Region 2 Headquarters
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804-3101
February 20, 2008

Governor's Office, Attn: Mike Volesky, PO Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Governor's Office, Attn: Hal Harper, PO Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, PO Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704
*Dept. of Environmental Quality, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
*Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, POB 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601
*Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:
Website, Commission Secretary, Division Secretaries, Regional Office Managers, Region 2 Information Officer, Terry Althaus, Mike Thompson
**Region 2 Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Citizens Advisory Council
*State Historic Preservation Office, PO Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202
*MT State Library, PO BOX 201800, Helena, MT 59620-1800
MT Environmental Information Center, Attn: Jim Jensen, POB 1184, Helena, MT 59624-1184
Dwight Opp, Stimson Lumber Co., PO Box 1499, Newport, Washington 99156
Granite County Commissioners, PO Box 925, Phillipsburg, MT 59858
**Rep. Cynthia Hiner, 1027 Kentucky St., Deer Lodge, MT 59722
**Rep. Dan Villa, 1619 W. Park, Anaconda, MT 59711
**Sen. Jesse Laslovich, 112 Mountain View St., Anaconda, MT 59711
George Grant Chapter, Trout Unlimited, POB 563, Butte, MT 59703-0563
Anaconda Sportsmen's Club, 2 Cherry, Anaconda, MT 59711
Skyline Sportsmen's Association, POB 173, Butte, MT 59703-0173
Montana Wildlife Federation, POB 1175, Helena, MT 59624-1175
George Ochenski, POB 689, Helena, MT 59624-0689
Wayne Hirst, POB 728, Libby, MT 59923-0728
Bob Rainey, 212 S. 6, Livingston, MT 59047
Vasil Czorny, 2400 Marshall Canyon Rd, Missoula, MT 59802
Eugene Tripp, Jr. 809 Beverly Ave., Missoula, MT 59801
James & Lori Hoover, Chalet Bearmouth, 1610 Frontage Rd W, Clinton, MT 59825
MT Department of Transportation, Attn: Shane Mintz, 2701 Prospect Ave., Helena, MT 59620
Five Valleys Land Trust, Attn: Pelah Hoyt, 117 West Broadway, Missoula, MT 59802
*Mailed electronically; **Postcard notification

Dear Interested Citizen:

Enclosed you will find for your review the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) proposal to accept a donation of approximately 20 acres of land in the Bearmouth Canyon between Drummond and Clinton in Granite County for a permanent Fishing Access Site on the Upper Clark Fork River.

This Draft EA is available for review in Helena at MFWP's Headquarters, the State Library and the Environmental Quality Council. It also may be obtained from the Region 2 MFWP Headquarters at the address provided above, or viewed on MFWP's Internet website at http://fwp.mt.gov ("Recent Public Notices").

Comments on this Draft EA must be received no later than March 24, 2008. Comments should be mailed to Lee Bastian, MFWP, 3201 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59804-3101 or emailed to lbastian@mt.gov. If you have questions, please contact Lee Bastian at 542-5500.

As part of the decision making process under MEPA, I plan to issue the Decision Notice for this EA. Based on the outcome of the Decision Notice, this project proposal would be presented to the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission for final action at its regularly scheduled meeting in April.

Sincerely,

Mack Long
Regional Supervisor

Enclosure: Draft EA for the Bearmouth-Tripp Fishing Access Site Donation

Draft
Environmental Assessment

CLARK FORK RIVER
BEARMOUTH FISHING ACCESS SITE DONATION

February 2008

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of proposed state action**: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to accept the donation of approximately 20 acres along the Clark Fork River in Granite Co. from a private individual for inclusion in the statewide Fishing Access Site Program. The land being offered for exchange is adjacent to the Bearmouth FAS that the department already owns, and would be added to that existing property.

2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605, which directs MFWP 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 established. Statute 87-1-209(c) authorizes MFWP, with the consent of the MFWP Commission, to acquire land by gift for the purpose of public fishing.

3. **Name of project:** Bearmouth Fishing Access Site Donation.

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

5. **If applicable:**
Estimated Acquisition Date: Spring 2008
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): N/A

6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):** Portions of the SW ¼ of Section 13 and the SE ¼ of Section14, Township 11 N, Range 15 W., in Granite Co.

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	0	Dry cropland	0
		Forestry	0
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	20	Rangeland	0
		Other	0

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

(a) Permits: N/A

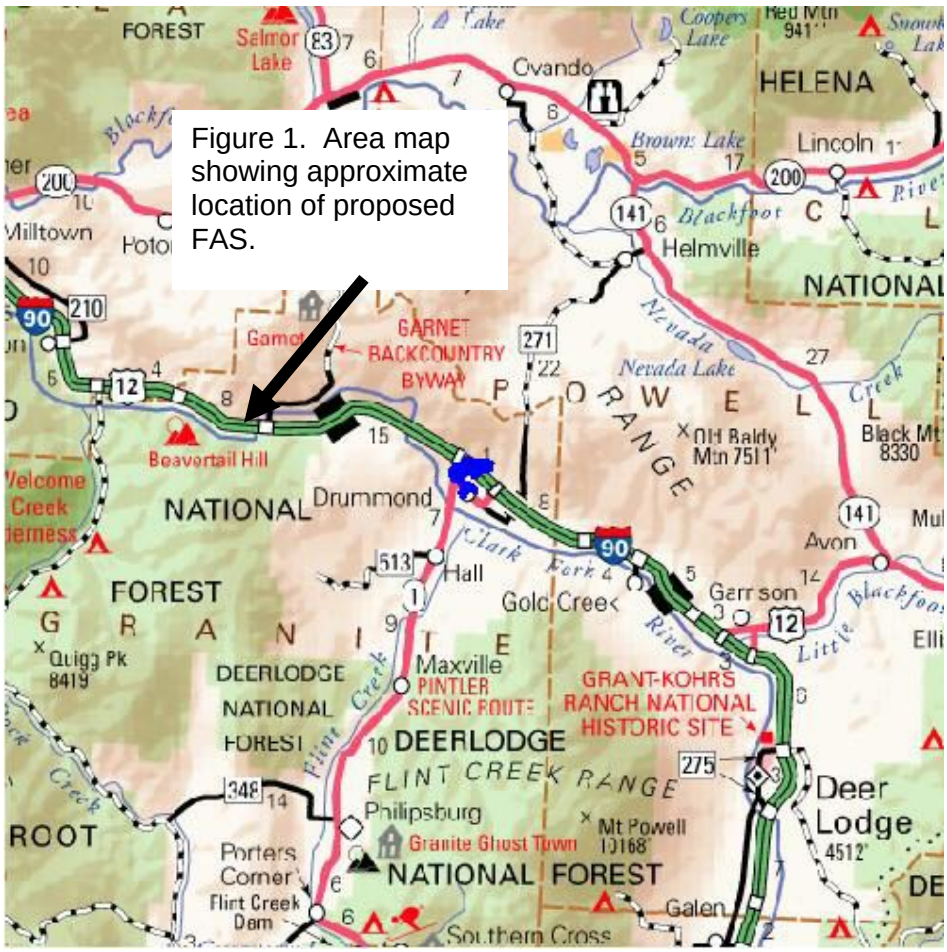
(b) Funding:

Source	Amount
Gene Tripp (private individual)	Donation of Title to Bearmouth parcel

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
Granite County	Oversight of survey and property transfer
Granite County	Weed inspection and management agreement
Five Valleys Land Trust	Temporary Trustee

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



The Clark Fork is one of the longest rivers in Montana, stretching more than 280 miles from its origin in the Silver Bow Mountains to the Idaho border. The Clark Fork River originates at the confluence of Silver Bow and Warm Springs creeks near Anaconda, MT. The section of river that includes Bearmouth FAS is called the Upper Clark Fork, and is bordered on the north by the Garnet Range and the John Long Mountains and Sapphire Mountains in the south. The Upper Clark Fork used to be heavily polluted from mining activities in Butte and Anaconda in the early and mid 1900's and the fishery was decimated. After its headwaters were declared part of a large Superfund Site in the 1980's, a significant amount of time and money has been spent cleaning up the river and preventing further contamination from heavy metals. As a result, the fishery in the Upper Clark Fork supports fishable populations of brown trout.

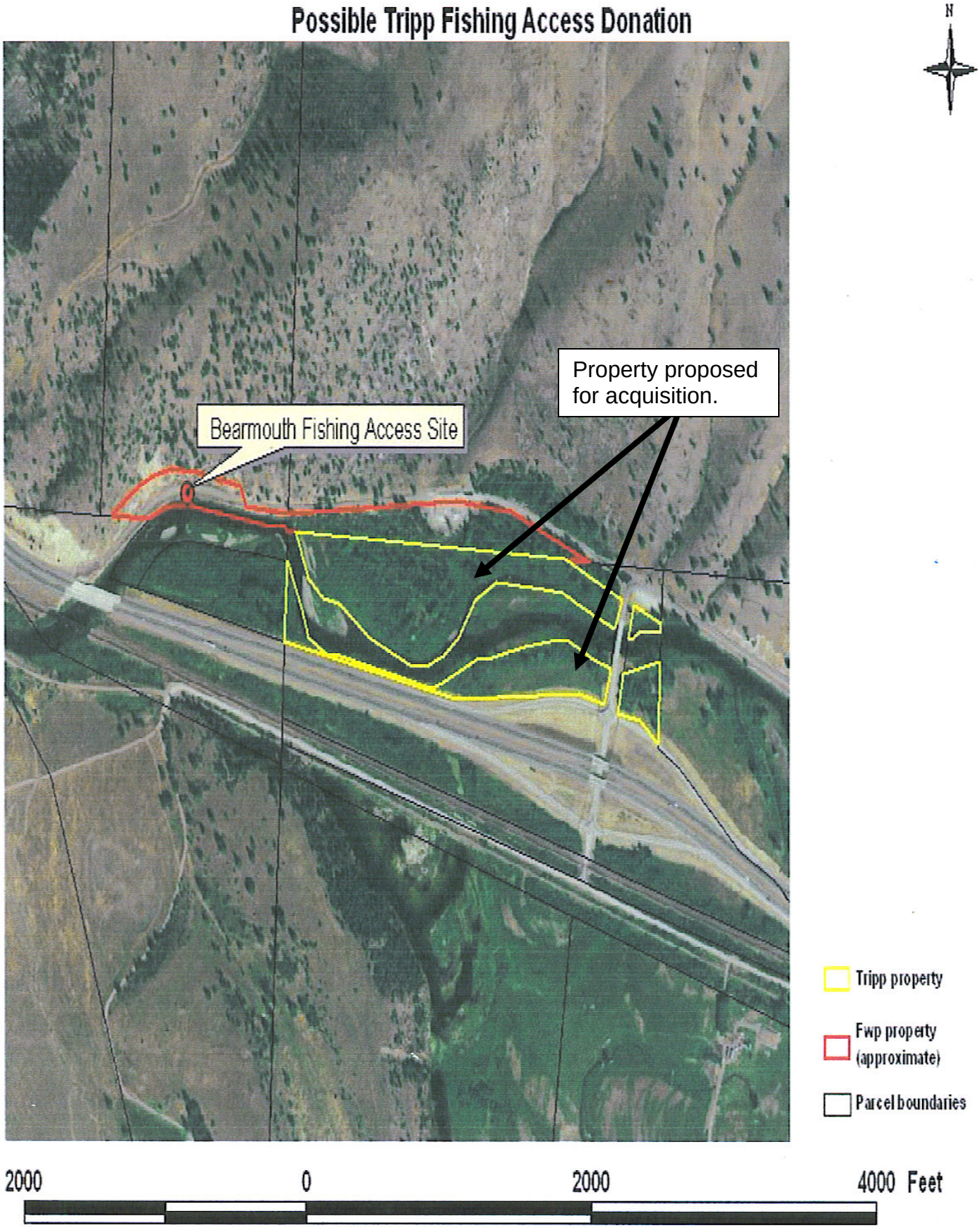
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to acquire through donation from Mr. Gene Tripp, approximately 20 acres of land, adjacent to the Bearmouth FAS located in Bearmouth Canyon between Drummond and Beavertail Hill State Park on the Upper Clark Fork River (see Figure 1). The property for the existing Bearmouth FAS was just acquired in 2005 and has not been developed yet. The proposed acquisition would be added to the Bearmouth FAS enlarging its size to approximately 30 acres.

As the process for FWP to accept donated property can last several months and Mr. Tripp wanted the donation to be effected in 2007, Five Valleys Land Trust in Missoula, MT agreed to hold the property until the MEPA process was completed and final approval was obtained. Five Valleys Land Trust is a non-profit organization and is not charging any fees to either party for this service.

The existing FWP property is a narrow strip along the old frontage road starting approximately ¼ mile downstream of the Bearmouth Bridge on the right bank only. The Tripp property starts upstream of the bridge to adjoin the FAS on the right bank, and continues approximately 250 feet downstream, covering both sides of the Clark Fork River between FWP's property and Interstate 90 (see Fig. 2). This proposed donation would greatly enhance public access at this location, due to the size and characteristics of the property. Most of the Tripp property is level with low banks, making it ideal for bank and wade angling (see Fig. 3). The Tripp property also includes land on both sides of the river, whereas the current Bearmouth FAS property only covers the north side of the river. The larger site would offer more angling opportunities and reduce trespassing on private lands, as the FAS would then be bordered by the interstate to the south and a steep cliffside to the north. The larger site would also offer more choices for future development such as a boat ramp or parking facilities.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is interested in acquiring this land because it would greatly enhance Bearmouth FAS as described above. There are very few designated public FAS's on the Upper Clark Fork River and little opportunity for public access. There are no other FWP FAS's in the 30-mile section between Drummond (river mile 273) and Beavertail Hill State Park (river mile 245). As efforts continue to clean up the Clark Fork and restore the fishery, angler days are on an upward trend. There were 23,666 angler days in the section between the Bitterroot River and the Little Blackfoot River in 2003, making it the 6th most visited in the region and 28th in the state. However, angler days dropped to 11, 772 days in 2005, making it the 9th most visited in the Region and 55th in the State. It is unclear what caused this drop in visitation, but lack of access is a likely factor.

Possible Tripp Fishing Access Donation



This EA addresses only the acquisition/donation of the 20-acre Tripp property, and does not include any possible improvements that would be made in the future. Benefits of the proposed action include the provision of greater public access to a major river at little cost to FWP. Access to the Bearmouth FAS is very easy and convenient, as users take the Bearmouth exit off of I-90, turn north and then turn west at the old highway. The Tripp property is ideally suited for streambank and wade fishing and together with the current FWP property would help make the Bearmouth FAS a very nice site for the public.

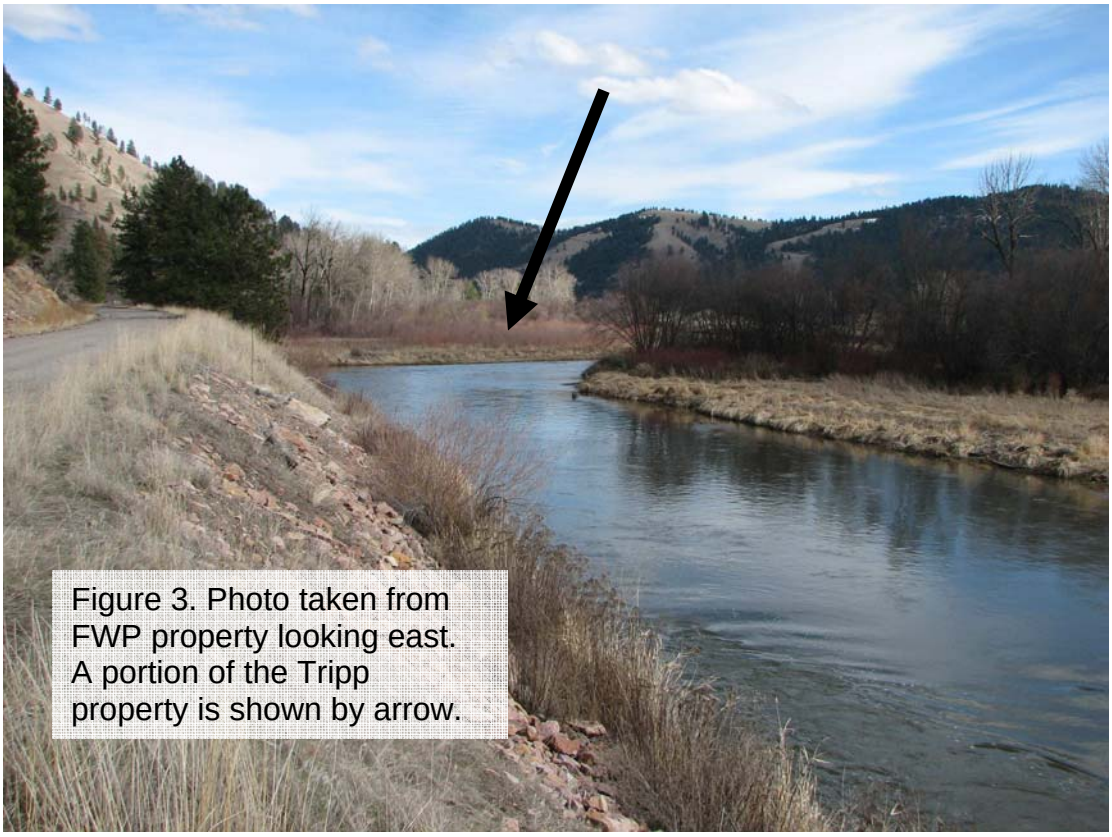


Figure 3. Photo taken from FWP property looking east. A portion of the Tripp property is shown by arrow.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action

If no action is taken, FWP would not accept the donation of the Tripp property for addition to Bearmouth FAS. The property has already been given to Five Valley's Land Trust (FVLT), who has been holding the property until FWP is ready to accept ownership. If for some reason FWP is unable to accept the property from FVLT as planned, FVLT would be forced to find a new owner for the property. It was the stated intention of Mr. Tripp that the property be used to develop a fishing access site, and FVLT would try to accommodate that wish, even without FWP participation. FVLT would likely attempt to give the property to another State Agency or perhaps to Granite County with the hopes that the parcel would still provide public access and recreation. If that was unsuccessful, FVLT would be forced to sell the property to private interests, in which case public access would almost certainly be lost.

If not action is taken, FWP would lose a rare opportunity to acquire riverfront property at very little cost in a location that would further department goals. In addition, future fencing and border signing at Bearmouth FAS would be more extensive to discourage trespass onto the Tripp parcel.

Preferred Alternative B: Proposed Action

In the preferred alternative, FWP would accept the donation of approximately 20 acres of land to be added to Bearmouth FAS on the Upper Clark Fork River. By accepting this land, FWP would be able to increase public access to a major river that currently has little public access at small cost. In addition, the parcel is well-suited for streambank and wade angling and increases the recreational value of Bearmouth FAS as a whole. The existing FWP property provides excellent vehicular access to the site, and the Tripp property would provide excellent walk-in access to the river. The configuration of the two parcels also reduces the amount of border that would be shared by FWP and private landowners, as Interstate 90 and steep topography provide effective boundaries. Less private/FWP borders means less trespassing and litter on private land and therefore less conflict between the private landowner and the public and FWP.

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

There is no mitigation, stipulations, or other controls associated with the actions. Therefore, no evaluation is necessary.

3. Private Property Regulatory Restrictions:

Actions described in this environmental analysis do not regulate the use of private, tangible personal property, and therefore do not require an evaluation of regulatory restrictions on private property.

PART VI. 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 *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
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. The proposed action involves only a donation of property to FWP and does not include development or physical alteration of the property. If the property is transferred, any proposed future development will be the subject of another EA available for public comment.

* 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 *				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				
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. The proposed action involves only a donation of property to FWP and does not include development or physical alteration of the property.

* 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 *				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				
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. The proposed action involves only a donation of property to FWP and does not include development or physical alteration of the property.

* 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 *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X positive			4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X positive			4b.
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. If FWP gains ownership of this parcel, managers would initiate a weed control program which would include spraying, biological control, and hand pulling as needed. MCA 7-22-2154 requires Granite Co.'s approval of a weed management agreement and inspection. The diversity of the remaining plant community would likely increase as a result.

4b. Please see comment 4a.

4e. An accurate report detailing the types and amounts of weeds on the site is not available at this time, but from its location and state of development it can be assumed that there are some noxious weeds present, particularly spotted knapweed. If FWP acquires the property; the parcel would be incorporated into the FWP Region 2 Weed Management Plan, and noxious weeds would be controlled. Therefore, the proposed action would not lead to the establishment of any new populations of noxious weeds and would decrease the likelihood of weeds being spread from the site.

* 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 *				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		yes	5b.
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				
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.)						
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.)						
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. The proposed action would increase public access to the Upper Clark Fork River, which would likely result in more fishing pressure and more game fish mortality. Department fisheries biologists feel that fish populations in this section of the Clark Fork River can support the expected increase in pressure. Game wardens regularly patrol FAS' to ensure that anglers are complying with state regulations.

* 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.

5g. The donation of land itself would not affect wildlife populations. Once the site became open to the public, the presence of recreationists on the property could cause stress to wildlife populations. However, the parcel is adjacent to I-90 and very close to a private campground and restaurant, so wildlife in the area is probably already accustomed to human presence and noise. The presence of anglers and other members of the public on the parcel would likely have a minor to negligible affect on those animal species.

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 no increase in noise from the proposed action. Once the site became open to the public there would be a very slight increase in noise. Adjacent landowners would not be affected.

* 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 *				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 action would not alter or interfere with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use, nor does it conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance.

* 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 *				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 FWP Region 2 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 and conducted by people trained in safe handling techniques. Weeds would also be controlled using mechanical or biological means in certain areas to reduce the risk of chemical spills or water contamination.

* 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 *				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				9a.
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
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):

9a. The proposed action would not alter the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population in the area.

* 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 *				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			10b.
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
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):

10b. Montana FWP is required to make payments to counties in a sum equal to the amount of taxes payable as if the property were owned by a private citizen (MCA-87-1-603).

10e. Mr. Gene Tripp, a private individual, would donate the 20-acre parcel to FWP.

10f. Maintenance cost estimates for the site are pending, but it is estimated that they would be about $1500/yr for the entire Bearmouth FAS.

* 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 *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
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			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.)						
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 donation would increase public access to the Upper Clark Fork River, thereby improving recreational opportunities in the area and Region.

* 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 *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)						
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. The proposed action would not destroy or alter any site, structure or object of historic importance.

* 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 *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Un-known *	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.)						
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.						

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

13a. This EA found no significant impacts to the human or physical environment from the proposed action.

* 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.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The ecosystem of the Upper Clark Fork River was significantly damaged by mine tailings in the early and middle 1900's, but after extensive restoration efforts and regulation it is making a comeback and recreational fishing is now improving in these upper sections. Brown trout now exist in sufficient numbers in this stretch of the Clark Fork to support greater fishing pressure than they are currently receiving. Public fishing pressure was focused on other areas for several decades, so there was little demand for greater access to the river. Now that the river is becoming healthier and fish stocks are recovering, anglers are rediscovering the Upper Clark Fork and seeking greater access. Visitation numbers suggest that anglers would use this area more if there was greater access. Providing greater access to under-served areas would also relieve fishing pressure on more heavily-used sites and rivers.

The enlargement of Bearmouth FAS by the donation of the Tripp parcel would be in line with MFWP's Six-Year Operation Plan for the Fisheries Program, which has as a stated goal to "identify waters in need of additional access and develop strategies to meet these needs". The proposed acquisition would increase public recreational opportunities with no significant environmental impacts. The acquisition of the Tripp parcel for inclusion in the statewide FAS system would greatly add to public recreational opportunities in the Region and would have no significant adverse effects to the physical or human environment.

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 a statewide press releases in the *Helena Independent Record* and *The Missoulian* and by public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks 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.

   The public comment period will run from February 20, 2008 until 5:00 pm on March 24, 2008.

   Comments should be sent to:
   Lee Bastian, Region 2 Parks Manager
   3201 Spurgin Road
   Missoula, MT 59804

lbastian@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.

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 found no significant impacts from the proposed action. In determining the significance of the impacts of the proposed project, FWP assessed the severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the impact, the probability that the impact would occur or reasonable assurance that the impact would not occur. FWP assessed the 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. As this EA revealed no significant impacts from the proposed actions, 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:

Lee Bastian	Allan Kuser	Linnaea Schroeer-Smith
Region 2 Park Supervisor	Fishing Access Site Coordinator	Independent Contractor
3201 Spurgin Road	1420 East 6th Ave	1027 9th Ave
Missoula, MT 59804	Helena, MT 59620	Helena, MT 59601
(406)542-5517	(406) 444-7885	(406)495-9620

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

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

Five Valleys Land Trust