Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1400 South 19th Ave
Bozeman, MT 59718

September 25, 2009

To: Governor's Office, Mike Volesky, State Capitol, Room 204, PO Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, State Capitol, Room 106, PO Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, PO Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:

Director's Office	Parks Division	Lands Section	FWP Commissioners
Fisheries Division	Legal Unit	Wildlife Division	Design & Construction

MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, PO Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202
MT State Parks Association, PO Box 699, Billings, MT 59103
MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., PO Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620
James Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, PO Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
George Ochenski, PO Box 689, Helena, MT 59624
Jerry DiMarco, PO Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771
Montana Wildlife Federation, PO Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624
Wayne Hurst, PO Box 728, Libby, MT 59923
Carl Webb, 2223 US Highway 89 S, Emigrant, MT 59027-6021
Jim Klyap, Dome Mountain Ranch LLC, 2017 US Highway 89 South, MT 59027
R & D Ranch LLC, The Cavanaugh Group, Baltimore, MT 21204-4542
Braune Living Trust, Braune Maximillian Otto & Jutt, 269 E. River Rd, Emigrant, MT 59027-6103
Clair Roberts, P.O. Box 2042, Wawona, CA 95389-2042
Michael & Erin Thompson, 209 S K St., Livingston, MT 59047-3205
Jeffery & Robert Henry, 171 E. River Rd, Emigrant, MT 59027-6103
Cinnabar Foundation, Holmes & Turner, Bozeman, MT 59715-3270
Kerry Fee, President, Joe Brooks Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Livingston, MT

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Attached is the Decision Notice for the Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site (FAS) Initial Development Project Environmental Assessment (EA). Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) proposes to develop a new river access on the upstream parcel of the Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site (FAS) to replace a substandard pioneered ramp downstream that is causing erosion. Development includes new highway signs, a concrete boat ramp, vault latrine, parking for 12 vehicles, and an overflow parking area for approximately another 12 - 15 vehicles. The existing highway approach will be improved as well.

Based on the EA, public comment, and the need for a suitable boat ramp at Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site, it is my decision to proceed with the development project. Both the Decision Notice and the Environmental Assessment are available for review from FWP at the address above or online on FWP's Internet website: http://www.fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices.

Questions regarding this Decision Notice should be directed to:

Todd Garrett
Region Three Fishing Access Site Program Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
c/o Point of Rocks FAS Initial Development EA
1400 S. 19th Ave
Bozeman, MT 59718
(406) 994-3552

or tgarrett@mt.gov.

Thank you for your interest.

Gerald Walker
Regional Parks Manager

Attachment

Region Three Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 South 19th Ave
Bozeman, MT 59718
September 25, 2009
Revised Decision Notice for

Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site
Initial Development Project
Draft Environmental Assessment

Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to develop a new river access on the upstream parcel of the Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site (FAS) to replace a substandard pioneered ramp downstream (on the lower parcel) that is badly eroded. Development would include new highway signs, a concrete boat ramp, vault latrine, parking for 12 vehicles, and an overflow parking area for approximately another 12 - 15 vehicles. The existing highway approach will be improved as well.

The Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site is located approximately 30 miles south of Livingston along the Yellowstone River. This site is located between the Gallatin and Absaroka mountain ranges. The Point of Rocks FAS is located at river mile 537. The closest upstream FAS is Crystal Cross at river mile 541. Emigrant FAS is the next site downstream from Point of Rocks at river mile 525. The stretch of the Yellowstone River that runs from river mile 508 to river mile 542 is ranked sixth in Region 3 and 17th in the state for the number of angler days (34,887 in 2005).

The downstream parcel is 15 acres and has been leased from Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) since 1982. This site is primitively developed with a steep pioneered boat launch into a high water channel and gravel parking area. The use of this ramp and erosion of the riverbank has made it difficult to safely launch and retrieve boats. Current use allows uncontrolled vehicle access across a gravel bar to the main river channel. Following development of the upstream site, parking at this site will continue but will be limited to walk-in or carry-in boat use only. The existing eroded boat launch area will be blocked with boulders and reclaimed.

The upstream parcel is 44 acres and was purchased in 1993. There are no parking or river access improvements at this area. The proposed project focuses on this site.

The purpose of the proposed developments is to improve the safety of recreationists launching and retrieving boats at the FAS in addition to preventing further erosion at the existing pioneered boat ramp into the Yellowstone River. The proposed project is also intended to eliminate vehicle access to a large gravel bar within the Yellowstone River corridor. The proposed development will provide better river access to area anglers in addition to increasing other general public recreational opportunities with the improved FAS on the Yellowstone River.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on July 11, 2008.

Public comments on the proposed project were taken for 30 days (through August 11, 2008). The EA was mailed to 29 individuals and groups, legal notices were printed in the *Helena Independent Record*, *Bozeman Chronicle* and the *Livingston Enterprise*, and the Draft EA was posted on the FWP webpage.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks issued a decision notice on the Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site (FAS) Initial Development Project Environmental Assessment (EA) in August 2008. The Region's decision was to proceed with the development of a new access site on the upstream parcel of the Point of Rocks FAS.

A commenter subsequently appealed the Region's decision to the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Director in September 2008. Action upon the appeal was delayed, first by the 2009 Legislative session, then by the change of agency director, until earlier this summer (2009). While the appeal was many faceted, the one element of the appeal that was granted the appellant regarded a public meeting. It was determined that the Region did not give public notice of the opportunity for a public meeting upon request by an interested member of the public in the EA. FWP rescinded the initial (August 2008) Decision Notice. FWP, in communication with the appellant, scheduled and conducted a public meeting on the Point of Rocks Initial Development proposal in Livingston on August 28, 2009. Public comments were again accepted during the August 1 through September 11, 2009 period.

Summary of Public Comment

Four (4) written comments were received during the initial 2008 comment period on the proposed project. An additional six (6) written comments were received in a second comment period held from August 1 through September 11, 2009. An additional five (5) individuals offered comments at the August 28, 2009, public meeting. Some people submitted comments in both comment periods as well as the public meeting and are tabulated collectively.

In the initial public comment period, two (2) comments were opposed and two (2) comments were supportive of the proposal.

Five of the six comments received in the 2009 comment period were supportive of the proposed project. A variety of suggestions accompanied the support letters. One (1) comment was in opposition to the proposal.

During the August 28, 2009, public meeting, four (4) people spoke in favor of the proposal and one (1) expressed opposition.

Comments Supportive of the Proposal

Written comment #1 (supportive of proposal)

1.) I would like to support the Alternative C (Proposed Action) in the EA for Point of Rocks FAS. That would be building a new FAS on FWP land right by the bridge. I understand the current FAS there is the old gravel pit from years back, with just a gravel boat ramp. A concrete one would be an improvement.

I also understand that there is some opposition to this proposal, but believe that providing Montana Citizens more access to the rivers that they own, is a good thing. In the future, people will glad that this was done.

I also point out that there has been some notes on the bad weed infestation in the proposed FAS, and believe that being a designated FAS should improve that condition, as then the legislated "Good Neighbor Policy" would apply for sure to this property, and thus weed control would be one of the highest priorities. Weed Control is very important to the Yellowstone Valley. So, put me down as supporting the development of the new Point of Rocks FAS, as long as the old one remains accessible as it is now.

FWP response: So noted.

Written comment #2 (supportive of proposal)

2.) The Joe Brooks Chapter of Trout Unlimited for Park and Sweetgrass Counties has no problems with the proposed new fishing access upstream of the Point of Rocks on the Yellowstone River. During low water, the existing access can allow traffic up and down the riverbed, which could be damaging it, therefore we also recommend turning the existing fishing access (Point of Rocks) into a walk in only access.

FWP response: So noted.

Written comment #3 (supportive of proposal)

3.) This is in regard to the proposed Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site (FAS) on the Yellowstone River south of Livingston. I am a Managing Director of the Montana Land Reliance, a Helena based land trust, which holds conservation easements on several ranches near or adjacent to the proposed FAS. The Montana Land Reliance has chosen not to engage itself either endorsing or opposing such projects as the proposed FAS. So I am writing in my individual capacity and as a concerned citizen and member of the angling community. I am the immediate past president of the Pat Barnes Missouri River Trout Unlimited Chapter (#55) and have been an engaged PBMRTU board member for more than a decade.

If this proposal is adopted there will be two fishing access sites within a half a mile of each other. From my experience as an angler on Montana's rivers, the DFWP doesn't have the financial capacity to adequately manage the existing fishing access sites throughout the state. A case in point is the existing FAS, which is heavily invested with noxious weeds such as Spotted Knapweed.

It does not make sense to have two fishing access sties so near to each other. *It is logical, however, that either the existing FAS should be improved or the proposed Point of Racks FAS should be constructed and the existing FAS should be closed.* This would save the DFWP annual maintenance costs and not interfere with public access to the Yellowstone River. If the proposed Point of Rocks FAS were constructed, the existing site would remain open to wade fishing which would allow re-vegetation of the riverbank.

I will further point out that this project seems unduly expensive and elaborate. There are several other Yellowstone River Fishing Access Sites that are sorely in need of upgrades such as Springdale, Grey Bear, Carter's Bridge and Broten Fishing Access Sites to name a few. Why not scale back this proposal and use some of this scarce funding to fix several sites rather than create a very expensive new FAS basically adjacent to an existing FAS?

I oppose this proposal as planned. I recommend that the DFWP should either 1) improve the existing FAS or 2) construct the proposed Point of Rocks FAS and then close the existing FAS.

FWP response: The proposal being considered will close the existing access point by which trailered boats gain access to the river. The downstream access site will remain open to the public for bank and wade fishing opportunities.

Written comment #4 (supportive of proposal)

4.) On behalf of Montana Wildlife Federation, Montana's oldest and largest, in-state organization of hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreationists with more than 7500 members and 22 affiliated sportsmen's clubs, we offer support for the proposed Point of Rocks FAS development. We believe the existing facilities need to be upgraded to meet the increased demand for use of this facility. We appreciate your attention to providing environmentally sound development to allow the angling public to utilize our public streams and fisheries.

FWP response: So noted.

Written comment #5 (supportive of proposal)

5.) As a Montana resident and property owner I would like to express my support for the new proposed "Point of Rocks" boat ramp access on the Yellowstone. I believe it would be in the best interest of FWP to alleviate the expressed safety concerns regarding the short distance from the Hwy bridge and use the County road to access the ramp area.

Additionally, I support minimizing the near by walk-in access site parking and full restoration of that complete area.

FWP response: So noted.

Written comment #6 (supportive of proposal)

6.) As the President of Joe Brooks Trout Unlimited for Park & Sweet Grass Counties I support building the "new" Point of Rocks Access Site as planned. I would like the "old" site to have the following done to it also:
-block off all access for driving to the Yellowstone River to vehicles past any parking for people using the site
-make the old site " walk in only "
-reduce the area for parking to let only 6 -10 vehicles park at the "walk in' site only
-restore the gravel bars that have be driven on with new vegetation if possible
-restore the unused parking area back to a more natural look with vegetation
-allow both neighboring landowners and conservation groups to help FWP achieve this process.

FWP response: FWP is willing to work with Trout Unlimited and any other groups and individuals to perform restoration work on the downstream Point of Rocks access site.

Written comment #7 (supportive of proposal)

7.) The Madison-Gallatin, Trout Unlimited Chapter is in support of the proposed Point of Rocks FAS with idea that you would consider some of the following:

1. Take old site and close it down and make it a Walk-In only access.
2. Block off ALL access to driving across canal and River to river bank.
3. Possibly eliminated 1 of the 2 roads into old access; creating only one road into the area and then making enough room to allow approximately 5 parked vehicles
4. restore old FAS back to its natural state; with the hopes that various organizations and private parties can join in the effort.

FWP response: So noted.

Summary of supportive comments from August 28, 2009, public meeting:

Kerry Fee (PRESIDENT JOE BROOKS CHAPTER # 25 TROUT UNLIMITED) stated he supports the new fishing access because the current access allows vehicles to drive on the river bottom, which results in resource damage. Trout Unlimited (TU) wants to protect the Yellowstone River. Allowing vehicle access to the river bottom contributes to spread of noxious weeds in addition to resource damage. He mentioned having no problems with old access being walk-in only and supports the new access and associated concrete boat ramp. He supported Point of Rocks project in the past and will in the future.

Adam Armold (TU Member): Access to rivers is paramount in Montana. Landowners need to accept trade offs when owning property near a river like Yellowstone. We live here to enjoy these rivers. Use of the river with a boat is currently an issue with site due to need to drive on river bottom. We all love rivers and want to preserve them and our access.

Ted Williams (TU Member): Lived here since 1967. Hokum wanted people to use this site for access. Good time to get favorable bids so bad economy may be good time to construct new ramp, FAS. Keep the proposed site rather than leased site if necessary.

Mathew Long (outfitter): He supports the proposed project. They do not want to be driving in the river bottom. He spoke with Scott Opitz awhile back telling him that he cannot get his car out there [current Point of Rocks access] to get boat in. Outfitters support the project and most do not use Point of Rocks frequently. Probably least used site by outfitters next to Free River FAS. Most put in at Carbella, and take out at Mile Marker 26.

<u>Comments opposing the proposal</u>

Comment #1 (opposed to proposal)

1A.) It is very difficult for me to understand why another access site is needed, especially less than a half mile from the existing site. Nowhere in the EA did I see a needs based assessment that concluded such a facility is required.

FWP response: The proposed project would replace the existing pioneered boat launch area on the downstream parcel, which is badly eroded and unsuitable for safe trailer boat launching, with a new concrete boat ramp on the upstream parcel. The existing boat launch area (on the downstream parcel) would be closed and reclaimed upon construction of a new boat ramp.

1B.) While this may be promoted as "fishing access," it is no less an unsightly/ unnecessary development of our beautiful valley, with no remediation of the present site.

FWP response: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks seeks to provide access to major rivers spaced generally on a half-day float spacing. FWP designs fishing access sites to be functional and blend harmoniously with the surrounding landscape. This proposal would provide the minimal facilities necessary to provide public access to the Yellowstone River and provide for the public's health and safety. FWP employs accepted Best Management Practices (see Appendix 4 in the EA) to design facilities such as contained in this proposal to best protect the river and adjacent land environments. As stated above, the existing boat launch area will be closed (blocked with boulders and reclaimed).

1C.) The proposed development of the upstream site will have access onto and off U.S. Highway 89 South (an already very dangerous stretch of highway), just north of the Yellowstone River bridge. This will be a very dangerous intersection from a traffic standpoint by virtue of its proximity to the bridge.

FWP response: FWP engineers and designers have extensive experience designing site entrances that lead from high-speed highways. Further, FWP works closely with MDT officials to maximize safe ingress and egress from FWP fishing access sites and must obtain an "approach" permit to access the highway.

1D.) The EA contemplates the construction of a concrete boat ramp into the Yellowstone River. I cannot imagine that construction of such a structure is permissible, particularly given the delicate nature of the stream-bank and adjoining riparian areas.

FWP response: FWP has constructed a number of concrete boat ramps into the Yellowstone River in Region Three (i.e., Loch Leven, Mallard's Rest, Pine Creek, Grey Owl, etc.). FWP must obtain permits from Park County, U.S. Corps of Engineers, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, and a SPA 124 MT Stream Protection Act permit in order to construct a boat ramp at this location. FWP has extensive experience with all these permit processes.

1E) The area between the proposed site and Highway 89 has a very excessive infestation of noxious weeds, primarily Spotted Knapweed. With the proposed roadway to the site going directly through this infested area, any vehicular traffic will only further spread this area of infestation to neighboring weed free sites.

FWP response: FWP is aware of the knapweed at this site and will be making plans with Park County weed officials to take some control actions later this summer. Vehicles using reconstructed roads and parking areas should not come into contact with noxious weeds, thus limiting the potential for spread.

1F.) The downstream Point of Rocks access site is less than a half mile from the proposed new site. My understanding is that the proposed development will not require the closure of this existing site…stating that it will be used for "overflow parking." Consequently, there would be parking for over 50 vehicles in total.

FWP response: The eroded, pioneered boat launching area on the downstream parcel will be blocked with boulders and reclaimed. This public property will remain open for wade fishing, hand carry launching of river craft, and other recreational activities. Parking of vehicles will continue to be permitted at the downstream parcel, but would not characterize this parking as overflow from the proposed new boat ramp due to the distance between the two parcels.

Comment #2 (opposed to proposal)

2.) Currently, there is already 3 access points within a 5-mile radius offering public access for floaters and fishers. The current Point of Rocks access area north of the bridge simply needs revision so that river users do not have to drive out onto the riparian areas of the river.

It would appear to me that the need to revise the current access site due to all its dangers should take precedence over the need for an additional site. The fact that vehicles routinely drive through over 1 mile of Yellowstone River bottom reflects a lack of vigilance on behalf of you and your office on protecting the Yellowstone River. I have witnessed this very dangerous act many times in living right across from the access point. My fear is that dangerous chemicals could eventually spill into this Blue Ribbon trout stream. I am sure that noxious weeds and other contaminants are routinely displaced here. Furthermore, in support of revision and upgrade to the current access site, there is plenty of room for parking. The addition of rest rooms would also be helpful. This could be a very nice access area with proper thought and limited work. The access at "MM26" is also very dangerous and in need of an upgrade. The steepness of this take out is very hazardous to anyone who uses this ramp.

As an outfitter and river user myself, I will always support public access, however I simply do not feel there is a need to overlook current areas in need of work and restoration to place another access site 1 mile upstream.

FWP response: The suitability for launching boats at the current location is marginal at best. The steep bank in this location currently must be negotiated to get to the Yellowstone River bottom. Unfortunately, the main channel of the river has moved quite a distance away from the west bank and only a shallow channel remains which becomes unsuitable for launching as the summer progresses. Costs to overcome the steep bank and lack of deep water for launching trailered boats would be extreme at this location. These are the reasons for proposing the new boat launch location. The proposed location takes advantage of the bank armoring that was done to protect the Highway 89 bridge immediately below the proposed boat ramp location. This section of riverbank is stable, the river current is negotiable due to an eddy just upstream in front of a rock cliff, and the water depth is suitable for launching of river craft from trailers. From an engineering and cost standpoint, the proposed location was deemed the most stable and suitable. As explained above, the eroded, pioneered boat launching area on the downstream parcel will be blocked with boulders and reclaimed, thus eliminating the easy vehicle access to the Yellowstone River bottom for which concern was expressed by the commenter.

The access point on the Yellowstone River referenced in the comment as MM26 (Mile Marker 26) is, to the best of our knowledge and research, located on private property. While public use of this property is apparently being tolerated at the present, there is no guarantee that this access point will remain available in the future.

Comment #3 (opposed to proposal)

3.) I want to express tonight my formal opposition of this unnecessary site development and wasteful and untimely expenditure of dollars and resources . . . Why?

Why am I so strongly opposed to this development…..7 reasons

1: No needs based assessment was ever undertaken that I can find. Where is the need?

FWP response: A formal needs based assessment has not been undertaken as a part of this EA process. The use of the existing, downstream site by the public points to the need for an access site at this location.

2: There is a POR fishing access less than ¼ mile downstream ….why another….where is the need?

FWP response: The proposed project would replace the existing pioneered boat launch area on the downstream parcel, which is badly eroded and unsuitable for safe trailer boat launching, with a new concrete boat ramp on the upstream parcel. The existing boat launch area (on the downstream parcel) would be closed and reclaimed upon construction of a new boat ramp.

3: The PV *(Paradise Valley)* continues to be increasingly developed, both residentially, commercially as well as recreationally. This project may be

promoted as “Fishing Access”, but it is no less an unsightly / unnecessary development of our beautiful valley, with no reclamation / remediation of the existing site less than ¼ mile downstream.

FWP response: FWP is willing to consider remediation measures for the existing access site to the extent finances allow. FWP is also willing to work in concert with conservation groups and concerned individuals to achieve objectives articulated in this comment.

4: The EA speaks of the construction of a concrete boat ramp into the Yellowstone River. Is this how we keep our rivers pristine and unspoiled? Is this how we are supposed to protect and maintain our stream banks and Riparian area? Is this being a good and thoughtful steward of one of our true national treasures?

FWP response: FWP will acquire all required permits for the construction of a boat ramp at the Point of Rocks FAS. FWP has constructed and maintained a number of concrete boat ramps for many years that provide boat launching opportunities into the Yellowstone River. Best Management Practices are employed in the installation of boat ramps and are spelled out in Appendix 4 in the Draft EA.

5: Safety . . . The proposed new POR fishing site would be next to the YR Bridge. Only this one between Livingston and the Park is a very dangerous stretch of U.S. Hwy 89. Access onto and off 89 will be even more dangerous here next to the bridge. Not so at the existing site. Overflow parking . . . for the proposed new area. Pedestrian traffic along and crossing 89 is asking for a major accident and potential loss of life. I don’t want that on my hands.

FWP response: FWP engineers and designers have extensive experience designing site entrances that lead from high-speed highways. Further, FWP works closely with MDT officials to maximize safe ingress and egress from FWP fishing access sites and must obtain an “approach” permit to access the highway. The design of the new access site will not necessitate pedestrian traffic along or across Highway 89.

6: Expense . . . is this the time to be spending this kind of money? $71,000 will not fund this project as stated in the proposal.

FWP response: FWP feels that funding allocated for this project is sufficient to achieve a high quality, completed project.

7: And what should be the most important to all here who love this valley like I do, is the historic significance of POR from the days of Lewis & Clark to the early travelers to Yellowstone National Park to today. Will this be our legacy of land stewardship . . . creating a parking lot and concrete boat ramp within 100 feet of a Montana landmark? I would hope not.

FWP response: FWP acknowledges the historical significance of the Point of Rocks, but does not feel the proposed access development will, in any way, jeopardize that significance.

In closing, it is easy for one to object and oppose. I have never opposed a public work in my life, but is there a better way to serve the needs of all? I would offer the following counter proposal for you consideration. . .

1: Rather than have two FAS within ¼ mile of each other, spend money to improve the existing site and other sites in need of maintenance in the area. But if . . .

2: If the state is determined to go forward in spite of logical objections to the new site, close and remediate / reclaim the existing site and use it solely for wade fishing access. Not overflow parking . . . that is a dangerous option.

Within either of these two alternatives I would respectively withdraw my formal protest to this proposal.

Pick up any history book about the PV and POR is always mentioned prominently. Do we want it to now be known as a concrete boat ramp and parking lot? I would answer that as an emphatic no!

Thank you for this opportunity to express my sincere opinions and provide alternative proposals.

Summary of opposition comments from August 28, 2009, public meeting:

Carl Webb's comments at the public meeting were also submitted in writing (see opposition comment #3 above).

Mr. Webb additionally offered the following proposals:

1) Improve the existing site, and use left over money to improve other sites. This is better than making new one ¼ mile away.
2) If proposal goes forward, close and reclaim current FAS and leave for wade only access, not overflow parking. All history books of the valley mention Point of Rocks and we need to preserve it.

Decision

There are no modifications necessary to the Draft Environmental Assessment based on public comment. The Draft Environmental Assessment, together with this Decision Notice, will serve as the final document for this proposal.

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and the need for providing a safe and useable boat ramp at Point of Rocks FAS, it is my decision to proceed with the initial development project as described in the EA. With the construction of the new fishing access site on the upstream parcel of the Point of Rocks properties, it is the

intention of FWP to close the access point on the downstream parcel to vehicle use. This downstream site will then become available for bank and wade fishing only upon the installation of a new concrete boat ramp at the upper Point of Rocks parcel. Additionally, the Region is willing to work with interested conservation/sportsmen's groups and neighboring landowners to further contain parking and roadway use, control noxious weeds, and restore streambank/gravel bar vegetation on the downstream parcel in a cooperative and partnership venture to better achieve the vision and objectives held by all parties that expressed interest in this project.

I find there to be no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

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Gerald Walker
Regional Parks Manager