Frenchtown Pond State Park
Master Site Plan

Updated DRAFT
Environmental Assessment
MEPA/NEPA/HB 495 Checklist
April 6, 2006

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action

Replace and upgrade state park facilities at Frenchtown Pond State Park. (This Draft EA is an update of the original Master Site Plan EA for Frenchtown Pond State Park from 2000. This current EA is intended to update progress on the park's completed Phase I and II improvements, to describe the proposed Phase III improvements, and to aid in compliance with federal funding requirements.)

2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action

23-2-101 MCA: FWP is vested with the purpose and authority to plan and develop outdoor recreational resources in the state and receive and expend funds including federal grants for this purpose.

3. Name of Project: Frenchtown Pond State Park, Master Site Plan

4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)

Sponsored by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP)

5. Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Summer 2006

Estimated Completion Date: Phase I completed December 2001/2002; Phase II completed 2004/2005; Phase III proposed for completion by end of 2006; future Phases as funding is available.

Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 5%

6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)

Frenchtown Pond State Park is accessed from the frontage road one mile west of the town site of

Frenchtown, and twenty miles west of Missoula, Missoula County, Township 15 North, Range 21 West, Sections 28 and 33; total park is 40.7 acres.

7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

(a) Developed:
residential ..... 0 acres
industrial..... 0 acres

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/
Recreation ..... 18 acres

(c) Wetlands/Riparian
Areas..... 0 acres

(d) Floodplain..... 0 acres

(e) Productive:
irrigated cropland ..... 0 acres
dry cropland ..... 0 acres
forestry..... 0 acres
rangeland ..... 0 acres
other..... 0 acres

Revised 4/6/2006

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.

See site location map (Appendix B) and Master Site Plan (Appendix C).

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

Frenchtown Pond was originally used as a gravel pit and watering site (natural spring fed) for the construction of Interstate 90 in the 1960's. The Highway Commission constructed an internal road system through the area, then granted a recreation site easement to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) in 1972. The current 25-year recreation easement to FWP extends the lease to July 24, 2022. In 1974, picnicking and camping facilities were completed. Camping was discontinued in 1985 due to management problems associated with inappropriate late night behavior in the campground and a lack of law enforcement to correct the problems. The site is currently managed for day-use, with swimming, picnicking, fishing, exercise (trail walking/running), non-motorized boating and group use events the most popular activities at the park. An estimated average of 25,000+ visitors use the park annually.

The Region 2 Parks staff completed the management plan for Frenchtown Pond State Park in August of 2000, which included a completed Master Site Plan (Appendix C). Scoping for the Management Plan and Master Site Plan included inquiring about visitors' preferred activities and desired future facilities. Public attitudes indicated that the most popular facilities visitors wanted at the park were picnic shelters, playground equipment, irrigated lawn areas, volleyball courts and horseshoe pits. Recreation managers anticipate continued growth in outdoor recreation in the greater Missoula area, in part due to significant increases in population in the area. The new facilities are intended to spread visitor use across the park, thus enhancing their experience and reducing high-use impacts on the park.

This EA was originally adopted and a Decision Notice signed in September of 2000. The Decision Notice stated:

"Based on the analysis in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and the applicable laws, regulations

and policies, I have determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the natural or human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.
It is my decision to implement the proposed action (Alternative 3, the preferred alternative), and proceed with the basic improvements to this site……..”

Construction activities/phases listed in the 2000 EA proceeded into the calendar year 2005. The following Table lists what facilities exist at the site and during what phase they were constructed:

FACILITY/INFRASTRUCTURE	PHASE/YEAR
Construct new interior road system & parking areas (replace existing)	Phase I – 2001-2
Construct sidewalk system connecting major use areas	Phase I – 2001-2
Relocate entrance station to new entrance road	Phase I – 2001-2
Construct electric utility services to major use areas (replace existing)	Phase I – 2001-2
Construct potable water system to major use areas (replace existing)	Phase I – 2001-2
Construct new Comfort Station (replace existing) & septic tank and drain field (Fig. 1)	Phase I – 2001-2
Construct volunteer camp host camping pad (Fig. 2)	Phase I – 2001-2
Install outdoor shower	Phase I – 2001-2
New site - interior & exterior sign packages	Phase I – 2001-2
Seed native grasses in reclaimed areas post construction Phase I	Phase I – 2001-2
Construct second (#2) Comfort Station, septic tank & drain field	Phase II–2004-5
Decommission existing rec. trailer dump station, tank & drain field	Phase II–2004-5
Hook up camp host camping pad to (#2) Comfort Station septic system	Phase II–2004-5
Construct gravel hiking trail around perimeter of pond	Phase II–2004-5
Construct children’s playground area (Fig. 3)	Phase II–2004-5
Construct second (#2) Group Picnic Shelter, extend sidewalk & electric utilities (Fig. 4)	Phase II–2004-5
Install new swimming dock at existing beach area	Phase II–2004-5

Figure 1. Comfort station.

Figure 2. Volunteer camp host camping pad.

Figure 3. Children's playground area.

Figure 4. Group picnic shelter.

Funding would again determine how quickly the rest of the Master Site Plan could be completed, thus a continuation of the phased approach is proposed. The next phase (III) of construction would include an irrigation system with its own well, top-soil and turf grass in selected areas of high use, and trees and shrubs to landscape around the comfort stations, entrance area, host pad, playground and other selected areas as identified in the Frenchtown Pond State Parks' Management Plan and Master Site Plan. Additional funds would be requested in the next biennial budget to complete the proposed Master Site Plan. Some smaller items may be completed with in-kind services from area communities and groups or with force account projects. This environmental assessment addressed all construction proposed in the Master Site Plan, and on all future phases.

PHASE III: please refer to Master Site Plan (Appendix C)

- Construct irrigation well and pump-house.
- Install irrigation system for lawns, trees and shrubs in major use areas.
- Add soil amendments to proposed lawn/grass areas.

ADDITIONAL PHASES

- Build new entry station for fee collection and visitor services.
- Install latrine fir off-season use by the public.
- Provide more picnic tables throughout the park.
- Build 20' x 14' storage building near host pad, for lawn equipment, maintenance tools, supplies, and pressure tanks for the irrigation system, etc.
- Develop new eastern beach area with grading and sand.
- Expand western beach area with grading and new sand.
- Install a swim dock at new eastern beach area
- Construct two sand volleyball courts.

- Plant variety of trees and shrubs along park perimeter to visually screen the Interstate and frontage road, and plant trees in the interior to provide shade and shelter.

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

(a) Permits:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
Missoula County Sanitarian	Septic Permit	completed
Montana State Building Codes	Building Permit	completed
Fish, Wildlife & Parks	124 Permit	completed
DEQ	Public Water System	completed
DNRC	Water Right – Irrigation	filing

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Land & Water Conservation Fund	$100,000
Montana State Parks Earned Revenue	$100,000
TOTAL (Phase III, only)	$200,000

Please refer to number 10e., page 15, for future anticipated funding.

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
State Historic Preservation Office	historic preservation clearance

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

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Design & Construction
- Regional 2 Parks, Missoula
- Fisheries, Missoula
- Wildlife, Missoula

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Department of Commerce, Tourism
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACTэ				Can Impact Be Mitigatedэ	Comment Index
	Unknownэ	None	Minorэ	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		yes	1b.
<c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				1c.
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?			X			1d.
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):

1a. No changes in soil stability or geologic substructure are anticipated by the proposed projects.

1b. Construction of the Master Site Plan would require the disruption, displacement, compaction and over-covering of soil to enable the excavation of the old roads, preparation and grading of the new interior road and parking system, curbing, sidewalks, comfort stations and utilities. The addition of formal asphalt parking areas, sidewalks, 10’ wide gravel path around the lake, new group use picnic shelter, sand volleyball courts, playground, and additional beach areas would eliminate the productivity and fertility of these areas. In the proposed lawn and tree planting areas, the installation and use of an irrigation system would improve fertility and increase production of vegetative cover. Impacts and soil disturbance to the area would be limited by restricting the use of equipment to the immediate vicinity of construction. The seeding of native grasses immediately after construction in disturbed areas would speed vegetative recovery and minimize erosion in disturbed areas. The use of this site as a gravel pit for the construction of Interstate 90 indicates that the original integrity of the entire site was completely disturbed in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. This area is designated by the Highway Commission to be utilized for recreation.

1c. This site was entirely modified from its original state when used as a gravel pit in the 1960’s and early 1970’s. The site is considered a man-made recreation area with no known existing unique geologic or physical features that would be altered by implementing the Master Site Plan.

1d. This site was completely disturbed during the construction of Interstate 90. The installation of a second beach area on the east side of the lake, would require minor grading and leveling of this section of shoreline (approximately 300 feet). Depositing 3000 s.y. of additional sand to Frenchtown Pond’s shoreline to improve the beaches is considered a minor impact due to the nature and historical use of the lake. The existing shoreline is sloped gradually, thus the physical features of the shoreline would not change significantly, nor have an extended impact on siltation, deposition, or erosion patterns.

э 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. 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		yes	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)		n/a				
f. Other						

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

2a. The construction of the new facilities would create temporary dust, primarily during road construction. The contractor would use water trucks as necessary to reduce dust and increase compaction of the roads and parking areas. After asphalt roads and parking areas are complete, ambient air quality is expected to be better than the current conditions, which bears deteriorating park roads. In addition, the installation of extensive irrigation systems to provide irrigated lawns, trees and shrubs, would reduce dust now caused by thin ground cover and unabated wind.

2b. The replacement of a vault latrine would decrease the amount of objectionable odors that latrines often create.

∋ 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. WATER **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACTϽ				Can Impact Be Mitigated Ͻ	Comment Index
	Unknown Ͻ	None	Minor Ͻ	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		yes	3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		yes	3b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of 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				3d.
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				3f.
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?			X			3g.
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-I, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		n/a				
⊄m. For P-R/D-I, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		n/a				
n. Other:						

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

3a. Only the new beach areas would require construction which would alter surface water quality. The shoreline would require some grading and removing of vegetation for approximately 300 feet of shoreline. About 3000 s.y. of washed pit sand (rather than unwashed sand) would be deposited on the bank and along the shoreline. This process of grading and depositing sand on the shore would cause some minor and temporary turbidity.. A state 124 Permit would be attained prior to construction.

3b. Due to the new and increased amount of hard surfaces created by the asphalt roads and parking areas, concrete sidewalks and curbs, the drainage patterns and the rate and amount of surface runoff would slightly increase. These new facilities would be graded according to standard engineering procedures and drainage retention basins may be used to collect runoff, which would limit the rate of runoff or impacts to surface water quality.

3d. A second well would be drilled on the site to provide irrigation water. Significant changes in pond water levels are not anticipated, however levels currently fluctuate at various times of year, perhaps due to increased irrigation practices by local farmers. If this is the case, pond water levels may fluctuate slightly due to increased irrigation within the park.

Ͻ 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.

3f. The existing Frenchtown Pond well (186' deep) has not shown bacterial contamination in the past, as experienced in other local, private wells.

3g. The installation of two new comfort stations and an outdoor shower post would use more water than the one existing comfort station. The existing 186' well is expected to supply the increased volume with no difficulties. A second well, used for irrigation, may have a minimal impact on higher water tables in dry years as evidenced by the fluctuating pond water levels during the local farm irrigation season.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?	X					4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		yes	4e.
⊄⊄f. ~~For P-R/D-I~~, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		n/a				
g. Other:						

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

4a. Because of the large size of this project, the abundance of established grasses would decrease. Immediately after construction of each phase, the disturbed areas would be seeded with a native grass mix to aid in vegetative recovery. The Master Site Plan proposes planting and irrigating large volumes of lawn, shrubs and trees of all sizes; thus, an increase in diversity and abundance of many species would occur, particularly in Phase II. Planting large and small deciduous trees and conifers, as well as berry-producing bushes, is proposed. After the irrigation system is in place, vegetation production would increase due to a consistent water supply. Undeveloped areas would be managed based on recommendations from the regional Wildlife Biologist to maintain habitat for existing birds and small mammals.

4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program database revealed one sensitive vascular plant species: *Elatine brachysperma*, or Short-seeded water-wort. This species was found in a dried pond margin of Frenchtown pond in 1990, however it was not relocated in 1998. It inhabits seasonally inundated wetland areas. This is a globally secure species, though its state ranking is possibly in peril. Bonnie Heidel, Botanist for the Montana Natural Heritage Program (444-0536), stated to Sue Dalbey on May 15, 2000, that the status is uncertain and further investigation of the water-wort species is needed to accurately determine its status. Under its current status, it is given a lesser priority in occurrence because it occurs in an entirely man-made setting. Heidel indicated that although the species was not found in 1998, it may not be extracated from the site. Field notes were not available to interpret the given information, such as climate during the survey, shoreline where the species was originally located, etc. The only proposed construction actions which have the potential to impact the Short-seeded water-wort, would be those along the shoreline, such as the new beach improvements, and consequential increase in human use along the shore. Impacts to this species due to the completion of the proposed Master Site Plan are unknown at the time of this writing (May 15, 2000).

∋ 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.

4e. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has taken aggressive steps to implement an integrated weed control program for all agency administered sites. Easy accessibility and scheduled spraying are currently controlling the weeds in the Park. Small patches of Spotted Knapweed, Canadian Thistle and other noxious weeds are known to exist at the site. Construction does present an opportunity for noxious weeds to spread. A native grass mix would be seeded in newly disturbed areas immediately after each phase of construction to reduce the potential for weeds to establish and provide competition. The newly disturbed areas would be targeted during weed control measures to reduce the possibility for weed establishment.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

< 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		yes	5a.
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		yes	5c.
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				5f.
g. Increase 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)		n/a				
⊄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)		n/a				
j. Other:						

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

Frenchtown Pond was developed in the late 1960's and early 70's as a watering source and gravel pit for the construction of Interstate 90. It is fed by a natural spring, and the water fluctuates a small degree, perhaps due to local irrigating patterns. The pond supports a mixture of hardy warm water species, including large mouth bass, black bullheads, northern pike, pumpkin seeds and bluegill. Local Fisheries Biologist, Ladd Knotek, indicated that the pond has the potential to be stocked with trout for a put-and-take fishery. (Personal communication with Sue Dalbey, May 2, 2000) According to the draft Management Plan, brook trout were planted in 1970, but it was considered an unsuccessful stock with little or no spawning. Rainbow trout were planted in 1985, but there are no plans for future fisheries enhancement. Knotek, does not anticipate significant impacts to the fishery from the proposed park improvements.

Seasonal visitation is about 34,000 people at this 40-acre park, thus wildlife habitat includes small mammals and a variety of birds. Migratory waterfowl, shorebirds and various passerine bird species generally inhabit the site on a seasonal basis. Area Wildlife Biologist, Bob Henderson, states that small common mammals such as the white-footed deer mouse and meadow voles may occur at the site (personal communication with Sue Dalbey, May 3, 2000). Henderson does not foresee significant negative impacts to wildlife or wildlife habitat due to the proposed construction, though minor increases in nesting opportunities and habitat may be provided by the proposed planting of trees in 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.

5a. Biologist Bob Henderson indicated to Sue Dalbey (May 3, 2000) that the destruction of existing bunch grasses may displace the white-footed deer mouse or meadow voles which may exist in the park, since irrigated lawn environment is considered an unsuitable habitat. The planting and irrigating of a variety of trees and shrubs may increase the number of small birds and songbirds which would benefit from the increased woody vegetation and nesting habitat. Henderson encourages the plating of berry-producing shrubs for bird habitat. Overall, no significant negative impacts are anticipated to wildlife or habitat from the proposed development plan.

5c. The number of small mammals and reptiles may decrease due to the construction required for new roads and parking areas, development of new irrigated lawn, sidewalks, and trails. The number of songbirds and related species may be temporarily displaced, but are expected to return and possibly increase after the planting of approximately 200 additional trees. Please refer to 5a. above.

5f. A database search by the Montana Natural Heritage Program revealed three bald eagle nests along the Clark Fork River, south of Frenchtown Pond State Park. The closest nest is approximately 1 ¼ mile directly south. Dennis Flath, Nongame Wildlife Coordinator for FWP, indicated to Sue Dalbey (May 15, 2000) that this distance should be an adequate buffer from the nesting site, particularly since the construction activity would occur in the fall, not during nesting periods.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT[Э]				Can Impact Be Mitigated[Э]	Comment Index
	Unknown[Э]	None	Minor[Э]	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		yes	6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:						

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

6a. Noise levels would increase temporarily during construction due to the necessary use of heavy equipment, i.e. dump trucks, tractors, back hoes, packers, asphalt paving equipment, water trucks, etc. Construction would take place in phases, with the first phase incurring most of the major construction, thus later phases would require less intrusive equipment and less noise. Construction would also occur outside of the high use season, therefore site visitation would be low and few people would be impacted by noise in the immediate vicinity.

Э 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. 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 positive			7a.
b. Conflict 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 positive			7c.
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				7d.
e. Other: _____						

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

7a. Implementation of the Master Site Plan would likely result in a slight increase in day-use at the park, thus increasing the income generated by day-use fees. Currently, visitors must pay $1.00 each; children under six years old are free. A person may purchase the annual State Park Passport for $20 and affix it to the vehicle windshield, which would allow day-use for all vehicle occupants at any state park. FWP Region 2 Parks Managers anticipate a 10-15% increase in both visitation and revenue to occur as facilities are completed.

7c. Current lack of use of some undeveloped park areas allow for expansion as proposed in the Master Site Plan and would provide more effective use of the site. Approximately 34,000 visitors annually are crowded onto one small beach area, one group use shelter, and no formal lawn space. Existing roads cause traffic congestion and inadequate parking space. Without the proposed development, the site is suffering impacts in specific high-demand areas. The proposed improvements would disperse use across the site, by providing more opportunities to recreate in more areas.

7d. Improved local parks often increase the quality of life for local residents as well as increased property values. The proposed improvements may be a desirable feature for area homeowners, as illustrated by the lack of negative comments received to date by 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.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?			X positive			8b.
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?			X positive			8b.
⊄d.For P-R/D-I, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		n/a				
e. Other:						

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

8b. The current site layout does not provide enough parking, resulting in congestion. Roads are deteriorating to the extent that travel mixed with random pedestrians routes may be unsafe. In the event that visitors would need to evacuate the Park quickly, the proposed developments would aid in that process. The new roads would designate parking and vehicle and pedestrian travel routes, thus exiting the park can occur in a more orderly and safe manner.

∋ 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.

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⊄ 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. 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 positive			9a.
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			9c.
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:						

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

9a. The proposed Master Site Plan is intended to spread use around the park by providing more of the desirable facilities for visitors to use. Visitation is expected to increase slightly because people are generally attracted to new facilities, however the use would be more dispersed, therefore the higher number of people would not necessarily result in crowded facilities.

9c. A few temporary jobs would be created during the construction phases of the Master Site Plan. Contractors must submit bids to complete the project, therefore the number of employees and their origin would be dependent upon the successful bid.

9e. The park entrance from the frontage road would be moved west of the current entrance to align internal park roads. All state highway visibility standards would be followed. Existing travel routes within the park are rough and insufficient for the number of vehicles that use the park. The new road system would provide organized travel patterns, paved roads, defined parking and less congestion. The addition of sidewalks would also aid in the safety of pedestrians in route between their vehicle and/or different areas within 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

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: police protection, parks maintenance, water supply, septic systems, solid waste disposal,			X		yes	10a.
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			10d.
< e. Define projected revenue sources						10e.
< f. Define projected maintenance costs.						10f.
g. Other:_____						

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

10a. Primary law enforcement activities are conducted by FWP. The Frenchtown Pond Park Manager, park ranger, and other FWP enforcement personnel would make regular patrols through the park and periodically meet with representatives from the county and state police to encourage similar patrolling activities. Minor supplemental or jurisdictional assistance would continue to be requested from the Missoula County Sheriff's Department and the Montana Highway Patrol.

Park maintenance would increase due to the increase in number of facilities, however, because the facilities are new, maintenance should primarily be routine cleaning and minor repairs for many years. An increase in seasonal staff at the park may be needed to accommodate the duties required by additional facilities. The comfort stations would be winterized each fall and opened in the spring. Picnic shelters, tables and docks would require refinishing every few years. Irrigation systems may need minor ongoing repairs of broken pipes, new sprinkler heads, etc. Beach areas may need annual tilling to loosen sand. The majority of existing maintenance would continue with slight increases due to the anticipated increase in visitation after project completion, such as: litter pick-up, garbage removal, fire grill cleaning, sign posting, hazard tree and branch removal. Solid waste disposal (garbage removal) is contracted with a private company, who hauls the waste to the county disposal site. The volume of waste is expected to increase slightly due to the increase in visitation.

Irrigated lawns would require mowing more often than the existing bunch grass. These maintenance duties would be done by Frenchtown Pond State Park staff and/or FWP Regional Maintenance Crew, or contracted with a private service for duties such as lawn mowing.

Well water use would increase due to the addition of a second comfort station and outside shower. A second well would be drilled to accommodate irrigation needs for new lawns and trees.

∋ 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.

10a. (continued) The number of septic systems would stay the same, however, would be replaced by new installations. Even though we are adding a comfort station, we are eliminating the RV dump station. FWP engineers calculate that the 40 acre park and soils are able to adequately handle this volume and must stay within permitted levels.

10b. State Parks are exempt from state, county, and local taxes; however, park improvements may slightly increase local property values.

10d. The second comfort station would require a slight increase from current demands on electricity to light the structure, operate the water pump and miscellaneous appliances, such as hand dryers, or maintenance power tools. The outdoor showers and the irrigation system would require electricity to operate the water pumps. The second group use shelter would provide electricity for users, as well.

10e. Projected Revenue Sources

PHASE I (completed)	
Land and Water Conservation Fund (federal matching)	$130,000
State Parks Earned Revenue	$150,000
State Highway Fuel Funds	$100,000
Sub-Total	$380,000
PHASE II (completed)	
State Parks Earned Revenue	150,000
Project Total	$530,000
PHASE III (proposed)	
Land and Water Conservation Fund	$100,000
State Parks Earned Revenue	$100,000
Project Total	$200,000

10f. Projected Operating and Maintenance Costs (O&M)
O&M costs after Phase III would increase approximately 10% due to the addition of an irrigation system.

	EXISTING	AFTER PHASE III
Supplies	$ 2,700	$2,970
Utilities	1,000	1,100
Maintenance & Supplies	2,000	2,200
Communications, Travel, Other	4,750	5,225
Total	$10,450	$11,495

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

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

Frenchtown Pond State Park originated as a gravel pit, and has grown into a popular day-use recreation site used by over 34,000 visitors annually. Visitor activities at this park resemble those at a city park, thus the proposed irrigated lawns, playground, beach areas have been requested in visitor surveys and at public meetings. Based upon public meetings and public surveys at Frenchtown Pond State Park, the proposed actions are expected to be positively received by the public. There is a need for local, water-based recreation, which this park provides. The proposed projects would add to the overall aesthetics of the area, specifically with the new irrigation system, which would ensure successful planting of 200 various trees around the park. The park is sandwiched between Interstate 90 and the frontage road, therefore traffic noise would not diminish, but vegetative screens can reduce the visual effects.

11a. Trees planted around the park are expected to significantly raise the site's aesthetic value to visitors. Trees help provide shade and privacy barriers from other visitors, as well as the surrounding highways. Many open areas would remain, as lawns and activity fields, which are generally pleasant viewscapes in this city-park-type atmosphere. Planting trees around the park would visibly obscure the view of traffic from park visitors and block the developed area from the highway travelers, allowing for the park to blend more into the area landscape.

11c. The quality and quantity of recreational and tourism opportunities and settings would increase upon completion of the proposed Master Site Plan. The intention of the Plan and the upcoming Management Plan is to increase the area within the park that visitors have to continue the present recreational activities. Facility upgrades, improved and expanded beaches, a higher level of accessibility for people with disabilities, and groomed lawns would all provide cleaner, healthier and hopefully a more enjoyable experience for visitors. The proximity to Missoula and Interstate 90 would attract local recreation enthusiasts and out-of-town/state tourists. (See Tourism Report, Appendix D.)

∋ 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. 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)		n/a				12a.
e. Other:						

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

12a. Frenchtown Pond is a reclaimed gravel pit from the 1960s; therefore, historical and cultural resources are not present. The State Historic Preservation Office has reviewed the project, and a letter of clearance is attached (Appendix E).

∋ 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 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 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				13c.
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				13e.
⊄f. For P-R/D-I, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		n/a				
⊄⊄g. For P-R/D-I, list any federal or state permits required.		n/a				

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

13c. The Highway Commission has designated this area as a recreation area and under MCA 23-1-101 and a 25 year lease agreement, FWP has jurisdiction over this area to improve and maintain it as a recreation area.

A moratorium does stand against the construction of new drain fields in this area; however, because FWP has leased the property prior to 1987 and it is not being subdivided, the moratorium does not apply, as per the Missoula County Sanitarian dialogue with the FWP project engineer, January 2000.

13e. The 1994 public surveys at the park and three public meetings held in 1997 reflect visitor support of improvements to the park, especially irrigated lawns, volleyball courts, trees, and playground equipment. The Frenchtown Community Trail Committee, in cooperation with Missoula County, supports the development planned at Frenchtown Pond. This group has developed five miles of ten-foot-wide hike/bike trail along the north side of the frontage road, which passes next to the Park. Area private campground owners support day use at 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.

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
The "no action" alternative does not address the problem of growing recreational needs in the Missoula Valley and the ability of Frenchtown Pond State Park to retain the qualities it is known for, such as swimming, fishing, picnicking and canoeing, while protecting the natural resources. Projected increases in recreation popularity would subsequently raise visitation at Frenchtown Pond. The natural resources and existing facilities would not be able to support growth without significant negative impacts. The existing facilities (comfort station and roads) require significant improvements for safe visitor use.

Alternative 2. *Preferred Alternative:* Develop site according to Master Site Plan in phases and as funding is available.
Visitation approaches 30,000 people annually and is expected to grow with the popularity of outdoor recreation and continued growth in the Missoula Valley. Much of the site had been under-developed, thus this Alternative would help to spread use across the site, provide quality recreation for many visitors, ease the burden on facilities and the natural resources, as well as improve the aesthetic benefits for visitors. The first two Phases have been completed and comments from the public have been very favorable and supportive of the developments. The phased approach allows for funding over several years, the possibility of completing smaller, in-kind projects by community groups or force-account, and a chance for resource managers to evaluate the project and make changes to the Master Site Plan prior to completion, if in the best interest of the resource, FWP, and the public.

Alternative 3. Develop site according to Master Site Plan, including 10 overnight camping sites.
Camping received minor support during the 1994 visitor survey and one negative comment during public meetings held in 1997. Day use visitors indicated that they would continue using the site for day-use activities (92%) even if camping was provided at the Park. Camping (primitive development) would provide added revenue for the Park to help pay for the site operations and maintenance. Camping was discontinued in 1985 due to management problems associated with inappropriate late night behavior in the campground and a lack of law enforcement to correct the problems. FWP now feels that these issues can be addressed appropriately if camping is provided in the future; however, six private campgrounds between Missoula and Alberton provide camping with full hookups (electricity, sewer, and water).

It is not the intent of FWP to compete with local, private business owners; therefore, this alternative would not be considered at the present time, unless significant public support and demonstrated need arises. If this alternative is considered in the future, a separate environmental assessment would be prepared to evaluate potential impacts.

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

Contractors hired by FWP are required to follow all standard operating procedures, state guidelines, and acquire all necessary state and federal permits.

Disturbance of surrounding vegetation during construction would be limited to the immediate vicinity to lessen the impacts from dust, surface runoff, elimination of plant species, and weed encroachment. Water trucks would be used during construction of the roads and parking areas to minimize dust. Completion of the entire proposed project would likely improve ambient air quality due to the improved ground cover

provided by irrigated lawns and hard surface roads and parking areas. Planting native grasses in disturbed areas, a standard practice for FWP projects, is critical to minimize the impacts of erosion and weed infestation.

The use of washed pit sand in the beach areas would produce less turbidity than other options. Standard road engineering and grading techniques and drainage retention basins would ensure that drainage patterns do not significantly change runoff patterns or cause erosion.

Noxious weeds are a primary concern of FWP, and an integrated weed management program is ongoing at the Park, according to the Regional Weed Management Plan. The seeding of grass in the disturbed areas and targeting these areas during weed control measures, would reduce the possibility of spreading noxious weeds.

The planting of approximately 200 various trees would be instrumental in the return and/or increase in the number of small birds and songbirds, which may be displaced during construction.

The impacts to the Short-seeded water-wort are unknown at this time. This species is globally secure and this site is entirely man-made, giving the species a lower priority in the tier of native species conservation. The species was originally found along the south shore of the lake in 1990. It is possible that the inability to relocate the species in 1998 was due to changes in habitat that already occurred due to increased visitation and development since 1990. The proposed actions, therefore, may not result in direct impacts to the water-wort.

Increased visitation is expected at the site due to its popularity and the attraction to new facilities. Crowding, however, should not be a problem because of the new design and dispersal of facilities, such as enlarging the existing beach area and adding a second beach area, second group use shelter, second comfort station, etc.

Governmental services (provided primarily by FWP) would naturally increase due to the higher number of facilities at the park, thus requiring rescheduling regional seasonal staff, or increasing seasonal staff through the budgeting request process. The new facilities, however, would require only routine cleaning type of duties rather than difficult repairs, which the existing facilities require. Enforcement is primarily conducted by FWP, with only supplemental aid requested from other agencies.

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

This environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts due to the proposed action, therefore an EIS is not necessary and an Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

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?

The public would be notified by way of: 1) a statewide press release; 2) legal notices appearing twice each in the *Missoulian* and the *Helena Independent Record* newspapers; and 3) public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page http://.mt.gov/publicnotices. Draft EAs would be sent to the region's standard EA distribution list and to those that have requested one, and postcard notification of the EA's availability would be sent to adjacent landowners and others.

Three public meetings were held in 1997 to solicit public comment regarding the proposed project: July 29 at the FWP Region 2 Headquarters, and August 20 and 23 at Frenchtown Park. Approximately 15 people total attended these informational and comment periods. All comments were positive in response to the project as proposed in this Environmental Assessment. One negative comment was received against the installation of camping facilities, which may compete with local, privately owned campgrounds. Since the completion of the first 2 Phases, very favorable and supportive comments have been made to the field staff over the last couple of summers.

A public meeting is not scheduled to allow the public to comment on this current EA, proposed action, and alternatives; however, this opportunity would be provided if requested. Notification of the available EA would be mailed directly to the neighboring landowners and other interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed action and provide a venue to request the document. Comments are welcome, and can be mailed to the address below.

The opportunities for public input listed above are appropriate for the proposed actions, since few negative and no potentially significant environmental impacts are identified.

6. Duration of comment period if any?

Thirty (30) days following the publication of the second set of legal notices would be provided for public comment. **Written comments will be accepted until 5 P.M. on May 8, 2006,** and can be mailed to the address below:

Frenchtown Pond State Park EA
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804

For questions related to this Draft EA, please contact Lee Bastian at MFWP (phone 406-542-5517; email at lbastian@mt.gov).

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

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

Mike Hathaway
Park Supervisor
MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks
3201Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 542-5531

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

Frenchtown Pond State Park is a rural park that supports activities much like those of a city park and receives nearly 34,000 visitors annually. There is a demand for more than the outdated, primitive facilities and development level can currently provide. Visitation is expected to increase whether or not the proposed development occurs; therefore, FWP is proposing a proactive improvement plan to provide higher quality and larger quantities of facilities to support the growth at the Park. Accomplishing this in phases, allows for infrastructure improvements initially and additional facilities to be constructed when funding is available, or use in-kind sources when possible. The existing road system and comfort station are in need of replacement to accommodate current use and legal requirements. Often, it is more economically sensible to replace dilapidated facilities rather than modify them.

The negative impacts from the proposed action are temporary and/or minor, of which many can be mitigated. All disturbed areas would be graded and seeded. No unique cultural, geologic, or physical features would be affected. The SHPO has determined that no historic or cultural resources would be disrupted. The improvements planned for this site would enhance the visitor's recreational opportunities and experiences, as well as protecting the site from further environmental deterioration.

APPENDIX A.

HB 495
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST FOR:
Frenchtown Pond State Park, Master Site Plan (Updated Draft EA)

Date April 4, 2006 **Person Reviewing** Lee Bastian

Project Location: Frenchtown Pond State Park, Missoula County, Township 15 North, Range 21 West, Sections 28 and 33; total park is 40.7 acres.

Description of Proposed Work:
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to construct Phase III of the Master Site Plan. This would consist of an irrigation system with it's own well, top-soil and turf grass in selected areas of high use, and trees and shrubs to landscape around the comfort stations, entrance area, host pad, playground and other selected areas.

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.)

[ ] **A.** **New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?**
Comments: None

[ ] **B.** **New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?**
Comments: None

[√] **C.** **Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?**
Comments: The digging of the trench for the well and irrigation lines might require excavation of 20 c.y. or more.

[ ] **D.** **New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?**
Comments: None

[ ] **E.** **Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?**
Comments: None.

[ ] **F.** **Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?**
Comments: None.

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[ ] **G.** **Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?**
Comments: SHPO clearance has been obtained for the proposed project (Appendix E).

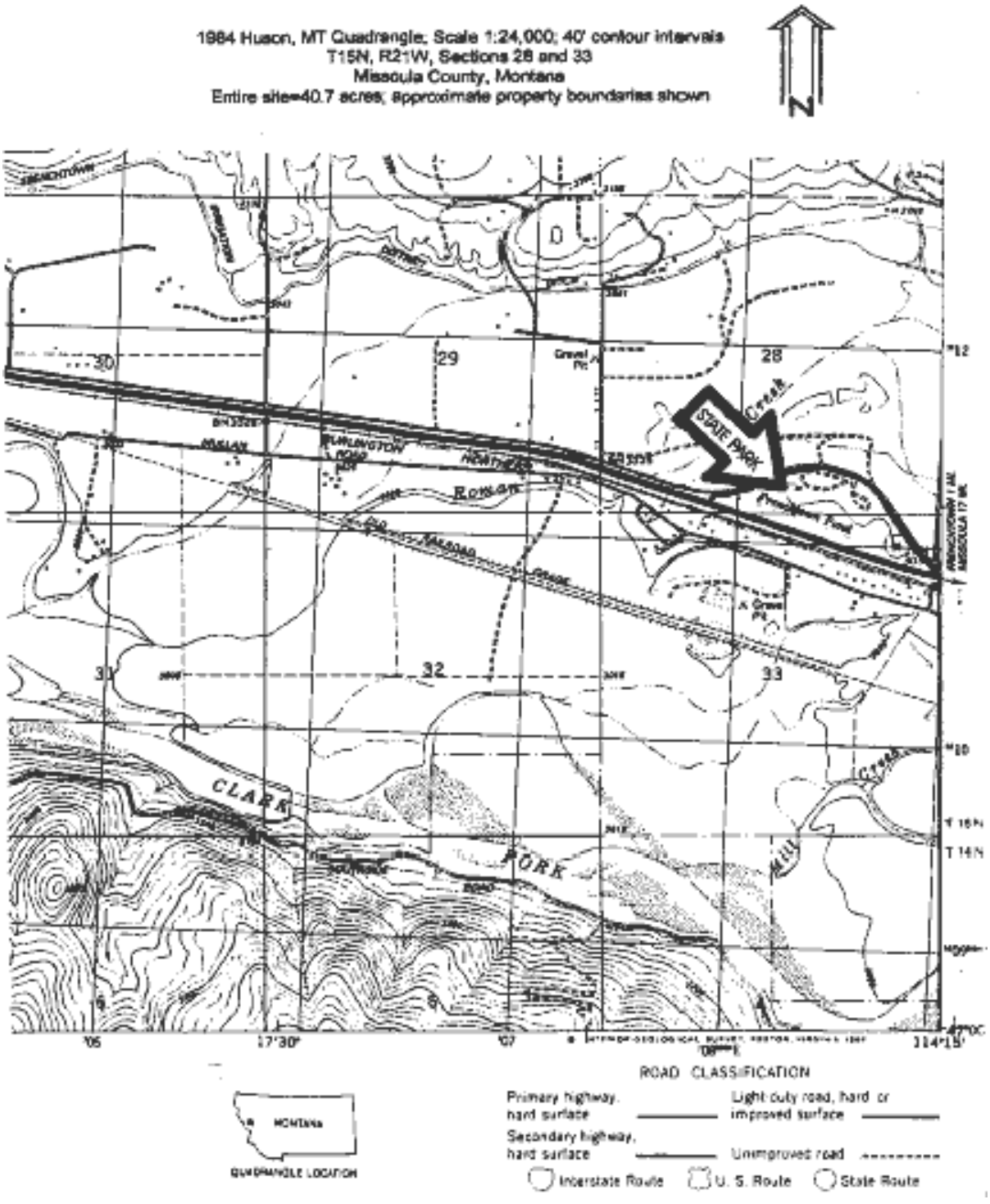
[ ] **H.** **Any new above ground utility lines?**
Comments: None.

[ ] **I.** **Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?**
Comments: None.

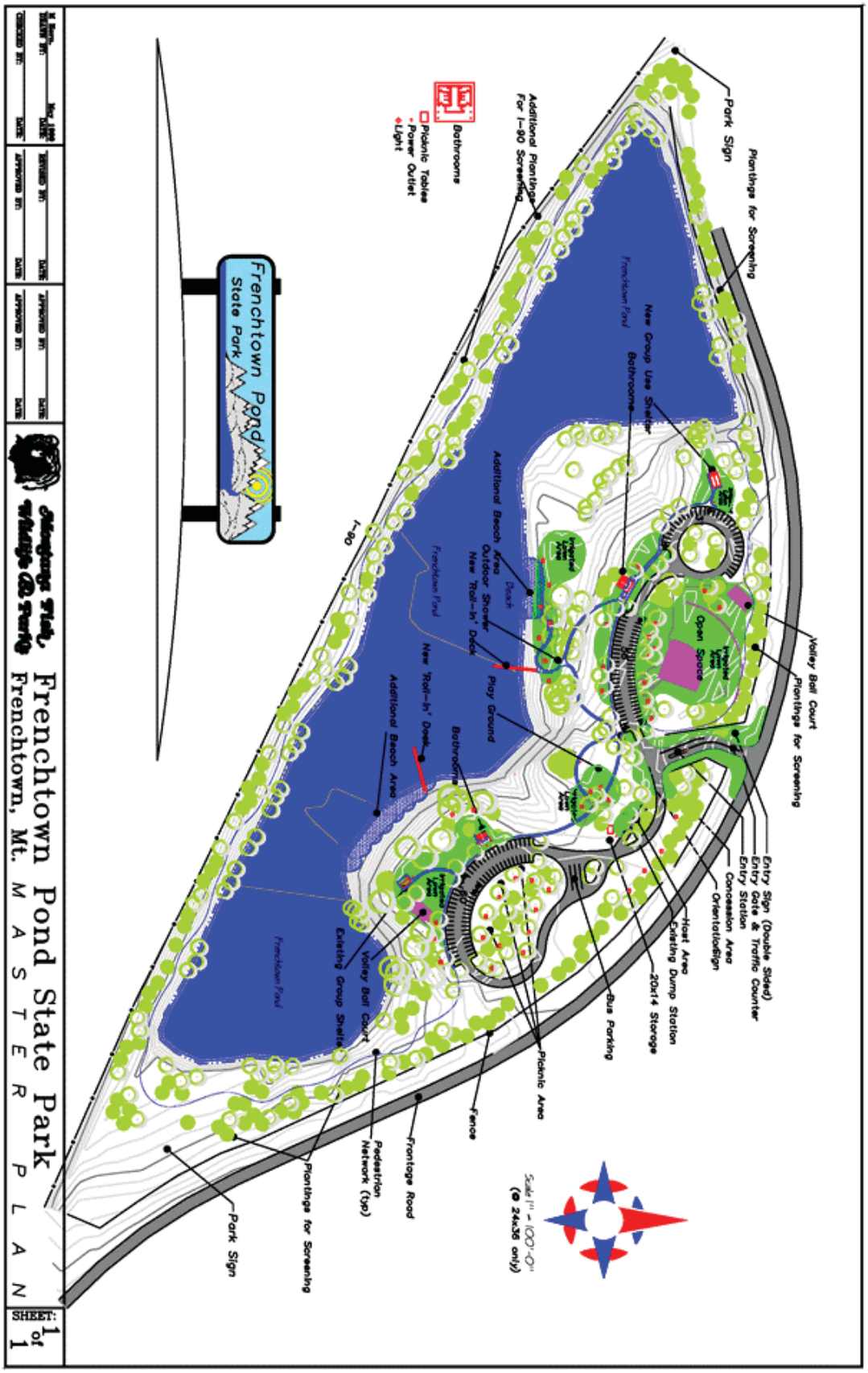
[ ] **J.** **Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?**
Comments: None

If any of the above are checked, HB 495 rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB 495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB 495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

APPENDIX B. Site location map for Frenchtown Pond State Park.



APPENDIX C. Master Site Plan for Frenchtown Pond State Park.



APPENDIX D.

TOURISM REPORT
MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)/HB495

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by HB495 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce
PO Box 200533
1424 9th Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Project Name: Frenchtown Pond State Park Master Plan Improvements

Project Description: Demolish and reclaim old roads, construct: asphalt road system and parking areas, two comfort stations, sidewalks, gravel trail, picnic areas, beach areas, signs, playground, docks, trees, irrigation system, outdoor showers, lights, storage building.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?
   (circle one) NO YES If YES, briefly describe:

   It provides improvements to facilities and amenities at Frenchtown Ponds which should enhance the visitors experience

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?
   (circle one) NO YES If YES, briefly describe:

   It appears to improve both quality and quantity.

Signature Victor Bjornberg Date 5-10-00

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APPENDIX E. Clearance letter from State Historic Preservation Office.

State Historic Preservation Office

Montana Historical Society

1410 8th Avenue • PO Box 201202 • Helena, MT 59620-1202 • (406) 444-7715 • FAX (406) 444-6575

September 2, 1999

Michael D. Horn
Design & Construction Bureau
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620

RE: Cultural Resource File Search - Frenchtown State Park, Section 28 & 33 T15N R21W MO Co.

Dear Mr. Horn

I have conducted a cultural resource inventory for the above cited project area. There is currently one previously recorded historic site in the designated search locale. The site 24MO713 is the Milwaukee Railroad and is considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. However it does not appear that this site will be impacted by this undertaking. If you need more information on this site you may contact the University of Montana Archaeological Records Office at (406)-243-5525. According to our records there have been no previous cultural resource inventories in the area.

We feel that based on the previous disturbance in the area from construction and recreational activities that there is a low likelihood of unknown or unrecorded cultural properties to be impacted. However, if cultural materials are encountered during the course of the 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 please feel free to contact me at (406)-444- 7767 or by e-mail at pmelton@state.mt.us.

Sincerely,

Phillip E. Melton
Cultural Records Manager

File: FWP/ 1999