Appendix C. Sampling of comments in opposition to electrifying and paving Salmon Lake State Park campground and appropriate FWP responses.

This little park is perfect as is. No need to pave or add electricity, Great stay.

Comments: No Electricity if you need Power stay home

Please don't electrify our state parks.

He does not think electrified campsites is a necessary improvement for any of these 3 state parks. He says that if FWP wanted to put in a few electrified campsites, for some specific justification or need, maybe OK. But he doesn't see the reason or need.

He states that it raises the cost of the campground/camping. "20 dollars a night is a lot of money." This "puts the cost out of reach for more people."

Makes the campgrounds more like some main highway campground. Takes away from the spirit of camping.

I am responded to the request for comment that was in the Pathfinder newspaper.

I do not think that Salmon Lake and Placid Lake campgrounds should get electric hook-ups. I have camped in campgrounds with and without electrical hook-ups and I think the ones with electrical hook-ups attract a different kind of camper (meaning the person's philosophy toward camping) and also larger rigs. I think there are enough campgrounds with electrical hook-ups for campers that really think they need them.

The state and national parks and BLM land seem to be the places to camp to avoid the campgrounds with electrical hook-ups. If even the state parks get electrical hook-ups, there won't be campgrounds without hook-ups, and it won't be like camping anymore.

I live in Seeley Lake year-round and moved here two years ago. I don't think Salmon Lake and Placid Lake campgrounds need electric hook-ups and with the limited FWP resources available, that money could be spent better elsewhere.

I am writing to oppose any proposal to add electrical outlets for campers at the MT Salmon Lake State Park Campground.

There are plenty of places that 'campers' who drive around in RVs and want electricity to run their air-conditioners and Direct TVs and strings of holiday lights can spend the night.

Camping is supposed to be about getting back to nature. Being surrounded by people who can't bear to be away from every form of creature comfort destroy this concept, and they are not to be encouraged in our state parks. I camp in state parks and avoid private RV parks specifically for this reason. People in RVs may think that what they're doing is camping, but it's not, and people with my perspective rely on state parks without electrical service to avoid all the negatives RVs bring with.

This also a terrible idea from an economic standpoint. Since there's no mention of metering the use of electricity, the citizens of MT will wind up essentially subsidizing its use. How ironic that would be, paying RV users to come to natural settings so they can destroy the atmosphere of natural peace and quiet.

Moreover, providing this subsidized electricity will impact private businesses that are designed to serve this segment of 'campers' and put the state government in direct competition with them. That's not something our government should be doing.

This was a terrible idea when it was first proposed over a year ago and it remains a terrible idea now. Please do not provide electrical hookups in this park.

FWP Response: Everyone's definition of "camping" is different. Montana State Parks does not discriminate between one type of camping or another. Our 2006 visitor survey shows that already over 50% of the campers in our state parks are using motor-homes and full size hard-sided campers. From our other campground facilities that have electricity, the $5 per night fee is covering the cost of providing electricity and therefore, it is not being subsidized.

Lee, this is in response to the EA's proposing electrification of campsites at West Shore, Beavertail Hill, Salmon Lake, Placid Lake, Big Sandy and Lewis & Clark Caverns State Parks prepared by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. I realize the deadline has passed for the latter two but still need to comment about those two parks. Preparing separate EA's for each park seems counterintuitive when each EA addresses the same issues and the same actions. At first glance this would seem to be an attempt for an end run around the process which is disappointing to see coming from FWP. Having read the EA's I have several comments. Electrification of all of these campsites would destroy the night skies and quite solitude of each of these campsites. My family and I have used all of these campsites over the years and light pollution and increased noise will definitely be a problem. These campgrounds are almost always full (especially Salmon and Placid Lakes) during the summer months, adding electricity will not generate more use of these campgrounds. Electrification of all of these campsites runs counter to the very need to conserve electricity. Unmetered electrical use sends the wrong message about the need for conserving energy and reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and reducing our carbon foot print. From my professional experience, FWP has greater needs than spending scarce dollars on program which may or may not return revenue to the agency. FWP, and Montana sportsmen and women, would be better suited if you would take that 750,000 and spend it on backlogged maintenance at these parks instead. Finally, the EA's acknowledge a lack of hard data supporting the need for such an action, citing only anecdotal evidence. Anecdotal evidence does not qualify as data necessary to determine an appropriate course of action. Anecdotal evidence does not belong in any assessment of any type; your agency needs to be taken to task for relying on such inadequate documentation. If you have any questions or need clarification, please feel free to contact me. Thank you.

FWP Response: We felt that it was necessary to prepare individual EA's for each state park, especially, since each park is located differently geographically and may have different resource issues to address. Obviously, there are many similarities to each proposal; however, there are also some differences that we felt were important to point out. Electrification will not lead to the night skies being lit up any more than they are now when people camp. We are NOT proposing to install streetlights, only provide electrical pedestals that a camper could plug into to run

appliances, various camping equipment, or health equipment without running their generators. Electricity is one of the more energy efficient forms of electricity than the use of fossil fuels. The spending of state park dollars to provide this service to campers is meeting a need that will not only enhance tourism but also meet the emerging needs of today's "baby boomer" generation. Even comments from Missoula's Convention and Visitors Bureau indicate that the lack of electricity in our Montana State Parks is a very common complaint by tourists visiting Montana. Many anglers to our state parks rely on batteries to power their boats & fishing gear and have to run generators to charge them up. More and more of our camping public carry medical equipment needed for their health.

I have received notification of improvements (electrification projects) for Beavertail Hill State Park, Placid Lake State Park, Salmon Lake State Park, Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park and Black Sandy State Park.

I am of the opinion that NONE of these projects may proceed without the approval of the Legislature. However, I was not active in the 2009 Legislature to know if you received approval in advance.

Please note that 23-1-126(4) MCA requires that "any development in state parks and fishing access sites beyond those defined as maintenance in 23-1-127 must be approved by the legislature. No where in 23-1-127 MCA is it permissible to electrify any park or FAS.

Perhaps the 2009 legislature approved these projects in a bill I am unaware of. If so, please advise how I may find that action. If not, please advise how it is that your agency intends to get around this legal requirement.

Additionally, 23-1-110(2)(g) states "The department shall prepare a public report regarding any project that is subject to the provisions of subsection (1). The report must include conclusions relating to the following aspects of the proposal: (g) site-specific modifications as they relate to the park or fishing access site system as a whole." A purpose of this section of law is to insure that maintenance is up-to-date before additional development takes place. You have a noxious weed and/or noxious plant (Salt Cedar and Russian Olive) problem all across the park/FAS system and yet you are developing sites before this maintenance is addressed. Many sites need improved toilet facilities and improved toilet and trash maintenance. So, how does additional development at this time comply with the intent of the law?

When and where are the public meetings on the developments as provided for in 23-1-110?

Referenced statutes are copied below.

Please observe that I have copied this inquiry to the Attorney General, Governor, Hal Harper, FWP Commission members and others.

No need for me to go beyond comments, which exactly echo my thoughts AGAINST the plan to electrify 5 Montana State Parks. We have worked for too many years, through too many fads, to not realize that this plan significantly increases the maintenance costs for state parks, destroys the natural setting, and caters to a dwindling, resource-consuming sector of the so-called "camping" populace.

For all the reasons enunciated, I will go on record OPPOSING these five projects so that I can join in the inevitable appeal before the FWP Commission.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

FWP Response: After consulting with our legal bureau, and reviewing the analysis of the Legislative Services Division, the Department has in fact received the appropriate legislative approval for this project [Sec. 23-1-126(4)]. The Department adheres strictly to the Legislative process of getting authorization for capital improvements.

Draft environmental assessments (EA) represent the public involvement and reporting requirement specified in statute. The opportunity for public meetings was also presented and

discussed in each EA. These EA's are the established forum for public comments for proposed projects. All public comments received are evaluated and considered.

Finally, should an individual be dissatisfied with the decision reached by the Department following the public comment period, the decision may be appealed to the Department Director and ultimately to the FWP Commission.