Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
RR 1 – 4210
Glasgow, MT 59230

May 24, 2004

Environmental Quality Council
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
- Parks Division
- Fisheries Division
- Wildlife Division
- Conservation & Education Division
- Design & Construction Bureau
- Commission Secretary
- Regional Office Managers

Montana State Library, Helena
MT Environmental Information Center
Montana Audubon Council
State Historic Preservation Office
Fort Peck Tribes
Fort Peck Tribal Police Department
Wolf Point City Mayor, City Council,
Wolf Point Public Works Director
Roosevelt County Commissioners
Roosevelt County Sheriff

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Please find enclosed a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared for the proposed action to provide recreational improvements at the Lewis & Clark Fishing Access Site (FAS). This site is located on the north bank of the Missouri River, approximately six miles south of Wolf Point, Montana. After the purchase of this site from the City of Glasgow in 1999, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) has done minor improvements and seasonal upkeep. The proposed improvements would include the upgrade an existing interior road system, provide a permanent concrete boat ramp, and establish and define a parking/turn-around area for vehicles with boat trailers. The improvements would also include additional parking for day-use visitors and directional and regulatory signing.

Please submit any comments that you have by 5:00 P.M., June 24, 2004 to the Region 6 Parks Manager, Woody Baxter, at the address listed above.

Thank you for your interest on this project.

Jim Satterfield
Regional Supervisor

MEPA COMPLIANCE

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of Proposed Action:** Within the boundaries of the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Lewis & Clark Fishing Access Site (FAS), this proposal includes improving the roadway by adding fill, new gravel and widening the roads, improving the parking area next to the day-use/horseshoe pits, installing barriers to block existing loop roadway, adding a parking area for six vehicles next to the entrance by the existing Kiosk, placing a parking/turn around area near the boat ramp, develop nine parking spots for trucks with trailers next to the boat ramp, adding a sixteen foot wide concrete boat ramp, adding three additional parking spaces on the entry road near the boat ramp, and adding regulation and directional signs. Additional details of the proposal are listed under #9 below.

2. **Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** 87-1-209 M.C.A. authorizes Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to acquire and develop properties for fishing access and outdoor recreation purposes. 87-1-605 M.C.A. directs FWP to utilize fishing license dollars to maintain and develop a system of fishing access sites throughout the state. Finally, 23-1-110 M.C.A. establishes a procedure whereby proposed improvements to Fishing Access Sites are subject to notification and acceptance of public comment on the advisability and acceptability of the proposal.

3. **Name of Project:** Lewis and Clark Fishing Access Site (Located approx 6 miles south of Wolf Point, Montana, off of Highway 13, on the north bank of the Missouri River.)

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

   -N.A.-

5. **If Applicable:**

   Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: September 2004

   Estimated Completion Date: October 2004

   Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 10% (Landscape survey and 'conceptual design' is completed).

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

   Lewis and Clark FAS, Roosevelt County, Section 28, Township 27 North, Range 48 East

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

(a) Developed:
residential ..... NA acres
industrial ..... NA acres

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/
Recreation ..... NA acres

(c) Wetlands/Riparian
Areas ..... NA acres

(d) Floodplain ..... 40.3 acres

(e) Productive:
irrigated cropland ..... NA acres
dry cropland ..... NA acres
forestry ..... NA acres
rangeland ..... NA acres
other ..... NA acres

8. **Map/site plan:** See attached location map and conceptual site plan.

9. **Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action.**

In 1999, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) acquired this Missouri River access site, previously referred to as "Bridge Park," from the City of Wolf Point. Prior to this purchase, the Bridge Park site was a city park owned and operated by the City of Wolf Point. This site has historically been open to public recreation since 1940. This site, now referred to as Lewis & Clark Fishing Access Site (FAS), has a total of 40.3 acres, deeded to MFWP. It currently has a graveled access road from Highway 13, a small graveled parking area for vehicles, and a gravel boat ramp on the natural incline of the riverbank of the Missouri River. The existing graveled roadway, parking area and boat ramp are degrading due to vehicular use and natural erosion.

This site is 67.8 river miles downstream from a boat ramp near the town of Fort Peck, and 80.7 river miles upstream from the Culbertson Bridge FAS, which is a developed site near Culbertson Montana. These two sites are the closest public river access sites to Lewis & Clark FAS. Fishing pressure from the 1995-mail survey estimates that 2363 angler days are spent on the lower Missouri River from below Fort Peck Dam to the North Dakota border.

Proposed Facilities and Improvements
The proposed project would be implemented by private contracted services complying with MFWP guidelines. The following describes the proposed improvements:

Construction of a concrete boat ramp. The current boat ramp is constructed on the natural incline and of the natural river gravel from the bank. This ramp needs grading periodically to provide efficient access to the river for boat trailers and to control stream bank erosion. With increasing usage, the natural materials of the ramp cannot withstand the wear and tear of this use. Building a new ramp would protect the stream bank from future erosion and degradation. The new ramp would be a sixteen-foot wide 'poured-in-place' concrete ramp above the water level at the time of

construction and concrete planks or cable mat below the water's surface.

Nine defined parking spots for pickup trucks and trailers would be developed next to the boat ramp. This improvement would assist in systematizing the site and allow parking room for more vehicles; thus allowing easier access to the river. Currently, parking is undefined; people park wherever they can find a spot suitable. This existing uncontrolled method of parking decreases the amount of vehicles that can use the area, and has caused damage to the soil and vegetation.

A turn-around/cul-de-sac area will be added near the boat ramp. This would enable traffic to flow easier around the boat ramp area during the process of launching and loading of boats. This would also prevent vegetation in the surrounding area from becoming damaged or destroyed. Barriers would be placed around the turn-around/island area to prevent people from using this part of the roadway as a parking area.

Re-routing traffic flow and reclamation of a portion of the existing interior roadway would help reduce current resource impacts. Currently, motorists can use this FAS by going around a major portion of the site on the existing loop-style roadway. By closing-off and reclaiming the section of the road between the horseshoe pit parking area and the boat ramp, this would discontinue the through traffic and in-turn alleviates damage to the soil and vegetation in this area. With this proposed roadway system, traffic entering the FAS would then be able to drive directly to the boat ramp area via one road or choose to drive directly to the day-use/horseshoe pits via another road.

The "entry road" leading to the boat ramp from the highway would be widened to twenty feet. Currently portions of this interior roadway are sixteen feet wide, which is not effectively wide enough for two lanes of traffic. This improvement would allow traffic to flow in both directions without running off the road and in-turn damage vegetation.

The vehicular trail leading to the day-use/horseshoe pits would be improved with a twenty-foot wide roadbed. Currently this trail has no firm roadbed and has several ever-widening spots that have been created by vehicular use during wet periods. By constructing a well-defined, twenty-foot wide roadbed, traffic could flow in both directions without running off the road, damaging soil and vegetation.

The small parking area next to the day-use/horseshoe pits would be improved. Placing new gravel and re-grading the surface would define the parking for this area and prevent parking and vehicle traffic in vegetated areas.

Additional parking would be added near the entry Kiosk. The Bureau of Land Management has an interpretative paneled kiosk near the entrance of this FAS. Designated parking for six vehicles would be added next to the kiosk. Currently, parking in this area is undefined, in turn, causing vehicles to park on vegetation. Defined parking spots would prevent this in the future.

Three parking spaces would be added on the entry road. This parking area would be placed near the boat ramp and would serve as additional parking for boaters and anglers.

Regulation and directional signs would be added. These signs would inform users of the changes in

the interior roadway as well as rules and regulations for the FAS.

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

-None-

11. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the MEPA Checklist:

State Historical Preservation Office- See letter of concurrence attached.
Montana Natural Heritage Program
MFWP- Lands Unit, Fisheries Division, Wildlife Division, Parks Division, and Design & Construction

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PART II. MEPA CHECKLIST

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
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				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other None						

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

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. AIR **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			X			See 2a. below
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-I projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		X				
f. Other None						

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

2a. During the construction phase, the improvement of the existing roadway and the development of the boat ramp, turn-around and parking areas, dirt would be disturbed causing an temporary increase of dust particles in the air. This impact would cease upon completion of the construction project. During construction, contractors would be encouraged to minimize the dust by putting water on the disturbed soil, and work during favorable weather conditions.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. WATER **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	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				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater 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-I, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)			X			
m. For P-R/D-I, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other: None						

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

31. This project does not propose any structures to be built in the floodplain. There would be consultation with Roosevelt County floodplain personnel to define the designation and verify the permitting that may be required, along with any mitigation.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X			See 4a. below
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
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				
f. For P-R/D- I, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other: None						

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

4a. By designating parking areas and reclaiming existing vehicular trails, plant species would be replenished where people used to park and drive vehicles. This action would improve vegetative growth. The proposed design does not prescribe the cutting of any large cottonwood trees. Minimal cutting of smaller trees and brush would occur in the construction of new parking spaces in the area of the boat ramp.

*4c. No plant species of special concern, or endangered plant species were identified in this area by the Montana Natural Heritage Program data search (6/24/03).

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	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			See 5b. below
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
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			See 5g. below
h. For P-R/D-I, 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-I, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X*				
j. Other: None						

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

5b. No significant changes in diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species is anticipated at this site with the proposed improvements. With the improved facilities, terrestrial and aquatic game species may experience minor disturbance due to increased human use and activities, but no significant change is anticipated. An increase in fishing pressure may occur, however with the addition of a concrete boat ramp, game fish populations are not expected to be significantly affected. Information signing addressing special fishing regulations would be posted next to the boat ramp.

5g. If human activity increases as a result of the improvements, increase would be so slight that no significant change or impact to wildlife or fishery is anticipated. Information signing addressing special fishing regulations would be posted next to the boat ramp.

*5h. Using the Montana Natural Heritage Program database (6/24/03), three federally listed species of animals are known to be present near the project area. These are the piping plover (threatened), interior least tern (endangered), and pallid sturgeon (endangered). Normal recreational activities at this site and in the Missouri River near this site are not anticipated to negatively impact these species.

*5i. During the construction of this project and with the completion of the proposed improvements and facilities it is not anticipated that any new species will be introduced or exported.

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HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to severe 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: None						

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	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: None						

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	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 plans or creates a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. For P-R/D-I, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other: None						

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?			X			See 9a. below
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: None						

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

9a. There may be a slight increase in number of people using the site over time, but it is not likely to increase significantly from what presently occurs at this site or within the local area. With the posting of information and regulatory signs, along with continuation of cooperative interagency law enforcement, the potential impacts of this possible increase in use would be controlled.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	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			See 10e. below
f. Define projected maintenance costs.			X			See 10f. below
g. Other:: None						

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

10e. The revenue source for the proposed improvements are MFWP license dollars derived from the sale of fishing licenses along with both state and federal motorboat fee revenues.

10f. Current annual maintenance costs at this site, including personal services and materials, is approximately $8,150. This cost should continue to be close to the same amount after the proposed improvements are available for public use. Maintenance funding for this site comes from MFWP license account.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION 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/tourism opportunities and settings?			X			See 11c. below
d. For P-R/D-I, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		N/A				
e. Other: None						

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

11c. The quality and quantity of the recreation/tourism at this site would be altered. Both would be positively impacted due to the improvements, allowing a greater number of visitors more efficient access to the site and the Missouri River.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X*				See 12a. below
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-I, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? **Attach SHPO letter of clearance.** (Also see 12.a)		X*				
e. Other: None						

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

*12a & d. The State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) has previously reported to MFWP that no historic or archeological resources are recorded in the Lewis and Clark FAS project area. See attached SHPO Report. An archaeologist would monitor any area not previously disturbed. The Fort Peck Tribes would be consulted prior to construction.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
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-I, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		X				
g. For P-R/D-I, 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):

13g. It is anticipated the following permits would be required for this project:

- A federal 404 permit through the Army Corps of Engineers
- A state 124 permit through FWP
- A state 318 permit through Dept. of Environmental Quality
- And consultation with Roosevelt County floodplain personnel to verify what permitting may be required.

Name, title, address and telephone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing this MEPA Checklist:

Woody Baxter
Regional Parks Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
R.R 1-4210
Glasgow, MT 59230
Phone #: 406-228-3707
e-mail: gwbaxter@state.mt.us

PART III MEPA CONCLUSION SECTION

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 comparison of the alternatives with the proposed action/preferred alternative:

Alternative A: No improvements (No Action Alternative)
If no action were taken at the Lewis and Clark FAS, the degradation to the site would continue and may ultimately negatively affect the quality of the recreational experience for future users. This option would ignore many environmental, aesthetic, and facility improvements that can be corrected. The environmental impacts of unregulated usage would not be addressed under this option. By not making improvements, environmental consequences would still occur because the existing environment is not static.

Alternative B: Improvements
Implementation of **Alternative B** has been described under section #9, Narrative Summary of Proposed Action in this document. This action would assure that the site had adequate parking added, and a safe and effective boat ramp would be provided. By redesigning a portion of the existing roadway, this would decrease unwanted through traffic and would reclaim the old roadway. Adding designated parking areas is critical to the protection of resources in the area, as well as preventing surface runoff and erosion. Regulation and directional signs are significant in providing access site users a satisfactory, safe and legal experience. **Alternative B** is the agency's preferred alternative.

2. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? NO
If an EIS is not required, explain <u>why</u> the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:
This environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action; therefore, an EIS is not necessary, and an Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

3. 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?

The proposed project had public involvement and input before and after MFWP purchased and took over management of the site 5 years ago. Specifically:

- The Lower Missouri River CMR Council had a meeting on July 22, 1998, that addressed the purchase and eventual improvements by MFWP. This working group initiated three "action items". They were: 1) develop a boat ramp, 2) improve the interior access road, and 3) provide sanitation facilities. This EA document addresses the proposal for developing a concrete boat ramp and improving the roadway. Two pre-cast concrete toilets were installed in 2002.
- The Fort Peck Tribal Enterprise Community Board of Directors invited FWP Region Six's Park Manager to their meeting on April 24, 2002. A general description of the proposed

improvements at the Lewis & Clark FAS was presented to the Board. In turn, the Fort Peck Tribal Enterprise Board formed a cooperative partnership with FWP to assist in purchasing two pre-cast concrete toilets for this FAS.

- Additional public involvement is planned with the release and distribution of this Draft Environmental Assessment. Future comments will be considered and incorporated if feasible in the Final EA document.

Availability of this Draft EA to the public will be announced through the local media, including the official newspaper of record, The Herald-News (Wolf Point, MT), and the Wotanin Wowapi (Poplar, MT), along with the MFWP Web Site.

Copies of the EA will be delivered/mailed directly to the neighboring landowners to ensure their knowledge of the proposed action.

Due to the high user counts of local residents that visit this FAS, FWP has and will attempt to provide several opportunities for public involvement in the assessment of this proposed project.

4. Duration of comment period if any:

The public will have thirty (30) days to comment following the publication of the legal notice. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., June 24, 2004, and can be mailed to the address below:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
ATTN: Woody Baxter
R.R.1 - 4210
Glasgow, MT 59230

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

Woody Baxter
Regional Parks Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
R.R.1 - 4210
Glasgow, MT 59230

Phone #: 406-228-3707

E-mail: gwbaxter@state.mt.us

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

This proposed project conforms to Fisheries Program goals as spelled out in the Fisheries Program Strategic Plan (Fisheries Beyond 2000). Specifically, Goal Three of the Fishing Access Element reads, "provide management and funding for the Fishing Access Site Program to assure continued opportunities for public use." One of the five activities listed to achieve this goal states, "develop and provide improvements at FAS's only to the extent necessary to address the public's use levels at an individual site." This proposed project precisely follows this philosophy.

This Environmental Assessment identified several minor impacts to the environment, some impacts were positive and others can be mitigated. Threatened or endangered plant or animal species are not present in the area. No unique cultural, geological, or physical land features would be affected. The proposed improvements planned for this site would greatly enhance the visitor's recreational opportunities as well as protect the area from environmental degradation. Improvements would also help maintain a harmonious relationship between adjacent landowners and MFWP.

APPENDICES

1. Site Location Maps
2. Site Plan (Concept Plan)
3. Clearance Letter- State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO)