

MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action

FWP proposes to partner with the Montana Power Company rehabilitate approximately 2,850 Acres of land which has been impacted due to heavy unauthorized use of OHVs on the north shore of the Missouri River. The project will provide for obliteration and reseeding of these unauthorized trails, site security measures such as fencing and signing. This project is designed to augment the current funding provided by the Power Company under the recommendation of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) 2188 Project which recommends managing these lands as a natural Area. A budget of \$10,000 in capital monies are available in 2000 and this proposal would increase funding to \$50,000.

2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action

FWP has authority to provide development and access for public recreation. **23-2-101 MCA.**

3. Name of Project

Lewis and Clark Greenway Natural Area Rehabilitation and Security

4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)

FWP - Parks Division
P.O. Box 6610
Great Falls MT 59406
(406)454-5840

Montana Power Company
40 East Broadway
Butte MT 59707
(406)888-2669

5. If Applicable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date 7/1/2000

Estimated Completion Date 7/1/2001.

Current Status of Project Design (% complete) 20%

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6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)

Cascade County: Portions of Sec 33, 28, 27, 26, 25, 24, R4E, T21N. Portions of Sec 30, 19, 18, 17, 16, 21, 15, 14, 10, 11, 2 , T21N, R5E.

7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

- (a) Developed:
 - residential 0 acres
 - industrial 0 acres

- (b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation..... 2985 acres

- (c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas..... 0 acres

- (d) Floodplain 0 acres

- (e) Productive:
 - irrigated cropland 0 dry cropland 0 acres
 - forestry 0 acres
 - rangeland 0 acres
 - other 0 acre

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8. **Map/site plan:** attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.



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9. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.

The Benefits of this project are to achieve the objectives put forth in the FERC 2188 License application and to maximize benefits to the recreating public. A further benefit is to reestablish natural systems that have been heavily impacted through illicit activities for many years.

10. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
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None

(b) Funding:

<u>Montana Power Company</u>	<u>66%</u>
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(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
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USDA Forest Service	Conservation Easement on portions of the Fee Title lands
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USDI Bureau of Land Management	Adjacent landowner
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MT Dept. Fish, Wildlife and Parks	Owner of Conservation Easement on majority of lands on Northshore
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11. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:

FWP Region 4 - Parks, Fisheries, Wildlife and Enforcement Divisions, Great Falls MT

FWP Legal Unit - Helena MT

Montana Power Company, Butte MT

State Historic Preservation Office, Helena MT

Lewis and Clark National Forest, Great Falls MT

Bureau of Land Management, Great Falls Area Field Office, Great Falls MT

Recreational Trails Incorporated, Great Falls MT

American Public Land Exchange - Missoula MT

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

a, b, c. While rehabilitation work is being performed disturbance of the impacted roads is expected. After work is completed the area will revert to natural grasses and shrubs. Until vegetation becomes established additional siltation may result in the short term. Long term benefits outweigh any short term impacts to the impacts trails land base in general and adjacent streams.

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

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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

a. During rehab work some level of air pollution can be expected. This will be very short lived and overall pollution will be reduced as OHV use is discontinued.

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

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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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

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

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

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the check sheet. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

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

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regulations? (Also see 3a)						
n. Other: _____		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

a. While rehabilitation work is being performed disturbance of the soils underlying and adjacent to the impacted roads is expected. After work is completed the area will revert to natural grasses and shrubs. Until vegetation becomes established additional siltation may result in the short term. Long term benefits outweigh any short term impacts to the trails, land base in general and adjacent streams.

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

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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- a. A commercially produced seed mixture will be used. Because of variability of the mix abundance and distribution of native species may be effected. No non-native species will be introduced.
- b. Alteration of the plant community is to be expected in the short term. As native species establish themselves the community will stabilize. Over time (5-10years) the plant community will look substantially the same as it does to day but without the impacted roads and trails.
- c. The landowner will maintain responsibility for all Noxious Weed Control efforts on all lands other than those immediately adjacent to proposed recreational developments. Recreational developments which are also used as power generation service facilities will remain the responsibility of the Power Company. As the impacted trails and roads rehabilitate the power company will assume weed management responsibilities for these roads.

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

Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM) Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the check~~list~~. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

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

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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- a. Local populations of game and Non-game species should show a positive response to the rehabilitation work first through closure of the unauthorized trails and roads to off highway vehicles and secondly to a net increase in vegetative cover.
- b. Hunting pressure is anticipated to increase and local populations may fluctuate in response. Long term wildlife impacts should be positive due to protection of habitat.

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

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

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the check¹². Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

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

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HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- o Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- x Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the check 13. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

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

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- a. The use of agrichemical pesticides to control noxious weeds is accepted and desired. All herbicides will be applied in accordance with the Region Four Noxious Weed Management Plan and under the supervision of a licensed pesticide applicator. Storage and mixing of these chemicals will be in accordance with standard operating procedures listed on labels and in the Weed Plan. The Forest Service currently has weed control responsibilities on portions of the proposed fee title donation. Weed control on those lands will conform with standard Forest Service rules concerning chemical weed control.

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

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- o Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the check 16. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- b. Project capital funds for the FERC relicensing projects are provided by the Power Company. These funds are earmarked for the following projects. North Shore Natural Area - \$20,000;

- Project operations and maintenance funds are provided by the Power Company. These funds are earmarked for the following projects. North Shore Natural area - \$5,000 annually.

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

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

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

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

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Both of these funding commitments by the Montana Power Company are in 1992 dollars and will be adjusted for inflation to current levels.

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

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- a. This land donation and conservation easement in and of itself will have a negligible effect on tourism, however the management of this land as recreational will have a positive effect on tourism in Great Falls. See attached tourism report by Travel Montana.

The lands protected by the easement and land donation are those trod by Captain Meriwether Lewis on June 14 & 15, 1805 when he first "discovered the Great Falls of the Missouri. Lewis and Clark tourism is expected to increase significantly in the next 10 years* and few places on the L&C Trail offer the ability to experience the land as the explorers first saw it. This land, while altered significantly, does offer views and landscapes very similar to those viewed by L&C. By rehabilitating these lands to a more natural state tourism opportunities will be enhanced.

* The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center showed visitation of 80,000 during its first six months of operation. The Bureau of Land Management reports an increase of 30% on the Wild and Scenic Missouri River. Much of this increase is attributable to interest in Lewis and Clark. (personal contact with Jane Weber - Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center and Clark Whitehead - BLM Recreation Manager, Lewistown MT)

- Ⓞ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ✓ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the check¹⁹. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- a. No known archeological sites are effected by the rehabilitation project. If during the course of the work sites unknown at these time become apparent that individual site will be withheld from further work until an assessment can be made as to it's significance.

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

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

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the check^o. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

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

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HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- a. This action must be viewed as a continuation of the FERC relicensing process. In the Relicensing Environmental Impact Statement many people were consulted and the establishment of a natural was suggested. The establishment of this natural area is a requirement of the license.

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1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

No Action.

Without action the partners will be limited to the amount of funding specified by the FERC licenses. This funding is not expected to produce the desired effect of essentially eliminating OHV usage of the natural area.

Project as proposed.

The preferred alternative. By increasing funding amounts by \$40,000 we can expect to increase site security and rehabilitation work by a corresponding amount. This increase will result in reduction of OHV use by an estimated 90% as compared with only an estimated 20% decrease using existing funding. Increasing funding levels will produce a better product and will give results in a much faster time frame. With the upcoming Lewis and Clark Bicentennial rapidly approaching we need to act quickly to rehabilitate this area.

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

No mitigation is necessary. This action is a mitigation measure of the re-issued dam license.

3. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

An EIS is not required.

With no anticipated significant impacts to the environment or the public the EA is the appropriate level of analysis.

4. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

A public comment period of 15 days will held. This period begins Friday December 13, 1999 and continues to Thursday December 30, 1999. Because many scoping and public meeting shave been held since 1992 with the relicensing process no public meetings or hearings are anticipated.

5. Duration of comment period if any.

13 days

6. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

Dan Smith
Parks Operation Specialist
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls, MT. 59405 (406)454-5840.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

With no significant impacts to the environment it is FWP's recommendation that this project proceed as proposed.

Great Falls has developed a variety of recreational facilities in the recent past including major developments at Giant Springs State Park with the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center and River Edge Trail, as well as developments at Ulm Pishkun State Park and its new visitor center. The North Shore lands, properly managed, can help people understand Native Americans, early explorers, power generation, and homesteader pioneers by allowing them to walk on the ground that these forerunners trod upon, and to see what they saw. Protecting this land will provide a primitive experience in relatively natural landscapes.

This area can provide a part of the recreation spectrum which is currently missing in the Great Falls Area. It bridges the gap formed by the relatively heavy recreational development of Great Falls and the relatively sparse development of the Wild and Scenic portion of the Missouri river. When taken together these opportunities provide a full range of recreational activities within a hours drive of Great Falls. Enhancement of these lands by rehabilitation of impacted trails and roads will only increase visitor satisfaction.