



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

2300 Lake Elmo Drive
Billings, MT 59105
August 19, 1999

TO: Environmental Quality Council
Director's Office, Dept. of Environmental Quality
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Director's Office	Lands Section
Parks Division	Design & Construction
Fisheries Division	Legal Unit
Wildlife Division	Regional Supervisors

Montana Historical Society, State Preservation Office
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council
Montana Wildlife Federation
Montana State Library
George Ochenski
Montana Environmental Information Center
Wayne Hirst, Montana State Parks Foundation
Montana Parks Association
Representative Bob Raney
Don Kendall, DNRC Area Manager, Southern Land Office
Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana (FOAM)
Commissioner David Simpson
Neighboring Landowners
Magic City Flyfishers
Walleyes Unlimited, Billings Chapter
Beartooth Ranger District
Red Lodge Rod & Gun Club
EA Respondents

Ladies and Gentlemen:

A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for a proposed land exchange involving two Fishing Access Sites (FAS) along **Rock Creek north of Red Lodge**. Our Department proposed to exchange 0.67 acres of Beaver Lodge FAS (5 miles north of Red Lodge) to acquire .329 acres of additional land at Black Diamond FAS (20 miles northeast of Red Lodge) in order to gain access to the latter site. The draft EA was circulated for 30 days, and legal notices were published in the Billings Gazette, Carbon County News, and Helena Independent Record. The EA was posted on Montana's electronic bulletin board. A public meeting held at the Joliet Community Center on June 15 was attended by 11 people.

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Persons interested in providing testimony to the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission regarding the recommended decision should attend the meeting on September 8, 1999 in Helena. This proposal will be discussed at 1:30 p.m. in the Commission Room at Fish, Wildlife & Parks Headquarters, 1420 East Sixth Avenue.

Many of the concerns summarized in the enclosures can be addressed by proper development, maintenance, and enforcement at the access site. The understandable desire of adjacent landowners to have the public directed elsewhere must be balanced with the strong public desire for access to this already publicly owned property. The Department has decided, therefore, to recommend Alternative B (Preferred Alternative) and pursue acquisition of the proposed land exchange.

Thank you for your interest and involvement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. Ellis".

Richard Ellis
Regional Supervisor

Enclosures