From: Bob Keenan
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Acquisition EA
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 1:02:54 PM

To whom it may concern:

1. I am concerned with the ongoing cost of this new state park. I have spent many hours with FWP management and staff trying to address budget concerns. I was a member of the State Parks Futures II committee under Director Doug Monger (20 years ago?). The funding of state parks is not a new issue and my question is simply; Can we afford to add another park to this underfunded system?

2. I see no mention of seismic activity possibly disturbing the contamination identified in Appendix B. The stability of the plume is mentioned on page 10 (fourth paragraph) of the draft EA but what liability would the State of Montana have should this stability be disturbed?

3. Why will BNSF not allow the building material for the shoreline protection (Appendix D)to be hauled across the exposed lakebed?

4. Why are the Sliters being required to build a road across wetlands when it isn't necessary?

Thank you
Bob Keenan
Senate District 5

Legislators are publicly elected officials. Legislator emails sent or received involving legislative business may be subject to the Right to Know provisions of the Montana Constitution and may be considered a "public record" pursuant to Montana law. As such, email, sent or received, its sender and receiver, and the email contents, may be subject to public disclosure, except as otherwise provided by Montana law.

From: aew333@yahoo.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 3:24:09 PM

Name: Ansley Ford
City: Somers
Dear Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing with a second comment about the north shore beach in Somers. Over the twenty years I have lived in Somers, I have spent countless hours in the Sliters woods and on the beach, cross-country skiing, swimming, and exploring with my children. I so appreciate that the Sliter family has allowed neighbors access to this amazing area, and I think they are very altruistic to consider opening the area as a state park. Not only does our family enjoy the beach itself, but we truly love the surrounding forest and hillside that leads to our home on Breezy Point. We value the flowers, foxes, deer and many birds that make their homes in those woods. We would hate to see that sensitive area disturbed by the development of a state park. If you do go ahead with the development of a state park, I would like to suggest a "nature park" with access being walk-in only. All physilities (parking, restrooms, even a small playground) would be along Somers Road and Pickleville. Patrons would walk into the park down the meadow trail or dirt road and could
pull kayaks or canoes on carts provided by the park. Keeping the park a natural idea would be a unique use of Flathead Lake land and would be an attraction in itself. I would be very happy to assist in the planning. As a long time local educator and naturalist, I have many ideas to share and would love the chance to develop these ideas alongside the Sliter Family and MT Fish, Wildlife and parks.

Thank you so much for considering the unique idea of a walk-in nature park as you work to do what is best with this gem of a place.

Sincerely,

Ansley Ford

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: BJ BOEING
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers beach
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 8:15:57 PM

Stevie, This is a good idea.Boat launch is needed .Somers access over flows with boats in the summer.Camping sites would be real nice also. It would be nice if Sliters would donate the land.Thank you B.
via iPad

From: Brian Kennedy
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers beach acquisition EA
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 10:34:58 PM

To: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed project.

I've been a full-time Flathead County resident since 1978 while owning a business here for 20 years. I choose to remain here during retirement because I love northwest Montana!

My concern with your proposed acquisition of the Sliter family beach property in Somers is the obvious impact on the waterfowl that heavily use the adjacent area during certain times of the year. Protecting waterfowl is why much of the north Flathead Lake shoreline and wetlands is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area. The property on which you intend to create a state park borders this WPA. Developing a state park and attracting more people next to where waterfowl by the thousands rely on a safe and protected environment is highly questionable. And wrong.

I've seen the traffic and people problems on and around this Somers beach escalate in recent years to ridiculous levels for three or four months in the spring. There were 74 vehicles parked along the road and in one parking lot during one weekend day this spring. Campfires at night, illegal use of motorized vehicles and people ignoring the closed waterfowl protection area to the east are all common issues every spring in recent years.

How does creating a state park eliminate the traffic congestion, noise pollution and threats to the waterfowl that are happening now? Your proposal will bring more people to this beach and wetlands area all year while contributing to the overuse problems already occurring. That's a very poor option for the waterfowl and other birds that use the northern shores of Flathead Lake.

Please reconsider making this area a state park.

Thank you.

Brian Kennedy
4200 Columbia Falls Stage Rd.
Columbia Falls

From: Carolanne Stalteri
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Project
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 6:50:27 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

I have several concerns about this proposal...One is for the traffic and horrible roads we already have, and the parking situation in Somers. I live here on Burns street and when there is anything going on at Dels or when there used to be the Vintage art show in the field across from Dels, people parked in your drive way all day,, they even block you in,,,,,,,no consideration for anyone.....as you should realize. Most people care nothing for anyone but themselves...most have no respect. So unless you make this a very small limited amount of people to access this area the impact will be horrible...That north shore since the old buildings have been taken down and gravel put it there,, can be crazy!!! The houses that face it have bullet holes from,,, we presume,,,, drug deals gone bad.... It is crazy already with people trying to get to the lake with their dogs and kids. And when that lot is full then they park in front of our houses. I have seen cars everywhere down there. I am glad I live a block away.

Also the impact on the waterfowl. and wildlife,,,I have deer and bear and raccoons which I love, visit my yard. People will ruin this ecological sanctuary here, and the ambiance of this quiet little town. We already have a park around the corner on the lake,,,2 is unreasonable for us.

This used to be a quiet little community, but in the last couple years, the summers have become a mess down there in that parking lot, which isn't even a legal parking lot. So doing this right if you proceed, so as not to impact the wildlife and town any further is absolutely necessary.

Have some concern for the people who live along the hill, and in this quiet sanctuary. NOT just for the business it will bring and worrying about how few places there are for the MASSES to access the lake,,,find a place where the impact is less critical.I DON'T CARE IF SLITERS DONATED THE PROPERTY OF IF THAT IS THEIR VISION....THEY ARE NOT SOMERS!!!!

It is my opinion that that area should be closed off a let alone. It is the way it should be right now. NO further development.

Sincerely,
Carolanne

Carolanne Stalteri
Artist, Jewelry Designer
POB 325
Somers, MT. 59932
Cell: 406-249-0884

Carolanne Stalteri
Artist, Jewelry Designer
POB 325
Somers, MT. 59932
Cell: 406-249-0884

From: Chris Cassidy
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers beach.
Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 3:09:57 PM

I just read a few of the letters of support for this proposed park...
I wonder how they would feel if they had the speeding,trash, partying and dog feces and off leash dogs if the park was being built in their backyard? Ask the property owners on Somers road and in Somers if they want it... 99% of support is from non Somers residents... the boat launch garbage cans are always overflowing.. and again... I oppose this traffic nightmare... tourists in a hurry to do everything dont slow down... nobody obeys the posted speed limit now.... add n extension of highway 93 thru town... kids live here and ride bikes to school... No no no.
It will only benefit the Sliter family 2.5 million dollars? Anyone going to pay the homeowners property value loss?

From:	Chris Cassidy
To:	Burton, Stevie
Subject:	[EXTERNAL] Strongly opposed to Somers Beach park
Date:	Monday, August 24, 2020 12:27:10 PM

Hello.
My name is Chris Cassidy and I am a homeowner on Somers road across the street from the proposed "park"
This has been a bigger problem every year... the trash, heavy pedestrian use and the thousands of cars daily has been a huge mess..
I strongly oppose this idea... there needs to be a traffic study on our residential street... people do not obey the posted speed limit of 25 miles an hour nor do people care where they park their vehicles...
Somers road is not on a highway like all the other lake access points...
There has to be a traffic impact study before this goes anywhere...
Somers road has become a defacto 93 bypass... and the amount of traffic has gotten out of control.
I agree this proposal should be an outright nature preserve...
Since the high traffic and dog feces/ dogs off leash and high pedestrian use the foxes, coyotes and birds have all but dissapeared...
Please feel free to call me.
There are many residents of SOMERS who strongly oppose this "plan"...
Thank you
Chris Cassidy
406 270 0927

I am an avid outdoor recreationist and a supporter of open space, conservation, wilderness, and public lands since my teenage years. I have lived on the hill overlooking the proposed Somers Beach State Park for nearly 30 years. In the non-summer months, I typically walk the shore or the beach from my back door, 4-5 times a week and I have always been blessed to consider it my backyard. For over 20 years, the only people I would ever see was the occasional Somers townsite resident. The east side of my house, and my deck, overlook the north shore and I have enjoyed years of peaceful sunrise cups of coffee, reading and naps in my hammock, dinners on my deck. My bedroom also has the same aspect, and has been a quiet haven of waves lapping at the shore, moonrise over the mountains, and dark sky with zero light pollution.

Over the past 7-8 years, with the help of Flathead Beacon, word of mouth, and Flathead Valley population growth, the North Shore has become overwhelmingly popular. For the past 2 years in particular, use has become out of control. This spring, I counted back to back weekends of 55 and 73 cars parked in the old substation parking lot and down both sides of North Somers Road. I never went to the beach without a 5 gallon bucket or a large trash bag, and filled them every time. I made many calls to Rob Hirschboeck of USFWS (and Kevin before him) to report mountain bikes, horses, ultralight planes, and loose dogs hazing birds, all trespassing during bird nesting season.

All of us who live on the hill hear everything….car alarms, dogs barking or fighting, babies and toddlers crying, loud adolescents, even voice level conversation as folks walk the newly created path in the field (which used to house fox dens) as the sound carries loudly and directly into our homes. With the recent EPA addition of the gravel bar adjacent to the pond, use has continued all year. Prior to that, when the lake level rose, we could count on peace and quiet again until the following spring.

I anticipate this will indeed become a state park. I had always hoped it would be a conservation easement and managed something like the Owen Sowerwine natural area, or Sam Bibler's greenbelt areas, but after conversations with Andrea Sliter Gouge, and Paul Travis, I have learned otherwise. I agree that something has to be done and the area needs to be managed for toileting, trash, wildlife management, dog control, and overuse.

My greatest concerns are the following:

1) Management of the USFWS area during bird nesting season. This is the time of year of the heaviest use and the majority of users ignore, the albeit very few, closure signs.

2) Planning to minimize impact on the residents adjacent to the park by:
   Creating a wide buffer zone from homes
   Having foot traffic only with reasonable daytime usage similar to Lone Pine, 8 a.m. to sunset.
   Ideally, leaving the area undeveloped (with the exception of vault toilets and trash bins).

There has been talk of both a non-motorized boat launch and a campground. I was assured by Andrea Sliter's husband that a boat launch would be placed as far east as possible, and I hope this would be the case, perhaps with closures during bird nesting season. A campground would be devastating, allowing for extended periods of noise, and creating light pollution.

Like most of us on the hill, I have worked hard (and continue to do so) to pay for my home here and would like to stay. I do believe a park will devalue my property, and a campground would be cause for moving from a place I have lived for half my life and deeply love.

Sincerely,
Denise Davies
113 Pavillion Hill/POBox 186

From: fredtil@yahoo.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2020 10:23:55 AM

Name: Fred Tilly
City: Arlee
We certainly need better access to the lake for the public. I would like to see the site stay open all year, unlike the upgraded access area on Finley Point which is closed in winter. Ice fishermen need a way to access the lake and locations are very limited.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Jim Lynch
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FWP Somers Beach Project.
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 12:46:38 PM

Dear Stevie Burton, Jim Williams and FWP Board.

I support this project. The State Park will be a worthy addition to State Parks in Montana.

Do not forget FWP has funding from the Montana Department of Transportation at for roads and infrastructure improvements, statutorily set aside to be used only by FWP for State Park projects.

This is FWP's share of the gas tax collected from boater gas purchases statewide.

Great Project. Keep moving forward.
Jim Lynch
Bigfork, MT.

From: jonathan.fv@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 12:37:17 PM

Name: Jonathan Fetter-Vorm
City: Somers
I am a Somers resident who has been using that access for many years and I am in favor of turning into a public park with year-long access.

My only reservation is with proposed campsites. This section of land has long been a wildlife corridor (I've seen black bears, griz, deer, and elk pass through). Overnight camping will disrupt the wildlife that passes through to the federal land on the east side of the site. Aside from this, overnight camping will introduce light pollution, noise, and fire risk into an area that is still relatively wild.

I encourage the state to consider a day-use area, or if campsites are inevitable, that they be clustered on the north edge of the land, closer to the road and therefore less disruptive to the existing landscape/wildlife habitat.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Jules Howard
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers bay
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 12:05:45 PM

To Steve Burton:
I'm writing on the update about the purchase and creation of a new State Park in Sommers.
This is great news! My family and I have enjoyed this area (Thank you Sliters) for many years.
I think this is a brilliant idea and gladly support its acquisition and maintenance with our tax dollars!
Thank you,
Julie Howard
Bigfork
59911
Sent from my iPhone

From: maxwell.katherine@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 5:38:08 PM

We are 33 year residents of Somers, and living on Pikes Peak, uphill neighbors of the proposed State Park. Our children have grown up playing on the beach. We have appreciated the informal access given by the owners to local residents.

Over recent years the beach has been discovered - and even publicized - as a recreation area. Generally, we like seeing families enjoying the area, but there are those that cause problems - noisy parties late into the night, the burning of the tree stumps - natural sculptures we enjoy seeing, trash, motorized vehicles tearing up and down the beach. We are particularly affected by the noise which is amplified by geography.

The area is well used by wildlife and we are also concerned at the impact on the birds and animals who share the proposed state park. This last spring was the first year that there was any attempt to enforce the closure of the beach during nesting season.

We support public access. But a state park goes too far. Ours is a small town with narrow winding streets, and we don't want or need even more visitors. Development of a state park - ugly paved parking lots, toilet blocks, and picnic tables will destroy the natural beauty of the area. Keeping the development very small would mitigate our concerns. Day use only. No motorized boats or vehicles. No camping - noisy generators do not belong in a residential neighborhood. No fires. Dogs leashed. Enforcement of the closed area during nesting season.

The area is not suited to year round use as a state park should be. The spring beach season is only two months long, and it coincides with nesting season. When the lake is at full pool, all summer, there is no beach at all; no sand, no pebbles, just a grassy access to a very shallow lake. It does not seem good use of state resources to develop an access that would only be used for two months a year.

Please keep in mind the people of Somers when making decisions that affect a quiet town that has existed here for over a century.

Thanks, Katherine & Lee Maxwell

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Kathryn Schlapfer
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 12:59:22 PM

Hi,
Regarding the EIS.. section 6a.
Noise pollutants: my experience , living on Pavillion Hill Avenue, is that with the prevailing winds we hear everything that goes on down below. This impacts us now and I imagine it would even more if there is a lot of public use.
I would recommend day use only and keeping all human activity to the east of the BNSF " swamp pond". Please vacate/ close off the foot path across BNSF/ Sliter's land that is currently used to get to the beach. Keep park activity to the East of the swamp pond.
Thank you,

Kate Schlapfer
151 Pavillion Hill Ave
Somers

From:	hillhiker2020mt@yahoo.com
To:	Burton, Stevie
Subject:	Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date:	Monday, August 31, 2020 11:41:19 AM

I was excited about this proposed new state park until I read the public comments of those who oppose it, for good reasons. I hope the park can still happen, but also hope you will work thoughtfully with the neighbors who are concerned about noise, litter and vandalism. This summer in the Flathead has demonstrated the results of too many people impacting our natural areas. This new park will require careful management.

The park should be day-use only.

Sincerely,

Laura Behenna
Kalispell

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Mark Manning
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Project
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 10:44:04 PM

To whom it may concern

We love that Somers Beach feels wild and is a wild place. It's always full of bird life and we've seen tracks from all kinds of wildlife there. We know we share this love of a wild Somers Beach with our neighbors and other visitors because we talk about it with them. We love that Somers is dark at night. We love that you have to walk a bit of distance to get to the the beach (not *everything* has to be a 'drive-up' or drive-thru' these days), and that you have to come prepared because there's little shelter. Like all wild places, it's a place that teaches you be prepared. We would love to see a "Somer Beach" state park design that keeps this unique and undeveloped place wild by keeping parking (gravel and not paved) well away from the lake shore. Gravel pathways and low profile bathrooms hidden with landscaping and plantings would also minimize impact . In other words, we would love to see a "Somers Beach" state park design that maintains the flavor of the experience that visitors have been finding there for there for many decades. We believe nearly everyone that cherishes this unique place currently, if asked, would feel the same.
We know there is concern in the Somers community that a "Somers Beach" state park will bring traffic, noise, light pollution and unsightly development and we are also concerned about these possibilities. In general, Somers is a small community that has seen, and would like to see, little change. The proposed, "Somers Beach" state park sits right at the edge of the community and has the capacity to impact it greatly if respect is not given. For example, a limited parking area and closing the park after dark would be design actions that would be respectful of the neighboring community; limitations that would go hand in hand with maintaining a wild feeling we are seeing less and less of these days in the Flathead valley. Limiting "Somers Beach" state park users would also go a long way to protect the North Shore Waterfowl Production Area from being trespassed on when that area is closed.

Thank you,
Mark Manning and Liv Ensign
Somers residents

Aug. 31, 2020

To: DAVE LANDSTROM
REGION 1 PARKS MANAGER
KALISPELL. MT.

I am a waterfowl sportsman of fifty five years. and upon my return from service in Vietnam in 1971, I discovered the Federal waterfowl Production area of the North shore of Flathead lake. That was a great purchase. I and many of hunters have use the F.W.P.A. on the North Shore of the lake

I am all in favor for the States acquisition of the Sliters' propaty. at Somers Beach.

But I am also concerned about how that acquisition would effect the waterfowl and Brid hunting on and along the F.W.P.A.?

Sincerely Mike R. Noziska

PH: 755-7965

Michael R. Noziska
336 E. California St.
Kalispell, MT 59901

From: Michele Neal
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Acquisition EA
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 12:40:25 PM

Somers Beach Acquisition EA

MT Fish, Wildlife &Parks
490 N Meridian
Kalispell, MT 59901

Stevie Burton,

Thanks for taking input from the community again and I hope that members of the Somers community can continue to have some input as the project begins it's initial phase in determining if a State Park moves forward. I do understand that protecting the area from big development is important for the lake.

I only assume that most property owners along the West Bank above the proposed project and adjacent property owners on the west shoreline are disappointed that this could become a state park. This past spring made us totally aware of the disturbances that we will encounter if the proposed site becomes a state park.
In previous years it was tolerable as only a few families came down in the Spring. After the newspaper article it blew up 100% for traffic. Obviously COVID restrictions/closings, didn't help the situation either as everyone was trying to get outdoors.

It truly is an amazing space in the spring and I understand people/families wanting to come down even though it was private property. Because the Sliter family has not enforced the trespassing has led to all possible entrances to sandy beach area. One being the county access at end of Breezy Pt. On a beautiful day numerous folks would walk down and cross three private properties to get to sandy beach. Most not understating they were trespassing with confusion over river high water rights and lake low water rights. Personally I was attacked verbally when I nicely pointed out that they must walk straight out to water and then crossing over through low water mark from the county access area. Additionally there were so many people down at sandy beach that social distancing brought people onto our properties from the East. Planting themselves down right in front of our homes. Experiencing a bit of solitude was lost to the property owners to say the least.

The purpose of Lakeshore protection regulations is to conserve and protect the value of the lakeshore property. There are numerous reasons with in these regulations that need to be addressed. Dogs will need to be leashed. Numerous dogs have run through my property and their owners then trespassing to fetch them. With also chasing of the bird wildlife. Dog poop has to picked up as it diminishes water quality. No campfires as there is no burning on lakebed or shore as per Lakeshore Protections. Day use only per public nuisance and visual impact. Sound carries along the water and beach area. With people drinking it becomes a huge issue with late night noise. Just during the day time is bad enough. But if people continue into late evening it will be to much. Again the property owners have lost any solitude we had.

My opinions of what should be allowed or disallowed to make me feel better about project would be:
There should be non motorized access only, including dirt bikes and jet skis should not be rented over at the state park. Signage of ground water contamination and possible risk of creosote problem/risk should be posted. Families should have the information to determine the risks. Signage to prevent trespassing onto private property. Adequate personal to manage the park from trespassing on private property and bird protection area, and protect boater and swimmers from them not understanding changing lake conditions. It is the shallows but people will be kayaking out to hog island and huge waves come in quickly and will put people and kids at risk.

The area should be closed off completely until state park completes initial phase. This would be to control the disturbances until staff is in place to enforce regulations and unmanaged access. Not looking forward to another year or so of the completely out of control scenario we experienced this past spring.

Michele Neal
325 Breezy Point
Somers, Mt 59932
mkunga@gmail.com

Sent from my iPad

From: Morey Grove
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on the Public Park at Sandy Beach in Somers.
Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 8:43:27 AM

Mr. Burton,

I am Morey D. Grove, who resided in Somers 1946 – 2005, thus have an interest in the proposed Somers Public Park in the local area called Sandy Beach.

My comments below.

Are a follow up on the comments I sent March 30, 2020, to the net site - Somers Beach Acquisition EA; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; 490 N. Meridian Road; Kalispell, Mt.

My then access to Montana Cadastral net site for Flathead County, under the name of Sliter, I got a full page colored map of the Somers area.

This map shows – locates the three colored land tracts in the proposed Public Park.

All three tracts have a permanent underground “floating layer of creo” that flows north in the Spring as the level of the Lake rises and flows south in the Fall as the Lake level lowers.

This “floating layer of creo " came from years of the Somer’s Rail Road Tie Treating Plant disposing of liquid “creo” waste into tie crib vats for soakage into the ground. These “vats” were located in the little white triangle on the right side of the top EPA brown colored land tract.

A small creek, the locals called “Cero Creek,” flowed from these “vats” towards the lake.

The two EPA controlled land tracts.

EPA controls access to the two brown colored land tracts on this map, the boundaries for each land tract is defined by a red line.

The top square land track.

Is at the top of the map, is a square brown colored EPA land tract, that is to be fenced off, thus denying current public use as a parking lot by parties who then walk to the beach area.

With the loss of the current access to the proposed public park,

the next available replacement Sliter land tract for access to the proposed beach area is the white colored land tract that is on the south side of Somers Road before it does a 90 degree turn to the north.

On the top right side of this square land tract, is a small “V” extension to this land tract. The left side of this extension is a very small dark line that is the Somers Road.

On the east side of the Somers Road, I recall six Somers homes were located there. Due to the “Creo” under these homes, BN Railroad purchased these the homes and lots they were on from the respective owners, had the homes demoed, the debris deposed of.

Currently in the area south of those six homes, a series of wells, have been drilled down to this floating layer of “Creo.” In the summer, these wells are being pumped, in an effort to reduce - remove this floating layer of “Creo.”

But a problem with “Creo” contamination still exists.

In the top of this EPA brown colored square land tract, on the tract’s left side, is a slanted land tract. At the bottom of this slanted land tract boundary, is a portion of the old Sandy Beach access road.

On the east side of this road, is the area where a former slaughterhouse was located, that was owned and operated by a Somers Meat Retailer.

“Creo sludge” from the Somers Tie Plant was dumped there late August in the mid 1950 era and was burned. The black smoke plume was visible for miles.

This burn area is presently covered with gravel, thus the actual burn area is not visible.

The pending installation of the EPA boundary fence for this “creo contamination site” will determine the location of this gravel covered “creo sludge burn site.”

This graveled over area could be located all within the EPA land tract and could extend onto the Sliter land.

Mr. Roger Hooterhide and longtime Somers farmer – rancher who

is now retired. Mr. Francis VanRinsum and Mr. Hooterhide, have met and together have inspected this gravel covered area “creo sludge burn area.”

Mr. Roger Hooterhide was the current contact person when I wrote the enclosed pages on the EPA Somers Tie Plant Clean Up Contact Person. His phone number is 406 - 457 – 5031.

Frances VanRinsum, a lifetime Somers resident, saw the burning of this “creo sludge,” thus is knowledgeable and interested about this “creo sludge” burn area.

Yet EPA has not “officially issued an acknowledgment” on the existence of this creo sludge burn area.

I suggest you make a Formal Request to Mr. Roger Hooterhide, requesting him to inform EPA Officials on the existence of this “Creo sludge” burn area, and have EPA start its removal.

The brown colored rectangular land track.

A few years ago, near the spring low lake level, this floating layer of “creo” surfaced, which required EPA action to remove. Thus the reason for the red outline and pending area will be fenced in.

The Sliter owned land tract.

Is defined by a red line and has white and green - gray colored areas.

Being the white colored area borders the Somers Road, it can become the new access site for the proposed Somers Beach state park.

Only the top half of the green – gray colored area will provide safe and easy access for the enjoyment of the shoreline.

The bottom half of the green – gray area contains a red outlined rectangular tract that the EPA controls. It was in this tract where the above mentioned floating “Creo” surfaced, was discovered and removed. This area, controlled by the EPA, is to be fenced off, thus preventing public access.

NOTE:

I assume you have or can obtain a copy of that map I mentioned in my above comments.

The end of my comments, this early morning, 24 August, 2020.

Questions – comments welcomed.

My phone number is 406 885 0301.

My E address is morey353@gmail.com

Respectfully,

Morey D. Grove

Kalispell, Mt.

[RA1]

From: Phil
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Recreation area
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 4:22:20 PM

Sirs;

As a child growing up in Somers a few hundred yards from this beach, I can only fully endorse its opening to the public and development as a public land. As a kid, many hours were spent playing in the north shore storm waves and building castles in the sand. I cannot deny the upcoming generations the marvelous entertainment one can have playing on this beach.

The only negative caveat I can think of in regard to anything bad on this beach is the possibility of miss-informed people thinking the rainbow sheen seen at times on the sand, is oil pollution left over from the old tie plant. This isn't true. The sheen is from decomposing iron in the sand particles and is a totally natural, non harmful process.

Sandy Beach holds great memories for me. I would love to see it passed down to the future.

Phil Lauman
2311 Merganser Drive
Kalispell, MT 59901

From: mt s
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed Lakeside Public Access State Park in Somers
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 9:42:57 AM

To Stevie Burton,

We would love to see another beach on Flathead Lake, especially in Somers.

Our family had been visiting the little beach next to the boat launch for years up until two or three summers ago. About that time we became totally disgusted with the public garbage dump that the nice little strip beach had become. There are posted rules at the site, but they were not paid attention to by the public. I understand that our world is becoming less literate. Luckily none of our family became injured or poisoned (a nice crop of poisonous nightshade berries) at that site. On one occasion I spoke to an inattentive parent whose child was picking the poisonous berries and was promptly told to mind my own 'f°#*ing business'. As for dogs, cigarette butts, human excrement, fans and bottles, etc. apparently we, the public, cannot 'police' ourselves anymore. The beach was once a nice stop to cool our feet on our way home from Missoula or points south. We stopped visiting there and now on our travels, we wave bye-bye to the little beach we enjoyed so much as we pass through Somers.

Perhaps, if due diligence is truly done, a recreational site can be maintained and patrolled so that it can be enjoyed. Perhaps ample parking for non-boating visitors can be there, as well as sufficient restrooms and garbage disposal units for the public's use. Perhaps a fee can be charged to enter a parking lot to access this park. Perhaps the fee could be helpful in paying for the strict supervision that will be required to maintain such a nice place to visit on the lake. Perhaps that could extend to the current strip beach in Somers.

As for the ' advertising real estate' that exists in Somers Bay, can anything be done with those houseboat ads?

Thank you for allowing our comments.

Skeeter Johnston
Whitefish, MT

MATTHEW J. JONES
Executive Director
Public Affairs
Montana, Wyoming and Idaho

BNSF Railway Company
800 North Last Chance Gulch,
Suite 101
Helena, Montana 59601-3351

Phone 406-256-4047
matthew.jones@bnsf.com

September 10, 2020

Sent via electronic mail

Somers Beach Acquisition EA
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
Stevie.Burton@mt.gov

Re: Comments on draft Environmental Assessment for MT FWP's proposed acquisition of property from the Sliters Family in Somers, Montana

Dear Ms. Burton,

BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) appreciates the opportunity to review the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' (MT FWP) proposed acquisition of real property in Somers, Montana. We understand that a separate environmental review will be conducted for any proposed development on the property and that we will have further opportunity for comment once a development plan has been prepared and its environmental impacts evaluated.

BNSF and affiliated companies own real property surrounding and within the area targeted for acquisition by MT FWP. From the early 1900s through approximately the early 1980s, a BNSF predecessor operated a tie plant from uplands property in Somers and a timber company had operations on portions of property MT FWP now seeks to acquire. BNSF has long been engaged in investigation and remediation of historic environmental impacts from its predecessor's tie plant operations. Those efforts are and have been under the direction and oversight of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. In addition to BNSF's uplands remediation efforts, there has also been significant restoration work in the area of a pond on BNSF property fronting the lake and the lakebed itself in this area.

At pages 10 - 11 and 21 - 22, the EA discusses some of BNSF's efforts to investigate, remediate and restore upland and wetland areas and potential risks associated with encouraging additional public use of these areas. The EA does not appear to mention the beach area that BNSF investigated below ordinary high water. The pond and beach area is addressed in EPA's Record of Decision and BNSF can provide MT FWP with additional information. The EA would benefit from additional discussion on viable alternatives away from this area (which includes a restored wetland) and the possible impacts additional public use of this area may have on the habitat and the EPA approved remedy.

BNSF has long been a staunch supporter of an established public access area with lake access along the Northshore in Somers. BNSF's support, however, has been tempered by a desire to support public access in a way that balances prior wetland/wildlife restoration efforts in this area, recreational values, and the environmental remedies in place at the Somers Tie Plant Site. To that end, BNSF participated in numerous discussions with public access proponents including the Sliters, the Flathead Land Trust, and MT FWP and were clear that BNSF could not support an access plan that could potentially compromise the habitat or remedy in and around the swamp pond area. The public access proposal developed from those consultations and referenced in BNSF's 2019 letter of support for the project, however, appear to have been abandoned by MT FWP in favor of a development designed to attract a much greater volume of traffic and to direct that traffic to areas immediately adjacent to the prior wetland/wildlife restoration area on the BNSF lakefront property. BNSF hopes to work together with MT FWP in reconsidering proposed development for the property in a way that more appropriately balances wildlife values with recreational values.

Sincerely,

Matthew Jones
BNSF Railway

From: Sue Snyder
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concerning Somers Beach State Park proposal
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 5:59:54 AM

Steve, and to whom it may concern:
As a 25 yr. resident of Somers, 23 of which has been on present sanctuary land, I am very concerned of the impact in multiple areas, including the Wildlife corridor that has traditionally frequented this proposed acreage. Seasonal migration of black bear (and others), daily use of deer, rodents, raptors, waterfowl, coyote, fox, beaver, muskrat, etc. rely on this stretch to follow thru, having crossed thru the Waterfowl protected lands from the east.
(Just this week BNSF hired Mild Fence Co., who installed a 6' chain link fence surrounding their properties (kudos that they had the consideration to install black, vs. annoying shiny, metal). This fence cannot be jumped by deer, and they may stress trying to figure way out.)
Also of Major concern is the impact of increasing traffic on our small, narrow roads. Especially Somers Rd. (Pg. 23 refers to additional parking on Somers Rd., and "Burnsville"/ which doesn't exist). Parking off road in dry grass is another fire hazard we cannot accept. Plus the inconsiderate smokers that flick butts out windows, and as they walk paths... etc. Careless drivers has become an increasing problem on Somers Rd., especially after BNSF condemned/removed the houses in the Pickleville area. Blind curves, narrow roads, frequented by folks, kids, dog walkers, bike riders, etc. Then when lake water level is low, parking overflows along the streets, making for hazardous conditions... I've noticed in Lakeside, the folks living on Old 93, near boat launch, have had so much trouble with speeders bypassing thru their area that they have resorted to installing speed bumps, writing Slow Down on the pavement, etc. The new Volunteer Park has brought A LOT of extra traffic, noise, litter, misuse, headache/heartache for many locals. We cannot have speed bumps on Somers Rd. to control inconsiderate mayhem, drunk drivers, testosterone...
Fires are a constant threat, and could wipe our quaint town out in a flash. Our Volunteer Fire Dept. is short staffed, over burdened, and access with overcrowded parking... well, you get the picture.

This proposed State Park site is in a flood plain, on monitored EPA test well acreage, with Minimum disturbance to soils allowed. IF this purchase takes place, I HIGHLY suggest it be DAY USE ONLY! A parking area away from our homes and scenic lake views, vault latrine or port-a-pots. Possible Host Campsite, fencing and proper signage. No Alcohol/No Fires/No Fireworks! Adequate trash containers, emptied daily. An access path to carry non-motorized watercraft that cannot be abused by 4-wheeler/dirtbike/snowmobile, which has become increasingly problematic.
Light/night sky pollution is another concern. So many concerns...
If Sliters wants this legacy, keep it on Their land, away from our peace of mind, and considerate of all who love the peace and quiet, precious open space, respect for one another. Keep the RV/generator campsites out of the equation.
There is NO WAY a camp host will be able to control misuse and Trespass of closed Waterfowl Lands during low level, and I doubt there will be a host camped year round, thru winter.
This will not alleviate the overcrowding elsewhere, it will only bring more. The swim beach next to the boat launch (around the corner on 93) has boat trailer people parking in the swim beach parking area, and no one polices that. I witnessed a boat hauler take a side mirror out, passing a small car parked. Boat haulers should not be towing thru that lot. And the lane should be widened enough to park all along it, as people do it anyways.

SO MUCH to consider, don't rush into it, PLEASE. ThankYou

Scarecrow Sue :)
Have A Ravens' Way Kinda Day !

From: tibian20@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 8:55:53 AM

Name:
City:
This project has the potential to be a tremendous community asset. However, it will take pro-active management to integrate this new use into the current landscape. It sounds like recent users have not always been respectful of the beach or the neighbors, and that has to be enforced, especially early on. Perhaps the project could be approached in phases, where public access is contingent on appropriate use, and the more intensive uses (e.g. camping etc.) could be considered 10 or 20 years down the road, depending on previous impact to the beach and neighborhood.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Vicki
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers proposal
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 3:02:16 PM

Hi Stevie,

I am writing in support of developing the Somers shoreline access project. I used to live in Somers and walk to the lakefront occasionally. I think the area is perfect for NON-motorized watercraft launching, playground, day-use/picnics most of all. I am unsure if there is room to have camping there, but if so, a few sites would be nice since there is not enough camping to handle the summer tourists close to town. I recommend there be an outside shower and flush toilets available for beachgoers. I do not know if 'swimmers itch' is an issue there now, but where birds go, that itch also can be a problem, and showering off after swimming is required.

Thank you for all you do!
Vicki Gockenbach

From: adriennedmaxwell@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 4:17:47 PM

Name: Adrienne Maxwell
City:
I am writing to support the creation of a new state park on Somers Beach. I had the privilege to grow up in the Somers townsite, and spent all seasons down on the beach, skating and skiing in the winter, constructing elaborate castles and waterways out of sand, and swimming out to the island. I hope that a state park will facilitate these low-impact activities and allow families to enjoy this beautiful place as I have. I would not support the addition or facilitation of higher impact activities, like motorized watercraft and overnight generator use. This area is quiet and wild - a paradise on the North Shore, and I am confident that a state park can allow continued recreation in this area in a way that preserves that character.

Thank you for taking my comments!

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From:	Amy McCormmach
To:	Burton, Stevie
Subject:	[EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Public Comment
Date:	Wednesday, August 26, 2020 12:00:39 PM

This a much-needed access point to a Montana treasure. In Oregon, the entire coastline is public, so it was a shock when I moved to Bigfork a few years ago to find access to lake was so limited! And because demand far exceeds the supply, especially during tourist season, many of the sites that do exist are often beyond capacity with overflow parking and pedestrian traffic into busy 93.

I don't think overnight camping is a good idea for the neighborhood, we really don't need it to become a draw for more tourists, but more as a relief for the current access sites. I'd love to see adequate parking, trash receptacles, basic core access be the priority. Maybe some reserved parking spots for those who volunteer at the park or local residents? I'd also love to see reservable horse trailer parking spots, riding on the north shore has been a favorite NW MT experience!

Would love for MT or Flathead Co. To make acquiring land for additional parks around the lake to it's more of community asset, less something that is only accessible to private landowners. Two more 20acre parcels are currently for sale along the North Shore.

https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/320-Holt-Dr-Bigfork-MT-59911/2111581232_zpid/?utm_campaign=androidappmessage&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=txtshare [zillow.com]

From: annrpescott22@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2020 1:20:56 PM

Name: Ann Prescott
City: Gallatin Gateway
As visitors to Flathead Lake additional State Park we know more public access is ideal. Upon our first visit, a few years ago, we were surprised that there was not more public access on Montana's most beautiful lake. Additional access and State Park is nothing short of a win for ALL! Thank you Montana FWP & Sliter family for making this happen!!

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Annette Marsh
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Park
Date: Monday, August 17, 2020 4:59:39 PM

This is a wonderful idea. Yes, do it.

Annette Marsh

From: bovenga2@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 9:33:03 AM

Name: April Boveng
City: Kalispell
I am very excited about the acquisition of this beautiful space for conservation and public access. I sincerely hope the area will be kept undeveloped in most ways, remaining a day use area. Walking paths, benches and restrooms will allow access to a beautiful area in its most wild state, preserving the integrity of the land and habitat. I would hate to see this space paved, with large recreation vehicles, boat access and camping. While those types of spaces are necessary, we have them in our other parks on the lake. This space currently is home to so many birds; it is a special habitat and our privilege to be able to enjoy it, rather than alter it.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: B bradford-fenchak
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Sliter property aquisition
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 1:20:09 PM

This is a win /win proposition for local residents, tourists and protection of a unique ecosystem. Hope nothing stops this from happening. Tham you, B. Bradford Fenchak

From: proctor.mt@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2020 12:57:27 PM

Name: Barry Chandler
City: Proctor
WONDERFUL, and a great use of the publics resources!

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: otisranch@wispwest.net
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Saturday, August 15, 2020 8:24:38 AM

Name: Bert Otis
City: Emigrant
Dear Fish Wildlife & Parks Commission,
I support the Somers Beach Acquisition and would like to Thank the family for offering it to the public. It sounds like they have shared this property with the public already, and it's time they got paid for that, and now it's time for the public to manage it. I'm sure the FWP will come up with a plan to benefit everyone not just the people that know they can use it. Speaking of that, I own property next to a FAS and don't have any problems with the public trespassing onto my property. The FWP have great signs and clean up the area probably better then I do.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Beth Kornick
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FWP Proposed Purchase along North Shore of Flathead Lake
Date: Monday, August 17, 2020 1:02:00 PM

I am writing in support of the purchase of 106 acres along the North Shore of Flathead Lake. As a residence of Somers, I know there is a huge need for more public access to our wonderful lake, but I also trust that FWP will be diligent in their stewardship.

Thank you!
Beth Kornick

From: bl_mitchell@hotmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Sunday, August 30, 2020 8:26:03 AM

Name:
City:
Increased conservation of Flathead Valley open space lands and enhanced options for public access is needed for the area. This project would conserve open space for fish and wildlife, and improve opportunities for public access. Improved access for beach use and launching non-motorized watercraft is needed at Flathead Lake. The project would also benefit the local and State economies while improving the quality of life for local residents and for visitors.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Bpascucci411@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 12:21:33 PM

Name: Bonnie Pascut
City: Stevensville
Please do this!

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Brian Schott
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] excellent idea
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 7:08:05 AM

Good news to see the consideration to purchase 106 acres along North Shore of Flathead Lake for new State Park I applaud that initiative.

Brian Schott
708 Lupfer Ave
Whitefish, MT 59937

From: Brittney Rutherford
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach
Date: Monday, September 14, 2020 1:28:18 PM

Hi there- I am emailing in regards to Somers Beach Access. I believe it would be an added benefit to the entire Flathead area if this was made available to everyone as a safe enjoyable place to enjoy the beach throughout the season. Safe beach access is my vote!

Thank you,
Brittney

--
Brittney Rutherford
M|406-314-7788
P|406-837-5472
E|brittney@sleepeatdrink.com

14729 Shore Acres Drive
Bigfork,Montana 59911

From: calebruns@hotmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 8:43:44 PM

Name:
City: Somers
Please keep it SIMPLE. Like, foot access. Not an RV park, PLEASE. Keep it accessible for the local community (ie free); people in Somers are already poor, don't make them pay.
Please have some reasonable reinforcement of having DOGS leashed and being sure people pick up DOG poop. If were up to me, I'd ask for NO dogs, particularly as it is still a bird habitat.
In 10 years, this area will certainly be a hot spot for wind sports (kite boarding, kite surfing). There should be some degree of foresight into how these sports may infringe on the access of those who are not participating in these sports (think Hood River).
Please no food vendors or anything resembling that.
I am so happy this special place will be protected and managed rather than shut down due to popularity and the inevitable subsequent land abuse.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Carly Williams
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach
Date: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 8:52:14 AM

I highly support the plans by the Sliter family and FWP for this property. To preserve this area for public use and continued protection/enhancement of birding areas is extremely important.
Carly Williams
Bigfork, MT

From: Carol McCrum
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: failure notice
Date: Saturday, August 29, 2020 1:00:35 PM

---------- Forwarded message ----------

From: MAILER-DAEMON@osiris.accessmontana.com
Date: Wed Aug 26 21:09:21 MDT 2020
Subject: failure notice
To: mcnik.6@ronan.net;

Hi. This is the qmail-send program at osiris.accessmontana.com [osiris.accessmontana.com].
I'm afraid I wasn't able to deliver your message to the following addresses.
This is a permanent error; I've given up. Sorry it didn't work out.

:
Remote host 205.220.172.42 [205.220.172.42] does not like recipient steve.burton@mt.gov
Remote host said: 550 5.1.1 User Unknown

--- Below this line is a copy of the message.

I totally support acquiring the 106 acres to the east of Somers for the creation of a new state park. This project is a rare chance to provide more public access

to Flathead Lake which is sorely needed.

This would also protect this special place from future private development, conserve the wetlands and bird habitat.

Thank you to the Sliter family for possibly making this become a reality.

Carol McCrum mcnik.6@ronan.net

From: cea635@aol.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2020 7:10:41 AM

Name: Carolyn Abbott
City: Missoula
Yes, please develop this as a public park. All my adult life I've felt like there needs to be more managed public access to beautiful Flathead Lake.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: carriegiordano@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 3:45:01 PM

Dear Ms. Burton,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed acquisition of the property from Sliters to establish a state park on the north shore of Flathead Lake.

Carrie Eklund
177 School Addition Rd, Somers

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: pcsaunders@montanasky.net
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 9:05:46 PM

Name: Cary Saunders
City: Kalispell
This is wonderful news! Good job FW&P for creating more public access to Flathead lake with Montana State parks!!!! Thank you for looking after Montana's lands, water and citizens' health with more park opportunities to play outdoors.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: mooseages@hotmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 8:15:46 AM

Name: Char Milne
City: Columbia Falls
I agree that keeping this site open to the public would help ease congestion at other sites. I am for this project!

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

August 20, 2020

RE. Somers Beach Acquisition

Yes - By all means - Do make a Public Park on this property! It is a beautiful spot.

Charlene Tucker

Charlene Tucker
29 E. Nicklaus Ave.
Kalispell, MT 59901

From: Claude Boiteau
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Acquisition EA
Date: Monday, September 14, 2020 3:27:35 PM

Good Afternoon Stevie,

I apologize for the lateness of this comment submission, I realize the comment period is closed. While not redeemable as an official comment, I hope that my thoughts can at least offer anecdotal support for the Somers Beach acquisition as described.

I feel that the potential benefit of this acquisition exceeds that of simply allowing for increased access to Flathead Lake. The location of the parcel, and the seasonally changing beach characteristics offer the potential for a truly unique year round access. I strongly encourage Montana FWP to consider the greater economic value to the local community of the proposed access. If accepted, the opportunity exists to further expand on this potential value. The incorporation of recreational trails should be considered, and could bolster the benefit and quantity of recreational opportunities. It is my opinion that the department should consider the incorporation of rustic recreational lodging amenities such as yurts, operated as part of the network of cabins and fire lookouts.

The Somers Beach acquisition offers a unique opportunity to vastly expand the stable of year round recreational amenities on Flathead Lake. I strongly support FWP aggressively pursuing and creatively developing this donation for the personal enjoyment and economical benefit of the greater Flathead Valley.

Thank you for the opportunity to lend my support.
Cheers,

Claude Boiteau
406.249.6870
3550 W 38th Ave, Apt 423
Denver, CO 80211
AND
13931 Sylvan Dr.
Bigfork, MT 59911

From: Cleo Gorton
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Sliter property
Date: Friday, August 21, 2020 7:04:56 AM

My husband and I are Kalispell residents and have bern for 62 and 67 years. We are 100% in favor of buying this property for public use.
Flathead lake is a jewel and should be protected and enjoyed by all of us, not just millionaires that can afford property on it. This would be wonderful for families to enjoy the lake as we have done our whole lives.
Thank you
Cleo and Brad Gorton
Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android [go.onelink.me]

From: Dave Fern
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers/Flathead Lake State Park
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 7:53:03 AM

This is Dave Fern, legislator in the Montana House, HD5, Whitefish. This is an amazing opportunity to address the shortage of public access points on Flathead Lake. The purchase of this land along with the adjoining BN land is a very rare opportunity to add to the limited inventory of public lands upon the Lake. There's absolutely no down side to this decision. Let's move forward on this purchase. Let's honor the Sliter family, lets act for our future generations and do the right thing! I'm a YES for more public land on Flathead Lake and the our beautiful North Shore.

Thanks,
Dave Fern
211 Dakota Ave.
Whitefish, MT
212-0674

From: Dave Harvey
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] State park at Somers
Date: Monday, August 17, 2020 7:53:15 PM

My name is David Harvey. I have lived in the Somers area for over 30 years, and now reside in Kalispell. I've Always thought what a shame it was that so much of our beautiful lake had such a limited amount of public access. Lots of folks don't have the benefit of having a boat to enjoy the lake. It would be a shame if we let this opportunity pass without action. We will have few, if anymore opportunity to secure more land for the public in the future. I'm older, and have enjoyed Montana's public lands all my life, but we need to do this for our kids and grandchildren, and future generations. I would encourage you to embrace this rare opportunity.
Thank you!

Sent from my iPad

From: David Schultz
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach - FWP acquistion
Date: Monday, September 14, 2020 7:18:55 PM

I'm in strong favor of the acquisition of the Somers Beach access for the public.

Dave Schultz
Kalispell, MT 59901

From: flatheadmt@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2020 4:29:54 PM

Name: David Cummings
City: Kalispell, MT
Dear FWP,

The Sliter family have given FWP (and the public) a golden opportunity to acquire land for a new state park on Flathead Lake through the Somers Beach Acquisition. The Environmental Assessment is thorough, comprehensive, and addresses the majority of concerns in the negative public feedback. The remaining concerns that cannot be addressed - mostly ?not in my back yard? concerns - can only fully be addressed if said neighbors are willing to purchase the adjoining property and do what they individually want. You likely realize that this is the nature of private property ownership and that it simply isn?t possible to please all of the people all of the time.

However, the benefits of the SBA would be great and long term. As a nearly 40-year resident of the Flathead Valley I have seen the population grow while the number of our public recreation sites have remained largely unchanged. Current sites see high use and little can be done to address such high pressure except to expand or acquire new properties.

I was also pleased to see the state?s support of SBA as a buffer for the existing North Shore WPA. As a resident who has enjoyed hunting the north shore, I too would appreciate such a buffer to further protect the North Shore WPA. Appropriate signage and management of a public access site would be a great improvement over the current situation which is largely unregulated and lacking adequate signage.

I wholeheartedly support the proposed SBA as an invaluable addition to our state parks, specifically on Flathead Lake, and as an environmental buffer to the adjoining, critical Waterfowl Production Area.

Thank you for your efforts in this project.

Sincerely,
David Cummings

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: davidheller4747@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 8:41:08 AM

Name: David Heller
City: Bigfork
This would be a great addition to the Flathead Valley Parks. This area is unique in the way it can be used at high and low water levels. Keep the good news coming!!

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From:	David Hergesheimer
To:	Burton, Stevie
Subject:	[EXTERNAL] Somers Beach
Date:	Friday, September 11, 2020 1:38:44 PM
Attachments:	image001.jpg

As a frequent Flathead lake user I would like to pass along my positive comments in regards to the FWP acquiring Somers Beach & turning it into a State Park. This would be a positive acquisition in many regards such as providing much needed public access to Flathead Lake, reducing congestion at the Somers Bay access, and preserving nearly a half mile of shoreline that really has been enjoyed by the public for years, though not legally. I would speak in favor of the acquisition. Thanks for listening.

David C. Hergesheimer, CPA
Jordahl & Sliter PLLC
Phone: 406-752-1040 Ext. 9003
FAX: 406-752-2578
dherge@js-cpa.com
www.js-cpa.com [js-cpa.com]

Click here [js-cpa.sharefile.com] to Securely send me files via Sharefile.

Description: JS-bw

The highest compliment we can receive is the referral of your friends and business associates. Thank you for your trust!

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From: Deborah Meiers
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach acquisition
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 11:45:23 PM

I support the purchase of this property by the state. I was fortunate enough to grow up playing on and swimming off the beach. My parents told stories of the days before the dam was built when families from Kalispell would drive down and have beach parties. I would love to see some semblance of this preserved for the public.
My concerns include protecting the waterfowl refuge and neighboring private properties. If this can be accomplished I am wholeheartedly in favor!
Debbie Meiers
Lakeside

From: Diane Medler
To: Burton, Stevie
Cc: andrea@sliters.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach - letter of support
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 3:17:35 PM
Attachments: image002.jpg

Stevie Burton,

Please accept this letter of support for the Somers Beach Project. Discover Kalispell is the tourism brand for the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce. Our main role is to promote our area to non-resident visitors, but we also support amenities that benefit residents and preserve our public lands. Flathead Lake is one of the crown jewels of Montana. Smart development such as the Somers Beach Project helps to preserve habitat and the historical heritage of the site which has been enjoyed by generations, while enabling safe public access now and in the future. That is a project that we are proud to support!

Tourism is a leading economic driver for Montana in general and northwest Montana specifically. Visitors are attracted to our beautiful natural landscapes and look for improved, easy-to-access recreation amenities such as state parks, improved trails and safe water access, not only in summer but year-round. This project will preserve nearly a half mile of shoreline creating year-round public access on Flathead Lake. Having the area as part of the state park portfolio also provides for proper management to reduce noise, trash, sanitation issues and potential mis-use. The Somers Beach Project is an important step towards preserving the incredible scenic corridor of the north shore for residents and visitors to enjoy for years to come.

Thank you,
Diane

Diane Medler, Executive Director
Discover Kalispell, The Kalispell Convention & Visitor Bureau
15 Depot Park, Kalispell, MT 59901
O: 406-758-2808
M: 406-249-5841
DiscoverKalispell.com [discoverkalispell.com]

From: dogupsidedown@yahoo.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 2:56:00 PM

Name: Doug Doty
City: Missoula
I support the Somers Beach Acquisition.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Doug.James@moultonbellingham.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Sunday, August 30, 2020 5:39:32 PM

This is an exciting opportunity for Montana. I strongly support the acquisition of the Somers Property. This will benefit current and future generations of Montana citizens. This is a special place worth of protection. The acquisition of this property will insure future generations of access to this important area.

Doug James
Billings, MT

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: jsjvash@monatansky.us
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 11:39:13 PM

Name: Jim Vashro
City: Kalispell
Flathead Wildlife, Inc. is northwest Montana's oldest (64 years) and largest sportsmen and sportswomen organization. Flathead Wildlife enthusiastically endorses the acquisition of the Somers Beach area from the Sliter Family for possible inclusion into the Montana State Parks system. Flathead Lake is woefully underserved for public access. The Somers Beach area was historically used for public recreation until the Tie Plant pollution restricted use of the site. Remediation has now progressed to where it is safe to recreate again. The public has also been accessing the site for hiking and wildlife viewing during spring drawdown.
The nearby Somers Fishing Access and Flathead County Access sites are at peak or overflow use during most of the summer. This creates unsafe conditions for parking along Highway 93 with resulting foot traffic and for boaters coming into conflict with swimmers. In addition, the rocky and silty areas near Somers FAS are not the best substrate for swimming. Usage by non-motorized kayaks, canoes and stand-up paddleboards also can conflict with motorized boat use and creates parking congestion.
Somers Beach would be a great recreational addition. The sandy bottom is ideal for swimming and the shallow area would allow non-motorized boating while discouraging motorized use. The site is large enough to accommodate a large number of users, particularly if parking could be provided on adjacent BNSF property.
In addition, the site has some wetland and upland areas that could be developed for wildlife habitat to complement the adjacent USFWS Waterfowl Production Area (WPA). Formalized management of the Somers Beach area could result in less trespass on the WPA during restricted seasons for waterfowl nesting.
Flathead Wildlife compliments the Sliter Family for creating this opportunity and we hope Montana State Parks can acquire and develop the area to enhance recreational opportunities around Flathead Lake.
Jim Vashro, President, Flathead Wildlife, Inc.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: GA WA
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach project
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 4:29:50 PM

I am in favor of the Somers Beach project only insofar as you can provide protection for the Federal bird sanctuary to the east when it is closed for nesting. Habitat for water birds has been greatly reduced in the valley and the bird sanctuary is vital. Just putting up a sign saying to keep out will not sufice.
Yours
Gail A Watson-Fulsaas
Kalispell
Sent from Outlook [aka.ms]

From: Gary Mort
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Acquisition.
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 6:18:15 AM

As a Flathead resident for over thirty years I support this purchase.

As a local , year round resident, every year more and more recreation opportunities are being overtaken by people visiting our beautiful area. From fishing access to camping sites. One needs to to secure a camp site on a Tuesday just to have it for a weekend. Fishing access trailer parking in N.Flathead as you know is becoming nonexistant after 8am on weekends and dangerous parking on 93 in Somers illegal. F.W.P. needs to open more recreation opportunities.
We are the ones who support you with our purchases of licenses and otc sales.
We and you can do a better job.
Thanks in advance.
Gary and Lisa Morton

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S8 Active, an AT&T 5G Evolution capable smartphone

From: gdylinab@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 11:29:23 AM

Name: Glenda Brown
City: Kalispell
It is beautiful area has been used by Flathead Valley residence so many decades. I remember as a little girl with my mother and sisters and 50?s And 60s join the sandy beach and logs that had Drifted
in. I sincerely hope this is acquired and made available to residents.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Greg and Jo Ann Dramer
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Sliter Flathead Lake north shore proposal
Date: Friday, August 21, 2020 10:08:36 AM

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

-------- Original message --------
From: Greg and Jo Ann Dramer <greg-joann@hotmail.com>
Date: 8/21/20 10:03 AM (GMT-07:00)
To: Steve.Burton@mt.gov
Subject: Sliter Flathead Lake north shore proposal

We want to voice our strong support for the Sliter family property on the north shore of Flathead Lake becoming a state park.

More public access to the lake certainly is needed. This is an awesome piece of property with great wildlife and outdoor opportunities.

To have a willing seller whose interests include the property and its values which can be melded with public needs and wants is an opportunity we must not miss!

We urge those involved to make this proposal happen as soon as possible.

We have a place on Ashley Lake and see the problems with such limited access, not just for visitors but also for those with lakeshore property who need Lake access...the same as is needed for Flathead Lake.

Greg and Jo Ann Dramer
Bigfork and Ashley Lake property owners
406-250-7764
greg-joann@hotmail.com

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

From: Jennifer Montague
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments for Somers Beach Project
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 3:52:44 PM

To whom it may concern,

As a life-long resident of the Flathead Valley and current home owner in Somers, I am excited about preserving the Somers beach area so others can enjoy it for years to come. My hope is that the area can change as little as possible, because the specialness of the place is the walk in (on a a dirt trail), only bringing what you need in a backpack to enjoy a couple hours on the beach. The quietness of the area invites bird life, which I believe would be disrupted by motorized vehicles and motorized water rafts. I would be very sad to see a parking lot built close to the water or a boat ramp. A boat launch is already available at Somers Bay. The only upgrades I am supportive of are a parking area off the main road, with bathrooms, and a trail wide enough to haul kayaks and canoes on carts to the water. I believe this should be a day use only area, and that fires should only be allowed in certain areas and at certain times of the year. I also believe dogs should be on leash for at least certain hours of the day (9-4), and that fines should be given for those who leave trash behind.

Thank you,
Jen Montague
406-471-5403

From: Jenny Cloutier
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Sliter"s Project
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 1:18:52 PM

Hello,

I am writing to wholeheartedly lend my support to the purchase of the Sliter property in Somers. Continued public access to this unique place is an incredibly thoughtful gift to the future. With the at times alarming increase in use we have seen in recent years it will be such a relief to have this property under the sound management of the State of Montana. What a perfect use for LWCF funding!

A huge thank you to everyone stewarding this project forward,

Jenny Cloutier
Kalispell, MT

From: jodeltravis@yahoo.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Cc: robert.s.mount@gmail.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers beach state park proposal
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2020 2:13:52 PM

Hello Stevie Burton,
I fully support and advocate for the Somers, MT beach to be utilized as a state park. Flathead lake, has severely limited public access points for public use as private ownership has taken precedence and priority in our state. In contrast lakes like Pend O' Reille in Sandpoint, ID planned appropriatly by developing adequate shoreline for oublic access.
In short, the Montana public should all be allowed to enjoy and utilize the benefits of our natural water spaces on our largest freshwater lake. Private ownership should not monopolize most to all of this resource.
Thank you,
JoDel Travis

From: jdeneeve@yahoo.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Friday, September 4, 2020 9:52:29 AM

Name: John de Neeve
City: Kalispell
I am very enthusiastic about the proposed preservation and public access in the Somers beach acquisition plan. I support most aspects of the Alternative B plan. My main concern
Is that it should not be developed for any overnite accommodations. This area is also a designated bird sanctuary and too much development will violate one of the main purposes of this area.
Encouraging a great pic nic and swimming area for people with boat access for Non-motorized boats (canoes , kayaks) sounds wonderful. An reasonable access fee for Out of state users would be appropriate. My family has used this area every spring for the last 25 years. I praise the Sliter family for their generosity and vision with this property. I hope there will be a tasteful monument honoring this family. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss my concerns. John de
Neeve
Should be

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: jblord at interbel.net
To: Burton, Stevie
Cc: jblord@interbel.net John Lord
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Acquisition
Date: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 9:46:01 AM

I support the proposal for FWP to acquire Somers Beach from the Sliter family to create a new State park.

I'm guessing that other parties have already stated the following justifications for creating the proposed Somers Beach Park and for expanding the FWP State parks program. So I apologize for repeating the following: 1. A new State park would protect open space from private development and continue to provide public access to Flathead Lake. 2. Public use of existing State parks parks has grown considerably, and more parks are needed to accommodate Montana residents and out-of-state visitors. 3. I have been surprised at the number of people recreating (and social distancing) during this "Summer of COVID-19". A new park would be another great place for the public to enjoy healthy outdoor activities. 4. I appreciate our existing State parks, and how they enhance the quality-of-life in Montana. I believe that creating more new public parks would be positive for our great State.

Thank you for accepting my comments.

John Lord
Rexford, MT

From: jcm@bresnan.net
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2020 12:25:33 PM

Name: John Moore
City: Helena
I support adding a state park to this area near Somers. Given that public access has occurred regularly, it would be advantageous to manage the area using public resources. This will protect the terrain and benefit the users.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Julieartie@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 6:37:59 PM

Name: Jules
City: Bigfork
This is great news! My family have enjoyed this area (Thank you Sliters) for many years.
I think this is a brilliant idea and gladly support its acquisition and maintenance with our tax dollars!

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Karen Breck
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers beach project
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 6:01:19 PM

I'm Karen Breck and together with my husband, Steve, and many family members in the area, we strongly encourage you to move forward with the offer made by the Sliter family to create on their north shore property, a public park. Having once owned lakeshore property on Flathead Lake, we still refer to simply as "the lake ". Having so appreciated the once frequent and easy access available to residents of the greater Flathead valley, it's been difficult to see those spontaneous camping, picnicking, afternoon swimming visits to "the lake" disappear as we find ourselves competing with ever growing numbers of visitors from everywhere snapping up the very limited public access areas on this huge lake.
The Sliter property will open up a popular stretch of lakeshore where visitors won't be competing with those launching boats or tying up lakeshore camping spots.
Regarding the nesting area adjacent to this property, let's not forget the lake belongs to the people. This may well prove to be the last chance we have to provide opportunity for those not fortunate enough to own lakeshore property to have access to this amazing body of water that we are fortunate to have right in our backyard. Please move this project forward according to the Sliters thoughtful, generous intentions.
Thank you, Karen Breck

Sent from my iPhone

From:	Kari Rieke
To:	Burton, Stevie
Subject:	[EXTERNAL] State Park at Somers Lakeshore on Flathead Lake
Date:	Friday, September 11, 2020 12:24:57 PM

To whom it may concern,

Good afternoon! I wanted to write and let you know that I think the State Park in Somers, MT is a wonderful idea! It would be so positive for reinvigorating commerce in Somers, and bringing in travelers and locals to enjoy our beautiful lake. As an owner of our gorgeous hotel here in Somers, I feel it would be so beneficial, as it would be a fantastic place to send our guests, close and nearby, to play and have a fun time as they visit our area. We would be so thankful! We love to refer our guests to everything close and local to show them our wonderful area. Please move forward with helping to make this happen for our community! Thank you so much.

Kari Rieke

--
Kari Rieke | **Event Coordinator**
(406) 857-2400

Best Western Plus
Flathead Lake Inn & Suites
4824 Highway 93 South
Kalispell, MT 59901
www.bestwesternflatheadlake.com [bestwesternflatheadlake.com]

From: Kathy Hill
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Flathead property purchase
Date: Monday, August 17, 2020 2:06:34 PM

We are in favor.

A.J. & KATHY HILL
173 CHILDS RD
TROUT CREEK, MT

From: Kay Grice
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Acquesition
Date: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 12:09:57 PM

I'm a resident of Somers (born and raised), with many memories of Sandy beach. It would be wonderful if the park had day use only. It would also be wonderful if the boats stayed down at the rest area, and families, kayakers, paddle boards, etc. had a place to enjoy without all the boat traffic. Please, give us back a place where kids can have fun with their families like we used to be able to with out boats!
Thank You
Kay Grice

From: Ken Madsen
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] proposed Somers beach park
Date: Friday, August 21, 2020 5:16:23 AM

Consider this email to be one in strong support of the proposed acquisition of Somers Beach. I had the opportunity to use this property as a youngster before the 1964 flood. It is a special area and has returned to nearly the conditions prior to the flood. Acquisition would allow proper restroom facilities to be built that would prevent further "bush" use. I would recommend limited vehicle access but would like to see access extended to the existing bike/walking path. I am a lifelong Flathead resident and currently a Somers resident.

Sincerely,

Ken Madsen

From: Kris McIntyre
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Acquisition
Date: Sunday, August 23, 2020 1:11:47 PM

I have lived in the Flathead Valley my entire life, raised my children here and my grandchildren are now being raised here. Like most who were raised here, I have a strong love of the outdoors in general and Flathead Lake in particular.

I am strongly in favor of allowing public access of the Somers Beach area. I think it would be a wonderful asset for generations to come and would enable it to be maintained properly.

Kris McIntyre

Krismcintyre6@gmail.com
Sent from my iPad

LAKESIDE/SOMERS Chamber of Commerce

www.lakesidesomers.org • PO Box 177 • Lakeside, MT 59922 • lakesidesomers@gmail.com

September 10, 2020

Stevie Burton
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

RE: **Somers Beach Project**

Dear Stevie,

The Lakeside Somers Chamber of Commerce has been thrilled to support a new public access site on the Sliter property on the north shore of Flathead Lake since it was an idea in its infancy. With this endorsement we welcome the idea for locals and visitors alike to have an outdoor recreational area that is safe, legal and sanitary to create memorable experiences.

Not only is it a great advancement for our local economies with attracting outdoor enthusiasts but helps supply the demand for outdoor recreation areas. During COVID, it has become more apparent that Montanans value spending time outdoors. It's also apparent that the many year-round visitors also enjoy our opportunity for outdoor recreation. This summer has once again proven that our lack of public access sites simply does not meet demand. With only 13 public access sites along the 185 miles of Flathead Lake shoreline, sustainable recreation and safety have become of concern. The public access to Flathead Lake that would result from the Somers Beach project would provide a year-round access with quality amenities focused on both locals and visitors. We believe the potential of this proposed access will provide relief to our overcrowded recreational areas, offering increased safety and strengthen the sustainability of Montana's outdoor playground.

As a chamber of commerce, we strive to promote and preserve the assets of our community. Therefore, with the proposed Sliter property, we hope to preserve this slice

of Flathead Lake from private development and instead offer it as a gift to a place many of us call home. We hope Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Montana State Parks and Recreation Board can help facilitate this incredible project.

Sincerely,

Ali Binder
Lakeside Somers Chamber of Commerce
Executive Director

From: Carol McCrum
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: failure notice
Date: Saturday, August 29, 2020 1:01:10 PM

---------- Forwarded message ----------

From: MAILER-DAEMON@osiris.accessmontana.com
Date: Wed Aug 26 21:16:13 MDT 2020
Subject: failure notice
To: mcnik.6@ronan.net;

Hi. This is the qmail-send program at osiris.accessmontana.com [osiris.accessmontana.com].
I'm afraid I wasn't able to deliver your message to the following addresses.
This is a permanent error; I've given up. Sorry it didn't work out.

:
Remote host 205.220.160.42 [205.220.160.42] does not like recipient steve.burton@mt.gov
Remote host said: 550 5.1.1 User Unknown

--- Below this line is a copy of the message.

Hello, my name is Larry Ruffatto. I support acquiring the 106 acres to the east of Somers for the creation of a new state park.

There are only a few places for the public to recreate around Flathead Lake and this would protect this place from future private development.

Thank you to the Sliter family for offering this important property.

Larry Ruffatto 676-8114

From: Laura Poitra
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment
Date: Monday, August 17, 2020 4:42:18 PM

Good afternoon,

I am writing to provide my support for acquiring the proposed north shore property on Flathead Lake. As a local resident it has become increasingly obvious over the years that public access points to the lake are limited. Over the years more and more of lakeshore property has been developed by private property owners resulting in decreased access to the public and crowding at the limited locations that currently exist.

I firmly believe that without current investment we will find ourselves with less and less access opportunities as years go by. Additionally the North Shore of Flathead Lake holds unique qualities that make it attractive to outdoor enthusiasts and ideal for conservation. I believe preservation and public access to this area is necessary and a wise investment.

Therefore, I am in full support of acquiring and developing this north shore property as a state park. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my feedback.

Best,
Laura Poitra

Sent from my iPhone

From: Lauren Grabelle
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: FWP Proposing to Purchase 106 Acres along North Shore of Flathead Lake for New State Park
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 9:04:14 AM
Attachments: image006.png
image007.jpg
image005.png

Yes, this park acquisition is a great idea!

Best,
Lauren Grabelle
Bigfork, MT

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Tabish, Dillon** <Dillon.Tabish@mt.gov>
Date: Mon, Aug 17, 2020 at 12:55 PM
Subject: FWP Proposing to Purchase 106 Acres along North Shore of Flathead Lake for New State Park
To: Tabish, Dillon <Dillon.Tabish@mt.gov>

For Immediate Release: Aug. 14, 2020

Proposed project site along the north shore of Flathead Lake. FWP photo

FWP Proposing to Purchase 106 Acres along North Shore of Flathead Lake for New State Park

Kalispell, MT — In an effort to further promote conservation and public access along the north shore of Flathead Lake, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is proposing to acquire 106 acres to the east of Somers for the creation of a new State Park.

FWP is seeking public input on the proposal, and the deadline to comment is Sept. 12, 2020.

This property, owned by the Sliter family, has been identified as a significant undeveloped portion of the north shore of Flathead Lake and would complement habitat protections already in place along the lakeshore. This project is a rare chance to provide more public access to Flathead Lake, which currently has less than 20 public access points along its 185 miles of shoreline, all of which are heavily used by residents and tourists alike.

Throughout the year, there is enormous demand for opportunities to recreate on or near the lake; and state, city, and county parks and Fishing Access Sites (FAS) are

at or above capacity throughout much of the year. Seeing this need for more recreational access, multiple entities have been working together to add the proposed Somers Beach property to the Montana State Park System and ensure future public access.

The site would be suitable for a variety of recreational offerings and amenities, such as trails, hand-launch boat access, benches, picnic tables, restrooms, waterfowl viewing, educational vignettes and more. The exact nature and location of amenities and hours of operation have not yet been determined. Extensive scoping and public comment will determine the future development of the park through a separate assessment. As a result, FWP has not determined whether the site would include an overnight component or provide day-use only. FWP recognizes site management and staffing of the site will be crucial to addressing initial concerns about the proposed park.

A final appraisal is scheduled to occur in Sept. 2020. Funding would be provided by a pending Land and Water Conservation Fund grant and required matches from Parks Earned Revenue or General License Fund monies.

FWP has worked with the Sliter family and Flathead Land Trust to consider the project. The Flathead Land Trust previously solicited public input on the initial acquisition, and several hundred people provided comment. Those letters were presented to the Montana State Parks Board earlier this year to show community support and encourage the Parks Board to move forward with further consideration of the project. The board voted to do so, which initiated the next phase of the project, including the preparation of this draft environmental assessment (EA) and a formal public commenting process.

“For decades, our family has been working towards a vision of formal public access at Somers Beach. This beautiful place on Flathead Lake has been enjoyed by residents and visitors for generations. We couldn’t be more excited about the collaboration with FWP and Montana State Parks on this proposal,” stated Andrew Sliter.

“In order to protect this special place from future private development, conserve the wetlands and bird habitat, and secure much needed new public access on Flathead Lake, a state park offers our best opportunity to do so,” stated Paul Travis, executive director of Flathead Land Trust. “Flathead Land Trust has been committed to working towards a conservation and public access outcome with the Sliter family on this beautiful property for over a decade now, and to see this come one big step towards fruition is extremely gratifying.”

The public comment period for this draft EA will extend for 30 days beginning Aug. 14, 2020. Written comments will be accepted until 5 p.m., September 12, 2020, and can be mailed to: Somers Beach Acquisition EA; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; 490 N. Meridian Road; Kalispell, MT 59901 or sent by e-mail to: Stevie Burton at Stevie.Burton@mt.gov.

Copies of this EA will be available for public review at FWP Region One headquarters in Kalispell; the Montana State Library in Helena; and on the FWP web site (http://fwp.mt.gov) under Public Notices.

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Dillon Tabish

Regional Information and Education Program Manager

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 1

490 N. Meridian Road

Kalispell, MT 59901

Ph: (406) 751-4564 | C: (406) 381-2292

Montana FWP |Montana State Parks | Montana Outdoors Magazine

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Dave Hadden, Director
Headwaters Montana
(406) 270-3184
www.headwatersmontana.org [headwatersmontana.org]

From: lindabowman31@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 10:31:54 PM

Name:
City: Kalispell
Adding this piece of property to our state parks system is a once in a lifetime opportunity. We need access to Flathead Lake for locals and visitors. This is a prime location because it offers access in all seasons.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Jim & Linda Heim
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Purchase
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 7:07:33 PM

Steve, I would like to submit my comment in support of the property purchase from Sliters along the north shore of Flathead Lake in order to create a new state park.

Growing up on a farm near Somers in the 1950's & 1960's, the Somers Beach was the place where we gathered with friends to spend the day swimming. Families enjoyed it, too, with picnics and swimming. It was a very real blow to everyone who enjoyed the beach when it was lost due to the dam raising the lake.

This is an opportunity that will not come along again and every effort should be made to purchase the Sliter property.

Thank you.

Linda Jensen Heim

From: RichandLinda Kehr
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Park proposal
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 10:42:50 AM

Hello,

I would like to voice my support of the Sliter family property being acquired as a state part land in Somers, Montana. Presently, public access to Flathead Lake is limited. This property would assure more access to the lake for future generations. It would also honor the Sliter family's desire to have this property serve the public.

Again, please accept my support in moving forward with this property acquisition.

Thank you,
Linda Kehr
Creston, MT
503-580-0415

Somers Beach Acquisition EA

NO overnight
NO camping

Camping will promote ~~extended~~ stays by parties from "Away" Lessening the availability to locals - who must endure traffic + noise already generated by tourists.

Camping will require more maintenance + personnel by an already financially burdened entity.

Camping will give way to contamination of water from trash, auto-emissions - gas + oil, fire — Resulting in a "shut-down".

The more you allow, the greater opportunity for failure.

Day use only 7AM – 10:00 PM (or whatever existing regulations dictate)

This way - Locals will be able to frequent the facility and not be discouraged by the number of people using the area at one time.

Tourists can make use of the motels, B+B, etc. nearby - promoting business for them!

NO cooking by Charcoal, kindling etc. This leads to debris being left on the beach, dirtying sand, spoiling the site. 3 Seasons of campfire will make it so dirty from ash + charcoal that you will NOT (NOT) be able to sit down on the beach!

NO motorized vehicles - noise, errosion.

Many Nat'l parks pay a private service to operate due to lack of park service

personnel - they must be paid and can shutdown access due to turf wars between them + the government of the community.

Carry in - Carry out - If you provide trash recepticles they will be over used, raided by animals, attract bears, etc.

Linda Walthers
Bigfork 12walthers@gmail.com.
207-461-6500

From: Lisa Cloutier
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] We support the Somers Public Access !
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 1:41:01 PM

As born and raised Montanans we value nothing more than public land access. As our valley continues to grow we see our access points becoming busier and busier. We feel this land will be an amazing addition to the local area

--
Lisa Cloutier
406-249-4455
lisa@sleepeatdrink.com
14729 Shore Acres Drive
Bigfork Montana USA
59911

From: Lizajane Moorhead
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 7:51:57 PM

Yes yes on Sliters half mile beach save us all from more houses being built on beaches.. All should be back hundred feet from water giving everyone more access to water.. What's wrong... Developers GREED...

From: mandy@fieldguidedesigns.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 1:06:50 PM

Name: Mandy
City: Kalispell
I think public park access is so important. I would discourage RV and camping.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

Mark and Nancy Jo Connell
4605 Arnica Road
Missoula, MT 59803
(406) 240-1925
mtrivers64@gmail.com

September 11, 2020

Somers Beach Acquisition EA
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
By email: Stevie.Burton@mt.gov

Dear Stevie Burton:

Please accept this as a statement of my full-throated support of the new Somers Beach public park currently under consideration.

My wife and I have owned cabins on Flathead Lake for many years (our current place is on Angel Point near the northwest corner of Flathead), and can readily attest to the need for additional public access points and recreation sites on the lake. With more and more Montanans as well as other Americans seeking what northwestern Montana has to offer, especially during the crowded summer months, the current opportunity to create a sizeable additional public park on Flathead Lake is too important to pass up. I see no problems, and only a great upside, to the Somers Beach proposal, and strongly urge MFW&P to support it with every means at its disposal.

Please contact me if you need additional information, and thanks very much for considering my recommendation.

Very truly yours,

Mark Connell

From: Mary Kay Myett
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Purchase of 106 acres on the North Shore of Flathead Lake
Date: Saturday, August 22, 2020 8:27:49 AM

I cannot speak strongly enough in favor of this purchase. It is an opportunity that we will never get again.

Drive along Highway 93, at the north end of the lake, and you will see how congested it is there. It is an accident waiting to happen. Maybe this new access would offer some relief from that dangerous situation.

Mary Kay Myett

From: matthew farwell
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Acquisition EA
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 6:50:09 AM

I am a resident of the Kalispell area. I have visited the North shore of the lake every winter when the water is low. I am in FULL support of acquiring the property to guarantee access to this great property in the future!

Best regards
Matt

From: matt@hollowayeducation.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2020 6:58:53 AM

Name: Matt Holloway
City: Columbia Falls
Dear Stevie Burton and MTFWP,

After reading the EA for the potential Somers Beach State Park, it is still with vehement support that I suggest to move forward with this project.
My hope is that by formally designating this land as a state park, we can prevent residential or commercial development and protect the wild and scenic natural values of the landscape and wildlife therein. When I visit this area, I see illegal motorized activity and other harmful use that could be mitigated by making this a state park.
Please don't hesitate to contact me with questions.
Thank yo very much for the detailed EA and for the hope of protecting this strip of land along Flathead Lake!
Best,
Matt Holloway
836 10th Street West
Columbia Falls, MT
406-270-7429

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: melruonavaara@hotmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 10:42:02 PM

Name: Melanie Ruonavaara
City: Kalispell
I support FWP in creating a new state park in North Somers. It is a one of a kind property and chance to protect a treasure. Public access to Flathead Lake is very limited and adding a site would help alleviate congestion at other places, especially Somers boat launch. Also, there is no other place like the North Shore, and adding protection and user guidelines would benefit everyone. Please work towards adding North Shore to our parks!

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: mbutton07@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Flathead
Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 8:26:59 AM

Mr. Burton,
I am in total favor of Montana accepting the new acquisition on the north shore of Flathead Lake. I really hope an over-night component can be part of the development plan for this new state park.

Sincerely,
Michael Button
96 Shirley Way, Anaconda, MT 59711

Sent from Mail [go.microsoft.com] for Windows 10

Virus-free. www.avg.com [avg.com]
[avg.com]

From: Tabish, Dillon
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Re: FWP Proposing to Purchase 106 Acres along North Shore of Flathead Lake for New State Park
Date: Monday, August 17, 2020 1:40:29 PM
Attachments: image005.png
image006.png
image007.jpg
image006.png
image001.png

I think this qualifies as a comment?

Dillon Tabish
Regional Information and Education Program Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 1

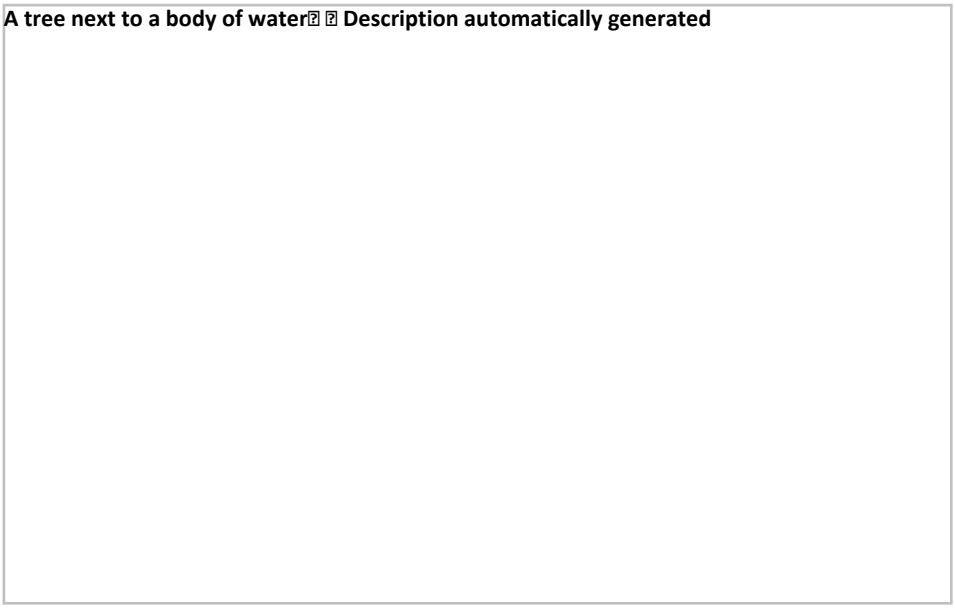
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
Ph: (406) 751-4564 | C: (406) 381-2292
Montana FWP |Montana State Parks | Montana Outdoors Magazine
FWPParksEmailLockupSm

From: Michael Shepard <michaelshepard7@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 1:16 PM
To: Tabish, Dillon <Dillon.Tabish@mt.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: FWP Proposing to Purchase 106 Acres along North Shore of Flathead Lake for New State Park

I vote yes.

On Mon, Aug 17, 2020, 12:55 PM Tabish, Dillon <Dillon.Tabish@mt.gov> wrote:

> **For Immediate Release: Aug. 14, 2020**



Proposed project site along the north shore of Flathead Lake. FWP photo

FWP Proposing to Purchase 106 Acres along North Shore of Flathead Lake for New State Park

Kalispell, MT — In an effort to further promote conservation and public access along the north shore of Flathead Lake, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is proposing to acquire 106 acres to the east of Somers for the creation of a new State Park.

FWP is seeking public input on the proposal, and the deadline to comment is Sept. 12, 2020.

This property, owned by the Sliter family, has been identified as a significant undeveloped portion of the north shore of Flathead Lake and would complement habitat protections already in place along the lakeshore. This project is a rare chance to provide more public access to Flathead Lake, which currently has less than 20 public access points along its 185 miles of shoreline, all of which are heavily used by residents and tourists alike.

Throughout the year, there is enormous demand for opportunities to recreate on or near the lake; and state, city, and county parks and Fishing Access Sites (FAS) are at or above capacity throughout much of the year. Seeing this need for more recreational access, multiple entities have been working together to add the proposed Somers Beach property to the Montana State Park System and ensure future public access.

The site would be suitable for a variety of recreational offerings and amenities, such as trails, hand-launch boat access, benches, picnic tables, restrooms, waterfowl viewing, educational vignettes and more. The exact nature and location of amenities and hours of operation have not yet been determined. Extensive scoping and public comment will determine the future development of the park through a separate assessment. As a result, FWP has not determined whether the site would include an overnight component or provide day-use only. FWP recognizes site management and staffing of the site will be crucial to addressing initial concerns about the proposed park.

A final appraisal is scheduled to occur in Sept. 2020. Funding would be provided by a pending Land and Water Conservation Fund grant and required matches from Parks Earned Revenue or General License Fund monies.

FWP has worked with the Sliter family and Flathead Land Trust to consider the project. The Flathead Land Trust previously solicited public input on the initial acquisition, and several hundred people provided comment. Those letters were presented to the Montana State Parks Board earlier this year to show community support and encourage the Parks Board to move forward with further consideration of the project. The board voted to do so, which initiated the next phase of the project, including the preparation of this draft environmental assessment (EA) and a formal public commenting process.

“For decades, our family has been working towards a vision of formal public access at Somers Beach. This beautiful place on Flathead Lake has been enjoyed by residents and visitors for generations. We couldn’t be more excited about the collaboration with FWP and Montana State Parks on this proposal,” stated Andrew Sliter.

“In order to protect this special place from future private development, conserve the wetlands and bird habitat, and secure much needed new public access on Flathead Lake, a state park offers our best opportunity to do so,” stated Paul Travis, executive director of Flathead Land Trust. “Flathead Land Trust has been committed to working towards a conservation and public access outcome with the Sliter family on this beautiful property for over a decade now, and to see this come one big step towards fruition is extremely gratifying.”

The public comment period for this draft EA will extend for 30 days beginning Aug. 14, 2020. Written comments will be accepted until 5 p.m., September 12, 2020, and can be mailed to: Somers Beach Acquisition EA; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; 490 N. Meridian Road; Kalispell, MT 59901 or sent by e-mail to: Stevie Burton at Stevie.Burton@mt.gov.

Copies of this EA will be available for public review at FWP Region One headquarters in Kalispell; the Montana State Library in Helena; and on the FWP web site (http://fwp.mt.gov) under Public Notices.

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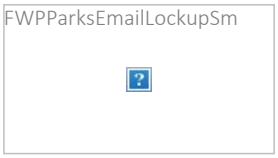
Dillon Tabish
Regional Information and Education Program Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 1

490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
Ph: (406) 751-4564 | C: (406) 381-2292
Montana FWP |Montana State Parks | Montana Outdoors Magazine



From: minanten@centurytel.net
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 8:42:07 AM

Name: Michael Thoennes
City: Kalispell
Whatever it takes to get this done I am wholeheartedly FOR it! We desperately need public access to our waterways, now more than ever with the growth and private land being sold and traditional access spots disappearing.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

MONTANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Protecting Montana's wildlife, land, waters and hunting & fishing heritage for future generations.

August 14, 2020

Stevie Burton
Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks, Region 1
490 N Meridian Rd
Kalispell, MT 59901

Attn: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment

Dear Stevie Burton,

The Montana Wildlife Federation (MWF) is our state's oldest and largest state-based wildlife conservation organization. We were formed in 1936 when hunters joined landowners to restore depleted wildlife in Montana, and for 84 years we have worked on key issues affecting wildlife, habitat and access.

MWF is strongly supportive of the proposed acquisition of Somers Beach by the Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). This property, and the family that owns it, has contributed significant access for Montanans, and out of state visitors, seeking recreation opportunities on Flathead Lake. Flathead Lake has notoriously few access points for a lake of its size which makes initiatives, such as this one, incredibly important. The trails, hand boat launch, and fishing opportunities provided by this purchase are essential to maintaining quality recreation on this iconic lake. Additionally, the use of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) dollars to purchase this property is a testament to the significance of the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) and the far reaching implications it will have in Montana.

MWF commends the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks as well as the current landowners for working together to protect our great outdoors. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and voice support of this project. If you have any questions, or if we can be of any assistance, please contact our Western Montana Field Coordinator, Eric Clewis, at eclewis@mtwf.org

Sincerely,

Eric Clewis
Western Montana Field Coordinator
Montana Wildlife Federation

BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS
MONTANA

Stevie Burton
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
stevie.burton@mt.gov

RE: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment

The Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (Montana BHA) represents nearly 3,000 public land owners concerned with maintaining fish and wildlife habitat and traditional, non-motorized hunting and fishing opportunities. Our Montana Chapter includes numerous members who recreate and fish around Flathead Lake, including the north shore.

Montana BHA strongly supports the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) acquisition of approximately 106 acres of land along the north shore of Flathead Lake for the creation of a new State Park, aka, the Somers Beach Acquisition. We also support the proposed funding mechanisms - the Land and Water Conservation Fund with matches from Parks Earned Revenue or General License Fund.

Upholding the protection and creation of contiguous public lands is a central value of Montana BHA. The proposed Somers Beach Acquisition would offer such opportunity with the neighboring Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on the east.

Montana BHA greatly appreciates the efforts of FWP and the Sliter family to ensure public access in perpetuity.

Sincerely,

Molly VandeVoort, Flathead Board Member (Whitefish/Columbia Falls/Kalispell)
Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

From: outdoorwif@aol.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 1:36:56 AM

Name: Nicole Peters
City: Florence, Montana
We were so excited to learn of the possible Somers Beach Acquistion! Our family lives in the Bitterroot and our favorite area to recreate is Flathead Lake. Accessing the lake has gotten harder every year due in part to increasing demand and lack of access sites. The pressure on the lake has become more evident with the pandemic and increased number of locals and out of staters coming to the area. Flathead Lake is a precious jewel that will only increase in value to Montana. We urge you to complete the Somers Beach Acquistion. This opportunity for lake front land acquistion is rare and should not be passed by. We join the many Flathead Lake users who camp, boat, fish, bird and wildlife watch and enjoy the special beauty of the area. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely, Mr. and Mrs. Don Peters and family

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This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Pam Bucy
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Public Access Project
Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 2:11:10 PM

Pam Bucy <pameladbucy@gmail.com> 2:06 PM (4 minutes ago)

to Stevie.Burton

Dear Ms. Burton,

Please accept my email in support of the potential new public access site in Somers. As someone who loves to recreate on Flathead Lake and a passionate supporter of public access to Montana's beautiful places, I could not be more excited about this potential public access opportunity. I know how hard members of the Sliter family as well as Flathead Land Trust officials have worked to provide this access to the residents (and non-residents) of the Flathead valley. As you are painfully aware, public access on Flathead Lake is in short supply. The lack of access has made the limited access sites overused and frankly, dangerous due to traffic issues and overcrowding. This is a tremendous opportunity. The time is right and the collaboration between the public entities and the private individuals and companies involved could and should be a model for future projects. Thank you for your work on this exciting project, it is greatly appreciated by all of us Montanans who don't own any luxury property but love to enjoy as much of Montana as we can access!

Pamela Bucy
808 8th Avenue
Helena, MT 59601

From:	ingarden@peoplepc.com
To:	Burton, Stevie
Subject:	Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date:	Thursday, August 27, 2020 6:16:37 PM

We often recreate on Flathead Lake and appreciate what access is currently available. Camping there is often problematic unless you reserve a site well in advance. We strongly support more public access to the Lake which your proposed acquisition will do. An additional public access point will also help distribute use and reduce congestion at other sites. We also support designing for additional camping once ownership converts to FWP for similar reasons stated earlier.
Please go forward and adopt the alternative that will purchase the Somers property.
Pat and Sharon Sweeney, Huson, MT

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Patrice Latourelle
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Sliters summer beach
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 9:13:43 PM

I would like to back the beach proposal since I have been able to walk & enjoy the beach on many beautiful & peaceful occasions.
Pat LaTourelle
Sent from my iPhone

From: baerpattie@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 8:20:32 AM

Name:
City:
Yes, please continue the effort to get this Park done. Thank you. An access used and loved by many.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

Greetings, 8/31/20

I'm writing in response to the comment period for the Proposed Somers Beach acquisition.
I'm all in favour of being able to protect the area for the migratory birds and other wildlife, and having access to walk or hike in and around the beach, but I have my reservations on having a boat launch; I'll explain why.
For 18 years, I kept my horses along with Tarry Schedzik stock at the old barn, (I believe it was Mcalister's) before it was dismantled. In that time, I got to see an improvement in Plantr, grass, as well as wildlife, such as deer, Pheasant, fox, weasel, owl, Red tail hawk, Osprey, right down to the garter snake.
My concern is, how long will it be before it becomes overrun with people and overcrowded just like the boat launch on the other side of the hill?
I've also seen my share of garbage and fishing line on the beach, (especially old garbage of years prevous) from people that recreate

and don't bother to pack it out when they're through.
I've even seen 4-wheeler riding through, tearing up the ground and racing up and down the beach near the nesting area for the birds.
I certainly would not like to see the area destroyed after so many years of bringing it back, especially the damage the Creosote the plant did years before. (yes, I remember the plant, I especially remember the spillway that went across the road and pooled up in front of the old barn.)
I'm not against access to do certain recreational activities in the area, but would like to see it on a very limited basis.
I don't know if what I say will fall on deaf ears, or you guys will shrug me off, but I wanted to put my 2 cents in.

Sincerely
Paul Heitschmidt

Paul Heitschmidt

117 E. Evergreen Dr.
Kalispell, MT 59901

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SEP 2 2020
MT FWP
REGION 1

Somer Beach Aquisition EA
Montana, Fish, Wildlife and Parks
490 N. Meridian Rd
Kalispell, MT 59901

5990163854

From: Paul Mutascio
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somer"s beach
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 2:15:39 PM

I just wanted to add my support of the State creating the new Somer's beach as proposed by the Sliters. It is an incredible opportunity for creating more public access to the Flathead Lake. Thank you to the State for getting this project moving forward and getting completed.

Paul Mutascio
406-261-1049

From: rainapratt@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 7:58:11 PM

Name: Pratt
City: Somers
We are a family of 6 that live in downtown Somers. We love to access Flathead lake as a family and enjoy the lake year round. This is such an incredible area and a beautiful part of Flathead lake that you can't easily access and enjoy just as the Somers boat launch area. We are excited about the proposed State Park and the sale of lakefront property for the purpose of public access. I would really like to see increased public lake access and the proposed state park could be a great way to do that and in a location that the public already loves to get to enjoy Flathead Lake.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Richard Pata
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PLEASE! Advocate for more public accessibility to Flathead Lake!
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 7:09:01 AM

I would like to plead with you to do everything possible to open access to Flathead Lake fo the general public. This is for people that live here, work here, raise their families here, yet only have minimal access to this phenomenal resource. Please advocate for the Sommers property to be developed for access by the general public.
Thank you,
Richard and Judy Pata
535 Pemble Drive
Columbia Falls, MT 59912
406-897-3222

HE>i

From: rkehr4642@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 8:02:26 AM

Name: Richard Kehr
City: Kalispell
I strongly support the State of Montana acquiring this site for public recreation on Flathead Lake. Recreation opportunities on the lake are extremely limited due to private development. Current recreation along Highway 93 in Somers is limited, and creates heavy congestion and safety issues. Acquisition of this new site for recreation will reduce these issues and help meet recreation demand on the lake. Please move forward with acquisition.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Rita Madsen
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach comments
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 9:20:32 PM

Hello. I am responding to your request for public comment regarding the acquisition of Somers Beach on Flathead Lake as a State Park. I fully support the effort to acquire this parcel of land for public use. I would prefer to see it used as day use only, with minimal amenities, to keep it much like it is. Overuse of this area would cause irreparable damage, in my opinion. Maintain the current parking area without extending it further towards the lake. Thank you for considering my opinion. Rita Madsen, Somers, MT.

From: gofastrob@hotmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 8:18:02 AM

Name: Robert Milne
City: Columbia Falls
I agree that keeping this site open to the public would help ease congestion at other sites. I am for this project.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: montaguemountaineering@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 5:19:38 PM

Name: Robert Montague
City: Somers
Hello,
I am in favor of preserving public access to the Sliters land on the North shore of Flathead Lake. I am a resident of Somers and share the concerns of my neighbors regarding increased car traffic and limiting access to day time hours. This should not be developed into a campground or boat ramp. I would like to see the land left mostly as it is with limited parking at the road, some trash receptacles, and perhaps a pit toilet. More development than this would impact the Somers residents living on the hill adjacent to the proposed park.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Robert Mount
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers State Park
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2020 2:36:14 PM

Having a new park there would be great
My vote is yes until someone could prove its a bad idea!

From: rogandpat@centurytel.net
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Sunday, August 23, 2020 11:16:24 AM

This is an excellent opportunity to create a new state park for the enjoyment of the people of Montana and its visitors. The current state parks on Flathead lake are way over capacity in recent years and this property will be an tremendous boost for public access to Flathead Lake. As a local users of the current public access sites on Flathead Lake my wife and I fully support keeping this site open for all of us and future generations.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Rhonda Catlett
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers Beach Public Access
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 8:33:28 PM

Please include us in the list of citizens in favor of the proposed State Park at Somers Beach!

Ron and Jill Catlett
443 Rosewater Loop
Kalispell MT

Sent from my iPhone

From: rza_78@hotmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 1:31:51 PM

Name:
City:
This area is a local treasure and should be kept as wild and undeveloped as possible. Public access would be a good idea, but it would be a shame to allow RVs and large-scale lighting here, which would despoil this beautiful and unique region. Please avoid developing this in such a way that would allow campers and generators and floodlights.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Shannon Niswonger
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers beach access Shannon Niswonger
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 2:08:25 PM

Just wanted to drop a note to express my thought about the access. I think that it's a great idea.
For a variety of reasons. First. Having places to get out and recreate open to the public are so appreciated. With limited access to Flathead and more and more people recreating it's nice to have options. This would also take some pressure off somers boat launch. Which we all know is packed and crossing the highway presents a danger especially! When people are parked all over the place. Plus boat traffic Having designated beach front will allow more families to spread out. Lakeside beach is a precious gem. But again it's growing. Having another beautiful spot to go and swim and enjoy takes the pressure off parents like me and my family. Wondering if I can find a spot. Where to park. Location.
Preserving more public recreation spots on Flathead is a win win. ! Thank you so very much for allowing me to express my thoughts. And thank you for what your wanting to do for us here locally. Sincerely Shannon Niswonger. Lakeside residents. Family of 5.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Sharon Vonk
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] New State Park on North Shore of Flathead Lake
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 6:50:16 PM

This is a beautiful area and my family enjoyed walking there during the low lake levels in the early spring. We support acquiring land from the Sliters to make this a park with more parking and better access for all.

Sharon and Harry Vonk
2888 Swan Highway
Bigfork, MT 59911

406 480 6208

From: Tanya Kato
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Park
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 10:33:01 AM

I say yes make a new park, there isn't enough places or parking for boats around the like, I think it's amazing idea and help a little bit of congestion! My vote is yes!!

Sent from my iPhone

From: Thomas Carlson
To: Burton, Stevie
Cc: Kris Carlson
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Somers bay state park
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 1:31:07 PM

Dear State Evaluator,

We just wanted to drop you a line to let you know we are fully supportive of creating a park on the Sliter Family's property on the North shore of Flathead lake.
We have lived in the valley 27 years and see how current access to the lake has gotten busier and busier. Another park on the lake will help distribute the crowds in the summer and offer additional outdoor opportunity all year long. Please recommend that the Sliter property become our newest state park!

Sincerely,
Kris and Tom Carlson
1258 Clear Springs Trail
Somers, Mt 59932

Sent from my iPad

From: tbansak@yahoo.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 12:28:16 PM

Name: Tom Bansak
City: Bigfork, MT
I am strongly in favor of the proposed acquisition of land for a state park in Somers.

1. Demand for access to Flathead Lake is increasing dramatically, and the public (both MT residents and visitors) needs more formal places to do so. The existing Flathead Lake State Parks (which I frequent) are often over-crowded. This year in particular! And the existing Somers FAS is often overwhelmed by users. Being the closest access to Kalispell and Flathead Valley, it is often very crowded with inadequate parking.

2.This park would protect Flathead Lake shoreline from development, preserving the natural characteristics of the area. Additionally, given the proximity to the existing WPA, keeping this land natural has many wildlife benefits.

3.Since people already use this site for recreation, it needs management. FWP can provide order (prevent noise and unruly behavior) and proper facilities (ie, bathrooms and parking) that do not currently exist. Also, since people have been using this site for recreation for many years, it would be a real shame to lose this existing public access point.

4. I also think that a new State Park would benefit Somers economically. Although local users already go to this unofficial access site, if designated a park, more people from afar would now come to Somers and spend money in the local businesses.

5. My final point is that this property is unique from other Flathead Lake State Parks in that there is so much beach access. Most of the other Flathead Lake State Parks are rocky and steep, so having additional beach space for people to enjoy and spread out would greatly enhance the visitor experience to Flathead Lake. Plus most of the North Shore access is closed to the public for much of the year to protect the nesting waterfowl. So there is a need for this type of shoreline for public enjoyment.

In sum, in my opinion, the pros vastly outweigh any cons in this proposal and the EA. I am strongly in support of creating a new State Park in Somers on the Sliter family land.

thank you.
Tom Bansak

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: tom.hollo@gmail.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 1:06:49 PM

Name: Thomas Hollo
City: Kalispell
I support buying it to make it a park but strongly oppose offering overnight camping there. In my experience, overnight camping invites misuse of parks, including litter, improper motorized vehicle use, over staying, harassment of wildlife, etc. Not to mention drinking and raising hell that would disturb the nearby residents and wildlife. The beach area is truly something special when the water is lower - preserving it through a park is a great idea. Please, please, please don?t ruin it by allowing overnight camping!!!!!!! I love camping and do it often, but there are plenty of places to camp in this gorgeous state - we don?t need to make this one of them.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: Ursula Mattson
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed New State Park-Somers
Date: Saturday, August 29, 2020 5:48:51 PM

Stevie,
I am a resident of East Glacier with strong ties to the Flathead Valley and Flathead Lake. I strongly support Montana FWP purchase of the Somers Lakeshore property (106 acres) to begin the process of creating a new state park. My husband and I recently completed our quest to visit every state park in Montana. Each and every one of them is so important to those of us who love our Montana outdoors.

This piece of property, which would give public access to the lake, is hugely important since so little of the shoreline is currently public land. Our public recreational lands are getting more and more use...almost too much at times. The Volunteers and staff are to be commended for their labor of love in keeping the parks looking beautiful and safe. Also, this property will tie in nicely with the beginning of the Great Northern Historic bike trail and add so much appeal to the town of Somers.

A state park seems like the perfect use of this land.
Ursula Mattson
East Glacier Park, MT

From: wendy@chuckolson.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 3:23:15 PM

Name: Wendy Brown
City: Kalispell
Please please please keep this open to public access. It's been such a wonderful place to recreate! It would be wonderful if this could take some pressure off of the Somers launch area which is becoming very dangerous due to congestion. We greatly appreciate the Sliter's generosity in letting the public use this land over the years and would love to continue to play in the warm shallow water of "Sandy Beach"

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From:	cwak252@charter.net
To:	Burton, Stevie
Subject:	Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date:	Thursday, September 10, 2020 12:39:32 PM

Name:
City:
The birds need a safe place, from people, from noise. Flathead Lake is so special, leave it for generations to see. Not every place needs to be full of people, and all that comes with the results. There is a beach farther down the Lake, don't give this peaceful place up to the same traffic, garbage, fights, noise, poop. We have seen all of that and more with the limited use of the shore you are proposing for a park. I heard a man threaten a woman with a child in her arms that he would get a gun and use it on her=====they didn't know each other. I have picked up garbage, including diapers, seen late night parties, and campers. I have lived above that area since 1978, it is so special, leave it that way.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: aew333@yahoo.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 3:09:20 PM

Name: Rose Ford
City: Somers
Dear Sliter Family,

My name is Rose Ford. I am 8. I think the Somers beach shouldn't be a state park because there would be too many people. It is so much fun to run around there, but with so many people you probably couldn't.

Sincerely,

Rose Ford

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.

From: aew333@yahoo.com
To: Burton, Stevie
Subject: Public Comment: Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment
Date: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 3:11:01 PM

Name: Sam Ford
City: Somers
Dear Sliter Family,

I want to say no state park on the beach because the water is fun and I get to run. And I don't like all the people there.

Sincerely,

Sam Ford

This e-mail was generated from the 'Somers Beach Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment' Public Notice Web Page.