

Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee

Project Completion Report FY 2007

Gallatin National Forest
Rigler (Slip 'n Slide Ranch) Proposed Land Acquisition
Project Description: Working in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), the Forest Service is pursuing the potential acquisition of most of the Rigler (Slip 'n Slide) Ranch, private lands located north of Yellowstone National Park on the Gallatin National Forest, along the east side of the Yellowstone River, near Dome Mountain. Acquisition of the Ranch would conserve critical habitat for the grizzly bear and wolf, winter range and migratory habitat for elk and mule deer, streams and ponds that provide habitat for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, and diverse habitat for many other species. Acquisition would also conserve open space, scenic and historic values and provide access for dispersed recreation. The ranch property has been for sale and is considered vulnerable to permanent development.
GYCC Funding Received: \$4,000 Partner Funding/In-Kind Received: The partners are the RMEF, Montana FWP and the Forest Service. Each partner has contributed a substantial amount of staff time and legal expertise to this project. Each partner shared in the costs of the appraisal, preparation of legal documents, and preliminary title review.
Status of the Project: In the past year, the partners pooled funds to secure a preliminary appraisal of the Rigler property; RMEF developed a purchase option agreement; the Forest Service obtained title information for the property; and the Forest Service requested LWCF funding for FY 08. However, in mid-2007, the Righlers decided not to wait for potential LWCF funding for purchase of the property, and they sold most of the Slip 'n Slide Ranch to another private party. At this time, the Forest Service is pursuing a potential land exchange or potential purchase with the new owner of the ranch. However no agreement has been reached to date.
Products that can be shared across the GYA:
Project results: (Information worth sharing on methods, results, partnerships, etc) Two important "lessons learned" about this project include: (1) When the opportunity exists to acquire and conserve critical private lands in the Greater Yellowstone area, the partner agencies and conservation groups need more certainty regarding the timing and availability of funding to purchase the land: and (2) Although landowners may prefer to see their lands acquired and conserved for wildlife habitat and other public values, landowners want assurance about the availability and timing of funding. Without those assurances, landowners will often sell the land to other private parties.
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Report Date: January 31, 2008
Submit to Virginia Kelly: vkelly@fs.fed.us 406-587-6704. Contact Virginia with questions.

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