



In Big Sky Country, 27 million acres of publicly owned national forest and Bureau of Land Management lands provide fish and wildlife with irreplaceable habitat.

72%
of Western sportsmen
depend on public lands
for hunting.

Despite the immense value of America's public lands, special interests are working hard to hand lands over to the state of Montana. When it comes to land management decisions, the state wouldn't just swap in new players – it would change the whole game. In state hands, everything else would come second to generating income from these lands. Take a look at what state seizure of America's public lands would actually do.

1. State and local economies would take a serious hit.

The transfer of America's public lands to state hands would have a negative impact on local economies across the state.

Tax increases

A potential reality for 686,000 taxpayers taking over the enormous costs of management.

\$100 million for fires

Montanans would pay for wildfire suppression costs on an additional 27 million acres.

\$28 million lost

Montana counties would lose millions in federal Payments in Lieu of Taxes.

2. It wouldn't take much to sell off our treasured public lands.

State trust lands are constitutionally mandated to be managed for maximum profit. These lands are sold if they don't generate substantial revenue through resource development, or if they generate a substantial profit through sales. An independent body made up of just five elected state officials, the State Board of Land Commissioners, makes decisions about state land sales.

800,000 acres sold

Montana has already sold over 800,000 acres of its original land grant.

Outdoor recreation is more restricted on state lands than on America's public lands. For example, on Montana State Trust Lands:



DNRC may close specific tracts to recreational shooting, hunting, or other public use upon request.



Hunting is prohibited on cultivated cropland during the growing season.



Dispersed camping is limited to two consecutive days.



Dispersed campfires are prohibited.



Off-road vehicle use is prohibited.



Horse camping is prohibited.

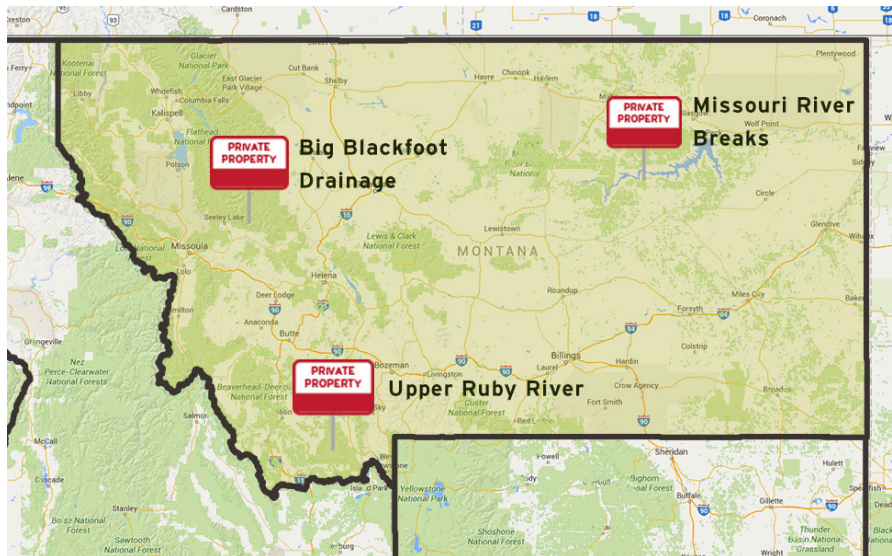


All hunters and anglers pay a fee to access state lands for hunting and fishing. Access to most national lands is free.

If the state of Montana were to seize 27 million acres of BLM and national forest lands, it is indisputable that important lands would be sold off and closed to hunting, fishing, and public access.

3. Public access would be at risk.

Without the resources or mandate to manage world-class hunting and fishing destinations for wildlife or recreational access, these areas important to sportsmen and the general public could be headed to the auction block:



Missouri River Breaks: Located in central Montana, this area provides some of the finest trophy elk and bighorn sheep hunting in the nation.

Big Blackfoot River Drainage: Flowing from the Swan Range in western Montana, this area supports world-class cutthroat trout fishing and great big game hunting.

Upper Ruby River: National forest lands in this area provide excellent wild trout fishing and access to the largest elk herd in Montana.

4. Montana long ago relinquished any claim to America's public lands.

"That the people inhabiting said proposed State do agree and that they forever disclaim all right and title to the unappropriated public lands lying within the boundaries thereof..."

—ENABLING ACT of 1889



THERE IS A BETTER WAY

We live in a democracy where Americans have been rolling up their sleeves and solving problems for more than two centuries. Instead of considering the unworkable idea of land seizure, it is time for stakeholders to find common ground to improve the management of our treasured public lands.

Get involved today, and tell your state and federal lawmakers that America's public lands are not for sale. Urge them to reject any proposed seizure of these lands by signing the petition at sportsmensaccess.org.



photo: Dusan Smetana

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