

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 13, 2019

Agenda Item: Gallatin County Bridge Realignment onto Gallatin Forks FAS (R3)

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background:

Gallatin Forks FAS is located along the Gallatin River north of Manhattan, Montana in Gallatin County. The Gallatin County Commission is proposing to realign the road and construct a new bridge across the Gallatin River at Nixon Gulch. The purpose of replacing the bridge is to meet the public needs for increased safety and bridge capacity. This realignment will encroach upon the Gallatin Forks FAS at its most northwest corner. The proposed project shifts the roadway and bridge alignment slightly east impacting the FAS parking lot. Approximately 0.05 acres of land will be lost to the FAS. Upon completion, the realigned road, including a gabion-style retaining wall and a small portion of the abutments for the replaced bridge would cross the existing FAS. The County will mitigate the loss of the 0.05 acres by exchanging 0.1 acres of county land. In addition, the County will expand the balance of the gravel parking area south to add more parking, provide a new vault latrine, add a pedestrian crosswalk to increase the safety of visitors crossing the highway and relocate the gravel boat launch.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

Gallatin County has received strong public support for the replacement of the Nixon Bridge. Gallatin County Commission sponsored five public meetings with 57 comments being received regarding the bridge realignment and selection. On April 12, 2016, a public meeting was held during the regularly scheduled Gallatin County Commission Meeting to receive comments concerning the Environmental Assessment for the Nixon Bridge. No written comments were received prior to the meeting, and no public comments were received at the meeting. FWP's EA public notice of the proposed project and impacts related to the Gallatin Forks FAS was made available to the standard public notice list for 30 days, beginning Dec. 21, 2018. Two comments were received, one proponent and one opposed. The comments and FWP's responses are attached.

Alternatives and Analysis:

The project required FWP to prepare an environmental assessment to evaluate impacts and mitigative measures. In exchange for the 0.05 acres of Gallatin Forks FAS that will be used for the Nixon Gulch Road realignment, Gallatin County will grant 0.1 acre to FWP for the Gallatin Forks FAS.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale:

The Departments recommends that the Commission approve the exchange of 0.05 acres of land to Gallatin County for the new road alignment in exchange for 0.1 acre of land from the county for the FAS.

Proposed Motion:

I move that FWP initiate the land exchange with Gallatin County.