

Draft Environmental Assessment

West Shore State Park Campground Improvement Project

Revised Version



July 2009



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

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

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Proposed state action:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to install 11 campsite electrical pedestals within campground Loop B at West Shore State Park. This would be 11 of the 32 campsites or 34% of the sites available. Additionally, the proposed project would include electrical infrastructure improvements, such as a new transformer box and electrical panel to support the new pedestals.

In conjunction with the installation of the electrical conduits, FWP proposes to extend the existing waterline from near Campsite 8 in Loop B to the end of the campground loop by the vault latrine. Approximately 200' of new piping is anticipated.

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

3. Project sponsor:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-752-5501

4. Estimated schedule of events:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Fall 2009
Estimated Completion Date: Fall 2009
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 25%

5. Location:

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.

8. Narrative summary 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 remained consistent at approximately 19,000 per year over the past five years, with the bulk of those visiting for day-use activities. FWP expects the proposed improvements and those recently completed within camp Loop A would result in a higher number of overnight campers staying at West Shore. In 2006, approximately 40% of the visitors to the park utilized the camping opportunities. This percentage is expected to increase if new RVs and campers all have provisions for connecting to electrical power.

Campground Electrification

In a 2006 survey of the park's visitors, results reflected that 90% of respondents were pleased with the park's facilities and felt the fee charged for camping was fair and reasonable. In the same survey, visitors were asked how important it was for electrical hook-ups to be added to the park's campsites. Nearly 48% replied that adding hook-ups was an important service that should be considered for the site facilities in the future. Currently, the park has 3 campsites with electrical pedestals. Two are for seasonal campground hosts and are unavailable to the public. The other is an ADA- (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant campsite in Loop B. The handicapped-accessible site is reserved for disabled campers until 7 p.m. each evening. Nondisabled campers may occupy the site after that time. The demand by nondisabled campers to utilize the ADA site after 7 p.m. is high. Campers occupying standard campsites frequently utilize generators resulting in high noise levels and exhaust fumes, which can create user conflicts. With the installation of additional electrical hookups, campers would be much less reliant on using their own generators, thus decreasing noise levels and visitor complaints.

FWP experiences from previous campground electrification efforts have shown that some campers do appreciate the opportunity to use campsite pedestals instead of individual generators. Prior to 2007, there were no state parks providing campers the opportunity to utilize electricity for powering medical equipment, camper comforts, or recharging boating equipment. Feedback through visitor satisfaction surveys completed at the Cooney, Hell Creek, and Tongue River Reservoir State Parks in addition to visitor comment cards showed there was a contingent of campers that desired electricity within the campgrounds. Of the 110 visitor comment cards FWP received in 2005 at Hell Creek, 39 visitors asked if pedestals could be added to the park's facilities. The visitor survey completed at Tongue River Reservoir in 2007 reflected that 62% of respondents felt that electrical hook-ups at some of the campsites were important or very important. After the pedestals were installed at Cooney, Hell Creek, and Tongue River Reservoir State Parks, comment cards and comments given directly to park staff reflected that many campers appreciated the campground improvements and the opportunity to plug in instead of using their own generators. Now, those electrified sites have become the preferred sites for many visitors.

The preliminary plan for the proposed project would involve infrastructure improvements that would include the installation of a new electrical conduit from the power source near the upper parking area to a new electrical panel, which would then facilitate the distribution of the electricity to the campground Loop B pedestals. This plan is designed with all conduits underground so that the natural environment of the park can be maintained. Ground-disturbing activities would be required in order to bury the conduits, and some ground covering vegetation would be displaced. Efforts would be taken to limit effects to mature trees and all disturbed areas would be reseeded with native vegetation.

As a final component of this element, a courtesy light is planned for the restroom at the end of the campground loop, which will either be powered by electricity via an extension of the power line or a small photoelectric panel. Although many of the campers in this area of the park will likely have their own restroom with their RV units, tent campers do utilize provided toilet facilities. The light will increase the safety and convenience to all park visitors after dark.

Waterline Extension

Currently there is a waterline though a portion of campground Loop B, but the line ends near Campsite 8 where there is a faucet for campers to use. The proposed enhancement would extend the waterline an additional 200' to reach the vault latrine area at the campground turn-around where another faucet would be available. The extension would provide the campers at the end of the camp loop road a convenient location to access water, and the availability of pressurized water would assist parks staff with the regular cleaning and pumping of the vault latrine.

9. Alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action - FWP does not install electrical hook-ups in campground loop B.

If FWP chooses not to improve a portion of the existing campsites with electrical pedestals, public demand for the option of using electricity at the West Shore campsites is likely to continue to increase, and visitors may choose to recreate elsewhere if the opportunity to use electricity is not provided within the park.

Alternative B: FWP proceeds with installation of electric pedestals at campsites and extension of the waterline in Loop B.

The proposed enhancement to the campground Loop B at West Shore State Park would provide an additional incentive for recreationalists to stay at the park versus choosing to stay at other campgrounds along the western shore of Flathead Lake.

With the completion of the proposed electrical enhancement, pressure on the existing ADA campsite would be alleviated, and the pedestals will reduce the need for visitors to rely on noisy generators to power camper comforts (A/C, TV, etc.), medical equipment, and recharge boating equipment.

The extension of the waterline and new public faucet will benefit both campers and park staff.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

The analysis of the physical and human environments discussed on the following pages is limited to Alternative B, the preferred action. The reason for this is because based on the description of Alternative A, FWP would not pursue the electrification of campground Loop B nor the extension of the waterline within West Shore State Park. The park staff would continue to do routine maintenance of the current facilities at the campground loop, as well as in the remainder of the park.

1. 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 *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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		Yes	1b
c. **Destruction, covering, or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition, or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				

1a. The proposed project does require a limited amount of disturbances to localized soils, but the project does not require any changes to geologic substructures.

1b. The trenching that would be required for both elements of the proposed action in campground Loop B would disturb ground covering and related soils to an anticipated depth of 24". This would provide enough width and depth for the conduits and required fill materials. With the completion of the installation of the conduits, the disturbed areas would be reclaimed and reseeded with native vegetation to decrease the potential for erosion. The proposed design would also require a limited number of cuts to the existing asphalt across the access road. When the installation is completed, the asphalt will be repaired so normal traffic patterns can resume.

Within the project area, the soil is classified as Repp gravelly loam with a thirty to sixty percent slope.

* 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. <u>AIR</u> 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 13c.)			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 regulations? (Also see 2a.)		N/A				

2a/b. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created by construction equipment during the trenching. After the project's completion, the amount of dust and emissions would return to normal levels.

An expected benefit of the new pedestals is the likely reduction of personal generator use, which is anticipated to improve air quality in the immediate area.

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3. <u>WATER</u> 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		Yes	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.)		N/A				
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/A				

3b. The proposed project is not expected to alter any surface drainage patterns. All disturbed areas would be reseeded with native vegetation to decrease the potential chance of different drainage patterns becoming established in the vicinity of the covered trenches.

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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				
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?		N/A				

- 4a. It is anticipated that a limited number of shrubs may be adversely impacted by the location of the conduit trenches and require the removal of those individual plants. Efforts would be taken to limit impacts to mature trees such as limiting the placement of conduits beyond a 12' buffer zone when possible. Because of the planned underground design of the conduits, surface vegetation would be displaced, but reseeding the disturbed areas with native plants would mitigate these influences to the overall plant community.
- 4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage database revealed no occurrences of plant life that is designated a species of concern, threatened, or endangered within the park.
- 4e. Installation of the enhancements may increase the possibility of noxious weeds becoming established within the campground loop since there are noxious weeds already in the area. Mitigating actions would include reseeding with native species and monitoring of growth of noxious weeds at disturbed areas. Any noxious weeds discovered would be managed using Integrated Weed Management (IWM) methods identified in the 2008 FWP Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan.

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

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** 5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> 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.)		N/A				
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.)		N/A				

5b/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 period. Elk are known to use the state park for winter habitat, and deer and black bear seasonally move through the area. During the trenching activities, some species would likely move from the vicinity of the campground for a limited period of time. The reseeding of unstable areas would return the overall plant community to close to the pre-installation habitat, so it is likely there would be minimal impacts to wildlife visiting the campground area. (Communications with 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 within the park.

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

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

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B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> 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				

6a/b. There would be a temporary increase in noise levels at Loop B due to the construction equipment during the course of the project. After the completion, noise levels as a result of campers' personal generators is anticipated to be reduced for a positive impact for the park, since it is expected most campers would use the pedestals for electricity.

The project is scheduled for the fall when camper visitations are low. The camp Loop B would likely be closed during the installation period, but camp Loop A would remain open until the campground officially closes for the winter.

7. <u>LAND USE</u> 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				
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				

The proposed enhancement to campground Loop B would not change the existing use of the area.

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8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> 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

8a/d. Chemical spraying may be used to deter the establishment and growth of noxious weeds in the proposed construction areas. Weed treatment would follow the guidelines of FWP's Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan.

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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					9d
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				

9d. The closest private campgrounds are located in Lakeside, which is 5 miles north, and Elmo, which is 15 miles south of West Shore State Park. Each of these private campgrounds charge \$35 or more per night, but each facility does offer additional services that are not available at West Shore, such as laundry, sewer, and water hook-ups. FWP limits camper stays to 7 days within a 30-day period, whereas at the campgrounds at Lakeside and Elmo, patrons can choose to stay as long as they want.

University of Montana's Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research survey of traveler characteristics based from summer 2006 statistics reflected that the same percentage of respondents stayed overnight at private campgrounds compared to public campgrounds when visiting Flathead County. So, there appears to be no dominant preference by campers as to which type of campground they stay at.

It is unknown if the electrification of a portion of the campsites within West Shore State Park would affect occupancy rates at nearby private campgrounds. Campers may choose to stay at the state park rather than at privately owned facilities because of the lower price (\$20 at the park).

University of Montana's Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research survey of traveler characteristics based from April 2007 reflected an equal percentage of the respondents stayed overnight in private campgrounds versus public ones when visiting Flathead Country.

If campers want a higher level of service or additional amenities, park staff would continue to refer those visitors to private campgrounds in the area.

Through the competitive bidding process for services, it is possible that a locally owned electrical business could be chosen for the project, which would support the local economy and residents of the area.

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10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> 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: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?			X			10c
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?			X			10d
e. **Define projected revenue sources						10e
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						10f

10c. The proposed action would require the installation of new underground electrical conduit lines and possibly new electrical panels in order to provide electricity to the pedestals. The proposed new conduits would not affect the existing electrical conduit that supports the ADA-accessible campsite in campground Loop B.

10d. The proposed installation of electric hookups for a portion of the campsites at West Shore State Park is expected to increase the park's consumption of electricity. Furthermore, the convenience of the campside outlets would provide visitors the opportunity to recharge boating equipment, cell phones, and other electronic equipment.

10e. If Alternative B is implemented, the park could expect an increase in revenue. The following chart shows the revenue estimates based on different levels of occupancy:

Total campsites at park = 32

Number of campsites proposed for electrification: 11, which are 34% of total campsites

Season: ½ May, June, July, August, ½ September = 120 days

Occupancy (#of days x # of campsites x camp fee with hook up)		Less Cost of Electricity per night *	Net Revenue per season
75%	(75 days)(11 sites)(\$20/night) = \$12,375	-\$ 2,475	\$9,900
50%	(45 days)(11 sites)(\$20/night) = \$4,950	-\$ 990	\$ 3,960

* Assume \$4 cost of electricity per night, first year

10f. Small increases to current maintenance costs are expected by the proposed improvements. Electrical breaker switches may need to be replaced on occasion. The waterline will continue to be drained as part of the seasonal maintenance performed at the park prior to winter.

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** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> 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.)		N/A				

11b. The design of the electrification project would have all conduits underground with only the pedestals and electrical panel visible. This design would ensure the natural beauty of the state park is maintained. The waterline extension would also be underground with the exception of the new faucet near the turn-around.

11c. There would be no impact on tourism opportunities at the site. See *Appendix D* for the Tourism Report.

The project is scheduled for the fall when camper visitations are low. The camp Loop B would likely be closed during the installation period, but camp Loop A would remain open until the campground officially closes for the winter.

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure, or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?	X					12d
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.)		N/A				

12a. Although there have been two cultural assessments completed by the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) in the West Shore State Park area, SHPO's records have not indicated any known sensitive areas within the park. SHPO has recommended a cultural resource inventory be completed within the project area to ensure no culturally sensitive sites are impacted by the proposed improvements. FWP's cultural resource specialist would conduct the inventory prior to the start of the project. See *Appendix E* for SHPO's recommendation letter. Additionally, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes would be contacted to ensure no known cultural sites are affected by the proposed project.

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SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u> 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.)		N/A				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		N/A				

- 13 e. The project would not create any cumulatively negative impacts that might affect the use of the park by visitors. Some public debate is anticipated.

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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 would be developed by the state-appointed engineering consultant in conjunction with FWP engineering staff. All state and federal permits would be obtained by FWP. A private contractor selected through the state's competitive bid process would complete construction. Final inspection would be the responsibility of the FWP Design and Construction Bureau.

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

If the cultural resource inventory identifies any previously unknown historic sites in the path of the underground conduits, FWP would work with SHPO and the FWP's cultural resource specialist to discuss alternatives to the design of the conduit system to ensure culturally sensitive areas are not disturbed.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The proposed campground improvements within West Shore State Park in campground Loop B would meet the increasing needs of campers and boaters wanting to utilize electricity power camping comforts, such as air conditioning, refrigerators, and TVs, to charge boat batteries, and for medical equipment. FWP anticipates a decrease in nuisance noises and odors produced by individual generators in use by campers.

The extension of the existing waterline through the remainder of campground Loop B will provide campers at that end of the loop with a convenient location to access water instead walking to the faucet available near Campsite 8. The addition of the new faucet near the vault latrine will also help park staff with the routine cleaning and pumping out of that latrine instead having to rely on trucked water to rinse the septic tank.

Because of the scope of the proposed improvements, it is expected there would be a limited number of impacts to the human and physical environment. However, most of these influences, which were previously noted, are expected to be only for the relatively short duration of the construction period with no lasting negative effects on the local environment. For those actions requiring minor mitigation, such as the trenching for the electrical system for the hook-ups and connections to the existing power source, efforts would be taken to reseed disturbed areas, and efforts would be taken not to stress mature trees in the vicinity of the conduits. The reseeded areas would decrease the chance of noxious weeds being established and would limit erosion. Additionally, FWP's cultural survey of the project would ensure previously unknown historic areas are not affected by the conduit and pedestal system.

The facility improvements to West Shore State Park are expected to improve camper satisfaction and customer service to ensure returning visitors.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public involvement:

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

action and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: *Helena Independent Record*, *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>.

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

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

2. Duration of comment period:

The public comment period will extend for (30) thirty days following the publication of the second legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 26, 2009, and can be mailed to the address below:

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

Or email comments to: jsawyer@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 no significant negative impacts would be created from the proposed action. Therefore, an EIS is not necessary, and an EA is the appropriate level of analysis.

2. Persons responsible for preparing the EA:

Dave Landstrom
Regional Parks Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-751-4574

Jerry Sawyer
Park Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-751-4575

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

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

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)

University of Montana – Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research

APPENDICES

A. West Shore State Park Map

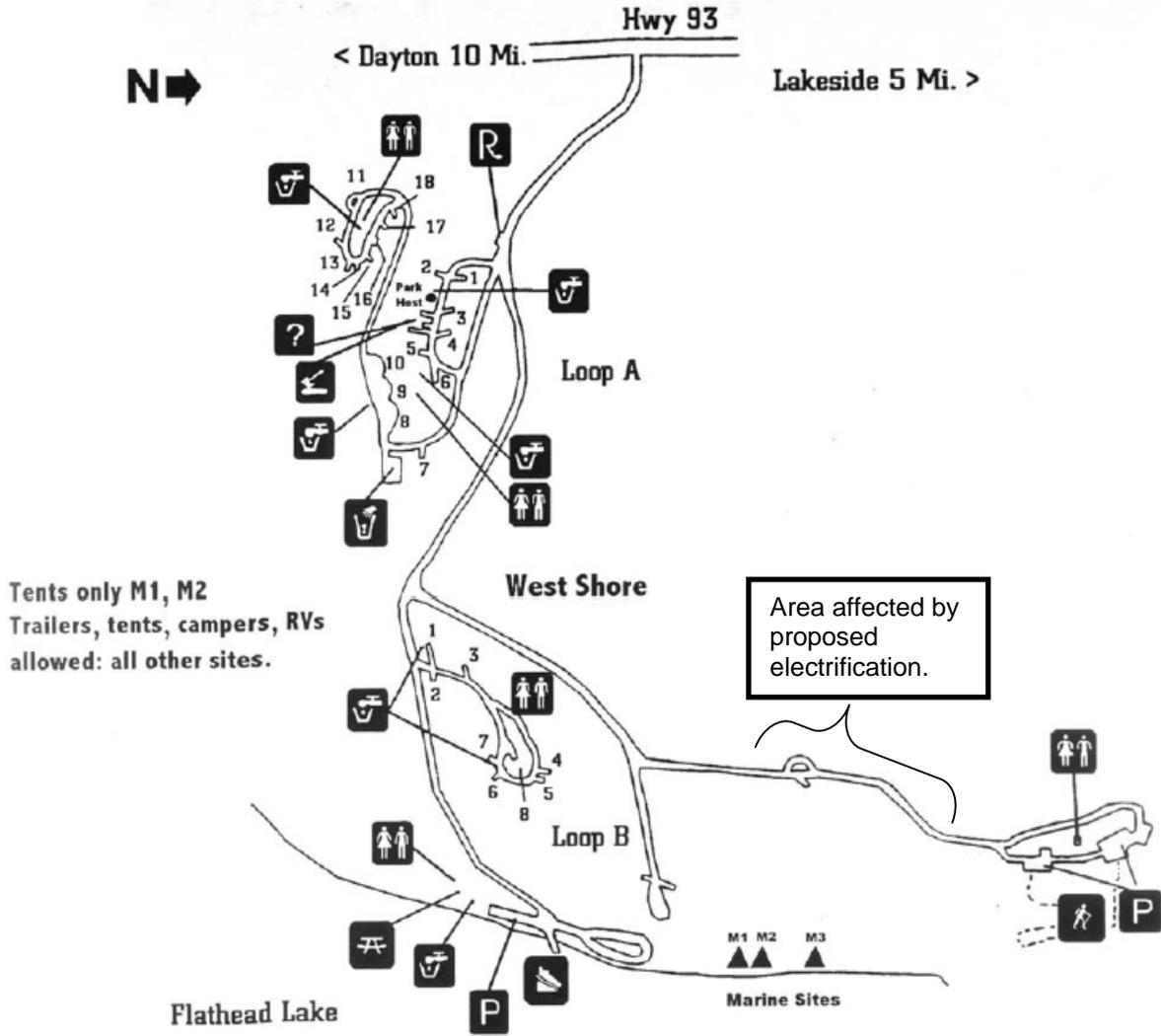
B. Preliminary Electrification Concept Plan

C. Department of Commerce - Tourism Report

D. State Historic Preservation Office - Recommendation Letter

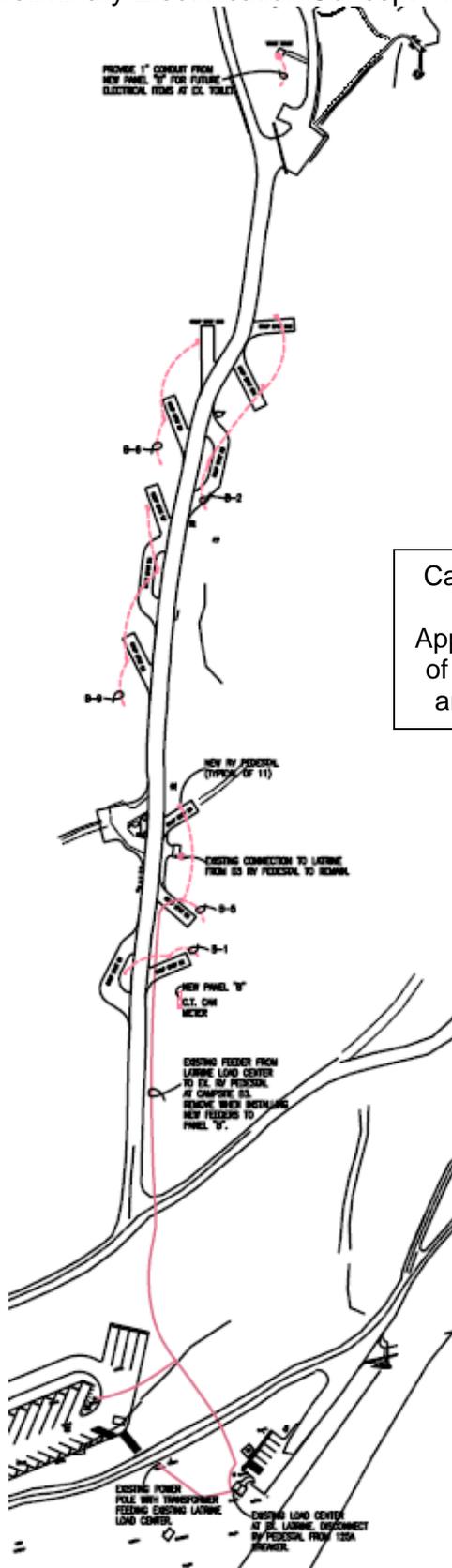
E. HB495 Project Qualification Checklist

APPENDIX A
West Shore State Park Map



APPENDIX B

Preliminary Electrification Concept Plan



Campground Loop B

Approximate locations of electrical conduits are denoted in red.



APPENDIX C

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:

Carol Crockett, Tourism Development Specialist
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce
301 S. Park Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

Project Name: West Shore State Park Electrification Project

Project Description: The installation of fourteen camp-side electrical hook-ups within the campgrounds at West Shore State Park, which south of Lakeside, Montana. The new service will meet the needs of RVs and 5th-wheel campers staying the park and will be an incentive for tourists in the area to choose this state park to overnight in.

The anticipated electrical design will encompass underground conduits between the source of electricity and between campsite pedestals. Additionally, the proposed project will require the improvement of the park's electrical infrastructure to support the pedestals, which is likely to include a new transformer box and electrical panel.

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

As described, the project has the potential to positively impact the tourism and recreation 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 would improve the quality and quantity of tourism and recreation opportunities.

Signature Carol Crockett Date 1-3-06

APPENDIX D

To: Paul Valle

MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

225 North Roberts ♦ P.O. Box 201201 ♦ Helena, MT 59620-1201
♦ (406) 444-2694 ♦ FAX (406) 444-2696 ♦ www.montanahistoricalsociety.org ♦

January 7, 2008

Sara Scott
FWP
PO Box 200701
Helena MT 59620-0701

RECEIVED

JAN 15 2008

FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

CLAIMS

RECEIVED
JAN 9 2008
STATE PARKS
DIVISION

RE: WEST SHORE STATE PARK, ELECTRICAL HOOKUP INSTALLATION. SHPO
Project #: 2008010405

Dear Sara:

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 have been two previously conducted cultural resource inventories done in the area. I've attached a list of these reports. If you would like any further information regarding these reports you may contact me at the number listed below.

After a review of the two previous inventories it was found that only a small portion of West Shore State Park has been surveyed. Based on the lack of previous inventory and the ground disturbance required by this undertaking we feel that this project may have the potential to impact cultural properties. We, therefore, recommend that a cultural resource inventory be conducted in order to determine whether or not sites exist and if they will be impacted.

If you have any further questions or comments you may contact me at (406) 444-7767 or by e-mail at dmurdo@mt.gov. Thank you for consulting with us.

Sincerely,

Damon Murdo
Cultural Records Manager

Paul - FYI
I will do this
survey work
let's talk
about scheduling
limits!
Sara

File: FWP/PARKS/2007

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE ♦ 1410 8th Ave ♦ P.O. Box 201202 ♦ Helena, MT 59620-1202
♦ (406) 444-7715 ♦ FAX (406) 444-6575

APPENDIX E
HB495
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date Feb 29, 2009

Person Reviewing Rebecca Cooper

Project Location: 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.

Description of Proposed Work: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to install (14) campsite electrical pedestals within campground Loop B at West Shore State Park. Additionally, the proposed project would require electrical infrastructure improvements, such as a new transformer box and electrical panel, to support the new pedestals.

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: *No*
- B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments: *No*
- C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments: *The exact amount of soil that would be disturbed is unknown but is expected to be much less than 20 cubic yards.*
- D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments: *No*
- E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments: *No*
- F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments: *No*
- G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments: *No*
- H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments: *No, all new electrical lines would be buried.*
- I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments: *No*
- J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments: *No*

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.