



Region 2  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59804-3101  
March 31, 2006

\*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  
\*State Historic Preservation Office, PO Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202  
\*MT State Library, PO BOX 201800, Helena, MT 59620-1800  
Jim Jensen, MT Environmental Information Center, POB 1184, Helena, MT 59624-1184  
BLM, 3255 Ft Missoula Rd, Missoula, MT 59804  
Clearwater Resource Council, Attn: Jon Haufler, P.O. Box 1471, Seeley Lake, MT 59868  
DNRC, Attn: Steve Wallace, Box 388, Greenough, MT 59823  
DNRC, Attn: Tony Liane, 1401 27th Ave, Missoula, MT 59804  
Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Bldg., Helena, MT 59620  
MFWP R2 CAC, Bud Pile, 610 Swanson Lane, Potomac, MT 59823  
MFWP R2 CAC, Chad Bauer, P O Box 8449, Missoula, MT 59807  
MFWP R2 CAC, Chris Marchion, 2105 Garfield, Anaconda, MT 59711  
MFWP R2 CAC, Ed Greef, P O Box 1327, Florence, MT 59833  
MFWP R2 CAC, Edward Hebbe III, 604 Mitchel, Deer Lodge, MT 59722  
MFWP R2 CAC, Jaala Wickman, POB 27, Frenchtown, MT 59834  
MFWP R2 CAC, Jack Reneau, 5425 Skyway Dr, Missoula, MT 59804  
MFWP R2 CAC, Jim Olson, 215 N 10th St, Hamilton, MT 59840  
MFWP R2 CAC, Louie Bouma, Box 188, Lincoln, MT 59639  
MFWP R2 CAC, Margaret Moddison, 1580 Sleeping Child Rd, Hamilton, MT 59840  
MFWP R2 CAC, Pat O'Herren, 2516 Wylie, Missoula, MT 59802  
MFWP R2 CAC, Ray Rugg, 50 Dry Creek Rd, Superior, MT 5972  
MFWP R2 CAC, Rich Lane, 1730 Frey, Missoula, MT 59808  
MFWP R2 CAC, Stephanie Strickland, POB 8249, Missoula, MT 59807-8249  
MFWP R2 CAC, Tim Aldrich, 3340 Rodea Road, Missoula, MT 59803  
MFWP R2 CAC, Tracy Manley, 232 Douglas Creek Ln, Drummond, MT 59832  
Missoula City-Co Health Dept, Attn: Ben Schmidt, 301 W Alder, Missoula, MT 59802  
Missoula Co Commissioners, 200 W. Broadway, Missoula, MT 59802  
Missoula Co Public Works, Attn: Greg Robertson, 200 W Broadway, Missoula, MT 59802  
MT Audubon Council, Attn: Janet Ellis, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624  
MT Environmental Info Ctr, Attn: Jim Jenson, PO Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624  
MT FWP, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620  
MT Historical Society, SHPO, PO Box 201201, Helena, MT 59620  
MT Parks Foundation, Attn: Wayne Hirst, PO Box 728, Libby, MT 59923  
MT State Library, PO Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620  
Plum Crk Timber Co, Attn: Denny Sigars, 140 N Russell, Missoula, MT 59801  
Seeley Lk Ranger District, Attn: Tim Love, 3583 Highway 83, Seeley Lake, MT 59868  
US Forest Service, Attn: Jim Blackburn, 3583 Highway 83, Seeley Lake, MT 59868  
Wildlife Federation, PO Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624  
Placid Cabin Owner Assoc., Wally Bell, 647 Tamarack Street, Helena, MT 59601  
George Ochenski, PO Box 689, Helena, MT 59624  
Doug Mood, PO Box 42, Seeley Lake, MT 59868

\*\*Sen. Carol Williams, PO Box 9176, Missoula, MT 59807-9176  
\*\*Sen. Jon Ellingson, 141 North Ave. E, Missoula, MT 59801-6011  
\*\*Sen. Vicki Cocchiarella, 535 Livingston Ave., Missoula, MT 59801-8003  
\*\*Sen. Greg Lind, PO Box 16720, Missoula, MT 59808-6720  
\*\*Sen. Carolyn Squires, 211 South 10th St W, Missoula, MT 59801-3412  
\*\*Rep. Rosalie Buzzas, 233 University Ave., Missoula, MT 59801-1809  
\*\*Rep. Gail Gutsche, 1530 Cooper St., Missoula, MT 59802-2220  
\*\*Rep. David Wanzenried, 903 Sky Dr., Missoula, MT 59804-2793  
\*\*Rep. Holly Raser, 4304 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59804-4520  
\*\*Rep. Teresa Henry, 204 Chestnut St., Missoula, MT 59801-1809  
\*\*Rep. Kevin Furey, PO Box 56, Milltown, MT 59802-4903  
\*\*Rep. Dave McAlpin, 800 Woodworth Ave., Missoula, MT 59801-7046  
\*\*Rep. John Balyeat, 4879 Scott Allen Dr., Missoula, MT 59803-2793  
\*\*Rep. Robin Hamilton, 330 Daly Dr., Missoula, MT 59801-4338  
\*\*Rep. Tom Facey, 418 Plymouth, Missoula, MT 59801-4133  
\*\*Adjacent property owners  
\*\*Placid Lake Cabin Owners' Association members  
\*Mailed electronically  
\*\* Received postcard notification of the availability of the EA.

Dear Interested Citizen:

The enclosed Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for the proposed Placid Lake State Park Road Paving and Improvements project. This project proposes to pave the internal park roads and parking areas, widen and improve safety on approximately 500 feet of North Placid Road, and install a volunteer host pad with underground utilities at Placid Lake State Park (PLSP). The improvements to the internal park roads would benefit park visitors to PLSP by decreasing dust, thereby improving air quality and visitor experience. The safety improvements to the North Placid Road are needed to rectify traffic safety problems at the park entrance as well as eliminate dust generated from vehicle traffic on the county road. The volunteer host pad would allow for adding volunteer staff in order to provide better visitor services at PLSP.

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 MFWP at the address provided above, or viewed on MFWP's Internet website at <http://fwp.mt.gov> ("Recent Public Notices").

Comments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 1, 2006. Comments should be sent to MFWP's Chris Lorentz by mail at the above address or by email. If you have questions about this EA or project, please contact Lorentz at MFWP (phone 406-677-6804; email at [clorentz@mt.gov](mailto:clorentz@mt.gov)).

Sincerely,

*/s/ Lee Bastian for*

Mack Long  
Regional Supervisor

# DRAFT

## MEPA/NEPA CHECKLIST

March 31, 2006

### PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of Proposed State Action** Placid Lake State Park – Pave Campground Roads.
  
2. **Agency Authority for the Proposed Action** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.
  
3. **Name of Project** Placid Lake Campground Road Paving & Improvements.
  
4. **Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)**  
Co-Sponsor:  
Missoula County  
Public Works  
200 West Broadway  
Missoula, MT 59801
  
5. **If Applicable:**  
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date Spring 2006.  
Estimated Completion Date: Summer 2006.  
Current Status of Project Design (% complete) 70% complete.
  
6. **Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)**  
Missoula County, Montana  
Section 28 T16N R15W Principal Meridian Montana
  
7. **Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**  
The project will be within the existing road and parking areas. No new roads will be constructed nor will any new right of way be required for this proposed project.
  - (a) Developed:  
residential ..... \_\_\_ acres  
industrial..... \_\_\_ acres
  - (b) Open Space/Woodlands/  
Recreation ..... \_\_\_ acres
  - (c) Wetlands/Riparian  
Areas..... \_\_\_ acres
  - (d) Floodplain..... \_\_\_ acres
  - (e) Productive:  
irrigated cropland ..... \_\_\_ acres  
dry cropland ..... \_\_\_ acres  
forestry..... \_\_\_ acres  
rangeland ..... \_\_\_ acres  
other..... \_\_\_ acres

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

Figure 1 shows an area map of the project location. Figures 2 and 3 show site plan of the Placid Lake State Park campground. Figure 4 shows the camp host pad site plan.

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

**Proposed Action:** Montana FWP proposes to correct drainage, replenish the gravel base and asphalt the internal campground roads within Placid Lake State Park. The proposed project also includes adding a campground host pad with utilities, as well as widening and paving approximately 500 hundred feet of North Placid Lake county road outside the park entrance.

**Purpose/Benefits:**

The purpose of the proposed road improvements at Placid Lake State Park is to provide a better, more healthful, safe experience for visitors to Placid Lake State Park. Presently the park road surface is gravel with a low percentage of aggregate stone and high percentage of finely ground organic material and silt. During the summer peak use season the park road generates tremendous clouds of dust with every passing vehicle, especially in the lower loop and park entrance area. The dust not only detracts from the visitors' experience (Appendix A), but also creates safety hazards and health issues for people with any type of respiratory distress (Appendix B). The current gravel/organic road surface also generates mud during inclement weather. Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) needs to address public safety, drainage and dust issues within the park.

FWP has tried to reduce the dust and particulate at Placid Lake State Park. FWP has applied Magnesium Chloride (MgCl) as dust abatement for the past five years, with limited success. The dust abatement requires moisture to be effective. Unfortunately there is minimal moisture or relative humidity in the peak of the summer season, when the dust abatement is needed the most. Figures 5a and 5b provide a comparison of the campground during dusty conditions and dustless conditions, respectively. In addition, the MgCl has exacerbated the stress on mature trees along the park roads, contributing to higher mortality when combined with drought and insect attack. Hard surfacing the road would decrease airborne particulate, thus improving health and safety while being more environmentally responsible.

The unpaved North Placid Road also generates significant dust at the park entrance. The traffic volume in the Placid lake area has increased significantly in the past ten years. The increased traffic volume has created safety issues at the park entrance due by limiting visibility and the narrow nature of the road. The proposed action includes widening and paving approximately 500 feet of the North Placid Road outside the park entrance. Widening the road, increased sight distance, pavement and striping should improve safety at the park entrance.

This proposal also includes the installation of a host pad with underground utilities for a volunteer host. The volunteer host has nothing to do with resolving the dust or traffic safety issues. In response to public comments FWP would like to expand visitor services at Placid Lake

Figure 1. Location of Placid Lake State Park improvement project (Missoula County, T.16N, R.15W, Sec. 28).



Figure 2. Placid Lake State Park campground.



Figure 3. Current layout of Placid Lake State Park campground.

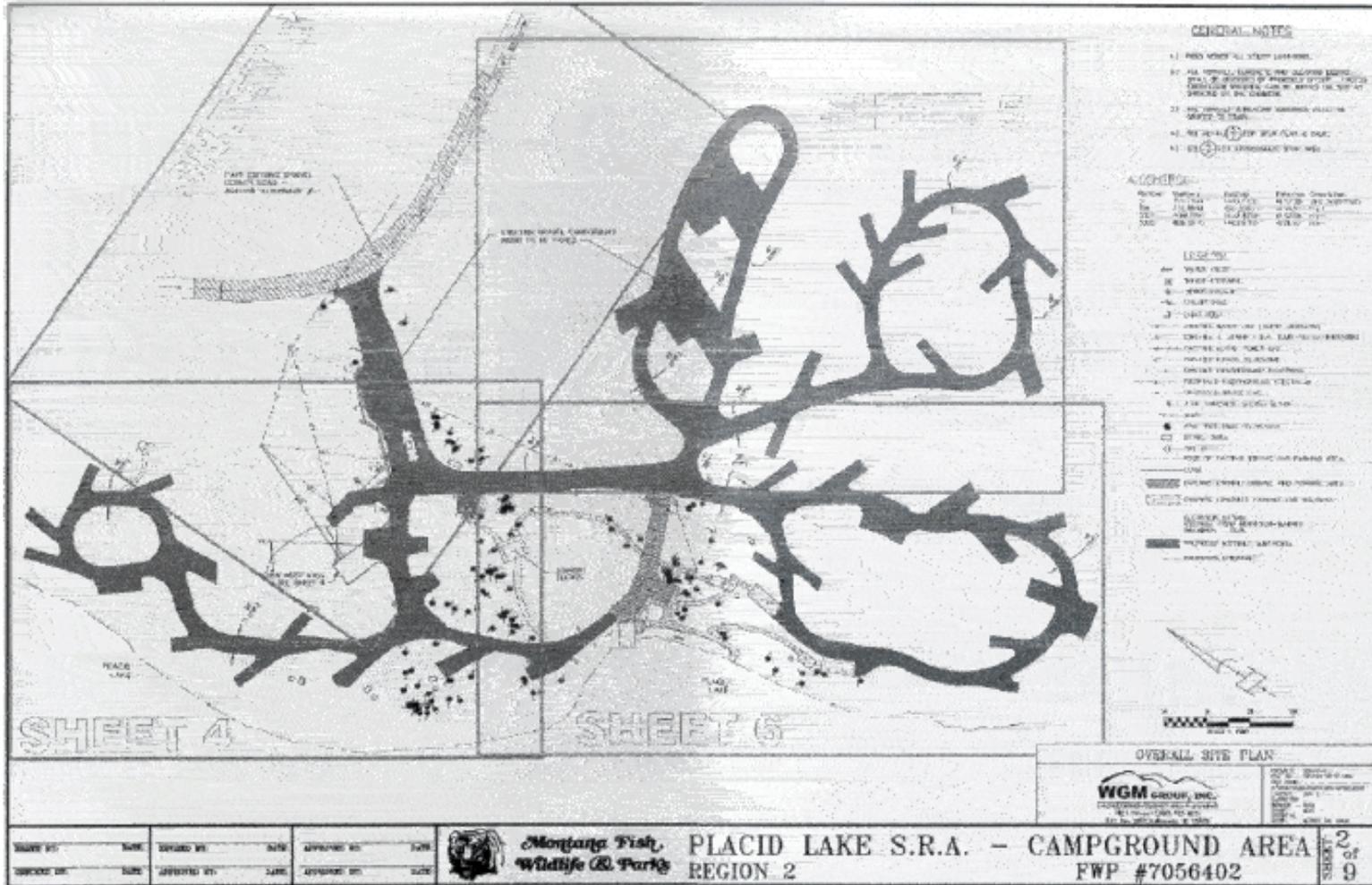
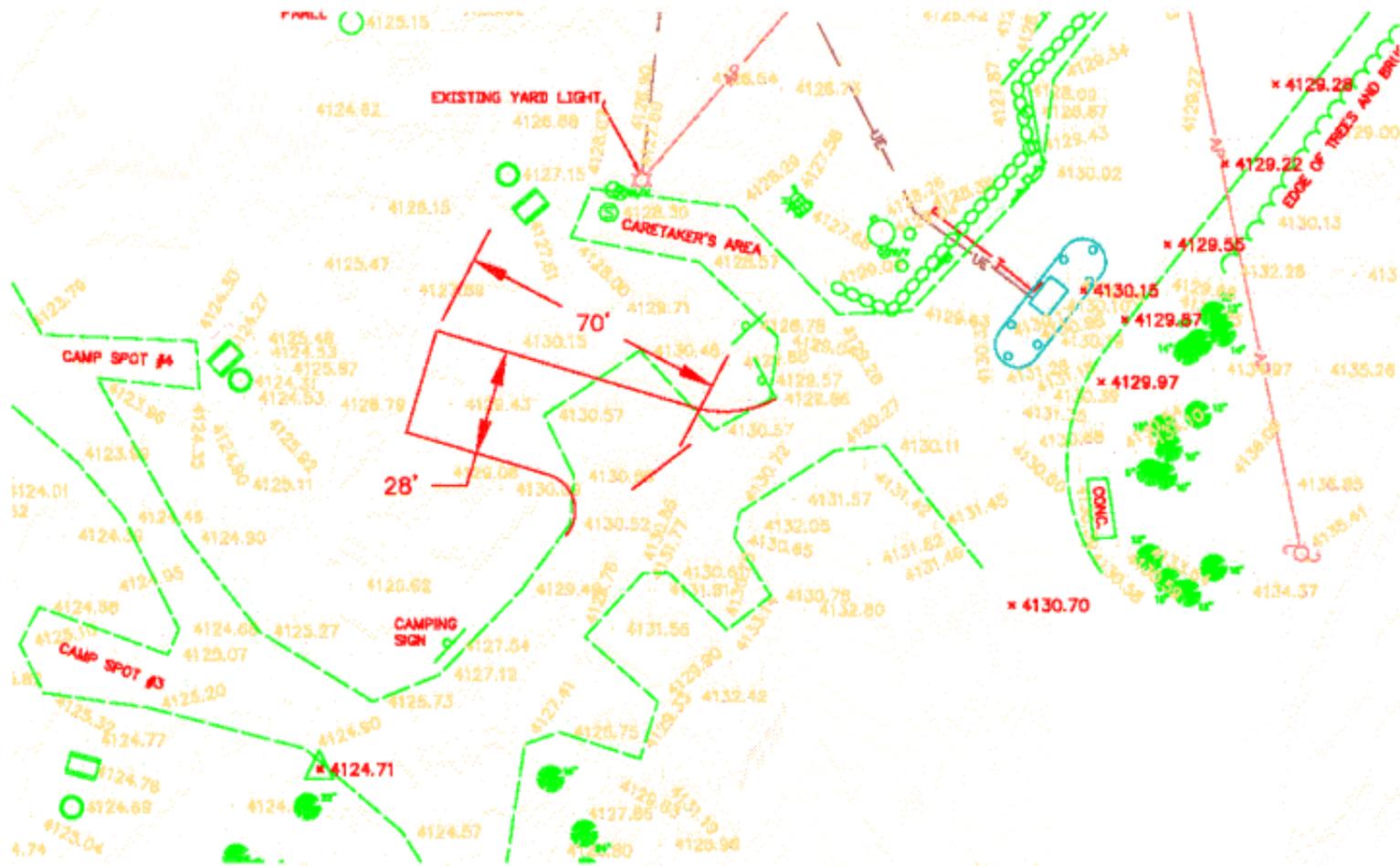


Figure 4. Details of proposed site plan for camp pad for volunteer host.



**Figure 5a. View within Placid Lake State Park campground during dusty conditions.**



**Figure 5b. View within Placid Lake State Park campground during dustless conditions.**



State Park by bringing in a volunteer Host. The Host would answer visitor questions and assist the park staff with programs such as the loan a life jacket and kids fishing program. The remote location of the park necessitates the volunteer reside at the park to ensure success of the program. A camp pad with utilities would be an asset in recruiting and retention of volunteers for this program. A level pad with utilities services would be constructed near the existing Caretaker site. Utilities to the host pad would include underground electricity, water, sewer and phone. All utilities would be tied in to existing services. This underground utility work should be completed prior to any paving, since several road crossings may be required.

The proposed road improvements would benefit park visitors to Placid Lake State Park by decreasing dust thereby improving air quality and visitor experience. The safety improvements to the North Placid Road are needed to rectify traffic safety problems at the park entrance as well as eliminate dust generated from the traffic on the county road. The host site will allow for adding volunteer staff to provide better visitor services at Placid Lake State Park

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

(a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
Fish, Wildlife & Parks		124 MT Stream Protection Act

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$ 300,000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
Missoula County	County Road

**11. List of Agencies Consulted during Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
 Missoula County  
 State Historic Preservation Office

# PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>☆</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>☆</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>☆</sup>	None	Minor <sup>☆</sup>	Potentially Significant		
▶a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				1.b
▶c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				1.c.
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			1.d.
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other						

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

1.b Soil structure and permeability should be improved by curtailing the use of Magnesium Chloride for dust control. Magnesium Chloride is a salt, which changes the soil structure and can inhibit moisture uptake by plants. Surfacing the road should eliminate the need for dust abatement, and the salts applied in past years should leach from the soil and root zone.

1.c. There would not be any destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features.

1.d. The road system in the park drains into predominately vegetated areas. Surfacing the road should not result in any significant changes in sedimentation or drainage patterns into Placid Lake.

- ☆ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

2. <u>AIR</u>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	IMPACT <sup>☆</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>☆</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>☆</sup>	None	Minor <sup>☆</sup>	Potentially Significant		
▶ a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			X			2.a.
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						

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

2.a. Paving should dramatically reduce dust from the road. This would vastly improve air quality in the general vicinity of the park road during the summer season. Particulate (dust) from vehicle traffic on the road currently creates health and safety issues on the road and an unpleasant experience for park visitors.

- ☆ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

3. <u>WATER</u>	IMPACT <sup>☆</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>☆</sup>	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown <sup>☆</sup>	None	Minor <sup>☆</sup>		
▶ a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X			3.a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X			3.b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
◆◆1. 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:						

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

3.a. Turbidity and temperature of surface water should not be impacted by the project.

3.b. Run off patterns from water leaving the road surface may be altered by the project in specific instances. During construction standard Best Management Practices (BMP's) would be used to mitigate any sediments entering the lake. These can include but are not limited to constructing gravel bars to trap sediment, sediment fencing, grading parking area to direct drainage away from the lake?, directing runoff into vegetative zones and development of sediment catch basins. The development of sediment basins and channeling of runoff water into vegetated areas would be expected to decrease the rate at which storm waters enter Placid Lake.

- ☆ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

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

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

The project will be within the existing road bed and should not negatively impact existing vegetation.

4.e. Noxious weed control BMPs would be followed throughout the project zone by the contractor under supervision of FWP.

- ☆ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

▶ 5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u>	IMPACT <sup>☆</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>☆</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>☆</sup>	None	Minor <sup>☆</sup>	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?			X			5.a.
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			5.f.
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)						
◆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:						

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

5. The proposed action would improve air and water quality within the project area. The proposed action is anticipated to have no detrimental impacts to T&E species. Placid Lake has a population of trout including rainbow trout, cutthroat trout and some bull trout. Warm summer temperatures stratify the lake, causing trout to seek deeper water away from the shallow zones along shore.

5.a Impacts to fish habitat would be minimized by implementing stream/riparian mgmt zone BMP's. Road improvements directly adjacent to the lake would move all work away from the water's edge with appropriate measures to prevent sediments from entering the surface waters. During construction standard BMP's would be used to mitigate any sediments entering the lake. These can include but are not limited to constructing gravel bars to trap sediment, sediment fencing, grading parking area to direct drainage away from the river, directing runoff into vegetative zones and development of sediment catch basins.

5.f. Bull trout are known to inhabit Placid Lake. Fish population studies have indicated bull trout are present but rare in Owl Creek and Placid Lake. The seasonally warm temperatures and poor habitat in Owl Creek seem to be the primary limiting factors for bull trout; however to protect the water quality of both Placid Lake and Owl Creek streamside BMP's would be adhered to on this project.

5.g. There may be intermittent and temporary displacement of animals due to noise and activity during the three to four month construction period.

- ☆ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>☆</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>☆</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>☆</sup>	None	Minor <sup>☆</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			6.a.
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:						

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

6.a. Minimal increased noise from construction equipment during the 30-day construction period may temporarily impact property owners adjacent to the Park.

- ☆ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

7. <u>LAND USE</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>⊛</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>⊛</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>⊛</sup>	None	Minor <sup>⊛</sup>	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: _____						

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

- ⊛ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>☆</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>☆</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>☆</sup>	None	Minor <sup>☆</sup>	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			8.a.
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:						

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

8.a. Any potential release of hazardous substance (oil, diesel fuel, etc.) due to vehicle accident or equipment malfunction would be mitigated with proper safety procedures, as well as signing and traffic control throughout the work zone during the construction period. There would be continued use of weed control chemicals with the risk of spills mitigated through use of qualified applicators.

8.b. Improve access for emergency vehicles.

8.c. Reduce dust for visitors with respiratory distress. Improve driving conditions and visibility at the park entrance.

- ☆ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>⊛</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>⊛</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>⊛</sup>	None	Minor <sup>⊛</sup>	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				
f. Other:						

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

- ⊛ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>☆</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>☆</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>☆</sup>	None	Minor <sup>☆</sup>	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				
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 used of any energy source?		X				
▶ e. Define projected revenue sources		X				10.e.
▶ f. Define projected maintenance costs.		X				10.f.
g. Other: _____						

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

10.e. This project would not create any new revenue sources. Visitation to Placid Lake State Park is at capacity most summer weekends. The only time period where there could be a potential increase in visitation at Placid Lake State Park would be during the “shoulder seasons” and “some week days during the summer season. Whether the road is paved or not paved would not influence people to change their visitation habits. The social impact of crowding at the park could cause people to change their visitation habits. This road project is not expected to increase visitation and therefore, not add to revenues collected at the park.

10.f. This project would eliminate the need for road grading and dust abatement within the Park. However, once paved, this road would have maintenance needs. These interior-road maintenance needs would continue to be the responsibility State Parks.

- ☆ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

▶ 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u>	IMPACT <sup>⊛</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>⊛</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>⊛</sup>	None	Minor <sup>⊛</sup>	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
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			11.c.
◆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:						

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

11. The proposed action may improve the quality of the aesthetics and recreational experience for many visitors to the Placid Lake State Park. Surfacing the road would greatly decrease dust, improving the visitor experience at Placid Lake State Park.

11.c. The proposed action is not anticipated to increase overnight camping at Placid Lake State Park because facilities at the Park are operating at near capacity. Over time a slight increase in use during the shoulder seasons, early spring and late fall, is likely to occur based on increasing population in western Montana. (See Appendix C for Tourism Report.)

- ⊛ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>☆</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>☆</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>☆</sup>	None	Minor <sup>☆</sup>	Potentially Significant		
▶a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12.a.
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? <b>Attach SHPO letter of clearance.</b> (Also see 12.a)						12.d.
e. Other:						

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

12.a. The proposed action would occur within the existing road right of way and would not impact cultural or historic resources.

12.d. Appendix D provides a copy of the State Historic Preservation Office letter of clearance.

- ☆ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

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

13.a.) The proposed action would benefit visitors to Placid Lake State Park by improving the ease and safety of vehicular travel within the Park in addition to providing a more positive recreational experience. Disruption of wildlife, recreation, and other public uses at Placid Lake State Park would be temporary and occur intermittently during the construction period. Following the completion of the project resource impacts would likely be minimized through better defined roadways which aid in preventing “user-pioneered” road and parking areas, less road dust particulate being generated in the air, and discontinued use of dust abatement chemicals. Negative cumulative impacts from this project are not expected.

- ☆ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. 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 1 - No Action** - This alternative would not resolve the issues impacting public health and safety or natural resource protection (tree stresses from chemical agents). By choosing the “No Action” alternative, the known safety, resource, and aesthetic issues at Placid Lake State Park would not be addressed.

**Alternative 2 – (Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative) Add Gravel, Correct Drainage& Asphalt Paving; Pave 250 Feet of the North Placid Road on Each Side of the Park Entrance; and Add Campground Host Pad with Underground Utilities**– This alternative would be the improvements to the internal park road system, including improvements to 400 feet of N. Placid Lake Rd. (county road) at the park entrance and addition of a volunteer host pad. The road improvements would correct drainage and pave the roads and parking spurs with a 2” lift of asphalt. The county road at the park entrance would be widened and surfaced to improve safety in this congested area. The addition of a campground host pad with utilities would provide amenities to a volunteer camp host. Providing basic services to a volunteer camp host would aid in encouraging the participation of future camp hosts while the host would provide a positive resource for visitor experience, information and safety.

**Alternative 3 – Correct drainage and refresh gravel surface of interior park roads.** This alternative would correct drainage and reduce dust in the short term. Needle fall from the conifer trees requires raking organic material off the road system for fire safety and aesthetics. Over time the aggregate stone from the road base is depleted by maintenance activities and dust will again become a significant detractor to the visitor experience. Chemical dust abatement is environmentally damaging to trees and vegetation, in particular the long-term health of the trees adjacent to the interior park roads. The addition of a Host site with underground utilities and safety improvements (widening) to N Placid Rd would be completed without asphalt surfacing.

**Alternative 4 – Correct drainage and refresh gravel surface of interior park roads and parking spurs, pave interior roads and boat parking lot only (leave camp pads gravel)** This alternative would correct drainage and reduce dust generated by vehicle travel in the park. This alternative would not address dust from North Placid Road. The addition of a Host site with underground utilities and safety improvements (widening) to North Placid Rd would be completed without asphalt surfacing. The expense of returning at a later date to pave camp spurs would be cost prohibitive.

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

Mitigation measures are listed in the checklist under the appropriate items.

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

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

5. 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?

Legal notices advertising the availability of this EA for public review will be published in the Missoulian, Seeley Lake Pathfinder, and Helena Independent Record newspapers. .

The EA will be available on MFWP's web site at [www.fwp.mt.gov](http://www.fwp.mt.gov), under "Recent Public Notices."

6. Duration of comment period if any:

Comments will be accepted for a period of not less than 30 days.

Comments must be postmarked or received no later than 5 p.m. on May 1, 2006.

Please send comments to:

Placid Lake Road EA  
C/O Chris Lorentz  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
P.O. Box 61  
Seeley Lake MT 59868

[clorentz@mt.gov](mailto:clorentz@mt.gov)

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

Chris Lorentz  
Park Manager  
Montana FWP  
P.O. Box 61  
Seeley Lake, MT 59868  
(406) 677-6804

Lee Bastian  
R-2 Parks Manager  
Montana FWP  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
(406) 542-5500

Rod Berg  
Fisheries Biologist  
Montana FWP  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
(406) 542-5500

Mike Thompson  
R-2 Wildlife Manager  
Montana FWP  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
(406) 542-5500

## **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

### **Narrative Evaluation**

#### **Background information**

Placid Lake State Park is located 7 miles from the town of Seeley Lake, approximately 50 miles east of Missoula. The park has an average annual visitation of 29,000 people per year with almost 85% of those visitors being Montana residents. The majority of visitors camp over night. Park facilities include 42-unit campground, boat ramp, dock with boat slips, comfort station with flush toilets and coin operated hot showers. Placid Lake State Park provides the only public access to Placid Lake.

Public comment has been gathered using a number of methods. In 2004 and 2005 visitor comment cards have been distributed to park visitors to solicit comments on facilities and staff at Placid Lake State Park. Dust from the campground roads was the most often mentioned negative comment about Placid Lake State Park identified by users at Placid Lake:

- 32% of the comments indicated the facilities and staff were good
- 19% of the comments complained about dust in the campground
- 12% offered no specific comments about Placid Lake State Park
- 1% of the comments complained about crowded facilities or conflicting behaviors of other visitors in the park
- 1% commented on the cleanliness of the facilities at Placid Lake
- 0.3% commented on the need for additional boat slips or a second dock
- 0.3% felt the free day use was damaging the park and experience
- 0.25% felt there should be an RV dump station
- 0.25% commented on a missing directional sign on the way to the park
- 0.25% commented on need for additional water hydrants
- 0.25% commented on a broken sewer line that required the comfort station to be closed for a weekend
- 0.1% commented on the need for an additional latrine in the upper loop
- 1 commented there should be less development and lower fees.

Of the comments received from visitors to Placid Lake State Park dust was one of the primary detractors from their visit (Figure 1). This situation was in no doubt exacerbated by the drought experienced over the past several summers. Behavior of other visitors was the second most commonly mentioned detractor from the visit to the park. If a volunteer host were on site to supplement public contact and provide better information to the public some behavioral conflicts could be eliminated or reduced.

FWP staff conducted scoping at Placid Lake Cabin Owners Association meetings annually for the past 5+ years. In discussions relating to road improvements in the Placid Lake area the Cabin Owners are generally in favor of better roads but not overwhelmingly in support of paving the connecting road between Placid Lake and Highway 83. The majority of visitors to Placid Lake State Park strongly favor surfacing the park road system to eliminate dust in the campground.

#### **Will improving the road detract from the primitive character of Placid Lake?**

The impacts of the road on the aesthetic environment and character of the Park will be offset by the significant reduction of dust and mud in the campground. The pavement will better delineate the

road and parking areas, which will reduce the encroachment of vehicles in to the vegetation, thus enhancing the natural attributes of the park. Further mitigation of the pavement could be chip sealing the paved surfaces to soften the appearance of the “black asphalt”. The impacts of this project to the primitive character of the lake will be minimal. The addition of a volunteer host pad will enable FWP to augment visitor services through the help of volunteer hosts. The expectation is that a volunteer host would help reduce conflicts between park visitors. Installation of the host site, with utilities would required trenching across the campground road, work that should be done before paving the road system.

**Will paving the road increase the number of people camping & boating on Placid Lake?**

The paving project is not anticipated to significantly change the number of people camping and recreating at Placid Lake State Park. Facilities at the Placid Lake State Park are operating at near capacity and there is no plan to expand facilities at this time. Most visitors to Placid Lake prefer paved parking spurs for ease of leveling RV’s and cleanliness.

**Why improve the North Placid Road at the park entrance?**

Traffic volume on the North Placid Road has increased at a steady pace as a result of development on private lands around the Placid Lake basin. Ingress into the park is at a bend in the road with limited sight distance, this creates a safety issue with traffic turning left into the park.

**Who will maintain the road after it is paved?**

Fish, Wildlife and Parks will be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the road inside the park, Missoula County will maintain the North Placid Road outside the park, just as the current situation is today.

**How much will this project Cost?**

The cost is variable. Current estimates are between \$250,000 and 275,000. The instability in the price of oil based products like asphalt make it difficult to determine the final cost of the project. If surfacing the road is done in conjunction with other paving projects and coordinated with the set up of an asphalt batch plant in the vicinity the cost would be reduced.

**Appendix A. Comments received from the public that related to dust at Placid Lake State Park campground, 2004-2005 seasons.**

PARK_ID	COMMENTS	PARK FACILITIES	STAFF SERVICES	DATE VISIT
34	Would be nice to reduce the dust.	4	5	
34	Could use more water faucets, and roads could be sealed to hold down dust.	3	6	
34	Nice place, great staff, but too much dust.	3	5	
34	The staff service is excellent, they keep the grounds very clean and take pride in their job. After a camper pulls out they clean and rack the area. Very friendly staff. The only thing that would keep me from coming back is all the dust!	3	5	
34	Lake Placid is a very quiet and clean campground. The hosts do an excellent job. Our only complaint is the amount of dust and dirt passing vehicles stir up. It's really bad.	4	5	
34	Great staff!!! Need to dust oil CG road!	4	5	
34	Campsites dusty and dirty cigarette butts everywhere. Bathrooms dirty garbage overflowing, lawns aren't mowed anymore. Did management forget Placid Lake?	1	1	
34	Dust problem. Park roads very dusty. Gety in our trailer everytime somebody drives by. Need to pave roads in park. Also, make available some sites with power. Minnesota & Wisconsin do it in their State parks, for only \$3.00 extra per night.	5	5	6/28/2004
34	A nice place to stay w/clean facilities but way too much dust in the air. Dust stays and does not leave.	5	4	6/29/2004
34	Except for the dust. Stayed at campsite #2 and #15. Too much traffic with an unpaved road.	2		6/30/2004
34	A lot of dust from the road was messy. However, staff and other facilities wre excellent.	3	5	7/1/2004
34	Lots of dust, from road traffic, even though we were driving very slow.	4	5	7/1/2004
34	Your facilities are most accommodating. A beautiful place. However, there is one large drawback, the dirt and dust is suffocating at times. One of the quietest and well run campgrounds we've visited.	4	5	7/1/2004
34	Wonderful view and people, clean bathrooms. Wish road was paved, very dusty. Otherwise awesome.	4	5	7/2/2004
34	Very nice people and awesome view. Bathrooms clean, campsites tidy. Road would be better paved (very dusty).	4	5	7/2/2004

34	Dust abatement on the road would help. The people here are absolutely great!	1	1	7/2/2004
34	Showers are awesome!!! The lady at the booth is the best thing going for your State Parks! She is so helpful and really seems to enjoy her job. We will come again. Dusty.	5	5	7/2/2004
34	Camp site is way too dusty because of the road. Sure could use oil.	5	5	7/2/2004
34	Very nice campposts... nice campgrounds. Didn't like all the dust from the gravel roads.	4	5	7/9/2004
34	Out house full, stinks; dusty roads, noisy dogs and deep piles. To many vehicles for size of park. New rules are not good. Day use should have to pay just like I do.	1	5	7/11/2004
34	Staff was very goo this year. Full out house--smelly. Dusty roads. Barking dogs should not be allowed in campground. Speeding cars and trucks. New rules will never work--The people making the rules need to come work for a while.	1	5	7/11/2004
34	Dusty. New boat slip dock railings to far outside on edge of dock & rubs boat before bumpers contact slips very narrow.	3	5	7/14/2005
34	Need second dock put back in. New dock is nice but not enough room for two boats in one area. Some kind of dust control would be nice also.	4	5	7/20/2005
34	Campground attendant very nice and helpful as well as park staff. Needs to have more supervision for late night parties--should be more of family atmosphere. Campsites very dusty, but understandable with drought. Beautiful park!	4	5	7/22/2005

Appendix B. Comment concerning affects of dust at Placid Lake State Park Campground on respiratory problems.

To Whom it may concern  
Placid Lake Park

The severity of powdery dust on the interior roadways causes extreme difficulty for people with respiratory problems. The failure of people not following the "5 mph" speed limit adds more to this problem.

It seems that oiling the interior roadways would help alleviate this problem.

Consideration of this problem would be appreciated.

The improvements made at this park definitely makes a high rating. Such as the rest room, showers, boat ramp, docks, boat slips and handicap access.

We always enjoy our visits.

Thank You

[Redacted signature]

## Appendix C. Tourism Report

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

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

**Victor Bjornberg**  
**Tourism Development Coordinator**  
**Montana Promotion Division**  
**Department of Commerce**  
**1424 9th Avenue**  
**Helena, MT 59620-0533**

#### Project Name

Placid Lake State Park Improvement Project

#### Project Description

The proposed project is the grade correction and paving of the internal park roads and installation of a volunteer host site at Placid Lake State Park. FWP proposes to invest up to \$275,000 dollars to improve the roads and parking lots in Placid Lake State Park. The volunteer host site, with utilities will facilitate a summer volunteer to provide information services at the park. Paving the road will reduce dust, eliminating the need for chemical dust abatement, improving the visitor experience at Placid Lake State Park. The project would also include safety enhancements to approximately 500 feet of County road at the park entrance. Specifically FWP would widen and improve sight distance on the County road at the park entrance.

Would this site development project have a impact on the tourism economy?

NO

**YES** If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, Would improve tourism infrastructure in Placid Lake State Park.

The proposed action is to improve the internal park roads by correcting drainage and safety issues, rectifying problems in the road base and surfacing the road with asphalt. During the summer peak use season the gravel surface of the road generates significant dust even with the low traffic speed inside the park. FWP has use Magnesium Chloride as a chemical dust abatement with some success. However, a side effect of the MgCl dust abatement has been increased stress on the mature trees along the park roads. The MgCl (salt) exacerbates the drought s and insect stress and has resulted in increased mortality of trees in the park.

The project will benefit both park visitors and natural environment. Placid Lake State Park provides the only public access to Placid Lake. The campground at the State Park currently operates at near capacity so the road improvements will not significantly increase campground occupancy. The project may improve survival of the mature trees in the park. Visitor experience will be enhanced with the implementation of expanded interpretive programming and customer service provided by the volunteer host program.

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

NO

**YES** If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, would improve quality of visitor experience (camper and day visitor) to Placid Lake State Park. Park visitor have complained about the dust in the park, chemical dust abatement is not 100% effective nor is it an environmentally sound solution.

The road improvement project will impact the visitor experience in a positive manner. The qualitative improvement will be realized by the visitor in the form of decreased dust and less mud during wet weather. A gradual increase in tourism/visitation to Placid Lake is anticipated based on population growth and age demographics. This increase in visitation will occur primarily in the shoulder seasons (spring and fall) since the park is at near capacity during the peak summer season. The infrastructure improvements will not increase capacity.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date: March 6, 2006

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development  
Montana Promotion Division  
Department of Commerce  
1424 9th Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Re: Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)/HB 495  
Tourism Report

Dear Victor:

Attached for your information and completion is a MEPA/HB 495 Tourism Report form. This form is used when park or fishing access site improvement or development project meets the criteria directed by HB 495 and identified in 12.8.602 (1) Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) and/or when the Montana Environmental Quality Act review is initiated.

Please complete and sign the attached form and return it to me. If you have questions or would like to discuss details, you can call me at (406) 677-6804 in Seeley Lake.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Chris Lorentz  
Blackfoot-Clearwater Recreation Manager  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
P.O. Box 61  
Seeley Lake, MT 59868

Attachment

cc: Parks MEPA/HB 495 Coordinator

PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST  
HB 495

Date: March 20, 2006

Person Reviewing: Chris Lorentz

Project Location: Placid Lake State Park, Missoula County MT

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK:

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

A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?

Comments:

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

Comments:

C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?

Comments: Correction of drainage, line of sight and other safety issues on N. Placid Road at the entrance to Placid Lake State Park may require excavations in excess of 20 Cubic yards of material.

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

Comments:

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

Comments:

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

Comments:

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

Comments:

H. Any new above ground utility lines?

Comments:

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

Comments:

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

Comments: Paving the internal campground roads and parking lot is not likely to effect property values or visitation patterns to Placid Lake and surrounding lands.

IF ANY OF THE ABOVE ARE CHECKED, HB 495 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.

cc: Park Managers, Region  
FWP Design & Construction  
Helena Parks  
Project File

Appendix D. SHPO letter.



# MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

January 30, 2006

Paul Valle  
FWP  
PO Box 200701  
Helena MT 59620-0701



RE: PLACID LAKE STATE PARK, PAVING PROJECT. SHPO Project #: 2006012702

Dear Mr. Valle:

I have conducted a cultural resource file search for the above-cited project located in Section 20, T16N R15W. According to our records there have been no previously recorded sites within the designated search locales. However, there has been one previously conducted cultural resource inventory done in the area. If you would like any further information regarding the report you may contact me at the number listed below:

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 [djmurdo@mt.gov](mailto:djmurdo@mt.gov).

Sincerely,

Damon Murdo  
Cultural Records Manager

File: FWP/PARKS/2006



STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE ♦ 1410 8<sup>th</sup> Ave ♦ P.O. Box 201202 ♦ Helena, MT 59620-1202

♦ (406) 444-7767 ♦ FAX (406) 444-2696