



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

February 6, 2012

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

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

MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202

MT State Parks Association, P.O. Box 699, Billings, MT 59103

MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620

James Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624

Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624

George Ochenski, P.O. Box 689, Helena, MT 59624

Jerry DiMarco, P.O. Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771

Montana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624

Wayne Hurst, P.O. Box 728, Libby, MT 59923

Jack Jones, 3014 Irene St., Butte, MT 59701

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for the proposed Three Dollar Bridge Fishing Access Site Improvements. This project proposes that improvements be made by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) at Three Dollar Bridge Fishing Access Site (FAS) on the Madison River. The proposed improvements include enhancing the entrance road, graveling existing parking areas on both sides of the river, improving a designated trail to the water on both sides of the river, and adding a new precast-concrete latrine on the west side of the river. Worn signs would be replaced and a new informational sign added. The proposed improvements would prevent further degradation and sanitation concerns at the site.

This Draft EA is available for review in Helena at FWP's Headquarters, the State Library, and the Environmental Quality Council. It also may be obtained from FWP at the address provided above, or viewed on FWP's Internet website: <http://www.fwp.mt.gov>.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks invites you to comment on the attached proposal. The public comment period will be accepted until 5:00 PM March 8, 2012. Comments should be sent to the following:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
c/o Three Dollar Bridge
1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

Or e-mailed to: cherylmorris@mt.gov

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Flowers
Region Three Supervisor
Attachment

**Draft
Environmental Assessment**

**THREE DOLLAR BRIDGE
FISHING ACCESS SITE
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS**



February 2012



***Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks***

**Three Dollar Bridge Fishing Access Site Proposed Improvements
Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST**

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Proposed state action:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes site improvements at Three Dollar Bridge Fishing Access Site (FAS) on the Madison River. FWP and the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) provide joint management of this Fishing Access Site to facilitate angling and other recreational activities. The proposed improvements include enhancing the entrance road, graveling existing parking areas on both sides of the river, improving a designated trail to the water on both sides of the river, and adding a new precast-concrete latrine on the west side of the river. Worn signs would be replaced and a new informational sign added. The proposed improvements would prevent further degradation and sanitation concerns at the site.

2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605 which directs FWP to acquire, develop and operate a system of fishing accesses. FWP has the authority to develop outdoor recreational resources in the state per 23-2-101 MCA: *“for the purpose of conserving the scenic, historic, archaeological, scientific, and recreational resources of the state and providing their use and enjoyment, thereby contributing to the cultural, recreational, and economic life of the people and their health.”* The legislature earmarked a funding account to ensure that the fishing access site program would be implemented. Sections 23-1-105, 23-1-106, 15-1-122, 61-3-321, and 87-1-303, MCA, authorize the collection fees and charges for the use of state park system units and fishing access sites, and contain rule-making authority for their use, occupancy, and protection.

Furthermore, state statute 23-1-110 MCA and ARM 12.2.433 guides public involvement and comment for the improvements at state parks and fishing access sites, which this document provides. ARM 12.8.602 requires FWP to consider the wishes of users and the public, the capacity of the site for development, environmental impacts, long-range maintenance, protection of natural features, and impacts on tourism as these elements relate to development or improvement to fishing access sites or state parks. This document will illuminate the facets of the proposed project in relation to this rule. See Appendix 1 for HB 495 qualification.

3. **Name of project:** Three Dollar Bridge Fishing Access Site Proposed Improvements

4. **Project sponsors:**
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 S. 19th Avenue
Bozeman MT 59718
406-994-4042

5. Anticipated Timeline:

Estimated Public Comment Period: February 2012 – March 2012

Estimated Decision Notice Published: March 2012

Estimated Construction/Commencement: Spring 2012

Estimated Completion Date: Fall 2012

Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 20%

6. Location:

Madison County, Sections 31 and 32, Township 11 South, Range 2 East. The site is 39 miles south of Ennis or 32 miles northwest of West Yellowstone on Highway 287. See Figures 1 and 2 for Highway and FAS parcel maps. See Figure 3 for relation of Three Dollar Bridge FAS to other FWP FAS's along the Madison River.

Figure 1: Three Dollar Bridge FAS Highway Map Location

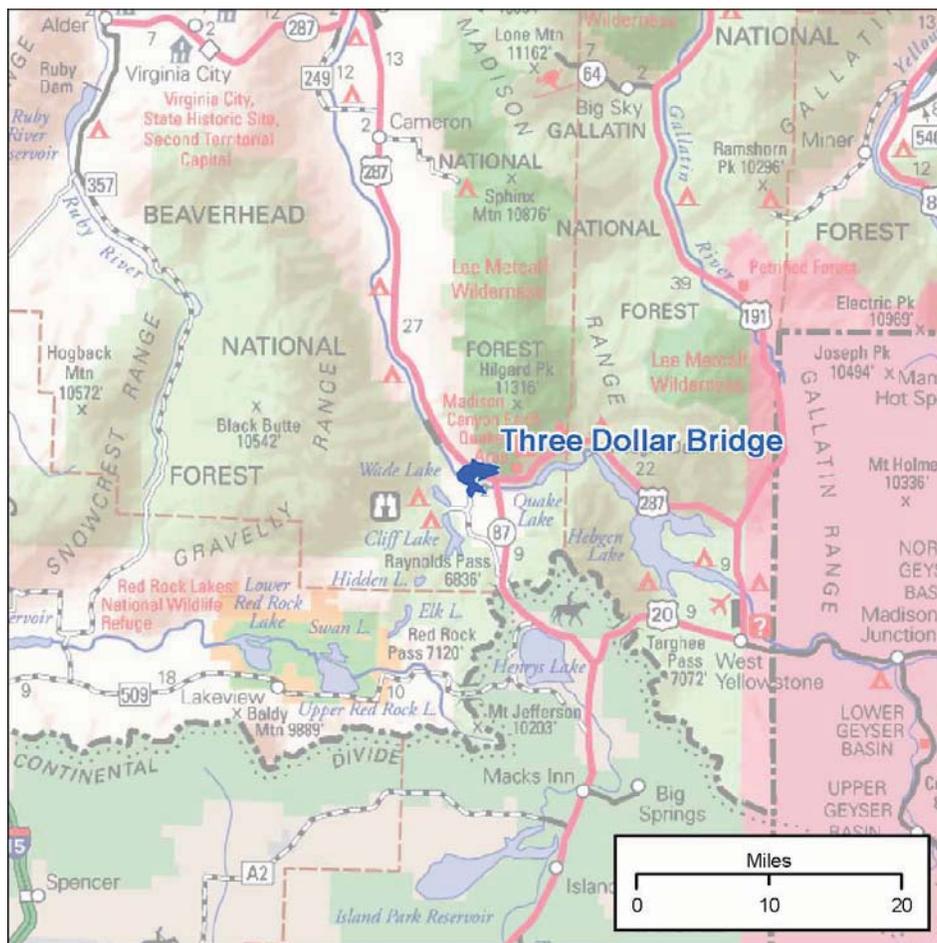


Figure 2: Three Dollar Bridge FAS Parcel Map

Three Dollar Bridge Fishing Access Site

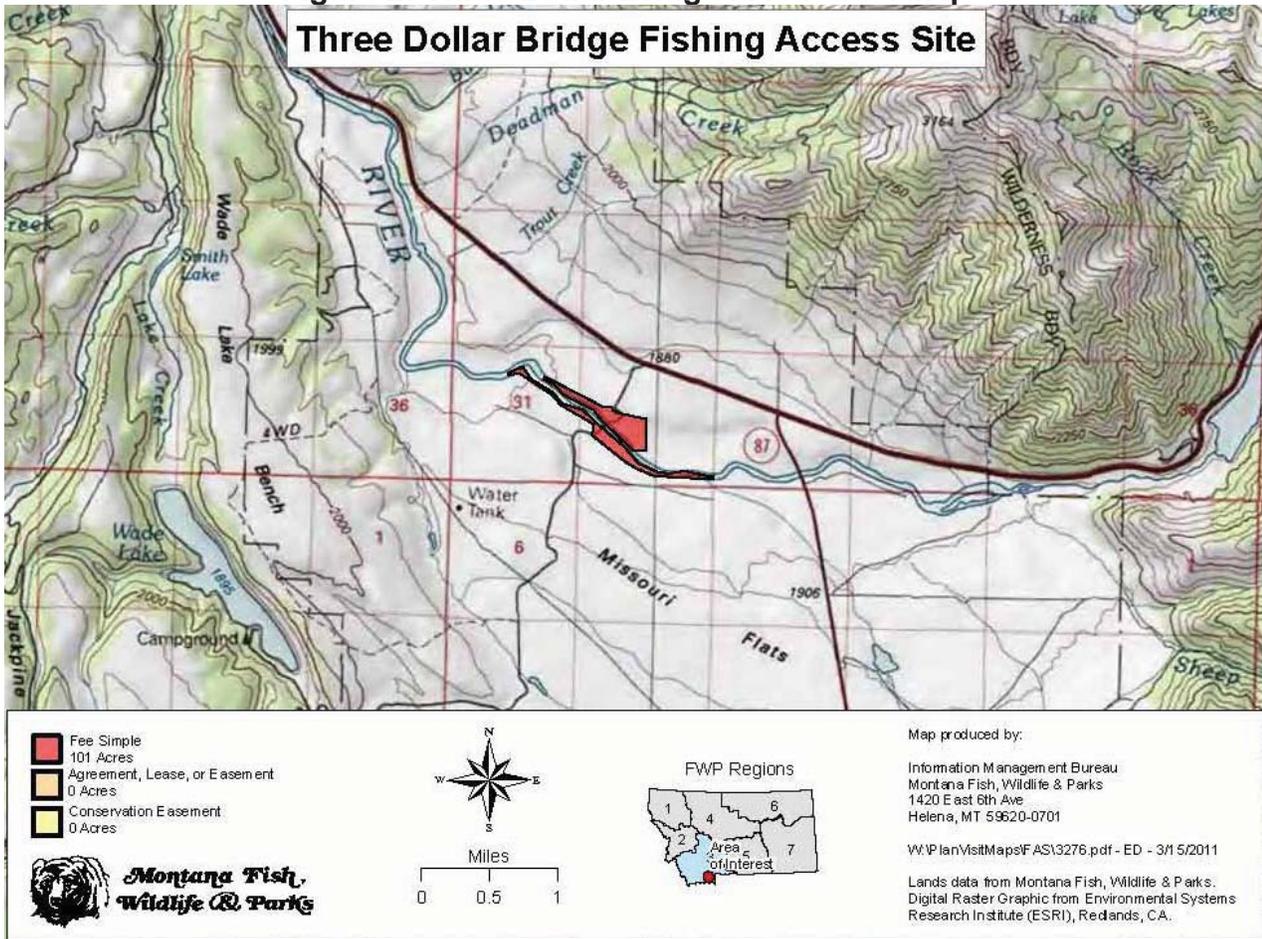


Figure 3: Madison River FAS Location Map

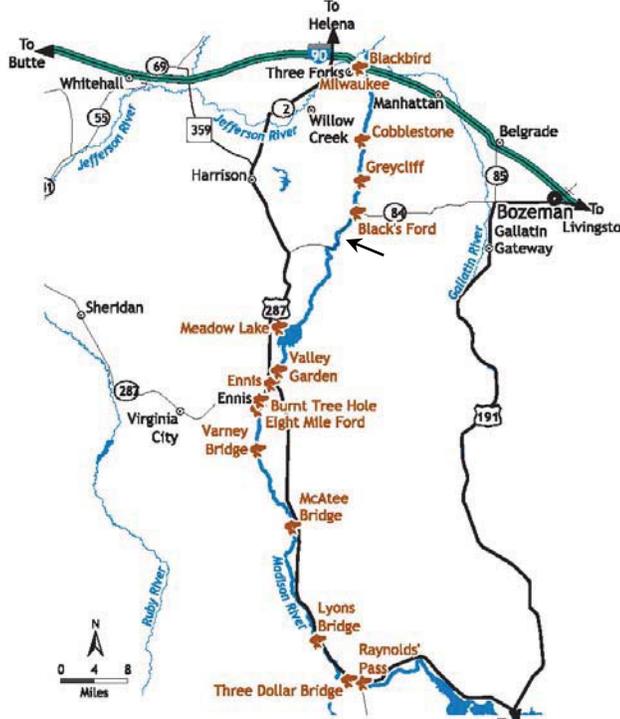
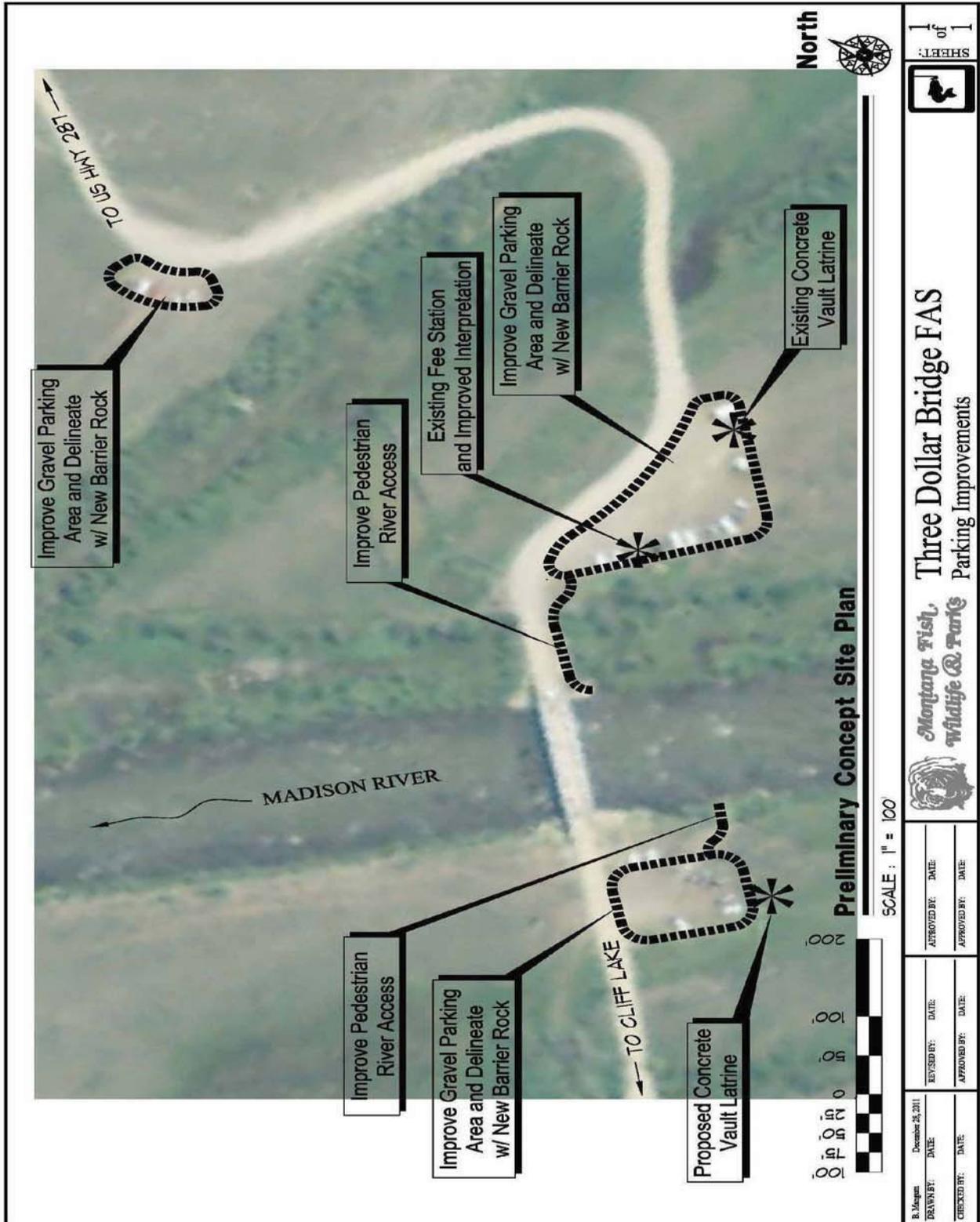


Figure 4: Draft Preliminary Concept Site Plan for Three Dollar Bridge FAS



7. Project size:

	<u>Acres</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain/Riparian	___0
Residential	___0		
Industrial	___0	(e) Productive:	
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	___0.25	Irrigated cropland	___0
		Dry cropland	___0
		Forestry	___0
c) Riparian Wetlands Areas	___0	Rangeland	___0
		Other	___0

8. Local, State or Federal agencies with overlapping or additional jurisdiction:

(a) **Permits:** All appropriate permits will be acquired prior to development.

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
Madison County	Encroachment (if required)
Madison County	Flood Plain (if required)
Madison County	Sanitation Permit
MT FWP	124 MT Stream Protection Act (if required)
MT DEQ	Storm Water Discharge Permit (if required)
US Corps of Engineers	404 Federal Clean Water Act (if required)

(b) **Funding:**
 MT FWP FAS License Account: \$ 40,000.00

(c) **Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
Madison County Weed District	Weed Management Coordination and Approval of Weed Management Plan
MT Dept of Commerce	Tourism Report (Appendix 2)
MT Natural Heritage Program	Species of Concern (See Appendix 3)
MT State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural Clearance
Montana Bald Eagle Working Group	Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan
US Fish & Wildlife Service	Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act
US Fish & Wildlife Service	Migratory Bird Treaty Act

9. Narrative summary of the proposed action:

The Three Dollar Bridge FAS parcel is along the Madison River and is 39 miles south of Ennis or 32 miles northwest of West Yellowstone on Highway 287 (Fig. 1). The public has traditionally used this parcel for recreation purposes and to gain access to the Madison River (Fig. 2). FWP proposes improvements to Three Dollar Bridge FAS to enhance the entrance road to the site, gravel three existing pioneered parking areas, add barrier rock to protect vegetation, improve a designated trail to the water on the east and west sides of the river, add a precast-concrete vault latrine on the west side of the bridge/river, and replace existing worn regulation and informational signs. See Fig. 4 for the draft preliminary concept site plan.

Vegetation on the property is primarily upland grass with scattered sagebrush, red osier dogwood, Oregon grape, and some wild rose bushes. A riparian

corridor along the river is dominated by grasses, sedges, and willows. Noxious weeds including Canada thistle, hoary alyssum, houndstongue, oxeye daisy, spotted knapweed, and sulfur cinquefoil occupy less than 2% of the parcel. The parcel currently has three pioneered dirt parking areas, several pioneered trails to the river's edge, and a primitive pioneered boat launch.

Three Dollar Bridge is used for fishing and other recreational activities. Lyon's Bridge FAS is the next FAS downstream from Three Dollar Bridge FAS, and Reynolds' Pass FAS is the next site upstream from Three Dollar Bridge FAS. See Fig. 3 for the FWP FAS location map for the Madison River. The Reynold's Pass FAS and Three Dollar Bridge FAS are just over one river mile apart, and there is a pioneered trail on the east side of the river between the two FAS's. In the future as funding allows, that trail connecting the two FAS's may be improved, but the proposed work for this project only includes enhancing a trail to the water from Three Dollar Bridge to the Madison River on the both sides of the bridge/water. See Fig. 4 for the preliminary draft concept site plan.

This stretch of the Madison River supports game fish populations of brown trout, mountain whitefish, and rainbow trout as well as other species present including brook trout, longnose dace, longnose sucker, mottled sculpin, mountain sucker, Utah chub, and white sucker. Arctic grayling (native), westslope cutthroat (native), and Yellowstone cutthroat trout (non-native) are primarily found in the surrounding lakes but may be found in low numbers in the river. The river is used for boating, floating, fishing, waterfowl hunting, and wildlife viewing. This section of the Madison River is ranked by FWP as 2nd in the state and 1st in the region for fishing use in 2009. Total pressure in 2009 was over 121,000 fishing days, up from 2007 with over 106,000 fishing days and slightly up from 2005 with nearly 116,000 fishing days.

Vegetation has been degraded by indiscriminate vehicle parking. The Madison River is under intensive management, mainly by the BLM, with many fee-based camping and boating sites within this corridor. FWP is working with the BLM for the cooperative management of the Madison River Corridor to benefit the public and to preserve and protect the corridor's natural resources. A priority management effort is to ensure continued public access to the Madison River in this location. Other resource values will continue to be protected by FWP as required by statute.

Three Dollar Bridge FAS provides access for anglers and floaters on the Madison River providing opportunities for inner tubing, canoeing, rafting and kayaking. The Special Recreation Permit (SRP) program and FWP Commercial Use Rules will continue to apply to commercial outfitters, organized groups and competitive events using the site and the Madison River.

Immediate FWP management activities would include installation of site usage signage, continued enforcement of site rules and regulations, regular law enforcement presence, and continuation of the FWP's Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan to control the existing weeds on the parcel. Proposed work

includes improving the access road, gravelling existing parking areas, adding barrier rock to establish gravel parking boundaries protecting vegetation, improving a trail to the water on both sides of the river, and installing a new pre-cast concrete vault latrine on the west side of the river adjacent to the parking area.

10. Alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action

If no action were taken, Three Dollar Bridge FAS would continue to be open to the public and resource values would likely continue to be degraded by continued use/expansion. Indiscriminate vehicle parking as well as continued use of pioneered trails to the water would continue to degrade the soil and vegetation in the area, likely promote the spread of weeds, and increase erosion and sediment delivery to the river. Without a latrine on the west side of the river, health and sanitation concerns would continue and likely increase over time.

Preferred Alternative B: Proposed Action

In the preferred alternative, FWP would improve Three Dollar Bridge FAS. FWP proposes to enhance the access road to the site, gravel three existing parking areas, add barrier rock to define designated parking areas and protect vegetation, establish a designated trail to the water on both sides of the river, and add a new precast-concrete vault latrine on the west side of the river. Worn signs would be replaced and a new informational sign added. The proposed improvements are primarily maintenance in nature but are also intended to enhance public access and use, prevent further site degradation, and address health and sanitation concerns. See Fig. 4 for draft preliminary concept site plan.

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

All county, state, and federal permits listed in Part I 8(a) above would be obtained by FWP as required. Adherence to the FWP Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan and required application records would be submitted to the Montana Department of Agriculture.

FWP employs Best Management Practices which are designed to reduce or eliminate sediment delivery to waterways during construction. FWP would develop the final design and specifications for the proposed project. A private contractor selected through the State's contracting processes would complete the construction.

A bald eagle nest is located more than a mile from Three Dollar Bridge FAS and is of sufficient distance from the FAS that the eagles in the area should not be disturbed during the proposed development or use of the site. The area is already used by the public, so wildlife in the area are used to people, vehicles, boats, etc. While bald eagles were officially delisted in 2007, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has jurisdiction protecting this species under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

At the state level, the Montana Bald Eagle Working Group was formed in 1982 and is composed of representatives from federal and state agencies, tribes, universities, conservation groups, and private industry. In 1994, the group developed a "Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan" to provide information and guide landowners and resource managers in conserving eagle habitat. If eagle nesting occurs in the future at Three Dollar Bridge FAS, the nests would be protected following the standard protocol established in the management plan.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

Evaluation of the impacts of the **Proposed Action** including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		YES Positive	1b.
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X			YES Positive	1d.
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				

- 1a. The proposed development would improve site stability and reduce deterioration occurring under the existing use levels and patterns. Soil and geologic substructure would remain stable during and after the proposed work.
- 1b. The proposed work would temporarily disrupt the soil during the road and parking area improvements but would stabilize naturally over time. The proposed work would reverse the degradation of the site by controlling the erosion and soil compaction that presently occurs from the indiscriminate parking and driving at the site. There would be a short term and minor impact during the development of the site, but the overall benefits would have a greater and long-term impact from improved surfaces thus improving the environmental conditions at the site. The road improvements are designed to reduce erosion, and any erosion would be minor and temporary. FWP would follow the Best Management Practices (BMP's) during all phases of construction to minimize risks and reduce erosion. See Appendix 4 for the BMP's.
- 1d. The proposed work would have no long-term effects on the river channel or flows. The road enhancements and parking area improvements should improve existing erosion at the site.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

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

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

****Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)			X		YES	2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X		YES	2b.
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)		NA				

- 2a. During construction, temporary amounts of dust may be generated during soil excavation and placement in the flood plain. If additional materials are needed off-site, loading at the source site would generate minor amounts of dust. There would be a temporary increase of diesel exhaust from the construction equipment during the construction and road improvements, but this would be short-term and minor. FWP would follow the Best Management Practices (BMP's) during all phases of construction to minimize risks and reduce dust. See Appendix 4 for the BMP's.
- 2b. Three Dollar Bridge FAS has a latrine on the east side of the river but none on the west side of the bridge/river. Without a latrine on the west side, health and safety issues would likely continue and become worse as visitors continue to use the site without proper sanitation facilities on both sides of the river. Not providing a latrine close by typically leads to human waste/sanitation problems in vegetated areas in and around the FAS. A second concrete vault latrine is proposed and would be installed on the west side of the river and maintained regularly to avoid offensive odors. A county sanitation permit would be obtained prior to installation. Placement of a second vault latrine at Three Dollar Bridge FAS would decrease public health concerns on the west side of the river.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

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

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

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3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		YES	3b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				3c.
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				3e.
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?			X		YES	3h.
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		NA				3l.
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		NA				

3a. FWP Best Management Practices would be followed (Appendix 4). Parking lot and road enhancements would be sloped appropriately so that runoff is not routed to the river.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

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

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

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- 3b. Graveling the existing pioneered parking areas should not alter surface runoff. The proposed work would be designed to minimize any effect on surface water, surface runoff, and drainage patterns. The historic drainage pattern would be preserved as much as possible, and no nearby area would be negatively impacted. Parking lot and road enhancements would be sloped appropriately so that runoff is not routed to the river. FWP would follow the permit requirements for the DEQ permit for Stormwater Discharge. Riparian buffers would be protected and enhanced to reduce impacts to water quality from developments at the site. FWP Best Management Practices would be followed (Appendix 4).
- 3c./3e. The proposed work would not alter the course or magnitude of floodwater. This area of the Madison River is not mapped within floodplain by FEMA database. The limited improvements proposed with this project would not affect flood risks of neighboring properties. There are no close neighboring residences affected by the proposed work. Proposed improvements are outside of the floodplain, so they would not result in flooding risk.
- 3h. The use of heavy equipment during construction may result in a slight risk of contamination from petroleum products and a potential temporary increase in sediment delivery to the river. FWP Best Management Practices would be followed during all phases of construction to minimize these risks (Appendix 4). Development of the site would encourage increased use by the public and potential dumping and spillage of contaminants in the parking lot, roads, and launch adjacent to the Madison River. These potential impacts would be mitigated through proper sloping of roads on the site, riparian buffers, and appropriate signage. The noxious weeds are managed within the guidelines of the FWP Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan. The use of herbicides would be in compliance with application guidelines and applied by people trained in safe handling techniques in accordance with product labels and as provided for under state law. Weeds would also be controlled using mechanical or biological means in certain areas to reduce the risk of chemical spills or water contamination.
- 3l. Madison River flows are controlled upstream of Three Dollar Bridge by Hebgen Dam. Madison County has mapped floodplains using topographical maps and aerial photos. FEMA maps are not available. The FAS does include a narrow strip along the river (about 5 acres total) considered to be in the 100-year floodplain. The proposed work would not impact the floodplain. The existing parking areas and proposed latrine placement is out of the floodplain. FWP would obtain all required permits including a sanitation permit for the vault latrine. The latrine would be set back 50' from the high water mark of the Madison River and 50' from any other surface or groundwater facility.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

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

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**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X		YES	4b.
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				4e.
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		NA				4f.

- 4b. Vegetation on the property is primarily upland grass with scattered sagebrush, Oregon grape, and woods' rose, and a riparian corridor along the river dominated by grasses, sedges, and willows. Throughout the site, shrubs identified include various willow species, red osier dogwood, and woods' rose. Because the public already uses the property, proposed improvements should not significantly impact the plant community and may have a positive impact by not allowing indiscriminate vehicle use.
- 4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program's (MNHP) species of concern database found no vascular or non-vascular plants of significance within the boundaries of Three Dollar Bridge FAS.
- 4e. This property currently has infestations of Canada thistle, hoary alyssum, houndstongue, oxeye daisy, spotted knapweed, and sulfur cinquefoil on less than 2% of the parcel. FWP complies with the Statewide Integrated Weed Management Plan using chemical, biological, and mechanical methods. FWP has a weed contract with Madison County for weed control budgeted at \$500 annually. Weed management facilitates the restoration of native vegetation and should prevent the spread of weeds. Vehicles will be restricted to the parking area which will be maintained as weed-free, and vehicles will not be allowed on undisturbed areas of the site where the weed infestation exists.
- 4f. There are no prime or unique farmlands on Three Dollar Bridge FAS parcel.

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

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** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				5b/c.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				5b/c.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				5g.
h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		NA				
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		NA				

The proposed improvements will have no bearing on the game and nongame species that frequent the property and is not considered critical habitat for any species, according to FWP Region 3 wildlife biologist Julie Cunningham, native species wildlife biologist Claire Gower, and fisheries biologist Mike Vaughn.

5b/c. There is a low likelihood that the proposed project would cause any changes in the diversity or abundance of game or non-game species in the larger project area. Human presence is already fairly heavy at the site, and there is too little cover on the site for most game animal and bird species.

5f. A search of the Natural Resources Information System provided by the Montana Natural Heritage Program showed 137 species occurrence reports for six species of concern for the vicinity around Three Dollar Bridge FAS along the Madison River. The property is potential habitat for grizzly bear (threatened species), bald eagle, greater sage-grouse, and wolverine (sensitive species) as well as Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout (sensitive species). No observations of any of these species have been recorded at this location, but it is possible that they have moved through the area. The type of light construction proposed in this project is unlikely to have an impact on these

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species, should they occur, because of the project's small footprint and the existing human presence in the area. Neither the FWP wildlife biologist nor the native species biologist for the area has any concerns with the proposed improvements impacting wildlife in the area. See Appendix 3 for a complete listing of species of concern found in the larger project area.

Grizzly bears and black bears inhabit the Gravelly and Madison mountain ranges and will move through the entire valley. Grizzly bears boundaries shown by the Heritage Program are based on the Greater Yellowstone Recovery Zone boundary which comes within a mile of Three Dollar FAS. The USFWS estimates populations of greater than 500 animals within the Yellowstone Distinct Population Segment. Due to existing development and human presence on the site, there is a low likelihood that the proposed project would impact this species.

The bald eagle was delisted as Threatened by the USFWS in 2007 and now falls under the Bald Eagle Protection Act. Currently designated as Delisted Taxon-Recovered, they continue to be systematically monitored. The bald eagle is listed as Sensitive by USFS, Sensitive by BLM, is in the Tier 1 of the FWP Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CFWCS) and S3/G5 by MNHP. According to the FWP wildlife biologists, bald eagles are seen around area but no bald eagle nests have been sighted on the property. Known eagle nests are over a mile away. Bald eagles from this territory use the river for foraging, and the proposed work should not impact the eagles.

This reach of the Madison River is an important foraging area for bald eagles which nest along the Madison and at several lakes in the region. The Northern Harrier, red-tailed hawk, Swainson Hawk, and osprey are also present in this area. The riparian zones offer a rich diversity of migrating birds in general. Waterfowl are present year-round and transitionally during north-south migrations.

Antelope winter north of this reach but move through on their way south. This is also a transitional area for elk between winter and summer range. River otters inhabit the rich riparian zones of the Madison River. Mule deer, coyotes, skunks, fox, and ground squirrels also use Three Dollar Bridge area. In addition, the vicinity is good habitat for white-tailed deer, mountain lions, and moose. These species may not be common within this parcel but may use the parcel seasonally. This area may be potential habitat for upland game birds including blue grouse, ruffed grouse and sage grouse. There is some sagebrush on the FAS but no leks, nesting, or core areas are near the FAS.

Tier I of the FWP CFWCS is the greatest conservation need. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has an obligation to use its resources to implement conservation actions that provide direct benefit to these species. Species identified in this section have included the tier level to help identify those in greatest need of conservation.

- 5g. The land is currently used by the public for wildlife viewing and waterfowl hunting, and the water is used by anglers, boaters, and floaters. The proposed improvements to the property should not negatively impact or stress wildlife populations.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

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

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

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		YES	6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?			X		YES	6b.
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				

6a/6b. Construction equipment would cause a temporary increase in noise levels at the site. Proximity to the highway with much higher sustained noise levels may help mask any increase in noise level at the construction site. Adjacent landowners will be notified and should not be affected. Visitor use is not expected to increase noise levels as vehicles will be restricted to the parking area and the access road. Since previously used by the public, noise levels are not considered to significantly increase noise levels.

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				

The proposed action would not alter or interfere with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use nor does it conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance. Anglers and waterfowl hunters currently use the land and river. The property has been used some by the general public for wildlife viewing. FWP would continue to allow these activities. The property would be designated for day-use only. The land is dry shrub grassland that serves as important habitat for a variety of mammals and bird species.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

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

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

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		YES	8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		NA				

8a. Physical disturbance of the soil during construction would encourage the establishment of additional noxious weeds to the site. In conjunction with Madison County Weed District, FWP would continue implementing an integrated approach to control noxious weeds as outlined in the FWP Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan. The integrated plan uses a combination of biological, mechanical, and herbicidal treatments to control noxious weeds. The use of herbicides would be in compliance with application guidelines to minimize the risk of chemical spills or water contamination and applied by people trained in safe handling techniques. Weeds would also be controlled using mechanical or biological means in certain areas to reduce the risk of chemical spills or water contamination. In recent years, FWP has been working closely with Madison County and the Madison Valley Ranch Group to improve weed control within the upper Madison Valley.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

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

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

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?			X		YES Positive	9c.
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X			YES	9e.

9c. The site is already used by the public. However, the proposed improvements may improve tourism in the area by increasing the number of visitors which will benefit local retail and service businesses (Appendix 2 - Tourism Report). The proposed improvements are designed to protect the property while providing for continued recreation access. The parcel will be day-use only, and camping will not be allowed.

9e. The public access at Three Dollar Bridge FAS is not expected to increase vehicle trips per day significantly since the site is already used by the public. Highway signs and other directional and informational signs are posted to direct traffic safely in and out of the FAS. Visibility is good, and there are no line-of-sight concerns.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

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

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

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				10b.
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. **Define projected revenue sources		X				10e.
f. **Define projected maintenance costs						10f.

10b. The proposed action would have no impact on property taxes.

10e. Three Dollar Bridge FAS would be operated for day-use only. No camping facilities are provided, so there would be no revenue from camping fees. FWP commercial use rules for activities at fishing access sites would be enforced at this site and could change the level of outfitter use. Outfitters that use other FWP FAS's for boating and floating would already have paid the commercial use fee, so any new revenue generated is negligible. Users of the site have historically paid a \$3 voluntary fee for river access. Voluntary fees are still collected at this site. Revenues vary, but donations collected have averaged about \$2500 annually over the last six years.

10f. Annual maintenance costs are expected to average \$3,000 per year including litter removal, caretaker work, latrine pumping, weed control, and Fisheries and Enforcement staff time. Maintenance costs are part of the Region Three Fisheries Operations and Maintenance budget. There is a county weed agreement for this FAS for approximately \$500 in 2011 and budgeted the same in 2012.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

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

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

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

** 11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			X		YES	11a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X		YES Positive	11c.
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		NA				

11a. Three Dollar Bridge FAS would be operated for day-use only, with no camping allowed. Proposed improvements would include enhancing the access road, graveling three existing parking areas, adding barrier rock to define designated parking, adding a new concrete vault latrine on the west side of the river, improving a designated trail to the water on both sides of the river, and replacing worn signs and adding a new informational sign. The entrance road would be visible from the highway. The proposed project would improve the aesthetics of Three Dollar Bridge FAS.

11c. Public access to the area will continue if the proposed development is approved and will continue to be a destination for wildlife viewing, fishing, floating, rafting, hiking, and picnicking. Waterfowl hunters will also continue to use the property. See Appendix 2 for the Department of Commerce Tourism Report. The property would continue to be designated for day-use only.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

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

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

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)		NA				

A clearance from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would be obtained prior to the proposed improvements. If cultural materials are discovered during the project, work would cease and SHPO will be contacted for a more in-depth investigation.

- * Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.
- ** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- *** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u> Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		NA				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		NA				

During construction of the proposed improvements, there may be minor and temporary impacts to the physical environment, but the impacts would be short-term. The improvements would benefit the community by providing recreational opportunities over the long term. The proposed action would have no negative cumulative effects on the biological, physical, and human environments. When considered over the long term, the proposed development poses positive effects towards the public's access of the Madison River. The proposed action will have no negative cumulative effects on the physical and human environments. When considered over the long term, the improvements pose significant positive effects towards the public's continued access of a scenic recreation area. The positive effects associated with the proposed action include improved site protection of resources by not allowing indiscriminate vehicle use and providing a latrine on the west side of the river as well as regular maintenance and enforcement.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

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

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

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The Madison River is a blue-ribbon fishery and the most popular river to fish in Montana. The proposed improvements would provide better access to this stretch of the river and improve the recreational experience for anglers and other recreationists using the site. The project would also protect land, water, and plant resources.

The proposed project would increase public recreational opportunities with no significant impacts to the human or physical environment. During construction of the proposed improvements, there may be minor and temporary impacts to the physical environment, but the impacts would be short term and the improvements would benefit the community and increase recreational opportunities over the long term. The proposed development would have no negative cumulative effects on the biological, physical, and human environments. When considered over the long term, the proposed development poses positive effects towards the public's access of the scenic recreation area along the Madison River. The proposed action will have no negative cumulative effects on the physical and human environments.

The minor impacts that were identified in the previous section are small in scale and will not influence the overall environment of the immediate area. The natural environment will continue to exist to provide habitat to transient and permanent wildlife species and will continue to be open to the public for access for fishing, floating, rafting, picnicking, waterfowl hunting, and wildlife viewing. The positive effects associated with the proposed development include improved site protection of resources, improved site sanitation on the west side of the river, and regular maintenance and enforcement.

The proposed development would have no negative impact on the local wildlife species that frequent the property and would not increase negative conditions that stress wildlife populations. The property is not considered critical habitat for any species. Even though the area is within the habitat of bald eagles, the proposed development is unlikely to have any impact on this species since there is already so much activity and disturbance in the area from the historic public use of the site.

The environmental analysis focuses solely on the preferred alternative to develop this parcel, and the public will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed improvements.

The proposed improvements at Three Dollar Bridge FAS would allow FWP to preserve this stretch of habitat and provide better public access to area anglers in addition to increasing other general public recreational opportunities. The proposed improvements would allow FWP to provide improved public access for fishing, waterfowl hunting, boating, floating, and wildlife viewing to the Madison River. It would also provide safe and developed access to a stretch of river that has been a high priority for FWP.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public Involvement:

The public will be notified by way of legal notices in the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, the *Ennis Madisonian*, and the *Helena Independent Record* in addition to a statewide press release. A public notice will also be posted on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices>. A direct mailing will be sent to adjacent landowners and interested parties. Additionally, copies will be available for public review at FWP Region 3 Headquarters. This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having few minor impacts.

Public meetings to address questions for this EA can be arranged upon request within the comment period.

2. Duration of comment period.

A 30-day comment period is proposed as appropriate for the scale of this project. The comment period will extend for 30 days following publication in area newspapers. Comments will be accepted until 5 pm March 8, 2012. Comments should be sent to Region 3 River Recreation Manager Cheryl Morris:

Mailed to: Three Dollar Bridge FAS Proposed Development
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 South 19th
Bozeman MT 59718

Emailed to: cherylmorris@mt.gov

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? NO If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis.

Based upon the above assessment, which has identified a very limited number of minor impacts from the proposed action, an EIS is not required and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of review.

2. Person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Pam Boggs
EA Coordinator
PO Box 200701
Helena MT 59620-0701
pboggs@mt.gov

Cheryl Morris
R3 River Recreation Manager
1400 South 19th Ave
Bozeman MT 59718
406-994-6359
cherylmorris@mt.gov

Ray Heagney
FAS Manager
1400 South 19th Ave
Bozeman MT 59718
(406) 994-3552
rheagney@mt.gov

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

Madison County Floodplain Coordinator

Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Director's Office

Lands Unit

Legal Unit

Fish & Wildlife Division

Design and Construction Unit

Fisheries Bureau

Wildlife Bureau

Parks Division

Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)

Appendices

- 1 HB 495 Project Qualification Checklist
- 2 Tourism Report – Department of Commerce
- 3 Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) Native Species Report
- 4 FWP Best Management Practices (BMP's)

APPENDIX 1
HB495 PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date November 2, 2011

Person Reviewing Pam Boggs

Project Location: Three Dollar Bridge FAS T11S, R02E, sections 31 and 32 in Madison County

Description of Proposed Work: FWP proposes to improve the entrance road and gravel three existing parking areas adding barrier rock to protect vegetation, improving an existing trail to the river, adding a precast-concrete vault latrine on the west side of the river and replacing worn signage and add a new informational sign.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under HB 495 rules. (Check all that apply and comment as necessary.)

- A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?**
Comments: Improvements to the existing entrance road and existing trail.
- B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?**
Comments: No new construction.
- C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?**
Comments: Excavation for the vault latrine, parking area and staging area may exceed 20 c.y.
- D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?**
Comments: Parking has been haphazard. Existing parking areas will be graveled with barrier rock to protect vegetation, but not increasing or decreasing the amount of parking area.
- E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a doublewide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?**
Comments: No improvement to the existing pioneered ramp proposed.
- F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?**
Comments: No new construction.
- G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?**
Comments: SPHO will be consulted and no work will begin prior to approval.
- H. Any new above ground utility lines?**
Comments: No new utility lines; will not interfere with existing utility lines in the area.
- I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?**
Comments: The property would be designated for day-use only.
- J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?**
Comments: No.

If any of the above are checked, HB 495 rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

Appendix 2

TOURISM REPORT

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

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by MCA 23-1-110 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Carol Crockett, Visitor Services Manager
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce
301 S. Park Ave. Helena, MT 59601

Project Name: THREE DOLLAR BRIDGE FAS DEVELOPMENT

Project Description: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes site improvements at Three Dollar Bridge FAS. Three Dollar Bridge FAS is a popular site for anglers to access the Madison River which has local historical significance. Resource values have been degraded by indiscriminate vehicle use, by no definitive access points to the river and by the lack of sanitation on the west side of the river. The proposed improvements include to improve the entrance road, add a new latrine on the west side, establishing designated parking areas on both sides of the river to prevent further degradation concerns at the site. Three Dollar Bridge FAS is located in Madison County on the Madison River, T 11 South, R 2 East, Sections 31 & 32. It is located 39 miles south of Ennis or 32 miles northwest of West Yellowstone on Hwy 287. It is one mile downstream from Reynolds' Pass Bridge FAS. The site is already used by the public for fishing, floating, picnicking, hiking, and wildlife viewing.

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

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to positively impact the tourism and recreation industry economy if properly maintained. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?
NO YES If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to improve quality and quantity of tourism and recreational opportunities if properly maintained. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

Signature Carol Crockett, Visitor Services Manager Date November 15, 2011

Appendix 3

Sensitive Plants and Animals in the area of Three Dollar Bridge FAS Madison River

Species of Concern Terms and Definitions

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) element occurrence database (<http://nris.mt.gov>) indicates no known occurrences of federally listed threatened, endangered, or proposed threatened or endangered plant species in the proposed project site. The search did indicate the project area is within habitat for Bald Eagle, Greater Sage-Grouse, Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Grizzly Bear and Wolverine. Please see next page for more information on these species.

Montana Species of Concern. The term "**Species of Concern**" includes taxa that are at-risk or potentially at-risk due to rarity, restricted distribution, habitat loss, and/or other factors. The term also encompasses species that have a special designation by organizations or land management agencies in Montana, including: Bureau of Land Management Special Status and Watch species; U.S. Forest Service Sensitive and Watch species; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Threatened, Endangered and Candidate species.

▼ **Status Ranks (Global and State)**

The international network of Natural Heritage Programs employs a standardized ranking system to denote global (**G** -- range-wide) and state status (**S**) (Nature Serve 2003). Species are assigned numeric ranks ranging from 1 (critically imperiled) to 5 (demonstrably secure), reflecting the relative degree to which they are "at-risk". Rank definitions are given below. A number of factors are considered in assigning ranks -- the number, size and distribution of known "occurrences" or populations, population trends (if known), habitat sensitivity, and threat. Factors in a species' life history that make it especially vulnerable are also considered.

Status Ranks

Code	Definition
G1 S1	At high risk because of extremely limited &/or rapidly declining numbers, range, &/or habitat, making it highly vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.
G2 S2	At risk because of very limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.
G3 S3	Potentially at risk because of limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas.
G4 S4	Uncommon but not rare (although it may be rare in parts of its range), and usually widespread. Apparently not vulnerable in most of its range, but possibly cause for long-term concern.
G5 S5	Common, widespread, and abundant (although it may be rare in parts of its range). Not vulnerable in most of its range.

MFWP Conservation Need. Under Montana's Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy of 2005, individual animal species are assigned levels of conservation need: **Tier I. Greatest conservation need.** MFWP has a clear obligation to use its resources to implement conservation actions that provide direct benefit to these species, communities and focus areas. **Tier II. Moderate conservation need.** MFWP could use its resources to implement conservation actions that provide direct benefit to these species communities and focus areas. **Tier III. Lower conservation need.** Although important to Montana's wildlife diversity, these species, communities and focus areas are either abundant or widespread or are believed to have adequate conservation already in place. **Tier IV. Non-native, peripheral.** These are Incidental species or on the periphery of their range and are either expanding or very common in adjacent states.

Appendix 3 (continued)

Sensitive Plants and Animals in the area of Three Dollar Bridge FAS Madison River

1. *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (Bald Eagle)

Natural Heritage Ranks:

State: **S3**

Global: **G5**

Federal Agency Status:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: **DM**

U.S. Forest Service: **Sensitive**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier: 1

Eight Element Occurrence of bald eagle were reported but none were in the boundaries of this parcel. Last observation date was 2007.

2. *Centrocercus urophasianus* (Greater Sage-Grouse)

Natural Heritage Ranks:

State: **S2**

Global: **G4**

Federal Agency Status:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: **C**

U.S. Forest Service: **Sensitive**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier: 1

One Element Occurrence data reported of greater sage-grouse in 1995 in the proximate area of this parcel. There are no active leks within or immediately surrounding the proposed project site. There is a low likelihood that this species would be negatively impacted by the project.

3. *Oncorhynchus clarkii bouvieri* (Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout)

Natural Heritage Ranks:

State: **S2**

Global: **G4T2**

Federal Agency Status:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

U.S. Forest Service: **Sensitive**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier: 1

One Element Occurrence of Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in the Madison River. Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout have historically been stocked in the drainage, predominately in the mountain lakes, and may find their way out of the lakes and streams and into the main river.

4. *Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi* (Westslope Cutthroat Trout)

Natural Heritage Ranks:

State: **S2**

Global: **G4T3**

Federal Agency Status:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

U.S. Forest Service: **Sensitive**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier: 1

One Element Occurrence of Westslope Cutthroat Trout in the Madison River. Westslope Cutthroat Trout have historically been stocked in the drainage, predominately in the mountain lakes, and may find their way out of the lakes and streams and into the main river.

Appendix 3 (continued)

Sensitive Plants and Animals in the area of Three Dollar Bridge FAS Madison River

5. *Ursus arctos* (Grizzly Bear)

Natural Heritage Ranks:

State: **S2S3**

Global: **G4**

Federal Agency Status:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: **LT, XN**

U.S. Forest Service: **Threatened**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier: 1

One Element Occurrence of Grizzly Bear in the vicinity of this parcel. The USFWS estimates populations of greater than 500 animals within the Yellowstone Distinct Population Segment. Due to the existing development and human presence on the site, there is a low likelihood that the proposed project would impact this species.

6. *Gulo Gulo* (Wolverine)

Natural Heritage Ranks:

State: **S3**

Global: **G4**

Federal Agency Status:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: **C**

U.S. Forest Service: **Sensitive**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier: 2

One Element Occurrence of Wolverine in 2011 in the vicinity of this parcel. The Madison, Gallatin, Absaroka, Beartooth and Dear Creek mountain ranges have relatively continuous habitat for wolverines. There is a low likelihood that wolverines would be negatively impacted by this project, as the site is already developed and does not contain preferred wolverine habitat.

Information courtesy of Montana Natural Heritage Program.

APPENDIX 4
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR FISHING ACCESS SITES
10-02-02
Updated May 1, 2008

I. **ROADS**

A. Road Planning and location

1. Minimize the number of roads constructed at the FAS through comprehensive road planning, recognizing foreseeable future uses.
 - a. Use existing roads, unless use of such roads would cause or aggravate an erosion problem.
2. Fit the road to the topography by locating roads on natural benches and following natural contours. Avoid long, steep road grades and narrow canyons.
3. Locate roads on stable geology, including well-drained soils and rock formations that tend to dip into the slope. Avoid slumps and slide-prone areas characterized by steep slopes, highly weathered bedrock, clay beds, concave slopes, hummocky topography, and rock layers that dip parallel to the slope. Avoid wet areas, including seeps, wetlands, wet meadows, and natural drainage channels.
4. Minimize the number of stream crossings.
 - a. Choose stable stream crossing sites. "Stable" refers to streambanks with erosion-resistant materials and in hydrologically safe spots.

B. Road Design

1. Design roads to the minimum standard necessary to accommodate anticipated use and equipment. The need for higher engineering standards can be alleviated through proper road-use management. "Standard" refers to road width.
2. Design roads to minimize disruption of natural drainage patterns. Vary road grades to reduce concentrated flow in road drainage ditches, culverts, and on fill slopes and road surfaces.

C. Drainage from Road Surface

1. Provide adequate drainage from the surface of all permanent and temporary roads. Use outsloped, insloped or crowned roads, installing proper drainage features. Space road drainage features so peak flow on road surface or in ditches will not exceed their capacity.
 - a. Outsloped roads provide means of dispersing water in a low-energy flow from the road surface. Outsloped roads are appropriate when fill slopes are stable, drainage will not flow directly into stream channels, and transportation safety can be met.
 - b. For insloped roads, plan ditch gradients steep enough, generally greater than 2%, but less than 8%, to prevent sediment deposition and ditch erosion. The steeper gradients may be suitable for more stable soils; use the lower gradients for less stable soils.

- c. Design and install road surface drainage features at adequate spacing to control erosion; steeper gradients require more frequent drainage features. Properly constructed drain dips can be an economical method of road surface drainage. Construct drain dips deep enough into the sub-grade so that traffic will not obliterate them.
2. For ditch relief/culverts, construct stable catch basins at stable angles. Protect the inflow end of cross-drain culverts from plugging and armor if in erodible soil. Skewing ditch relief culverts 20 to 30 degrees toward the inflow from the ditch will improve inlet efficiency.
3. Provide energy dissipators (rock piles, slash, log chunks, etc.) where necessary to reduce erosion at outlet of drainage features. Cross-drains, culverts, water bars, dips, and other drainage structures should not discharge onto erodible soils or fill slopes without outfall protection.
4. Route road drainage through adequate filtration zones, or other sediment-settling structures. Install road drainage features above stream crossings to route discharge into filtration zones before entering a stream.

D. Construction/Reconstruction

1. Stabilize erodible, exposed soils by seeding, compacting, riprapping, benching, mulching, or other suitable means.
2. At the toe of potentially erodible fill slopes, particularly near stream channels, pile slash in a row parallel to the road to trap sediment. When done concurrently with road construction, this is one method to effectively control sediment movement and it also provides an economical way of disposing of roadway slash. Limit the height, width and length of these “slash filter windrows” so not to impede wildlife movement. Sediment fabric fences or other methods may be used if effective.
3. Construct cut and fill slopes at stable angles to prevent sloughing and subsequent erosion.
4. Avoid incorporating potentially unstable woody debris in the fill portion of the road prism. Where possible, leave existing rooted trees or shrubs at the toe of the fill slope to stabilize the fill.
5. Place debris, overburden, and other waste materials associated with construction and maintenance activities in a location to avoid entry into streams. Include these waste areas in soil stabilization planning for the road.
6. When using existing roads, reconstruct only to the extent necessary to provide adequate drainage and safety; avoid disturbing stable road surfaces. Consider abandoning existing roads when their use would aggravate erosion.

E. Road Maintenance

1. Grade road surfaces only as often as necessary to maintain a stable running surface and to retain the original surface drainage.
2. Maintain erosion control features through periodic inspection and maintenance, including cleaning dips and cross-drains, repairing ditches, marking culvert inlets to aid in location, and clearing debris from culverts.

3. Avoid cutting the toe of cut slopes when grading roads, pulling ditches, or plowing snow.
4. Avoid using roads during wet periods if such use would likely damage the road drainage features. Consider gates, barricades or signs to limit use of roads during wet periods.

II. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (parking areas, campsites, trails, ramps, restrooms)

A. Site Design

1. Design a site that best fits the topography, soil type, and stream character, while minimizing soil disturbance and economically accomplishing recreational objectives. Keep roads and parking lots at least 50 feet from water; if closer, mitigate with vegetative buffers as necessary.
2. Locate foot trails to avoid concentrating runoff and provide breaks in grade as needed. Locate trails and parking areas away from natural drainage systems and divert runoff to stable areas. Limit the grade of trails on unstable, saturated, highly erosive, or easily compacted soils
3. Scale the number of boat ramps, campsites, parking areas, bathroom facilities, etc. to be commensurate with existing and anticipated needs. Facilities should not invite such use that natural features will be degraded.
4. Provide adequate barriers to minimize off-road vehicle use

B. Maintenance: Soil Disturbance and Drainage

1. Maintenance operations minimize soil disturbance around parking lots, swimming areas and campsites, through proper placement and dispersal of such facilities or by reseeding disturbed ground. Drainage from such facilities should be promoted through proper grading.
2. Maintain adequate drainage for ramps by keeping side drains functional or by maintaining drainage of road surface above ramps or by crowning (on natural surfaces).
3. Maintain adequate drainage for trails. Use mitigating measures, such as water bars, wood chips, and grass seeding, to reduce erosion on trails.
4. When roads are abandoned during reconstruction or to implement site-control, they must be reseeded and provided with adequate drainage so that periodic maintenance is not required.

III. RAMPS AND STREAM CROSSINGS

A. Legal Requirements

1. Relevant permits must be obtained prior to building bridges across streams or boat ramps. Such permits include the SPA 124 permit, the COE 404 permit, and the DNRC Floodplain Development Permit.

B. Design Considerations

1. Placement of boat ramp should be such that boats can load and unload without difficulty and the notch in the bank where the ramp was placed does not encourage bank erosion. Extensions of boat ramps beyond the natural bank can also encourage erosion.

2. Adjust the road grade or provide drainage features (e.g. rubber flaps) to reduce the concentration of road drainage to stream crossings and boat ramps. Direct drainage flow through an adequate filtration zone and away from the ramp or crossing through the use of gravel side-drains, crowning (on natural surfaces) or 30-degree angled grooves on concrete ramps.
3. Avoid unimproved stream crossings on permanent streams. On ephemeral streams, when a culvert or bridge is not feasible, locate drive-throughs on a stable, rocky portion of the stream channel.
4. Unimproved (non-concrete) ramps should only be used when the native soils are sufficiently gravelly or rocky to withstand the use at the site and to resist erosion.

C. Installation of Stream Crossings and Ramps

1. Minimize stream channel disturbances and related sediment problems during construction of road and installation of stream crossing structures. Do not place erodible material into stream channels. Remove stockpiled material from high water zones. Locate temporary construction bypass roads in locations where the stream course will have a minimal disturbance. Time the construction activities to protect fisheries and water quality.
2. Where ramps enter the stream channel, they should follow the natural streambed in order to avoid changing stream hydraulics and to optimize use of boat trailers.
3. Use culverts with a minimum diameter of 15 inches for permanent stream crossings and cross drains. Proper sizing of culverts may dictate a larger pipe and should be based on a 50-year flow recurrence interval. Install culverts to conform to the natural streambed and slope on all perennial streams and on intermittent streams that support fish or that provide seasonal fish passage. Place culverts slightly below normal stream grade to avoid culvert outfall barriers. Do not alter stream channels upstream from culverts, unless necessary to protect fill or to prevent culvert blockage. Armor the inlet and/or outlet with rock or other suitable material where needed.
4. Prevent erosion of boat ramps and the affected stream bank through proper placement (so as to not catch the stream current) and hardening (riprap or erosion resistant woody vegetation).
5. Maintain a 1-foot minimum cover for culverts 18-36 inches in diameter, and a cover of one-third diameter for larger culverts to prevent crushing by traffic.