Draft
Environmental Assessment

West Shore State Park
Maintenance Project

September 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:** Improvements to West Shore State Park. The project will replace three old vault latrines to provide improved public service, installation of an information and regulation kiosk, and repavement of the road system in Camp Loop A in the southern portion of the park. In addition, this project will rehabilitate four campsites and realign the road as agreed upon in the West Shore Boat Ramp Improvement Project Decision Notice.

2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:**
   FWP has the authority to develop outdoor recreational resources in the state per 23-2-101 MCA.

   Furthermore, state statue 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:** West Shore State Park Maintenance Project

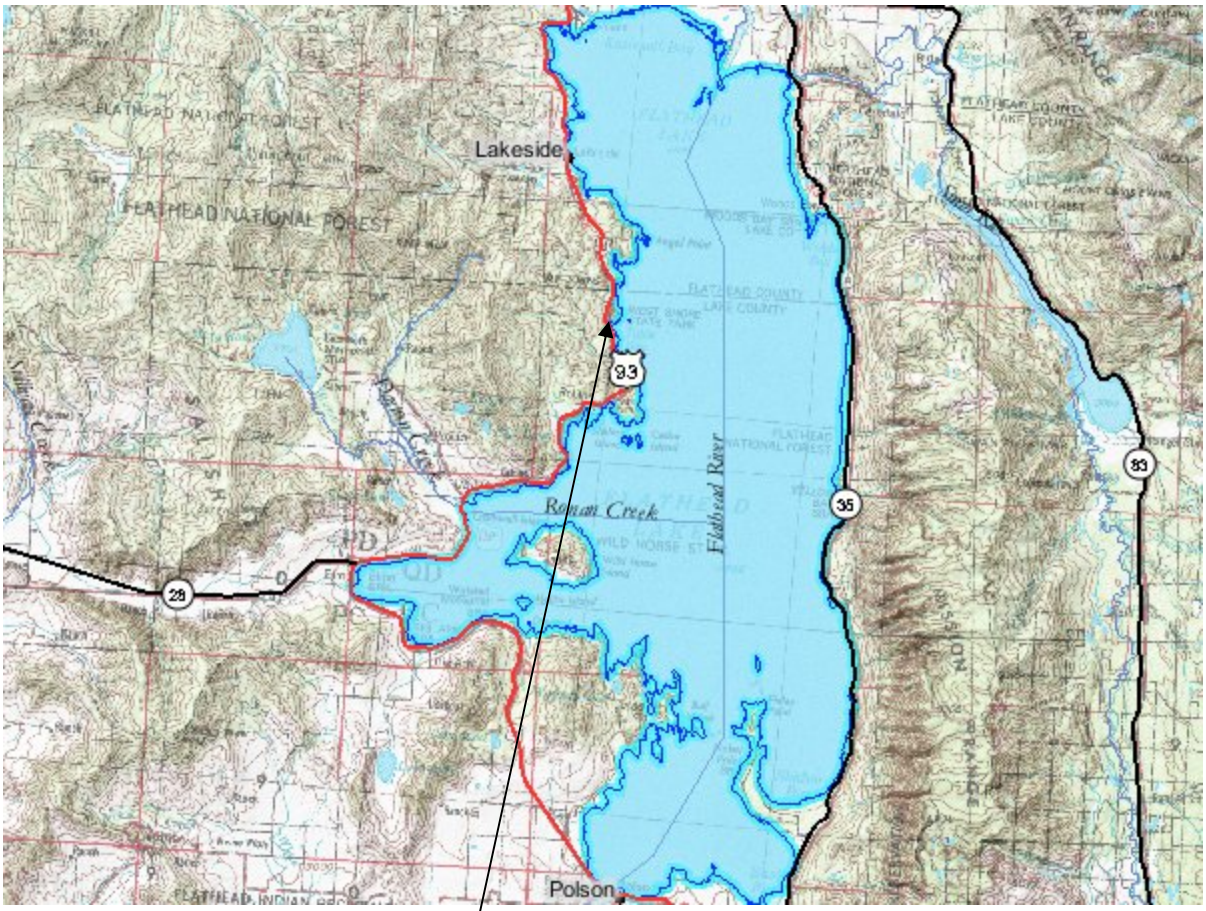
4. **Name, address, and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):**

   Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 East 6th Avenue	490 North Meridian Road
Helena, MT 59620	Kalispell, MT 59901
406-444-3750	406-752-5501

5. **If applicable:**
   Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Spring 2007
   Estimated Completion Date: December 2007
   Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 20%

6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range, and township):**
   Lake County, Section 4, T25N, R20W. The site is 20 miles south of Kalispell on Flathead Lake and comprises of 129 acres owned by FWP since 1966. See the following page for a location map.



West Shore State Park

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	2	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: Permits will be filed at least 2 weeks prior to project start.

Agency Name	Permit
Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality	State Storm Water Pollution Prevention

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks - 2005 Capital Funding	$ 225,000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
Montana State Historical Preservation Office	Archeological & Cultural Site Protection

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

West Shore State Park is located south of the community of Lakeside on Flathead Lake. This approach to the lake is heavily used year-round since it provides convenient access to some of the better fishing opportunities on the lake. Historically, the number of visitors to the park has stayed consistent at approximately 19,000 over the past five years with the bulk of those visiting for day-use activities. Four campsites will be visibly removed and rehabilitated with this project. These sites were replaced in the relocated Camp Loop B during the last completed capital project, so the actual number of campsites available to visitors will remain static.

With the addition of 14 new campsites in Loop B in 2004 that could accommodate RV, trailer, and tent campers, FWP proposes the realignment of the camp loop road that services Loop A, which will move the road away from the proximity of a neighbor's home and the park's southern property boundary.

Neighbor's home visible from Campsite 13. See *Appendix B* for existing site plan of Loop A.

The planned project would also include the reclamation of those campsites and portions of road accessing them, and construction and paving of the new portion of the camp loop road. (See *Appendix C* for concept map). The proposed realignment will improve driving and safety conditions through Loop A.

Currently, the asphalt layers of the camp loop road are in poor condition from years of use by park visitors. In addition, the location of mature trees along the road limits the accessibility of Campsites 11-14 by larger camping vehicles.

The proposed reconstruction would limit the area to tents or vehicles with a total length of 22 feet. Large RVs and towing units will be redirected to the camping opportunities within Loop B.

Additional proposed improvements include the replacement of three of the park's current four wood-sided latrines with precast concrete latrines. The old latrines are being replaced because of their age, outdated aesthetics, and for improved odor control. The new latrines will be better able to meet camper and visitor expectations for modern, clean restroom facilities at a state park.

One of the current latrines in consideration of replacement in Loop A.

The covered information and registration kiosk that is proposed will provide additional comfort and convenience for park visitors during inclement weather conditions as compared to the current flat, unprotected information signs. The covered kiosk will be easier to maintain by FWP staff since the text and paint will be protected from the elements. Finally, the proposed new gate for the service access road will provide additional security and deter visitors from that area.

Improvements will include the following elements:

- Realign the camp loop road and construct new intersection with the main West Shore access road;
- Clearing, grubbing, and construction of approximately 300 linear feet of new camp loop road;
- Obliteration and reclamation of approximately 500 linear feet of existing camp loop road and 4 campsites;
- Reconstruction and paving of approximately 2,400 linear feet of camp loop road;
- Replacement of 3 existing latrines with precast concrete latrines;
- Installation of gate across service road; and
- Installation of a covered information and registration kiosk.

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

The four campsites identified as a concern by neighbors have been closed to public use, but are still visible and appear to be viable campsites for visitors to use. This will continue to cause issues with campers if all other sites are occupied and it is not clear why these sites are closed. If none of the proposed improvements were implemented, the close proximity between campers at the southern portion of Loop A (the road and campsites proposed for reclamation) and the neighbors homes at the southern boundary of the state park would continue to raise concerns about privacy and noise levels between the two areas; large towing vehicles would continue to have difficulty navigating through Loop A; and drivers leaving the Loop A campground would continue to have limited visibility at the intersection with the main access road, and safety concerns about possible vehicle accidents would remain. Visitors registering for the

camping areas would not have the added comfort of a covered information/registration kiosk during inclement weather. Visitors would continue to use the outdated latrines and the condition of the camp loop road would continue to decline.

Alternative B:

Realignment, construction, and paving improvements to the camp loop road; reclamation of 4 campsites; installation of an information and registration kiosk and access road gate; and the replacement of the existing latrines with precast concrete latrines.

This alternative would improve the relations between West Shore State Park's neighbors and Parks staff by reducing the potential for conflict between campers at the Loop A campground and the neighboring homeowners regarding privacy and noise levels. The proposed enhancements to the condition and orientation of the camp loop road are expected to increase vehicle safety in the campground area and reduce the possibility of collisions at the intersection of the loop and access roads.

The placement of new, precast concrete latrines would improve visitor satisfaction with the restroom facilities at the park. Also, they would reduce the possibility of odors emanating from latrine areas affecting nearby campers. The proposed new kiosk would provide a comfortable resource spot for park information and camping registration during inclement conditions. The final piece of this alternative is the installation of a gate accessing the service road from the camp loop road, which would provide added security to that area by deterring visitor traffic.

Alternative C:

Reclaim 4 campsites that are part of Loop A; replace the three older latrines with precast concrete latrines; no realignment, repaving, or intervention at the intersection of the camp loop road; no replacement of the existing information kiosk with a covered kiosk; and no addition of a gate across the service road.

This alternative would allow for the rehabilitation of the closed campsites would alleviate concerns about privacy and noise levels between the property owners on the southern boundary, campers, and FWP staff. The replacement of the existing older latrines with precast concrete ones will reduce possibility of objectionable odors and improve the aesthetics of the park.

Traffic issues pertaining to RVs and towing vehicles traveling around Loop A would continue and the pavement would continue to deteriorate from annual use. The current kiosk would remain in use, providing information and registration services to visitors. Finally, the public would still have entrance to the access road area, which could allow for vandalism and inappropriate camping sites to be established.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

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 geological 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 removal of trees and dirt for the realignment and new construction portion of the camp loop road will initially result in some minor displacement of topsoil materials at limited areas in the park. With the completion of the new portion of the road, the old portion of the road and the four reclaimed campsite areas will be reseeded with native vegetation.

* 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			2a
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X			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.)		X				
f. Other:		X				

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

2 a/b. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created by construction equipment during the creation of the new portion, repaving of the existing road, and realignment of the intersection of the camp loop road. After the repaving, the amount the dust created in the campground area by normal use is expected to be less than prior to the construction due to the repaving.

The replacement of the existing latrines with new, precast concrete ones will decease the objectionable odors emanating from the vaulted toilets in the camping areas.

* 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.

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			yes	3h
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				3h
n. Other:		X				

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

3h. Three new latrines will be installed at the park. All will replace existing, older latrines with precast concrete latrines. One will be installed at the head of the hiking trail at Loop B and the others will be within Loop A.

The installation of all the latrines will meet county sanitation requirements so that no contamination of groundwater will occur, and they will be maintained by FWP to meet visitor expectations for cleanliness and ensure efficiency.

* 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		yes	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. A limited number of trees and bushes will be removed for the construction of the new portion and realignment of the intersection of the camp loop road. These impacts will be mitigated by the obliteration and reclamation of the eliminated campsites and camp loop road accessing them. The disturbed areas will be reseeded with native plants. Additionally, the proposed project would not cause significant changes to the overall plant community of Loop A.

4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage database revealed no occurrences of plant life that are designated a species of concern, threatened, or endangered.

4e. Ground disturbance during construction will increase the possibility of noxious weeds becoming established since there is a noxious weed bed already in the soil. Mitigating actions will include reseeding with native species and monitoring for growth of noxious weeds in disturbed areas. Weed spraying and other techniques will be used as weeds emerge. The area will be incorporated into the Integrated Weed Management (IWM) methods identified in the 2002 Region 1 Noxious Weed and Exotic Vegetation 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				5c
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f
g. Increase 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				
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):

5 b/c. Since this location is already receiving recreational use, the impact to game (black bear, elk, deer species) and nongame species (small mammals, birds) would be minimal during the construction and the reclamation portions of the project. Elk are known to use the state park for winter habitat, and deer and black bear seasonally move through the area. The reclamation and revegetation of campsites and a portion of the camp loop road will enhance the wildlife habitat of the southern boundary of the park. (Communications with Kristi DuBois, FWP Native Species Biologist, and Gael Bissell, FWP Region 1 Wildlife Biologist.)

5f. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage database revealed no occurrences of species that are designated a species of concern, threatened, or endangered.

* 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			6a
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?			X			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 Loop A due to the addition of the construction equipment and contracting staff working on the project. Some neighbors bordering the southern property boundary are likely to hear the noise, but the construction would be limited to daylight hours, thus causing minor inconveniences to them and visitors to the park. After the completion of the project, noise levels at the site will return to normal levels within the camping area and the level of noise heard by the neighbors at the southern property boundary is expected to decrease because of the expanded distance between the campsites and houses.

* 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		yes	7a
b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?			X			7d
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 West Shore State Park include the reclamation of four camping sites. Since these sites have already been replaced by new campsites in the relocated Loop B, no reduction in camping fees is anticipated.

7d. As previously noted, the proposed project will have minimal, short-term effects on the neighboring homeowners in regard to dust, noise, and construction equipment emissions. See responses to 2a and 6a. Overall privacy will be increased for neighboring homes because of the four campsites being reclaimed.

* 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 may be used to deter the establishment and growth of noxious weeds in the proposed construction areas. Weed treatment would be conducted only by a trained professional licensed in the state of Montana under the guidelines of the Region 1 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.

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				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (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.

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				
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: electrical 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 improvements at West Shore State Park are estimated to cost $225,000, which will be paid from funding from the FWP capital account approved by the 2005 Legislature.

10f. No increases to current maintenance costs are expected by the proposed improvements.

* 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.

** 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				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:		X				

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

11b. The proposed new latrines will be of a design that is more aesthetically pleasing with the forested environment of the park.

11c. There will be no impact on tourism opportunities at the site. See *Appendix D* 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 prehistorical, historical, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				12c
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:		X				

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

12 c/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. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) were contacted in August 2006 for their cultural assessment of the proposed project. CSKT will have an additional opportunity to comment on this project during the 30-day comment period.

See *Appendix E* 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				13e
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		X				13f
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):

13 e/f. During the spring of 2006, a letter was sent by the FWP Region 1 Parks staff to inform interested parties as to the Department's intention to improve West Shore State Park as described in this EA. The purpose of this communication was in to identify the public's attitude toward the proposed improvements. The Department received no responses in opposition or support of this proposed project at that time.

* 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:

Final plans and specifications for the project will be developed by the state appointed engineering consultant in conjunction with FWP engineering staff. FWP engineers will design other portions of the project. All state and federal permits will be obtained by FWP. A private contractor selected through the state's competitive bid process will complete construction. Final inspection will be the responsibility of the FWP Design and Construction Bureau.

State pesticide use laws and regulations will be followed. Application records will be submitted to the Montana Department of Agriculture as required every five years and these records will be available to state investigators upon request.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The current location of the campsites at the southern border of the Loop A at West Shore State Park is within plain sight of neighboring homes, which increases the possibility of complaints to FWP staff about noise levels and lack of privacy by neighbors. These sites were closed due to neighbors concerns in a 2004 project at West Shore State Park. The reclamation of these four campsites and the rerouting and reclamation of a portion of the access road to those sites will help to improve the relationship between FWP and adjacent neighbors. Park visitors will not notice the lost of the four sites since they were replaced in the 2004 Loop B improvements.

With the obliteration and reclamation of a portion of the camp loop road, the newly constructed portion of the road, repaving, and realignment of the intersection will provide camp visitors with a safe, convenient way to navigate through the camping area.

The additional intended improvements (i.e., latrines and information/registration kiosk) will provide visitors to the park with improved facilities, which will increase the chance of a positive experience and the possibility of returning to the park in the future.

Overall, the impacts to the physical and human environments will be minor, primarily in the form of removing forest vegetation for the road realignment and new road construction. However, those impacts will be mitigated by the reclamation of the campsites that were closed for public use, and obliteration and reclamation of a portion of the access road. The other improvements, such as the latrines, kiosk, and barrier gate will enhance the facilities at the park.

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, and the proposed action and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: *Helena Independent Record, Daily Inter Lake,* and the *Lake County Leader.*
- One statewide press release.
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: *http://fwp.mt.gov.*

Notification of the environmental assessment will be distributed to interested parties that were involved in the 2004 West Shore EA process to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project. If there is sufficient interest, a public meeting will be held.

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:

The original public comment period extended for (30) thirty days following the publication of the second legal notice in area newspapers (through 11/13/06), and was extended an additional 30 days because the e-mail address originally given for submitting comments was inactivated. Written comments will now be accepted through 5:00 p.m., Monday, December 18, 2006, and can be mailed to the address below:

West Shore State Park Maintenance Project
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 1 Headquarters
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

Or e-mail comments to: dlandstrom@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 on the criteria provided by MEPA Model Rule III to assess if an EIS is required, this environmental review revealed that no significant negative impacts will be created from the proposed action. Therefore, an EIS is not necessary, and an EA is the appropriate level of analysis.

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

Marty Watkins
Region 1 Parks Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-752-5501

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

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

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Parks Division
- Wildlife Division
- Fisheries 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)

APPENDICES

A. MCA 23-1-110 Qualification Checklist
B. West Shore State Park Map
C. Site Concept Map
D. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce
E. Clearance Letter – State Historic Preservation Office

APPENDIX A
23-1-110 MCA
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date: August 15, 2006 **Person Reviewing:** Rebecca Cooper

Project Location: West Shore State Park Maintenance Project, Lake 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*: The existing camp loop road will be realigned and new intersection with the main West Shore access road will be constructed. Approximately 300 lf will be added to the camp loop road.*

[ ] B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments*:*

[✓] C. Any excavation of 20 cy or greater?
Comments*: The excavation of more than 20 cy will be required for the construction of the new portion of the camp loop road.*

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

[ ] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a 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 Historic Preservation Office)?
Comments*: No - SHPO concurrence obtained and confirmation from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.*

[ ] H. Any new above-ground utility lines?
Comments*:*

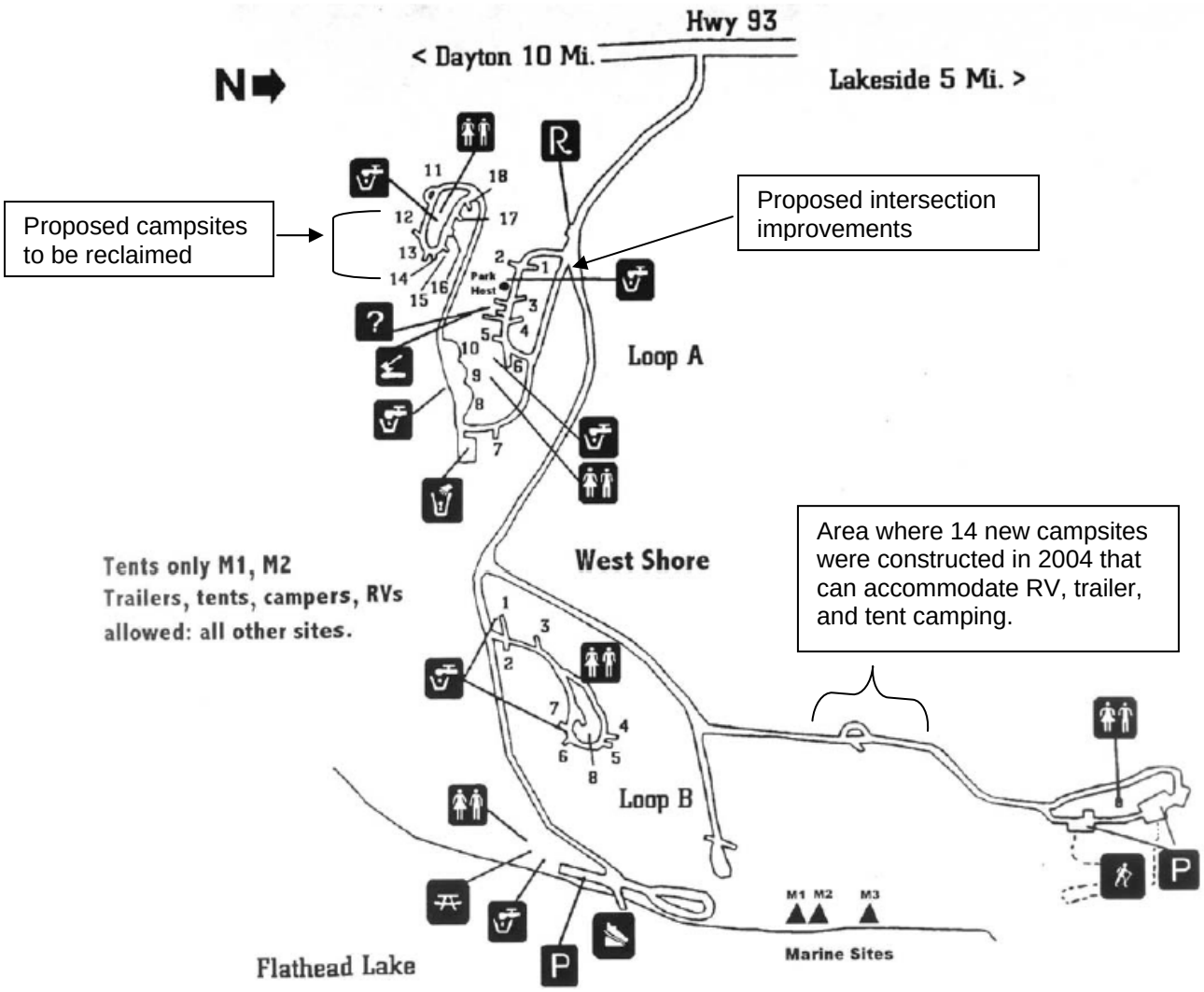
[ ] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments*:*

[ ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments*: The traffic pattern within the camping area in Loop A will be adjusted to accommodate the reconstruction and realignment of the new camp loop road. These changes will improve the traffic flow, decrease camping noise heard by neighbors, and improve visitor safety when driving through the camping area.*

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.

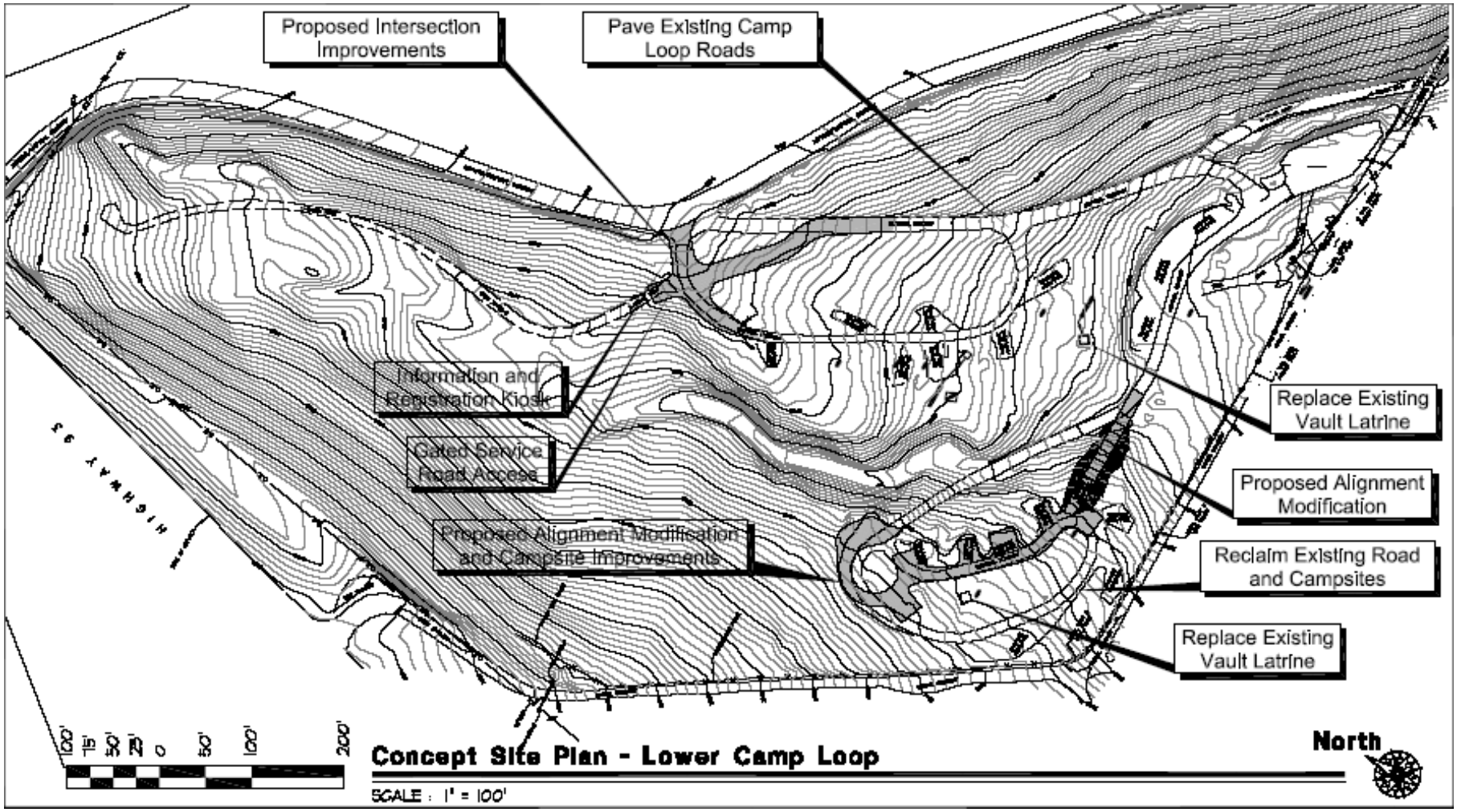
APPENDIX B

WEST SHORE STATE PARK MAP
LOOP A



APPENDIX C

SITE CONCEPT PLAN



APPENDIX D

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

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has 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
1424 9th Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Project Name: West Shore State Park Maintenance Project, Lake County

Project Description: To improve access to the West Shore State Park southern campground loop area and address public safety concerns arising from RV enthusiasts using the compact area. Improvements proposed will include: re-aligning and expanding the existing campground loop road, repaving the road, installing information and registration kiosk, and replacement of three existing latrines with pre-cast concrete latrines.

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 address safety and customer service needs at West Shore SP.

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 the quality of recreation/tourism opportunities at West Shore

Signature Victor A Bjornberg Tourism Dev. Coordinator Date Aug 22, 2006

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TRR600

APPENDIX E

-----Original Message-----
From: Murdo, Damon
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2006 4:10 PM
To: Mangum, Bardell
Subject: West Shore State Park - Lower Camp Loop

August 11, 2006

Bardell Mangum
FWP

RE: WEST SHORE STATE PARK - LOWER CAMP LOOP. SHPO Project #: 2006080901

Dear Mr. Mangum:

I have conducted a cultural resource file search for the above-cited project located in Section 4, T25N R20W. According to our records there have been no previously recorded sites within the designated search locales. However, there has been one previously conducted cultural resource inventory done in the area. Steve Aaberg conducted a *Cultural Resources Survey of Four Montana FWP Surplus Properties In the Flathead and Swan Valleys, Western Montana* in June 1990.

Based this report we feel that there is a low likelihood cultural properties will be impacted. We, therefore, feel that a recommendation for a cultural resource inventory is unwarranted at this time. However, should cultural materials be inadvertently discovered during this project we would ask that our office be contacted and the site investigated. Thank you for consulting with us.

If you have any further questions or comments you may contact me at (406) 444-7767 or by e-mail at dmurdo@mt.gov <mailto:dmurdo@mt.gov>.

Sincerely,

Damon Murdo
Cultural Records Manager

File: FWP/PARKS/2006