

MINUTES OF THE LONG RANGE BUILDING COMMITTEE  
February 8, 1983

Side 13 The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. in Room 108 of the Capitol Building.

Members present were Sen. Mark Etchart, Sen. Matt Himsl, Sen. Jack Haffey, Sen. Bill Thomas, Sen. Donald Ochsner, Rep. Rex Manuel, Rep. Francis Bardanouve, and Rep. Bob Thoft. Rep. Gene Donaldson and Rep. Steve Waldron were excused to attend another hearing.

Also present were Ron Holliday, administrator of the Parks Division of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and Curt Nichols of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst's Office.

Mr. Holliday explained to the committee that, in order to fulfill lawful requirements and to carry out mandated responsibilities, the Department proposed six projects to be funded from Earmarked Licensed Revenue from the Cash Account.

Priority #29 (019)

This request is for \$500,000 to improve fishing access sites managed by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (see Attachment 1). The average size project dealt with by this request is \$20-25,000 and this appropriation would cover improvements of 20 of these sites.

There is a license increase bill before this legislature which would increase the revenue generated by licenses. If this bill does not pass, some of the requests lower on the priority list would be cut. Last biennium, the legislature appropriated \$25,000 for site improvements which was used to improve one fishing access site.

Priority #42 (063)

This request is for funding a 25% match of \$300,000 necessary to expend federal dollars for the acquisition of big game winter ranges (see Attachment 2). If the request is approved, the total capability for range acquisition would be \$1.2 million.

(147) Gene Allen, administrator of the Wildlife Division of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, explained in more detail the federal funding program. In the past, these federal funds had to be spent solely on Operations. This biennium, the Department is requesting that the Appropriations Committee fund Operations so that these

federal dollars can be spent on the acquisition of big game winter ranges. Range acquisition has taken one of the highest priorities so, if the proposed license increase is not passed, other projects would be cut from the Department's total request.

(250) Ken Knudson of the Montana Wildlife Federation voiced support from the Federation for the acquisition of big game winter ranges. Eighty-seven percent of the elk remaining in the United States are in the Northern Rocky Mountains and, because of this fact, elk herds are one of the most valuable and prized wildlife populations in Montana. Good wintering ranges for elk are disappearing and Mr. Knudson feels the purchase of these ranges by the State would ensure that the elk do have a good habitat to live in and reproduce.

Mr. Knudson feels acquisition is a wise and effective use of the license fees. The Wildlife Federation hopes that this committee looks favorably on this request.

(288) Gary Sturm, a Montana sportsman, supports this request to purchase additional winter elk ranges. He feels it is a good long term solution to the growing conflict between sportsmen and agricultural interest. He feels this acquisition would be a good use for the money hunters spend on license fees.

(302) Bill Morse, an attorney from Absarokee, presented a parcel of land that was very recently put on the market by the surviving relatives of a friend of the Morse family. Mr. Morse went into great detail of the location of the land that is for sale (see Attachment 3).

This land is being sold at a cost far below the asking price of lands in that area due to the owner's untimely death. This land is an open winter range in the heart of chinook country. Mr. Morse did not testify in support or opposition of the request before the committee. He just wanted the committee to know that this choice winter game range is up for sale if the committee would like to consider its purchase.

(464) Eric Weber is an avid outdoorsman and would like to voice his support for this proposal. He is a biologist and he understands the needs and limitations of big game animals. He felt the State cannot have too many winter ranges for such a valued animal.

(480) Larry Brown voiced his support for this project and for the use of the money he spends on licenses for the purchase of more winter game ranges. He also stated that he would like some of the money to go to providing access to public lands through privately owned land.

Chairman Manuel asked Mr. Brown if he felt sportsmen in Montana would mind paying larger fees for the purchase of these winter game ranges. Mr. Brown said all of the people he has spoken with on the subject are in favor of an increase in license fees to purchase more winter game ranges.

(508) Bob Van Der Veer wanted the committee to know that he opposes the raising of license fees to buy any more game ranges.

Rep. Thoft asked if taxes would be paid for these properties. Mr. Holliday explained that there would be in-lieu-of-tax payments that would equal real estate taxes but they wouldn't equal the personal property taxes of machinery or animals that would be on the property. If there was a grazing agreement similar to Mr. Haggin, some of this personal property tax would be generated.

(546) Noel Rosetta voiced his support for this proposition and the statements made by Mr. Knudson. The people Mr. Rosetta hunts with realize the importance of winter game ranges to wildlife and they also support this proposal.

Priority #38 (670)

This request is for \$100,000 for maintenance activities on wildlife management area lands (see Attachment 4).

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Priority #39 (008)

This request is for \$50,000 for minor construction projects to improve or minimize damage to fish habitat (see Attachment 5). This work is generally a contribution to a contract.

Mr. Holliday gave an example of the kind of thing this program addresses. Sen. Haffey asked what the total amount of revenue is anticipated from hunting and fishing licenses. Mr. Holliday estimated \$10-12 million.

(045) Pete Test, an employee of a private engineering firm in Helena, related the story behind the example given by Mr. Holliday for this project. Lewis and Clark County had funds to build a culvert near Hauser Lake but that culvert would interfere with trout spawning. Trout Unlimited donated some time and the Lake and Stream Improvement fund donated money to build a bridge which satisfied the county, Trout Unlimited, and the spawning trout. Mr. Test voiced his support for the funding of this project.

Priority #36 (065)

This request is for \$50,000 for unforeseen heavy maintenance for the Department headquarters throughout the state. This is basically a maintenance request for emergency jobs that would put an unnecessary burden on the Department's regular budget.


Priority #37 (116)

This request is for \$30,000 to construct a storage building at the Kalispell headquarters of the Department. There are a large number of vehicles used in that area. Presently, this equipment is being left outdoors and is causing a more rapid deterioration of the equipment.

The committee discussed the building and the necessity for the construction of the building.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

  
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Rex Manuel, Chairman  
Approved

RM/ljt

HOUSE Long Range Building COMMITTEE

Date February 8, 1983

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Form CS-33  
1-81

FISHING ACCESS SITE PROTECTION

TESTIMONY

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks manages over 20,000 acres of land classified as fishing access sites most of which have been purchased with fishing license monies earmarked for that purpose. These sites provide locations throughout the state where recreational fishermen and boaters can enter or leave a lake or river or where they can conveniently camp or picnic.

Of the 211 separate fishing access sites in Montana, many have no access roads, few if any directional signs, and no fence protection from trespass livestock. These sites need protection from resource damage and need to be made usable by the public. Funding for capital construction projects to improve fishing access sites for the past several years has failed to keep up with new acquisitions let alone take care of sites already owned by the department. The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is requesting funding to improve this situation.

FISHING ACCESS  
SITE PROTECTION

Lump sum for all regions

\$500,000.00

Earmarked Revenue  
02131

SCJ:an  
4-6-82

# WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA ACQUISITIONS



The Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks has acquired 100,000 acres of land in the Big Hole National Monument area. This acquisition is part of a larger program to protect and manage the area's wildlife resources. The Department has been successful in acquiring this land, which is now being managed as a Wildlife Management Area. The acquisition of this land is a significant step in the Department's efforts to protect and manage the area's wildlife resources. The Department has been successful in acquiring this land, which is now being managed as a Wildlife Management Area. The acquisition of this land is a significant step in the Department's efforts to protect and manage the area's wildlife resources.

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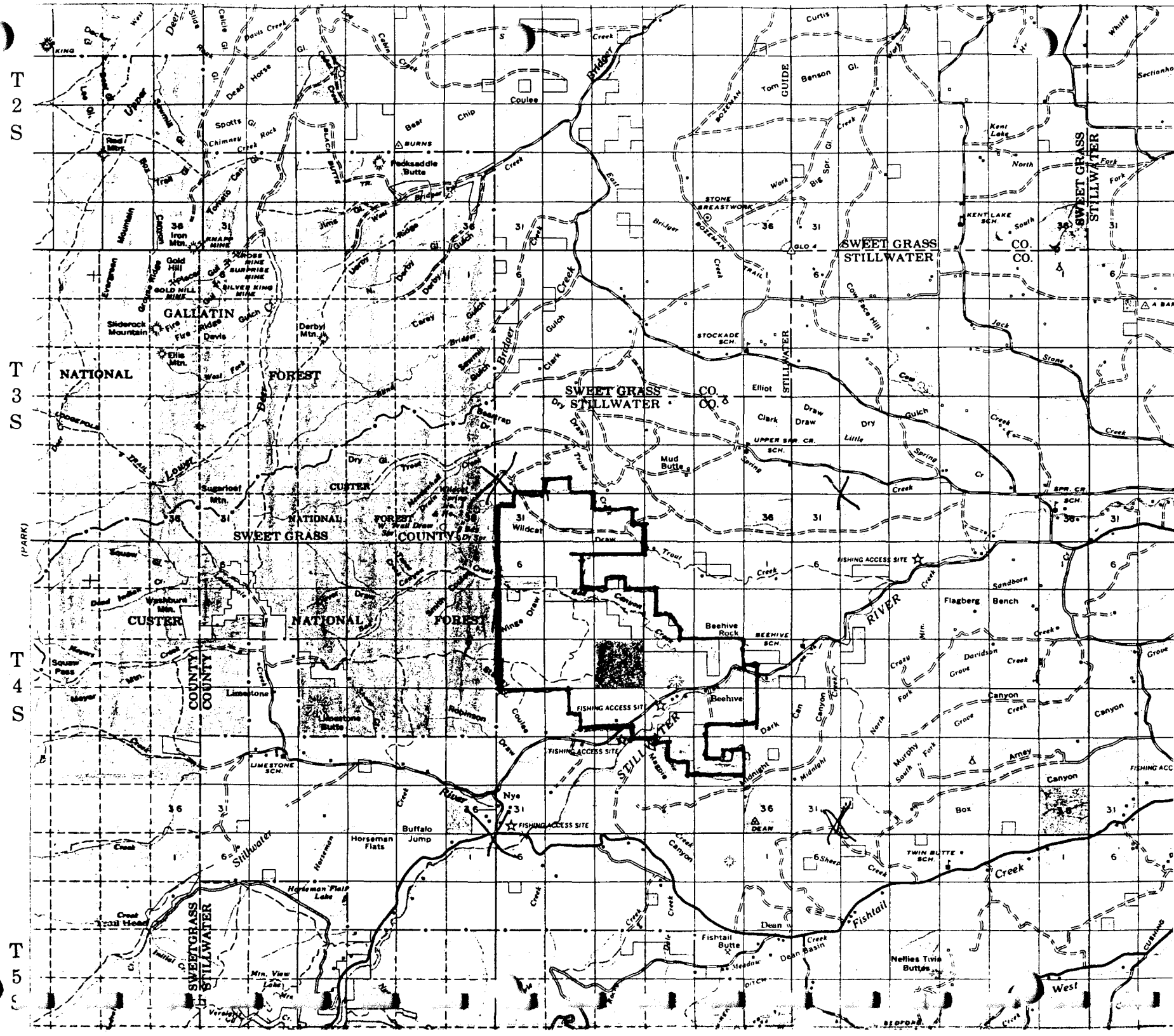


same time keep problems to private land owners at a minimum, is to continue to be able to acquire key elk winter ranges. Usually, these key areas are associated with large backcountry herds summering on public land. In the past, the federal money available to Montana has been spent partly in the department's operations budget and the rest went to a land acquisition fund. Past legislatures routinely authorized the department one-half million dollars per biennium for the acquisition of big game winter ranges.

About three years ago, budget shortfalls of license revenue created a situation in the department where all of the federal money was necessary for the base operations budget, leaving no money in the federal balance to be used for land acquisition. Consequently, no State-land purchases have been made during the last three years.

The 1981 Legislature authorized \$750,000 for land acquisition from Federal funds. No authority was granted for State license revenue. The department has currently changed its funding needs and projections so that the department and projects there, over the next biennium, will have a balance of Federal money equal to the approximately \$900,000 of Federal authority already approved by previous legislatures. This request for \$800,000 from license revenue would provide the necessary 25% matching money to use with the \$900,000 of Federal money, making the department's total capability for land acquisition authority during this biennium of \$1.2 million.

Land acquisition is an integral and necessary part of an effective elk management program. This funding is necessary to continue with the high quality elk management program. Montanans have enjoyed the elk herds.



WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA MAINTENANCE

TESTIMONY

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is requesting \$100,000 from license revenues for maintenance and development activities on the Wildlife Division's 46 wildlife management areas. These areas encompass approximately 276,000 acres. Activities and projects would include such items as bridges, culverts, cattle guards, signing, fences, water structures such as headgates, dikes and irrigation ditches, flood control and damage repair.

Current operations budgets preclude doing more than just the bare necessities and do not allow the adequate addressing of long-term preventive maintenance. Experience has shown it is better to be able to conduct routine maintenance as the needs arise rather than having to deal with crisis situations all at one time. Some of these items impact public safety.

One program directly affected is the department's interest and attempt to identify areas where domestic livestock can be grazed on a controlled basis compatible with the primary purpose of the game ranges. Fences are necessary in order to graze cattle on the game ranges and still protect the forage necessary for wintering elk. This request would allow the acceleration of this program.

LAKE AND STREAM IMPROVEMENT  
TESTIMONY

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is requesting \$50,000 from license revenues. The money will be used for minor construction projects where opportunities arise to improve or minimize damage to fish habitat in streams, lakes and reservoirs. Previous projects funded included such things as repair of spillway or other outlet structures on private dams in return for guaranteed fisherman access, installation of baffles in culverts to insure passage of spawning runs of game fish, funding less damaging stream channel improvements on private land in return for guaranteed public access, stabilizing old mining tailings on streambanks to minimize pollution and purchase of abandoned water rights to insure adequate instream flows. Projects such as these cannot be anticipated far enough in advance to allow the request of legislative approval on an individual basis.