



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

**Draft
Environmental Assessment
Checklist**

**Toston Fishing Access Site
Parking Expansion**

February 19, 2021

Draft Environmental Assessment Checklist

PART 1 - PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

Type of proposed state action: Parking expansion at the Toston Fishing Access Site (FAS) on the Missouri River at the HWY287 Bridge

Agency authority for the proposed action: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP)

Anticipated Schedule

- Estimated Construction Commencement Date: April 2021
- Estimated Completion Date: May 2021
- Current Status of Project Design: 0% complete

Location Affected by the Proposed Action

Broadwater County, R2E- T5N-S23

Lat/Long: 46.17181/-111.44583

The area of proposed parking expansion is outlined in yellow.



Project Size

Land Type	Acres	Land Type	Acres
Residential	0	Productive Land	0
Industrial/Shop	0	Irrigate Crop Land	0
Open Space, Woodlands, Recreation	~4.0	Forests	0
Wetlands/Riparian Areas	0	Rangeland	0
Flood Plain	0	Other	n/a

Permits

Issuing Agency	Permit Name/Number
None required	n/a

Funding

Agency Name	Amount
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$25,000

Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
None	n/a

Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action

In 2019, Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) began construction on a new bridge and road realignment project at Toston, MT where HWY287 crosses the Missouri River. Approximately 4 acres of the NW corner of the FAS was ceded to MDT for the purposes of the project. At this time, FWP staff identified an opportunity to expand the parking area two acres utilizing the disturbed area that was used as staging for the project. At that time, it was agreed that the bridge construction contractor would contribute labor and equipment toward the total cost of the parking lot expansion prior to demobilization.

Description and Analysis of Reasonable Alternatives

- **Alternative A: No Action**
No action would result in a site that would remain highly impacted and subject wind erosion and weed infestation. Additionally, the public would not receive the benefit of increased parking capacity to accommodate increased demand.
- **Alternative B: Proposed Action.**
The proposed action would serve to reclaim the entire area impacted by the bridge construction and allow FWP to meet the additional parking needs of the recreating public.

PART 2 - ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

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

Physical Environment

Will the Proposed Action result in potential impacts to:

	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Provided
1- Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
2- Air quality, objectionable odors				X		
3- Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		
4- Existing water right or reservation				X		
5- Vegetation cover, quantity & quality			X			X
6- Unique, endangered or fragile vegetative species				X		
7- Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		
8- Unique, endangered or fragile fish or wildlife				X		
9- Introduction of new species to area				X		
10- Changes to abundance or movement of species				X		

Comments

#5- The area was heavily disturbed during the bridge construction project. As part of the original agreement, MDT agreed that the contractor would be responsible for reclaiming the entire area impacted by the construction project. Additionally, the contractor will be responsible for annual weed control treatments from 2021 – 2023.

Human Environment

Will the Proposed Action result in potential impacts to:

	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Provided
1- Noise and/or electrical effects				X		
2- Land use				X		
3- Risk and/or health hazards				X		
4- Community impact				X		
5- Public services/taxes/utilities				X		
6- Potential revenue and/or project maintenance costs			X			X
7- Aesthetics and recreation			X			X
8- Cultural and historic resources				X		
9- Evaluation of significance				X		
10- Generate public controversy				X		

Comments

#6- No revenue will be generated. Future maintenance expenses will be incurred as part of the regular road repair schedule. The contractor will assist in weed control of the disturbed area until 2023 pursuant to the original agreement.

#7- The aesthetic will be congruent with the existing area. The parking lot expansion will successfully accommodate the growing popularity of river recreation.

PART 3 - NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The Toston Bridge Parking Expansion project presents FWP with a unique, cooperative opportunity to enhance infrastructure at this popular FAS. The expansion will play an integral role in facilitating public access amid the growing popularity of river recreation.

PART 4 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public Involvement- The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on this current EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: Bozeman Daily Chronicle, Helena IR
- One statewide press release (if applicable);
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov>.

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

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having limited impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

Duration of Comment Period- The public comment period will extend for (30) thirty days following the publication of the second legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. Mountain time, March 22, 2021, and can be mailed or emailed to the address provided below.

PART 5 - EA PREPARATION

Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? No

The Checklist EA is the appropriate level of analysis based on MEPA standards for small capital improvements with minimal to no impacts on the Physical or Human environment.

Person(s) responsible for preparing the EA

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List of agencies or offices consulted during preparation of the EA: n/a