



Education and Local Government Interim Committee

61st Montana Legislature

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TO: ELG members
FROM: Helen Thigpen
DATE: March 12, 2010 **** (Updated April 21) ****
RE: Heritage Resources Program

Heritage Resources Program Quick Facts

- ▶ The Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) administers a Heritage Resources Program to improve its ability to identify and protect historic and cultural resources in Montana's state parks.
- ▶ FWP has conducted numerous excavations in various state parks over the years and usually hired outside consultants to ensure that it complied with the requirements of the Montana Antiquities Act. The Historic Resources Program was established by FWP in 2007 to provide a more centralized method by which it could inventory and protect historic and cultural resources in state parks.
- ▶ Through the Heritage Resources Program, FWP collects and manages information on the location and nature of existing resources, ensures that cultural resources are protected during FWP activities, assists with planning and management activities related to cultural resources, and coordinates public outreach and education activities.
- ▶ The Heritage Resources Program maintains a Memorandum of Understanding with the Montana Heritage Commission to exchange services, including grant preparation and staff expertise.
- ▶ The coordinator of the Heritage Resources Program at FWP is Sara Scott, phone 444-3797. In addition, field hands work to maintain and help protect the state's heritage and the parks FWP cares for, such as Bannack, Chief Plenty Coups, Travelers' Rest, First Peoples Buffalo Jump, Rosebud Battlefield, and others.
- ▶ FWP's authority to acquire and designate areas, sites, or objects to be held, improved, and maintained as state parks, state recreation areas, state monuments, or state historical sites is located in § 23-1-101, MCA.
- ▶ Any person, association, or representative of a governing unit may submit a proposal to FWP for the acquisition of any area or site that should be maintained as a state

monument or state historical site. Nominations must be received by July 1 of the year preceding a legislative session. FWP is required to present a list of the areas, sites, or objects that were proposed for purchase through the parks account on the 15th day of any legislative session. Funds must be appropriated by the Legislature before any park, area, monument, or site may be purchased.

- ▶ There are currently 53 state parks in Montana and approximately 230 historic and archaeological sites within these parks.
- ▶ FWP manages 7 of the 23 National Historic Landmarks in Montana, and 10 state parks are listed as National Historic Places.
- ▶ See information on the Long Range Building Program for additional funding information.