



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

October 9, 1996

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Attached to this cover letter is the Decision Notice for a proposed new latrine installation Environmental Assessment (EA) at Gallatin Forks Fishing Access Site, Gallatin River, Gallatin County.

The decision has been made to implement Alternative 1 (No Action) and withdraw the proposed action to install a latrine at this site.

Copies of the final EAs can be obtained from Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region Three, 1400 S. 19th, Bozeman, MT 59715, (406) 994-4042.

Sincerely,

Stephen L. Lewis

Stephen L. Lewis
Regional Supervisor

Decision Notice
For Gallatin Forks Fishing Access Site Latrine Installation
Gallatin River, Gallatin County

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region Three
1400 S. 19th
Bozeman, MT 59715

October 9, 1996

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to install a pre-cast concrete, sealed vault latrine at the Gallatin Forks Fishing Access Site (FAS) on the Gallatin River, approximately 1 mile north of Manhattan, Montana. The purpose and benefit of the proposed action is to provide toilet facilities for site users in order to maintain a safe, sanitary and healthful environment where concentrated number of recreationists are attracted.

FWP received two written comments each from two individuals including a petition signed by five families on the Environmental Assessment (EA). Ten (10) individuals provided testimony at a public hearing conducted October 1, 1996, in Manhattan, on the EA.

All written comments and 9 of the individuals providing testimony at the public hearing opposed the proposal. One individual at the public hearing testified in favor of the proposal.

Opponents to the proposal cited concerns with the following issues related to installing a latrine at this FAS:

- the need for a latrine is poorly documented
- aesthetic concerns for neighbors who overlook site
- periodic flooding
- high water table
- lack of floodplain documentation
- proximity of proposed latrine site to open water
- contamination of ground water if concrete vault fails
- odor from latrine wastes
- noxious weed establishment
- chemical control of weeds
- detrimental impacts on wildlife
- devaluation of surrounding property values
- money for cost of latrine would be better spent on other site maintenance issues, i.e. road, fences & weed control

- objections to taxpayer money being spent on latrine
- latrine will attract more people
- latrine will attract illegal dumping of garbage and other refuse
- latrine installation will result in more development which is unwanted by neighbors
- FWP are not good neighbors as evidenced by lack of road and fence maintenance, unresponsive law enforcement for shooting, trespassing, poaching, illegal camping, transient use, property damage, etc., signing placed on private property, and no response to complaints
- FWP does not have enough information to make decision on latrine installation
- FWP has not involved bordering property owners in management decision making
- litter will increase
- not enough people use this part of site to justify latrine
- men won't use latrine anyway

In addition to the concerns listed above, opponents cited flaws in the preparation and distribution of the EA document:

- not all site neighbors were sent copies of the EA
- EA checklist failed to note impacts to the following elements of the physical and human environments:
 - Exposure of people or property to natural hazard-flooding (checklist # 1.e.)
 - Creation of objectionable odors (2.b.)
 - Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species (5.b.)
 - Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity) (5.g.)
 - Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area (7.a.)
 - Adverse effects on or relocation of residences (7.d.)
 - Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods (9.e.)
 - Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were

to occur (13.b.)

- Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created (13.e.)

The one proponent of the proposal to install a latrine cited use enhancement as a benefit of having a latrine.

Responses To Issues

Many of the issues listed above can be mitigated. Other issues are highly speculative or unfounded in the opinion of FWP. FWP has little credibility with the surrounding neighbors and some of the opposition to the proposal to install a latrine at this FAS appears to be directed at the agency for issues unrelated to the proposal.

Corrections To the Draft EA

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, AIR, Item 2.b., creation of objectionable odors?, should be changed to indicate a minor impact. Under cloudy conditions the venting system does not operate at maximum effectiveness and slight odors may be produced.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT, SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE, Item, 13.e., generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?, should be changed to indicate a minor impact. Neighboring landowners indicated in letters and testimony at the public hearing that they are overwhelmingly opposed to the proposed installation of a latrine within the Gallatin Forks FAS in the location suggested.

Decision

With the above listed corrections to the draft EA, this decision notice will act as a supplement which changes the draft to the final EA.

The department has evaluated the EA and applicable laws, regulations, and policies and has determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the human and natural environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Based on overwhelming neighboring landowner opposition and little expressed support for the proposal, FWP's decision is to implement Alternative 1 (No Action), and withdraw the proposal to install a

latrine at Gallatin Forks FAS.

The final EA may be viewed at or obtained from the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region Three, Bozeman, Montana. Please Direct requests and questions to:

Stephen L. Lewis, Regional Supervisor
1400 S. 19th
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 994-4042

Sincerely,

Stephen L. Lewis
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