

**Responses to Concerns by Category for
Proposed Beaver Lodge/Black Diamond
Fishing Access Site Land Exchange**

NO NEED FOR ACCESS

The closest public fishing access site (FAS) on Rock Creek is at Water Birch FAS approximately 19 miles upstream. Currently, many anglers and boaters access Rock Creek adjacent to Black Diamond FAS by parking on the highway right-of-way near a bridge crossing. This site accesses a popular stream fishery for brown and rainbow trout just 33 miles from Billings.

INCREASED TRESPASS

Nearby property owners are concerned that use will increase at the site, thereby increasing the likelihood that anglers will leave Rock Creek through their property, threatening their privacy and safety. Their "no trespassing" signs have been vandalized or removed in the past. Instructions will be added to site signs discouraging users from trespassing and vandalism. Local law enforcement and wardens will respond to landowner complaints.

The proposed site will stand on its own as an access site. It will not be used as a means to access the original Black Diamond FAS. Anglers will, therefore, have direct access to Rock Creek without trespassing onto Mr. Isto's property.

WILDLIFE IMPACTS

Concerns were expressed about increased angling pressure reducing fish populations and increased human presence disturbing whitetail deer, moose, sandhill cranes, eagles, geese, and pheasants.

Brown trout, the primary gamefish species in nearby Rock Creek, are notoriously resistant to angling pressure. Overharvest can be addressed by changing fishing regulations to reduce limits.

According to the Wildlife Manager, none of the wildlife species mentioned is particularly sensitive to human disturbance, as evidenced by the number of houses in the immediate area. Whitetail deer invade residential Billings; moose are abundant and found downstream to Laurel; cranes and eagles visit but don't nest in the area; and geese and pheasants are found in the midst of urban sprawl.

Signs will inform visitors that no hunting is allowed, and the new site will be well defined by fencing.

Carbons

10/27/99

SITE DEVELOPMENT/MAINTENANCE

TRAFFIC/PARKING. The parking area will not be extended to encroach upon Rock Creek. The lot size is intentionally small to minimize use, yet encourage anglers to stop using the highway right-of-way (R-O-W). Additional enforcement can discourage parking on the R-O-W.

The MT Department of Transportation has given FWP approval to expand the existing approach and to encroach upon the R-O-W with fill, as long as the site boundary fence is restored. The new site will, therefore, be adequate for the proposed parking and latrine.

FENCING. The entire boundary of the addition, as delineated on the Certificate of Survey, will be fenced using metal posts and barbed wire and signed with Department boundary signs. The original, isolated site will be posted with boundary signs.

LITTER/SANITATION. Site regulations will require users to pack out their trash. The site will be patrolled for litter as part of FWP maintenance activities.

The Department will install a concrete, earth-toned latrine when the site is developed.

WEED CONTROL. Weed management is a regular and important part of maintaining all Department access sites. FWP contracts with Carbon County to control weeds at Rock Creek FAS's, and this partnership has effectively controlled weeds at these sites. Lack of legal access to the original site has prevented us from addressing this issue to date. The Department will work with Mr. Isto to obtain access to the original site for weed control.

STREAMBANK STABILIZATION. If erosion becomes a problem, we will address it as part of site protection, adhering to all permitting requirements.

STORMWATER RUNOFF. Site development will be minimal, and little impervious area will be added. Erosion controls will be part of parking area construction.

MAINTENANCE COST. The estimate of \$200 annually was based upon experience with similar sites and upon having no latrine to service. No tax dollars are involved; funds come from sportsmen's license accounts.

PERMITS

All applicable permits (federal, state, county, etc.) will be obtained before development.

IRRIGATION ACCESS

The access needed to maintain the Joliet Ditch will not be affected.

GENERAL

The regional staff will respond quickly and appropriately to neighbors' concerns and meet periodically to discuss any problems.