



DECISION NOTICE
CULBERTSON BRIDGE FISHING ACCESS SITE
PARKING AREA AND CAMPSITE
CONSTRUCTION FWP-DN-POR-R6-24-008

May 28, 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 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 Check List 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 May 10, 2024 – May 24, 2024. 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 one supporting comment during the public comment period.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

Due to shoreline erosion, the Culbertson Bridge Fishing Access Site (FAS) currently does not have adequate parking for vehicles towing a trailer. The project proposes to reroute the current parking and turn around access trail to incorporate a parking area for vehicles towing a trailer. The project also proposes to develop designated campsites within the FAS boundary. Construction of the designated campsites and new parking area would accomplish recreation goals for FWP in accordance with the Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Goals include promoting outdoor recreation opportunities for all Montanans, enhance public access to outdoor recreation resources and facilities, support economic vitality of communities and state, improve quality of life through outdoor recreation experiences, adapt outdoor recreation for a changing environment, and honor Montana's Outdoor Legacy. This project would increase camping and recreational opportunities in eastern Montana. The project will likely include maintenance work to the boat ramp area.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Shoreline erosion along the Missouri River at Culbertson Bridge FAS damaged the parking lot, making it unsafe for vehicular traffic and parking of vehicles towing a trailer. Eastern Montana also has limited camping opportunities for the public. FWP proposes the following:

- Construct a parking area and turn around for vehicles towing a trailer to easily launch a boat and park their vehicle while boating on the Missouri River.
- Construct designated campsites on existing FAS property.
- Boat ramp maintenance.
- This project supports FWP goals to expand camping and enhance recreational opportunities in the region and eastern Montana.

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 public would have very limited spots to park vehicles while using the site and the camping opportunity would be the same as it is now.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, recreation users will benefit with a less congested parking area while using the site. Recreational opportunities and enjoyment would be enhanced with the development of campsites at the Fishing Access Site.

PUBLIC COMMENT AND FWP RESPONSE

FWP received one public comment in support of the project. FWP thanks the commentor for the support of the project to increase recreational opportunities in Northeast Montana.

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 blue ink, appearing to read "Drew Henry", is written over a faint, larger blue ink signature that is partially obscured.

Drew Henry
Region 6 Supervisor
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks