



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: June 24, 2021

Agenda Item: Nongame Check-off Workplan

Action Needed: Proposed **Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

Background: Under the provisions of 87-5-122, MCA, “the FWP Commission shall review and annually approve the nongame wildlife program’s projects recommended for funding from the nongame wildlife tax check-off account. The Commission shall provide for public comment during the review and approval process.” While final 2020 tax year donations are unknown at this time, the average received by FWP from the 2004-2018 tax years was \$30,000-\$40,000/year. FWP is proposing some combination of the following work in FY21 dependent on the final allocation:

- \$30,000** Inventory, monitoring, and conservation work on Montana Species of Concern and species in need of inventory as determined through a formal ranking process.
- \$5,000** Wildlife viewing and outreach projects that encourage more Montanans to appreciate Montana wildlife.
- \$5,000** Competitive graduate student stipend for nongame research.

Public Involvement Process & Results: Public comment will be solicited upon tentative commission approval.

Alternatives and Analysis:

The recommended work addresses several components of FWP’s overall nongame management program (including threatened and endangered species management), as identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan. Tax check-off funding is used to address high-priority habitat, survey and inventory, and species conservation needs. Examples of survey and inventory efforts that have been recently completed or are currently underway include targeted surveys for grassland birds, harlequin duck, great gray owl, golden eagle, alpine dwelling rosy finches, northern bog lemming, and multi-species monitoring on Wildlife Management Areas. Engaging the public in citizen science monitoring has increased our capacity to monitor species such as black swift, short-eared owl, and long-billed curlew. Monitoring bat populations to detect and track the spread of the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome has been a priority for many years. Successful wildlife viewing projects include a raised viewing platform at the North Shore Wildlife Viewing Area and installation of a wildlife viewing shelter at the Clark Fork Waterfowl Production Area. Alternatives to the current work plan could include allocating more or less among these categories or identifying new categories.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the commission endorse the proposed work for funding with nongame tax check-off funds.

Proposed Motion: Move that the commission tentatively approve the proposed Nongame Tax Check-Off Workplan for Fiscal Year 2022.