



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Region 1
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901**

**Decision Notice
and
Finding of No Significant Impact
For Construction of Hiking Trail Project
at Lone Pine State Park
Environmental Assessment**

October 6, 2009

Proposed Action:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to construct approximately 1.5 to 2.5 miles of new trails on a recently acquired parcel of land at Lone Pine State Park. The trail would be approximately 18 inches wide and have a native soil tread, keeping in character with the surrounding trails and the more natural and secluded atmosphere of the area. The new trail would be open to foot travel only, due to a lack of an adjoining multiple-use trail which would allow for access of horses and bicycles. In addition, allowing for multiple-use would increase the probability of soil erosion due to the steepness of the terrain in areas. These developments are intended to 1) provide additional recreational opportunities to park visitors, 2) reduce soil erosion caused by cross-country travel, and 3) improve access to the southeastern portion of the park.

In 2007 FWP purchased 40 acres of land located in the southeastern portion of the park. A conservation easement was placed on the property at the time and is being monitored by the Flathead Land Trust. This proposed project does not violate the conservation easement.

This parcel of land is currently open to use by park visitors and has several user-created and game trails that are being utilized by hikers. There is, however, no established trail system in the parcel. Visitors using the area are traveling cross-country, creating a network of social trails leading to areas of soil erosion and vegetative damage. Many of the sections of user-created trails would be utilized in the proposed project. Areas that have eroded and are too steep would be rehabilitated and trails rerouted. The proposed trails would connect to the existing trails system in three different places.

Public Process:

FWP is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an environmental assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on September 14, 2009.

The public was notified in the following manners to comment on the draft EA, the proposed action, and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: *Helena Independent Record*, *Daily Inter Lake*, *the Flathead Beacon*
- One statewide press release
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web site: <http://fwp.mt.gov>

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope.

Summary of Public Comment:

One written response was received. The comment was written by the Flathead Land Trust, which monitors the conservation easement on the property. The comment was supportive of the proposed action.

Comment Summary:

- “As the holder of the Conservation Easement on this property, we are excited about enhanced opportunities for the public to enjoy this remarkable piece of property.”
- “We appreciate and support the Park’s decision to not allow multiple use of the trail in order to prevent soil erosion. We also greatly appreciate the Park’s decision to close, reroute, and rehabilitate user created trails that are located on steep slopes and are resulting in soil erosion. Both decisions are consistent with the intent of the Conservation Easement.”
- “The Flathead Land Trust supports the Park’s hiking trail plans, and we look forward to seeing the new trail system upon our next visit.”

FWP Response:

So noted.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI):

Based on the analysis in the environmental assessment (EA), I find the construction of the trail project, Alternative B, to be the preferred alternative. I have evaluated the EA and applicable laws, regulations, and policies and have determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

The draft EA will become the final EA and may be viewed at or obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region One, 490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901. Please direct requests and questions to Amy Grout, Park Manager, (406) 755-2706 or by e-mail to agrout@mt.gov.

In accordance with FWP policy, an appeal may be made by any person who has either commented in writing to the department on the proposed project, or who has registered or commented orally at a public meeting held by the department on the proposed project, or who can provide new evidence that would otherwise change the proposed plan. An appeal must be submitted to the Director of FWP in writing and must be postmarked or received within 30 days of this decision notice. The appeal must describe the basis for the appeal, how the appellant has

previously commented to the department or participated in the decision-making process, and how the department can provide relief. The appeal should be mailed to: Director, Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 East 6th, Avenue, Helena, MT 59620

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "David Landstrom", is displayed on a light yellow rectangular background.

October 6, 2009

David Landstrom
Regional Parks Manager

Date