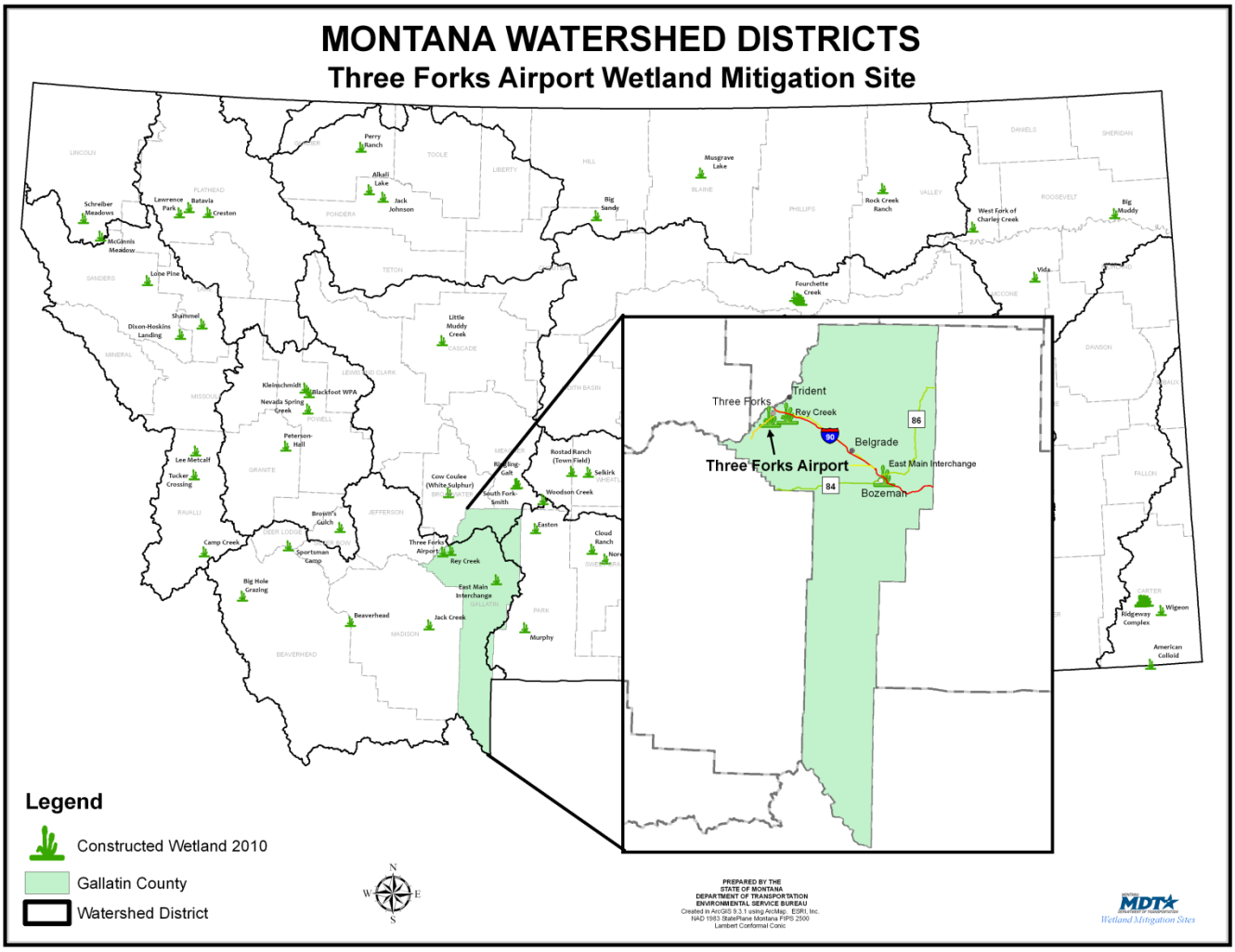
THREE FORKS AIRPORT

Watershed # 6-Upper Missouri River Basin
Gallatin County, Montana



LAND OWNERSHIP: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) currently owns a parcel of land located directly adjacent to the Gallatin County Airport – Pogreba Field, Three Forks within Watershed # 6 – Upper Missouri River Basin. This parcel of land was acquired by the Montana Department of Highways between 1936-1937 for the purpose of excavating borrow material to construct a nearby overpass of Montana State Highway 287 over Northern Pacific and Montana Railroad Company railroad tracks. As a result of that excavation, wetlands developed on the property.

In 1999-2000, there was consideration of filling the wetlands in order to expand airport operations. However, during an environmental and engineering feasibility study conducted by an independent consultant for the airport in 1998, the consultant discovered the presence of ***Spiranthes diluvialis*** (Ute Ladies' Tresses) which is listed by the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) as a threatened wetland plant species. At that time, the consultant observed approximately 15 individual blooming plants. As a consequence, the wetland area is now

considered as critical habitat for this threatened plant species and is afforded protection under the Endangered Species Act.
The discovery of these threatened plants prompted MDT to preserve this unique wetland area for mitigation of transportation projects within the watershed. Subsequent surveys by MDT and monitoring since 2000 have seen a variable number of between 15 to 150 plants blooming in any given year within the site. The Ute's Ladies Tresses is often found in combination with a number of other Montana State-Listed sensitive plant species of concern that have also been observed within the site, including; ***Platanthera aquilonis*** (Northern Green Orchid); ***Castilleja exilis*** (Annual Paintbrush); and ***Eleocharis rostellata*** (Beaked Spikerush).

Three Forks Airport



Utes Ladies Tresses (*Spirathes diluvialis*)



Annual Paintbrush (*Castilleja exilis*)



Northern Green Orchid (*Platanthera aquilonis*)

INHABITANTS:

BIRDS	
American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*) American Robin (*Turdus Americana*) Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) Black-billed Magpie (*Pica americana*) Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*) Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*)	Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus)* Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*) Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*) Wilson's phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*) Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicate*)
MAMMALS	
Coyote (*Canis latrans*) Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) Meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*)	Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) Striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)
HERPETILES	
Western garter snake (*Thamnophis elegans*)	Western Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris triseriata*)



No Monitoring Reports available for this site