



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, MT 59105
November 9, 2006

TO: Environmental Quality Council
Director's Office, Dept. of Environmental Quality
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks*
 Director's Office
 Parks Division
 Fisheries Division
 Wildlife Division
Mike Volesky, Governor's Office *
Sarah Elliott, Press Agent, Governor's Office*
Montana Historical Society, State Preservation Office
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council
Montana Wildlife Federation
Montana State Library*
George Ochenski
Montana Environmental Information Center
Wayne Hirst, Montana State Parks Foundation
FWP Commissioner Shane Colton*
Bob Raney (Parks EA's only)
DNRC Area Manager, Southern Land Office
County Commissioners
Other Local Interested People or Groups
* (Sent electronically)

Lands Section
Design & Construction
Legal Unit
Regional Supervisors

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LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY OFFICE

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for renovation of the Bratten FAS site and is submitted for your consideration. Questions and comments will be accepted until December 11, 2006.

If you have questions or need additional copies of the draft EA, please contact Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks at 247-2940. Please send any written comments to the following address:

Bratten Fishing Access
C/O Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings MT 59105
Or contact by email: twalters@mt.gov

Thank you for your interest,

Gary Hammond

Gary Hammond
Regional Supervisor

Environmental Assessment

BRATTEN FISHING ACCESS SITE RENOVATION

November 2006



*Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks*

**Bratten Fishing Access Site Renovation
Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST**

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of proposed state action:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) proposes to renovate Bratten FAS by redesigning the site to better serve current use patterns including boat launch parking, renovation of the road system, and replacing the old latrine.
2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605, which directs Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to acquire, develop and operate a system of fishing accesses. The legislature established an earmarked funding account to ensure that this fishing access site function would be accomplished.
3. **Name of project:** Bratten Fishing Access Site Renovation
4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):** Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks is the project sponsor.
5. **If applicable:**
 Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Spring 2007
 Estimated Completion Date: Fall 2007
 Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 80%
6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):**
 Sweetgrass County, T01S R17 NE ¼ of the NE ¼ Sec. 28. Bratten FAS is 16 miles east of Big Timber on I-90, then 2 miles east on Frontage Road.
7. **Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

	<u>Acres</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u>92.76</u>
Residential	<u>0</u>		
Industrial	<u>0</u>	(e) Productive:	
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	<u>0</u>	Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
		Dry cropland	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	<u>0</u>	Forestry	<u>0</u>
		Rangeland	<u>0</u>
		Other	<u>0</u>

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

(a) **Permits:** permits will be filed at least 3 weeks prior to project start.

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	404 Fill Permit in Waters of the U.S.
Department of Environmental Quality	318 Short-Term Water Quality: Turbidity Related to Construction
Stillwater County Sanitarian	Sealed vault latrine permit
MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Stream Protection Act Permit
Stillwater Co. Floodplain Administrator	Floodplain Permit

(b) **Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
General FWP License Funding	\$41,000

(c) **Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural site protection

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

Bratten Fishing Access was purchased in 1970, originally the site was 137.50 acres, however FWP sold 44.74 acres in 1985. Bratten was named for one of the men involved in the Lewis and Clark expedition, as are many of the fishing access sites on the Yellowstone waterway. The Bratten Fishing Access is located between the towns of Reedpoint and Greycliff in Stillwater County, and is located on the south bank of the Yellowstone River 16 miles east of Big Timber on Interstate 90, then two miles east on the Frontage Road (see figure 1). The 92.76-acre site is open to camping year-round and has one old wooden double-vault latrine, graveled roads and parking areas. This site needs renovation so as to accommodate current use patterns. This would include boat-launch parking, fencing, relocation of the road system, replacement of the wooden double-vault latrine, and grading and graveled of the existing boat launch.

This site's outdated design no longer provides for established uses; the old latrine is hard to keep clean and in a sanitary condition. There is heightened fire danger and resource damage due to off-road travel. FWP would be able to keep this site available during fire conditions with vehicles contained on graveled surfaces. These options would allow managers to better provide for day-users and campers, provide adequate boat access, regulate use, establish site protection measures, and address the weed problems on the site.



Figure 1.
Bratten FAS location is indicated by black arrow.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. 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 A: No Action Note: A detailed evaluation of the Proposed Actions are included in Part VI., the Environmental Review Checklist.

If no action is taken, the boat ramp will remain difficult to use, and boaters will either avoid using Bratten FAS for put-in or take-outs or will use undeveloped areas for launching. This unregulated use will continue to cause shoreline degradation and the spread of noxious weeds. Fire danger will remain at a higher level due to vehicles not being contained to the road system. The old wooden vault will be left as is and will potentially cause health and safety risks due to its condition.

Alternative B:

In Alternative B, the existing boat launch would be upgraded. A small (9 vehicle) gravel parking lot, staging area, fence modification and road realignment would also be part of the project. The old wooden vault toilet would be replaced with a concrete vault that would be easier to maintain in a sanitary condition. This area of the FAS is already developed, and construction would disturb very little new ground. Estimated project budget total would be **\$41,000**.

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

There are no mitigation stipulations or requirements associated with the actions. Plans for mitigation discussed in part VI (such as adherence to Best Management Practices) are associated with actions that would have a minor impact, and thus are not subject to specific requirements. Therefore, no evaluation is necessary. These actions do not involve permitting or granting of a license on which stipulations would be placed.

The proposed renovations and improvements have been designed to follow BMP's. Montana FWP engineering staff would oversee the completion of the project to ensure that construction meets state specifications, such as limiting soil and vegetation disturbance to the immediate project area, limiting changes in surface water runoff or drainage patterns once the project is completed, and seeding disturbed areas to aid in reclamation. The Stillwater County Sanitarian must approve the location and installation of the sealed vault latrine proposed in Alternative B.

3. Private Property Regulatory Restrictions:

Actions described in this environmental analysis do not regulate the use of private, tangible personal property, or real property under a regulatory statute adopted pursuant to the police power of the state; the actions do not involve the denial of an application for a permit or other permission; and the actions do not restrict the use of the regulated person's private property. The actions of accepting a donation of land and developing it for a fishing access site do not place regulatory restrictions on private property and therefore do not require an evaluation of regulatory restrictions on private property.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

Bratten FAS is an important point of access for the public to the Yellowstone River in Region 5. This EA did not reveal any significant negative impacts to the physical and human environment. Most minor impacts could be mitigated. No threatened or endangered species have been located in the area, and no unique or physical features would be affected. The proposed renovations would greatly increase visitor enjoyment of 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 by way of two statewide press releases in local newspapers and by public notice on the MFWP web page: <http://fwp.state.mt.us/publicnotices> . Individual notices will be sent to those that have requested one.

- 2. Duration of comment period, if any.**
A 30-day comment period is proposed. This level of public involvement is appropriate for this scale of project.

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.**

No, an EIS is not required. Based on an evaluation of the primary, secondary, and cumulative impacts to the physical and human environment, this environmental review revealed no significant impacts from the proposed actions. In determining the significance of the impacts, MFWP assessed the severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the impact; the probability that the impact will occur; or reasonable assurance that the impact will not occur, growth-inducing or growth-inhibiting aspects of the impact; the importance to the state and to society of the environmental resource or value affected; any precedent that would be set as a result of an impact of the proposed action that would commit MFWP to future actions; and potential conflicts with local, federal, or state laws. Therefore, an EA is the appropriate level of review, and an EIS is not required.

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

Terri Walters
Parks Manager
2300 Lake Elmo Dr
Billings, MT 59105
(406) 247-2955

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

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Parks Division
Wildlife Division
Fisheries Division
Design & Construction Bureau
Lands Division
Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)

PART VI. 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. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X			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				1d.
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):

- 1b. The renovation of the boat launch, and construction of the associated parking areas and access roads would cause some soil disruption, displacement and compaction of soil. Any disturbed areas would be reseeded or otherwise reclaimed.
- 1d. The changes to a river's deposition and erosion patterns that the renovation of the boat launch might cause are negligible.

2. <u>AIR</u> 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			2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X positive		yes	2b.
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)						
f. Other:		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 heavy equipment during construction. Post-construction visitation would likely increase, therefore vehicle-created dust levels would increase slightly, but not to problematic levels.
- 2b. Replacing the old wooden latrine with a concrete vault latrine would reduce the impact of objectionable odors that are currently experienced at the site. Regular latrine maintenance would help to minimize offensive odors in the future.

3. WATER Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	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			3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X			3b.
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.)						
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)						
n. Other:		X				

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

- 3a. Minor and temporary turbidity would occur in the immediate area of the boat launch as new gravel is graded into place. Providing a workable boat launch would have the positive effect of concentrating boat launching activities in one designated location, instead of being spread out over several pioneered areas, causing bank erosion and sedimentation.
- 3b. Proposed parking areas and new sections of road would be located in areas with low slope (0-2%) and sandy loam soils, resulting in little to no surface runoff.

4. <u>VEGETATION</u> 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			4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X positive			4e.
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?						
g. Other:		X				

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

- 4a. The vegetation of Bratten FAS is dominated by mature cottonwood stands and grasses, with some riparian vegetation in low areas. There is very little understory. The renovations that MFWP is proposing would not cause significant changes to the diversity or productivity of the plant community. Some shrubs, grasses and forbs would be removed in Alternative B, but such losses would be extremely minor and would not significantly affect their abundance within the FAS or greater area.
- 4e. The road renovation and fencing would eliminate off road vehicle use, thereby reducing the spread of noxious weeds. Noxious weeds are already monitored and controlled at Bratten FAS by MFWP staff in accordance with methods outlined in the Region 5 Weed Management Plan and by the Stillwater County Weed Board, and this control would continue after project completion.

** 5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> 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				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X		yes	5g.
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				
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):

- 5f. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program Database did not yield any documented observations of endangered, threatened, or sensitive species on Bratten FAS. Bald Eagles, a threatened species, are fairly common along the Yellowstone River and have been documented at upstream and downstream locations (please see Appendix 2). Because of the limited development proposed and the distance involved, the proposed project would not be likely to adversely impact this species.
- 5g. The proposed improvements would likely cause an increase in site visitation, which could cause additional stress to wildlife populations. However, the proposed projects would concentrate visitors in designated areas, thus reducing stress to wildlife in remaining undisturbed areas and therefore minimizing any negative effects of these proposals.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

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

- 6a. There would be a temporary increase in noise level during renovation of the boat launch, parking areas and roads, but it would not be excessive and would end after completion. No homeowners live close enough to the site to be affected. Likewise, there may be a very slight increase in noise associated with increased visitation to the site, but the overall noise level would still be very low and very unlikely to affect any homeowners in the area. Ambient noise from the nearby freeway overshadows minor site noises.

Bratten

7. <u>LAND USE</u> 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				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 project would not alter or interfere with the productivity or profitability of existing land use in the area.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> 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		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)						
e. Other:		X				

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

8a. The MFWP Region 5 Weed Management Plan calls for an integrated method of managing weeds, including the use of herbicides. The use of herbicides would be in compliance with application guidelines. Herbicides have been used at Bratten FAS in the past without incident, and the proposed development should not affect that record. Where appropriate, weeds would also be controlled using mechanical methods in certain areas. The latrine vault incorporated into Alternative B would be pumped as needed to manage collected human waste. There is a slight potential for petroleum products to enter the water from towing vehicles at the boat launch.

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> 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				
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):

- 9c. The proposed renovations would make Bratten FAS a more attractive site for recreationists in the immediate and surrounding area. Visitation would likely rise slightly as a result, which would result in increased expenditures in the towns of Reedpoint and Big Timber on items such as gas, food and other supplies. The increase would not be significant (please see attached Tourism Report).
- 9e. The anticipated rise in visitation to the FAS prompted by the proposed project would lead to an equal increase in traffic on roads leading to the site. The entrance into the site is visible, and this increase would not create a significant traffic hazard.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> 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:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
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):

10e. The proposed project would be funded through State funding sources if deemed appropriate.

10f. There would be very little additional costs incurred, as the caretaker time would be absorbed by the Region.

** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X 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.)		x				
e. Other:		X				

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

11c. The proposed project at Bratten FAS would improve the recreational opportunities for the public by making boat access to the Yellowstone River easier at this location. See Attachment A for Tourism Report.

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *		
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				
e. Other:		X				

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

12a. According to SHPO records there have been no previously recorded historic or archaeological sites within the designated search locale. Please see Attachment B for clearance letter.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u> 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 that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				13a.
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.			x			

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

13a. This evaluation of the proposed project revealed no significant impacts to the human or physical environment.

13g. See item 8 under Part 1 Proposed Action Description.

APPENDIX 1
HB495
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date February 8, 2006

Person Reviewing Terri Walters

Project Location: Bratten FAS, Stillwater County

Description of Proposed Work: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to renovate Bratten FAS by grading and gravelling the boat ramp. Roadways would be reconfigured and a parking area would be developed.

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: None
- 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
- G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?**
Comments: None.

- 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/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

APPENDIX 2

Threatened and Sensitive Species in the Bratten FAS Area

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) element occurrence database (nhp.nris.state.mt.us/eoportal) indicates the following occurrence of federally listed threatened, endangered, or proposed threatened or endangered plant or animal species in the greater area of the proposed project site.

Threatened Species

Haliaeetus leucocephalus (Bald Eagle). The Montana Natural Heritage Program database indicates that bald eagles occur in at least two places near the proposed project site. One occurrence is approximately 1/4 of a mile downstream, the other occurrence is about 5 miles downstream. No other information about these populations such as number of individuals, date of last sighting, breeding status, etc. was available.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce
- B. Clearance Letter – State Historic Preservation Office
- C. Threatened and Sensitive Species Map in the Bratten FAS area
- D. Site Plan

ATTACHMENT A

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: Bratten FAS renovations

Project Location: The proposed project location is Bratten FAS, in Stillwater County, T01S R17 NE ¼ of the NE ¼ Sec. 28.

Project Description: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to renovate Bratten FAS by gravelling and grading the boat ramp, upgrading the road and parking system, providing a new vault toilet. New signage and fencing will also be provided.

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

As described, the project appears to improve the opportunity for public use, non-resident and resident, so that benefits can come to the tourism economy.

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

As described, the project appears to improve both the quality and quantity of opportunities and settings for recreation in this area. Public input on locations will be beneficial in assisting FWP to determine the most useful site to develop public access.

Signature Victor Bjornberg Date 11/3/06