

**DECISION NOTICE:
PLACID LAKE CAMPGROUND
ROAD PAVING & IMPROVEMENTS**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 542-5500

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

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 for approximately 200 hundred feet of North Placid Lake county road in each direction from the park entrance.

The purpose of the proposed road improvements at Placid Lake State Park is to provide a better, healthier, safe experience for visitors to Placid Lake State Park. Presently, the park road surface is gravel with a low percentage of aggregate stone and a 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 but also creates safety hazards and health issues and for people with any type of respiratory distress.

Interior Roads

MFWP has tried to reduce the dust and particulate levels at Placid Lake State Park. MFWP 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. 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 levels, thus improving health and safety while being more environmentally responsible.

Park Entrance

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 by limiting visibility due to the narrow nature of the road. The proposed action includes widening and paving the N. Placid Road 200 feet in each direction from the park entrance. Widening the road, increased sight distance, pavement and striping should improve safety at the park entrance.

Volunteer Host Pad (with utilities)

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 but is in response to public comments. MFWP would like to expand visitor services at Placid Lake State Park by bringing in a volunteer host. The host would answer visitor questions, provide more site security, and assist the park staff with programs such as the loan-a-life-jacket and the kids fishing program. The remote location of the park necessitates the need for the volunteer to reside at the park. A camp pad with utilities would be an asset in recruiting and retention of volunteers for this program. A level pad with utilities 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.

PUBLIC PROCESS AND COMMENT

Public comments were collected from park visitors through the use of visitor comment cards in 2004 and 2005 and through direct contact with park staff. Park staff also attended the Placid Lake Cabin Owners Association annual meetings and discussed issues and needs at the park with the local property owners.

The EA was sent out and the public comment period began April 1, 2006, and ran through May 1, 2006. Legal notices were published in the Missoulian, the Helena Independent Record and the Seeley Lake Pathfinder. There were 40 full copies, 6 electronic versions, and 125 post cards about the EA sent to interested parties consisting of neighbors, friends, conservation groups, Montana state legislators, Montana congressional members, county & state departments or agencies, and federal agencies. The Placid Lake State Park Paving and Improvements EA was posted on the MFWP web site April 1, 2006. The EA is still available for review at http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices/notice_1061.aspx.

Four comments were received from the public. One email response supported the project. One person called to get information because the post card notification was smeared and the web address was illegible, after a short discussion about the project he supported the project as long as it did not add additional public campsites. Another person called and supported the project wholeheartedly. A fourth inquiry, from a free-lance reporter from a local newspaper, asked questions and seemed supportive of the improvement project.

DECISION

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 and proceed with the improvements of this site. By notification of this Decision Notice, the draft EA is hereby made the final EA with the MFWP responses in this Decision Notice. The final EA with Decision Notice may be viewed at or obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks at the above address. Please direct any further requests or questions to Mack Long, Region Two Supervisor.

In accordance with MFWP policy, an appeal may be made by any person who has either commented in writing to the department on the proposed project, or who has registered or commented orally at a public meeting held by the department on the proposed project, or who can provide new evidence that would otherwise change the proposed plan. An appeal must be submitted to the Director of FWP in writing and must be postmarked or received within 30 days of this decision notice. The appeal must describe the basis for the appeal, how the appellant has previously commented to the department or participated in the decision-making process, and how the department can provide relief. The appeal should be mailed to: Director, Fish, Wildlife & Parks, PO Box 200701, 1420 East 6th Avenue, Helena, MT 59620-0701.

/s/ Lee Bastian SDR for

Mack Long

5/18/2006

Date