

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Washington Street Bridge Removal
Proposed Implementation Date:	Fall 2005/Spring 2006
Proponent:	Yellowstone County
Location:	Generally located in the riverbed of the Yellowstone River in the SW¼ of Section 16, Township 1 South, Range 26 East
County:	Yellowstone County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Yellowstone County is proposing to remove an abandoned bridge in the former Washington Street right-of-way. The bridge no longer serves vehicular or pedestrian traffic and has become a safety concern. The County will need to enter the riverbed of the Yellowstone River, south of Billings, to remove the bridge and its abutments, if funding allows.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

No public scoping was performed by DNRC other than contact with the Yellowstone County's consulting engineer, Bill Oakey of Design 3 Engineers in Billings.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED

- SPA 124 Permit from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
- Section 404 Permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers

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LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OFFICE

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Proposed Alternative: Allow Yellowstone County to hire a contractor to remove the abandoned Washington Street Bridge and its abutments from the navigable riverbed of the Yellowstone River.

No Action Alternative: Disallow disturbance of the riverbed and leave the abandoned bridge and abutments in its current location.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.
- Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.
- Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

No Impact.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

No Impact. See mitigation measures required by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Fisheries Manager in Attachment A.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

No Impact.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

No Impact.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

No Impact.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program database indicated that there is one threatened species in the general project area, the bald eagle. Additionally, there are 5 species listed as sensitive that are in the general project area, including the spiny softshell turtle, spotted bat, peregrine falcon, western hognose snake and milk snake. The proposed action is not anticipated to have any negative impact on any threatened or sensitive species.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

No Heritage Properties will be affected with the removal of the remaining portion of the Washington Street Bridge, per email from Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archaeologist, on 17 October 2005.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

No Impact. The proposed action will remove an abandoned bridge and abutments, if funding allows, from a channel of the Yellowstone River and the river's appearance will revert to a more natural state.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No Impact.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

There are no known state or federal actions in the vicinity and no known future actions proposed by the state that would have cumulative impacts with this proposal.

<p style="text-align: center;">IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i> |
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14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

The proposed alternative would improve safety by removing an attractive nuisance from the river that has been the site of previous accidental falls into the Yellowstone River that necessitated Search and Rescue operations.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

No Impact.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

No Impact. The proposed action of removing the bridge would be a relatively short duration project and would not have a significant impact on employment.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

No Impact. The bridge structure is owned by Yellowstone County and does not currently generate any tax revenue.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

No Impact. The removal of the bridge structure will not alter traffic patterns because the road that formerly served the bridge was previously closed by Yellowstone County and is no longer maintained.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

There will be no impact from the proposed action because there are no known plans that the proposed action would affect.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

The proposed action will increase recreational values for those floating the Yellowstone River by removing a man-made obstacle from the river, provided that there is enough funding to remove the abutments.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

No Impact.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

No Impact.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

No Impact.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

No Impact.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Jeff Bollman, AICP	Date: 18 October 2005
	Title: Area Planner, Southern Land Office	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

The proposed alternative has been selected and it is recommended that a Land Use License (LUL) be issued to Yellowstone County to allow the removal of the Washington Street Bridge and its abutments from the Bed of the Yellowstone River. The bridge no longer serves vehicular or pedestrian traffic and has become a safety concern..

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The potential for significant impacts to the Yellowstone River is minimal provided mitigation measures required by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (see Attachment A) are observed.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Sharon Moore
	Title: Area Manager, Southern Land Office
Signature: <i>Sharon Moore</i>	Date: 10/18/05



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region 5
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings MT 59105

August 31, 2005

Bill Oakey
Design 3 Engineering
17 North 26th Street, Suite 22
Billings, MT 59101

SUBJECT: Permit No. CO-04-05 R-5 Waterbody: Yellowstone River
 Project Name: Washington St Br Removal Water Code: 22-7015

Dear Bill:

Relative to the Montana Stream Preservation Act, the Department has completed our review of your proposed project on the Yellowstone River. The project has been approved if it is carried out in accordance with the following conditions.

1. All in-stream work shall be completed in an expeditious manner to avoid unnecessary impacts to the stream.
2. Power wash all equipment allowed to enter a flowing stream prior to entering the channel. To prevent leaks of petroleum products into waterways, no defective equipment shall be operated in the watercourse or adjacent areas capable of contributing surface flow to the watercourse.
3. All construction activities performed in the stream and immediate vicinity shall be conducted in a manner to reduce in-stream turbidity along with minimizing disturbances to the streambed and/or streambank.
4. Clearing of vegetation will be limited to that which is absolutely necessary for construction of the project. Extra precautions shall be taken to preserve existing riparian vegetation.
5. Restore riverbanks/streambanks disturbed by the bridge removal to their natural configuration, stabilize, and revegetate.
6. Waste material and concrete pieces 2-inches and over must be removed from the river/stream.
7. If the piers or end bents are removed by blasting, wrap with chain link fence or similar material to reduce rock fly.

8. Remove all piers flush with the top of the footing(s) or 1-2 feet below the riverbed/streambed elevation; completely remove the footing(s) and seal(s) when feasible. The natural streambed elevation is defined as the lowest point in the thalweg at or near the structure.
9. Remove, break or cut off all wood or steel pilings at least one foot or more below the natural streambed elevation. The natural streambed elevation is defined as the lowest point in the thalweg at or near the structure.
10. Remove or bury all end abutments.
11. Locate staging or storage areas at least 50 feet (15.2 meters) horizontally from the top of the stream/river bank.

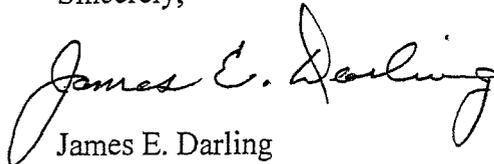
Conditions 6. through 11. apply only if the abutments are removed under Add Alternate #1 and #2. Also, the project will not cause a significant increase in turbidity if only the decking, trusses, etc. are removed without entering the water.

NOTE: This permit is valid for **one year** from the date of receipt.

X This project will cause a significant increase in turbidity. Therefore, the applicant must contact the Department of Environmental Quality to determine narrative conditions required to meet short-term water quality standards and protect aquatic biota.

 This project will not significantly increase turbidity if completed according to the conditions listed in the permit. Therefore, application to DEQ is not required.

Sincerely,



James E. Darling
Fisheries Manager

c: Fisheries Division, FWP
Jeff Ryan, DEQ