

## **HUNTER ACCESS – A MOVING TARGET FOR MANAGERS**

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Traditionally, fish and game agency program managers deal with science as biologists or laws as game wardens. Agencies typically adopt regulations, issue licenses, and hunters set forth on their own to find a place to hunt. However, in recent years, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks has found it necessary to develop access programs and become more involved in helping ensure that the hunters who buy the licenses have a place to hunt. This has become necessary not only to maintain Montana's hunting heritage and traditions, but also to ensure that public hunting remains an effective tool to help manage the state's populations of deer, elk, and antelope. Changes in who owns the land, how the land is managed, what hunters expect, and what hunters are willing to do all pose challenges for wildlife agency program managers as the world changes around them.