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MEPA/NEPA/HB495
checklist

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MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of Proposed State Action** State Park County Access Road Improvement Project

2. **Agency Authority for the Proposed Action** Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Beaverhead County.

3. **Name of Project** Bannack State Park County Access and Entrance Road Improvement Project

4. **Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)**

   Agency

5. **If Applicable:**

   Estimated Construction/Commencement Date Fall 1994
   Estimated Completion Date Fall 1995
   Current Status of Project Design (% complete) 40%

6. **Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)**

   3.6 miles of Beaverhead County Road #1-014 & 1-014.1, Sections 24, 25 and 36, T7S, R12W, and Section 1, T8S, R12W, P.M.M.

7. **Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

   (a) Developed:
   residential ..... __ acres
   industrial ..... __ acres

   (b) Open Space/Woodlands/
   Recreation ..... .40 acres

   (c) Wetlands/Riparian
   Areas ..... .10 acres

   (d) Floodplain ..... __ acres

   (e) Productive:
   irrigated cropland ..... __ acres
   dry cropland ..... __ acres
   forestry ..... __ acres
   rangeland ..... 3.0 acres
   other ..... __ acres

8. **Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.**

   Topographic map attached (Page 19).

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9. **Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.**

The proposed action is to improve approximately 3.6 miles of the existing county and park roads which provide access to Bannack State Park, 22 miles southwest of Dillon, Montana. The action is intended to widen and pave 3 miles of Beaverhead County Road (Road No. 1-014 and 1-014.1) from Highway 278 to the Bannack State Park boundary, and make drainage improvements and resurface with gravel, .6 miles of Bannack State Park entrance road and main parking lot within the state park. Funding for the project is to be provided by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Beaverhead County would administer the project and construct or contract for construction, the above described work to bring the road to county road standards. The county would, in addition, maintain the road for a minimum of 25 years after completion of work.

The existing county road was constructed in the mid 1960's. The surface is a dirt/gravel mix and maintenance is infrequent. The road surface is narrow (19 to 20 feet) and the roadway was never designed to carry the type and volume of traffic now utilizing the road. In 1993, Beaverhead County rerouted a portion of the county road around the Shaffner Ranch. This is the only residence in close proximity to the county road. Within Bannack State Park, the park managers residence is along the road near the main parking lot. The county road traverses sagebrush flats from Highway 278 to the park entrance at an approximate elevation of 5800 to 6000 feet. The road crosses Taylor Creek 2 miles south of the Highway 278 intersection. (See topographic map on page 19).

The purpose of the project is to improve access for visitors to Bannack State Park, one of Montana's premier historic sites. The existing road was not designed for current traffic levels and frequent complaints are received concerning the condition of the road. The proposed project would provide a safer, all season/all vehicle road to the park. Improvement of the surfacing would enhance the county's ability to consistently maintain the road.

The general intent and benefits of the proposal is to upgrade traffic safety, increase capacity, improve driving experience and reduce maintenance costs to the county.

10. **Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

Four alternatives are being considered for the proposed action:

A. Leave the road in it's current condition (No Action Alternative).
Under this alternative, the county and park roads would be left in their current condition. The existing roadway is 19' to 22' wide which is substantially under the county standard of 26'. Several of the fill sections along the roadway appear to be higher than is necessary. The lack of roadway shoulders and high fill sections are safety hazards. The vertical alignment between the Bannack Road and FAS 278 is approximately 60 degrees (90 degrees is generally the most desirable angle). Existing

drainage culverts are in poor condition. The park entrance road lacks culverts in several locations where runoff periodically flows across the roadway surface. Drainage problems also plaque the park entrance road and parking area as standing pools of water are common on roadway surfaces. The existing road surfacing would continue to be difficult to maintain. Complaints about the condition and safety of the road would continue. The current road condition would continue to limit the types of vehicles that could travel to Bannack State Park.

B. Resurface (with gravel) The Existing Roadway.
Implementation of this alternative would be the least costly of the improvement alternatives. While this alternative would improve the ride and maintainability of the surface, inherent design and safety flaws would remain. This alternative would have the least impact of the improvement alternatives on various environmental and resource factors. Complaints about the roadway surface would likely diminish, but the suitability for larger motorhomes and recreational vehicles would continue to be low.

C. Widen and Resurface (with gravel) Roadway.
Under this alternative, the county roadway would be widened and the surface would be improved with gravel. The existing county roadway would be widened to 24' or 26', depending on costs. Widening to 26' is most desirable. Implementation of this alternative would correct all design and safety flaws identified in Alternative A, including roadway width, shoulders, fill slope height, vertical alignment, vertical sight distances, intersection alignments, culverts and drainage, and surfacing. The park entrance road and parking area would remain the same width under this alternative, but would be improved with culverts, drainage features, road base improvement and resurfacing with gravel. The costs of this alternative would be greatly above Alternative B and slightly below Alternative D. Roadway safety would be greatly enhanced but vehicles would be expected to travel at a higher rate of speed. Environmental disturbance associated with the roadway widening would be higher under this alternative as compared to Alternative B.. Complaints about the road surfacing and suitability for larger recreational vehicles would diminish further. County road maintenance needs would remain high. High levels of dust would continue to be a problem under this alternative.

D. Widen Roadway and Pave Surface.
This alternative is the proposed action and the preferred alternative. Implementation of this alternative would bring the county road to a design standard equivalent to a Montana Department of Transportation secondary highway, with a 26' wide paved surface (see page 24 for Typical Section No. 1). All design and safety improvements described under Alternative C would be implemented with the exception that the road surface would be pavement. The Bannack State Park entrance road and parking area would be improved to the standard described under Alternative C and would remain a gravel road.

The cost of this alternative would be the greatest of the four alternatives but only slightly above Alternative C. Safety factors would be highest under this alternative but the greatest vehicle speeds would be expected on a pavement surface. Environmental disturbance would be as high, or slightly higher, than Alternative C and would result primarily from the roadway widening. Dust would be at minimal levels under this alternative. A pavement surface with lane widths identical to a secondary highway

would allow all types of vehicles a smooth, comfortable drive to Bannack State Park. The paved county road with the transition to an improved gravel park entrance road would allow visitors to mentally leave the modern world behind and enter the historic townsite. This alternative would reduce short term maintenance costs to Beaverhead County substantially.

Table 1. Summary of impacts on the physical and human environment of the Bannack State Park Road Improvement Project. (0 = no impact, + = slight positive impact, ++ = moderate, positive impact, +++ = potentially significant positive impact, - = slightly negative impact, -- = moderate negative impact, --- = potentially significant negative impact).

	Alternative A No Action	Alternative B Resurface With Gravel Existing	Alternative C Widen and Resurface With Gravel	Alternative D Widen and Pave
Soils	0	0	-	-
Air Quality	--	-	-	+++
Water Quality	0	0	0	+
Vegetation	-	0	-	-
Fish/Wildlife	0	0	0	0
Traffic Hazards	---	--	+	+++
Road Maintenance	Costs --- Maintainability ---	Costs --- Maintainability --	Costs -- Maintainability -	Costs - + Maintainability - +++
Project Cost	0	-	--	---
Recreation/ Aesthetics	--	-	+	+++

11. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
Beaverhead Conservation District	310 (Stream Preservation Permit)	
Beaverhead County	Flood Plain Permit	
Beaverhead County	Sign Placement	
Beaverhead County	Approach	
Beaverhead County	Weed Control Plan	
MT Historical Society, State, Historical Preservation Office	SHPO Consultation	

Soil Conservation Service	Wetlands Permit and Prime Lands Clearance
MT Dept. of Health and Environmental Science	Turbidity and Storm Water Runoff Permits
MT Dept. of State Lands	Open Mine Permit

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
MT Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks	$1.04 M

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
Beaverhead County	Securing right of way and project administration
MDFWP	Environmental analysis and compliance
USDI, Bureau of Land Management	Archaeological investigation

12. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:

U.S.D.I., Bureau of Land Management
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Montana Department of Transportation
Montana Department of State Lands
Montana Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Department of Commerce, Travel Promotion Bureau
Beaverhead County Commissioners and Road Department
Montana Natural Heritage Program

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
	Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant		
▶ a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X		Yes	See 1a. below
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
▶ c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1a. The project will result in some soil instability if either of the road widening Alternatives (C or D) are selected. The instability would result from new cut and fill slopes created during the widening process and wind and/or water erosional forces. The impact will be mitigated by minimizing the height of fill slopes and steepness of cut slopes. Erosion control will be enhanced by seeding bare slopes with native grass mixtures.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. AIR Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
	Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant		
▶ a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			X		Yes	See 2a. below
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ◆ For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		X				
f. Other N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2a. The current road surface is dirt/gravel and a considerable amount of dust is generated by vehicles traveling the road when it is dry. None of the proposed alternatives will likely increase dust levels (air pollution), but Alternative D would greatly reduce dusty conditions. Elevated levels of dust can be expected during the construction phase under all alternatives. Dust created during the construction phase can be mitigated by utilizing water trucks to moisten the road surface.

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. WATER Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
▶ a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X		Yes	See 3a. below
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		Yes	See 3b. below
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
◆◆For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		X				
m. ◆For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3a. Selection of Alternative C could result in reduced water quality as the redesigned and crowned road surface more effectively sheds precipitation runoff. Under this alternative water running off the gravel surface would be turbid and could muddy streams in the vicinity (Taylor Creek and Grasshopper Creek). This problem could also occur, but a lesser extent under Alternatives A and B. These effects can be mitigated through drainage design and seeding all bare slopes with grass.

3b. Selection of Alternatives C and D will result in increased runoff from the road surface. The road will be designed, under these alternatives, so water effectively runs off the road surface for safety considerations. Again, these effects can be mitigated with the same techniques described in 3a.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
e. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundence of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X			See 4a. below
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				See 4c. below
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	See 4e. below
f. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?			X			See 4f. below
g. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondery Effects on Lend Resources (Attech additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. Selection of Alternative C and D, which would widen the road, will require the removal of existing vegetation (Sagebrush, low shrubs and grasses) along the entire roadway for up to 40 feet from the existing road. Alternatives A and B would have little or no effect on vegetation adjacent to the existing road.

4c. No sensitive plant species were found in the project area. Additional survey work at the Taylor Creek area will be conducted later in the summer when sedges can be reliably identified in a mature fruiting stage. See attached letter from Jim Vanderhorst, Natural Heritage Program, concerning impacts to sensitive plant species, pages 26 and 27.

4e. Road construction activities that expose mineral soil can facilitate the spread of noxious weeds. Alternatives B, C and D will all like create conditions conducive to the spread of weeds. Disturbed areas will be required to be reseeded with native grass species to reduce the potential for noxious weed establishment and spread. In addition, ongoing county weed control efforts will be utilized to prevent weed growth along the roadway.

4f. Alternatives B, C and D will affect wetlands in the vicinity where Taylor Creek crosses the county road. The culvert, through which Taylor Creek passes under the road, would be replaced under all three alternatives. Alternatives C and D, in addition, would impact the wetlands more significantly due to the roadway widening. Up to 40 feet from the existing roadway would be filled to accommodate the widened roadway. The total impact to the Taylor Creek wetland would be less than an acre. (See page 25 - for schematic of planned work in the Taylor Creek crossing vicinity).

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

► Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

▸ 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ¤				Can Impact Be Mitigated ¤	Comment Index
	Unknown ¤	None	Minor ¤	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				See 5f. below
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. ◆◆ For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		X				
i. ◆ For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				
j. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

5f. The proposed project will have no impact to unique, rare, threatened or endangered wildlife species. See attached memo from Dennis Flath, FWP Nongame Biologist, concerning impacts to sensitive wildlife species, page 28.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ¤				Can Impact Be Mitigated ¤	Comment Index
	Unknown ¤	None	Minor ¤	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

¤ Include a nerretive explenetion under Pert III describing the scope end level of impect. If the impect is unknown, explein why the unknown impact has not or can not be evalueted.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

◆ Determine whether the described impact mey result end respond on the checklist. Describe eny minor or potentielly significant impects.

◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narretive end include documentetion if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interferance with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or rediation) in the event of an accidant or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affact an existing emergancy response or emargancy avacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ♦For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impa has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT○				Can Impact Be Mitigated○	Comment Index
	Unknown○	None	Minor○	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an aree?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of e community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?			X			See 9c. below
d. Changes in industrial or commercial ectivity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X			See 9e. below
f. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative end Secondery Effects on Land Resources (Attech additionel pages of nerrative if needed):

9c. Construction Alternatives (B, C & D) would positively alter both employment and income distribution for a temporary period of time as county employees and contractors perform road improvement activities. Project funding would vary with the alternative selected but could exceed $1 million dollars for alternative D. Long range income distribution and employment could also be positively stimulated by this project (see page 29 for Tourism Report).

9e. Patterns of movement would likely increase as more people visit the state park due to improved roadway conditions.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT○				Can Impact Be Mitigated○	Comment Index
	Unknown○	None	Minor○	Potentielly Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in e need for new or altered governmentel services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational fecilities, roeds or other public meintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid weste disposel, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: road maintenence			X			See 10a. next page
b. Will the proposed ection heve an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed ection result in e need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gee, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
▶ e. Define projected revenue sources						See 10e. Next Page
▶ f. Define projected maintenance costs.						See 10f. Next Page
g. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondery Effects on Lend Resources (Attech additionel pages of narrative if needed):

○ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10a. If road improvements are undertaken, Beaverhead County road maintenance services will be altered. The immediate effect of road improvements will be a lessening of maintenance needs. Over time, road maintenance will need to be adjusted to the type of surfacing (gravel or paved) as compared to the existing dirt surface.

10e. The revenue source for this project is the highway fuel tax.

10f. Maintenance costs will be the responsibility of Beaverhead County by agreement with the Fish, Wildlife and Parks for a minimum of twenty-five years. Projected annual maintenance costs are as follows:

Alternative A (existing roadway and surface)	-	$ 7,200	per year
Alternative B (resurface with gravel existing roadway)	-	$ 4,800	per year
Alternative C (widen roadway and resurface with gravel)	-	$ 4,800	per year
Alternative D (widen roadway and pave surface)	-	$ 1,600	per year

This information was provided by J. David Stahly, P.E., of Stahly Engineering and Associates.

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

► Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

▸ 11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthatic character of e community or neighborhood?		X				
▸c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)				X		See 11c. below
d. ♦For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondery Effects on Land Resources (Attech additionel pages of narrative if needed):

11c. Both the quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities will be positively affected by the proposed actions. See attached Tourism Report on page 29.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant		
▸a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)		X				See 12d. below
e. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additionel pages of narretive if needed):

12d. This project will not affect historic or cultural resources. See attached State Historic Preservation Office correspondence and letter of clearance, pages 30 to 34.

* Include a narrativa explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, axplain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may rasult and raspond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ♦For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13a)		X				
g. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.						See 13g. below

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

13g. Permits required for roadway construction alternatives (B, C & D):

A. Stream Preservation Permit
B. Flood Plain Permit
C. Sign Erection Permit
D. Road Approach Permit
E. County Weed Board Permit
F. State Historic Preservation Office Consultation
G. Wetlands Permit
H. Health Department Turbidity Permit
I. Storm Runoff Permit
J. Open Mine Permit (for roadway gravel sources)

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

Specific mitigation measures are listed in the checklist under the applicable item.

3. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, it is determined that an EIS is not required. The EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action because only minor impacts are expected to the natural and human environment.

4. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The Beaverhead County Commissioners conducted a public hearing on October 4, 1993, to discuss plans to improve the three-mile or county road leading to Bannack State Park (see attached news release, pages 35 and 36). Four Beaverhead County residents spoke in favor of paving the road. No one spoke in opposition (see attached news articles from Montana Standard and Dillon Tribune newspaper's, pages 37 to 39). In addition to this hearing, legal notices and news releases will be distributed to the Dillon Tribune, Montana Standard and Helena Independent Record newspapers advertising the availability of this environmental assessment and the dates of the 30 day comment period.

5. Duration of comment period if any:

Comments on the Bannack/Beaverhead County Road Improvement Project will be accepted until 5 p.m., August 2, 1994.

6. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

Jerry Walker
Regional Park Manager
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
1400 So. 19th
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 994-4042

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

HB 495 Narrative Discussion

LONG RANGE PLANNING:

The State Park Futures Committee cited the extensive state park interior and county connecting road needs in their 1990 report to Governor Stephens. The committee recommended utilization of highway fuel tax dollars to fund these road improvements.

The improvement of the county road to Bannack State Park, and park interior road and parking area conforms to FWP goals articulated in the department's long range planning process initiated in 1991. Specifically this project relates to Goal B, provide increased opportunities, for public enjoyment of fish, wildlife and parks resources while maintaining our commitment to improve landowner - sportspersons - department relations, and Goal C, achieve a quality, financially sound State Park system.

The Bannack State Park Management Plan draft discusses the need for an adequate transportation system leading to and within the park. The concept of transporting visitors back in time by transisting their arrival at the park from interstate highway, paved secondary roads to graveled park road is discussed in the management plan and enhanced by this project.

MODIFICATIONS AS THEY RELATE TO THE ENTIRE STATE PARK SYSTEM:

This project was considered as part of a comprehensive effort to improve state park system interior roads and county connecting roads leading to state parks.

PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST
HB 495

Date May 31, 1994 Person Reviewing Jerry Walker

Project Location: Beaverhead County Road leading to Bannack State Park

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK: Improve Beaverhead County Road leading to Bannack State Park and improve park entrance road and main parking lot.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under HB 495 rules. (Please check ✓ all that apply and comment as necessary.) Capital Construction projects - Prepared by D & C; Force Account Projects - Prepared by Region.

[ ] A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments:

[ ] B. New building construction (buildings < 100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments:

[X] C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?

Comments: Drainage and parking lot improvements to interior park road.

[ ] D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?

Comments:

[ ] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?

Comments:

[ ] F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?

Comments:_____

_____

[X] G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?

Comments: Roadway improvements may include widening which for the purposes of this EA are considered new construction.

[ ] H. Any new above ground utility lines?

Comments:_____

_____

[ ] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?

Comments:_____

_____

[ ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects.

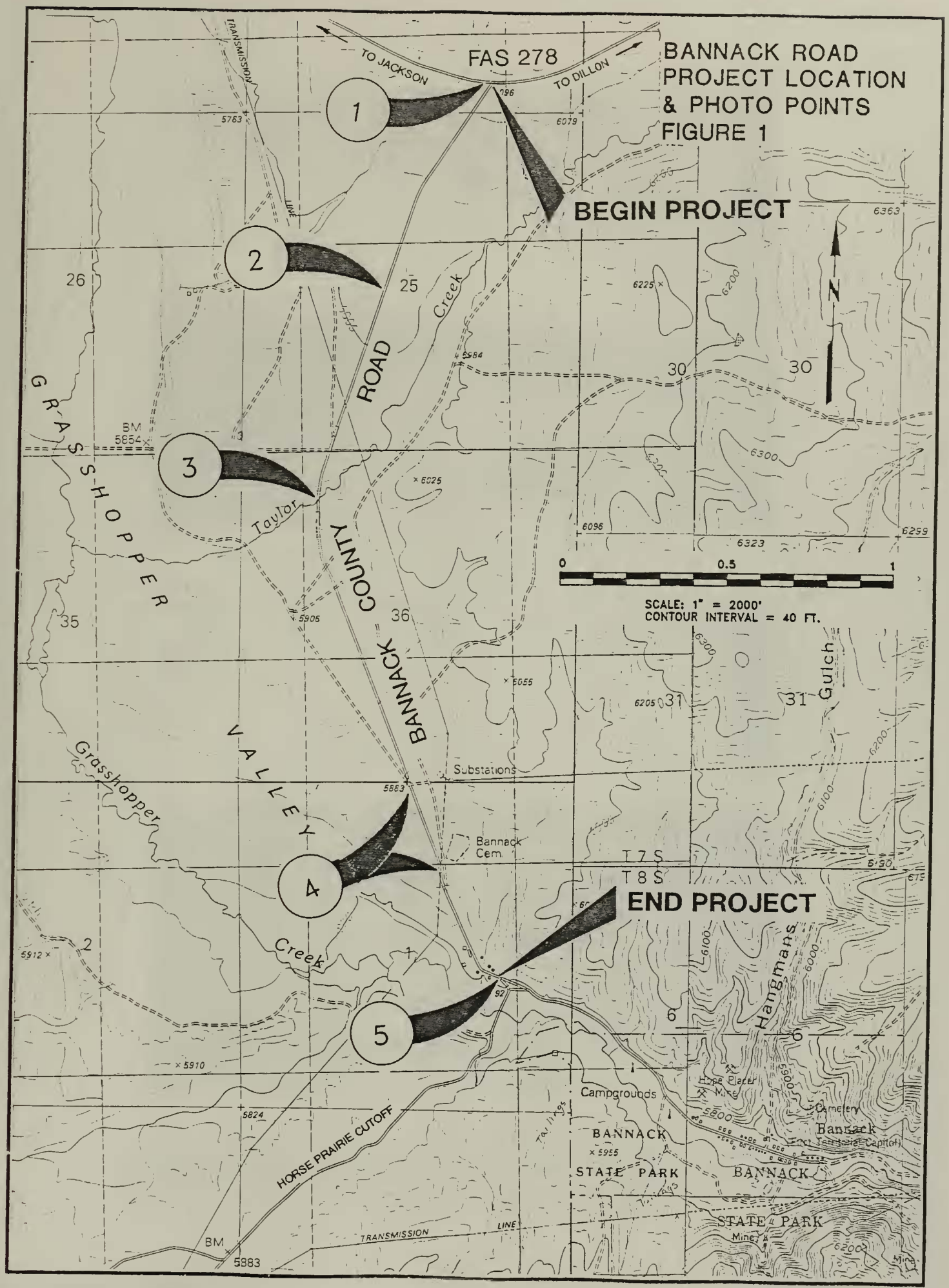
Comments:_____

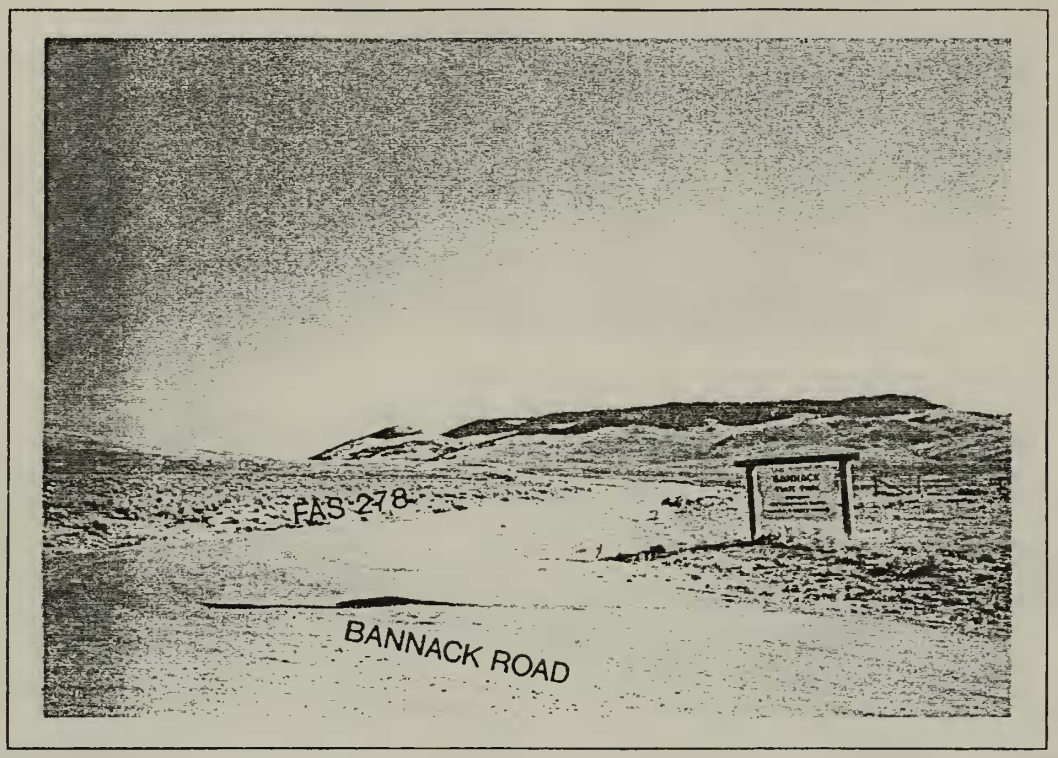
_____

IF ANY OF THE ABOVE ARE CHECKED, HB 495 RULES APPLY TO THIS PROPOSED WORK AND SHOULD BE DOCUMENTED ON THE MEPA/HP495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MPEA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

cc: Park Managers, Region 1, 2, 4, 5 & 7
Kevin Redmond
Mary Ellen McDonald
Project File

3/92


BANNACK ROAD
PROJECT LOCATION
& PHOTO POINTS
FIGURE 1
FAS 278
TO JACKSON
TO DILLON
BEGIN PROJECT
END PROJECT
1
2
3
4
5
N
0
0.5
1
SCALE: 1" = 2000'
CONTOUR INTERVAL = 40 FT.
GRASSHOPPER
VALLEY
BANNACK COUNTY ROAD
Taylor
Creek
Grasshopper
Creek
Substations
Bannack Cem.
T 7 S
T 8 S
Gulch
Hangmans
Campgrounds
BANNACK
STATE PARK
Hope Placer Mine
Cemetery
Bannack
(Fort Territorial Capitol)
HORSE PRAIRIE CUTOFF
TRANSMISSION LINE
BM 5854
BM 5883
26
25
30
35
36
31
2
6



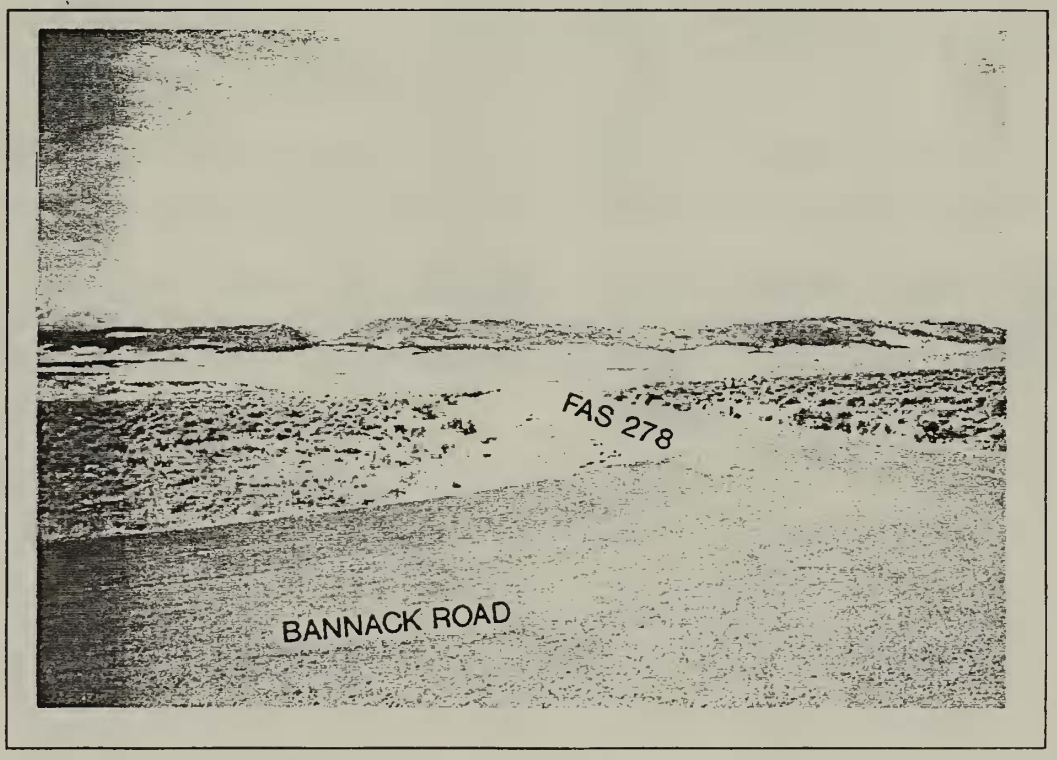


PHOTO POINT 1: Mile Post 0 - Beginning of project (north). Highway FAS 278 at junction with Bannack County Road: looking east toward Dillon (Top); Looking west toward Jackson (Bottom). Note: Bannack Road approaches the highway at the outside of a curve and at an oblique angle. Safety considerations of site distance, turning radii for recreational vehicles, and approach geometry are important.

PHOTO POINT 2: Mile Post 0.6 - Bannack Road looking south Cattle Guard, fencing, telephone and power utilities will be considered in the design

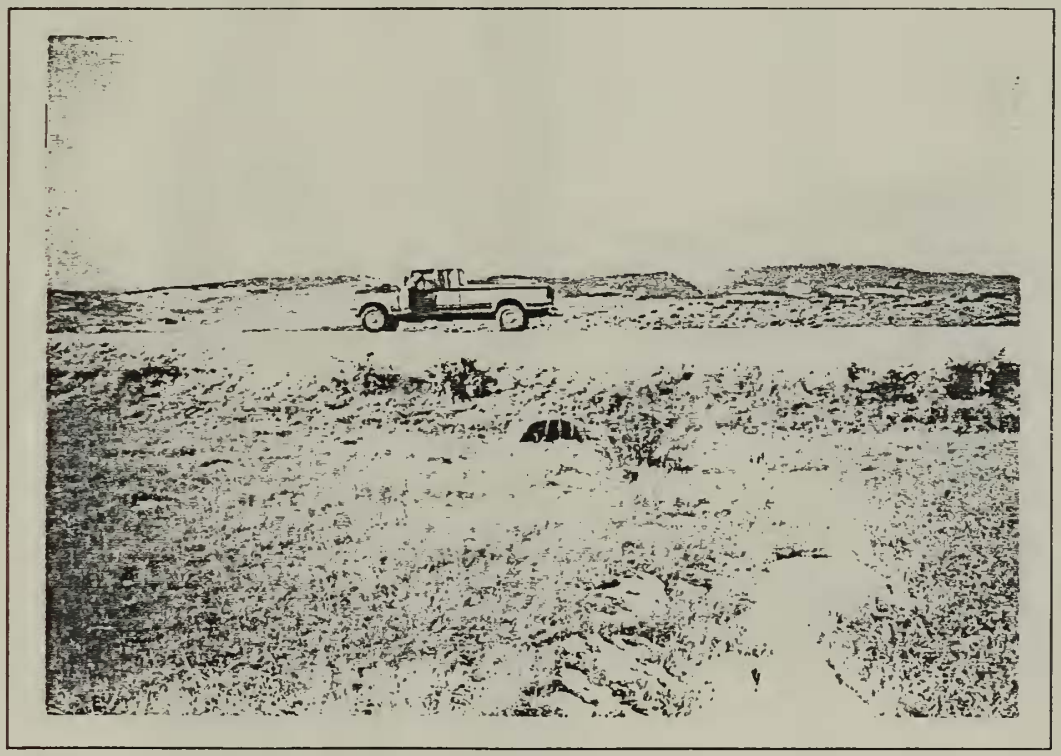


PHOTO POINT 3: Mile Post 1.4 - Taylor Creek crossing looking west downstream (Note: Existing corrugated metal pipe culvert). Cross drainage will be evaluated for adequate sizing and condition to minimize future maintenance. Possible wetlands conditions will be assessed.

PHOTO POINT 4: Mile Post 2.3 - Power substation Approach and Bannack Road, looking south (Top); Mile Post 2.6 - Cemetery Approach looking southwest (Bottom). These and other approaches to Bannack County Road will be designed and signed to meet safety standards of sight distance, approach geometry and grade adjustment. Note power line crossings.

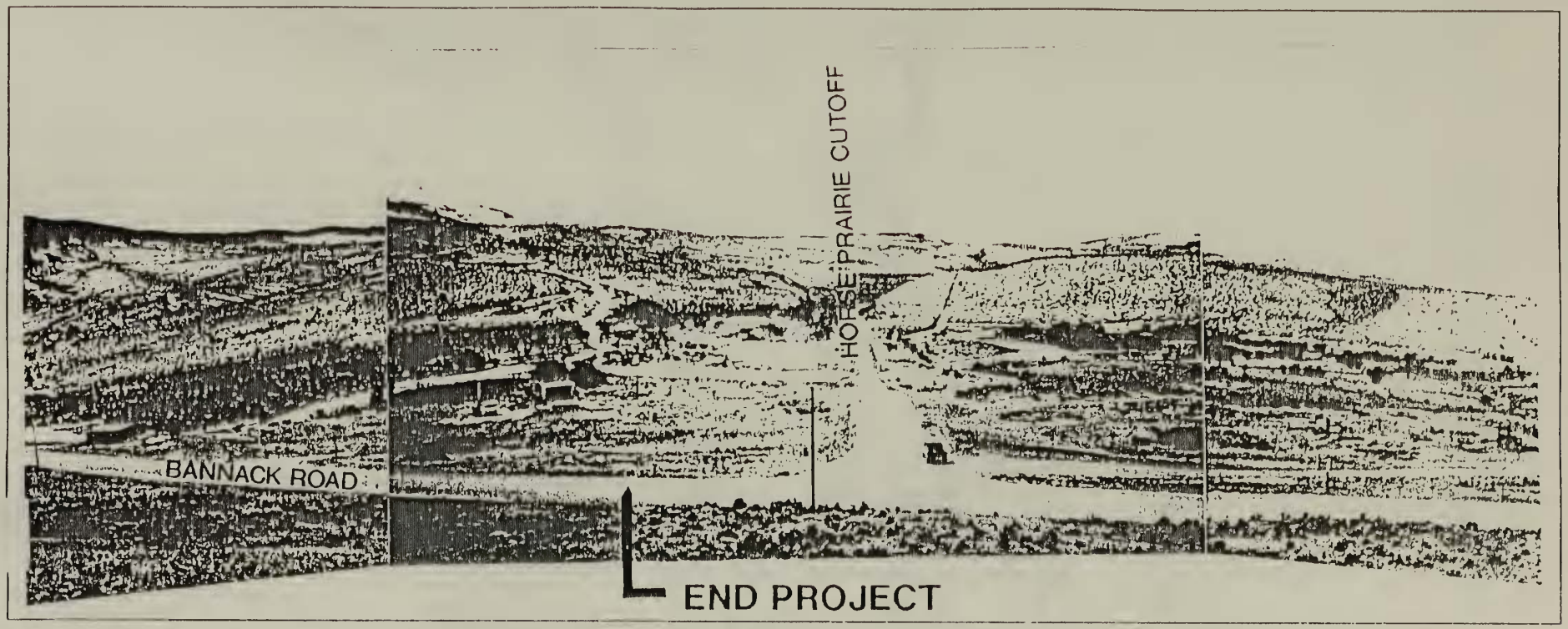
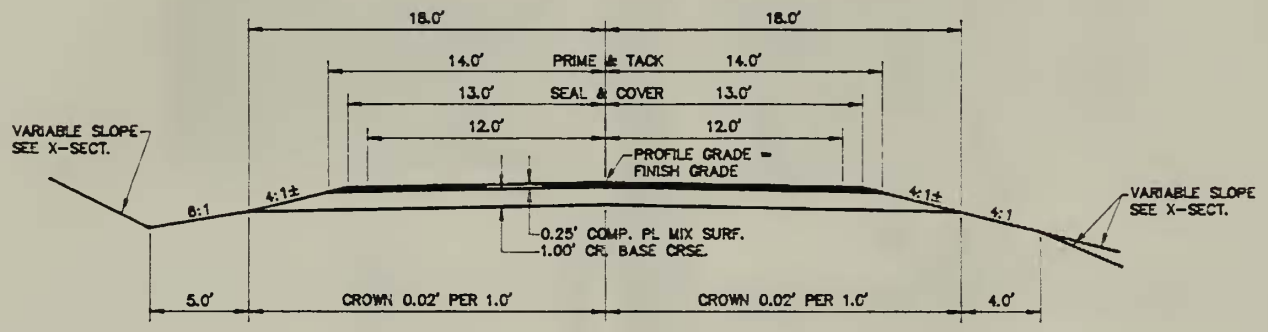


PHOTO POINT 5: Mile Post 3. End of Project (south) - Junction of Bannack Road with Horse Prairie Cutoff looking southwest. This junction will need to accomodate traffic to both the continuation of the Bannack Road and to the Horse Prairie cutoff. The local approach road entering at the junction creates a traffic hazard and needs to be relocated.

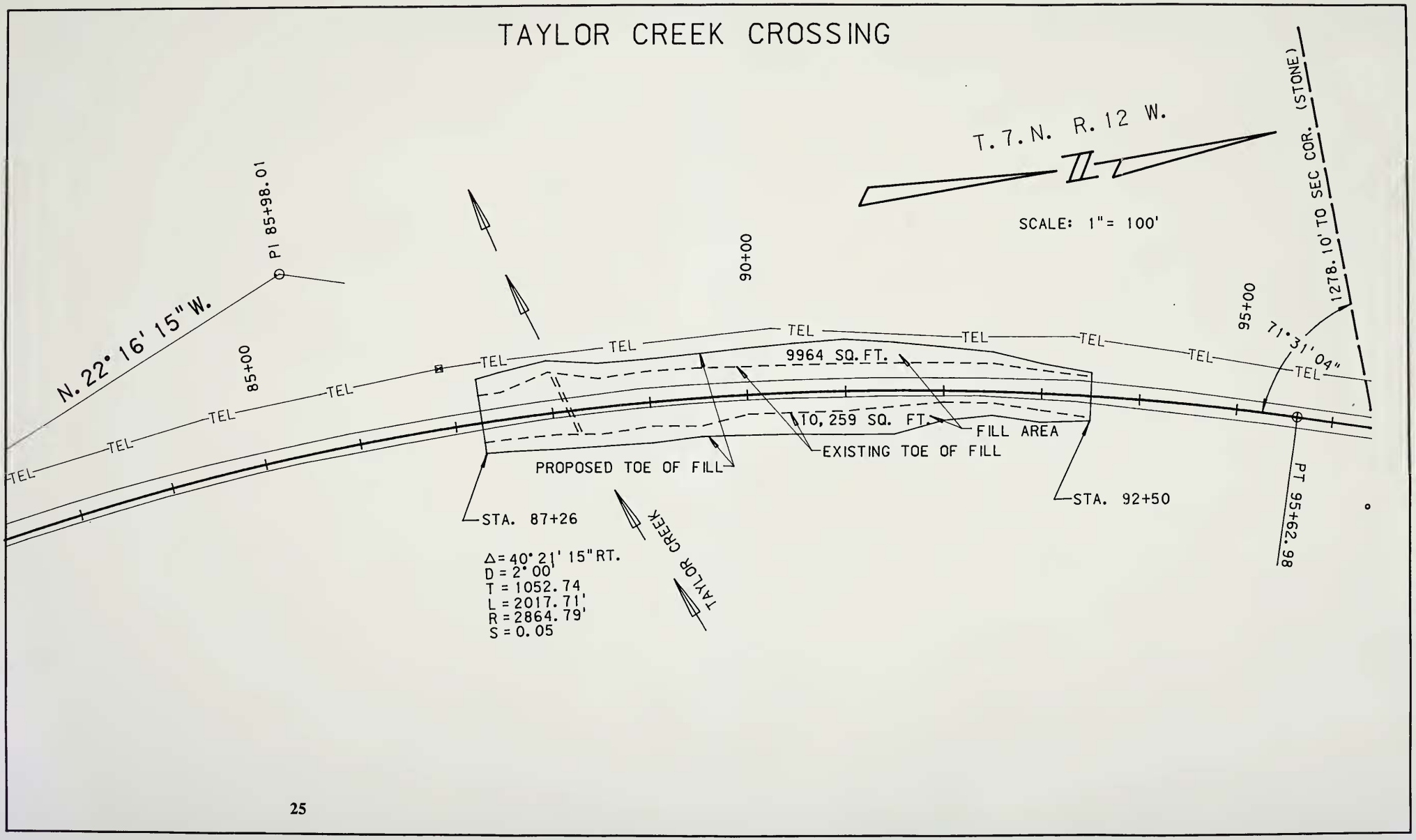
TYPICAL SECTION NO. 1



QUANTITIES

	PLANT MIX	COVER	CR. BASE CRSE.		PLANT MIX	SEAL	PRIME	TACK
AREA SQ. FT.	6.6	—	32.0	SQ. YDS. PER STA.	—	288.9	311.1	311.1
CU. YDS. PER STA.	25.2	—	118.5	TONS PER STA.	2.92	0.43	0.40	—
TONS PER STA.	48.6	3.6	—	GAL. PER STA.	—	—	—	15.6

COMP. GRAV. WT. = 3700 LB. PER C.Y.
COMP PL MIX SURF. = 3855 LB. PER C.Y.
PL MIX BIT. MATL. = 6% OF PL.MIX SURF.
BIT. MATL. = 8.5 LB. PER GAL.
TACK = 0.05 GAL. PER SQ. YD.
PRIME = 0.30 GAL. PER SQ. YD.
SEAL = 0.35 GAL. PER SQ. YD.
COVER = 25 LB. PER SQ. YD.
HYDRATED LIME = 1 1/2% OF PL. MIX SURF.


TAYLOR CREEK CROSSING
T. 7. N. R. 12 W.
SCALE: 1"= 100'
1278.10' TO SEC COR. (STONE)
PI 85+98.01
N. 22° 16' 15" W.
85+00
90+00
95+00
71° 31' 04"
TEL
9964 SQ. FT.
10,259 SQ. FT.
FILL AREA
EXISTING TOE OF FILL
PROPOSED TOE OF FILL
STA. 87+26
STA. 92+50
PT 95+62.98
TAYLOR CREEK
Δ = 40° 21' 15" RT.
D = 2° 00'
T = 1052.74'
L = 2017.71'
R = 2864.79'
S = 0.05

Montana Natural Heritage Program
1515 East Sixth Ave.
Helena, Montana 59620

June 23, 1994

Jerry Walker
Regional Park Manager
Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks
1400 S. 19th
Bozeman, Montana 59715

Dear Mr. Walker,

On June 17 and 23, 1994, I surveyed the site of the proposed road project between Highway 278 and the Bannack townsite for plant species of concern. Although plant species tracked by the Montana Natural Heritage Program and designated as sensitive by the BLM and USFS are known from nearby, none were found in the project area.

Plant species of concern previously known from the Bannack Park/Badger Pass area include Astragalus scaphoides (Bitterroot Milk-vetch), Penstemon lemhiensis (Lemhi Beardtougue), and an undescribed species of Lesquerella (Bladderpod). The first two of these grow in sagebrush communities and were thus considered as potentially occurring in the project area. The bladderpod is confined to mountain mahogany communities on limestone, a habitat not found in the project area. The road, for most of its length, passes through a degraded big sagebrush (Artemisia tridenta) community, by far the most common vegetation type in Beaverhead County, but also crosses a wetland around Taylor Creek. The sagebrush habitats adjacent to the road were searched for the milk-vetch and beards-tongue. Both of these large plants were observed flowering elsewhere in Beaverhead County during the same week and would have been easily seen if they occurred in the project area. Neither was found, nor were any other plant species of concern. The sagebrush habitats adjacent to the road outside the State Park are already heavily disturbed by previous road construction, cattle trailing, and weed invasions. The habitat inside the park, beyond the immeadiate roadside cutbank, is closer to its natural condition.

The Taylor Creek wetland is the highest quality native plant community in the project area. There is some potential for a sensitive species of sedge (Carex parryana ssp. idahoa) to occur here, but the area has not been completely surveyed yet. I will return to survey this site later in the summer when sedges can be reliably identified in a mature fruiting stage.

Often, the greatest threat which road construction poses to native plant species and communities is spread of weeds. The roadside is currently very weedy so revegetation with native species following road construction may potentially improve the condition of the habitat. Away from the roads and townsite, Bannack State Park has

several unique native plant communities and species which deserve to be protected. Since the proposed road improvement within the park is limited to resurfacing, without widening, the native plant communities along the road should not be impacted. If weed control and revegetation concerns are addressed, then the proposed road improvement poses no threat to plant species of concern in the sagebrush habitat. I will inform you of my findings after I survey the wetland later in the summer.

Sincerely,

Jim Vanderhorst

Jim Vanderhorst
Botanist

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

TO: Jerry Walker

FROM: Dennis Flath

DATE: May 11, 1994

SUBJ: Bannack Access Road

On May 9, 1994 I visited the site of the proposed road widening and improvement project from Highway 278 to Bannack to determine potential impacts on wildlife species of special interest or concern.

I did not find evidence of pygmy rabbits (Brachylagus idahoensis). From a point about one mile south of Bannack all the way to Horse Prairie Creek I found pygmy rabbits in virtually all suitable habitat. But, the preferred habitat seems to peter out as one approaches Bannack from the south. There is one draw in the project area that looks really good as potential habitat. This is in the SW 1/4 of Sec. 36, just north of an electrical substation. It currently has a culvert under the road, and I would recommend retaining or improving this structure. It's starting to silt in a little bit.

I cannot determine presence of Perognathus parvus without a significant trapping effort. Whether present or absent, I don't think the project would have any appreciable effect.

Black-tailed jackrabbits (Lepus californicus) may occur in the area, but I did not see any. They are very mobile and have a large home range, so the road improvement would not affect them. Lots of jackrabbit forms and pellets, but I can't distinguish between L. californicus and L. townsendii based on that evidence.

Protection of the wetland and retaining as much heavy sagebrush as possible in the Sec. 36 draw are the two measures that would help these species the most. Beyond that, the reconstruction project will have a negligible effect on species of special interest or concern.

MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)/HB 495
TOURISM REPORT

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by HB 495 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Clint Blackwood, Tourism Development Coordinator
Montana Promotion Division
Department of Commerce
1424 9th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Project Name ~~Beaverhead County Road Improvement - Bannack State Park~~

Project Description ~~The project involves improving (which depending on the selection of alternatives, could mean widening and paving) the 3.5 mile Beaverhead County Road leading to Bannack State Park. The project will also involve upgrading (with Gravel) the Bannack Park entrance road and main parking lot.~~

1. Would this site development project have a impact on the tourism economy?
☐ NO ☒ YES If YES, briefly describe:

Improved access roads could have a positive economic impact as more visitors travel to Bannack and/or stay longer.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?
☐ NO ☒ YES If YES, briefly describe:

Definitely would improve the quality and also possibly the quantity of recreation opportunities.

Signature [signature] Date 5/10/94

2/93

1420 East Sixth Avenue
PO Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

October 12, 1993

Marcella Sherfy
State Historic Preservation Officer
State Historic Preservation Program
Montana Historical Society
225 North Roberts
PO Box 201202
Helena, Montana 59620-1202

Dear Marcella:

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, in conjunction with Beaverhead County, is proposing some road work at Bannack State Park. This proposed road work will include road improvements from the highway to the park entrance, along with roads within the park itself.

The extent of this project is as follows:

1. The road from the highway to the park entrance is proposed to be widened from an average of 22 feet shoulder to shoulder to 28 feet and the surface paved. It has not been defined at this time whether the widening of this road will occur. This is dependent on the county securing additional right-of-way.

2. The road within the park, (approximately 1/2 mile) is proposed to have minor grading and graveling to address current surface and drainage problems.

Please respond with comments regarding this proposed work.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL HORN
Design & Construction Bureau
Field Services Division

MH/cd

30.2

State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
1410 8th Avenue • PO Box 201202 • Helena, MT 59620-1202 • (406) 444-7715

October 19, 1993

RECEIVED
OCT 21 1993
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION BUREAU

Michael Horn
Design and Construction Bureau
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
1420 East Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Re: Bannack State Park road work

Dear Mr. Horn:

Thank you for requesting our comments on joint agency - county plans to work on roads leading to and within Bannack State Park. As we understand your request, some of the work on access to the park may or may not be done. Work within the park will occur.

As described, there appears to be very little potential for impact to significant features of the park from plans to do minor grading and graveling within the park. Our office has no additional need for information or cultural resource concerns with this aspect of the plan.

For the access itself, changes planned appear to be a bit more drastic, with widening and paving both planned. We would like a little more information about this before commenting. For example, how long is the access road? Does it pass close to historic properties? Is paving programmed regardless of whether widening occurs?

Thanks for consulting with us. We'll plan on hearing particulars from you for the access road as necessary. If you have questions, please do call.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Huppe

Katherine M. Huppe
Historical Survey Reviewer

File: Comp/ FWP/ 1993
NR/ Bannack State Park

3.0.2

1420 East Sixth Avenue
PO Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

October 22, 1993

Marcella Sherfy
State Historic Preservation Officer
State Historic Preservation Program
Montana Historical Society
225 North Roberts
PO Box 201202
Helena, Montana 59620-1202

RE: Bannack State Park Road Work

Dear Marcella:

This letter is in response to the letter sent to me by Katherine M. Huppe. dated October 19, 1993.

Please find enclosed a map of the project area.

The access road is planned to be paved, however, widening the road will be at the discretion of the county. The length of the paved access road will be approximately 3 miles and we do not have any knowledge of this access road passing any significant historic structures. The access road proposed for improvement traverses T7S, R13W, Sections 24, 25 and 36 and T8S, R12W, Section 1 in Beaverhead County. (See map for additional information.)

Sincerely,

MICHAEL HORN
Design & Construction Bureau
Field Services Division

MH/cd

Attachments

24
25
30
31
35
36
1
6
TRANSMISSION
LINE
Taylor Creek
Taylor
Creek
GRASSHOPPER
VALLEY
Grasshopper
Creek
BM
5854
5783
5922
5906
5984
6025
6096
6079
6225
6246
6323
6299
6205
6055
5883
5792
5910
5824
6190
6199
6200
6100
6300
6500
6000
Substations
Bannack
Cem
Campgrounds
Hope Placer
Mine
BANNACK
STATE PARK
Bannack
First Territorial Capitol
Hangmans
Gulch

State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
1410 8th Avenue • PO Box 201202 • Helena, MT 59620-1202 • (406) 444-7715

November 9, 1993

Michael Horn
Design and Construction Bureau
Field Services Division
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-0701

RECEIVED
NOV 12 1993
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION BUREAU

Re: Bannack State Park Road Work

Dear Michael:

Thanks for the additional project information you provided on plans to upgrade the access road to Bannack. My questions were prompted by two factors: 1) We reviewed a BLM permit for road work in and near Bannack way back in 1990, and I wondered if this was part of the same project; and 2) paving a previously unpaved road can have an adverse effect on that road's ability to convey its historic character.

Although it still seems better to travel to Montana's territorial capital over a gravel road, on further reflection I think that even in its present condition the road is unlikely to reflect its historic character in ways that would qualify it for listing in the National Register or make it eligible as a Heritage Property. Since there are apparently no other historic age properties within the area of potential (direct or indirect) effect for this project, and since the BLM permitted reroute would actually move the travelling public farther away from the Shafner Ranch, we do not believe any additional cultural resource consideration will be necessary for this undertaking to proceed.

If I have missed something, or if the assumptions I'm working from are incorrect, please do call.

Sincerely,

Kathy Huppe

Katherine M. Huppe
Historical Survey Reviewer

File: Comp/ FWP/ 1993

Fish · Wildlife · Parks
NEWS

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 1400 South 19th, Bozeman, MT 59715
Contact: Bernie Kuntz 994-4042

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 13, 1993

Bannack State Park Road to be Improved

BANNACK--The Beaverhead County Commissioners will conduct a public hearing at 7 p.m., October 4 in the Multipurpose Room of the Law Enforcement Complex, Beaverhead County Courthouse in Dillon, to discuss plans to improve the three-mile stretch of county road leading from Highway 278 to Bannack State Park.

Funding for the project would come from fuel tax dollars allocated to state parks in Montana, and made available by a recent increase in the state fuel tax, according to Jerry Walker, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) Regional Parks Manager in Bozeman.

Specific plans for improving the road could include widening and paving, and also may involve upgrading of the entrance road within Bannack State Park.

The scope and cost of the project will not be determined until FWP conducts an environmental analysis, and completes engineering work.

Beaverhead County Commissioners have endorsed the proposal, and expressed interest in working with FWP on the road

improvements.

"By working with the county we can take advantage of local manpower, provide employment for local residents, and save time and money," Walker said.

Walker said FWP hears frequent complaints about the condition of the roads leading to and within Bannack State Park, and that the road improvements "would allow park visitors to reduce their speed and make a gradual mental transition to the ghost town atmosphere which is the preservation philosophy of Bannack."

###

Montana Standard
Weds. Oct. 6, 1993

Bannack road paving considered

By Perry Backus
Standard Staff Writer

DILLON — Beaverhead County might soon provide the brawn and Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks the money to pave the road to historic Bannack State Park.

During a public hearing Monday night, the Beaverhead County Commission and representatives of the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department heard no opposition to the paving plan.

The money to pave the road will come from a portion of the recent state increase of gasoline taxes, which was allocated to the state parks, according to Doug Monger, of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP).

The road to Bannack had been identified as the number one priority of the FWP for improvement, said Monger, adding the department has received many complaints about the condition of the road.

FWP representatives attended the public hearing to hear what level of improvement citizens of the county felt should occur on the road, Monger said.

Beaverhead Commissioner Spence Hegstad said the county spends a lot of money maintaining the Bannack road and from the commission's standpoint, it would like to see the road paved.

"We're looking at something here that could save the county some bucks," Hegstad said.

Former manager of Bannack Dale Tash said a number of developments occurring across the state could impact the amount of visitation to Bannack. Specifically, he pointed to the increased interest in the Nez Perce Trail, Lewis and Clark's 200th year celebration in 2004 and anticipated increased visitation to Yellowstone.

"I think we are going to have to pave the road someday," Tash said. "We better do it now while we have the funding."

Curley Anderson, a member of the Bannack Association, said current work on a Road Agent's Trail — which stretches from Bannack to Virginia City — could also increase the number of people visiting Bannack.

Montana is popular for vacations and and it's important that the state provide good roads to its attractions, Anderson said, adding the Bannack road is not safe.

Steve Sherman of the Bureau of Land Management said that agency supports paving the road.

"Southwest Montana is discovered and people are coming here in droves," Sherman said. "Any time the county can spend money up front to save maintenance down the road, it is money well spent."

Kevin Redmond, the FWP construction manager, said the construction recommended for the Bannack road would increase the road width to 28 feet. The road is now 18 to 24 feet wide, he said.

Estimated costs for widening the road and paving run about $1.3 million, he said.

Hegstad said on Tuesday that the county and FWP are working on developing a contract that would allow Beaverhead County to oversee the project. Under that scenario, Hegstad said he thought the work may be done for less than $1 million.

The county attorney and FWP attorneys are working on contracts to begin work on the project, Hegstad said.

While county crews might do some of the road work, the state will be responsible for all costs incurred on the project, Hegstad explained, adding any work done by county crews will be billed to the state.

Some preliminary survey work, developing easements and preparing the bid processes may take place through the winter months, but actual construction probably won't occur until next spring or summer, he said.

ANA

Calendar

- Opportunity Homemakers portunity Community Club at lace etc. Thelma Keller will be
- AA of Anaconda meets at pital of Anaconda.
- Methodist Church in An Thursday at 10 a.m. There w food and a White Elephant ta day.
- Pensioners and Oldtimer day.
- Chapt .O. will m Mrs. Frank West Seve
- "Wor th" Bible more information... call 563-7226
- WIC office hours are Tu to 4:30 p.m. This USDA pro women, infants and children, all residents of the county. Fo 115 W. Commercial.

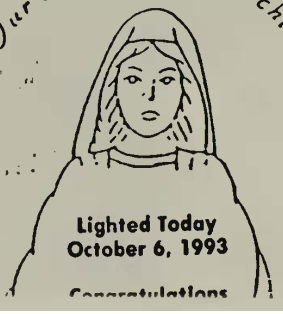
Justice court

Fines and forfeitures: Lan plus a $30 warrant fee; Davi less driving; Thomas Struble tion.

In memory of CEAL O'SULLIVAN. May she rest in peace. Rita Casagranda, Sara Godbout, Michael, Bill & Jack McLaughlin Families.

In loving

Our Lady of the Rockies



Lighted Today
October 6, 1993

Congratulations

In loving memory of my Husband & Father CLARENCE (CHON) DUNSTAN on his 8th anniversary. Memories and love still remain. Miss you, Katie & Family.

For our special

Beaverhead talks future

By Perry Backus
Standard Staff Writer

DILLON — Beaverhead County and the rest of Southwestern Montana are no longer the well-kept secret they once were.

"People here don't realize the pressures that are coming to bare on Western Montana ... People living here now won't recognize this place 20 years from now." — Don Chance.

Dillon Tribune, Weds. Oct. 6, 1993

Bannack road upgrade urged

By Mark Heinz

The idea of paving the road from Highway 278 into Bannack State Park received much support at a public hearing Monday evening.

Doug Monger from the Fish, Wildlife and Parks office in Helena said money gathered from the recently implemented gas tax has been allocated to state parks for road improvement and repairs. The Bannack road is high on the FWP's list of priorities because there are frequent complaints from tourists about its poor condition, Monger said.

Dale Tash, the former manager of Bannack State Park, said fixing the road now would be a good investment because Southwest Montana will get lots of traffic during the upcoming dedication of the Nez Perce Trail and the 200th aniversiary of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Tash also pointed out that Yellowstone Park expects to double the number of applications for visitors there by the year 2000.

Kevin Redmond, the FWP project manager for the Design and Construction Bureau said the most expensive part of paving the road would be widening it.

The road is currently 18-24 feet wide, and would have to be 28 feet wide in order to be properly paved, Redmond said.

The cost of paving the road for the three miles from Highway 278 to the park gates and improving the road and parking lot within the park would be about $1.3 millon, Redmond said. To simply widen the road and cover it with a 6-inch im-

Please turn to page A-14

face harder penalties, as do those who attempt to dodge child support payments.

And underage persons who attempt to purchase alcohol illegally also face prosecution under another law recently passed by the Montana State Legislature.

All of these laws also went into effect October 1.

Drivers who are tagged with a third conviction for Driving Under the Influence (DUI) of alcohol, or Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) violations will face the seizure and sale of their vehicles under that new law.

According to the notice issued by the Department of Justice Motor Vehicle Division to city

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Hom coming Royalty...

W Beaverhead County High School's Homecoming just a few days av the royal court has been chosen, ready for the final crowning on Friday night during the halftime ceremonies of the Dillon vs. Lewistown football matchup. Pictured are sophomore candidate Andrea

Two Dillon men charg in drug ca

By Mark Heinz

Two Dillon men w
rested on drug charges
tember 28 after an inves
and undercover opera
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the Beaverhead County
office and the Dillon P

Harvey Dean Lott,
Jeffrey Michael Later,
caught in possession
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authorities were infor
g task force involv
going investigatio
Southern United Stat

in Montana for sheep ranchers. Hegstad made calls to the offices of Foley and Williams on Monday to state the commissioner's support of keeping the Wool Act

natures of 10 local free landowners appeared on a petition presented to the commissioners requesting the road be aban-

solid plans to construct a shelter would also encourage more people to donate money to the Humane Society.

Road paving

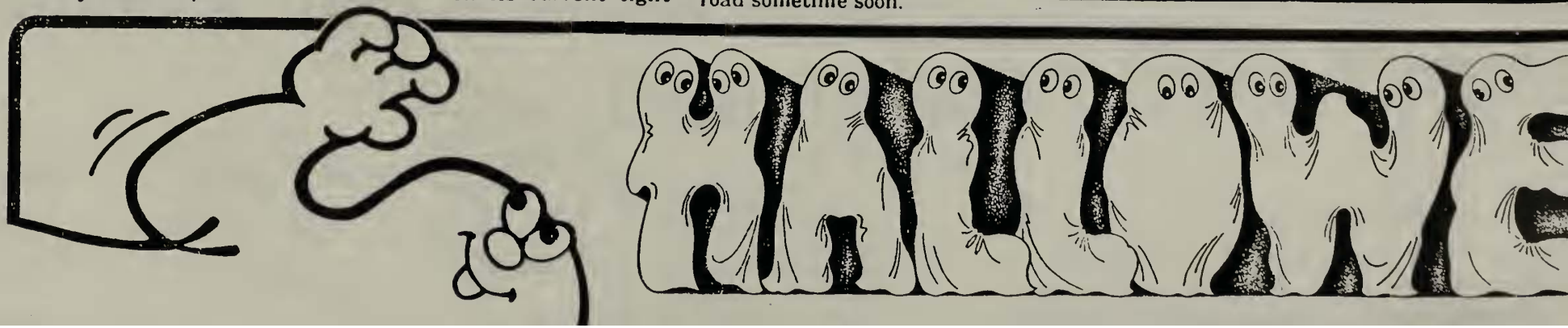
Continued from Page 1

proved gravel surface would cost about $225,000. Redmond said he estimated those figures from past Highway Department contract projects. Construction, engineering and contingency fees were all figured into Redmond's estimates.

Beaverhead County Commissioner Spencer Hegstad said the price of the project could possibly be driven down if the County Road department did the work.

County Road Manager Richard Miller suggested the county take a closer look at the cheaper option of giving the road an improved gravel surface before making any solid decision. Miller pointed out that the gas tax money would probably not cover the entire cost of paving the road and the county may not be able to handle the rest of the bill on its current tight budget.

Miller suggested, however, that if the Bannack road were paved, it could be included on the Highway 278 snow plowing route with little trouble.

Nobody at the hearing suggested leaving the road in its present condition. Quicker and safer passage for tourists and the elimination of troublesome dust along the route were cited as reasons for improving the road sometime soon.

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