



March 19, 2021

Irma Nansel
Planning and Environmental Coordinator
BLM Miles City Field Office
111 Garryowen Road Miles City, MT 59301

Dear Ms. Nansel,

The Public Land/Water Access Association (PLWA) is a Montana based organization, whose mission is to maintain, restore and perpetuate public access to the boundaries of all Montana public land and waters. We support the Bureau of Land Management's proposed Lower Musselshell River Acquisition Project. Public lands access has been identified as one of the top priorities of Montanans.

As Montana ranches are being sold increasingly to non-agriculture focused buyers, many of these private lands, including intermingled public lands traditionally used by the public, including hunters, are being closed. The proposed 11,420-acre acquisition will benefit the public by providing access to quality recreational opportunities including hunting, fishing, boating, camping, hiking, and wildlife viewing, while also conserving important wildlife habitat.

The acquisition would also open access to an additional 9,360 acres of BLM and State Trust lands. The increased access for hunters will provide economic benefits for nearby communities which rely on seasonal activities as an important part of their annual economic activity. The CMR National Wildlife Refuge and surrounding lands are increasingly attracting non-hunting recreationists that are benefiting the local economy during non-hunting seasons. Additionally, this acquisition and the additional hunting access provided will help increase the harvest and improve the ability to manage big game populations, benefitting neighboring ranches. Given the many benefits to sportsmen and sportswomen, and other outdoor enthusiasts, PLWA supports the BLM's proposed action Alternative 2, to acquire the 11,420 acres.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Bernard W. Lea
President

WWW.PLWA.ORG

@publiclandwateraccess

@plwamt

2100 FAIRWAY DR. #211
BOZEMAN, MT 59715

406-690-0960
PLWA@PLWA.ORG