

The Significance of Land Acquisition in the Management of Wildlife in Montana



Photo: Thomas Curry

The Significance of Land Acquisition in the Management of Wildlife in Montana

2015 Natural Resource Damage Program Conference

April 16, 2015

Fairmont Hot Springs Resort

Compiled and presented by:
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Region 2 Wildlife Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Missoula



Disclaimer: Data summaries are approximate and preliminary, presented here as points of interest only.



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

Wildlife Management Areas



76 Wildlife Management Areas



Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks

BLUE-EYED NELLIE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Welcome to Blue-eyed Nellie Wildlife Management Area. Since 2000, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has acquired 193 acres here to protect bighorn sheep winter range and to provide access to public lands.



Habitat

The bighorn herd utilizes grasslands in the foothills of the Flint Creek Range near Lost Creek and along Stucky Ridge just to your north. Their range extends south and west into the cirques and ridges of the Anaconda-Pintler Range.

The topography and vegetation nearby are well suited to bighorns. Native grasslands, found in the foothills, ridges and saddles supply nutritious forage, and abundant cliffs and rocky terrain, provide escape cover.

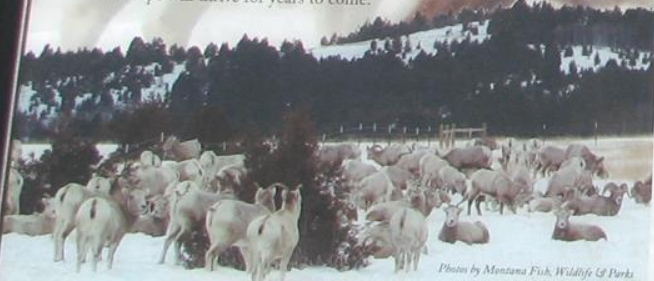


Breeding

Bighorn sheep frequent this area during their rut (breeding season). A complex social structure based on hierarchy directs the rut. Rams employ multiple breeding strategies: blocking, tending, or courting, depending on their social rank and access to ewes. Breeding success is greater for older rams, but younger rams and rams that are able to keep ewes away from the herd are also successful in fathering lambs.

Herd History

The Anaconda bighorn sheep herd was established in 1967 when FWP and the Anaconda Sportsmen's Club transplanted 25 bighorn sheep to Olsen and Foster Creeks from the Sun River west of Choteau, Montana. Despite two pneumonia outbreaks the Anaconda herd survives and we hope will thrive for years to come.



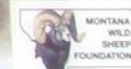
Photos by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Conservation by Partnership

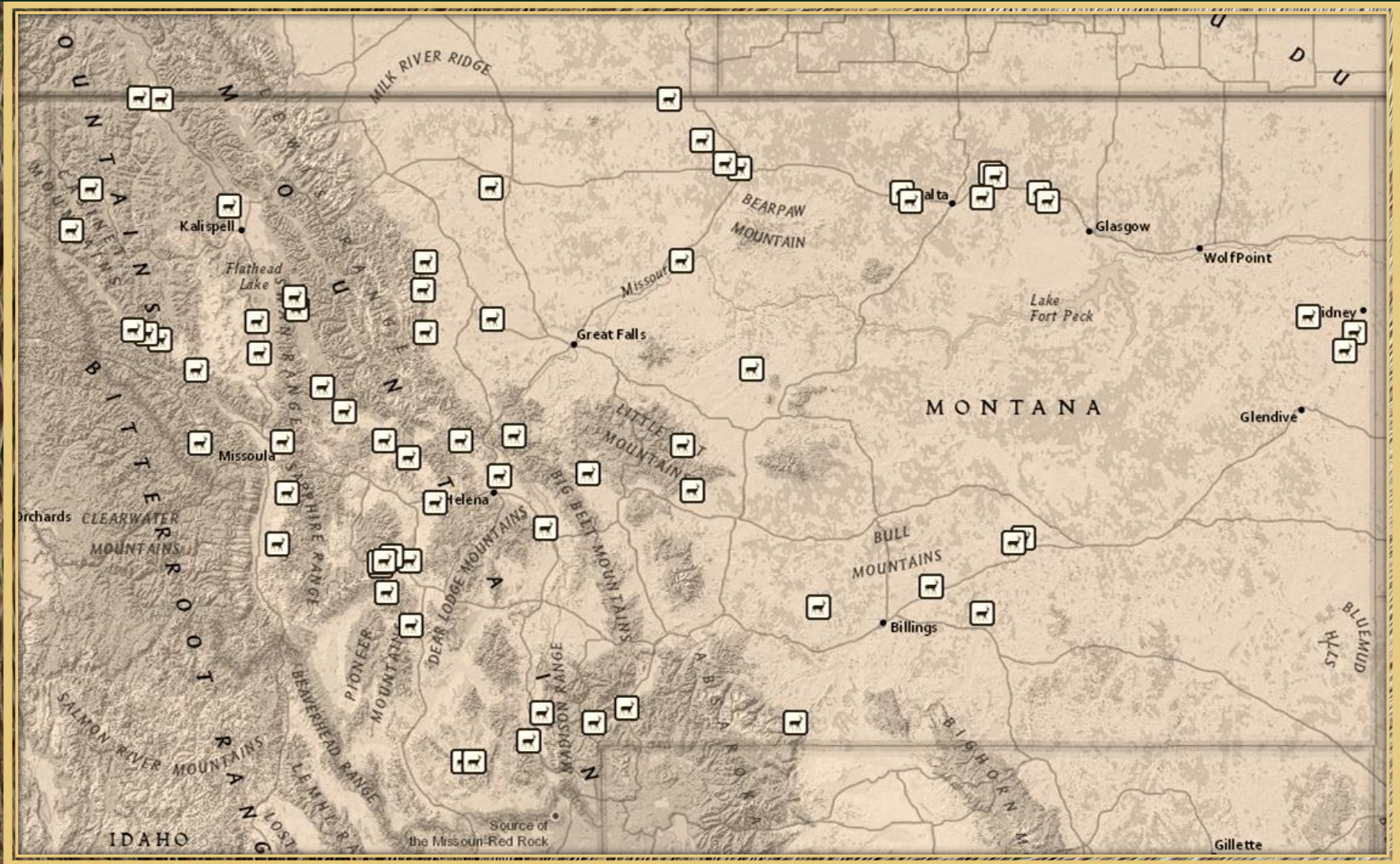
A broad constituency of local residents, state and national sporting groups, conservation groups, private land owners, and agency cooperators contributed resources to help create this Wildlife Management Area. FWP would like to thank the many partners whose cooperation has allowed us to conserve this herd.

Our partners have been: the Anaconda Sportsmen's Club, Montana Wild Sheep Foundation, the Washington Wild Sheep Foundation, Utah Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, Wild Sheep Foundation Midwest Chapter, the Western Montana Chapter of Safari Club International, Five Valleys Land Trust, the Natural Resource Damage Program, the Ternes family, and the Haffey family.

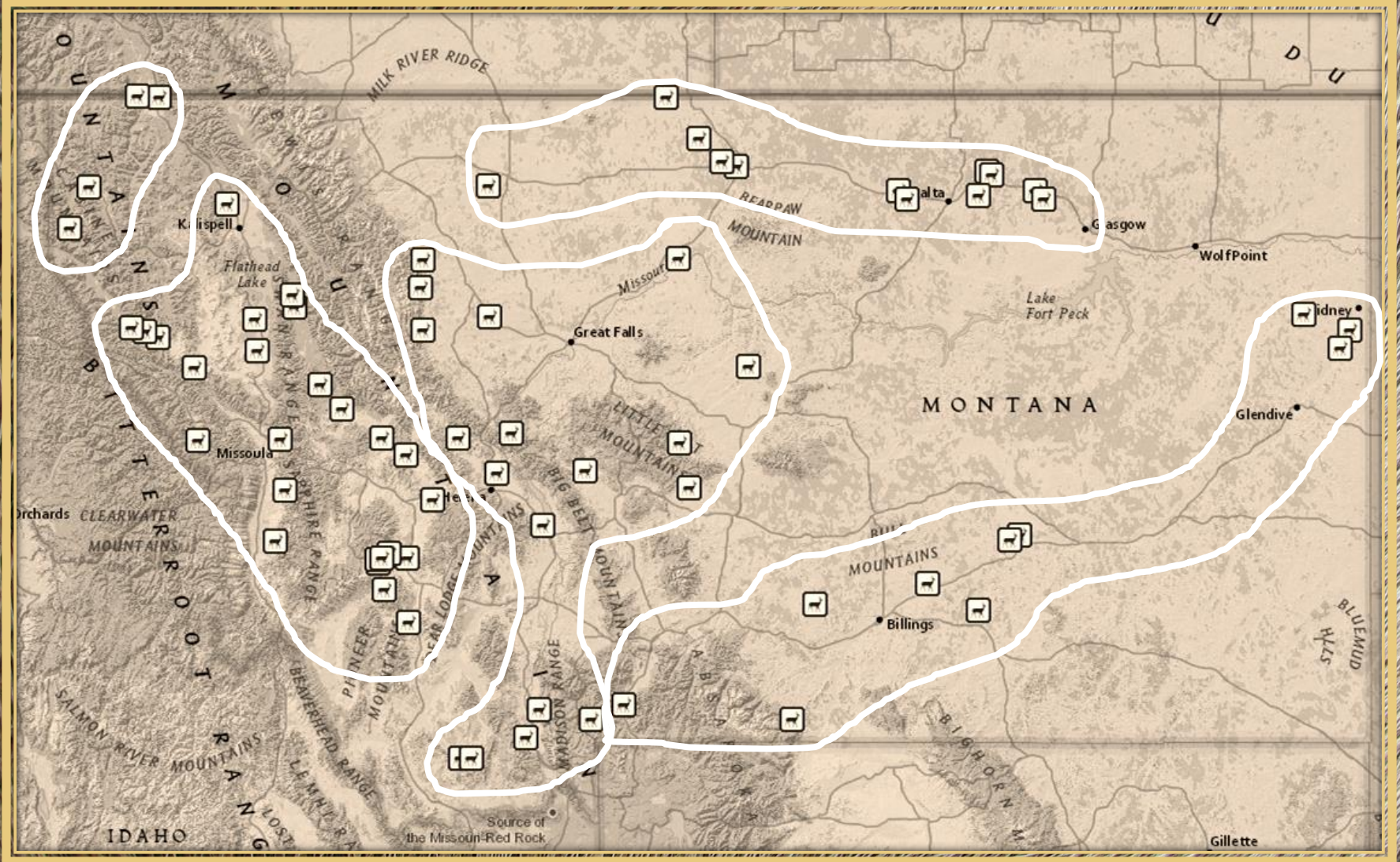
We appreciate the assistance of the Boy Scouts of America installing this sign.



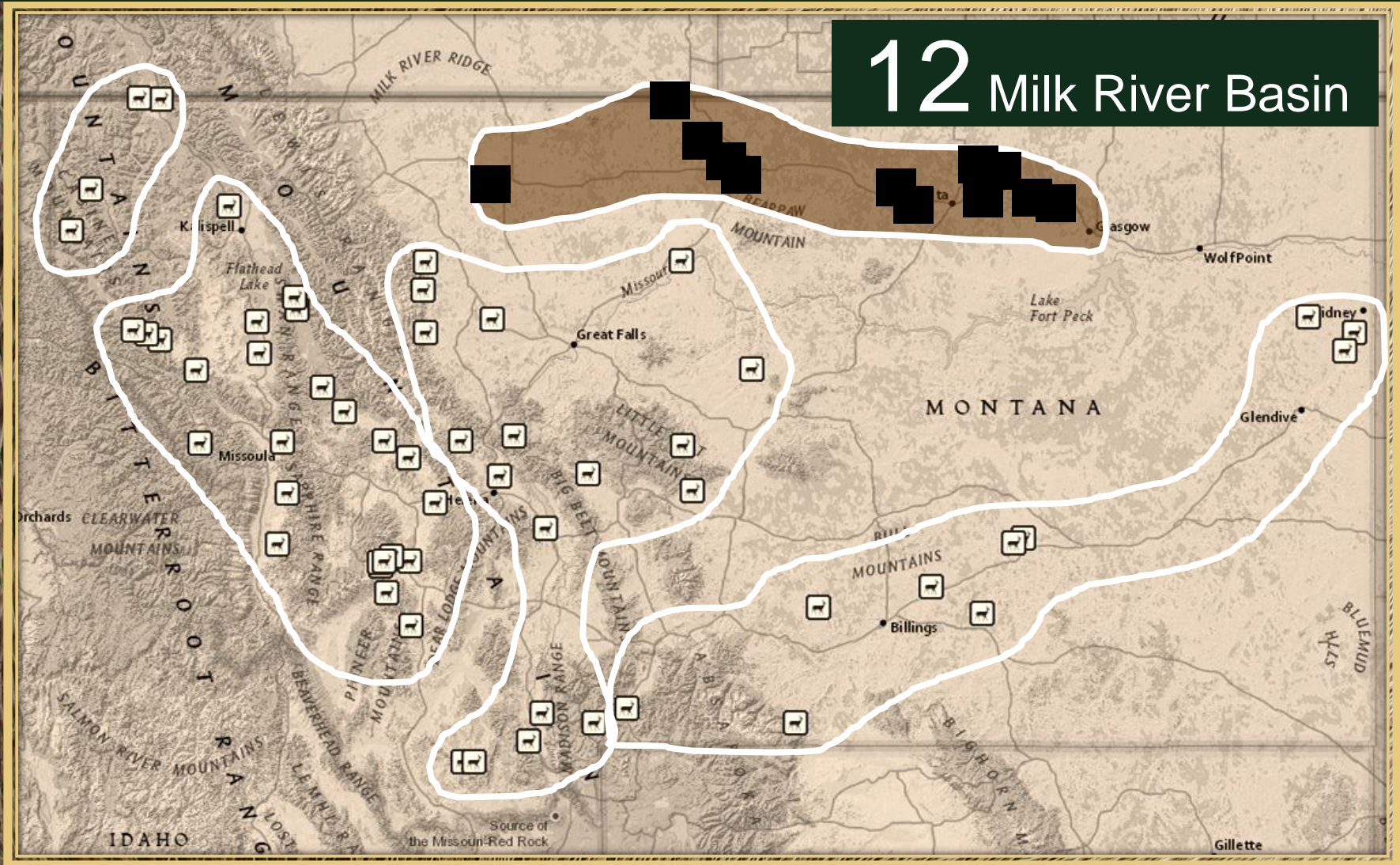
76 Wildlife Management Areas



76 Wildlife Management Areas



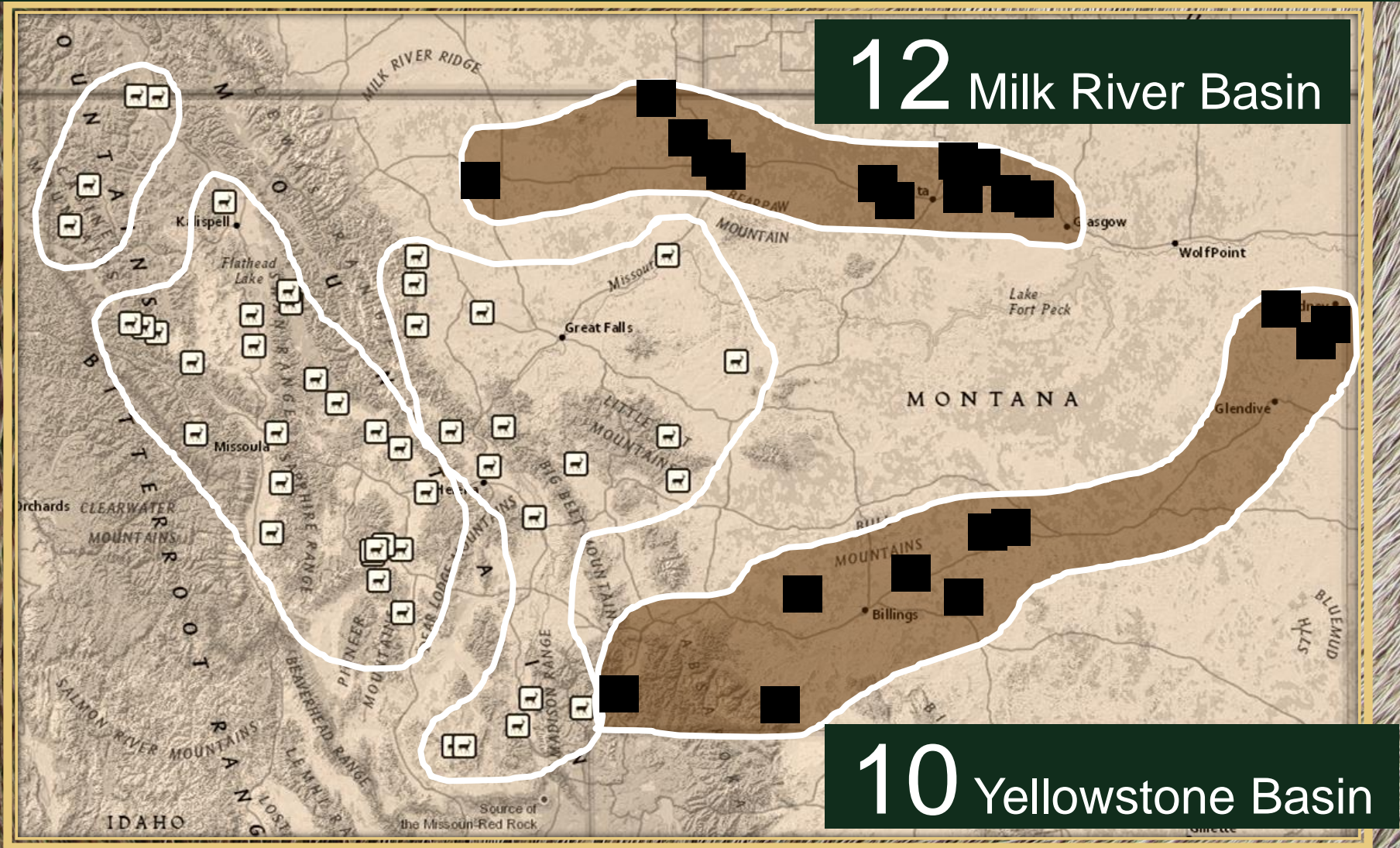
76 Wildlife Management Areas



Vandalia WMA



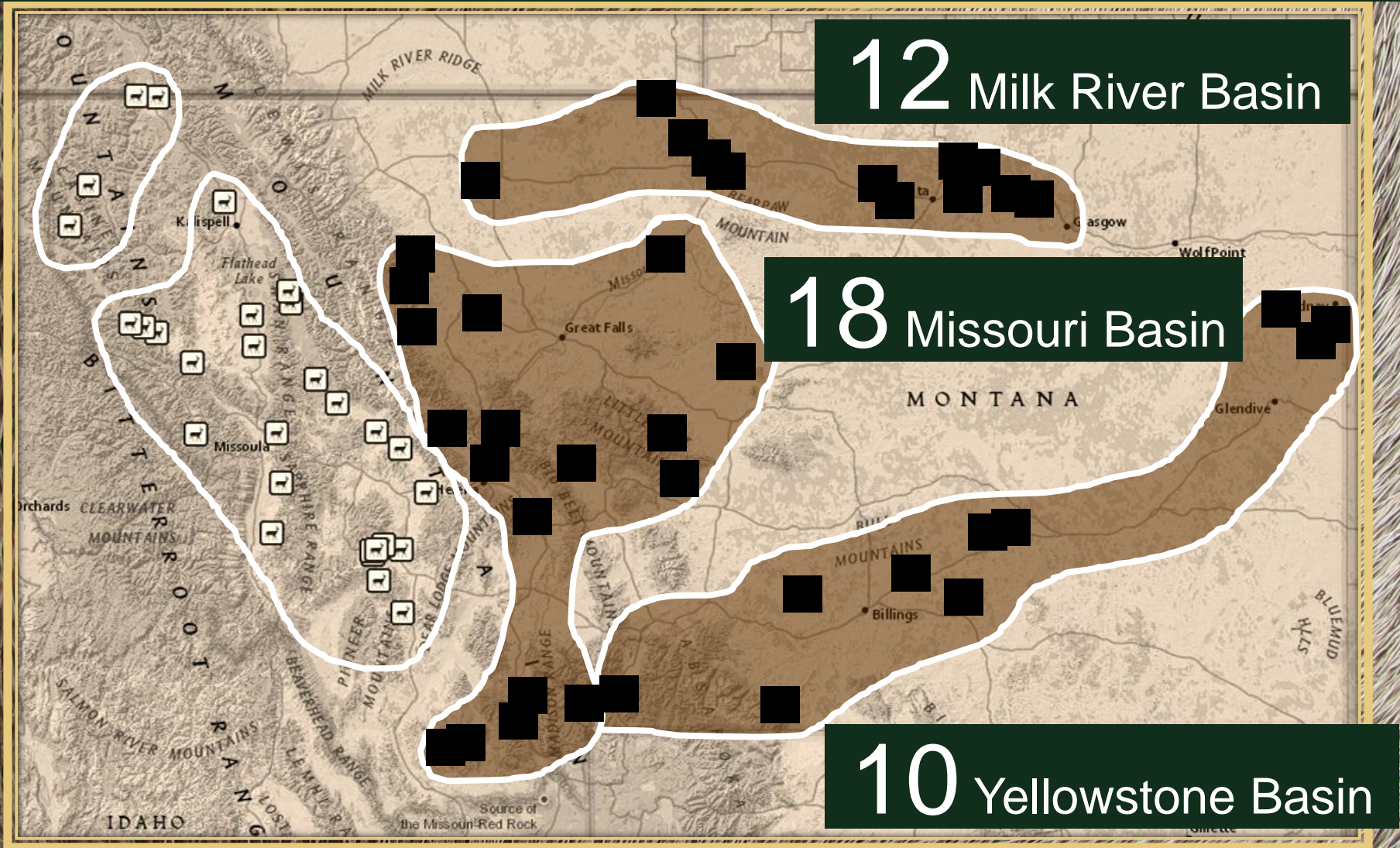
76 Wildlife Management Areas



Yellowstone WMA



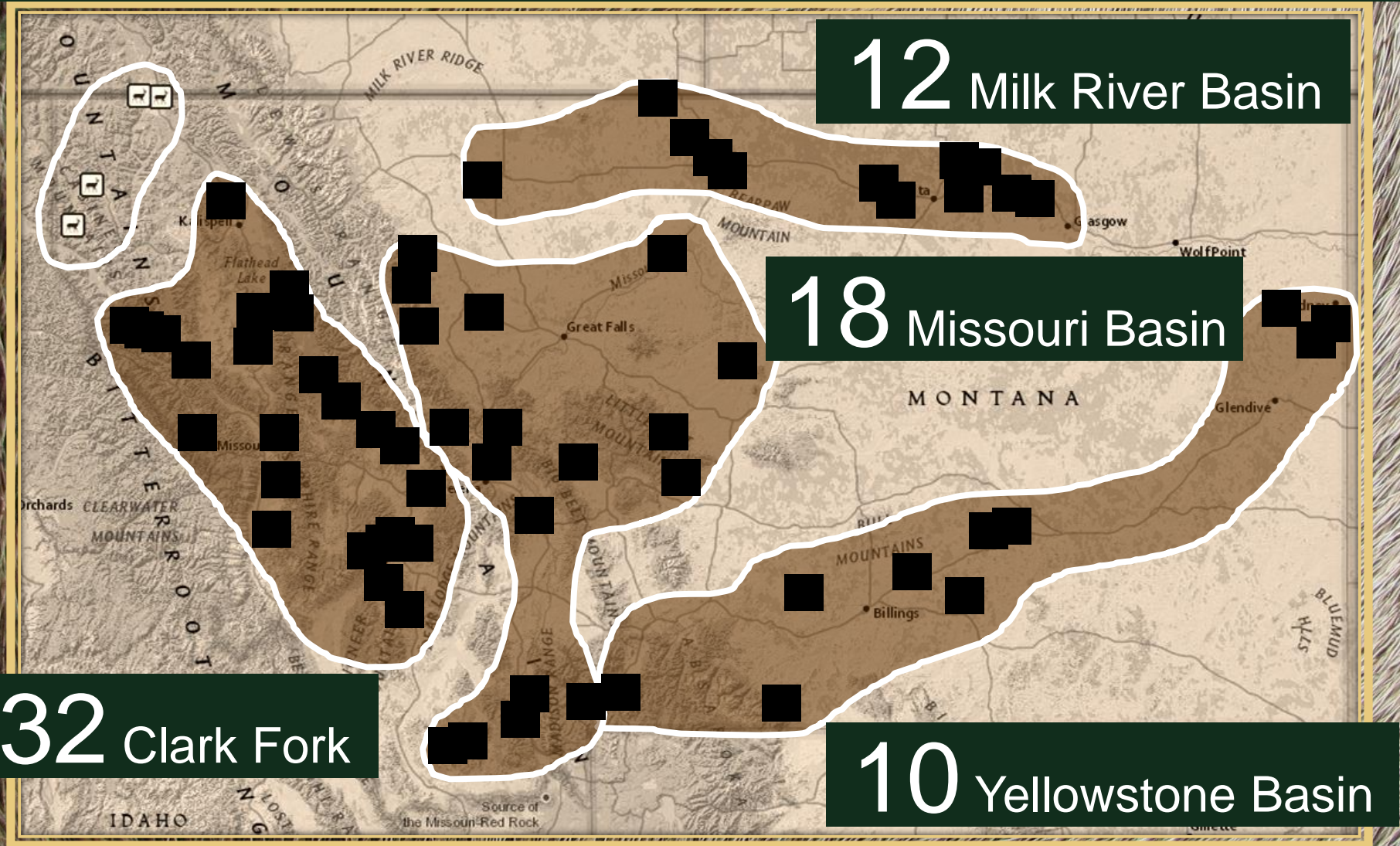
76 Wildlife Management Areas





Rocky Mountain Front

76 Wildlife Management Areas





Warm Springs WMA

76 Wildlife Management Areas

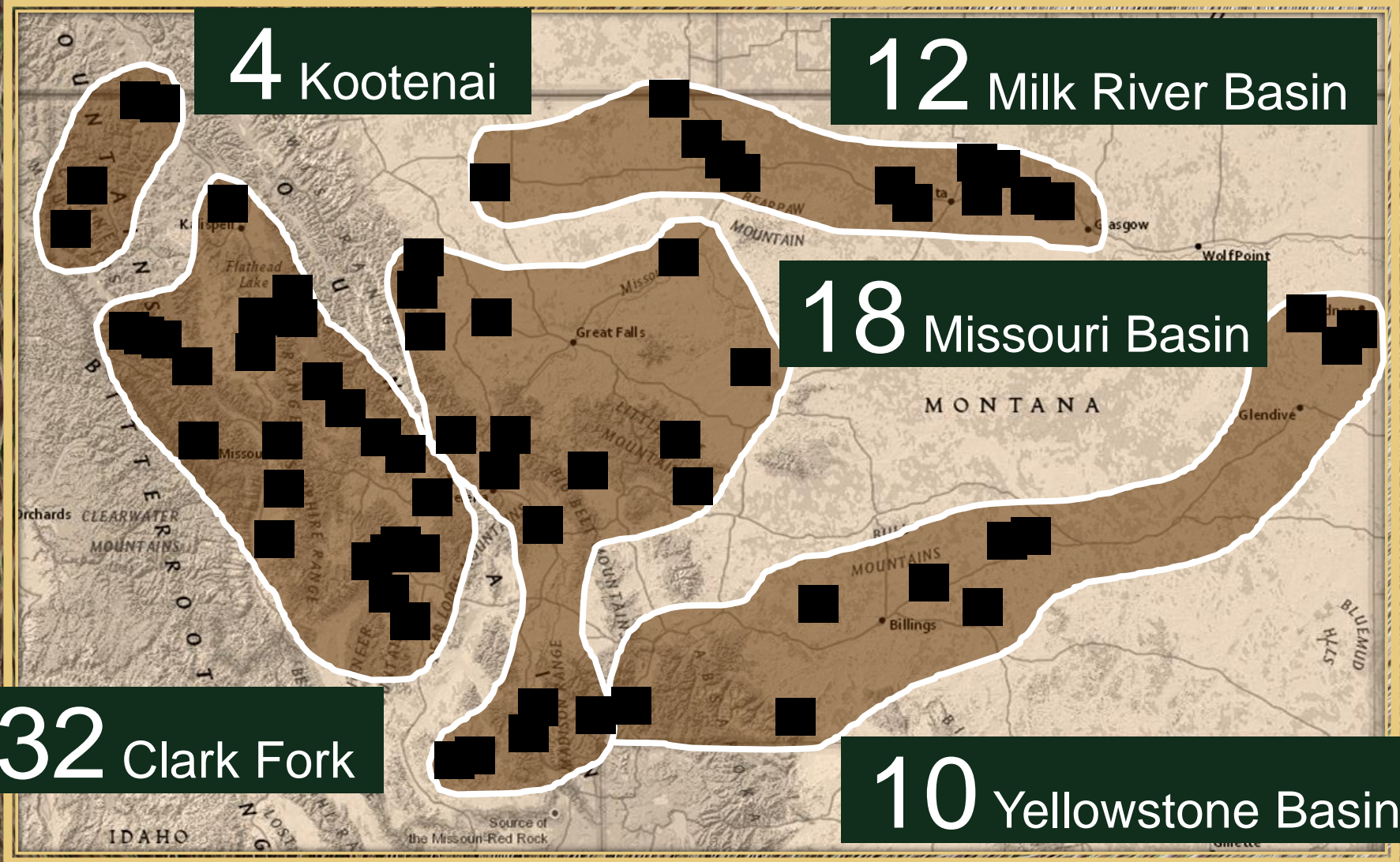
4 Kootenai

12 Milk River Basin

18 Missouri Basin

32 Clark Fork

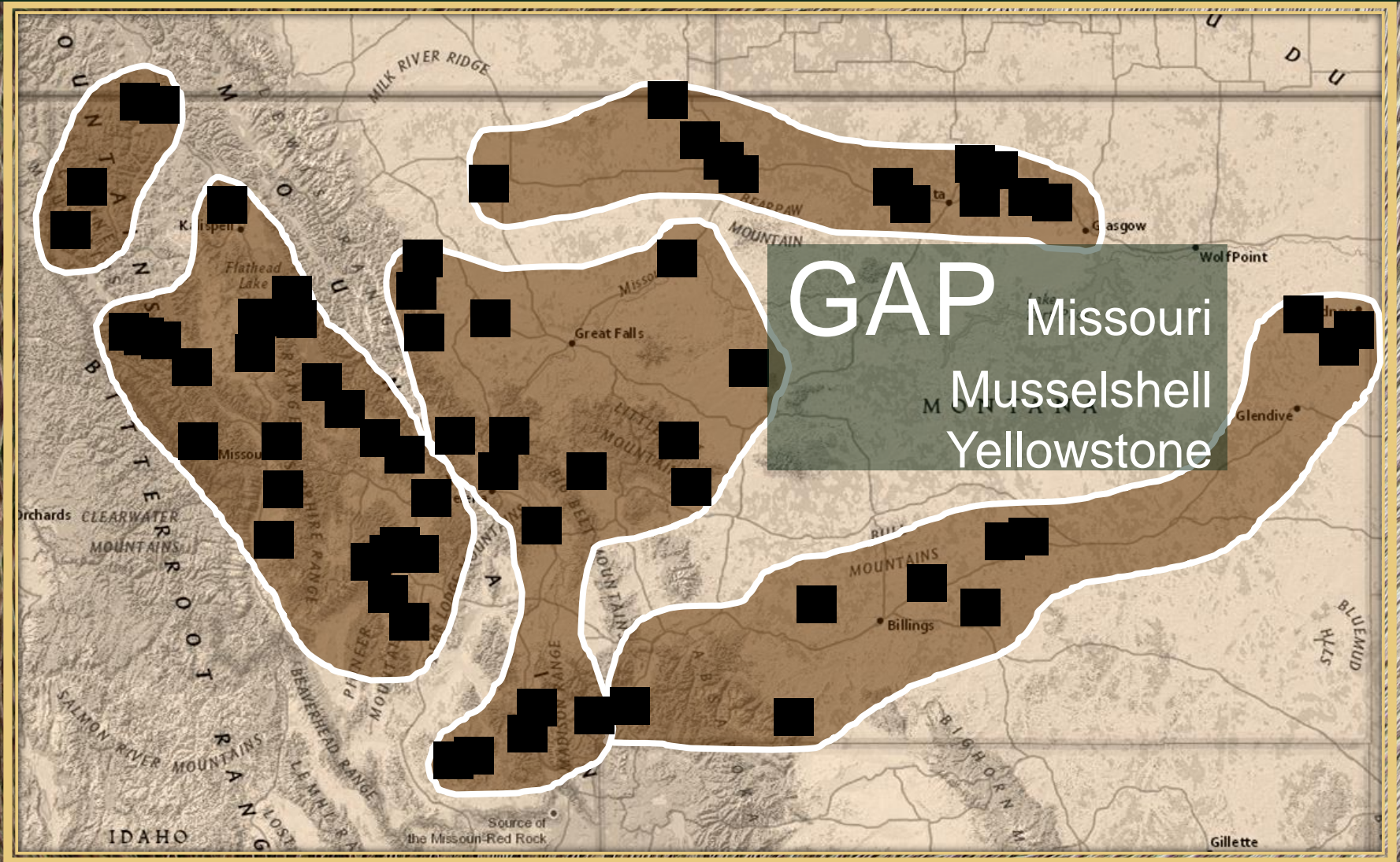
10 Yellowstone Basin



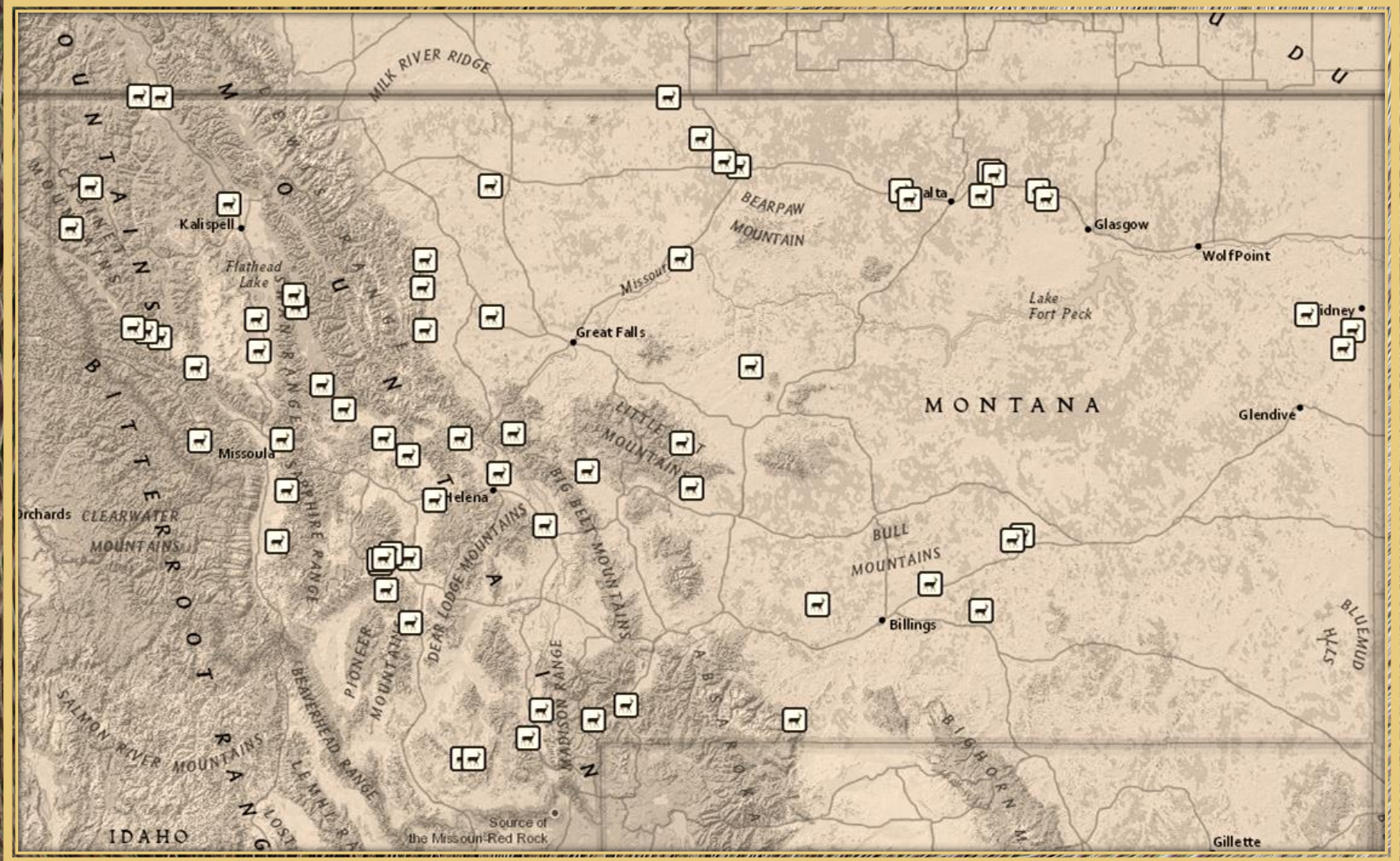


Bull River WMA

76 Wildlife Management Areas



373,000 Wildlife Fee-Title Acres



373,000 Wildlife Fee-Title Acres

0.4% of Montana



38,577 Fee-Title Acres via NRDP

10% of WMA acres



WMA Acres vs Other Public Land in Montana



THREEMILE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA



This 6,099 acre area is a contribution from America's hunters to Montana's wildlife, and it's wildlife enthusiasts. The Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission purchased this area because it provides critical winter range for migratory herds of elk and mule deer. As its first priority, the Department manages the area to enhance these unique winter range values, but many other wildlife species flourish as well. During the summer and fall months when the stress of winter has passed, we invite you to visit.

YOUR PURCHASE OF HUNTING EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS WILDLIFE RESTORATION

A source of pride

A rich history — 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA

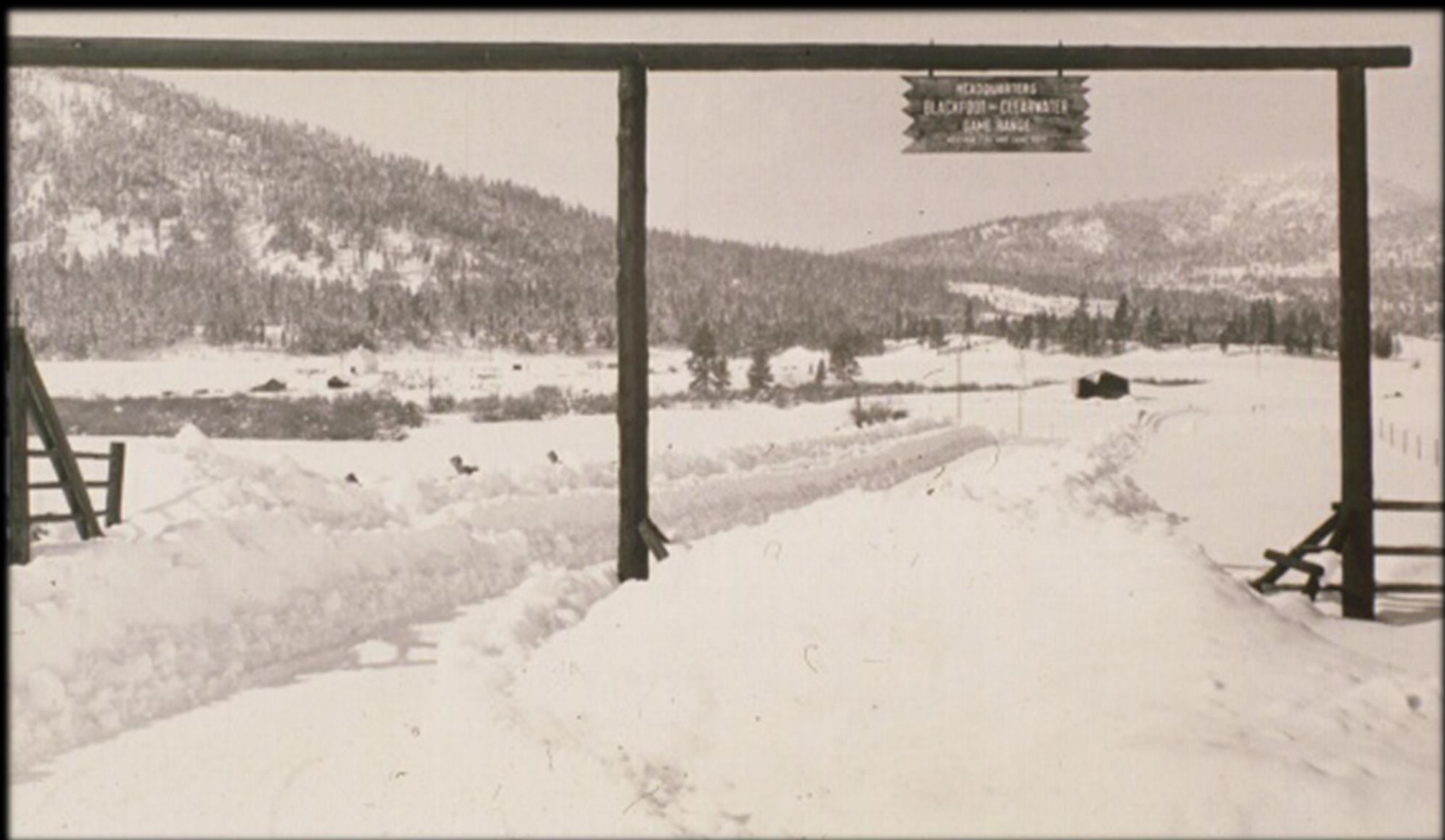


June 12, 1999



Restoring America's Wildlife

First WMAs Were Big Game Winter Ranges

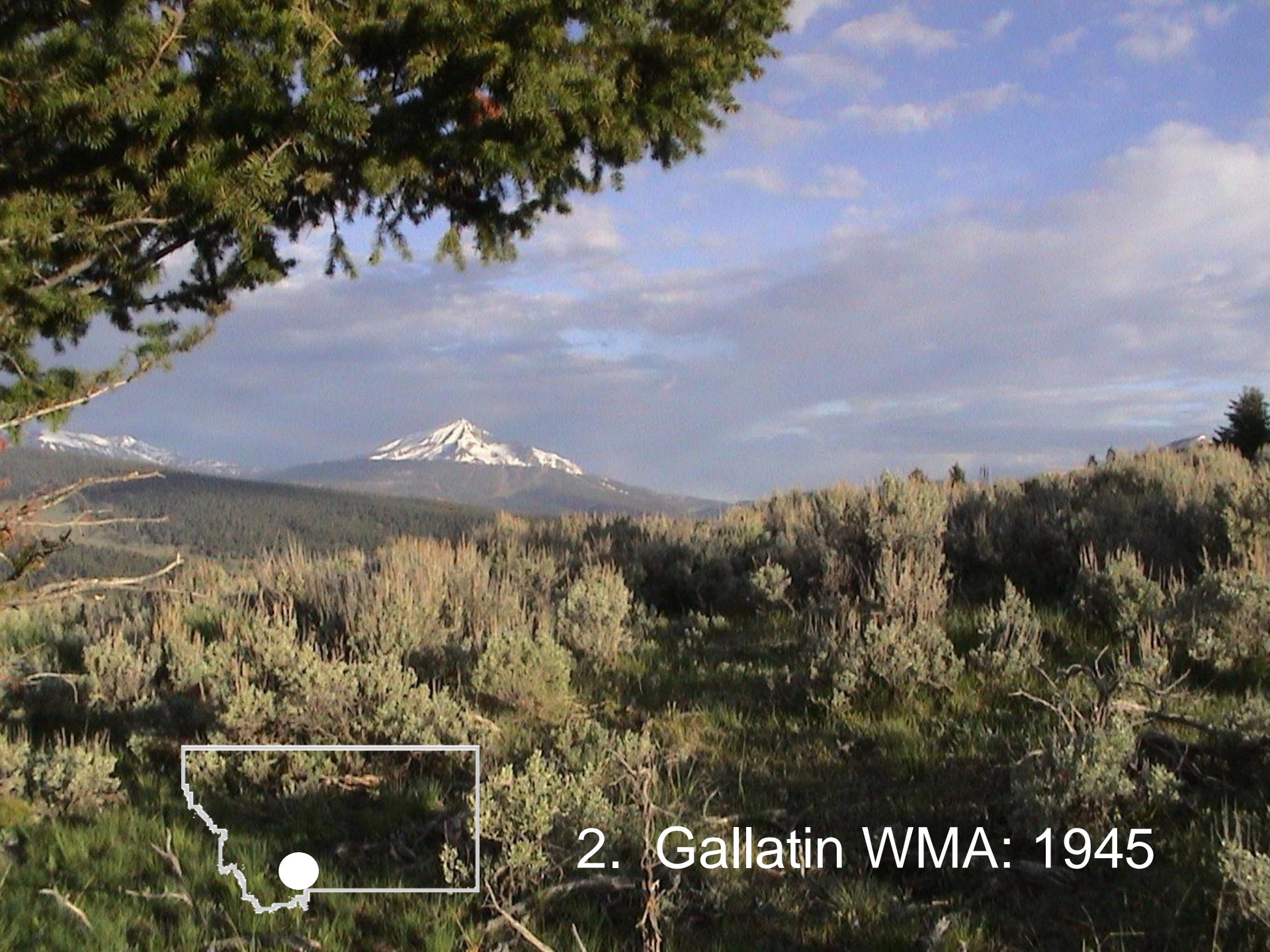


First WMAs Were Big Game Winter Ranges

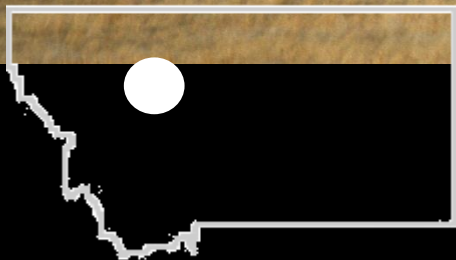




1. Judith River WMA: 1940



2. Gallatin WMA: 1945



3. Sun River WMA: 1948



4. Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA: 1949

27 WMAs are for Big Game Winter Range



Kootenai WMA

27 WMAs are for Big Game Winter Range

36%



Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA

Conserve Remnant Native Grasslands



Spotted Dog WMA

Conserve Remnant Native Grasslands

Spotted Dog WMA

- 27,616 deeded acres
- 18,000 deeded acres of native grassland

Spotted Dog WMA

Conserve Remnant Native Grasslands



The Encyclopedia
OF EARTH



The Montana valley and foothill grasslands ecoregion occupies high valleys and foothill regions in the central Rocky Mountains of Montana in the USA and Alberta.

Conserve Remnant Native Grasslands



The Encyclopedia
OF EARTH

Much of the very high human population growth in the Rocky Mountains region naturally finds its way to this ecoregion.

Conserve Remnant Native Grasslands

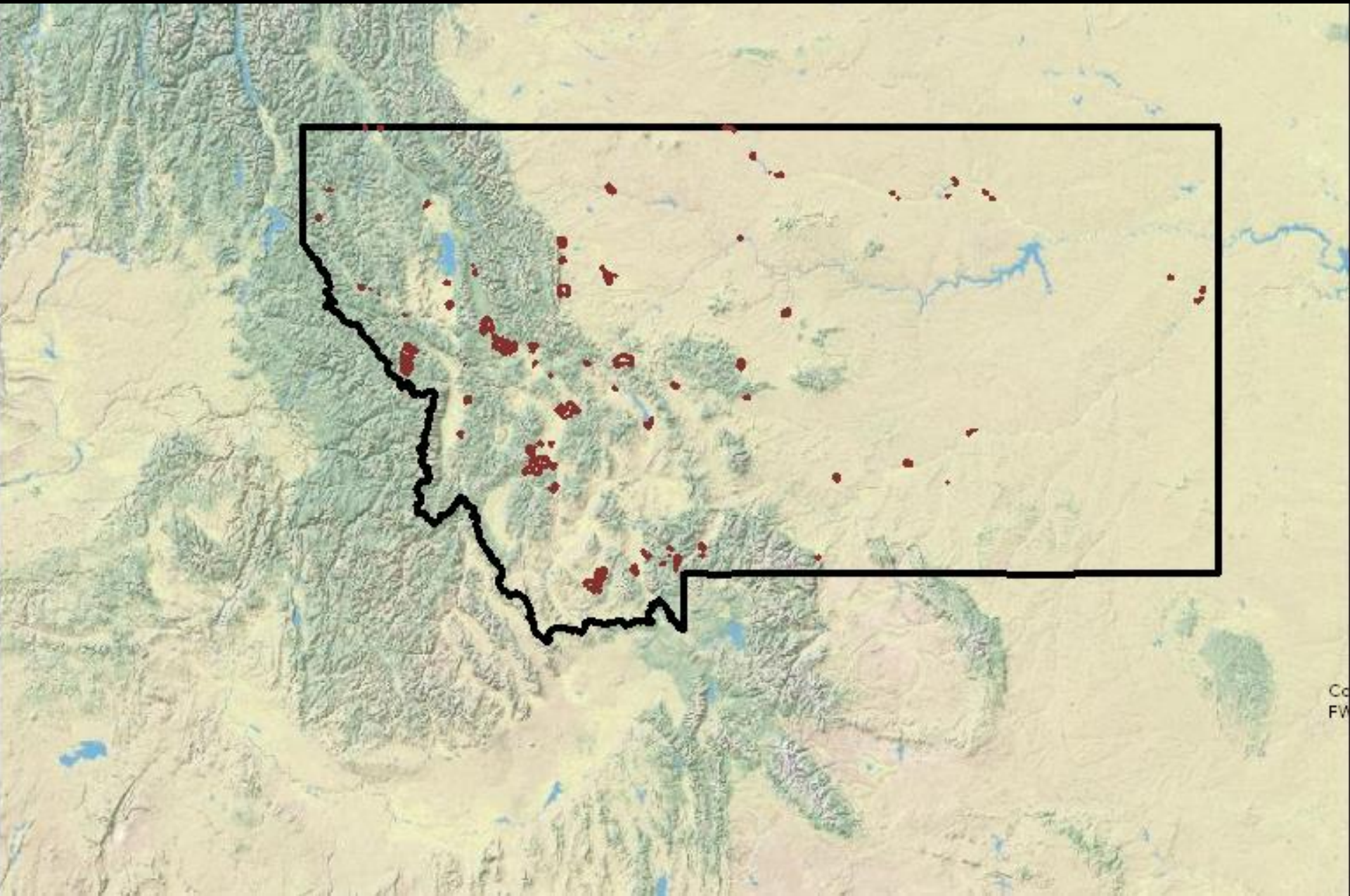


The Encyclopedia
OF EARTH



*Approximately
25 percent of
the ecoregion
remains as
intact habitat.
Most of the
ecoregion has
been heavily
altered.*

Conserve Remnant Native Grasslands



Conserve Remnant Native Grasslands



The Encyclopedia
OF EARTH



Ecoregions
superimposed
over FWP map
of Wildlife
Management
Areas

Conserve Remnant Native Grasslands



The Encyclopedia
OF EARTH



Ecoregions
superimposed
over FWP map
of Wildlife
Management
Areas

Conserve Remnant Native Grasslands



The Encyclopedia
OF EARTH

Blackleaf WMA

Sun River WMA

Beartooth WMA

Spotted Dog WMA

Wall Creek WMA

Silver Run WMA

Ecoregions
superimposed
over FWP map
of Wildlife
Management
Areas

Idaho

Conserve Remnant Native Grasslands



Silver Run WMA

Obtain Info Online

You are here: fwp.mt.gov

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[Wildlife Management Areas](#) »

Visit a WMA Site

Silver Run WMA

Obtain Info Online

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Visit a WMA Site

Opens noon on May 15.

Management Goal

To conserve and improve the soil and vegetation of the wildlife management area while providing winter habitat for elk, seasonal habitat for mule deer, white-tailed deer, black bear, blue grouse and nongame wildlife.

10% of the elk in Region 2 winter on WMAs



Spotted Dog WMA

10% of the elk in Region 2 winter on WMAs



Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA

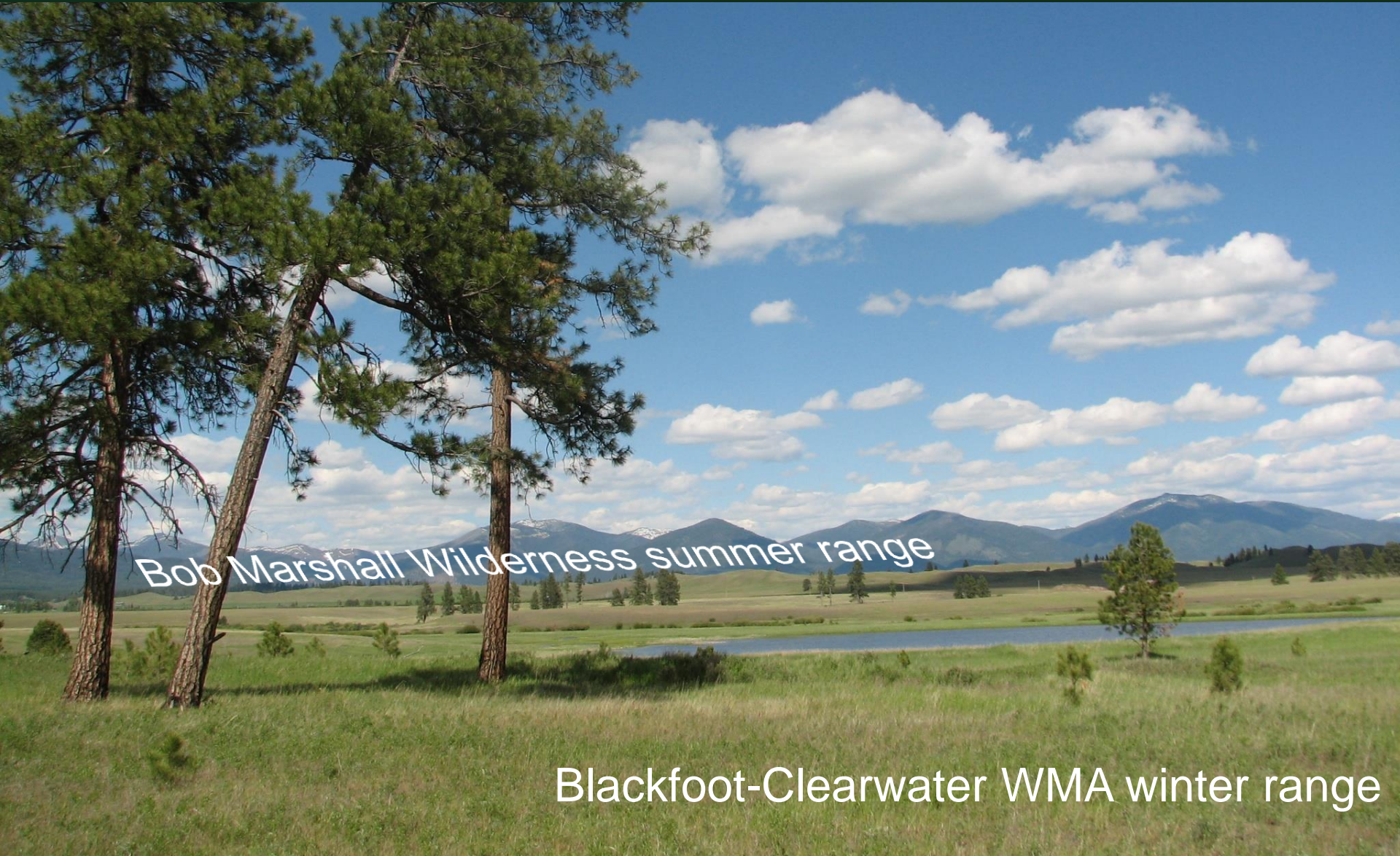
7% of the herd home range is winter range

Bob Marshall Wilderness summer range

Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA winter range



7% of the herd home range is winter range

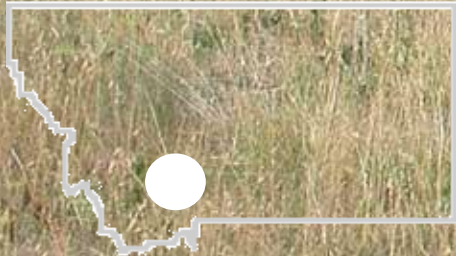


Bob Marshall Wilderness summer range

Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA winter range

7% of the herd home range is winter range

~4,900 acres per WMA



Bear Creek WMA winter range

7% of the herd home range is winter range



The Sphinx behind
Bear Creek WMA

Therefore,
132,000
acres of
winter range
on WMAs
supports
migratory big
game across
an additional
1.7 million
acres

Conserve Low Elevation Ponderosa Pine



Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA

Conserve Low Elevation Ponderosa Pine



Threemile WMA

Conserve Low Elevation Ponderosa Pine



The Encyclopedia
OF EARTH

Possibly an outlier
in Montana, with
ecology similar to
the *Eastern
Cascades* forest
ecoregion.

--M. Thompson

Conserve Low Elevation Ponderosa Pine



Unique wildlife and
difficult conservation
challenges on the
margins

Blackfoot Valley

Conserve Low Elevation Ponderosa Pine

- Evolved with frequent, low intensity fires



Threemile WMA

Conserve Low Elevation Ponderosa Pine

- Fire exclusion promotes stand replacement



Threemile WMA

Conserve Low Elevation Ponderosa Pine

- Forest management planned for 2015



Threemile WMA

1940-1987: Many WMAs purchased with Federal Aid.



Freezout Lake WMA

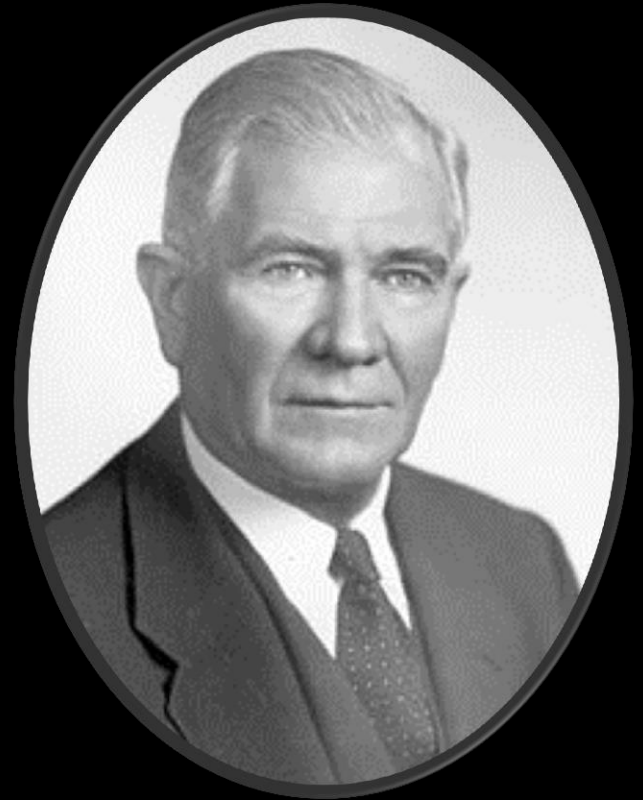
Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act 1937



Key Pittman
Nevada



Franklin
Roosevelt



Absalom Willis Robertson
Virginia

Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act



The Pittman–Robertson Act took over a pre-existing 11% excise tax on firearms and ammunition.[[]

Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act



Instead of going into the U.S. Treasury as it had done in the past, the money is kept separate and is given to the Secretary of the Interior to distribute to the States.[[]

Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act



The Secretary determines how much to give to each state based on a formula that takes into account both the area of the state and its number of licensed hunters.

Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act



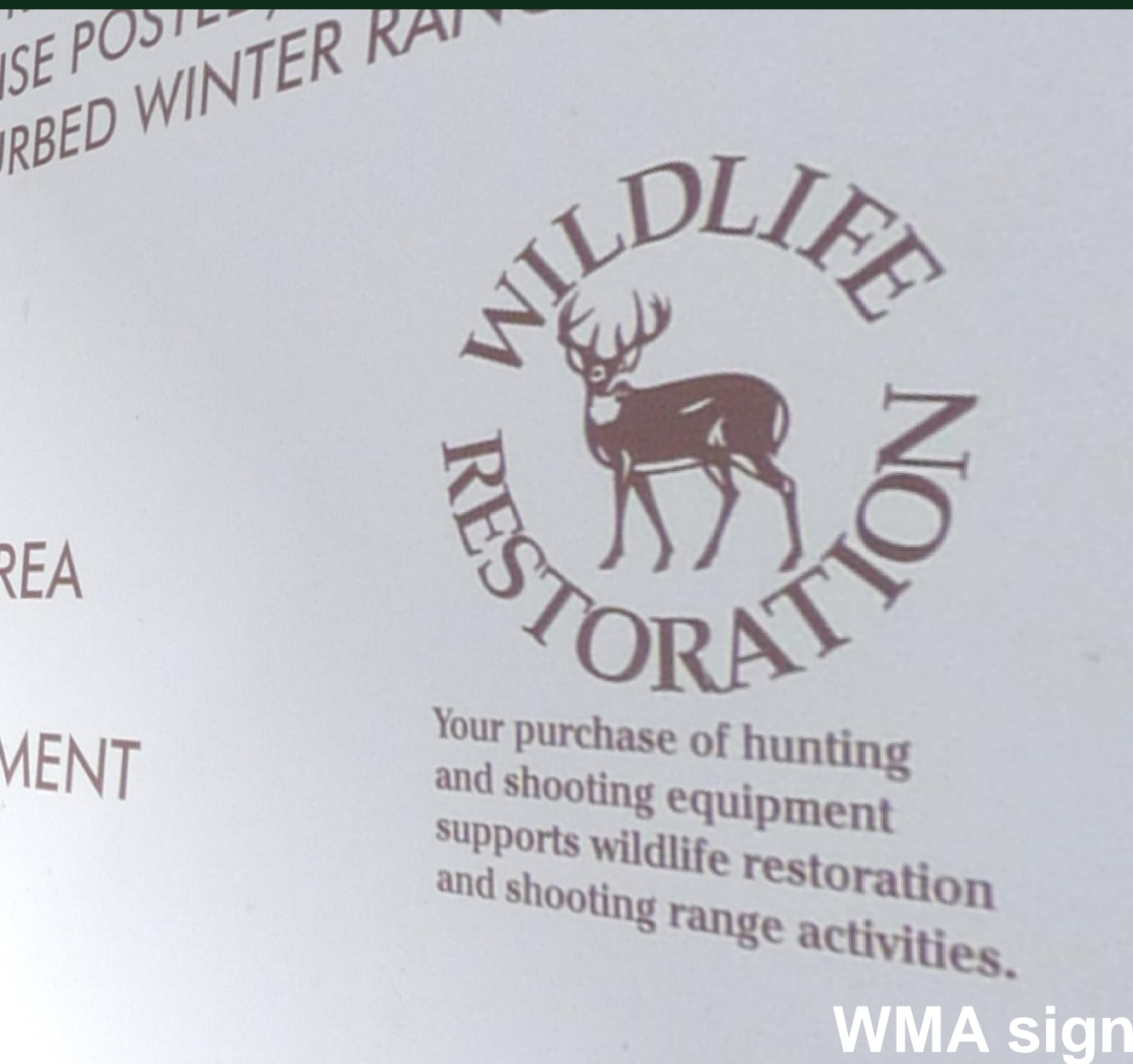
None of the money from their hunting license sales may be used by anyone other than the State's fish and game department.

Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act



Acceptable options include research, surveys, management of wildlife and/or habitat and acquisition or lease of land, among other things.

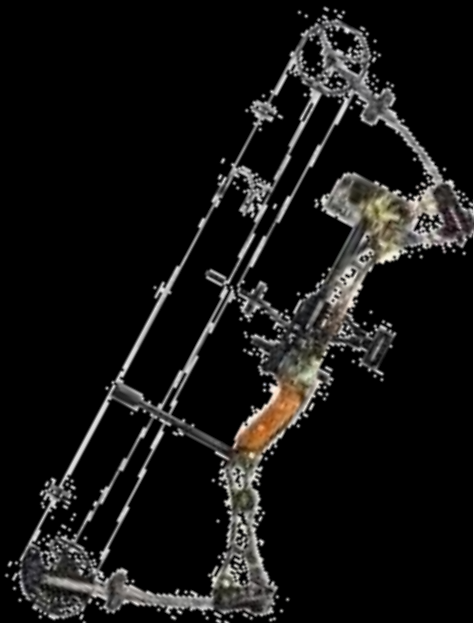
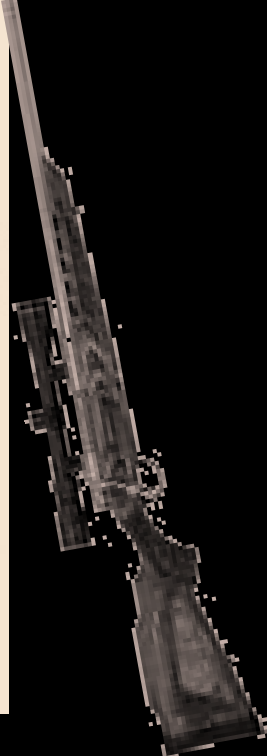
Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act



Once a plan has been approved, the state must pay the full cost and is later reimbursed for up to 75% of that cost through P-R funds



Federal Aid Project
funded by your purchase of
hunting equipment



75 *Years*
IT'S YOUR NATURE

Federal Aid recently increased and used for WMAs



Fish Creek WMA, purchased in 2010

Waterfowl Production



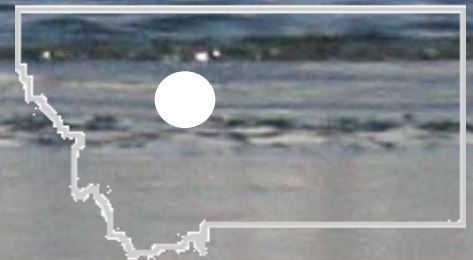
Clark Fork River

Waterfowl Production



Freezout Lake WMA: 1953

Waterfowl Production



Freezout Lake WMA: 1953

Waterfowl Production



Freezout Lake WMA

Waterfowl Production



Freezout Lake WMA

Waterfowl Production



Freezout Lake WMA

Waterfowl Production—Watchable Wildlife



Freezout Lake WMA

Waterfowl Production—Watchable Wildlife



George Wuerthner

Ninepipe WMA

Waterfowl Production—Watchable Wildlife



Ninepipe WMA

Waterfowl Production



Ninepipe WMA: 1953

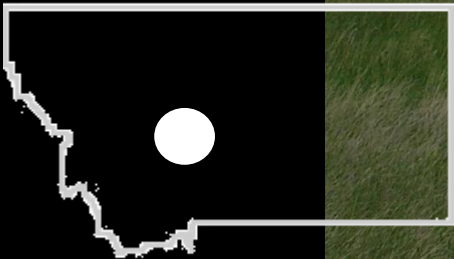
Waterfowl Production—and upland birds

Ninepipe WMA is
a destination for
pheasant hunting
in western
Montana



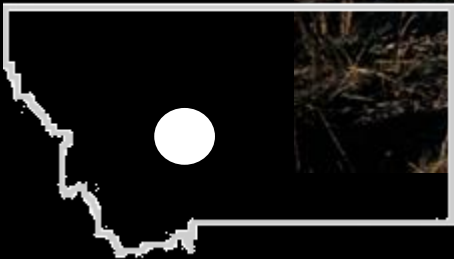
10 WMAs are for Waterfowl Production

Canyon
Ferry
WMA



10 WMAs are for Waterfowl Production

Canyon Ferry WMA



10 WMAs are for Waterfowl Production

13%



Warm Springs WMA

22 WMAs are for Riparian Wildlife



Near Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA

22 WMAs are for Riparian Wildlife

29%



Beckman WMA: 1999

07.26.2006 12:42

22 WMAs are for Riparian Wildlife



Marias River WMA: 2008

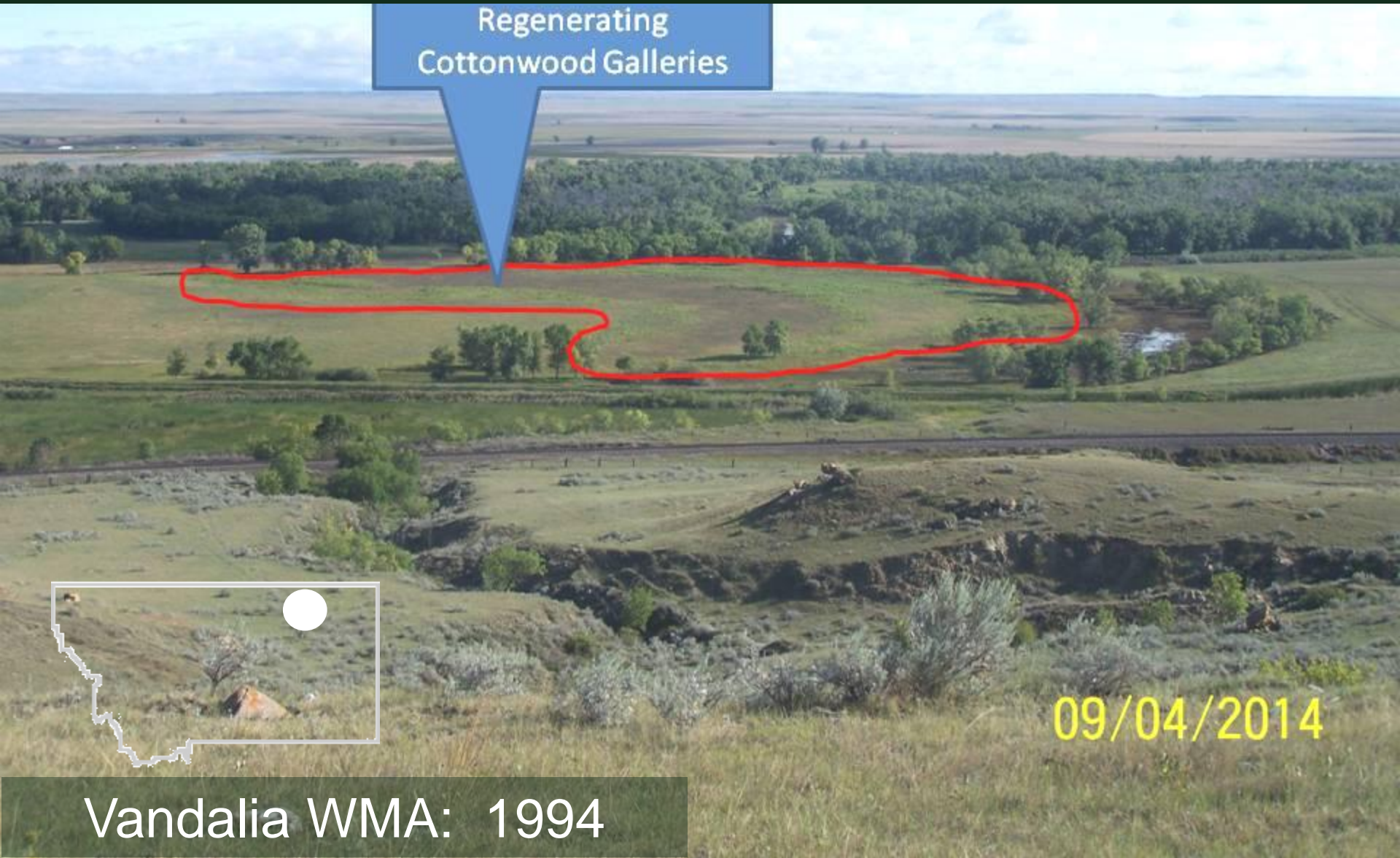
22 WMAs are for Riparian Wildlife

To conserve and enhance riparian habitats and wildlife populations along the Milk River and provide recreational opportunities for wildlife viewing and hunting of upland game birds, mule deer, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope, and elk.



Milk River WMA: 1949

22 WMAs are for Riparian Wildlife

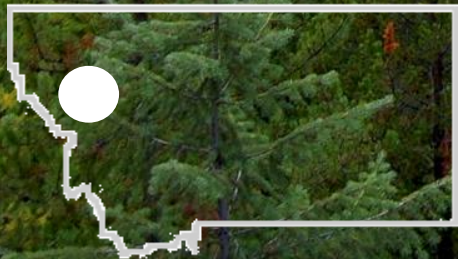


Regenerating
Cottonwood Galleries

09/04/2014

Vandalia WMA: 1994

Special Habitats in Special Places



Marshall Creek WMA

Special Habitats in Special Places



Bull Trout
on
Marshall
Creek
WMA

Special Habitats in Special Places

Canada
lynx on
Marshall
Creek
WMA



Special Habitats in Special Places



Landscape
connectivity
Marshall Creek
WMA





Special Habitats in Special Places



Mt. Haggin WMA



Special Habitats in Special Places



Special Habitats in Special Places



Robb-Ledford WMA



Habitat Montana Program



First acquisition of the Habitat Montana Program

Robb-Ledford WMA: 1988



Habitat Montana Program



HB 526 generates about \$2.8 million per year for acquiring interests in “important habitat that is seriously threatened”. Approximately 92% of revenue for this program comes from nonresident hunting licenses.

Dreyer Ranch Addition to Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA: 1989

Habitat Montana Program



Habitat Montana was originally established through legislation passed by the 1987 Montana Legislature (87-1-241 et seq. MCA).

Dreyer Ranch Addition to Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA: 1989

Habitat Montana Program



Between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2014, FWP secured a total of 20,141 acres through a combination of fee title acquisition and conservation easement. This includes 8 fee title projects totaling 3,741 acres and 6 conservation easement projects totaling 16,400 acres.

Habitat Montana Program



These projects were completed using a variety of funding sources totaling \$11,077,750 including \$2,740,000 of HB526 (Habitat Montana) funds

Habitat Montana Program



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Partnerships