PUBLIC LANDS

LEGISLATOR NOTICE

The Legislative Services Division is required to offer a brief history on the subject matter of a bill draft request prior to drafting. (5-4-105, MCA; Chapter 309, Laws of 2017) The history must include related legislation introduced over the last five sessions and hyperlinks to the bill, hearing information, and fiscal notes.

Legislation can be complex and this history is not intended to be exhaustive. Please contact the drafter of the requested bill for more information.

Background Materials and Research

**Topic Summary**: This primer on public lands is broad and primarily includes legislation categorized by the subjects of “state lands” and “federal government”. Specific topics range from implementing fees for access to state lands, to incentives for enhancing access to public lands, restricting certain activities, providing criteria for or limiting acquisition of lands by the state, management of state and federal lands, the sale and exchange of public lands, and payments in lieu of taxes by state agencies to counties. The list includes some bills related to ‘public recreational access’ of land. However, a more comprehensive list of that type of legislation is included in the topic primer of the same name.

**Other Materials**: 

- House Joint Resolution No. 13 (2015): Roads, Land, & Big Game Harvest (final report); [interactive map and instructions for use](#)
- Senate Joint Resolution No. 15 (2013): Evaluating Federal Land Management in Montana (final report)
- [Public and private land ownership maps](#), Montana State Library, Sept 2016
- [Land management by county](#), EQC, May 2013
- [Payment in lieu of taxes payments by county](#), EQC, 2012
- [Coordination between the Forest Service and County Governments](#), USFS, 2014
- [Montana Public Lands Access Network](#) (MT-PLAN)

**Introduced Legislation**

2017

*House Bill No. 154* – (H) Died in standing committee - AN ACT PROHIBITING THE POSSESSION OF EXPLODING TARGETS ON STATE LANDS AND WATERS FOR THE PERIOD OF MAY 1 THROUGH OCTOBER 31; DEFINING "EXPLODING TARGETS"; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; AMENDING
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SECTIONS 23-1-111, 77-1-804, 87-1-301, AND 87-1-303, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

House Bill No. 204 – (H) Died in Standing Committee – AN ACT REVISING FISHING ACCESS MAINTENANCE LAWS RELATED TO VESSELS; REQUIRING A FISHING ACCESS SITE MAINTENANCE DECAL FOR EACH VESSEL OPERATED IN MONTANA; ESTABLISHING FEES AND USES OF REVENUE; PROVIDING A STATUTORY APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTION 17-7-502, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

House Bill No. 243 – (H) Died in Standing Committee – AN ACT REGULATING THE USE OF CERTAIN STATE TRUST LAND FOR HUNTING, FISHING, AND TRAPPING; PROHIBITING AN OUTFITTER FROM HUNTING, FISHING, OR TRAPPING ON STATE TRUST LAND NOT LEGALLY ACCESSIBLE; PROHIBITING A LESSEE FROM ALLOWING ACCESS BY AN OUTFITTER TO STATE TRUST LAND NOT LEGALLY ACCESSIBLE; PROVIDING PENALTIES; REQUIRING GAME WARDENS TO ENFORCE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT; PROVIDING THAT FINES COLLECTED UNDER THIS ACT ARE DEPOSITED IN THE GENERAL FUND; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 77-1-101, 87-1-504, AND 87-1-601, MCA.

House Bill No. 491 – (S) Died in Standing Committee – AN ACT CREATING A PUBLIC LANDS DAY TO BE RECOGNIZED ON THE FIRST DAY OF MARCH.

House Bill No. 498 – Chapter Number Assigned – AN ACT EXTENDING THE UNLOCKING PUBLIC LANDS PROGRAM; AND AMENDING SECTION 6, CHAPTER 346, LAWS OF 2013, AND SECTION 3, CHAPTER 392, LAWS OF 2015.

House Bill No. 597 – Chapter Number Assigned - AN ACT CREATING THE MONTANA PUBLIC LAND ACCESS NETWORK GRANT PROGRAM; AUTHORIZING DONATIONS; CREATING THE MONTANA PUBLIC LAND ACCESS NETWORK ACCOUNT; AUTHORIZING DISBURSEMENTS; REQUIRING BOARD OF LAND COMMISSIONER APPROVAL; REQUIRING ACCESS EASEMENTS TO BE HELD AND ENFORCED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION; EXCLUDING PAYMENTS FOR ACCESS FROM ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME; PROVIDING A STATUTORY APPROPRIATION; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; AMENDING SECTIONS 15-30-2110, 17-1-508, 17-7-502, AND 87-2-903, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE.

House Bill 651 – (H) Died in Progress - AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO PUBLIC ACCESS PROJECTS; CREATING A PUBLIC LANDS ACCESS ADVOCATE; PROVIDING DUTIES; REVISING USE OF WILDLIFE HABITAT FUNDING; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTIONS 77-1-202 AND 87-1-242, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

House Joint Resolution No. 11 – (H) Died in Standing Committee - A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA EMPHASIZING THE VALUE OF PUBLIC LANDS IN MONTANA TO THE STATE'S ECONOMY, RECREATION, HERITAGE, AND QUALITY OF LIFE; AND OPPOSING ANY EFFORT TO CLAIM, TAKE OVER, CONVEY, OR SELL OFF FEDERAL LANDS WITHIN THE STATE OF MONTANA.
Senate Bill No. 235 – Vetoed by Governor - An act allowing the land board to extend a coal lease if the extension is in the best interest of the state; amending section 77-3-314, MCA; and providing an immediate effective date and an applicability date.

Senate Joint Resolution No. 17 – (S) Died in Standing Committee - A joint resolution of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the State of Montana emphasizing the value of public lands in Montana to the state's economy, recreation, heritage, and quality of life; and opposing any effort to claim, take over, litigate for, or sell off federal lands within the state of Montana.

Senate Joint Resolution No. 22 – (S) Bill Not Heard at Sponsor's Request -- A joint resolution of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the State of Montana requesting an interim study of ways to provide access to public lands through legal means while protecting private property rights; and requiring that the final results of the study be reported to the 66th Legislature.

2015

House Bill No. 62 – Missed Transmittal Deadline - An act clarifying liability for unauthorized use of state school trust lands; increasing the penalty for unauthorized use of state school trust lands; amending section 77-1-125, MCA; and providing an immediate effective date.

House Bill No. 160 – Missed Transmittal Deadline - An act prohibiting the possession of exploding targets on state lands and waters; defining "exploding targets"; providing rulemaking authority; amending sections 23-1-111, 77-1-804, 87-1-301, and 87-1-303, MCA; and providing an immediate effective date.

House Bill No. 329 – Missed Transmittal Deadline for Appropriations Bills - An act establishing an interagency weed abatement pilot project to fund weed control on state land in coordination with nearby landowners; providing an appropriation; and providing an effective date.

House Bill No. 352 – (H) Missed Deadline for Revenue Bill Transmittal -- An act regulating the use of certain state trust land for hunting, fishing, and trapping; prohibiting an outfitter from hunting, fishing, or trapping on state land not legally accessible; prohibiting a lessee from allowing access by an outfitter to state trust land not legally accessible; providing penalties; requiring game wardens to enforce provisions of this act; providing that fines collected under this act are deposited in the general fund; and amending sections 77-1-101, 77-1-801, 87-1-504, and 87-1-601, MCA.

House Bill No. 386 – Missed Transmittal Deadline - An act revising requirements for the sale to or exchange with public entities of state parks, state recreational areas, state monuments, and state historic sites; providing notice provisions; requiring approval of the board of land commissioners for certain transactions; and amending sections 77-2-351 and 87-1-209, MCA.
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House Bill No. 496 – (H) Vetoed by Governor -- AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PUBLIC LAND TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLIC LAND CURRENTLY ADMINISTERED BY THE STATE OF MONTANA OR THE UNITED STATES, EXCEPT FOR CONGRESSIONALLY DESIGNATED WILDERNESS AREAS AND NATIONAL PARKS; REQUIRING A FINAL REPORT; APPROPRIATING FUNDS; PROVIDING EFFECTIVE DATES; AND PROVIDING A TERMINATION DATE.

House Joint No. 19 – Missed Transmittal Deadline - A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA EMPHASIZING THE VALUE OF PUBLIC LANDS IN MONTANA TO THE STATE’S ECONOMY, RECREATION, HERITAGE, AND QUALITY OF LIFE; AND OPPOSING ANY EFFORT TO CLAIM, TAKE OVER, LITIGATE FOR, OR SELL OFF FEDERAL LANDS WITHIN THE STATE OF MONTANA.

Senate Bill No. 215 – Missed Transmittal Deadline - AN ACT PROHIBITING FUTURE SALES OF LAND GRANTED OR TRANSFERRED TO THE STATE; AMENDING SECTION 77-2-302, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

Senate Bill No. 274 – Missed Transmittal Deadline - AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF FEDERAL LAND IN MONTANA; REPEALING SECTIONS 77-2-401, 77-2-402, AND 77-2-403, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

Senate Bill No. 309 – Chapter Number Assigned -- AN ACT REVISING THE UNLOCKING STATE LANDS PROGRAM TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC FEDERAL LAND; INCREASING THE TAX CREDIT FOR QUALIFIED ACCESS; REVISING CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION; AMENDING SECTIONS 15-30-2380 AND 87-1-294, MCA; AMENDING SECTION 6, CHAPTER 346, LAWS OF 2013; AND PROVIDING A DELAYED EFFECTIVE DATE AND AN APPLICABILITY DATE.

Senate Bill No. 324 – Missed Transmittal Deadline - AN ACT REQUIRING STATE RELIEF TO COUNTIES IF FEDERAL PAYMENTS FROM THE SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT ARE NOT DISBURSED; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

Senate Bill No. 326 – Chapter Number Assigned -- AN ACT REVISIONING LAWS RELATED TO RECREATIONAL USE OF STATE LANDS; REQUIRING PUBLIC NOTICE PRIOR TO LAND CLOSURES AND RESTRICTIONS ON GENERAL RECREATIONAL USE; SETTING CAMPING LIMITS; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; REQUIRING REPORTING TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL; AMENDING SECTION 77-1-804, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

Senate Bill No. 348 – Missed Transmittal Deadline - AN ACT REVISING STATE CONSENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF LAND FOR NATIONAL FOREST PURPOSES; REQUIRING COUNTY AND LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL; AMENDING SECTION 2-1-210, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND AN APPLICABILITY DATE.

2013

House Bill No. 444 – Chapter Number Assigned -- AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING STATE LAND LAWS RELATED TO ACCESS; PROVIDING A TAX CREDIT FOR QUALIFIED ACCESS TO STATE LANDS; CREATING THE UNLOCKING STATE LANDS PROGRAM; DEFINING PARCELS NOT PREVIOUSLY DEEMED LEGALLY
ACCESSIBLE; PROVIDING CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; AND PROVIDING A DELAYED EFFECTIVE DATE, AN APPLICABILITY DATE, AND A TERMINATION DATE.

**Senate Bill No. 155** – (S) Died in Standing Committee - AN ACT REQUIRING THE PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR ALL LAND ACQUISITIONS PROPOSED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS; PROVIDING AN EXCEPTION; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 23-1-102, 87-1-209, AND 87-1-218, MCA.

**Senate Bill No. 169** – (S) Died in Standing Committee - AN ACT REVISION PAYMENTS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS TO COUNTIES FOR LAND OWNED OR HELD UNDER EASEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT; EXEMPTING LANDOWNERS FROM PROPERTY TAXES FOR THE PORTION OF LAND HELD UNDER EASEMENT; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 87-1-218 AND 87-1-603, MCA.


**Senate Bill No. 338** – (S) Died in Standing Committee - AN ACT REQUIRING THE BOARD OF LAND COMMISSIONERS TO CONSIDER UNIQUE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL VALUES RELATED TO THE USE OF STATE LAND BY A STATE AGENCY AS PART OF FULL MARKET VALUE; AND AMENDING SECTION 77-1-202, MCA.

**Senate Bill No. 354** – (S) Died in Standing Committee - AN ACT REMOVING THE REQUIREMENT FOR A PERSON OR COUNTY TO PAY THE FAIR MARKET VALUE FOR HISTORIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY; AND AMENDING SECTION 77-1-130, MCA.

**Senate Joint Resolution No. 15** – Filed with Secretary of State - A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY EVALUATING THE MANAGEMENT OF CERTAIN FEDERAL LANDS, ASSESSING RISKS, AND IDENTIFYING SOLUTIONS.

2011

**House Bill No. 272** – Vetoed by Governor - AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF HUNTING ACCESS ENHANCEMENT FEES FOR FEE TITLE LAND ACQUISITION; AMENDING SECTIONS 87-1-270 AND 87-1-271, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

**House Bill No. 297** – Chapter Number Assigned - AN ACT EXTENDING THE TIME FOR APPLYING FOR A HISTORIC RIGHT-OF-WAY ON STATE LANDS; AMENDING SECTION 77-1-130, MCA; AMENDING SECTION
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House Bill No. 454 – (H) Died in Standing Committee -- AN ACT REQUIRING THAT AT LEAST 20% OF THE LANDS OR WATERS ACQUIRED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS BE MANAGED FOR MULTIPLE-USE PURPOSES; AMENDING SECTION 87-1-209, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

House Bill No. 506 – (H) Died in Standing Committee - AN ACT REQUIRING COMPLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION REGARDING FEDERALLY OWNED LANDS IN MONTANA; DIRECTING THE BOARD OF LAND COMMISSIONERS TO ACQUIRE FEDERAL LANDS NOT LEGALLY OBTAINED; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.


Senate Bill No. 353 – (S) Died in Standing Committee - AN ACT REVISIONING LAWS RELATED TO PAYMENTS TO COUNTIES FOR LAND OWNED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS; CLARIFYING AND ELIMINATING CERTAIN EXCEPTIONS TO DEPARTMENT PAYMENT; AMENDING SECTION 87-1-603, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

Senate Bill No. 409 – Chapter Number Assigned - AN ACT GENERALLY REVISIONG STATE LAND CABIN SITE LAWS; AUTHORIZING AN ALTERNATIVE RENTAL MARKET VALUATION COMPETITIVE BID PROCESS; AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF STATE-LEASED CABIN OR HOME SITES OR CITY OR TOWN LOTS; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; AMENDING SECTIONS 77-1-208, AND 77-2-318, MCA; REPEALING SECTION 77-2-319, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

2009

Senate Bill No. 254 – Vetoed by Governor - AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE STATE OF MONTANA TO EXERCISE EMINENT DOMAIN AUTHORITY ON CERTAIN PROPERTY POSSESSED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT; AMENDING SECTIONS 2-1-102, 70-30-101, AND 70-30-103, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.
Senate Bill No. 506 – (H) Died in Standing Committee - AN ACT REQUIRING COMPLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION REGARDING FEDERALLY OWNED LANDS IN MONTANA; DIRECTING THE BOARD OF LAND COMMISSIONERS TO ACQUIRE FEDERAL LANDS NOT LEGALLY OBTAINED; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

Senate Bill No. 353 – (S) Died in Standing Committee - AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO PAYMENTS TO COUNTIES FOR LAND OWNED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS; CLARIFYING AND ELIMINATING CERTAIN EXCEPTIONS TO DEPARTMENT PAYMENT; AMENDING SECTION 87-1-603, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

Senate Joint Resolution No. 6 – Filed with Secretary of State - A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO EXPEDITE THE FEDERAL LAND USE DECISION PROCESSES IN MONTANA, TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF TRADITIONAL MULTIPLE RESOURCE USES ON FEDERAL LANDS, NOT TO IMPOSE RESTRICTIONS ON ADDITIONAL FEDERAL LAND OR MINERALS THAT WOULD PRECLUDE DEVELOPMENT, AND TO SUPPORT FEDERAL LEGISLATION PLACING CHECKS AND BALANCES ON THE PRESIDENT'S POWERS TO DECLARE NATIONAL MONUMENTS.

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