



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718
September 7, 2010

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Decision Notice has been prepared for the Logan Fishing Access Site Proposed Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposed acquiring approximately 1.5 acres of land, by donation, along the Gallatin River for the purpose of establishing a fishing access site (FAS). Thirteen (13) public comments were received during the comment period that began July 23, 2010 and ended August 25, 2010.

The EA and Decision Notice may be obtained from FWP at the address provided above, or viewed on FWP's Internet website: <http://www.fwp.mt.gov>.

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and FWP evaluation, it is my decision to proceed with preferred Alternative B, as described in the Logan Fishing Access Site Proposed Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment, and recommend the FWP Commission accept the land donation in order to establish a fishing access site.

Questions regarding this Decision Notice should be mailed to:

Fish, Wildlife & Parks
C/O Todd Garrett
1400 S 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

Or e-mailed to: tgarrett@mt.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gerald Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gerald Walker
Regional Parks Manager



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region Three Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 South 19th Ave
Bozeman, MT 59718

September 7, 2010
Decision Notice for:

Logan Fishing Access Site Proposed Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment

Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposed acquiring approximately 1.5 acres of land in the town of Logan, Montana, along the Gallatin River for the purpose of establishing a fishing access site (FAS). The landowner has offered to donate the property to FWP.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks 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 July 23, 2010.

Public comments on the proposed project were taken from July 23, 2010 through August 25, 2010. The EA was mailed to 45 groups and individuals.

Summary of Public Comment

FWP received thirteen (13) comments regarding the proposed action; ten (10) comments supported the proposal, one (1) comment was impartial, and two (2) comments opposed the proposed action.

Comments supporting the proposed project: ten (10) total.

Examples of Comment Statements Supporting the Proposal

“I support Alternate B, the acceptance of the 1.5 acre tract of land for a FAS in Logan. What a great gift for the public.”

“I read with excitement the consideration that is being given to the addition of a fishing access on the Gallatin at Logan. Please accept this as my enthusiastic support for such consideration.”

Examples of Comment Statements Supporting the Proposal Continued

“The proposed site makes sense because it provides for the only developed access between the forks of the Gallatin and Three Forks.”

“We support the purchase of 1.5 acres of land in Logan, Montana along the Gallatin River to establish a fishing access site in Region 3.”

FWP Response: Duly Noted

Comments opposing the proposed project: two (2) total.

Examples of Comment Statements Opposing the Proposal

“The comments regarding water, 3c and 3e refer to floodwater or other flows and hazards such as flooding. Even with an approved boat ramp boaters and fishermen are very likely to drag their watercraft up and over the “flood control berm” which will result in deterioration of this berm.”

FWP Response: This EA addresses the acquisition of the site and a future EA would address development components, such as a boat ramp. In order for a boat ramp to be constructed, FWP would need to develop an engineering plan that would be subject to approval by Gallatin County, which would evaluate any potential impacts on the susceptibility of the area to flood impacts. Specific site-development plans proposed by FWP will be subject to public review and comment in a future environmental assessment.

“The note regarding increase in existing noise levels would be increased dramatically for those residents who live along the roads that lead to the proposed fishing access. You state that the “county park” is located between the site and the residential neighborhood and the property would minimize noise disturbance. The “park” has not been maintained in years and contains no vegetation that would help reduce noise levels. The roads leading to the site are dirt and gravel and the noise generated by an empty boat trailer would be VERY disturbing to the residents living next to those roads.”

FWP Response: Train and automobile traffic currently exist near the proposed acquisition site. While public access will add to existing traffic and associated noise levels, acquiring this site will not dramatically alter the existing human environment.

“The note regarding a need for new or altered governmental services was greatly under stated. There would be a greater need for both police and fire protection. As you state in this proposal there would be an increase in vehicle traffic in and out of Logan. Fishing accesses throughout the state are known locations for under-age drinking parties. There will be litter tossed along the riverbank and the adjacent areas, including the yards of those residents living along the roads that lead to the access. The increase in fire danger will also be magnified with the increase in traffic. The only fire protection in Logan is the volunteer fire departments in Three

Forks and Manhattan. During the hot summer months the park receives no irrigation and the weeds could be ignited by a parked vehicle or by careless smokers, not to mention fireworks.”

FWP Response: FWP is committed to being a good neighbor and would assign staff to care for this site, if acquired. FWP enforcement staff patrol FAS to ensure regulatory compliance and maintenance staff work to keep sites clean and safe for visitors. Additional governmental services beyond FWP efforts would not be required as this site would receive service from existing staff currently serving nearby FAS, such as Gallatin Forks. FWP mitigates fire hazards by prohibiting fireworks, regulating campfires, and mowing vegetation near parking areas. Should this site be acquired, FWP will release a future EA to address development including plans for an appropriate parking area.

“The note regarding the quality of tourism is highly overstated. There is one business in Logan that might see an increase in patrons but this is very unlikely. In conclusion the bad outweighs the good to bring this site into an unincorporated town. There must be other locations along the river that would have little or no impact on Montana residents.”

FWP Response: As stated in the EA, this site has the potential to positively impact tourism and recreation since it creates new recreational access. This section of the Gallatin River lacks public access and has been identified as a priority area to establish a fishing access site. FWP has investigated other properties in the Logan area that proved unfeasible. This generous donation of land will allow FWP to provide access to this section of the Gallatin River.

We received a comment criticizing acquiring a new site when existing sites are in need of improvements. This comment mentioned the need for FWP to mitigate dusty road conditions resulting from FAS traffic as an example of desired improvements.

FWP Response: FWP acknowledges that existing FAS would benefit from improvements and works towards accomplishing such improvements as funding allows.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and FWP evaluation, it is my decision to proceed with preferred alternative B, as described in the Logan Fishing Access Site Proposed Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment, and recommend the FWP Commission accept donation of the 1.5-acre tract of land in order to establish a fishing access site (FAS) and provide public access to this stretch of the Gallatin River. This decision notice focuses solely on the acquisition of the 1.5-acre parcel along the Gallatin River at Logan, Montana. If FWP were to initiate new development of the property for a fishing access site, a separate environmental assessment would be completed and the public would have the opportunity to comment on proposed developments.

Appeal

This project is subject to appeal, which must be submitted to the FWP Director (Mr. Joe Maurier, Director, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701) in writing and postmarked within 30 days of the date on this decision notice. The appeal must specifically describe the basis for the appeal, explain how the appellant has previously commented to the department or participated in the decision-making process, and lay out how FWP may address the concerns in the appeal. If you have questions regarding this decision notice, please contact Todd Garrett, Fishing Access Site Manager at 406-994-6987.



Gerald Walker
Regional Parks Manager
