

DECISION NOTICE
Water Birch Fishing Access Site Camp Area Expansion
Prepared by Region 5, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
May 11, 2021

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to develop as many as five additional campsites to replace the campsites lost due to river channel changes in the last 10 years.

MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) PROCESS

The proposal has been analyzed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) to satisfy the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). FWP is required to assess the impacts of the proposed action to the human and natural environment as directed by MEPA. Under the MEPA process, a 34-day public comment period ran from February 12, 2021 to March 18, 2021. Notice was published twice in the Carbon County News, Billings Gazette, Helena Independent Record, and was posted on the MTFWP web pages along with a statewide news release.

ISSUES RAISED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

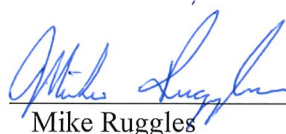
Comments received were supportive with concerns raised about changing the irrigation system with the potential addition of a culvert and crossing.

GENERAL SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A total of three comments were contributed through the public comment process. One supporting comment was emailed. Two comments were phoned in with both supportive but with questions. One called to better understand the layout and visibility of the proposed project area. The other called to discuss the irrigation ditch and proposal to potentially place a culvert in the ditch having concerns for beaver plugging the culvert regularly. An on-site meeting was held with the irrigation group and the FWP Fishing Access Site manager. A culvert will not be placed in the ditch as part of this project. An updated plan modified the design to avoid the irrigation ditch and create five sites.

DECISION

After review of this proposal and public comment, it is my decision to accept alternative C with the goal of establishing five new campsites, resetting the latrine from the south end to the north end to support the new campsites.



Mike Ruggles
Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks
Regional Supervisor, Billings