

Provide a complete description of your proposal, including sufficient information to be used in the decision-making process. The narrative should address the issues prompting the request, the relationship to program priorities, and any alternative that have been considered.

A MOU has been signed by the Directors of DNRC and FWP regarding FWP taking over management of 14 areas that should be developed for public recreation. This is contingent upon capital and operational funding being available for development and maintenance of these sites. These sites are all currently being used by the public for recreational access, and are critical to maintain the current level of recreational opportunity. Without this project, these lands will be lost to public recreation as they are leased out to make revenue for the school trust, or are blocked off because of violations of BMPs.

One of these access sites is on Flathead Lake, where access has been identified as a critical issue; another is on Echo Lake, the second most heavily used lake in the Flathead. All the sites are important for recreational access.

2. Relationship to program priorities:

Fisheries:

1. Develop and manage urban fishing opportunities and maintain children's fishing opportunities
2. Maintenance support for fishing access sites
3. Additional funding for fishing access site programs
4. Reduce conflicts among resource user groups at access sites.

Parks:

1. Resource Protection and development:
2. Maintain Recreational Opportunity.
 - a. Work with DRNC to maintain recreational access through any feasible mechanism.
 - b. Examine Flathead Lake for opportunities to acquire additional recreational access.
3. Recreational Access/New Sites, i.e., Work toward securing critical new recreation sites and focus more attention on water recreation opportunities.
 - a. Ensure future recreational access through feasible mechanisms.
 - b. Enhance access to the Flathead, Whitefish, and Stillwater rivers.

3. Alternative approaches considered to achieve a similar result:

The fate of important recreational access on DNRC land has been an issue since the 1990's. The other alternative would be for FWP for lease all these properties. At current lease rates for recreational property this is economically unfeasible. Lease payments increase regularly, and recreational access is lost as these properties are leased to private parties.

This is a rare opportunity for FWP and DRNC to reach an agreement that is critical for the citizens of Montana, and meet their constitutional mandates. If this opportunity is lost, critical access will also be permanently lost.

4. Explain the estimated four-year effects of the proposal on staffing, workloads, and public perception.

These sites could be separated into 5 loops that could be managed by individual Grade 7 maintenance personnel. Enforcement personnel would also be needed. It is anticipated that an FTE of 1.0 Game Warden at a Grade 14 would be needed. Operations costs were estimated based on use patterns, facilities, travel distances, utility costs, and miscellaneous employee costs (uniforms, Per Diem, etc.).²

Existing sites were incorporated into the loops, but costs were discounted for these sites, as their costs are already part of the budget. Sites already in the system are marked with an asterisk. The loops are as follows:

Echo Lake Loop: Echo Lake, Point, Pleasant, Cedar Creek, Horseshoe Lake*, Swan River*, and Loon Lake*.

FTE: .23 FTE (16 hours week May – September, 4 hours a week October – April).

Host Pads: 2

Vault Toilets: 5

Beaver Lake Loop: Beaver Lake*, Woods Lake, Murray Lake, Rainbow Lake, Little Beaver Lake, Dollar Lake.

FTE: .07 FTE (16 hours a month May – September, 4 hours a month October – April)

Host pads: None

Porta Potties: 3

Elmo Loop: Elmo State Park, Walstad FAS*, Woody Bay FAS*, Somers FAS*

FTE: .79 FTE (70 hours a week, May – September, 16 hours a month October – April)

Host Pads: 1

Vault Toilets: 2

Flush Toilet/Shower: 2

Whitefish Loop: Spencer Lake, Blanchard Lake*, Duck Lake, Upper Whitefish Lake

FTE: .07 FTE (8 hours a month May – September, 8 hours a month October – April)

Host Pads: 1

Vault Toilets: 2

Ashley Loop: Rogers Lake, Smith Lake*, Ashley Lake*, Bitterroot Lake*

FTE: .18 FTE (16 hours a week May – September, 4 hours a month October – April)

Host Pads: 1

Vault Toilets: 3

TOTAL NEW FTE (GRADE 7)

2.34