

NRDP Funding Recommendation Garry Mountain Addition Land Purchase May 2014

Background and Project Summary

In June of 2012 the Anaconda Sportsmen's Club submitted a restoration concept abstract (Attachment A) to NRDP for consideration of using natural resource damage funds for purchasing the 640 acre Garry Mountain Addition (hereafter referred to as "Property") located two miles west of Anaconda. A map depicting the Property and surrounding area is provided in Attachment B. The State included this project as a potential land acquisition project to be considered for further review and subsequent funding decision in the December 2012 *Final Upper Clark Fork River Basin (UCFRB) Aquatic and Terrestrial Resources Restoration Plans* ("Final Restoration Plans"). If purchased by the State, the Property would be included as part of Fish Wildlife, and Park's adjoining Garry Mountain Wildlife Management Area (Garry WMA) and protected for fish and wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities for the general public.

The *Final Restoration Plans* identify this acquisition project as a proposed restoration action within the Anaconda Terrestrial Priority Landscape area, to be funded with Terrestrial Priority Account of the UCFRB Restoration Fund. As indicated in the *Final Restoration Plans*:

- Funding of individual projects within aquatic priority areas and terrestrial priority landscapes will be based on cost-effectiveness and cost:benefit, rather than on concept proposal estimates; and
- Each project involving property and or water rights acquisitions will require a subsequent approval of the proposed transaction, once fully developed in accordance with the plans, by the Trustee following consideration of input from the public, Advisory Council, and Trustee Restoration Council.

This document provides the NRDP funding evaluation and recommendation that will be the subject of a 30-day public comment period that will begin on Friday, May 9, 2014 and end on Monday, June 9, 2014. The two indicated councils will consider the NRDP's recommendation and public comment in making their funding recommendation to the Governor, who will make the final funding decision.¹

The current property owner, The Conservation Fund (TCF), purchased the property on March 20, 2014 to provide bridge funding during the time period thereafter until the State determined whether acquisition of the property would be in its best interest and was approved. The Property was listed for sale on the open market and under threat of being acquired, managed, and developed in a manner that may have conflicted with its public and natural resource values. Based on an appraisal commissioned by NRDP, the appraised value is \$1.38 million. FWP has committed

¹ The Advisory Council will consider this project at a meeting on June 18, 2014. The Trustee Restoration Council will consider this project at a meeting on June 26, 2014. For more information on this meetings, go to <https://doj.mt.gov/lands/advisory-councils/>.

\$50,000 as matching funds towards the Property purchase and TCF has applied to the Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Trust for \$50,000 in additional matching funds.

NRDP Funding Recommendations Summary

The NRDP recommends funding of this project for \$1.28 million, subject to the following funding conditions:

- that the NRDP review and approve of remaining land transaction documents;
- that the acquisition be approved by the FWP Commission and State Land Board; and
- that a Buy/Sell agreement between the TCF and the State be successfully executed.²

If the \$50,000 pending from the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Trust match is not committed, the NRDP recommends an additional \$50,000 in natural resource damage funds go towards project funding.

Land Acquisition Due Diligence Summary

Most of the needed land transaction due diligence has been completed to date. This includes an appraisal, environmental property assessment, mineral and water rights evaluations, the warranty deed, and title insurance commitment/guarantee. The NRDP has found all these land transaction documents to be acceptable.

The environmental property assessment commissioned by TCF and completed in February 2014 concluded that the Property does not appear to present an environmental liability. The title work completed by TCF prior to its acquisition of the Property did not indicate any unacceptable encumbrances on the Property. The appraisal of the Property commissioned by the State and completed in June 2013 concluded a fair market value of \$1.38 million for 640 acres, or \$2,150/acre.

A mineral guarantee commissioned by TCF and completed in March 2014 indicated that mineral rights come with the northern half of the Property, but are severed from the southern part. A geological assessment of the mineral development potential completed in March 2014 concluded that the risk of any commercial mineral development of the Property to be extremely remote. The owner(s) of those severed mineral rights remain to be determined. If State acquisition is approved, FWP may pursue acquisition of the severed mineral rights from the owner(s).

Through the March 2014 land transaction, TCF obtained ownership of the three water rights associated with this Property:

² The expected closing of the Buy/Sell agreement would be between The Conservation Fund and the State of Montana, acting by and through the Department of Justice Natural Resource Damage Program. The warranty deed would be between The Conservation Fund and the State of Montana, acting by and through the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

- 1) A surface water right on Grays Gulch of 1 cfs (cubic feet per second) for irrigation that has a priority date of April, 1899;
- 2) A surface water right on Grays Gulch of 1.88 cfs for irrigation that has a priority date of April, 1889; and
- 3) A surface water right on Ice House Gulch of 1.25 cfs for irrigation that has a priority date of June, 1894.

There is a co-owner of the water right who bought a separate parcel from a previous owner of the Property. The general abstract for the three water rights states: "Ownership update processed to add new owners. The water right may be split into separate water rights upon request of the owners." If State acquisition is approved, FWP may pursue a change of use process through DNRC to convert these irrigation water rights to in-stream flow.

In October 2013, the FWP Commission approved FWP to proceed with conducting needed due diligence and negotiations so that this Project could be considered for FWP's acquisition. FWP anticipates completing a Draft Environmental Assessment in June 2014. Following consideration of public comment on the draft EA, the FWP Commission will consider project approval. If approved by the Commission, the State Land Board will next consider project approval.

Summary of Relationship Between TCF and State and Funding Sources

In May 2013, TCF and the State, acting through NRDP and FWP, agreed to work together via a non-binding letter of intent agreement, to determine whether public ownership of the Property could be recommended and accomplished.³ TCF agreed to pursue its acquisition of the Property from American Bank and then work with the State to complete the NRDP process and sell the Property to the State, if funding is approved by the Governor. TCF and the State worked together on this acquisition because the Property was listed on the open market and at risk of being sold. TCF's purchase allowed the State the time to go through its land acquisition process, including public scoping, without risk of a private sale.

TCF acquired the Property on March 20, 2014 at a purchase price of \$1,330,000, which is \$50,000 less than the appraised value of \$1,380,000. TCF bought the Property with \$1,280,000 of TCF funds and \$50,000 from TCF's partner, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. The owner at that time, American Bank, had agreed to a bargain sale of \$50,000 less than the appraised value.

The State will purchase the Property from TCF at the appraised value of \$1,380,000. The anticipated funding for State's purchase price is \$1,280,000 in natural resource damage funds, \$50,000 from FWP Habitat Montana (confirmed) and \$50,000 of funding from the Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Trust (pending). The \$100,000 difference between TCF's out of pocket purchase cost of \$1,280,000, and the \$1,380,000 sale price to the State will be used to cover TCF's direct, indirect, and overhead expenses. This \$100,000 amounts to about 7% of the appraised value. TCF's involvement as a partner has saved the State both time and money. For

³"Letter of Intent to Work Together on a Potential Acquisition of Real Property" from Gates Watson of the TCF to Carol Fox of the NRDP and Darlene Edge of FWP, dated May 9, 2013.

example, TCF coordinated and paid for a hazardous materials inspection of the Property, which also met the State's needs. TCF also took the lead in seeking the \$50,000 from Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Trust which will reduce the State's costs to \$1,330,000. Assuming approval of the pending \$50,000 in matching funds from the Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Trust, the expenditure from the Terrestrial Priority Account of the UCFRB Restoration Fund for this acquisition project would be \$1,280,000.

FWP estimates that it will need approximately \$80,000 for initial operation and management to construct the primitive parking lot, weed control, and fencing needs. Funding for this work will come from the WMA habitat enhancement allocation in the *Final Restoration Plan*.

Project Evaluation

Public Access: Purchase of the Property will expand on and improve public access to the eastern portion of the Garrity WMA. The two existing access points closest to the subject Property provide insufficient access to this portion of the Garrity WMA. Both existing access points are not on the Garrity WMA lands and in locations that make them difficult for the public to find and use. Accessing the Garrity WMA through 'Stump Town' area requires driving past some homes to a parking area located on DNRC lands that accommodates 1 or 2 vehicles. The second existing access point requires crossing about ½ mile of the adjoining Hearst Lake Property, a private property that is under long-term lease to Anaconda Deer Lodge County. If State acquisition is approved, FWP plans to install a small gravel parking lot off Stump Town Road that would be located on the Property, accessed via county road, and accommodate approximately four vehicles (see proposed location on Attachment B).

The Property is immediately west of Anaconda and will provide considerable recreational opportunities for hunters, hikers, horsemen, fishermen, wildlife watchers, and other users. FWP estimates that about 250 fishing days and 750 hunting days may be added by the addition of this Property to the Garrity WMA. Given the proximity to Anaconda, hunting success will be maximized with walk-in access only. To protect wildlife during critical time periods closures to public use and travel management will be necessary and managed by FWP.

Costs:Benefit Relationship: FWP's resource evaluation (Attachment C) describes the natural resource and public recreational benefits of this project. If approved for State ownership, this Property will add 640 additional acres to the existing 9,475 acre Garrity WMA, which was purchased with natural resource damage funds in 2000/01 for \$5.8 million. This addition would complement and protect the existing State investment by conserving high quality wildlife habitat for many species and precluding development. This habitat is of especially high quality for both winter range and calving habitat, and conservation of the Property will help maintain connectivity for wildlife migration over an expansive area of nearby public lands managed for natural resource conservation. Expected recreational activities include wildlife watching, hiking, walking, hunting, and horseback riding, all of which will be directly accessible near the Anaconda city limits.

Three specific habitats (winter elk range, aspen, and riparian) will be protected from development by this acquisition:

- 1) Big game winter range for elk will be protected. Elk are increasingly wintering on the Property because it is at a lower elevation as compared with the Garrity WMA as a whole, and because it supports high quality grasslands (225 acres) and aspen stands. These grassland areas are designated as Priority 1 lands for restoration and replacement projects in the UCFRB, as outlined in the *Final Restoration Plans*. Herds of up to 200 elk have been observed wintering on the Property, with significant use also occurring during spring and fall. The Property is particularly valuable as an addition to the Garrity WMA because wintering elk have shifted east from the mountain itself and onto the proposed addition (“the Property”).
- 2) This Property has approximately 300 acres of aspen stands, which are relatively rare in the UCFRB and provide habitat for species such as moose, white-tailed deer, black bear, ruffed grouse, song birds, small mammals, bats, and raptors.
- 3) Grays and Ice House gulches pass through the Property, harboring stands of woody riparian vegetation and some wetlands. These perennial streams may support a modest cold water fishery. (FWP has not yet surveyed the Property so the presence and distribution of fish is unknown.) All riparian and aspen habitats are designated as Priority 1 lands for restoration and replacement projects in the UCFRB, as outlined in the *Final Restoration Plans*.

Given these substantial natural resource and recreational benefits the project offers, and that matching funds are available, the NRDP considers the project to have a favorable cost:benefit relationship.

Cost-Effectiveness: The *Final Restoration Plans* indicate that the NRDP will use a cost-effectiveness evaluation to judge whether a project accomplishes its goals in the least costly way possible, or if there is a better alternative. In FWP’s Resource Evaluation (Attachment C), FWP adequately justifies the reasons for and benefits of this Property. As stated therein: “The addition of 640 acres to the east of Garrity WMA will protect highly utilized elk winter range and calving habitat, conserve multiple priority habitats, and associated species, and provide significant public recreational opportunities, all within sight of Anaconda. The value of Garrity WMA to wildlife and the community will be enhanced by the purchase. The juxtaposition of native grasslands, aspen groves, riparian habitat, and ponds make the property an especially valuable site for wildlife.” Adding such quality wildlife habitat to an existing WMA is a cost-effective way to synergistically enhance the benefits of existing conservation lands. Because of the significant benefits that this project offers as described herein, this acquisition will cost-effectively accomplish the project goal of enhancing the wildlife resource habitat and increasing the public access to the Garrity WMA.

Public Support: As indicated in their abstract submitted in 2012 (Attachment A), the Anaconda Sportsmen’s Club strongly supports adding this Property to the Garrity WMA. Following the conclusion of a 30-day public comment period on this proposal, the NRDP will provide the public comment and the NRDP’s draft response to public comment to the Advisory Council and Trustee Restoration Council before these councils determine their funding recommendations.

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JUN 18 2012

Natural Resource Damage Program
1301 East Lockett
PO Box 201425
Helena, MT 59620-1425

NATURAL RESOURCE
DAMAGE PROGRAM

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Anaconda Sportsmen's Club as our Restoration Concept Abstract.

Our club has represented the interests of outdoor recreationist, mostly hunters and fishers, in the Anaconda area for more than 60 years. From the initiation of legal proceedings which produced the NRD funds from ARCO we were active supporters and provided legislative testimony to support funding of the lawsuit. Our members provided testimonials to quantify the actual losses in wildlife and riparian resources as well as associated recreation. These losses were the majority of documented losses for which monetary compensation was received to provide funding for what is now the NRD Program.

It has been our expectation that the recently adopted Framework for allocating the remaining fund balance would protect and insure appropriate funds for the various Restoration Plans. Specifically we expect the estimated \$43.3 million for aquatic resources and \$18.4 million for terrestrial resources will be available for identified priority areas. Funding is not sufficient to obtain all priority projects but we expect to work with FWP and conservation organizations to pursue those projects as opportunities are identified and available.

While we don't have the resources to develop actual projects we support the Priority area projects as proposed. These represent our initial Restoration Concept Abstract. In addition to those listed we would ask for fishing access sites on the Clark Fork River, especially above Drummond. We can't identify specific sites or a quantity of sites but it is important that sufficient public access is provided so the public can enjoy the benefits of a restored river system. This will require negotiation with private parties to find willing sellers as fee title or easements in appropriate locations.

In addition we have supported the development of a reservoir in the Fifer Gulch area on the Southwest corner of Anaconda for the purposes of an urban fishery designed for youth. These lands are under long term lease by Deer Lodge county from Mountain Lion Corporation (Dennis Washington).

For Terrestrial Restoration plans we submit the Big Easy, a large block of wildlife habitat east of the Warm Springs Ponds. Negotiations with the owner were suspended this past year when it was determined there were too many risks to presenting a project for this year. We would like to pursue this opportunity again.

In addition there is a 600 acre property know as the Brickley lands as well as the Hearst Lake property owned by Mountain Lion Corporation, noted above. Both are adjacent to

the Watershed lands owned by FWP in the Hearst Lake drainage. This is valuable winter range for our local elk herd and we support protecting these wildlife values and providing additional access to adjacent public lands. Protecting both of these habitats is critical to achieving the full wildlife and recreational values of the public lands in the larger Watershed landscape.

We recommend the Letica property, 11,000 acres between Lost Creek State Park and the Racetrack drainage. This property is critical habitat for a number of wildlife species including Bighorn sheep, Mule deer, and a large number of elk. Again these lands are vital to maintaining wildlife values on existing public landscape.

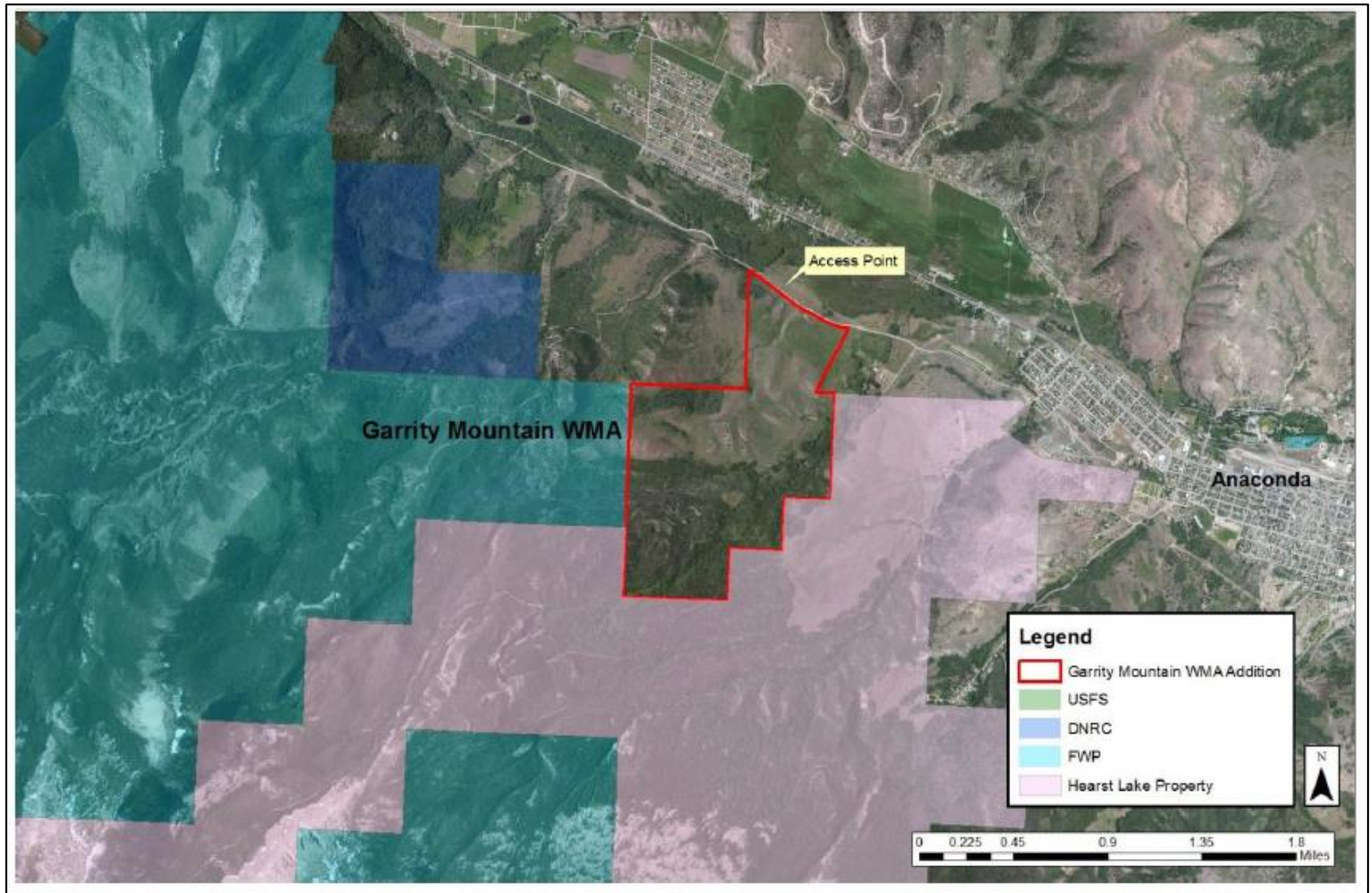
We appreciate the opportunity to develop these additional proposals as well as work with appropriate parties to move the existing priority projects forward. We don't have a preference for fee title purchase or easements. Our preference is to replace and enhance habitats and access depleted by the activities which were the basis of the NRD lawsuit. Our expectation is that the remaining funds will be used to provide the best restoration opportunities with the greatest long term benefit for the public in the damaged Clark Fork watershed.

We look forward to working with the NRD staff and advisory councils to develop these projects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chas Marchio" with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Anaconda Sportsmen's Club
2 Cherry St.
Anaconda MT. 59711

Attachment B. Garrity Mountain WMA and Addition Property (Potential New Access Point listed below)



Attachment C
Terrestrial Resource Evaluation
Garrity Mountain Wildlife Management Area Addition

Date: April 15, 2014

Prepared by: Ray Vinkey and Kristi DuBois, FWP wildlife biologists

Property name: Garrity Mountain Wildlife Management Area Addition

Project Sponsor: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Location: 2 miles west of Anaconda, Montana (Figure 1)

Portions of Gray's and Ice House gulches at:

Township 5 North, 11 west, section 32
Township 4 North, 11 west, section 6

Acreage: 640 acres **Elevation:** 5440 to 6400 feet (Figure 2)

Landownership: Nonprofit organization – The Conservation Fund

Project description and cost: Fee-title acquisition of 640 acres of critical elk winter range, including intermountain grasslands, aspen stands, and riparian areas which provide high quality habitat for multiple game and nongame species (Figure 3). The appraised value of the land is \$1.38 million. As proposed the Natural Resource Damage Programs' Terrestrial Resource Fund would pay \$1,280,000, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Habitat Montana Fund would pay \$50,000, and the Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Fund would pay \$50,000. Project costs for due-diligence and administration are paid by the Conservation Fund and NRDP.

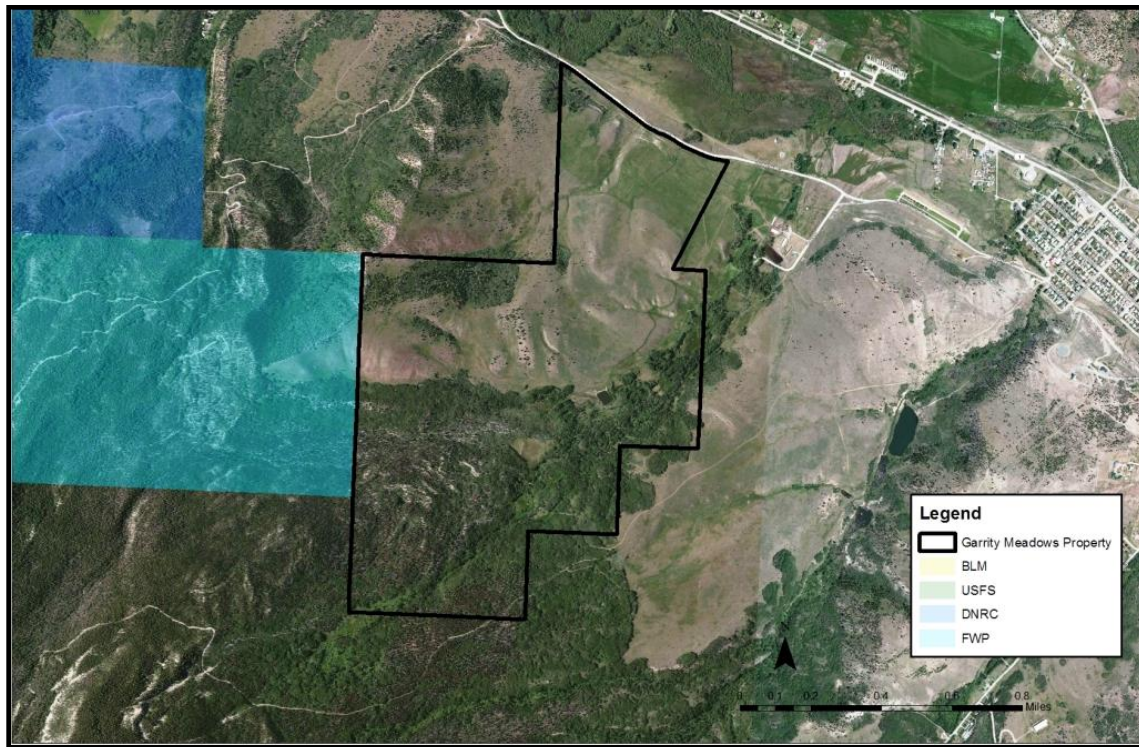
Consistent with a memorandum of understanding with NRDP, the Conservation Fund (TCF) has purchased the property from a Bozeman bank for disposition to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Significant due diligence has been completed by TCFs' partner American Lands and NRDP. The FWP Commission has approved this project to proceed.

The Garrity addition would complement the existing WMA by adding lower elevation winter range as well as 300 acres of aspen forest and riparian habitats along with two creeks and three ponds. The purchase would preclude the subdivision of the property that could occur under private ownership.

The map displays the state of Montana with its geographical features, including the Rocky Mountains, the Missouri River, and various cities. A red dot marks the location of the subject property in the western part of the state, near the town of Bonanza. An inset map in the bottom right corner shows the location of Montana within the United States. A legend in the bottom right corner identifies the red dot as the 'Subject Property'. A scale bar and a north arrow are also present in the bottom right corner.

This topographic map illustrates the Garrit Meadows area, highlighting the Garrit Meadows Property boundary in black. The map is overlaid with a grid of red lines and includes various land management designations: BLM (yellow), USFS (green), DNRC (light blue), and FWP (dark blue). Key geographical features include Grays Gulch, House Gulch, and Filer Gulch. The map also shows contour lines, a north arrow, and a scale bar. A legend in the bottom right corner identifies the land management areas and the property boundary.

Figure 3. Aerial map of proposed Garrity WMA Addition.



Wildlife Habitat onsite: (Are there targeted habitats for conservation? Any unique habitats?)

The property is composed of intermountain grasslands and meadows (225 acres), aspen and riparian (300 acres), several ponds, 2 streams, and formerly irrigated pastureland (115 acres). Inclusions of lodge pole pine and Douglas fir are found in the uplands. Native intermountain grasslands and riparian habitats are targeted for conservation by FWP in the *Comprehensive Fish & Wildlife Conservation Plan* (2006) as well as by NRDP in the *Upper Clark Fork River Basin—Terrestrial Wildlife Resource Prioritization* (2011) and *Final Upper Clark Fork River Basin Aquatic and Terrestrial Resources Restoration Plans* (Restoration Plan, 2012). All riparian and aspen habitats are Priority 1 for restoration and replacement projects in the UCFRB.

The juxtaposition of native grasslands, aspen groves, riparian habitat, and ponds make the property an especially valuable site for wildlife. The addition is especially valuable because almost half of it is aspen and riparian, and much of the remainder is foothill grasslands. Aspen stands are relatively rare in the Upper Clark Fork and provide wildlife values in excess of their footprint on the landscape. There is an extensive aspen stand onsite which provides habitat for elk, moose, white-tailed deer, black bear, ruffed grouse, song birds, small mammals, and bats (Figure 4).

Aspen stands are a favored habitat for elk calving and native grasslands onsite provide critical elk winter range. Ponds provide breeding and nesting habitats for waterfowl as well as foraging habitat for bats and birds.

Figure 4. Aspen stand on the Garrity Mountain WMA Addition.



(Mark Sommer photo)

Wildlife onsite: *(What species are present, any Species of Concern or Endangered Species Act species? Are there targeted species for restoration: waterfowl, aquatic mammals, amphibians, grassland birds, insectivorous birds, birds of prey, bats?)*

Over 150 wildlife species (48 mammals, 97 birds, 4 amphibians, and 2 reptiles) have been verified in the Anaconda area in habitats similar to those found on the property. Aspen and riparian habitat, wetlands, forest, and native grasslands onsite provide important seasonal ranges for elk, moose, mule deer, and white-tailed deer.

The proposed addition adjoins the eastern portion of the Garrity WMA and would protect critical elk winter range in HD 214. The elk herd is stable to declining in number and their distribution has shifted eastward from Garrity Mountain to the proposed addition and the Hearst Lake property owned by Mountain Lion LLC.

In recent years more elk have wintered on the proposed addition, and adjoining private lands, than on Garrity WMA itself. The addition would accommodate this shift in elk distribution and

assure that the WMA retains its integrity by precluding subdivision of this adjoining parcel. FWP's ability to manage the WMA would be improved.

During an aerial survey on March 24, 2014, 190 elk were observed wintering on the property. This was 69% of all elk in the eastern portion (Georgetown Lake to Mill Creek) of HD 214. Significant use also occurs during the spring and fall. The property has exceptional winter range and is also used during calving. Elk are frequently observed by residents, were observed during all field visits, and have been recorded during aerial surveys (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Elk observed on field visit to Garrity Mountain WMA addition.



(Mark Sommer photo)

The area supports diverse populations of (or habitat for) a suite of other managed species, including mule deer, white-tailed deer, moose, black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, wolf, beaver, muskrat, mink, dusky grouse, and ruffed grouse.

Species of Concern and Potential SOC likely present on the property (either foraging or breeding) include dwarf shrew, Preble's shrew, hoary bat, silver-haired bat, fringed myotis, porcupine, western toad, western screech-owl, great gray owl, golden eagle, northern goshawk, peregrine falcon, veery, great blue heron, Cassin's finch, Clark's nutcracker, evening grosbeak, rufous hummingbird, brown creeper, green-tailed towhee, gray-crowned rosy-finch, pileated woodpecker, and Lewis's woodpecker. The property has not been surveyed for small mammals,

reptiles and amphibians, bats, or songbirds, although some bat and songbird surveys have been conducted in similar habitats nearby.

Targeted species for restoration likely to use the property include waterfowl, herons, raptors, amphibians, woodpeckers, insectivorous birds, bats, and burrowing mammals.

Fisheries habitat and resources onsite: Evaluation pending spring 2014.

Geographic relationship to other lands: (*Public, protected, developed, connectivity*)

The proposed addition adjoins Garrity Mountain Wildlife Management area (9,475 acres) to west, is ½ mile southeast of 480 acres Department of Natural Resources land, 2 miles south of Stucky Ridge WMA (296 acres), and 5 miles north of Mt. Haggin WMA (58,188 acres).

Thousands of acres of the Beaverhead National Forest in the Flint Creek Mountain Range to the north and the Anaconda-Pintler Range to the south the define this landscape. The addition is part of a landscape of extensive lands held by Beaverhead National Forest and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Anaconda-Deerlodge County leases an adjoining 4,734 acre parcel. Overall a high level of connectivity and protected lands characterize this area, but developed lands in the corridor west of Anaconda are a pinch point for wildlife movement. Conservation of this parcel will help to maintain connectivity across the area.

Development Status: (*What is the development potential?*)

In the immediate term there is no development potential for this parcel since it has been purchased by TCF as a bridge party for FWP. If FWP can not secure the parcel TCF will ultimately need to dispose of the property to another buyer. Nearby properties have been subdivided or are on the market for sale and if the property is not conveyed to FWP the most likely long-term outcome would be development of home-sites on the pasture along the county road and recreational homes in the uplands or near the pond.

Enhancement opportunities:

FWP may work to reinvigorate the aspen stands and riparian areas would benefit from fencing in some areas. Aspen stands would be improved by encouraging regeneration using either fire or thinning as a tool. Unnecessary fencing could also be removed to eliminate entanglement or collision hazards for wildlife. Spot treatment of weeds will be necessary.

Public access and recreation: (*What will be provided? Are there risks?*)

The addition is immediately west of Anaconda and would provide considerable recreational opportunities. Hunters, hikers, horsemen, fishermen, wildlife watchers, and others use the

adjoining Hearst Lake property and these user groups could also recreate here. Hunters are interested in obtaining access to Garrity WMA closer to town and the addition would provide it.

The Garrity WMA addition would provide deer and elk hunting opportunity. Its potential to support a fishery is unknown at this time. Since the property is 2 miles west of Anaconda and off a county road, we would expect significant public use. Predicting hunting and fishing days is difficult, but an estimate would be 250 fishing days and 750 hunting days. The project also increases opportunities for hiking and wildlife viewing in the Anaconda area. Given the proximity to town, hunting success will be maximized with walk-in access only. To protect wildlife during critical times closures to public use and travel management will be necessary.

Who are the partners? The Conservation Fund, American Lands, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Montana Fish and Wildlife Conservation Fund, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and Natural Resource Damage Program are the partners in this project.

Who will manage the land? The Garrity WMA addition would be managed as a part of, and consistent with existing management of the WMA. Staff already dedicated to work on Region 2 WMAs will be responsible for the addition and no additional FTE will be necessary.

Other unique factors to consider: Purchase of this property would help to protect impressive views of Mount Haggin and an undeveloped view-shed near Garrity Mountain. The proposed addition lies at the headwaters of the Upper Clark Fork and drains into Warm Spings Creek which is a Priority 1 stream in the Restoration Plan. The value of Garrity WMA to wildlife and the community will be enhanced by the purchase. There is strong public support for purchase of this property by Anaconda Sportsmens' Club & others.

Summary: The addition of 640 acres to the east of Garrity WMA will protect highly utilized elk winter range and calving habitat, conserve multiple priority habitats, and associated species, and provide significant public recreational opportunities all within sight of Anaconda. The value of Garrity WMA to wildlife and the community will be enhanced by the purchase.