



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Unlocking Public Lands v. Public Access Land Agreement Landowner Fact Sheet

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is pleased to offer a variety of programs and incentives to landowners who allow public access to public lands. Two of these options are the Unlocking Public Lands and the Public Access Land Agreement programs. This fact sheet is intended to explain the program differences and assist landowners in determining which program may be the right option for them and their operations. Not all details of each program, nor are all available public access programs below so landowners are encouraged to visit with their local FWP Hunting Access Coordinator, Biologist or Warden or contact the FWP Wildlife Office in Helena with any questions. Landowners can also visit fwp.mt.gov/hunt/landownerprograms for more information. Application periods open in January and close March 15.

Unlocking Public Lands

Program runs on calendar year.

Public access must be available for most of the year-typically June 30-December 31. One-year agreement only.

Landowner must have lease if providing access to State Land. No lease required if offering access to Federal Lands.

Access must be allowed for all recreations as permitted on public lands.

Provides \$750 State of MT Income Tax Credit-maximum of 4 credits.

Landowners could also be considered for an agreement if they own land adjacent to the point where the corners of two parcels of public land meet. The landowner shall grant access through the landowner's land to establish a corridor between the two parcels of public land if one of the parcels of public land is accessible by a public road, waterway, or access granted by a landowner.

Public land cannot be accessed by: public road, right-of-way, or easement; public waters; adjacent federal, state, county, or municipal land that is open to public use; adjacent private land because a landowner has granted permission to cross. Also does not include a corridor established between two or more parcels of public land when the public land parcels are surrounded by private land.

Landowner cannot enroll private land in program if outfitting or commercial hunting restricts public hunting on private land. Cannot enroll in any other FWP program- such as Block Management that already secures public access to same public land.



UNLOCKING PUBLIC LANDS
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Public Access Land Agreement

Program runs on state fiscal year. July 1-June 30.

Public access is dependent upon landowner terms (duration, location, restrictions, etc). Dependent upon available funding, agreements may be up to 10-years in length.

Landowner must have State and/or Federal lease to public land- if the public land has a lease.

Public land must be open for hunting and/or fishing, but landowner can allow public access to cross private for all recreations as permitted by the public land.

Landowner is compensated based on evaluation and payment schedule set by FWP and the Private Land/Public Wildlife (PL/PW) Advisory Committee. Landowner may also request reimbursement for improvements that facilitate public access to public land.

PL/PW will review applications during their meeting and make a recommendation to the FWP Director whether to extend an agreement to the landowner.

To be eligible, public land must be wholly surrounded by private land by which there is no other legal access via public road, trail, right of way or easement; public waters; adjacent federal, state, county, or municipal land that is open to public use; or adjacent private land for which that landowner has not granted permission to cross. Or public land for which there is no other legal access point within two miles via public road, trail, right of way or easement; public waters; adjacent federal, state, county, or municipal land that is open to public use.

Landowner cannot enroll in program if enrolled in Unlocking Public Lands or DNRC MT-PLAN program.

Landowner can enroll in program and Block Management.

