



P.O. Box 1630, Miles City, MT 59301
Telephone (406) 234-0900 ~ Fax (406) 234-4368

July 3, 2012

To:

Governor's Office, c/o Mike Volesky, PO Box 200802, Helena, MT 59620*
Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Bldg, Room 106, PO Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620 *
Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality, Bonnie Lovelace, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620*
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks*:
-Director's Office (Reg Peterson) -Wildlife Division (Laura Geary)
-Legal Unit (Jessica Snyder) -Design & Construction (Paul Valle)
-Lands Section (Heather Noel) -Regional Information Officer's/ Office Managers/Reg Supervisors
-Fisheries Division (Beth Giddings) -Parks Division (Deb McRae)
Shane Colton, MT FWP Commissioner, 335 Clark, Billings MT 59101*
MT DNRC, Eastern Land Office, PO Box 1794, Miles City MT 59301*
Montana Historical Society, State Preservation Office, PO Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202 *
Montana Environmental Information Center, PO Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Montana State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave, PO Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624*
Montana Wildlife Federation, PO Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624*
Kevin Smith-DNRC, Water Projects Bureau*
Big Horn County Commissioners*
(*sent electronically)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Montana State Parks has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment for campground renovations and improvements at Tongue River Reservoir State Park. The proposed project is for that portion of Tongue River Reservoir State Park consisting of Camper's Point, Pee Wee Point North and South, Sand Point and Park-wide. As the proposed project is extensive, proposed work will be separated by park-wide projects and specific areas (Camper's Point, Pee Wee Point North and South and Sand Point).

Tongue River Reservoir State Park is located on Tongue River Reservoir, Big Horn County. It is located six miles north of Decker, Montana and one mile east of secondary highway 314. Proposed project will occur in Range 40E, Township 8 S, Sections 25, 26, 27 and 35.

The public comment period will extend until 5:00 p.m. Friday, July 20, 2012. Written comments can be mailed or emailed to the address below:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Attn: John Little
P.O. Box 1630
Miles City, MT 59301
jlittle@mt.gov

Thank you for your interest,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Little".

John Little
Region 7 Parks Manager

Enclosure

**Tongue River Reservoir State Park
Proposed Improvement
Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST**

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of Proposed State Action-** Campground Renovations and Improvements, Pee Wee Point North, Pee Wee Point South and Sand Point Campgrounds

2. **Agency Authority for the Proposed Action** – Montana State Parks, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

3. **Name of Project** Tongue River Reservoir State Park Campground Renovations

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

John Little, R7 Park Manager	Bob Peterson
Montana State Parks	Park Manager, Tongue River Reservoir State Park
Box 1630	Montana State Parks
Miles City, MT 59301	Box 8
406-234-0923	Decker, MT 59025
	406-757-2298

5. **If Applicable:**
 Estimated Construction/Commencement Date – Sept 2012
 Estimated Completion Date May 2013
 Current Status of Project Design (% complete) 65%

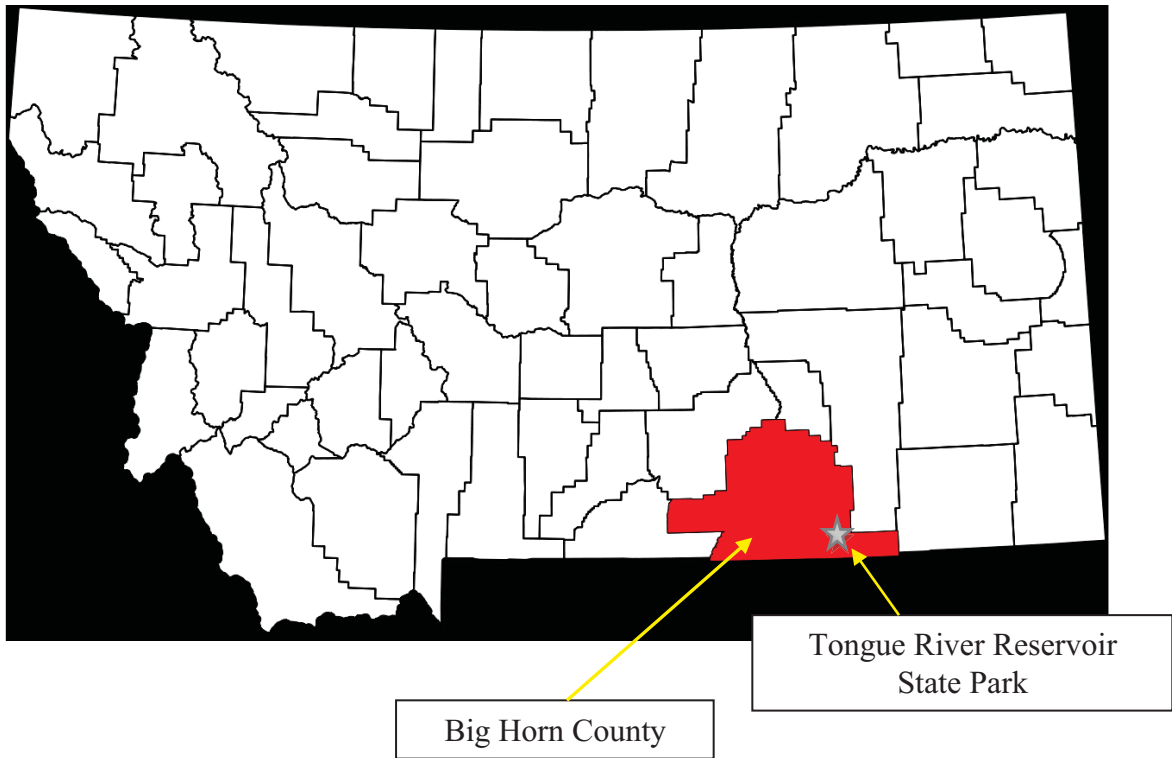
6. **Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)**
 Tongue River Reservoir State Park is located on Tongue River Reservoir, Big Horn County. It is located six miles north of Decker, Montana and one mile east of secondary highway 314. Proposed project will occur in Range 40E, Township 8 S, Sections 25, 26, 27 and 35.

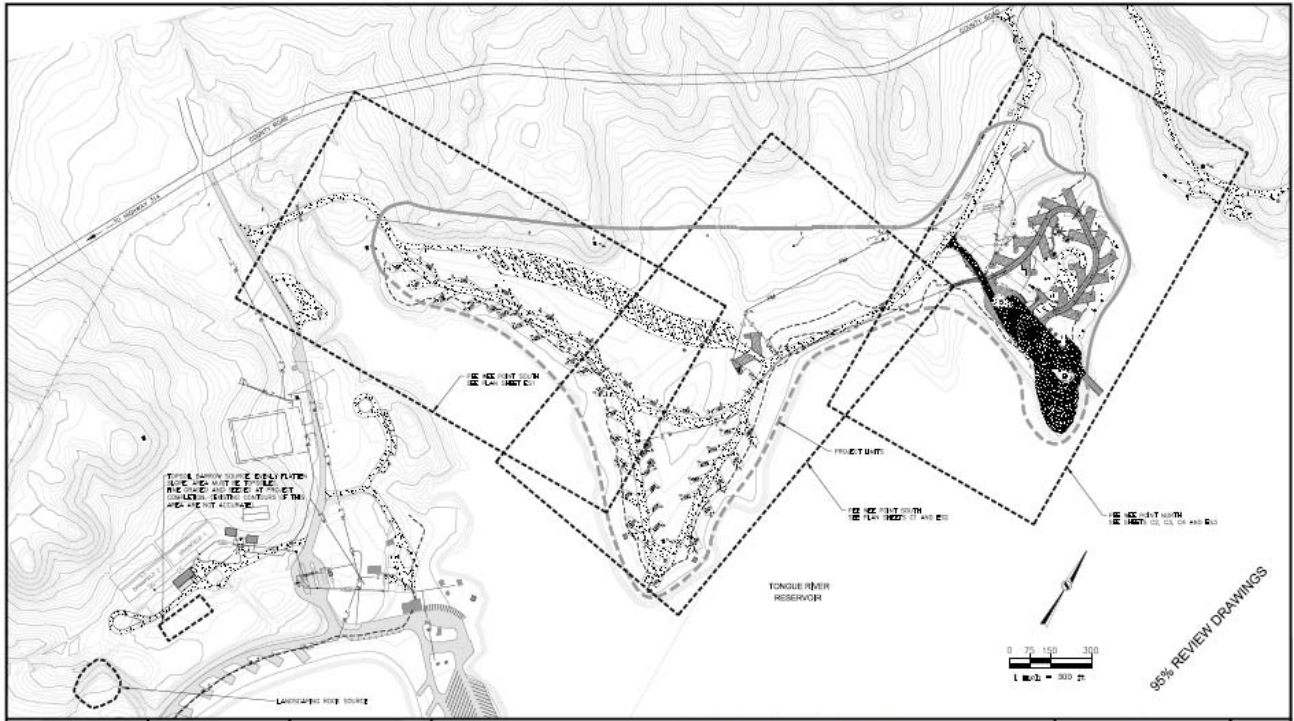
7. **Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

(a) Developed: residential..... __ acres industrial..... __ acres (b) Open Space/Woodlands/ Recreation <u>89</u> acres (c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas __ acres	(d) Floodplain __ acres (e) Productive: irrigated cropland __ acres dry cropland __ acres forestry __ acres rangeland __ acres other __ acres
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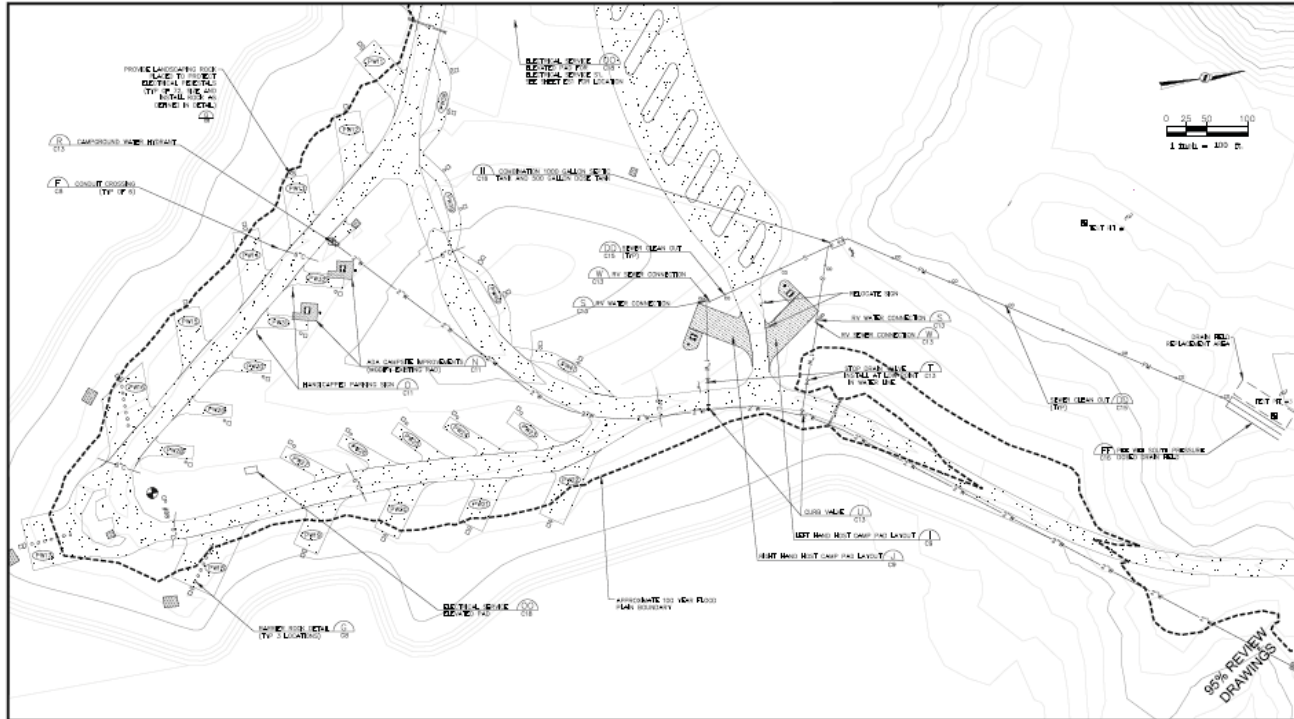
8. **Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be**

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.

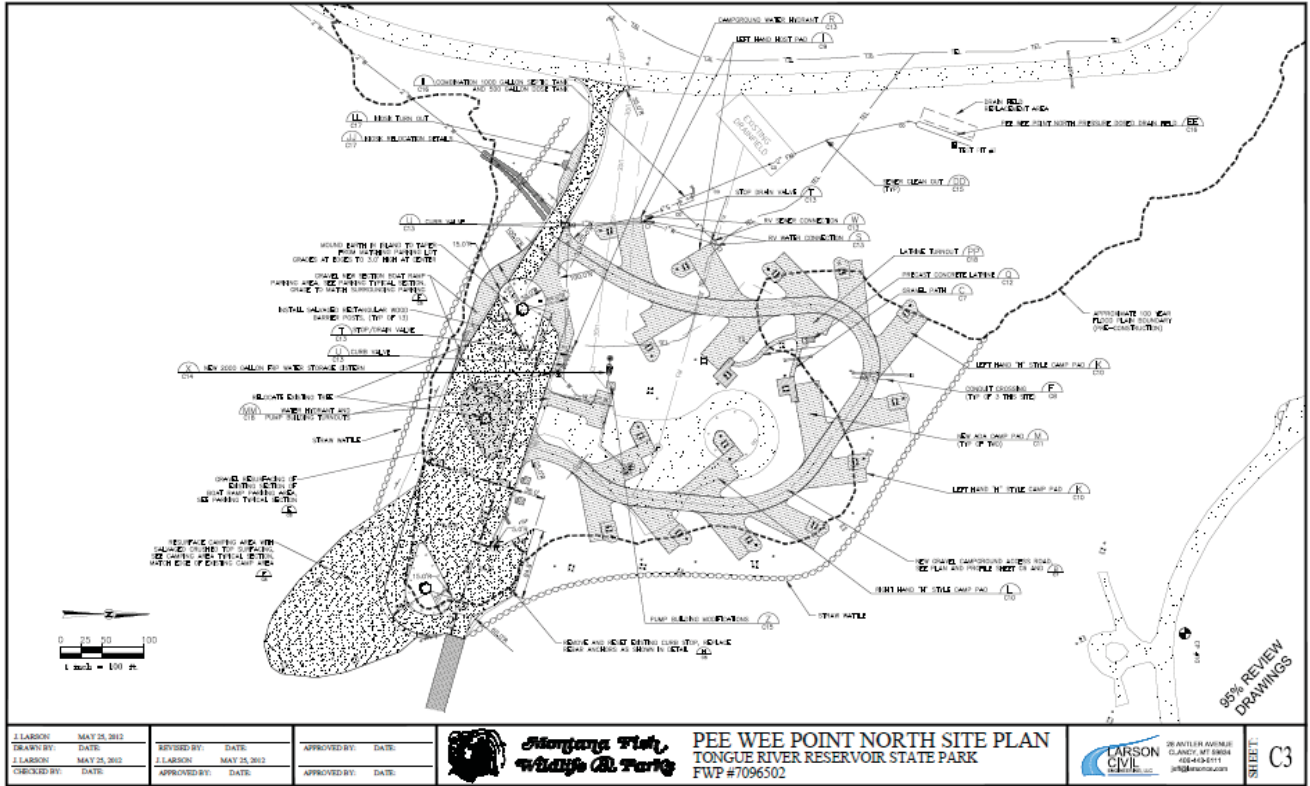




DESIGNED BY: J. LARSON	DATE: MAY 25, 2012	REVISIONS BY: DATE:	APPROVED BY: DATE:	OVERALL SITE PLAN TONGUE RIVER RESERVOIR STATE PARK FWP #7096502	28 SOUTH AVENUE CLANDY, UT 84014 (435) 434-1111 jlarson@carsoncivil.com	SHEET C1
DRAWN BY: J. LARSON	DATE: MAY 25, 2012	APPROVED BY: DATE:				
CHECKED BY: DATE:	APPROVED BY: DATE:	APPROVED BY: DATE:				



DESIGNED BY: J. LARSON	DATE: MAY 25, 2012	REVISIONS BY: DATE:	APPROVED BY: DATE:	PEE WEE POINT SOUTH SITE PLAN TONGUE RIVER RESERVOIR STATE PARK FWP #7096502	28 SOUTH AVENUE CLANDY, UT 84014 (435) 434-1111 jlarson@carsoncivil.com	SHEET C2
DRAWN BY: J. LARSON	DATE: MAY 25, 2012	APPROVED BY: DATE:				
CHECKED BY: DATE:	APPROVED BY: DATE:	APPROVED BY: DATE:				



9. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.

Tongue River Reservoir State Park Description and Background

Tongue River Dam was constructed between 1937 and 1940 by the Montana State Water Board. The primary purpose of the dam was to provide irrigation water for the Tongue River Water Users and the secondary purpose was to provide flood protection in the Tongue River Basin. A significant flood event in 1978 caused significant damage to the existing concrete spillway. A subsequent inspection by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers declared the dam unsafe in 1980. In 1992, the U.S. Congress approved a compact between the State of Montana, the Federal government and the Northern Cheyenne Indian Tribe through the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reserved Water Rights Settlement Act of 1992. The Settlement Act provided funding to: 1) increase spillway capacity at the dam; 2) raise the reservoir pool four feet to provide additional irrigation water for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe; 3) provide for mitigation of impacts to public recreational facilities at the reservoir; and 4) provide environmental mitigation and enhancement. This work was completed in May of 1999.

Tongue River Reservoir State Park receives approximately 80,000 visitors annually. In the past few years, visitation has varied from a high of 105,000 visitors in 2009 to a low of 73,000 visitors in 2011. The high number of visitors is likely due in part to the increase in population in and around Billings and Sheridan, Wyoming areas. Many activities are available at this 642-acre state park, including boating, fishing, swimming, camping, picnicking, bicycling, wildlife viewing, and photography. The 12-mile long reservoir is situated among scenic red shale, juniper canyons, and the open prairies of southeastern

Montana. Due to its remote location most visitors stay at the park. There are six campgrounds located throughout the park with camping for RV's and tents. There are numerous locations for motorboat access to the reservoir including one marina and two boat ramps. The park is loved by Montana and Wyoming anglers, campers, and boaters. Water sports are popular here and the reservoir boasts excellent fishing as five state record fish have been taken from its waters (i.e., black crappie, northern pike, rock bass, white crappie, and yellow bullhead).

Many anglers utilize the park for its diversity of fishing opportunities. Excellent game fish opportunities in the reservoir exist for black and white crappie, channel catfish, smallmouth bass, walleye, and yellow perch. Other fish species in the reservoir include common carp, green sunfish, largemouth bass, longnose sucker, northern pike, pumpkinseed, rock bass, shorthead redhorse, spottail shiner, stonecat, white sucker, yellow bullhead, and black bullhead. Walleye have been stocked in the reservoir each spring (50,000 at 1.2 inches) and summer (1,000,000 at 0.2 inches) since 1996. Sauger were stocked in the reservoir in the spring of 2003 and 2004. In 2003, an angler survey estimated that there were a total of 23,991 days fished (77% residents, 23% nonresidents) on the reservoir with 560 trips. In 2003 the reservoir ranked 27th in the state and first in Region 7 for number of days fished. The reservoir has ranked first in the Region since 1997.

The Tongue Reservoir State Park has received federal funding in the past to improve motorboat access from the Tongue River Dam mitigation settlement to address impacts from the dam reconstruction and increased reservoir elevation. Mitigation funding was used to replace State Park facilities that existed prior to the dam reconstruction. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks received additional funding to increase motor boat access (\$1,096,000 mitigation funding; \$799,475 Federal Wallup Breaux funds; \$615,525 state funds; \$2,511,000 total project). The projects included constructing a concession and storage facility (dry dock storage) at Camper's Point, installing a new dock with 12 slips at the Camper's Point marina, installing new signs, picnic tables and fire rings at Camper's Point and Pee Wee Point, constructing a new road at Rattlesnake Point and installing new signs at Sand Point. This work was completed in 1999. A project completed in 2008 included asphalt paving of the entrance road and interior roads, parking areas and camp pads at Camper's Point, upgrade of the water system on Camper's Point, installation of electrical hookups at 40 camp pads on Camper's Point, 54 hardened gravel camp pads on Pee Wee Point South, construction of a shop and office building and installation of two housing units for Park employees.

In addition the park receives federal funding for motorboat access operations and maintenance through grant F-95-DMA. Work completed under this grant includes general operations and maintenance at the park specifically related to motorboat access and use.

The Camper's Point, Pee Wee Point, and Sand Point areas will be affected by the proposed project.

Camper's Point

Camper's Point is the location of the majority of park developments. Motorboat activity and camping are the main activities in this area of the park. The park headquarters, park shop and administrative storage area and four employee residences are all located at Camper's point making this the central location for employees at the Park. In addition, a 40-unit campground and the privately operated marina / concession facility are also located on Camper's Point making this a central area for all visitors to the park. The entrance road, parking areas and the 40-unit campground are all paved with asphalt. There are two information kiosks, garbage cans, three day-use picnic shelters with tables, and a day use parking area. In the campground all of the 40 campsites have electrical hookups, are asphalt paved and all have picnic tables and fire rings. There are six vault latrines, four water spigots, fish cleaning station, and a trailer dump station. There is a double wide concrete boat ramp with a courtesy dock. The privately operated

marina at Camper's Point offers a variety of sundry items, beverages, fuel, fishing bait and tackle, boat rentals, a slip dock, and a dry dock storage area. At the administrative area at Camper's point there are three septic tanks with a lift station and a leach field, shop, four employee housing units, water well, garbage transfer station and other maintenance and administrative items.

Pee Wee Point

The Pee Wee Point areas are also important to campers and motorboat users. There are two campgrounds and a boat ramp with courtesy dock in this area. The two separate campgrounds are, Pee Wee Point South and Pee Wee Point North. At Pee Wee Point South, there are 54 gravel hardened campsites with picnic tables and fire rings, numerous garbage sites and three shelters for camping. At Pee Wee Point North there are 14 picnic tables and fire rings with dispersed camping allowed which results in as many as 30 or more camp units on any given summer weekend, two vault latrines, three water spigots, one well, one septic tank with lift station and leach field, one well house, single lane concrete boat ramp with courtesy dock, and a day use parking area.

Sand Point

The Sand Point area is a smaller less developed area, but equally important to campers, for those visiting the park for just the day, and motorboat users for its beach location. In the campground, there are 7 soft-pad campsites and 25 hard-pad (graveled) campsites with picnic tables and fire rings. There are five vault latrines in the immediate vicinity of Sand Point. Dispersed camping is allowed at Sand Point resulting in as many as 60 camps on a Saturday during the summer. There are three day use picnic shelters with picnic tables, five vault latrines, garbage receptacles, and a day-use beach area. The upland area adjacent to Sand Point has two vault latrines and, 7 gravel camp pads with picnic tables and fire rings.

Proposed Action, Purpose, and Benefits of the Action

The proposed project is for that portion of Tongue River Reservoir State Park consisting of Camper's Point, Pee Wee Point North and South, Sand Point and Park-wide. As the proposed project is extensive, proposed work will be separated by park-wide projects and specific areas (Camper's Point, Pee Wee Point North and South and Sand Point).

Park-wide projects

A complete new signing plan will be developed to reflect Montana State Park standards and allow for a decrease in the overall number of signs, thereby easing the ability of visitors to become informed.

Camper's Point

Upgrade of one site on Campers Point South to include water hook up and sewer connection at the site for camp host site utilization. Work will require a septic tank, fluid lift station and a 600 foot long run of sewer pipe to access existing drainage fields to the north. Water lines will also be installed with buried piping for a similar run. The dry dock storage area will be expanded to provide more space for the private Concessionaire's operations at the park including renting secured space to store privately owned recreational gear including motorboats on trailers, camp trailers and campers. Owing to Tongue River Reservoir's remoteness from the major population centers it serves and fuel costs, recreationists seek out this service to help reduce their commuting costs. If funding allows, this project will also add a second Slip Dock in the Camper's Point area to meet the public demand for a place to secure their boats overnight. Both the Dry Dock storage and Boat Slips will be managed by the Tongue River State Park private concessionaire.

Pee Wee Point South

Upgrade of 41 existing campsites. The upgrade of the existing sites will include installation of electrical service at all 41 campsites along with associated transformer and circuit breaker panels, for temporary recreational use by those wishing to camp at the park. A water well, the water from which will be used for irrigation purposes only, will also be constructed. Also planned are two camp host sites with associated water and sewer infrastructure. A parking area and a picnic shelter will be added to the open space close to these camp host pads. Project will result in more sites that provide an experience highly sought after by many park users which includes electrical service and defined graveled camp pads adjacent to the reservoir shore.

Pee Wee Point North

Reconstruction of 14 campsites. These campsites currently have only randomly dispersed picnic tables and fire rings. Under the proposed project, all sites will have hardened gravel camp pads. Two sites will have amenities for camp host usage. At present, these sites are poorly defined, lack gravel camp pads and have been heavily used. This scenario has resulted in almost complete removal of vegetation. Heavy rains turn these sites into mud holes, resulting in increased resource damage from vehicles and ordinary use.

Future Projects:

Evaluation of the proposed project determined total costs to be approximately 3 million dollars. The proposed project, as a result, will be completed in two phases. Phase One, to be started in the fall of 2012 or spring of 2013, will consist of the items listed for Pee Wee Point North and, Pee Wee Point South, the Slip Dock and expansion of the Dry Dock storage area on Campers Point. Estimated total cost for Phase One is \$1.2 million.

Phase Two of the proposed project will occur at a future, yet to be determined, date. Phase Two will consist of any developments not completed during Phase One construction including the work on Sand Point and adjacent upland area. The total estimated cost for Phase Two is \$1.8 million.

Sand Point - Construction of up to 46 new gravel hardened back-in campsites and renovation of 11 existing campsites. Area of new construction will be in areas currently having little development. New construction is intended to eliminate current resource damage. This will be achieved by restricting vehicles to graveled surfaces once the project is complete.

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

(a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
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Potential Permit Needs.

- County of Big Horn:
 - Building permit.
 - Waste Water for new and modified drain fields
 - Lake Shore Protection
- SWPPP
- DEQ: Water Improvement Approval
- Army Corp of Engineers:
 - 404 Permit
- FWP 124

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
<u>Phase One-</u>	
Boat – In - Lieu-	\$198,333.
Highway Fuel Tax Funds -	\$266,667.
Federal Wallop-Breaux	<u>- \$735,000.</u>
Total	\$1,200,000.

Phase Two-

Total \$1,800,000.00
To be completed as funds are available.

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Directors Office 1625 11 th Ave PO Box 201601 Helena, MT 59620 406-444-2074	

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

As of this writing no agencies have been contacted for consultation.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> 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						

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

1a. Many of the improvements will drastically reduce or eliminate current damage to, soil and vegetation being demonstrated at these sites at this time.

- ⊗ 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

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ³				Can Impact Be Mitigated ³	Comment Index
	Unknown ³	None	Minor ³	Potentially Significant		
< a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			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-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						

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

2a, 2e. Minor air quality to include dust and machinery exhaust will be present during construction.

- ∩ 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

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ³				Can Impact Be Mitigated ³	Comment Index
	Unknown ³	None	Minor ³	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				
z. 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:						

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

3a. Increase of hard surface sites and roads could see a minimal increase of runoff in major weather events.

3f. Use of heavy equipment to haul gravel and prepare sites could result in minimal air particulate increase during construction period.

- 3 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)
- z Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- zz Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. <u>VEGETATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ³				Can Impact Be Mitigated ³	Comment Index
	Unknown ³	None	Minor ³	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-I, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:						

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

4a,b. Construction will result in minor and temporary loss of vegetative cover. Areas disturbed during construction along with areas currently denuded of vegetation will be reseeded with a mixture of native grasses.

4e. Disturbance of ground could allow a minor increase of noxious weed growth. Weed control to become routine maintenance.

- ∩ 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

< 5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u>	IMPACT ³				Can Impact Be Mitigated ³	Comment Index
	Unknown ³	None	Minor ³	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
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 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				
4zh. 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				
4zi. 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:						

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

- 3 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)
- 4 Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- 44 Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u>	IMPACT ³				Can Impact Be Mitigated ³	Comment Index
	Unknown ³	None	Minor ³	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			
b. Exposure of people to serve 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:						

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

6a. Increase in seasonal visitor usage due to site improvements may change total noise emission for limited selective times. Temporary increase in noise emission from heavy equipment use will be noticed during construction.

- 3 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)
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HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ³				Can Impact Be Mitigated ³	Comment Index
	Unknown ³	None	Minor ³	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: _____						

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

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- < Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
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HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ³				Can Impact Be Mitigated ³	Comment Index
	Unknown ³	None	Minor ³	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:						

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

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- zz Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ³				Can Impact Be Mitigated ³	Comment Index
	Unknown ³	None	Minor ³	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
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:						

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

9c. Expansion of existing dry dock storage facility and additional boat slips will likely result in increased business activity at the privately managed concessionoperation.

- 3 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)
- z Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- zz Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ³				Can Impact Be Mitigated ³	Comment Index
	Unknown ³	None	Minor ³	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						
< f. Define projected maintenance costs.						
g. Other: _____						

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

- 10a. Project will increase public/recreation usage and facilities, increase need for road maintenance, increase needed water supply, sewer and septic systems, solid waste disposal.
- 10c. Project will need to have additional transformer sites for electrical service.
- 10d. Electric usage is projected to increase beyond current usage.

3 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)

z Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

zz Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

< 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u>	IMPACT ³				Can Impact Be Mitigated ³	Comment Index
	Unknown ³	None	Minor ³	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
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? (Attach Tourism Report)			X			
çd. For P-R/D-I, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other:						

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

11b. Project will have minor positive impacts to the aesthetic character of the park by confining vehicles and camp trailers and RV to designated, graveled roadways and camp pads resulting in a more organized and professional appearance.

11c. Project will address public demands for additional camp pads with electrical service by adding electrical service at 41 existing camp pads on Pee Wee South. Currently there are 40 electrical service camp pads located on Camper’s Point. Project will add five additional camp host pads, resulting in additional assistance to visitors in need of information, assistance with equipment issues, etc.

3 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)

ç Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

çç Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ³				Can Impact Be Mitigated ³	Comment Index
	Unknown ³	None	Minor ³	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 12.a)		X				
e. Other:						

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

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>	IMPACT ³				Can Impact Be Mitigated ³	Comment Index
	Unknown ³	None	Minor ³	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:						
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				
cf. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)						
cg. 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):

- 3 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)
- z Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- zz Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

This analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment. The areas of the parks proposed for improvements are currently being used by the public. The proposed action will improve this public use while adding amenities, such as increased number of camp pads with electrical hookups that the public has been requesting.

Land, air and water resources will be impacted by the proposed project. The proposed project will cause some disruption, displacement, compaction, and over-covering of the soil. During construction, emissions will contain some pollutants and odors. These emissions and odors will be minor and temporary. Defining the roadways and camp pads with gravel surfacing will confine traffic to these areas allowing for vegetation to reestablish and reduce future discharge into surface water. During construction however, there may be discharge into surface water that may alter turbidity, dissolved oxygen or water temperature. Construction will cause changes in drainage patterns of surface runoff. Best Management Practices will be utilized during design and construction of the project to minimize this potential. In addition, culverts will be located in areas to minimize negative effects of flooding to the road and surrounding areas.

There will be minimal impacts on vegetation, fish, and wildlife by the proposed project. All construction activities will be occurring in areas that have been previously disturbed. The proposed project will not cause changes in the plant species or plant communities of the park. Construction will disturb plants in the specific area of construction, but will not alter plant species or plant communities in the larger area of the park. To minimize the spread of weeds, revegetation with native grasses and forbes will occur in disturbed areas of the proposed project. The proposed project will not cause the deterioration of critical fish and wildlife habitat or change the diversity or abundance of game and nongame species. The proposed work will not have any impact in addition to current impacts on any fish and wildlife – including listed species.

There will be minor impacts on the human environment. There will be temporary increase in noise during construction of the proposed project. The proposed project should not affect land use in the area. All construction will occur within the park in previously disturbed areas. The proposed project will increase electrical use, water use, and sewer use at the park. The electrical system and water system will be upgraded with the proposed project. In addition, drains fields will be added where appropriate and needed. The proposed project will improve visitor services in both site access and available facilities at Tongue River Reservoir State Park. Both the quantity and quality of the tourism/recreation opportunity and setting will be improved by the proposed project. There is a low likelihood that cultural properties would be impacted by the proposed project.

Both the quantity and quality of the tourism/recreation opportunity and setting will be improved by the proposed project. Proposed action will be confined to previously disturbed areas and will also address existing design deficiencies that have resulted in minor impacts to vegetation and soils. There will be other minor impacts to the physical and human environment that will be confined to the construction phase of the project and will therefore be short-lived. Best Management practices will be utilized during both the design and construction phases of the project to further minimize impacts.

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 A: No Action

This alternative leaves the area in its current state. There will be no expansion in the offering of electrical service to the 41 camp pads at Pee Wee South camp area. Campers will continue to use electrical generators at these camp pads. The use of generators produces exhaust fumes, noise pollution and the threat of gasoline spillage when filling fuel tanks will continue along with the risk of accidental fire from improperly stored gasoline containers. The camp area at Pee Wee North will remain without a

hardened surface. Further negative impacts to the soil and the vegetative community will continue unabated at this camp area along with camper dissatisfaction during and immediately following rain events. Proper stewardship of the area may require closure of this popular camp area to prevent further resource degradation and to allow for reseeded and reestablishment of native ground cover species.

2. 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:

1. No Action
2. Proposed Project

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

Possible erosion control measures to comply with SWPPP, DEQ and county regulations on wastewater and water systems.

4. 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:

Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, 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.

5. 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 public will be notified in the following ways to comment on the EA for the Tongue River Reservoir State Park.

1. Legal notices will be published in the *BILLINGS GAZETTE*, *HELENA INDEPENDENT RECORD*, *MILES CITY STAR* and the *SHERIDAN PRESS*.
2. Legal notice and the draft EA will be posted on the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices>.

6. Duration of comment period if any:

The public comment period will be 21-days in length, June 30, 2012 – July 20, 2012.

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

John Little	Bob Peterson
R7 Park Manager	Park Manager, Tongue River
Box 1630	Box 8
Miles City, MT 59301	Decker, MT 59025
406-234-0900	406-757-2298

Appendix A:

PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST HB 495

Date June 21, 2012 Person Reviewing John Little

Project Location: Tongue River Reservoir, Big Horn Count, MT. Range 40 E, Township 8 S, Sections 25, 26, 27, and 35.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK: Campground Renovation and Improvement, Tongue River Reservoir State Park, Camper's Point, Pee Wee Point and Sand Point Campgrounds.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under HB 495 rules. (Please check all that apply and comment as necessary).

- A. New roadway built over undisturbed land?
Comments: No.
- B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments: No new buildings will be constructed as a part of this proposed project.
- C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments: Yes, for a drain field to be used by the campground hosts and trenching for water, waste water and electrical lines.
- D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments: New , hardened camp pads will be constructed on land that is currently used as camp spots and lacks a hardened surface. Modifications to the parking lot at Pee Wee North campground will not increase parking capacity by 25%.
- E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments: There will be no shoreline alteration.
- F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments: There will be no construction into the reservoir.
- G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments: No.
- H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments: All new utility lines will be underground.
- I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments: Proposed project will reduce overall number of campsites on Pee Wee Point North and Sand

Point where “dispersed camping” is presently occurring. Over use of this area by dispersed camping is resulting in resource damage. Project will delineate campsites by graveling the camp pads. Proposed action will develop 14 campsites on Pee Wee North and up to 46 camp sites on Sand Point. Total number of campsites reduced by the project will be less than 25%.

- J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments: Construction of hardened campsites and discontinuation of dispersed camping at Pee Wee Point North and Sand Point would change the existing use patterns by restricting wheeled vehicles to graveled surfaces.

**APPENDIX B
TOURISM REPORT
MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)/HB495**

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks have initiated the review process as mandated by HB495 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Carol Crockett, Visitor Service Manager
Montana Office of Tourism-Department of Commerce
PO Box 200533
301 S Park
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Project Name: Tongue River Reservoir State Park Campground Renovations

Project Location: Tongue River Reservoir State Park, Big Horn County, MT, six miles north of Decker, MT, one mile east of highway 314. Township 8 South, Range 40 East, Sections 25, 26, 27, 35.

Project Description: Proposed project is broken into two phases due to total cost estimate of three million dollars.

Phase One. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to 1) create five camp host pads with electrical, water and sewer hookups, one on an existing campsite at Campers Point and two each on new campsites at Pee Wee Point North and Pee Wee Point South, 2) expand existing dry dock storage area managed by private concessionaire for storage of boats and camp trailers. 3) install an additional slip dock to be managed by private concessionaire. 4) Upgrade 41 existing campsites on Pee Wee Point South by adding electrical hookups for camper use. 5) Install a water well on Pee Wee Point South for irrigation purposes. 6) Reconstruct 14 campsites on Pee Wee Point North by hardening them with gravel. This camp area currently has no gravel and camp sites are poorly defined and become extremely muddy and slippery during rain events. 7) Complete and install a new signing plan to decrease overall number of signs thereby easing the ability of visitors to orientate themselves and become better informed.

Phase Two. Construction of 46 new gravel hardened back-in campsites and renovation of 11 existing campsites on Sand Point and adjacent upland area. As with work on Pee Wee Point North, this project is intended to eliminate existing resource damage that is occurring from dispersed camping on non-hardened surfaces. Vehicles in both camp areas will be restricted to the graveled surfaces once the project is completed.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?

NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to positively impact the tourism and recreation industry

economy if properly maintained. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?

NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to improve quality and quantity of tourism and recreational opportunities if properly maintained. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

Signature Carol Crockett, Visitor Services Manager Date June 29, 2012

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