

**NEWS RELEASE**  
**GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK**  
**STATE OF MONTANA**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Governor Steve Bullock Applauds Red Hill Road Access Decision**

*Decision Creates Access to 18,000 Acres of Public Lands in Big Snowy Mountains*

Helena—Governor Steve Bullock today applauded the decision by the FWP commission to purchase 40 acres of land, which will open access to 18,000 acres of Forest Service land in the Big Snowy Mountains. The Big Snowy Mountains are located in the Lewis & Clark National Forest. Prior to this purchase, there had been no public access to this land for hunters and other recreationalists. The land is located 20 miles south of Lewistown.

“Public lands make Montana a special place to live and visit. They allow families to hunt, camp, hike and recreate. Today’s decision protects access to the Big Snowies, and should serve as a model for further efforts to protect access to public lands,” Bullock said of the decision. “When we work together, we can protect public access for the next generation of Montanans, while respecting the rights of private property owners.”

The previous owner of this land allowed hunters to use it to access the Forest Service land; however this access came into doubt when the owner expressed his intentions to sell the land. The owner agreed to sell this land to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) for \$190,000. Today, the FWP Commission agreed to purchase this land from RMEF for \$50,000. RMEF chose to cover the other \$140,000 in purchasing costs.

“Today’s decision was just common sense. By purchasing this land at a fraction of its value, we are able to preserve public access to these hunting lands for generations to come,” Dan Vermillion, Chair of the FWP Commission said of the decision.

The portion of the Big Snowy Mountains whose public access has been improved by this decision is a high-use area for elk, mule deer, black bear, mountain grouse and turkey hunting opportunities. However, due to the lack of public access to this land, the elk population is currently 400% higher than desired.

Currently, Montana has over 30 million acres of state and federal lands for hunting, camping, hiking and other recreation. Outdoor recreation supports 64,000 jobs in Montana, and generates \$5.8 billion in consumer spending.

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