

## STATE OF MONTANA



DEPARTMENT OF

## FISH AND GAME

Helena, MT 59601

June 27, 1979

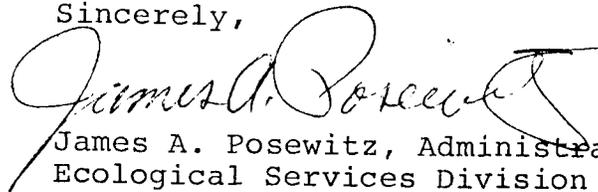
Mr. Terry Carmody, Executive Director  
Environmental Quality Council  
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Terry:

Enclosed are two copies of FG-N-109, the PER for the Boulder Forks Fishing Access Site in Sweet Grass County. The project will consist of road construction and improvements, culvert installation, signing, fencing and planting grass.

We hope this project will meet the requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act. If you have any questions, please let us know.

Sincerely,

  
James A. Posewitz, Administrator  
Ecological Services Division

sd  
Enc

cc: Department of Highways  
Department of Health  
Sweet Grass County Commission

PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW  
BOULDER FORKS FISHING ACCESS SITE  
SWEET GRASS COUNTY, MONTANA

FG-N-109

Prepared by: Walt Anderson  
Montana Dept. of Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks  
Parks Division  
6/7/79

## I. Project Location

Boulder Forks FAS is approximately 72 acres between the West Fork of the Boulder River and the Boulder River. The area is located approximately 20 miles south of Big Timber, Montana on highway 298.

## II. Project Description

The project will consist of approximately 1600 feet of grading and shaping an existing road, 15,000 sq. ft. of new gravel road and parking areas, one double latrine, post barriers, approximately 70 feet of culvert, signing, seeding of grasses and the removal of about 25 rods of barbed wire fence.

Access is already provided by an existing road extending from highway 298 down to the Boulder River and across it to a local residence. About 180 feet before the river crossing, the 15,000 sq. ft. of gravel work begins, consisting of a 12 foot road curving away from the river and terminating in a cul-de-sac with parking areas. Wood barriers will be placed on the east side of this addition to prevent vehicular travel down to the Boulder River. The latrine will be constructed in the area of the cul-de-sac.

## III. Project Purpose

The West Fork of the Boulder River and the Boulder River are typical of Montana's high-mountain streams. A high volume spring runoff flushes the rivers of accumulated silt and debris creating numerous pockets, holes, and cut-in banks which provide excellent trout fishing during the following low-volume months.

Access to these rivers is very limited due to private ownership below their points of emergence from the Gallatin National Forest. The purpose of this project is to provide access to these streams for fishing, picnicking, and camping although camping will not be encouraged.

## IV. Impacts

### A. Historic

An archaeological survey of the area was completed by Steve Auberg of the Montana State University. Insufficient evidence was found to warrant monitoring the construction activities using an archeologist. However, the possibility of uncovering prehistoric or historic remains should not be ignored completely due to closeness of other archeological sites in the area.

## B. Human Residence Problems

There is a small ranch located directly across the Boulder River from the site. Historically, there has been a problem with the residents concerning our right-of-way. Probably, the underlying problem is the public use of the site being fairly close to their residence. With proper signing, the installation of post barriers, and placement of the parking areas away from the residence, no conflicts are expected to arise.

## C. Fish, Wildlife and Recreation

A variety of small mammals and predators inhabit the area. Deer are the only consistent game species to utilize the area. Some fur-bearing animals, mink and muskrat, are infrequent visitors. Waterfowl are found on the river and the ponds and irrigation ditch that flows through the property. In addition to the waterfowl, a wide variety of song birds make up resident and migratory population that utilize the site throughout the year.

Rainbow, Brown, and Brooktrout inhabit the area. Whitefish and suckers are also found in the streams.

The project shall have barriers installed along the roadside. The area shall be left unfenced so as not to prohibit pedestrian travel, which has a fairly small impact on wildlife, but the barriers should keep vehicular traffic, which has a much greater impact on wildlife, on graveled road surfaces.

Until recently, the tract had been used for agricultural production. Present plans call for letting this area return to its natural state which should actually improve wildlife habitat.

Impacts on fish are expected to be minimal. The increased pressure on the fish populations caused by this access site will be spread up and down the rivers and will be well within the ecological carrying capacities of the rivers.

The project will provide increased recreational opportunities for fisherman and picnickers. Other recreational opportunities exist here, such as bird watching, hunting, and camping, but we expect the two activities listed above, to be the most common uses of the site.

## D. Air and Water Pollution

During construction there will be a temporary but unavoidable increase in dust and engine exhaust. The dust can be kept to a minimum by oiling or watering. In any event, the impact is expected to be insignificant.

As visitor use increases, litter will also increase. To minimize this impact a "Pack in, Pack out" policy will be enforced. Fish and Game personnel will periodically clean the site.

A sealed vault double latrine will be installed and pumped as often as necessary. Groundwater levels will be taken into account when locating the latrine. The latrine will be located above the 100 year flood plain.

V. Basis for P.E.R. vs. E.I.S.

In general the anticipated impacts of this project are considered to be minimal. Considering the limited scope of the project, a complete Environmental Impact Statement is not justified.