

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DECISION RECORD
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
DOI-BLM-MT-M030-2016-0010-EA
Marias River Wildlife Management Area
Crested Wheatgrass Conversion

A. Decision

I have decided to authorize the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) proposal to convert the non-native vegetative structure of a 33-acre field on the Marias River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) to a native vegetative structure. Approximately 18.5 acres of the project area is on land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This proposal is described in Alternative B – Proposed Action of the environmental assessment (EA), DOI-BLM-MT-M030-2016-0010-EA as adopted from the FWP's EA: Marias River Wildlife Management Area Crested Wheat Field Conversion, March 21, 2016.

The project will initiate April 2016 and be completed in 2022. Actions include annual treatments of herbicide, planting of a small grain crop with a no-till drill, leaving a small grain crop un-harvested for one year, and the planting of a 90% native plant seed mix. The project is located on public lands in Toole County, Montana.

This decision is subject to the following terms and conditions and stipulations.

1. Use of pesticides will comply with all applicable Federal and State laws. Pesticides shall be used only in accordance with their registered uses, directions on the label, and within the limitations imposed by BLM. Prior to use of pesticides, FWP will obtain approval from the authorized officer of a plan indicating the type and quantity of material to be used, pests/organisms controlled, method of application, and other information deemed necessary by the authorized officer.
2. A record of application must be documented within 24 hours of the application of pesticides and copies will be submitted to the BLM by December 1 of the year of application.
3. Pesticide applications must be made by licensed and bonded pesticide applicator.

The authorization will be effective on the date the Decision Record is signed by the authorized officer.

B. Rationale for the Decision

My decision will allow for conversion of the non-native vegetative structure (crested wheatgrass) of 18.5 acres of BLM to a native vegetative structure over a seven year period. The terms and conditions applied to this authorization will help ensure that surface resources are protected.

My decision is consistent with BLM policy and federal regulations.

C. Authority

The authority for this decision is contained in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, Title IV – Range Management Sec. 401 (b) (1).

D. Plan Conformance and Consistency

The proposed action has been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the land use decisions in the HiLine Resource Management Plan (RMP) (2015). A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was prepared for the EA and determined that the proposed action will not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment or cause unnecessary or undue degradation of the natural environment.

E. Public Involvement

The BLM posted notice of this EA on April 6, 2016, on the BLM's ePlanning NEPA Register at https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/nepa/nepa_register.do. In addition, MFWP provided a public comment period for their EA as adopted by the BLM. Public comments on the MFWP proposed action were open for 21 days.

MFWP sent News Releases to the Great Falls Tribune, Conrad Independent Observer, Shelby Promoter, Cut Bank Pioneer Press and the Valerian newspapers. The EA was also posted on the MFWP webpage <http://fivp.mt.gov/publicnotices/> beginning March 21. Copies of the EA or electronic notification of its availability were available to interested parties and adjacent landowners.

MFWP received two written comments; all were received electronically, and both offered support for the project. Comments were in favor of the expected positive impacts to upland game birds, upland game bird habitat and improved hunting opportunities on the WMA.

F. Administrative Remedies

If you believe that you have been affected adversely by this decision, or that you believe the decision is incorrect, you may have the right to appeal this decision.

This decision may be appealed to the Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in the HiLine District Office, 1101 15th Street North, Great Falls, MT 59401 within 30 days of this decision. A copy of the notice of appeal and any statement or reasons, written arguments, or briefs must also be served on the Office of the Solicitor at the USDI Field Solicitor's Office, P.O. Box 31394, Billings, MT 59107-1394. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition, pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 4.21, for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. The provisions of 43 CFR 4.21(b) defines the standards and procedures for filing a petition to obtain a stay pending appeal.

	5/10/2016
<i>Authorized Officer (Signature)</i>	<i>Date</i>

Name: Micah Lee

Title: Acting Field Manager