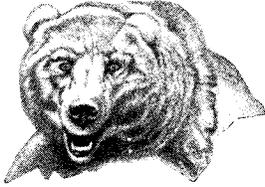


# STATE OF MONTANA



## DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Helena, MT 59601  
September 18, 1979



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

Dear Terry:

Enclosed is an addendum to FG-N-90 for James Kipp Recreation Area in Fergus County. The enclosed addendum covers only the construction of a concrete boat launching ramp at an existing state park.

We hope this document will satisfy the requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act. If you have any questions, please feel free to call on us.

Sincerely,



James A. Posewitz, Administrator  
Ecological Services Division

sd

cc: Water Quality Bureau  
Fergus County Commissioners  
Division of Architecture & Engineering  
Nels Thoreson

**RECEIVED**  
SEP 20 1979  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
COUNCIL

FG - N - 90

PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

for

JAMES KIPP RECREATION AREA

FERGUS COUNTY, MONTANA

PARKS DIVISION

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

January, 1978

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## I DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed project involves the construction of a concrete boat launching ramp. The ramp will be 12' wide and approximately 150 feet long. The construction will take place during the fall of 1980.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT.

### A. Description of the Area

#### 1. Region

Fergus County is located in the central part of the State of Montana and is bordered by the eight other Montana counties of Chouteau, Blaine and Phillips which border the north portion along the Missouri River, Petroleum County to the east, Musselshell, Golden Valley and Wheatland Counties to the south and Judith Basin County to the west. The total area of 4,253 square miles makes this county the ninth largest in the state. Of the total area, only nine square miles represent water surface area. The Missouri River along the northern border and several small reservoirs account for the majority of this water surface.

Fergus County is characterized by land that changes from rugged mountains and foothills in the south and central portions of the county to plains that gradually descend to meet the Missouri River on the extreme northern border. Elevations vary from the 8,730 foot Greathouse Peak in the Big Snowy Mountains on the southern edge of

the county to a low of near 2,500 feet where the Missouri River exits the county in the northeastern corner. Although Lewistown is the largest populated city in the county, the bulk of the remaining people is generally distributed along an east west line between the two ranges of the Judith and Big Snowy Mountains.

2. Project Area

The boat ramp will be located 1000' west of the Fred Robinson Bridge on the south bank of the Missouri River. (See site plan).

B. Physical Environment

i. Natural Resources

Fergus County is an agricultural county; although some mining activities do exist on a limited scale. In 1967, minerals produced in order of economic importance to the county's economy were gypsum, sand and gravel, clays and silver. The gypsum was mined near Heath from the Shoemaker Mine by the United States Gypsum Company and was calcined and marketed as ground gypsum. Miscellaneous clay and shale for making heavy clay products was dug by the Lewistown Brick and Tile Company near Lewistown.

The rolling foothills and plain areas of the middle and northern region in Fergus County give way to open range country in the rest of the county. These areas are used for grazing. The total cash receipts to the county in 1967 from livestock and livestock products was \$9,580,800. The receipts for the same year from crops, both irrigated and dry land, totaled \$7,671,400. The primary grain crop is wheat.

There are only 145 square miles of national forest lands within the county, and the federal forest service payments for grazing, land use, recreation, mineral rights and timber to the county was \$1,196.34 in 1969. All the forest lands contribute to the agricultural income as they are all used for grazing.

The recreational opportunities in Fergus County are widely acclaimed for the hunting opportunities of both mule and whitetail deer. Annually, hunters from states east of Montana converge into this area for trophy harvests from area game herds. The northern border offers recreation opportunities on the Missouri River where some of the last of the Wild Missouri still remains relatively as it was when white men first came to the area. The James Kipp Recreation Area is located on the northern county border and offers picnicking, camping, fishing and boating. During the spring, giant paddlefish, some weighing over 100 pounds, are caught by snaggers from the river in this park.

## 2. Soils

The soils of Fergus County are generally of the agriculture supporting type. In the higher elevations, the soils support forest and grass land while most lower elevations are conducive to hay fields and crop farming. A very limited amount of acreage is irrigated, and there are some erosion problems in the northern sections.

## 3. Surface Water

There are six basic drainage areas in Fergus County. In the southern portion of the county, Flat Willow Creek, rising in the Big Snowy Mountains, collects water as it flows eastward through the county into Petroleum County and the Musselshell River. Box Elder Creek begins in the Judith Mountains in the central county area and, flowing along the north edge of these mountains, also travels east into Petroleum County joining Flat Willow Creek just before entering the Musselshell River.

Dog Creek begins just west of Hilger in the central portion of the county and runs north into the Missouri River. The western portion of the county is drained by the Judith River and Wolf Creek. The two streams originate in Judith Basin County in the Little Belt Mountains and traverse into Fergus County through the western border. The Judith River enters near Ross Fork and travels due north to the Missouri River while Wolf Creek enters further west near Denton and travels northeast joining the Judith River before it enters the Missouri. Big Spring Creek rises in the foothills of the Big Snowy Mountains southeast of Lewistown and flows in a northwesterly direction through Lewistown to its junction with the Judith River near Danvers.

The Missouri River, from the mouth of Arrow Creek to approximately 18 miles east of the Fred Robinson Bridge, forms the northern boundary of Fergus County. The eastern 15 miles of this section of river are part of the Fort Peck Reservoir. The rest of this section remains virtually in its natural state.

#### 4. Ground Water

The Missouri River flood plain is a good source of ground water. The water bearing intervals are from less than 50 feet to more than 200 feet below the surface. Their thickness varies from 1 to 10' with occasional thickness of up to 60'. Most small wells experience little or no drawdown.

#### 5. Climate

Northern Fergus County is in an area having a climate generally described as Continental, with cold winters, warm summers and a marked variation in seasonal precipitation. During a normal year most of the annual precipitation falls during the May to September growing season, usually peaking in June. Annual precipitation averages approximately 12 inches per year. The frost free period averages 131 days per year. Snow fall is generally light, averaging only 30 inches per year. Stormy weather causes some problems. There is usually some crop damaging due to hail during the summer

and, on an occasion, a small tornado. Flash floods can occur after heavy thunder showers. Cold waves can be troublesome if one is not prepared. In the spring ice jams occasionally occur on the Missouri River , flooding the caretaker's site.

6. Geology

The underlying strata of the project area is an alluvium deposit. That is, an accumulation of fresh water silt, sand and clay, inter-mixed, of a fairly recent geological age and normally unconsolidated or only weakly cemented.

7. Visual Setting

James Kipp Recreation Area affords considerable recreational use, fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, etc. The Fred Robinson Bridge is a popular pickup point for float trips. The bottom lands, with stands of mature cottonwood and other native vegetation, offer a scenic contrast to the adjoining land and provide some climatic relief in summer and winter.

8. Air Quality

Fergus County is sparsely populated and generally lacking in heavy industry. No detailed studies of the area have been conducted; however, one can assume that the air quality of the area is generally good due to the low population.

9. Aquatic

The fishing resource consists of paddlefish, catfish, sauger, pike, walleye, drum and ling.

10. Wildlife

Ring-necked pheasants and both white-tailed and mule deer are abundant on the bottom land year-round. 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.

#### 11. Vegetation

Natural vegetation consists primarily of riparian species. The overstory is dominated by cottonwood trees of varying age classes. Buffalo-berry, willows, red-dogwood and Russian Olive are common tall shrubs. Snowberry and rose are the dominant low growing shrubs. Important grasses in the area include smooth brome, Kentucky bluegrass, Canada wild rye, quackgrass and cheatgrass brome. Marsh vegetation consists primarily of cattails, rushes and sedges. Croplands on the area consist of hay and grain fields. Alfalfa is the dominant hay species while oats and wheat are the grain.

Seed and berry crops are produced by snowberry, rose, buffalo-berry, Russian olive and various forb and grass species. Important browse plants include red-dogwood, willow, cottonwood and snowberry.

#### C. Human Environment

##### 1. Historic and Archeological Factors

The area along the Missouri River has great historic significance to the development of central Montana. From the earliest explorations until the coming of the railroads in 1881 it was the main route of travel to the region.

At the time of the white man's coming, the area was inhabited by the Blackfoot Tribe. They were hostile to the white man until 1831, when a trading agreement was reached.

Then traders and trappers, such as James Kipp, used dugouts, mackinaw or keel boats to move their furs and goods to and from the markets. Later steamboats carried the same traders and trappers plus gold seekers and military men to Fort Union, Fort Benton and

other landings along the river.

## 2. Transportation

Fergus County is served by two federal highways and a network of state and county secondary roads. U.S. Highway 87 enters the county from Billings through the southeast corner and, serving Lewistown, exits the western border, eventually leading to Great Falls. In addition to Lewistown, this highway serves the Grass Range, Glengarry and Moore communities. U.S. Highway 191 enters the county along the southwest corner. Traveling north, U.S. 191 serves Lewistown, where it crosses U.S. 87, and the communities of Moore, Hilger, Fergus and Roy, eventually leading to Malta in the northeast. State Highway 200 enters the county from the east border and joins U.S. 87 at Grass Range.

Rail transportation is provided by two railroads. The Burlington-Northern sends a spur line of the Billings to Great Falls main route into Fergus County from Moccasin in Judith Basin County to the west. This spur provides freight service to the Ross Fork, Hanover and Lewistown areas. A main line of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad enters the western border of the county and serves Straw, Moore, Glengarry and Lewistown. Branch lines of this railroad extend from Lewistown and terminate at Winifred and Roy. An east spur serves Heath, Forestgrove and Grass Range and eventually terminates at Winnett in Petroleum County. The freight transportation service provided by the railroads is of particular importance to the agriculture industry for transporting livestock and wheat to central marketing points.

Lewistown is the site of a commercial airport with a 5,600 foot runway which provides daily air services and connections to nation wide airlines. Winifred, Denton and Grass Range are sites of unpaved aircraft landing fields; no servicing facilities are available at

these small fields, however. There are also several private air fields scattered throughout the county.

### 3. Services

The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. serves a very large portion of the county including the communities of Buffalo and Straw to the south, Danvers, Winifred and Roy to the north, and the Grass Range and Forestgrove areas east of the Lewistown hub. The City of Lewistown is furnished power from the Montana Power Company which has three major switching and substations located there in addition to a large gas and electric distribution center.

Telephone service is provided to Fergus County by two telephone companies and one telephone cooperative. The Mountain States Telephone Company provides service to the immediate Lewistown area and west and south over the county to the Denton, Moore and Straw areas. The Mid River Telephone Company furnishes telephone service to the eastern third of the county including the Fergus, Roy and Grass Range areas. The Triangle Telephone Cooperative serves the northern one-third of the county comprising the Roy, Suffolk and Christina areas.

### 4. Socio-Economic Profile

Fergus County has a total population of 12,611 (1970 census). The largest economic activity is agriculture, followed by services and finance.

Lewistown is the nearest town of any size. As of 1970, the population was 6,437. Most of the predicted growth in the county will take place in Lewistown.

Unemployment is above the state average in Fergus County. Little industrial development is expected for the next ten years.

## 5. Recreation Use

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreational Plan indicates the current recreational use of James Kipp Recreation Area is moderate, the main limiting factor being the distance from major population centers. The park itself is convenient to major highways. Most use is by state residents, but not necessarily residents of Fergus or Phillips County. Much of the use is by residents of Yellowstone and Cascade Counties. One day trips were indicated to be the major type of use with two people being the predominant number per group.

Resting and relaxing, camping, picnicking, fishing and walking for pleasure were the five most popular activities for the park user.

## 6. Land Ownership and Use

There are three main types of land ownership in Fergus County. The largest segment, eighty percent, is privately owned while nineteen percent is owned by the federal government. The federal lands include two large areas, the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge in the northern part of the county along the Missouri River and the Lewis and Clark National Forest areas of the Big Snowy and Little Snowy Mountains. The remaining twenty-six square miles of land is owned by the State of Montana.

Land use in the county is reflected by the general physical characteristics of the area. Over five-sixths of the land is utilized solely for agricultural purposes. Although fifteen percent may be considered forested, all of the forest land is grazed and could be classified in both areas. Of the more than 400,000 acres of forest land, only 92,704 acres are contained within Lewis and Clark National Forest boundaries. The remaining nine square miles, or one percent

of the county's area consists of water surface. Land used for town sites, transportation routes, and similar purposes is included in the above categories.

### III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED ACTION

#### A. Biological Impacts

##### 1. Vegetation

Only a small amount of grass will be disturbed as a result of construction to accomplish the proposed action.

##### 2. Wildlife

There will be a temporary minor impact on wildlife. However, since this project is situated in an established, well-used state park, the effect will be minimal.

#### B. Physical Impacts

##### 1. Air

Exhaust fumes and dust will result during the construction period.

##### 2. Noise

Increased noise levels will result during the construction period.

##### 3. Landscape Alteration

The landscape will be temporarily disrupted by the construction activities.

##### 4. Water

Heavy rains during the construction phase could possibly cause temporary silt problems.

No appreciable effect is expected.

##### 5. Solid Waste

The amount of solid waste is expected to increase only slightly.

6. Soil

Some impact is expected during the construction period; however, it is not expected to be significant.

7. Safety

Boat launching will be safer after the ramp's construction.

8. Aesthetics

The ramp will be designed to blend into the river bank to minimize the visual impacts.

9. Socio-Economic Impacts

The preservation and enhancement of outdoor recreation activities would be the most significant beneficial impact.

Economic impacts are expected to be minimal.

10. Historic and Archeological

The project site is not located at or near a known historic or archeological site. Therefore, there will be no significant impact to area resources.

11. Rare and Endangered Species

Impact will not be significant since the site is located in an established state park and will not disrupt a natural environment.

C. Planned Measures to Minimize Adverse Environmental Impacts

1. Air

Dust pollution will be reduced by sprinkling.

2. Excavation

During construction, equipment will be confined to road surfaces; no traffic will be allowed outside the construction limits in order that other landforms and vegetation will be left unmarred. Turning around on areas outside of construction areas will not be tolerated. Topsoil will be stockpiled before construction and will be replaced on cuts and fills.

4. Wildlife

No impacts.

5. Vegetation

All areas disturbed as the result of construction methods used will be fertilized and seeded with indigenous grasses. Barriers will

be placed at critical areas to prevent vehicular traffic from disrupting vegetation. Barriers to be used will consist of native landscape stones, wooden posts or logs.

6. Noise

Noise levels will be somewhat reduced by keeping vehicle speeds to a minimum.

7. Landscape Alteration

The nature of this particular site dictates the pattern of development rather closely; however, design measures will assure protection of views as well as the protection of the setting.

8. Soils

As use increases, various degrees of vegetation trampling will occur, resulting in compaction of soil and mechanical injuries to trees. Controlled use patterns will help keep use within ecological carrying capacities.

D. Favorable Environmental Effects

1. Aesthetics

The maintenance of a pleasing landscape will be maximized remembering that any development proposal will cause change; however, landscape modifications will result in a more harmonious relationship between man-made features and the natural conditions of the area.

E. Adverse Environmental Effects Which Cannot Be Avoided

1. Air

Air quality will deteriorate to a slight degree during periods of construction due to mechanical equipment operations.

3. Soil

Regardless of controls exercised, some damage to soils will occur.

Soil will also be disturbed during periods of construction activity.

4. Aesthetics

Any proposed change will alter the natural appearance of the area; however, landscape management principles will be applied to lessen the impact on the area.

5. Noise

Noise impact will derive primarily from construction equipment during the development period.

6. Vegetation

Vegetation will be disturbed during periods of construction.

F. Relationship Between Local Short-Term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

Recreation use of James Kipp Recreational Area will slowly increase whether the project is undertaken or not.

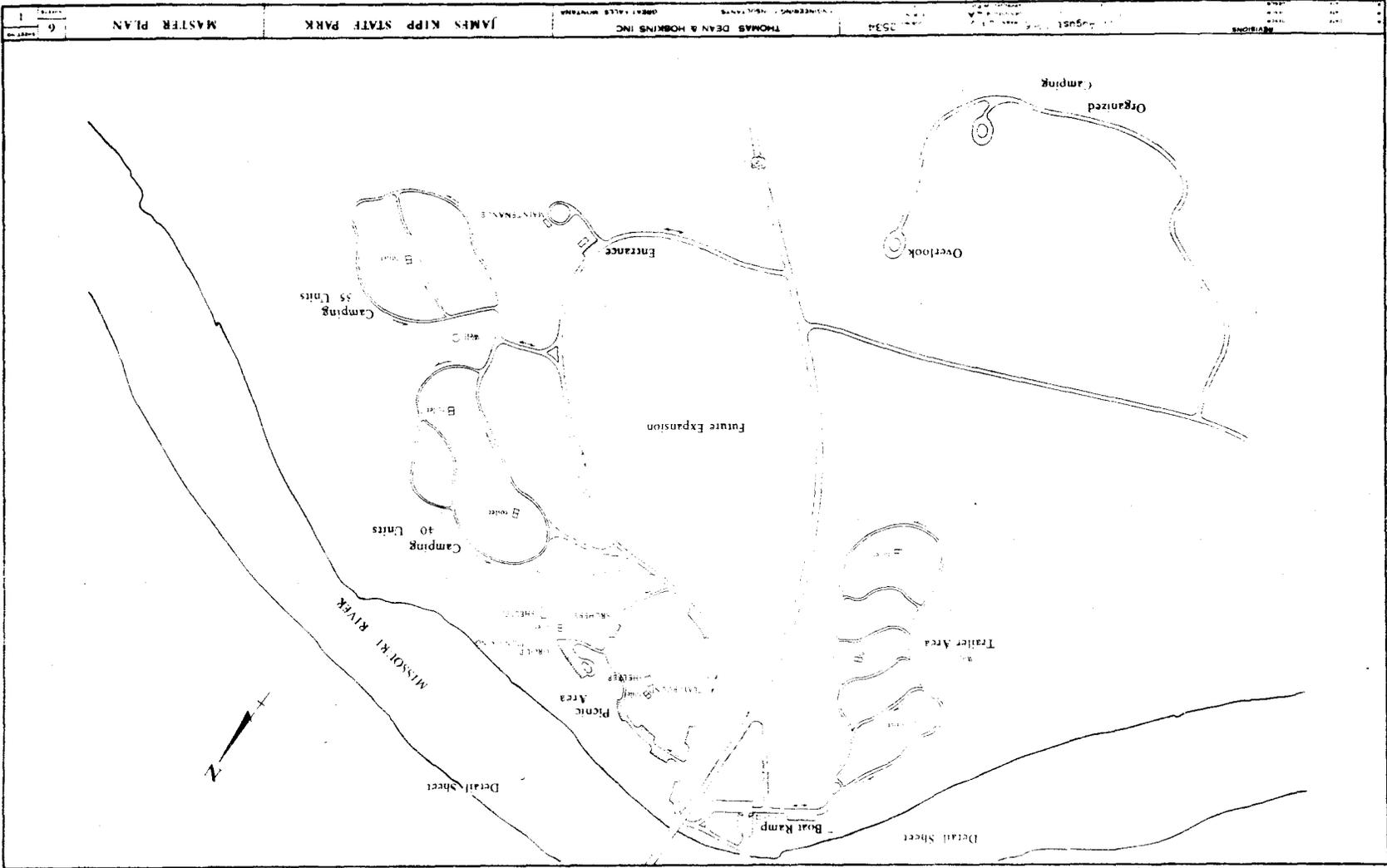
1. Under a no-action program, use will increase in direct relationship to population, leisure time and word of mouth advertising. A no-action plan will result in uncontrolled use of the existing facilities.

2. If the project is undertaken, use will not significantly increase, but better care will be provided for the existing facilities.

Short-term use, therefore, does not conflict with long-term use relative to recreation.

G. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

There are no commitment of resources involved in this improvement which would be considered irreversible or irretrievable of any significance. Those portions of the recreation area proposed for improvement will result in conditions as good as, or better than existing. There will be no change in the resource as a result of the proposed construction. It is always possible to remove, fill in, cover over, or otherwise destroy the boat ramp so that the land may be reverted to its former condition. Even though it is technically feasible to convert, however, long-term commitments make it irretrievable in a political sense.



REVISIONS DATE DRAWN BY CHECKED BY APPROVED BY August 1954 TDSM	THOMAS DEAN & HOBKINS INC ENGINEERS & ARCHITECTS 10001 KINGS HIGHWAY JAMES KIPP STATE PARK	MASTER PLAN SHEET NO. 6 OF 1
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