



## STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** June 12, 2023

**Agenda Item:** Somers Beach Development Project

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda:** 15 Minutes

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**Background:** FWP is proposing a second phase of amenity development at Somers Beach State Park in Region 1 based on the completion of a more than year-long public planning process for the site. In October 2021, FWP acquired the 106-acre park on the northwest shore of Flathead Lake. Basic visitor amenities to facilitate public use were installed in 2022 to meet public safety and sanitation needs, delineate state park boundaries, and provide visitor information. Now, FWP proposes to develop additional amenities with the remaining \$2 million appropriated for the project by the 2021 Legislature. The proposed development would enhance shoreline habitat protection, better manage visitor use, provide improved opportunity for day use and nonmotorized watercraft, and add limited overnight accommodations in the form of rustic cabins. Pursuant to 23-1-111, MCA, the Board must approve construction costs over \$50,000.

**Public Involvement Process:** Throughout 2022, FWP conducted an extensive planning process for Somers Beach with public scoping and planning meetings, both virtual and on-site, to inform the development of alternatives for a second round of visitor amenities. These planning efforts culminated in the release of a draft environmental assessment in January 2023 for a 30-day public comment period that ended Feb. 13, 2023. FWP received 202 correspondences via email and through the online portal during the comment period. FWP summarized and responded to the comments in a decision notice issued on April 17, 2023, with a modified final environmental assessment.

**Alternatives & Analysis:**

Alternative A: No Action – FWP would install additional amenities worth no more than \$50,000. This alternative would result in minimal improvement to management of visitor use but would not result in enhanced shoreline habitat protection, improved nonmotorized watercraft opportunity, or limited overnight accommodations.

Alternative B: FWP would complete development of additional amenities at Somers Beach State Park worth up to \$2 million to enhance shoreline habitat protection, better manage visitor use, provide improved opportunity for day use and nonmotorized watercraft, and add limited overnight accommodations.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** FWP recommends the proposed development of additional amenities at Somers Beach worth up to \$2 million to enhance shoreline habitat protection, better manage visitor use, provide improved opportunity for nonmotorized watercraft use, and add three rustic cabins to offer limited overnight accommodations.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the State Parks and Recreation Board approve the expenditure of up to an additional \$2 million for capital development of additional amenities at Somers Beach State Park.