



Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, Region 1
Attention: Chris Hammond and John Grant
Ninepipe Wildlife Management Area Management Plan Draft
490 North Meridian Rd
Kalispell, MT 59901

April 14, 2015

Dear Mr. Hammond and Mr. Grant:

The Flathead Audubon Society (FAS) is a local, active group of people interested in sound stewardship and management of natural resources. Many of our members are regular users of Ninepipe Wildlife Management Area.

We have reviewed the Draft Management Plan for Ninepipe Wildlife Management Area posted on the FWP website and submit the following comments.

The proposed Management Plan is a reasonable, well described approach for management of Ninepipe WMA. It recognizes the original intent of the WMA for waterfowl and pheasant habitat and public hunting access plus it acknowledges the WMA values for other nongame species.

We were pleased to see the emphasis on an Integrated Noxious Weed Program and the sensitivity to the effects of herbicides on non-target broadleaf plants and plant diversity which are vital to many nongame species.

We were also pleased to see the recognition that recreational wildlife watching and bird watching is an important and increasing segment of the public use of Ninepipe WMA. Nationwide surveys have shown that wildlife watchers outnumber hunters across the nation. Many of our members routinely visit the area to view birds.

We suggest that to increase the opportunities for bird watching, additional pull-offs or turnouts with good views of wetlands and other habitats be strategically located along roads to provide additional safe stopping places. Current parking areas are more oriented to hunting access and often do not offer particularly good wildlife viewing opportunities.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Bob Lopp
President
Flathead Audubon Society