

Conservation Land Steward		Agency/Program #: 5201-02-I1
		Division: Field Services
		Program: Land
Agency Name:	Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks	
Agency Contact:	Paul Sihler	444-3196
LFC Contact:	Rep. Ripley, Rep. Erickson	
LFD Liaison:	Barbara Smith	444-5347
OBPP Liaison:	James Chamberlain	444-1338

Program or Project Description:

The Field Services Division is responsible for implementing the department's lands program, construction projects, and landowner-sportsman's relations program. The aircraft unit, living with wildlife program, game damage program, and hunting access enhancement program, including the Block Management program and the Access Montana program, are under the jurisdiction of this division. Administration and implementation of disabled accessibility standards on department properties and the department's safety program are also a responsibility of this division.

Appropriation, Expenditure and Source					
Fund Name:	2008		2009		Approp & Expenditure numbers are as of August 29, 2008
	Approp.	Expended	Approp.	Expended	
General Fund					
State Special					
Federal Funds					Not Provided
Total:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

Legislative Goal(s):

Work cooperatively with private landowners to ensure delivery of the habitat conservation benefits and associated public recreational opportunities acquired through FWP conservation easements.

Legislative Performance Measures :

1. Monitor all conservation easements annually, completing field monitoring no later than October 15 of each year.
2. Review easement monitoring reports with appropriate Division staff (Wildlife, Fish or Parks), and send the reports and cover letters to all landowners no later than December 15 of each year.
3. Develop a chronological tracking log for all notices pertaining to landowner requests for approval of activities or operational changes, and send the landowner a letter of receipt no more than 10 days after the landowner's request is received. Provide case information to Division staff and, when appropriate, to the Legal Unit no more than 10 days after receipt of the landowner's notice, and resolve all requests within the time frame provided for in the conservation easement.
4. Coordinate with the landowner, Division staff and Legal staff to develop the department's position on all pending landowner requests for conservation easement amendments by August 1, 2008.
5. Work with Wildlife Division staff to refine, implement and document monitoring techniques for those conservation easement properties exceeding 5,000 acres in size and managed as commercial forestry operations.
6. Transition by October 2008 from a conservation easement monitoring program run by an FWP contractor to a program directed by the Conservation Easement Land Steward, with contract assistance on a limited, as-needed basis.
7. Develop by December 2008 an easement-by-easement list of public recreational rights on the easement property, along with the status of public recreational use of each easement property.

2009 Biennium Significant Milestones:	Completion Dates	
	Target	Actual
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Agency Performance Report:

1-All Fisheries conservation easements have been monitored; all but 6 Wildlife conservation easements have been monitored; the five Parks conservation easements remain to be monitored. We anticipate that all monitoring will be completed by November 15.

2-Review of all easement-monitoring reports will be provided to appropriate personnel for review by December 15, 2008. Year-end letters will be sent to all landowners following those reviews. October Update: We anticipate that this work will be completed on schedule.

3- A meeting of staff from Field Services, Legal, and Wildlife Divisions was held on June 23, 2008 to develop a coordinated protocol for all landowner inquiries and requests. Stewardship memos have been completed to summarize all pertinent landowner issues including requests that have been included in monitoring files, and they have been shared with local biological staff and Wildlife administrative staff. Work is ongoing.

4-Coordinate with the landowner, Division staff and Legal staff to develop the department's position on all pending landowner requests for conservation easement amendments. A meeting of staff from Field Services, Legal, and Wildlife Divisions was held on June 23, 2008 to develop a coordinated protocol for all landowner inquiries and requests. Work is ongoing.

5- The CELS is exploring state of the art methodology (combinations of remote sensing, aerial observation and ground monitoring) for monitoring forest easements and will work with Wildlife Staff and Regional Biologists, Information Technologies Staff, and other experts to determine what techniques are most effective, efficient and cost conscious for monitoring large forested easements. FWP will work with partnering organizations (TNC, TPL, DNRC, BLM and other private partners) to identify state of the art methods that will efficiently ensure the sound stewardship and monitoring of such working forest easements into the future. This will be a multi-year effort.

6-The CELS and past contractor met June 9, 2008 to strategize for the 2008 monitoring duties. The two have traveled together to all FWP conservation easement properties and have met with landowners and FWP regional representatives as often as is possible throughout the monitoring season in order to transition relationships and historical understanding in the most effective and efficient manner. It has become apparent that a good deal of work has become back-logged over the course of the past few years, and the division administrator has committed that contracted assistance will be available as necessary in the future in order to manage work loads.

7-Once the monitoring season has been completed, the CELS will concentrate on streamlining and organizing all conservation easement related records and all data related to conservation values and public access. Those files are to be organized during the winter months, and records related to public access will be obtained from a combination of block management staff, regional biologists, and partnering landowners. The target date for compiling and organizing these data is March 1, 2009.

LFD ASSESSMENT: On -Track

APPROPRIATION STATUS: This proposal was a single budget package. The agency should be able to isolate costs associated with this program.

COMMENTS/ISSUE: The FTE was hired later than originally anticipated. New dates for the measures were provided based on the late hiring. The project appears to be back on track. The workgroup may wish to question the need for on-going contracted services as the deliberations over this program during the last session were to replace contracted services with an FTE, not use both.

OPTIONS: 1) accept the ranking and receive another report, or 2) dismiss

Version	Date	Author
5201-02-11-CC-1	12/4/07	Smith
5201-02-11-CC-1	5/14/08	Smith
5201-02-11	9/24/08	Smith

Change Description
Workgroup Update