DRAFT

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Environmental Analysis
MEPA CHECKLIST

Mission: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, through its employees and citizen commission, provides for the stewardship of the fish, wildlife, parks and recreational resources of Montana, while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations.

All Montanans have the right to live in a clean and healthful environment. This brief environmental analysis is intended to provide an evaluation of the likely impacts to the human environment from proposed actions of the project cited below. This analysis will allow Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to fulfill its oversight obligations and satisfy rules and regulations of both the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and the National Environmental Policy act (NEPA). The project sponsor has a responsibility to ensure that all impacts have been addressed. Some effects may be negative; others may be positive. Please provide a discussion for each section. If no impacts are likely, please discuss the reasoning that led to your determination.

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action: Road Improvements

Development	_____
Renovation	_____
Maintenance	X
Land Acquisition	_____
Equipment Acquisition	_____
Other (Describe)	_____

2. If Appropriate, agency responsible for the proposed action:
Montana Fish Wildlife Parks: has authority to provide for maintenance of facilities and development and access for public recreation on Department lands (23-2-101 MCA)

Cascade County: The Montana Legislature adopted MCA 23-1-107 which provides for the assistance and cooperation between Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) and other local agencies relating to the planning, developing, improving and maintaining a recreational site.

3. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor

Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks	Co-Sponsor:
Parks Division	Cascade County Commission
4600 Giant Springs Rd.	415 3rd Street NW
Great Falls, MT 50404	Great Falls, MT 59404

4. Name of Project: UUCascade County/Ulm Pishkun Cooperative Road Improvement Project

5. If Applicable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date
Estimated Completion Date
Current Status of Project Design (preliminary civil plan and profile have been drafted)

6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)

Cascade County, Montana, T20N, R 2E, West ½ of border between Section 7/Section 18

The .5 (approx.) mile stretch of the county (Goetz) Road from its intersection with Ulm Vaughn Road 4.5 miles north of Ulm, MT.

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

(a) Developed:
residential ..... ___ acres
industrial..... ___ acres

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/
Recreation ..... ___ acres

(c) Wetlands/Riparian
Areas..... ___ acres

(d) Floodplain..... ___ acres

(e) Productive:
irrigated cropland ..... ___ acres
dry cropland ..... ___ acres
forestry..... ___ acres
rangeland .....2.5 acres
other –existing roadbed.....1.8 acres

8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

Exhibit A " Site Map"

Revised 7/2/2004

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

Proposed Action: The proposed project will provide funding to Cascade County to complete a road maintenance project on a one-half mile (approximate) stretch of Goetz Road. The proposed construction project will provide a new road alignment (essentially within the boundaries of the existing alignment) smooth the alignment profile, increase the radius of an existing sharp switchback (lessening the severity of the existing turn), widen/flatten the slopes adjacent to the existing road for stability purposes, and provide an all-weather gravel driving surface, that when completed, will be better capable of handling current and anticipated future visitation between the Visitor Center and the jump site at Ulm Pishkun State Park. See Exhibit C "Site Photos"

Need for Action:

Education & Tourism:

Ulm Pishkun State Park is a historic/cultural site centered around one of the largest prehistoric Native American buffalo jump cliffs in North America. The visitors Center is the newest in the Montana Parks System and offers ever expanding educational opportunities to learn about the area's cultural, natural, and archeological resources and to provide a center for Native American cultures to tell their stories and demonstrate life-skills. The number of students visiting the park has increased annually with the park providing educational programs to approximately 1,500 individuals during school tours in 2002-03 and an estimated 1700 for 2003-04.

In 2002 about 655,000 tourist groups traveled through Cascade County and spent an estimated $64 million (Montana CTAP 2003-04, ITRR). Ulm Pishkun State Park is located just thirteen miles south of Great Falls- one of Montana's largest cities, and a mere three and one half miles from Interstate 15- Montana's most traveled North-South highway and a major corridor between Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks. Ulm Pishkun State Park is the fourth most visited site by people stopping at attractions in Russell Country (Community Tourism Assessment Program 2003-04, ITRR) and the public has expectations of touring the actual jump site when visiting the park. Currently this is not always possible.

Improve safety and access:

The current road conditions limit access of certain vehicles to the upper reaches of the park and points west of the switchback on Goetz Road. Some tour and school buses, RVs or trailer units, and farm machinery such as combines and large grain trucks are unable to traverse this stretch due to steep grades and extensive washboarding.

In addition, the steep switchback alignment and narrow road surface areas prohibit two large vehicles from meeting and passing one another and creates dangerous passing conditions for other standard vehicles on several segments of the road.

During inclement weather, the clayey road surface softens after snow or rain and generally precludes access for all but 4-wheet drive vehicles. This results in recreationists riding out a dangerous slide to more level ground or becoming stuck on the switchback and creating an even more dangerous situation for other vehicles.

Objectives of the Action:

- To bring the current (substandard) access road and road geometry (leading to the upper reaches of Ulm-Pishkun State Park) up to current county design standards improving safety and driving conditions for tourists and area residents –Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has helped fund past county road projects, including pavement of the 3.5 mile stretch from Ulm to the Ulm Pishkun State Park Visitor Center and contributed more dollars to Cascade County for road upgrades than any other state park.

- To provide, improve, and preserve public/park visitor access between the lower Ulm Pishkun State Park area (visitor center) and the upper jump with as minimal land disturbance as possible to increase educational opportunities and improve visitor safety and satisfaction.

- To formalize the road easement right-of way across the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks owned property and Cascade County.

10. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the required no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonable available and prudent to consider and a comparison of the alternatives with the proposed action/preferred alternative:

No Action: Under **t**his alternative, the current situation would be retained. This alternative is less desirable as unsafe driving conditions would persist, substandard road conditions would remain, and there would be continued limited or non access to the jump and points west along Goetz road due to steep grades, sharp turns, and slippery conditions when wet.

Proposed Road Improvement: This alternative would improve public and Ulm area resident access between the lower Ulm Pishkun State Park area (visitor's center) and the upper Jump area improving safety of travel for large vehicles (buses, RVs, trailer units, utility/service vehicles). This alternative would upgrade the existing roadway serving Ulm Pishkun State Park and the adjacent area, enhance quality recreational opportunities, and formalize an easement right-of-way between Montana FWP and Cascade County.

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

(a) Permits:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
Cascade County	All necessary permits	

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Montana FWP	$200,000
Cascade County	In-kind (to be determined)

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
SHPO	Cultural Resources/Archaeological Clearance
Cascade County Weed Board	County Weed Plan
Cascade County	Construction & Maintenance

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

Montana FWP:	-Dan Smith (Region 4 Parks)
	-Corey Loecher (Region 4 Wildlife)
	-Paul Valle (Design & Construction)
	-Bardell Mangum (Design & Construction)
	-Tom Reilly (Parks)
Cascade County	-Gary Cook
Cascade County Weed Board	-Jim Freeman (supervisor)

State Historic Preservation Office- Stan Wilmoth, Ph.D. (State Archaeologist)
Mrs. Annetta Williams, BS: Environmental Mgt, Minor: Botany
Montana Natural Resource Information System
Soil Conservation Office
Mr. Brian J. Williams, P.E., P.G. (Geotechnical Engineering)
Thomas, Dean & Hoskins, Inc. -Mr. Jack Fisher

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACTэ				Can Impact Be Mitigatedэ	Comment Index
	Unknownэ	None	Minorэ	Potentially Significant		
<a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X		Yes	A
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		Yes	B
<c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				C
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				D
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other						

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

A. The subsoil is of varying depths and is an erodable clay-shale. Mitigation should include consultation for specifics that may include cut bank stability and/or slope stability

B. Current slopes have varying degrees of vegetative cover and some areas of erosion. Erosion control measures and seeding/re-seeding of vegetation to ensure long-term soil stability and fertility will be included in the county's plans.

C. The project includes flattening of uphill slopes adjacent to part of the road. Although the site is in close proximity to a culturally significant buffalo cliff kill site, no established unique geologic or physical features will be impacted

D. There are no stream channels or lakes in the project area. The project will include the establishment of drainage (ditches culvert crossings) along the project alignment consistent with County design standards; no stream channels or lakebed/lakeshore features will be impacted.

E. Persons living adjacent to the project will not be impacted (due to earthquake, ground failure, or other natural hazard) as a result of this project (closest residential structure is approximately 3,000 feet east-northeast of the project area. Slope by road itself may need to be secured. Traffic through the project area and access to the upper reaches of the Park (or further west along the road) may temporarily be limited by construction activities; traffic control will be required during construction to direct local traffic access.

э Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

XPHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. AIR **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACTϽ				Can Impact Be Mitigated Ͻ	Comment Index
	Unknown Ͻ	None	Minor Ͻ	Potentially Significant		
< a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			X		Yes	A
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				B
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				C
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				D
⊄e.UU For P-R/D-I projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)						
f. Other						

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

A. Fugitive dust will be generated temporarily as part of the construction process.

B. No odors beyond those generated by standard road construction should be generated.

C. Standard construction and graveling of the road surface will not alter the atmosphere.

D. Pollutants will not be present at a level to significantly effect vegetation.

Ͻ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. WATER **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACTϽ				Can Impact Be Mitigated Ͻ	Comment Index
	Unknown Ͻ	None	Minor Ͻ	Potentially Significant		
< a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				A
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		YES	B
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		X				C
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				D
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				E
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				F
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				G
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				H
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				I
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				J
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				K
⊄⊄l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)						
⊄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)						
n. Other:						

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

A. No surface waters are located in/around the project area.

B. One culvert will be lengthened and another added to upgrade roadside drainage to current design standards. (See proposed geotechnical study completed by Thomas, Dean, and Hoskins, Inc. Great Falls, Montana)

C. No alteration to flows other than as discussed in (b) above.

D. See (a) above.

E. See (a) above; and no residential structures within 500 feet.

F. Review of proposed preliminary plan and profile indicates that excavation associated with construction is anticipated to impact only the upper 10 to 15 feet of the southern hill slope between Stations 5+50 and 10+50. No seepage from existing slopes (that are planned for excavation) is currently observed in this area; therefore, no direct connection to useable groundwater (other than potential surface infiltration) is anticipated. On that basis, the project is expected to have no impact on groundwater quality.

Ͻ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

G. Based on (f) above, no impacts to groundwater quantity are anticipated.

H. Risk of contamination to surface or groundwater is expected to be limited to fuel or lubricant spillage during construction; contractor will have an environmental response program in place to respond to such contingencies and be required to clean any such spillage.

I. No water right or reservation will be impacted.

J. See (f) above.

K. No impacts are anticipated as no surface waters are present and no residences are located directly down-gradient from the project.

∋ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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

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

A. Some impacts will occur at construction site, and the potential for weed invasion is increased.
Disturbed lands will be reclaimed with a variety of native grasses and forbs.
The species that exist on the project site also exist at other locations in the park.

B. See (a) above

C. There are no known unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species on this site.

D. There is no agricultural land to be affected by this project.

E. There is the possibility of the establishment of noxious weeds while ground is disturbed and re-distribution of weeds throughout the site during construction. However, impacts will be minimized by closely monitoring re-vegetation areas and spraying noxious weeds after construction.

F. There are no wetlands or unique farmland that will be affected. Prime farmland will not be affected.

∋ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

< 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT∋				Can Impact Be Mitigated∋	Comment Index
	Unknown∋	None	Minor∋	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				A
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				B
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of non-game species?		X				C
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				D
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?			X		YES	E
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				F
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X		YES	G
⊄⊄h. For P-R/D-I, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		X				H
⊄i. For P-R/D-I, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				I
j. Other:						

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

A-D There would be no deterioration of wildlife habitat nor changes in game or non-game species. There is no fisheries in the project area.

E. Minor movements out of the area until machinery moves from the work area can be expected. Then wildlife is expected to move back into its natural environments. Effects would be very minor.

G-I. There are no known unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species in the project area.

∋ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT∋				Can Impact Be Mitigated∋	Comment Index
	Unknown∋	None	Minor∋	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		YES	A
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?			X		YES	B
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				C
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				D
e. Other:						

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

A. Noise levels associated with operation of construction equipment will temporarily increase at and within several hundred feet of the project. However, the closest residence is at least 3,000 feet east-northeast of the site and increase in noise levels should be limited to daytime (construction) hours and be insignificant at a distance of 3,000 feet from the construction site. Increased noise levels during construction might impact park guests traveling to and visiting the jump site and, to a lesser degree, those visiting at the Visitor Center.

B. See (a) above.

C. Construction activities will generate no electrostatic or electromagnetic effects.

D. See (c) above.

∋ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT∋				Can Impact Be Mitigated∋	Comment Index
	Unknown∋	None	Minor∋	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				A
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				B
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				C
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				D
e. Other: _____						

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

A. Completion of the project will enhance park visitation. The project will not impact area farming and ranching lands. Completion of the project will increase/enhance access opportunities to the upper reaches of Ulm-Pishkun State Park.

B. Existing area lands are used for grazing, agriculture, and recreation/tourism to the park. Proposed adjustments and improvements to the existing road should not alter these uses. Existing land usage could be enhanced due to increased accessibility.

C. No residences will be negatively impacted; closest residence is 3,000 feet east-northeast of the project area.

D. The project area is an existing road alignment controlled by Cascade County; upgrading of the road is consistent with current land use. Completion of the project will bring this stretch of Goetz road into compliance with County road standards. Open space land policies are not impacted negatively or positively.

E. Completion of this project as an all-weather road will reduce traffic hazards and will allow additional traffic access as an intended outcome of the project. Traffic volume, especially tourist traffic, might increase as a result of the upgraded road surface. Increase of speed limit is unknown; refer to completed design plans of Cascade County. No impacts to transportation facilities is anticipated as no transportation facilities are located in the area.

∋ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT∋				Can Impact Be Mitigated∋	Comment Index
	Unknown∋	None	Minor∋	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				A
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				B
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				C
⊄d.For P-R/D-I, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)						
e. Other:						

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

A. Construction is not currently anticipated to include the use of explosives; therefore, no risk of explosion is anticipated. Potential releases of hazardous substances are anticipated to include only fuel or lubricant spillage during fueling and maintenance of construction vehicles; the project contractor will have an environmental response program in place to respond to such contingencies.

B. No permanent adverse impacts to emergency response plans are anticipated. Traffic through the project area and access to the upper reaches of the Park (or further west along the road) might temporarily be limited by construction activities; traffic control will be required during construction to direct local and visitor traffic access.

C. Construction and completion of the project is anticipated to pose no human or potential health hazard.

∋ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT∋				Can Impact Be Mitigated∋	Comment Index
	Unknown∋	None	Minor∋	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				A
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				B
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				C
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?			X		YES	D
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X		YES	E
f. Other:						

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

A. The project area is situated inside Ulm Pishkun State Park boundaries and the park is surrounded by agricultural lands –both private and public (DNRC). One small community resides to the north (no direct road access) and another (Ulm) approximately 5 miles to the south of the proposed project area along the Ulm-Vaughn Road. These are primarily bedroom communities surrounding the larger metropolis of Great Falls. This project should not effect the distribution, structure, or growth of area communities or ranch/farm families.

B. See (a) above.

C. See (a) above.

D. The County (Goetz) road provides one means of access to Ulm and Great Falls for several ranching families and a Huterite Colony. Short-term impacts to existing traffic patterns and commercial activities could include traffic delays, detours, uneven road surfaces, and narrowed traffic lanes within the construction zone. During construction the effects of the proposed action will be mitigated in the contractors safety and operations plan for the project. In the long-term, improved access and safety along the Goetz road might create a slight increase in traffic through Ulm. However, this traffic would still be limited by road conditions west of the improved stretch.

E. See (d) above. There will be a temporary increase in the volume of construction/commercial vehicles during the construction/renovation period. Short-term traffic hazards such as stationary and moving construction vehicles (both private and commercial), safety, and traffic pattern guidance during working and non-working hours will be addressed/mitigated in the contractor's safety and operations plan for the project.

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

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F. **HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT∋				Can Impact Be Mitigated∋	Comment Index
	Unknown∋	None	Minor∋	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: _____			X		YES	A
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				B
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				C
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		X				D
< e. Define projected revenue sources						E
< f. Define projected maintenance costs.						F
g. Other:_____						

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

A. Cascade County presently maintains, and will continue to maintain, the current road surface in the project area.

B. (See A above)

C-D. None

D. Montana FWP will provide for the cost of this project up to a maximum of $200,000 to Cascade County for the road upgrade and improvements. Cascade County may provide in-kind services consisting of work involving supplying gravel or other materials for the project, project administration, engineering, and accounting.

E. There are no projected maintenance costs to Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Cascade County will provide maintenance on the road .

∋ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

< 11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT∋				Can Impact Be Mitigated∋	Comment Index
	Unknown∋	None	Minor∋	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				A
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				B
<c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)		X				C
⊄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)		X				D
e. Other:						

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

A.-B. The proposed project will simply improve and minimally re-align an existing public road.

C. The project will enhance recreation/tourism opportunities by increasing travel safety for visitors, providing accessibility for many vehicles currently unable to reach the jump, and lessen wear and tear on department vehicles.

∋ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT∋				Can Impact Be Mitigated∋	Comment Index
	Unknown∋	None	Minor∋	Potentially Significant		
<a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?	X				YES	A
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				B
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				C
⊄⊄d. ~~For P-R/D-J~~, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? **Attach SHPO letter of clearance.** (Also see 12.a)						
e. Other:						

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

A. This is an important issue for this site. The project's close proximity to an established prehistoric, cultural site increases the potential for disturbing Paleontologically important materials during re-alignment of the existing road. At present, the existence or possible extent of cultural materials in the project area is unknown. Mitigation procedures will include having an Archaeologist inventory a flagged corridor within which all possible re-alignments would be contained (Reference SHPO letter) and possibly having an archaeologist on site during a portion of the work.

B. See A above. The project construction will minimize the cutting and disturbance of road side geologic features during re-alignment

C. While there are no anticipated effects on religious use levels due to this project, mitigation for the possibility is included. See A above.

∋ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT∋				Can Impact Be Mitigated∋	Comment Index
	Unknown∋	None	Minor∋	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)	X1		X2	X1	YES	A
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				B
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				C
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				D
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				E
⊄f. ~~For P-R/D-I~~, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)						
⊄⊄g. ~~For P-R/D-I~~, list any federal or state permits required.						

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

A1. As noted earlier in this EA checklist, the projects close proximity to an important historical/cultural site creates potential for discovering cultural materials within the project site. This impact can be mitigated by having an archaeologist inspect the project area prior to construction and, if deemed necessary, having an archaeologist on hand during portions of construction itself.

A2. Cumulative impacts of noise, dust, soil/vegetation disturbance, and disruption to established wildlife and human traffic patterns could be created during construction but these impacts would be short-term. With proper erosion control, plant restoration, and an improved road surface. Positive cumulative impacts of this project could include: enhanced plant communities, improved recreational/educational opportunities and increased visitor satisfaction and safety.

B-E. Outside of the potential for cultural impact as noted in A above, this is a standard road improvement proposal.

∋ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

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

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

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

2.Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

No Action: This alternative would leave the county road between the base of the hill and the actual upper cliff jump site as-is, resulting in a continued unsafe, substandard road with limited access due to steep grades, sharp turns, washboarding, and slippery conditions when wet. This does not address visitor satisfaction comments and limits educational opportunities for increasing numbers of school students and visitors touring the park as the current road conditions often prevent buses and many RV units from reaching the upper jump site.

Proposed Road Improvement: This alternative upgrades the existing county roadway serving the upper area of Ulm Pishkun State Park and the adjacent area. Realigning the current road to lessen the severity of the existing switchback curve, lessening steep grades, and gravel surfacing would bringing the current road conditions up to county standards; provide and improve public access between the parks visitor's center and the upper Jump area; increase safety of travel for large vehicles (buses, RVs, trailer units, utility/service vehicles, and farm equipment); and enhance quality recreational opportunities in the area.

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

Mitigation/control measures include:

- Controlling soil erosion, maintaining cut bank stability, and reseeding disturbed areas.
- Safely control of disrupted traffic.
- Properly assessing/monitoring for cultural/historical materials on the project site (see appropriate checklist)

4.Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, it is determined that an EIS is not required. With no anticipated significant impacts to the environment, an EA is the appropriate level of analysis.

5. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

Public involvement will include a 30-day comment period, and distribution of this EA to known interested parties. Legal notices advertising the availability of this EA for public review will be published in the Great Falls Tribune, the Cascade Courier, the Helena Independent Record, and the state's Electronic Bulletin Board.

6. Duration of comment period if any:

This EA will have a 30-day comment period beginning from the date of the first advertisement in the above mentioned public newspapers.

Comments may be directed to:

Ulm Pishkun Cascade County Road Project EA
PO Box 109
Ulm, MT 59485

Or emailed to: Pishkun@montana.com

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

Faith Robertson
Ulm Pishkun State Park
PO Box 109
Ulm, MT 59485
406-866-2217

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The following issues were identified in scoping Meetings:

Glossary of Terms

Alternative – A different approach to achieve the same objective or result as the proposed action.

Cumulative Impacts – Impacts to the human environment that, individually, may be minor for a specific project, but, when considered in relation to other actions, may result in significant impacts.

Direct Impacts – Primary impacts that have a direct cause and effect relationship wit a specific action, i.e. they occur at the same time and place as the action that causes the impact.

Environmental Assessment (EA) – The appropriate level of environmental review for actions that either do not significantly affect the human environment or for which the agency is uncertain whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required.

Environmental Assessment Checklist – An EA checklist is a standard for of an EA, developed by an agency for actions that generally produce minimal impacts.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – A comprehensive evaluation of the impacts to the human environment that likely would result from an agency action or reasonable alternatives to the action.. An EIS also serves a public disclosure of agency decision-making. Typically, an EIS is prepared in two steps. The Draft EIS is a preliminary detailed written statement that facilitates public review and comment. The Final EIS is a completed, written statement that includes a summary of major conclusions and supporting information from the Draft EIS, responses to substantive comments received on the Draft EIS, a list of all comments on the Draft EIS and any revisions make to the Draft EIS and an explanation of the agency's reasons for its decision.

Environmental Review/Analysis- An evaluation, prepared in compliance with the provisions of MEPA and the MEPA Model Rules, of the impacts to the human environment that may result as a consequence of an agency action.

Human Environment – Those attributes, including but not limited to biological, physical, social, economic, cultural, and aesthetic factors that interrelate to form the environment.

Long-Term Impact – An impact, which lasts well beyond the period of the initial project.

Mitigation – An enforceable measure(s), designed to reduce or prevent undesirable effects or impacts of the proposed action.

Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) – The Montana state counterpart of NEPA that applies only to state actions.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – The federal legislation that established a new environmental ethic for Federal Agencies with the purpose being "to declare a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation; and to establish a Council on Environmental Quality".

No Action Alternative – An alternative, required by the MEPA Model Rules for purposes of analysis, that describes the agency action that would result in the least change to the human environment.

Public Participation – The process by which an agency includes interested and affected individuals, organizations, and agencies in decision making.

Scoping – The process, including public participation, that an agency uses to define the scope of the environmental review.

Secondary Impacts – Impacts to the human environment that are indirectly related to the agency action, I.E. they are induced by a direct impact and occur at a later time or distance from the triggering action.

Short-Term Impacts – An impact directly associated with a project that is of relatively short duration.

Significance – The process of determining whether the impacts of a proposed action are serious enough to warrant the preparation of

an EIS. An impact may be adverse, beneficial or both. If none of the adverse impacts are significant, and EIS is not required.

Project Area

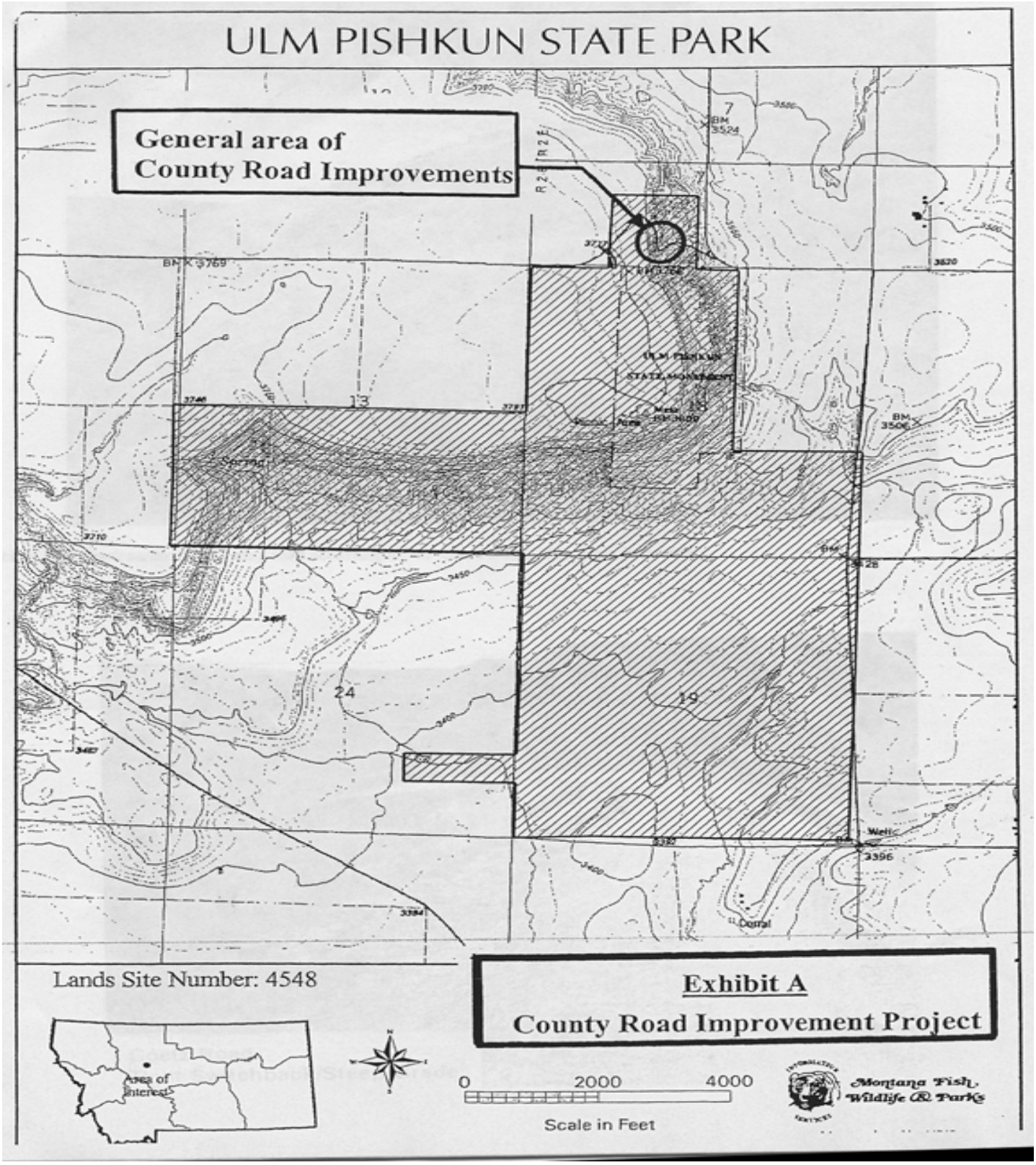

Exhibit A “Site Map”

Exhibit C “Site Photos”

Below switchback on county (Goetz) road accessing top of Ulm Pishkun State Park jump area.

Switchback/ Steep Grade on Goetz road accessing Ulm Pishkun State Park jump area

Tight curve above Switchback at approximately 17=100 – 19+100 on Goetz Road accessing Ulm Pishkun State Park jump area.