

**I submit the following comments on behalf of Hellgate Hunters & Anglers, a non-profit organization based in western Montana-based organization that represents hundreds of sportsmen and sportswomen across the state. We are grateful for the opportunity to comment on the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program Strategic Plan.**

**We encourage the UGBEP and those that have the ability to enact positive change for Montana's upland game bird habitat to engage in the following:**

- Emphasize the allocation of UGBEP financial resources to easements, leases, block management, and other forms of private lands that only provide HIGH-QUALITY upland game bird habitat or where there is a realistic opportunity to improve existing habitat.**
- We highly support the elimination of the requirement to set aside a maximum of 15 percent of the annual revenue to fund bird planting activities.**
- Decrease all possible expenditures associated with pen-raised pheasant releases and reallocate those financial resources to:  
(1) invest in habitat priorities identified in the UGBEP Strategic Plan's regional strategies;  
(2) funding biological staff to support the implementation of habitat-related projects and dedicated to UGBEP delivery; and,  
(3) increase assistance to relevant parties engaged in increasing access to private lands for public hunting.**
- Increase enrollment of new CRP projects through frequent communication of enrollment opportunities**
- Maintain/improve existing CRP projects**
- We support the Council's recommendation to research to quantify program components to justify use of funding and potentially justify additional funding in the future.**
- We support the Council's recommendation for program staff to seek additional opportunities to conduct habitat enhancements on DNRC State Lands as supported by the DNRC/FWP MOU.**

**Thank you sincerely for your consideration of these comments,  
Andrew Gorder, President Hellgate Hunters and Anglers**