

2025 – 2027

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

between the

**STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS**



and the

**FRATERNAL ORDER OF MONTANA GAME
WARDENS**



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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT
between the
STATE OF MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
and the
FRATERNAL ORDER OF MONTANA GAME WARDENS

PREAMBLE

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into this 7/25/2025, between the State of Montana, by and through the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, hereinafter referred to as the "Employer," and the FRATERNAL ORDER OF MONTANA GAME WARDENS., hereinafter referred to as the "Union." It is the intent and purpose of this Agreement to assure sound and mutually beneficial working relationships between the Employer and its employees, to provide an orderly and peaceful means of resolving grievances, to prevent interruption of work and interference with the efficient operation of the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and to set forth herein a basic and complete Agreement between the parties concerning terms and conditions of employment which are not otherwise mandated by statute. It is understood that the Employer is engaged in furnishing an essential public service, which vitally affects health, safety, comfort, and general wellbeing of the public and both parties hereto recognize the need for continuous and reliable service to the public.

ARTICLE 1.
DEFINITION OF TERMS

Section 1. TENSE and NUMBER

As used in this Agreement:

1. Words in the present tense include the past and future tenses, and words in the future tense include the present tense.
2. Words in the singular number include the plural, and words in the plural number include the singular.

Section 2. DEFINITIONS:

1. "Employee" in this Agreement means the bargaining unit members, as defined below, employed in full-time positions by the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, who are assigned to the Enforcement Division and designated by the Board of Personnel Appeals as a part of or member of the bargaining unit.
2. "Member" bargaining unit is defined as all game wardens and investigators who are not supervisors in the Enforcement Division.

3. "Job Profile" is a written statement of duties and responsibilities, which are characteristic of a class of positions and includes the education, experience, knowledge and ability required to perform the work of the class of positions.
4. "Disciplinary Grievance" in this Agreement means a procedure of review provided for in Article 10 whereby a permanent employee can seek review of their dismissal, demotion or a single suspension. A written warning cannot be grieved.
5. "Employer" is the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.
6. "Personnel File" in this Agreement means all those documents, reports, written or otherwise recorded evaluations of a person's performance while performing duties on behalf of the Employer, and any other material pertaining to that person that is kept in that file.
7. "Just Cause" means, but is not limited to, incompetence, unsatisfactory performance of duties, unexcused absenteeism, dishonesty or gross disobedience.
8. "Continuous Service" in this Agreement shall mean an employee's length of continuous service in the Department as a Warden or Investigator.
9. "Pay Period"- A normal pay period shall consist of 80 hours beginning Saturday at 12:01 a.m. and Friday at midnight in each 14 consecutive day period.
10. "State" is the State of Montana, Department of Administration.
11. "Workday" - A normal workday shall be defined as typically eight hours within a 24-hour period from 12:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. or an alternative workday as needed to meet job requirements and provide adequate response.
12. "Workweek" - A normal workweek will consist of 40 hours beginning Saturday at 12:01 a.m. and ending Friday at midnight in each seven consecutive day period.
13. "Weekend" - A normal weekend shall be defined as the hours from Friday midnight to Sunday midnight.

ARTICLE 2. DURATION OF AGREEMENT

Section 1. This Agreement shall be effective as of the 1st day of July 2025 and shall remain in full force and effect through the 30th day of June 2027. Either party shall notify the other in writing no more than 180 days and not less than 60 days prior to the expiration date that they desire to modify this Agreement.

Section 2. If the Union gives such notice, it agrees also to notify the Employer, State Office of Labor Relations, and Department of Administration in writing of such requested

negotiations, at the same time such notice is given to the Employer. In the event such notice is given, negotiations shall begin no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

Section 3. It is agreed that the State and Union will reopen negotiations on applicable economic issues sufficiently in advance of the executive budget submittal to ensure time for negotiations to take place. Such budgetary negotiations will be deemed completed in good faith when the negotiated results are submitted to the next legislature in the executive budget, by bill or resolution. Both parties hereby agree to support unequivocally at the legislative level all items agreed to in such budgetary negotiations.

ARTICLE 3. MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

Section 1. Management rights shall be retained and exercised in accordance with the provisions of § 39-31-303, MCA, except as such rights as are specifically relinquished in this Agreement.

Section 2. It is the right of the Employer in order to maintain efficient governmental operations solely and exclusively to set standards of service and to exercise control and discretion over its operations. It is also the exclusive right of the Employer to direct its employees, to hire, promote, demote, assign work, transfer employees, relieve its employees from duty because of lack of work, or for other legitimate reasons, to discipline, suspend, discharge for cause, to establish the number and starting time of shifts, workweek, workday, and to control and regulate the use of all equipment and other property of the Employer and to require employees to observe the Employer's rules and regulations except as such rights are specifically relinquished in this Agreement.

ARTICLE 4. MANAGEMENT – UNION SECURITY

Section 1. The Union hereby accepts liability for any damage to or loss of State property that is the proximate cause of action taken by striking employees of the bargaining unit.

Section 2. The Union, any of its officers, agents, or any employee covered by this Agreement will not instigate or promote any strike, picketing, boycotting, sit downs or slow down strikes, during the term of this Agreement. The Employer agrees not to in any way lock out, restrain or interferes, in the right of any employee or group of employees covered by this Agreement, in the normal conduct of their position during the term of this Agreement.

Section 3. In the event of a strike, a responsible official of the Union, after determining such members are members of the Union, will order such members to return to work and attempt to resolve the problems which led to the concerted activity.

Section 4. The Union has the right to engage in concerted activity after December 31, 2026, for matters pertaining to wages and economic benefits in the 2027-2029 biennium.

ARTICLE 5. RECOGNITION

Section 1. The Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks recognizes the FRATERNAL ORDER OF MONTANA GAME WARDENS, as the exclusive collective bargaining representative for those employees that the Union is authorized to represent for the purpose of collective bargaining with respect to rates of pay, hours of employment and other conditions of employment.

Section 2. It is further understood and agreed that the Executive Director, designated labor representative, or an alternate named by the FRATERNAL ORDER OF MONTANA GAME WARDENS, will be the official spokesman for said Union in any matter between the Union and the Employer. The alternate shall be selected from one of the Union's representatives.

Section 3. Any labor representative or alternate designated according to the FOMGW bylaws shall be designated in writing within 14 calendar days of their designation and the period of time covered by such designation shall be included in such notification.

Section 4. A list of accredited officers and representatives of the Union shall be furnished to the Director of the Department after their designation and the Director shall be notified of any changes of said representatives. A copy of the published personnel roster of the Enforcement Division will be furnished to the Union whenever such roster is updated.

Section 5. Upon receipt of a written authorization from an employee covered by this Agreement, the Employer will deduct from the employee's pay the amount owed to the Union by such employee for dues, or a representation fee. It is understood that this provision will provide for 24 deductions per year. The Employer will remit to the Union such sums within 30 calendar days. Changes in the Union membership dues rate and representation fees will be given to the Employer in writing over the signature of the authorized officer or officers of the Union and shall be done at least 30 calendar days in advance of the effective date of such change. The Employer's remittance will be deemed correct if the Union does not give written notice to the Employer within two calendar weeks after a remittance is received, of its belief with reason(s) stated therefore, that the remittance is incorrect.

Section 6. The Union will indemnify, defend, and hold the Employer harmless against any claim made and against any suit instituted against the Employer, including attorneys' fees and costs of defense thereof, on account of any check-off of Union dues or representation fees.

Section 7. An employee may revoke in writing at any time their authorization for dues or representation fees deduction. Said revocation shall be effective as of the beginning of the next pay period.

Section 8. No deduction shall be made from the pay of any employee for any payroll period in which the employee's earnings for that payroll period, after other deductions, are less than the amount of dues or representation fees to be checked off.

ARTICLE 6. NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

Section 1. No employee shall be discharged or discriminated against for upholding Union principles, insofar as any such actions are protected by the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Act. Employer and Union affirm their joint opposition to any discriminatory practices in connection with recruitment, hiring, evaluation, promotion or training. Decisions in these areas must be based on merit and qualification without regard to race, color, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth, political or religious affiliation or ideas, culture, creed, social origin or condition, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, military service or veteran status, or marital statute.

Section 2. In accordance with the provision of Chapter 3, Title 49, MCA, "Governmental Code of Fair Practices," the Employer shall recruit, appoint, assign, train, evaluate, and promote its employees on the basis of merit and qualification, without regard to race, color, religion, creed, political ideas, sex, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, or national origin. The Employer may not enter into any benefit plans such as retirement, pension or insurance plans, which may be construed as subterfuges to evade the purposes of the Code. However, the Employer may enter into bona fide seniority system programs that are not structured to perpetuate any past discriminatory practices.

ARTICLE 7. UNION ACTIVITIES

Section 1. It is recognized that employees representing the Union for purposes of negotiations or other activities relating to the administration of this Agreement, are acting on behalf of the Union and its members and not in their capacity as employees of the Employer.

Section 2. Employer's equipment shall not be used for Union purposes, except that:

1. It is understood by the parties of this Agreement that Union meetings of reasonable duration may be held in conjunction with regularly scheduled Regional or Division meetings and that any time so used, will not be considered part of a regular work shift. It is further understood and agreed that the Union Representative will conduct such meetings.

2. It is understood by both parties of this Agreement that special meetings may be called by mutual agreement during the month immediately following the conclusion of negotiations, ratification, and signing of the Agreement. At such meetings the Executive Director and/or the union representatives in conjunction with Management shall explain the provisions of the contract.
3. At such meetings the Executive Director and/or the union representatives in conjunction with management shall explain the provisions of the contract and, with management approval, department computers and phones may be used to communicate information regarding the negotiations.

Section 3. During all Union negotiation meetings with the Employer, one-day lodging and meal per diems for union representatives shall be paid by the Employer. Two nights lodging and meal per diems shall be allowed for union representatives beyond a five-hour travel time to the meeting location. Salary shall be paid by the Employer during travel and meetings time. Union representatives shall be allowed to "Patrol" to and from Union negotiation meetings.

Section 4. FOMGW shall be permitted to use the Employer's facilities for union meetings, provided that such meeting dates and times do not conflict with other uses previously scheduled by the Employer.

ARTICLE 8. PAY AND HOURS OF WORK

Section 1. Employee pay progression shall be determined using the FWP employee Career Progression Requirements as defined in Addendum A.

Section 2. All approved hours worked by employees over 80 in a pay period (FLSA 7k exemption), will be compensated at one and one-half hours for each hour worked. All approved hours worked on a state-declared holiday will be compensated at one and one-half hours for each hour worked, plus regular holiday pay (eight hours) regardless of total time worked in a pay period. Employees may choose overtime or compensatory time in compliance with Section 8.3.

Subsection 1. When Game Wardens are engaged in work declared by management as an emergency, their overtime will be calculated on a 40-hour workweek. If overtime earned under these circumstances is funded by sources outside of FWP, the overtime will not be counted towards an employee's normal overtime total. It will be counted, charged and tracked separately in a process established by the department. Wardens who volunteer for emergency work will coordinate with their Regional Captain to determine a schedule.

Subsection 2. Regular holiday pay (eight hours), and approved leave (annual, sick and comp time taken), shall constitute time worked when computing overtime credits under this Article. All overtime calculated shall comply with Montana state statute and policies.

Subsection 3. Each full-time employee is entitled to one floating holiday each calendar year. An unused floating holiday leave expires at the end of each calendar year, does not accrue, and is not paid out to employees on termination of employment.

Section 3. When budgeted and appropriated by the Legislature, employees will have the opportunity to earn up to 100 hours of overtime per fiscal year (July 1st to June 30th).

Section 4. Any additional overtime funding distribution will be a negotiable item.

Section 5. Employees may not exceed 120 hours of compensatory time for hours worked beyond 80 in a pay period. Employees may choose compensatory time in lieu of overtime.

Section 6. If the employee has a compensatory time balance of 25 hours or less by the end of the last full pay period in August, the department will reimburse the employee for the remaining comp time balance. If the employee has more than 25 hours of compensatory time balance at the last pay period in August, the employee will not get reimbursed for the excess compensatory time balance, and the employee's supervisor will work with the employee to develop a plan for the employee to reduce the balance as of the last pay period of August to 25 hours or less by February 1st of the following calendar year. Compensatory time accrued between the end of the last full of August and February 1st must be reduced to 25 hours or less by the following August deadline.

Section 7. Job-related travel shall be considered as normal work time for this Article.

Section 8. The Department commits, based on budget availability, to move towards 100% of current available salary markets in future agreements.

Section 9. Effective on the first day of the first complete pay period that includes July 1, 2025, the base salary of each employee must be increased by \$1.00 an hour or by 2.5%, whichever is greater. Effective on the first day of the first complete pay period that includes July 1, 2026, the base salary of each employee must be increased by \$1.00 an hour or by 2.5%, whichever is greater.

Further, in accordance with Section 2-18-303(4)(a)(i), these adjustments will not be provided to employees until the State receives written notice that the employee's collective bargaining unit has ratified the agreement. If that notice is received after the effective date of the pay adjustment, the adjustment will be paid retroactively.

Section 10. The monthly Employer contribution for group benefits will increase to \$1080 for the 2026 plan year and \$1107 for the 2027 plan year.

The monthly State of Montana employee contributions will increase for 2026 and 2027 plan years. The tables below break out the monthly increase both before and after the wellness incentive which increased to \$60 per month for the 2026 and 2027 plan years.

The cost of employee-only coverage will be covered by the Employer contribution, after the wellness incentive is applied.

Employee Monthly Contributions Before Wellness Incentive		
Contribution Type	2026 Plan Year Contribution	2027 Plan Year Contribution
Employee Only	\$60	\$60
Employee and Spouse	\$318	\$326
Employee and Children	\$134	\$138
Employee and Family	\$397	\$407

Employee Monthly Contributions After Wellness Incentive		
Contribution Type	2026 Plan Year Contributions	2027 Plan Year Contributions
Employee Only	\$0	\$0
Employee and Spouse	\$198	\$206
Employee and Children	\$74	\$78
Employee and Family	\$277	\$287

The monthly Tobacco Surcharge will increase to \$60 for the 2026 and 2027 plan year.

The State has the discretion to manage all aspects of the State Health Plan, to include, but not be limited to, deductibles, coinsurance levels, and maximum out-of-pocket levels. Member contributions will only increase beyond the rates established above if the Risk-Based Capital (RBC) level is at or below 300%.

Section 11. Statutory longevity increases will be paid in addition to an employee's base salary at the time the longevity hours of service are accrued.

Yearly Longevity Increment	Hourly Longevity Minimum	% of Pay Increase
5 years.....	10400 hours	1.50%
10 years.....	20800 hours	3.50%
15 years.....	31200 hours	5.50%
20 years.....	41600 hours	7.50%
25 years.....	52000 hours	9.50%
30 years.....	62400 hours	11.00%
35 years.....	72800 hours	12.50%
40 years.....	83200 hours	14.00%

ARTICLE 9. NOTIFICATIONS

Section 1. The Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks shall give the Union advance notice of at least 14 days and an opportunity to comment on any layoff, including a list of the employees affected.

Section 2. The Employer shall ensure reasonable access to the Union and each employee up-to-date rules, regulations, and policies on employment related matters. The Union shall be notified of any change or additions to personnel rules, regulations, and policies issued by the Department of Administration and the individual departments, sufficiently in advance to allow discussion and comment by the Union.

Section 3. Any contract-related information requests shall be requested through Human Resources.

Section 4. Per Human Resources practices, employees who are placed on administrative leave pending an investigation will be given an estimated timeline to complete the investigation. If the investigation takes longer than the estimated timeline, HR staff will reach out to the employee on administrative leave to provide an updated projected completion date. Employees on administrative leave can reach out to Human Resources at any time and request an update on the investigation status.

ARTICLE 10. GRIEVANCE AND ARBITRATION

Section 1. Having a desire to create and maintain harmonious labor relations between them, the parties agree that they will promptly attempt to adjust all complaints, disputes, controversies, or other grievances arising between them involving questions of interpretation or application of the written provisions of this Agreement. All potential grievances must be discussed with the immediate supervisor prior to the filing of a formal grievance and no formal grievance may be filed until the immediate supervisor has been given an opportunity to attempt resolution.

Section 2. Grievance Procedure.

Step 1

A grievance involving the interpretation or application of the written provision(s) of this Agreement shall be submitted by the employee or union representative to the employee's immediate supervisor or management designee within 30 calendar days from the occurrence of the grievable event. The immediate supervisor or management designee shall have 30 calendar days from receipt of the grievance to respond in writing.

Step 2

If the grievance is not resolved at Step 1, a formal grievance may be submitted by the Union in writing within 14 calendar days from the immediate supervisor's or management designee's response to Step 1. The grievance should be submitted to the

appropriate management official. The management official at the second step shall have 14 calendar days from receipt of the grievance to respond in writing.

Step 3

If the grievance is not resolved at Step 2, the Union may submit a Step 3 formal grievance to the agency head or designee within 21 calendar days of the Step 2 response. The agency head or designee shall have 21 calendar days from receipt of the grievance to respond in writing.

Step 4

Should the Union consider the decision of the agency head unsatisfactory, the Union shall, within 21 calendar days of such decision, notify the agency head and the State Office of Labor Relations of its intention to take the grievance to arbitration.

Step 5

After notification of arbitration, the State Office of Labor Relations (OLR) will work with the Union and management to determine if there is a mutually acceptable resolution that can be found or if the matter should go to mediation. If OLR determines the parties cannot resolve informally or through mediation, the decision should proceed to final and binding arbitration. If there is a cost associated, the parties will share it equally. The timeline for the grievance processing will be put on hold until the mediation is final or the decision is made to move to arbitration.

Section 3. Rules of Grievance Processing.

Subsection 1. Waiving time limits. Time limits at any stage of the grievance procedure may be extended by written mutual agreement of the parties at that step.

Subsection 2. Timeliness. A grievance not filed or advanced by the grievant within the time limits provided shall be deemed permanently withdrawn. Failure on the part of the Employer's representative to answer within the time limit set forth in any step will entitle the employee to the next step.

Subsection 3. Elements of the grievance. All presentations of grievances shall be submitted to the Employer in writing at each step and must include:

1. Name of employee(s)/Union grieving.
2. Date of the violation.
3. The step of the grievance.
4. A complete statement of the grievance and facts upon which it is based.
5. The specific Article(s) and Section(s) of the Agreement violated.
6. The specific remedy or correction requested.
7. The signature of each grievant or representative.

Subsection 4. Alternative procedures.

1. As recognized in § 49-2-512, Title 49 of Montana Code Annotated establishes the exclusive remedy for acts constituting an alleged violation of the Montana

Human Rights Act. In the event of a grievance based upon an alleged violation of this Act, the statutory procedures of filing a claim with the Human Rights Bureau shall be the exclusive remedy.

2. As recognized in § 2-18-1011, Title 2 of Montana Code Annotated establishes the exclusive remedy for an alleged violation of classification or compensation. In the event of a grievance based upon an alleged violation of this provision, the statutory procedures of filing a claim with the Board of Personnel Appeals shall be the exclusive remedy.

Section 4. Rules of Arbitration.

Subsection 1. Selection of Arbitrator. The parties shall request a list of seven arbitrators from the Board of Personnel Appeals and shall alternatively strike names from the list. The last remaining name shall serve as the arbitrator.

Subsection 2. Arbitrator's limitations. No grievance which fails to meet the requirements of Section 3, Subsection 3 of this Article shall be determined to be arbitrable. The arbitrator may not add to, subtract from, or modify the terms of this Agreement.

Subsection 3. The parties agree either party may file pre-arbitration dispositive motions or request a bench decision from the arbitrator.

Subsection 4. Each party shall share equally the cost of the arbitrator. In the event one of the parties wants transcripts from the proceedings of the arbitration, the party requesting the transcripts shall pay the entire cost. If each party requests a transcript, they shall equally share the cost.

Subsection 5. The arbitration location shall be in Helena, Montana unless otherwise mutually agreed by the parties.

ARTICLE 11. SENIORITY AND LONGEVITY

Section 1. Longevity will be computed and compensated for in accordance with the provisions of the State Pay Plan Rules promulgated by the Department of Administration.

Section 2. Seniority means an employee's length of continuous service with the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks as a Law Enforcement Officer. Seniority shall be computed from the date the employee began regular uninterrupted service as an FWP Law Enforcement Officer.

Subsection 1. Seniority shall be considered unbroken for:

1. Layoff not exceeding one year;
2. Leave without pay not in excess of 60 days except when such leave is granted in case of illness;

3. Or military service resulting from deployment.

Subsection 2. Time worked as a Warden Trainee shall also be counted toward seniority.

Section 3. Seniority shall not accrue when an employee transfers to a position not covered by this Agreement or when they terminate employment. However, upon transfer or rehire into a position covered by this Agreement, previously earned seniority as a bargaining unit employee shall be recognized and applicable under this Article.

Section 4. Employees to be laid off shall be given 14 days advance notice.

Section 5. In the selection of employees for layoff, consideration will be given to the programs to be carried out by the Employer and the staff structure which, after the reduction, will achieve program objectives. Accordingly, employees will be selected for layoff only after consideration has been given to position classification, skills and geographical location. If all the above factors are equal, seniority shall be the deciding factor in the determination of selection for layoff.

Section 6. Recall from layoff shall be with the same consideration as in Section 5 above. The Department shall notify such employees to return to work and furnish the Union a copy of such notification, and if the employee fails to notify the Department within 14 days of their intention to return to work, such employee shall be considered as having forfeited their right to return to work.

Section 7. No permanent employee shall be laid off while temporary, part-time, or probationary employees in the same skill are retained.

ARTICLE 12. LATERAL TRANSFERS

Section 1. Vacant or newly created employee positions open for permanent assignment will first be opened to all post-certified enforcement division employees. Sergeants, Lieutenants, Captains, Assistant Chief and Chief will have an equal opportunity to apply. Temporary warden assignments will last no longer than 12 months. If an eligible enforcement division employee listed above applies, the position will not be opened to applicants outside the enforcement division. Selection processes for investigators will follow the department's hiring and selection policy.

Section 2. Seniority, qualifications, and capabilities shall be the controlling factors in filling lateral employee positions. The scoring system shall be a 300-point system with qualifications and capabilities being worth 200 points and seniority being worth up to 100 points. Seniority shall be determined by giving each applicant five points for each full year of service as a bargaining unit member with a maximum of 100 points allowed for 20 years of service. The applicant gaining the most points will be recommended for the position to the hiring authority.

Section 3. If the vacant or newly created position becomes vacant within six months of it being filled, management may use the original pool of applicants to fill the vacant position. CIS positions shall be filled by open recruitment with current employees being given an equal opportunity to apply.

Section 4. Employees with at least 24 months of service are eligible to apply for a transfer at any time. The 24-month eligibility requirement is determined by the projected transfer/hire date(s) listed on the vacancy announcement.

ARTICLE 13. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

Section 1. Uniform and equipment issues will be administered in accordance with FWP policy. Proposed changes in uniform and equipment policy that would have a material or substantial effect on members of the bargaining unit shall be subject to bargaining between the Employer and Union.

Section 2. All employees will be reimbursed for the cost of monthly service for a home office phone if adequate cell phone service is not available at their residence. Internet may also be able to be reimbursed on a case-by-case basis.

ARTICLE 14. LEAVE BENEFITS

Section 1. Employees of the bargaining unit are entitled to leave benefits as set forth for all employees in the Montana Operations Manual Policy. This includes the benefit of utilizing sick leave for death, or funeral attendance, of an immediate family member or, at the agency's discretion, another person.

ARTICLE 15. RIGHTS ON PROMOTION

Section 1. An employee shall not forfeit their right to turn down a promotion and maintain their present rank and station without fear of reprisal.

Section 2. Temporary Promotions. If an employee is selected by a Management designee to temporarily fill a vacancy in a higher classified job, where it is anticipated to be more than 30 days, the authorization shall be in writing and the employee shall be paid equal to, but not less than, the lowest paid employee in the same job class beginning on the first day of the assignment and lasting for the duration of the assignment. The employee shall continue to accumulate seniority regardless of the temporary assignment.

ARTICLE 16. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1. The Employer's rules and regulations shall outline the duties and responsibilities for which the employees are held accountable.

ARTICLE 17. PERSONNEL RECORD

Section 1. An employee may request and receive a copy of their personnel file, current job profile, and market pay data kept by the department at any time.

Section 2. When performance appraisals are prepared by the employee's immediate supervisor and/or the next highest supervisor, the results of the combined evaluation shall be transmitted to the employee in the form of a copy of their performance appraisal a minimum of 48 hours in advance of the meeting for the employee to review prior to meeting with the Employer to discuss the performance appraisal. If changes/corrections to the performance appraisal must be made by the supervisor(s) within the 48-hour review period, then a new copy of the performance appraisal will be transmitted to the employee and the 48-hour review period will start again. Completed performance appraisals shall be signed and dated by both the employee and their direct supervisor; these signatures indicate that both the supervisor and employee have discussed and understand the appraisal's content and the employee's job performance expectations. If the employee disagrees with all or a portion of the appraisal the employee may, within 10 working days, submit written comments describing their reasons for their dissent and/or to provide additional information that explains the described job performance. These materials shall be attached to the performance appraisal delivered to the Human Resources office for inclusion in the employee 's permanent personnel file.

Section 3. Formal letters of caution, consultation, warning, admonishment, and reprimand shall be removed from the official personnel file no later than 24 months after they have been placed in the file unless such items can be used in support of possible disciplinary action arising from more recent employee action or behavior patterns or is applicable to pending legal or quasi-legal proceedings.

Section 4. The union representative, with the employee's written permission, shall have the right to examine an employee's personnel file upon notification and presentation of such written permission to the Employer. The Employer shall make available original or copies of the original records for examination in Fish, Wildlife and Parks offices by the union representative.

Section 5. If an action which may result in suspension, demotion, removal or discharge of an employee is based upon a citizen complaint, the Employee shall be provided a copy of the written complaint or documentation of the verbal complaint within 48 hours. The Employer shall not solicit complaints against Employees. An unfounded complaint shall not be kept in an Employee's personnel file.

Section 6. For actions which may result in suspension, demotion, removal or discharge, any interrogation of an Employee maybe recorded either by the Employer or Employee. When the Employer or the Employee records the interrogation a copy of the recording shall be furnished, if requested by the Employee or Employer, at no cost and no later than five days before any scheduled pre-disciplinary (Loudermill) meeting. All such recording shall be done in accordance with § 45-8-213, MCA.

Section 7. Questions directed to the Employee during the interview shall be asked by only one interviewer at a time. The Employee has a right to have a FOP representative or attorney of their choosing during the interrogation.

Section 8. An Employee shall not be subjected to offensive language nor be threatened with dismissal, transfer, or other disciplinary action as a guise to attempt to obtain an Employee's resignation, nor shall an Employee be intimidated in any form.

ARTICLE 18. JOB SECURITY

Section 1. Probationary Period. The probationary period shall be utilized for the most effective adjustment of a new employee and for the elimination of any employee whose performance does not, in the judgment of their supervisor, meet the required standard of performance.

Subsection 1. The probationary period shall be one year.

Subsection 2. If the Employer determines at any time during the probationary period that the services of the probationary employee are unsatisfactory, the employee may be separated upon written notice from the Employer.

Section 2. Dismissal. The Employer may remove any employee with permanent status only for just cause. The Employer shall furnish the employee with a statement, in writing, of the grounds and the specific reasons for dismissal.

Subsection 1. An employee, with permanent status, may appeal their dismissal through the grievance procedure.

Section 3. In cases of demotion or termination the Department agrees to notify the Union in writing as soon as practical.

Section 4. Each employee shall give the Department two weeks' notice before leaving their employment, unless mutually agreed beforehand between the Department and the employee.

ARTICLE 19. TRAINING OFFICER COMPENSATION

Section 1. Employees who serve as firearms, department approved defensive tactics or Police Vehicle Operations Course instructors, Boat Patrol Operations, or Horse Patrol Operations instructors, as approved by the Regional Captain shall be compensated \$250 per year for providing annual required training. Employees who serve as armorers, as approved by the Regional Captain shall be compensated as follows:

1. Pistol Armorers - \$325 per year for performing all required firearms maintenance, upkeep and armorer level inspections and ensuring armorer records are complete and up-to-date and submitted to Headquarters as required.
2. Shotgun Armorers - \$225 per year for performing all required firearms maintenance, upkeep and armorer level inspections on a minimum of three shotguns per year and ensuring armorer records are complete, up-to-date and submitted to Headquarters as required.
3. Patrol Rifle Armorers - \$225 per year for performing all required firearms maintenance, upkeep and armorer level inspections on a minimum of three patrol rifles per year and ensuring armorer records are complete, up-to-date and submitted to Headquarters as required.

Section 2. Employees who serve as OC, First Aid & CPR or as an instructor in another capacity approved by the Employer shall be compensated \$150 per year for providing necessary and required training per year.

Section 3. Field Training Officer Compensation. Employees serving as Field Training Officers in accordance with existing FTEP policy and guidelines will also be compensated as follows for each new hire they train:

Primary FTO (\$1,200); Secondary FTO (\$500); Out of Region (\$300)

ARTICLE 20. PRINTING OF AGREEMENT

Section 1. The Union shall furnish each new employee and all current employees with a printed or electronic copy of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 21. JOB POSTING

Section 1. All employees will be notified of all newly created or vacant bargaining unit positions and permanent, full-time promotional positions in the Department, the notice for internal lateral transfer opportunities will be made via email.

Section 2. All permanent warden positions in the State and their patrolling area will be designated in writing.

ARTICLE 22. LABOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Section 1. The Employer and the Union agree to the establishment of a Labor Management Committee (LMC). The purpose of this Committee is to discuss any item of concern to either party and to foster good communications between the Employer and the members of the bargaining unit. However, the Committee will not take the place of the grievance procedure or contract negotiations.

Section 2. The Committee membership will be established in the LMC Charter. LMC meetings shall constitute paid time worked for wardens and wardens may patrol to and from the location of the LMC meeting.

Section 3. Travel for these meetings will be paid in accordance with Article 7, Section 3.

ARTICLE 23. SEVERABILITY

Section 1. In the event that any provision of this Agreement shall be declared invalid at any time or unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction or through government regulations or decree, such decision shall not invalidate the entire Agreement, it being the expressed intention of the parties hereto that all other provisions not declared invalid or unenforceable, shall remain in full force and effect.

ARTICLE 24. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

Section 1. The parties acknowledge that during negotiations which resulted in this Agreement, each had the unlimited right and opportunity to make demands and proposals with respect to any subject or matter not removed by law from the area of collective bargaining, and that the understanding and agreements arrived at by the parties after the exercise of that right and opportunity are set forth in this Agreement. Therefore, the Employer and the Union for the duration of this Agreement, each voluntarily and unqualifiedly waives the right, and each agrees that the other shall not be obligated to bargain collectively with respect to any subject or matter specifically referred to or covered in this Agreement, or not specifically referred to or covered in this Agreement, even though such subjects or matters may, or may not, have been within the knowledge or contemplation of either or both of the parties at the time they negotiated or signed this Agreement.

Section 2. This Article shall not be construed to in any way restrict parties from commencing negotiations under the applicable law on any succeeding Agreement to take effect upon termination of this Agreement.

THIS AGREEMENT is signed and dated this 7/25/2025.

THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Signed by:



FB3CB5FCEA5B41B...
Christy Clark, Director
Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

Signed by:



362E3999E28E4DB...
Karol Anne Davis, Chief Negotiator
State Office of Labor Relations

THE UNION:

DocuSigned by:



34F03A393C644AE...
Dirk Paulsen, President
FOMGW

Signed by:



107D870FFFC9439...
Ben Chappelow, Vice-President
FOMGW

ADDENDUM A. CAREER PROGRESSION

TIER	Rate/hr (2024 pre-ratification)	Rate/hr (ratification)	Rate/hr (July 1, 2026)	POST CERTIFICATIONS REQUIRED TO ADVANCE TO RESPECTIVE TIERS	EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, JOB PERFORMANCE, AND TRAINING
I. ENTRY	28.72	29.72	30.72	N/A	Bachelor's degree in Fish and Wildlife, Park Management, Outdoor Recreation, Criminal Justice, or closely related field from an accredited university. (Applies to Investigator positions also).
II. ONE YEAR	29.79	30.79	31.79	BASIC	Tier advancement requires: Serving 1, 5, 10, and 15 years respectively with FWP Enforcement.
III. FIVE YEARS	30.71	31.71	32.71	BASIC AND INTERMEDIATE	
IV. TEN YEARS	31.78	32.78	33.78	BASIC, INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED	
V. FIFTEEN YEARS	32.23	33.23	34.23	BASIC, INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED	Successfully performing duties as attested by the collaborative decision of the Captain and Chief of Law Enforcement or designee. Successfully demonstrating warden competencies as defined in job profile and performance appraisals. Maintaining POST certification by completing required POST training hours. Failure to meet tier advancement requirements will result in no tier advancement until the requirements have been satisfied.
INVESTIGATOR	37.01	38.01	39.01	BASIC AND INTERMEDIATE	