



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

December 28, 2012

To: Governor's Office, Sheena Wilson, 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

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Decision Notice has been prepared for the Darlington Creek Enhancement Project at Cobblestone Fishing Access Site. This project proposes improvements to Darlington Creek which would include the augmentation of the creek to an appropriate channel dimension and slope based upon an analysis and assessment of the creek's existing characteristics. Riffles, pools, and runs throughout the reach will be constructed to provide spawning, rearing, and adult trout habitat while maintaining efficient sediment transport capabilities. No public comments were received during a 30-day comment period ending November 22, 2012.

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>.

It is my decision to proceed with the proposed project, with no changes to the Draft EA.

Questions regarding this Decision Notice should be mailed to:

Michael Vaughn
Madison-Gallatin Fisheries Biologist
1400 S 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

Or e-mailed to: mvaughn@mt.gov

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. J. Flowers', with a large, sweeping flourish that loops back under the signature.

Patrick J. Flowers
Region Three Supervisor

Attachment



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region Three
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 South 19th Ave
Bozeman, MT 59718
December 28, 2012

Decision Notice

Darlington Creek Enhancement Project at Cobblestone Fishing Access Site

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

A group of parties have developed a preliminary comprehensive fisheries enhancement plan for Darlington Creek (aka Darlington Ditch) at Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' Cobblestone Fishing Access site, south of Three Forks, MT. These include:

- Gallatin County Conservation District
- Madison-Gallatin Chapter of Trout Unlimited
- Madison River Foundation
- Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP)
- Greater Gallatin Watershed Council

Improvements to Darlington Ditch would include the augmentation of the ditch to an appropriate channel dimension and slope based upon an analysis and assessment of the ditch's existing characteristics. Riffles, pools, and runs throughout the reach will be constructed to provide spawning, rearing, and adult trout habitat and maintain efficient sediment transport capabilities.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on October 22, 2012.

Alternative A: No Action

Left in its current condition, Darlington Creek will be underutilized as a recreational fisheries resource and will not be a significant source of recruitment of trout to the lower Madison River. If no action is taken, this creek and the fisheries potential for the stream will remain degraded. The riparian habitat also will remain below optimum. Recreational opportunities associated with fish and wildlife resources will remain reduced and aesthetics will continue to be impaired.

Preferred Alternative B: Proposed Action

The proposed alternative is designed to restore approximately two miles of degraded channel on a tributary to the Madison River. The project would improve overall aquatic habitat for salmonids and improve the vegetative community within the riparian corridor. This alternative is expected to improve fish and wildlife habitat and aesthetics within the project area and would enhance recruitment of fish to downstream waters.

PUBLIC PROCESS AND COMMENT

A Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed project was made available for public review and comment from October 22, 2012 through November 22, 2012. Legal notices were published in the Bozeman Chronicle and Helena Independent Record newspapers. FWP distributed 53 copies of the EA and mailed out notices to nearby landowners. The EA was available for public review on FWP's website (<http://fwp.mt.gov>) under "Recent Public Notices" beginning October 29, 2012.

Summary of Public Comment

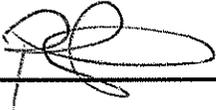
FWP received no comments on the project.

DECISION

Based on the analysis in the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), along with the public comments and the applicable laws, regulations and policies, it is my decision to proceed with the proposed action in preferred alternative B.

I have determined that the decision to proceed with the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the natural or human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared. By notification of this Decision notice, the Draft EA is hereby made the final EA. The draft EA with the Decision Notice may be viewed at or obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the address on page 1. This EA is still available for review on FWP's web site (<http://fwp.mt.gov>), under "Recent Public Notices"

If you have any questions regarding this environmental assessment decision notice, please contact Michael Vaughn, Madison-Gallatin Fisheries Biologist, at 406-994-6938 or at mvaughn@mt.gov.



Pat Flowers

Date:

12/28/12

R-3 Regional Supervisor