown, MT 59457

Ruggles, Mike

From: WENDY Kamm <WENDY.Kamm.259018023@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 10:48 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
WENDY Kamm
912 17th St
Fort Benton, MT 59442

Ruggles, Mike

From: Gordon Whirry <Gordon.Whirry.242143752@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 10:31 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

Having enjoyed hiking on the south side of the Snowies, I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Gordon Whirry
1912 4th Ave N
Great Falls, MT 59401

Ruggles, Mike

From: Gene Sentz <Gene.Sentz.215926627@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 10:23 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Gene Sentz
103 1st St NW
Choteau, MT 59422

Ruggles, Mike

From: clint loomis <clint.loomis.542954470@p2a.co>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 10:17 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
clint loomis
1116 W Evelyn St
Lewistown, MT 59457

Ruggles, Mike

From: Tom Ross <Tom.Ross.229060236@p2a.co>
Sent: Friday, April 22, 2022 3:30 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Tom Ross
645 Bear Crossing
Gallatin Gateway, MT 59730

Ruggles, Mike

From: Brad Poling <bradleypoling@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 6:29 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Shodair/FWP Comment

To whom it may concern

Although I support the mission of Shodair as well as supporting access to our public lands, I cannot support the purchase of the former Allen Ranch by FWP. There are very few of us public land hunters willing to put in the effort to hunt the public land near the former Allen Ranch. It requires work, but myself as well as a few other dedicated hunters have put in that work. The reason we have been successful in that area is because it is difficult to access. There are elk there, but not in the numbers people may think. In the words of Shodair CEO Craig Aasved recently in the Billings Gazette, "Elk are notorious for moving off any property where there is hunting and onto adjacent landowners' acreage to seek refuge, sometimes where hunting is not allowed." His statement is true and I do not want to see the public land adjoining the former Allen Ranch to suffer that fate. Easy public access through the former Allen ranch would push the elk out and only provide limited public hunting success. It would however, take away the opportunity for those already willing to put in the work.

I wish Shodair the best of luck and want them to be able to receive the highest offer to support their mission. However, I do not support opening public access through the former Allen Ranch.

Brad Poling

Ruggles, Mike

From: Jim Homison <jfhomison@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 9:38 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Cc: commissionerRegion1@mtfwp.org; CommissionerRegion2@mtfwp.org;
CommissionerRegion3@mtfwp.org; KC Walsh; commissionerregion5@mtfwp.org;
CommissionerRegion6@mtfwp.org; CommissionerRegion7@mtfwp.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition
Attachments: Big.Snowy.WMA.Comment.2022.pdf

My comment is attached.

Thank you.
Jim

To All Concerned:

My name is Jim Homison and I live in Stanford, Montana. I have hunted the south side of the Snowy Mountain Range nearly every fall since 1976, long before living in the area. I consider myself a sportsman-at-large and I am not representing any organized groups or associations that you routinely hear from. I do happen to be a member of MTFWP's neighboring Region 4 Citizens Advisory Council.

I enthusiastically support the proposal for MTFWP to purchase this property from Shodair Children's Hospital and placing it in public stewardship as a Wildlife Management Area. Here are several reasons why I believe MTFWP should proceed with this wise investment of resources.

- Public access to the public lands on the eastern end of the Big Snowy Mountains would be greatly enhanced with MTFWP ownership of this property. The current lack of good public access is a major factor contributing to the issue in my next item.
- The hunting districts involved have a severe over population of elk, many times over objective largely due to lack of public access to both public and private land. This property acquisition would help MTFWP and hunters to bring the elk population to levels in line with agency goals.
- Block Management Areas and associated public hunting are non-existent in this area. This factor also contributes to the difficulties to managing the elk harvest.
- MTFWP acquiring this property and making it a WMA would enable MTFWP to perform habitat improvement projects such as prescribed burning for conifer encroachment reduction and aspen enhancement.
- Transferring ownership of this property to MTFWP would not remove the property from the property tax roles of Golden Valley County. MTFWP plans to allow agricultural use of the property. Impact on the local agricultural economy should be limited and the local general economy would likely benefit during the fall hunting season.
- Initial development costs (which should be relatively minimal) and annual maintenance costs (such as for fencing and weed control) would likely be derived from MTFWP **user fees (ie. the sale of hunting licenses)** along with possible grant money and partnerships. There should be no burden on the general tax payers of Montana with the addition of this WMA
- According to recent national news reports, firearm and ammunition sales are at all time highs. It follows that available federal grant money through the Pittman-Robertson Act should also be plentiful and available for this acquisition. Acquiring the Shodair property is a one time opportunity to acquire a very special and useful piece of property that would likely never be for sale again. The timing is right to move ahead with this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Jim Homison
Region 4 Citizens Advisory Council Member
Stanford, Montana

Ruggles, Mike

From: Deanna Parker <coachdeannaparker@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 8:33 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Deanna Parker. I am a resident of Billings, MT, and an avid user of public lands - hunting, hiking, camping, kayaking, etc. are all vitally important parts of my lifestyle, identity, and well-being. I would like to add my support to the proposed Big Snowy Mountains WMA acquisition proposal. Montana has a long, storied heritage of sporting men and women, and public lands are a significant part of that heritage.

The Snowy Mountains are an amazing part of the varied, unique, and beautiful landscape of Central Montana. Unfortunately, as things stand now, they aren't able to be enjoyed by most of the people who own them - the public. Access is so bad so as to be non-existent in this area. In addition to keeping the public from enjoying land that they pay for with their tax dollars, this lack of access has allowed the elk population, per the environmental assessment conducted by FWP, to increase to approximately 900% over objective. This WMA would ostensibly give public land hunters access to those elk, making the acquisition of this WMA not just a boon for recreational users, but also a management tool for the land and the wildlife there.

Montana is changing. We can't stop that. People from all around the country and the world are coming here to make a home for themselves. As more and more people come to our beloved state, it becomes more important every day to provide and protect access to these places that are such an important part of our identity as Montanans. These types of projects are exactly what Montanans need, and what our tax dollar funding of the Pittman Robertson fund are intended to go towards. I applaud the efforts of the FWP, Shodair Children's Hospital, Habitat Montana, and all other involved conservation organizations. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Best,

Deanna Parker

Ruggles, Mike

From: anne tews <billanne@midrivers.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 9:20 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear FWP

We strongly support the proposed fee title acquisition of the Big Snowy Wildlife Management Area as described in the Draft EA, Alternative B. As mentioned in the EA, this property will provide substantial public access to an area where already limited access has been further reduced as nearby properties have been bought by absentee landowners. The acquisition is also important to provide protection of native prairie and woodlands that provide habitat for a wide array of plant and animal species.

We live in Lewistown and frequently visit the Big Snowy Mountains and have used all of the public access points. Additional access is needed here. Numbers of recreationists have been increasing in Central Montana but that increase has been accompanied by a reduction in public access.

Thank you FWP for proposing this acquisition. We hope we can start hunting, hiking and bird watching on this property soon.

Sincerely:

Bill Gardner and Anne Tews

624 NE Washington St, Lewistown, MT 59457

Ruggles, Mike

From: Jacob Parker <jacobp.parker@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 23, 2022 8:38 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Jake Parker. I am a resident of Billings, MT, and an avid user of public lands - hunting, hiking, camping, kayaking, etc. are all vitally important parts of my lifestyle, identity, and well-being. I would like to add my support to the proposed Big Snowy Mountains WMA acquisition proposal. Montana has a long, storied heritage of sporting men and women, and public lands are a significant part of that heritage.

The Snowy Mountains are an amazing part of the varied, unique, and beautiful landscape of Central Montana. Unfortunately, as things stand now, they aren't able to be enjoyed by most of the people who own them - the public. Access is so bad so as to be non-existent in this area. In addition to keeping the public from enjoying land that they pay for with their tax dollars, this lack of access has allowed the elk population, per the environmental assessment conducted by FWP, to increase to approximately 900% over objective. This WMA would ostensibly give public land hunters access to those elk, making the acquisition of this WMA not just a boon for recreational users, but also a management tool for the land and the wildlife there.

Montana is changing. We can't stop that. People from all around the country and the world are coming here to make a home for themselves. As more and more people come to our beloved state, it becomes more important every day to provide and protect access to these places that are such an important part of our identity as Montanans. These types of projects are exactly what Montanans need, and what our tax dollar funding of the Pittman Robertson fund are intended to go towards. I applaud the efforts of the FWP, Shodair Children's Hospital, Habitat Montana, and all other involved conservation organizations. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Best,
Jake Parker

Ruggles, Mike

From: Rick Hunt <rhunt441@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 22, 2022 3:07 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big snowy mountains WMA acquisition

I want to add my full support for this project! More public access in the Snowies can only be a good thing. I'm hoping this will go through; we will all benefit.

Thanks,

Rick Hunt
Kalispell

Ruggles, Mike

From: Lisa Bay <lisamaebay@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 22, 2022 2:15 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

April 22, 2022

RE: Big Snowy Mountains WMA acquisition

MT Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

To Whom It May Concern:

As ranchers in the Wolf Creek area, we are submitting the following comments of support for the purchase of the Shodair property for a new Wildlife Management Area in the Big Snowies.

Over two decades ago, we put our 4000-acre ranch under a conservation easement with MFWP. The easement protected the viewshed on Highway 434 as travelers head north up the Rocky Mountain Front, and allows hunters access to privately-held big game habitat. The sale of the easement also helped with the transfer of the ranch to the next generation.

We see huge (and similar) benefits to the proposed acquisition by MFWP of the Shodair property: our experience is that our BMA reservations fill up within minutes each year. There simply isn't enough good quality wildlife habitat open to hunters and other recreationists, and people crave and expect to see wide open spaces in Montana. Protecting extraordinary habitat helps ensure that coming to Montana will remain an epic experience for generations to come.

As avid horsemen we also are eager to ride and recreate on this beautiful property.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Best regards,

Mike and Lisa Bay

Mike and Lisa Bay
P.O. Box 88
Wolf Creek, MT 59648

--

Lisa Bay
(406)461-7620
lisamaebay@gmail.com

Ruggles, Mike

From: Marcus Strange <mstrange@mtwf.org>
Sent: Friday, April 22, 2022 10:38 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MWF Comment Letters
Attachments: FINAL - 2022 MWF Affiliate Sign On Letter re Big Snowies WMA.docx.pdf; FINAL - MWF Big Snowy Wildlife Management Area Acquisition Comments.docx.pdf

Dear Supervisor Ruggles,

Please find attached two comment letters regarding the Big Snowy WMA EA. One is from the Montana Wildlife Federation and the other is from the MWF Affiliates. Please confirm the receipt of this email and let me know if you have any questions.

Best regards,



Marcus Strange (He/Him)

Director of State Policy and Government Relations
Montana Wildlife Federation



(406) [916-2585](tel:4069162585)

mstrange@mtwf.org

www.montanawildlife.org [montanawildlife.org]

PO Box 1175, Helena, MT, 59624

Become a Wildlife Advocate

[\[montanawildlife.org\]](http://montanawildlife.org)

I gratefully acknowledge I live, work, hunt, fish, and grow in the homeland of the Niitsítapiis-stahkoi and Salish Kootenai. Visit <https://native-land.ca/> [native-land.ca] to learn more about the Indigenous land where you live.

Montana Wildlife Federation • Helena Hunters and Anglers • American Bear Foundation • Laurel Rod and Gun Club • Great Falls Archery Club • Traditional Bowhunters of Montana • Anaconda Sportsmen Club • Hellgate Hunters and Angler • Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument • Bearpaw Bowmen Archery Club • Bridger Bowmen Archery Club • Flathead Wildlife Inc. • Gallatin Wildlife Association • Public Land Water Association

April 25, 2022

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
1420 East Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Re: Big Snowy Wildlife Management Area Acquisition

Dear Supervisor Ruggles,

The undersigned organizations represent tens of thousands of Montana hunters who are part of the Montana Wildlife Federation (MWF) affiliate network. Our memberships are comprised of individuals who love Montana's hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreational traditions. Today, we write to express our unwavering support for the Big Snowy Wildlife Management Area (Big Snowy WMA) Acquisition. Our groups express our support for the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) adopting the recommended alternative and approving this purchase. This purchase of 5,677 acres has a willing seller and will be funded through the Habitat Montana program. Habitat Montana is Montana hunters' preferred method for protecting public access and quality wildlife habitat in perpetuity.

Golden Valley County of Central Montana is one of the most wildlife-rich regions of Montana and is home to the iconic Big Snowy Mountains. The area encompassed by the proposed Big Snowy WMA provides hunters with access to a truly wild, backcountry experience and provides critical habitat for native wildlife. For generations, hunters have been coming to the region to pursue elk, deer, and other wildlife. The next generation should have the same opportunities that hunters of the past have enjoyed in this special place.

The purchase of the Big Snowy WMA is an essential step toward ensuring that quality public access, critical wildlife habitat, and traditional land uses are protected. This proposal is the right thing to do, but it also ensures continued economic growth in Montana, where hunters contribute millions of dollars annually to local and state economies. In addition, Montana hunters agree that the Big Snowy Mountains are far too remarkable to be compromised.

With a willing seller and the incredible tool of Habitat Montana funding from hunter dollars, you have a unique and historic opportunity to protect habitat and

access to the Big Snowy Mountains forever, further preserving hunting traditions and opportunities for unborn generations. Thanks for all you do for wildlife conservation. Our organizations look forward to working with you to see this acquisition through to the end.

Sincerely,

Marcus Strange

Director of State Policy and
Government Relations
Montana Wildlife Federation

Steve Platt

President
Helena Hunters and Anglers

Joe Kondelis

President
American Bear Foundation

JW Westman

MWF Liaison and Board Member
Laurel Rod and Gun Club

Jeremy Garness

President
Great Falls Archery Club

Bill Siebrasse

President
Traditional Bowhunters of Montana

Chris Marchion

MWF Liaison and Board Member
Anaconda Sportsmen

Walker Conyngham

President
Hellgate Hunters and Anglers

Mikayla Moss

Executive Director
Friends of the Missouri Breaks
Monument

Nick Siebrasse

MWF Liaison and Board Member
Bearpaw Bowmen Archery Club

Garrett Serreday

President
Bridger Bowmen Archery Club

Jim Vashro

President
Flathead Wildlife Inc.

Clinton Nagel

President
Gallatin Wildlife Association

Drewry Hanes

Executive Director
Public Land Water Association



Protecting Montana's wildlife, land, waters, and
hunting & fishing heritage for future generations.

25 April 2022

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
1420 East Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

RE: Big Snowy Mountains Wildlife Management Area Acquisition

Dear Supervisor Ruggles,

The Montana Wildlife Federation (MWF) is the state's largest hunter advocacy organization consisting of thousands of Montanans who value sound wildlife management and our storied hunting and outdoor legacy. Together with our 19 affiliate organizations, we ensure the conservation dollars are efficiently spent on wildlife conservation-related activities, promote sound biology in managing our state's wildlife, and safeguard our hunting heritage.

We express our gratitude to the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP or Department) and the FWP Commission (Commission) for the opportunity to comment on the proposed acquisition of 5,677 acres North of Ryegate in Golden Valley County to form the Big Snowy Mountains Wildlife Management Area (Big Snowy WMA). This is a historic opportunity to work with a willing landowner, utilizing federal funds, and our state's best conservation tool, Habitat Montana.

MWF strongly recommends the adoption of **Alternative B: Proposed Action - For FWP to acquire the 5,677-acre property from Shodair Children's Hospital to create the Big Snowy Mountains WMA** for the following reasons:

1. **Protects habitat.** This excerpt from the Department's summary says it all, "the proposed property is entirely native mountain/foothill and prairie grassland habitats at the base of the Big Snowy Mountains with no farmed or crop land. It provides habitat for a diverse assemblage of species, including elk, black bear, mule deer, pronghorn, and at least 22 animals listed as species of concern. It is beneficial in maintaining huntable and viewable populations of game and non-game species, both migratory and resident." Abundant and quality wildlife habitat is critical to keep wildlife on public land, ensure health and diversity within the population, and prevent overcrowding.

2. **Improves access.** The acreage in the proposed acquisition is in an area with access challenges due to the nature of island range ownership, i.e., private property essentially surrounds the Snowy Mountain range with little public access. This acquisition will improve access to the public land and the elk herd, which is currently 900% over objective. The WMA will provide access to significant tracts of National Forest Service and BLM lands, which for all practical purposes are currently inaccessible to the public
3. **Supports agriculture and working ranches.** As part of the acquisition, FWP would honor an existing cattle grazing lease on the property, in place until 2031 with potential for future grazing systems as compatible with wildlife. A WMA would also provide a place for wildlife to take pressure off adjacent ranches.
4. **Broad support from Montanans and a willing seller.** This purchase has broad support from the public, both hunting and nonhunting. Montanans recognize the importance of protecting habitat for recreation and the environment and see this as an opportunity to permanently protect an area where public land is in short supply. Having a willing seller who sees the vision of preserving this landscape makes this project all the more worthy of support. In the existing, heated real estate market where extensive tracts of private land are acquired by wealthy out-of-state buyers, who frequently don't share Montana's public access values, a seller willing to go through the required public acquisition process is a rare find.
5. **Utilizes federal and state dollars.** The state has a textbook opportunity to use Pittman-Robertson and Habitat Montana dollars, money expressly set aside by hunters, to accomplish purchases such as these. Given that the money is there, and budgets are intact, the Department is in an excellent position to make this purchase with dedicated funds and without general tax revenue.

In closing, MWF strongly recommends FWP adopt Alternative B, complete this acquisition, and improve habitat and access for wildlife and generations of Montanans.

Sincerely,



Marcus Strange
Montana Wildlife Federation
Director of State Policy and Government Relations

Ruggles, Mike

From: Bill Long <bill@solidgroundconsulting.com>
Sent: Friday, April 22, 2022 8:25 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Friends,

I'm writing in support of the Big Snowy Mountains WMA acquisition.

Thanks,

Bill

Bill Long

Solid Ground Consulting
(406)-437-2938

www.solidgroundconsulting.com [solidgroundconsulting.com]

Ruggles, Mike

From: sadie361@bresnan.net
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 5:22 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

We strongly support FWP acquisition of the Shodair land and NOT sale to private parties.
Jim and Jeanette Van Meter
406 933 5790

Ruggles, Mike

From: Mike <mhg4556@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 1:55 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I support the preferred alternative listed in the environmental assessment for FWP to purchase this land and manage it as a WMA.

I believe it would be a wise use of Federal Pittman Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Habitat Montana funds for the benefits to wildlife and public access as described in this EA.

Sincerely,

Mike Getman
Lewistown, MT
Mhg4556@gmail.com

Sent from [Mail \[go.microsoft.com\]](mailto:go.microsoft.com) for Windows

Ruggles, Mike

From: Alan Scott <smoontana@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 1:10 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountain Land Acquisition

I heartily endorse this proposal for Mt. FWP to purchase this key piece of property. It is an important step in securing access to public lands.

Scott Moon
49 Harbin Hill Rd.
Kalispell, Mt. 59901

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android \[aka.ms\]](#)

Ruggles, Mike

From: David Pisauro <dsmt63@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 10:51 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountain WMA Aquistion

To Whom it May Concern,

The acquisition of this land would be of great benefit to sportsman and recreation enthusiasts. Access to public lands is of paramount importance to the residents of Montana. I am very much in favor of this acquisition.

Thank you.

David Pisauro
Seeley Lake, MT

Ruggles, Mike

From: Richard Gould <rgould8n@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 9:58 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear MTFWP:

I think it would be a wonderful idea for FWP to acquire the ranch. It would be in line with the Shodair and Allen legacy. It would also benefit generations of Montana hunters as well as preserve some grazing for the surrounding local ranches. As you know Montana is being rapidly bought up left and right, and we cannot predict what the bought up lands will be used for in the future. It is important to me, as a fourth generation Montanan, and as a descendant of pioneers, we preserve, as much as possible, what makes Montana great. Please acquire the property.

Sincerely,

Richard R. Gould

Butte and Quartz, Montana

Sent from my iPhone

Ruggles, Mike

From: Beth Madden <bethmadden64@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 8:44 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

To Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks:

As a bird hunter, wildlife biologist, and Montana recreationist, I fully and enthusiastically support MTFWP's proposed action to buy 5,677 acres in the Snowy Mountains in Golden Valley County – a perfect use of our Pittman-Robertson and Habitat Montana funds, in my opinion.

The short-grass prairie areas and foothills habitats north of Ryegate and east of Judith Gap are outstanding! Besides including critical winter range and year-around habitat for ungulates, this area provides high-quality habitat for prairie birds. I have hunted sharp-tailed grouse on state land blocks scattered north of Ryegate, and driven around wishing for more access than just these state sections. This property would afford more hunting opportunities for us, and exactly what we hope our license contributions to PR and Habitat Montana will go toward.

I also want to mention that this area provides critical breeding habitat for some imperiled prairie birds, such as the Chestnut-collared and Thick-billed (McCown's) Longspur, Sprague's pipit, Baird's sparrow, Lark Bunting, and others. I conduct the annual USGS Breeding Bird Survey routes at Ryegate and also northwest of Roundup, so I am familiar with the area. The prairie bird community in these areas is known to be an outstanding example of endemic breeding prairie birds – and we have lost more than 80% of the populations of these species mentioned since 1967. These species breed only in the Northern Great Plains, and Montana is turning out to be a last stronghold for them - we can be proud to be a part of protecting some remaining short-grass prairie habitat for them and other species. It is our responsibility. The USFWS has a 2018 Conservation Strategy for four of these prairie species, and this proposal would help meet their goals of protecting prairie habitat for them. See goals and objectives of this document here: <https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/migbirds/pdf/full-annual-cycle-conservation-strategy-for-spragues-pipit-chestnut-collared-and-mccowns-longspurs-and-bairds-sparrow.pdf> [fws.gov]

As outlined in the EA, this project is wholly positive, and I am supportive of the state managing this area as a Wildlife Management Area (WMA). I look forward to hopefully visiting it in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
Elizabeth Madden
408 Overbrook Drive
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 224-1012

Ruggles, Mike

From: Sonny Mazzullo <Sonny.Mazzullo.229059391@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 5:36 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Sonny Mazzullo
1330 6th Ave E
Kalispell, MT 59901

Ruggles, Mike

From: Jill Paul <Jill.Paul.242620978@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 5:38 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Jill Paul
3903 2nd Ave S
Billings, MT 59101

Ruggles, Mike

From: Anthony Pavkovich <Anthony.Pavkovich.215680035@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 5:43 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Anthony Pavkovich
178 W Boulder Rd
Mc Leod, MT 59052

Ruggles, Mike

From: Deborah Hanson <Deborah.Hanson.233297554@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 5:48 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

My husband and I have always treasured the Big Snowies. I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Deborah Hanson
1002 Pleasant St
Miles City, MT 59301

Ruggles, Mike

From: Tina Schock <Tina.Schock.542141698@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 5:54 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Tina Schock
2645 Burlington Ave
Billings, MT 59102

Ruggles, Mike

From: Grant Barnard <Grant.Barnard.220129969@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 5:55 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

Please accept my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are necessary for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Grant Barnard
422 15 St W
Red Lodge, MT 59068

Ruggles, Mike

From: Brian Harrington <Brian.Harrington.360440698@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 5:58 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Brian Harrington
501 Chancery Ln
Billings, MT 59102

Ruggles, Mike

From: eleanor guerrero <eleanor.guerrero.403270464@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 6:10 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
eleanor guerrero
24 E Palisade Basin Rd
Red Lodge, MT 59068

Ruggles, Mike

From: Don Baxter <Don.Baxter.542148961@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 6:21 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Don Baxter
1325 Wrangler Trail
Billings, MT 59105

Ruggles, Mike

From: Sarah Ryan <Sarah.Ryan.524329131@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 6:35 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Sarah Ryan
1735 Winne Ave
Helena, MT 59601

Ruggles, Mike

From: Doug Stange <Doug.Stange.335217504@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 6:22 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Doug Stange
2001 Chalk Buttes Rd
Ekalaka, MT 59324

Ruggles, Mike

From: Darci Colbrese <Darci.Colbrese.498019469@p2a.co>
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 12:07 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Darci Colbrese
3105 Ave F
Billings, MT 59102

Ruggles, Mike

From: State of Montana Quarantine Notification <quarantine@mt.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 6:52 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: End User Digest: 2 New Messages



End User Digest

Hi FWP Region 5 Public Comments,
You have 2 Spam - Quarantined messages.

Spam - Quarantined

Vance.Drain.335200700@p2a.co

[\[EXTERNAL\] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition](#)
[Release](#) [Block Sender](#) [Not Spam](#) [Report Phish](#)

Apr 19 07:19 PM

Darci.Colbrese.498019469@p2a.co

[\[EXTERNAL\] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition](#)
[Release](#) [Block Sender](#) [Not Spam](#) [Report Phish](#)

Apr 20 12:06 AM

Spam - Quarantined

The emails listed in this section have been placed in your personal Quarantine. Click Release to deliver the email to your inbox. To report messages that are not spam but are included in the Spam - Quarantined section, click Not Spam.

For more information please contact your agency IT staff.

[Request New
End User
Digest](#)

[Request Safe/Blocked
Senders List](#)

[Manage My
Account](#)

Powered by Proofpoint Protection Server

Ruggles, Mike

From: Rochelle Gravance <Rochelle.Gravance.215849434@p2a.co>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 5:34 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the necessary land purchase by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. I support Alternative B (the proposed action) of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Purchasing these 6,000 acres and bringing them into the protected public domain will open access to nearly 100,000 acres of intact and wild public lands. Intact prairie-to-mountain ecosystems are critical for wildlife species and are under-protected across the state, so protecting this area is critically important. The proposed WMA will protect and make accessible habitat for elk, deer, bear, and birds and for hunters, hikers, and wildlife watchers alike.

Projects like this are exactly what Habitat Montana dollars should be used for. I fully support the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA.

Regards,
Rochelle Gravance
565 N 9th St
Columbus, MT 59019

Ruggles, Mike

From: DeAnna Bublitz <deannabublitz@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 11:52 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I am writing with enthusiastic support of the proposal to purchase this land in the Big Snowy Mountains. Not only will this purchase provide protection for critical habitat and species but it will give access to an island range that's largely been inaccessible to the broader public.

I look forward to recreating out there in the near future!

Thank you,

DeAnna Bublitz

Ruggles, Mike

From: Kyle Reedy <kyle_reedy@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, April 18, 2022 7:21 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] "Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition"

Hello,

I fully support the Acquisition of the Big Snowy Mtn WMA, alternative B. It would great to have access here and hopefully public hand owners would be able to help reach FWP's elk management objectives in this unit.

Thanks,
Kyle

Ruggles, Mike

From: Richard Strong <rpstrong@centurytel.net>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 4:14 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I support the Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition.

Thank you,
Richard Strong
Bigfork, MT
406-250-5409

Ruggles, Mike

From: John Ryan <jeryan4@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 2:58 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I'm hopeful and excited for the acquisition and the creation of the big snowy mountains WMA. Let's open more opportunities for the public to access public land. More and more people are moving to montana, (it's not just the Californians)folks are being squeezed out of Idaho and Utah by growing populations and many among them are avid hunters and people who want access and open spaces.

As Montana continues to grow it's up to us to start preparing for the future.

Thank you.

JR

Manhattan MT

--

John Ryan
7172653347

Ruggles, Mike

From: Stephanie Prater <sprater@cmmccares.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 11:29 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I am writing in favor of the Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition. This is a great opportunity to preserve some of the best habitat and ensure it stays in public hands for future generations to enjoy. It will provide access to hunt a large elk herd where limited access traditionally exists. In addition to the huntable game species the land is rich with other plant and wildlife.

This is a huge win for Montana and her residents. Thank you for your consideration.

Stephanie Prater
416 Entrance Ave
Lewistown, Montana 59457
sprater@cmmccares.com
406.461.6949

Ruggles, Mike

From: C Richard Clough <rclough45@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 3:07 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I would certainly support this acquisition by FWP. This would enhance access in an area that is difficult and allow for more control of wildlife numbers. I would also support grazing on the property to provide a management tool for vegetation management. As a hunter and recreationist, this would be a great addition to our state's opportunities for outdoor enjoyment. I would urge the Commission and Land Board to approve this acquisition. Thanks for the opportunity to comment. Rich Clough, Box 1303, Choteau, MT 59422

Sent from my iPad

Ruggles, Mike

From: Patrick Costello <p.e.costello83@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 2:17 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Hello,

As a MT hunter, I am writing to express my strong approval of the Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition in MT region 5.

The increase to public access, wildlife-focused land management, and prevention of future housing development/sale to wealthy absentee landowners are the primary reasons I am in favor of this acquisition.

I am sure many messages are being sent regarding this subject, so I will leave it at that.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and have a good day.

Patrick Costello
Bozeman, MT

Ruggles, Mike

From: Dick and Nancy Raths <dick.nancy.raths@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 12, 2022 10:39 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear sir,

I am in favor of the land acquisition for a wildlife management area.

I live on the North side of the Snowies and have watched that land change hands into hunting preserves really limiting the access for hunting and recreation activities.

This piece of land being considered is one of the few available for access and would no likely have been gobbled up by the neighboring large land owner had the current owner not resisted selling to them thus effectively sealing off the bulk of the big and little Snowies in terms of dispersed access.

This piece of land, as a bonus, allows for better access to the two isolated sections of state trust land further enhancing its value to hunters and recreationalists.

While some of the land is typical front of the flat lands, that land does offer scenic and recreation value and preserves it from potential development. I am also encouraged to see grazing for management and the further development of water on the property.

Thanks for the work in considering the land for a wildlife management and access site.

Also, thanks to the current owner for their willingness to pursue providing for public recreation in the future.

Dick Raths
Lewistown, Mt 59457

Sent from my iPad

Ruggles, Mike

From: marty petritz <martyp3@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 12, 2022 7:42 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Please approve this land acquisition. This is a great opportunity to increase public access, habitat for wildlife and to use habitat montana funds that resident montanas have voted for.

Marty Petritz
2920 bayard
Butte, MT 59701
4064907611

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Ruggles, Mike

From: Joe L. Perry <circles@3rivers.net>
Sent: Wednesday, April 6, 2022 8:52 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Cc: Dale Tribby; Don Thomas; Doug Krings; Jeff Herbert; John Borgreen; Raymond Gross; Robert Wood; Steve Schindler; Tim Thier; jw westman; Joe Perry; Andrew McKean
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Snowy Mtn WMA

April 6, 2022

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
ATTN: Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, MT 59105

Responsible Parties
Ashley Taylor, FWP Region 5 Wildlife Biologist
Linneae Schroeer, FWP MEPA Coordinator
Fwpreion5pc@mt.gov

Dear Mses. Taylor and Schroeer,

The [Montana Sportsmen Alliance \[montanasportsmenalliance.com\]](http://montanasportsmenalliance.com) appreciates the opportunity to provide public comment on the proposed Big Snowy Mountain Wildlife Management Area acquisition in FWP's Region 5. As detailed in this letter, we offer our enthusiastic support for the department's pursuit of fee-title acquisition of this property, not only to provide permanent high-quality public access in a part of the state lacking such access, but as a tool to address pernicious elk-management conflicts.

We have been closely following the progress of this acquisition since it first came before the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission in August 2020, and applaud the department for not only working in the public's interest, but also for respecting the intent of Shodair Children's Hospital that this property enter the public domain. We further recognize the work of fellow conservationists at Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for facilitating this proposed real estate transaction.

We strongly support Alternative B in the Big Snowy Mountains WMA Draft Environmental Assessment, that FWP acquire the 5,677-acre property from Shodair Children's Hospital to create the Big Snowy Mountains WMA.

The department proposes tapping two sources for the purchase—at the appraised value of \$8.22 million—that are intended for just this sort of acquisition. Approximately 75 percent of funding would come from the federal Pittman Robertson Wildlife Restoration account, and Habitat Montana would be used for the remaining 25 percent. Both these accounts are funded by Montana sportsmen and women, who consider this property acquisition to be a long-term investment that will pay dividends in hunter days, responsive wildlife management, and deeper appreciation for Montana landscapes and wildlife. Time and again, Montana’s hunters and anglers have voiced unwavering support for Habitat Montana in order to make possible precisely this sort of visionary habitat and access project.

The EA specifically notes that the property would serve as “a gateway” to access adjacent federal property in the Big Snowy Mountains, essentially creating 100,000 acres of contiguous accessible public land. The property’s proximity to Montana’s largest population center “increases the probability it would receive substantial public use.” The EA further notes that “a growing interest in access to occupied elk habitat in this hunting district (Deer/Elk Hunting District 535) makes conservation of this land extremely valuable.” The document further states that “the lack of public access to elk is the largest contributing factor to the elk population being roughly 900% over objective” in the hunting district.

Alternatively, sale of this property to a private owner—the likely outcome of Alternative A—would likely mean “the ability to provide public access to the property would be lost.” And presumably elk populations, and resulting conflict, would increase in the district. In short, acquisition of this property as a WMA is precisely the sort of creative tool that FWP Director Hank Worsech has recommended the department pursue to address elk-management conflicts.

We support the perpetuation of the property’s existing grazing lease, and recommend the implementation of an adaptive grazing management plan that maximizes forage for both domestic and wild ungulates. We further support public-use restrictions that would close the WMA from Dec. 1-May 15 to allow wildlife undisturbed access to winter habitats on the property. Following what we hope is support from the Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Land Board, we welcome being involved in a hunter-management discussion that provides abundant access but also limits hunter intensity to ensure that elk and other wildlife remain on the property through traditional hunting seasons.

In closing, we appreciate the work and diligence the department has contributed so far to this project, and look forward to helping this fee-title acquisition come to fruition. Please include the Montana Sportsmen Alliance in any future correspondence and count on our support and assistance once the property becomes Montana’s newest Wildlife Management Area.

Sincerely,

Montana Sportsmen Alliance Leadership Group

John Borgreen, JW Westman, Steve Schindler, Robert Wood, Don Thomas, Doug Krings, Tim Thier, Andrew McKean, Dale Tribby, Joe Perry, Ray Gross

Ruggles, Mike

From: G Mose <mobilt13@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 2, 2022 4:14 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

This proposal is one of the best I have seen in a long time for providing public access in an area with elk numbers way above the management objectives. I struggle to find the right words to express how much I support the acquisition of this parcel. If this happens, the local economy in the area will definitely get some money from me!

Sincerely,
Gary Moses
Kalispell, MT

Ruggles, Mike

From: Daniel Kirkpatrick <dgetfit76@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 5, 2022 10:15 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisitions

I am writing to support and encourage this acquisition by the Fish Wildlife and Parks.

Sincerely,

Dan Kirkpatrick
Billings, MT

Ruggles, Mike

From: Mike Mershon <mtnkid82@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 5, 2022 9:02 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I am writing to encourage the endorsement of the acquisition of the Big Snowy Mountains WMA by FWP. We need to be doing everything we can to bolster wildlife habitat and winter range, increase accessibility to public lands and protect native undeveloped open spaces. This new WMA would help with all of that in addition to being a shining example of varied interests such as Shodair Childrens Hospital and RMEF working together for the betterment of us all.

The price to acquire the land will be covered through the federal excise tax of the Pittmann Robertson fund and the Habitat Montana fund, which is funded by sportsmen's hunting licenses and is the states premiere program for funding these purchases. The Habitat Montana is widely supported and deeply valued by Montana sportsmen who want to see the fund utilized for projects like the Big Snowy Mountains WMA.

This proposal saw wide support during the endorsement by Montana Fish and Wildlife commission in 2020 and that support continues today. Demand for access to prime habitat, such as what will be provided here, in a portion of the state where access is already limited will only increase with time

Thank you for your time and please support the acquisition of the Big Snowy Mountains WMA.

Mike Mershon

Ruggles, Mike

From: DOREEN BIGLEN <BIGLEN3@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, April 4, 2022 8:47 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

From Ronald T. Biglen, 114 Badger In. Lewistown Mt.
To FWP ,
Please do buy the Big Snowy Mountain Acquisition. We do
Desperately need more access into Big Snowy's .
Thank You

Sent from [Mail \[go.microsoft.com\]](mailto:go.microsoft.com) for Windows

Ruggles, Mike

From: Koeshall, Samuel <skoeshal@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 4, 2022 5:23 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Ms. Taylor and Ms. Schroeer:

I would like to voice my support for the Big Snowy Mountains WMA land purchase. With this piece of land being in central MT, where a large majority of our elk issues arise from. The 5,677 acres in question north of Ryegate and at the base of the Big Snowy Mountains consist of roughly 2,500 forested acres and 3,177 acres of prairie rangeland, an ideal mix for big game habitat and winter range. Adjacent to the north of this property is BLM's Twin Coulee Wilderness Area and the US Forest Service's Big Snowies Wilderness Study Area. Adding this WMA would create a wild lands and wildlife-rich complex of more than 100,000 acres, with even more public lands to the northwest.

This land purchase would increase the amount of public land available to the general public, set aside winter range that will hopefully decrease pasture and crop damage on nearby farms and ranches, and finally, increases the amount of prime wintering range that wildlife can count on in the Snowy Mountains.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on this future project,

Samuel Thomas Koeshall

*Research Associate and PhD Student
Sustainable Cropping Systems Lab
Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences
Montana State University - Bozeman*

cell: (423)-767-8568 email: samuel.koeshall@student.montana.edu

Ruggles, Mike

From: Travis Hall <writing@travishall.org>
Sent: Monday, April 4, 2022 2:54 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Hello,

I am emailing to voice my support for FWP's proposed acquisition of 5,677 acres of land in the foothills of the Bog Snowy Mountains currently owned by Shodair Children's Hospital.

The public access to over objective elk populations that this acquisition would provide will greatly benefit the wildlife resource and the people of Montana.

The continued habitat connectivity that this acquisition will allow is absolutely essential for the long term viability of not just elk, but many other prairie species.

I fully support FWP's plan to close the WMA from Jan into mid May to protect the valuable wintering grounds from year round human encroachment.

It is my belief that there are few better uses of FWP-allocated funds than the acquisition of new land for the benefit and enjoyment of the citizenry of our great state.

I would like to applaud all FWP staffers involved in the effort. All Montanans owe a debt of gratitude to the current and previous landowners for their willingness to convey this property to a buyer who will hold it in trust for the public in perpetuity.

Sincerely,

--

Travis Hall

Writer

travishall.org [[travishall.org](mailto:writing@travishall.org)]

Ruggles, Mike

From: c merker <c_merker@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 4, 2022 10:35 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I strongly support this purchase.

This is a tremendous opportunity for the non-landowner hunter to access the notoriously difficult to enter Snowy Mountains. Wealthy landowners, many non-resident have made 1) elk populations over objective, and 2) access supremely difficult to rectify the situation. Buying the property would greatly help change this. As Covid showed us there is an always increasing demand for public outdoor recreation. Buying properties such as this should be a priority for FWP and other public resource agencies. As the human population continues to ever grow, we need to invest in properties such as this for the future before they are no longer available.

Chris Merker
Lewistown
Sent from my iPad

Ruggles, Mike

From: Rochelle Gravance <rochelle@rochellegravance.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 2, 2022 2:47 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks,

I am in support of the acquisition of the Big Snowy Mountains Wildlife Management Area.

Every opportunity you get to purchase prime wildlife habitat in support of wildlife and preserving wild public lands while preventing subdividing, I will fully support.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rochelle Gravance
MMH Graduate 2020

Ruggles, Mike

From: pdrakeinmt@aol.com
Sent: Saturday, April 2, 2022 2:05 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition
Attachments: Comments on Environmental Assessment for WMA.docx

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the attached comments.

Paul Drake
367 Swimming Woman Road
Ryegate 59074

406-459-5519

Comments on Big Snowy Mountains WMA - Environmental Assessment & Proposed Acquisition

Introduction:

The proposed Snowy Mountain WMA will increase the acreage of public lands and make existing public lands easier to access than they are today. The benefits identified are improved opportunity for elk (and other species) hunting, wildlife viewing, camping and other recreational uses. The decision to place this property into the public's hands needs to consider whether these benefits are of enough consequence to justify its cost and risks.

Discussion:

Much of the original press on the proposal emphasized the access it would create to thousands of acres of public lands, helping to spur public support. The reality is that those acres are already accessible from the east and west of this WMA. And on the east side, those access points are quite close by, approximately two miles from its boundary. The proposal will make access to some of those lands easier, but it is a fact that they are all accessible without this WMA.

Easier access will increase hunting pressure, causing wildlife to move onto the safe haven of bordering private lands, and reduce the quality of public hunting where it is currently excellent. Those willing and able to hike/camp in a relatively easy backcountry environment have that opportunity there today. It's ironic that this proposal has strong support from an organization named "Backcountry Hunters Association". True backcountry hunters knowledgeable of this area are unlikely to find this a positive acquisition. As stated in the assessment, "proximity to Billings increases the probability it would receive substantial public use. Demand in this area is high for public access to elk, mule deer, pronghorn, and black bear hunting." I believe this assessment is correct, but I don't view it as a positive in that the eased access to the bordering public lands will negatively impact the quality of hunting already there. Simply making it more accessible doesn't make it better and will result in overuse.

Also, the proposal states that it's a public benefit to add an additional 5,600 plus acres to the State's holdings and discusses the rich flora and fauna found on those acres for viewing and appreciating as well as the hunting. It should be noted, that there is accessible State Land already bordering the property. In addition, there are more State Lands to the west along Swimming Woman Creek, to the east along Red Hill Road, further east on Cameron Creek and South on Rothiemay Road. All identified bird watching, exploring, and flora/fauna elements are found on those existing State Lands, easily accessible to the public and simple to find with modern navigation tools. Furthermore, there are decent hunting opportunities for all identified species on those properties.

A critical risk of the WMA is fire danger caused by increased human use. Fire is a real and growing danger in this semi-arid area which often experiences drought. Fire mitigation on the proposed WMA would have to be significant to keep a fire started on the WMA from spreading to the heavily timbered surrounding lands. Response times to deal with an emergency in the area are likely to be delayed given its remoteness, rural nature and the counties dependence on volunteer responders.

Summary:

The benefits of this WMA are limited as most of those exist without the burden of additional State Lands. There are consequential issues described above (and below in the Environmental Review Checklist comments) that outweigh its benefits. The State should not move forward with this purchase.

Additional comments specific to the Environmental Review Checklist:

Section A: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. AIR

a. ...deterioration of ambient air quality?

Traffic dust for nearby residents along the graveled portion of Rothiemay Road will be increased directly proportional to the amount of new traffic created. This is not identified as an impact.

5. FISH/WILDLIFE

e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?

Increased human activity thrust through the east/west elk corridor along the south face of the Snowies may disrupt their seasonal movement. There is a clear spring/summer migration that moves East to West, and then another in the fall that moves back to the East. Elk use this to access calving grounds and summer ranges in Swimming Woman Canyon and other places to the West of their wintering grounds. Restricted usage should be late enough in the spring to allow the elk to calve undisturbed and migrate towards their summer pastures to the west. In late summer and fall (hunting season), early hunting pressure will expedite the elk movement towards the larger tracts of private property to the east.

Section B: HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6 NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS

a. Increases in existing noise levels?

Comments state minor impact by increased use and discusses that access will be mostly walk in and there are no residences impacted. The people who live right next to Rothiemay Road, already have noise and dust issues to contend with, a significant increase in traffic to and from this WMA will make it much worse. There is a planned residence that borders the proposed WMA at the intersection of Rothiemay and Judith Gap roads, where a well was recently dug. This will impact that owner as hunters arrive to park and access the WMA at all hours of the day and night.

7 LAND USE

d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?

True at the moment, but a planned home identified above, will be impacted. Has there been any conversation or discussion with that owner?

8. RISK/HEALTH/HAZARDS

b. Effect on existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?

This is identified as “none” in the review. This seems to underappreciate the additional risks of needing fire, law enforcement or medical response services in the area. Has this been reviewed with local authorities to determine whether additional or enhanced emergency response plans (or resources) are needed?

9 COMMUNITY IMPACTS

d. Increased traffic hazards.....?

In the comment section, FWP doesn't expect the number of visitors to be substantial. Yet in the intro of the assessment, it says the probability of substantial use by the public is high? Which is it? If it's high, then has the issue of increased traffic hazards been fully addressed?

10 PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES

a...need for new or altered government services...?

FWP wardens are famously overburdened during hunting seasons and this adds to the work of thinly spread wardens. Simply because they are already in the area, doesn't mean this will be effective.

11 AESTHETICS/RECREATION

d. Wilderness areas impacted?

Making a “wilderness” area easier to access certainly doesn't make it more of a wilderness.

13 SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?

There is an increased risk of fire danger as the use of the WMA will include increased human use in times of high fire danger. A fire in the area could be “extremely hazardous”. This risk seems to qualify as one to be identified and discussed as an impact, but the review says there is none.

Ruggles, Mike

From: Montana Chapter <montana@backcountryhunters.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2022 1:16 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Cc: Doug Krings; Thomas Baumeister
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition
Attachments: Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition.pdf

Ms. Taylor and Ms. Schroeer:

On behalf of roughly 3,000 dues-paying members in the Big Sky state, please consider the attached comments from the Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers re: the Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition, and our full and enthusiastic support of this purchase, Alternative B.

Sincerely,

Doug Krings & Thomas Baumeister
Board Members of Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS
MONTANA**

March 30, 2022

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Ashley Taylor, FWP R5 Wildlife Biologist

Linnaea Schroeer, FWP MEPA Coordinator

2300 Lake Elmo Dr.

Billings, MT 59105

fwpreion5pc@mt.gov

RE: Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Ms. Taylor and Ms. Schroeer:

On behalf of roughly 3,000 dues-paying members in the Big Sky state, please consider the below comments from the Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers re: the Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition, and our full and enthusiastic support of this purchase, Alternative B.

Our members value wild places, public access, quality habitat and the fair-chase hunting and fishing opportunities these things provide. It should come as no surprise then how excited we are for this potential acquisition and creation of a new Wildlife Management Area in one of the most elk-rich and access-poor areas of the state. We voiced our support when this proposal was in front of the Fish and Wildlife Commission in 2020, and we fully intend to continue to support this every step of the way until it's final.

The environmental assessment prepared by the Department shows very few and very minor negative impacts from this purchase proposal, while the benefits are enormous. The property is



not farmed, nor does it consist of any crop land; it's native prairie grassland offering prime habitat for a wide variety of wildlife including elk, black bear, mule deer, pronghorn - all things are members take great value in - plus "at least 22 animals listed as species of concern," according to the Department. In other words, preserving this landscape would offer both sporting opportunity and important biological value.

The Department's stated management plan lists both a) restricting motorized use to designated roads open for public use and b) closing the WMA to all forms of public entry from December 1st through May 15th each year for the benefit of wildlife; Montana BHA applauds both of these restrictions on behalf of what's best for our wildlife.

The 5,677 acres in question north of Ryegate and at the base of the Big Snowy Mountains consist of roughly 2,500 forested acres and 3,177 acres of prairie rangeland, an ideal mix for big game habitat and winter range. Adjacent to the north of this property is BLM's Twin Coulee Wilderness Area and the US Forest Service's Big Snowies Wilderness Study Area. Adding this WMA would create a wild lands and wildlife-rich complex of more than 100,000 acres, with even more public lands to the northwest.

The other two-thirds of the property are bordered by private parcels owned by out-of-state absentee landowners; public hunting on adjacent properties is rarely allowed, according to FWP's press release. Situations like these are likely a big reason why the hunting area this property resides in - district 535 - is significantly over the stated elk management objectives. Preserving this property and opening it to public hunting will not only provide incredible opportunities for Montana hunters, but it will also help with elk management concerns in the area.

The purchase price of approximately \$8.22 million is money well spent, and money that's available for exactly this sort of project. 75 percent of the purchase price will be covered by the Federal Pittman Robertson Wildlife Restoration funds, which comes from excise taxes on



hunting and shooting equipment, while the remaining 25 percent will come from Habitat Montana, the state's premiere funding mechanism for habitat conservation and public access work. Habitat Montana is funded by sportsmen and women from our hunting license sales, and hunters show up in Helena session after session to express their support for the program and what it funds. Projects like the one before us in the Big Snowy Mountains are shining examples of why hunters are so fond of this Habitat Montana program and happy to contribute to it.

We would like to thank Shodair Children's Hospital for their original vision and generosity which got this ball rolling. Our appreciation extends to our friends at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation as well for helping usher this project through.

In closing, this project speaks to all things Montana BHA cares deeply about and we support it with great enthusiasm; we cannot think of a better use for federal PR dollars or Habitat Montana funds than a project like this that will have significant and lasting impacts for wildlife, for habitat and for the sportsmen and women of Montana. We support Alternative B - for FWP to acquire the 5,677-acre property to create the Big Snowy Mountains WMA. We stand ready to assist in taking this across the finish line.

Sincerely,

Doug Krings, Lewistown, MT
Regional Board Member

Thomas Baumeister, Helena, MT
Vice Chair and Capital Leader



Ruggles, Mike

From: Steve & Konny Martin <sandk@itstriangle.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2022 11:27 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mtns WMA Acquisition

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed acquisition. I have hunted the Snowy Mtns and other places in MT for over 42 years. I have been a volunteer hunter education instructor for 39 years. Having completed a career as a forester with the US Forest Service, I am familiar with the natural resources of the area. I strongly support this acquisition as a key component of the WMA system in Montana. This area would provide recreational opportunities to both hunting and non-hunting public. As you are aware public access is very difficult on the southeast corner of the Snowy Mountains. It would help alleviate depredation on croplands by elk and other wildlife. I believe it to be one of the best parcels of land for these opportunities on the south side of the Snowy Mountains.

Thank you for considering my support of this acquisition.
Steven Martin
Harlowton, MT

Ruggles, Mike

From: paul burns <bznpaul@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2022 5:33 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains

Buying the 5,677 acres from Shodair sounds like a great chance for all Montanans to have better access to the Big Snowy Mountains. I'm all for it.

Paul Burns
1031 E. Olive St.
Bozeman MT 59715

406-587-8593

Ruggles, Mike

From: kriss <samjd@montana.com>
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2022 1:44 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I fully support the Big Snow Acquisition. The truth is they don't make land anymore and if we are to continue with public hunting, the public needs more land. Rich people don't need any more land.

Richard J. Douglass Ph.D. Professor Emeritus
611 South Crystal St.
Butte, Montana
59701
406 782 9060
406 490 9644

Ruggles, Mike

From: rattpak@centurytel.net
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2022 3:42 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

I highly support buying this property to insure access to Montana residents. The current Department and Commission seem to be more in favor of encouraging residents and non-residents to purchase large parcels of property and allow a dozen or so people to hunt a how elk and then give the landowner a few tags for bull elk that the rest of the people have to apply for for 30 or 40 years to possibly draw. This is a great chance for the average hunter in Montana. Please jump on this as soon as possible.

Thank you,
Larry Rattray
49168 Lake Mary Ronan Road
Proctor, Montana 59929
406-261-7199
rattpak@centurytel.net

Ruggles, Mike

From: Matt Schuyler <mschuyler@sthomesmt.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 27, 2022 5:31 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I highly support FWP purchase of this property and also commend the seller for not going to market for highest bid. Access is a huge problem all over and this would help tremendously.

Matt

Ruggles, Mike

From: Bert Otis <otisranch@wispwest.net>
Sent: Saturday, March 26, 2022 4:37 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains Wildlife Management Area ,Fee Title Acquisition

Dear Fish Wildlife & Parks Commission,

I support Alternative B: The Proposed Action – For FWP to acquire the 5,677-acre property from Shodair Children’s Hospital to create the Big Snowy Mountains WMA. What a great opportunity for the people of Montana to own a piece of property that they can enjoy from this day forward.

Please don't let this purchase slip away from the public.

Thank You

Bert Otis

PO Box 60

Emigrant, MT 59027

Ruggles, Mike

From: Bert Otis <otisranch@wispwest.net>
Sent: Saturday, March 26, 2022 4:34 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Dear Fish Wildlife & Parks Commission,

I support Alternative B: The Proposed Action – For FWP to acquire the 5,677-acre property from Shodair Children’s Hospital to create the Big Snowy Mountains WMA. What a great opportunity for the people of Montana to own a piece of property that they can enjoy from this day forward.

Please don't let this purchase slip away from the public.

Thank You

Bert Otis

PO Box 60

Emigrant, MT 59027

Ruggles, Mike

From: Bert Otis <otisranch@wispwest.net>
Sent: Saturday, March 26, 2022 4:31 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] "Big ,Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition"

Dear Fish Wildlife & Parks Commission,

I support Alternative B: The Proposed Action – For FWP to acquire the 5,677-acre property from Shodair Children’s Hospital to create the Big Snowy Mountains WMA. What a great opportunity for the people of Montana to own a piece of property that they can enjoy from this day forward.

Please don't let this purchase slip away from the public.

Thank You

Bert Otis

PO Box 60

Emigrant, MT 59027

Ruggles, Mike

From: Dean Blomquist <deanblomquist@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 26, 2022 2:01 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition
Attachments: Big Snowies WMA.docx

Greetings:

Attached are my comments regarding this acquisition. Good job on the analysis.

Dean Blomquist

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks

Attention: Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

March 26, 2022

I write in agreement and support of the Big Snowy Mountains WMA acquisition and Environmental Analysis. It seems to be rather difficult to come by the opportunity to acquire a property of this nature for the benefit of wildlife and the public. I think this WMA would enhance Golden Valley County as well as Ryegate, Lavina, and surrounding areas economically from additional folks spending some of their money and maybe even as an incentive to move here. Another plus is that the property will continue to be in agriculture providing state income from leases and would pay state and local taxes as if private. This property will provide access to other public lands where access is very limited by surrounding inaccessible private lands. With this access, during this period of unprecedented overabundance of elk, the public will be able to help manage elk numbers. Furthermore, this purchase will be accomplished through 75% Federal and 25% State funds designed for this purpose.

I recommend proceeding with the preferred alternative.

Dean Blomquist – 15 S. Barber Rd, Ryegate MT 59074

Ruggles, Mike

From: Mickey Carr <rdrunner_carr@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, March 25, 2022 10:04 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I agree with the purchase of the land to protect and maintain public access, hunting, and recreation in Montana. Too much MT lands is being lost to selling to private people moving into the state and our land becoming private with no access.

I am ok with grazing rights remaining in place but if they are allowed to drive in past the parking lot so should the public. Consider game retrieval routes like the CMR has.

Please manage the timber to prevent disease and bugs killing the trees. Consider prescribed burns to help provide more food for the animals and keeping wildfire risks lower.

Thanks

The carrs
PO box 1716
Trout Creek, MT

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android \[go.onelink.me\]](https://go.onelink.me)

Ruggles, Mike

From: mwc4275@gmail.com
Sent: Friday, March 25, 2022 2:46 PM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

To whom it may concern,

As a Montana resident I would fully support this acquisition of land. I feel this is a great use of funds. Projects like this would be a better solution to manage the elk population, rather than the extended shoulder seasons, in my opinion.

The Big snowies are such a wonderful area. I spent some time there a few years ago to hunt elk. I was never able to find any elk on public land. I spotted quite a few, but they were untouchable on private land. It was very frustrating to say the least.

I hope the agencies involved can make this proposal a reality. I would hate to see such a valuable piece of land sold to another rich out of stater.

Sincerely,
Mitch Campbell

Sent from my iPhone

Ruggles, Mike

From: joe rohde <bluetickjr@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 25, 2022 11:50 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

To whom it may concern.

I am in full support of the Big Snowy Mountains WMA acquisition. Access near the subject area is incredibly difficult. So much so that I currently don't hunt it much, but I definitely would if the subject acquisition happens.

I see the plan is to close off access from December 1 thru May 1. Besides being an elk hunter, I am a houndsman and lion season runs during a bulk of this period. Houndsman train their hounds to not run elk, deer, antelope, etc. The impact of hound hunting has been studied before and has a minimal impact on deer and elk, especially deer. I don't know about the Big Snowy range, but I would expect the elk to be down low during lion season and lion typically work the perimeter of herds and not right in the middle of them. Anyway, I would like to see a provision that would allow for some lion hunting to occur. Maybe limit it to the forested areas or allow lion hunting for at least one month.

As I'm sure you know, any such acquisition should include a thorough review that a public easement thru other properties to reach the subject property is guaranteed prior to purchase.

Thank you.

Joe Rohde
2750 Whiskey Row
Billings, MT 59101

[Bluetickjr@gmail.com](mailto:bluetickjr@gmail.com)
406-698-3431

Ruggles, Mike

From: kim latterell <kimlatterell@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 25, 2022 10:55 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountain WMA Acquisition

This email message should disclose my “yes” vote for the acquisition of the proposed Big Snowy Mountain WMA Acquisition.

I DO know this area a bit, since my family and I have hunted the south face of the Big Snowy Mountains since I was a very small child and I am now 68 years old. I also knew the original owners of this property for many years and I spent quite a few hours visiting with them through the years. I know very well their wishes for the long-lasting disposition of this great area. Those wishes were – that the area was to be left in perpetuity for use by the public to recreate thereon and to enjoy the landscapes and the wildlife as well as the peace and quite away from urban life. They were adamant that this property NEVER fall into the hands of the Wilkes brothers and their selfishly-acquired mass of Montana land around and adjacent to the Big and Little Snowy Mountains. Like myself, the original owners, envisioned this area to be left as one of the “last, best places” in Montana.

This is the people of Montana’s chance to make, not only the original owners’ vision come to fruition, but also the visions of the outdoor recreationalists of Montana come true. A purchase using Pittman Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act funding for 75% of the total purchase price is a wonderful deal; after all, that IS what Pittman Robertson was originally intended for. And the remaining 25% of the total purchase price to be paid with Habitat Montana funds – well, this is just the type of and quality of purchase that we all desired when Montanans set up the Habitat Montana Program.

This area is filled with absolutely gorgeous landscapes and such a broad and diverse level of wildlife, it would be a TRAVESTY to see this land lost to private ownership that will keep us Montanans out. The opportunity is here and now to purchase this land and to make many, many Montanans very happy by placing this land in public ownership in perpetuity, instead of sitting back complacently and watching a handful of people smile as they selfishly enjoy their un-shared use thereof by private ownership of this sacred area.

I say we make this proposed acquisition before the candle of time melts down and our flame of purchasing hope is snuffed out.

I say, “get ‘er done”!!!

Very sincerely,

Kim Latterell

P.S. I am encouraging my friends to take a few minutes of their valuable time to send a comment into your email address using the same email address and same subject line as I have used above, since, I do believe that we all feel mutually the same or at least very similar.

Sent from [Mail \[go.microsoft.com\]](mailto:go.microsoft.com) for Windows

Ruggles, Mike

From: Heather Marie <hmfoslund@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 25, 2022 10:26 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

I support alternative B, to acquire the land and establish a WMA.

Thanks!

Ruggles, Mike

From: prairiebear1 <prairiebear1@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 25, 2022 9:49 AM
To: FWP Region 5 Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Snowy Mountains WMA Acquisition

Get the land before the Wilks do.

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S9, an AT&T 5G Evolution capable smartphone