Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region 2 Headquarters
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
April 1, 2016

Dear Interested Citizen:

Enclosed you will find for your review the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposal to implement a site improvement project at its 31-acre Bearmouth Fishing Access Site (FAS), located along the upper Clark Fork River about 15 miles west of Drummond in Granite County. The FAS is just north of Interstate 90 at Bearmouth exit 138, and it consists of property divided north and south by the river, and west and east by Bearmouth Bridge. A small gravel parking area in the northeast portion is currently its only facility. FWP proposes to build a short gravel access road, 12-stall gravel vehicle and trailer parking area, combination gravel and concrete boat ramp, and concrete vault latrine in the southwest portion of the FAS, and upgrade and fence the existing (overflow) parking area in the northeast portion. The purpose would be to provide boat access to the river and safe off-highway parking, while increasing recreational opportunities at the FAS.

The Draft EA is also available for review in Helena at FWP's Headquarters, the State Library and the Environmental Quality Council. A copy may be obtained by mailing Region 2 FWP (address above), phoning 406-542-5540, emailing shrose@mt.gov, or viewing FWP's Internet website http://fwp.mt.gov ("News," then "Recent Public Notices," beginning April 1).

Comments on this draft EA and proposed project must be received by FWP no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 2, 2016. Comments should be mailed to Sharon Rose at the address above or emailed to shrose@mt.gov. If you have questions, please contact Rory Zarling at 406-542-5561.

As part of the decision making process under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), I plan to issue the Decision Notice for this EA very soon after the end of the public comment period.

Sincerely,

Randy Arnold
Regional Supervisor

RA/sr

Enclosure: Draft EA for Bearmouth FAS Improvement Project

Draft
Environmental Assessment

BEARMOUTH FISHING ACCESS SITE
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

March 2016

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Bearmouth Fishing Access Site
Proposed Improvement Project
Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of proposed state action:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has owned the approximately 31-acre Bearmouth Fishing Access Site (FAS) on the Clark Fork River in Granite County since 2006 but the site is currently undeveloped aside from a small gravel parking area (Figures 1 and 2). In order to provide more recreational opportunities at the FAS, FWP proposes to develop the site by building a larger graveled parking area, boat ramp, and vault latrine in the southwest portion of the FAS; and by upgrading and fencing the existing parking area in the northeast portion (Figure 3). These improvements would provide boat access to the river and safe off-highway parking. Besides floating and angling, the public would likely continue to use the FAS for picnicking, wildlife viewing, and other similar activities. The site is and would remain day-use only.

2. Agency authority for the proposed action:

The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted Section 87-1-605, Montana Code Annotated (MCA), which directs FWP to acquire, develop and operate a system of fishing accesses. The legislature earmarked a funding account to ensure that the fishing access site program would be implemented. Section 87-1-303, MCA, authorizes the collection of fees and charges for the use of fishing access sites, and contains rule-making authority for their use, occupancy, and protection. Furthermore, Section 23-1-110, MCA, and Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 12.2.433 guide public involvement and comment for improvements at state parks and fishing access sites, which this document provides.

ARM 12.8.602 requires the Department to consider the wishes of the public, the capacity of the site for development, environmental impacts, long-range maintenance, protection of natural features and impacts on tourism as these elements relate to development or improvement to fishing access sites or state parks. This document will illuminate the facets of the Proposed Action in relation to this rule. See Appendix A for the HB 495 qualification checklist.

3. **Name of project:** Bearmouth Fishing Access Site Proposed Improvement Project

4. Project sponsor:
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 2
3201 Spurgin Rd
Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 542-5500

Figure 1. General location of Bearmouth FAS, located within the upper Clark Fork River basin.

5. Anticipated Schedule:
Estimated Comment Period: April 2016
Estimated Decision Notice: early May 2016
Estimated Commencement Date: Fall 2016
Estimated Completion Date: Fall 2016
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 35%

6. Location:
Bearmouth FAS is located on the north and south side of the Clark Fork River (Figure 4), 33 miles east of Missoula (and 15 miles west of Drummond) and just north of Interstate-90 at exit 138, in Granite County (Lat 46.701, Long -113.434)

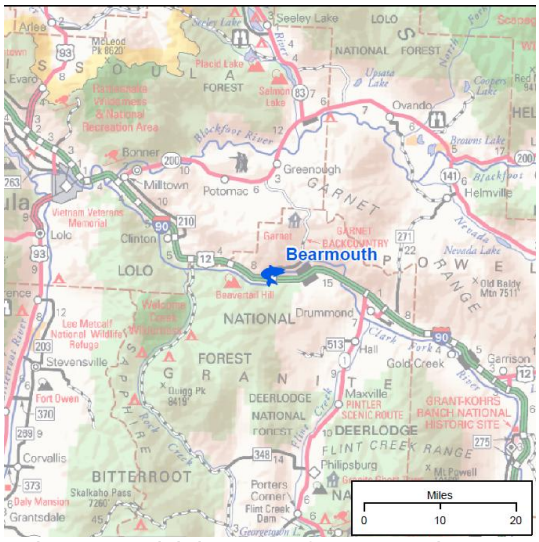

Figure 2. Vicinity map of Bearmouth FAS.

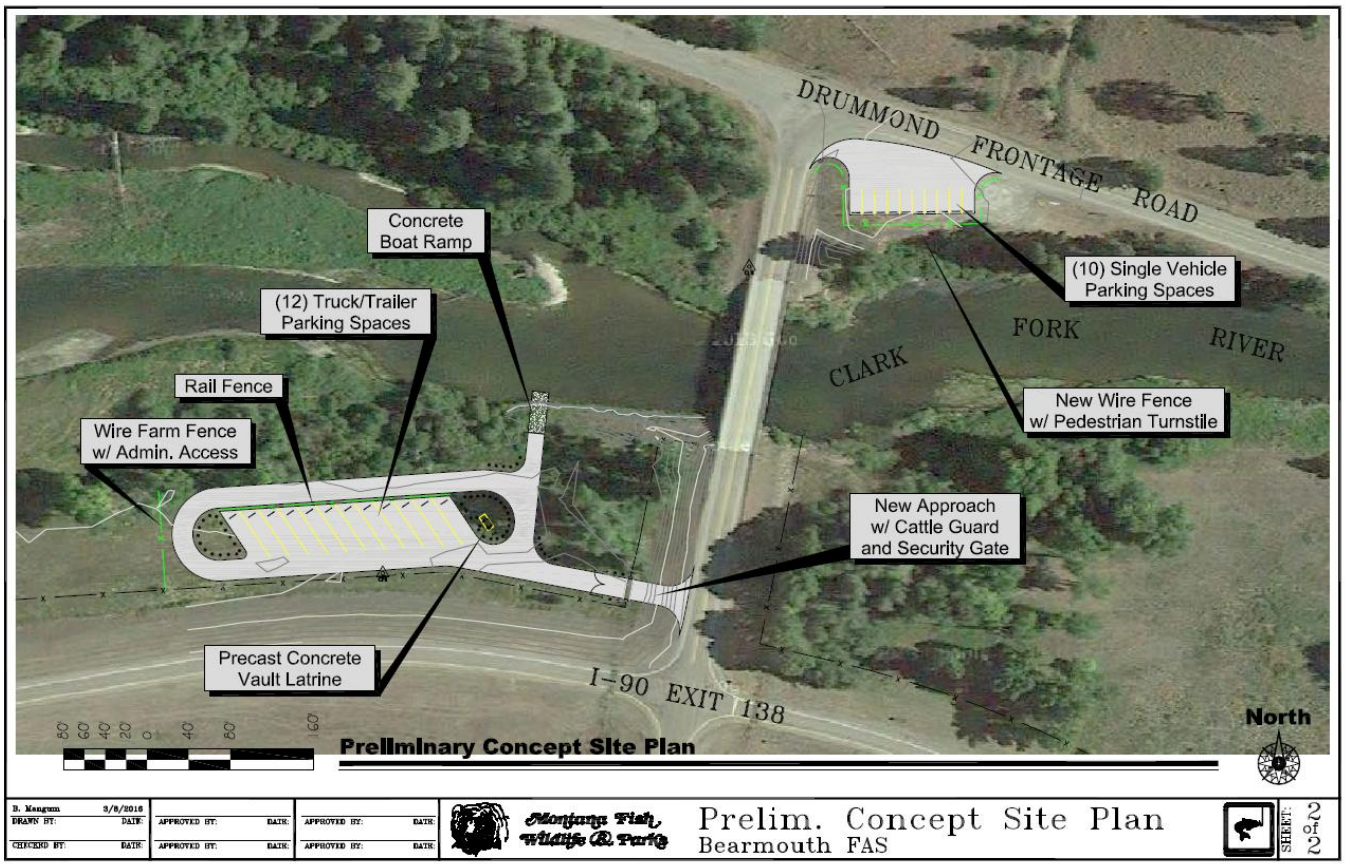

Figure 3. Preliminary Concept Site Plan for Bearmouth FAS

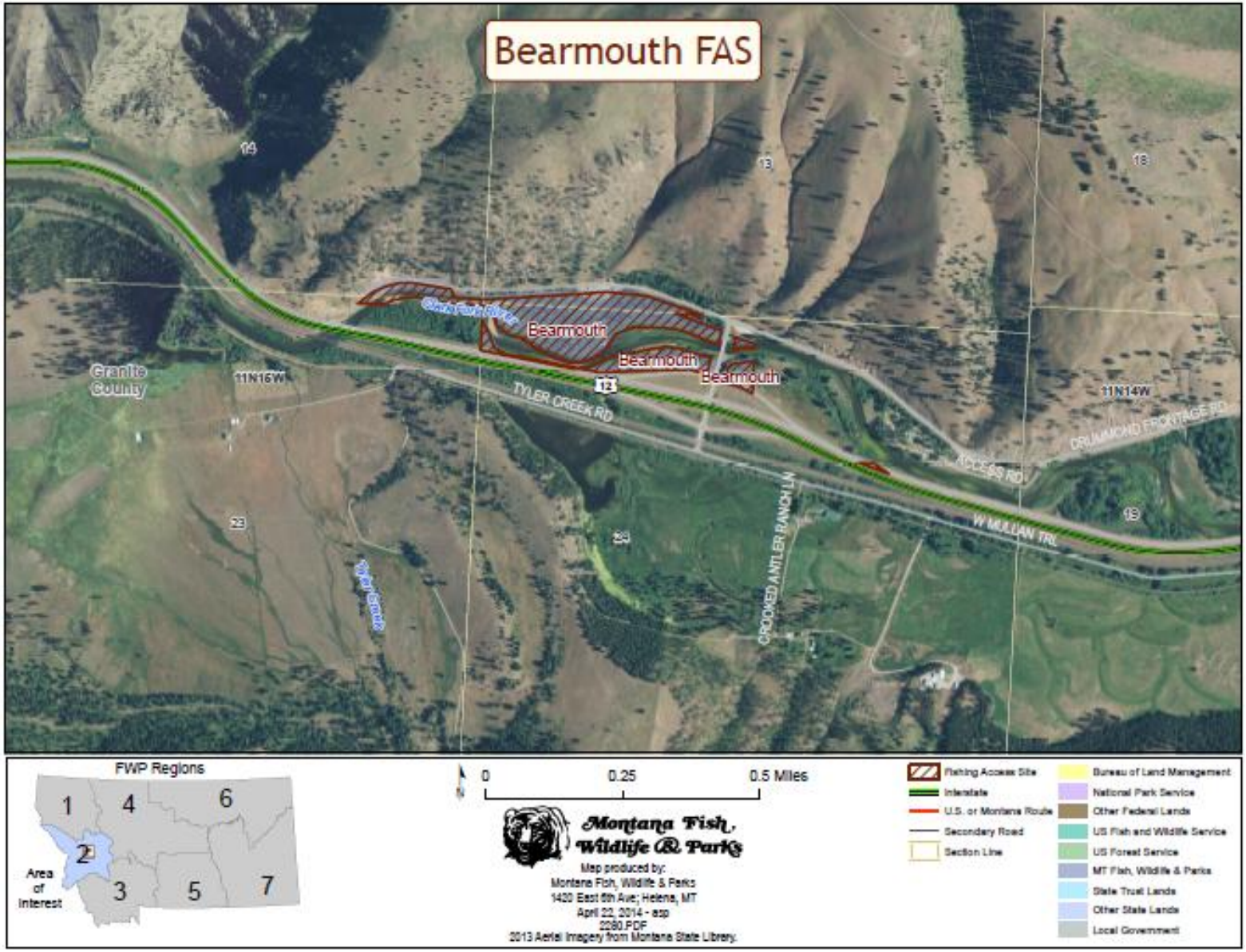

Figure 4. Aerial view of Bearmouth FAS

7. Project size--estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	5
Residential	0		
Industrial	0	(e) Productive:	
		Irrigated cropland	0
(b) Open Space/ Woodlands/Recreation	0	Dry cropland	0
		Forestry	0
		Rangeland	0
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	0	Other	0

8. Local, State or Federal agencies with overlapping or additional jurisdiction:

(a) Permits: Permits will be filed at least 2 weeks prior to project start.

Agency Name	Permits
Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks (FWP)	124 MT Stream Protection Act
Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ)	318 Short Term Water Quality Standard for Turbidity
Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)	Encroachment Permit
Granite County	Floodplain Permit

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Montana Dept of Justice	$125,000-$159,000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
Natural Heritage Program	Species of Concern (Appendix B)
Montana Office of Tourism	Tourism Report (Appendix C)
State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural Clearance (Appendix E)

9. Narrative summary of the proposed action:

The Clark Fork River is Montana's largest river by volume and one of its longest, stretching more than 280 miles from its origin in the Silver Bow Mountains to the Idaho border. Bearmouth FAS is located in the Upper Clark Fork 15 miles west of the town of Drummond. The FAS currently consists of property divided north and south by the river, and west and east by the Bearmouth Bridge (Figure 4). The 31.33-acre site was donated to the department in two separate land transactions: 9.49 acres from Stimson Lumber Company in 2006 and 21.84 acres from Mr. Gene Tripp in 2008, with the understanding that the parcels would be made available to the public as an FAS.

The Upper Clark Fork has been heavily impacted by past mining operations and the Clark Fork watershed now encompasses the largest Superfund site in America. A court settlement between the State of Montana and Atlantic Richfield Company produced a multi-million dollar fund to clean up and restore the Clark Fork River basin, including removing the mine waste trapped behind Milltown Dam, restoring biologically once-dead Silver Bow Creek, and rehabilitating 47 miles of the Upper Clark Fork.

The planned work on the Upper Clark Fork is the result of many years of planning among numerous federal, state, and local agencies and stakeholders and is described in the *2012 Final Upper Clark Fork River Basin Aquatic and Terrestrial Resources Restoration Plan*[1] (hereafter referred to as the Restoration Plan). Funding for this Restoration Plan amounts to $96 million and is being

[1] Available online at https://dojmt.gov/wp-content/uploads/Final-AT-Restoration-Plan-Combined.pdf , assessed 31 March 2016.

administered by the Montana Natural Resource Damage Program (NRD) within the Montana Department of Justice. Section 5 of the Restoration Plan specifies recreational restoration actions, with allocations of up to $1 million for the construction or upgrade of 10 fishing access sites along the Clark Fork River between Warm Springs Pond to its confluence with the Blackfoot River. Earmarked for acquisitions and easements is $150,000, and the remaining $850,000 is to go towards improvements such as boat ramps, parking, and latrines. Bearmouth FAS was one of the FASs identified in the Restoration Plan as being suitable for such improvements.

According to the Restoration Plan, the main criteria used in producing a list of potential sites or projects included the following:

- Establishing reasonable float distances between sites.
  - *Bearmouth FAS is 19 river miles downstream from Drummond FAS, and 18 river miles upstream from Schwartz Creek FAS. As Bearmouth FAS does not currently have a boat ramp, boaters must float 37 miles between sites to access boat ramps.*
- Selecting sites that already exist to some extent.
  - *Bearmouth FAS is already owned by FWP*
- Choosing sites to formalize access for the public.
  - *Without improvements, pioneered boat ramps and trails at Bearmouth FAS are likely to occur.*
- Selecting sites where anticipated use is greatest (Deer Lodge to Missoula).
  - *As restoration work continues on the Upper Clark Fork River, fisheries are rebounding and public demand for access is increasing.*

Not mentioned in the site selection criteria is that the parcel has areas suitable for recreational development, such as an open area for a parking lot and a low bank for a boat ramp. As Bearmouth FAS appears to be suitable and appropriate for development, FWP has proposed building a short gravel access road, approximately 12-stall gravel vehicle and trailer parking area, combination gravel and concrete boat ramp, and concrete vault latrine south of the river; and a fenced overflow gravel parking area north of the river (Figures 5-8). The cost estimate for these improvements is $159,718.68.

Access to Bearmouth FAS is very easy, as users take the Bearmouth exit off of I-90, turn north and then almost immediately encounter the FAS. The location of the approach road would require minimal disturbance, allows for good visibility and has been tentatively approved by Montana Department of Transportation. The location of the proposed main gravel parking area along the southwest side was chosen because it would allow for the most parking space, is already fairly level, and would require little clearing of vegetation. Having the boat ramp and parking area on the downstream side of the bridge is also desirable because the bridge would provide some protection to the boat ramp and likely lengthen its life expectancy. Installation of a concrete vault latrine would provide for the proper disposal of human waste at the site. A gravel parking area northeast of the bridge already exists (Figure 8) and is sometimes used as an illegal dumping ground for appliances and other debris. FWP proposes cleaning up the site, leveling the pad and installing a fence around the back and sides of the parking area with a pedestrian turnstile in order to discourage this practice.

The property would continue to be managed under existing FWP public use regulations. Management of the FAS includes routine maintenance, control of vehicles, enforcement of rules, and other accepted FWP recreation area management policies. Protection of natural resources, the health and safety of visitors and consideration of neighboring properties are being incorporated into improvement plans for this site. The proposed project would improve recreational opportunities for fishing, boating, hunting, floating, picnicking, and wildlife viewing along the increasingly popular Upper Clark Fork River.

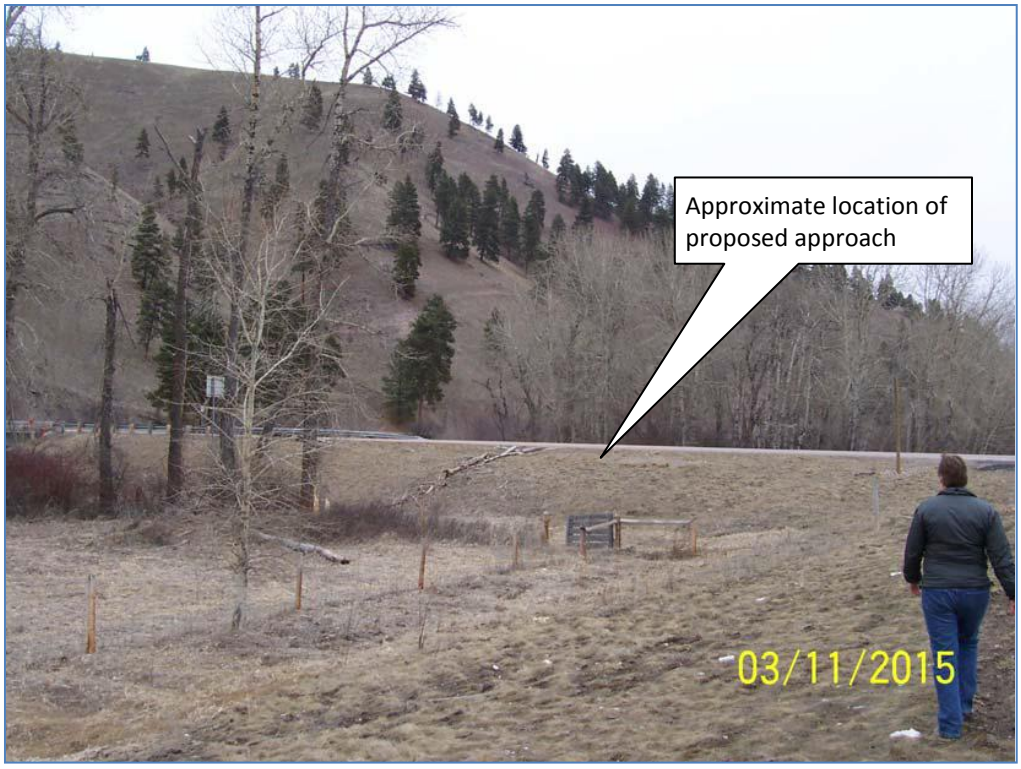

Figure 5. Proposed parking area approach in southwest portion of FAS (looking easterly)

Figure 6. Proposed southwest parking area (looking northerly)

Figure 7. Proposed boat ramp in southwest portion of FAS (looking westerly)

Figure 8. Existing northeast parking area, to be improved and fenced (looking southeasterly).

10. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives:

<u>Alternative A:</u> No Action
If no action is taken and the proposed developments were not made, Bearmouth FAS would continue to be little used, with the exception of some bank angling and a few other minimal activities. Illegal dumping, vandalism, and other improper uses of the site would likely persist. Without designated areas for use, pioneered trails and hand-launch sites would likely be established, with accompanying resource damage. If no action is taken, there would remain a 37-mile stretch of river between public boat ramps, and recreational use of the river in that section would therefore be limited. FWP law enforcement would continue to patrol the FAS, and all other regular management of the site such as weed control would remain the same as it is now.

<u>Preferred Alternative B:</u> Proposed Action
In an effort to improve recreational opportunities in the Upper Clark Fork River, FWP proposes the development of Bearmouth FAS, including a gravel access road, additional parking area, combination gravel and concrete boat ramp, concrete vault latrine, as well as fencing around an existing parking area. These improvements would accommodate the public's desired use of the site without causing major impact to the human or physical environment. The placement of the boat ramp and parking area to the southwest of the bridge is selected because that location is the most suitable, would cause few disturbances, would accommodate more vehicles (approximately 12), and would provide some protection of the boat ramp, which would reduce future maintenance costs. Installing fencing around the existing northeast parking area would discourage illegal dumping of trash, which currently occurs in its present state and is a maintenance problem and cost for FWP. Installing a latrine would encourage the proper disposal of human waste. Once developed, FWP would continue to provide general maintenance, weed control, and enforcement patrols.

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

FWP would employ *Best Management Practices* (BMP, Appendix D), which are designed to reduce sediment delivery to waterways during construction. FWP would develop the final design and specifications for the Proposed Action. All county, state and federal permits listed in Part I.8.(a) above would be obtained by FWP as required. A private contractor selected through the state's contracting processes would complete the construction.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X			1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		Yes	1b.
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			.	

1a. The construction of the proposed gravel boat ramp would cause very minor, temporary, and localized soil instability.

1b. During construction, some minor modifications to the existing soil features would be required for the construction of the access road, parking area, latrine and boat ramp. Disturbed areas would be reseeded with a native seed mix to minimize erosion, sediment delivery to the Clark Fork River, and the spread of noxious weeds. The FAS is managed for recreation and wildlife habitat and is not under commercial agricultural production so the Proposed Action would not affect agricultural production, soil productivity, or soil fertility. FWP BMP (Appendix D) would be followed during all phases of construction to minimize erosion.

2. AIR **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ∗**					
	Unknown ∗	**None**	**Minor ∗**	**Potentially Significant**	**Can Impact Be Mitigated ∗**	**Comment Index**
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)			X		Yes	2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X		Yes	2b.
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				

2a. There would be minor, short-term impacts to air quality due to dust and odors generated during construction. Construction is slated to begin in the fall of 2016 in order to reduce the amount of dust generated, as the fall is generally cooler and wetter. If the site is particularly dry during construction, water would be applied to control dust.

2b. The latrine would be regularly maintained to minimize objectionable odors.

3. WATER Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X		Yes	3a
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		Yes	3b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?			X		Yes	3d.
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		Yes	3h.
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.)		NA				
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.)		NA				

3a. Construction of the boat ramp may cause a temporary, localized increase in turbidity in the Clark Fork River in the vicinity of Bearmouth FAS. FWP would obtain a Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) 318 Authorization Permit for Short Term Water Quality Standard for Turbidity. FWP BMPs would be followed during all phases of construction of the access road, parking area, latrine, and boat ramp (Appendix D).

3b. The proposed development of Bearmouth FAS would cause minor changes in drainage patterns and the rate and amount of surface runoff. FWP BMPs would be followed, including immediately reseeding disturbed areas (Appendix D).

3d. There may be a minor, temporary increase of runoff during construction. FWP BMPs would be followed (Appendix D).

3h. The use of heavy equipment during construction may result in a slight risk of contamination from petroleum products and a temporary increase in sediment delivery to the Clark Fork River. FWP BMPs would be followed during all phases of construction to minimize these risks (Appendix D).

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT *					
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		Yes	4a
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				4b.
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				4d.
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4e.
f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		NA				

4a/b. The Proposed Action would have no impact on the plant diversity or productivity of Bearmouth FAS and would have a minor impact on plant abundance. A small number of trees and shrubs would be removed during construction. Because the construction area is small (approximately 2 acres), impacts from construction would be minor. Any area disturbed during construction would be reseeded with a native seed mix.

4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) Montana Species of Concern[2] (SOC) database found two plant SOC within the vicinity of Bearmouth FAS. *Eucladium verticillatum*, also known as Lime-seep Eucladium moss, has been observed approximately ¾ mile from the proposed development in 1988, and *Epipactis gigantea*, also known as giant helleborine, has been observed approximately ¼ mile (and across active railroad tracks) from the proposed development in 1986. Because neither of these SOC have been observed within the area of proposed development, it is unlikely that these sensitive species would be affected by the proposed project.

4d. No portion of Bearmouth FAS is under agricultural production.

4e. Soils disturbed during construction could colonize with weeds. Disturbed areas would be reseeded with a native reclamation seed mix where necessary to reduce the establishment of weeds. In conjunction with the Granite County Weed District, FWP would continue implementing its *Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan*[3] using chemical, biological, and mechanical methods to control weeds on the property. Weed management would include the establishment of native vegetation to prevent the spread of weeds. Vehicles would be restricted to the parking areas and access roads, which would be maintained as weed-free, and vehicles would not be allowed on undisturbed areas of the site to minimize the spread of noxious weeds. Weed control costs for Bearmouth FAS in 2015 were approximately $150 and FWP estimates control costs to be about the same after development.

[2] A native animal breeding in Montana that is considered to be "at risk" due to declining population trends, threats to its habitats, and/or restricted distribution. The purpose of Montana's SOC listing is to highlight species in decline and encourage conservation efforts to reverse population declines and prevent the need for future listing as Threatened or Endangered Species under the Federal Endangered Species Act.
[3] Available online at (accessed 31 March 2016) http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/habitat/noxiousWeeds/default.html

** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				5a.
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X			5b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X			5c.
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			5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X			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.)		NA				
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.)		NA				

5a. The Upper Clark Fork River is on the eastern edge of designated critical habitat for bull trout, although densities in this section of the river are very low. Bull trout are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act[4] and are a Montana SOC. There may be extremely minimal and localized short-term impacts to habitat during construction of the gravel boat ramp but the effect would be almost non-existent and deterioration of critical habitat would not occur.

5b/5c. Wildlife species commonly found in the vicinity of Bearmouth FAS include big-game animals such as white-tailed deer, elk, moose, and black bear; small furbearing animals such as mink, beaver and weasel, and a wide variety of resident and migratory bird species. A search of the MNHP SOC database found 2 threatened species and 10 sensitive animal species that have been observed within the larger Bearmouth area. Listed threatened species are Canada lynx and bull trout, and SOC are great blue heron, bald eagle, golden eagle, Lewis's woodpecker, Clark's nutcracker, westslope cutthroat trout, fisher, wolverine, keeled mountainsnail, and lyrate mountainsnail. According to Kristi Dubois, FWP Region 2 Non-Game Wildlife Biologist, little brown myotis and hoary bats also probably use the area, although they did not appear in the MNHP search. Dubois believes that the effects to fish and wildlife resulting from the proposed FAS improvements would be minimal. The area is already adjacent to a developed area and close to an existing road network, train track, and commercial business, so the proposed changes will not greatly contribute to overall disturbance of the area (Personal communication, 11 Feb 2016).

5f. Game fish found in this stretch of the Clark Fork River include brown trout, rainbow trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and mountain whitefish. The proposed addition of a boat ramp would likely add to an increase of anglers in this stretch of the Clark Fork, which would lead to an increase in angling pressure. However, Pat Saffel, FWP Region 2 Fisheries Manager, believes that game fish populations in the Upper Clark Fork can support the anticipated increase in pressure, and that existing regulations are sufficient to protect bull trout from negative impacts from the proposed action (personal communication, 19 Feb 2016). Brad Liermann, Region 2 Fisheries Biologist, echoed these sentiments that the local fishery could support an increase in fishing pressure and that it was unlikely that bull trout would be affected by such an increase because their numbers are very low in the Upper Clark Fork. Bull trout are primarily limited by habitat and

[4] US Fish & Wildlife Service; information online at (and accessed 31 March 2016) http://www.fws.gov/pacific/bulltrout/

competition with introduced fish. It should be noted that fishing license fees help pay for habitat improvement projects which benefit bull trout and many other fish species. FWP wardens will enforce all fish and game regulations.

5g. According to Scott Eggeman, FWP Region 2 Wildlife Biologist, the effects to fish and wildlife resulting from the proposed FAS improvements would be minimal. The area is already part of an existing developed area and close to an existing road network, so the proposed changes would constitute only a small increase of disturbance to the larger area. See also 5b/5c.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ∗**					
	Unknown ∗	**None**	**Minor ∗**	**Potentially Significant**	**Can Impact Be Mitigated ∗**	**Comment Index**
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		Yes	6a
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?			X		Yes	6b.
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				

6a. Construction equipment would cause a temporary increase in noise levels at the project site.

6b. Bearmouth FAS is located within ¼ mile of a private RV park. The minor and temporary increase of noise levels during construction may disturb nearby customers of this commercial establishment but would cease after construction is complete. Construction would not start until the fall of 2016, when there is less use of the RV park. Regular use of the FAS would produce some traffic noise, but would likely not be noticeable above the existing noise from Interstate 90 and the active train track. (It is possible that the business' customers may benefit from and make use of the developed FAS.) The FAS would continue to be managed and regulated to minimize noise disturbance to current or future neighbors.

7. LAND USE **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ∗**					
	Unknown ∗	**None**	**Minor ∗**	**Potentially Significant**	**Can Impact Be Mitigated ∗**	**Comment Index**
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?			X			7a.
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				

7a. The proposed improvements to Bearmouth FAS would likely lead to an increase in use of the site by recreationists and commercial guides, which could bring additional tourism benefits to the Bearmouth area and the Upper Clark Fork corridor (Tourism Report, Appendix C).

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown *	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
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		Yes	8a.
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)		NA				

8a. As with any construction project, the use of heavy equipment brings a minor risk of accidental release of hazardous substances in the form of petroleum products. FWP would follow the *BMPs* during all phases of construction to minimize risks of such contamination.

Physical disturbance of the soil during construction would encourage the establishment of additional noxious weeds on the site. In conjunction with the Granite County Weed District, FWP would continue implementing an integrated approach to control noxious weeds, as outlined in FWP's *Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan*. The integrated plan uses a combination of biological, mechanical, and herbicidal treatments to control noxious weeds. The use of herbicides would be in compliance with application guidelines to minimize the risk of chemical spills or water contamination and would be applied by people trained in safe handling techniques.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
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			9c.
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?			X			9d.
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X			9e.

9c. The Proposed Action would likely improve recreational use of the area by providing improved parking and boating facilities. This would benefit local retail and service businesses (Tourism Report, Appendix C).

9d. The proposed improvements could increase commercial use of the FAS by fishing guides, outfitters, and tourists. This could positively affect local employment and incomes.

9e. There is the potential for a small increase in traffic on Bearmouth Connection Road and Drummond Frontage Road.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
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				10a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				10b.
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 use of any energy source?		X				
e. Define projected revenue sources			X			10e.
f. Define projected maintenance costs.		X				10f.

10a. The proposed action would have no impact on public services or utilities. The proposed improvements would require periodic maintenance by FWP and the site would continue to be patrolled by FWP.

10b. The proposed action would have no effect on the local and state tax base and revenue.

10e. The proposed action may result in additional, indirect revenue generated from an increase in fishing licenses and commercial use permits because of the establishment of a formal boat ramp and the resulting increase in access. There would be no direct revenue generated from the development of Bearmouth FAS.

10f. Projected annual operating, maintenance, weed control, and personnel expense for Bearmouth FAS post-development is estimated to be approximately $3,000.

** 11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
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? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X positive			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.)		NA				

11a/b. The Proposed Action would alter the aesthetic appearance of the FAS. As the site is currently undeveloped, grass, shrubs, and trees currently cover the ground, which is generally considered to be more pleasing than a parking area and boat ramp. The parking area would be visible from Interstate 90. However, the site is not considered to be a scenic vista and the benefits to the public in the form of increased recreational opportunities outweigh the small loss of aesthetics.

11c. The Proposed Action would improve recreational opportunities in the area by increasing and improving parking and boating facilities. This could benefit local retail and service businesses (Tourism Report, Appendix C).

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?	X					12a.
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.)		NA				

12a. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been consulted and has requested additional investigation into the proposed project. A cultural resource consultant is under contract to provide a cultural resource inventory as soon as conditions allow. FWP would not begin construction until final clearance has been given by SHPO. FWP would consider design changes if necessary to accommodate SHPO requirements to protect cultural or historical resources.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE **Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:**	**IMPACT ∗**					
	Unknown ∗	**None**	**Minor ∗**	**Potentially Significant**	**Can Impact Be Mitigated ∗**	**Comment Index**
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)			X		yes	13a.
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				
f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		NA				
g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		NA				

13a. The proposed action, being part of a larger plan to increase recreational opportunities in the Upper Clark Fork, may result in cumulative positive effects in the form of increased tourism and expenditure along the 79-mile reach paralleling I-90 between Deer Lodge and Missoula. The expected increase in use of Bearmouth FAS and other FASs featured in the Recreation Plan may also result in cumulative minor negative impacts to fish and wildlife resources at those FASs and along the Clark Fork River corridor, but these potential impacts would be minimal. FWP's increased presence along this series of FASs would likely minimize or reduce unwanted occurrences from happening.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The Upper Clark Fork River has been heavily impacted by past mining activity. Recent and planned remediation efforts are improving fisheries within the Clark Fork and its tributaries and recreational interest in the river is steadily growing. The Montana Department of Justice's Natural Resource Damage Program has set aside funding to enhance recreation along the Upper Clark Fork River as part of a larger clean-up and settlement, described in the *Final Upper Clark Fork River Basin Aquatic and Terrestrial Resources Restoration Plan*. The proposed development discussed in this EA is part of that Plan, and would be fully funded through that source.

Bearmouth FAS was deemed to be an appropriate site to receive development funding because FWP already owns the site, public demand for more access and services is high along the Upper Clark Fork, the addition of a boat ramp would greatly enhance boat access in this reach of river, and the site is suitable for light development. During construction of the proposed project, there would be minor impacts to the physical and human environment but the majority would be temporary and none would result in significant negative impacts.

Two animal species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act--bull trout and Canada lynx—have been observed in the greater Bearmouth and Upper Clark Fork vicinity but it is unlikely that the proposed project would affect these or other SOC wildlife species because the site is adjacent to the heavily developed I-90 corridor and active BNSF train track. Also, more opportunities for lake and river access generally leads to more fishing license sales, and license fees help pay for habitat improvement projects that benefit bull trout and many other fish species. The two sensitive plant species in the area are located well away from the proposed project site and would not be impacted.

Soils disturbed during construction could colonize with weeds. Disturbed areas would be reseeded with a native reclamation seed mix where necessary to reduce the establishment of weeds. In conjunction with Granite County Weed Control District, FWP would continue implementing the *Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan* using chemical, biological and mechanical methods to control weeds on the property.

The proposed development project at Bearmouth FAS would improve recreational opportunities by providing parking, boat access, and sanitation facilities. The project would also reduce resource degradation by formalizing trails and discouraging illegal dumping and other vandalism. The Proposed Action would have no negative cumulative effects on the biological, physical, and human environments. And when considered over the long-term, this and other proposed actions along the Clark Fork River combine into cumulative positive effects in the form of increased restoration, recreation, and economic development. The Proposed Action represents a unique chance to improve recreational opportunities in a currently underserved section of the Clark Fork River with earmarked, outside funding.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public Involvement:
The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on the Bearmouth FAS Proposed Improvement Project, the Proposed Action and alternatives:

- Two legal notices in each of these newspapers: the *Missoulian,* the *Independent Record* (Helena), *and the Philipsburg Mail* (respectively, Region 2's newspaper of record, FWP's newspaper of record, and the local newspaper).
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: http://fwp.mt.gov ("News," then "Recent Public Notices"). The Draft EA will also be available on this website, along with the opportunity to submit comments online.
- Copies of the Draft EA will be available at the Region 2 headquarters in Missoula and the State Headquarters in Helena.
- A news release will be prepared and distributed to a standard list of media outlets interested in FWP Region 2 issues. This news release will also be posted on Region 2 FWP's website http://fwp.mt.gov/regions/r2/.
- Copies of this environmental assessment will be mailed (or notification of its availability emailed) to neighboring landowners and other interested parties (individuals, groups, agencies) to ensure their knowledge of the Proposed Action.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having no significant physical or human impacts and only minor limited impacts that can be mitigated.

2. **Duration of comment period.**
The public comment period will extend for thirty (30) days and will begin after publication of the 2nd legal notice in the *Missoulian*. **Comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on May 2, 2016** and can be e-mailed to shrose@mt.gov, phoned to 406-542-5540, or mailed to this address:

Region 2 FWP
Attn: Sharon Rose
3201 Spurgin Ave
Missoula, MT 59804

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. **Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? NO**
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. In determining the significance of the impacts, Fish, Wildlife & Parks assessed the severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the impact, the probability that the impact would occur or reasonable assurance that the impact would not occur. FWP assessed the growth-inducing or growth-inhibiting aspects of the impact, the importance to the state and to society of the environmental resource or value affected; any precedent that would be set as a result of an impact of the proposed action that would commit FWP to future actions; and potential conflicts with local, federal, or state laws. As this EA revealed no significant impacts from the proposed actions, an EA is the appropriate level of review and an EIS is not required.

2. **Persons responsible for preparing the EA:**

Rory Zarling
FWP Region 2 FAS Manager
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
rzarling@mt.gov
406-542-5561

Linnaea Schroeer
FWP MEPA Coordinator
1420 E 6th Ave
Helena, MT 59620-0701
lschroeer@mt.gov
406-444-3378

3. **List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:**
Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism
Montana Department of Justice-Natural Resource Damage Program
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
    Design and Construction
    Lands Unit
    Legal Unit
    Fisheries Division
    Wildlife Division
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)
Montana Historic Preservation Office

APPENDICES

A. MCA 23-1-110 Qualification Checklist
B. Native Species Report - Montana Natural Heritage Program
C. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce
D. Fish, Wildlife & Parks *Best Management Practices*
E. State Historic Preservation Office – Clearance Letter ***(pending)***

APPENDIX A
23-1-110 MCA PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date: February 18, 2016 **Person Reviewing:** Linnaea Schroeer

Project Location: Bearmouth Fishing Access Site is located on the Clark Fork River 33 miles east of Missoula on I-90 in Granite County (Lag 46.701, Long-113.434)

Description of Proposed Work: The 30-acre Bearmouth Fishing Access Site (FAS) has been owned by Montana FWP for nearly ten years but is currently undeveloped. Remediation monies have made development and improvements at Bearmouth and other FASs along the Clark Fork River a possibility and FAS managers have proposed constructing a 12-stall gravel parking lot, concrete boat ramp, concrete vault latrine, and installing fencing around an existing parking area at Bearmouth. These improvements would provide quality recreational opportunities for fishing, boating, floating, picnicking, and wildlife viewing at this location and in the Upper Clark Fork corridor by enhancing boat access.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed action or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check all that apply and comment as necessary.)

[X] A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments: Yes, a short access and loop road would be built over undisturbed land.

[ ] B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments: No building construction.

[X] C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments: Yes, for the parking area and access road.

[X] D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments: Yes, the new parking area would increase parking capacity and would be constructed over previously undisturbed land.

[ ] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a doublewide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments: No.

[X]F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments: Single-wide gravel and concrete boat ramp would be constructed downstream of the Bearmouth Bridge.

[ ] G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments: A cultural resource inventory will be conducted and SHPO concurrence will be sought.

[ ] H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments: No new utility lines.

[ ] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments: No.

[ ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern, including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments: No. The proposed project would not affect existing features or use patterns.

APPENDIX B

NATIVE SPECIES REPORT – MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM Sensitive Plants and Animals in the Vicinity of Bearmouth Fishing Access Site

Species of Concern Terms and Definitions

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) element occurrence database (http://nris.mt.gov) indicates two occurrences of Threatened, Endangered, or other species federally ranked by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have been found in the vicinity of Bearmouth FAS. Bull trout and Canada Lynx, both federally listed Threatened Species, have been known to occur in the greater Bearmouth Area. The search also indicates that Montana Species of Concern (SOC) great blue heron, bald eagle, golden eagle, Lewis's woodpecker, Clark's nutcracker, fisher, wolverine, westslope cutthroat trout, keeled mountainsnail, and lyrate mountainsnail have been observed on or near Bearmouth FAS. Lime-seep Euclium moss and giant helleborine, Montana Plant Species of Concern, were observed within one mile of Bearmouth FAS as recently as 1988. More information on these species is included below.

Montana Species of Concern. The term **"Species of Concern"** includes taxa that are at-risk or potentially at-risk due to rarity, restricted distribution, habitat loss, and/or other factors. The term also encompasses species that have a special designation by organizations or land management agencies in Montana, including: Bureau of Land Management Special Status and Watch species; U.S. Forest Service Sensitive and Watch species; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Threatened, Endangered and Candidate species.

Status Ranks (Global and State)

The international network of Natural Heritage Programs employs a standardized ranking system to denote global (**G** -- range-wide) and state status (**S**) (Nature Serve 2003). Species are assigned numeric ranks ranging from 1 (critically imperiled) to 5 (demonstrably secure), reflecting the relative degree to which they are "at-risk". Rank definitions are given below. A number of factors are considered in assigning ranks -- the number, size and distribution of known "occurrences" or populations, population trends (if known), habitat sensitivity, and threat. Factors in a species' life history that make it especially vulnerable are also considered (e.g., dependence on a specific pollinator).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Endangered Species Act)- Terms and Definitions

LE. Listed endangered: Any species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

LT. Listed threatened: Any species likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

C. Candidate: Those taxa for which sufficient information on biological status and threats exists to propose to list them as threatened or endangered.

DM. Recovered, delisted, and being monitored - Any previously listed species that is now recovered, has been delisted, and is being monitored.

BGEPA. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (BGEPA) prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior, from taking bald or golden eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs. The BGEPA provides criminal and civil penalties for persons who take, possess, sell, purchase, barter, offer to sell, purchase or barter, transport, export or import, at any time or any manner, any bald eagle ... [or any golden eagle], alive or dead, or any part, nest, or egg thereof.

MBTA. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) implements four treaties that provide for international protection of migratory birds. The statute's language is clear that actions resulting in a

"taking" or possession (permanent or temporary) of a protected species is a violation of the MBTA.

BCC. Birds of Conservation Concern 2008. The 1988 amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act mandates the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify species, subspecies, and populations of all migratory nongame birds that, without additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act

Status Ranks

Code	Definition
G1 S1	At high risk because of extremely limited and/or rapidly declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it highly vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.
G2 S2	At risk because of very limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.
G3 S3	Potentially at risk because of limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas.
G4 S4	Uncommon but not rare (although it may be rare in parts of its range), and usually widespread. Apparently not vulnerable in most of its range, but possibly cause for long-term concern.
G5 S5	Common, widespread, and abundant (although it may be rare in parts of its range). Not vulnerable in most of its range.

MFWP Conservation Need. Under Montana's Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CFWCS) of 2005, individual animal species are assigned levels of conservation need as follows:

Tier I. Greatest conservation need. Montana FWP has a clear obligation to use its resources to implement conservation actions that provide direct benefit to these species, communities and focus areas.

Tier II. Moderate conservation need. Montana FWP could use its resources to implement conservation actions that provide direct benefit to these species communities and focus areas.

Tier III. Lower conservation need. Although important to Montana's wildlife diversity, these species, communities and focus areas are either abundant or widespread or are believed to have adequate conservation already in place.

Tier IV. Species that are non-native, incidental or on the periphery of their range and are either expanding or very common in adjacent states.

SENSITIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS IN THE VICINITY OF BEARMOUTH FISHING ACCESS SITE

1. *Ardea Herodias* (Great Blue Heron)

Vertebrate animal- Bird	Habitat- Riparian Forests
Natural Heritage Ranks	Federal Agency Status:
State: **S3**	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**:**
Global: **G5**	U.S. Forest Service**:**
	U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier: **3**

Element Occurrence data was reported of great blue heron within the project area. Last recorded observation date was in 2011.

2. *Haliaeetus leucocephaus* (Bald Eagle)

Vertebrate animal- Bird	Habitat- Riparian forest
Natural Heritage Ranks	Federal Agency Status:
State: **S4**	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**: DM: BGEPA; MBTA; BCC**
Global: **G5**	U.S. Forest Service**: Sensitive**
	U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

Element Occurrence data was reported of bald eagle nests within vicinity of Bearmouth FAS but not in actual project area. Last recorded observation date was 2004.

3. *Aquila chrysaetos* (Golden Eagle)

Vertebrate animal- Bird	Habitat- Grasslands
Natural Heritage Ranks	Federal Agency Status:
State: **S3**	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**: BGEPA; MBTA; BCC**
Global: **G5**	U.S. Forest Service**:**
	U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

Element Occurrence data was reported of golden eagle within general vicinity of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 2011.

4. *Melanerpes lewis* (Lewis's woodpecker)

Vertebrate animal- Bird	Habitat- Riparian forest
Natural Heritage Ranks	Federal Agency Status:
State: **S2B**	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
Global: **G4**	U.S. Forest Service:
	U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

Element Occurrence data reported of Lewis's woodpecker within one mile of the project area. Last observation date was 2009.

5. *Nucifraga columbiana* (Clark's nutcracker)

Vertebrate animal- Bird	Habitat- Conifer forest
Natural Heritage Ranks	Federal Agency Status:
State: **S3**	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
Global: **G5**	U.S. Forest Service:
	U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

Element Occurrence data reported of Clark's nutcracker within one mile of the project area. Last observation date was 2009.

6. *Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi* (Westslope cutthroat trout)

Vertebrate animal- Fish	Habitat- Mountain Rivers, Lakes
Natural Heritage Ranks	Federal Agency Status:
State: **S2**	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
Global: **G4T3**	U.S. Forest Service: **Sensitive**
	U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

Element Occurrence data reports westslope cutthroat trout occurring in the Upper Clark Fork River to date.

7. *Salvelinus confluentus* (Bull trout)

Vertebrate animal- Fish	Habitat- Mountain Rivers, Lakes
Natural Heritage Ranks	Federal Agency Status:
State: **S2**	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: **LT**

Global: **G4** U.S. Forest Service: **Threatened**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Special Status**
Element Occurrence data reports Bull trout occurring in the Upper Clark Fork River to date.

8. *Pekania pennanti* (Fisher)
Vertebrate animal- Mammal Habitat- Mixed conifer forests
Natural Heritage Ranks Federal Agency Status:
State: **S3** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
Global: **G5** U.S. Forest Service: **Sensitive**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**
Element Occurrence data was reported of fisher within the project vicinity. Last observation date was 2011.

9. *Gulo gulo* (Wolverine)
Vertebrate animal- Mammal Habitat- Boreal forest and alpine habitats
Natural Heritage Ranks Federal Agency Status:
State: **S3** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
Global: **G4** U.S. Forest Service: **Sensitive**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**
Element Occurrence data was reported of wolverine within the project vicinity. Last observation date was 2011.

10. *Lynx canadensis* (Canada Lynx)
Vertebrate animal- Mammal Habitat- Subalpine conifer forest
Natural Heritage Ranks Federal Agency Status:
State: **S3** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: **LT**
Global: **G5** U.S. Forest Service: **Threatened**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Special Status**
Element Occurrence data reported of Canada lynx within the project vicinity. Last observation date was 2010.

11. *Oreohelix carinifera* (Keeled mountainsnail)
Invertebrate animal-snail Habitat- Limestone, dry conifer forests
Natural Heritage Ranks Federal Agency Status:
State: **S1** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
Global: **G1** U.S. Forest Service:
U.S. Bureau of Land Management:
Element Occurrence data reported of wolverine within one mile of project site. Last observation date was 1975.

12. *Oreohelix haydeni* (Lyrate Mountainsnail)
Invertebrate animal-snail Habitat-
Natural Heritage Ranks Federal Agency Status:
State: **S1S3** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
Global: **G2G3** U.S. Forest Service:
U.S. Bureau of Land Management:
Element Occurrence data reported of wolverine within general vicinity of project area. Last observation date was 1960.

13. *Eucladium verticillatum* (Lime-seep Eucladian moss)
Vascular Plant Habitat- Alkaline Sites
Natural Heritage Ranks Federal Agency Status:
State: **S1** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
Global: **G4** U.S. Forest Service:
U.S. Bureau of Land Management:
Element Occurrence data was reported of lime-seep Eucladian moss within one mile of the project area. Last observation date was 1988.

14. *Epipactis gigantea* (Giant Helleborine)
Vascular Plant Habitat- Wetland/Riparian
Natural Heritage Ranks Federal Agency Status:
State: **S2S3** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
Global: **G4** U.S. Forest Service: **Sensitive**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management:
Element Occurrence data was reported of giant helleborine within one mile of the project area. Last observation date was 1986.

APPENDIX C
TOURISM REPORT
MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) & MCA 23-1-110

Jeri Duran, Director of Sales and Constituent Services
Montana Office of Tourism
301 S. Park Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

Project Name: Bearmouth FAS Development Project EA

Project Description: Montana FWP proposes developing Bearmouth FAS on the Upper Clark Fork River by constructing a gravel access road, 12-stall vehicle parking, gravel/concrete boat ramp, and concrete vault latrine at the site. The site is currently undeveloped besides a small existing gravel parking area to the north of the river. The addition of a boat ramp at this site would greatly improve access to the Clark Fork River, as the next upstream and downstream boat ramps are 19 and 18 river miles away, respectively.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?
   NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

   Yes, as described, this 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 Jeri Duran, Bureau Chief Date 2-10-16

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APPENDIX D
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
10-02-02; Updated May 1, 2008

I. ROADS

A. Road Planning and location

1. Minimize the number of roads constructed at the FAS through comprehensive road planning, recognizing foreseeable future uses.

   a. Use existing roads, unless use of such roads would cause or aggravate an erosion problem.

2. Fit the road to the topography by locating roads on natural benches and following natural contours. Avoid long, steep road grades and narrow canyons.

3. Locate roads on stable geology, including well-drained soils and rock formations that tend to dip into the slope. Avoid slumps and slide-prone areas characterized by steep slopes, highly weathered bedrock, clay beds, concave slopes, hummocky topography, and rock layers that dip parallel to the slope. Avoid wet areas, including seeps, wetlands, wet meadows, and natural drainage channels.

4. Minimize the number of stream crossings.

   a. Choose stable stream crossing sites. "Stable" refers to streambanks with erosion-resistant materials and in hydrologically safe spots.

B. Road Design

1. Design roads to the minimum standard necessary to accommodate anticipated use and equipment. The need for higher engineering standards can be alleviated through proper road-use management. "Standard" refers to road width.

2. Design roads to minimize disruption of natural drainage patterns. Vary road grades to reduce concentrated flow in road drainage ditches, culverts, and on fill slopes and road surfaces.

C. Drainage from Road Surface

1. Provide adequate drainage from the surface of all permanent and temporary roads. Use outsloped, insloped or crowned roads, installing proper drainage features. Space road drainage features so peak flow on road surface or in ditches will not exceed their capacity.

   a. Outsloped roads provide means of dispersing water in a low-energy flow from the road surface. Outsloped roads are appropriate when fill slopes are stable, drainage will not flow directly into stream channels, and transportation safety can be met.

   b. For insloped roads, plan ditch gradients steep enough, generally greater than 2%, but less than 8%, to prevent sediment deposition and ditch erosion. The steeper gradients may be suitable for more stable soils; use the lower gradients for less stable soils.

   c. Design and install road surface drainage features at adequate spacing to control erosion; steeper gradients require more frequent drainage features. Properly constructed drain dips can be an economical method of road surface drainage. Construct drain dips deep enough into the sub-grade so that traffic will not obliterate them.

2. For ditch relief/culverts, construct stable catch basins at stable angles. Protect the inflow end of cross-drain culverts from plugging and armor if in erodible soil. Skewing ditch relief culverts 20 to 30 degrees toward the inflow from the ditch will improve inlet efficiency.

3. Provide energy dissipators (rock piles, slash, log chunks, etc.) where necessary to reduce erosion at outlet of drainage features. Cross-drains, culverts, water bars, dips, and other drainage structures should not discharge onto erodible soils or fill slopes without outfall protection.

4. Route road drainage through adequate filtration zones, or other sediment-settling structures. Install road drainage features above stream crossings to route discharge into filtration zones before entering a stream.

D. Construction/Reconstruction

1. Stabilize erodible, exposed soils by seeding, compacting, riprapping, benching, mulching, or other suitable means.

2. At the toe of potentially erodible fill slopes, particularly near stream channels, pile slash in a row parallel to the road to trap sediment. When done concurrently with road construction, this is one method to effectively control sediment movement and it also provides an economical way of disposing of roadway slash. Limit the height, width and length of these "slash filter windrows" so not to impede wildlife movement. Sediment fabric fences or other methods may be used if effective.

3. Construct cut and fill slopes at stable angles to prevent sloughing and subsequent erosion.

4. Avoid incorporating potentially unstable woody debris in the fill portion of the road prism. Where possible, leave existing rooted trees or shrubs at the toe of the fill slope to stabilize the fill.

5. Place debris, overburden, and other waste materials associated with construction and maintenance activities in a location to avoid entry into streams. Include these waste areas in soil stabilization planning for the road.

6. When using existing roads, reconstruct only to the extent necessary to provide adequate drainage and safety; avoid disturbing stable road surfaces. Consider abandoning existing roads when their use would aggravate erosion.

E. Road Maintenance

1. Grade road surfaces only as often as necessary to maintain a stable running surface and to retain the original surface drainage.

2. Maintain erosion control features through periodic inspection and maintenance, including cleaning dips and cross-drains, repairing ditches, marking culvert inlets to aid in location, and clearing debris from culverts.

3. Avoid cutting the toe of cut slopes when grading roads, pulling ditches, or plowing snow.

4. Avoid using roads during wet periods if such use would likely damage the road drainage features. Consider gates, barricades or signs to limit use of roads during wet periods.

II. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (parking areas, campsites, trails, ramps, restrooms)

A. Site Design

1. Design a site that best fits the topography, soil type, and stream character, while minimizing soil disturbance and economically accomplishing recreational objectives. Keep roads and parking lots at least 50 feet from water; if closer, mitigate with vegetative buffers as necessary.

2. Locate foot trails to avoid concentrating runoff and provide breaks in grade as needed. Locate trails and parking areas away from natural drainage systems and divert runoff to stable areas. Limit the grade of trails on unstable, saturated, highly erosive, or easily compacted soils

3. Scale the number of boat ramps, campsites, parking areas, bathroom facilities, etc. to be commensurate with existing and anticipated needs. Facilities should not invite such use that natural features will be degraded.

4. Provide adequate barriers to minimize off-road vehicle use

B. Maintenance: Soil Disturbance and Drainage

1. Maintenance operations minimize soil disturbance around parking lots, swimming areas and campsites, through proper placement and dispersal of such facilities or by reseeding disturbed ground. Drainage from such facilities should be promoted through proper grading.

2. Maintain adequate drainage for ramps by keeping side drains functional or by maintaining drainage of road surface above ramps or by crowning (on natural surfaces).

3. Maintain adequate drainage for trails. Use mitigating measures, such as water bars, wood chips, and grass seeding, to reduce erosion on trails.

4. When roads are abandoned during reconstruction or to implement site-control, they must be reseeded and provided with adequate drainage so that periodic maintenance is not required.

III. RAMPS AND STREAM CROSSINGS

A. Legal Requirements

1. Relevant permits must be obtained prior to building bridges across streams or boat ramps. Such permits include the SPA 124 permit, the COE 404 permit, and the DNRC Floodplain Development Permit.

B. Design Considerations

1. Placement of boat ramp should be such that boats can load and unload with out difficulty and the notch in the bank where the ramp was placed does not encourage bank erosion. Extensions of boat ramps beyond the natural bank can also encourage erosion.

2. Adjust the road grade or provide drainage features (e.g. rubber flaps) to reduce the concentration of road drainage to stream crossings and boat ramps. Direct drainage flow through an adequate filtration zone and away from the ramp or crossing through the use of gravel side-drains, crowning (on natural surfaces) or 30-degree angled grooves on concrete ramps.

3. Avoid unimproved stream crossings on permanent streams. On ephemeral streams, when a culvert or bridge is not feasible, locate drive-throughs on a stable, rocky portion of the stream channel.

4. Unimproved (non-concrete) ramps should only be used when the native soils are sufficiently gravelly or rocky to withstand the use at the site and to resist erosion.

C. Installation of Stream Crossings and Ramps

1. Minimize stream channel disturbances and related sediment problems during construction of road and installation of stream crossing structures. Do not place erodible material into stream channels. Remove stockpiled material from high water zones. Locate temporary construction bypass roads in locations where the stream course will have a minimal disturbance. Time the construction activities to protect fisheries and water quality.

2. Where ramps enter the stream channel, they should follow the natural streambed in order to avoid changing stream hydraulics and to optimize use of boat trailers.

3. Use culverts with a minimum diameter of 15 inches for permanent stream crossings and cross drains. Proper sizing of culverts may dictate a larger pipe and should be based on a 50-year flow recurrence interval. Install culverts to conform to the natural streambed and slope on all perennial streams and on intermittent streams that support fish or that provide seasonal fish passage. Place culverts slightly below normal stream grade to avoid culvert outfall barriers. Do not alter stream channels upstream from culverts, unless necessary to protect fill or to prevent culvert blockage. Armor the inlet and/or outlet with rock or other suitable material where needed.

4. Prevent erosion of boat ramps and the affected streambank through proper placement (so as to not catch the stream current) and hardening (riprap or erosion resistant woody vegetation).

5. Maintain a 1-foot minimum cover for culverts 18-36 inches in diameter, and a cover of one-third diameter for larger culverts to prevent crushing by traffic.