



1 Airport Rd
Glasgow, MT
59230

December 13, 2022

Dear Interested Citizen:

Thank you for your review of our proposal to close Fresno Tailwater FAS during the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)- Safety of Dams Project on Fresno Dam. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is looking out for the safety of the public during the construction phase of the BOR's project.

Enclosed is a decision document in which I explain my rationale for approving the proposed closure of Fresno Tailwater FAS as proposed under the preferred action (Alternative A) in the draft environmental assessment (EA). Upon completion of the public involvement process and by inclusion of information noted in this Decision Notice, FWP accepts the draft EA as final. FWP did not receive any public comments on the proposed proposal.

Please feel free to contact me at 406-228-3700 with any questions you may have. Thank you for your interest and participation.

Sincerely,

Drew Henry
Region 6 Supervisor

**Decision Notice for the Draft Environmental Assessment:
Closure of Fresno Tailwater Fishing Access Site (FAS) for Bureau of Reclamation -
Safety of Dams Project on Fresno Dam**

December 2022

PROPOSAL

Type of Proposed State Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), proposes to close Fresno Tailwater Fishing Access Site until completion of the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) project.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

At the request of the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), FWP proposes to close to public use the Fresno Tailwater Fishing Access Site (FAS) in the Spring of 2023 while the BOR initiates a Safety of Dams project on Fresno Dam (Federal Action). The FAS sits below the Fresno Dam in Hill County northwest of Havre. The FAS is part of an MOU between BOR and FWP. Ninety percent of the developed FAS site is on BOR property. The FAS and the access road to the FAS will be heavily used by contractors to haul and stage materials and equipment during the Federal Action. BOR will be dewatering the toe of the dam for excavation, but the reservoir will not be impacted as part of this action. Given the size of the project and necessary activity in and around the FAS, FWP proposes to close the FAS to public access for the duration of the Federal Action, which is projected for completion in October 2025.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative A--Proposed Action: Closure of Fresno Tailwater FAS until the completion of the BOR Safety of Dams Project

Under this alternative, FWP would close the FAS until it is safe for the public to return to the FAS to recreate safely.

Alternative B--No Action: The Department would not close the FAS.

In addition to the proposed Project, and as required by MEPA, FWP analyzed the "no-action" alternative for this EA. Under the "no-action" alternative, FWP would not do the proposed project. While the no action alternative would not lead to the short-term loss of recreational and public use at this fishing access site, it would compromise public safety during the BOR's Safety of Dams project on Fresno Reservoir and therefore has been discarded as a viable alternative.

PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

FWP completed a 14-day public comment period from November 30-December 12, 2022. The EA could be viewed on the FWP website at <https://fwp.mt.gov/public-notice> or by contacting the Region 6 office at (406) 228-3700. Comments could be submitted to FWP via mail or email. Legal notices for the availability of the draft EA were published in the Havre Daily News and Helena Independent Record on November 30, 2022, and email notifications were sent to FWP's Region 6 interested persons list.

Public Comments

FWP did not receive any public comments regarding the proposed closure during the public comment process.

DECISION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the Draft Environmental Assessment and the applicable laws, regulations, and policies, I have determined that the proposed action will not have significant negative effects on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the EA is the appropriate level of analysis, and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is unnecessary.

This proposal is for FWP to close the FAS during the BOR Safety of Dams Project. FWP did not receive any public comments during the respective public comment period. The proposal to close the FAS during the safety project is for the public's safety. In consideration of these facts and with the addition of this Decision Notice (DN), the draft EA and this DN are hereby made the final EA.

Based on the analysis in the draft EA I have selected the "Proposed Action" (Alternative A). FWP will close the FAS in the Spring of 2023 until the completion of the BOR Safety of Dams Project as identified in the Draft EA.



Drew Henry
Region 6 Supervisor
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

12/13/22

Date