



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Fur Farm, Game Bird Farm, Zoo/Menagerie, Shooting Preserve

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Project Title: Application for Roadside Menagerie Permit
2. Application Date: 4/20/2021
3. Description of Project: Applicants (Paul and Anne Schnell; 8 Davis Lane, Noxon MT 59853) wish to obtain a permit for a roadside menagerie to house various raptors for educational purposes (e.g., live eagle exhibition)
4. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives

Alternative A: No Action.

Under the No Action Alternative, FWP would not issue a roadside menagerie permit to the applicant. Impacts from adopting the No Action Alternative are unknown. It is uncertain whether the applicant would seek to upgrade the mew buildings or tear them down.

Alternative B: Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, FWP would issue the requested permit for a roadside menagerie to the applicant which would allow the applicant to keep 10 raptors (see Table 1.4.1) in custom built mews. This action would have few if any impacts to the human or physical environment.

Table 1.4.1 Proposed species and numbers animals to be held in captivity

Species	Number
Bald Eagle	1
Golden Eagle	1
African-hawk Eagle	1
Harris Hawk	2
Peregrine Falcon	1
Eurasian Eagle Owl	2
Barn Owl	1
Marshall Eagle	1

The applicant is responsible for contacting other state or federal agencies which may have overlapping jurisdiction and obtaining any other necessary permits or licenses.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Table 2.1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				×		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				×		
3. Introduction of new species into an area			×		×	2.1.3
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				×		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				×		
6. Existing water right or reservation				×		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				×		
8. Air quality or objectional odors				×		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				×		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				×		
11. Aesthetics				×		

Comments

2.1.3. There is a remote possibility that the animals could escape from captivity if mews were damaged (Wildlife or Falling trees). Survival in the wild is unlikely. A site visit was made by the MT-FWP Thompson Falls area biologist on 6/11/2021 and recommendations were made to use chain link on the roof instead of coated wire mesh and to consult with bear specialist Kim Annis regarding electric fencing options. Kim Annis was contacted by applicant on 6/14/2021. Rehabilitation specialist Ali Pons visited the site on 07/16/2021 and her assessment is included in Appendix A. Pictures of the mews incorporating electric fencing suggestions are provided below (Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1. Larger mew facility with 8 individual pens. Five wire electrical fence around open areas. Ali Pons (FWP) right and Anne Schnell (applicant) on the left.

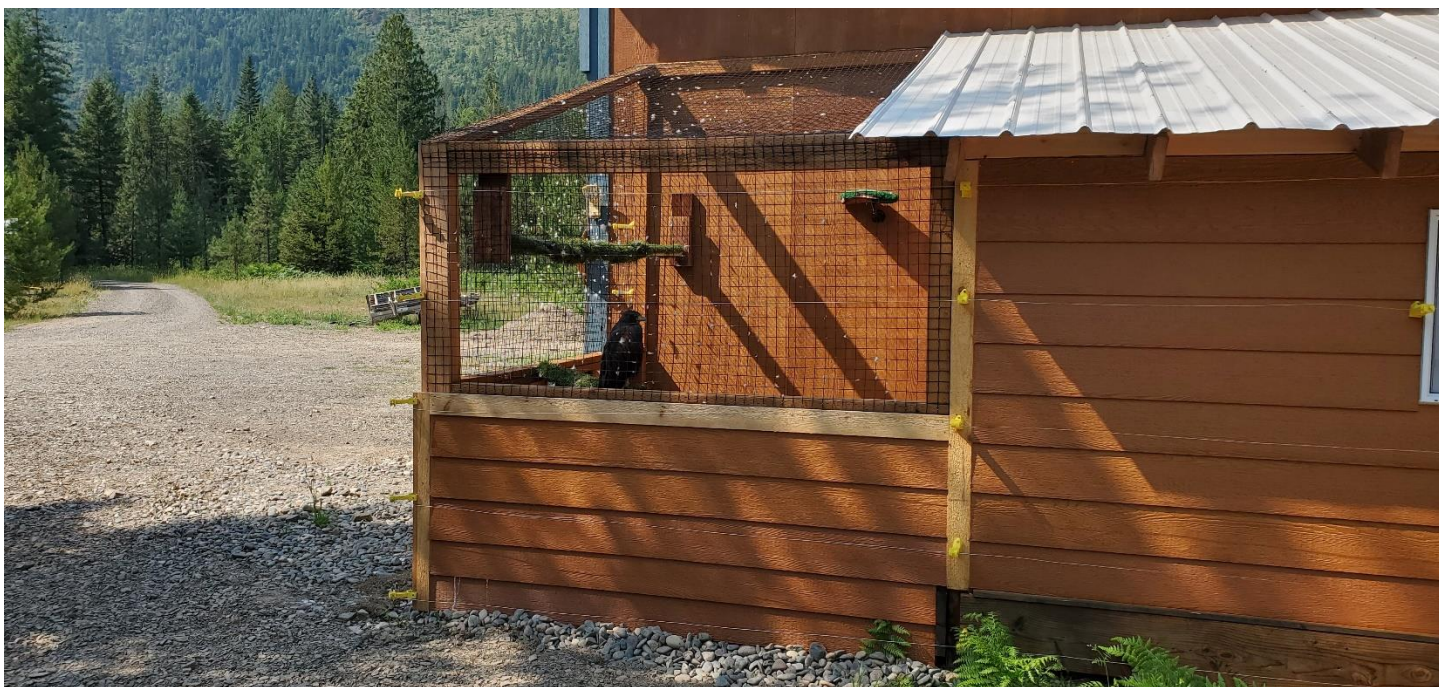


Figure 2. The smaller mew facility housing two Harris Hawks. Five wire electrical fence around open areas

Table 2.2. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				×		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				×		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				×		
4. Agricultural production				×		
5. Human health			×		×	2.2.5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income			×		×	2.2.6
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				×		
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				×		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				×		
10. Demands for government services				×		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				×		

Comments

2.2.5. There is a small possibility that the animals could escape, or that someone could trespass on the property, gain access to the enclosure, and be injured. This potential impact can be mitigated through the use of remote cameras/lights and locking mew outer doors at all times.

2.2.6. The ability to obtain a roadside menagerie permit could lead to more revenue for the applicant's business and therefore a small rise in personal income.

Part III. Narrative Evaluation and Comment

The applicant seeks a roadside menagerie permit to keep several raptor species (see table 1.4.1) on their personal property at 8 Davis Lane, Noxon, MT 59853. The mews consist of two buildings each with a two door access to enter holding pens. The applicant has integrated several FWP recommendations including adding chain link wire to mew ceilings and electric fencing on exterior of pens (Figures 1 and 2). The applicant intends to use remote trail cameras as a security enhancement at the site. The applicants have committed to all suggestions identified during site visits (see Appendix A) except the 10' perimeter chain-link fence due to cost and aesthetics. Based on multiple site visits FWP is not aware of any unaddressed issues and therefore

proposes to approve this permit. There are no foreseeable significant or cumulative impacts to the proposed action.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public involvement:

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

- One public notice in each of these papers: Sanders County Ledger , Helena Independent Record, The Daily Inter Lake
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov/public-notice/news>.

Notice of the availability of this environmental assessment will be distributed to the neighboring businesses 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.

2. Duration of comment period:

The public comment period will extend for (30) thirty days following the publication of the legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until **5:00 p.m., September 9, 2021** and can be mailed to either of the addresses below:

Mike Ebinger or Michael.Ebinger@mt.gov
Fish, Wildlife & Parks
5427 MT-200
Thompson Falls, MT 59873

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)?

No. An EA is the appropriate level of analysis for an action like this with few if any impacts.

2. Person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Phil Kilbreath, FWP Operations Sargent-Enforcement Division
Lee Anderson, FWP Warden Captain, Region 1
Neil Anderson, FWP Wildlife Manager, Region 1
Mike Ebinger, FWP Area Biologist, Thompson Falls, MT
Ali Pons, FWP MT WILD Wildlife Center Program Coordinator, Helena, MT
Travis Johnson, FWP Warden, Thompson Falls, MT
Linnaea Schroeer, FWP MEPA Coordinator



Schnell Raptor Enclosure Assessment

Assessment Date: July 16, 2021

Location: 8 Davis Lane, Noxon, MT 59853

Summary: Small enclosure holds two adult Harris hawks. The size, substrate, and building materials used for this enclosure are appropriate for this species of raptor. Restricted access to weathering area during inclement weather is provided by a door, to keep hawks in completely enclosed area. The roof and upper sides of weathering area are a coated wire mesh. Four lines of electric fence are strung around the weathering and enclosed areas of the structure. Electric fence is placed around the window of the enclosure. The vestibule and doors used to access enclosure are not protected by electric fence.

The large enclosure is split into 7 mews holding one barn owl, one peregrine falcon, two Eurasian Eagle Owls, one African Hawk Eagle, one Martial Eagle, one Bald Eagle and one Golden Eagle. Each raptor is enclosed in an individual mew with the exception of the Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle, which are housed together. The substrate and building materials used are appropriate for the raptor species held in each mew. The smaller mews are narrower than the recommended minimum cage sizes for fully flighted program raptors of 2x their wingspan. The roof and upper sides for the weathering areas are coated wire mesh. Chain link fence is in the process of being attached to the weathering area roof to increase security against predators. Four strands of electric fence run along the front and sides of the enclosure. The back of the enclosure has one, low strand of electric fence. The doors and window to the enclosure are not protected by electric fence.

There is no food storage in either enclosure. The raptors are fed in the late evening. Uneaten food is picked up prior to the next day except in the mews holding the owls due to their nocturnal eating habits. Both enclosures are cleaned regularly to reduce predator attractants.

Suggestions: Not listed in order of priority

- Place a 10 ft high chain link fence around exterior of both enclosures as a barrier against predators in addition to the electric fence
- Protection against digging predators such as fox by burying wire mesh around the enclosures. The mesh should attach to the sides of the enclosures and buried one foot down and three feet out from the enclosure.
- Attach chain link fence to weathering area roof of smaller enclosure
- Provide additional heat support in cold temperatures (below freezing) – avian safe panel heaters, heat lamps, etc. or moving raptors into heated building
- Extend the electric fence insulators on upper strand to keep eagles from grabbing onto the wire through the weathering area wire mesh
- Place electric fence across doors and around vestibule
- Additional electric fence strands around the back of large enclosure and across the window