DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for

LONE PINE STATE PARK ADDITION

July 18, 2007

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 752-5501

LONE PINE STATE PARK ADDITION
MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action: Land acquisition

2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

3. Name of Project: Lone Pine State Park Land Acquisition

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

5. If Applicable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: September 30, 2007
Estimated Completion Date: September 30, 2007
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): n/a

6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range, and township): Flathead County, Section 24, Township 28 north, Range 22 west

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

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

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/
recreation....**40 acres**

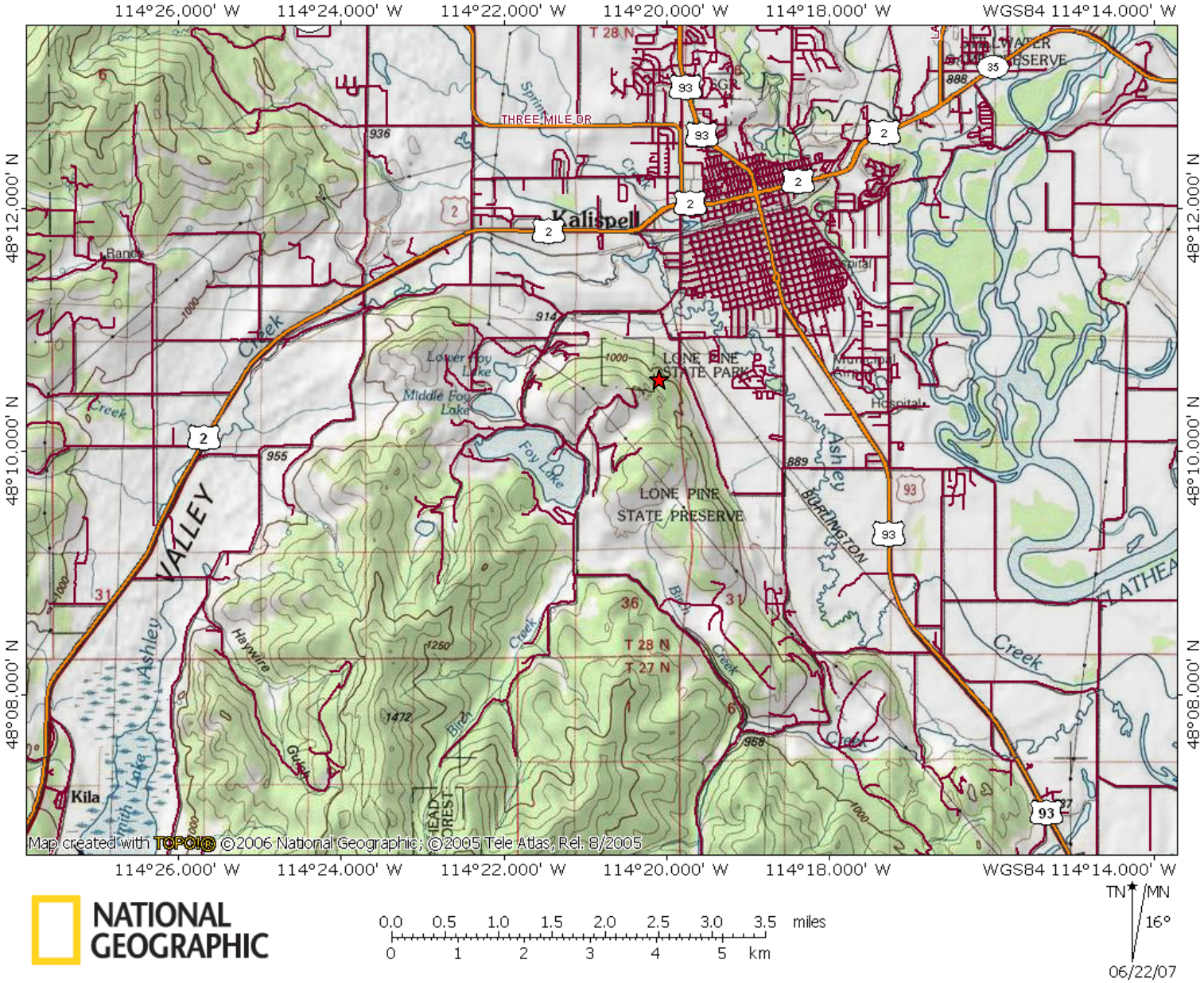
(c) Wetlands/Riparian
areas..... __ acres

(d) Floodplain ..... __ acres

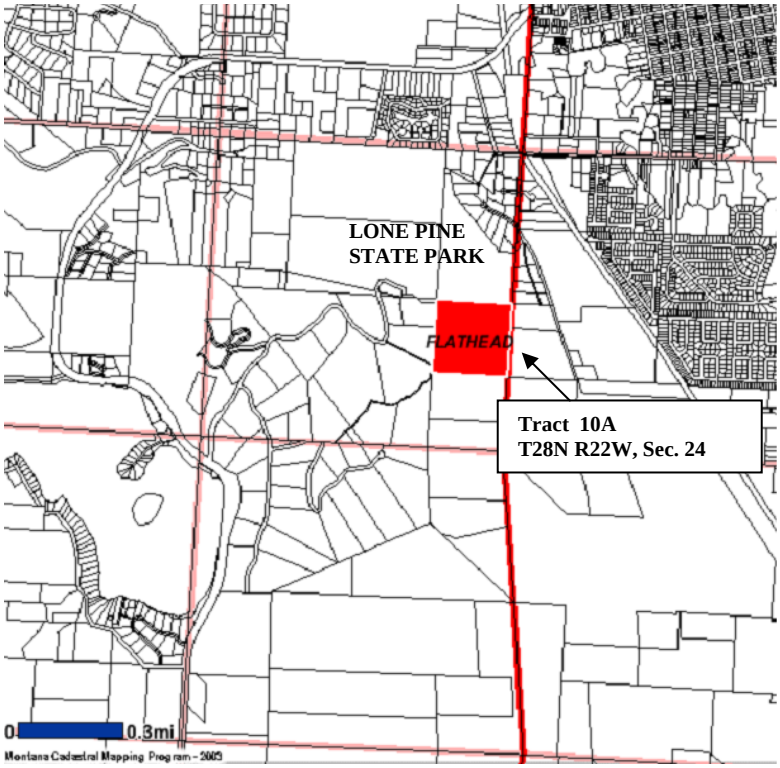
(e) Productive:
irrigated cropland……__ acres
dry cropland ……__ acres
forestry..... __ acres
rangeland..... __ acres
other..... __ acres

8. **Map/site plan: Attach an original 8½" 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.**

PROPOSED LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT AREA



PROPOSED 40-ACRE ACQUISITION
TO LONE PINE STATE PARK



9. Summary of the Proposed Action or Project, Including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes the acquisition of Tract 10A, NE4SE4 of Section 24, T28N, R22W in Flathead County. The tract is 40 acres of undeveloped woodland bordering Lone Pine State Park along its east boundary. This property has been offered by the owner at a cost of $470,000. This parcel would be added to Lone Pine State Park, located at the southwest edge of Kalispell in Flathead County, for the purpose of providing additional dispersed recreation land.

The purpose and need for this acquisition is to provide expanded recreational opportunities to Flathead Valley residents and to conserve the viewsheds from Lone Pine's scenic overlooks, and from the Flathead Valley floor. This acquisition would provide additional nonmotorized trails and open space, spectacular views of the Flathead Valley and surrounding mountains, and an undeveloped western skyline from the city of Kalispell. A secondary benefit would be the conservation of valuable wildlife habitat for a wide variety of birds and mammals.

The long-range planning document for the Montana state parks system, 2020 Vision for Montana State Parks, identifies the purchase of critical adjoining lands as the highest land acquisition priority for the Parks Division. Flathead County grew by 14% since 2000 to a current estimated population of 85,314 people. In that same time frame, the city of Kalispell has grown from 14,233 residents to an estimated 20,000 in 2007; a 40% increase in seven years. With this increase has come a greater demand for recreational opportunities adjacent to population centers. Visitation at Lone Pine State Park has grown by 38 % in the past five years to an estimated 38,000 visits in 2006. At the same time, private lands in Flathead County traditionally used for dispersed recreation are becoming developed or restricted, causing a decrease in the supply of open lands for recreation within easy reach of urban areas in the Flathead Valley. The Montana State Trails Plan identifies the need for urban trails as a key issue*: "There is a strong demand for convenient recreation opportunities which people can enjoy on short notice. An important related issue is integrating trails with land use and transportation planning in urban areas. Rails-trails, greenways, and creating connections to the surrounding public lands are important needs to urban trails."* This proposed acquisition and associated trail, with its proximity to Kalispell and the planned rails-to-trails route, fulfills the trails plan goal of creating *"more local trails, greenways, and trail connections for recreation and transportation in, around, and between Montana's populated urban areas."*

By acquiring this acreage, Flathead Valley residents and all state park users will be able to continue their historic use of this timbered property. Trail systems already exist on the property, egressing and ingressing from Lone Pine's east boundary.

Alternative I - No Action:
Under a no-action alternative, this property will be converted to residential property. Traditional public use of the parcel may be eliminated as a result. In addition, the predominant view from Lone Pine's interpretive overlooks may be altered by residential development. Additionally, the viewshed from the city of Kalispell may be altered by the elimination of undeveloped space.

Alternative II - Acquisition of Tract 10A:
Under this alternative, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks would acquire Tract 10A (40 acres) in Section 24 of Township 28 north, Range 22 west. This property would be an addition to Lone Pine State Park. Existing trails would be added to the Lone Pine trail system to add additional nonmotorized trail opportunities.

10. Listing of Any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency That Has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) Permits:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Acquisition	
Montana State Park Acquisition Funds	$470,000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility

11. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

Flathead County Property Assessment Office

Flathead Regional Development Office

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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		x				

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

This proposal would not alter the current land resource conditions.

☼ 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.

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 13c.)		x				
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):

There would be no alteration of air quality as a result of this acquisition.

☼ 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.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

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

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

There would be no alteration to water resources as a result of this acquisition.

☼ 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.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

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				
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-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):

There would be no alteration to vegetation as a result of this acquisition.

☼ 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.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

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				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of non-game 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		yes	5g
♦♦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):

5g. Trail usage may result in increased stress to wildlife within the proposed acquisition. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will create seasonal buffer zones near nesting or denning sites, if such sites are identified, in compliance with ARM 12.8.209. Increases in wildlife disturbance resulting from pets will be mitigated through signing and enforcement of ARM 12.8.203. This administrative rule requires that all pets be in the immediate control of their owner.

There will be a positive effect on wildlife within the acquisition area resulting from state park designation. Under this designation, the habitat will remain largely unchanged from its current condition.

☼ 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.

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:		x				

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

Noise levels would not be altered as a result of this acquisition.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

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. Conflict 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) :

Land use would remain as dispersed recreation.

☼ 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.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

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 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				
e. Other:		x				

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

There would be no change to risk and health hazards as a result of this acquisition.

☼ 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.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

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**		**no**	**9a**.
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		**x**				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment, 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):

9a. Designation as a part of Lone Pine State Park would maintain the current condition of the subject property and would prevent future residential development on Tract 10A.

☼ 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.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. 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. Have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?			**x**		**no**	**10b.**
c. 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. Result in increased use of any energy source?		**x**				
➢e. Define projected revenue sources						**10e**
➢f. Define projected maintenance costs.						**10f**
g. Other:_____		**x**				

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

****10b. Flathead County property tax revenue will be lost as a result of state park designation. Annual property tax estimates are approximately $56.**

10e. Project revenue sources are Parks-earned revenues and state coal tax trust fund appropriations.

10f. Project maintenance costs are estimated at from $2,000 to $4,000 annually.

***** Property tax estimates are based on a grade-three timberland classification for Flathead County in 2006.***

☼ 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.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

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**			**11a**
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?			**x**			**11b**
➢c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings?			**x**			**11c**
♦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):

11a. & 11b. By acquiring this property as an addition to Lone Pine State Park, the prominent view of the Lone Pine bluffs and their timbered flanks will remain intact.

11c. This addition to Lone Pine will increase the park's ability to offer recreational and interpretive opportunities to area residents and visitors.

☼ 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.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

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**				
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 12a.)		**x**				
e. Other:		**x**				

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

☼ 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.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (cont.)

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			**13a**
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects that 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.						

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

13a. The cumulative effects of this project will be positive to the local community. A popular Flathead Valley landmark will remain visible and open to the public as a result of this acquisition. The ability to offer recreational opportunities to area residents will be greatly enhanced. The wildlife habitat qualities of the property will be perpetuated, providing for a large variety of species.

☼ 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.

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:

Alternative I - No Action:

Under a no-action alternative, this property will be converted to residential property. Traditional public use of the property may be eliminated as a result. In addition, the predominant view from Lone Pine's interpretive overlooks and from the city of Kalispell may be altered by residential development. Finally, the wildlife habitat qualities of this property may be altered as a result of a no-action alternative.

Alternative II - Acquisition of Tract 10A

Under this alternative, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks would acquire Tract 10A (40) in Section 24 of Township 28 north, Range 22 west. This property would be an addition to Lone Pine State Park. The acquisition of this parcel would be accomplished using state park acquisition funds. Daily operations will be included in Lone Pine's operating budget.

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

Noxious weed control will be a part of ongoing park operations.

3. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES/NO If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

The proposed project is minor in scope and effect. It will not have significant impacts to the physical or social environment. Therefore, this project does not require an EIS.

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?

In September of 2006, FWP nominated this parcel for acquisition under the Land Banking Program administered by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. A scoping meeting was held at Lone Pine State Park for the purpose of gaining public input. The meeting was attended by 14 citizens, all of whom favored acquisition. Comments were received by some attendees who preferred that FWP acquire the parcel as opposed to purchasing a perpetual easement on the property.

The draft environmental assessment for this proposal will be made available to the public for a 30-day comment period. During this time, FWP will notify the public through press releases, mailings, and additional media outlets. Comments will be evaluated prior to a decision notice issued by the Region One Supervisor.

5. Duration of comment period if any:

The duration of comment on this document will be 30 days, from July 18 through August 17, 2007.

6. Name, title, address, and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

David Landstrom, Regional Parks Program Manager, 490 North Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901, (406) 751-4574 or e-mail to dlandstrom@mt.gov.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

5g. Trail usage may result in increased stress to wildlife within the proposed acquisition. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will create seasonal buffer zones near nesting or denning sites, if such sites are identified, in compliance with ARM 12.8.209. Increases in wildlife disturbance resulting from pets will be mitigated through signing and enforcement of ARM 12.8.203. This administrative rule requires that all pets be in the immediate control of their owner.

There will be a positive effect on wildlife within the acquisition area resulting from state park designation. Under this designation, the habitat will remain largely unchanged from it current condition.

9a. Designation as a part of Lone Pine State Park would maintain the current condition of the subject property and would prevent future residential development on Tract 10A.

10b. Flathead County property tax revenue will be lost as a result of state park designation. Annual property tax estimates are approximately $56.

10e. Project revenue sources are Parks-earned revenues and state coal tax trust fund appropriations.

10f. Project maintenance costs are estimated at from $2,000 to $4,000 annually.

11a. & 11b. By acquiring this property as an addition to Lone Pine State Park, the prominent view of the Lone Pine bluffs and their timbered flanks will remain intact.

11c. This addition to Lone Pine will increase the park's ability to offer recreational and interpretive opportunities to area residents and visitors.

13a. The cumulative effects of this project will be positive to the local community. A popular Flathead Valley landmark will remain visible and open to the public as a result of this acquisition. The ability to offer recreational opportunities to area residents will be greatly enhanced. The wildlife habitat qualities of the property will be perpetuated, providing for a large variety of species.