

**Attachment D – FWP Scoping Response Letter**



*Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks*

2300 Lake Elmo Drive  
Billings MT 59105  
Ref: hn040-05  
May 23, 2005

Ms. Sharon Moore, Area Manager  
Southern Land Office  
DNRC  
Airport Industrial Park  
Billings, MT 59105-1978

Dear Sharon:


Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your department's proposal to dispose of certain DNRC Lands. I asked my field staff to review the proposals, and received the following comments on the parcel in T8S, R20E, Sec 16.

This piece of property is extremely valuable to wildlife. During at least the last 2 winters in excess of 200 elk have spent a fair share of the winter on or near that parcel. These elk move back and forth from the Silver Run Wildlife Management Area (WMA) so any negative impacts to the elk from development of the DNRC land would impact elk on the game range. The area also supports a relatively large number of wintering white-tailed deer and a smaller number of wintering mule deer. From the map it looks to me like a corner of the property runs off the east bench and onto the side hill above Rock Creek. This side hill supports stands of chokecherry that are frequented by black bears and moose. Mountain lions travel the edge of this property throughout the year. While I have not seen wolves on the property, I have seen them and their sign within a couple of miles on an annual basis. There was a wolf den less than a mile from the property just a few years ago. Additionally this area supports nesting blue grouse and gray partridge.

Given the rate of development in the area surrounding this parcel there is little question that the land would be sold to developers. Its value to wildlife would be lost completely and that loss would be difficult to mitigate.

If you have any questions about these comments, please call me at 247-2951.

Sincerely,

  
Harvey E. Nyberg  
Regional Supervisor