



DECISION NOTICE

Judith Landing State Park – Acquisition and Development

FWP-SEA-POR-R4-24-001

12/18/2024

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 (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 standard 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 November 15, 2024, to December 14, 2024. 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 did receive comments during the public comment period.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes the acquisition of approximately 109 acres of land northwest of Winifred, MT near the confluence of the Judith River and Missouri River for the purpose of establishing a new Montana State Park. The incredible history of the Judith Landing historic district is the impetus behind the proposed acquisition and subsequent development of the property. In all, the historic district contains over 30 contributing resources (structures or structure remnants, graves, camps...), many of which no longer physically exist. Many of these contributing resources were not located on the subject property however a state park in this area would allow for the story of the entire historic district to be told. If the property were to be acquired by FWP, development would follow to provide for public safety, operational efficiency, and site stewardship.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed acquisition and development would be to provide permanent access, through the Montana FWP State Park system, to a property that offers substantial heritage values. FWP believes that there is long term value to the residents of Montana in the preservation of the historically significant buildings and sharing the rich history of the area through a rustic, heritage state park.

The Benefits of the proposed acquisition and development would include the following:

- Ensure perpetual public access to the property.
- Provide interpretive opportunities to the public related to the surrounding historic district.
- Expand the Montana State Park system in a portion of the state with limited access to state parks.
- Provide additional public outdoor recreation opportunities including, but not limited to, camping, wildlife watching, hiking, and access to the Judith River and Missouri River for angling and water-based recreation.
- Develop a state park in north central Montana which would have the potential to economically benefit the surrounding small communities due to increased tourism.
- Preserve and protect the historic structures and cultural resources.

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.

Under the No Action alternative, the proposed acquisition and development would not occur. FWP would not receive the donation and would not acquire the property as a State Park. The future of the property would be unknown, but there is the real possibility that if FWP does not acquire the property and preserve the buildings, they would continue to degrade and be forever lost. Additionally, the story of the Judith Landing Historic District would not be highlighted, the public would not realize the recreational opportunities the site could offer, and the Montana State Park system would not expand into a portion of the state that has limited access to state parks.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action – Day use and overnight development

Under alternative 2, the proposed action, FWP would acquire the property from the Montana State Parks Foundation, via donation and the property would be developed as a rustic heritage state park. Alternative 2 would include installation of base features such as signage (regulation, wayfinding, and interpretive),

fencing, and landscaping/vegetative planting, as well as development of an access road, parking lot, vault toilet, picnic shelter/picnic tables, trails, an administrative area, utilities, and a campground consisting of approximately 8 sites. The campground would contain a vault toilet, a host site and may offer drinking water but would likely not provide power or sewer hookups as rustic parks typically do not offer these amenities. The park would highlight the history of the area as well as provide new recreational offerings for the public. The acquisition of the property would be dependent on approval from the Montana State Parks and Recreation Board.

Alternative 3: Day use only development (no campground)

Under alternative 3, FWP would acquire the property, and all the base features included in alternative 2, except the campground, would be developed. The site would be entirely day use only and provide no opportunities for public camping. The campground located across the Missouri River at the BLM managed Judith Landing site would remain a viable option for visitors. However there would not be the opportunity for camping between October 16th and May 14th, due to stipulations of the BLM lease. Additionally, there is the possibility that the 8 sites at the BLM campground would not be enough capacity for the use the area would receive with the addition of a state park. This could present challenges because of the distance visitors must travel to reach the site, without knowing if camping would be available upon their arrival. The acquisition of the property would be dependent on approval from the Montana State Parks and Recreation Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT AND FWP RESPONSE

FWP received substantive public comment on the Draft EA. A substantive public comment was defined as the identification of a specific issue or impact. A verbatim transcript of all comments officially received and FWP's responses are attached to this Decision Notice.

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.

With this DN, FWP hereby adopts the Final EA, with modifications, and approves the proposed action.

The acquisition of the proposed Judith Landing State Park property will be presented to the Montana State Parks and Recreation Board on December 20th, 2025, for review.

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

1	Received: November 22, 2024	Sender: Bill Cook
<p>Thanks for this opportunity to comment on the EA for the proposed development of a state park at Judith Landing. I have floated the Missouri Breaks four times, so have passed this site several times. I have also stayed several nights at a hut located quite close to this proposed new state park site and done some hiking in the general area. I agree that there is a need for a state park here. I fully support the proposed alternative, which would develop the park as a "rustic" facility with campground. People floating the Missouri would make use of this new site, as would those interested in history and the upland resources. I am particularly interested in the proposed development of a short trail. The existing historic buildings on the site are intriguing, and it would be excellent if the public could enjoy seeing them. A picnic area and vault toilet would be very welcome.</p> <p>Good work, FWP! Would you please put me on any mailing/email list relating to this project?</p>		

2	Received: November 24, 2024	Sender: Candi Zion
<p>Hi Alex, I am so delighted that APR has donated this culturally significant 109 acres to MT State Parks Foundation. This location will be an extraordinary state park not just because of the cultural significance of the area but also because of the incredible recreational amenities it will offer. Becoming a state park will greatly enhance opportunities to fish and boat on the Judith and Missouri Rivers as well as offer much needed camping spots which will benefit recreationists and hunters. Additionally, the establishment of an accessible Judith Landing State Park will boost the economy of the surrounding towns; Lewistown, Denton, Hilger, Roy, Big Sandy, Winifred, etc would all economically benefit from the influx of people coming to the area for the park.</p> <p>As a state park, I am confident the historic structures of the PN will be well documented, assessed and preserved; many of us have watched the deterioration of the trading post and other buildings with a concerned eye.</p> <p>In conclusion, I commend the APR in donating the 109 acres to the Foundation and agree with and support Alternative 2.</p>		
<p>FWP Response: As outlined in the environmental assessment, should the property be acquired and the development funded, FWP intends to contract with an architect to complete a condition assessment for each of the historic structures on the property. These assessments would yield as-built drawings that would aid in monitoring the buildings over time and would provide information that would be vital to future stabilization of some of the historic structures. FWP intends to stabilize some of the structures, but that work would be dependent upon funding being available.</p>		

3	Received: November 25, 2024	Sender: Harvey Nyberg
<p>Dear Sir or Madam:</p> <p>I just learned that American Prairie has donated 109 acres of the Judith Landing Historic Site to the Montana State Parks Foundation. This is exciting news, indeed, and I am very pleased to fully support this effort to develop a State Park on the site.</p> <p>The Judith Landing area is a central feature of what is perhaps the most significant area of Montana history.</p> <p>In 1979, the BLM conducted an extensive historic survey of the Judith Landing Historic District which includes several Lewis and Clark campsites and the Missouri River Island where the Stevens Indian Treaty was signed in 1855.</p>		

The first Army fort in Montana, the short-lived Camp Cooke, was located at the mouth of the Judith River to protect steamboat traffic to Fort Benton. The Fort Claggett and TC Power trading posts were located near the mouth of the Judith River. The PN Ranch is one of the oldest continually operating ranches in Central Montana. The first manager James Wells may have brought in the first large herd of Texas cattle to the Judith Basin in 1872.

The Judith Landing area is near the site where Nez Perce Chief Joseph crossed the Missouri River on his historic flight to Canada.

It is also believed that the PN Ranch may have been featured in BM Bauer's book: Chip of the Flying U. I am completely supportive of this proposal and urge your organization to go forward and protect this site for our future enjoyment and education.

I first toured this site in August 2017 with AP (then APR) staff and the Lewistown Historic Resources Commission and was immediately overwhelmed by the historic significance of the area. That day, the grass was knee high and cured and it seemed that a wildfire could destroy all of the wooden buildings. As an avid student of Montana history, I drafted a letter to AP suggesting some steps that I thought should be taken immediately to protect the area. The first step was to photographically document the buildings in case of fire and the second suggestion was that the grass be mowed to prevent a destructive wildfire.

I volunteered to do the mowing and have mowed the historic site a few times each summer, using their equipment. Often, I photographed after mowing to document the status of the buildings. In addition, this would be great place to implement a volunteer program. I have been told by Winifred residents that this area is very important to them. This would provide a good opportunity to develop a volunteer program to aid in the maintenance and interpretation of the site.

We have a very unique crew of volunteers in Lewistown that share an interest in this historic site. They include an architect, stone mason, builder, photographer and a few grunts like me. Over time, we worked with AP staff to do some minor protection and stabilization projects including propping up the old blacksmith shop and improving the roof on the schoolhouse. We also helped install official Historic signs for each building.

I am very pleased to learn that Montana State parks may develop a new park here. From my informal contacts with a few folks in Winifred over time, I believe they will also be supportive.

I support the designation of this proposed park as a Rustic, Heritage site and believe that the actions proposed in the Preferred Alternatives are appropriate for this stage of development. Because of the small collection of buildings on site, it is a good example of a prairie town that grew in the old days around a successful ranch.

Depending on usage and funding, additional development can be added in the future to address future needs. One thing that I would suggest is to find a use for the Norris mansion. Buildings that are used are easier to preserve than this that sit vacant.

Again, I am very happy to see this site transferred to Montana State Parks and being turned into a State Park for the people.

FWP Response: Should the property be acquired, FWP would maintain it in a way to limit the spread of potential fires and protect the structures. As outlined in the environmental assessment, should the property be acquired and the development funded, FWP intends to contract with an architect to complete a condition assessment for each of the historic structures on the property. These assessments would yield as-built drawings that would aid in monitoring the buildings over time and would provide information that would be vital to future stabilization of some of the historic structures. FWP intends to stabilize some of the structures, but that work would be dependent upon funding being available. The Norris ranch house is one of the structures the department hopes to stabilize. At this time FWP does not plan to utilize the Norris ranch house as an occupied building.

4	Received: December 2, 2024	Sender: Mike Spenner
<p>I would like to voice my support for the development of the Judith Landing State Park.</p> <p>After looking at the various development alternatives, I feel like it would make a lot of sense to include some basic (rustic) camping options here in part because of the distances needed to be traveled to get there and also because of the overall lack of developed camping within the region.</p> <p>White I don't live close to this area, I have traveled fairly frequently within the region and most of my camping has been boondocking on BLM lands. So this would be a nice addition to the State Park System.</p> <p>Best of luck with the process,</p>		

5	Received: December 2, 2024	Sender: Don Sasse
<p>I am supportive of the acquisition and development of the Judith Landing State Park project as described in FWP-SEA-POR-R4-24-001. Please address a trail system for non-motorized vehicles including restrictions on electric bikes. Also please address the status of mineral rights including oil and gas and discuss compatibility with State parks objectives.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>		
<p>FWP Response: Should the property be acquired, and the development funded, FWP plans to manage the trails on the property as non-motorized. FWP views electric bikes as motorized vehicles so under the non-motorized designation, electric bikes would not be allowed. The mission of Montana State Parks is “to preserve and protect our state’s cultural, natural, and recreational heritage for the benefit of our families, communities, and local economies. Our objectives are to provide excellent land stewardship, public safety, and service through recreation, innovation, and education. Our goals are to provide an extraordinary experience for our visitors and to keep our state park system strong now and for generations to come.” FWP believes the acquisition and development of this property would align with that mission by providing the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure perpetual public access to the property. • Provide interpretive opportunities to the public related to the surrounding historic district. • Expand the Montana State Park system into a portion of the state with limited access to state parks. • Provide additional public outdoor recreation opportunities including, but not limited to, camping, wildlife watching, hiking, and access to the Judith River and Missouri River for angling and water-based recreation. • Develop a state park in north central Montana which would have the potential to economically benefit the surrounding small communities due to increased tourism. • Preserve and protect the historic structures and cultural resources. <p>FWP did not receive a mineral title/mineral remoteness survey on this parcel however FWP has ordered these reports on similar properties in this area. The Department believes it is extremely unlikely that there are any marketable minerals or petroleum products located under this parcel.</p>		

6	Received: December 2, 2024	Sender: Dave Helmrick
<p>In looking at the maps of proposed area. Lots of history in area, but also, lots of hunting opportunities. In distant past prior to APF owning property, or the hunting club they got it from, this was some of the best pheasant and mule deer hunting in the Missouri corridor. Would like to see an alternative which would lean more to a WMA, for majority park status for interp site (Safety zone)</p>		

near buildings. Seems like a small area lost to hunting, but its just another step. acre here, acre there.

FWP Response: The property associated with the proposed acquisition is culturally significant while also providing quality wildlife habitat. FWP sees tremendous value in sharing the history of the area with the public and a state park designation would afford the department the best means to do that. While the ability to hunt the property is often a byproduct of a Wildlife Management Area (WMA), their intent is to secure wildlife habitat on a landscape level and the 109 acres associated with this property is small for a standalone WMA. It is important to note that hunting is allowed at many but not all state parks in Montana. FWP would analyze the property of the ability to allow hunting once the development plan is finalized and if hunting can safely occur on the property, it may be allowed.

7 **Received:** December 2, 2024

Sender: Joe DosSantos

Hi,
What can I say except go for it. What an opportunity for FWP to preserve and protect a place with such a rich MT history.
I know that another state park is just another financial burden, but this property is too good to let slip by.
Good luck with the acquisition. I'm certainly all for it.

8 **Received:** December 3, 2024

Sender: Richard Schwalbe

This is a great opportunity. First, it is a stand-alone opportunity to service Montana's growthing population. Second, it is an example and inspiration of private-to-public sponsorship and citizenship as it should be. This is the latest of several recent examples of new public access supporting the people of Montana as well as a vibrant tourist industry.
I am a strong supporter of these efforts. FWP cannot stand frozen in time while our population, outdoor recreation and tourism industry grows.

9 **Received:** December 3, 2024

Sender: Brent

It would end up being just another spot for Out of state people to go and overrun and ruin, just like you did to our hunting.
Washington and Minnesota tourists will love it!

FWP Response: Montana state parks are open to residents and non-residents alike. Day use and camping fees are required for both groups to access and or stay overnight at state park properties.

10 **Received:** December 4, 2024

Sender: Russ Earl

Good Day The proposed new state park at Judith Landing is a fantastic idea. It would also be nice if they finished the paving of the road from Big Sandy to the bridge. Thank you

FWP Response: The paving of secondary road 236 (S-236), also known as PN Bridge Rd, is outside of the scope of this environmental assessment.

11	Received: December 4, 2024	Sender: Danette Thurman, Fergus County
<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>Any changes to Secondary Road 236, PN Bridge Rd, must be approved by Fergus County. Right of Way permit applications can be submitted to the Fergus County Planning Office.</p> <p>Permits can be found at: Fergus County, Montana - Road Department [fergusmt.gov]</p> <p>Thank you,</p>		
<p>FWP Response: Should the acquisition of the property be approved and funds for the development of the property be secured, FWP would work with the Fergus County and MDT on any potential impacts to secondary road 236, such as a new access road to the property.</p>		

12	Received: December 4, 2024	Sender: Sue Kelso-Haines
<p>Dear Mr. Sholes,</p> <p>I am writing in support of establishing Judith Landing State Park. This park would be a “winner” for so many reasons. The Judith Landing is located on an area of the Upper Missouri designated as a National Wild and Scenic River; it would protect critical habitat for over 60 wildlife species (including elk, mule deer, big horn sheep and antelope!); it would add a park to an area that is limited in state parks; it would allow the public access to boating and fishing opportunities and historical interpretation, and finally, stimulate the local economy. We love to visit Montana. This would be such a great addition to its park system! Thank you for the chance to comment.</p>		

13	Received: December 4, 2024	Sender: Jean Riley, Montana Department of Transportation
<p>Alex,</p> <p>The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) staff has reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Judith Landing State Park – Acquisition and Development (FWP-SEA-POR-R4-24-001) dated November 15,2024. Below are MDT comments.</p> <p>The property is adjacent to Secondary 236 (S-236) also known as PN Bridge Rd. As S-236 is a Secondary Road it is under the jurisdiction of the Montana Transportation Commission (Commission). If changes are proposed to the roadway they will have to be reviewed by MDT staff and approved by the Commission.</p> <p>The approach must be designed as not to adversely impact the travel on S-236.</p> <p>Fergus County is responsible for maintenance and permitting on S-236. Please contact John Anderson, Fergus County Road Department Supervisor, for permitting requirements.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Draft (EA).</p>		
<p>FWP Response: Should the acquisition of the property be approved and funds for the development of the property be secured, FWP would work with the Fergus County and MDT on any potential impacts to secondary road 236, such as a new access road to the property.</p>		

14	Received: December 4, 2025	Sender: John Lord
<p>Hello:</p> <p>I support Alternative A to acquire the 109-acre land parcel at the confluence of the Judith and Missouri Rivers for the reasons set forth in the FWP Proposal.</p>		

<p>Montana State parks are popular with the public and their use has increased substantially during recent years. Judith Landing is used by people who float the Missouri Wild and Scenic River corridor. It would be nice to have more amenities there.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

15	Received: December 5, 2024	Sender: Kristen Mark
<p>Hello Alex, I'm from Hardin and read about the proposed satellite park at Judith Landing, and am writing to voice support for the creation of a state park there. Preservation of history, of public land access, affordable recreation for Montana families such as my own, and increased tourism that can benefit local businesses are all reasons I support the state park. Small towns like mine have been suffering from the dramatic increase in property taxes and inflation and we could use a boost.</p>		

16	Received: December 5, 2024	Sender: Sally Staley
<p>Good day,</p> <p>I am in total support of this project. The historic value and potential to develop the site with interpretive and possibly tribal celebrations would be a compliment to this already beautiful, historic area. I visit the American Prairie area annually and appreciate the foresight they had to preserve this priceless piece of Montana.</p> <p>I look forward to camping at this new site and enjoying all it will offer in the future.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p>		

17	Received: December 5, 2024	Sender: Marilyn & Dennis Clark
<p>Hello,</p> <p>We are writing to offer our support and enthusiasm for creating a new state park, Judith Landing. This property has great historical significance dating back with US History to Lewis and Clark, and beyond that to the history of the Indigenous Peoples. It also offers significant scientific and geologic opportunities to those involved with prehistoric studies. Geographically, being situated at the confluence of the Judith and Missouri rivers, it offers wonderful recreation and enjoyment of nature in an area of the state which has little close access to state parks.</p> <p>The fact that the property is being donated would seem to make this a no brainer. We realize there will be development, legal costs, etc., but overall, we consider those small in comparison with the value of this land being made a state park that will be enjoyed for generations.</p> <p>We heartily support the plan.</p>		

18	Received: December 6, 2024	Sender: Bret Otis
<p>Dear Fish Wildlife & Parks Commission,</p> <p>I support the Judith Landing State Park - Acquisition and Development.</p> <p>Having driven by this land many times, I can hardly wait for this land to be open to the public. It is truly a special piece of land, and a true piece of history that hopefully can be shared with the public.</p> <p>Please Approve of this plan.</p>		

Thanks
FWP Response: The potential acquisition of land as a state park is under the jurisdiction of the Montana State Parks and Recreation Board not the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

19	Received: December 6, 2024	Sender: Ruby Kikkert
<p>YES!! Definitely make it a state park.... with all our population growth, we need more parks to camp y recreate on. Great river access through beautiful, unique landscape.</p> <p>And make it MT Residents Only.....well, at least start limiting the length of stays. Out of state RVs aren't camping in our parks, they're living in them all summer infringing on locals use. Three nights is long enough!</p> <p>Thank you for your work y to AP for thr generous donation.</p>		
<p>FWP Response: Montana state parks are open to residents and non-residents alike. Day use and camping fees are required for both groups to access and or stay overnight at state park properties. FWP has developed administrative rules associated with camping stay limits. 12.12.107 (1) states “unless otherwise posted by the department, within a public use site it is prohibited to: (d) camp at one or more campsites in a public use area for a period of longer than 7 nights during any consecutive 30-day period, beginning with the first night occupied unless otherwise posted by the department.” FWP does have the authority to allow for a longer stay limit, with Montana State Parks and Recreation Board approval, such as 14 nights during a consecutive 30-day period, should there be a reason to extend the stay limit. When utilized, stay limit extensions typically occur outside of the peak season, the third Monday in September—third Thursday in May.</p>		

20	Received: December 6, 2024	Sender: Denise Boggs
<p>While I would prefer APR keep this land, it has made the donation and I encourage FWP to accept it. I also encourage keeping it rustic without a lot of development. A pit toilet and wildlife proof garbage cans would suffice. Many Montanans are tired of all the development going on in the state, and FWPs catering to hunters and trappers. Neither should be allowed in or near any state park. This is a gorgeous area I’m familiar with and there is no reason to develop it. Folks can take walks, watch birds and fish if they desire. Keep it simple.</p>		
<p>FWP Response: Should the property be acquired, the site would need to be developed to provide for public safety, operational efficiency, and site stewardship. FWP has proposed alternatives in the environmental assessment that would align the potential park with the rustic service level designation. As a potential rustic park, FWP would not offer garbage service and would require the public to pack out their trash. The conceptual plan does include at least 1 vault toilet. It is important to note that hunting is allowed at many but not all state parks in Montana. FWP would analyze the property of the ability to allow hunting once the development plan is finalized and if hunting can safely occur on the property, it may be allowed.</p>		

21	Received: December 7, 2024	Sender: Michele Carey
<p>I am writing in support of the creation of the Judith Landing State Park. Montana needs more protected lands for camping, hiking, and for wildlife. We need these lands in all parts of our state.</p> <p>Thanks</p>		

22	Received: December 7, 2024	Sender: Luann Fortenbery
What a wonderful gift to the state park system. I live in Lewistown and think this is an opportunity that can't be passed up. A big thank you to American Prairie and to you for bringing this all together for residents of Montana and visitors from far and wide.		

23	Received: December 9, 2024	Sender: Doug Doty
Greetings, I am writing in support of Judith Landing State Park. The proposed park will create additional recreation and camping opportunities in north-central Montana, which will benefit local economies.		

24	Received: December 9, 2024	Sender: Carol Gilbert
Hi I grew up part of my childhood on the P.N. Ranch. It would be wonderful to see my grandparents beautiful home used as a visitor center. That area as you know is rich in history. Thank-you for your consideration. Happy trails,		
FWP Response: As outlined in the environmental assessment, should the property be acquired and the development funded, FWP intends to contract with an architect to complete a condition assessment for each of the historic structures on the property. These assessments would yield as-built drawings that would aid in monitoring the buildings over time and would provide information that would be vital to future stabilization of some of the historic structures. FWP intends to stabilize some of the structures, but that work would be dependent on funding being available. The Norris ranch house is one of the structures the department hopes to stabilize. At this time FWP does not plan to utilize the Norris ranch house as a visitor center.		

25	Received: December 10, 2024	Sender: George Wuerthner
I strongly urge the state to accept the donation of the 109 acres at the confluence of the Judith and Missouri River as a new state park. The area has tremendous historical significance, and would offer travelers on the river, an important stop.		

26	Received: 12/11/24	Sender: Thomas Kilmer
Here are my comments regarding the proposed Judith Landing State Park. There are so many reasons to oppose this proposed State Park that I hardly know where to begin.		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look at the results of the latest elections in Montana. Most of the people voted for rabid public lands haters on the Republican side of the ballot. This includes both the state and the federal level. This apparently means that most Montana voters, despite their statements to the contrary do not support the protection of public lands for either recreation or the protection of wild places and wildlife. Please do not designate the Judith River State Park. The majority of Montana voters do not support or deserve it. 2. The majority of Montana residents do not know how to conduct themselves properly when on public lands. Look at the mess they leave.: they scatter cigarette butts, plastic bags, plastic bottles, tooth flossers, trigger trash and other assorted garbage. In the firepit they leave behind partially burnt cans and paper trash and even entire bags of garbage. 		

3. If there is no vault toilet they leave behind, on public view their toilet paper and turds.
4. Most Montana residents feel some kind of bizarre need to drag their barking, pooping dogs to public lands with them. I personally feel that this is so that their animals will poop and bark some place other than their own back yard. These people do not need a new state park for that purpose.
5. Fish Wildlife & Parks Department does not now, nor will it ever under Republican control, have enough financial and staff resources to adequately staff, maintain and patrol the state parks and other recreation facilities we now have. You cannot add more facilities without at the same time adding more funding and staff. That is not going to happen.
6. Many of our fishing access sites are overgrown by noxious Russian Olive Trees. They are choking out the native vegetation, especially Cottonwoods. There is no effort to control these giant weeds. For example, I frequently stay at "Far West" fishing access site. What a mess of Russian Olive trees at that site. You really ought to do some management and control and eradication of these weeds before adding any new facilities. Locally in Helena at Spring Meadow State Park there are Russian Olive trees choking off the native vegetation. I brought this to the attention of management several years ago. To date there has been no effort at eradication and control.
7. Sometimes I go to far Northeast Montana and camp at Brush Lake State Park. The camping area is nice and well laid out. The swimming and boating area at the east? shore of the lake is usually a mess with overflowing garbage cans, micro and macro litter and dogs running loose. The people do not deserve another State Park until they can take proper care of the ones we already have.
8. A few years ago, on a Sunday afternoon my Subaru had a flat tire in Forsyth, Montana. Because the tire shop was closed till Monday morning I spent the night camping at East Rosebud recreation area. What a mess. Dirty, potholed dusty roads. Overgrown and crowded vegetation. Dogs running loose and barking. Micro and macro litter. You need to take better care of and manage better the recreation areas we now have.
9. A bunch of Recreation Consultants are pushing FWP and the tourism industry to force more visitors into central and southeastern Montana. Both areas are places that I treasure. I first ventured east of Billings, Montana in 1969 when I loaded myself onto a Greyhound Bus bound for Miles City to attend Miles Community College. I was immediately hooked on that country. I ended up living and working back there for a few years. I still get out that way multiple times a year. I treasure the times in I spend in solitary recreation, paddling the Yellowstone River and hiking and camping in the badlands. Central Montana in the Breaks and on the prairie is another place I go to while escaping the hordes of humans in western Montana. I truly believe that the Consultants are only advocating for more recreation sites in central and southeast Montana to make a name for their business and to make some major profits.
10. One more thing. I see that 3G has appointed a Wolf and Grizzly Bear hating woman to be the new director of Fish Wildlife and Parks. She is going to divert a large amount of FWP resources towards the eradication of Wolves and Grizzly Bears. There will not be any money in the Parks Division budget to build new State Parks or maintain the ones we now have.
11. In Summary: Say no to a Judith River State Park. Thanks so much.

FWP Response: As outlined in the conceptual plan, which was included in the environmental assessment, FWP is proposing at least 1 vault toilet as part of the proposed park (potentially more if a campground is included). If the property is acquired, FWP anticipates implementing a leash requirement for pets (12.12.111). FWP manages noxious weeds as outlined by the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan. The site's vegetation plan would likely also consider weed management. FWP's administrative rule 12.12.110 prohibits littering in a public use site, this rule also applies to pet waste. Violating this or any regulation could result in a citation and fine. Should the property be acquired, current Region 4 recreation staff would absorb the duties associated with the operations of the property. The maintenance unit is proprietary funded

there is no need to request additional capacity through the legislative process to maintain acquired properties. FWP has the resources in place to add a maintenance presence to this property at the time of possession. Development, should it be funded, would likely not occur until 2026 or even 2027. At that time the department would seek additional funds for operations and maintenance of the property and potential addition of FTE, should it be necessary.

27	Received: 12/12/24	Sender: Beth Madden
<p>To Montana FWP,</p> <p>I write in support of the proposed land acquisition and creation of Judith Landing State Park at the confluence of the Missouri River and Judith River. This is an exceptional area in so many ways - human history, natural history, and for recreational opportunity. The plan to manage it at a "rustic services level" seems fitting for that landscape and nature of the surrounding area.</p> <p>I am a retired wildlife biologist (USFWS) and currently live in Bozeman. I often spend time in central Montana - camping, hiking, bird-watching, and bird hunting. It is an amazing area. Adding to our state park system in such a strategic spot as Judith Landing is a fantastic opportunity - and with the proposed donation of the property by American Prairie, we are indeed fortunate.</p> <p>I urge FWP to acquire the property and move forward with the plans outlined in the draft Environmental Assessment.</p> <p>Thank you for your work on our behalf.</p>		

28	Received: 12/12/24	Sender: Mary Sexton
<p>Good Morning,</p> <p>As a former Parks Board Member - 2013-2016, I would like to heartily recommend the acceptance of the Judith Landing property as a future State Park. Usage of State Parks continues to skyrocket, and Parks' plans have considered the addition of State Parks particularly in areas where they are lacking. This property is not only uniquely located but has exceptional recreational and historical attributes. Opportunities like this potential donation must be strongly considered. Partners such as the State Parks Foundation and other non-profits, will certainly assist in development of the park.</p> <p>I urge the Parks Board to enthusiastically approve Judith Landing property as a new State Park. Thank you for your consideration.</p>		

29	Received: 12/12/2024	Sender: Mike England
<p>As Montana's population grows, we need more access points and public land along our waterways. There's plenty of space to spread out in the mountains, but so very little, in comparison, along our storied, picturesque rivers. Consequently, it's harder and harder to find parking and campsites, and to get away from other people in general, at public sites on lakes and rivers around the state.</p> <p>The proposed state park at Judith Landing would help alleviate this increased crowding at our low-elevation public recreation sites. It will provide opportunities for nature walks and wildlife viewing for people like the woman I saw at the Cobblestone Fishing Access last week. She was injured and clearly incapable of hiking up a mountain trail in the national forest. But she was able to hobble along the flats along the Madison River, and the look on her face showed how important that experience was to her happiness and wellbeing.</p>		

As it was to my own – I too have a condition that has kept me out of the mountains lo these last few years. Instead, I have taken my dog and wandered the flats at all the FASs around southwest Montana, as well as various state-land parcels in eastern Montana. There’s nothing quite like a good dose of wild nature to feed the soul, and solitude is a big part of that. My wife spent some time in Washington state this summer and she was appalled at the number of people on the trails. Montana needs to do whatever it can to avoid that fate – and the time is now. (That includes preventing Knutsen from voting against this acquisition and others like it.)

While we’re on the subject, what’s with the current campground and put-in across the river from the APR land? We stayed there a couple of years ago and had a great time at what we thought was an FWP FAS – but when I look at the Cadastral, it shows it owned by a private party. Does she just let FWP use the site? Why can’t the state buy that and make it permanent?

FWP Response: The campground across the river from the proposed Judith Landing State Park is private property. The BLM leases that land from the landowner and FWP is not linked to that particular property or lease. The boat ramp is located on County property.

30	Received: 12/13/24	Sender: Doug Krings, Back Country Hunters and Anglers
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Dear Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks,
The Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers enthusiastically supports the establishment of a new state park in north-central Montana. This site presents an exceptional opportunity to provide lasting benefits to the public and the region. We want to thank American Prairie for its generous donation of the land.

The proposed park location offers important benefits, including:

- **Perpetual Public Access:** A state park designation ensures permanent public access to this valuable land, guaranteeing Montanans and visitors to enjoy its cultural and natural beauty and recreational opportunities for generations to come.
- **Historical Interpretation:** The site's history allows for the development of interpretive programs and exhibits that showcase the area's rich cultural heritage, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Montana's past, present, and future.
- **Enhanced Recreational Opportunities:** The diverse landscape offers a wide array of outdoor activities, including camping, canoeing, hunting, fishing, hiking, wildlife viewing, and access to both the Judith River and the Missouri River.
- **Economic Growth:** Increased tourism from the park will boost the surrounding communities economically and culturally. This will create jobs, support local businesses, and contribute to the overall vitality of the region.

The Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers is dedicated to ensuring public access to our natural resources and conserving fish and wildlife habitats. We firmly believe that the creation of this state park aligns with our mission and the values of our members.

We urge Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to prioritize the establishment of this new state park and are committed to working with the department to ensure its success. We are confident that this park will become a valued destination for residents and visitors alike, contributing to preserving Montana's natural and cultural heritage.

31	Received: 12/14/24	Sender: Cody Isom
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I am against this state park. For the reason that this park does not benefit all demographics. It caters to the APR and not all the others that would visit this area. The APR is a non for profit that has the

funds to pay for this themselves and not make tax payers pay for this, if it will not benefit everyone. Against anything that helps the APR with taxpayer funding.

The APR could donate the rest of the river front to the bridge. Then a nice camping area could be built with shade trees that are already established, which all campers would appreciate. A boat ramp could be installed to support the river users. Currently the camp ground and boat ramp reside on private property on the north side. It only is operated by the BLM. BLM could then help operate the one on the south side and abandoned the north side. This would allow the canoers better access to the history in which is the reason they are canoeing anyhow.

FWP Comment: FWP believes that there is long term value to the residents of Montana in the preservation of the historically significant buildings and sharing the rich history of the area through a rustic, heritage state park. The Benefits of the proposed acquisition and development would include the following:

- Ensure perpetual public access to the property.
- Provide interpretive opportunities to the public related to the surrounding historic district.
- Expand the Montana State Park system into a portion of the state with limited access to state parks.
- Provide additional public outdoor recreation opportunities including, but not limited to, camping, wildlife watching, hiking, and access to the Judith River and Missouri River for angling and water-based recreation.
- Develop a state park in north central Montana which would have the potential to economically benefit the surrounding small communities due to increased tourism.
- Preserve and protect the historic structures and cultural resources.

FWP did not dictate the footprint of the donated land. The conceptual plan, included in the EA, intentionally avoided development in the riparian areas to keep those valuable habitats intact and to limit any potential developments to the already impacted cultivated fields. Should the property be acquired, FWP does not intend to provide a duplicate boat ramp on the property. Floaters would be more than welcome to land on the south shore of the Missouri River and enjoy the state park.