

**DRAFT**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**CHECKLIST**

**Bannack State Park ADA Upgrades**  
**FWP-CEA-POR-R3-25-011**



April 30, 2025

## I. Background and Description of Proposed Project

### **Name of Project: Accessibility Improvements Project**

Bannack State Park is a National Historic Landmark (24BE0169) attracting over 50,000 visitors a year and continues to grow in popularity as a local and regional destination. Accessibility is an important issue, and FWP and Bannack State Park are committed to providing persons with disabilities the opportunity to share in the 'Bannack Experience'. When the development of the park began in earnest in the early 1990s, the 1992 draft management plan stated, "Every effort will be made by the Department to provide access for the disabled, to share in the Bannack feeling, and enjoy the ghost town atmosphere" without diminishing the historical integrity of the resource.

Bannack State Park is in a multi-phase effort to improve accessibility to the park. Currently, the wooden boardwalk is being upgraded with ramps, landing platforms, and extensions that will allow for improved access and maneuverability for all users and especially for those needing mobility assistance. The second phase, which is covered in this EA, is to make ADA improvements to the parking and entrance area to the park. The third phase will involve more ADA accessible interpretive exhibits at the park.

In this proposed project, ADA improvements will be made to the visitor parking lot and entrance area including moving ADA parking closer to the ADA latrine, reducing the slope of the path to the latrine, and extending the boardwalk. These alterations will improve accessibility for all visitors and help Bannack State Park better conform to the standards established by the ADA. A new interpretive plaza next to the visitor center will also be constructed.

### **Affected Area / Location of Proposed Project:**

#### Legal Description

- Latitude/Longitude: (45.1606846 / -112.994215)
- Section, Township, and Range: Section 7, Township 8S, Range 11W
- Town/City, County, Montana: Dillon, Beaverhead, Montana

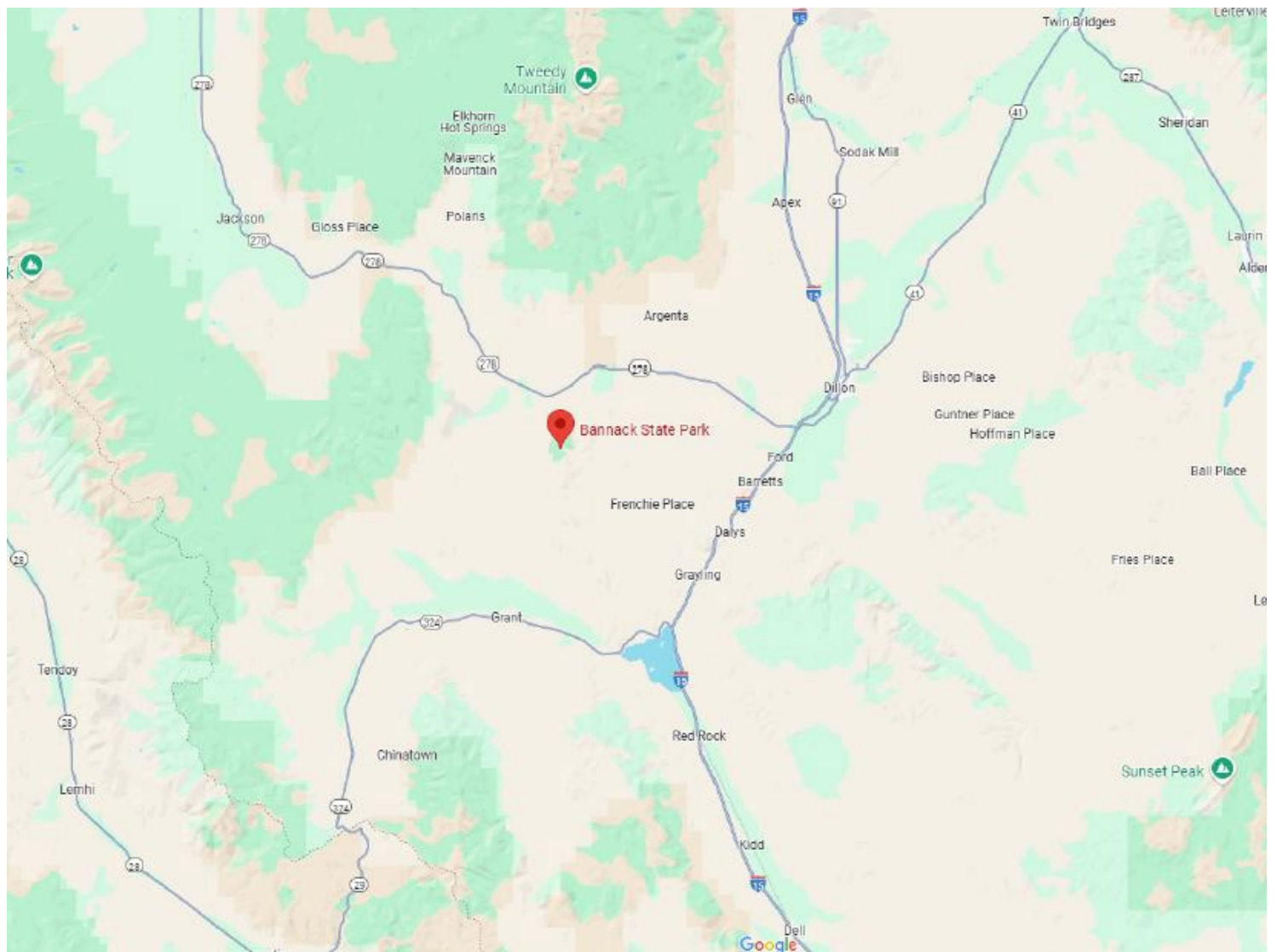


Figure 1. Location of Bannack State Park in southwestern Montana.

## II. Purpose and Need

The goal of this project is to improve accessibility and opportunity for all visitors to enjoy Bannack State Park, especially those guests with mobility challenges. This project will specifically implement changes that will improve parking, access to the latrine, and access to the entrance of the park for people with disabilities. The reconfiguration of these elements provides opportunities to make additional improvements to this part of the park that will benefit all users including a larger and more pleasant picnic area, an interpretive plaza, and a more welcoming entrance.

The grade of the path to the existing parking lot latrine is greater than 5%, so to meet the standard set by the ADA the path will be extended and incorporated into a remodeled picnic/interpretive area adjacent to the parking lot and latrine. Disabled parking will be designed to meet ADA standards and moved and incorporated into the remodeled picnic/interpretive area. Please see project plans in Appendix A.

Funding for the ADA upgrades was secured through the FWP budget and HB5 (2021 appropriation) to improve ADA compliance at the park, and the work is planned for the 2025 construction season.

FWP is committed to the goal of increasing accessibility for everyone and complying with the standards set by the ADA. Although total accessibility is often impossible to achieve, it is the Department's intention to make our sites as usable as possible to the greatest number of people despite limitations created by the nature of the site. Bannack's management plan states Bannack will "provide a reasonable range of opportunities for visitors with disabilities to experience Bannack, while still retaining the historic integrity of the site..." Accessibility issues will always be present at Bannack because of the nature of the site, but this project represents a continuation of the park's efforts to increase accessibility for everyone to participate in the "Bannack Experience".

## III. Other Agency Regulatory Responsibilities

**Table 1: Federal, State, and/or Local Regulatory Responsibilities**

Agency	Type of Authorization (permit, license, stipulation, other)	Purpose
SHPO	Consultation	Ensure compliance with all relevant historic preservation laws.
NPS	Advisory	Ensure compliance with all relevant historic preservation laws.

## IV. List of Mitigations, Stipulations

**Table 2: Listing and Evaluation of Enforceable Mitigations Limiting Impacts**

Are enforceable controls limiting potential impacts of the proposed action? If not, no further evaluation is needed.			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, are these controls being relied upon to limit impacts below the level of significance? If yes, list the enforceable control(s) below			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Enforceable Control	Responsible Agency	Authority (Rule, Permit, Stipulation, Other)	Effect of Enforceable Control on Proposed Project	

## V. Alternatives Considered

	Yes*	No
Were any additional alternatives considered and dismissed?		X

\* If yes, a list and description of the other alternatives considered, but not carried forward for detailed review is included below

### Alternative 1: No Action.

Under the “No Action” alternative, the proposed project to extend the boardwalk, move ADA parking, and improve the grade to the parking lot latrine would not occur. Therefore, no additional impacts to the physical environment or human population in the analysis area would occur. The “No Action” alternative forms the baseline from which the potential impacts of the proposed Project can be measured. If the proposed project does not occur, the existing handicapped parking and ramp to the latrine will continue to fall short of current ADA standards and visitors to the park with mobility issues may struggle to access those facilities.

### Alternative 2: Proposed Project.

Alternative 2 is the preferred alternative. Under the proposed project, FWP will redesign the visitor’s parking lot and entrance to better conform to ADA standards and improve the area for all users. As part of the proposed project, FWP will reduce the slope to the latrine in the parking lot, move ADA parking closer to the ADA latrine, extend the wooden boardwalk closer to ADA parking, and create an interpretive plaza at the entrance to the park. The project will not cause any significant negative impacts to the physical or human environment. It will have a long term and positive impact by improving accessibility for all visitors to Bannack State Park.

## VI. Summary of Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project on the Physical Environment and Human Population

**Table 3 - Potential Impacts of Proposed Project on the Physical Environment**

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	Duration of Impact			Severity of Impact					Summary of Potential Direct, Secondary, and Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures
	None	Short-Term	Long-Term	None	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	
Terrestrial, avian, and aquatic life and habitats	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Water quality, quantity, and distribution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Geology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Soil quality, stability, and moisture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Vegetation cover, quantity, and quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There will be a short-term and minor impact to the aesthetics of the parking lot and entrance to the park during construction.
Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Historical and archaeological sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse effects to historic and archaeological sites would be expected because of the proposed project. In keeping with the Montana Antiquities Act and related regulations (12.8.501-12.8.510), all undertakings on state lands are assessed by a qualified archaeologist or historian for their potential to affect cultural resources. The process for this assessment may include a cultural resource inventory and evaluation of cultural resources within or near the project area, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office. FWP also consults with all Tribal Historic Preservation Offices affiliated with each property in accordance with FWP's Tribal Consultation Guidelines. If cultural resources within or near the project area are recorded that are eligible for the

[illegible]

#### Table 4 - Potential Impacts of Proposed Project on the Human Population

[illegible]

[illegible]

## VII. Public Participation

*The level of analysis in an EA will vary with the complexity and seriousness of environmental issues associated with a proposed action. The level of public interest will also vary. FWP is responsible for adjusting public review to match these factors (ARM 12.2.433(1)). Because FWP has determined the proposed action will result in limited environmental impact, and little public interest has been expressed, FWP determines the following public notice strategy will provide an appropriate level of public review:*

- α. An EA is a public document and may be inspected upon request. Any person may obtain a copy of an EA by making a request to FWP. If the document is out-of-print, a copying charge may be levied (ARM 12.2.433(2)).*
  - β. Public notice will be served on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website at: <https://fwp.mt.gov/news/public-notice>*
  - χ. FWP maintains a mailing list of persons interested in a particular action or type of action. FWP will notify all interested persons of the EA to those persons for review and comment (ARM 12.2.433(3)).*
  - δ. Public notice will announce the availability of the EA, summarize its content, and solicit public comment.*
- **Duration of Public Comment Period:** *The public comment period begins on the date of publication of legal notice in area newspapers (see above). Written or e-mailed comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., MST, on the last day of public comment, as listed below:*

**Length of Public Comment Period:** 15 days

**Public Comment Period Begin:** April 30, 2025

**Public Comment Period Ends:** May 15, 2025

Comments must be addressed to the FWP contact listed below.

- **Where to Mail or Email Comments on the Draft EA:**

Name: John Phillips

Email: [john.phillips@mt.gov](mailto:john.phillips@mt.gov)

Mailing Address:

Bannack State Park

721 Bannack Rd

Dillon, MT 59725

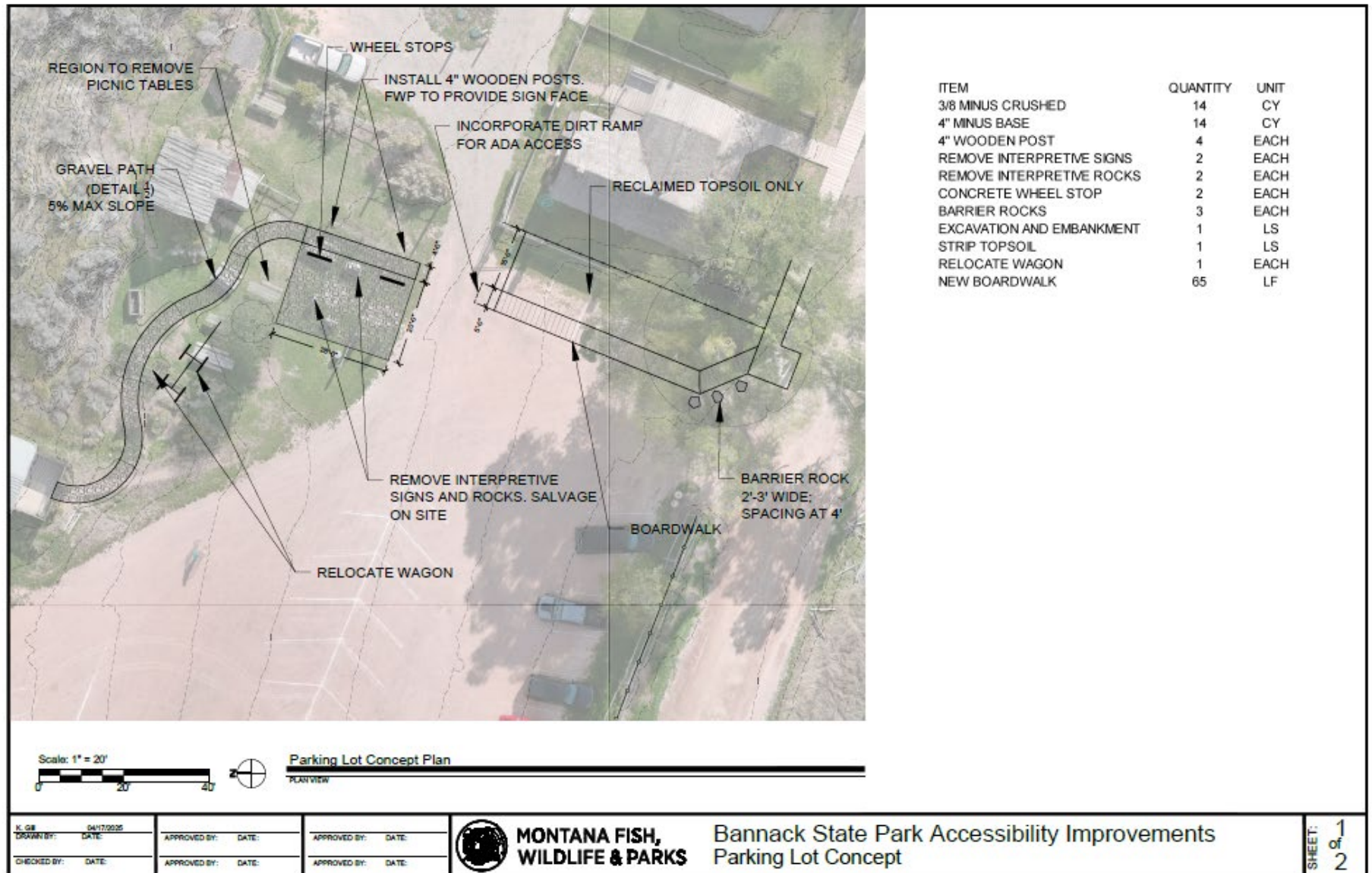
## VIII. Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis

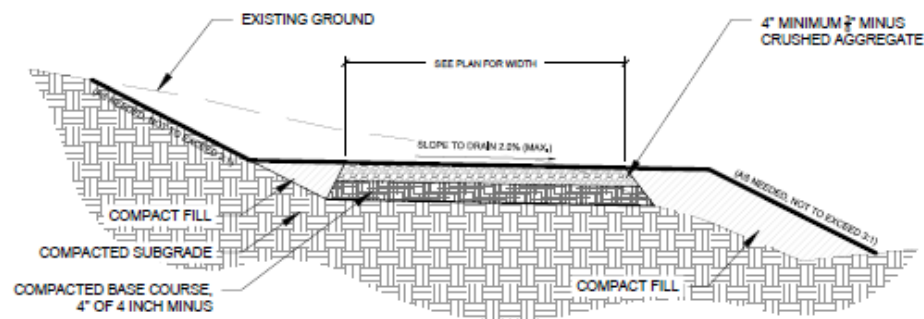
<b>NO</b> further analysis is needed for the proposed action	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FWP must conduct <b>EIS</b> level review for the proposed action	<input type="checkbox"/>

## IX. EA Preparation and Review

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>EA prepared by:</b>	John Phillips	FWP Recreation Manager, Bannack State Park
<b>EA reviewed by:</b>	Linnaea Schroeer	FWP Reg 3 Recreation Manager

## Appendix A





1 GRAVEL PATH  
2 NTS

K. GE  
DRAWN BY: DATE:  
CHECKED BY: DATE:

APPROVED BY: DATE:  
APPROVED BY: DATE:

APPROVED BY: DATE:  
APPROVED BY: DATE:



**MONTANA FISH,  
WILDLIFE & PARKS**

Bannack State Park Accessibility Improvements  
Parking Lot Details

SHEET: 2  
of 2

