



PO Box 7186 Missoula, MT 59807 (406) 543-0054

21 July 2010

Todd Garrett
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Region 3
1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59719

Re: Sixteen Mile Creek land purchase

Dear Todd:

Montana Trout Unlimited, which represents 3,300 TU members in the state, strongly supports Montana Fish and Wildlife Parks purchasing as a fishing access site the former Milwaukee Road rail bed running along Sixteen Mile Creek west of Ringling to the Montana State School Trust Section 36 located in T. 6N. R. E. We also support FWP's proposed facility development of a fenced parking area for 8 vehicles, improved access road to the parking area and installation of signs and a vault toilet.

We support the acquisition because:

- It provides legal access to the public to a stream with fine fishing for wild trout in an area with limited public angling opportunities;
- The project involves a willing-seller and willing buyer, and can be managed by Montana FWP as part of the Parks' Division's Fishing Access Site program;
- This corridor – and the access it provides to a state school trust section -- also provides additional recreational opportunities for hiking and birdwatching and limited hunting (on the state land),
- The purchase price for appraised value is fair; and
- The proposal has much popular support.

We strongly support the area being managed for day-use and for non-motorized access. We believe that limiting access to walk-in and bicycle traffic will better ensure fishing pressure is appropriate for the size of the fishery and that conflicts with adjoining landowners, as well as weed spread, will be minimized. FWP is silent on whether access using horses will be allowed. We do not have a position on this, but ask FWP to evaluate it. If horses are allowed, we recommend the number per party be limited after consideration of potential conflicts with bicyclists and potential grazing impacts they could create along this narrow corridor. We also recommend that the primary objective of managing this site in the future be to maintain only the minimum development necessary. The proposed management plan seems adequate.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Bruce Farling
Executive Director

cc.
Madison-Gallatin Chapter TU
Joe Brooks Chapter TU
Pat Barnes-Missouri River Chapter TU