



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

**Meeting Date: June 18, 2014**

**Agenda Item: Acquisition of new park lands**

**Division: Parks**

**Action Needed: Informational**

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 20 min.**

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### **Background:**

Montana State Parks is working to improve operational stability as we develop the strategic plan and look to the upcoming legislative session. Understanding the multi-faceted funding, behind the acquisitions of the public lands the Parks Division manages is critical to that process. As some of the lands that are managed by the Parks Division were initially acquired through funding sources from other FWP divisions and/or state government agencies.

Montana State Parks is one of the largest and least well funded in the Rocky Mountain West per the HJR 32 EQC report. The state as a whole, wrestles with the acquisition of lands for various park and recreation oriented uses including new state parks or even easements for trails or parking. The board is well aware of the challenges relating to significance, priority, funding, staffing, development, political perception, geographic distribution, site designation, and public use. This body has begun dialogue on how to address this ongoing but complex concern.

In February the board discussed changing statute and has since moved away from that consideration but continues to ponder how to best address the issue. This informational discussion for the park board consideration is simply the next step in addressing this longstanding issue.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** No public involvement specific to this single complex issue has been initiated. The strategic plan public involvement has touched upon this topic and no formal action is being considered so no process need exist at this time.

### **Alternatives and Analysis:**

Two alternatives have been briefly identified:

- A) No Action: Allow this issue to remain unresolved by not formally taking broad action and dealing with the issue as it surfaces before the department, the board, the executive and the Legislature.
- B) Develop Board Policy on acquisition: Direct staff to continue to deliberate the issue and consider developing Montana State Parks and Recreation Board policy to guide future decision making for the department and the board.

**Agency Recommendation and Rationale:** No recommendation at this time. This topic is simply an informational item for board discussion and consideration.

**Proposed Motion:** Not applicable at this time.