Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 1630
Miles City, MT 59301
April 15, 2004

Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Bldg, Room 106, POB 201704, Helena, MT 59620
DEQ, Planning, Prevention & Assistance Division, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620
DEQ, Permitting & Compliance Division, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Director's Office	Parks Division
Legal Unit	Design & Construction
Lands Section	Regional Supervisors/Information Officers

Montana Historical Society, State Preservation Office, POB 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202
Montana State Parks Association, PO Box 699, Billings, MT 59103
Montana Environmental Information Center, PO Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Montana State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave, PO Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
Montana Wildlife Federation, PO Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624
George Ochenski, PO Box 689, Helena, MT 59624
Wayne Hirst, PO Box 728, Libby, MT 59923
USFWS,CMR, PO Box 110, Lewistown, MT 59457
US Army Corps of Engineers, PO Box 208, Fort Peck, MT 59223
Harold Blattie, Asst. Director, Mt. Association of Counties, 2715 Skyway Drive, Helena, MT 59602-1213
Alec Hanson, Executive Director, MT League of Cities and Towns, Inc., 208 N Montana Ave, Helena, MT 59602
Garfield County Commissioners, Jordan, MT 59337
Jerry Johnston, President, Walleye's Unlimited, Jordan, MT 59337

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for the Hell Creek State Park/Garfield County Road Maintenance Project in northern Garfield County, and is submitted for your consideration.

Questions and comments will be accepted until May 15, 2004.

If you have questions or need additional copies of the draft EA, please contact Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks at (406) 232-0900. Please send any written comments to the following address:

Hell Creek State Park/Garfield County Road Maintenance Project
C/O Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 1630
Miles City, MT 59301

Sincerely,

Bryce Christensen
Region Seven Supervisor

Enclosure

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

MONTANA STATE PARKS

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
MEPA/NEPA 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 help 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, be sure to discuss the reasoning that led to your determination.

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of proposed action.

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

2. If appropriate, agency responsible for the proposed action.
   Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
3. Name, address phone number and E-mail address of project sponsor.
   Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks
   Parks Division
   PO Box 200701
   Helena, MT 59620-0701
4. Name of project.
   Hell Creek State Park, Garfield County Road Maintenance Project
5. If applicable: Estimated construction/commencement date

Fall 2004 as weather conditions allow

Estimated completion date
Fall 2004, or Spring 2005, weather dependent.
Current status of project design (% complete)
0%

6. Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township).
Garfield County – T21N, R37E & T20N,R38E

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

(a) Developed:
residential..... 0 acres
industrial ..... 0 acres

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/
Recreation ..... 0 acres

(c) Wetlands/Riparian
Areas ..... 0 acres

(d) Floodplain..... 0 acres

(e) Productive:
irrigated cropland ..... 0 acres
dry cropland..... 0 acres
forestry..... 0 acres
rangeland ..... 0 acres
other..... 0 acres

8. Map/site plan: substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.
Please see Exhibit 'A', attached

9. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action.

Proposed project will provide funding to Garfield County to complete a major county road maintenance project on an eight to ten mile section of the Hell Creek State Park road. The County will hire a professional engineering firm for the purpose of designing a major maintenance project, that when completed provides a road surface better capable of handling current and anticipated future visitation to Hell Creek State Park, 26 miles north of Jordan. The County will publicly bid the project and select the successful bidder and their consultant-engineering firm will provide the necessary construction oversight of the project.

The proposed project will add a four-inch lift of surfacing gravel, beginning at the southern boundary of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (CMR), extending south towards Jordan. In addition to adding road

surface gravel, dust inhibitor will be added along a ½ mile stretch of roadway adjacent to a ranch dwelling 6 miles north of Jordan, and on another ½ mile stretch immediately north of Jordan to lessen airborne dust near inhabited dwellings from construction traffic and general recreation traffic. Approximately 8 to 10 miles of county roadway will be resurfaced. However, the exact length of roadway resurfaced will depend upon the public bid prices. Several projects of this nature will be needed to resurface the entire 20 miles of road between the CMR boundary and Highway 200 in Jordan. Additional cooperative FWP/Garfield County road projects may be undertaken in the future as funding becomes available.

Hell Creek State Park is the most developed access site on the south shore of the 160-mile long Fort Peck Reservoir. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has invested over $2,156,000 in improvements at this state park in the past 16 years including a shower facility/comfort station, boat ramps and docks, RV dump station, station, latrines, campsite rehabilitation two cooperative projects with local Walleyes Unlimited chapters that resulted in construction of a fish cleaning station and a playground. Hell Creek State Park is the closest developed access to the Reservoir for Montana's major population centers of Billings, Great Falls, Bozeman, Helena, and Missoula. Hell Creek is the closest major access point on the reservoir to the interstate highway system. Annual visitation at the park exceeded 35,000 visits for 2003.

Fort Peck Reservoir supports a warm water fishery in the Hell Creek area. The reservoir provides the most consistent and possibly the best walleye fishing in the state. This fishery has been and continues to be the subject of monthly articles in angling magazines such as "In Fisherman", along with feature television programs on the various outdoor channels. Over the course of a year, Hell Creek is the site of four different fishing tournaments. The largest of these tournament hosts 150 two-person teams over a two day period.

The existing road surface of the county road typically becomes impassible when wet, resulting in recreationists either becoming stranded in the Park or stuck on the 26-mile long roadway. Light rain showers often result in a badly rutted road surface. These ruts and slippery road surface cause drivers to loose control of their vehicles creating dangerous situations.

In addition, the majority of visitors, and potential visitors are pulling boats and campers with recreational vehicles or pickup trucks, which are unable to safely negotiate the rough road conditions and easily become mired in the mud or slide off the road.

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

We have identified three reasonable alternatives:

A) **Proposed Plan**. Under the proposed plan FWP will via a Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) with Garfield County, expend $200,000 of Montana State Parks road funds and an additional $400,000 of matching Federal Motor Boat funds to resurface approximately 8 to 10 miles of the Hell Creek county road to provide a safer, easier maintained, all-weather road surface for public access to Hell Creek State Park and Fort Peck Reservoir.
B) **No Action Alternative**. Under this alternative, the current situation would be retained. This alternative is less desirable as unsafe driving conditions would persist. Those conditions include the rutted road surface and slippery driving conditions that exist during and after even light precipitation events effectively

excluding many recreational visitors from the park.

11. Listing of each local, state or federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits		
Agency Name: N/A	Permit: N/A	Date Filed: N/A

(b) Funding	
Agency Name:	Funding Amount:
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	$200,000
Matching Federal Motor Boat Funds	$400,000
Total Project:	$600,000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities	
Agency Name:	Type of Responsibility:
Garfield County	Maintenance of County Road

12. List of agencies consulted during preparation of this Environmental Checklist:

Garfield County Commission
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

13. Name of Preparer(s) of this Environmental Checklist:

John Little – Region Seven Parks Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
PO Box 1630
Miles City, MT 59301
(406) 232-0900 FAX (406) 232-4368

14. Date submitted: April 15, 2004

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Land Resources" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on land resources. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects of the action as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

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

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

This cooperative County Road maintenance project is confined to the existing road surface and right-of-way. All work will take place within the existing County owned or controlled right-of-way.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Air" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on air resources. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects of the action as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

2. AIR **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			X			1
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X			1
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. Any discharge that will conflict with federal or state air quality regs?		X				
f. Other						

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

1. Some dust from grading, applying and hauling gravel will occur, as will some odors from the exhaust of the construction equipment used. Commercial dust inhibitor will be applied near inhabited dwellings to minimize dust. Both the dust and odors will be temporary, occurring only during the construction phase. Some dust will be produced from recreational vehicles that travel the road. This condition exists at present as it does with all non-paved county roadways.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Water" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on water resources. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

3. WATER **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	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				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
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				
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				
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. Effects to a designated floodplain?		X				
m. Any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations?		X				
n. Other:						

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

NOTE: This County Road maintenance project is confined to existing road surface. All work will take place within the existing County Road right-of-way.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. **At the bottom of this "Vegetation" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on vegetative resources. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.**

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				
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				
f. Effects to wetlands or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:						

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

NOTE: This County Road maintenance project is confined to the existing road surface. All work will take place within the existing County Road right-of-way.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Fish/Wildlife" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on fish and wildlife resources. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed**.**

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				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
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				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. Adverse effects to threatened/endangered species or their habitat?		X				
i. Introduction or exportation of any species not presently or historically occurring in the affected location?		X				
j. Other:						

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:
NOTE:
This County Road maintenance project is confined to the existing road surface. All work will occur within the confines of the existing County Road right-of-way.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Noise/Electrical Effects" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects of noise and electrical activities. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

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			2
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
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				
e. Other:						

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

NOTE: Noise levels will likely increase slightly during construction from equipment operation, however no residences or people are in the immediate proximity of the construction zone.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Land Use" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on land use. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects.

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				
b. A conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. A 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				
e. Compliance with existing land policies for land use, transportation, and open space?		X				
f. Increased traffic hazards, traffic volume, or speed limits or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
g. Other:						

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

NOTE: Project is confined to existing road surface, therefore no impacts to the human environment are anticipated.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Risk/Health Hazards" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects of risks and health hazards. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects of the action as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

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				
b. Effects on existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. Disturbance to any sites with known or potential deposits of hazardous materials?		X				
e. The use of any chemical toxicants?		X				
f. Other:						

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

NOTE: This project will be confined to major road maintenance, including grading, applying gravel to, and spreading gravel on an existing County Road surface within the established right-of-way. The purpose of the project is to improve all weather driving conditions on the roadway to improve visitor access to Hell Creek State Park. The project may in turn allow for quicker emergency response to Hell Creek State Park in the event of an emergency, especially so during rain events. During the construction phase a likely increase in dust from grading and construction traffic is anticipated. Commercial dust inhibitor will be applied to those road surfaces in the immediate vicinity of inhabited dwellings to minimize dust. This increase in dust levels will be short-term.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Community Impact" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on the community. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

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				
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			3
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:						

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

NOTE: This project may result in increased public visitation to Hell Creek State Park, which in turn may lead to an increase in tourist spending at businesses in Jordan and at the privately operated Hell Creek State Park Marina. It is not anticipated however, that the project will result in a visitation increase of such magnitude to the park or Jordan that new businesses will be established. Instead, it is anticipated that any increase in visitation to the park will contribute to the economic viability of existing businesses in the immediate vicinity.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Public Services/Taxes/Utilities" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on public services, taxes and utilities. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. 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 so, specify:			X			4
b. Effects on the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. 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. Increased used of any energy source?		X				
e. Other.						
Additional information requested:						
f. Define projected revenue sources.						
g. Define projected maintenance costs.						

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

4. FWP has completed numerous upgrades to the Hell Creek State Park facilities in recent years. These upgrades include construction of a shower/bathroom facility, Recreational Vehicle sewage disposal system, an upgrade of the potable water facility, enlarged wastewater treatment plant and expansion of the number of campsites and roadways and parking areas within Hell Creek State Park. These improvements were made in advance of the proposed series of connecting county road improvements to assure FWP and it's patrons that park facilities would accommodate any increases in visitation that may occur as a result of this project.

10. f. Funding for the project, $200,000, will come from a Montana State Parks proprietary funding sources. In addition, this amount will be matched to secure up to an additional $400,000 of available federal motorboat funding upon application by the Department and final approval by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). The scope and funding of this project is contingent upon final approval by the USFWS.

10. g. Garfield County road maintenance costs are expected to be reduced by this project. That end will be accomplished by a reduction in road surface rutting that currently occurs following each rain event. Adding gravel to the existing road surface in the project area will result in a firmer, safer and more easily maintained road surface for recreationists.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Aesthetics/Recreation" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on aesthetics & recreation. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

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				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			X			5
d. Adverse effects to any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas?		X				
e. Other:						

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

5. Hell Creek State Park is currently a destination park attracting over 32,000 visitors per year, 75% of which are from outside Garfield County. Approximately 15% of the total visitors to Hell Creek State Park come from outside Montana.

The only access to Hell Creek State Park is via this 26-mile county road. By providing safer access and access for a wider variety of recreational vehicles, Hell Creek State Park could potentially produce a modest increase in tourism value for the Jordan community.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Cultural/historical Resources" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on cultural/historical resources. Even if you checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

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				
b. Physical changes that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. Adverse effects to historic or cultural resources?		X				
e. Other:						

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

This road maintenance project will be confined to the existing road surface. No work under this project will take place on any previously undisturbed surfaces.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Summary Evaluation of Significance" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects. Even if you have checked "none" in the above table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

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.)		X				
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. Have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy?		X				
Additional information requested:						
g. List any federal or state permits required.						

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

This project is confined to existing road surface. No previously undisturbed areas will be affected by the proposed project.

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST CONCLUSION SECTION

1. Discuss the cumulative and secondary effects of this project as a whole.

   Negative impacts identified during the preparation of this Environmental Analysis were confined to the construction phase and are deemed very minor in nature. Impacts identified included:

   - Dust from construction activity and odors from the exhaust of construction equipment. The dust and odors will be present during the construction phase. Dust inhibitor will be placed on the roadway in the proximately of inhabited dwellings to minimize it's effect on occupants.
   - Potential traffic delays during construction.
   - Added traffic safety concerns during the construction phase. Garfield County and the road contractor will address traffic control issues as appropriate.

2. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this Environmental Checklist (Part II), is an EIS required?

   YES _____

   NO __X___

   If an EIS is not required, explain why the current checklist level of review is appropriate.

   No significant negative impacts were identified in the preparation of this Environmental Analysis.

3. Describe the public involvement for this project.

   Public involvement will include a 30-day comment period, and distribution of this EA to known interested parties. FWP feels this is an appropriate level of public involvement, since this road project is in response to numerous public comments to both the Department and Garfield County over the poor condition of the Hell Creek road.

The EA will be advertised in the *Billings Gazette, Helena Independent Record* and the *Jordan Tribune.*

4. What was the duration of the public comment period?
30 days.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Affected Environment – The aspects of the human environment that may change as a result of an agency action.

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

Categorical Exclusion – A level of environmental review for agency action that do not individually, collectively, or cumulatively cause significant impacts to the human environment, as determined by rulemaking or programmatic review, and for which an EA or EIS is not required.

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 with 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 does 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 form 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 that 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 made to the Draft EIS and an explanation of the agency's reasons for its decision.

Environmental Review – 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.

Mitigated Environmental Assessment – The appropriate level of environmental review for actions that normally would require an EIS, except that the state agency can impose designs, enforceable controls, or stipulations to reduce the otherwise significant impacts to below the level of significance. A mitigated EA must demonstrate that: (1) all impacts have been identified; (2) all impacts can be mitigated below the level of significance; and (3) no significant impact is likely to occur.

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

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

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.

Record of Decision – Concise public notice that announces the agency's decision, explains the reason for that decision, and describes any special conditions related to implementation of the decision.

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.

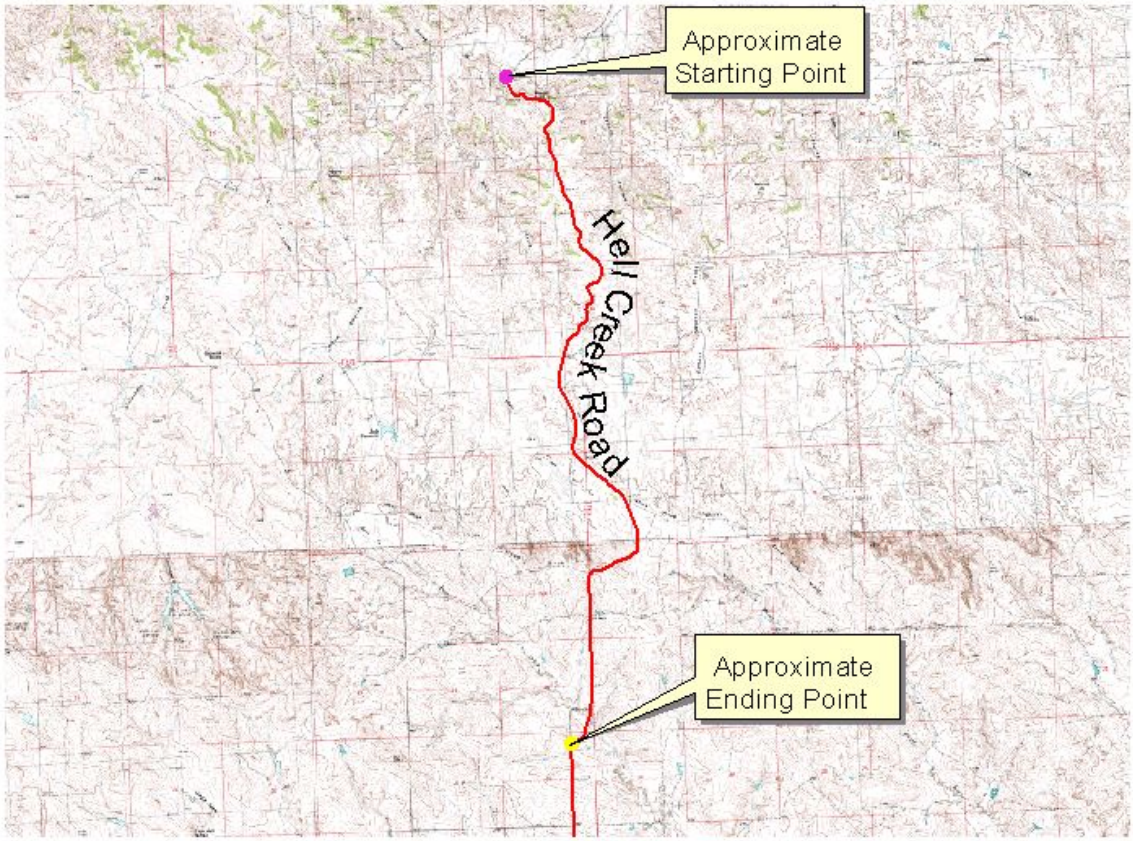
Short-Term Impact – An impact directly associated with a project that is of relatively short duration.

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, an EIS is not required.

Supplemental Review – A modification of a previous environmental review document (EA or EIS) based on changes in the proposed action, the discovery of new information, or the need for additional evaluation.

Tiering – Preparing an environmental review by focusing specifically on narrow scope of issues because the broader scope of issues was adequately addressed in previous environmental review document(s) that may be incorporated by reference.

Project Area



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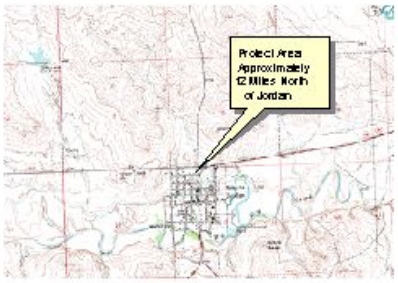

Starting Point
Ending Point
Hell Creek Road

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2004