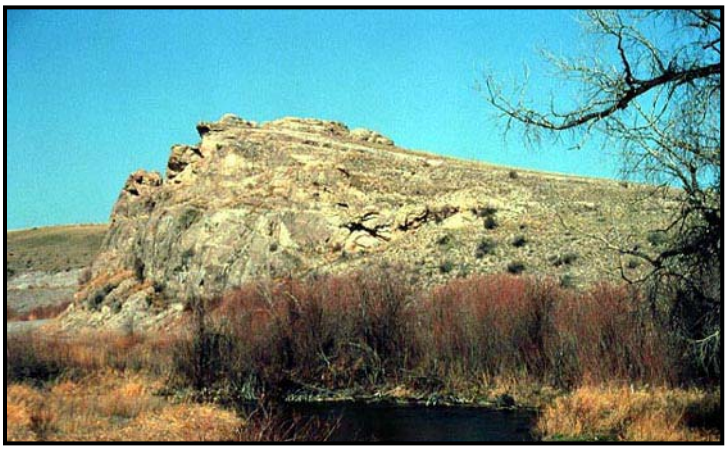
Draft
Environmental Assessment

CLARK'S LOOKOUT STATE PARK IMPROVEMENTS



November 2002

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Clarks Lookout State Park Improvements
Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

Draft

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of proposed state action:** Improve gravel park entrance, parking area and trail; install vault latrine; grant road easement to county, acquire road easement from Union Pacific Railroad, help fund new railroad crossing; install fencing, gates, road signs and interpretive signs.

2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** FWP is vested with the purpose and authority to plan and develop outdoor recreational resources in the state as determined in MCA 23-2-101. MCA 23-1-104 and 23-1-104 authorize the construction, improvement and maintenance of roads between existing state highways and state parks and the cooperation between state and local agencies for these purposes. The opportunity for public involvement regarding the proposed park project is provided under MCA 23-1-110.

3. **Name of project:** Clark's Lookout State Park Improvements

4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):** Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks is the project sponsor. Beaverhead County, Dillon, is a cooperating sponsor with roads outside the park.

5. **If applicable:**
   Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Spring 2003
   Estimated Completion Date: Winter 2003
   Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 75%
   Note: Beaverhead County has completed the new railroad crossing, but other park improvements are contingent upon securing funding.

6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):** Clark's Lookout State Park is accessed by traveling north of Dillon on State Highway 91 North (frontage road) approximately 0.6 miles to Lover's Leap Road. The park was acquired in 1985 by warranty deed and is located in Beaverhead County, Montana; Township 7 South, Range 8 East, Section 7; total size is 7.23 acres.

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

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	0
Residential	0		
Industrial	0	(e) Productive:	
		Irrigated cropland	0
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	3	Dry cropland	0
		Forestry	0
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	0	Rangeland	0
		Other	0

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.

Please refer to Appendices B – D.

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

(a) Permits: permits will be filed at least 2 week prior to construction.

Agency Name	Permit
County Weed Board	weeds
County Sanitarian	sealed vault latrine
Union Pacific Railroad to Beaverhead County and FWP (Lover's Leap Road North)	road easement
FWP to Beaverhead County (Lover's Leap Road South)	road easement
FWP to Beaverhead County (Lover's Leap Road North)	emergency road easement

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Interior Park Improvements	
Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (50:50 match with state funds)	$42,750
FWP – state park road funds	$35,250
FWP – Lewis and Clark Interpretation Funds	$7,500
New Railroad Crossing	
FWP – state park road funds	$5,000
Union Pacific Railroad	$15,000
Beaverhead County	$26,500

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
Union Pacific	road easement approval
Beaverhead County Commissioners	road easement approval

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

The purpose of the improvements at Clark's Lookout State Park is to protect this historic, cultural and geographic resource, provide interpretation, provide public safety and public access to the Park. Public scoping helped create a comprehensive Management Plan completed by a diverse, seventeen member team. The Plan was released for public comment in the Spring 2002, slightly revised, then approved by the State Parks Administrator and FWP Director in September 2002. The following proposed improvements are a direct reflection of the Plan Goals.

PARK ACCESS

Beaverhead County completed the railroad crossing relocation with approval and cooperation from Union Pacific in May 2002. The County has requested that FWP contribute $5,000 toward the paving of this crossing. This project eliminated a dangerous railroad crossing on a curve of both Highway 91 and the railroad approximately 450 feet south of the new site. The new site is on a straight section of these routes and provides safer public crossing. The paved crossing is 28' wide and 166' long, with pavement extending 60' north and 60' south on Lovers Leap Road North, and 40' west on Welborn Drive. (Please refer to **Appendix D: Railroad Crossing Paving Detail**). This project was not dependent or related to the development of Clark's Lookout State Park, but based on the safety of residential traffic crossing the railroad. FWP is considering contributing to this effort since traffic will also use this crossing to enter Clark's Lookout State Park.

Beaverhead County proposes to improve the current Lover's Leap Road North road grade between the new railroad crossing to the park's northern boundary, including a turn-around area at the location of the abandoned RR crossing for times when the park is closed. This will allow recreational vehicles (RV) to turn around prior to reaching the park gate, where there is not currently a turn around area. The road will remain gravel.

PARK IMPROVEMENTS

An approach sign on Highway 91 North would be erected to identify the park location. Proposed park improvements can be reviewed in the preliminary master site plan (Appendix C) and include the following items

- perimeter fencing,
- entry gate and signs,
- grade and gravel interior road,
- designated standard vehicle parking and bus/RV parking on existing grade,
- rock barriers around parking area and roadsides,
- sealed vault latrine,

- 8' wide concrete sidewalk along southwest edge of parking area,
- compacted gravel loop trail leading from parking area to top of lookout and tie into future community trail,
- various benches,
- emergency access road along east side of lookout (gates at the southern end of the parking lot and the southeast property corner).

The proposed improvements benefit the public by identifying this historically important site, providing off-road parking, improving trails for access to a larger cross-section of the public, and providing basic facilities for visitors, as are typical at Montana State Parks.

Current site access is limited to a small pull-off adjacent to a railroad crossing at Lover's Leap Road South. This allows approximately three standard vehicles to park and turn around using the road as part of the turn-around circle. The proximity to the railroad poses dangerous circumstances, especially with more than one vehicle in the area, or buses, or large recreational vehicles, as are expected during the upcoming Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration years. The existing jack-leg pole fence hinders park entry to pedestrians.

ROAD EASEMENTS

Beaverhead County

As part of this project, FWP also proposes to grant road easements to Beaverhead County for Lover's Leap Road North and Lover's Leap Road South, sections of which are within the State Park boundaries. Lover's Leap Road South is a main thoroughfare for residences west of the lookout and will remain open for public use. Lover's Leap Road North will provide the County with an emergency access and another RR crossing for residents north of the park in the event that a train accident would block the new RR crossing. This was a formal county road, but has been out of service since the 1980s.

Union Pacific Railroad

The railroad has agreed to grant easements to FWP and Beaverhead County along the eastern border of the park. This includes the emergency access road and a small portion of the parking area. Fencing between the park and railroad tracks will likely need updating to increase visitor safety.

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Clark's Lookout was used as an observation site by William Clark of the Corps of Discovery on August 13, 1805. Clark took compass readings at this site; therefore, it is one of the only locations on the entire expedition route where we can be certain William Clark actually stood and made observations. He described it as a "high point of limestone rock on the Stard. Side [of the river]." His observations from this point were incorporated into the exhaustive maps he made of the region and the riverways the expedition traversed.

The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many Lewis and Clark sites have been lost due to the meanders of rivers, natural erosion and modern encroachment; therefore, recognizing the significance of well-preserved sites, such as Clark's Lookout, becomes increasingly important.

11. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Parks Division
- Wildlife Division
- Fisheries Division
- Design & Construction Bureau
- Lands Division

Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)
Beaverhead County Road Department

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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				1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		yes	1b.
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				Refer to 1a. below
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:		X				

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

1a. The area proposed for road and parking improvements was leveled many years ago. The proposed improvements will slightly alter existing surface grades, but will not create soil instability or changes in geologic substructure. The preservation of this geologic and physical landmark is critical to its historical importance.

1b. Some disruption, displacement, compaction and overcovering of soil will occur to improve road, parking and trail surfaces. Large portions of these areas were graded for similar purposes about 15 years ago. These impacts will be mitigated by utilizing areas previously disturbed and trail routes similar to those in existence. In addition, all adjacent areas disturbed by construction will be seeded with a grass mix after the project is completed to reduce erosion and moisture loss.

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		yes	2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X		yes	2b.
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. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)		X				
f. Other:		X				

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

2a. Minor and temporary dust will be created during construction of the park road and parking areas. Traffic is expected to slightly increase on Lover's Leap Road North and the county will apply dust control measures on the road between the new railroad crossing and the park entrance.

2b. Vault latrines often cause a very localized, minimal odor. Latrine design, seasonal pumping, and odor controls will reduce offensive odors.

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				3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X positive			3b.
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. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		X				
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.)		X				
n. Other:		X				

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

3a. The proposed construction will not impact surface water, such as the Beaverhead River or the adjacent irrigating canal. Minor sheet runoff from the gravel parking area and road will be contained by surrounding road beds and the site topography.

3b. The proposed site improvements closely match the existing grades. Gravel road and parking surfaces will not alter the drainage of this rocky soil. Proposed trails will likely improve drainage from the lookout area by reclaiming vegetation and restricting off-trail traffic.

	IMPACT *	Can	

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in?	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		yes	4a.
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		yes	4e.
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. Improving the parking and roads will remove various common grasses and a few sagebrush plants that have become established since grading of the site many years ago. The effects of the construction will be minimal since the proposed plan utilizes areas previously disturbed. FWP typically restricts construction to the immediate project area and requires scarification and seeding of disturbed areas upon project completion. Larger cottonwood trees and bushes are typically not disturbed to retain natural vegetation.

4e. Construction and additional traffic tend to increase the possibility of noxious weeds becoming established. The site does contain knapweed and hounds tongue. Seeding of disrupted soils after construction limits the potential for weed growth by providing competition from a mix of hearty grasses. FWP staff will closely monitor the site after construction and weeds will be eradicated under guidance from the FWP Region 3 Weed Management Plan. Beaverhead County and FWP work closely together using integrated weed management methods.

** 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			5c.
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		yes	See comment 5b.
h. ****For P-R/D-J, 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				
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		X				
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

FWP Wildlife Biologist Gary Hammond does not anticipate any major impacts to wildlife from the proposed project (personal communication with Sue Dalbey, May 28, 2002). The area is not highly valuable for wildlife habitat. Areas previously graded have some grass available for white-tailed deer grazing and pocket habitat for small mammals or reptiles. Thicker willows and protective habitat is along the Beaverhead River, which will not be altered by this project.

FWP Fisheries Biologist Dick Oswald does not anticipate impacts to the fisheries due to the proposed project (personal communication with Sue Dalbey, May 28, 2002). This construction project is not likely to alter fish habitat due to the drainage of the area and proximity from the river. FWP does own some Beaverhead River frontage at this site, however there are several other fishing access sites up and down stream of Clark's Lookout that offer better opportunities and access. Intermittent angling use in this reach would not have an impact on fish populations. Most visitors are expected to be focused on the historical significance of this site, rather than angling.

5c. The proposed parking area and road through the park will displace a small number of non-game mammals and reptiles.

5g. White-tailed deer use the site occasionally, mostly at night, and will be temporarily displaced during construction and until acclimated to the change in use. The site will be closed at night, however, which will provide quiet periods fore deer to continue using the park as a passageway to the river and minor forage.

B. 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	6a.
b. Exposure of people to serve 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:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. Signing and providing access to the park will inherently increase visitation; thus, vehicle and human noise levels will slightly increase. Area residents raised concerns during the management planning process about noise from night parties and traffic. To mitigate the potential effects of the added area visitation on neighbors, the park entrance will have a locking gate and only day use will be allowed.

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 positive			7a.
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?			X positive			7b.
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?			X		yes	7c.
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?			X		yes	7d.
e. Other:		X				

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

7a. The park is not currently utilized. By providing direction, historic interpretation and facilities to the public, the park will not only generate funds in the form of park fees for the State Parks Division, but also stimulate a small amount of economic growth in Dillon. As a significant site from the Lewis and Clark Expedition, visitors from in- and out-of-state will be more likely to exit the interstate, visit the park, and buy commodities in Dillon, including gas, food and/or lodging.

7b. The site is one of few remaining sites from the Lewis and Clark Expedition which can be positively identified by Clark's observations and maps. This is of high educational importance and should be protected, as well as made available to the public as part of America's heritage.

7c. An easement agreement will be completed between Beaverhead County, FWP and the Union Pacific Railroad to legally provide the emergency access along the southeastern edge of the park, which will be located on railroad right-of-way. Fencing between the park and the railroad is part of the proposed project to discourage park visitors from accessing the railroad.

7d. During the management planning process, including public scoping/comment periods, area residents were concerned with late night park visitation, lighting, turn around areas, gating the park entrance, hours of visitation, refuse and litter. The diverse planning team considered the alternatives and in an attempt to alleviate these concerns and maintain a high quality neighborhood, proposes to: allow day use only; lock the park gate at night; provide a vault latrine to maintain a sanitary site; and overall, develop the site at a moderate level. A turn around area and signing will be provided outside the park (at the old RR crossing) for periods when the park is closed. In many cases, open space and park lands are known to increase property values and are generally desirable aspects to a neighborhood.

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		yes	8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?			X positive			8b.
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8a. Combatting noxious weeds often utilizes chemical spray. Weed treatment is conducted by trained personnel and follows the guidelines in the FWP Region 3 Weed Management Plan. Chemicals are typically applied to sealed vault latrines to control odors. Risk to the public is low.

8b. FWP, Beaverhead County and the Union Pacific Railroad have cooperated to provide road easements across adjacent lands for better access during an emergency. Lover's Leap Road North will be gated, but access allowed in emergency situations.

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		yes	9a.
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 positive			9c.
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		yes	9e.
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9a. Park visitation is expected to increase after signs and basic facilities are installed. Because the site will be open for day use only and the proposed facilities are not a high level of development, the average visitor will not spend much time at the site. Visitation is also expected to be seasonal, with few visitors in the winter months.

9c. It is anticipated that a few visitors to the park will also consume gas, food, and perhaps lodging facilities in Dillon, that they might not otherwise have exited the freeway to purchase. This may result in a slight increase at certain service-oriented establishments near the park.

9e. Traffic will increase on Lover's Leap Road North due to visitors accessing the park on this route. The County and Union Pacific have improved the access to this road from Highway 91 by relocating the railroad crossing to a straight section of track/highway, installing a concrete crossing and paving on either side of the crossing. FWP proposes to contribute funds to that effort as an act of community involvement and because of the benefit of that improvement to Park visitor safety. The old railroad crossing will be improved outside the park to allow park visitors to turn around without using residential driveways when the park is closed. This new traffic pattern will require new awareness and caution by local drivers, though the area will be signed. It is anticipated that traffic will be greater in the summer months with few visitors in the winter.

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: police, parks, roads, septic			X		yes	10a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
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				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. **Define projected revenue sources						10e.
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						10f.
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. By improving and publicizing the site, visitation will increase; thus, several services will need elevating from the nearly non-existent level currently. FWP staff will check on the area more often and FWP will work with the local departments to request occasional surveillance. As a designated state park, Clark's Lookout has had a management plan completed and as per decisions in that process, a moderate level of park development and a low level of staff will be needed to maintain the park. Park entry and fees will be on a self-serve basis, with staff on site sporadically to check for compliance and provide visitor service. Garbage will be a "pack in/pack out" basis similar to FWP fishing access sites. The vault latrine will require contracting with a service company to pump the vault periodically. Lover's Leap Road North may require additional grading. The moderate level of development is intentionally planned to limit the stay of visitors in this residential neighborhood, and limit costs associated with more facilities and longer stays.

10e. The new railroad crossing, completed by Beaverhead County and the Union Pacific Railroad, cost nearly $42,000. This project included using a previously used concrete crossing, surplus track, and ties from the railroad, and fill dirt and asphalt hauled by the county. FWP proposes to contribute $5,000 to that project because of the benefits provided to park visitor safety and as a member of the community. The FWP contribution would come from the state parks road account.

Half of the park improvement funds are proposed to come from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, which requires a fifty-percent (50%) match from state funds.

The state portion of funding will primarily come from the state parks road account with a small amount added from funds allocated for Lewis and Clark interpretive projects.

Preliminary cost estimates are provided below.

Preliminary Cost Estimates

ITEM	TOTAL COST
Road gravel	$22,500
Parking	4,500
Bus parking	2,500
Rock barriers	5,000
Concrete sidewalk	5,000
Latrine	9,000
Fencing – wood jack-leg	12,000
Gates	9,000
Road signs	3,000
Trail gravel	1,000
Interpretive signs design/installed	7,500
Emergency access road	4,500
ESTIMATE TOTAL	$85,500

10f. Maintenance costs are estimated to total approximately $6,000 annually. This includes 0.25 FTE for staff to open/close and clean the park, travel, repairs and maintenance.

** 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		yes	11a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?			X		yes	11b.
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X Positive			11c.
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				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

The area proposed for development was leveled many years ago and has since grown over in various grasses. The grade of this area will change slightly and the addition of a formal parking area, sidewalk, latrine, and visitor vehicles will slightly alter the view of the park from Highway 91. Changes to the rock outcropping only include improvements to existing trails to provide better access and reduce erosion. Elevated signs and structures, etc., which would alter the historic silhouette of the upper rock outcropping, will purposely be avoided.

11a. The gravel road and parking area, latrine, and signs are open to view from Highway 91 and from the lookout. Though this is open space now, it is obvious that the area proposed for development has been graded and altered in the past. In addition, the area is a developed neighborhood with housing and businesses to the north and east. Viewsheds to the south and west of the lookout will not be altered by this project and offer the visitor a glimpse of what Clark saw nearly 200 years ago overlooking the Beaverhead River Valley.

11b. Residents may feel a slight change in the neighborhood due to the added traffic, park visitation, and formal improvements at the park. Traffic and park visitation is expected to be minimal for most of the year; summer will be the peak visitation period. The management plan team attempted to consider these factors, hence the few facilities and limited park hours.

11c. Signing the site and providing basic facilities, such as parking, trails, and latrine, greatly enhances the recreational and tourism opportunities. This site is an important part of the historic Lewis and Clark Trail, which will be open to the public and easy to access. Please refer to the Tourism Report in Appendix E.

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				12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. Clark's Lookout is purposefully being preserved as an important historic site. The area proposed for construction has been previously altered. FWP hired a consultant to survey the area for cultural resources and none were found (refer to Appendix F). When the final report is received from the consultant, FWP will consult with the State Historic Preservation Office prior to beginning the project.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

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 that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)			X positive			13a.
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				13e.
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		X				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

13a. Opening and publicizing this historically significant site has a positive impact on the local and state tourism and recreational opportunities with relation to the upcoming Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration. This site contributes another piece to the trail through the state and will add to the area's attractions and economic potential.

13e. The public, including park neighbors, has been involved throughout the management planning process, including scoping meetings, public comment, and communication with the county road department. Ideas and concerns rising from these meetings have been incorporated into the planning and design of the park improvements.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)

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.

The Clark's Lookout State Park Management Plan Team discussed several ideas about how to develop the park and the public. This environmental assessment presents the preferred alternative determined through the management planning process. The first decision was whether to approach the park from the west along the canal, from the south, or from the north. The northern entrance was chosen due to safety and liability. In addition, the railroad crossing was moved another 350' north to provide safety for traffic turning off of Highway 91.

The Team then discussed the level of development desired to provide basic amenities and protect the natural resources, yet maintain the simple, rustic atmosphere of the lookout. The following Alternatives B-D briefly outline those discussions and possible development alternatives.

Alternative A: No Action

This alternative does not address the degradation of the site due to increased and unmanaged visitation in upcoming years. The upcoming Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration will attract many visitors interested in this site. Without parking for more and larger vehicles, and a restroom facility, the park physical environment will suffer from indiscriminate use. Traffic will be congested at railroad and road intersections creating dangerous situations. This alternative also does not recognize the historical importance of this site or the potential for expanding recreational and economic opportunities in this area. As steward of this public park since 1985, it is the State's responsibility to protect the site, identify the site, and provide some level of facilities.

Alternative B: Basic Level of Development

This alternative would provide a gravel entrance road and parking, low level of interpretation, a dirt trail/path to the top, pack-in/pack-out policy for litter. This option does not provide the level of sanitation or interpretation that the planning team felt was necessary at this site. With the visitation increase anticipated after this site is signed and opened to the public, human sanitation could become a problem. This site is significant to Clark's journey in its natural state, but the importance of this is not capitalized without various interpretative media.

Preferred Alternative C: Proposed Medium Level of Development

Alternative C offers a gravel entrance, a slightly large parking lot, a sealed vault latrine, moderate level of interpretation, gravel trail to the top, benches along the trail, pack-in/pack-out policy for litter unless garbage volumes dictates hauling service. Dust abatement alleviates problems from additional traffic on the road passing area residences. A larger parking lot was felt necessary to accommodate recreational vehicles and tour buses that are likely to visit the site, and avoid the use of neighboring driveways and traffic congestion. A sealed vault latrine keeps the site clean and healthy. The top of the lookout

is the destination of the site. Improvements to the trail make the lookout more accessible, yet maintain the integrity and rustic atmosphere. Benches provide some resting places to further improve access to the top, yet would not be placed on the horizon to maintain the natural aesthetics of the lookout.

Alternative D: High Level of Development

Alternative D includes paving the entrance and parking lot, a flush toilet, high level of interpretation and programming, picnic tables, grills, garbage cans, a paved or surfaced trail accessible to the top of the rock for people with disabilities, a well and water. The management planning team and public decided that the anticipated visitation, cost, and aesthetic intrusion to the site and the neighborhood did not warrant a high level of development at Clark's Lookout.

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

The proposed plan utilizes areas previously disturbed and graded, and will retain significant vegetation, such as cottonwood trees and large bushes. Adjacent areas disturbed by construction will be seeded with a grass mix after project completion. The lookout rock will be preserved with minor improvements to the trail to ease access, yet maintain the natural integrity.

The county will treat the road outside the park to alleviate dust near neighboring residences.

Latrine odors will be controlled with periodic pumping and standard vault treatments.

Noxious weeds will be closely monitored by FWP and fought in accordance with the Region 3 Weed Management Plan and the County Weed Supervisor using trained applicators.

Day use only of the site will allow continued use of the site by deer and other wildlife at night when they are most active.

The management planning team incorporated public comment into their decisions in an attempt to alleviate neighborhood concerns. The park is scheduled for day use with gates closed when the park is closed; pack-in/pack-out litter disposal unless volume determines the need for garbage service. Signage and a turn-around area outside the park will reduce visitors intruding into neighborhood driveways. The proposed medium level of development is anticipated to provide a rewarding visit to the site for many more people, but discourage extended stays. Day use will also mitigate the potential noise at night. This level of development also provides facilities that require low maintenance costs.

The medium level of development has a low profile, especially at the top of the lookout where only trail improvements are planned. Viewsheds to the south and west of the lookout will not be altered by this project.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The Clark's Lookout Management Plan team and the public did a thorough job of identifying various issues and development alternatives. The preferred (proposed) alternative considers public needs for recreation and interpretation, yet maintains the naturally rustic aesthetics of the site. Basic needs of the visitor are met, yet the site and facilities require little maintenance. Agency cooperation on this project is helping to create a safe park entrance and respect neighborhood concerns regarding additional traffic, congestion, and dust.

The project does not impact historic or culturally important sites. The proposed design utilizes areas previously disturbed; therefore, will not alter the site integrity vital to its cultural and historic significance.

This analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment. Most of the minor impacts can be mitigated. Minor impacts will occur to the vegetation during construction. No threatened or endangered species have been identified in the area. No unique cultural, geological, or physical features will be affected. The proposed improvements will enhance visitors' educational and recreational opportunities.

The 2020 Vision for Montana State Parks includes a priority list for the Parks Capital Program. The proposed project would fall under two priorities within the program: number 2) protection of natural and cultural resources; and, number 5) visitor services, interpretation, and education. Visitation is anticipated to increase in the next five years with the emphasis on Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. If the site is not protected and managed, the physical environment would surely be impacted. The proposed project will help visitors protect the resources and learn about our heritage.

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

1. **Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?** NO
   If an EIS is not required, explain <u>why</u> the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

   Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action; therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

2. **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?**

   The public was involved and provided comments used in the Clark's Lookout State Park Management Plan (completed September 2002), which included the proposed development.

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

- Two public notices in each of these papers: *Dillon Tribune, Montana Standard* (Butte), and the *Helena Independent Record;*
- One statewide press release;
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: *http://fwp.state.mt.us*.

Copies of this environmental assessment will be distributed to the neighboring landowners and interested parties for review and to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project.

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.

3. Duration of comment period, if any.

The public comment period will extend for thirty (30) days following the publication of the second legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m.,Thursday, January 2, 2003 and can be mailed to the address below:

Clark's Lookout Draft EA
c/o Bannack State Park
4200 Bannack Road
Dillon, MT 59725

Or e-mailed to: *bannack@montana.com*

4. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Sue Dalbey	Angie Hurley	Jerry Walker
Independent Contractor	Bannack State Park Manager	Regional State Park Manager
Dalbey Resources	FWP	FWP
926 N. Lamborn St.	4200 Bannack Road	1400 South 19th
Helena, MT 59601	Dillon, MT 59725	Bozeman, MT 59718
406-443-8058	406-834-3413	406-994-3552

APPENDICES

A. 23-1-110 MCA Qualification Checklist
B. Site Location Map
C. Preliminary Master Site Plan
D. Railroad Crossing Paving Detail
E. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce

F. Cultural Resources Inventory Summary Letter