



## MONTANA STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

**Meeting Date:** February 26, 2014  
**Agenda Item:** Lewis & Clark Caverns/Thompson Falls State Parks – DNRC Lands  
**Division:** Parks  
**Action Needed:** Informational  
**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 15 minutes

---

### **Background:**

This project was presented to the Parks Board in August 2013 and tentative approval was granted to pursue a solution. Per State Constitution requirements, DNRC Trust Lands are to receive appropriate compensation for their use in support of Montana's educational systems. The annual lease payment made to DNRC on the 36.4 acre Thompson Falls site is \$12,917. For the 640 acre Lewis & Clark (L&C) Caverns site, the lease payment is \$4,774. The situation at the L&C Caverns site was discovered as an audit exception in October 2010. It is desirable to resolve the DNRC land issues at these two important state parks to a conclusion via perpetual Recreational Use Easements with DNRC. The solution of securing Easements is preferable to fee title acquisitions due to the complications of the DNRC proceeding with land sales of the two sites.

Appraisals have been completed to determine the current land values at the two sites. The Thompson Falls property has appraised at \$275,000. The L&C Caverns site has been appraised at \$640,000.

It is anticipated that a combination of available Parks funding and a contributed amount from AVISTA Corporation will provide adequate funding to resolve the two DNRC Trust Land issues and bring them to a conclusion via perpetual Recreational Use Easements.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

There has yet not been formal public comment on this proposed project. An Environmental Assessment (EA) is being developed.

### **Alternatives and Analysis:**

Once the public comment period is complete the project will be brought back to the Parks Board. The public comments received will be presented to the Board.

### **Proposed Motion:**

No motion is required. This is simply an informational update on a previously approved tentative project.