



## DECISION NOTICE

### MEADOW LAKE FISHING ACCESS SITE CAMPGROUND IMPROVEMENTS FWP-DN-POR-R3-25-006

April 10, 2025

#### **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 checklist (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 3/20/2025 to 4/4/2025. A legal Notice of the Draft EA was posted on FWP's Public Notice webpage: <https://fwp.mt.gov/news/public-notices>. 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 not receive any comments during the public comment period.

## **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Meadow Lake FAS is located 6 miles north of Ennis, MT, along the north shore of Ennis Lake and is approximately 8 acres in size. This site has 10 camping spots with one vault latrine and is a popular spot for walk in boat access to the lake. Recreation use has significantly increased across FWP fishing access sites, particularly those that have camping available. Meadow Lake FAS is a popular FAS site in the Madison River corridor due to the proximity of Ennis, Bozeman, Big Sky, and West Yellowstone. FWP is proposing to expand existing camping and recreational opportunities at Meadow Lake FAS by adding five additional camping sites and a new rollout dock for hand launching personal watercraft. To help support this additional infrastructure, there will be updates to the road including an expansion of the loop to accommodate more campsites along with a new ingress/egress to allow for one-way traffic access to the site which will be safer for the visitors to use. The project also includes the development of a new day use parking area to access the new boat launch, and an additional ADA vault latrine to accommodate the new campsites.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED**

Meadow Lake FAS is managed by FWP through a property easement and cooperative management agreement with Northwestern Energy. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued Northwestern Energy (formerly Montana Power Company) a license to operate the Missouri-Madison Hydroelectric Project 2188 in September 2000. Article 426 of the license outlines provisions for recreation management within Project 2188. This project is part of the effort to meet those licensing requirements for recreational use of and improvements placed on the property.

The proposed project is a major upgrade to the existing FAS and includes improvements for a new day use area along with increasing the number of available campsites from an existing 7 to a total of 12 sites. An additional vault latrine will help to keep up with the increased use from additional campsites and the designated day use area. Improved road access with a designated entry/exit to the site will help address any traffic safety concerns. Operation and maintenance will be maintained within the existing regional budget.

Day use and overnight camping at Meadow Lake FAS are very popular with the recreating public and as such places a high maintenance demand on the current site. The high level of use has also resulted in occasional noncompliance with site rules. The addition of more campsites and an official day use parking area and personal watercraft boat access will help alleviate these issues and give the public more opportunity to recreate at this site. This project will improve overall access by creating a day use area that includes a developed trail to the lake. This will ease foot traffic on the existing shoreline and help decrease erosion that will result in maintaining proper fish habitat. The addition of a new dock will allow people to have a more stable area to unload a canoe or fish.

## **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 project 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.

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

Under the Proposed Action, Meadow Lake FAS will have upgraded improvements, including a new day use area, 5 additional campsites, and additional vault latrine and improved road access to improve traffic safety.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT AND FWP RESPONSE**

No public comments were received during the public comment period.

## **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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Proffitt".

Kelly Proffitt  
Region 3 Supervisor