



DECISION NOTICE

# Eureka Reservoir Fishing Access Site Improvement Project

**FWP-CEA-POR-R4-24-014**

May 24, 2024

**ACTION**

Decision Notice (DN). Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) shall prepare a DN for the proposed action. The DN must identify the agency decision, the reasons for the decision, and any special conditions surrounding the decision or its implementation.

With this action, FWP hereby adopts the Draft Environmental Assessment or Draft EA as final, without modification, and approves Alternative 2, the proposed action.

**AUTHORITY: MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT**

According to the applicable requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act or MEPA and its implementing rules and regulations, before a proposed action may be approved, environmental review must be conducted to identify, consider, and disclose any potential impacts of the proposed action on the affected human environment. The level of environmental review will vary with the complexity and seriousness of environmental issues associated with a proposed action. The level of public interest will also vary. The agency is responsible for adjusting public review to match these factors. *Title 75, Chapter 1, Parts 1 through 3, Montana Code Annotated (MCA)*.

Based on these factors, FWP determined a checklist EA (Draft EA) constitutes the appropriate level of review for the proposed action. Therefore, to assess and disclose potential impacts of the proposed action, FWP prepared a Draft EA for public review and comment. See *Public Participation Process* below.

Further, FWP must consider any substantive comments received in response to an EA and proceed in accordance with one of the following steps: determine the EA did not adequately reflect the issues raised by the proposed action and issue an Environmental Impact Statement or EIS; determine the EA did not adequately reflect the issues raised by the proposed action and issue a supplemental EA; or determine the Draft EA adequately addressed the issues raised by the proposed action and make a final decision, with appropriate modification resulting from the analysis provided in the Draft EA and the analysis of any

substantive public comments received. See *Public Comment and FWP Response* below.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

The Draft EA was made available for public review and comment from April 26<sup>th</sup> to May 10<sup>th</sup>. A legal Notice was published and the Draft EA was posted on FWP's Public Notice webpage: <https://fwp.mt.gov/news/public-notice>. The Draft EA was also made available for public review on the Environmental Quality Council or EQC website: <https://leg.mt.gov/mepa/search/>, by individual request, and through notice to identified interested parties. FWP received comments during the public comment period.

## **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION**

FWP is proposing to develop 7 graveled, hardened camping spaces at Eureka Reservoir Fishing Access Site (FAS) that are set back from the shoreline. FWP proposes to install two-day use group shelters and establish a small day use parking area. The proposal has been supported by the private landowner (lessor) to improve the condition of the FAS. The FAS has experienced a high degree of vegetation compaction and erosion along the shoreline due to the years of dispersed camping. The proposed project is intended to address these issues.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The proposed improvement project would address the high degree of vegetation compaction along the shoreline by moving camping use away from the shoreline. The proposed project would provide the following benefits:

- Provide hardened, designated camping sites consisting of graveled pads, new picnic tables and new fire rings;
- Provide 2- hardened day use areas with picnic shelters for users to enjoy the reservoir, away from the motorized boat ramp and dock; and
- Reduce conflict between motorized boats and day use users.

Project implementation would likely occur during the fall of 2024.

## **ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED**

### **Alternative 1: No Action**

In addition to the proposed action, and as required by MEPA, FWP analyzes the "No-Action" alternative in the EA. Under the No-Action alternative, the proposed action would not occur. Therefore, no additional impacts to the human environment would occur. The No Action alternative forms the baseline from which the potential impacts of the proposed action may be measured.

If the No Action alternative is selected, there would be continuation of the resource impacts occurring along the shoreline. The primary day use area would remain at the boat ramp, and camping would continue at the undeveloped areas along the shoreline.

### **Alternative 2: Proposed Action**

Under the Proposed Action, the proposed improvement project would address the high degree of vegetation compaction along the shoreline by moving camping use away from the shoreline.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT AND FWP RESPONSE**

FWP received substantive public comments on the Draft EA. A substantive public comment was defined as the identification of a specific issue or impact. The following provides the public comments received and FWP response(s).

**Comment:** I strongly support the Eureka Reservoir fishing access improvement project.

**FWP Response:** Thank you for your comment.

#### **DECISION**

Based on the environmental review provided in the Draft EA, and in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and policies, FWP determined the proposed action (Alternative 2), will not have significant adverse impacts on the human environment associated with the proposed action and constitutes a reasonable and appropriate strategy to achieve identified objectives. Therefore, preparation of an EIS is unnecessary. FWP hereby adopts the Draft EA as final and approves the Alternative 2, the proposed action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Rhoten". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jason Rhoten  
Regional Supervisor, Region 4  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks