Draft
Environmental Assessment

Camp Baker Housing & Office Project
Smith River State Park

August 30, 2006

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of proposed state action:** Install a new prefabricated visitor contact office and prefabricated staff residence at Smith River State Park - Camp Baker facility, including updated and new utility hook-ups. Renovate current office/residence building for storage and remove two small existing storage structures.

2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:**
In 1989, the Montana Legislature enacted statue 23-2-4 MCA, which entrusted the management of the Smith River to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to provide continued recreational and commercial use and enjoyment of the Smith River waterway, to seek ways to minimize conflicts between river users and private landowners, and to protect the integrity of the river's water and canyon resources for future generations.

   FWP has the authority to develop outdoor recreational resources in the state per 23-2-101 MCA.

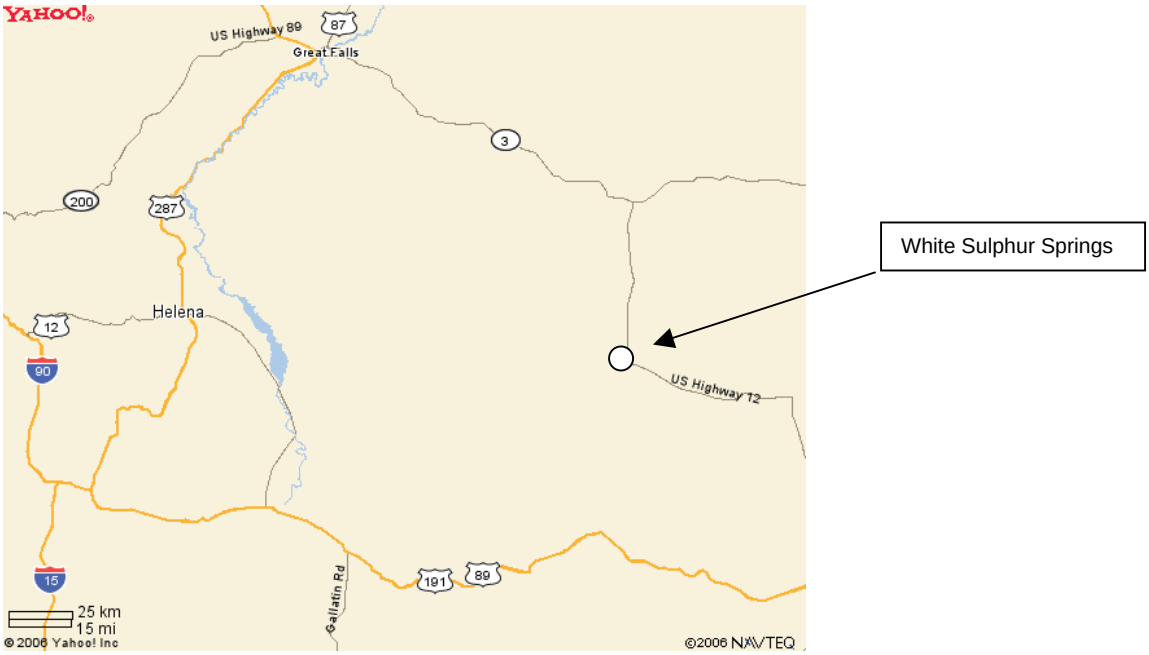
   Furthermore, state statute 23-1-110 MCA and ARM 12.6.601-606 guides public involvement and comment for the improvements at state parks and fishing access sites, which this document provides.

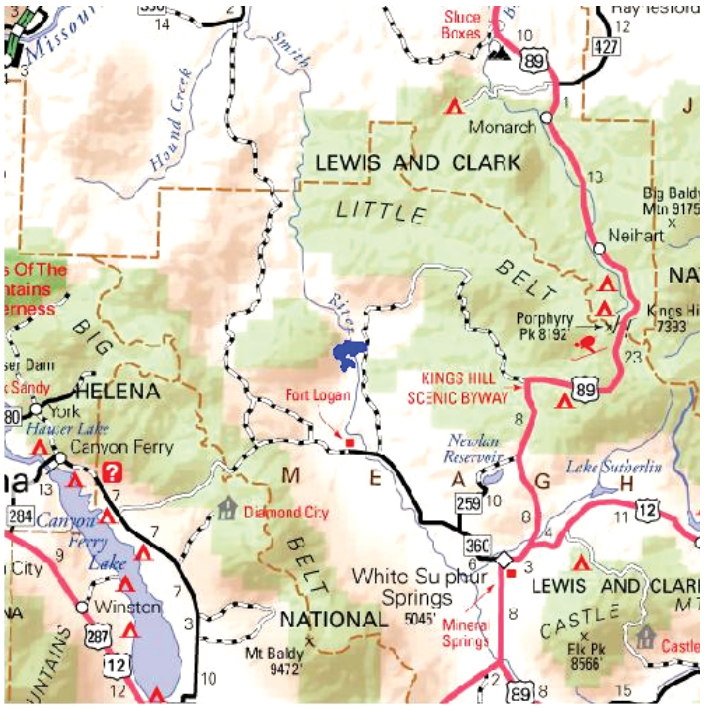
3. **Name of project:** Camp Baker Housing & Office Project, Smith River State Park

4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):**
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1420 East 6th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
406-444-3750

5. **If applicable:**
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Late Fall 2006 or Early Spring 2007
Estimated Completion Date: 3 months depending upon commencement
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 50%

6. Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township): Meagher County, Section 13, T12N, R4E. The site is approximately 27 miles northwest of White Sulphur Springs on Smith River Road and comprises of 47.9 acres owned by FWP since 1970. See *Appendix B* for a Smith River State Park map.





The blue fish icon denotes Camp Baker.

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

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	0
Residential	0		
Industrial	0	(e) Productive:	
		Irrigated cropland	0
(b) Open Space/ Woodlands/Recreation	.25	Dry cropland	0
		Forestry	0
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	0	Rangeland	0
		Other	0

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

(a) Permits:

Agency Name	Permit
None required	

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks - 2005 Capital Funding	$150,000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
Meagher County	Weed Management
Montana State Historical Preservation Office	Archeological & Cultural Site Protection
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Endangered Species Protection

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

Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to improve the administrative office and the staff housing at Smith River State Park - Camp Baker by the installation of prefabricated visitor contact office and residence buildings at the primary access point for Smith River floaters.

Camp Baker is located on the Smith River northwest of White Sulphur Springs and is one of over (30) fishing access sites and boat camps FWP manages on the river.

Camp Baker provides the only launch access for a unique 59-mile corridor, which is the only river corridor managed by FWP as a permitted river. The Smith River float is extremely popular during its short season (April - October, peak season mid-April through mid-July) with an average of 3,400 people on the river per year over the past five-years.

Currently, river floaters begin their adventure at Camp Baker by checking in at the current office/staff residence building or the ”cabin”. Over the past five-years, the staff has met with an average of 523 groups of floaters traveling through the state park. During peak season, state park staff can greet and register up to 9 groups and 135 people per day.

Staff duties include registering and providing a safety and river etiquette orientation to floaters prior to their departure on the river and maintenance of 52 designated boat camps along the 59-mile river corridor between Camp Baker and the Eden Bridge take-out.

Development proposed at the site includes the following items:

- Installation of prefabricated staff office (12’ x 36’), prefabricated 3-bedroom residence (27’ x 40’), and their required foundations for support.
- Connections between existing utilities already on-site (i.e. water, on-site waste water treatment, power, and phone) and the new buildings.
- Installation of propane heating system for the new residence.
- Removal of two existing storage buildings.
- Renovation of the existing log cabin to accommodate storage for on-site equipment and new roof would be added to the building.
- Improvements to the existing well water filtration system.

The proposed improvements will address the following public and employee health, safety, and welfare issues:

- With the increase in popularity of floating the Smith River, more floaters are camping at Camp Baker prior to their departure. The current location and orientation of the cabin does not provide staff with a sufficient view of the camping area to monitor for possible problems and to determine order of arrival.
- Floater fee revenues collected at Camp Baker are administered and remitted in the cabin. This creates a fee security and employee safety issue when fee administration is interrupted by public entry into the cabin.
- The cabin’s lower level is unsuitable for staff housing because of the following life-safety concerns:
    - Water collects on the concrete floor in close proximity of electrical connections and outlets;
    - There are seasonal rodent infestations (Hantavirus concerns);
    - There is no secondary fire escape routes/egress routes;
    - The lower cabin area is damp and musty with limited ventilation; and
    - There is a lack of privacy when the staff is mixed gender.
- There is a current lack of separation between staff accommodations and off-duty privacy and public service areas.

- Currently, the cabin's lower level housing area cannot accommodate more than two employees, under extremely cramped living conditions.

The "cabin" was constructed in early 1980's. Floaters check in on the upper level, which also serves as a kitchen area for the staff. Staff sleeping quarters, storage, and bath/shower area are on the lower level. At present, two staff persons live at the cabin during the float season.

The current cabin that provides staff housing can only accommodate two employees under extremely cramped conditions. The new housing would be configured with three bedrooms and two full baths, which could accommodate three employees, including mixed gender configurations (See *Appendix D* for a Floor Plan Detail). The proposed new residence will facilitate on-going efforts to add a third seasonal river ranger to the staff.

The new staff residence would provide staff with a safe lodging environment and much better view of the camping and river access areas. The new office building would provide the public with a more professional and accessible environment to conduct pre-floating business, talk with the staff as to current river conditions, and provide staff with a safe and secure building for administrative files and equipment.

View from the proposed new office location at the campground area looking south at the existing office/residence.

View from the cabin's existing parking area looking toward the camping area (center of the Y-shape). The proposed visitor contact office would be between the toilets and truck on the left hand side of the picture.

Additionally, proposed renovation of the cabin will provide ample and secure indoor storage for equipment, which will reduce the possibility of theft, vandalism, and seasonal wear. Also, the current locations of the storage buildings are needed for convenient parking for the new residence unit. Renovation of existing cabin will make these buildings obsolete and removal will reduce site clutter.

Currently, the upper level of the cabin is heated by an outdated wood-burning stove that provides an inconsistent and high maintenance heat source, while the cabin's lower level utilizes electric baseboard heat. The proposed new residence would be heated with propane, which would provide staff with a safe and reliable source of heat during the early and final portions of the Smith River season. The proposed new office building will be heated and cooled by electricity.

The existing well water filtration system supplies basic needs for the cabin's staff bathroom. However, because of the water's high mineral content, fixtures are encrusted with mineral deposits and the water's color and taste makes it difficult to use. Due to water quality concerns, the staff currently utilizes bottled water for drinking.

The existing water system is maintenance intensive with limited successful improvement to the condition of the water supplied to the cabin. The upgrades to the water filtration system would enhance the overall water quality to the new residence building and extend the longevity of the plumbing system.

Both new buildings will be instrumental for FWP staff's ability to meet the responsibilities of the current legislation in managing Smith River State Park and its' highly popular floater program in an effective, professional, and efficient manner.

10. 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:

<u>Alternative A:</u>
No Action

If no action were taken, FWP would not improve the current 1080's era log cabin building, which would remain used as both a staff residence and office at the Camp Baker site. The professional contact expected with visitors would be less than desirable due to the office sharing space with the residential kitchen area. Safety of campground facilities and users would not be adequately monitored due to poor visibility from the existing facility. Staff living conditions would remain poor and unsafe due to inadequate size, privacy, and facility conditions. Concerns for the safety of the camping area and the living environment for the staff would linger and would be mitigated as future financial and staff resources would allow. Furthermore, the current size of the building would limit the number of staff housed there during the floating season to two, who provide pre-float services for the public and management of the Smith River corridor.

Alternative B:
Proposed installation of prefabricated office and residence buildings with associated utilities; removal of existing small storages buildings; and renovation of existing office/residence building for storage

In Alternative B, FWP would pursue the purchase of the prefabricated office and residence buildings for Camp Baker. These new facilities would improve the public's safety at the camping area and the customer service facilities for floaters of the Smith River. Additionally, the living and working conditions for the FWP River Rangers stationed there would be greatly enhanced.

Although the costs involved for the proposed improvements are covered by capital funding, annual operational expenditures are expected to increase because of the additional electrical, communications, and propane needs of the new buildings and continued electrical supplies to the existing cabin.

Alternative C:
Installation of a prefabricated residence building; with associated utilities; removal of existing small storages buildings; and renovation of existing office/residence cabin for administrative and storage needs

Under this scenario, only the new prefabricated residence would be purchased. This would alleviate the current health and safety issues with regards to the current staff housing facility. Additionally, the cabin could be renovated to accommodate the administrative needs of the office on the entire upper level and establish the lower level as a storage area. Visibility from the cabin of the camping and river areas would still be a challenge for the staff, which require them to be away from the office for greater periods of time during peak season.

As with Alternative B, the purchase costs of the new residence would be paid for by capital funds and some annual utility and communications costs would be increased due to the basic needs of the additional building at the site.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

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

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X		yes	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				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

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

1a/b. The proposed new staff residence site is above the existing cabin, which has a slight sloping grade. The foundation for the structure will have a crawl space for storage that will require the movement of more than 20 c.y. of earth. The construction and displacement or the soil will cause some temporary soil instability, but Best Management Practices (erosion control techniques) will implemented to ensure limited runoff and erosion.

Similarly, the foundation for the office unit will require the displacement of soil to accommodate the new foundation. Since the office site is in closer proximity to the Smith River, steps will be taken to limit the possibility of construction run-off.

Soil disturbed by the construction at both sites will be compacted and reseeded with native grasses after the buildings are installed and connections to existing utility systems are completed.

All excavated boulders removed for the foundation of the new residence will be used at Camp Baker as traffic and vegetation barriers.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. AIR Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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.)		X				
f. Other:		X				

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

2a. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created by construction equipment during the creation of the building foundations, installation of buildings, and the digging of trenches to connect utility and waste water systems at Camp Baker.

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** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

3. WATER Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		X				
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.)		X				
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water 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 cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		yes	4a
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X			4b
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-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

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

4 a/b. The proposed construction and improvements at Camp Baker will require the removal of about .25 acre to accommodate the new building foundations and will disturb small areas of vegetation as below ground utility and water connections are established. Areas that are disturbed and not covered by the new structures will be reseeded with a native dryland seed mix. The effects of these changes will not constitute significant changes to the diversity or abundance of the plant species in the area.

4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program's (MNHP) species of concern database identified one vascular plant of significance, *Cirsium longistylum* (Long-styled Thistle), occurring in the region but not at the proposed sites of improvement at Camp Baker. An extensive surveyed of the region was completed in 2004 by Scott Mincemoyer, MNHP botanist, and all occurrences of the long-styled thistle were found to be at higher elevations than that of Camp Baker.

4e. Construction at the site will likely increase the possibility of noxious weeds becoming established. Reseeding disrupted soils after construction limits the potential for additional weed infestation by providing competition from a mix of local grasses. Currently, FWP has a contractual agreement for weed management at Camp Baker by the Meagher County Weed District, which is part of the Regional Weed Management Plan.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				5b
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				5b
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 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.)		X				5h
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.)		X				
j. Other:		X				

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

5b. Since this location is already receiving recreational use, the impact to game and non-game species would be minimal during the project period (communications with Adam Grove, FWP Region 4 wildlife biologist and Kristi DuBois, FWP Native Species Coordinator).

5 f/h. A database search by the Montana Natural Heritage Program identified one species of concern in the vicinity of the proposed site of development – *Lynx Canadensis* (Canada Lynx). A small portion of the Little Belt Mountains has been designated potential lynx habitat, which is at a much higher elevation than that of Camp Baker (via FWP wildlife biologist, Graham Taylor). Thusly, this endangered and species of concern will not be impacted by the improvements at Camp Baker.

A bald eagle nest is in used approximately 1-mile south of Camp Baker. The improvements at Camp Baker will not disturb or negatively impact the habits of the current occupants. (via Adam Grove, FWP Wildlife Biologist, White Sulphur Springs).

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

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

6 a/b. There would be a temporary increase in noise levels at Camp Baker due to the addition of the construction equipment and contracting staff working on the project. Some neighboring ranches may hear the noise, but the construction would be limited to daylight hours thusly causing very minor inconveniences to them. After the completion of the project, noise levels at the site will return to normal levels.

The project is intended to commence this fall, which is after the peak use season; therefore construction will have a limited impact on 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 cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				7a
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

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

7a. The proposed improvements at Camp Baker will not interfere with the current productivity or profitability of the site as it is used by private floaters, commercial outfitters, and the general public.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		yes	8a
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)			X			8d
e. Other:		X				

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

8 a/d. Chemical spraying is part of the FWP weed management program, as well as, the Meagher County Weed District to limit the infestation of noxious weeds. Weed treatment would be conducted only by a trained professional under the guidelines of the weed management contract between the FWP Region 4 office and Meagher County. Other means of weed control, such as mechanical or biological means, are also used to reduce risks of impact to adjacent water sources and humans.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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			9e
f. Other:		X				

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

9e. The prefabricated buildings are transported by flatbed truck in two sections per unit. The movement of these sections may cause temporary congestion on Hwy 360 and Smith River Road as they are transported to their foundations at Camp Baker. The inconvenience to the public and commerce is expected to be brief.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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			10a
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			10c
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:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. The proposed new facilities at Camp Baker will require additional maintenance by FWP staff including: seasonal opening and closing of buildings, cleaning, maintenance of the updated water treatment system, painting, refilling propane tanks, and weed management around buildings. The exteriors of the new residence and office buildings are being designed to limit the amount of maintenance required for upkeep.

10c. The new buildings will require being connected to existing underground utilities, water, and waste water systems. Both buildings will be heated by propane, which will be new to the site.

10d. Since the new buildings are considerably larger than the existing office/residence structure, FWP expects the use of electricity and propane will increase at the site.

10e. The proposed improvements at Camp Baker are estimated to cost $209,249, which will be paid from funding from the FWP capital account approved by the 2005 Legislature. Maintenance and staff costs will be paid from the revenue derived from floater registration fees. In 2005, revenues generated from the Smith River State Park were $165,865.

10f. The annual costs are expected to increase by $750, which would be directly associated with new buildings' phone, propane, and electricity charges.

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** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

** 11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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		yes	11b
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X			11c
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		X				
e. Other:						

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

11b. Camp Baker is in a scenic rural area. The proposed new buildings will be painted and roofed in an earth-tone color scheme that blends in with the natural surroundings and to be an aesthetically pleasing to visitors to the site.

11c. See *Appendix E* for the 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 cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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.)		X				12d
e. Other:						

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

12 a/d. A cultural assessment of the site was completed by the State Historical Preservation Office, which found that no historically or culturally sensitive areas existed at the site. See *Appendix F* for the recent SHPO concurrence letter.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
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.)		X				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.						See page 3, #8

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (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 cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

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

The FWP Design and Construction Bureau engineering staff have designed the proposed site plan following best management practices. A private contractor, required to meet all state standards and specifications, will complete construction of the project. The Design and Construction Bureau will oversee the project and is responsible for final inspection. All state and federal permits will be the responsibility of FWP or the contractor through FWP.

The Meagher County Sanitarian will be consulted when the new residence's waste water system is connected with the existing septic system. Necessary approvals and permits will be received before installation of the new residence commences.

A contractual agreement already exists between FWP and the Meagher County Weed District to manage for noxious weed infestations at Camp Baker. This agreement is in accordance with the FWP's Region 4 Weed Management Plan. All disturbed areas not covered by the new buildings will be reseeded or otherwise reclaimed.

Boulders removed in the construction of the building foundations will be reused as traffic barriers at the site to limit the destruction of native vegetation at the site by future floaters and campers.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The popularity of Camp Baker as a camping destination and as the Smith River float access point shows no signs of diminishing. The proposed improvements at Camp Baker will benefit visitors and floaters to the site, as well as FWP Parks' staff providing customer service to the floaters and maintenance to the Smith River State Park and river corridor. The new buildings will also alleviate public and employee health and safety concerns that are currently of issue at the site.

This analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment, with only minor impacts identified which will be mitigated or short in duration at the site.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on this current EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: *Helena Independent Record, The Meagher County News,* and the *Great Falls Tribune;*
- One statewide press release;
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: *http://fwp.state.mt.us*.

Copies of this environmental assessment will be distributed to the neighboring landowners and interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having few minor impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

2. Duration of comment period, if any.

The public comment period will extend for (30) thirty days following the publication of the second legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., October 13, 2006 and can be mailed to the address below:

Smith River, Camp Baker Housing & Office Project
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Great Falls Headquarters
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls, MT 59405

Or email comments to: rsemler@mt.gov

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)?
If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

Based upon the evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed improvements at Camp Baker. Therefore, an

environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis and an environmental impact statement is not necessary.

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

Roger Semler
Region 4 Parks Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls, MT 59405
406-454-5859

Colin Maas
Smith River State Park Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls, MT 59405
406-454-5857

Rebecca Cooper
MEPA Coordinator
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1420 E. 6th Ave., Helena MT 59601
406-444-4756

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

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

Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)
Meagher County, Montana Weed Management District

APPENDICES

A. MCA 23-1-110 Qualification Checklist
B. Smith River State Park Map
C. Site Concept Map
D. Floor Plan Detail – Residence Building
E. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce
F. Clearance Letter – State Historic Preservation Office

APPENDIX A
23-1-110 MCA
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date: August 2, 2006 **Person Reviewing:** Rebecca Cooper

Project Location: Smith River State Park - Camp Baker, Meagher County (T12N, R04E)

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 23-1-110 rules. (Please check ✓ all that apply and comment as necessary.)

[ ] A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments*:*

[✓] B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments*: Two prefabricated buildings will be installed on permanent foundations.*

[✓] C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments*: Foundations for the residence and office buildings will require cut and fill of more than 20 c.y.*

[✓] D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments*: New parking spaces will be created in front of the new staff residence. However, the area is already in use by the existing parking area and storage structures.*

[ ] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a doublewide 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*: No- SHPO concurrence obtained.*

[ ] H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments*: None – all utility lines will be buried.*

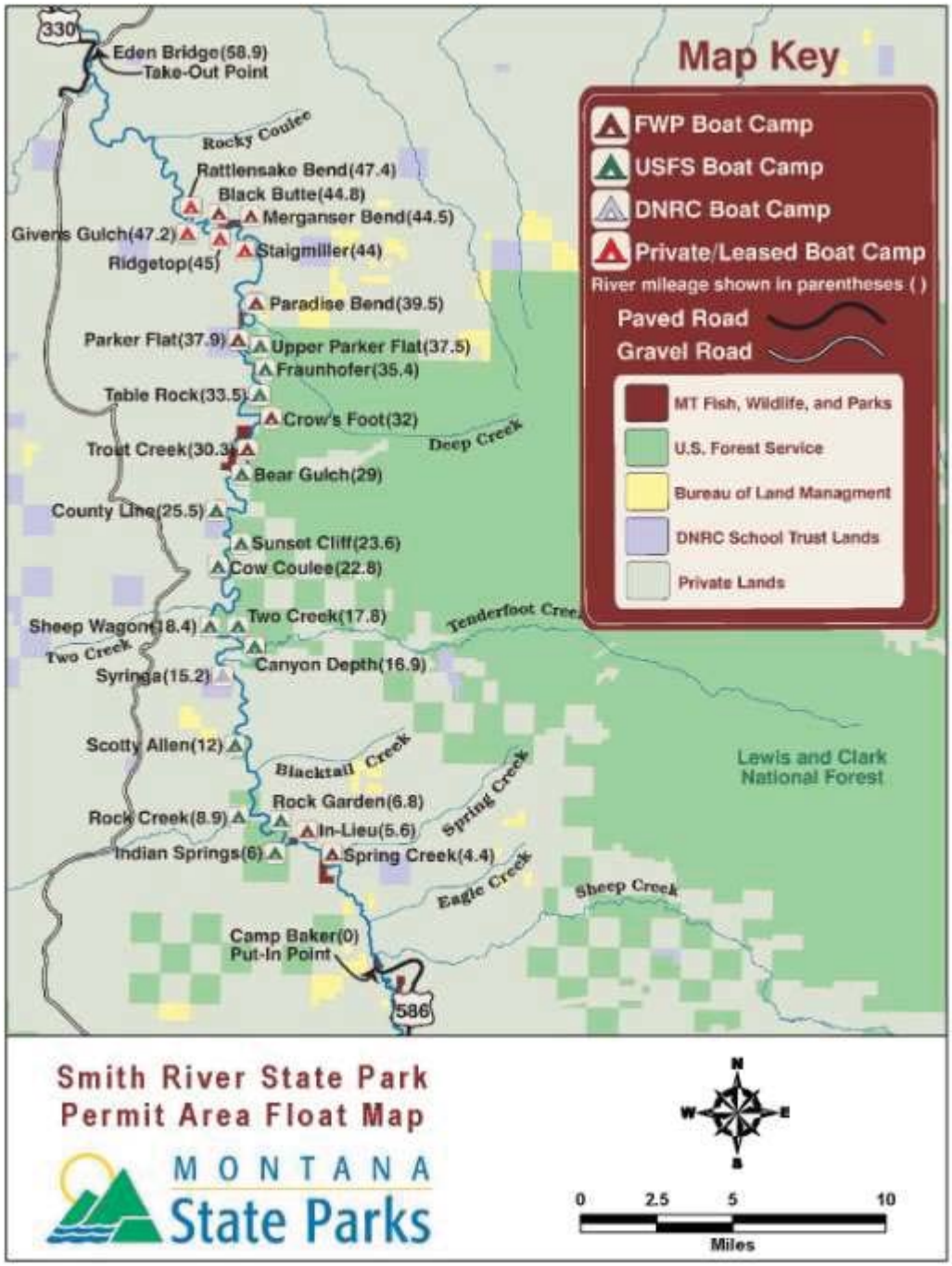
[ ] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments*: N/A*

[ ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments*: Minimal changes in use patterns of the public will occur at the site from the installation of the new buildings.*

If any of the above are checked, 23-1-110 MCA 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.

APPENDIX B

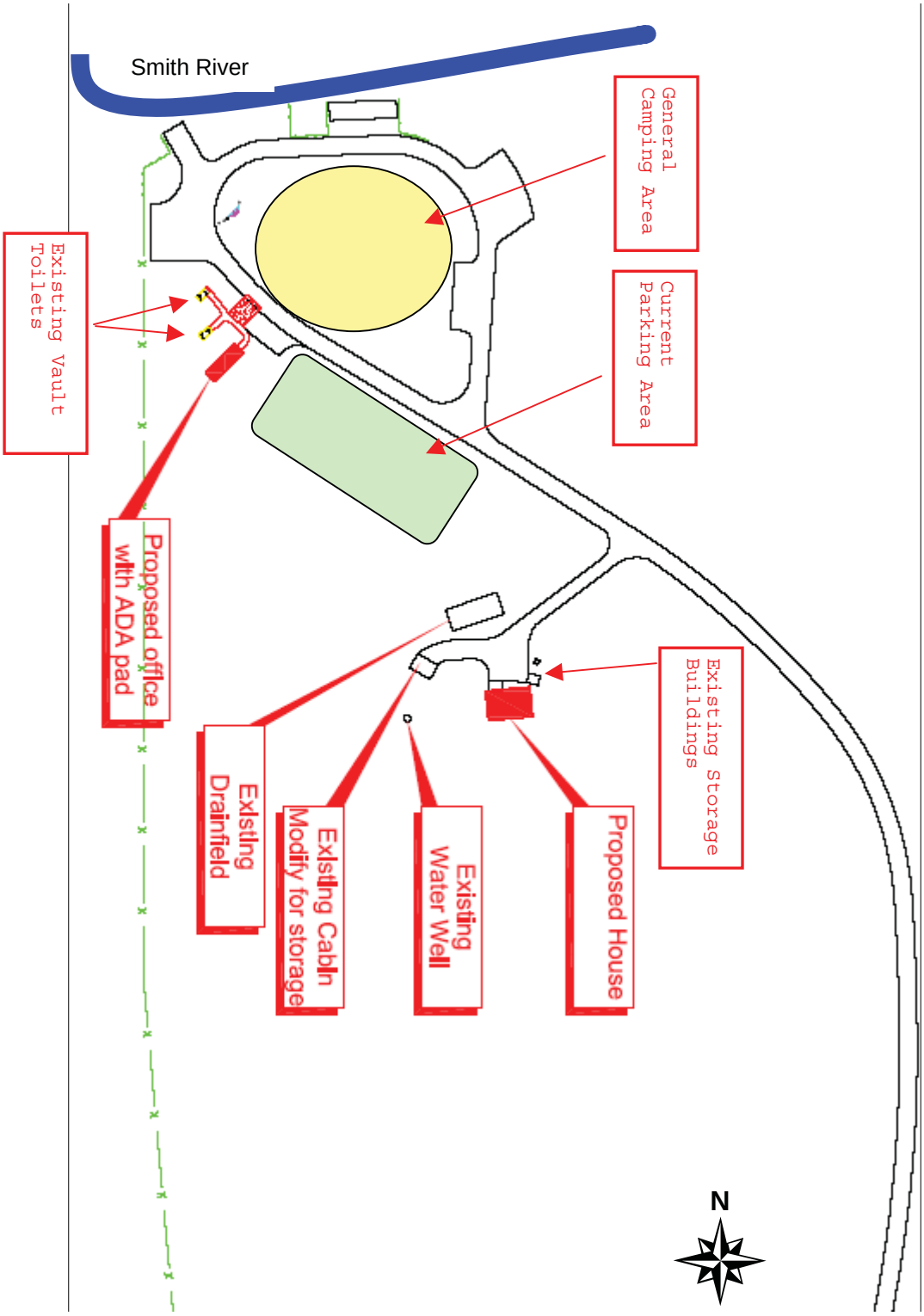
SMITH RIVER STATE PARK MAP



MONTANA FWP

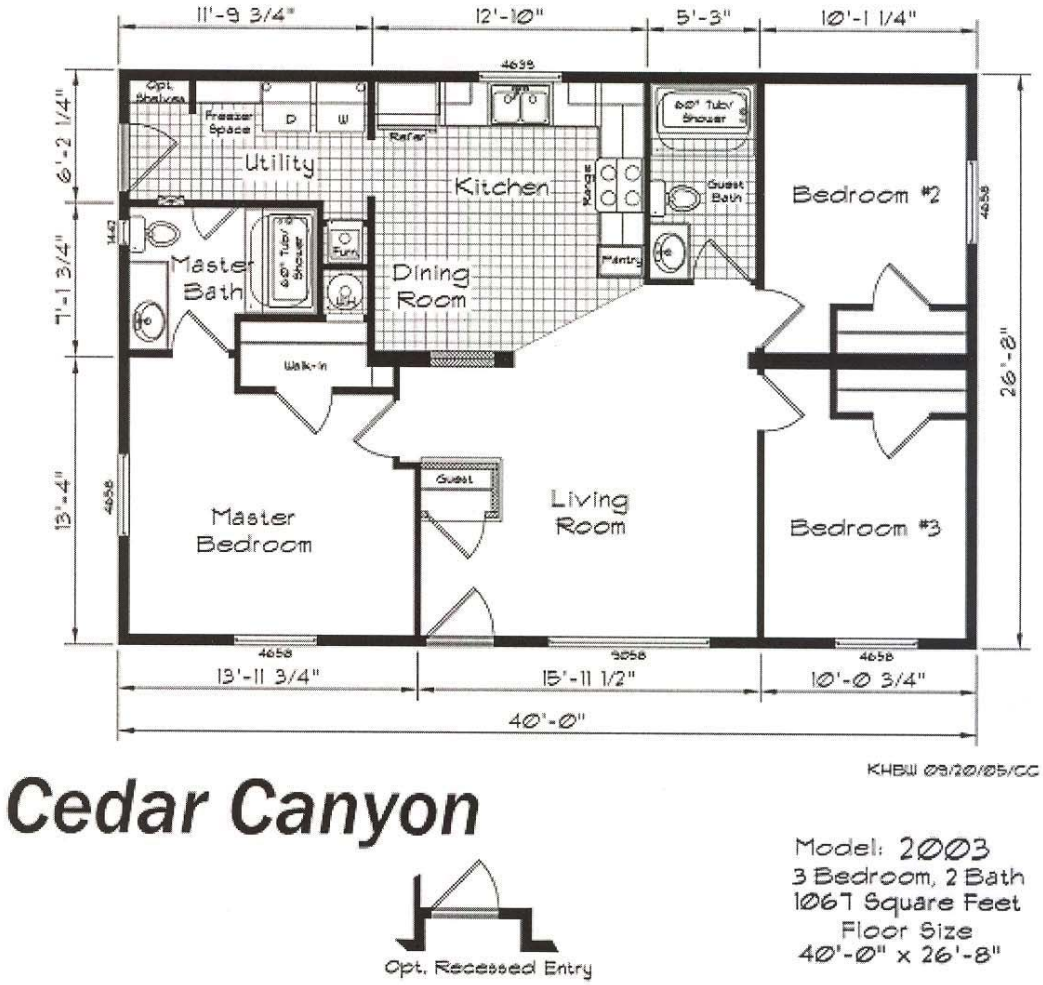
APPENDIX C

SITE CONCEPT PLAN



APPENDIX D

FLOOR PLAN DETAIL – RESIDENCE BUILDING



APPENDIX E

TOURISM REPORT

TOURISM REPORT
MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) & MCA 23-1-110

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks have initiated the review process as mandated by MCA 23-1-110 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
301 South Park
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Project Name: Camp Baker Housing & Office Project, Smith River

Project Description:
To add a new prefabricated house and prefabricated office to the Camp Baker site for staff use, site organization, and better customer service. Other work proposed includes possible renovation of the current office building and removal of storage structures.

Development proposed at the site includes the following items:

- Installation of prefabricated staff housing unit (27' x 40'), prefabricated office unit (12' x 36'), and their required foundations for support.
- Connections between existing utilities already on-site (i.e. water, on-site waste water treatment, power, and phone) and the new buildings.
- Installation of propane heating systems for new buildings.
- Demolition and removal of two existing storage buildings.
- Renovation of the existing log cabin to accommodate storage for on-site equipment and new roof would be added to the building.
- Improvements to the existing well water filtration system.

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

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

NO YES If YES, briefly describe:

Signature Victor Bjamby Date 8-3-06

2/93
7/98sed

APPENDIX F

SHPO LETTER

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

20060 80904

Design and Construction Bureau
600 North Park Avenue
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

AUG 09 2006
BY: S.N.P.O.
RECEIVED
AUG 15 2006
DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

- STAN
- F.W.P / Parks
- Camp Baker housing + access

August 7, 2006

Mark Baumler
State Historic Preservation Office
P.O. Box 201202
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Dear Mark:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is proposing to install a modular house to replace the existing employee housing at The Camp Baker Access site, T12N R4E Sec 13, convert the existing ranger cabin to equipment storage and install a prefab office building with electrical, telephone and an ADA parking pad and walks if funding allows. Cultural site 24ME75 an eligible site, has been recorded at this site, attached is a plan of the proposed project and a sketch of the location of the proposed improvements over the original cultural inventory map of the site. In my review of the project and the past cultural work at this site I believe that the installation of the new house and converting the existing cabin into storage will have a low likelihood of impacting cultural resources. The installation of the office with power and telephone lines are in the area identified as active floodplain in the original cultural report. We have in the past done monitoring of all ground disturbances in this lower terrace of the site, but the monitoring results have not identified any obvious cultural areas other that those identified in test unit #2 of the original survey. Given that this lower terrace appears to be the same landform as where the original test unit #2 documented several well-defined cultural strata I think that it would be wise to continue to monitor any ground disturbance in this area. Could you please review your files and records along with the proposed project and provide us with your comments.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Paul Valle
Cultural Resources Coordinator

CONCUR
MONTANA SHPO
DATE 8/15/2006 SIGNED

Attachments