

**ACTION:** CONSIDER TRUST LAND PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT ACCOUNT PROJECT

**AUTHORITY:** Senate Enrolled Act No. 37 (Original SF0015), 2005 Session Laws.

**ALTERNATIVES:** Approve or deny the preservation and enhancement project.

**ANALYSIS:**

Pursuant to Chapter 85, 2005 Session Laws, the Wyoming Legislature created a “State Trust Land Preservation and Enhancement Account” (TP&E Account). The legislation provides that the account may be used to fund Board approved projects that preserve and enhance the value of state trust lands. For accounting and performance tracking purposes, subsequent appropriations to the TP&E Account are accounted for separately.

The recommended project satisfies one or more of the established criteria and priorities for preservation and enhancement account projects. Additionally, the recommended project was evaluated and ranked using the project evaluation system and questionnaire developed by the Office in accordance with the strategic plan for the preservation and enhancement account. The project score indicates that the projected outcomes would be consistent with objectives of the program as identified within the Strategic Plan and ranked favorably when compared to other potential projects. The scoring sheets are available for review upon request.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Office has identified the following forest value enhancement project that it recommends for approval by the Board:

Oak Patch. Pts Section 12, T. 28 N., R. 72 W., Converse County. Timber stand improvement on 20 acres.  
Total cost: \$11,000.00.  
TP&E cost: \$5,500.00.

The total maximum approved TP&E cost for the recommended projects is \$5,500.00.

A summary of anticipated benefits of the forest value enhancement project follows:

**Economic Cost/Benefit:** The project is economically feasible and utilizes federal funds for fifty percent (50%) of the cost. Timber stand improvement has been shown to generate a positive financial return.

**Resource Benefit:** The project may increase water quantity by reducing the number of live trees per acre. The project improves vegetative health by increasing spacing between trees and allocating resources to the most desirable trees. The project addresses a high priority landscape identified by the Forest Action Plan.

**Trust Land Income:** The project improves long-term income because without thinning young forest stands will take longer to reach merchantable size and may not reach merchantable size. The project improves the value of state lands because healthy forests add value while unhealthy forests detract from the value of the land. Additionally, since the thinning must be done, it would represent a cost to a new landowner should the lands be sold. The project protects the underlying value of state trust lands by maintaining healthy forest stands which contribute to the economic, recreational, ecologic, and scenic values of the land.

**Habitat Enhancement:** The project enhances habitat by increasing forage production in the understory, maintaining healthy forest stands, and by allowing more rapid tree growth, which shortens the time needed to return large trees to a previously harvested area.

Management: The project improves the manageability of state lands by helping to maintain healthy forest stands thereby reducing the potential for future forest health problems. The project allows the young forest stands to develop into stands of larger trees that can be managed and harvested in the future. The project improves forage production by reducing overstory density, which allows for higher forage production in the understory. The project reduces fuels over the long term. The project will be long term in nature because pre-commercial thinning is typically conducted only once during a 100-year rotation.

**DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION:**

The Director recommends, subject to funding availability, that the Board of Land Commissioners grant approval to expend \$5,500.00 from the Preservation and Enhancement Account for the forest value enhancement project described above.

**BOARD ACTION:** Board Approved