PUBLIC MEETING NOTES

YELLOWSTONE RIVER STATE PARK CAMPGROUND PROJECT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PUBLIC MEETING

MAY 4, 2010

SIGN IN SHEET

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MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) Attendees: Doug Habermann, Terri Walters, Gary Hammond, Ray Mule', Harold Guse, Tom Reilly, Dianne Stiff

Public Attendees: Guy Raidiger, Greg Raidiger, Dave Raidiger, Michael Bullock, David Oss, Bobbie Oss, Scott Bowen, Annie Rowe, Bill Rowe, Robert Smyth, Janet Talcott, Kirk Marzolf, George Grossi, Tony Brilz, Kirk Moffitt, Sharon Richey, Linda Shelhamer, Mike Whitaker, Paul Reinker, Joe Fedin, L.W. Rice, Mike Penfold, Tom Carroll

Greeter: Terri Walters

Welcome and Introductions: Doug Habermann

History

FWP has received about 16 written, e-mails or by phone comments on this proposed campground project environmental assessment (EA).

The total property was acquired in June 2008 – complete property is 4,666 acres with 200 acres purchased for state park purposes. Access Montana dollars was used as established by the legislature two sessions ago to acquire new parks and fishing access sites. In April 2008 we went through an environmental assessment process which included a management plan about how we would manage the state parks site, and about parks development allowing for overnight camping in a designated area. On June 6, 2008, we issued a decision notice with a revised management plan attached to proceed with acquisition. That clarified that a portion of the property would be developed and designated as a state park to include camping. At that point we committed to a separate environmental assessment process which is what currently is being done.

The main issues that were addressed associated with acquiring the property were fire control, road dust, level of available enforcement, weed management, impacts on adjoining neighbors and cost of acquiring the site. In this process specifically public regulations were listed with two land ownerships on this property. There is both a wildlife management area and a state park. Each has different regulations. There are more regulations on the state park compared to the wildlife management area. Some of these regulations specific to the state park include restricting the discharge of firearms and weapons, animals are required to be on a leash (cannot run at large), motorized vehicles are restricted to designated roads and parking areas, camping permitted only in designated sites (currently no camping is allowed anywhere), campfires would be in designated steel fire rings, removal of any natural or historical geological items is prohibited.

During the last legislative session funding was approved to complete development of this park. Allocation of $500,000 is specifically for this project, and with the legislature's direction we are moving forward including this public process.

Proposal

There will be an access road coming off of the existing road down to the bottom where the campground would be located. Between 35 and 40 campsites, 4 vault latrines and a site for a campground host will be at this site. Terri Walters is the park manager, and in addition there will be a park ranger and maintenance people assigned to this site. If funding allows we could eventually develop an irrigation system, plant trees, provide a comfort/shower building and a playground. Electricity would be provided at the campsites. Sites will be provided for large trailers or motor homes, so would be 35-40' long, include a picnic table and fire steel ring. A well would be drilled to provide potable water for the campsite visitors, the host, irrigating the landscaping and the comfort/shower building. There are no plans to build anything down to the river but foot trails, and no plans to build a boat ramp at this time as there is not a suitable location. Plans are to upgrade the existing roads from the east property boundary into the proposed campground location which is out for bid now.

We will be going through a subdivision review process with Yellowstone County. As a part of that, a road evaluation study has been contracted with through a local engineering firm. They are looking at Bundy and the Bozeman Trail roads to see what kind of improvements may have to be done to bring them up to standards to handle the type of traffic this could create.

In terms of operating the park once it is in place, we have standard regulations we enforce in all of our state parks and a lot of our fishing access sites. Again that includes no off road travel, no discharge of firearms in the developed areas, and fires must be in the steel fire rings. Nonresident visitors pay a fee to come into the park and there is an overnight camping fee as well for all visitors. Management of this site is out of the Region 5 office with an onsite park host there during the high use season.

Three alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action - FWP will not initiate improvements at the Park.

Alternative B: FWP proceeds with basic development of the campground, access road, and overlook areas within Yellowstone River State Park (Proposed Action).

Alternative C: FWP proceeds with the development of campground area and the access road.

Comments will be taken until this Friday, May 7, 2010.

One issue in the past is dust control. We are committed to do dust control with Yellowstone County. Since this is a county road, so we will be contracting with the county to do that.

The proposed area is only about 5% of the 200 acres of the park. We are committed to doing weed control. The wildlife division is responsible for the WMA and parks division for the state park. Under state law we are required to do weed control just like any other private landowner.

Impacts on fish and wildlife – there will be some impacts in terms of the developed area. The wildlife will probably move away from that area somewhat. We have created a buffer zone between the habitat area (food plots) and the park. There is about 100 yards with a shelterbelt of shrubs. It is a good opportunity if we proceed, to talk to our park visitors about bird habitat promoting our partners, Pheasants Forever and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This allows for a way to educate the public on what we are doing within the WMA.

Current visitation - we are seeing around 400-600 visits per month with vehicles and this would significantly increase with this development. Improvements to the road are important for everyone, our neighbors and our visitors.

Community impact - with Pompey's Pillar nearby, there are a lot of visitors who are looking for a place to camp. From an economic standpoint, people would stay a little longer in the area and would spend money within the local community (groceries, gas, etc.).

Terms of public service with fire danger - We are part of a county wide fire group that meets every week during the fire season reporting current conditions sharing any fire activities. The County Commissioners authorize closures. Camp fires will only be allowed within a steel fire ring an nowhere else. We are working closely with the Worden volunteer fire department. Through the Department of State Lands there is a pumper truck available and will be on one of the neighbor's property. There is a 10,000 gallon tank on top of the property full of water. Training has been completed with the Worden Fire Department onsite and access is provided to them. We enforce fire restrictions in the park and campground, and when there are closures we prohibit any kind of fires and even close the site as a last resort. Within the campground we can keep the grass mowed and the roads will help provide a fire break, quicker access and response time.

Comments from Attendees

Michael Bullock, member of Pheasants Forever and avid hunter, also as an environmental engineer that builds EA's, reviews them and supervises the production of them -

- What pheasants require for survival is food, water, hard cover and brood habitat. What is seen at this parcel and the WMA as well is that we have all three of these habitats in one area which is pretty hard to come by especially on public ground. As we know the private property ownership along the river where the riparian habitat is located is all locked up privately. People in my group (Pheasants Forever) agree that having an opportunity to have the access to that type of habitat on public ground is rare, and should be cherished and preserved.

- Specifically going through each item in the EA. 5b – changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species - the EA suggests none. This is a ridiculous statement. Demolishing habitat and replacing with campgrounds, fire pits, kids running around, and RV's going up and down the road, we cannot say that there will not be a change in the diversity or abundance there. This also includes nongame species using the same area. 5e – creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals. There is not a lot of riparian habitat on the north side of the river. What movement there is on the north side of the river is really constricted. When you put a state park right in the middle with campgrounds and all of the amenities, the amount of animals moving up and down will be reduced. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance – there was a minor for that. Disagree that that as well. If there is the amount of use that we are projecting then you will not see just a minor impact there. Nuisance noise levels, conflict with existing land use (those type of comments) – one of the issues that I've seen in the past and in other areas of the country as well, is when you have two different uses (camping use and hunting use next door) what ends up happening often times is a perceived threat or danger to the campers. When you start mixing uses, what used to be a wildlife management area becomes a park. This has happened in the Sundance area out in Laurel. It may be that hunting is still allowed but no responsible hunter is going to be walking around out there when there are people riding bikes, horses or walking their dogs.

- With respect with the whole economic issue – I have friends and family come visit, and when they go to the Pompey's Pillar, it's a ½ day trip. It doesn't seem to me to be a destination for campers. When we look at the habitat that is being destroyed by building a campground, there's no real mitigation proposed for this. This is key, because you have all three of those features of habitat for wildlife. The different kinds of biodiversity out there – rimrocks, sage steps, riparian areas and irrigated agricultural – it's all in one spot and it is contiguous which is really rare in this county. It's even rarer that it is publically accessible. Per the Billings Chamber of Commerce with its Billings Montana Trail Head, studies have shown that people travel through Billings, stop on their way to the Park or to the west coast. It's just kind of a stopover point.

- Three suggested alternatives: locate a campground adjacent to Pompey's Pillar National Monument; the FAS at Bundy Bridge would be a good spot; or the third suggestion would be a campground at the John H. Dover Memorial Park, Sindelar Property.

Kirk Moffitt, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Yellowstone Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever – We entered into a partnership with BLM and FWP couple of years ago to establish a habitat specialist position, Dennis Yurion. Under this partnership agreement the three areas that we wanted to establish habitat at were Sundance Lodge, Pompey's Pillar and the Yellowstone WMA. The food plots that Dennis has put in are very impressive. Habitat is being provided not only for pheasants but for the deer and any other wildlife in that area. In this area that is being talked about, there was discussion of putting nesting cover in there. It's my opinion that nesting cover is one thing that is lacking in that area.

The wind-blown flats up on top is so sparse that there isn't good nesting cover and our thought was that when this came in we would establish nesting cover in the area adjacent to the food plots. We're trying to develop habitat and want to increase the hunting opportunities for the people of Montana. This is a great spot. Like Mike said it has all the necessary elements there to turn into a great property. It gets used a lot as it is and I know there has been some conflicts with the neighbors. As hunters we don't need to establish anymore conflicts with the adjacent landowners. We are trying to respect their rights as property owners. We need their help in keeping access to Montana to hunt. That access goes away more and more every day. Our perspective is building this campground will be an adverse effect on the efforts that we have already put into the property. I can't see putting the food plots within 100 yards of that campground because even though there are regulations, people are going to run their dogs through there. We see this out at Sundance. I think it is a wonderful spot for the hunters in Montana to go hunting, not only for pheasants, but huns up on the hills and prairie dogs. I think this going to have a detrimental effect to the habitat and to the access for the hunters of Montana.

Lloyd Rice – I agree with the first two fellows. Put the campground by Pompey's Pillar at the FAS on the south side of the river and hunting on the other side.

Linda Shelhamer – We are the adjacent landowners directly to the west of this property. Our concerns have always been the fire danger in this area. Last year was minimal fire danger and fortunately nothing got started there. We are very concerned with getting campers in there. The site wasn't supposed to be open 24 hours. Anybody who lives near there will tell you there are people going in shooting off guns, and partying anytime of the day. Even with this activity there are not as many as there will be when you create a developed state park. Two years ago when you bought this property you did an EA. It said everything was going to be better when FWP was in charge and there wasn't going to be any negative impact on the wildlife with all the people in there. There are not as many eagles there now. It's good to see what you are doing for the pheasants, because being raised in this area there were a lot more pheasant when I was a kid than there is now. We think you need to have an Environment Impact Statement not just an EA. You need to understand more about the cost of the road. Why do we want to drag people up from Pompey's Pillar to camp there when the hunters were the guys who were all originally in favor of buying this so they could have access to it? There will be lots of people which we don't want. That's the bottom line. We don't want more people in there. With more tourists/people who don't understand how fragile the property is, it's more likely to get a fire going. The Rowe's had their place burned a couple of years in a row. Just three ago 250,000 acres burned north of there and we are just sensitive to the fire danger. We would like it to stay the way that it is and allow the hunters to come in as they are right now. Keep the use as primarily walking around versus overnight camping. I agree with the first Pheasants Forever guy, how can you say that there is no impact on wildlife with people camping there all the time? We have a lot more of the wildlife on our place than used to be on the Circle R ranch just from the traffic we currently have which is much more limited than it's going to be with roads and campsites. Our hired man lives right across the river and says he hears shooting in there all the time. Not to say that 98% of hunters and shooters aren't really responsible people, but there's always that 2%.

Scott Bowen – landowner just north of the WMA – A number of us have met with the Worden Fire Department in the last couple of months. They have no idea that you have a pumper truck for us. That's new to us. Comment on road studies and subdivision process. When is the start date on this part? Has anything been done with the county yet on a subdivision plan?

Kirk Marzolf – lives by the WMA - You talk about fire control, and we haven't heard anything about it. There isn't a truck available. We've done some training with the Worden Fire Department realizing that we are probably going to have to be first responders. When you increase access, you are increasing the risk of fire (more visits more risk). That's a big issue with all of us out there. Three of the last four years we've had a major fire out there. It's a dry arid landscape and sensitive habitat. What about the county road, Bozeman Trail? As Bozeman Trail exists right now, there are three blind corners on it. Understand we are going to widen this out to 24 feet which is an expensive process. This county road is not well suited to that kind of traffic even if you were to do some pretty extensive work there. You still have a steep incline after you cross the creek across the first cattle guard. Down into the ranch, there is a steep haul in and out of there. In inclement weather it would be difficult for people pulling a large camper and motor home. Other issues are I hear you say "if" we do this. If we've already got it out in the paper, everybody knows it is probably an "if" with small letters. Maybe we can make it an "IF" with capital letters. That arid habitat is not well adapted to that kind of pressure. You've got to decide if this is a recreational area and we want a lot of people or whether you want people to come down there and have a quality hunt. I think it's arguable that there's been some dislocation of wildlife already.

Paul Reinker – president of Pheasants Forever - We think this is a no win situation for anything we stand for. We have such a rare area so close to Billings where a variety of habitat exists, and you could go out and have a successful trip. I hope the concerns of Montana residents are more important than the out of state visitor from Georgia that may visit us every three years. The residents are the people doing the environmental work with FWP and BLM. We are trying to give people that quality experience to get outside, go out for a couple of hours and maybe not see anybody. Maybe they get a shot or two off or maybe they don't, but they get to go. Twenty years ago people could do that at Sundance. I personally think Sundance would be a perfect place for a campground. We want to give people the ability to get outside, take their dog, son, or daughter, strap on their boots and go walk for a couple of hours. It is not much fun when you get to park by the latrine, then clear it with the camp host and get lectured about shooting 400 years away from the campground. There are not many places like this left. This is such a special area, and that's what we'd like you to really consider.

Guy Raidiger – sportsman, life-long resident and friends of people nearby the area – I'm in total opposition of campground. I like the WMA. I like access to be able to hunt. I like what everything has stood for with that WMA. I like the fact that trips are limited as far as not bringing all the campers into the area. A huge problem is fire out there. If you are going to change 400-600 trips a month out there now to five times that in the future that is a huge problem. We are going to widen that road to 24', advertise it nationally to bring people to Montana to come stay at a park by Pompey's Pillar and we are going to be dragging all those people into an area where we can't control fires once they start anyway. There is no fire control. Once they start out there, you hope that the weather participates with you to

help stop these fires. That whole country is getting burned up. They say trees replace themselves, that's not true. Look at the Bull Mountains and the divide area. Fences are burned, people's property ruined, and these decisions are not made by the right groups of people for these areas. We're getting campgrounds and places like this proposed, money asked for and things done way too far in advance. You don't even get a good chance to get good input from people that you need on the front side. I don't think there's enough input. Why do we have all these roads when we don't know if we are going to have a campsite yet? To me it looks like you've made your decision. My Dad and brother are here and feel the same way about it. I know a lot of people who have gone out there to hunt and they appreciate opportunities like this. Fish and Game has done a great job for us sportsmen in getting block management areas to hunt. But this WMA is a plus besides that. To put a park down there with 30 people or more camping will just push all the game out of there. We won't have any animals left there to hunt. We have a perfectly good place down at the bridge with Pompey's Pillar there, that's the land we should have for people to camp. Makes no sense to drag people all the way out there, ruin the road, ruin the irrigation for people who need this for their hayfields, and then take chances of burning people out of their properties. The public does not have enough of a voice. There are not enough people willing to come out and speak about it. I've been to a lot of Fish and Game meetings and state meetings in the past where I've voiced or e-mailed opinions, but it seems like the decisions are made before we get up here and get a chance to talk. You need to listen to the people and be good neighbors. Leave the thing alone, let the people go out and take care of the land and hunt out there that want to. Limit it to no overnight camping and no fires and put the rest of this stuff down by the Pillar where it ought to be.

John Gibson – President of the Public Land and Water Access Association – I commend FWP for acquiring this property. We had tried to get access into the about 4,000 acres of public land west of the WMA. We were unable to do that, but with the purchase of this ranch now we are connected to the BLM property west of there. There no connection for motorized vehicles, which I agree with because they put their parking area back. As far as fire is concerned, I've spent 34 years with the Forest Service and the last data I remember about fires is that on the Rocky Mountain west and the Great Plains about 70% of the fires are started by lightening. I think you've got a better opportunity to control fire with a good road system than you have with an absence of people. That's my opinion. I keep hearing about the Bozeman Trail, and I've had other people tell me that the Bozeman Trail was across the river and this is a military trail but not the Bozeman Trail. I tend to agree with the guys with Pheasants Forever, that's crowding things as far as the pheasant habitat putting the campground right down in the middle of the flat irrigated land. I'd like to see it somewhere else, but I'm not so sure that it would go anywhere else on that property. You wouldn't want to put it up on top. When you consider the riverfront from Park City all the way down to Pompey's Pillar, we have a public river with public fish in it and about 95% of the shoreline is private. I don't like that equation. I like it better with a little more public ownership on the shoreline. I think we got it when we got this ranch.

Ann Rowe – landowner next to WMA – I think you have accomplished your objective of acquisition. You have your public activities with all the people coming and going as they wish day and night, you also got your wildlife management area and I think you should stick with Alternative A, and you've also

gotten your access to the BLM that you wanted so badly. My family moved out there in the early 40's. There was access to the BLM during the 40's, 50's, 60's, 70's and the 80's. Both BLM and FWP wrote hat nobody had been out there for years, but they have, and that's been a misunderstanding for a long time. There is a lot of shooting right above my house. The signs are shot up throughout the WMA. We found a whole bunch of broken bottles shot up that were used for targets.

Robert Smith – I wanted to disagree with Mr. Reidiger. There is fire control up there and it is me. I've been running around with my shovel for a couple of years now putting out stumps, fence posts, or whatever. You get 30 people down there camped with 400-600 cars a month, that's a lot of opportunity for fire (flipping cigarette butts, whatever). Fire doesn't care, and it's not going to stop at your borders. I'm just a one man fire department.

Mike Penfold – Our Montana – We want to see our rivers to be taken care of and outdoor recreation taken care of. We try to provide a lot of support for our state parks. I did a review of the state parks a few years ago and went to all of them talking to managers. I have a pretty good sense of what is going on in our state park system. We have a good state park system with good managers. Doug is committed to doing the right job on the road. He's getting an outside professional organization to look at it. I believe that he has made a commitment to all of us that the road issue will be taken care of. If I wanted to get a lot of people to go out and support this point of view, I wouldn't have to take very long to do that. I'm not disrespecting many of your comments at all, particularly on the question of pheasants. That is an area of expertise that I don't have. I have a lot of experience in these other areas. Tourism is an economic driver in our state, just as agriculture has been the primary one. A lot of our state parks don't have destination areas where people want to come and stay and spend the money in the local communities. Don't you tell me your local communities here don't need people to come in and buy gasoline, go into the restaurant, buy mosquito repellant, etc? I think one of the places where the EA makes a mistake is it doesn't recognize that the economic opportunities that come out of something like this become more of a destination area. It's historic setting on the river with Pompey's Pillar nearby with a beautiful environment. You think about the environment at this place. It's a magnificent tract with islands sitting right there, fishing opportunities and lots of opportunities to watch wildlife. You know that in managed campgrounds, the wildlife, certainly the deer are going to be right there in the campground. You also know that the first shot they are going to be going over on the private land where hunting isn't allowed. During the camping season wildlife are going to be there. I fundamentally like the plan. I don't have the expertise on the pheasants. It is a marvelous thing with the cooperation that the Pheasants Forever is doing with the wildlife managers on the food plots. I just don't have an answer whether that is a valid issue, but it sounds like it might be. In terms of fire, in all my experience in managing campgrounds in a bunch of states throughout the United States, I've yet to see a wild fire come out of a developed campground. All of the fires you expressed you've seen in your area did not come out of a developed campground. Of course there is risk because where you have people you have risk. Very glad to see there are provisions for a campground host. It gives the travelling public and people who have issues a contact and that is a good stroke of business. In terms of soils, you have some of the best soils in the state sitting there. If you can't manage traffic on those soils you just don't know

what you are doing. These guys know what they are doing. As you take care of weeds, I hope you will look at Russian Olive and tamarisk. They have not made a decision yet. People want to say you've made a decision, but the process you are in right now is part of the process by which you do make a decision. The way they make a decision is to put ideas in front of people so you have a chance to comment. That's what they have done. Fundamentally I think you have done a good job with this. I hope the landowners who testified for the economic benefits of the grain facility sitting next to Pompey's Pillar will also recognize the economic benefits in this too.

Joe Fedin – Some of my best friends are ranchers. I've helped fight fires. I live in Billings. I've been involved with parks and park development in three states for over 40 years. I've conducted many meetings like this regarding park development. Normally at these kinds of meetings you get the people who are affected in their own back yard and rightfully so. These people have opinions and many of them have some pretty good answers. Is this maybe the best place in the state for this type of facility? Maybe, maybe not. But I don't think this is going to be the type of facility that will be full of out of state people. I think it will be a facility that will serve a lot of people in this local area. Environmental impact – every second we sit here that thing that happened in the Gulf of Mexico is doing more damage than this would in a thousand years. Special interests – everybody has a special interest. Ranchers are great people. But there are 100,000 people live who in Billings and a 120,000 who live in the greater Billings area. How many people go to Cooney Dam on a summer day? It's really busy. Are there enough really good places locally to go? As far as the Pheasants Forever comment, how many acres are we talking about here for the campground? How big is this state? It takes 8 hours to drive across the state. I don't think this small of acreage is going to answer the questions of all the pheasant hunters in the state, but it sure could answer the need for a lot of people that live within 30 miles of this area. I've driven a 100+ miles with my camper on the back just to get to a camp site and it's filled. Yes, 70% of the fires are caused by lightening and we have no control over that. With people managing the site, making improvements to prevent fires to begin with, and having the ability to respond fast with an improved road, I think the chance of fire is much smaller. I don't think this site will be totally out of state usage. You may get some from the Pompey's Pillar, but Billings has two campgrounds that take care of the out of state tourist traffic. The locals are the people who will want to get out of town. In a well managed facility you will be less apt to see the activity of shooting up signs and broken glass. Right now I think we have some of the best leadership in FWP to manage this site and manage it well. I think FWP would be a good neighbor to a rancher and there would be a lot less stuff going on out at this site if it's managed and well supervised. That's my opinion. With it open to the public and the amount of people who would use it whether there is a campground there or not I don't know that is going to be a prime pheasant place especially after a couple of shots and the wildlife go to the neighbors property. I'm not opposing the Pheasants Forever, but if you sat down at the table and worked on the development that would go on, it would be beneficial to both parties. We could have a facility in the state that we all are proud of.

Michael Bullock (2) – The soils are to poor for road.

Bill Rowe – The road that goes across our field will require maintenance with that amount of traffic. The water that goes down the creek runs all the way to the Yellowstone River. There are seasonal conditions. This year we had 14" of water standing on the road for about six days. Use Alternative A and retain the wildlife management aspects and the hunting. Our practice is that we allow hunting and even during this last year. The thing is that we cannot take on Billings. I really fear this development with the traffic going down into there. In 2008 the contest was fear of subdivision and now you are going to "subdivide" it down there or is there going to be more camp sites?

Tony Brilz – In about 6 months I'm going to retire. I'm moving out there by the corrals and help them out and try living another 20 years hunting, fishing and trapping. I'm concerned about the impact that it is going to be on the amount of traffic that is going to come into this proposed campground. Can that land sustain that much more traffic? I'm concerned about road that will come in from Bundy up to the access because that is open range for cattle. The cows are calving right now are on the one side of the pasture. We should have had them out of there a month ago, but are scared to move them because of the traffic going into the WMA. The one sign out there now says it's 2 miles to the State Park. That makes me think that the state park is already firmed up. The fence line is not in very good shape. At 11:00 or 12:00 at night people go across the cattle guard and on up the hill, so we are scared to put the cows and calves out there because of the traffic at night since it is open range and not fenced.

David Oss – My interest is as a sportsman. I'm very familiar with the river from Worden to Custer. To me it's a place to get away and find solace, peace and tranquility. My opinion is that what you have now has turned out to be a good thing in spite of some of the fears in 2008, if left as first proposed. I can't imagine putting a campground to host 35 camps in a riparian area and expect it to not change irreversibly. The reason that area is a paradise is because it's located on the quiet side of the river. I always get permission, always accepted and trusted. Myself and the people I bring with me act like responsible sportspersons and practice leave no trace. We try to respect the laws, plus understand the people that own their own land because we have personal relationships as friends, ranchers, and business colleagues that haven't changed. What could change is the landowner culture out there, because of the value of ranches has gone from $300,000 twenty years ago to $6 million today. In 2008 we thought at least if it was safe from development. But now from what I see, FWP is a developing entity themselves and using even political means to acquire and develop this property. If we left things right now going with Alternative A, there is almost a consensus on both sides of the fence. If left alone, it could almost be acceptable to these people who live here. For all the ranchers and people that live along there, you need to properly maintain and fund the WMA. You need to manage it from there, not from Billings, and use the half a million dollars you've got for developing a road to have a presence with authority on site to take care of the problems that come in and spoil everything for everyone else. You can't build a playground and then just leave it with no one watching the children. A campground doesn't have to be built there on the quiet side of the river. You are compromising a riparian area to do it. What is a riparian area? That is not a place where you put in campgrounds for 35 motor homes or trailers. That doesn't belong right in the middle of a riparian area. Once that campground is accepted sooner or later there is going to be a trail to the river, handicapped access to the river, then a boat launch not far across

the river from an existing boat launch already. Once that has happened how can you undo it again? You can't. My interests are selfish as I like an outdoor experience where it's quiet with my dog and wife or just alone. To turn that into a zoo in the middle of that area is wrong. It is totally obscene to put an overlook on top of that hill. This would affect the wildlife and specifically the eagles that fly along the ridge from Waco up to this site east to west as that is how the prevailing winds blow. What you have right now has turned out to be a good thing as a WMA if properly policed and managed with a onboard presence funded ahead of time before it's too late and to many things have gone wrong. You will end up with law abiding sportsmen and hunters looking for a real meaningful experience with their family who are responsible people. From what I've seen, most of the campers come from out of state. Most of the time when they leave, they probably are not coming back. We have a real responsibility to consider our affect on the culture that has been there, the landowners. We owe the private landowners something greater than what it looks like they are going to get.

Questions/Answers – Doug Habermann

Restricting hunting? Doug - other than the developed campground there is no proposal to restrict firearms use on the WMA.

Pompey's Pillar campground? Doug - we approached them about a campground there and because it is a national historic monument they cannot do that. That was determined through their planning process.

Fire truck? Gary Hammond - I talked to Lance Taylor this morning and it wasn't a fire truck, but a fire pumper. It's a 150 gallon fire pumper unit and he was hoping to talk to Kirk to put it on his land. You would have to slide a pickup under it to use it. He specifically mentioned Kirk or the Rowe's who are close to the site as a possibility. I was also thinking that with potential for a campground host on site, there is an opportunity to have a FWP vehicle with perhaps that pumper unit in the back of it right in the developed campground. Clarification – not a pumper truck, but a pumper unit that fits on the back of a truck. (Linda Shelhammer – So the 10,000 gallon thing you were talking about?) Gary – Up on top there is a solar pump that goes into a 10,000 gallon tank that you can pump water out of to fill the tank up with for a remote fire. We've met with the Worden folks to make sure they have a GPS location plus the BLM has it in their database so they know the exact location. We've told them to go ahead and use it as it is full right now. (Kirk Marzolf – Doug we I talked with Lance and spent quite a bit of time with him about three weeks ago, did some fire training and they weren't getting any cooperation from anybody at that time, DNRC, FWP or BLM. They said they'd been trying to get something there for two years and really hadn't gotten anything. What he's talking about is a smaller slide in pickup unit that is 150-200 gallons with a half inch hose and probably good for a first response kind of thing, but I think most of us have one. We were thinking of something a little bit more serious in terms of fire control. If we are going to have the kinds of traffic that we do have up there, that is a priority with all of us that we do something in earnest.

The starting date? Doug - We don't have a starting date at this point. We are required to go through this process and decide where we go from here plus working with the county. Tom Reilly – We have to go

through Yellowstone County subdivision process by law as any other private entity that would be doing this. One of the first things that we've done in talking to the county is we need to conduct a road study and have hired an engineering firm here in Billings. We have to have that road up to county standards if we proceed with this. The Bozeman Trail road (from Bundy Bridge)? Yes. Is Bundy already that way? Yes. Any idea the cost? No. What about pavement? No. Dust control? We address dust control at other state parks and we will do it here too. We've done dust control in Carbon County at Cooney SP, in Lewis and Clark County at Black Sandy near Helena, so we work with counties on that. State of Montana pays for that with state tax money? No, that is state park money. What is the speed limit on the county road you propose to put in? Don't have any idea as that will be up to Yellowstone County being that is a county road. (Ken Oblander – You can't promise dust control and then turn around and say you have no funds to do it. You can't make promises you can't keep.) Tom– We do this in a lot of places around the state and you are correct a lot of that is dependent upon the funding we get from the legislative session. (Bill Rowe – We still have dust 365 days per year 24 hrs per day at our house as it's 150 feet off the road. We can't move or change that as it's a 97 year old homestead.) Doug – Bundy Bridge is a fishing access site. We are limited in funds as we have 300+ of those throughout the state of Montana. We have more funding in state parks road dollars to do that sort of thing. (Ken – I have another example, when the gravel was being hauled out there to upgrade the road last year, we had pairs along the road that stood in a cloud of dust for two days. I called the county commissioner and the only way they stopped you was to make you water the road before you could continue the project. That wasn't being good neighbors. Am I wrong?) Gary – No you are not wrong, but we did fix it. Harold Guse – Actually we held the contractor accountable. It was in the contract and you are right he was supposed to do it.

Bill and Annie Rowe – If you raise the road, they lose their hayfields.

What is the time frame on making decisions about the road? Tom – There are two road issues. We have a project to fix the hill which is a separate project from the county road. That bid is tomorrow in Helena at 3:00 p.m. and then we'll make a decision regarding that project. We've hired a private firm here in Billings, Morrison Maierle, Inc., and they're working on a study of the Bozeman Trail road. When we get that report finalized, we meet with the county. We don't have any numbers or projections on the cost per mile or per 100 foot to fix it, raising the road for drainage, etc. That hasn't even been talked over with the consultant or the county.

Nonresident and residents - Tom Reilly – For 10 years visitation to state parks in Montana has averaged about 18% nonresidents and 82% residents. Montanans are the ones out using these state parks.

If and when this ever comes about, is it going to be operated as a campground 4 or 5 months a year? Doug – Our intention is to have it open year around. If we had to close it seasonally for a reason, we probably wouldn't see a lot of campers in December and January.

You are talking about fixing the road going down into there right? Is that going out tomorrow is that right? Tom Reilly – That bid is tomorrow at 3:00 p.m. in Helena. Are you planning on fixing that road

even if you don't put in the campground? That is a decision we are going to have to make. Right now I would say yes as it needs to be fixed.

Way back when with started this was supposed to be a hunter's paradise. Some of this money should be spent raising pheasants and turning them lose and that would make the pheasant people happy. Doug – You need to understand these are different funding sources. Some is for wildlife and some is for parks and general recreation. Tom Reilly – We can't take road money and buy pheasants and we can't take pheasant money and fix road.

If you have $450,000 or whatever the figure was, doesn't that mean this already has been decided? Tom Reilly – We put together estimates when we go to the legislative session based upon proposed projects. But you've got the money already given for that? Yes. Doug – We have to go to legislature to get the permission to proceed on these projects. You cannot proceed on the project and then get permission. You go to the session and you say here is what we are proposing to do along with that we will do all the environmental work and that sort of thing that has to be done. You have to go to them first and get permission to go ahead and do this. Do the money's come out of that, this $450,000 go for that too? Environmental studies? Yes sir. So the road, the environmental studies and the campground is all included in this $450,000? That's what you estimate it will cost to do this? Doug – The road is actually a separate dollar item. The $450,000 is for the campground. How much money do you have for the road? Tom Reilly – There's no budget set for it right now because we don't know what it is. So what happens if the improvements to Bozeman Trail come in so high that you can't get funding? Tom Reilly – Let me be clear on that. We will not proceed with the campground until the Bozeman Trail issue is resolved. The Bozeman Trail is Yellowstone County. Hasn't the county already said they'll fund that deal? No. If it has to be upgraded is that not the Fish and Game? I would say that's going to be the county's position. I would be surprised if it wasn't. (Linda – The county will want them to pay for it.)

Kirk Marzolf - Are we involved in these decisions or is it a foregone conclusion that we're going to put in a campground as there is a sign in there right now that says "Yellowstone State Park 2 Miles"? Doug – Well, 200 acres is a state park right now. The day we bought it, it was a state park. We are not changing or converting. The acquisition documents very clearly stated that it was going to be a state park. We need to get the road study and get some dollars attached to that. If it is 5 million dollars to fix the road we obviously do not have the money to do that. We obviously think this is a good project or we wouldn't have gone through the work to put this all together and invite you all here to talk about it. We think there's value and this is what we do in state parks. We provide campgrounds, we provide recreational opportunities. That's our job and we take it seriously. As you heard a few of the people say here, they are very well used and also used by you folks probably. (We take our side a little seriously too.) Doug – I take your side seriously as well. So to say that you have already made a decision that just isn't true. We are gathering information; we need to know and understand this, then put everything together and decide if we should proceed. You also have a Yellowstone County subdivision process that you can participate in because that is a public process as well.

Kirk Marzolf - The question is how much are those who have input today, how involved are we in these decisions? Do you just take our input and the process just moves forward or is this input considered and weighed? Doug – This isn't a vote because everyone involved isn't here. Every citizen has a right to make comments and give us input. As a neighbor there's more consideration given to that because we are required by law to be neighbors. Any neighbor has more standing than just the general public. Yes, you have input and we are taking notes, recording things. Other decision makers are involved that we will report back to, that's why we have people from Helena as well as from here, and you have a lot of input. Kirk – So we're still deciding as to whether this is a worthwhile project? Doug – Absolutely. I heard several people say tonight that they were opposed to the regional acquisition. Now they think it is a great idea. A number of people said "it's great the way it is." (That's because it's already there and we don't have a choice.) Doug – For some folks anyway, we've managed it well and it has worked out. Yes, it is causing change there is no question.

Tony Brilz – Today is the first day that I heard that is already is a state park. Now a state park, no hunting is allowed on it right? There has been hunting going on in there for two years. Doug- Not allowed in the developed campground there are no firearms allowed. Because there is not a developed campground right now, you can discharge firearms.

Tony Brilz – You are responsible for the fence on the boundary along the state park? Doug – Yes. We've looked at the fence and plan on working on it this spring.

Guy Raidiger - You said that this isn't really a vote? But when it comes right down to voting for things people have to go to a ballot to vote. People that are concerned about this area should be here giving their concerns about it. So realistically we are casting a vote tonight. Right? Doug – No. Guy – You've got to go and speak for or sign for what you think, whether it voting for a city councilman, senator or whomever. By not doing it you're giving a vote, so the people here tonight giving our time and our opinions we are giving you a vote. Realistically you should listen to the people who came tonight. Doug – I am not saying that I'm not going to listen to you. Because by coming here and giving your input you are having input. Guy – When you say it's not preconceived after I've attended subdivision hearings and involvement with housing, I can tell you that when it gets that far preconceived notions are way ahead of everyone else. I'm really concerned about it.

David Oss – If wisdom prevails and Alternative A is actually chosen, will the promise of dust abatement still be held and considered? Is this one promise going to be kept? Doug – I would like to think so. That is not completely my decision, but I'd like to do it though. David – From this office came that promise in 2008 it was right there on the EA. Doug – Yeah it's on there. David – That is a promise that hasn't been kept yet. Doug – Gary do you want to address that? Gary – Actually we do some dust abatement by the Rowe's but that base isn't very good and is very sandy so it didn't hold up to the pounding. David – That is an ongoing maintenance thing. That isn't just a one-time thing. Gary – Yes it is. If we are going to be real on dust abatement there is going to have to be some kind of substrate on there as sand doesn't hold the magnesium chloride very well.

Janet Talcott – Where will all of these comments go from here? Who gets them? Doug – They are being recorded and I've been taking notes. We will put those together and then when the decision notice is completed, we'll report those out. Anything that is said and we write down is public record. You can see everything that we think you said. This isn't a hearing, it is a public meeting so we don't capture everything and transcribe it verbatim. We try to capture your main comments, and then we'll respond to those in the decision notice. Janet – So when you go to make a decision on this, somebody will know what we said and how many of us are against this, and you take it to the people that will make a difference or does it just stay here among you guys and then it gets left? Doug – I am the decision maker on behalf of the department. In terms of who will evaluate it, a whole group of people will. We will have a 30 day appeal period on any development of our property. We will notify everyone who gave us their address.

Doug – Thank you for coming. We will keep you all informed and urge you to watch the paper. If we go beyond this and begin working with Yellowstone County, that will be publicized too.

YELLOWSTONE RIVER STATE PARK CAMPGROUND PROJECT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PUBLIC MEETING

MAY 4, 2010

Notes Taken By: Doug Habermann

Michael Bullock – Pheasants Forever, EA preparer. Pheasants need certain things. All three in one area.

- Wants to preserve it. 5a – would be some/not none. Constricted riparian corridor there – would restrict movement. Be more than minor impacts to diversity. Perceived threat to campers. Would end up restricting hunting.
- Economic – Pillar – ½ day trip – not destination. No mitigation proposed.
- Alternative – place next to National Monument; campground at Bundy Bridge; campground at Dover Park

Will submit written comments.

Kirk Moffitt – Pheasants Forever – Habitat improvements. Expected to place habitat in park area. Don't need any more conflicts with neighbors. Could result in loss of habitat. Will have adverse impacts on habitat improvements. Dogs.

Lori Rice – agrees with others.

Linda Shelhamer – Concern with fire danger. Already 24 hour use. Partiers, attractive to other problems. Less eagles. Don't want people in there – who don't understand the fragility and fire danger there. Would like it to stay the way it is.

Scott Bowen – Worden – No idea of pumper truck. Starting date? Working with county.

Kirk Marzolf – Raising the risk of fire with more visits. Sensitive, dogs, habitat. What about the Bozeman Trail – 3 blind corners – expensive – not suitable for this sort of travel. Steep road down into site. Already dislocation of wildlife.

Paul Reinker – No win situation. Rare opportunity so close to Billings. Concerns of Montanans should take precedence over out-of-state visitors. Special area – really consider before developing.

Guy Raidiger – Totally opposed. Likes wildlife management area. Likes limited access. Fire danger. Bringing people into area with no fire control. Lots of burned areas. Property and fences to be burned. Not enough input. Decision is already made – wasting his time here. Block Management is good. Will push wildlife out. Wrong location for campsite. Leave as is, put next to Pillar.

John Gibson – Commends FWP for purchasing. Better fire control with developed road system. Crowding things with placing next to habitat. Mosquito haven. Likes public ownership along river. Wouldn't put there.

Annie Rowe – Would like to see if left as is. Shooting at site day and night. Broken bottles. Submitted written comments.

Robert Smyth – He does fire control. 400-600 cars, lot of opportunity for fire – cigarettes, etc.

Mike Penfold – Our Montana – Good park system with good managers. Tourism – economic driver – visitors will buy things in local stores. Wildlife will be around campgrounds but gone during hunting season. Fires don't come out of developed campgrounds. Campground host is good idea. Russian Olive/Tamarisk should be addressed as weed species. Economic benefit for this, just like grain silos. No idea on pheasants – hope will address it.

Joe Fedin – Believes that there would be a lot of local use. Very little environmental impacts. Need places close to Billings. Small area affected. Developed sites have quicker response. Good leadership in FWP. Would make good neighbors. Could make it work out to benefit both uses. Problems created by small percentage.

Michael Bullock (2) – Poor soils for roads. Will require a lot of gravel. Road down into site will require lots of maintenance.

Bill Rowe – Quagmire, wet areas in road. Road floods out. Will affect his well.

Tony Brilz – Concerned about amount of traffic. Concerned about Bozeman Trail Road. Open range. Recreationists don't know about calves. State Park is already decided. East fence line. Concerned about cattle rustling.

David Oss – What is there now is good. Incompatible in riparian area and expect not to change. Quiet side of river. Will change culture – FWP have become developing entity? Use dollars to manage rather than develop. Will compromise riparian area. Development would continue. Overlook shouldn't be developed – eagles fly along rims. Owe neighbors something better.

COMMENTS

Paul Reineker – Telephone comments
Yellowstone River State Park Campground EA
4/13/10

- Chairman Pheasants Forever
- Commented that the area with a campground is wrong to develop after all of the Pheasants Forever work on the food plots.

Habermann, Doug

From: Walters, Terri
Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2010 11:34 AM
To: Habermann, Doug; Reilly, Tom (FWP)
Subject: FW: Proposed Yellowstone River State Park Campground

From: Ken Dockham [mailto:Ken.Dockham@wascana.sk.ca]
Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2010 11:30 AM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: Proposed Yellowstone River State Park Campground

I read of this much needed development in today's *Billings Gazette.* It is so important, particularly in today's economic climate, to support Montana's efforts in creating and maintaining a strong recreation/tourism base along the nation's Interstate Highway system within the state. As both a Montanan and a parks and recreation professional, I am personally familiar with the proposed area and the needs. From a number of perspectives, the location could not be better situated. Initially, the detractors will, most likely, be those residing close by and/or having adjacent properties. This is normal. Without exception, similar cases that I have been involved with, have eventually proved positive, winning these folks over in due course.

Montana FWP is to be commended on this initiative.
Good luck as the project unfolds!

Sincerely,

C. K. (Ken) Dockham FCSLA ASLA Director of Operations / Landscape Architect

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Michael Bullock– Telephone comments
Yellowstone River State Park Campground EA
4/16/10

- Pheasants Forever
- Against the EA didn't feel that it adequately addressed issues.

Habermann, Doug

From: Mike Penfold [penrodmt@bresnan.net]
Sent: Friday, April 16, 2010 2:13 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: EA Yellowstone River Camp Ground

Ms. Terry Walters,
Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks
Billings Montana.

April 16, 2010

Dear Ms. Walters:

Our Montana Inc. is extremely pleased to see you are moving forward with public recreation facilities in our new Yellowstone River State Park.
Our organization strongly endorses the project. This is in an area that is in need of camping facilities for the public with Pompey Pillar in such close proximity. Additionally there are significant outdoor recreation opportunities within the Park and along the Yellowstone River. This new campground will enhance economic opportunities of tourist service businesses in local communities of Huntley, Pompeys Pillar, Worden and Custer. It will help the new park become a destination area for in state and out of state visitors.

We believe this new campground will provide excellent wildlife viewing opportunities and be a good hub for hunters during the hunting season.
We suggest consideration of some management techniques for wildlife.
Dogs should be kept on leases when in the campground and the key nesting areas for birds should be restricted from public access during nesting season. We have seen considerable wildlife harboring on private land adjacent to the park. We encourage enrolling these properties into the block management program to improve hunting and deer management.

Best regards,

Paul Hickman
Executive Director
Our Montana, Inc.

Habermann, Doug

From: Walters, Terri
Sent: Monday, April 26, 2010 10:52 AM
To: Reilly, Tom (FWP); Habermann, Doug
Subject: FW: Yellowstone River State Park

From: L Gustafson [mailto:gbgust@cablemt.net]
Sent: Saturday, April 24, 2010 9:53 AM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: Yellowstone River State Park

I would like to comment on the proposed campground. My wife and I live in laurel and camp frequently in the summer months. A facility such as proposed would be a wonderful addition to the close by opportunities around this area and one we would use at least once or twice year.

From a public perspective, a camp close to the Pompey's Pillar would facilitate the historical and cultural appreciation programs available to all Americans. Montana would be leading the way in establishing a venue of national significance in understanding the Pre-European great plains , the exploration of the West, and the impact of one of the few remaining undammed river drainages.

FWP efforts to bring this about exemplify the best of public spirited, effective, executive action.

Lee and Billie Gustafson
2040 Saddleback Dr.
Laurel , MT 59044
406-628-7278

Habermann, Doug

From: Walters, Terri
Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2010 10:44 AM
To: Habermann, Doug; Reilly, Tom (FWP)
Subject: FW: YRState Park camopground

From: john R.Gibson [mailto:jcgibson@imt.net]
Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2010 10:08 AM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: YRState Park camopground

COMMENTS ON YELLOWSTONE RIVER STATE PARK (PROPOSED)

By John Gibson President Public Land Access Association

I attenended the public hearing on this proposed park on May 4, 2010 at the Region 5 FW&P headquarters Billings MT.

Following are my comments representing the PLWA Association....

1. I believe the project is worthwhile and will be advantagous to the economy of Yellowstone County.

2. I am concerned with the proximity of this proposed campground to wildlife habitiat in the form of irrigated crops and cover for upland birds and waterfowl.

3. I propose the construction of a fence between the upstream bird habitat and the heavily used campground area that would prohibit dogs and youngsters from going from the campground area to the cover within the habitat area.
Perhaps there could be a gate installed on the primitave trail closest to the river that would remain locked until nesting and rearing season were over.

4. It might be best to restrict the season of use at the campground so that it would be closed during pheasant and big game season hunting season. The road down the hill to the C.G. could be closed at that time, avoiding most fall rains and snows.

5. You probably had better plan on paving the road down the hill to the campground

6. I found the comments of locals at the meeting to be rather self serving.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

John Gibson

Habermann, Doug

From: Michael Whitaker [whitaker.michael@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 11:30 AM
To: Walters, Terri
Cc: Habermann, Doug
Subject: Yellowstone River State Park Campground Project

Dear Ms. Terri Walters:

I'm writing in strong support of the Yellowstone River State Park Campground Project. I have worked in the parks and recreation field for over 30 years and have seen first hand the positive impact an outdoor recreation project can have on a community and a state. A substantial number of Americans participate in outdoor recreation. In 2000, 78% of Americans participated at least once a month in natural resource-based outdoor recreation. The construction a campground that is 15 minutes from the largest urban area in Montana makes perfect sense to me.

I also believe that Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has demonstrated over the years that they have the ability and resources to mediate any problems that may arrive from the development of a campground at Yellowstone River State Park. They do a great job in managing the camping facilities at Cooney State Park.

Best regards,

Michael Whitaker
whitaker.michael@gmail.com
4140 Trailmaster Dr.
Billings, Montana 59101

Walters, Terri

From: Habermann, Doug
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2010 4:42 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: FW: Yellowstone River State park campground

Terri – here' s a support letter I missed!

From: Lee [mailto:lee@montanafunadventures.com]
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2010 3:48 PM
To: Habermann, Doug
Cc: lee@montanafunadventures.com
Subject: RE: Yellowstone River State park campground

Doug
This is something that we really need in our local area. There really isn't much around the Billings area. This might help decrease some usage in our other sites which is good. We think that both the overlook and campsites need to be done together. One for safety the other to keep the place clean. We are in favor of Plan B
Lee & Renee

-----Original Message-----
From: tours@montanafunadventures.com [mailto:tours@montanafunadventures.com]
Sent: Friday, April 16, 2010 10:13 PM
To: Lee
Subject: FW: Yellowstone River State park campground

From: "Habermann, Doug" <dhabermann@mt.gov>
Date: Thu, 15 Apr 2010 12:13:55 -0600
To: "Renee & Lee Christiansen (tours@montanafunadventures.com)"<tours@montanafunadventures.com>
Subject: Yellowstone River State park campground

Lee and Renee, sorry for the late notification but we have a proposal out to develop a campground at Yellowstone River State park (you probably saw the article in the gazette). We are taking comments through the 19th. If you'd like to take a look at it, I've included the link. There is some potential to impact the wildlife area adjacent to the park but I thought as recreation/tourism providers you may want to consider making a comment on the proposal. Call me at 698-1900 if you'd like to discuss. You can make comments electronically.

http://fwp.mt.gov/news/publicnotices/notice.html?action=getPublicNotice&id=2335

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Billings Field Office
5001 Southgate Drive
Billings, Montana 59101-4669
www.blm.gov/mt

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

In Reply Refer To:

6240 (010.DK)

Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Region 5
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, Montana 59105

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of input regarding the proposed campground at the newly formed Yellowstone River State Park. The proposed campground would fill a void for those visitors to Pompeys Pillar National Monument who desire a nearby campground. The National Monument does not provide camping opportunities because of evening security concerns

Sincerely,

Dick Kodeski

Dick Kodeski
Monument Manager
Pompeys Pillar National Monument

Walters, Terri

From: George Ochenski [ochenski@mt.net]
Sent: Wednesday, April 07, 2010 1:46 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Cc: Harper, Hal; Bob Raney; Harper, Hal; Bruce Simon; Dave Lewis; Scott Seacat; Wayne Hirst
Subject: Yellowstone River State Park

To Whom It May Concern:

This comment is in response to the draft EA issued by FWP proposing construction of a campground and significant investment at the Yellowstone River State Park.

I wish to support the camping and latrine development, but OPPOSE any electrification of campsites, installation of shower facilities (proposed for future "improvements" in the EA), or construction of any "playgrounds."

My reason for this is simple – **The latest analysis by the Legislative Fiscal Analysts of FWP's Parks Division revenue shows a shortfall in funding**, in large part due to excessive spending and electrification of many state parks in the last year.

When spending exceeds revenue, the agency is simply OVERSPENDING.

The "solution" historically sought by the agency will then be to seek higher fees to bring revenues in line with spending.

Nothing in the foreseeable future supports the concept that the general recreating public in Montana will have more disposable income to spend for higher camping fees at state parks. Nothing. Just the opposite, in fact. Tax revenues are down, budget cuts to state agencies are being implemented by Governor Schweitzer, and personal incomes are flat or declining. Add to that the demographic reality of a huge portion of the population that is going from revenue production to revenue consumption as the Baby Boomers (72 million nationally) go into retirement and it must be clear that Parks, like everyone else, MUST live within its budget.

A great example of what I'm talking about just happened with the proposal by the Forest Service to eliminate the senior and handicap discounts for camping on federal lands. The public OVERWHELMINGLY OPPOSED the elimination of the discounts, forcing the agencies to abandon the proposal.

ALL new state parks should conform to the minimal developments allowed in the Primitive Parks Act, which will take care of camping areas, sanitation, and maintenance. Furthermore, the Good Neighbor Policy (23-1-126, if you haven't read it, attached below comment), requires that Parks give <u>priority to maintenance over development at ALL state parks and Fishing Access Sites.</u> This proposal does not comply with the requirements of that law.

It only makes sense to minimally develop this park given the agency's fiscal position, the economic situation in the state and nation, and the legal requirements of existing statutes governing park development. You can ALWAYS develop the park in the future if the fiscal situation improves. Prudence would suggest that you go slow now and save the electrification of campsites and, since the EA does NOT provide the required estimate of either future costs or the relation of this park to the

conjunction with private entities, political subdivisions of the state of Montana, and federal agencies;

(c) at the discretion of the department of fish, wildlife, and parks, projects on Fort Peck reservoir undertaken in conjunction with the U.S. army corps of engineers; or

(d) partnership projects as designated within the park master plan.

(4) Any development in state parks and fishing access sites beyond those defined as maintenance in 23-1-127(1) must be approved by the legislature. *(Effective July 1, 2013)*

Habermann, Doug

To: Kirk Moffitt
Cc: Walters, Terri
Subject: RE: Yellowstone River State Park

Kirk – thanks for your comment. We will be extending the comment period on this proposal til May 4th and holding a public meeting on May 4th, 7:00 pm here at the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Regional Headquarters.

From: Kirk Moffitt [mailto:KirkM@fisherconstructioninc.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2010 4:48 PM
To: Habermann, Doug
Subject: Yellowstone River State Park

Dear Sirs,

I would like to express my opposition to the proposed campground at the Yellowstone State Park.

I am the chairman of the Yellowstone Valley Chapter, Pheasants Forever, and have been involved with the habitat projects on the site.These projects were done to improve the hunting opportunities for the public. It is my opinion that building a campground will have a detrimental affect on the hunting opportunities on the site. Dennis Yurian has done a terrific job of planting the food plots and is planting nesting cover this spring. The increased traffic and use can only hurt the bird raising capabilities of the property.

I would like the site to remain the same, with a variety of users, but think building a campground would have an adverse effect on the hunting opportunities of the public.

Thank you, Kirk Moffitt

Habermann, Doug

To: Kirk Moffitt
Subject: RE: Yellowstone River State Park

Kirk – as I emailed earlier, thanks for your comment. I was wondering further if you or Pheasants Forever would have any ideas on how to make these two uses compatible? We intend to enforce dogs on leash regulations, etc but would you have any ideas on how to make this work such as seasonal signage, etc. We do plan on a buffer zone, about 100 yards, between the park development and the edge of the pivot spray. Any ideas would be welcome.

From: Kirk Moffitt [mailto:KirkM@fisherconstructioninc.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2010 4:48 PM
To: Habermann, Doug
Subject: Yellowstone River State Park

Dear Sirs,

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I would like the site to remain the same, with a variety of users, but think building a campground would have an adverse effect on the hunting opportunities of the public.

Thank you, Kirk Moffitt

8845 Razor Creek Rd.
Shepherd, Mt.59079
13 April 2010

Teri Walters,

I feel that it would be a regrettable mistake to proceed with the planned Yellowstone Park Campground Project and related facilities proposed in the most recent EA of March 15, 2010. Under part 1, bullet 8 : Alternatives, I would strongly advise choosing alternative A: No Action, FWP does not initiate improvements at the Park.

My position is based on, but not limited to, the following reasons:

1. I strongly disagree that an EIS is not warranted.
2. The riparian portion of the park cannot withstand the proposed development and associated impact. It would indeed cause serious changes in the diversity of both game and non-game species. The heron rookeries will be forced elsewhere, and their alternative locations are constantly diminishing on all fronts. Likewise whitetail deer will not tolerate the impact and by their nature cannot live in the 'adjacent WMA'. The Sandhill Cranes not mentioned in the EA are extremely shy and will no longer nest in the area. The Bald eagles are constantly loosing the mature cottonwoods they use for their nests due to beaver devastation and development elsewhere ~~and removal of this riparian ecosystem from their options is~~ not acceptable.
3. Both species of eagles hunt along the rims and in the river bottoms of this area and the presence of human visitors in the numbers that a developed campground would bring would leave these birds with even less hunting opportunity. The presence of overnight visitors in a campground beside the river would severely change the level of impact.
4. The sagebrush grassland portion of the WMA is a *fragile* ecosystem and cannot withstand the impact of all the hikers,

8. The EA of April 2008 and decision notice of the same year both mention (briefly) concerns of adjacent landowners regarding increased road dust hazards (asbestos), fears of increased vandalism, and danger to livestock and motorists from creating high levels of traffic on un-improved gravel-dirt roads in an open-range grazing situation. The WMA has been opened for over a year now and no consideration has been given to these people apart from a single sign at the intersection of Bozeman Trail and Bundy Road warn- of range cattle. This sign was poorly erected and has already been vandalized with shotgun blasts on two different occasions. In addition, vandals have left glass shards north of the entrance to the WMA property while target practicing on beer bottles with automatic assault weapons. This is only a preview of what's to come if this development proposal goes through. I believe the department of FWP has a moral, if not legal, obligation to seriously, promptly, and sufficiently attend to the concerns of these neighbors. We should keep in mind that these are the people who are in part responsible for keeping this whole side of the lower Yellowstone pristine. If John Q. Public is turned loose on this area without adequate policing and supervision, we only need to remember the Ah-Knee (sp) debacle that has frustrated the adjacent residents of that public wasteland north of Shepherd on C.A. road.

9. I entreat the department of FWP to move slowly on this issue and to think it out more thoroughly. You cannot sell this park, for example, on the promise of target shooting prairie dogs for sport. After a few shots the prairie dogs stay down in their holes and out come the beer bottles as substitute targets. I say this only to illustrate a sad reality and to hopefully head off a ecological and cultural disaster. Yes, I do mean cultural; these neighboring ranchers are an important part of Montana culture and history, and deserve better respect and consideration than they been given by FWP so far.

Habermann, Doug

From: Walters, Terri
Sent: Friday, April 23, 2010 2:52 PM
To: Habermann, Doug; Reilly, Tom (FWP)
Subject: FW: EIS for Pompeii's Campground

Another happy camper.

From: Weber, Edward [mailto:Edward.Weber@hdrinc.com]
Sent: Friday, April 23, 2010 2:51 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: EIS for Pompeii's Campground

I'm concerned that a campground is being proposed in an area that has historically been excellent wildlife habitat for pheasants and deer. Your draft suggests that there will be no impact to the habitat and land use ? How can that be ? I'm a life member of Pheasants Forever and we have sponsored a habitat specialist (Dennis Yurian) to work with the BLM and your agency to address these kinds of issues. Have you asked for input from him or our organization ? Perhaps the campground could be moved into the flood plain east of the bridge ? Anyway, rather than destroy good habitat, I'd rather not have anything there....

Edward P Weber
Senior Transmission Advisor
HDR **ONE COMPANY** | ***Many Solutions***
2913 Millennium Circle. | Billings, MT | 59102-7444
Phone: 406.651-6670| Cell: 406.670-5990
email: edward.weber@hdrinc.com

Habermann, Doug

From: Walters, Terri
Sent: Friday, April 23, 2010 2:36 PM
To: Reilly, Tom (FWP); Habermann, Doug
Subject: FW: comment

New comment-
TW

From: Christopher Scott Smith [mailto:css987@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, April 23, 2010 2:35 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: comment

?lease do not add camp sites. It is already too crowded at this park to do anything. We go in off seaseason, mid week just to see only six or seven cars. Hunting is nonexistant. Why did they open the road last fall?

--
Christopher Scott Smith
406.794.4521

Richard Smith – Telephone comments
Yellowstone River State Park Campground EA
4/27/10

- Commented that the area with a campground would be unsafe for hunters.
- Concern over road issues, amount of traffic, dust.

May 04, 2010

Terri Walters
Park Manager FWP Reg. 5.

Gary Hammond
Supv. FWP Reg. 5

In regards to: The Yellowstone River State Park Campground project and the required improvements on the Bozeman Trail Road.

No. pages included: 14

May 03, 2010
P.O. BOX 66
Worden, MT. 59088
phone # 875-2205

Terri Walters
park manager 7wp Reg. 5

Gary Hammond
Supv. 7wp Reg. 5

In regard to:
Bozeman Trail Road improvements and road standards.

Please send me a Complete Road Title Report on Bozeman Trail Road, which includes the road dimensions, easements, rightaways, road standards and etc. GPS readings.

Thankyou,

Annie Rowe

April 15, 2010
P.O. Box 66
Worden, MT. 59088
Phone # 875-2205

Terri Walters
Park manager, FWP Region 5

Gary Hammond
Supv. FWP Region 5

In regard to: EA of the Yellowstone River State Park Campground project and Bozeman Trail RD improvements.

The FWP's have been improving the Circle (R)(WMA) in a very planned manner. Last fall FWPs Constructed a 3.7 mile gravel road thru the middle of their property. According to the FWPs meeting and acquisition this 2nd public parking lot was to be ½ mile from our private property and the BLM lands. But instead it was Constructed yards from our private property and the BLM. Before FWPs Constructed this parking lot we made them aware, this parking lot puts Children and people, that don't understand Cows and bulls; in a possible dangerous situation. If the public should trespass into private lands, since livestock associates food with people and Vehicles. In my book Constructing this parking lot so close to private land didn't make much Common sense.

FWPs has not Constructed or maintained their boundary fences around their property to help their public understand where their boundaries are. This is Another problem of safety of the public trespassing into private property. Last May FWPs

said they had money for Construction of the boundary fences; but by fall there was no money for fences, so nothing has been done. It was agreed at the Land board meeting in June 16, 2008 for 7wps to pay and maintain fences on their boarders. In the last 20 years there has been 3 owners on the WMA property and no one has maintained the boundary fences, but we've had to for our Cattle operations; to the best of our time. The boundary fences are poor to fair Condition except the new fences of over 2 miles we put in after the 2005 fire.

We understand that 7wps wants to improve the Bozeman Trail Road. 7wps wrote in their EA there is 400-600 Cars a month using the road now; but the traffic Counts will increase with their new proposed 35 Campsites. Now with increased traffic of the public and the outerstates, who do not understand the habits of livestock is a dangerous situation for both people and livestock. At present 1 3/4 miles of Bozeman Trail Road goes thru our livestock's pasture (which is Open Range Area). There are several blind Curves with 90+ year old Cow trails Crossing the Curves. (you Can't Change Cow trails). This pasture is the Cows Wintering and Calving area for about 6 months of the year. The Cows and Calves sleep on Bozeman Trail Road; Day and nite. Some of the public does not slow up for the Calves and run them into the barb wire fence

hurting and cutting them up. Dead and Crippled Cows don't sell well. I have 2 Cows in the Corral now that may have been hurt on the road. With an improved or paved Bozeman Trail Road, increase of bigger Vehicles; speeds will increase; and the Vehicles go too fast for the road Conditions now. We've quested speed limit signs but were told no one a bides by them, no one to enforce them, and signs are just good for shooting targets. There is no speed limit on Bozeman Trail Road as of now, so it makes it dangerous for both the public and livestock. I see Fwps had road Counters on Bozeman Trail Road. If this is the Case of Counting the traffic patterns; this is March (a slow traffic time). The study should also include the summer and hunting seasons (the heavy use times of the year). In the new Fwps 2010 EA Fwps finally admitted there will be an increase in traffic and Dust on Bozeman Trail Road and Fwps May implement necessary Dust Abatement as funds allow. (only). This is only March the many Vehicles are already kicking up much dust, which floats to our house and Cow pastures.

Fwps promised us dust abatement Control in 2008. Fwps knew what type of road Bozeman Trail was, when they bought the (R) WMA. I've been going thru the old road records and petitions;

Are all the road right-a way and easements in order?

For the safety of the public and livestock there is a need for new fences on both sides of Bozeman Trail Road, Cattle guards and gates for ranching operations. These should be built, paid for and maintained by Faps. There should be no liability to us from injured people or injured livestock. There was no problems on Bozeman Trail Road before Faps moved in the public and all the new problems.

The Bozeman Trail Road Crosses our hay field and Also where Pompey Creek flows across our hay field for irrigation. Thru the years much time and expense went into Construction of many dikes and land leveling for efficeint flood irrigation of this hay field. This was done with much Advice from several Agricultural experts. If Bozeman Trail Road is Constructed to County Spec's this will Completly Change the flow of Pompey Creek's irrigation of this hay field. Also the road devides the hay field into 2 fields. This hay field is the main stay of this Ranches health and hay production for the livestocks' Winter feed. What is the guarantee that field will be irrigated to its past irrigation And hay production. Faps just Can't Come

in and tear up everything thats been a good system in the past for many years. I do have water rights on Pompey Creek. Close to this hay field is a good shallow 30 ft. well that pumps 10 gallons/minute that serves water for all the livestock and the trailer tenant. There should be a guarantee that this most needed water source isn't distrubed.

This WMA and the surrounding areas is a dry fragile dry arid grass lands, and with this much human activity and now much more with the 35 planned campsites; fire hazard to the public, wild animals and the surrounding areas will increase. We all should know there was the Ballek fire in 2005, the Railroad-Bundy fire in 2006 and the Dunn Mountain fire in 2008, these fires almost destroyed the "Northside" as us natives call this area. It was recommended to us to put a dozer fire guard around our property. This could be costly and time consuming for us. The "Northside Residents" were promised a fire truck, none was offered last year. Now our local fire department at their expense; is looking for one for us; or we will have to look to our private means; so we maybe the "first response people" on a fire, out in this area. What is Fwps help on this situation? Also BLM allows campfires

anywhere and at anytime! BLM has only 2 Wardens for many Counties, so how much help are they? To my knowledge BLM hasn't been out on the BLM lands to check out things or anybody!

A short distance from my house is Fwps entrance with a sign stating "weapons discharge for lawful hunting only". There is much shooting at anytime of day or time of year in this area. Fwps fiber glass signs are shot up and there is broken glass bottle targets in this area. This isn't a very safe for me (my house is close to this area) or for Fwps invited public with all this shooting in the area.

My trips thru the WMA I didn't see any of the 200 white tail deer, the 100 mule deer or the many resident turkeys. I believe Fwp's are right; the animals have moved out into other areas and into other landowners property; because of all the human activity and shooting. your hunters want to know also, some of your hunters are at my door now. Since Fwps managing WMA, How many deer, antelope and birds were harvested this last hunting season?

My husband and I also worry about our personal security with so much activity and all

the unknown persons in this area. We don't have neighbor next door to yell to for help. The County Sheriffs deputy has told us we are on our own for at least an hour if we need help.

My husband and I made changes to accommodate the imposed Conditions upon us by the FWPs 2008 acquisition to Continue our ranching business. Now FWPs have proposed a 2010 EA with improvements and expansion of the Bozeman Trail Road and a new 35 planned Campsite, more traffic and public activity is expected. With all this new activity Could very well put us out of the ranching business, financially, physically and emotionally. Is this the FWPs future goal for us?

Montana agriculture is or was the #1 business in the state. There should be strong Considerations given to the Farmers and Ranchers who puts food on your tables. Its been reported Montana is losing 250 farms and ranches every year (Will we be the next one?) Is recreation going to feed everyone?, then so be it! And is this the new West? This is not the way the West was before.

This ranch and other ranches have fed FWPs Animals for many many years for free. This made jobs for FWPs and also money that kept your departments financed. We have also let hunters

enjoy and hunt on our property for free.
In all these new problems and impacts upon Ranchers the "Thankyou" we Ranchers receive from 7wp for all our help?

I have been courteous to your invited guests. I also have honored your (7wp's) requests that my friends and helpers not drive close to the 7wps accesses.

In 7wps original statements and proposals these items were discussed or not discussed:

1. build and maintain boundary fences - Land board 2008 not done at the present time.
2. Day use only - 24-7 since opening
3. Dust Control
4. Shooting only for hunting - Much target shooting 2010
5. located the 2nd parking lot in a different location - Now by my private property.
6. possibly a few primitive Campsite 2008 - Now 35+ Campsites
7. State park - Not mentioned in 2008 meeting
8. No toilets or garbage Cans 2008 - Now many Proposed
9. No improvements 2008 - Now 2010 proposed - wells, power, Toilets, 35 Campsites and play ground for children.
10. Overlook - by my property and Cows not mentioned in 2008.
11. 7wp (WMA) to manage the area as a "Wild life habitat area 2008. Now proposed Campgrounds,

road projects, more Vehicles and people.

(12) "No impact" to surrounding area and residents 2008. We are much impacted now, Now More in 2010 with all the new plans - more Traffic and people.

7wp - you got what you set out as your objective: a place for a public playground for hunting, biking hiking, bird watching, a Wild life Management area; and most of all the access to the BLM lands. I feel 7wp has failed to live up to your Commitments as discussed. If you don't do what you say how can we believe in 7wps. With all the "impacts" 7wps has imposed upon me and my ranch. What have you done to "help" me "your neighbor"? because what goes on in your area and my area; affects me. 7wps said they would be a "good neighbor", tell me how? 7wp's should go with alternative "A": "No Action, 7wps does not initiate improvements at the park." 7wps would Continue to manage the area for wildlife habitat and allow public access for day-use recreation. page 5 of EA. Campground project 2010. the more money 7wp - gets and has to spend for more activities of people upon people; doesn't make a small area better. It's made a Quiet, Clean area into a noisey; dusty area for me and the surrounding areas.

In 2008 Fwps bought the property next to us, they imposed new changes upon us and we had to adjust our ranching operations. Now a new 2010 EA is issued with a proposed 33 Campsites and much road improvements (52 MTR. RD). This will probably ruin the irrigation of our hay field and change the Bozeman Trail Road. Now, it appears we will have to make Major changes in our ranching operations. I feel this is a lot to expect of a neighbor to change their whole way of life and way of making a living. It's like eating a piece of pie, a piece at a time, till you eat the whole pie. What's the next big project Fwps have in your planned future? With all the money's spent, all the money's gained, will this project really help this area and the Community or is it just money upon money spent to no end?!

With the increase of human activity in the WMA and surrounding area, I feel there should be more studies done by an independent personnel on pollution, air pollution, air quality, traffic patterns, dust, animal habitat, grass and range managements, environmental and economic impacts to this area and etc. I also

need a study on how the improvements on Bozeman Trail Road will affect the flow on Pompey Creek on the hay fields irrigation and hay production.

I have made several trips thru the WMA, It was very clean and garbage free, I'd like to say that for Bundy and Bozeman Trail Road, but they are not litter free; sad to say.

I understand: The Montana Supreme Court asserts: "The Landowners are entitled to every Expectation of peaceful enjoyment of their property and the exclusive use there of." (Montana Supreme Court 2008 Mitchell Slough Case). Is this what us Ranchers are enjoying from all the WMA (7 wps) Activities. This does not appear to be true.

I'm not trying to Complain just state the facts as I see them. My goal is to save my 97 year old family Ranch for the next future generation of Ranchers; and for myself I want to peacefully enjoy my property, as stated by the Montana Supreme Court.

Thank you and please take my Comments and Concerns into Consideration.

Respectfully,
Annie Rowe

page 12

Western Ag Reporter March 18, 2010 Front Page

Ask a rancher for a true story on livestock care... 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year

By Kerin Clark
WY Farm Bureau Federation

In today's fast paced society, we rarely take the time to celebrate what is right with the world. But if you can manage to work your way through the "news" that is reported, you might find a good thing or two to celebrate! When you chunk apart the big picture and realize that you still have food to eat and that we don't have to depend on foreign soils to produce all of it, that is a fact to celebrate!

Another fact to celebrate is that agriculture is an industry in which farmers and ranchers put the animals first. That may mean that the animals get to eat their breakfast before the farmers and ranchers do or that part of that football game on TV will have to be missed so the rancher can tend to the animals.

Farmers and ranchers take all possible steps to ensure that animals are well cared for-(Editor's addition: 24 hours a day), 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year. Farmers and ranchers recognize superior animal care leads to the production of high-quality, safe, and wholesome food, and they are constantly seeking ways to improve the well-being and comfort of their animals. Healthy animals mean healthy food for you and your family, the same food that the farmers and ranchers feed their families. Farmers and ranchers care for their animals because it is their responsibility and their way of life. And, if you think about it, how could anyone stay in business if they had sick and weak animals?

Growing up on a cattle ranch, I can tell you first-hand that the animals come first. It doesn't matter how cold it is outside or if you have something else to do, helping that heifer with her first calf, feeding the animals by a windbreak, bringing them into the barn to prepare for that winter blizzard coming in tonight, doctoring a sick one in the pasture... the list goes on and on, but the message is that we care for our animals... they are our life.

Amazingly, there are people today that would like to do away with animal agriculture and all that it provides our country. Agri-

...Cont. on pg 4

Ask a rancher

...Cont. from pg. 1

culturalists face increasing threats from legislation that fails to utilize the expertise of veterinarians, animal scientists, and experienced farmers and that could result in higher food costs and lower food safety. Overzealous standards add unnecessary costs to U.S. production and increase the amount of food imported from places with inferior food safety and animal health assurances. This threat concerns farmers and ranchers and the animal scientists and veterinarians who partner with them.

And it should concern you as a consumer, too. Ask a rancher in your community to tell you the true story about how they care for their animals and visit www.conversationsoncare.com to get an accurate picture of how animals are cared for across the United States of America. Then, while you are enjoying your favorite meal, remember to celebrate agriculture and its people that care for the animals and the land (24 hours a day), 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year.

FAX

TO: DOUG HABERMAN, REGION 5 PARKS MANAGER
TERRI WALTERS, PARK MANAGER, FWP REGION 5
GARY HAMMOND, SUPV FWP REGION 5

COMPANY: FWP HEADQUARTERS BILLINGS, MT.

FAX #: 1 406-248-5026

FROM: BILL & ANNIE ROWE

RE:

DATE

PAGES: _____ (INCLUDING COVER PAGE)

COMMENTS:

WE ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE MAJORITY OF THE ATTENDEES AT THE FWP PUBLIC HEARING ON TUESDAY MAY 4, 2010. THEY TOOK THE TIME FROM THEIR BUSY SCHEDULES AND DID NOT WANT ANY CAMPSITES DEVELOPED IN THE FWP WMA AS PROPOSED IN THE EA (MARCH 2010)

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTE: The information contained in this facsimile message is legally privileged and confidential information for the use of the individual or entity named above. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, or distribution or copy of this telecopy is strictly prohibited. If you have received this telecopy in error, please immediately notify us by telephone and return the original message to us at the address above via United Postal Service. Thank you

RETAIN THE NATURAL WILD CHARACTER OF THE WMA AND AVOID THE ESSENCE OF SUB-DIVISION.

ON p. 5 OF THE EA WE SUPPORT ALTERNATIVE A.

YOUR NEIGHBORS
Bill Rowe
Annie Rowe

APRIL 7TH, 2010

TO: TERRI WALTERS, PARK MANAGER
GARY HAMMOND, FWP SUPV.

REGION 5
BILLINGS, MT.

WE WANT A PUBLIC HEARING TO BE HELD ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED YELLOWSTONE RIVER STATE PARK CAMPGROUND PROJECT DATED MARCH 15, 2010. WE WOULD LIKE TO SHARE VIEWS AND CONCERNS REGARDING THIS MATTER.

PLEASE LET US KNOW BY MAIL AND A PHONE CALL WHEN THE PUBLIC MEETING IS SCHEDULED.

THANKS

Bill Rowe
Annie Rowe
P.O. BOX 66
WORDEN, MT. 59088

Bill & Annie Rowe
875-2205

P. O. Box 330
Shepherd, MT 59079
May 4, 2010

Attn: Terri Walters
Parks Manager at Fish, Wildlife & Parks
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, MT 59105

Comments on Draft Environmental Assessment
Yellowstone River State Park Campground Project

Thanks for extending the comment period on this project. Due to the terrible wind today, I will not be attending the public hearing tonight. After reading this EA, I have a few thoughts on the project.

It strikes me that you are building an attractive nuisance in an area where you will have little control over those who use it. You should be aware from your wardens in the local area all the trouble that occurs on the Bundy Road and adjacent areas. It is a fertile area for poaching and vandalism. The bubbling trouble in the irrigated district on the south side of the River seeks its release on the north side of the river. The road mileage markers on the north side are shot up with the exception of 13. School bus stop signs are full of holes. Road signs have had to be replaced because of gun damage. This summer a boy was picked up for shooting his gun parallel to a county road right of way as it crested a hill. Your campground is not going into a pristine vacuum.

The neighbors to this campground are worried about the attractive nuisance that is being created. I would not want to live north of the overlook. At least the campground is below the ridge. Don't bet that guns will not be fired in that campground. FWP plans to leave the campground open all year. The part of the year when the hosts are gone will be open season for the vandals. Unless there are serious physical barricades to vehicular access between the campground and the wildlife area, the whole area will be accessed with motorized vehicles. After all, what are 4 wheel drives and 4 wheelers for? Ah-Nei has had to impose hours and access times on their recreational area---finally after more than 30 years of damage. I wouldn't even bet that the sprinkler irrigation will escape unscathed. I doubt if the overlook is constructed that the people in the automobiles will respect the cute little paths to the over look unless there are serious barricades there that will prevent vehicles from accessing the grass.

At the very least, FWP should employ full time "hosts" on a year around basis. When the hosts leave, the vandals will come. Copper thieves are stripping rural houses of their electrical wiring in this county. It would only take one night to strip the copper from this new installation. It could be quite a while before the theft was discovered. Unless the hosts are there year around, you can bet guns will be discharged within the campground area. FWP is indulging in fantasy if they think that won't happen.

Does FWP plan to pave Bundy Road and Bozeman Trail? What is the definition of upgrade? Does "hand launching watercraft" mean the users will have to hand carry the boats to the River? Do the rights of way have sufficient legal width to also construct a foot/riding/bicycle trail within the legal right of way alongside the 24 ft wide road for automobiles?

Considering the fact that Gov. Schweitzer has requested that all state agencies try to cut their budgets by 4%, I would suggest holding off on building the overlook until the user fees from the park can pay the freight. Considering the activities of recreationists with guns, and most of them have them, I think the over look is the most dangerous aspect of this plan as it affects people adjacent to this area.

Adjacent ranches are all ready having trouble from this project—dust, fast traffic and unauthorized personnel. This EA does not seem to have discussed remediation with FWP neighbors. FWP should do more than investigate dust abatement. It should have had several suggestions set out in this EA.

Will the latrines be locked for the winter? How vandalproof are they? Does FWP proposed to forfeit its water right to the 33 foot deep well when it drills the new well for "potable" water? If FWP puts in its comfort station, what are FWP's plans for winterizing it and protecting it from vandalism? I would think this would need additional sanitation attention.

The overlook has the potential for spreading noxious weeds from the river bottom due to traffic from the bottom to the overlook and from there on across the north side.

FWP should not only install a traffic counter at the site entrance, it should install one further north up the Bozeman Trail and Bundy to see where the traffic goes after it leaves their property. The rumor mill has it that FWP is hoping that other ranchers will leave to obtain their property. Is FWP trying to pressure other people out of the area? Some of the questions that FWP seems to find unanswerable could have been ascertained with a little effort on the part of FWP.

FWP should have some idea of what the increased costs would be to local fire departments and emergency medical services as well as sheriff's services by extrapolating those kinds of costs from similar operations that they operate.

Since FWP has all ready advertised for bids on the construction of the campground road, is FWP really going to let that project to a local contractor? The bid ad sounds like FWP has all ready made up its mind about this whole project.

This project will impact the electrical service for Yellowstone Valley Electric, which has lost federal power supplied by WAPA. FWP should consult with YVEC on what it can do to mitigate the power demand for this campground.

The maps attached to this EA are hard to read, even with a magnifying glass. In addition to the road into the camp ground, the campground and the wildlife area have the Bozeman Trail bisecting the area. Will

the rest of the Bozeman Trail be paved to the border of the wildlife area? The maps do not indicate where local residences are and hide possible impacts.

I do not think FWP understands this area and the unintended consequences this proposal may have, or perhaps it hopes to export the undesirable effects onto its neighbors.

Ellen Pfister

Walters, Terri

From: Ellen Pfister [epg@midrivers.com]
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2010 2:47 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: Hearing

This e-mail is to request a public hearing on the Draft EA of Yellowstone River State Park Campground.

Ellen Pfister

Habermann, Doug

From: Walters, Terri
Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2010 11:48 AM
To: 'Ellen Pfister'
Cc: Habermann, Doug
Subject: RE: Hearing

Ellen,

At this time we are not planning to hold a public meeting. However, we are taking comments until April 19, 2010. If you are in need of a copy of the Environmental Assessment I would be happy to send one to you.

Please let me know if I can assist you in any way.

Thank you,
Terri Walters

From: Ellen Pfister [mailto:epg@midrivers.com]
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2010 2:47 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: Hearing

This e-mail is to request a public hearing on the Draft EA of Yellowstone River State Park Campground.

Ellen Pfister

Habermann, Doug

From: Walters, Terri
Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2010 10:45 AM
To: Habermann, Doug; Reilly, Tom (FWP)
Subject: FW: Yellowstone river state park

From: Guy Raidiger [mailto:graidiger@midlandimplement.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2010 10:02 AM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: FW: Yellowstone river state park

Vote no to the campground. I hope my vote does count.
Thank-you
Guy Raidiger

From: Guy Raidiger [mailto:graidiger@midlandimplement.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2010 9:44 AM
To: 'french@billingsgazette.com'
Subject: Yellowstone river state park

It's very disappointing to me that a process gets so far along before a general public comment meeting is asked for. As a sportsman, the WMA and state park area, at a cost of 5,000,000.00 is a very expensive nice area close by that hunters, hikers and outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy. Why spend that huge amount of tax payers and sportsman's money and ruin it with a camp ground. This will turn into a 6,000.000 camp ground area and no wildlife left around. The WMA area will turn into a total waste of money. The sportsmen that use the WMA and state park are not asking for a campground. The north side of the Yellowstone River is a historic and beautiful quiet place. It has been a spot many people use to get away from the concrete jungle of city life, electricity, lights, generators, etc. Now Doug Habermann, with his own vision, wants to shove a camp ground in an area that has no business being there. If you ask any of the people that live in the area and the sportsman that use the WMA and state park they are all against this. Why ruin a good thing. This is in an area where we have huge fire danger issues every year. All area residents will tell you point blank, fire is a major concern. It makes more since to have a campground at the fishing access site by the Pompey's Pillar Bridge, and keep development south of the river on the Interstate side closer to the monument. I went to the meeting last night at the FWP head quarter's and was disappointed in how a lot of question's were answered. It seemed the meeting was cut short because of the 9:30 time, and it was getting late. Just because it was getting late does that mean we should not resolve public questions? It appears as though the decision has been pre determined to put this camp ground in, and this meeting was to justify a policy guide line. This area is used by a lot of local people already. Doug acts like nobody hardly use's it. I asked Doug, that since the people at the meeting gave up their time to come and voice an opinion does that carry a vote as to the outcome. He said that we do not carry a vote and the decision would be made by him, some democracy. Get behind the sportsman and help protect an area from being developed under county subdivision rules. Don't let economics play a role in loosing the integrity of the Bozeman Trail.

Thank-you
Guy Raidiger
2964 Canyon Drive
Billings,Mt 59102
697-1713

Habermann, Doug

From: Walters, Terri
Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2010 2:41 PM
To: Habermann, Doug; Reilly, Tom (FWP)
Subject: FW: Proposed Campground

From: Pheasants Forever #434 [mailto:pheasantsforever.billings.mt@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2010 2:36 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: Proposed Campground

To whom it may concern:

As president of the Yellowstone Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever, I have been asked to write to you expressing our feelings towards the new proposed campground at the Yellowstone WMA. We feel that this is in no way a positive move for the wildlife habitat in our area, and goes directly against everything that we as a non profit organization stand for.

Our chapter of several hundred members has worked closely with the BLM and the FWP in recent years, and have been able to accomplish some wonderful things. Should this campground be completed, we as a chapter will be forced to seriously evaluate our working relationship with your agency in all areas. How can we in good conscience be affiliated with an entity that:

1. accommodates the out of state traveler rather than the resident sportsman
2. feels that the data obtained for an environmental impact statement can be vague/interpreted as needed to ensure that the desired goal is obtained
3. feels that the habitat in the Yellowstone WMA is so common that its preservation is not warranted

Our chapter hopes that you seriously reconsider your current plans: as were discussed at the May 4, 2010 public meeting, there are other areas to do this. In these economic times, is the spending of $500,000 for a campground a responsible action?

Thank you for your time,

Paul Reinker, President
Yellowstone Valley Chapter 434
Pheasants Forever

Paul Reineker – Telephone comments
Yellowstone River State Park Campground EA
4/13/10

Covered in written

- Chairman Pheasants Forever
- Commented that the area with a campground is wrong to develop after all of the Pheasants Forever work on the food plots.

Lisa Carpenter
5600 Pleasant Hollow Tr.
Shepherd, MT 59079

May 6, 2010

Attn. Ms. Terri Walters
Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks
2300 Lake Elmo Dr.
Billings, MT 59105

Ms. Walters,

I strongly believe Alternative A should be the course of action for the Yellowstone River State Park Campground Project. The original EA and proposed purchase plan was for minimal development.

In your successful attempt at a faster "land grab", your department hastened the process by conducting an EA instead of an EIS for more rapid purchase. This was not the appropriate level of environmental study this property should have gotten because of the abusive past practices and future land use impact.

Neighboring landowners were not notified of the proposed purchase and found out through a third party potentially denying them a voice of concern. On the subject of neighborly relationships, Bill and Ann Rowe have been given ultimatums by your own regional supervisor. Telling them that boundary fencing would be taken care of only if they enrolled in Block Management is coercion at the least; more accurately extortion.

Your proposals mean nothing in the way of honest disclosure. You use the EA and EIS process as a tool for bait and switch to later inflict your long term plans of use regardless of what you proposed before. You have stooped to bullying an elderly couple to secure more land for the Block Management program. Your argument is that there is a list of landowners that want to be in the block management program. Yes that may be true, but none of them are adjacent to your state park and recreational area.

You have proven through your actions already at this site that you simply cannot be trusted to follow your proposals. No more development is the best management for this site.

Sincerely,

Lisa Carpenter

Lisa Carpenter

Attn: Terri Walters

Be advised that I will cast a vote for alternative A concerning the Yellowstone River State Park Project.

Perry Hein
2560 E.I Rd.
Ballantine, MT 59006

Habermann, Doug

From: Kurt Markegard [laurelpwd@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 9:07 PM
To: Habermann, Doug; Walters, Terri
Subject: Yellowstone State Park

Doug and Terri,

I was not able to attend the public meeting for the proposed new campground due to a Laurel City Council Meeting that I must attend. I was hoping to comment on the plan for the Yellowstone State Park campground.

I have searched the FWP web site and could not find the EA for the proposed campground. I had to find the link from a Billings Gazette article. I believe that this information should have been easier to find and even searching the FWP website could not find the link. Is this information not being distributed?

I have supported FWP by purchasing hunting and fishing license's for 20 years. I have also purchased seed for bird habitat for the WMA's next to the proposed campground. I do not understand how placing 40 or so campers next to an area that is for wildlife management is in the best interest of Montanans. The recreational benefits of camping surely does not outweigh the benefits of wildlife habitats. I am familiar to this area and I am aware of the recent progress in trying to establish food plots and nesting cover for birds. It would be a real shame to see all the efforts of this habitat improvements succumb to campers, campers pets, and public recreation that disturbs the wildlife in the area. I have hunted this area for 8 or 9 years and I am willing to support FWP efforts in improving bird and wildlife areas that are productive. If this venture harms these efforts I will withdraw my financial support for all FWP activities for wildlife habitat. This will include no longer purchasing seed at the pheasants forever banquet and stop being a member of the local pheasant forever chapter which also supports wildlife habitat.

I oversee the Riverside Park Campground in Laurel and understand the need for recreation and I am aware of the consequences of this type of recreation. It is not always pleasant. Vandalism, assaults', and even a bear biting a camper in a tent to name a few instances. Over the last few years due to the high cost of motor fuel I have seen the campground revenues drop to a point that almost make it not worth while to open.

I encourage smart responsible planning and live and work towards that goal at home and at my work as Public Works Director for Laurel. I am opposed to the proposed location and am hopeful that the FWP will consider a location more suitable for human recreation.

I am also concerned that I can find a bid opening for the road improvements to this campground this week and that the public meeting just took place Tuesday night. I would like to know if this is a political motivated agenda that disregards public support or opposition? Who is requesting a public campground? Montanans or Montanans Government?

I serve the wishes of my community and I try not to interject my personal interests in planning for their future needs. I am hopeful that my state government shares these values also and serves the people interests first while protecting the wildlife. I enjoy all wildlife and not only to hunt them but to see them protected for future generations as well. Wildlife is what makes Montana outdoors special.

Thank you,

Kurt Markegard

Walters, Terri

From: The Larson Crew [nicolettelarson@bresnan.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 7:03 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Cc: nicolettelarson@bresnan.net
Subject: Comment on Yellowstone River State Park Enviormental Assessment

Terri,

I've read through the EA for YRSP and strongly believe that MFWP should implement Alternative A, "No Action", on page 5 of the document. I personally know one of the neighboring land owners of this WMA and feel that their concerns were ignored when the WMA was first created. Now it seems that things would only get worse with the creation of "35 camp sites, initially". Who knows what expansion would come down the line if these camp sites were allowed to be created. The EA states on page 11, that there is currently 400-600 visits per month to the WMA. The creation of the campsites and overlook areas would drastically increase this traffic on the only access to this area, which is Buffalo Trail road.

This would be like proposing to put 35 camp sites in, South of Lake Elmo, with the only access being through the MFWP parking lot and building compound. I don't believe that MFWP would like to have that kind of traffic increase through their own front yard! I'm sure the same complaint has been voiced from those people living on Buffalo Trail. A better approach would be to create Public access through the BLM land to the west, which would open up this virtually private BLM section and alleviate the problems that are sure to come with all the traffic that would be using the Buffalo Trail road. The EA identifies existing camp grounds that are close by already, so this new camp ground proposal is not necessary. Sure it would be nice, but being a good neighbor is just as important.

Thank you for your time.

Richard Larson

1029 Eldora Lane
Billings, MT. 59105

406-855-0069

May 6, 2010

Terri Walters
FW&P
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, MT 59105

Terri Walters and Doug Habermann:

After the meeting of May 4, 2010 I have different and more concerns then I had previously.

Concern #1: How can you put this plan into place and not know the cost of getting Bozeman Trail road up to county standards?

Concern #2: Two days after the May 4 meeting The Yellowstone County News has a big article on all the vandalism at our State Parks. We were told there was no worries about fire, vandalism, etc.

Concern #3: Who will man this recreational spot and control the vandalism and fire problems that will occur? There should be a person on the site at all times and not the campground over-seers.

Concern #4: We were told that Doug Habermann would be the person who takes all the comments and concerns and makes the decision to go forth with this project. Seems there should be more than one person on this big of a matter. At the meeting Tuesday night there were lots of comments that were very worthwhile and should be taken seriously.

Comment #5: The county road department told us that they would not have anything to do with the work on Bozeman Trail. Who do we believe?

Janet Talcott
Box 422B
Worden, MT 59088

April 19, 2010

Terri Walters
FW&P 2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, MT 59105

E-Mail and hard copy sent

Seems to me this is a "DEAL GONE BAD" and you're going to spend even more money trying to make it work. FW&P spent 4 times the market value on that piece of property. An agricultural person who might have been interested in the land and wanted to use the land for what it was meant to be used for was wise enough to realize he couldn't pay anything near this price and make it work. NOT the FW&P's. They've got all kinds of money and if they don't the Governor has and he will bail FW&P out.

I believe you should find different access to this "Prize Project". Make it more accessible to Pompeys Pillar as you state this is one reason for this costly project.

Originally we were told the campsites would be "primitive". Wrong. Electricity, running water, and latrines in my vocabulary is not "primitive."

As far as the road goes it goes exactly the way it did when FW&P's purchased the property. Now we're told the Bozeman Trial road is going to have to be improved to meet county regulations for another large expense. We're told now the road down to the campsites has to be paved because of "subdivision" status.

We were never informed two years ago of all these expensive improvements. We were all very honest and up-front with FW&Ps. We poured our hearts and soles out to you about our legitimate concerns but you turned a deaf ear to us. We live, walk and talk our land and who knows better than the landowners of the problems there will be.

It's beyond all my comprehension that this would become a state park. I believe you people have lost your minds or you've got way more money than you are portraying. The Governor is cutting jobs and tells us he's trying to cut all extra expenses and get the budget out of the red.

I believe a meeting would be appropriate at this point. There is nothing remotely similar to what were told about the project two years ago.

Janet Talcott *Janet Talcott*
Landowner North of Yellowstone River

May 6, 2010

Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks
Attn: Doug Habermann
Terri Walters

RE: Yellowstone River State Park proposed camground

After attending the public meeting on May 4, 2010 I have a few comments I hope will be taken into consideration.

It seems to me that FWP is getting the cart before the horse on this campground. If I understand correctly, the $ 450,000 appropriated is for the construction of the campground and for improvement of the road inside the park to the campground. It sounded as if no one even had an estimate of what the road improvement would cost. If the road improvement comes in at $ 400,000 for example, does FWP just go back to the legislature for more money to finish the campground?

Also nobody has a clue about the cost of improving Bozeman Trail Road. I would think that the responsible thing to do would be to get an estimate on the cost of road upgrades before proceeding with the planning and design of a campground.

With the planning and design of the campground being done first, it seems to me that the FWP isn't concerned with the costs of road upgrades or the ongoing maintenance costs associated with this entire project. AS A TAXPAYER THIS CONCERNS ME GREATLY! Let's not forget, the money the Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks is so willing to spend belongs to the taxpayers. I am sure there are plenty of taxpayers that would support this project, but is it reasonable or justifiable to spend potentially millions of dollars on a mere 35 campsites.

In the meetings in 2008 on the purchase of this property the main focus of the FWP was that this property would be a wildlife management area and a great asset for the hunters of the state. The mention of overnight campsites was at best glossed over. I cannot understand how adding a year around overnight campground has any benefit for the wildlife or their habitat.

One last thing, Doug you made a comment in the meeting on May 4th that there were a number of people in attendance that were against the purchase of the property in 2008 but are now in favor of it. This comment, at best, is disingenuous, and you know it. The people opposed to this in 2008, my self included, are still opposed. But we are realistic.

Sincerely,

Scott Bowen
KS Land Company, LLC
Worden, MT

Habermann, Doug

From: Walters, Terri
Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2010 1:10 PM
To: 'scott@tamisgrassfedbeef.com'
Cc: Habermann, Doug; Reilly, Tom (FWP)
Subject: Yellowstone River State Park

Scott,

Thank you for the interest in Yellowstone River State Park. At this time we are not planning to hold a public meeting. However, we would be more than happy to meet with you to address any questions or concerns that you may have in regards to the campground development. I will mail you hardcopies of the Environmental Assessments that have been completed for the Yellowstone River State Park and Wildlife Management Area. This property was purchased as a Wildlife Management Area and State Park. Impacts on wildlife are reviewed in both Environmental Assessments. One was done for the site acquisition, and the newest for the campground development.

Morrison Maierle Engineering will be completing a traffic impact study, this is required by Yellowstone County as part of their subdivision review process. The upgrade of the road is then directed by the results of the study.

I will be sending you hardcopies of the reports that you requested.

Sincerely,
Terri Walters
Parks Manager
247-2955

Habermann, Doug

From: Walters, Terri
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2010 10:18 AM
To: Habermann, Doug
Subject: FW: Proposed campgrounds Circle R River Ranch

Doug – FYI. How should I respond?

From: scott@tamisgrassfedbeef.com [mailto:scott@tamisgrassfedbeef.com]
Sent: Friday, April 09, 2010 11:01 AM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: Proposed campgrounds Circle R River Ranch

Terri Walters,

My name is Scott Bowen. I run a ranch just north of the state park formlly known as the Circle R River Ranch, My place borders Bill & Annie Rowe. I understand that the Montana FWP is beginning construction of campsights on the park and also is in the process of widening Bozeman Trail Road.

I attended the public meeting on the purchase of this property in June 2008. In that meeting we were told that there was a very slim chance that campsights would be constructed on the property because of the high fire danger in this area. We were also told that this area was being purchased mainly as a wildlife preserve. I don't understand how overnight campsights do anything but harm a game preserve. I'm wondering if the original Environmental Assessment done on this property contained the plans for campsights? If it did, is it possible to get a copy of that EA? If not, was another EA done on the campsights? I would also like a copy of that if possible.

I would also like to know if there were any environmental studies done on the impact of widening Bozeman Trail Road. Also is a public meeting planned or scheduled on the widening of the road?

In that public meeting in June 2008 I think it was Gary Hammond that said "the Montana FWP is concerned with the nieghboring ranchers concerns and wants to be a good neighbor." I hope this is still the case.

Thank you for your time, I look forward to hearing from you.

Scott Bowen
406-794-1862
3802 Scothern Rd.
Worden, MT 59088

Habermann, Doug

From: Walters, Terri
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 3:55 PM
To: Habermann, Doug; Reilly, Tom (FWP)
Subject: FW: Yellowstone river state Park campground Project

From: Newmiller, Douglas L [mailto:dlnewmiller@pplweb.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 3:45 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: Yellowstone river state Park campground Project

I support alternative (A) No Action

Anthony J Brilz

The information contained in this message is intended only for the personal and confidential use of the recipient(s) named above. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient or an agent responsible for delivering it to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you have received this document in error and that any review, dissemination, distribution, or copying of this message is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately, and delete the original message.

To: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Region 5 Headquarters
2300 Lake Elmo Dr
Billings, Mt 5105
Attn: Terri Walters
Yellowstone River State Park Development Project

I would like to comment on the Environmental Assessment for the proposed improvements to the Yellowstone River State Park near Pompey's Pillar. That type of development [campground] would only chase many of the indigenous species out of the area and provide a major change of lifestyle for the local landowners, some of whom have had several generations involved in the ownership of the adjacent land. There would be increased noise, garbage, traffic, vandalism, trespassing, etc. For these reasons I would recommend alternative A on page 5 of the environmental draft assessment—No Action, FWP does not initiate improvements at the Park.

Sincerely,

Tom Brosius
1266 Grubstake Circle
Billings, Mt 59105
406-259-3313
ALS 09/09/1950-1
May 6, 2010

Brandon B. Carpenter
5600 Pleasant Hollow Tr.
Shepherd, MT 59079

May 6, 2010

Attn. Ms. Terri Walters
Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks
2300 Lake Elmo Dr.
Billings, MT 59105

Ms. Walters,

I am writing in regard to the proposed EA of the Yellowstone River State Park Campground Project.

The original EA and proposed plan was for minimal development providing only primitive camping at the site. It was proposed that no roads be developed. It was to be managed as an area that would have minimal development to encourage users to enjoy an area close to Billings that did not have development.

Your department violated the original EA concerns and guidelines and therefore the public trust concerning this site. I wrote and explained about hazardous materials purposely buried in different locations at the site prior to purchase. Mr. Habermann told me that a HAZMAT survey was done and the site was found to be satisfactory. How could a comprehensive survey be done when you failed to recognize the burial sites? That concern and other concerns I pointed out were never addressed during the comment period from the original purchase EA.

A gravel road was developed to the northwest corner of the property with a parking area. This road was developed across the state school trust land within the boundaries of your wildlife management area. What permits, easements MOU's etc. did your department secure from the DNRC to allow vehicular travel development on land owned by the citizens of Montana not managed by your department?

I strongly believe **Alternative A** should be the course of action for development of the site. If further development is authorized, there will be no end to the abuse you will continue to promulgate for your "mission".

Sincerely,

Brandon B. Carpenter

Lloyd Shelhamer
Revocable Trust
Linda K. Shelhamer Trustee

446 Tabriz Drive
Billings, MT 59105
406-259-9160
shara@bresnan.net

May 6, 2010

Terri Walter, Parks Manager
Fish, Wildlife & Parks,
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, MT 59105

Dear Terri:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit comments on you're the draft EA regarding the Yellowstone River State Park Campground Project. We are the landowners immediately to the west of the BLM land section that joins your property. We have owned this property for almost 50 years now and we have 3 major concerns with the project as proposed. First we believe that due to the impact this project will have on the existing wild life, landscape, and nearby properties that an Environmental Assessment performed by your office is insufficient study before beginning a project of this scope. We want an environmental impact study to determine the impact of this further development and the resulting huge increase in human visitors on the park property as well as the related WMA. Your EA is inadequate and at times self-serving when it indicates none or minimal impact on the wild life and property. A great deal of wild life including eagles, deer and others have been displaced from this property onto our property and others due to WMA which currently has 400-600 visits a month. The proposed campsites and improvements will bring many more visitors, require a huge road upgrade, and yet no real study of this has been done of the impact this will have on wild life species.

Our second concern, is that FWP underestimates dramatically the fire danger of having increased 24 hour visitation and camping on this property. Camping will occur primarily during the summer months during the high fire danger. Most hunting does not have the same risks because hunting is mostly done in the wetter and cooler months. The property adjacent to this area has seen major fires in 3 out of 4 years. This is not a stream side fishing access, it is extremely arid country within a 40 minute drive of 150,000 people. In the past when fires start here they often flare up to 10,000 to 250,000 acres in 1 day.

Many of these fires have been started by humans and spread very rapidly. At the public meeting, FWP indicated it was planning to have a 150 gallon water tank available nearby to put our fires. This is entirely insufficient and almost laughable. A more realistic approach would be a truck such as used by Forest Service with at least 500 gallons high pressure tank that allows an operator inside the truck to spray the water. In addition you indicated you will have volunteers overseeing the campground. You indicate they are easy to find and would love to be out there. We wonder if that will really prove true and feel it is inadequate as a plan with no funding for supervision by actual FWP personnel. If volunteers are so easy to find, then we wish you would find one to monitor the current unimproved state park and WMA.

Third, when this property was purchased FWP indicated it wanted this property for increased hunting and fishing access to both this riparian area and the nearby BLM land. This purchase was in fact funded to a large degree by hunting fees. Now you are proposing overnight, developed camping which will impinge on the hunting opportunities. Responsible hunters don't shoot near campgrounds and the more campers and untrained visitors you bring to this area the less attractive it will be to hunters and all the wild life.

For this reason, we support Alternative A—no improved overnight camping sights. This will contain visitation somewhat reducing fire dangers. It will also allow the Pheasants Forever project for habitat improvement which we applaud to continue. We would like you to seek volunteers to monitor the unimproved park, and for you to start

taking regular audits of wildlife and how the current human visits affect them. Since the purchase of the property was proposed, FWP has indicated that properties like these along the Yellowstone are very difficult to find. Why turn an area so attractive to wildlife into campsites and drive these animals away.

If you proceed with this action right now, you will be rushing to judgment without adequate study of the impact on the property or the wildlife and without property study for minimizing fire risks. Please take the time to do this right and have an EIS, if you do decide to proceed.

Sincerely,

Linda K. Shelhamer, Trustee
Lloyd Shelhamer Revocable Trust

Walters, Terri

From: dawnpetty6@aol.com
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 3:27 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: Yellowstone River State Park campgound comment.

Terri,

I want to express my feelings that the MFWP should use Alternative "A", No action, on the YRSP Environmental Assessment. The pros of this proposed campsite, do not out weigh the cons in my opinion. If an alternate access method could be devised for this area, then the campground may be more acceptable, but the current traffic and proposed increase of traffic on Buffalo Trail can't be justified, especially in the eyes of the current land owners that live on that road. What about the BLM land that is to the West of the WMA? Why can't public access be arranged through this BLM land for the WMA and also give the public easier access into this BLM that has been surrounded by private land for years?

The only acceptable action at this time is Alternative A., No Action.

Sincerely,

Dawn Petty
6707 Bret Lane W.
Shepherd, MT. 59079
406-373-6673

ATTN: TERRI WALTERS

5/7/10

To whom it may concern:
I would like to protest the development of a campground on the Yellowstone River State Park near Pompeys Pillar.
This construction would compromise the pristine conservation already implay.
This area if a wonderful tribute to the history of this piece of land.
When one steps on this place it's as if they step back in time and become part of the era.
A campground would only detract from this experience. A campground generates noise, traffic, and a lot of garbage.
People are not always respectful and this place should be respected.
The wildlife should remain intact and undisturbed.
We have many places to camp and enjoy the outdoor life style. Why do we have to disrupt and disturb this marelous place.
For this reason I recommend alternative A on page 5 of the enveromental draft assesment.
Please take no action to emprovements at the Park. Ann Brosius 1266 grubstake Cr. Billings Mt

Walters, Terri

From: Diane Cooper [coopfam@usadig.com]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 4:03 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: Yellowstone River State Park

Dear Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing in concern about the proposed Yellowstone River State Park Campgound.
I have been hiking, fishing and photographing this area for 15 years, and in that time I have seen the devastation done by irresponsible people, jet boats, and vehicles. It worries me to have more development, more people, and more traffic to this area. I have already noticed more traffic and garbage; such as beer cans, broken glass, used condoms, diapers, walmart bags, bullet shells, and more.
With more people, the fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing numbers will decrease.
Toilets, electricity, playgrounds, parking lots, and more authority should stay in the city where they belong. Leave the riverbottom and bluffs alone.
I appreciate and am excited about the FWP purchasing more lands for people to access and enjoy nature, but what is wrong with leaving these areas for hiking and not for vehicles, 4-wheelers, campgrounds, etc.
In the past few years I have also noted increased jet boat traffic. I can hear the demonic roar of the machines for miles and miles and can smell the exhaust as they go by, displacing birds such as the bald eagle out of their nests and disturbing soft shell turtles soaking up sun on the banks. I've also noticed them treating the river like a race track, disrupting fish and wildlife along the way. It's a touchy subject, as jet boats are very popular, with their tanks full of gas and a cooler full of beer it is good for the economy and their egos, but it is not good for the river. We need to put the river first, as well as the wildlife that inhabits it.
The Yellowstone River is the longest free-flowing river in the lower 48 states. What is wrong with leaving the river and the bluffs the way they are protecting them from the onslaught of too many people? More people mean more problems. Let's put the river first, not people or money.
Please let's not overdevelop this area. Sometimes river bottoms and clifftops should be left the way they are. This area is also rich in paleontology and Native American history. People can still access the beauty of these lands, they just might have to work at it and walk a little more.
I don't want to be an extremest, but the river is my life and I am very passionate about respecting the river, surrounding lands, and wildlife.
If you are interested, I have many photos of fish, wildlife, and the seasons in this region.
Thank you for taking my concerns into consideration with the planning of the Yellowstone River State Park.

Sincerely,

Nathan Cooper

May 7, 2010

Michael Bullock
2563 Clearwater Way
Billings, Montana 59105

Ms. Terri Walters
Parks Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Region 5 Headquarters
2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, Montana 59105

Subject: Comments Requested on
Draft Environmental Assessment
Yellowstone River State Park Campground Project
March 15, 2010

Dear Ms. Walters:

This letter presents my comments regarding the *Draft Environmental Site Assessment - Yellowstone River State Park Campground Project* dated March 15, 2010 submitted for public comment. I was also present at the public meeting on May 4, 2010 and understand that my comments presented in that meeting will also be recorded.

Pheasants Forever and Fish, Wildlife and Parks agreed to work together to provided food plots for pheasants and other wildlife. Food plots are necessary to sustain the wildlife, hard cover (riparian areas) are important for survival during the winter, and grass lands are important for brood rearing. By putting development in the brood habitat in that area, you remove one of the three legs required for pheasant survival. Additionally, the increase in activities at the campground will displace birds.

The reason why Pheasants Forever agreed to improve the area with feed plots using donations from our club, is because all three types of habitat were contiguous to each other. The development of this campground will remove a large portion of the brood habitat and the consistent presence of humans and vehicles will discourage wildlife from a large area in the vicinity of the campground, not just in the campground itself. Using the following facts discussed above, there were several items in the checklist which were incorrectly completed. Specifically:

6a	Increases in existing noise levels?	Minor	Noise levels will increase dramatically between generators, people yelling and kids screaming, and other activities in and around the campground area. The increase in noise will scare away a lot of wildlife. **"Minor" is an incorrect conclusion.**
6b	Exposure of people to severe [sic] or nuisance noise levels?	None	The WMA is a very active hunting area. The campground will be affected by the sound of gunshots regularly between September 1 and January 15. Typically, once there is a perceived public safety threat by non-hunting users in an area, the discharge of firearms in the area becomes prohibited. **"None" is an incorrect conclusion.**
7c	Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?	None	The WMA is a very active hunting area. The campground will be affected by the sound of gunshots regularly between September 1 and January 15. Typically, once there is a perceived public safety threat by non-hunting users in an area, the discharge of firearms in the area becomes prohibited. **"None" is an incorrect conclusion.**
8c	Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?	Minor	The WMA is a very active hunting area. The campground will be affected by the sound of gunshots regularly between September 1 and January 15. Typically, once there is a perceived public safety threat by non-hunting users in an area, the discharge of firearms in the area becomes prohibited. **"Minor" is an incorrect conclusion.**
9c	Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or personal income?	Minor	It is likely that Pheasants Forever will cease assisting with the management of these areas since development, which eliminates hunting opportunities either through habitat destruction, displacement of wildlife due to increased human activity, and safety concerns of hunters around non-hunters, has occurred. Additionally, there are really no businesses within a few miles of the proposed campground. The economics presented in Items 9 and 10 are extremely overestimated. This campground is not going to get used as much as FWP believes. The nearby Pompey's Pillar National Monument is not a multi-day destination. **"Minor" is an incorrect conclusion.**
11c	Alteration of quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings?	Minor	There won't be a reason for hunters to use the campground, if the presence of the campground the rest of the year chases the wildlife off. **"Minor" is an incorrect conclusion.**

1. Place the campground adjacent to the National Monument to ensure that those visiting the Monument know of it's presence, and those interested in staying overnight will do so. Although I understand that this has been raised in the past, I feel that FWP would be remiss in not revisiting the idea with the BLM.
2. Place the campground at the FWP Bundy Bridge FAS. There will be less disturbance to the several different types of habitat, and access to the Yellowstone River would be easier. Although I understand that this area was developed in coordination with BLM, I feel that FWP would be remiss in not revisiting the idea.
3. Place the campground in the proposed John H. Dover Memorial Park. The proximate location to Billings and the establishment of a nature park near an urban area would, in my opinion, be more of draw for tourists and transient vacationers.
4. Investigate other locations in the area for a campground.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this document and proposed project and please keep me informed as to the progress of the project and studies.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Bullock

Michael J. Bullock, P.E.
2563 Clearwater Way
Billings, Montana 59105
(406) 373-0187
bullockmj@gmail.com

Michael Bullock– Telephone comments
Yellowstone River State Park Campground EA
4/16/10

- Pheasants Forever
- Against the EA didn't feel that it adequately addressed issues.

covered in written

Walters, Terri

From: Twana Bourke [twanadale@bresnan.net]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 4:32 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Cc: twana bourke
Subject: Campgrounds from Bozeman Trail

Terri,
I hope that FWP will reconsider developing a state park with camp sites off of Bundy Road down Bozeman Trail near Pompeys Piller. It would be better left for the wildlife and hunters. I have enjoyed visiting and hunting this area for many years and enjoy seeing all of the wildlife. Development of this area would be a detriment to the wildlife and to the ranchers who live near or on that road. Twana Bourke 855-8793

Habermann, Doug

From: Walters, Terri
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2010 9:28 AM
To: Reilly, Tom (FWP); Habermann, Doug
Subject: FW: Comments on Proposed Campground
Attachments: FWP - Campground.doc

From: Kirk Marzolf [mailto:kirkmarzolf@nemontel.net]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 4:49 PM
To: Walters, Terri
Subject: Comments on Proposed Campground

Terri,

Attached are my written comments on the proposed Yellowstone River State Park Campground.

- Kirk Marzolf

TERRI WALTERS

FWP PARK MANAGER

RUMOR HAS IT, THERE WILL BE NO PUBLIC MEETING FOR THE RANCHERS TO AIR THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THE NEW STATE PARK ON BOZEMAN TRAIL.

AS THIS IS A PET PROJECT OF THE GOVERNOR, WAS THIS ONE OF HIS DIRECTIVES, OR WAS THIS AN FWP DECISION?

I WAS READING THE MINUTES OF A BOARD MEETING LATHY AND LOWE BELTOLD IT STATED "THE FWP LOST THE INFORMATION AND RECORDS" ON THE PROPOSAL TO TO ACQUIRE THE (R) RANCH, FROM A PRIVATE PARTY.

WHAT A CATASTROPHY, BUT THANKS TO "THE CONSERVATION FUND" FOR STEPPING UP AND PURCHASING IT FOR THE FWP NOT ONLY DID IT COST THE LOCAL TAX PAYER DOUBLE IT ALSO ELIMINATED "RED TAPE" SUCH AS EIS REPORTS SINCE THE PRICE WAS APPRAISED BY NO OTHER THAN THE SELLERS APPRAISER AS I HEARD IT.

PLEASE TERRI, HELP US, THE SPORTSMAN, RANCHERS, FARMERS, TAXPAYERS DISUADE THE PUBLIC FROM FEELING THAT NOT ONLY DID WE GET SCREWED BUT WE PAID DOUBLE FOR THE PRIVALIGE

SINCERELY
ROBERT SMYTH

Comments- FWP / Yellowstone River State Park

After last night's public hearing I decided I would like to submit my comments in writing. Although there are a number of other issues that really haven't been worked through, much less worked out, I think that there are three major issues that when considered make a campground in the Yellowstone River State Park an impracticality.

1) Access – access to the park and adjacent WMA has always been poor. It seems like FWP is trying to force this thing and continues to throw good money after bad. The issue of proper access will require that FWP spend a substantial amount of money to remedy this problem. Both the county road and the private road into the property are steep and winding and go over soils and terrain difficult to work with. This will make any effort to improve access by upgrading to county code prohibitively expensive.

2) Fire – the fire plan FWP articulated at the meeting was really no plan at all. It essentially came down to let the local fire department and the neighbors deal with the problem. And there is a problem that FWP needs to acknowledge. The WMA range has a lot of cheat grass, which in season creates a very dangerous fuel load to manage. If 35 campsites is a subdivision, which it undoubtedly is, to meet the criteria a responsible fire plan will require will be prohibitively expensive. Even if that is accomplished, there still remains the need for a plan for the WMA as large numbers of visitors will be coming in the summer, which is the fire season.

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3) Conflict of user groups – even a casual observer recognizes that a WMA and a public campground are incompatible uses. Why would FWP move forward knowing that this cannot play out without conflict between the user groups. FWP is now the steward of prime riparian and sensitive semiarid habitat and needs to take that responsibility seriously. To try to do too much with the acquisition just to generate revenues, shows a lack of clear vision by those whose responsibility it is to manage the resource. There already has been some dislocation of wildlife particularly the whitetail and mule deer populations. During the season current management probably already allows for too many hunters for the resource. A campground will put more

pressure on these species movements and travel patterns. The activity associated with a campground is also going to have a disruptive effect on the upland bird populations in the adjacent food plot and will ultimately dislocate some of these upland bird and big game species hunters come to the WMA to hunt.

Solution: By the time FWP spends the money necessary to upgrade the Bozeman Trail, and their own access to the proposed campground, pays for the fences, cattle guards and gates they will need to provide their neighbors currently ranching on open range, deals with water rights and a host of other issues that will add cost to the project, they would be better off taking those moneys and purchasing a nice parcel on the south side of the river. Maybe around the National Monument, across the river from their existing holdings, next to the fishing access or revisit the YRPA / Dover Park purchase. There are several nice parcels that may be available for the purpose. Ultimately that would be better for the campers who would prefer not to bring their campers and RVs a longer distance over poor roads. It would be a better experience for the campers once there with easy access to the boat launch, and the Rock. It is closer to services and therefore there may be some real economic benefit to the local communities, as opposed to little or none under the current draft EA. Response time for emergency services would be greatly reduced. And last of all, but probably most importantly, the WMA would remain just that, in which case both the wildlife and the sportsmen who paid for this would benefit and get what FWP has promised them from the beginning.

LEGAL NOTICES

CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION

I hereby certify that I have read 18-7-201 to 18-7-205, MCA and declare that the price or rate charged the State of Montana for the publication for which claim is made in the attached papers in the amount of $ 40 -, is not in excess of the minimum rate charged any other advertiser for publication or advertisement.

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Date 3-27-10 Payee Independent Record
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By Bre Marie Farr Title Legal Clerk

(Above certification need not be verified by affidavit.)

helenaitr.com

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LEGAL NOTICE

A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for improvements to Yellowstone River State Park, and is submitted for public consideration. Developments will include the construction of a campground and associated infrastructure; this will include water, electricity, and vault latrines. Improvements will also include construction of a new access road and an overlook area as funding allows. Questions and comments will be accepted through April 19, 2010 at 5 p.m. and may be addressed to Terri Walters at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), 2300 Lake Elmo Drive, Billings, Montana, 59105; or by e-mail to twalters@mt.gov. Copies of the draft EA may be viewed on the FWP website at fwp.mt.gov under recent public notices or obtained from the FWP office at the above address or by calling 247-2940.

March 20, 27, 2010

(PASTE PROOF HERE)

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The BILLINGS GAZETTE

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A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for improvements to Yellowstone River State Park, and is submitted for public consideration. Developments will include the construction of a campground and associated infrastructure; this will include water, electricity, and vault latrines. Improvements will also include construction of a new access road and an overlook area as funding allows.

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March 21, 28, 2010

Tammy Haar, being first duly sworn, deposes and says: That she is the principal clerk of The Billings Gazette, a newspaper of general circulation published daily in the City of Billings, in the County of Yellowstone, State of Montana, and has charge of the Advertisements thereof.

That the: 2 Folios legal regarding:

Legal Notice YRSP Improvements

a true copy of which is hereto annexed, was published in said newspaper on the following dates: via:

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Tay Haar

STATE OF MONTANA
County of Yellowstone

On this day of Mar 29, 2010, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public for the State of Montana, personally appeared Tammy Haar, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she executed same. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal the day and year first above written.

NOTARY PUBLIC for the State of Montana
Residing at Billings, MT
My commission expires: 8/31/2013

TERESA A COX NOTARIAL SEAL STATE OF MONTANA

TERESA A COX
NOTARY PUBLIC for the
State of Montana
Residing at Billings, Montana
My Commission Expires
August 31, 2013

***** AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION *****

The BILLINGS GAZETTE

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Billings, MT 59101
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Ad Number: 3849717

LEGAL NOTICE

We are extending the comment period on our Environmental Assessment for proposed improvements to the Yellowstone River State Park through **May 7, 2010 at 5 p.m.** We will also be holding a public meeting on **May 4th, 2010, at 7:00 pm at the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Regional Office** at 2300 Lake Elmo Drive in Billings.

If you have questions, need additional copies of the draft EA, and to submit comments, please contact Terri Walters, Park Manager at Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 2300 Lake Elmo Drive, Billings, MT 59105; by telephone at 247-2955 or by email to twalters@mt.gov.

April 25, May 2, 2010

Tammy Haar, being first duly sworn, deposes and says: That she is the principal clerk of The Billings Gazette, a newspaper of general circulation published daily in the City of Billings, in the County of Yellowstone, State of Montana, and has charge of the Advertisements thereof.

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Tay Haar

STATE OF MONTANA
County of Yellowstone

On this day of May 3, 2010, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public for the State of Montana, personally appeared Tammy Haar, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she executed same. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal the day and year first above written.

NOTARY PUBLIC for the State of Montana
Residing at Billings, MT
My commission expires: 8/31/2013

TERESA A COX NOTARIAL SEAL STATE OF MONTANA

TERESA A COX
NOTARY PUBLIC for the
State of Montana
Residing at Billings, Montana
My Commission Expires
August 31, 2013

CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION

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Date 5-2-10 Payee Independent Record
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By Rosemary Ann Title Legal Clerk

(Above certification need not be verified by affidavit.)

SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2010

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April 25, May 2, 2010

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NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

CATHOLIC CHURCH SHOWS NEW POLICY TO MOVE SWIFTLY / PAGE 3A

TODAY'S WEATHER
59
36
Partly cloudy and windy
Complete forecast / 6B

Billings Gazette

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2010

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124th year, No. 347

LOCAL EDITION

PLAYOFF EXPERIENCE
Sharks' goalie has edge on Avs 1D

FIGHTER TRANSITION
Montana Air Guard trains on F-15s 1B

ALIVE AND WELL
Local oncology center may be closing, but fundraising efforts — like a fashion show — go forward 1C

Camping opportunity planned along Yellowstone River

35 sites included in plan for state park, 30 miles northeast of Billings

Story and photo
By BRETT FRENCH
Of The Gazette Staff

To read the draft environmental assessment for the Yellowstone River State Park, or to learn more about Pompeys Pillar National Monument or state parks, click the links inside this story on **billingsgazette.com**

Construction could begin this fall on a 35-site campground at Yellowstone River State Park, 30 miles northeast of Billings. It will be the first state park along the 600-mile-long Yellowstone to accommodate campers.

"We'd really like to see it done by wintertime, and maybe even by fall so hunters could check it out," said Doug Habermann, FWP's Region 5 parks manager.

The 200-acre park is part of what was formerly the 4,600-acre Circle R Ranch that Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks purchased in 2008. In the past few years, the agency has actively sought such acreage across the state and in the Billings area to guarantee more public access and recreational opportunities.

"It's a beautiful spot," Habermann said. "I hope it's popular with Billings folks. They can get away from it all and not be that far out."

The property is located on the north bank of the river, upstream from Pompeys Pillar National Monument. The monument is where explorer William Clark carved his signature into a sandstone tower July 25, 1806, while returning from the first journey of exploration by the young United States to the Pacific Ocean.

It's expected that the state campground will attract monument visitors, as well as hunters

Please see Campground, 12A

This southeast corner of Yellowstone River State Park is where a 35-site campground would be built, possibly beginning this fall. The park is located about 30 miles northeast of Billings near Pompeys Pillar National Monument.

An excerpt from the legislation

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act reauthorized and made permanent the American Indian Health Care Improvement Act.

An excerpt from the legislation, found in Part III of Chapter X, reads as follows:

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Federal health services to maintain and improve the health of the Indians are consonant with and required by the Federal Government's historical and unique legal relationship with, and resulting responsibility to, the American Indian people.

(2) A major national goal of the United States is to provide the resources, processes, and structure that will enable Indian tribes and tribal members to obtain the quantity and quality of health care services and opportunities that will eradicate the health disparities between Indians and the general population of the United States.

(3) A major national goal of the United States is to provide the quantity and quality of health services which will permit the health status of Indians to be raised to the highest possible level and to encourage the maximum participation of Indians in the planning and management of those services.

(4) Federal health services to Indians have resulted in a reduction in the prevalence and incidence of preventable illnesses among, and unnecessary and premature deaths of, Indians.

(5) Despite such services, the unmet health needs of the American Indian people are severe and the health status of the Indians is far below that of the general population of the United States.

expand its services to include prevention, chronic disease management, long-term care and behavioral health, among other things.

"They do not do early diagnosis and treatment," said Gordon Belcourt, executive director of the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council and a member of the Blackfeet Tribe. "With this legislation, they're going to be able to evolve into a chronic disease model."

How much can be done depends on how much money is allocated to the IHS budget.

Belcourt said Montana's congressional delegation could play a role in bringing a portion of any funding increases to the Billings region of IHS.

"We have to fight for appropriations," he said. "There's a political dynamic and a geographic dynamic going on."

Under Obama's leadership, Congress increased the IHS budget for 2010 by 13 percent to $4.05 billion, and an 8 percent increase is under consideration for next year, Cooper said.

"This won't happen overnight," she said. "At least now, instead of advocating for authorization — we have the authorization — now it's working with IHS and HHS (Health and Human Services) on what these programs will look like when they're implemented."

A spokeswoman for the Billings IHS office could not get permission to talk to the media about the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. The Billings office oversees medical centers on eight reservations in Montana and Wyoming.

The Indian Health Board of Billings, which provides care to tribal members who do not live on reservations, also did not have someone authorized to talk about the law.

Contact Diane Cochran at dcochran@billingsgazette.com or 657-1287.

ıke in western China kills 300

Qinghai province. The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake measured a magnitude of 6.9.

Rescue efforts were hindered by telecommunications problems, with phone lines down.

A series of strong earthquakes struck China's western Qinghai province today, officials and state media said.

The main quake sent residents fleeing as it toppled houses made of mud and wood, said Karsum Nyima, the Yushu county television station's deputy head of news, speaking by phone with broadcaster CCTV.

"In a flash, the houses went down. It was a terrible earthquake," he said. "In a small park, there is a Buddhist tower and the top of the tower fell off."

VICTOR ADY/Gazette Staff

Campground

Continued from 1A

using the adjacent wildlife management area and Yellowstone River anglers and boaters.

"It kind of complements Pompeys Pillar, which doesn't allow camping," Habermann said.

Four graveled loops are planned for the campground. Each loop would contain a vault latrine, with the possibility of a shower building being added if funding is available. Every campsite would have a fire pit and picnic table. Electricity would be extended from a nearby irrigation pump to service the campsites and to discourage generator use. A children's playground is included in the initial design. The cost of an overnight stay would be $20 a night. A campground host would be hired to staff the site during summer.

The improvements, outlined in an environmental analysis, will be paid for with $450,000 in state park funds that have been set aside. The money comes from user and registration fees.

The campground would be located in the southeast corner of the park, a flat 5-acre parcel centered between the base of sandstone rimrocks and not far from the cottonwood banks of the Yellowstone. Access to the river would be by foot trail; no boat ramp is planned.

The campground is accessible from Bundy Road and the Bozeman Trail Road. FWP is planning to improve the roads from the eastern boundary of the park to the campground to allow two-way traffic. Even without improvements, traffic counters have shown that the park and adjacent wilderness management area are attracting 400 to 600 visits a month.

All of the work has to undergo subdivision review by Yellowstone County.

"That will extend the process a little farther out," Habermann said. "This is the first time we've worked with Yellowstone County, so we're not sure how long that will take."

If there is enough money left over, FWP is proposing to build an overlook atop the rimrocks that provides views of the river and surrounding valley. Included in the overlook development would be a parking lot, vault latrine, paths to observation points and interpretive signs.

"The campground is our first priority," Habermann said. "The overlook is the second alternative, and we probably won't get to that this funding round."

Contact Brett French at french@billingsgazette.com or at 657-1387.

Huntley MT 59037

Phone: 406-348-2649
Fax: 406-348-2302
Email:
info@yellowstonecountynews.com

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Campsite next for new Yellowstone River park

April 9, 2010

by Robert Nolte

POMPEYS PILLAR – Despite opposition from a local rancher, plans to build 35 campsites and make road improvements this spring are progressing at the new Yellowstone River State Park.

The sprawling 200-acre recreational area is open now but camping is not allowed, according to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, which maintains and operates it.

The public has until Monday, April 19, to file comments about development of the park, scheduled to open a new gravel road and campsites this summer.

However, at least one rancher in the area is concerned about the anticipated influx of campers in an area that for years has been primarily used for agriculture and ranching.

Annie Rowe sent an 8-page letter to Yellowstone County commissioners recently, outlining her opposition to the park.

"Before FWP constructed (a) parking lot, we made them aware—this parking puts children and people, that don't understand cows and bulls, into a possible dangerous situation."

Rowe said about 20 to 30 vehicles use Bozeman Trail Road daily to access the park. The county road cuts through Rowe's open range livestock pasture and a hay field.

"There are several blind curves with 90-plus-year-old cow trails crossing them," she said. "You can't change cow trails. These new campsites would increase the traffic. . .(and the public) who do not understand the habits of livestock. The cows and calves sleep on Bozeman Trail Road day and night, which could be a hazard to traffic."

Rowe also said the flow of Pompeys Creek irrigation would be affected by improvements on Bozeman Trail and that, in turn, would hinder water flow into her hayfield, "the mainstay of this ranches' health and hay production for the livestock's winter feed."

The state will improve Bozeman Trail and bear the cost, according to County Commissioner Jim Reno, who noted that FWP at first wanted the county to pay for improvements on Bozeman Trail. However, FWP was treated as a subdivision developer in that it was expected to build or improve roads leading to a subdivision just as a private developer would be required to do under county regulations.

Reno said county commissioners "embrace" the state park for recreational use.

FWP has a budget of $450,000 to make improvements at its new park, which will include improvements on Bozeman Trail and building an overlook area as well as building camp sites, a vault toilet and installation of water and electricity.

Yellowstone River Park abuts thousands of acres of wildlife management tracts and BLM land, both of which are open for public access.

The park is touted for having excellent turkey hunting and has several prairie dog towns for those who like to shoot. Fishing access to the Yellowstone is difficult but for hikers, bikers, horseback riders and explorers, the park offers unlimited opportunities and beautiful vistas, according to the FWP. The park is 5.5 miles from the historic Pompeys Pillar monument.

The park land and wildlife management area was part of the old Circle R River Ranch that FWP purchased. It has five miles of frontage on the Yellowstone River and opened Sept. 1, 2008, even though the park acreage was not fully developed.

Tags: FWP, Pompeys Pillar National Monument, Robert Nolte, Yellowstone River State Park

2 Responses to " Campsite next for new Yellowstone River park "

Scott Bowen on April 10, 2010 at 8:01 am

Robert,
I live north of this state park and can assure you Annie Rowe is not the only rancher opposed to the campsights. It seems that many comments and concerns fall on deaf ears at the Montana FWP.

As for unlimited opportunities, horseback riders tell me they're unlimited as long as you stay on road. Riding offroad can result in a ticket.

And why did the FWP pay 5 times the fair market value for this property. Was this so a private individual could not compete.

Many questions, but only lip service from the FWP

Scott Bowen

jamie on April 26, 2010 at 10:59 am

seems like there are some nice people that come to this site. Looks like my new hangout!

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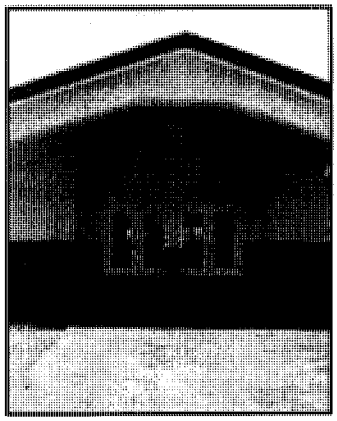
Pappy's Cowboy Cookout



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