



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

Region 2 Headquarters
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804-3101
Phone 406-542-5500

April 20, 2012

Dear Interested Parties:

Enclosed, you will find for your review the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposal to purchase 23.69 acres of land, including a building that houses a visitor center, museum, artifacts, and offices at Travelers' Rest State Park (TRSP) in Lolo, Missoula County. FWP also proposes to expand the trail system on existing TRSP lands and those included in this acquisition.

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 the Region 2 FWP Headquarters or viewed on FWP's Internet website at <http://fwp.mt.gov> ("Public Notices" under "News").

Comments on this draft EA must be received by FWP no later than 5:00 pm on May 21, 2012. Comments should be mailed to Loren Flynn, Travelers' Rest State Park, PO Box 995, Lolo, MT 59847 or emailed to LFlynn2@mt.gov. If you have questions, please phone Flynn at (406) 273-4253.

As part of the decision making process under MEPA, I plan to issue the Decision Notice for this EA by June 1. Based on the outcome of the Decision Notice, this project proposal would be presented to the FWP Commission for final action. Approval will also be needed from the Montana Board of Land Commissioners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lee Bastian". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lee Bastian
Regional Park Manager

Enclosure: Draft EA for Travelers' Rest State Park—Proposed Land Acquisition and Trail Development

DRAFT Environmental Assessment
Proposed Land Acquisition and Trail Development--
Travelers' Rest State Park

April 20, 2012



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Appendix A. TRSP Map

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1.0 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1.1. Proposed Action and Need

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) proposes to purchase via fee title a 23.69-acre, three-parcel addition to Travelers' Rest State Park (hereafter, TRSP, the Park, or Travelers' Rest) located near the town of Lolo, Montana from Bill and Ramona Holt (Figure 1). Included in the acquisition would be the park visitor center, museum and administrative office building, which are currently leased from the Holts. The community of Lolo is in Missoula County, about 8 miles south of Missoula. Travelers' Rest is located south of US Highway 12, just west of its junction with US Highway 93.



Figure 1. Outlined in red are the Travelers' Rest State Park parcels proposed to be acquired by FWP. The blue shaded areas are the existing lands owned by FWP.

If the acquisition is completed, FWP would also plan to expand the trail system within the park to connect to Lolo neighborhoods and existing nonmotorized trails within the community (Figure 2). Trails would be constructed with gravel, no more than 5 feet in width and designed to meet accessibility (Americans with Disabilities or ADA) standards. Where cultural resources could be impacted by ground disturbance, trail construction would involve placing a barrier on top of the existing surface, then adding and compacting gravel to complete the surface.

Travelers' Rest State Park was established in 2001 with a donation of 15 acres of land from The Conservation Fund. Additional acquisitions in 2002, 2004 and 2005 have increased the size of

the park to approximately 41 acres. FWP also holds a 10-acre conservation easement on one of the parcels (Parcel 3) of this proposed acquisition.

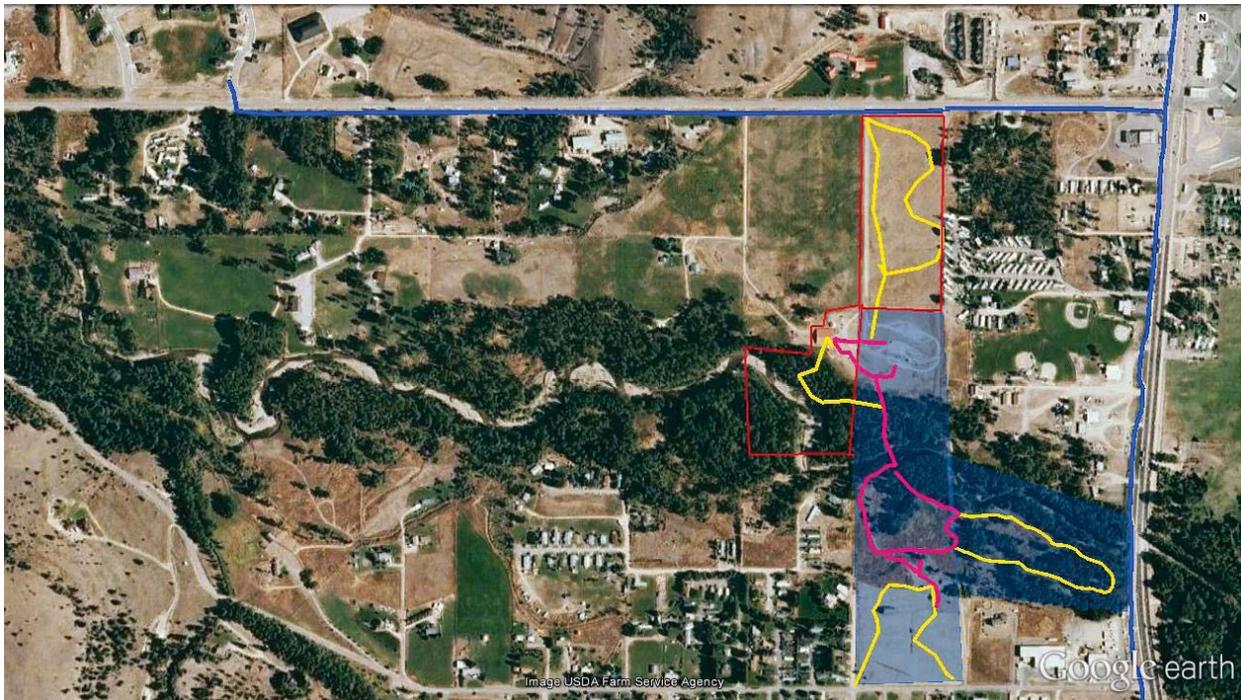


Figure 2. Proposed trail routes with Travelers' Rest State Park (TRSP). The pink lines indicate existing TRSP trails. Blue lines mark the nonmotorized trails following US Highway 93 east of TRSP and US Highway 12 north of TRSP. Yellow lines are proposed future trails within TRSP.

In 2001 and 2002, a unique research project identified and uncovered evidence of the use of the site by the Lewis and Clark Expedition during their stays here in 1805 and 1806. Based on this evidence, the Department of Interior relocated the Travelers' Rest National Historic Landmark (NHL) boundary to State Park lands and some private land on the south side of Lolo Creek.

The proposed acquisition includes the Holt Museum and Visitor Center at Travelers' Rest State Park, which is currently leased by FWP and houses exhibits related to the history of the area as well as the administrative offices for Travelers' Rest, Fort Owen and Painted Rocks State Parks.

This project would not only add the visitor center and museum to state ownership, but the additional lands would protect important riparian habitat along Lolo Creek; provide important and desired recreational access to the Lolo and western Montana community; and provide the opportunity to connect neighborhoods in the community as well as link existing nonmotorized recreational trails along both US Highways. The three parcels are (see Appendix A):

- Parcel 1, approximately 11 acres of open grazing land is between the existing park boundary and US Highway 12. The park entrance road passes through this parcel via a road easement granted to FWP by the Holts;

- Parcel 2 includes the visitor center and museum and affiliated parking lot. This is approximately 2.5 acres;
- Parcel 3 is south of Parcel 2 and comprised primarily of riparian lands along Lolo Creek. This parcel is approximately 10 acres.

Threats to these parcels include the potential for development of residential homes and/or commercial businesses in Parcels 1 and 2 because of their close proximity to Lolo and the main travel corridors of the highways.

The proposed action helps meet many of the objectives of the 2003 TRSP Management Direction (see Appendix B), including:

1. Providing for a series of paths (and associated educational materials) to illustrate natural ecosystems.
2. More land for recreational access and opportunity.
3. Fish and wildlife habitat protection.
4. Access to existing nonmotorized trails.
5. Buffer to the historic site.

1.2 Objectives of the Proposed Action

- Provide lasting public access to open and riparian lands;
- Create the ability to connect existing community nonmotorized trail systems through the park;
- Expand the trail system within the park to provide additional recreational access and educational opportunities to the community;
- Secure ownership of the park visitor center, museum and offices;
- Permanently protect riparian and wildlife habitat; and
- Preserve the park entrance from development.

1.3. Location

The Travelers' Rest acquisition parcels are located within the community of Lolo, approximately 8 miles south of Missoula, in Missoula County, Montana (Figure 1).

Legal Descriptions:

T12N, R20W, Sec. 34. Tract 3A-1 in E2 and Plat C2, Parcel 001 in NE ¼

1.4 Relevant Plans

Travelers' Rest State Park Management Direction (2003) identifies the plans to develop and create Travelers' Rest State Park.

Lolo Regional Plan serves as a planning guide for local officials and citizens, which was adopted in 2002 and amended in 2010. Missoula County is currently reviewing the document based on stakeholders' concerns regarding growth in the planning area.

Missoula County Parks and Conservation Lands Plan is meant to guide citizens, the County Park Board, and the Board of County Commissioners in their work to improve and maintain park lands within Missoula County (1997).¹

1.5 Authority and Responsibility

FWP has the authority to purchase lands that are suitable for game, bird, fish or fur-bearing animal restoration, propagation or protection; for public hunting, fishing, or trapping areas; and for state parks and outdoor recreation per Montana state statute § 87-1-209, Montana Code Annotated (MCA).

FWP is also required to deposit 20% of the purchase price, capped at \$300,000/acquisition, for properties it acquires (§§ 87-1-209 and 23-1-127(2), MCA). Such an account would be used for weed maintenance, fence installation or repair of existing fences, garbage removal, implementation of safety and health measures required by law to protect the public, erosion control, streambank stabilization, erection of barriers to preserve riparian vegetation and habitat, and planting of native trees, grasses, and shrubs for habitat stabilization. Such maintenance activities should be consistent with the Good Neighbor Policy (23-1-126 MCA).

2.0 ALTERNATIVES

2.1. Alternative A--Proposed Action: FWP would purchase three parcels totaling 23.69 acres and the visitor center and museum and would expand the park trail system

FWP proposes to acquire via fee title, approximately 24 acres in Lolo, including visitor center and museum for the Park and an extensive collection of artifacts and exhibits related to the history of the area. FWP would provide \$300,000 towards the expected \$700,000 purchase price.

The acquisition would be funded from four sources: Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF); the Missoula County Open Space Bond Fund; a private, community fundraising campaign; and a generous and significant sale discount from the landowners.

FWP would provide \$300,000 in federal LWCF funds for the project. The LWCF program provides matching grants to States and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The program is intended to create and maintain a nationwide legacy of high quality recreation areas and facilities and to stimulate non-federal investments in the protection and maintenance of recreation resources across the United States.

The Missoula Board of County Commissioners has approved funding of up to 30% of the appraised value of the land not to exceed \$300,000 for this project. An appraisal would be completed in the spring of 2012. The Missoula Open Space Bond Fund was established by the

¹ The Missoula County Park Board has recommended that the Missoula County Commissioners adopt a new *Missoula County Parks and Trails Plan*. Action on that plan is expected in the spring of 2012. For Lolo the Draft Plan states “The most fruitful community trail projects would be...explore connections within the community such as from Mormon Creek Road to existing trail on Highway 93 and Travelers’ Rest State Park.”

voters of Missoula County in November, 2006. This program designated \$10 million (divided equally between the City of Missoula and Missoula County) to implement the purposes of the bond. Bond funds are used to preserve fish and wildlife habitat, protect agricultural lands, and provide recreational access to Missoula County residents. Because the bond funds must be used for preserving open space and recreational access, a deed restriction would be added at closing. This deed restriction would acknowledge that FWP would manage the land consistent with bond purposes.

The remaining estimated \$100,000 would come from other sources, primarily a community fundraising effort spearheaded by the Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association (TRPHA). TRPHA is the non-profit partner of TRSP, and the organization has been integral to the preservation and development of the Park.

The Holt family would complete the transaction by donating the remaining value of the land and building, as well as the Holt collection of artifacts and exhibits in the museum. The value of the land, building and collection is estimated at \$1.5 - \$2 million. Therefore, the Holts' contribution towards FWP ownership of the land would be in the range of \$1 million.

If the land is acquired, FWP would begin to further develop the trail system within the Park, connecting neighborhoods and existing nonmotorized trails throughout the Park. This would be very important for Parcel 1. In the fall of 2011, Missoula County completed an extension of the nonmotorized trail parallel to US Highway 12, which has already contributed to a significant increase in pedestrian use along the Park entry road. For visitor safety, trail construction along the entry road would be a high priority.

FWP proposes a series of trail routes within the park to provide connection to neighborhoods and other trails, as well as create trail loops within and outside the park boundary. It is not expected that all trails would be constructed in the near future, but priorities would be established to address the trails as funding and other opportunities become available. The first priority would be to connect the park to the Highway 12 trail (Figure 2).

Challenges for FWP related to the proposed acquisition include:

- Long-range operation and maintenance of the parcels and buildings;
- ensuring adequate levels of funding for trail development and access; and
- enforcement of FWP rules throughout the parcels for protecting public safety, park facilities, and resource values.

Anticipated immediate expenses include the installation of appropriate signage (FWP identification, public use rules and regulations, etc.), ongoing noxious weed management, fence removal, and trail construction.

2.2 Alternative B--No Action: FWP would not purchase three Travelers' Rest State Park parcels and the visitor center/museum

Under the No Action Alternative, FWP would not purchase the three parcels, including the visitor center and museum building from the Holts. It is assumed that the Holts would look for

other buyers for the parcels, with an eye to develop Parcel 1, most of which has been identified as suitable for 4 dwellings per acre by the Lolo Regional Plan. It is also quite possible that without the long-term commitment that the Holts may look to sell or lease the visitor center and museum to an interested commercial interest, thereby leaving TRSP without the ability to provide essential services to the public or office space for park employees. This loss of the visitor center and museum could mean that staff would need to be re-assigned to alternative work stations. This could leave the park open to increased vandalism on existing lands. Or, FWP would need to request funding for a visitor center from which to manage this National Historic Landmark.

Additionally, the 10 acres of riparian land would not be as easily accessible to the public for fishing or other recreational access, and the community would not have the expanded trails proposed in this project.

2.3 Alternative Considered but Eliminated from Further Analysis--Conservation Easement

This alternative was not investigated since the Holts are only interested in selling the parcels.

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENT CONSEQUENCES

3.1 LAND USE

Parcel 1 has been used for agricultural purposes for at least the last century. Currently, this land is grazed on a rotating basis by the Holts. The land is irrigated, and the associated water rights would be transferred to FWP if it obtains the land.

Until 2008, Parcel 2 was also used primarily for agricultural purposes, associated with a small house located adjacent to the subject property. In 2008, the Holts began an expansion of a building on the property that eventually grew to be the visitor center and museum currently leased by FWP.

Parcel 3 is part of the Lolo Creek riparian system and is largely intact as such with a multi-tiered understory and a healthy cottonwood forest over-story.

Proposed Action: Under FWP ownership, Parcel 1 would remain as open space and would be managed for light recreational use (hiking, wildlife viewing, etc.) as part of TRSP. A trail would be constructed along the entry road to connect the park to the Highway 12 pedestrian trail. Long-term plans may include a more extensive trail system through this parcel (with associated interpretation) and a possible native prairie restoration project. With the deed restriction in place, development beyond trails and signage would be prohibited.

FWP would manage Parcel 2 in conjunction with the visitor center and museum. This would allow for parking, picnic areas, signage and park information. The visitor center and museum would continue operations consistent with current management, providing park information to visitors, a space for interpretive and educational programs, and community events. Additionally,

existing native plant beds established in 2010 could be used as a seed source for future restoration efforts at Travelers' Rest.

Parcel 3 would be managed for its high value as fish and wildlife habitat. Eventually a small trail could be constructed through the parcel to allow for more recreational access to the stream, wildlife viewing, and natural history education. A conservation easement was donated to FWP by the Holts in 2005. That easement prohibits any development other than trails and associated signage. FWP expects to transfer the conservation easement to the Five Valleys Land Trust prior to closing.

A search of the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology Abandoned and Inactive Mines database for Missoula County did not identify any old hard rock mines (gold, silver, etc.) within any of the parcels. All mineral interests attached to the parcels would be transferred to FWP.

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) water rights database identifies 2.5 cfs as part of the larger 40-acre parcel from which FWP would acquire its 23.69 acres. FWP would receive a proportionate share of these rights at acquisition.

Any existing road easements attached to the parcels would transfer to FWP.

No Action: Under the No Action Alternative, FWP would not acquire the land. The Holts would be free to explore other land use options, including developing the property or seeking another buyer who may develop the property for residential or commercial purposes.

3.2 Aesthetics and Recreation Opportunities

Although Travelers' Rest is a cultural park, its location on Lolo Creek, within the community of Lolo and situated along the commuter corridor connecting Missoula with the Bitterroot Valley has meant that the fastest growing segment of visitation is recreational use by local residents. Acquisition of these parcels would allow FWP to better provide and manage this use.

Historically, all the parcels have been in open space, albeit in private ownership. As Lolo has grown over the years many of the open lands contiguous to the community have been developed, leaving a patchwork of ownership with little recreational access to Lolo Creek or other public lands.

There is little public access to Lolo Creek between Lolo Creek Campground and the confluence with the Bitterroot River (approximately 15 miles). Access to the rich fishery of Lolo Creek is a need for the community and the many visitors to the area.

Another growing segment of TRSP users are local residents who use the existing trail to walk or bike, either for exercise and/or to view the wildlife that inhabits the park. While there are many such opportunities in the greater Missoula area, there are few places in Lolo where residents can access natural areas easily.

Another community need is an alternative route to Lolo School for children who reside in the neighborhoods south of Travelers' Rest. Currently many of those children use Mormon Creek Road, which lacks a shoulder and is heavily traveled by motor vehicles.

Finally, schoolchildren from throughout the region would benefit from the increased education opportunities. Working in cooperation with TRPHA, more than 2,000 students from approximately 20 communities take part in place-based education at Travelers' Rest each year. The addition of these parcels would not only secure a year-round weatherproof facility for additional programs, but the lands in this proposal provide rich opportunities to increase the program offerings that are focused on Lewis and Clark history, Native American history of the area and natural history.

Proposed Action: With acquisition of these parcels, FWP would further meet the plans and ideals developed in the early phases of park planning and described in the Travelers Rest State Park Management Direction (Appendix B).

Parcel 1 would allow for trail linkages to existing trails and would connect communities, including providing a safe alternative route to Lolo School and the main part of town for those who live in the Mormon Creek Road area south of the park. Construction of a trail parallel to the entry road through this parcel would be a high priority for FWP if the acquisition is completed.

Parcel 3 protects high-value riparian area that is important to the Lolo Creek watershed. In addition to mink, beaver, river otter, muskrat, moose, white-tailed and mule deer, mountain lion, black bear, fox, coyote and bobcat, more than 125 species of birds have been documented on site. While protecting the cottonwood forest, this parcel would also greatly increase the recreational access at the park. When combined with other FWP lands at the park, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of Lolo Creek frontage would be accessible to the public for fishing and recreating (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Lolo Creek in the proposed acquisition area (Parcel 3) for Travelers' Rest State Park.

The proposed acquisitions are expected to benefit a large number of visitors to the park, due to its location within the community. With visitation more than 20,000 per year and increasing, FWP anticipates addition of these parcels would encourage more nearby residents to use the park for recreation.

FWP would continue with the management of the parcels for open year-round nonmotorized recreation appropriate at a cultural site. Firewood cutting, off-road motorized use, horse riding, hunting and camping would be prohibited.

The purchase of Parcels 1 and 2 would protect them from potential commercial and/or residential development and would ensure the park entrance would maintain the open character of the park. The acquisition of the parcels by FWP would also provide buffer zones between developed areas and wildlands for the benefit of wildlife species.

With the location of the park in an urban area and limited resources, there would be challenges associated with managing recreation on the property. These challenges could be related to: public safety, law enforcement coverage, vandalism, maintenance, noxious weed management, and resource protection. FWP has a year-round site manager based at the park, as well as seasonal employees and a strong cadre of volunteers who provide everything from visitor information to park maintenance.

Recreation would continue to be managed in accordance with applicable FWP rules and regulations, including the Parks Biennial Fee Rule, Commercial Use Administrative Rules, and Commercial Use Permit Fee Rule. FWP would install appropriate boundary, entry and regulation signage, and additional site information would be available via brochures and FWP's Montana State Parks website (<http://stateparks.mt.gov>) to inform the public of the recreational opportunities and activities within the park.

No Action: If FWP decides not to purchase the parcels, the Holts would possibly search for other buyers. Public recreational opportunities afforded by these properties would likely be lost.

3.3 Vegetation

Parcels 1 and 2 are largely comprised of introduced short grasses commonly found on agricultural land in west-central Montana. Parcel 3 is a functioning cottonwood riparian area. The dominant overstory is black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*), with much understory of alder (*Alnus spp.*), common snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), woods rose (*Rosa woodsii*), willow (*Salix spp.*), and red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*). The elevation of the parcels is approximately 3200 feet throughout.

Invasive weed species are present in limited areas within all the parcels. Exotic weed species include spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*), common hound's-tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*), and Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*).

Proposed Action: FWP acquisition of the proposed parcels for Travelers' Rest would preserve the existing vegetation within the riparian area of Parcel 3 and provide opportunity for future grassland restoration activities on Parcels 1 and 2.

If FWP were to acquire these parcels, FWP would manage noxious weeds in accordance with the FWP's Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan (2008) and the FWP Region 2 Parks Division Weed Management Implementation Plan (2010). In accordance with § 7-22-215, MCA, FWP is required to have the property inspected and to develop a site-specific noxious weed management plan agreement in cooperation with the local weed district. Any isolated patches of invading species would be eradicated by the most efficient and effective means (e.g., hand-pulling, digging and/or herbicide spot treatment), depending on weed species and site limitations. FWP's priority for herbicide control of noxious weeds on the subject lands would be to spray roadsides and previously disturbed areas. Roadsides and trail edges would be inspected annually for the purpose of detecting and eradicating any new weed introductions before infestations become established. As an additional preventive measure, FWP would confine motorized traffic to the existing road system and would otherwise avoid disturbance of the soil surface.

No Action: If the Holts retained ownership of the parcels, little would change for now. Parcels 1 and 2 would continue to be used for agricultural purposes in the short-term. If the parcels were sold, the exact level of this risk is unknown since the future impacts to resources and public access would be dependent on the desires of the property's new owner(s). It is difficult to predict how new ownership would affect existing vegetation and wildlife habitat resources, since actual landowner activities are unknown. There is the potential for residential and/or commercial development, which could negatively impact habitat for wildlife species and the open space feel of the park.

3.4 Wildlife Species

Despite the location in the urban interface with the Lolo community, Travelers' Rest State Park and the proposed acquisition parcels provide habitat for a wide diversity of species. To date, more than 125 species of birds have been documented on site, most of them in the cottonwood riparian area along Lolo Creek. Mule and white-tailed deer frequent the proposed acquisition, as well as an occasional moose and elk.

There is considerable evidence of furbearers and other mammals throughout the Park and proposed parcels. River otter, mink, muskrat, bobcat, black bear, mountain lion, fox and coyote have been observed or known to use the area on a regular basis.

In general, riparian areas are critical habitat for many bird species. Riparian areas and wetlands comprise approximately 4% of Montana's land mass, yet support more than 80% of all bird species found in the state. The riparian area along Lolo Creek in the proposed acquisition area provides a rich source of food and cover for the diversity of bird species found here. It also provides a critical link to the Bitterroot River Important Bird Area (IBA), which borders the park property to the southeast.

Table 1 lists Montana Species of Concern (SOC) and Threatened/Endangered species (US Fish and Wildlife Service status under the Endangered Species Act) that have been observed on the property or are predicted to occur within the vicinity².

Table 1. Montana Species of Concern (SOC) and Threatened/Endangered Species observed or expect to occur on the lands proposed for acquisition by FWP.

Common name <i>Species</i>	Status*	Habitat	Status in Vicinity of Parcels
<u>Species of Concern</u>			
Bull Trout <i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>	Threatened, SOC, Tier 1	Mountain streams, rivers, and lakes	Uses Lolo Creek in Parcel #3 as a migratory corridor.
Westslope Cutthroat Trout <i>(Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi)</i>	Sensitive, SOC, Tier 1	Coldwater streams	Uses Lolo Creek in Parcel #3 as a migratory corridor.
Fisher <i>(Martes pennant)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Mixed conifer forest	The area has low quality fisher habitat.
Hoary Bat <i>(Lasiurus cinereus)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Conifer and riparian forests	Suitable habitat, no surveys have been done to document presence/absence.
Fringed Myotis <i>(Myotis thysanodes)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Riparian and dry mixed conifer forests	Suitable habitat, no surveys have been done to document presence/absence.
Bald Eagle <i>(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)</i>	Delisted, SOC, Tier 1	Riparian forests	Birds present and use all of the parcels for foraging
Clark's Nutcracker <i>(Nucifraga Columbiana)</i>	SOC, Tier 3	Conifer forests	Birds present & probably use all of the parcels.
Flammulated Owl <i>(Otus flammeolus)</i>	SOC, Tier 1	Low-mid elevation conifer forests with large trees	Suitable habitat, but not yet verified on site.
Great Blue Heron <i>(Ardea Herodias)</i>	SOC, Tier 3	Riparian woodlands	Birds present and use Parcel #3 frequently for foraging.
Northern Goshawk <i>(Accipiter gentilis)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Mixed conifer forests	Birds present and use all of the parcels.
Pileated Woodpecker <i>(Dryocopus pileatus)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Moist conifer forests	Birds present and use Parcel #3 extensively.
Lewis's Woodpecker <i>(Melanerpes lewis)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Riparian forest	Birds present and documented breeding in Parcel #3.
Clark's Nutcracker <i>(Nucifraga Columbiana)</i>	SOC, Tier 3	Conifer forest	Birds observed on site.
Veery <i>(Catharus fuscescens)</i>	SOC, Tier 2-3	Riparian forests, shrubby habitats	Birds present, primarily in Parcel #3.
Golden Eagle <i>(Aquila chrysaetos)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Grasslands	Birds present and use all of the parcels for foraging.
Cassin's Finch <i>(Carpodacus cassinii)</i>	SOC, Tier 3	Drier conifer forest	Birds observed on site.
Bobolink	SOC, Tier 3	Moist grasslands	Suitable habitat, but not yet verified

² Montana Natural Heritage database. Available <http://mtnhp.org/SpeciesOfConcern/?AorP=a>. Accessed 22 February 2012.

Common name Species	Status*	Habitat	Status in Vicinity of Parcels
<i>(Dolichonyx oryzivorus)</i>			on site.
Harlequin Duck <i>(Histrionicus histrionicus)</i>	SOC, Tier 1	Mountain streams	Birds verified using Parcel #3.
Brown Creeper <i>(Certhia Americana)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Mixed conifer forests	Birds verified using Parcel #3.
Western Skink <i>(Eumeces skiltonianus)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Rock outcrops	Suitable habitat, not verified.
<u>Potential Species of Concern</u>			
Barrow's Goldeneye <i>(Bucephala islandica)</i>	PSOC, Tier 3	Wetlands	Documented to occur in the area during migration.
An Ice Crawler <i>(Grylloblatta campodeiformis)</i>	PSOC		Unknown due to its nocturnal habits and activity at temperatures just above freezing.

*Tier 1 status identifies those species in greatest conservation need. PSOC are Potential SOC.

Proposed Action: FWP acquisition of the Travelers' Rest State Park parcels would protect riparian resources, which are important migratory corridors for songbirds, small mammals, amphibians and aquatic species. Preserving these parcels would also provide a small wildlife corridor connecting the Carlton Ridge area to the south and the Blue Mountain area to the north.

Parcel 1 includes highly desirable lands for residential or commercial development. The location along Highway 12 and just ¼-mile west of Highway 93 would likely make this land more desirable as time goes by.

FWP would manage these parcels for nonmotorized recreation opportunities appropriate in cultural parks. No impacts are expected to wildlife species if the proposed action is approved.

No Action: If no action were taken by FWP, the Holts may look to sell or develop the land in Parcels 1 and 2.

If the parcels were sold to a buyer for development, then the subject lands would be put at greater long-term risk of residential and/or commercial development and important local habitat for a host of game and nongame wildlife species might be impacted. Furthermore, easy public access to the park and the connectivity of neighborhoods could be lost. Exact level of risk of loss of habitat and public access are unknown, since they are dependent on the desires of the new property owner(s).

3.5 Fisheries Species and Water Resources

Lolo Creek originates near Lolo Pass on the Montana/Idaho border and flows 37 miles east to its confluence with the Bitterroot River. The Lolo Creek watershed drains 265,000 acres and is a main tributary to the Bitterroot River.

Historically, the stream hosted a prolific fishery of westslope cutthroat and bull trout. Although those populations have declined, Lolo Creek remains as important habitat for these species. This lower section of Lolo Creek is important migratory habitat for these species of concern, connecting the remnant populations of westslope cutthroat and bull trout to the Bitterroot River.



Figure 4. Lolo Creek in the proposed acquisition area (Parcel 3) for Travelers' Rest State Park

Floodplain: Nearly the entirety of Parcel 3 is identified as floodplain by US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain map database.

Water Rights: A search of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) water rights database identified 2.5 cfs as part of the larger 40-acre parcel from which FWP would acquire its 23.69 acres. FWP would receive a proportionate share of these rights at acquisition.

Proposed Action: FWP acquisition of Parcel 3 would add more than 900 feet of Lolo Creek frontage to Park lands, bringing the total creek frontage in the park to approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. The acquisition would assist in stream preservation and restoration efforts for the Lolo Creek and Bitterroot River watersheds.

In recent years, millions of dollars of public and private funds have been used to acquire former Plum Creek Timber Company lands in the upper Lolo Creek drainage. A key part of the success of the investments is to connect the migratory fish routes to the Bitterroot River, and the acquisition of Parcel 3 can be an important component in that success.

The project would have no negative impacts on fisheries habitat, fish passage or aquatic species.

No Action Alternative: If FWP decides not to purchase the parcels, it is unknown how fisheries and water resources (riparian areas) would be affected by future ownership or management.

3.6 Soils

The soils through most of the existing park properties, as well as the parcels proposed for acquisition, have been associated with the Lolo Creek bottom at some time in the past few centuries.

A search of the Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey found that most of Parcels 1 and 2 are categorized as Moiese gravelly loam, a well-drained soil. The soils in Parcel 3 are identified as Xerofluvents, a soil found in frequently flooded areas such as the riparian area along Lolo Creek.

The soils in the existing park lands are identified as Perma gravelly loam, a somewhat excessively drained soil, on the upper terrace, and as Riverrun-Gash complex soils on the lower terrace south of Lolo Creek. These soils are also fairly well drained.

Proposed Action: FWP acquisition of these lands would not be expected to have any significant impact on the soils. Future trail development could have minor impact to the soils, although due to the well-drained nature of the soils it is likely that those impacts would be minimal. Additionally, any trail construction in archeologically sensitive areas would be done with little or no ground disturbance, which would also protect the soils.

No Action Alternative: If FWP does not purchase the parcels, it is unknown how soils would be affected by future ownership or management.

3.7 Air Quality

Proposed Action: FWP acquisition of these lands would have no long-term impact on existing or future air quality in the surrounding area. Future trail development could have temporary and minimal impact to air quality during trail construction.

No Action Alternative: If FWP does not purchase the parcels, it is unknown how air quality would be affected by future ownership or management.

3.8 Noise and Electrical Effects

Proposed Action: FWP acquisition of these lands would not be expected to have negative impact on existing or future noise levels in the surrounding area. All vehicles would be

restricted to existing roads within the park. Existing utility easements would not be impacted by this acquisition.

No Action Alternative: If FWP does not purchase the parcels, it is unknown how noise would be affected by future ownership or management, but future development of Parcel 1 could lead to increased noise levels within the community.

3.9 Cultural and Historic Resources

FWP believes the entire human history of western Montana could be embodied at Travelers' Rest State Park.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition arrived on the banks of Lolo Creek (named "Travellers Rest" by Meriwether Lewis) on September 9, 1805. Here they camped before turning west on September 11, following an ancient trail over the Bitterroot Mountains in the most perilous part of their journey. The Expedition returned to Travelers' Rest on June 30, 1806 and stayed until July 3. On that day, the two leaders split the party in order to explore more of present-day Montana, remaining apart for nearly six weeks before reuniting near the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers.

A unique archeological research project in 2001-2002 verified the location of the Lewis and Clark Expedition campsite of September 9-11, 1805 and June 30-July 3, 1806. To date, this is the only scientifically confirmed Lewis and Clark campsite in the United States. The US Department of Interior moved the boundaries of the Travelers' Rest National Historic Landmark to the Park in 2006.

Prior to the arrival of Euro-Americans, however, the area around present-day Lolo was the homeland of the Bitterroot Salish people. Known in their culture as Tmsm, à (No Salmon), the area along Lolo Creek was an important gathering spot for the exchange of commerce and culture for the Salish and their allies, the Pend d'Oreille, the Nez Perce and others.

The Hellgate Treaty of 1855 included a provision that all lands "above the Loo-lo Fork" (south of Lolo Creek) be examined and perhaps set aside as a reservation for the Salish tribe. Although no such survey was completed, the Federal government opened the Bitterroot Valley to settlement. Many Salish peacefully remained in the valley until agricultural settlement precluded their traditional lifestyle. The last main band of Salish left the ancestral homelands of the Bitterroot Valley in 1891.

In 1854, Captain John Mullan traveled to what was called the "Lou Lou Fork" (Lolo Creek) making a cursory exploration of the Lolo Trail ("a good road is found for twenty miles up the stream, partly through prairie and open forest"). Gustav Sohon, an artist with Mullan's party, created a sketch of the area that captures the first known image of what is today Lolo and Travelers' Rest (Figure 5).



Figure 5 *Entrance to the Bitterroot Mountains by the Lou Lou Fork* by Gustav Sohn. Travelers' Rest is along the low line of hills to the right.

The earliest homesteads in the area were near present day Travelers' Rest in the 1880s. A large barn on the park grounds dates to the mid 1920s, a rustic reminder of Montana's agricultural roots.

FWP, in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), TRPHA, the Travelers' Rest Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, and the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes developed a Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) in 2006. Any lands added to the park would be managed in accordance with the CRMP.

Proposed Action: FWP's proposed acquisition would have a positive effect on cultural and historical resources by securing and managing them in public ownership. Under the Montana Antiquities Act (§ 22-3-433, MCA), all state agencies are required to consult with the SHPO on the identification and location of heritage properties on lands owned by the state, which may be adversely impacted by a proposed action or development project. This acquisition would provide a critical buffer to the National Historic Landmark properties, helping to ensure their preservation.

No Action: If the parcels were sold to a private party, it is unknown if or at what level historic sites would be affected. However, residential and/or commercial development could lead to degradation of these important resources.

3.10 Community and Taxes

All of these parcels are located within the unincorporated community of Lolo. Since Lolo is unincorporated, an estimation of population of the immediate area is difficult to define, but the population of the Lolo/Woodman area is estimated to be 3,800 people.

A high percentage of Lolo residents commute to Missoula for work, although agriculture, education, timber and service industries also provide local employment.

Property taxes assessed on the parcels total \$2,168 per year, based on Missoula County's current tax assessment.

Proposed Action: The proposed acquisition of the parcels is not expected to have any negative affects to the community of Lolo or other western Montana communities. With visitation at more than 20,000 annually and rising, Travelers' Rest State Park provides an economic stimulus for the Lolo community. The acquisition of these parcels would be expected to increase the opportunity for economic benefit for the community.

The proposed acquisition by FWP would also address several needs identified by the 2002 Lolo Regional Plan:

- "the community needs more parks for active recreation, conservation and historic preservation and interpretation"
- "the public has identified access to Lolo Creek and the Bitterroot River for fishing and recreation opportunities as desired goals"
- "Public acquisition of additional parklands could be considered in areas that are in need of recreation sites and cultural preservation, such as the Travelers' Rest National Historic Landmark"
- "Include areas of cultural resource and linear connections into a parks system through land acquisition, lease, donation, or in partnership with federal and state agencies, private individuals or organizations"
- "Establish linear parkways that connect important cultural and natural resources"

Purchase of these parcels by FWP would essentially eliminate future residential or commercial development of the property and potential revenues to the county that would have resulted. However, preclusion of residential and/or commercial development would also save the county from having to provide services (schools, infrastructure such as roads and maintenance, etc.) to newly developed areas.

The actual amount of property taxes paid to the County is not expected to change. FWP is required by state law to make tax payments to counties equal to the amount that a private landowner would be required to pay per § 87-1-603, MCA.

No Action: If the property were to remain under current use for agriculture, taxes paid to the County would likely remain the same as they are now. If the parcels were sold and used for

residential and/or commercial development, the amount of tax revenue paid to the County could be higher than the current level but the exact amount of change is difficult to predict at this time and would depend on plans/management by potential future landowner

3.11 Cumulative Impacts

Proposed Action: The proposed purchase would contribute to the long-term preservation of the Travelers' Rest National Historic Landmark, while increasing recreational opportunities for the residents of Lolo and west-central Montana. The addition of the visitor center and museum would establish Travelers' Rest State Park as a year-round destination for area residents and visitors to the area, increasing park visitation, interpretive programming and economic opportunity for the unincorporated community.

The long-term protection of the riparian area along Lolo Creek would assist in any future fisheries habitat restoration activities initiated by FWP or other partners and cooperators to improve habitat quality for native trout populations, as well as other aquatic and terrestrial species.

With proposed trail expansion within the park, Lolo neighborhoods would be better connected, providing alternate and safer routes to Lolo School and area residents with a quality outdoor recreational experience.

Additionally, State Parks in Montana provide significant economic benefits to local communities, and Travelers' Rest is no different. A survey of state park visitors in 2010 found that visitors to all Montana State Parks contributed \$289 million annually to Montana's economy, with nonresident spending creating 1,600 jobs statewide. In FWP Region 2, nonresidents spent more than \$22 million in 2010 and created nearly 300 jobs.

No Action: The implementation of the No Action alternative would eliminate these parcels from the broader development plans for Travelers' Rest State Park and jeopardize future preservation efforts for the riparian area or native grassland restoration projects. It may also require FWP to eventually construct a new visitor center at the park. The No Action alternative would impact public access to Lolo Creek and forego linking the park to existing nonmotorized trails in the community.

If the parcels were sold to private buyers, their existing natural resource values could be impacted if the parcels were developed for residences and/or businesses. Wildlife movement may change to navigate around newly developed sites.

Public access into the parcels and on to adjoining public lands could be allowed, altered or prohibited. Predicting potential long-term changes to the parcels' management under private ownership is not possible.

4.0 RESOURCE ISSUES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS

The Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) provides for the identification and elimination from detailed study of issues, which are not significant or which have been covered by a prior environmental review, narrowing the discussion of these issues to a brief explanation of why they would not have a significant effect on the physical or human environment or providing a reference to their coverage elsewhere (Administrative Rules of Montana 12.2.434(d)). While the following resources are important, FWP anticipates they would be unaffected by the proposed action or if there are any effects, those influences could be adequately mitigated, and therefore these resources were eliminated from further detailed analysis.

4.1 Risk and Health Hazards

As part of FWP's due diligence, the Department would complete a hazardous materials survey prior to the property's acquisition.

5.0 NEED FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? No. Based upon the above assessment of the Proposed Action, which has identified a limited number of minor impacts which can be mitigated, an EIS is not required and an Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of review.

6.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

6.1 Public Involvement

Planning for the preservation and development of Travelers' Rest State Park has involved many different phases of public involvement, beginning with a design charrette held in the Lolo community in 1999, a full two years before the park was established.

The Traveler's Rest State Park Management Direction (Appendix B) was the result of two years of public involvement following the original 15-acre acquisition in 2001. Additional acquisitions in 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 were all part of the public process, with the parcels in question in this current EA document identified as crucial to achieving the overall goals of the park.

Additionally, this acquisition has been vetted through the Missoula County Open Space Bond process, with presentations by FWP and Five Valleys Land Trust at Open Space Land Committee meetings on February 2 and 16, 2012. The result of those meetings was a unanimous recommendation to fund up to 30% of the appraised land value. Subsequently, the project was reviewed and approved at a public meeting by the Missoula County Board of Commissioners on March 28, 2012.

Current Environmental Assessment:

Public notification of the EA release and opportunities to comment would be by:

- A statewide press release;
- Two legal notices in each of these newspapers: *Independent Record* (Helena), *Missoulian*, and *Ravalli Republic* (Hamilton);
- Direct mailing to adjacent landowners and interested parties;
- Public notice and posting the EA on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov> (“Public Notices”).

Copies of this EA will be available for public review at FWP Headquarters in Helena, the State Library, Region 2 Headquarters in Missoula, Travelers’ Rest State Park in Lolo, and on the FWP web site.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having few and limited physical and human impacts.

6.2 Duration of Comment Period

The public comment period will extend for thirty (30) days beginning April 20, 2012. Written comments will be accepted by FWP until 5:00 p.m. on May 21, 2012 and can be mailed to the address below:

Travelers’ Rest State Park
Attn: Loren Flynn
PO Box 995
Lolo, MT 59847

or email comments to: LFlynn2@mt.gov

or phone comments to: 406-273-4253

6.3 Timeline of Events

Draft EA public comment period	April 20 to May 21, 2012
FWP Commission for final approval	June or July meeting
MT Land Board for approval	After final funding is secured from private sources

6.4 Offices/Programs Contacted or Contributing to This Document:

Missoula County Assessor Office
Montana County Office of Rural Initiatives, Missoula
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:
Lands Bureau, Helena
Legal Bureau, Helena

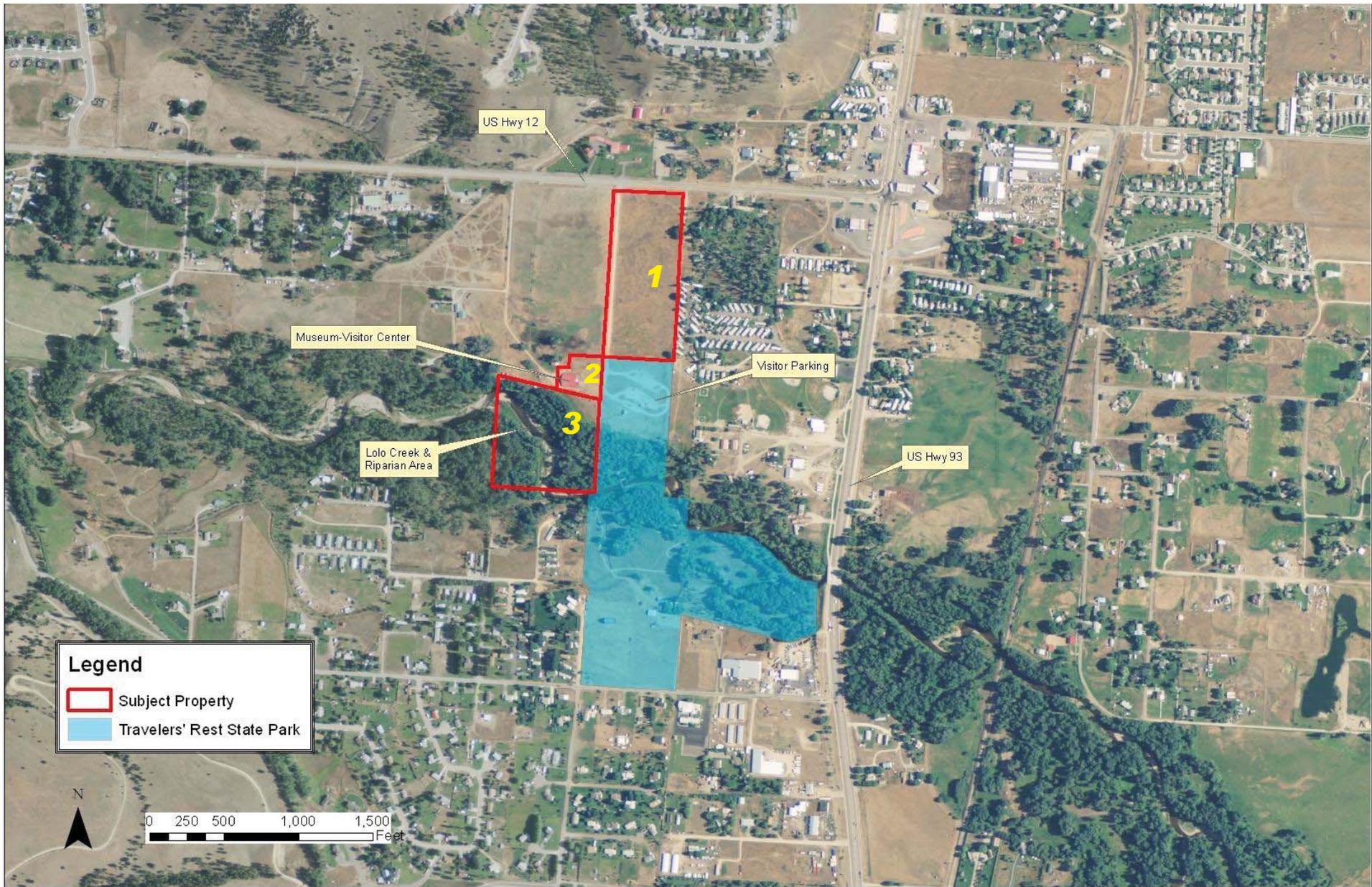
Parks Division, Helena and Missoula
Wildlife and Fisheries Division, Missoula
Montana Natural Heritage Program, Species of Concern database
Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey
US Department of Agriculture, Soil Survey Database
US Fish and Wildlife Service, Wetlands Database

7.0 EA PREPARATION

Loren Flynn, Park Manager, FWP, Lolo
Lee Bastian, Region 2 Parks Manager, FWP, Missoula
Kristi DuBois, Nongame Wildlife Biologist, FWP, Missoula
Ladd Knotek, Fisheries Biologist, Region 2 FWP, Missoula
Sara Scott, FWP Heritage Resources Specialist, Lolo
Darlene Edge, Lands Agent, FWP, Helena
Beth Shumate, FWP Trails Grant Coordinator, Helena
Jack Lynch, Legal Counsel, FWP, Helena

REFERENCES

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Appendix A. Parcels outlined in red, with yellow numbers, are the proposed acquisition Parcels 1, 2 and 3 for Travelers' Rest State Park (current lands shaded in blue), Lolo, Montana.

Appendix B. TRSP Management Direction

Travelers' Rest State Park Management Direction April 21, 2003

Historic Context

The Lolo area has been a crossroads of travel, culture, and commerce for hundreds of years. Located at the nexus of major American Indian trails, it is no surprise that the Lewis and Clark expedition was led here by a Shoshone guide in the fall of 1805. Camping along the banks of a stream they named "Travellers Rest Creek", the party spent three days in preparation for an arduous journey over the Bitterroot mountains. Enamored with the place, they returned on their eastward journey in 1806, led by a small group of Nez Perce. Again they rested, spending four days before splitting the party to explore more of what is now Montana. Because of the decisions made at Travelers' Rest camp, the location is one of the most significant along the length of the Lewis and Clark Trail. Archaeology completed in 2002 discovered physical evidence of the expedition, furthering the status of this unique and wonderful place.

Before and after these explorers stopped here, this area was used as a gathering place for many Indian tribes. The Salish, Nez Perce, and others lived, gathered, and hunted in the north part of the Bitterroot valley for millennia. It can be argued that this area has been the hub of history of western North America. Preservation of a portion of this historic location provides a unique opportunity to discuss the people, plants, and animals that make up the past, present, and future of western Montana.

The Vision

Travelers' Rest State Park will be a place that engages the imagination, the intellect and the hearts of visitors and local residents alike.

In order to attain this vision, Travelers' Rest State Park must complete the site and program development outlined in this document in order to provide an interactive, accurate, safe, and dynamic experience for the visitors. This narrative generally describes the various facilities and activities that are depicted on the Conceptual Master Plan (Appendix I), prepared by Kent Watson and Associates, Landscape Architects. The plan more or less depicts the ultimate park; however, it should be understood that the developments will be built as conditions and funding allow.

When this development is complete, visitors will access the park from U.S. Highway 12 via a road easement into the northern boundary of the park property. Well-placed highway signs will direct the visitors to the park entrance. The entrance to the access road and the park will be welcoming and attractively landscaped, using native vegetation. The 22'-wide paved access road will meander within a 60' right-of-way to the northwest corner of the park boundary. The road will not be fenced to maintain the rural and open feel that currently exists in the area. Small groups of native trees and shrubs (ponderosa pine, chokecherry, mock orange, e.g.) will be placed along the roadway to provide shade and aesthetic appeal. A pedestrian path will be constructed parallel to the road to accommodate foot and bicycle traffic. The access road will lead to the parking lot, which will also be paved. The parking lot will be a one-way loop that will provide parking for up to 75 passenger cars, six tour buses, and 10-20 recreational vehicles

App. B (continued)

at one time with additional space for overflow parking. Again, native shrubbery and trees (black cottonwood, ponderosa pine, e.g.) will be placed on the edge of the parking area to provide shade for visitors.¹ A pet area will be developed on an island in the parking area. Pets will be restricted to this area of the park.

Other visitor amenities will be developed in the area around the parking lot. Restrooms with flush toilets, drinking fountains, picnic areas, and informational and directional signage will be placed in convenient, safe, and appropriate locations.

Some visitor amenities must also be provided for visitors on the south side of the park near the administrative offices. A vault toilet, drinking fountain, a kiosk to provide interpretation and shade, a meeting room, and potentially a small visitor information center will be needed to accommodate visitors who want to spend more time on the site.

Interpretive and education programs are the backbone of the visitor experience at Travelers' Rest State Park and we will develop a comprehensive interpretive plan in the summer of 2003. Using the four identified storylines (please see Appendix II – Program Philosophy), a variety of delivery methods identified in the interpretive plan will be used to tell these stories.

- Interpretive Signs. Three to five, small wood, open-sided, covered kiosks (approximately 24' feet in diameter) will be erected between the parking lot and the riparian area.² Interpretive signs will be placed in these kiosks. Interpretive signs will also be used at the campsite overlook.
- Information Center. A larger kiosk (approximately 36' in diameter) will act as a visitor information center. This kiosk will be enclosed, and will require electricity. In this structure, visitors may ask questions, find area and park information, pay day-use fees, and purchase educational materials.
- Self-guided trails.³ A non-motorized trail will begin at the edge of the parking lot. This trail will be a minimum 6' wide to meet ADA standards and will be constructed of gravel, granite, or some aggregate material (not asphalt or concrete). The trail will pass through the curtain of cottonwoods, a physical reminder to visitors that they are passing from the present into the past. The trail will wind through the riparian area⁴, over a pedestrian bridge⁵, circle the historic campsite, and up to a bench that overlooks the campsite, before looping back to the bridge.⁶ An interpretive brochure will accompany this self-guided trail.

¹ Some of these trees should be large enough to provide some shade immediately, while others will be smaller and allowed to mature.

² As designed by the U.S. Forest Service. These kiosks will have hard surface floor (concrete or asphalt).

³ All trails in Travelers' Rest State Park will be non-motorized. Access will be restricted to foot and wheelchair travel unless specific segments of the trail provide a direct link to other non-motorized trails in the area. The width of those segments of the trail would be widened accordingly.

⁴ There are two overflow channels in this area that will need to be bridged. Each of these bridges will be less than 25 feet in length.

⁵ Like the kiosks, plans are underway to construct a bridge made of small material as designed by the U.S. Forest Service. This suspension bridge would be 120-140 feet in length and 6 feet wide to accommodate ADA standards, as well as management and emergency response requirements.

⁶ There is an existing and growing network of non-motorized trails in the Lolo and Bitterroot area. The trails at Travelers' Rest State Park should become a part of that network.

- Guided tours. Both paid and volunteer staff will provide guided tours of the site. These tours may follow the main trail, or a series of short, secondary paths where visitors may learn more about the history of this area.
- Living history and demonstration. Small areas will be cleared adjacent to the main trail, secondary paths, and near the parking lot to provide interpretive stations for presentation areas for a variety of living history performers and people who can demonstrate the skills and crafts utilized throughout time. Because some of these demonstrations may require fire or high impact activities (cooking, fire starting, dancing, e.g.), some of the areas near the parking lot will be hard surface. The plan includes a small amphitheater to be constructed on site for use with living history, demonstration, staff interpretive programs, and performing arts.
- Interpretive programs. Paid and volunteer staff will develop many interpretive programs to impart the vast history of the area. These programs will be conducted at a variety of locations, including the interpretive kiosks adjacent to the parking lot, another kiosk located near the historic overlook, or the amphitheater.
- Lectures and presentations. There are many interesting and scholarly aspects related to the history of Lewis and Clark, and the associated storylines of Travelers' Rest. Venues will be provided for presentation of these ideas to the public or to other researchers. The amphitheater, visitor information center, or administrative area can all provide space for these types of activities.
- Education programs and class field trips. Providing relevant educational resources to area schools is also a critical component of park development and sustainability. In addition to the interpretive tools described above, educational programs will be developed to meet curriculum guidelines for area schools. These programs will be presented on the site and in classroom space in the administrative area.
- A resource library. TRPHA is currently developing a resource library of materials related to the history of the area for use by staff and volunteers. Plans are to develop this library to be a resource also to visitors to the park.

The above listed tools and locations will be used to deliver the interpretive messages during the Lewis and Clark bicentennial in 2003-2006. Because of the significance of the site to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, that story, and the associated history of American Indians in the area, will always be an important component of the programming at Travelers' Rest State Park. In order to engage visitors long-term, other programs will be developed that talk about other historical aspects of the area, specifically natural history and the European settlement of the area. The foundation for these programs will be developed during the bicentennial years, with more of an emphasis placed on them in the post-bicentennial era. Some ideas for interpretation and development for these programs includes:

- A series of paths and educational materials to illustrate the natural ecosystems (riparian, grassland) on the existing park property and easements.⁷
- Educational programs focused on the ecosystems.

⁷ Additional properties may be acquired that would augment this system and link Travelers' Rest State Park to existing or future non-motorized trails.

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- A native vegetation restoration and education program, This program would be used to showcase plants native to the area, as well as discuss their importance to Lewis and Clark, Native Americans, and the European settlers.
- Technology augmented programs. i.e. A computer lab with information specific to the stories told at Travelers' Rest.
- A "Homestead Museum." This would require acquisition of the land located immediately southwest of the existing park boundary, currently owned by Mr. Ralph Kulberg, and renovation of the historic barn located on that property. Coupled with the adjacent existing acreage slated for the native vegetation program, this will provide a unique area for a variety of programming options.
- Community events. The park may eventually provide place for community picnics, reunions, and other community events.

It is also important to note that Travelers' Rest State Park provides many recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. Fishing access to Lolo Creek, bird and other wildlife viewing opportunities, and a place for quiet strolls on designated walkways are all acceptable and encouraged uses of Travelers' Rest State Park.

Park Establishment

In 2001, The Conservation Fund purchased 15 acres believed to be the heart of the historic Lewis and Clark Travelers' Rest campsite located on the outskirts of present day Lolo, Montana from the Pat and Ernie Deschamps family. The property was donated to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) and designated a State Park by the FWP Commission in March, 2001. Unable to commit the resources necessary to manage, develop, and interpret this site of national historic importance, FWP entered into a long-term management agreement (see Appendix I) with the Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association (TRPHA), passing management and financial responsibility to TRPHA. These two organizations will work collaboratively to prepare the park for significant visitation during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, but also to establish a framework that will ensure the long-term viability of the park for future generations. Additionally, TRPHA and FWP have chosen to work in concert with a variety of other organizations to create an enriching, sustainable, multi-faceted and multi-cultural experience for visitors and residents alike.

Much of the planning for Travelers' Rest State Park began before the property was in public ownership. In 1999, a design charette for the Lolo community was held to identify opportunities and obstacles facing this unincorporated community located just eight miles from one of Montana's major population centers. During this process, several opportunities (economic, cultural, aesthetic) were identified due to Lolo being the site of Travelers' Rest. There were also some obstacles and concerns identified at the same time (local infrastructure to support increased tourism, creating a sustainable visitation environment, creating historic, educational, and recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors). At that time the actual location of the Travelers' Rest campsite was suspected, but not known.

Following preliminary archaeological work, preservation of the site, and state park designation, TRPHA and FWP set out to build on the 1999 charette in creating site and program plans for the park. In June of 2002, a diverse planning team was brought together to create a vision for

development, education and interpretation. In addition to TRPHA and FWP, the team included Lolo community residents, representatives from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation (and its Travelers' Rest Chapter), the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Montana Community Development Corporation, the University of Montana, Missoula County, and members of the tourism and education community. The charge of this group was to arrive at a list of site and program recommendations to create an atmosphere at Travelers' Rest State Park that will not only promote visitation, but will also encourage park users to return.

The Opportunity

TRPHA, FWP and all the partners associated with Travelers' Rest State Park stand at the threshold of a unique opportunity. Having identified the historic campsite at the dawn of the bicentennial commemoration focuses a great deal of attention and visitation to the Lolo area. Finding physical evidence of the Lewis and Clark expedition provides immediate credibility as a significant site for visitors along the Lewis and Clark Trail.

With this credibility and enthusiasm, it is imperative that the organizations use this energy and attention to create a sustainable and dynamic operation that is a benefit to area residents and visitors while remaining financially sustainable.

This unique public/private collaboration should also continue to develop partnerships that will assist with site development, program creation, education curriculum development, and event planning. All parties involved should keep in mind that this relationship can be used as a model for similar situations in the future.

Because the very heart of the development of Travelers' Rest is a dynamic and engaging interpretive and education program, planning must also have a dynamic component while the site and programs are being developed. It is the intent of this Management Direction to act as an interim operating document until a long-range Management Plan can be developed. The long-range Management Plan will be developed as the attention from the bicentennial commemoration begins to wane. Due to the dynamic nature of this document, it should be reviewed at least annually and be updated when necessary.

Roles and Responsibilities

Travelers' Rest State Park is a part of the Montana State Park system and activities there must be consistent with any land owned by FWP and managed by the Parks Division.

FWP will provide technical assistance to TRPHA in the management of the site. This will include review of site and construction plans, review of programmatic objectives, assurance of public involvement, and environmental and cultural compliance.

FWP will also provide assistance in the form of labor, maintenance, minor supplies and equipment, when feasible from a financial and personnel standpoint. The concept of shared resources is integral to the success of the Park.

App. B (continued)

TRPHA will assume day-to-day management and operations of Travelers' Rest State Park. This responsibility will also include future site and programmatic development to meet the goals of TRPHA and FWP. TRPHA will manage the site in accordance with this document, the management agreement (Appendix I) and the statutes for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Because of this unique management arrangement, TRPHA has been able to develop additional partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and others. The continued use of these partnerships will be critical to meeting the goals established by TRPHA and FWP.

Public Involvement

Public involvement in the preservation, development and interpretation of Travelers' Rest actually began long before FWP had acquired the site and has been an ongoing part of the planning process for Travelers' Rest State Park. In April of 1999, the Society of Landscape Architects and the Missoula County Office of Planning and Grants hosted a design charrette for the community of Lolo. Over 100 people had input into this process, including community leaders, local school children, professional planners and landscape architects, and interested members of the Lolo and western Montana community. Although the broad scope of this two-day session was the future of Lolo, much of the discussion focused on the inclusion of the Travelers' Rest site (which had been identified in 1998) as a major recreational, economic, cultural, and educational resource for Lolo. The outcomes of that charette, while never coalesced into a completed document, laid the foundation for future planning when the site was acquired in March, 2001.

The second phase of significant public involvement took place during the acquisition of the 15-acre property from the Deschamps family in early 2001. The Environmental Analysis public review generated 65 responses from interested parties, all of whom were in support of the acquisition and preservation of the site, as well as public access and interpretation.

The next phase of public participation came in the spring of 2002, when FWP purchased 10 additional acres on the north side of Lolo Creek and planned for the anticipated acquisition of a 4.5 acre parcel that abuts the southwest corner of the original 15 acre Deschamps property. During this public review process, 17 comments were received. Fifteen of these favored the acquisition and one favored it with concerns about private property rights. There was one dissenting opinion, from a landowner who wished to develop property overlooking the site, and who was facing some opposition for the proposed developments potential impacts to the historic viewshed associated with Travelers' Rest.

The planning team developed a conceptual Master Site Plan (see Appendix II). This plan allows for necessary development and provides an appropriate context for an interactive and meaningful interpretive and education program. The planning teams also helped craft a program philosophy (see Appendix III). This philosophy will assist staff and volunteers in developing program direction and content. These plans were brought before the public in a variety of ways. Two public meetings were held at the park in September of 2002. Over 20 individuals attended the meetings, and offered comments on the site plan and proposed program philosophy. The comments were generally positive and dealt mostly with specifics of the plan that would be best

addressed in a MEPA process. The proposed site and program directions have also been used at presentations in Missoula, Lolo, and Helena, where audience members have viewed the plans and had opportunity for comment. Additionally, the plans have been available to all park visitors since early August of 2002. In all, over 500 individual copies of the plans have been distributed to interested parties to date.

Planning Process Outcomes

The planning team decided on four major interpretive and educational themes at Travelers' Rest State Park; the significance of the site to the Lewis and Clark Expedition during its stays here in 1805 and 1806; the significance of the immediate area to the variety of Native American tribes who utilized the area as a campsite and crossroads for centuries; the European settlement of the area in the wake of the Lewis and Clark journey; and the natural history of the area, which was critical to the success and survival of indigenous people, Lewis and Clark and the pioneers. Each of these themes can be told in the context of those days in 1805 and 1806 when the explorers and their party chose the banks of "Travellers Rest" (now Lolo) Creek as a place of rest and preparation. In order to create this atmosphere, we must establish certain tenets that will guide all aspects of site and program development:

1. The landscape will be used wherever possible to tell the stories.
2. Although significant visitation is expected during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial commemoration, development of park amenities (parking, restrooms, etc.) should not be built to accommodate the "worst case scenario" - but built to fit into the landscape so that management and maintenance costs can be sustained beyond the Bicentennial.
3. The cultural and natural resources of the park will be protected and the park will be safe, clean, accessible and well-maintained.
4. The park is an economic benefit to the Lolo area and a source of pride to residents. The park will be a good neighbor to surrounding residents and an integral part of the community.
5. Interpretation and education must be intricately interwoven into all program development.
6. The park will be managed in a way that is beneficial to wildlife native to the area.
7. Interpretive and education programs will integrate the different cultural and historical influences of the area. These programs will engage the intellect, the spirit, and the imagination.

Following the public review of this document and planned development, there will be additional planning. In the summer of 2003, TRPHA and FWP will develop an interpretive plan that will outline the type of programs that will be offered at the Park, the delivery methods to be utilized, and outline objectives to meet the program goals put forth in this document. During this process, the site plan will be meshed with the interpretive plan so that these two components compliment each other.

Current Buildings and Use

When the property was purchased from the Deschamps family, it included the existing ranch house and several out buildings. Many of these buildings are used for Park operations.

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The house is currently in use as the administrative office building for TRPHA. The house has been reviewed by FWP engineers for adherence to building codes. Minor renovations may be needed to bring the building into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The house is generally in good repair, although it is likely new shingles will be needed in the coming five years. A report from FWP engineering staff is expected in early spring, 2003.

Associated with the house are two small outbuildings, one located north of the house, the other to the west (between the house and garage). These buildings will be used for storage of equipment necessary for operations (interpretive materials, gift store items, tools, signs, etc.). Each of these buildings is in good repair and will not likely be used for public access.

The garage has been utilized as a visitor greeting area. Plans are underway to renovate the garage in 2003 to improve the visitor services area and to provide current and future meeting and classroom space. This building, and the proposed renovation, has also been reviewed by FWP engineering staff and a design for this project that addresses public health and safety has been completed by FWP Design and Construction Bureau. TRPHA is developing a resource library that may eventually be located in this building.

The large barn on the property will be used for maintenance and equipment storage. It is anticipated that TRPHA will need to acquire mowers, snow removal, trail maintenance and fencing equipment and supplies, and other items necessary to maintain and groom the park. These items will be housed in this building.

There are other various structures on the grounds that are proposed for removal. There is a small weathered shed at the edge of the bench overlooking Lolo Creek and a corral and located to the south of this structure. Removal of these structures would open up the area and make it much more inviting and relevant to the visitor. This is slated to take place in the spring or summer of 2003.

Rules, Regulations and Management Concerns

Animal Control – Pets are allowed only in designated areas. All pets are required to be on leashes not over 10 feet long.

Motor Vehicles – Motorized vehicles are allowed only on the roads and in the parking areas of Travelers' Rest State Park.

Night Closures – Travelers' Rest is located adjacent to a residential area and must respect those neighbors. Day use is appropriate, with hours posted by season. Normal hours will not exceed dawn to dusk, although special events may extend beyond those hours on occasion.

It may be necessary to restrict or prohibit access to some areas or during specific times to protect culturally or biologically sensitive areas.

Noxious Weeds – Travelers' Rest State Park will be added to the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Region 2 (west central Montana) Weed Management Plan.

Fees – Fees will be charged in accordance with the management agreement.

Other rules and regulations will be developed as the Park develops. In order to develop these rules and regulations, TRPHA will refer to the statutes for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, FWP State Park Management Policies, FWP Parks Department personnel, and the Guide to Montana's State Parks, Fishing Access Sites and Wildlife Management Areas.

Access, Acquisition and Site Development

Travelers' Rest needs to be developed and maintained in a manner that uses the natural setting of the park to enhance the programmatic objectives. The historic integrity of the park must be preserved while providing appropriate access and opportunities for local residents and area visitors.

In 2002, FWP purchased 10 acres on the north side of Lolo Creek adjoining the original 15-acre parcel. This property was acquired for the express purpose of developing the main park access from U.S. Highway 12 and providing the bulk of visitor services in a manner that protects the integrity of the historic campsite location. Administrative access would remain at the current park entrance on Mormon Creek Road. It is possible that pedestrian and recreation access could also be directed to the Mormon Creek access.

In 2003, FWP will receive a conservation easement on an additional 10-acres adjoining the tract north of Lolo Creek. The purpose of this easement will be to construct secondary trails that will be utilized to disperse activity during peak use times as well as serve as an area to provide education and interpretation for the natural history portion of park programming.

There is a 4.5 acre parcel at the southwest corner of the original park property that is owned by Mr. Ralph Kulberg. Mr. Kulberg purchased the property in order to protect it from development. He has indicated that should evidence be found to support the theory that the park encompassed the historic campsite, Mr. Kulberg would like to transfer ownership of the property to Travelers' Rest State Park. Conversations are ongoing with Mr. Kulberg and this property may be acquired during 2003. Possible uses of this property include education programs, interpretive programs focused on the agricultural settlement of the area, and conversion of the historic barn located on this property to a museum and education center.

With these properties under the ownership of FWP and the management of TRPHA, the partner organizations believe they can adequately manage, interpret and preserve the site. Additional properties may become available and each opportunity will be assessed as it arises. More land for recreational access and opportunity, access to existing non-motorized trails, for fish and wildlife habitat protection, and as a buffer to the historic area could be beneficial in the long term.

Funding and Staffing Requirements

In 2002, TRPHA entered into a joint capital campaign (Montana's Lewis and Clark Legacy Campaign) to provide the bulk of funding necessary for site and program development. The other partners in this venture are the Pompey's Pillar Historical Association, the Montana Lewis

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and Clark Bicentennial Commission, the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Foundation, and the Montana Historical Society. TRPHA expects to receive \$1 million from this campaign by 2006, with specific funding objectives (see Appendix IV).

Ongoing maintenance and operations funding will continue to be funded by TRPHA from a variety of sources. The organization will continue to develop a diverse funding stream including state and federal agencies, private contributions, entrance fees, and in-kind contributions.

TRPHA received funding from the Rural Community Assistance Program of the U.S. Forest Service. This appropriation assures operations through the end of 2003. It is expected that entrance fees, program fees, and individual contributions will fund the bulk of day-to-day operations in 2005 and 2006. Therefore a critical need is to find the necessary funding for operations in 2004 (expected to be \$150,000-\$200,000). The development of an endowment to ensure operations funding after 2006 is also a critical need in the next five years.

The organization currently employs an Executive Director, a Project Associate and an Interpretive Specialist (a position funded jointly by FWP and TRPHA). The individuals who fill these positions are responsible for the daily operations of TRPHA and Travelers' Rest State Park including fundraising, planning, community outreach, education and interpretive program development, and administration. Additional interpretive, seasonal, and maintenance staff will be added as needed and as funding allows.

Volunteers will continue to play a significant role at the park. Interpreters, groundskeepers, custodians, greeters, and gift shop staff should be largely comprised of volunteer or stipend rewarded staff.

While other future staffing needs are not clearly defined at this time, it may be desirable for TRPHA to add a part-time fundraising staff member during the next 1-3 years, should funding permit.

Current Operating Environment

Travelers' Rest State Park opened to the public for the first time in May, 2002. Currently, all administrative and visitor services take place on the south side of Lolo Creek. The park is accessed from U.S. Highway 93 and Mormon Creek Road. A small parking area has been established and may be improved with gravel in 2003. Portable toilets are now in use, but TRPHA has funding to install a vault toilet in 2003. This would not only address visitor comforts and convenience in the short-term, but provide long-term restroom facilities for park users.

The historic campsite is exposed to the sun, so plans are underway to construct a covered kiosk near the campsite to provide shade and interpretive area. This kiosk is identical to the interpretive kiosks to be constructed on the south side of Lolo Creek. Again, this development addresses immediate and long-term needs for shelter and an interpretive area in this location.

Interpretative opportunities are expanding at Travelers' Rest. A self-guided interpretive path opened in the spring of 2003. Paid and volunteer staff provide regularly scheduled interpretive

programs for visitors year round. the park also offers a weekly presenter series during the summer and special events around the anniversary dates of the Lewis and Clark stops at the site. TRPHA also offers an active outreach program for schools and community groups, providing interpretation and information about Travelers' Rest.

A project is underway to convert the original garage into a visitor information area, bookshop and gift store, exhibit space, and meeting space. Although visitor information and sales of educational materials will eventually be moved to the north side of the creek, this space can continue to act as meeting and exhibit space into the future.

Future Development Timeline and Triggers

It is critical that site development proceed as quickly as possible so that the park will be prepared to provide services and programs for visitors during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. It is also imperative that the constructions parallel program creation. While it is the intent of the partners to use the land to tell the story wherever possible, it is also necessary to provide comfort, safety, and educational opportunities for our visitors. Future development is dependent on funding and future planning and design elements. It is the intent to re-locate the entrance and visitor amenities to the north side location by the spring of 2005, to coincide with the heaviest visitation related to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Timelines for this development are dynamic, but completion of certain steps will trigger succeeding steps. The sequence of events:

1. Complete design of pedestrian bridge over Lolo Creek.
2. Begin design of access road, parking lot, restrooms, water supply.
3. Complete interpretive plan. Identify elements of interpretive plan that will effect location of kiosks, trails, etc.
4. Begin design of kiosks, trails, and interpretive signs.
5. Secure funding for bridge construction.
6. Begin construction of access road, parking lot, restrooms, water supply.
7. Begin bridge construction.
8. Begin construction of main trail⁸, interpretive areas, kiosks.
9. Complete construction of access roads, parking lot, restrooms, water supply.
10. Complete construction of kiosks and interpretive signs.
11. Complete trail construction.
12. Complete bridge construction.
13. Add directional and informational signs

Program Development

Interpretive and education programming will be the backbone of Travelers' Rest State Park. A diverse, multi-disciplinary program will provide a foundation of sustainability for the organization.

⁸ It is important that the archaeological record be preserved on the site. There is no indication of important cultural resources in the area north of Lolo Creek. TRPHA and FWP will work with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to preserve the integrity of the archaeological record in the historic campsite – and at all locations on the site.

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TRPHA and FWP have jointly funded an Interpretive Specialist to oversee program development at the park. Additionally, TRPHA has received funding to hire a Salish tribal member to develop interpretive programs related to Salish and other Native American use in the area.

A comprehensive interpretive plan will be developed during summer and fall of 2003. This plan will not only outline which delivery methods are best suited for each of the stories on the site, but also create a timeline for creation of the elements of the interpretive plan. Once completed, the interpretive plan will be added as an addendum to this document.

Future Operating Environment

Much of the future operating environment has been outlined in the “Vision” section of this document. Once the entrance has been moved to the Highway 12 location, the administrative offices will remain in their current location. Staff and administrative access will remain from Mormon Creek Road. Meeting areas and classrooms will also remain in the existing administrative area.

Public access will be from Highway 12. Interpretive and education programs will take place at designated areas across the site. The bulk of visitor services will be located on the north side of Lolo Creek, with minimal services available near the administrative area. This approach will leave the historic campsite area largely undeveloped, allowing visitors to experience Travelers’ Rest as it was 200 years ago – and beyond.

Summary

This unique partnership provides great opportunity for creating a public/private management model for Montana. The critical aspect will be developing the infrastructure, programs, and visitor experience on a very short timeline to prepare for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration. TRPHA, FWP, and other partners are committed to the vision and the future of Travelers’ Rest and will make its success a priority for the coming years. As the intensity of the bicentennial wanes, a long-term management planning process for Travelers’ Rest State Park will begin in 2005.

There is an opportunity to create a legacy at Travelers’ Rest. This opportunity must not be missed.