

PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF COSTS COUNTY ROAD STUDY

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) contacted several contractors that have supplied research services to some Montana Counties that are pursuing historic rights of way for public roads across State Trust Land. Based upon the information received from these contractors, DNRC has compiled a preliminary estimate of the potential costs associated with a hypothetical study of Montana County public road systems. Below is a synopsis of DNRC's estimate:

- The average cost for contracted services related to research, exhibit creation, and State Land application preparation was **\$40 per hour** (which includes estimated per diem and travel);
- The estimated hours to review County records, including road books, commissioner proceedings, maintenance records, etc. per County was **320 hours** (the equivalent of 8 weeks); and
- Assuming that there are approximately 35 counties with the need for such research and analysis¹, the anticipated cost of a County Road study for just those Counties would be **\$448,000** and take approximately **5 years**.

It is important to note that many factors such as the parameters of the study (i.e. providing a written report County by County; one state-wide contractor; map preparation, etc.); availability of records and management of those records by the County; and the size of the County could all affect the hourly rate and projected amount of time spent in each County.

It is suggested that Montana Association of Counties (MACO) be actively involved in any discussions related to a potential road study. MACO's oversight and guidance in such an endeavor would be necessary.

¹ Includes Counties without any recorded easements on State Trust Land - (5); Counties with few existing easements and no easements applied for under §77-1-130, MCA - (19); and Counties with less than 10 easements applied for under §77-1-130, MCA – (11)