

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRUTHS UNDERLYING MODERN  
AGRICULTURE IN WESTERN MONTANA AND THEIR EFFECT ON  
WILDLIFE HABITATS<sup>TWS</sup>**

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Farming and ranching in harsh physical and economic environments have brought significant changes to the landscape of Western Montana over the last century. Those changes continue at an exponential rate. Farms and ranches that do not survive the challenges are destined for alternative uses. The opportunity for land managers, wildlife professionals, and conservationists is to find solutions to maintain open space and sustainable agricultural practices that are ultimately much more wildlife friendly than 20-ac tracts. A discussion of the history of land use from a 5th generation rancher and professional land manager will lend insight into the cause and effect of real life decisions and the results of those decisions on the social and natural resources of a community.