

STATE OF MONTANA



DEPARTMENT OF

RECEIVED FISH AND GAME

JUN 08 1979

Helena, MT 59601

June 7, 1979

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
COUNCIL

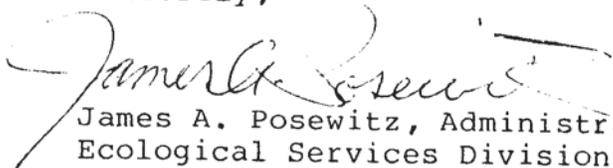
Mr. Terry Carmody, Executive Director
Environmental Quality Council
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Terry:

Enclosed are two copies of our preliminary environmental review FG-N-110, Buffalo Mirage Fishing Access Site. This project involves an access road, parking area, fencing, a boat ramp and the installation of a double latrine with a sealed holding tank. Construction will probably be completed during fall 1979.

We hope this document will satisfy the requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act. If you have any questions, please let us know.

Sincerely,


James A. Posewitz, Administrator
Ecological Services Division

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cc: Yellowstone County Commissioners
Stillwater County Commissioners
Department of Natural Resources (Conservation Districts)
Department of Highways
Water Quality Bureau (Health)

FG N-110

PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

FOR

BUFFALO MIRAGE FISHING ACCESS SITE

APRIL 1979
PARKS DIVISION
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

BUFFALO MIRAGE

I. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed project involves the construction of 47,600 square feet of graveled access road and parking areas, the installation of 399 wood barriers, 240 rods of barbed wire fence, installation of a double latrine with a sealed fiberglass holding tank, the installation of approach, entry and credit signs, boat access area and a fencing boundary survey. It is anticipated that this project will be advertised during the summer of 1979 for construction to be completed during the fall of 1979.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

A. Description of the Area

1. Region

The Yellowstone valley 4 miles west of the town of Laurel is broad and wide.

2. Project Area

The project area is located on a 10-acre tract that fronts on the Yellowstone River.

B. Physical Environment

1. Geology

The Yellowstone valley is composed of many feet of alluvial fill. Underlying this is the sedimentary Montana group of the Cretaceous age. These sedimentary rocks are several thousand feet thick and have escaped most of the upheaval associated with deposits further west. The area contains a few thin lignite and sub-bituminous coal beds.

2. Soils

The soils on site are moderately deep and well drained on a nearly level terrace consisting of alluvium material.

3. Surface Water

The Yellowstone River is a highly important economic factor in that it supplies irrigation water for a well developed agricultural economy.

4. Vegetation

Vegetation on the site consists of the cottonwood-willow vegetation type and includes principal associated species of rose, snowberry, sedges and wirerush.

5. Ground Water

Wells yielding in excess of 150 gallons per minute are generally possible in this area of the Yellowstone valley.

6. Climate

This area is characterized by moderate to strong westerly winds, low relative humidity, comparatively little rainfall, wide diurnal and seasonal variation of temperature, and plentiful sunshine.

7. Air Quality

There is very little information available on air quality in this vicinity but the air quality is generally considered to be good.

8. Aquatic

The fishing resource consists of trout, whitefish, burbot (ling), sauger, catfish, goldeye and suckers.

9. Wildlife

Ring-necked pheasants and white-tailed deer are common on the bottom land year-around. Canada geese and ducks nest on the river and feed on adjacent grain fields. Numerous nongame species and furbearers including song birds, bald and golden eagles, herons, cottontail rabbits, raccoons, red foxes, muskrats, bobcats, fox squirrels, beavers and mink utilize the area. No rare and/or endangered species are known to inhabit the area.

C. Human Environment

1. Historical and Archeological

William Clark and party floated by the Buffalo Mirage site on their return from the Pacific Ocean in 1806. In 1864, John Bozeman established his trail past the site. The Northern Pacific Railroad was constructed in 1882. Nothing of historic or archeological significance is known to exist on the Buffalo Mirage site itself.

2. Transportation

The Buffalo Mirage site is located 3 miles east of Park City and is served by a gravel road that connects to a paved county road. No commercial transportation services are available.

3. Socio-Economic Profile

This site is located approximately 25 miles from the City of Billings in Yellowstone County. The 1970 population of Yellowstone County was 87,367 and the City of Billings had a population of 61,581. This large population density near the site insures a relatively heavy use of the area.

D. Impacts

There will be minor impacts to air quality from the construction machinery and the increased recreational use.

Water quality will not be affected.

Minor impacts affecting wildlife will occur due to the increased recreational use. The area is not critical habitat for any species.

Approximately 1.1 acres of vegetation will be destroyed.

The health and safety of the area will be improved with the installation of sealed vault latrine.

Minor impacts from the consumption of fuels and oils will occur. This will be both from the construction equipment and the increased recreational use.

No impacts will be made on historic or archeologic sites.

III. MITIGATING MEASURES

Disturbed areas not used for vehicle traffic will be reseeded with native grasses.

IV. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Fuel and oil will be consumed. Minor air pollution will occur. Increased recreational use will force the largest game animals out of the area during the summer.

V. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT-TERM USES AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

The area is presently devoted to recreational uses although it is not developed. No change in type of use will occur. It is expected that use will increase as more people become aware that the site is public property.

VI. IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

Wood will be used for the barriers. Fuel and oil will be consumed.

VII. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

No Action would continue to allow the recreaionists who now use the site to drive anywhere. This would, in time, destroy more vegetation than the present development will. Less recreation would be provided without signs to direct people to the site.

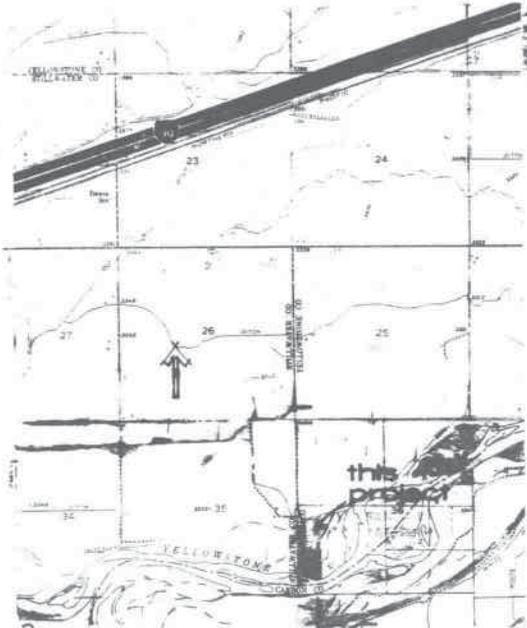
Prepared By: Richard E. Mayer, American Society of Landscape Architects;
Chief, Bureau of Design and Construction, Parks Division,
Montana Department of Fish and Game, Helena, Montana 59601.

Education: B. S. of Landscape Architecture, Iowa State University, Ames,
Iowa.

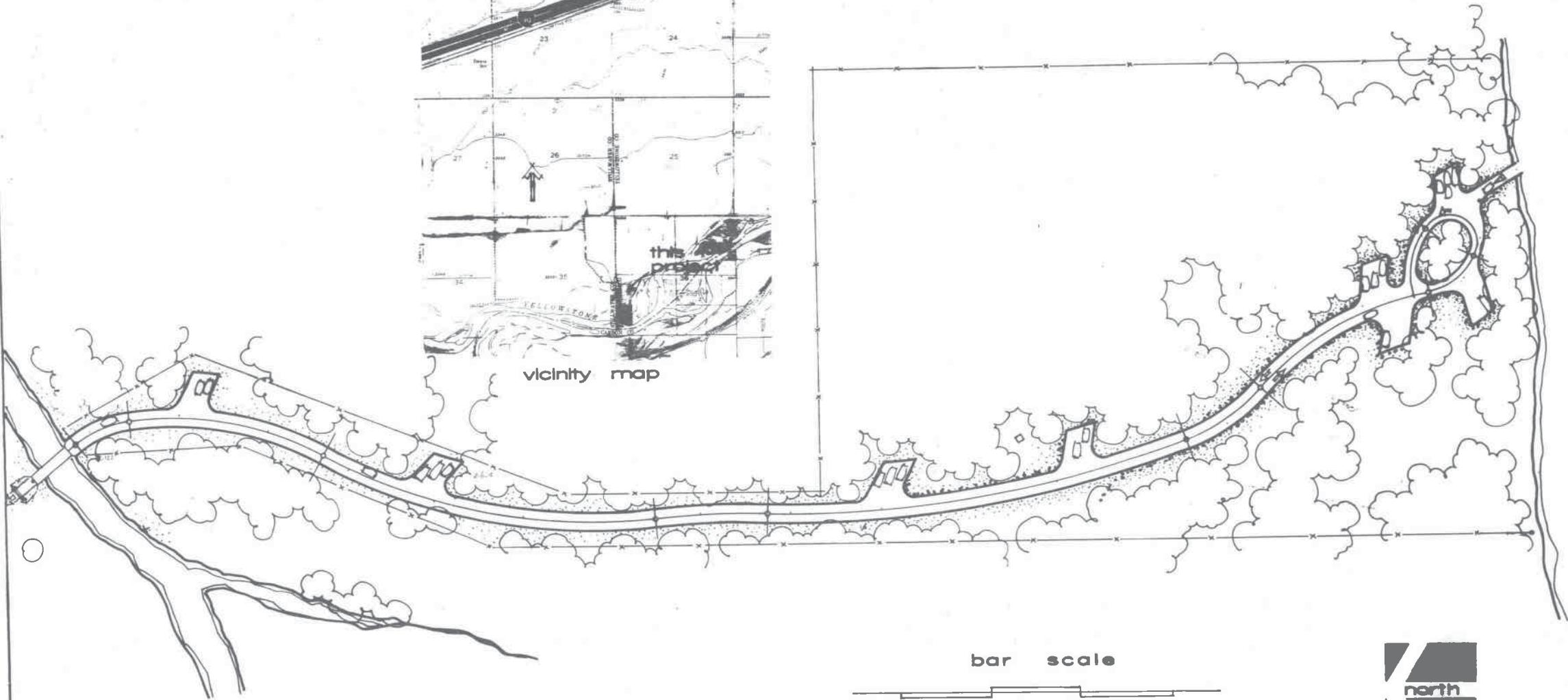
Affiliations: Registered Landscape Architect, Certificate #12, Colorado, 1968
- present. Past president, Montana-Idaho Chapter, American
Society of Landscape Architects; trustee, Montana-Idaho Chapter;
past president, Colorado Section; past president, Washington
Society.

Experience: Staff Landscape Architect, Land Planner; Clark-Coleman &
Associates; Seattle Parks Department; Denver Parks Department;
Bureau of Indian Affairs; Department of Natural Resources,
Montana; Department of Administration, Montana.

REM/TVC/t 5/30/79



vicinity map



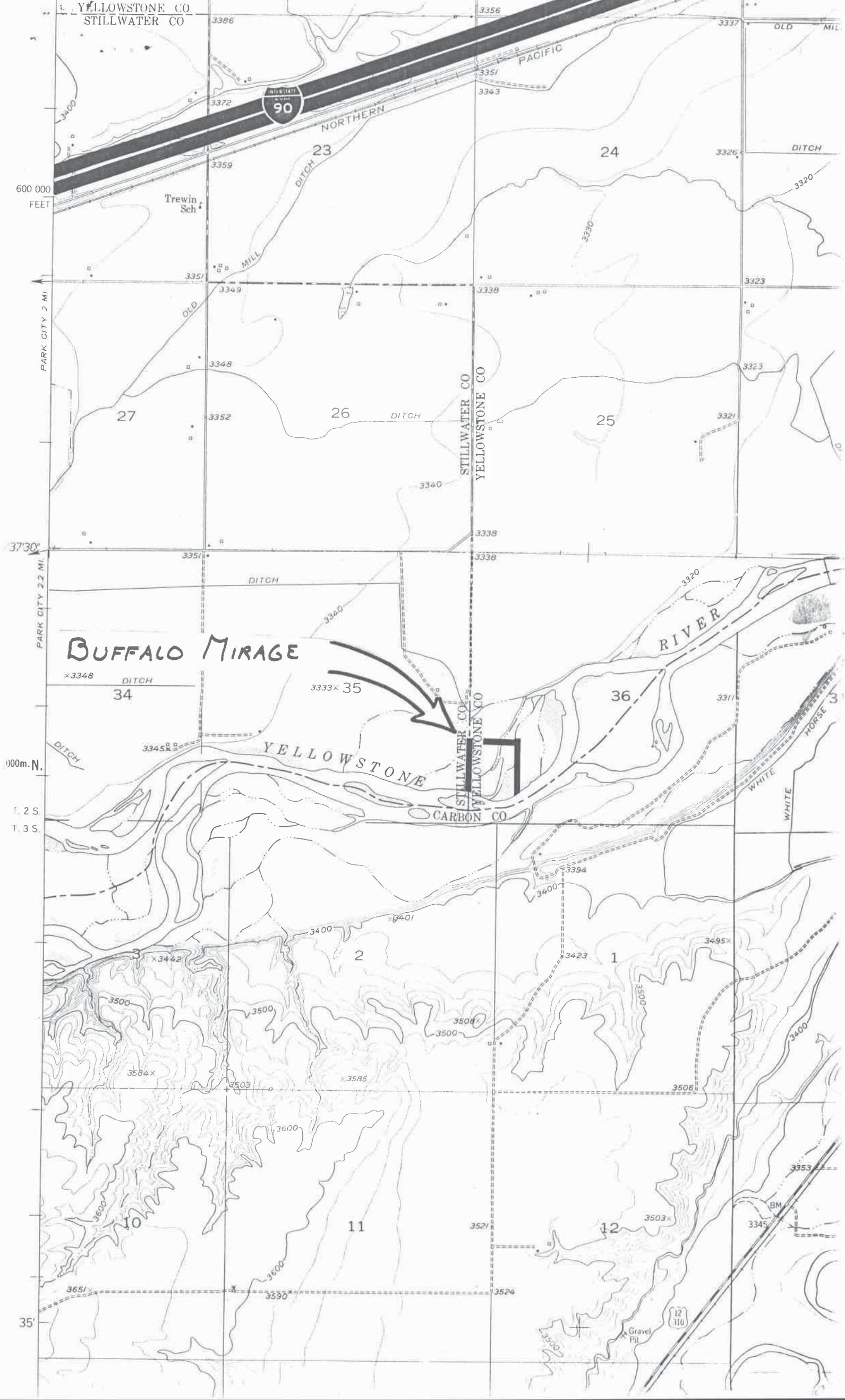
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STATE OF MONTANA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION RECREATION AND PARKS DIVISION		
buffalo mirage fishing access site laurel, montana		
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K. P. MAYER	8/70	1
APPROVED BY	DATE	

APPROVED BY

DATE



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STILLWATER CO

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YELLOWSTONE
RIVER

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YELLOWSTONE CO
CARBON CO

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