



# Conservation easement proposed along Thompson River



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[Lake County Leader](#)

By Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks



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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is initiating public scoping on a potential purchase of a conservation easement in Flathead and Sanders counties, along the Thompson River drainage.

FWP is working with The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and Green Diamond Resource Company on a potential project to place 47,907 acres of highly productive timberland under conservation easement.

The proposed conservation easement would be held by FWP and would allow Green Diamond to retain ownership and management of these timberlands, preclude development, protect important wildlife habitat, and provide public access and associated recreational opportunities. The U.S. Forest Service Forest Legacy Program and grant funding raised by TPL would be likely funding sources if this proposal proceeds.

This project would conserve a movement corridor for elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and moose as well as critical habitat for bull trout, grizzly bear, and Canada lynx, which are all listed as threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

Conservation easement terms would preclude the human-wildlife conflicts that come with residential development of properties within wildlife habitat, especially those with grizzly bears, black bears, and mountain lions.

The property currently provides over 45,000 days per year of public hunting and angling that would be secured in perpetuity under this proposal. The project borders the 142,000-acre Thompson-Fisher Conservation Easement, the 86,000-acre proposed Montana Great Outdoors Conservation Easement, as well as Lolo National Forest, Kootenai National Forest, and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation lands.

FWP is seeking public input on this potential project through June 3 to help FWP determine public interest, identify potential issues that would require further analysis, and provide insight for refining the proposal or for developing and analyzing one or more alternatives. Upon completion of the preliminary evaluation, FWP will determine next steps, which may include conducting an environmental analysis with additional opportunity for public input or taking no further action on the proposed project.

Send comments to habitat conservation biologist Leah Breidinger at [lbreidinger@mt.gov](mailto:lbreidinger@mt.gov) or mail to Montana FWP, Leah Breidinger, Re: Proposed Conservation Easement, 490 N. Meridian, Kalispell, MT, 59901.

More information on this potential project is available online at [fwp.mt.gov/news/public-notices](http://fwp.mt.gov/news/public-notices), or via phone or email, 406-751-4573 or [lbreidinger@mt.gov](mailto:lbreidinger@mt.gov).