



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Record of Decision
and
Finding of No Significant Impact
for
Hubbart Reservoir Public Access Easements
Environmental Assessment

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 1
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

August 18, 2005

Project Proposal: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) will acquire a right-of-way easement to Hubbart Reservoir from Plum Creek Timber Company (PCTC). This will provide the general public legal vehicular access (approximately four miles of road) from the end of a county road through PCTC lands to Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) lands on Hubbart Reservoir. MFWP would also acquire a recreational site easement from BIA for public use on the two parcels. The two BIA parcels are currently the two most heavily used public access points on the reservoir. One of the PCTC access roads is currently the most heavily used by the public. The other PCTC road that is included under the easement is currently closed to public use by a berm, but would be opened if the currently used access were closed to public use in the future. Although the only action MFWP will take is to accept the access easements, there are a number of related actions, specifically road improvements and construction, taken by the cooperators in the project, namely PCTC, BIA, and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT).

Environmental Impacts and Public Involvement: The environmental assessment (EA) assessed MFWP acquiring the easements from PCTC and BIA and the no-action alternative. The project does not change current use opportunities, but only provides a guarantee that public access and use can occur in the future. There were no significant impacts from this project, and it is not socially controversial.

Public involvement included working with the landowners and managers in the project area, including the PCTC, BIA, and CSKT. The EA was released for public review through a newspaper legal advertisement and an MFWP news release, which was subsequently published in local newspapers. We received five comments from public reviewers, two from organizations and three from individuals. The organizations were Flathead Wildlife Inc. and Polson Outdoors. All comments supported MFWP acquiring the access easements and the related road improvements. We did not receive any public comment against the proposal.

Decision: The project does not create more access than currently exists; it only provides a guarantee that there can be future public access and use of the area. This results in a benefit to the recreational public that fish and use the Hubbart Reservoir area. Due to the ever-increasing need for public access to water bodies, the lack of significant environmental impacts, and the supporting public comment, I recommend that MFWP accept the access easements from PCTC and BIA.

Jim Satterfield
Regional Supervisor

Date