

Notice of Habitat Conservation Lease Proposal

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

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

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

For more information, please refer to the Habitat Conservation Lease Program web page:

<https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/habitat/habitat-conservation/lease-program>

A programmatic environmental analysis (PEA) and supplemental environmental analysis (SEA) were completed by FWP at the start of the Habitat Conservation Lease Program. This Notice serves to 1) inform the public and adjacent landowners of a proposed habitat conservation lease, providing an opportunity for review and comment (as required by MCA 87-1-241) and 2) document if the programmatic environmental analysis is consistent with the circumstances of individual proposed conservation leases.

Proposed Lease Information:

Project Name: **Williams Family Trust Conservation Lease**

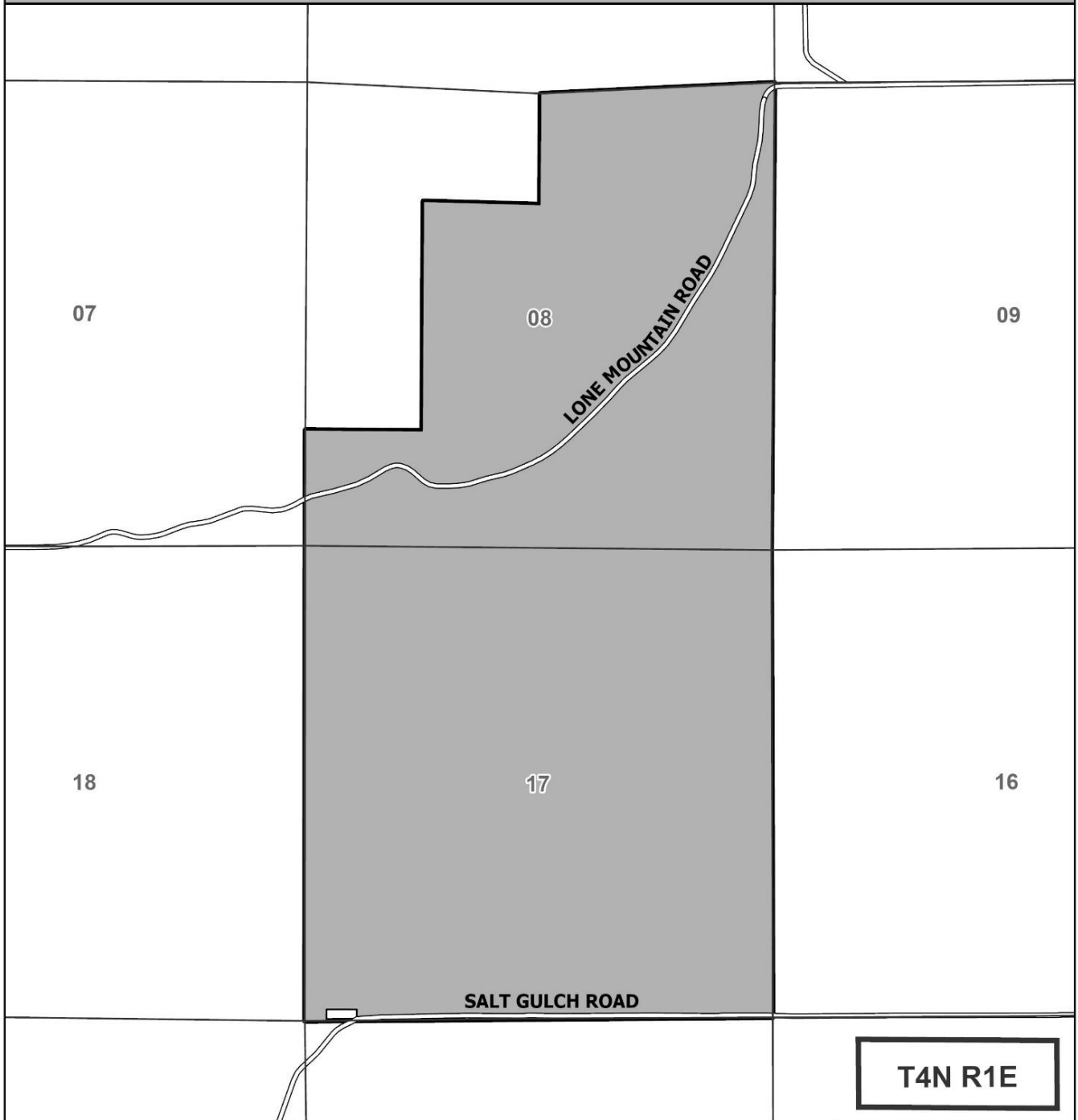
Location of Property: Toston, Broadwater County, Montana

Legal Description:

TOWNSHIP 4 NORTH, RANGE 1 EAST, P.M.M., BROADWATER COUNTY, MONTANA

Parcel 1: Section 8: E½, E½SW¼, SW¼SW¼, SE¼NW¼

Parcel 2: Section 17: ALL

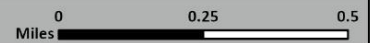


- Sections
- Property Boundary
- Roads
- Rangeland
- Excluded



Map Produced 7/1/2024

Lease data and rivers from Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks. Land ownership, public lands, and TRS data from Montana State Library. Roads from MDT.



Duration of Lease: 40 years

Approximate Acres Proposed To be Enrolled: 1,114

Approximate Acres of Priority Habitat: 1,109

Approximate Acres by Land Type: 1,114

Rangeland	1,114
Total	1,114

Public Access details:

As part of this Habitat Conservation Lease, the landowner agrees to allow a minimum of 48 recreation days to the public each year. At least 16 of those recreation days will be for hunting from September 1- January 1. The landowner may also choose to offer the 32 remaining recreation days for hunting during that time.

This property is currently enrolled as part of the Williams Ranch Type 1 Block Management Area and public access for hunting will continue in this same manner. Access will also be allowed for hiking (foot-access from the county road that runs through the property) outside of the hunting season. Individuals will need to register at a sign-in box when accessing the property.

If the property is withdrawn from Block Management at some point, or if the situation with access outside of the hunting season changes, a contact name and phone number will be provided for the public to obtain permission for access.

Public comment period details:

Duration of Public Comment Period: The public comment period begins on the date of publication on the FWP website. Written or e-mailed comments will be accepted through the last day of the public comment period, as listed below:

Date Listed: July 11th, 2024.

Length of Public Comment Period: 30 days

Public Comment Period Begins: July 11th, 2024.

Public Comment Period Ends: August 9th, 2024.

Comments must be addressed to the FWP contact, as listed below.

Where to submit Comments on the Proposed lease:

Name: Adam Grove

Email: adgrove@mt.gov

Mailing Address:

Montana FWP

Attn: Williams Habitat Lease

P.O. Box 998

Townsend, MT 59644

Public Meeting Date: July 23, 2024, 6:30 P.M.

Public Meeting Location: Community Room at the Townsend Library, Townsend, MT

Virtual Link: <https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/82279094219?pwd=fNNuA0gBEVIJHXO4unSaZrcGlfUIbn.1>

Meeting ID: 822 7909 4219

Password: 240251

Checklist pertaining proposed habitat conservation lease:

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

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

None.