

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:

Rocky Ford Creek Road Repair. Pts. Section 32, T. 29 N., R. 74 W., Converse County. The improvement work would be implemented on approximately 0.1 miles of existing roads.
Total cost: \$12,500.00.
TP&E cost: \$12,500.00.

The total maximum approved TP&E cost for the recommended projects is \$12,500.00.

The Rocky Ford Creek Road provides access to approximately 440 acres of state lands and forest products. A stream crossing was washed out and the culvert was damaged during a heavy rain event in the spring of 2016. The damaged 24 inch culvert needs to be replaced with a larger 36 inch culvert, as well as road repair associated with the culvert installation. Armoring with rock around both the inlet and outlet of the culvert will be required, as well as seeding of native grasses to re-vegetate the disturbed areas. The installation of the larger culvert and repair of the stream crossing will greatly reduce present and future delivery of sediment into the stream, as well as maintaining access to State Trust Lands for future land management activities. The area is not accessible to the general public, so use of the road is limited to the State and adjacent landowners & lessee. Thus, road maintenance should be minimal. This repair work will protect water quality in compliance with Wyoming Best Management Practices.

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

Economic Cost/Benefit: The project addresses a road in need of major maintenance. Although road maintenance is expensive, the work must be done to protect soil and water resources while maintaining management access.

Resource Benefit: The project protects water quality and soils by preventing erosion of the road surface and transport of materials into the stream and riparian areas parallel to the road system.

Trust Land Income: The project improves long term income by maintaining management access to forested state lands, thereby enabling future revenue producing projects. The project maintains the value of state lands by fixing a road that is currently inaccessible. The project reduces potential liability by bringing roads into compliance with best management practices to protect water quality. The project protects the underlying value of trust assets by protecting soils and water quality while maintaining a useable road system.

Habitat Enhancement: The project enhances aquatic habitat by preventing road surface erosion and transport of materials into the stream.

Management: The project improves the manageability of state lands by maintaining a useable road system. The project improves access for management through road maintenance. The design of the project is intended to ensure that the project benefits will be long term in nature, primarily by returning the stream to the natural channel and providing proper drainage to prevent damage to the road surface.

Intangible Benefits: The project achieves regulatory compliance by implementing recommendations from Wyoming's Silviculture Best Management Practices to protect water quality.

DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION:

The Director recommends, subject to funding availability, that the Board of Land Commissioners grant approval to expend \$12,500.00 from the Preservation and Enhancement Account for the forest value enhancement project described above.

BOARD ACTION: Board Approved