



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

930 Custer Avenue W
Helena, MT 59620

July 19, 2004

TO: Governor's Office, Todd O'Hair, Room 204, State Capitol, P.O. 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Room 106, P.O. Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620
Dept. Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Director's Office
Parks Division
Fisheries Division
Wildlife Division
Lands Section
Legal Unit
FWP Commissioners

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JUL 20 2004

LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY OFFICE

MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 201202 Helena, MT 59620-1202
MT State Parks Association, P.O. Box 699, Billings, MT 59103
MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620
Walleyes Unlimited P.O. Box 1293. E. Helena 59635
Trout Unlimited 405 Monroe Ave., Helena, MT 59601
Access Montana Outdoors, Scott Birkenbuel, 200 S. Bozeman, MT. Suite #D-7/TMB 111, Bozeman, MT 59718.
Prickly Pear Sportsman, P.O. Box 48 East Helena, MT 59635
Hunters and Anglers 314 Holter, Helena, MT 59601
Nancy Johnson, APLE-Helena, 460 Russell lane, Helena, MT 59602
James Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
George Ochenski, P.O. Box 689, Helena, MT 59624
Jerry DiMarco, P.O. Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771
Montana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for paving the main parking area at Spring Meadow Lake State Park and is submitted for your consideration. Comments or questions about the project can be submitted to the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Helena Area Resource Office, PO Box 200701, 930 Custer Ave West, Helena, MT 59620-0701, attn. Craig Marr (406) 495-3270, e-mail cmarr@state.mt.us.

Comments will be accepted until 5:00 pm, August 19, 2004. Copies of the EA are available upon request.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Michael Korn
Helena Area Coordinator

**Draft
Environmental Assessment**

**SPRING MEADOW LAKE
STATE PARK
PARKING AREA PAVING**



July 7, 2004



***Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks***

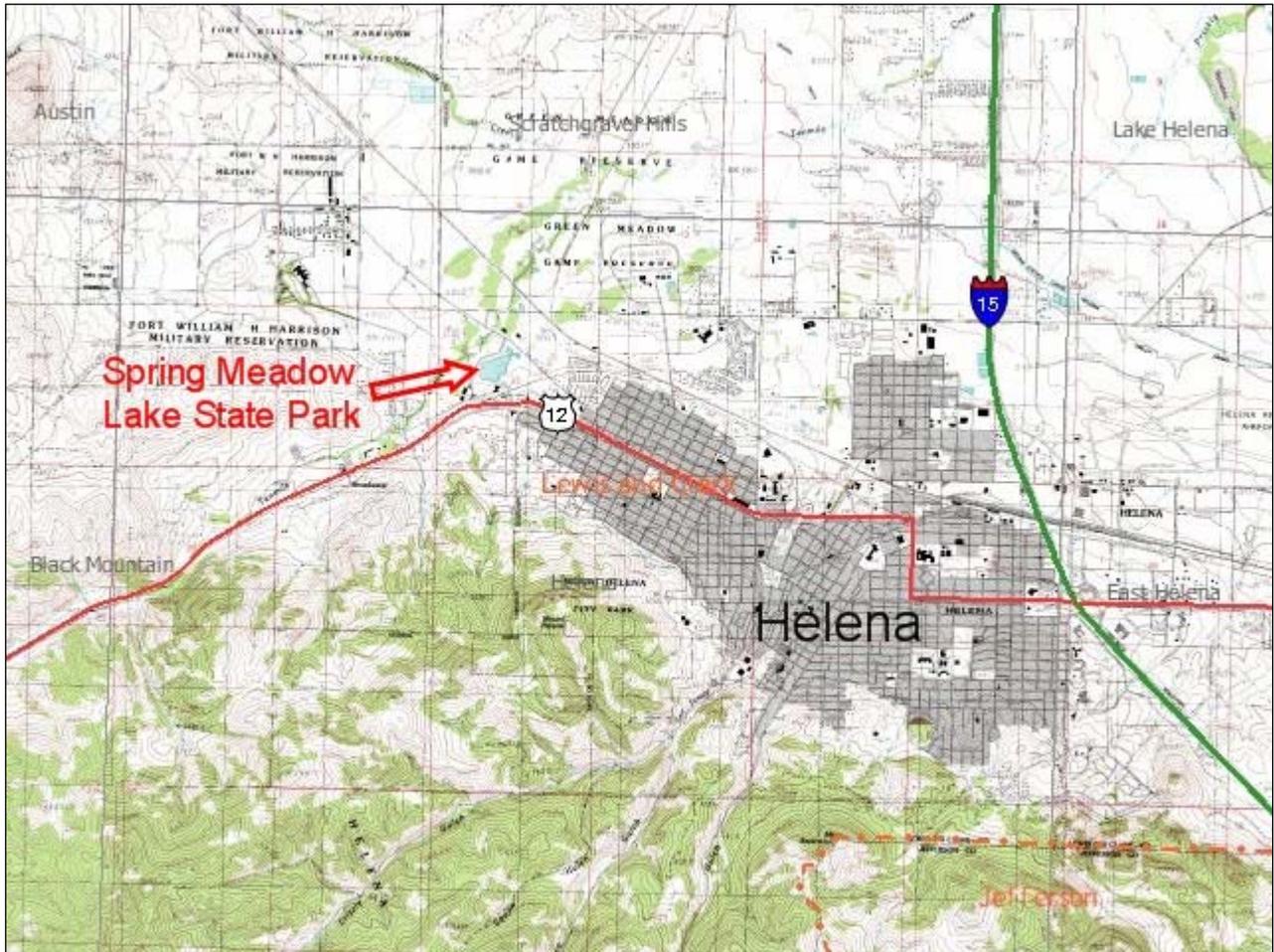
**Spring Meadow Lake State Park Road Paving
Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST**

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of proposed state action:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) proposes to pave Spring Meadow Lake State Park interior roads and parking areas; design site to drain into on-site detention pond; replace approximately 1000' of pave trail with eight-foot-wide concrete sidewalk along the southwest edge of parking areas, install standard State Park kiosk; relocate entrance booth.
2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** MFWP is vested with the purpose and authority to conserve, plan and develop outdoor recreational resources in the state as determined in MCA 23-1-101 and 23-2-101. The opportunity for public involvement regarding the proposed park project is provided under MCA 23-1-110.
3. **Name of project:** Spring Meadow Lake State Park Road Paving
4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks is the project sponsor.
5. **If applicable:**
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: September 2004
Estimated Completion Date: October 2004
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 75%
6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):** Spring Meadow Lake State Park is accessed by traveling west on Euclid Avenue or State Highway 12 West in Helena. Travel north about 0.8 miles on Joslyn Avenue, which veers west and becomes Country Club Avenue. The park is in Lewis and Clark County, Montana; Township 10 North, Range 4 West, Section 23; elevation 3918 feet; total park size is 61 acres.

Please refer to map below for the location of the park relative to Helena, Montana. Refer to **Appendix A** for the Site Plan (if viewing electronically, this is a separate pdf file).

Map showing location of Spring Meadow Lake State Park on northwest edge of Helena.



7. Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

	<u>Acres</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u>0</u>
Residential		(e) Productive:	
Industrial	<u>0</u>	Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	<u>2</u>	Dry cropland	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	<u>0</u>	Forestry	<u>0</u>
		Rangeland	<u>0</u>
		Other	<u>0</u>

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

(a) Permits: permits would be filed at least 2 weeks prior to project start.

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
Lewis & Clark County	storm water discharge return permit
U.S. Corps of Engineers	404 fill permit
Department of Environmental Quality	318 temporary water quality permit

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
MFWP State Parks Highway Fund	\$100,000
source to be determined	\$60,000
Total	\$160,000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
State Historic Preservation Office	cultural protection

9. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:

The purpose of this proposal is to pave about 1000 linear feet of road and parking area with curbing for about 124 standard vehicles inside Spring Meadow Lake State Park during early Fall 2004. A cul-de-sac road design would provide turn-around space for standard vehicles and buses. About 1250 feet of uneven and cracked paved trails would be replaced with eight-foot-wide sidewalk adjacent to the parking area and extending from both ends. Sections of old paved trail not in line with the new trail would be removed and reclaimed with lawn. The existing irrigation system would be repaired and improved to adequately water newly seeded and disturbed lawn areas. Existing wooden bollards and logs surrounding the roads and parking areas would be removed. The park entrance booth would be relocated and a new Parks Division standard information kiosk installed.

Drainage for the newly paved area would be controlled by three systems.

1) A small open retention pond will be located just east of the entrance between the lake and the roadway. In this area, clean, weed-free, sand fill material will also be added into the bay (extending about one foot into the lake) to stabilize the bank angle and provide a more user friendly shoreline.

2) The curb and gutter system for the majority of the parking area (about 700 feet in the center of the project) will drain water into a mounded, buried storm water retention system to perk the water into the soil. Perk tests will determine the size and specifics necessary for this system to adhere to MFWP Best Management Practices and protect the water quality of

Spring Meadow Lake and Ten Mile Creek. The new water retention system would be located at the northwest corner of the property.

3) The curb and gutter network in the eastern-most section of the parking area would return runoff to the Lewis and Clark County ditch along the north edge of the property, which then connects to Ten Mile Creek. No net change in runoff volume in the ditch is anticipated compared to runoff occurring from the existing site design.

This project would enhance access for visitors and area residents, people with disabilities, provide safer and more efficient traffic flow and parking, reduce dust, and reduce short-term maintenance activities and costs.

Funding is available from State Park designated highway funds to pave this road and parking area. Pavement has a life expectancy of about 20 years if chip-sealed one or two times and minor maintenance is conducted during that period.



Photo of park entrance and fee booth looking east.



Photo of parking area, wooden bollards and logs to delineate parking areas; looking south toward entrance.



Photo of east end parking area with log boundary and paved trail; looking east, Country Club Avenue on far left of photo.

Photos by Sue Dalbey April 27, 2004.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

- 1. 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:**

Alternative A: No Action

If no action is taken, the road and parking areas inside Spring Meadow Lake State Park would remain as large, gravel parking areas. Large recreational vehicles and buses would continue to have difficulty turning around in the park.

West winds often create dust, an irritant to visitors who are predominantly east of the gravel parking lot. Undesignated parking slots lead to haphazard parking and decreased parking capacity.

The existing park entrance is congested, confusing and unsafe, since exiting vehicles must cross traffic entering the park. The existing paved walkway is cracked and heaved where tree roots have grown under the path. Earth along trail edges is eroded from extensive and poor drainage. The current site is sloped to sheet-drain toward the lake, with no intermediary detention pond or runoff catch basin.

Alternative B: Treat road and parking area with magnesium chloride annually.

Roads in the park would remain gravel without modifying the design and be treated with magnesium chloride annually or less often, as needed. This alternative would reduce the dust caused by traffic and west winds.

Initial costs would be less than the proposed paving project, but would require annual application. Existing site drainage slopes toward the lake, presenting potential water quality impacts if magnesium chloride is used to treat gravel roads with no grade modifications.

Alternative B would not address degraded, paved trails and erosion along the trail edges.

The park would retain a rural atmosphere with gravel parking lots. However, the existing urban features of adjacent paved roads, surrounding residential densities and traffic volumes preclude this site from providing a truly rustic or primitive experience.

Preferred Alternative C: Proposed action to pave roads and parking areas inside the park; replace existing paved trails with eight-foot concrete sidewalk; relocate entrance.

The proposed action would pave the interior park roads and parking areas and install concrete sidewalk along the west and south sides of the parking area. This action would create efficient parking lots and prevent dust from disturbing visitors and neighbors. It would allow safer traffic flows, especially at the park entrance. Trail access would be free from obstructions and smoothly surfaced for access by people of all abilities.

The redesigned site would funnel run-off to a detention pond rather than directly into the lake, thus reducing the risk of petroleum spills entering the lake and turbidity from erosion.

Note: a detailed evaluation of the Proposed Action is included in Part IV. Environmental Review Checklist below.

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

The site improvements are designed to contain surface runoff in drainage ponds on-site, thus mitigating additional runoff created by hardened road surfaces. Disturbed areas will be reseeded and irrigated to encourage grass, and reduce erosion into the lake.

Qualified professional applicators would perform paving operations and the project would be monitored by MFWP Design and Construction Bureau engineers to minimize the risk of petroleum product spills or accidents during construction.

PART III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 1. 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 public will be notified in the following manners to comment on the EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Two public notices in the *Helena Independent Record* and *Queen City News*
- Statewide press release
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://www.fwp.state.mt.us>.

Copies of this environmental assessment will be distributed to the neighboring landowners and interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having few minor impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

- 2. Duration of comment period, if any.**

The public comment period will extend for thirty days following the publication of the second legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until **5:00 p.m. August 19, 2004** and can be mailed to the address below:

Spring Meadow Lake Paving Draft EA
930 Custer Avenue
Helena, MT 59620

Or e-mailed to: cmarr@state.mt.us

PART IV. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> 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				1a.
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				1c.
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:		X				

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

1a. Grading and gravel needed to modify drainage and accommodate paving will not alter soil stability or geologic substructure.

1c. No unique geologic or physical features exist in the area proposed for paving. Paving would occur on areas having been used for roads and parking for decades.

* 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 cannot 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. <u>AIR</u> 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 positive			2a.
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.)		NA				
f. Other:		X				

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

2a. Paving the gravel road and parking area inside the park would reduce dust for visitors and many neighbors.

* 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 cannot 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.

3. <u>WATER</u> 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 positive			3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		yes	3b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				3c.
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				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		NA				
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.)		NA				
n. Other:		X				

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

3a. Paving the road and parking areas would reduce sediment in surface runoff and turbidity in the lake.

3b. Paving the road and parking areas would create slightly greater amounts of surface runoff; however, the on-site retention systems would be designed to contain this runoff and perk the water back into the soil. Runoff into the county ditch would not increase over existing volumes. Runoff would not flow directly into Spring Meadow Lake, as it does now.

* 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 cannot 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.

3c. A small portion of the parking lot and new detention pond at the northwest corner of the property would be in the 500-year floodplain (Flood Insurance Rate Map Panel #300038 1538C map revised September 4, 1985). Because the proposed improvements are of low profile and designed to contain surface runoff on-site, no negative impacts are anticipated to the floodplain of Tenmile Creek.

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. The area proposed for construction has been previously altered by parking area development, heavy traffic use, or lawn and domestic landscaping features. A small block of various shrubs will be removed near the park entrance, and grass removed or disturbed on either side of the existing parking area. Vegetation disturbed by construction will be reseeded or replaced with sod and irrigated to re-establish lawn and reduce erosion.

4c. The Montana Natural Heritage Program did not find records for federally listed threatened and endangered plant species in the area during a search of their database. The area proposed for construction has no native plant species and has been completely altered through previous parking and domestic lawn improvements.

4e. If the roads are paved, there would be less risk of noxious weeds being transported to the park and becoming established. A sealed and hardened paved surface would not allow weeds to become established. The roadsides would be monitored for weed growth by MFWP staff and if found, treated under the guidelines of the MFWP Region 3 Weed Management Plan and Lewis and Clark County Weed Board.

* 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 cannot 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.

** 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				
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.)		NA				
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.)		NA				
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

MFWP Fisheries Biologist Steve Dalbey stated that Spring Meadow Lake holds several game fish species, including large mouth bass, rainbow trout, yellow perch, hatchery-reared westslope cutthroat, in addition to the non-game species pumpkinseed, long nose suckers and white suckers. The proposed construction project would not alter the shoreline of Spring Meadow Lake. Redesign of the site's drainage patterns would reduce sediment entering the lake and the detention pond would reduce potential sediment deposits into Tenmile Creek. Mr. Dalbey does not anticipate impacts to the fisheries due to the proposed paving of gravel roads and parking areas in Spring Meadow Lake (personal communication May 28, 2004).

MFWP Wildlife Biologist Gayle Joslin indicated that the existing road, parking area, trail and surrounding lawns do not provide valuable wildlife habitat. White-tailed deer pass through the area and there is some pocket habitat near the lake for small mammals or reptiles. The paving project would not be expected to create any additional human disturbance than currently experienced at the site. She advised that the proposed paving project would not likely impact wildlife species more than existing use (personal communication May 28, 2004).

* 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 cannot 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.

A data search was requested by the Natural Heritage Program for threatened and endangered species in the area; none were identified. Ms. Joslin confirmed that no species of state or federal concern are known to inhabit the area of the park proposed for construction.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> 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			6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe 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:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. Daytime noise levels would increase for about a month while equipment completes the paving process. Overall noise levels of vehicles using the roads are not expected to change if roads are paved.

* 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 cannot 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.

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference 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:		X				

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

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> 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 radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		yes	8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?			X			8b.
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?			X positive			8c.
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		NA				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8a. Paving the road could introduce risks of spilling petroleum products used in the construction process. Because construction would be completed by experienced professionals, this risk is very low. In addition, the project would be monitored by MFWP Design and Construction staff.

* 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 cannot 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.

8b. Paving and the associated painted lines to identify parking and travel routes would help emergency vehicle access or evacuation. Travel routes would be less likely to be blocked with clearly identified parking areas. Redesign of the entrance will allow safer traffic flows for implementing an emergency plan.

8c. Paving the road and parking areas would allow more effective and safer traffic flows. Curbing, painted lines to identify travel routes and delineate parking spaces would reduce unsafe driving activities, for example large recreational vehicles driving in the middle of a gravel road, or vehicles parking in the thoroughfare. Paving would reduce dust levels, which would benefit people with breathing difficulties.

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> 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 area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				9b.
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X positive			9e.
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9b. Paving would lead to a more urban park experience. Given the proximity to Helena, residential expansion in the area, the visitation at this park, and adjacent golf course, this is not expected to greatly change the social structure of the community or cause the relocation of residents.

9e. Traffic patterns would be improved if the roads are paved, due to the clear guidance of curbs, painted lines and delineated parking.

* 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 cannot 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.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:			X			10a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. **Define projected revenue sources						10e.
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						10f.
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. Paving the roads would reduce county and MFWP staff time spent on grading maintenance. Some MFWP staff or contracted services would still be needed for line painting as needed, and chip sealing.

10e. No revenue would be collected as a result of the proposed paving project. Due to legislation passed in 2003, Montana resident park visitors do not pay a daily entrance fee to the park; however, out-of-state visitors are required to pay an entrance fee.

10f. No short-term maintenance would be required on the paved roads. The roads would require chip-sealing and line painting one or two times over the 20-year "life expectancy" of the pavement (MFWP Design and Construction).

* 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 cannot 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.

** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> 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			11a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Please see Tourism Report.)			X positive			11c.
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

This local park on the outskirts of Helena provides quality water-based recreation experiences. It is essentially an urban park, and the gravel parking lots are a nuisance to visitors due to the dust created and inefficient parking. The irrigated lawn and picnic shelters along the lake shore provide a park-like setting for swimming, sunbathing, and picnicking. Paved walking trails are cracked and heaved from tree roots, and trail edges are abrupt or undermined from erosion in some areas.

11a. Park viewsheds from Country Club Avenue would be changed slightly by the proposed paving. Paving would create a more urban look and feel to this historically natural setting. The area, however, is already encroached with numerous homes and roads. Visitors to the park typically focus their attention toward the lake and south to Mount Helena; therefore, impacts to viewsheds within the park would be minor.

11c. The quality of access to this site would be improved by paving the roads. School buses delivering student groups for the numerous educational programs at the park would have better access and maneuverability with a cul-de-sac turn-around area. Access for people with disabilities would be greatly improved on this side of the lake with designated parking areas and easy access to sidewalks leading to park features. The park would be closed for a period of about one month to allow construction, but this would be after the peak visitation season.

* 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 cannot 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.

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 of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12a.
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.)		NA				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. The paving project would occur over existing roads and trails. MFWP has consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), who stated in a letter dated June 25, 2004 (attached), that there is a low likelihood that cultural properties would be impacted.

* 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 cannot 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.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

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 that 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 13e.)		NA				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		NA				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (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 impact has not or cannot 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.

PART V. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The proposed paving would surface roads, parking areas and trails already heavily used. This analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment. Additional run-off, drainage and potential water quality issues resulting in paving a parking area would be adequately managed with on-site retention systems, thereby water quality in Spring Meadow Lake and Ten Mile Creek would not be altered.

Paving the roads would enhance visitor access to the site. Traffic flows would be safer with associated lines identifying traffic lanes and parking stalls. Air quality would improve after paving, thus addressing visitor concerns about dust in the park.

The paving project would create a more urban feel to the neighborhood. The proximity of Spring Meadow Lake State Park to the city of Helena makes pavement around the site inevitable in the long-term development of the area. Trends across Montana indicate subdivisions and urban sprawl will intensify around Helena as people expand to "country living," yet want the associated amenities for easy access to town. The entrance road to the park is paved and the proposed paving is confined to the one corner of the park allowing the rest of the park to remain in a more natural state.

PART VI. EA PREPARATION

- 1. 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 an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action; therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

- 2. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:**

Sue Dalbey
Independent Contractor
Dalbey Resources
926 N. Lamborn St.
Helena, MT 59601
406-443-8058

Craig Marr
Sp. Mdw Lk. State Park Manager
MFWP
930 Custer Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
406-495-3270

Jerry Walker
Regional State Park Manager
MFWP
1400 South 19th
Bozeman, MT 59718
406-994-3552

3. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

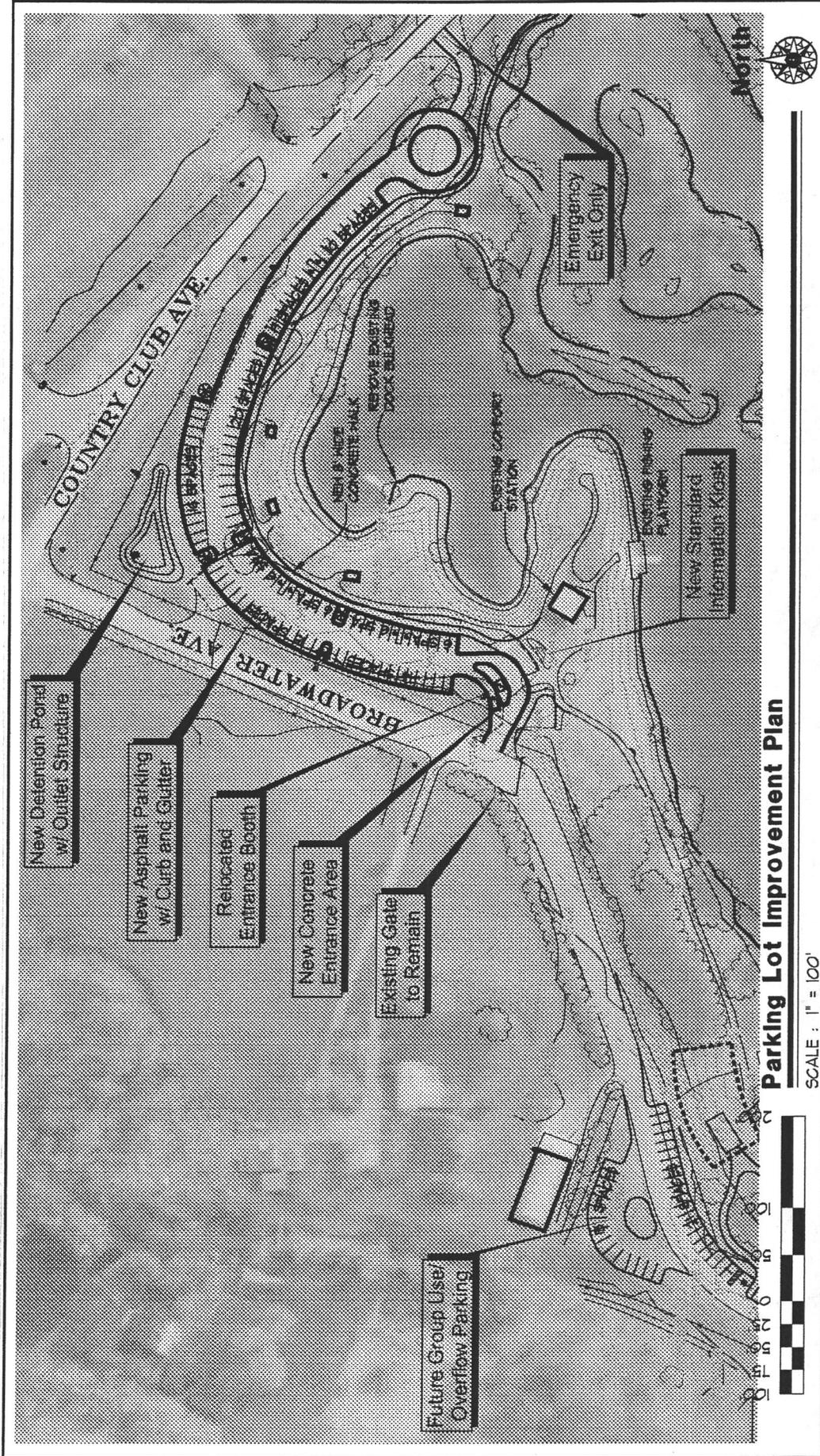
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Parks Division
Wildlife Division
Fisheries Division
Design & Construction Bureau
Montana Natural Heritage Program
Department of Natural Resources Conservation (floodplains)

APPENDICES

- A. Site Plan
- B. MCA 23-1-110 Project Qualification Checklist
- C. Tourism Report
- D. Clearance Letter – State Historic Preservation Office

file: Sp Mdw SP Paving Pre-Draft; sed 6/22/04; sed 7/7/04

APPENDIX A
 SITE PLAN
 SPRING MEADOW LAKE STATE PARK ROAD PAVING



DESIGNED BY:	DATE:	APPROVED BY:	DATE:
CHECKED BY:	DATE:	APPROVED BY:	DATE:
6/10/2004			

Parking Lot Improvement Plan
 SCALE: 1" = 100'

APPENDIX B
23-1-110 MCA PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST
SPRING MEADOW LAKE STATE PARK ROAD PAVING

Date: June 11, 2004

Person Reviewing: Sue Dalbey, consultant
Dalbey Resources

Project Location: Spring Meadow Lake State Park is accessed by traveling west on Euclid Avenue or State Highway 12 West in Helena. Travel north about 0.8 miles on Joslyn Avenue, which veers west and becomes Country Club Avenue. The park is in Lewis and Clark County, Montana; Township 10 North, Range 4 West, Section 23; elevation 3918 feet; total park size is 61 acres.

Description of Proposed Work: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) proposes to pave Spring Meadow Lake State Park interior roads and parking areas; design site to drain into on-site detention pond; replace approximately 1000' of pave trail with eight-foot-wide concrete sidewalk along the southwest edge of parking areas, install standard State Park kiosk; relocate entrance booth.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check all that apply and comment as necessary.)

- A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments: *None - all areas have been previously disturbed for parking and vehicle access.*
- B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments: *None.*
- C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments: *Grading for roads, parking areas and trails, and creating runoff retention systems, would require cut and fill of more than 20 c.y.*
- D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments: *Parking will be more efficient and provide about 108 spaces in the same area used for parking in the past.*
- E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments: *None*
- F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments: *Clean, weed-free sandy fill to stabilize bank and create a more user-friendly slope for visitors.*

- G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments: *None*

- H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments: *None*

- I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments: *No*

- 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, 23-1-110 MCA rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

**APPENDIX C
TOURISM REPORT
SPRING MEADOW LAKE STATE PARK ROAD PAVING**

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by 23-1-110 MCA 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:

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce
PO Box 200533
301 South Park
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Project Name: Spring Meadow Lake State Park Road Paving

Project Description: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) proposes to pave Spring Meadow Lake State Park interior roads and parking areas; design site to drain into on-site detention pond; replace approximately 1000' of pave trail with eight-foot-wide concrete sidewalk along the southwest edge of parking areas, install standard State Park kiosk; relocate entrance booth.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?

(circle one) NO

YES

If YES, briefly describe:

As presented, the project enhances the look and function of the Spring Meadow Lake SP parking, access and trail facilities. The impact on the tourism economy is likely to be positive.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?

(circle one) NO

YES

If YES, briefly describe:

It increases both and should provide benefits for the public using this facility.

Signature

Victor Bjornberg

Date

6-24-09

2/93
revised 5/00 sed

APPENDIX D
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE CONCURRENCE
SPRING MEADOW LAKE STATE PARK ROAD PAVING



MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

225 North Roberts ♦ P.O. Box 201201 ♦ Helena, MT 59620-1201
♦ (406) 444-2694 ♦ FAX (406) 444-2696 ♦ www.montanahistoricalsociety.org ♦

June 25, 2004

Bardell Mangum
FWP
1420 East Sixth Ave
Helena MT 59620-0701

RECEIVED

JUN 28 2004
DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
DEPT. OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

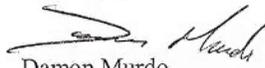
RE: SPRING MEADOW LAKE PARKING IMPROVEMENTS. SHPO Project #:
2004062403

Dear Mr. Mangum:

Thank you for your letter concerning the above-cited project. We feel that there is a low likelihood cultural properties will be impacted. We, therefore, feel that a recommendation for a cultural resource inventory is unwarranted at this time. However, should cultural materials be inadvertently discovered during this project we would ask that our office be contacted and the site investigated. Thank you for consulting with us.

If you have any further questions or comments you may contact me at (406) 444-7767 or by e-mail at dmurdo@state.mt.us.

Sincerely,


Damon Murdo
Cultural Records Manager

File: FWP/PARKS/2004