Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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POLICY OFFICE

Region 2 Headquarters
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804-3101
May 19, 2005

Governor's Office, Attn: Mike Volesky, PO Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, PO Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704
*Dept. of Environmental Quality, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
*Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, POB 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601
*Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:
Website, Commission Secretary, Division Secretaries, Regional Office Managers, Region 2 Information Officer, Dan Burns, Ray Vinkey, David Dziak
**Region 2 Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Citizens Advisory Council
*State Historic Preservation Office, PO Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202
*MT State Library, PO BOX 201800, Helena, MT 59620-1800
MT Environmental Information Center, Attn: Jim Jensen, POB 1184, Helena, MT 59624-1184
Powell County Commissioners, 409 Missouri Ave., Deer Lodge, MT 59722
Powell County Planner, 409 Missouri Ave., Deer Lodge, MT 59722
**Rep. Cynthia Hiner, 1027 Kentucky St., Deer Lodge, MT 59722
**Rep. John Ward, 4525 Glass Dr., Helena, MT 59602
**Sen. Jesse Laslovich, 112 Mountain View St., Anaconda, MT 59711
**Sen. Dave Lewis, 5871 Collins Rd., Helena, MT 59602
George Grant Chapter, Trout Unlimited, POB 563, Butte, MT 59703-0563
Anaconda Sportsmen's Club, 2 Cherry, Anaconda, MT 59711
Skyline Sportsmen's Association, POB 173, Butte, MT 59703-0173
Montana Wildlife Federation, POB 1175, Helena, MT 59624-1175
George Ochenski, POB 689, Helena, MT 59624-0689
Wayne Hirst, POB 728, Libby, MT 59923-0728
Bob Rainey, 212 S. 6, Livingston, MT 59047
Rocking W Cattle Ranch, POB 286, Avon, MT 59713-0286
Knight Family Trust, POB 226, Avon, MT 59713-0226
MT Department of Transportation, Attn: Shane Mintz, 2701 Prospect Ave., Helena, MT 59620
*Mailed electronically; **Postcard notification

Dear Interested Citizen:

Enclosed you will find for your review the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) proposal to acquire approximately 4.3 acres of land west of Avon in Powell County for a new Fishing Access Site on the Little Blackfoot River.

This draft EA is available for review in Helena at MFWP's Headquarters, the State Library and the Environmental Quality Council. It also may be obtained from the Region 2 MFWP

Draft
Environmental Assessment

LITTLE BLACKFOOT RIVER
FISHING ACCESS SITE ACQUISITION

May 19, 2005

Little Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks **Blackfoot River**

FAS Acquisition
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 acquire approximately 4.3 acres (subject to final certificate of survey) near Avon for a new Fishing Access Site (FAS) on the Little Blackfoot River. MFWP would purchase 2.3 acres from the Rocking W Cattle Ranch, and acquire another 2 acres from the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) either through the granting of a permanent recreation easement or permit on the parcel or by outright purchase of the property.

2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605, which directs Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) to acquire, develop and operate a system of fishing accesses. The legislature established an earmarked funding account to ensure that this fishing access site function would be established.

3. **Name of project:** Little Blackfoot River Fishing Access Site Acquisition

4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is the project sponsor.

5. **If applicable:**
   Estimated Purchase Date: Spring 2005
   Current Status of Project Design (% complete): N/A

6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):** That part of NE ¼ of Section 1, Township 9N Range 9W in Powell County.

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

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	0
Residential	0		
Industrial	0	(e) Productive:	
		Irrigated cropland	0
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	0	Dry cropland	0
		Forestry	0
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	5	Rangeland	0
		Other	0

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

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

Agency Name	Permit
N/A	

(b) Funding:

	Funding Amount
Rocking H Parcel	
Montana MFWP Acquisition Fund (License dollars)	$25,000
MDT Parcel	
Acquired through the granting of a permanent recreation easement	$0
Or (decision pending)	
Purchased from MDT with MFWP Acquisition Fund	$22,000
Total cost	$25,000-$47,000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
Montana Department of Transportation	transfer of property
Powell County	oversight of survey

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

(NOTE: Include maps, site plans showing location and boundaries here and/or under #6 above.)

The Little Blackfoot River is a tributary to the Clark Fork River in MFWP Region 2. The Little Blackfoot's headwaters are in the Boulder Mountains south of the town of Elliston and it flows for 40 miles to its confluence with the Clark Fork in the town of Garrison. Near its headwaters, the Little Blackfoot is small enough to jump across in many places and contains a lot of woody debris as it flows through the Helena National Forest. South of Elliston, the river slows and widens as it enters a valley. Streamside vegetation gradually changes from trees to grasses and shrubs, such as willow and red-osier dogwood. The fishery is dominated by brook and westslope cutthroat trout above Elliston and by brown trout below Elliston. Rainbow trout and mountain whitefish can be found throughout the length of the River but are less common. Recreational fishing for these species is considered to be very good in the spring and fall, especially during the brown trout fall spawning run. Summer fishing is made difficult by significant dewatering of the river by irrigation and, frequently of late, by drought.

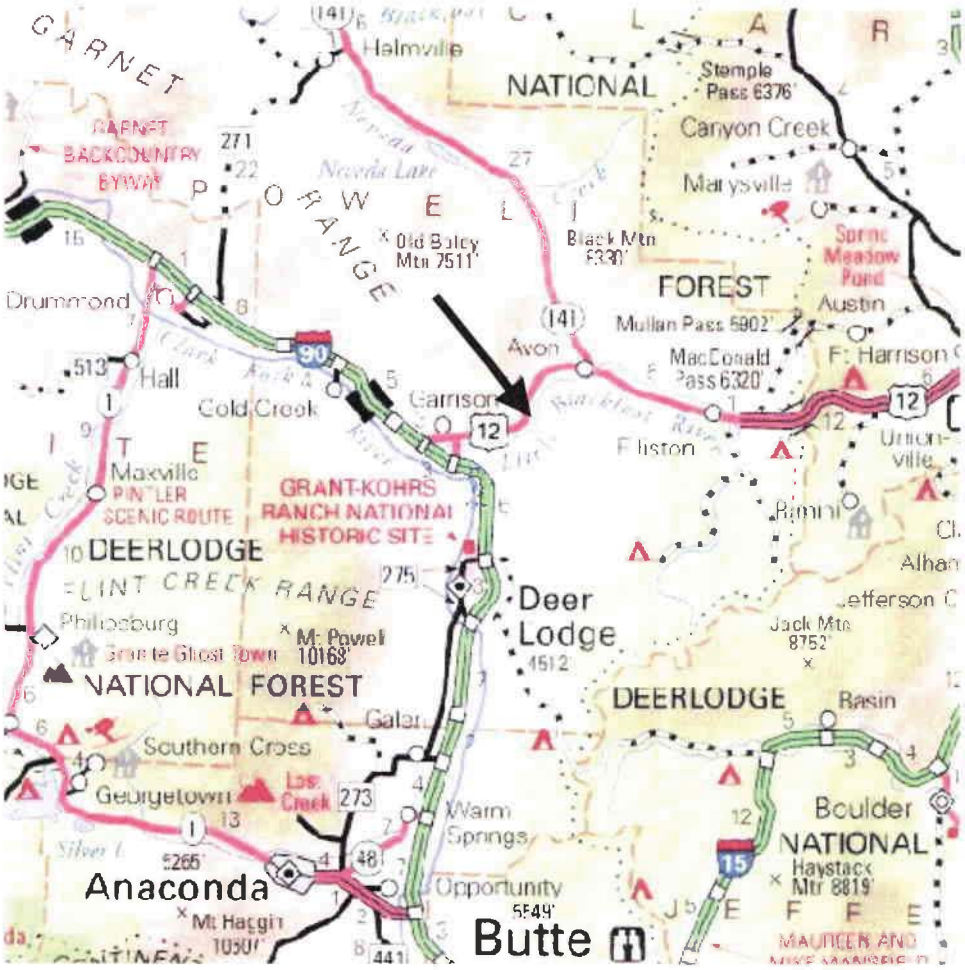

Figure 1. General location of the proposed FAS shown by black arrows.

MFWP proposes acquiring approximately 4.3 acres of land near Avon for a new Fishing Access Site (FAS) on the Little Blackfoot River (see Figure 1). The acreage sits between US Highway 12 and the Little Blackfoot River and currently is owned by MDT and a private landowner. The MDT parcel is approximately 2.0 acres in size and had been a highway rest stop from 1964 to 1996. The rest area was equipped with permanent rest rooms, a septic tank, picnic table structures, and water well. The rest area was closed in 1996 because of periodic flooding, problems with the water well, and limited sight distance for the approach. In 1997, MDT abandoned the water well and removed the restrooms, picnic table structures and access road. In 2004 MDT removed asphalt roadways, concrete sidewalks, the septic tank, and reseeded disturbed areas. The parcel now consists of a grove of cottonwood trees with a dirt road looping around it and a partially reclaimed approach (see Photo 1). MDT would grant either a recreational permit or sell that parcel to MFWP. MDT had the property appraised, and it was valued at $22,000. The decision to either sell the land or grant a recreational permit to MFWP is pending at this time.

MFWP managers foresaw that if the Department was successful in acquiring the MDT parcel for a new FAS, they would also need to acquire some adjacent land in order to construct a new, safe approach. The location of the existing, partially reclaimed approach has been deemed unsafe by MFWP engineers, as it does not afford enough site distance for cars exiting the MDT parcel. Therefore, MFWP approached the adjacent landowner about selling approximately 2.3 acres of ranchland adjacent to the MDT parcel for inclusion in the proposed

FAS, which would make the future construction of a new approach possible. The Rocking W Cattle Ranch has agreed to sell MFWP approximately 2.3 acres of adjoining land for $25,000. This sum is largely based on the appraised price of the MDT parcel. The Rocking W parcel consists of thick shrub understory, some grass and forbs, and scattered trees (Photo 2). Both parcels have stable banks that would be good for streamside angling (Photos 3 and 4). Spotted knapweed occurs on approximately 30% of both parcels.

MFWP is interested in acquiring this land for inclusion in the statewide FAS system because there are no designated public FASs on the Little Blackfoot River and little opportunity for public access, especially in the lower sections. Public access south of Elliston is currently limited to a handful of pullouts along state and county bridges and by permission of private landowners. Fishing pressure on the Little Blackfoot is relatively low due to the lack of public access and because of the proximity of better-known fly-fishing rivers like the Big Blackfoot and the Clark Fork. However, the Little Blackfoot does see more use than many people probably realize. In 2003, there were 1,716 angler days on the stretch between the headwaters and Elliston, and 3,472 angler days on the stretch between Elliston and Garrison. Montana FWP would like to provide better public access to these and other anglers with an FAS on the Little Blackfoot.

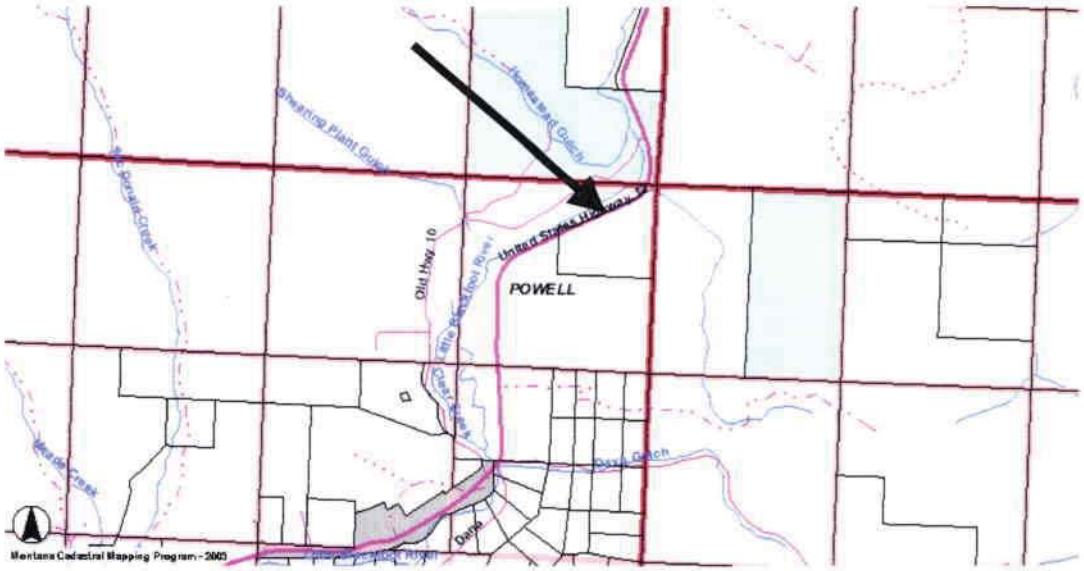

Figure 2. Approximate location of proposed Little Blackfoot FAS.

As discussed earlier, it has been decided by MFWP that if the proposed acquisitions do move forward, the existing approach [which has been partially reclaimed (see Photos 1 and 5)] would be moved about 300 feet to the southwest (Photo 6) so that people pulling on or off the highway would have better visibility of oncoming traffic. However, the actual construction of the new approach, the complete reclamation of the old approach, and any other physical improvements to the proposed FAS are not addressed in this EA

Construction of the new approach or any other improvements (which this EA does not cover) would not begin for at least a year and probably two. In the meantime, the site would not be open to vehicles, and MFWP would initiate a weed control program to eradicate the spotted knapweed and any other noxious weeds on the site. These steps would reduce the spread of

weeds from the site. This weed control would continue after the site became open to the public.

The benefits of the proposed action would include the provision of greater public access to a high-quality fishery; the establishment of site protection measures, especially that of noxious weed control; and the possibility of the construction of a safer approach from the federal highway. The acquisition of the MDT parcel and the Rocking W parcel for inclusion in the statewide FAS system would greatly add to public recreational opportunities in the Region.

Photo 1. View of MDT parcel and old approach.

Photo 2. Interior of Rocking W parcel.

Photo 3. Little Blackfoot River looking upstream on MDT property.

Photo 4. Little Blackfoot River looking downstream on Rocking W property.

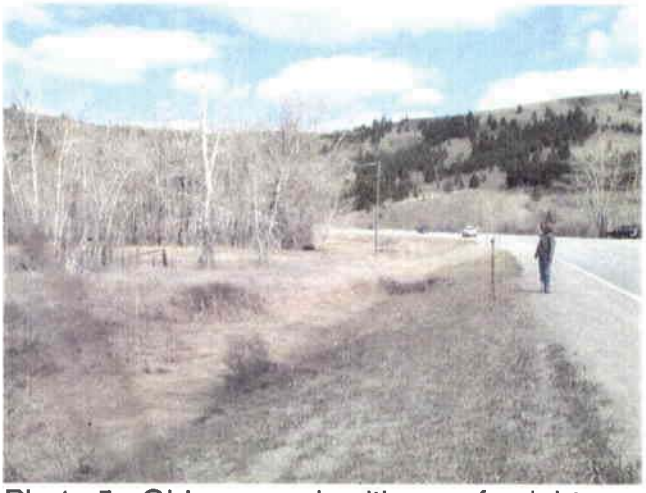

Photo 5. Old approach with unsafe sight distance.

Photo 6. Proposed location of new approach.

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 were taken, the parcels in question would remain under their present ownership. MFWP would lose a rare opportunity to establish an FAS in the area, and public access to the Little Blackfoot River would continue to be very limited. Weeds on the parcels would not be eradicated and would continue to pose a threat of spreading to adjacent land and downstream.

Alternative B:
In alternative B, MFWP would acquire the MDT land but not the adjacent 2.3 acres of Rocking W land. This alternative is not preferable because of safety concerns over the present approach and the likelihood of trespassing and conflict between the landowner and users.

Preferred Alternative C: Proposed Action
Note: a detailed evaluation of the Proposed Action is included in Part VI. Environmental Review Checklist beginning on page 10.

In the preferred alternative, MFWP would acquire approximately 2 acres (an old rest area) from MDT and 2.3 acres from the Rocking W Cattle Company for an FAS on the Little Blackfoot. By acquiring both parels, engineers would be able to relocate the approach to a safer location on the Rocking W land and lessen the chance of trespassing and conflict between users and adjacent landowners. By acquiring this land, MFWP would be able to establish the only designated FAS on the Little Blackfoot River and therefore provide better public access to a high-quality fishery while implementing site control measures on the site such as noxious weed control.

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

There are no mitigation, stipulations, or other controls associated with the actions. Therefore, no evaluation is necessary.

3. **Private Property Regulatory Restrictions:**

Actions described in this environmental analysis do not regulate the use of private, tangible personal property, and therefore do not require an evaluation of regulatory restrictions on private property.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The Little Blackfoot River is an important tributary to the Clark Fork River and is a high quality if lesser known and visited fishery. Brook trout, westslope cutthroat trout and brown trout exist in sufficient numbers to support greater fishing pressure than the present. The establishment of an FAS at this site would be in line with MFWP's Six-Year Operation Plan for the Fisheries Program, which has as a stated goal to "identify waters in need of additional access and develop strategies to meet these needs," and to "pursue access opportunities to high-quality, non-floatable (small/medium) streams."

The proposed acquisition would increase public recreational opportunities with no significant negative impacts.

PART IV. 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 would be notified of this proposal by way of: a statewide press release in newspapers; by legal notices in the *Silver State Post* (Deer Lodge), *Independent Record* (Helena), and the *Missoulian* newspapers; and by public notice on the MFWP web page: **http://fwp.state.mt.us/publicnotices/**. A copy of the draft EA will be mailed to any party who indicates or has indicated an interest in this proposal.

   After reviewing public input received by or on June 13, 2005, Region 2 MFWP Supervisor Mack Long would select a preferred alternative and issue the Decision Notice on this draft EA. Based on the outcome of the Decision Notice, this project proposal would be presented to the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission for final action at its regularly scheduled meeting in July. MFWP believes this level of public involvement is appropriate for this scale of project.

2. **Duration of comment period, if any.**
A 21-day comment period is proposed, and comments must be received no later than June 13, 2005.

Comments should be addressed to Lee Bastian at Region 2 MFWP, 3201 Spurgin Rd., Missoula, MT 59804-3101; or emailed to lbastian@mt.gov.

PART V. 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.**

Proposed finding:

Based on an evaluation of the primary, secondary, and cumulative impacts to the physical and human environment, this environmental review found no significant impacts from the proposed action. In determining the significance of the impacts, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks assessed the severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the impact, the probability that the impact would occur or reasonable assurance that the impact would not occur. MFWP assessed various aspects of the impact, the importance to the state and to society of the environmental resource or value affected, any precedent that would be set as a result of an impact of the proposed action that would commit MFWP to future actions; and potential conflicts with local, federal, or state laws. As this EA revealed no significant impacts from the proposed actions, the EA is the appropriate level of review and an EIS is not required.

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

Lee Bastian
Region 2 Parks Manager
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 542-5517

Allan Kuser
Fishing Access Site Coordinator
1420 East 6th Ave
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
(406) 444-7885

Linnaea Schroeer-Smith
Independent Contractor
1027 9th Ave
Helena, MT 59601
(406)495-9620

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

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks: Parks Division, Wildlife Division, Fisheries Division, Design & Construction Bureau, Lands Unit, Legal Unit

PART VI. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

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

A. 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				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				
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. The proposed action involves only an acquisition of property and does not include development or physical alteration of the property.

* 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. 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				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.)						
f. Other:		X				

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

2a. The proposed action involves only an acquisition of property and does not include development or physical alteration of the property.

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

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

3a. The proposed action involves only an acquisition of property and does not include development or physical alteration of the property.

* 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.

4. VEGETATION 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 positive			4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X positive			
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?			X			4d.
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?						
g. Other:		X				

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

4a. The MDT and Rocking W properties have a moderate (approximately 30%) infestation of noxious weeds, primarily spotted knapweed, and the current owners do not actively practice weed control. If MFWP gains ownership of the parcels, managers would initiate a weed control program, which would include spraying, biological control, and hand pulling as needed. The diversity of the remaining plant community would likely increase as a result.

4b. Please see comment 4a.

4d. The 2.3 acre Rocking W parcel is currently part of the ranch's agricultural operation but because of the size and location between the river and the highway, its use as agricultural land is minimal. This small reduction in acreage of agricultural land is not significant.

4e. If MFWP acquires the property; weed control measures would be implemented before the site was opened to the public. The proposed action would decrease the likelihood of weeds being spread from the site.

* 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		yes	5b.
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		yes	5g.
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.)						
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.)						
j. Other:		X				

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

5b. The proposed action would increase public access to the Little Blackfoot River, which would likely result in more fishing pressure and more game fish mortality. Department fisheries biologists feel that fish populations in the Little Blackfoot can support the expected increase in pressure. Game wardens regularly patrol FASs to ensure that anglers are complying with state regulations.

5g. The acquisition itself would not affect wildlife populations. However, once the site became open to the public, the presence of recreationists on the property could cause stress to wildlife populations. However, visitation would not be expected to ever be high, and most wildlife species present on the two parcels are probably already accustomed to human presence, given the site's proximity to US Highway 12 and area ranches.

* 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.

B. 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			6a.
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:		X				

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

6a. There would be no increase in noise from the proposed action. Once the site became open to the public there would be a very slight increase in noise. Adjacent landowners would not be affected.

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 interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				7a.
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):

7a. The proposed action would not alter or interfere with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use, not does it conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance.

* 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.

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 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				
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)						
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. The MFWP Region 2 Weed Management Plan calls for an integrated method of managing weeds, including the use of herbicides. The use of herbicides would be in compliance with application guidelines and conducted by people trained in safe handling techniques. Weeds would also be controlled using mechanical or biological means in certain areas to reduce the risk of chemical spills or water contamination.

* 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.

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 area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
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):

9e. If MFWP were to acquire the property in question, the approach would be moved to a safer location (Photos 5 and 6) before the site was opened to the public.

* 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				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?			X			10b.
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):

10b. The proposed action would result in a slight increase to Powell County tax rolls, as MDT is tax-exempt and therefore does not pay taxes on its property, and the tax classification for the Rocking W Cattle Company parcel would be upgraded from agricultural to a higher classification.

10e. MFWP would use Fishing Access Site Acquisition Funds provided from the sale of licenses.

10f. Because the proposed FAS would not be on a caretaker's established route, the Department has explored the option of having Region 3 MFWP staff maintain the FAS, as travel time and costs would be less. Another option would be to hire a caretaker in the Avon or Elliston area where per diem for travel would be minimal. It is estimated it would cost approximately $400 for weed control the first year or two to get control of the spotted knapweed, dropping to about $100 a year thereafter to maintain control. Total maintenance cost estimates for the site are pending.

* 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. 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 aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X			11c.
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.)						
e. Other:		X				

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

11c. The proposed acquisition would increase public access to the Little Blackfoot River, thereby improving recreational opportunities in the area and Region.

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.)						
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 proposed action would not destroy or alter any site, structure or object of historic importance.

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

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

13a. This EA found no significant impacts to the human or physical environment from the proposed action.

* 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.