MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Region One
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for Construction of a Hiking Trail at Lake Mary Ronan State Park

July 27, 2009

Description of the Proposed Action:

The proposal is to construct approximately 1.75 miles of hiking trail at Lake Mary Ronan State Park. To the east and south of the campground lie 56 acres of undeveloped forest. This area was thinned during the winter of 2007-08 to enhance forest health and reduce fuel loads. Another benefit has been to open the forest to views of surrounding mountains and open meadows. Currently, there are no developed trails through the area, resulting in an underutilization of the park's recreational potential. A developed, maintained trail would allow access to the area, creating the alternative recreational opportunities that formal hiking trails typically provide. A developed trail system would benefit visitors by presenting opportunities at the park other than fishing, boating, and camping. This is a project that would be attractive to both day users and campers alike and in the future could be further expanded to include self-guided interpretation amenities.

Public Comments:

The public was notified in the following manners to comment on the draft EA, the proposed action, and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: The Missoulian, Daily Inter Lake, and the Lake County Leader.
- One statewide press release.
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: http://fwp.mt.gov.
- 30-day public comment period following publication of second legal notice.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope, having few minor impacts, many of which can be mitigated. FWP received one comment in favor of the project. The project's tourism report from the Department of Commerce states that the new trail will have a positive effect on tourism and visitor recreational opportunities.

The only issue raised was a recommendation from the State Historic Preservation Office to complete a cultural and historical resource inventory prior to the start of trail construction. This was performed on July 21, 2009, by Montana State Park's Historic and Cultural Resource Preservation Specialist. During the course of the survey, no cultural or historical artifacts or areas of concern were found. The conclusion is that the trail project will have no impact on cultural or historical resources.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI):

Based on the analysis in the environmental assessment, I find the construction of the hiking trail, Alternative B, to be the preferred alternative. I have evaluated the EA and applicable laws, regulations, and policies and have determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

The final environmental assessment may be viewed at or obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region One, Kalispell, Montana. Please direct requests and questions to Jerry Sawyer, Park Operations Supervisor, (406) 751-4575 or e-mail to jsawyer@mt.gov

In accordance with FWP policy, an appeal may be made by any person who has either commented in writing to the department on the proposed project, or who has registered or commented orally at a public meeting held by the department on the proposed project, or who can provide new evidence that would otherwise change the proposed plan. An appeal must be submitted to the Director of FWP in writing and must be postmarked or received within 30 days of this decision notice. The appeal must describe the basis for the appeal, how the appellant has previously commented to the department or participated in the decision-making process, and how the department can provide relief. The appeal should be mailed to: Director, Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 East 6th Avenue, Helena, MT 59620

Dave Landstrom, Regional Parks Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

7/27/09
Date