

## **MINUTES**

### **MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 54th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

#### **JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Call to Order:** By **CHAIRMAN ROGER DEBRUYCKER**, on January 27, 1995, at 8:00 a.m. in Room 402 of the State Capitol.

#### **ROLL CALL**

##### **Members Present:**

Rep. Roger Debruycker, Chairman (R)  
Sen. Thomas F. Keating, Vice Chairman (R)  
Sen. Judy H. Jacobson (D)  
Sen. Loren Jenkins (R)  
Rep. John Johnson (D)  
Rep. William R. Wiseman (R)

**Members Excused:** Rep. Johnson excused 8:45 till end of meeting

**Members Absent:** none

**Staff Present:** Roger Lloyd, Legislative Fiscal Analyst  
Florine Smith, Office of Budget & Program  
Planning  
Debbie Rostocki, Committee Secretary

**Please Note:** These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

##### **Committee Business Summary:**

Hearing: Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP)  
- Parks Division

Executive Action: FWP - Wildlife Division

#### **EXECUTIVE ACTION ON FWP - WILDLIFE PROGRAM**

A listing of where FWP could reduce its budget and use the budget amendment process if necessary, in lieu of Legislative Contract Authority (LCA) was distributed by **Mr. Pat Graham**, Director of FWP; see **EXHIBIT 1**. **Mr. Graham** explained that "actuals" are less than the LCA and that is difficult to manage closely with the federal carry-over. He said the Dept. would recommend, in order to bring those more in line with the actuals for 1994, to reduce each division by the amounts indicated in the center column of **EXH. 1**, at the amount of \$637,500 per year.

**Mr. Lloyd** gave a short history of appropriations vs. expenditures on LCA, and he provided the committee with a summary of the past five years' activity in the Dept.; see **EXHIBIT 2**. He said the prioritization by the Department could be done in such a way so that those increases which would qualify for budget amendments would go through that process and **EXH. 1** offered a balance between the two options of LCA and budget amendments.

**SEN. KEATING** wanted to know how many projects were included in the \$900,000 per year requested in the Present Law Adjustment table on p. C-30. **Mr. Don Childress**, Administrator of the Wildlife Division, FWP, said there were about 28 different projects included and that about nine of them could be funded through the budget amendment process.

The **CHAIRMAN** asked **Mr. Childress** what had been requested for the black bear study (New Proposal No. 1, p. C-32). **Mr. Childress** said that as a result of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), hunting seasons had been restricted. Management criteria were developed looking at information from many sources, and had never been tested in Montana. The new proposal would fund the testing out of the criteria.

**Tape No. 1:A**

The committee turned to p. C-29 of the budget. **Mr. Lloyd** explained that part of the negative reduction in Personal Services (p. C-30, No. 1) was related to the EIS, and had been deemed a one-time expenditure by the last session of the Legislature. In response to **SEN. JENKINS**, **Mr. Lloyd** said that the total requested for grants (No. 9, PL adjustments, P. C-30) was an increase of \$14,000 over the 1994 base. He added that Watchable Wildlife grants were for contracts with university graduate students, and the Department anticipated hiring two students. **Mr. Childress** said that regarding possible intermixing of PL items No. 5 and 9, although it was not the same program, there was certainly an opportunity to focus a student in that area. They usually looked at the situation on a statewide basis, however.

**Motion/Vote:** **REP. WISEMAN** moved to accept items No. 10, 11 and 12 of Present Law Adjustments on P. C-30, with item No. 11 reduced to \$723,000 in 1996 and \$683,000 in 1997. **REP. JOHNSON** seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Motion:** **SEN. KEATING** moved to accept items No. 4, 5 and 6 on P. C-30; **REP. JOHNSON** seconded the motion. **SEN. JENKINS** wanted to know what would happen in No. 5 was not approved. **Mr. Graham** said that this was not a increase, it was just a transfer from the Conservation Education Division, and the increase was listed in the New Proposals. The funding was from license fees. He added that the Watchable Wildlife Program and the Nongame Program were presently combined, and this would once again separate them. The Watchable Wildlife portion would be in the Parks Division and

would be funded by the check-off system and the Nongame portion would be in the Wildlife Division.

**Vote:** The question was called for. Motion **carried** with **SEN. JENKINS** opposed.

**Motion:** **SEN. KEATING** moved to **accept PL adjustment No. 7** (P. C-30); **SEN. JACOBSON** seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** In response to **SEN. JENKINS**, **Mr. Lloyd** said that this was the authority to spend the money that was in the account. At the end of FY 94 almost \$500,000 was in the fund. The total request of \$1.8 million was a biennial amount. The fund balance plus expected revenue should cover the amount of spending authority.

**Vote:** The question was then called for. Motion **carried** unanimously.

In response to **SEN. JENKINS**, **Mr. Childress** said that Contracted Services (PL item no. 8, p. C-30) increases were mainly related to work needed for data management of the harvest surveys and the sportsmen data base, and also more was needed in the budget to cover rising contract costs.

**Tape No. 1:B:000**

Regarding new proposal No. 1 (p. C-32), **Mr. Childress** said that 28 management actions were recommended in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), two of them in the area of research. He explained that age structure and male/female composition of the harvest needed to be considered when figuring out the hunting season. They had to restrict the seasons last year. The purpose is to maintain the current populations of black bears. This specifically has been under attack by anti-hunters, and the Department felt that the EIS was an important aspect because of the possibility of litigation. Part of the management was necessary, he added, because of some problems which black bears created in beehives and orchards.

**Motion/vote:** **SEN. KEATING** moved to **accept new proposal no. 1** (P. C-32); **SEN. JACOBSON** seconded the motion. Motion **carried** unanimously.

**Motion:** **SEN. JACOBSON** moved to **accept new proposals no. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7.**

**Motion to segregate:** **SEN. KEATING** moved to **segregate item no. 2.** He submitted that black footed ferret research was a federal project and the state should not get involved in it.

**Discussion:** Regarding new proposal no. 3 (P. C-32), **Mr. Childress** said that their surveys indicated that if this program did not continue, 67% of those acres would be put back into some kind of production, at least in NE Montana. The Conservation

Resource Program (CRP), which had been reauthorized but not yet funded, could be affected by reductions or rate changes.

**Substitute motion:** REP. WISEMAN made a substitute motion to accept New Proposals No. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7, segregating the votes on items No. 2 and 3.

**Discussion:** It was stated that the upland game bird bill would not allow DSL to purchase land with these dollars. SEN. JENKINS wanted to know if the spending authority could be used for the "526 Acquisition Program." Mr. Graham explained that the "526" program was in the capital budget and new proposal no. 3 was in operations and although these monies could be transferred between operations and capital, they had never been and would not be used for land acquisitions. SEN. JENKINS said it was his understanding that "526" money was to be used for leases, easements, or purchases, and therefore there would be money there for this purpose. Mr. Graham said the money had been used solely for easements since the last Legislature met.

**Vote:** SEN. KEATING seconded REP. WISEMAN's motion, to accept items no. 4, 5 and 7, segregating items no. 2 and 3. The motion carried unanimously.

**Motion:** The motion to accept item no. 2 was then considered. Mr. Graham explained that the black footed ferret project started because the rural landowners were concerned about the federal involvement and they hoped the State would be more actively involved so the management of the program would not be from Washington D.C. They may not want the ferrets but they are there.

**Substitute motion:** SEN. JENKINS made a substitute motion to accept item No. 2, but to include language designating that this was to be a one-time-only expenditure; SEN. JACOBSON seconded the motion.

**Vote:** Motion carried with REP. WISEMAN and SEN. KEATING opposed.

**Motion/Vote:** REP. WISEMAN moved to accept new proposal no. 3 and SEN. JACOBSON seconded the motion. The question was called for and the motion carried with SEN. KEATING opposed and REP. JOHNSON voting "yes" by proxy.

**Discussion:** Regarding new proposal no. 6 (p. C-32), Mr. Graham said they were about 3/4 done with a project he felt they would need to complete. Many of the wildlife activities they are involved in are coming under assault from a variety of interests and this is leading to the increase in the numbers of EIS's required. This is a one-time-only one-year appropriation. He pointed out that this would involve the public in the decision-making process.

**Motion/Vote:** REP. WISEMAN moved to accept new proposal no. 6 (p.

C-32), with specific language designating that this be a **one-time-only appropriation**. **SEN. KEATING** seconded the motion. Motion **carried** unanimously (**REP. JOHNSON** voting "yes" by proxy).

**Tape No. 2:A:000**

**Discussion:** Discussion then took place regarding the Dingle-Johnson federal legislation. **Mr. Graham** said the money related to the legislation was a trust account, and could be redirected. There were possibly some more vulnerable funds in the Department, especially in the Enforcement and Conservation Divisions. He added that these funds had broad-based support and if they went, the Department would be in a "world of hurt." His sense was that user fees still had a high priority (i.e., if the program pays for itself, this has some weight) and this alone would provide some security for these projects.

#### Hearing on FWP - Parks Division

**Mr. Lloyd** gave an overview of the Division's budget. **SEN. JACOBSON** wanted to know why PL adjustments no. 5 and 6 (p. C-35) had been broken out separately. **Ms. Smith** (OBPP) said that the other divisions paid the Administration and Finance Division instead of the State Motor Pool.

**Mr. Arnold Olsen**, Administrator of the Parks Division, then gave an overview. He distributed to the committee members a State Parks Brochure; see **EXHIBIT 3**. He explained that the parks system was created in 1939 with the acquisition of Lewis & Clark Caverns from the federal government. Since 1965 the system has been under the management of FWP. There are 41 state parks and 13 affiliated lands about half of which charge no admission. In addition there are more than 300 fishing access sites which are also the Division's responsibility. There are about 25,000 acres of parks and the same amount of fishing access sites. Forty percent of the visitors were from out of state. Some of the Division's greatest needs include funding for toilet and road maintenance, with the greatest number of complaints from the public being received in these areas. There is also a lot of popular demand for more drinking water and shower facilities as well as for more interpretive facilities.

**Tape No. 2:B:000**

**Mr. Olsen** outlined what the Division had done to manage their costs. One measure was to transfer responsibility for sites to the public entities that owned them, and another was fundraising through the production of videos, including one about Makoshika Park which he passed around for committee members to see. In addition, in 1994 they had 454 volunteers in the State Parks system and he stressed that these volunteers provided many services that the Department would otherwise not be able to provide. He also mentioned that the Division had gotten out from under the responsibility for almost \$9 million in road work that was needed at Canyon Ferry, which had saved the State a lot of

money. He stressed that because of the increase in the number of visits from both residents and nonresidents to state parks, the Division was experiencing an ongoing increase in its workload. He pointed out that they had decreased their request overall from about \$11.8 million to \$10.4 million, a decrease of 12%, as a result of law changes that added to their revenue in the second year of the biennium, and internal transfers.

**Mr. Olsen** said that the Parks Division was about 14.8% of the overall operations budget and half of those FTE were seasonal. About 150 people are added in the summer. Funding sources include earned revenue, coal tax, motorboat fuel tax, general fund, accommodations tax, and both federal and private LCA. He said that coal tax money had not been used for park acquisitions for the past ten years, and was all used for operations now. Another component of the Parks Division is the Watchable Wildlife Program, funded by general license dollars and tax check-off funds. Land and water conservation funds are federal dollars from offshore drilling. In the past the states used to get a bigger portion of this federal money; it has gone from about \$3 million to about \$200,000 per year. About 1/3 of the funding for the Division comes from the motorboat fuel tax, with 26.3% from earned revenue, and almost 19% from the coal tax.

**SEN. JENKINS** wanted to know what effect the bill to eliminate coal tax funding for the parks would have. **SEN. KEATING** said the statutory appropriation would just be moved to a state special account. **SEN. JACOBSON** said that if the bill passed, this would lower the Department's 1996 base.

**SEN. JENKINS** asked some questions regarding a state park in his area and **Mr. Mike Aderhold**, Region 4 Supervisor, discussed the issue. He said his agency would work with everyone in the program but a lot of funding would be required.

**Tape No. 3:A:000**

**SEN. JENKINS** suggested that putting the river back in its original bed should be a priority.

**Mr. Olsen** said that because fishing and hunting license dollars could not be used directly, a multitude of smaller funding sources had to be looked at when putting the budget together. Regarding the Watchable Wildlife Program, besides watching wildlife, the program also includes conservation education and recreation-related activities. This included preventing species from becoming endangered, providing interpretation on state parks and FWP lands, and school and community programs as well as production of the Montana Wildlife Viewing Guide; see **EXHIBITS 4, 5, 6 and 7**. He submitted that this educational focus justified the use of license dollars in this program. He added that they had conducted a survey and that the results indicated that half of Montana's hunters, anglers and trappers supported this use of their money.

**Mr. Olsen** reviewed the funding history for the program. Seventy-three percent of the funds for 1995 would be checkoff money and the rest would be from the Parks Division. In 1996, 40% will be license dollars, 32% checkoff and the rest from Parks. Regarding the level of Wildlife check-off revenue, he said they were going to work to increase it, now that this program is in their division.

**Mr. Olsen** said the fuel tax adjustment (PL adjustment No. 6, p. C-35) was due to a change in the law. It went up three to four cents. This money wasn't available in 1994 and became available in 1995 through a Legislative appropriation. They are asking that this money be reappropriated in the coming biennium.

**Mr. Olsen** said that the off-highway vehicle program was a grant-through program and the money would be chiefly for ongoing projects. Some of the off-highway vehicle grants of \$1,000-\$10,000 go to various local groups including the Bozeman Ranger District and the Beaverhead Trail Users Association.

Regarding the Fishing Access Sites Program, they are asking for money actually given in 1995 and therefore it wasn't in the 1994 base. Drinking water provision has been an issue in this program and some of the counties have been pushing for the Department to provide this service. Overnight camping is allowed and trash disposal is a problem that this program has to deal with. The largest expense is toilet pumping. Other expenses include trash pick-up, weed control, and water testing.

**Tape No. 3:B:000**

Regarding Dingle-Johnson (D-J) monies, traditionally they have used this money for capital development but they now propose to use some of it for operations. **Mr. Olsen** proposed to carry the money forward from 1995 in the amount of \$50,000, but before this could be done any Land and Water research fund obligations would need to be transferred elsewhere. to fulfil D-J requirements. This would require appraisals, and could be done in 34 sites. Transfers could be made to the Thompson Chain of Lakes, which was donated to the State.

Regarding deferred maintenance costs, these funds were used to pay for early retirements. He outlined the projects which they had not done because of this. He said that since this money used to be part of their base, they would like it put back in. He added that they had ongoing maintenance needs as well. There had been an increase in the cost of maintenance contracts which was quite large percentage-wise. They were therefore asking for a \$55,000 increase over the 1994 base in this portion of the budget. Increased costs in the areas of fencing, water testing and weed control were especially notable.

In regards to PL adjustment No. 10 (p. C-35), in 1994 \$129,000 was received and distributed across the State. 43% went to

private trail clubs. The Parks Division has only expended \$25,000 because the appropriation is biennial. He pointed out that their request had been reduced from \$350,000 in 1994 to \$200,000. This account wasn't funded in the second year by Congress, however, but there is a feeling that this program might be funded in this biennium and the division can take care of this through a budget amendment. If the funding didn't come through from the federal government, this project would be dropped. In the best case scenario, Montana would get \$500,000. He felt a good portion of the funding would come through.

Regarding No. 11 on p. C-35, **Mr. Olsen** explained that 50% of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies were required to be spent at the local level. Since 1965, \$60 million has funded more than 750 projects. Federal support is decreasing for this. There is a major initiative going on at the local level to increase this program. The reduction was from \$3 million to \$224,000 and the Division has reduced its request from \$700,000 to \$400,000. They feel this amount could be reduced another \$100,000 and **Mr. Olsen** recommended doing this.

**Mr. Olsen** said there were some snowmobile revenue adjustments. The 1993 Legislature increased the decal fee from \$2 to \$5 and half of this money goes into the Parks Division. Therefore, they are requesting an increased spending authority (PL adjustment no. 12, p. C-35) and the revenue will be used to repair groomers across the State.

Regarding PL adjustment no. 13, the Division has decreased their request from \$288,000 in 1994 to slightly less than this amount. Spending categories have been changed (more in item No. 14 and less in item No. 16) and therefore he said this was not really an increase. Replacement equipment they were requesting funding for included industrial grade riding lawnmowers, traffic counters, etc.

**Tape No. 4:A:000**

Regarding PL adjustment No. 15, after the last Legislative session the dealers said they could get a better price if more than one groomer was purchased at the same time. To accommodate this, the Division is asking to change to a biennial appropriation. The increase would pay for larger groomers for Missoula and West Yellowstone. He said they could get two larger groomers for the price of one smaller one if they were bought at the same time; see **EXHIBIT 7**. The replacement equipment being requested included \$25,000 for a dump truck and almost \$40,000 for drills and saws, and \$20,000 for a landscape tractor.

**Mr. Olsen** reviewed PL adjustment no. 17, and said that half of this amount could be cut out if Montana Power was not included.

Regarding the Executive New Proposal no. 1 (p. C-38), \$319,000 was the level in 1994-5 and the level would be \$302,000 in 1996-7, a reduction of about \$17,000. Some of the items would not be



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in this request if they had already been in the budget, such as high band radios (\$20,000 for the biennium), which they want to purchase in order to facilitate communications with law enforcement personnel.

**Mr. Olsen's** presentation was cut short because the committee had to attend another meeting and the **CHAIRMAN** announced that the hearing would be concluded on Monday, January 30, 1995.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 10:35 a.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ROGER DEBRUYCKER, Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DEBBIE ROSTOCKI, Secretary

RD/dr

This meeting was recorded on four 60-minute audiocassette tapes.

1/27/1995

Senator Jacobson.

I may be absent during today,  
Ex Action. Vote one with you.

Lets save some of these programs  
from extinction. Especially Habitat Enhancement.

Rep. John Johnson  
HD-2

EXHIBIT 1DATE 1/27/95

HB \_\_\_\_\_

## Legislative Contract Authority

Budget Reduced For Uncertain Items That Could Later Be Handled As A Budget Amendment

	Requested FY96	Reduction FY96	Revised FY96
Administration & Finance	60,000	(30,000)	30,000
Field Services	0	0	0
Fisheries	1,667,000	(300,000)	1,367,000
Enforcement	80,000	(10,000)	70,000
Wildlife	968,000	(245,000)	723,000
Parks	50,000	(25,000)	25,000
Conservation Education	37,500	(17,500)	20,000
Department Management	125,000	(10,000)	115,000
TOTAL	2,987,500	(637,500)	2,350,000

	Requested FY97	Reduction FY97	Revised FY97
Administration & Finance	60,000	(30,000)	30,000
Field Services	0	0	0
Fisheries	1,843,400	(300,000)	1,543,400
Enforcement	80,000	(10,000)	70,000
Wildlife	928,000	(245,000)	683,000
Parks	50,000	(25,000)	25,000
Conservation Education	37,500	(17,500)	20,000
Department Management	125,000	(10,000)	115,000
TOTAL	3,123,900	(637,500)	2,486,400

	Actual FY94
Administration & Finance	17,955
Field Services	0
Fisheries	994,738
Enforcement	43,394
Wildlife	685,981
Parks	6,504
Conservation Education	57,908
Department Management	95,631
TOTAL	1,902,111

# FWP

## Legislative Contract Authority

EXHIBIT 2  
DATE 1/27/95  
HB \_\_\_\_\_

Fiscal Year	Authorized	Spent	Reversions	Percent Spent
1994	\$3,741,500	\$1,902,111	\$1,839,389	50.84%
1993	3,096,500	1,764,061	1,332,439	56.97%
1992	2,909,500	1,699,609	1,209,891	58.42%
1991	2,287,500	1,689,937	597,563	73.88%
1990	2,287,500	1,538,981	748,519	67.28%

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NAT. RESOURCES  
SUBCOMM.

EXHIBIT 3  
DATE 1/27/95  
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EXH. 3

# MONTANA STATE PARKS

The original of this document is stored at the Historical Society at 225 North Roberts Street, Helena, MT 59620-1201. The phone number is 444-2694.

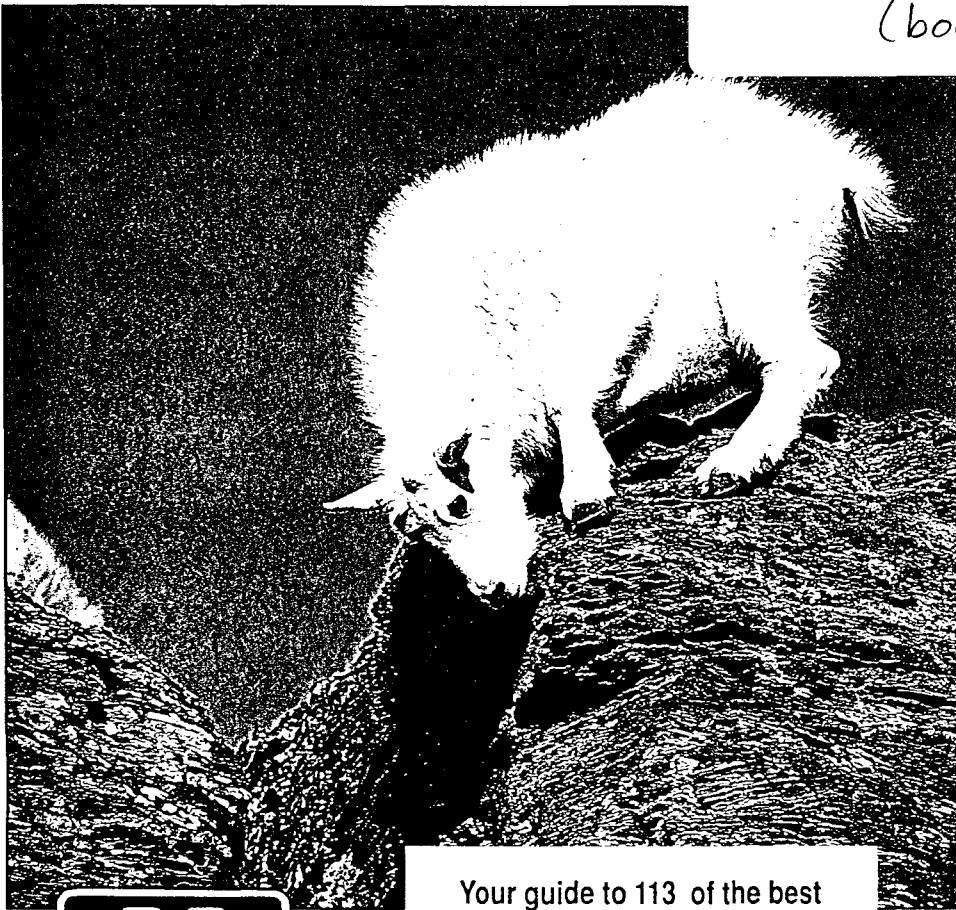
(brochure)



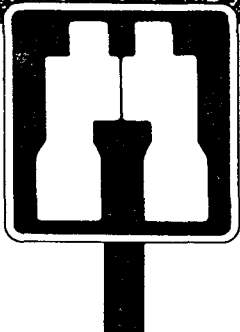
# MONTANA WILDLIFE VIEWING GUIDE

The original of this document is stored at the Historical Society at 225 North Roberts Street, Helena, MT 59620-1201. The phone number is 444-2694.

(book)



Your guide to 113 of the best  
and most easily accessible  
wildlife viewing sites in Montana.



by Carol and Hank Fischer  
A unique, multi-agency project  
coordinated by Defenders of Wildlife.

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Yellowstone Valley Audubon Chapters

**Project Coordinator**  
Defenders of Wildlife

## VIEWING WILDLIFE

This guide was designed for both the casual and the serious wildlife viewer. We expect it will be valuable to birders, wildlife photographers, and families seeking an interesting outing. Our emphasis on different types of access to wildlife-watching sites should make this book of special interest to hikers, boaters, skiers, and bicyclists as well as recreational-vehicle owners and auto tourers. We also made a special effort to underscore wildlife viewing opportunities for the physically challenged. Finally, we have emphasized wildlife viewing opportunities that are close to Montana's largest towns.

Some sites offer more reliable wildlife viewing than others, which can be a function both of the population density of a species and of its habits. For instance, waterfowl can be seen more predictably than great horned owls or pileated woodpeckers, just as prairie dogs are more dependable than beaver or cottontails. Be sure to keep in mind that wildlife viewing at some sites may be much better at particular times of the year. This rule is especially true for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl, and for such species as sage grouse or sharp-tailed grouse, which congregate for mating in the spring.

But once you're sure you're looking at the right place at the right time, the single most important way to increase your chances of seeing wildlife is to go early—right at dawn. This is almost always the best time, with dusk being a close second. An attempt at wildlife viewing during the heat of a summer day is usually a prescription for disappointment.

The only equipment that's really important for wildlife watching is a pair of binoculars, although a field guide can be helpful. A spotting scope can be fun to use but heavy if you're doing much hiking. The real keys are to go to the right place at the right time, to be there early, and to be patient.

**Carol and Hank Fischer**



# Identification of Montana's Owls

EXHIBIT 5  
DATE 1/27  
HB                     



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(magazine)

boreal owl

by Denver W. Holt and Dale M. Becker  
illustrated by Joe Thornbrugh

The following guide is to help you identify Montana owls. Owls are divided into two groups or subfamilies: Tytoninae (barn and bay owls) and Striginae (all other owls). In North America, the two groups are represented by 19 breeding species; 15 species occur in Montana.

Owls are basically nocturnal or crepuscular (active in the late morning or early evening). However, during winter, some species may be observed almost any time and in a variety of habitats because they are in search of food.

Because most owls are active in times of low light or complete darkness, they have evolved a low-frequency vocal repertoire as a means of communication. Familiarity with these primary songs can greatly facilitate owl identification.

Owls have two primary hunting methods: (1) "perch and pounce," which usually takes place from a low perch and is most common among forest owls, and (2) "quartering," which means flying low over the ground; it is most common among open-country owls.

Owls have evolved several important adaptations to help them cope with their lifestyle. Some of the most recognizable characteristics include:

- Large heads to accommodate large eyes and ears. Owls cannot move their eyes up, down, or side to side as humans can, so owls have evolved the ability to rotate their heads approximately 270 degrees.
- The ears in some species are asymmetrical (the right ear is longer and situated higher on the skull), allowing them to calculate flight angles when sounds are heard but prey cannot be seen.
- Owl feathers in many species are structured so that sound

created by flight is absorbed; consequently, these owls can hear but not be heard by potential prey when flying.

- Owls usually vocalize at low frequency. These sound waves carry long distances and are not absorbed by barriers such as vegetation as quickly as high-frequency vocalizations.

## IDENTIFICATION OF MONTANA OWLS

The illustrations and accompanying text are designed to help you identify Montana owls and provide some basic life history. In North America, female owls are larger than males, with the exception of the burrowing owl.

For identification purposes, owls are often separated into those with "eartufts" or "horns" and those which are "round-headed." In the owl descriptions which follow, we have used "tufts" instead of "eartufts" or "horns" to denote the specialized feathers arising from the heads of many owls. We have retained use of "round-headed."

If you're in the field and trying to identify Montana owls, make the following items part of your check list:

- (1) Determine if the owl has tufts or is round-headed.
- (2) Note eye and bill color.
- (3) Note plumage color and other distinctive markings.
- (4) Note relative size of the owl—for example, compare it with the size of your hand, the distance from your elbow to your fingertip, or the length of your arm.
- (5) Note details of the owl's habitat and check distribution maps.


By using a combination of these field tips, you should be well on your way to identifying any owl you might see in Montana. ■

EXHIBIT 6  
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# Birds of Passage

*Celebrating Montana's Long-Distance Travelers*

by DEBORAH RICHIE



An osprey over Flathead Lake slices the sky. A western tanager flames red, yellow, and black against a spruce on the flanks of the Snowy Mountains. The cry of a curlew swirls from the grasslands above the Missouri River.

Hundreds of miles separate each bird from the other in this state spanning 550 miles from east to west and 275 miles from north to south. The osprey seeks lakes and rivers with fish to eat and tall trees nearby for nesting. The tanager darts from a conifer limb to snap insects on the wing. The curlew is a bird of the prairie, probing the soil for insects with its sickle-shaped bill.

In spite of these differences of community, all three are considered "neotropical migrants," a term applied to the many birds that fly south of the U.S. border each winter in search of food. Hummingbirds, warblers, kingfishers, bluebirds, robins—even vultures—are just some of the birds falling into this category. These long-distance travelers return in the spring to nest, raise young, and repeat the cycle.

The original of this document is stored at the Historical Society at 225 North Roberts Street, Helena, MT 59620-1201. The phone number is 444-2694.

(magazine)

WATCHABLE WILDLIFE

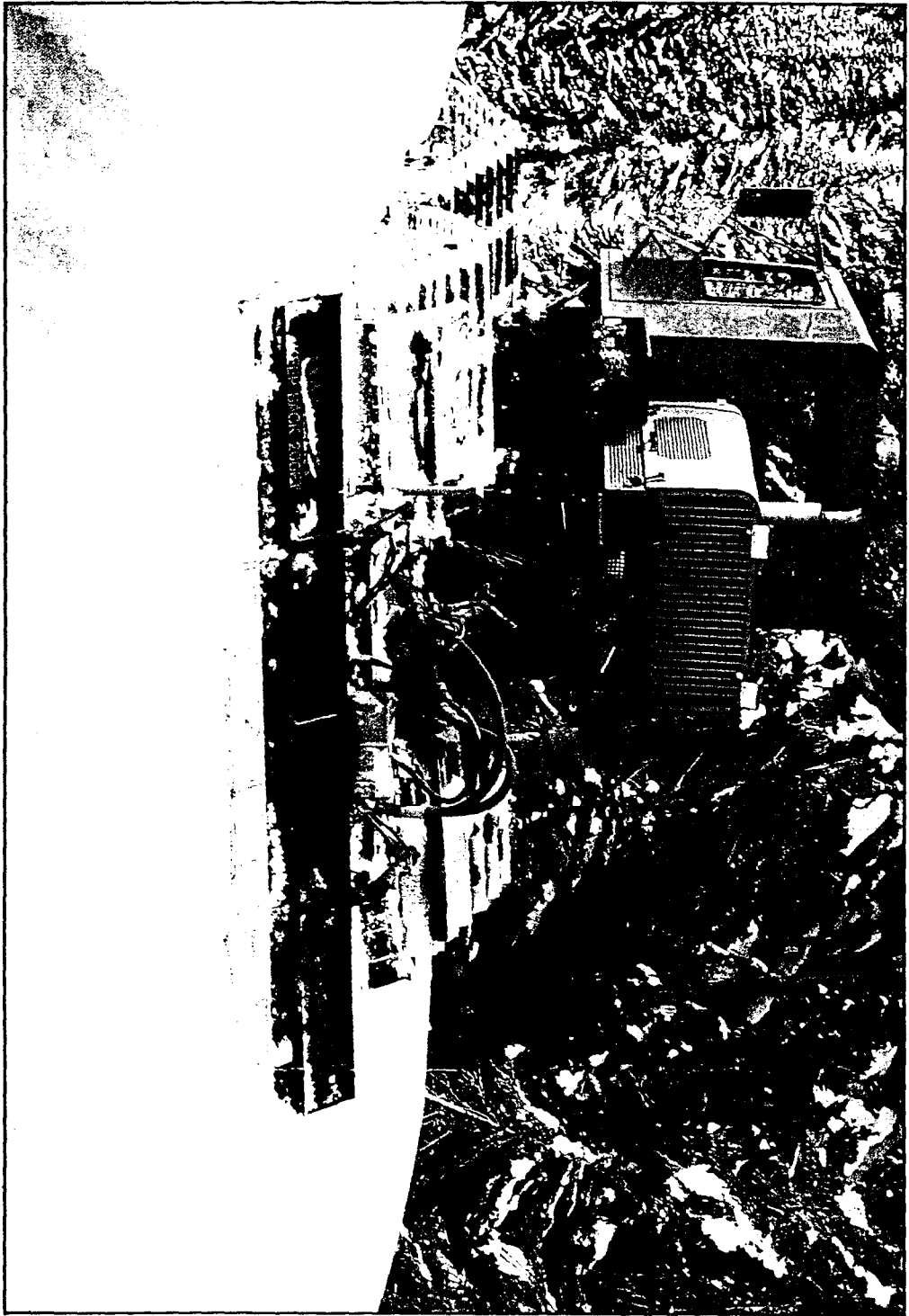


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\* Alpine      \* Snowmobile  
\* Cross Country

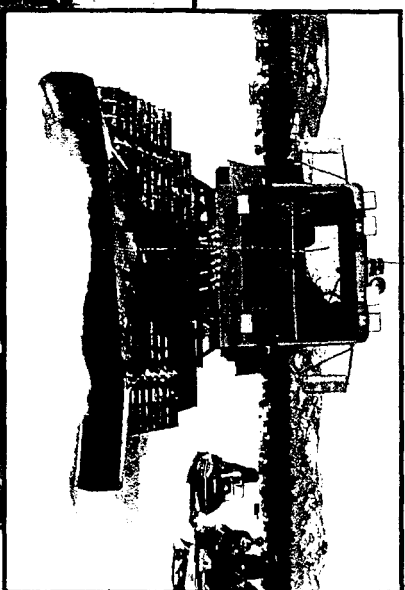
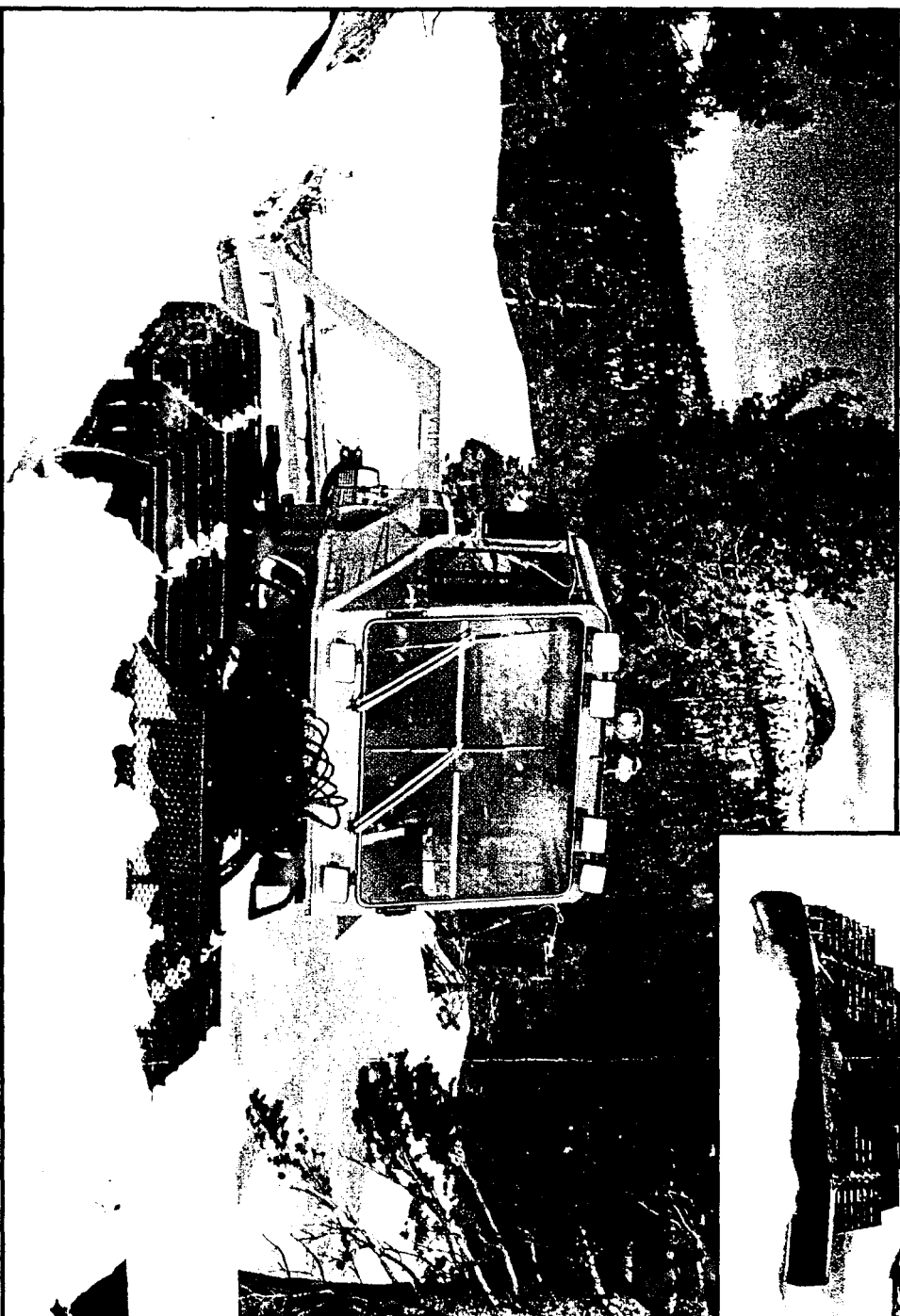


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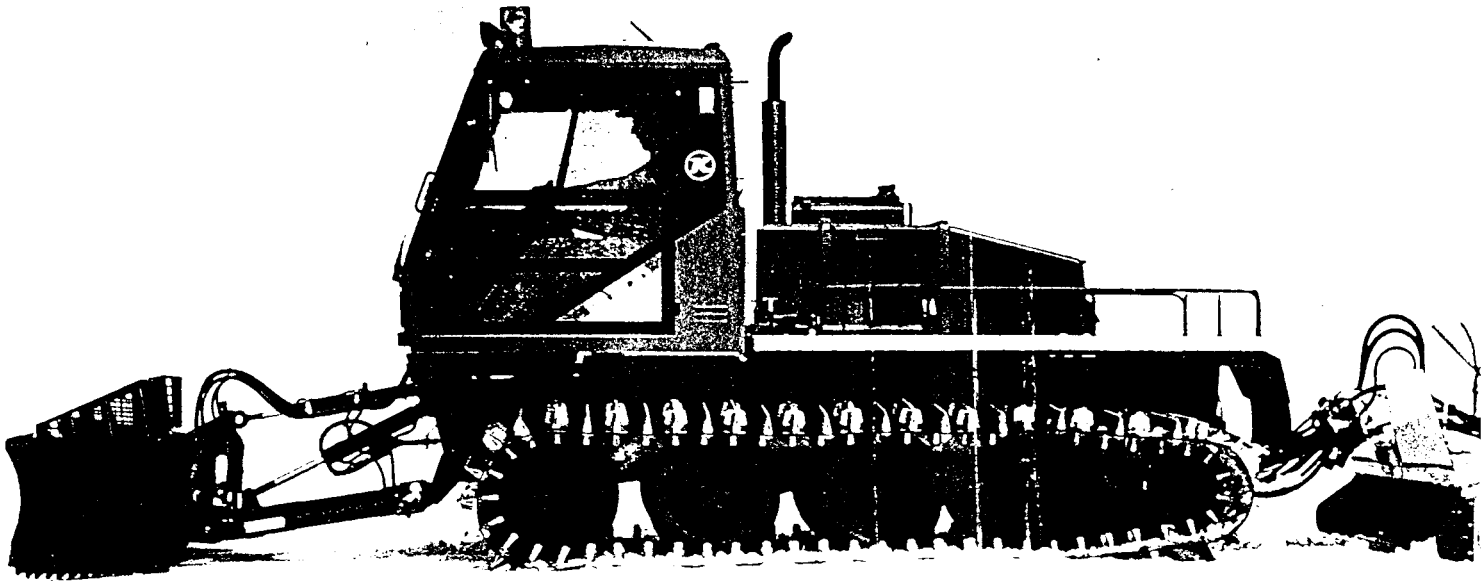


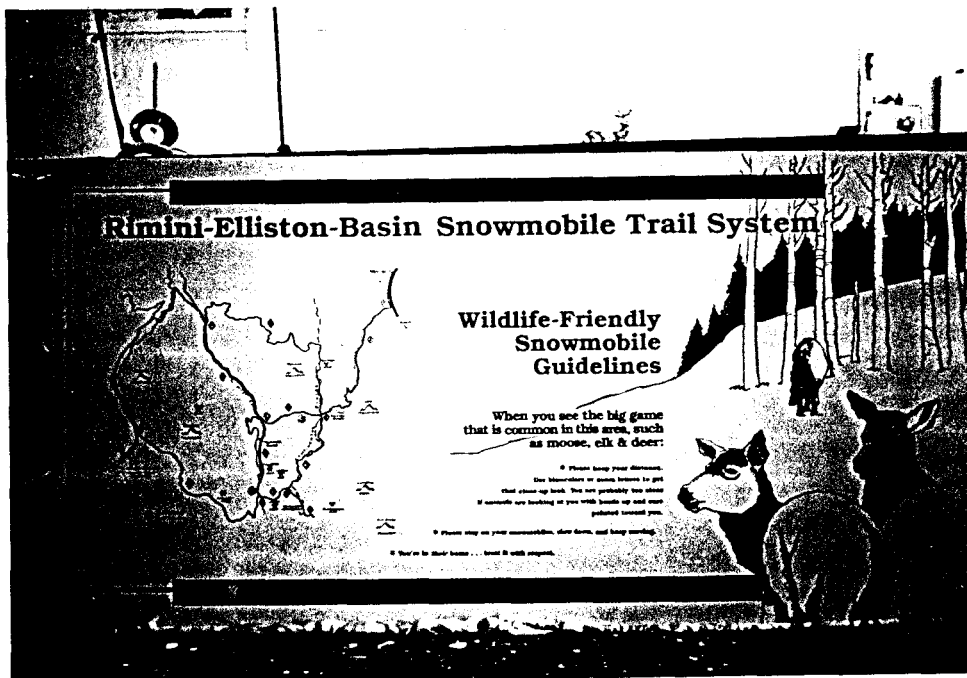
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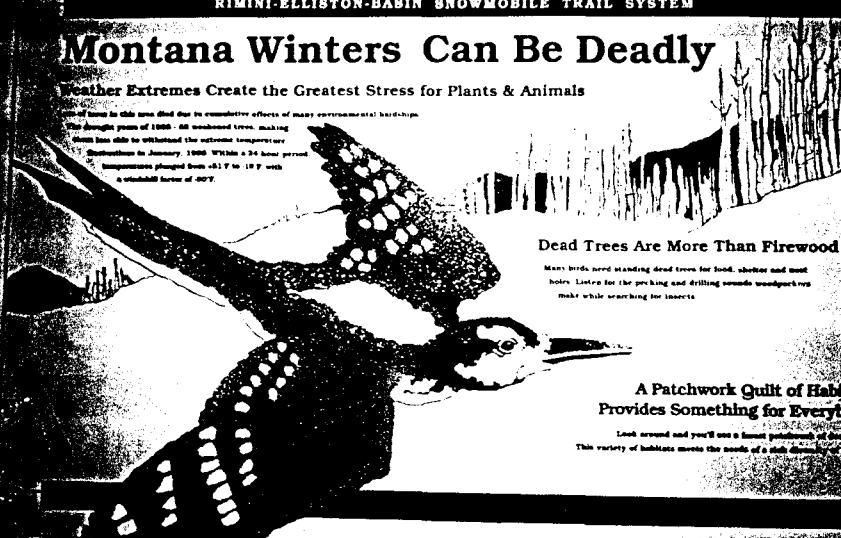
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## WATCHABLE WILDLIFE PROGRAM

### INTERPRETIVE PANELS FOR A MONTANA SNOWMOBILE TRAIL

This 3-panel kiosk at the Rimini-Elliston-Basin Snowmobile Trailhead welcomes, orients and informs snowmobilers about the trail system, safety tips and wildlife viewing techniques. The third panel is a bulletin board so information can be updated.





**RIMINI-ELLISTON-BASIN SNOWMOBILE TRAIL SYSTEM**

# Montana Winters Can Be Deadly

## Weather Extremes Create the Greatest Stress for Plants & Animals

Most birds in this area died due to cumulative effects of many environmental hardships.

The drought years of 1988 - 89 weakened trees, making them less able to withstand the extreme temperatures.

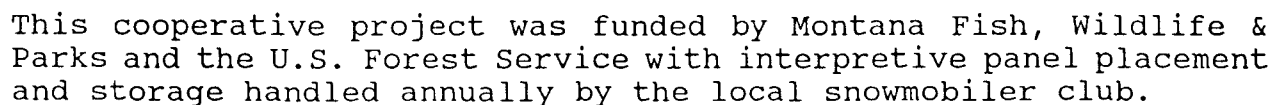
Snowstorms in January, 1990. Within a 24 hour period, temperatures plunged from +31°F to -19°F with a windchill factor of -20°F.

### Dead Trees Are More Than Firewood

Many birds need standing dead trees for food, shelter and nest holes. Listen for the pecking and drilling sounds woodpeckers make while searching for insects.

### A Patchwork Quilt of Habitats Provides Something for Everybody

Look around and you'll see a hodgepodge of dead trees. This variety of habitats meets the needs of a wide diversity of species.



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