STATE OF MONTANA

DEPARTMENT OF

FISH AND GAME

Helena, MT 59601
June 27, 1979

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

Dear Terry:

Enclosed are two copies of FG-N-105, the PER for the Pelican Fishing Access Site in Sweet Grass County. The project will consist of road construction and improvements, culvert installation, signing, fencing and planting grass.

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

Sincerely,

James A. Posewitz

James A. Posewitz, Administrator
Ecological Services Division

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cc: Department of Highways
Department of Health
Sweet Grass County Commission

PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PELICAN FISHING ACCESS SITE

SWEET GRASS COUNTY, MONTANA

FG-N-105

Prepared by: Richard Misplon
Montana State Fish & Game
Parks & Recreation Division
12/21/78

I. Project Location

Pelican Fishing Access Site is a 122 acre tract located ½ mile southeast of Greycliff, Montana, between the Yellowstone River and the Burlington Northern right of way(see master site plan). The project site itself is in the northern corner of the tract.

Access to the site is from Interstate 90 by way of the Greycliff exit or by old U.S. 10. Then take the Sweet Grass Creek Road to the site entrance on the south side of Yellowstone River Bridge.

II. Project Description

The project consists of the construction of approximately 23,000 square feet of gravel access road, parking areas, and boat access, installation of 40 feet of 12" CMP culvert, installation of 143 rods of four wire, barb wire fence, installation of five signs and construction and installation of one double latrine.

The project consists of an access road with a cul-de-sac, boat access ramp and parking area. Also included are signs, a latrine and fencing. (see master site plan)

III. Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide year round water based public outdoor recreation. The site is specifically valuable in providing fishing, hunting, floating and,eventually,camping opporturnities.

Fishing in the area is excellent and the Pelican site will provide a much needed access for bank and boat fishermen.

The boat access will provide access for a good one day float trip to Columbus, Montana.

In the fall hunters will be able to use the area as a base.

IV. Impacts

A. Historic

Pelican Fishing Access Site has historically been on a East-West migration route.

Before the white men came to the area it was inhabited by the Crow Indian tribe. The first record of white men in the area was in 1806 when William Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition passed through on his way East.

Trappers were the major users of the valley until 1864 when John Bozeman blazed his trail through the area.

The big influx of settlers came in 1882 with the coming of the Northern

Pacific Railroad.

At the present time Interstate 90, a major east-west artery, traverses the valley near the site.

The site itself has no significant historical artifacts. A survey done by Steve Auberg of the Montana State University turned up no prehistoric remains other than a few scattered bones. The conclusion was that construction would not disturb any known heritage remains.

B. Problems with Human Residences

There are no residences near the site, therefore we expect no conflicts between the local people and visitors.

Grazing and farming have been eliminated from the site so we expect no conflicts in that respect.

C. Fish, Wildlife and Recreation

The area is frequented by a variety of wildlife species. Whitetail and mule deer are found in the flats along the river. Coyotes, bobcats and other fur bearing mammels are seen occasionally in the general area. A variety of small mammels such as ground squirrels and mice are found on the site.

Ducks, geese, and a wide variety of aquatic birds use the Yellowstone River for feeding, especailly during the migration seasons.

Measures that will tend to mitigate the effect of visitor use on the wildlife are:

1. The project site will be located near the existing county road which in itself causes an impact on the wildlife.

2. Most of the project site, for the present time, will be left as is.

3. Until recently part of the tract had been used for agricultural production. Present plans call for letting this area return to it's natural state which should actually improve wildlife habitat.

4. The project area will be fenced and barriers installed. This will not prohibit pedestrian travel, which has a fairly small impact on wildlife, but it will keep vehicular traffic, which has a much greater impact on wildlife, on graveled road surfaces.

Impacts on fish are expected to be minimal. During construction of the boat access there will be some unavoidable roiling of the water. This will be kept to a minimum by proper construction techniques. The increased pressure on the fish populations caused by this access site will be spread up and down the river and will be well within the ecological carrying capacity of the river.

The project will provide increased recreational opportunities for fishermen, floaters, and hunters. Other recreational opportunities exist here such as bird watching and picnicking but we expect the three activities listed above to be the most common uses of the site.

The site is well located on the river as a pickup point for floaters and fishermen coming from Big Timber or as a put-in point for floaters and fishermen going to Reed Point or Columbus.

Hunters are expected to use the site as a base for bird hunting in the fall of the year.

D. Air and Water Pollution

During construction there will be a temporary but unavoidable increase in dust and engine exhaust. The dust can be kept to a minimum by oiling or watering. In any event the impact is expected to be insignificant.

As visitor use increases auto pollution will unavoidabley increase. It is not expected that the auto emissions will ever reach a point where they become a problem.

During the constuction phase of this project there will be unavoidable roiling of water at the boat access site for several days. Proper construction techniques will keep this to a minimum and impacts are expected to be insignificant.

E. Wastes

Trash generated during construction will be disposed of, off site, by the contractor.

As visitor use increases litter will also increase. To minimize this impact a "Pack-in, Pack-out" policy will be enforced. Fish and Game personnel will periodically clean the site.

A sealed vault double latrine will be installed and pumped as often as necessary. Ground water levels will be taken into account when locating the latrine. The latrine will be located above the 100 year flood plain.

F. Social Problems

Since there are no close residences to the site we anticipate no direct conflicts.

Increased visitor use will probably cause a small increase in local business. It is not anticipated that this will be a problem.

V. Non-Rcoverable Resources

In a physical sense there are no non-recoverable resources in this project. All structures can be removed or buried and the land returned to it's original

contours and use. In a political sense, since federal funds will be used, the land is committed to recreational use and cannot be returned to its former use. Funds expended will be irretrievable.

VI. Basis for P.E.R. vs E.I.S.

In general the anticipated impacts of this project are considered to be minimal. Considering the limited scope of the project a complete Environmental Impact Statement is not justified.