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Sharon Rose
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
3201 Spurgin Rd.
Missoula, MT 5980

August 25, 2020

Attn: Mt Jumbo WMA Forest Habitat Restoration Project Draft EA

Dear Sharon:

Hellgate Hunters and Anglers (HHA) is an all-volunteer conservation organization based in Missoula. We work to conserve Montana's wildlife, wild places, and fair-chase hunting and fishing heritage. We represent over 400 members and supporters in western Montana. On behalf of these members, I write to you today to voice support for the Mt Jumbo Wildlife Management Area Forest Habitat Restoration Project.

The proposed actions will increase elk and deer forage across roughly 100 acres in addition to improving habitat for many non-game wildlife species. This project will also reduce wildfire risk near many houses within the north end of the Missoula valley. For sportsmen and women, homeowners, and the broader Missoula community, this restoration project is a commonsense approach to a pressing issue.

The environmental assessment directly addresses prevention measures for the spread of noxious weeds and provides mitigation for damage caused by logging practices. Scheduling this project during winter months will reduce the impacts of heavy machinery on the landscape. Additionally, coordinating this work with local USFS efforts will achieve project results over a shorter time period, thereby reducing negative impacts to wildlife and recreation. The elk herd that frequents this WMA typically occupies the project area in late winter and early spring and should not be significantly negatively impacted by this project. We appreciate the concern paid to Missoula's most visible elk herd in this regard and encourage the Department to ensure that the work is completed before elk occupy this winter range.

Hellgate Hunters & Anglers commends Montana FWP for working to improve wildlife habitat on our wildlife management areas while moving towards a fire resilient landscape. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Walker Conyngham
President
Hellgate Hunters & Anglers